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The Paradox of Persuasion: Interpersonal Influence in Everyday Conversation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Political Science

by

Lisa Pfost Argyle

Committee in charge:

Professor M. Kent Jennings, Chair

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September 2016

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Political Participation; Race, Ethnicity, and Gender; Public Opinion; Deliberation;
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ABSTRACT

The Paradox of Persuasion: Interpersonal Influence in Everyday Conversation

by

Lisa Pfost Argyle

Political scientists have been using individuals' self-reported efforts to try to influence the votes of others as one indicator of political activism for more than a half-century. However, in spite of this widespread use, very little is known about the motivations of interpersonal persuasion.   This dissertation examines why some people try to influence the votes of others during the course of their everyday political conversations, while others are content to discuss politics without trying to persuade. Although attempts to persuade are often treated as a form of campaign participation with a goal of influencing the outcome of the election, I find that the motivations for persuasion are more internal and interpersonal than are the motivations for other forms of campaign involvement. I argue that interpersonal persuasion should be treated as a form of discursive participation, with consequences for our understanding of public opinion and deliberation.

I use three large-scale survey datasets to examine interpersonal persuasion as a distinct form of political participation: the 2012 American National Election Studies (Ch. 3), the Youth-Parent Political Socialization Panel (Ch. 4), and the 2008 National Annenberg Election Studies Phone Survey (Ch. 5). Each dataset has distinct advantages in design and

content that allow for examination of particular features of the motivations of persuasion. Using a variety of statistical methods and data sources, the overall argument is that attempts at persuasion have relatively little to do with campaigns and elections, and much more to do with individual orientations towards politics and social norms about political discussion.

In particular, I find that organizational membership and campaign mobilization efforts do not provide the driving force for attempts to persuade that characterize other forms of political activity. Additionally, persuasive behavior does not ebb and flow in expected ways relative to the campaign cycle or the competitiveness of races. Rather, internal (but not external) efficacy, political capital (e.g., political interest, attention to political news), and exposure to disagreement and attempts to persuade by other social contacts are highly predictive of persuasive behavior. Persuasive behavior also declines over the life cycle, unlike many other forms of participation, and it is not a stepping stone to other more costly or time-intensive forms of participation. Therefore, persuasive behavior is equally or better understood within a framework of discursive participation, where it is a mechanism for people to develop their political identities, form political opinions, and process political events within the context of their social networks.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Politics describes the struggle to gain influence and power over the governance of society. In democratic politics, the only legitimate way to gain that power is by influencing the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the citizens who are being governed. Citizens, in turn, exercise their democratic authority by attempting to persuade other citizens and elected officials to pursue their favored course of policy. The involvement of (at least some) committed citizens in the political process, through voting, donating, volunteering, or expressing specific opinions, is essential for the smooth functioning and representational legitimacy of the democratic process.

Aside from voting, discussing politics is the most common form of political activity reported on the American National Election Studies (ANES). In spite of the recent scholarly emphasis that has been placed on political discussion, surprisingly little research has considered what makes half of these political discussants attempt to influence the votes of others when they talk about politics. I therefore propose a more systematic evaluation of persuasion as a form of political behavior in the mass public, with specific focus on the appropriate measurement of persuasive behavior and exploration of the psychological and relationship characteristics that motivate some citizens to attempt to persuade their discussion partners, while others take a non-persuasive approach to political discussion.

Identifying the persuaders who shape public opinion at the interpersonal level and understanding their particular motivations for this unique form of participation is a prime goal of campaign managers and an important precursor to understanding the nature and movement of public opinion. Take, for example, the following story that was produced by a

popular NPR radio program, "This American Life," and aired on November 2, 2012, just a

few short days before the Presidential general election. The segment was entitled "Red State

Blue State" and described the state of political disagreement in American politics. The

following is taken from the transcript of that broadcast, where Lisa Pollak is a program host:

Lisa Pollak: The most creative rejection of a friend's politics I heard was this-- a man

named Drew wrote to say that he got an ultimatum from his friend, Ryan. The two

guys are married to sisters and hang out together all the time. But if Drew votes for

Obama, Ryan has put him on notice. There will be consequences. Drew explains.

Drew: "If you vote for Obama, you're cut off. You can still come over to our house and

eat, but when I cook ribs, you can bring your own chicken breast and use the grill

after I'm done." And at first I thought he was just kidding around, but he's made it

clear that he's absolutely serious. And I appealed to his wife, and she said, well, I got

to stand with my husband.

Lisa Pollak: Wait. He was totally serious that you couldn't eat his barbecue if you voted

for Obama?

Drew: Absolutely serious.

Ryan: Yep, he's got to cook his own meat for the next four years. I know he loves my

barbecue so much. And I was thinking one day. You know, I've tried to explain to

Drew why he shouldn't vote Democratic, but I can't get through to him. So now I'm

going to do a little negative reinforcement. And if he votes for him, I'm just not

going to let him eat here. And my wife makes salad or garlic bread or beans-- he can

have that. He just cannot eat my meat-- my tri-tip, my ribs, my pulled pork, my

brisket, I make a wonderful prime rib sandwich-- he can't have any of that.

Attempting to persuade others, as seen in the extreme example of Drew and Ryan, may introduce a level of disagreement that jeopardizes important interpersonal relationships while still having only an infinitesimal likelihood of affecting the overall outcome of the election. There must be additional social, psychological, or contextual factors that mitigate costs and provide enough intangible benefits to motivate approximately one-third of citizens to undertake the behavior. Taken from the perspective of a campaign manager, how much would it be worth to identify possible "persuaders" like Ryan and motivate them to action during an election? Certainly four years of missed brisket is much more effective than traditional canvassing tactics.

I. The Paradox of Persuasion

The title of this dissertation, "The Paradox of Persuasion," is a play on the well-known Paradox of Voting. In this Downsian perspective, if citizens are economically rational then the costs of voting – the time and resources necessary to register, form a preference for a candidate, and arrive at a polling place to cast a vote – outweigh the benefits of voting – the miniscule probability of casting a vote that makes a decisive difference in the election (Downs 1957). The paradox, then, is figuring out why so many people show up to vote even though the costs so clearly outweigh the benefits. At least part of the answer comes from the intangible psychological benefits voters receive when they feel like they have done their duty, the social benefits from behaving like others in their social networks, and the receipt of an "I Voted" sticker.

Applying the Downsian framework, the decision to try to persuade others about politics makes similarly little sense for the economically rational actor. The costs of trying to persuade someone else still require the investment of time and energy to learn about the

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candidates or issues and form an opinion, and then the time to talk with other people and try to persuade them to change their minds. Additionally, there is the added risk that the attempt to persuade will violate social norms and introduce disagreement that strains important interpersonal relationships. The benefit of persuasion relies on a string of conditional probabilities that almost makes the vanishingly small benefit of voting seem reasonable; namely: 1) the probability of successfully changing the other person's mind, 2) the probability the other person then votes, and 3) the probability their vote is pivotal in determining the election outcome. Social and psychological benefits are one way in which political scientists find resolution to the paradox of voting, but what do these benefits look like for persuasive behavior? The research presented in the following chapters represents an attempt to understand the social and psychological benefits that may lead someone to engage in persuasive behavior in spite of the high potential costs and minuscule likelihood of influencing election outcomes.

II. Why Persuasion?

There are many ways in which people participate in public life. What makes persuasion worthy of particular attention, above and beyond the attention that is given to other forms of participation? Interpersonal persuasion is central to the democratic endeavor and, next to voting, is perhaps the most fundamental and widespread way that individuals express their preferences. Practically speaking, understanding what motivates people to try to persuade others within their social networks could enhance political campaigning and mobilization tactics. Political conversation is also central to the formulation and articulation of political attitudes and identities, and persuasion plays a crucial role in how individuals understand their own opinions in relation to the public will. Persuasion has long been studied in the

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contexts of discussion and political participation more broadly, but has rarely received direct exploration as a distinct and important form of engagement with the political sphere.

Practical Campaign Tactics

The potential worth of identifying the persuaders and how to mobilize them has not been lost on the private sector of market research and political campaigns. Keller and Berry, two senior analysts at the market research firm RoperASW, use thousands of surveys spanning several decades to describe how one in ten people, the Roper-trademarked "Influential Americans," are the trendsetters who form early opinions and through their recommendations help shape the rest of consumer behavior and public opinion (Keller and Berry 2003). RoperASW has been snagging clients for decades based on their promised identification of these Influential Americans, and other marketing firms and campaign strategists have surely attempted to do the same.

RoperASW's Influential Americans make up about 10% of the population, and are defined by their formal participation in politics or other civic organizations.[1]   Similarly, the 2008 Obama campaign, which is often held up as a sterling example of local volunteer mobilization, emphasized finding individuals who had large social networks and the organizational resources to pull their contacts into politics (McKenna and Han 2014). Both of these examples demonstrate attention to a larger circle of influential citizens than is typically included in elite-driven explanations of public opinion (which might include elected officials, party leaders, organized activists, and media personalities).

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[1] Roper ASW's Influential Americans are identified based on their reported participation in at least 3 (out of 12) political and civic behaviors. It is worth noting that the use of political and social activists as a general gauge for public opinion is contested (Fiorina 2009).

However, this 10 percent is still far shy of the 30 to 40 percent of Americans who say they try to persuade their family, friends, or neighbors in a presidential election. What accounts for the discrepancy? Is it merely that only 10 percent of people are successful at their attempts, and the remainder try and fail to persuade others and so have little influence in politics? While it is almost certain that many of those who try to persuade others fail at the attempt, I believe there is a more important theoretical difference in the conceptualization of "Influential Americans" as it is distinguished from active attempts to persuade others. As Keller and Berry put it, the Influential Americans are "the most socially and politically active Americans," who "are connected to many groups" and "because of their position in the community, workplace, and society, their opinions are heard by many people and influence decisions in others' lives" (Keller and Berry 2003, 1). It is not their overt attempt to influence others that makes these citizens influential. Rather, Influential Americans are defined by their position in the social structure and their active participation in social or political causes.

Campaigns and market research firms that use this approach are tapping into a segment of the population that is already highly active and centrally located in their social networks. There is no denying their importance. However, this leaves a huge untapped resource of advocates (20 to 30 percent of potential voters) who are trying to persuade others about politics but who are not activists or civic leaders in other ways. Perhaps this group of individuals provides a bridge between the 10% of activists and the other 90% of ostensibly less engaged citizens they are reaching out to in a typical election. Campaign managers should have a clear interest in not only identifying who their likely voters are, but also who is likely to "go to bat" for their candidate or issue in the thousands of unobserved, private

political conversations occurring every moment around the country. In spite of the many recent advances and often impressive scope of social influence research, such literature has done very little to identify what might motivate these and other individuals to take initiative and incur the costs (time, psychological engagement, interpersonal disharmony) in an effort to persuade, especially if they are not often formally engaged in political or civic affairs.

Empirical Theory-building

Public opinion researchers ought to be similarly interested in identifying the characteristics and motivations of political persuaders. The importance of interpersonal influence in the development of political attitudes is an undeniable theme of public opinion research. For example, Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) foundational "two-step flow" model of media influence recognized the essential role of citizen-to-citizen discussion in shaping public opinion. However, due in large part to the difficulty of gathering appropriate information, the interpersonal processes that drive social and contextual influence were not modeled and tested by the Columbia school of scholars such as Katz and Lazarsfeld (Huckfeldt 2014; Weatherford 1982). By the very nature of persuasion, the biases, idiosyncrasies, and objectives of this influential group are likely to reverberate through public opinion and into election outcomes and public policy. For campaign managers and scholars alike, the identification of the distinct characteristics of this relatively large but under-studied segment of the population – the persuaders – and what motivates them to action is essential to understanding national public opinion and, in turn, voting behavior.

Situating interpersonal persuasion as part of a dynamic process by which citizens form and articulate their attitudes helps develop a more nuanced perspective of public opinion that goes beyond aggregating poll results (Cramer 2016; Gamson 1992). As Cramer describes it,

"when you listen to the way people make sense of politics, they have justifications for what they think, and these justifications make sense to them and are steeped in their personal sense of who they are in the world" (2016). Attempts to persuade are one way that people can articulate their justifications and develop their political consciousness and social identities. Understanding the mechanisms by which the development and articulation of public opinion occur, such as persuasion, is essential for moving beyond a thin quantitative view of public opinion to a more complete model public opinion that accounts for how it develops.

Additionally, a better theoretical understanding of the nature of persuasive behavior would enhance scholarly modeling of other forms of political participation. Political scientists have spent decades including attempts to persuade others as one form of electoral participation, alongside attending a rally, displaying a sign, or donating to a campaign. This assumption will be directly questioned in Chapter 3, but it is worth noting that the participation rates of attempts to influence the votes of others dwarf those of other forms of campaign participation. In the 2012 ANES, for example, 42 percent of the respondents said they tried to persuade someone else, versus only 4 percent who worked for a campaign and 16 percent who displayed a sign or bumper sticker. [2] If the theory presented here is correct, and persuasion is a qualitatively different kind of behavior from other forms of campaign participation, scholars should think carefully about the decision to include it in their participation indexes. Removing persuasion from the analysis may remove a major source of

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[2] In the 2012 iteration of the ANES, reported participation rates are as follows:

Attend a meeting/rally: 5.6%	Contribute money: 12.6%
Display a sign/button: 16.1%	Attempted to persuade others: 41.6%
Work for a party/candidate: 4.2%	Discussed politics: 71.6%
Voted in the Presidential Election: 79.9%	

noise from the data and allow for a more direct and refined understanding of instrumental campaign behaviors.

Aside from traditional campaign behaviors, political scientists are pushing to expand the scope of what is included in our understanding of political participation. For example, political discussion (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009), political consumerism (Gil de Zuniga, Copeland, and Bimber 2014), online activism (Gil de Zuniga, Jung, and Valenzuela 2012), and volunteering in the community (Zukin et al. 2006) have been proposed as essential to better understanding the shape of political participation in more recent generations.   However, these additional behaviors retain conceptual and statistical differences that prevent their full adoption into a single scale of political participation. Political participation cannot be understood in a unidimensional way (Dylko 2010; Zukin et al. 2006), and this research provides further evidence of the multidimensionality of participation by examining the variety of motivations that drive different types of participation. Through direct comparison with other forms of participation, a better understanding of political persuasion moves forward in developing a more robust understanding of a discursive dimension of participation and its relationship with traditional forms of campaign engagement.

Deliberative Democracy

Reconsidering persuasion as a distinct form of behavior within the deliberative context would have significant implications for deliberative scholarship. Mendelberg (2002) characterizes the ideal of deliberative democracy by claiming that "if it is appropriately empathetic, egalitarian, open-minded, and reason-centered, deliberation is expected to produce a variety of positive democratic outcomes" including increased tolerance,

engagement in civic affairs, understanding of one's own preferences, and setting aside of one's "adversarial, win-lose approach" (320).   In spite of a potential dampening effect on overall participation levels (Mutz 2006), both empirical scholars and democratic theorists contend that exposure to disagreement by tolerant, open-minded individuals improves the overall quality of democracy and the capacities of its citizens (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Mendelberg 2002; I. M. Young 2000).

The underlying tension, which is not explicitly addressed in these visions of deliberative democracy, is that the ideally "deliberative" or "tolerant" personality seems to be inherently at odds with the persuasive personality. It seems impossible to reconcile the ideal of deliberators who approach a political discussion with an open mind and a willingness to consider many perspectives in the process of coming to a collective decision, with the persuaders who have a high degree of confidence they are right and actively try to shape others' views or the outcome of the discussion.   In order to understand the extent to which persuaders are able to enhance or undermine deliberative democratic aims, the identity of persuaders and their motivations for participating in this unique way must be closely studied.

III. Barriers to the Study of Persuasion

The importance of persuasion in a democratic system is established in the very foundations of Western political thought, dating back to ancient Greece. Aristotle's formulation of the persuasive process, which he viewed as central to the political endeavor, consisted of three interwoven aspects: *ethos* (character of the speaker), *pathos* (emotion of the audience), and *logos* (logic or reason of the argument) (see Triadafilopoulos 1999). However, the body of scientific persuasion research, especially specific to the political realm, remains much smaller than anticipated given this theoretical weight and importance for

democracy. Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody describe the study of political persuasion as having a "long lineage but a brief history;" they then call for the "systematic study of political persuasion, separate from and comparable in importance to the study of voting and public opinion" (Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1996, 1).

If persuasion is so fundamentally important to the democratic endeavor, why does this dearth of empirical research about persuasive behavior persist? There are at least three reasons, including oversights due to theoretical approaches, practical empirical limitations, and normative ambiguity.

Theoretical Oversights

Research on persuasion often makes the unstated assumption that some people try to persuade others because there is something they want; they expect to receive some tangible, social, or psychological benefit from getting someone else to agree with them. Because this underlying motivation is so obvious, there has been very little scholarly attention paid to the determinants of attempts to persuade others. Within political science, the bulk of literature on political persuasion has focused on the persuasive activities of political elites, who have a clear vested interest in securing votes, monetary or ideological support, or preferred policy outcomes. Therefore, the motivations for their behavior are easily identifiable and not a terrifically interesting intellectual pursuit.

The fields of psychology and communications do study persuasion in everyday interactions, but they still assume that all individuals, at some point or another, will have a desire to persuade another individual of *something*. This has resulted in a bevy of studies that focus on the strategy selection process undertaken by the message sender in a particular situation (for a review see Perloff 2008, chap. 10; see also Dillard 2004). However, the focus

on the strategic details of successful persuasion has led to very little consideration of the initial decision of whether or not to try to persuade. Politics is an ideal setting to study the decision to persuade because it is not initially apparent what benefit is received by individuals who try to influence the vote choice of their friends and family members that is not also available to those who talk about politics and do not try to persuade.

Empirical Limitations

Unfortunately, despite our best empirical innovations, scholars have not yet devised a way to be "flies on the wall" capable of unobtrusively observing political conversations as they occur in the course of ordinary life. Political conversations occur in person, over the phone, through written correspondence, and, increasingly, online. They happen at home, at work, in social gatherings, and in communities, with family members, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and even strangers. They are informal, unstructured, and private; they are also sometimes formal, structured, and public. In some of these conversations, one person overtly and intentionally tries to change the attitudes or behaviors of the fellow discussant(s), in others the discussants have no such agenda. The variety and pervasiveness of political talk makes it nearly impossible to directly observe in all its naturally-occurring forms, so political discussion researchers often observe conversation in stylized situations.

Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996) describe how a research agenda focused on regularities generalizable across (and usually empirically isolated from) various contexts has actually hindered the development of research on *political* persuasion precisely because politics is so driven by context and interaction. For example, laboratory studies usually rely on random assignment of participants to never-before-seen stimuli or strangers as discussion partners. Political conversation, by contrast, usually occurs within established relational

networks, and the nature of the relationship with the discussion partner likely leads to different patterns of behavior than those observed among interacting strangers. More recent research has responded by attempting to observe political conversation in more real-world contexts. This includes research laboratories (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014), formally organized deliberative bodies (Fishkin 1995; Gastil 2000), neighborhood coffee shops (Walsh 2004), workplace water coolers (Mansbridge 1983), moderated groups of regular political discussants (Cramer 2016; Gamson 1992), and town hall meetings (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014; Mansbridge 1983), among others. Although there are many examples of well-designed research projects that examine political talk in a particular setting, each study is individually limited to one discursive context (or, at best, a few), and there remains a great deal of free-flowing political conversation that cannot be directly observed.

Another approach to research on political talk and social influence persists without direct observation of the actual conversation, and the focus of the study is the occurrence of the conversation, rather than the content. Political conversationalists are surveyed and asked to reflect on their usual patterns of discussion and their specific interactions with their discussion partners (for example Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Mutz 2006; Stoker and Jennings 2008). Survey data based on respondents' recall of particular interpersonal interactions require heroic assumptions about what they are able to remember and willing to report. However incomplete, though, these survey approaches provide the most feasible and least-invasive window for observing political conversations within social networks as they actually occur.

The role of methodology in determining the questions that are asked and the way in which conclusions are reached, and not the other way around as researchers ideally would

prefer, cannot be overlooked, especially when modeling a dynamic interpersonal process like persuasion (Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1996). There is no obvious or uncontroversial method for observing political conversation, which makes persuasive behavior difficult to observe and identify. These methodological obstacles have disadvantaged studies of persuasion relative to more easily-studied political behavioral phenomena such as voting or campaign donations, which can be clearly and accurately observed.

Normative Ambiguity

The slow growth of empirical work on the topic is at least partially the result of an entrenched discomfort with the moral ambiguity surrounding the negative potential of political persuasion. For example, one of Hobbes's suspicions about democratic government centered on its propensity to become an "aristocracy of orators," where the best speakers are able to gain the upper hand in a "society of equals," thereby undermining the whole endeavor (see Garsten 2006, pg. 2). Garsten (2006) tracks the history of normative attitudes toward persuasion, concluding that persuasion is so poorly regarded today because of a strong distrust in the abilities of the average citizen to engage in reasoned rhetorical argument at the founding of the modern democratic nation. Although persuasion is essential for building coalitions, mobilizing voters, avoiding coercive tyrannies, and achieving countless other democratic aims, it also has the sinister potential for populism, demagoguery, manipulation of the passions of the people, and other undemocratic outcomes. Because scholars cannot clarify whether persuasive behavior is a good thing to encourage or a negative thing to avoid, they tend not to study it as a dependent variable.

In political theory, and often based on Plato's hesitancy towards rhetoric in public deliberation, most modern deliberative theorists construct a vision of democracy in which

logos, or dispassionate appeals to "public reason," is the only one of Aristotle's elements of persuasion that is normatively valid (Tridafilopolous 1999). For these scholars, rational and reasoned public decision-making ought to be made on the internal merits of the arguments themselves, without being influenced by who makes the arguments or the emotional state of the audience when they are heard. The prioritization of *logos* presumes that in a deliberative setting speakers should lay out a set of facts, and that, by weighing the various possibilities in a rational and unpressured way, a majority of discussants will gravitate towards the correct solution, and those who do not agree will still understand and accept the eventual outcome.

However, this strict reliance on dispassionate reason as the only acceptable form of rhetoric in the public sphere is one of the major criticisms of deliberative democracy in practice (Sanders 1997; I. M. Young 2000). Young (2000) strongly rejects the predominance of *logos* by pointing out the inequality that arises when the reliance on "lawerly" dispassionate and reasoned speech privileges wealthy and well-educated white males in political discussion and further marginalizes traditionally disadvantaged groups (women and minorities). Scholars of deliberation have not yet worked out the theoretical or empirical implications if speakers take many approaches to the conversation, including passionate advocacy of a particular cause using a variety of rhetorical tools (i.e. intentional, active efforts at persuasion).

There is a particularly strong hesitation regarding *pathos* because of the inherently non-rational nature of emotion and the relative ease of emotional manipulation. *Ethos,* although still secondary to the logical force of the argument, receives some regard because evaluating claims based on the credentials of the speaker is usually deemed a rational heuristic by which to make judgments. However, the growth of political psychology and behavioral research

within political science has led to more serious consideration of the *ethos* and *pathos* elements of attitude formation and political participation, especially as psychologists and other scholars increasingly recognize that emotion and logic cannot be neatly separated in the human psyche (Lodge and Taber 2013; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). Significant research has explored how democratic citizens form attitudes, change attitudes, and evaluate political information and arguments. However, even the breadth of the field of public opinion cannot explain what it really means for the democratic citizen to be "reasonable" or "rational" unless the horizon is expanded beyond information processing and opinion formation and renewed attention is given to the role and functioning of all aspects of persuasion in the democratic process.

IV. Political Persuasion as Discursive Participation: An Overview

Political participation is not a unidimensional concept, and studies of political participation encompass a huge variety of ways in which Americans engage in the public life of their communities, states, and nation. There are many competing classifications of the dimensions of political participation, with distinctions made based on the publicness of the behavior, the kind of information needed to effectively engage in it, the benefits that motivate action, or the need for communicative skills to participate (see Dylko 2010). Some scholars make distinctions between political and non-political (civic) behavior and whether the primary function of the behavior is to express an opinion (Zukin et al. 2006). Although the present research project does not provide a comprehensive overview of the many dimensions of political participation, it contributes to the overall understanding of diverse forms of political participation by examining the relationship between persuasion and two particular dimensions of political participation: campaign behavior and discursive participation.

Canonical definitions of political participation emphasize the direct connection between the behavior and desired electoral or policy outcomes. For example, Verba and Nie define political participation as "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take" (1972, 2). Later, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady define political participation as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (1995, 38). In both definitions, the extrinsic, instrumental connection between the action and its intended effect on policy or electoral outcomes is the defining characteristic of political behavior.

In practice, political participation under this definition includes activities such as donating money to a campaign, attending a political meeting or rally, working for a campaign or candidate, displaying a sign or bumper sticker, protesting, writing a letter to the editor, or contacting an elected official. The first four of these items can only occur in relation to a particular campaign or election cycle. Likely due to the lack of formal connection to a specific institutionalized political process, the remaining activities are more expressive in nature, and their inclusion in scales of political participation varies (Zukin et al. 2006). The emphasis in later chapters will be on the comparison of persuasion to the other forms of campaign-oriented behaviors with which it is usually scaled. I will collectively refer to these four items (donating money, attending a rally, working for a campaign, or displaying a sign/sticker) as "campaign participation," in order to distinguish this common subset of activities from the full universe of potential political activities that people may engage in.

Given this definition of political participation, there is significant debate about whether talking about politics is even a form of participation at all. Although discussion may clearly be about political events or topics, there is little evidence that it has the intent or the effect of influencing government action or electoral outcomes. In their thorough analysis of political participation, Zukin et al. (2006) consider talking about politics to be a form of non-participatory political engagement, akin to reported interest in politics or news media consumption. However, talking about politics is an undeniably important way that many Americans come to understand and be involved with their political environment, and other scholars advocate the inclusion of political conversation among forms of political behavior (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Mansbridge 1999).

A formal definition of discursive participation is provided by Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini. According to them, discursive participation is "the process of citizens talking, discussing, and deliberating with each other on public issues that affect the communities in which they live – from one-on-one conversations to email exchanges to more formal meetings" (2009, 3).[3] Their definition explicitly includes attempts to persuade others as a type of discursive participation. Aside from persuasion and frequency of political discussion, other measures of discursive participation have not been regularly asked in

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[3] Their definition of discursive participation has five principal characteristics: 1. The activity involves "discourse with other citizens – talking, discussing, debating, and/or deliberating." 2. This interpersonal discourse is a form of participation, which has been understudied in previous analyses of participation. 3. "Discursive participation can include but is not limited to the formal institutions and public processes of civic and political life." As such, it includes unplanned, private, and informal conversations between citizens, as well as formal, public settings such as town hall meetings. 4. Discursive participation is not limited to face-to-face conversation, but may include interactions over phone, email, or internet forums. 5. "It is focused on local, national, or international issues of public concern."

national political surveys (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004). Consequently, a discursive participation dimension is not often considered in political science research. Persuasion is traditionally included as a form of campaign behavior, and discussion is usually viewed as a measure of non-participatory engagement. The expected motivations and implications of campaign participation and discursive participation differ greatly. As the only activity that overlaps between the two, persuasive behavior represents an interesting puzzle in its own right, and a unique window into both dimensions of political participation.

Much of the scholarship on discursive participation has emphasized either participation in formal deliberative bodies, or completely informal political discussion between friends, family members, or coworkers (although there are many exceptions). In an increasingly socially-interactive online world, the political role of discursive participation is certainly changing, whether for better or worse remains to be seen. A more robust understanding of the nature and implications of discursive participation as a dimension of political participation more broadly would certainly prove useful in navigating the normative and empirical questions facing political scientists as forms of discourse shift. This research project takes a step in that direction by considering the role of social norms in motivating different kinds of political discourse, and thinking carefully about the political intentions and implications of persuasive participation.

The overall conclusion of this research project is that persuasion would be more accurately understood as a form of discursive participation. Focusing specific attention on persuasive behavior in this light, and on discursive participation more generally, allows for a more complete and satisfying understanding of public opinion as a dynamic, rather than static or aggregative, concept. Furthermore, it builds understanding of how people engage with the

political system in the course of their everyday lives. This conclusion is reached based on a variety of methodological approaches. In Chapter 2, the existing empirical research about persuasion and political participation generally is reviewed to generate a model of the factors that influence someone's likelihood of engaging in persuasive behavior. Chapter 3 takes a statistical approach to identifying similarities and differences between persuasion and the two dimensions of participation, using factor analysis and machine learning techniques. Chapter 4 moves beyond statistical abstraction and depicts the reality of persuasion as it occurs, including the subject, target, and timing of persuasive endeavors. Chapter 5 explores the motivations of persuasive behavior in the 2008 presidential campaign, concluding that persuasion lacks the instrumental electoral purposes that characterize other forms of campaign behavior.   Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the empirical findings and a discussion of the theoretical and normative implications of conceptualizing persuasion as discursive participation.

2: Theory and Measurement

I. A Model of Persuasive Behavior

Think for a moment about the people with whom you have political conversations. Some of them (perhaps including yourself?) seem to never miss an opportunity to share and justify their political beliefs. Others only reluctantly discuss controversial political topics and actively avoid possibly contentious direct disagreement, even though they may hold just as strong and informed of opinions. What is it that motivates some political discussants to try to persuade others to share their opinion, while other discussants in similar circumstances talk about politics without overt attempts to persuade? This chapter presents a model describing the kinds of individuals, social norms, and political contexts that facilitate attempts to persuade others.

Three classes of explanations must be accounted for in a model of why people choose to engage in any form of political participation: 1) individual-level traits and dispositions, 2) social context, and 3) political context. However, these factors are not isolated, and the relative weight or sequencing of their influence must also be accounted for. Specifically, I posit that individuals have personal characteristics and intentions that create a baseline propensity towards participation, which is then activated or suppressed by the social norms and political context they encounter. Therefore, my model begins with the most stable factors, the individual level traits, and then expands outward, where the actual decision to persuade may be triggered or suppressed by a number of social or political contextual factors.

Briefly put, the model proceeds like this: 1) Individuals have personality traits and psychological orientations towards politics that predispose them towards taking persuasive approaches to political discussion. 2) The decision to persuade is then moderated by social

norms; individuals in contexts where social norms validate persuasion or confrontation as legitimate ways of talking about politics are more likely to act on their propensities to try to persuade others in their social networks. 3) The decision to persuade is also moderated by the political context. Strong opinions about a particular issue only lead to persuasion in contexts that make the attitude object (an issue or candidate) politically salient, such as elections or current events. A visual depiction of this interaction is available in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Model of Persuasive Behavior
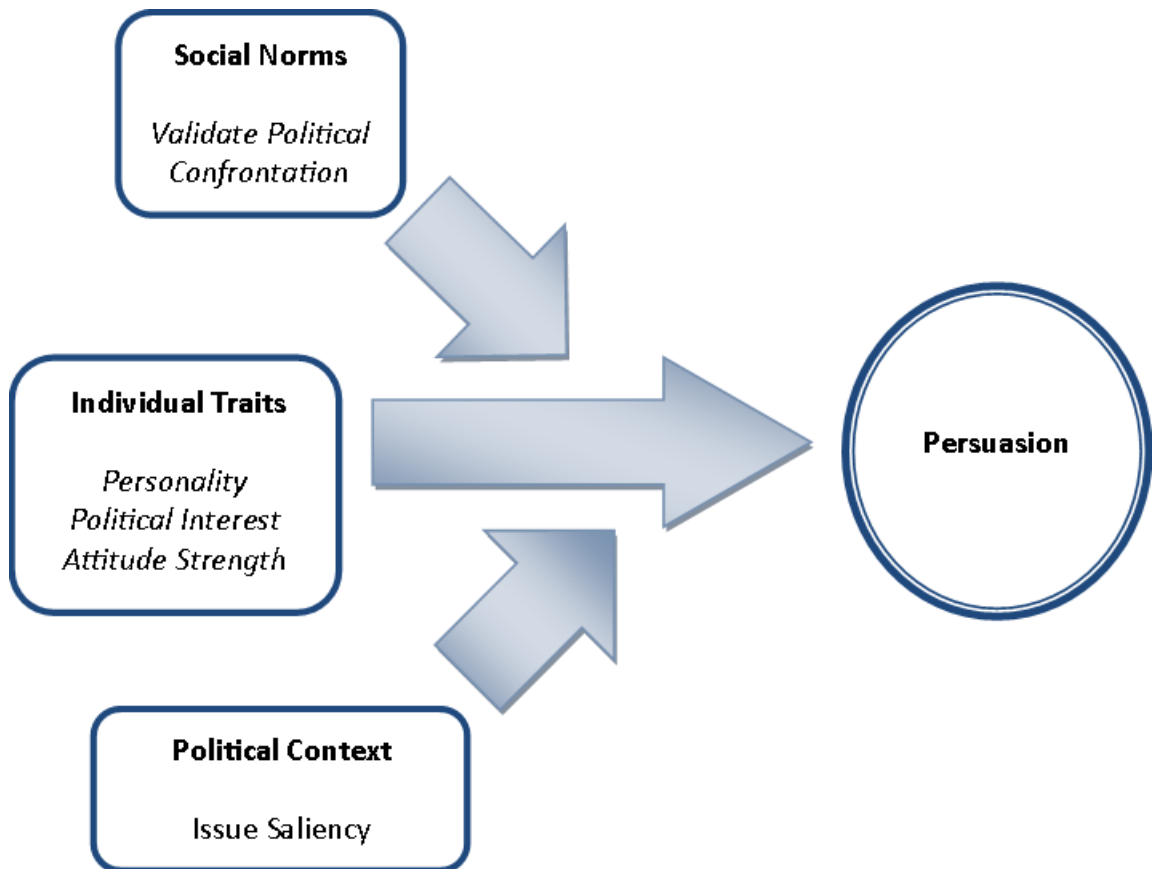
In this model, individual-level traits are the primary direct motivators of persuasive behavior, which is important because they are also the least fungible by those who may wish to inspire more advocates for their cause in the general public. However, this approach also recognizes that individuals do not exist in isolation, and a great deal about what they expect from and how they choose to engage with politics comes from the norms in their immediate social environment. Furthermore, we should not forget the *political* in political persuasion, and political context can provide the tipping factor in why similarly equipped and motivated people make different decisions about whether or not to engage with politics in a particular way at a given time.

Discursive Participation or Campaign Participation?

The broad features and flow of this model could reasonably be applied to the decision to participate in any political activity. In that case, what makes persuasion different? Why does it deserve specific attention? As they say, the devil is in the details. The main differences between political persuasion and other forms of behavior are the specific factors that motivate participation under each of these headings. Let me provide a few examples, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. At the individual level, socio-economic status and demographics (race, income, and education) have a consistent, demonstrated impact on other forms of campaign participation, but they do not have a strong relationship with attempts to persuade. Likewise, at the social level, the strong correlation between organizational membership and levels of both political talk and campaign participation does not extend to attempts to persuade others.

Throughout this chapter, a huge variety of potential influences on persuasive behavior are identified, and their relationship with persuasion is compared with insights from two existing

literatures: discursive (or deliberative) participation, and campaign participation. Persuasion has been included as one form of participation in scales of both discursive participation and campaign participation, and it is not immediately clear which model better describes the decision to talk to someone and try to show them why they should vote a particular way. This chapter contributes to the overall understanding of persuasive behavior specifically, and of political behavior more broadly, by systematically comparing the effects of theoretically important individual, social, and political factors on these different kinds of participation.

There are a select few studies that evaluate persuasion as an independent phenomenon, and a handful more that model the different forms of participation separately. The dearth of direct research on persuasion means that even where there are reported relationships, there has been little discussion and virtually no theory-building about attempts to persuade others as a distinctive form of political participation. Identifying the particular nature of influences on persuasive behavior, and how these compare with empirical and theoretical research on discursive participation and campaign participation is a significant step towards developing a correct theoretical understanding of what motivates interpersonal persuasion in the mass public.

Political persuasion is a way in which some people engage with the political system, and it varies in important ways from other forms of participation. The argument presented in later chapters as the data are reviewed is that persuasion is best understood as a form of discursive participation, but that scholarly work on discursive participation needs to pay more attention to the qualitative differences in approaches to political talk. Continuing to model persuasion as a form of campaign behavior in an undifferentiated scale obscures

important insights about the motivations and implications of persuasive behavior, campaign participation, and deliberation.

II. Defining Persuasion

Before moving on to review the expected influences on persuasive behavior, it is useful to spend some time establishing a clear conceptual and operational definition of persuasion. What does it mean to define persuasion as a form of political behavior? Intuitively, persuasion is about using argumentation or other communication to change the way that someone else thinks, believes, or behaves.[4] Therefore, engaging in persuasive behavior refers to the effort put forth by the message sender to change the attitudes or behaviors of their discussion partner(s).

Textbook definitions of persuasion (Gass and Seiter 2004; Perloff 2008) confirm that "pure" persuasion should preserve the free choice and awareness on the part of the person being persuaded (i.e., be non-coercive and non-subliminal), and involve language or other symbolic communications. Furthermore, in the political context, persuasion is a social phenomenon, and therefore requires interpersonal interactions, not just one person's internal self-dialogue. However, there are two additional possible characteristics of the definition of persuasion that require more discussion. Specifically, these are whether the message sender needs to have an explicit intent to persuade, and whether the persuasive attempt must be

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[4] Opinion change is often the focus of research about political persuasion, but modification of attitudes alone is rarely the sole objective of persuasive attempts. Policy changes do not occur without the motivation of some core group, be it a small number of elites or a large number of citizens, to action on behalf of the idea or attitude object. Voters must not only be persuaded to prefer a particular candidate, but also to show up on Election Day to cast their ballot. Yet persuasion is distinct from compliance-gaining or coercion, which refer to changes in behavior that may not be accompanied by changes in attitudes, and which undermine the agency of the target (see Perloff 2008).

successful (i.e., actually result in a changed attitude or behavior on the part of the message recipient). Attention to these two features helps to distinguish among existing research efforts that all use the terminology of "political persuasion" but in reality have very different research aims.

Does persuasion require that the message sender has an explicit "intent to persuade?" Should persuasion be defined by whether attitude change actually occurred? In practice, the answers to these questions are connected: approaches that emphasize identification of what factors successfully produce changes in the receiver's attitude are often indifferent to the message sender's intentions; meanwhile, approaches that emphasize intentionality often do not require success because that removes an important source of variation from the data. Most research in political science focuses on persuasion as an *outcome,* which means it emphasizes success but not intentionality. Research in this tradition aims to identify what characteristics of a sender, message, mode of communication, or message recipient improve the likelihood that someone will change their attitudes (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

However, this definition is not appropriate when the goal is to explain persuasion as a *process* or *behavior,* as is the case in the present endeavor. Instead of trying to determine the characteristics of a successful persuasive interaction, a process-based explanation of persuasion attempts to understand the goals, motivations, and approaches of the message sender, and does not limit the scope of research to only situations where the sender happens to be successful. Gass and Seiter (2004) recommend reserving the term "influence" for interactions that successfully but unintentionally result in attitude change, and the term

"persuasion" for the possibly unsuccessful but intentional attempts to affect attitudes (see also Thorson 2014). That terminology will be used here as well.

Identifying Persuasive Intent

Now that we have conceptually defined persuasive behavior as an intentional attempt to change others' attitudes, independent of the success of the attempt, how would one identify instances of persuasive behavior in practice? The relevant undertaking is to identify the intention of the message sender – was the sender actually trying to persuade someone else in a given interaction? One of the challenges in this research is that there is no clear way to validate persuasive participation, as can be done with other forms of political behavior (i.e. using voting records or donor rolls to validate voting and monetary contributions). In the absence of any validated measure of persuasive intent, there are three options: 1) ask the message sender, 2) ask the message recipient, and 3) make inferences as a third party observer. Each of these approaches has strengths and limitations, which will be discussed in turn.

The most obvious way to find out someone's intention is to ask them about it directly. However, decades of research have demonstrated that individuals do not have a great capacity for introspection and therefore a respondent's evaluation of their own motivational states may be unreliable (Nisbett and Wilson 1977; Roloff 1980; Smith 1989; but see Smith and Miller 1978 and White 1980 for critiques; and see Engelbert and Carruthers 2010 for a recent review of the introspection debate). On a more optimistic note, Nisbett and Wilson (1977, 256) report that knowledge of intention is one category of introspection in which individuals themselves may be more reliable judges than are outside observers. Roloff (1980) further theorizes that the communicator's level of awareness of communicating a

persuasive message may affect the quality of the presentation and resulting success, with more awareness and forethought leading to a higher quality presentation.[5]

The key point in this discussion is that although the debate in the literature raises some important questions about the reliability and validity of self-reported intentionality, they do not argue that individuals are *worse* at introspection or *less* aware of their own motivational states than outside observers. Relying only on situations in which the persuader is consciously aware of their intention to persuade minimizes type I errors (false positives) by only including instances where we can be completely sure individuals intended to persuade, even if it omits some cases in which people did not themselves realize or are unwilling to admit that what they were doing was persuasive in nature. There is still some room for errors due to social desirability bias encouraging respondents to over-report their political involvement, but without any way to externally validate persuasive intent, it is impossible to measure the size, or even direction, of this bias.[6]

By contrast, any measurement by outside observers, whether it is the discussion partner or the researcher, is going to include both type I and type II errors, as intentions may be inferred that did not exist, and intentional persuasion may not be recognized as such. The message recipient is a natural place to turn for identification of persuasion in an interaction about politics. Indeed, the recipient's attitudes have been the focus of nearly every study of persuasion to date. A very few surveys, some of which will be used in later chapters of this work, have also asked respondents to identify whether someone else had ever tried to

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[5] This is true up to a point; Roloff (1980) also suggests that over-practicing of a persuasive message, as may be seen in a door-to-door salesman, may actually decrease the spontaneity of the interaction and responsiveness to the situation, leading to a lower quality and less successful persuasive message.

[6] Overt persuasion may violate social norms and be undesirable in some social contexts. For example, see Gerber et al. (2012) and Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie (2014).

persuade them. In existing data, there is very little follow-up on such questions, and so the effect of a perceived attempt to persuade on the recipient can be tested to some extent (Thorson 2014), but very little inference about the persuader's characteristics or motivations can be made. Again, without some external way to validate persuasive intent, the reliability of asking the message recipient to infer persuasive intent cannot be directly tested.

Furthermore, it is not clear that message recipients would be exceptionally good at this task. Perhaps the most sophisticated persuaders will approach the conversation in such a nuanced manner that the receiver would not even realize the message was persuasive in nature, and the resulting data would therefore be unable to distinguish someone who is not persuading at all from the most advanced persuaders. Additionally, it is unlikely that many respondents would be able to clearly distinguish between whether someone else was trying to persuade them and whether they succeeded, especially in situations of ideological disagreement. Although it would be very enlightening to be able to compare the motivations reported by the persuader with the perceptions of the target, such data do not yet exist, and would be costly to gather as it would require a detailed questioning of both discussion partners about a specific interaction.

Third-party classification of persuasive intent still has some methodological barriers to overcome, but there are some promising avenues as research methods continue to advance. The sheer variety of persuasive tactics that an individual might employ make developing a reliable classification of markers of persuasive intent for use by human coders extremely difficult. Third-party human coders are also likely to be much less valid in their judgments than discussion partners, because they will be less sensitive to the contextual cues and interpersonal dynamics that serve as indicators of persuasive behavior. Recent exciting

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developments in machine learning and psychophysiology may help classify persuasive intent in an unbiased, third-party manner. Unfortunately, neither field is presently developed enough to provide a reliable classification of persuasive intent for these purposes.[7]

In summary, for the purposes of this research, persuasive intent is measured by asking individuals whether they have tried to persuade someone else. This is not expected to be a perfect measure, as it is not immediately apparent how willing or able individuals are to accurately describe their persuasive intent, or what considerations they have in mind as they formulate the response.[8] However, there is no evidence that asking a discussion partner to identify the persuader's intent, or observing interactions as a third party would produce a more accurate classification. In the absence of any reliable way to externally validate these responses, the best we can do is "take their word for it."

III. Individual Level Traits

The next step is to summarize and evaluate what we know from existing research about what makes some people try to persuade others when they talk about politics. The remainder

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[7] In particular, natural-language processing and other text-based analyses provide the possibility of using a computer algorithm to identify features of texts that are persuasive, and use those features to identify whether other texts are persuasive in nature (Biran et al. 2012; J. Young et al. 2011). However, this first requires a corpus of texts that are definitely persuasive in nature to train the algorithm. So either the researcher needs to have a specific set of texts that are indisputably persuasive on face value, in which case they are likely to be substantially different than the target data of possibly non-persuasive texts, or a set of texts in which the message sender has independently identified an intent to persuade, in which case we are back to self-reported intentionality. Psychophysiology is making progress in using physiological responses to a scenario to infer emotional or motivational states (see Blascovich et al. 2011). However, there is not yet research on the set of physiological markers that would identify "trying to persuade" as a particular state of mind or motivation, if they even exist. Third-party inference of intent is a promising future development, but is not yet a viable avenue of measurement

[8] For example, we do not know whether standard question wordings about persuasive behavior would cue respondents to think about and report online interactions, situations where their discussion partner asked for their opinion, or door-to-door canvassing.

of this chapter aims to identify the existing body of empirical knowledge and form hypotheses to fill in the gaps. There are very few direct studies of political persuasion; therefore, much of the following discussion relies on inferences from what we know from the literatures on campaign participation and deliberation. In particular, by comparing the facilitating factors of persuasion with other forms of participation, we can continue to build a theory and testable hypotheses about whether persuasion is better understood as a form of campaign participation or discursive participation. The following sections are organized according to the three types of influences described in the theoretical model, beginning with the effect of individual traits, moving to the social norms, and concluding with the contextual features of public discourse and elections.

Individual-level traits are a natural starting point, as I expect them to be the most influential predictors of persuasive behavior. Additionally, the majority of prior research on persuasion addresses individual-level factors, which makes this section the most concrete and empirically-grounded of the three. However, as tempting as it is to rely solely on the convenience and explanatory power of individual-level traits, it is also worth noting that because of the social nature of political discussion, relatively stable individual-level characteristics will never provide as complete of an explanation for attempts to persuade as they do for voting. For example, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) report that 42 percent of 1972 persuaders repeated the activity in 1976, which is half of the rate of repetition of voting for the same respondents. [9] In other words, "likely persuaders" appear to be a much less reliable group than "likely voters."

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[9] These high and low figures are reported for respondents to a special panel study conducted by ANES in 1972-1974-1976. By contrast, 80 percent of 1972 voters repeated the behavior in 1976.

Socio-Economic Status

Perhaps the most well-known explanation of political participation in America is demographics and socio-economic status. Socio-economic status encompasses or is correlated with a number of individual-level traits that condition the likelihood that someone will participate in politics. As a simple heuristic, political science generally demonstrates that white, well-educated, high-income men are the most likely to be politically active. Gender and race will be addressed separately in the following sections, but the expected influence of education and income will be explored here.

Beginning with education, Rosenstone and Hansen report that, in raw totals, individuals with a college degree attempt to persuade others at approximately twice the rate as individuals with only a high school diploma, and income has an almost linear positive relationship with rates of attempted persuasion (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). In a theme that will be returned to later, the ability to understand political facts and events, and the skills to confidently express your opinion and formulate a reasoned argument, are logically essential resources for political persuasion, and are skills developed through formal education (see Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Income is clearly tied to education, and may confer some important confidence associated with social status; but it is also not fundamentally necessary for attempting to persuade others to the same extent as, say, making a campaign donation.

Continuing to model persuasion as a form of campaign behavior makes assumptions about the importance of socio-economic status and resources, but research on discursive participation and deliberation indicates those assumptions should be re-considered in the case of political persuasion. Even as relevant as education and income are in predicting other

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forms of campaign behavior, and as *prima facie* related to persuasion as they seem, the

effects of both disappear entirely after including controls for political and social capital

(Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009, 56).[10] Indeed, Neblo et al. (2010) argue that

discursive participation may be attractive to precisely those segments of the population that

are least inclined to participate in more traditional ways, suggesting that discursive

participation draws on a different set of motivations and resources than other forms of

participation. The weak influences of income and education on persuasive behavior indicate

that persuasive behavior is more akin to discursive participation than campaign participation.

Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity may also influence rates of persuasion, both by introducing an

aggregate participation gap and by influencing norms of interaction between discussants. At

the macro-level, we know that whites are more likely than other racial minorities to

participate politically (Bowler and Segura 2012, chap. 6; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995,

chap. 8). Therefore, at first glance, we would expect whites to be most likely to try to

persuade others when they talk about politics. This is consistent with the pattern reported by

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993). However, the importance of race and ethnicity as an

explanation declines as additional controls for social and political capital are included, and

both Hansen (1997, 94) and Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009, 56) report very little

racial disparity in political persuasion. While race is highly related to the way individuals

engage with the political system (Tate 2004), once these social and psychological factors are

accounted for, race seems to have little direct effect on persuasive behavior.

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[10] Political capital includes cognitive resources like political interest, attention, and
information, and social capital refers to social and organizational connections. Both of these
are defined and addressed in more detail in following sections.

Part of the explanation for the unexpected irrelevance of race has to do with the micro-level structure of social networks. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague point out that "communication networks that include both whites and blacks are relatively rare phenomena." Furthermore, "given the low rates of interaction and communication across racial lines, it becomes mathematically inevitable that very few whites or blacks will encounter disagreement over racially structured opinions and preferences" (2004, 215). Because interpersonal discussion across racial lines is uncommon, most discussion happens within, rather than across, racial groups. Consequently, there is no reason for racial hierarchies to structure the nature of discourse. Although racial disparities continue to be a concern for more formal deliberative settings (Sanders 1997; I. M. Young 2000), in the context of informal interpersonal networks it is not expected to be a substantively important explanation for engagement in persuasive behavior. Application of a discursive perspective to the understanding of persuasive behavior helps make sense of important empirical differences between persuasion and other forms of campaign behavior.

Gender

There is a persistent gender gap in political persuasion (Atkeson and Rapoport 2003; Hansen 1997; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Even as women's participation rates have drawn even with, or even surpassed, men's in voting and other forms of civic engagement, women still lag behind men in a variety of authoritative or overtly political activities, including persuasion (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; see also Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014, chap. 2). Even as recently as 2012, the American National Election Studies reports a 4.4 percentage point gap in attempts to influence the votes of others. Gaps in women's discursive participation can

have significant implications for the content, process, and outcomes of public discourse (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). The persistence of this gender gap in persuasive behavior has led to a small body of research that aims to explain why women attempt to persuade others less frequently than men (Atkeson 2003; Cirksena 1996; Hansen 1997; Stokes-Brown and Neal 2008). Indeed, these studies are among the only research projects that directly address political persuasion as a distinct form of behavior, and, for the most part, they emphasize ways that persuasion is similar to other forms of campaign behaviors.

In an early attempt to explain the gender gap in political persuasion, Cirksena (1996) argues that disparities in news media use and education are the primary covariates that explain women's lower reported attempts to persuade.[11] However, as women's educational levels have surpassed men's, more recent studies have found that this kind of resource-based explanation is insufficient for explaining gaps in political or discursive participation. Structural causes of women's decreased political interest, confidence, and efficacy should be evaluated (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). Specifically, women in general are less likely to have confidence in themselves, which applies to both their perceived competence in political matters and their willingness to take on authoritative leadership roles by speaking in public, women generally dislike conflict and competition, and women are more sensitive to maintaining positive social bonds (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014, chap. 3). These gender role dynamics significantly impact women's participation in discursive interactions with men, and can be expected to contribute to the gender gap in persuasive participation.

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[11] Education and political interest will be addressed separately in following subsections.

Age

There is a demonstrated negative relationship between age and attempts to persuade others (Hansen 1997; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; McClurg 2004; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). This negative relationship does not persist when predicting other measures of discursive participation, such as face-to-face deliberation, or informal political discussion (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009). By contrast, age is positively related to voting, and other forms of campaign participation have curvilinear relationships that peak somewhat later than attempts to persuade (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 138).[12] Persuasion demonstrates a unique relationship with age, which is not replicated in other forms of discursive or campaign behavior.

Rates of persuasion have been relatively consistent for a number of decades (Putnam 2000), only rising in a significant way since 2000 (Thorson 2014), which indicates that generational replacement is not responsible for the observed decline in persuasion among older cohorts of respondents.[13] Rather, it appears that something about psychological or other life changes in the process of growing older decreases the individual-level motivation to try to persuade others. A decline in cognitive function among the elderly has been linked to decreased efforts to persuade others (Burden et al. n.d.), although this is unlikely to fully explain the negative relationship among middle-aged respondents. Another possibility is

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[12] According to Rosenstone and Hansen, attempts to persuade peak at 25-34 years of age, and decline steadily from that point. By contrast, donating to a campaign peaks at 55-64 years of age, before dropping off as people retire and disposable income declines

[13] However, there is some evidence of a very recent rise in persuasive behavior (Thorson 2014), which may be attributable to generational effects due to the rise in digital media. Younger people are more likely to discuss politics online (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009), which may lead to higher levels of persuasive behavior among younger populations in more recent cross-sections (but see the later section on persuasive behavior and digital media).

that, because older individuals are exposed to less disagreement (Mutz 2006), the prioritization of maintaining long-term relationships may generate more ideological similarity in discussion networks and increase aversion to disagreement. Further research is necessary in this area to fully identify the mechanisms responsible for this relationship.

Political Capital

Political capital is an important mediator in the relationship between socio-economic status and political participation, including attempts to persuade others. Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) use "political capital" as an umbrella term for a number of factors related to an individual's level of psychological and attitudinal engagement with the political system, including: political efficacy, political trust, social trust, political knowledge, political interest, political attention, ideological strength, partisan strength, and political tolerance. Ideological and partisan strength will be addressed in the subsection on opinion strength, and political tolerance will be discussed in the subsection on opinion diversity; the remaining constructs will be addressed in turn here.

Political Efficacy. Political efficacy refers to "citizens' perceptions of powerfulness (or powerlessness) in the political realm" (Morrell 2003, 589). It is often divided into internal and external efficacy, where internal efficacy refers to the belief in one's own capacity to be an effective political participant, and external efficacy refers to the belief that government actors and institutions respond to ordinary citizens. However, in spite of the identification of reliable scales of political efficacy more than 25 years ago (Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991), there is still substantial variation in the operationalization of both internal and external efficacy, with many studies using survey questions that do not fit

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well on either dimension, or failing to distinguish between the two (Morrell 2003). As such, existing findings regarding the role of efficacy in motivating political persuasion are mixed.

Cook, Jacobs, and Delli Carpini (2009) find no effect of efficacy on persuasion using a four item scale that did not differentiate between internal and external efficacy. Meanwhile, Hansen (1997) uses the more robust four-item scale of internal efficacy recommended by Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991), and finds a statistically significant positive relationship between internal efficacy (or political self-esteem, as she terms it), and attempts to persuade. However, she does not include a comparable measure of external efficacy. Internal efficacy has a documented and theoretically sound relationship with attempts to persuade others. To take the negative case, it is hard to imagine individuals who lack confidence in their own ability to understand complex political issues attempting to push their views on others.[14] External efficacy, by contrast, connects political activity to the instrumental purpose of affecting electoral outcomes or public policy. Even though this is clearly important for traditional campaign behaviors, such as donating money, working for a campaign, or even voting, the instrumental purpose of discursive or persuasive participation is much more tenuous, and has not yet been adequately empirically tested.

Political Trust. Political trust, or the belief that political actors and institutions are not corrupt and can be trusted to make decisions for the common good, has been declining for

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[14] Additionally, it is worth noting that most research to date is based on cross-sectional surveys, and so the results are correlational and unable to address the potential for endogeneity. Although political efficacy is usually treated as an explanatory variable in models of political participation, literature on deliberation also explores the possibility that discursive participation enhances an individual's political capital, including their sense of political efficacy (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Mutz 2008). While the effects of (undifferentiated) efficacy are small and inconsistent as both a cause and an effect of discursive participation, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) do present evidence that participation in formally organized face-to-face deliberation increases efficacy and political capital.

decades and appears to be perpetually at an historic low. There is an expectation that individuals who have more positive evaluations of politicians and political processes are less likely to become disaffected and more likely to expend their time and resources in support of political pursuits. However, although the decline in trust often mirrors a decline in overall political participation in America, there is no evidence that political trust is causally related to levels of political participation (Citrin 1974; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 150). Proponents of deliberation also anticipate that reasoned discussion of policy alternatives and recognition of competing interests will restore some faith in the legitimacy of decision-making and the merits of the political process (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009). Unfortunately, they are also disappointed, as political trust "shows no consistent relationship to our measures of discursive participation," including two measures of persuasion (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009, 95). The research indicates that political trust is unlikely to be related to engagement in persuasive behavior, whether considered as a campaign behavior or a form of discursive participation.

   Social Trust. By contrast, higher levels of social trust are correlated with increased attempts to persuade others (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009, 96), and there is some evidence that discursive participation increases levels of social trust (Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs 2007). Alongside organizational membership (which is discussed later in this chapter), social trust is one component of social capital and much of the literature on social trust concerns its interaction with organizational membership in the development of social capital. While the causal interactions between social trust and attempts to persuade others have not been directly examined, there is evidence that social trust is more a cause than a consequence of civic involvement (Jennings and Stoker 2004). Therefore, social trust may

reflect an individual's overall perception of their social environment in ways that have direct impacts on the decision to participate in inherently social political activities like discussion and persuasion.

Political Knowledge. The importance of political information for political activism is unquestioned; individuals who have more information about politics are more likely to participate in a variety of political activities (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, chap. 6). Because attempting to persuade others assumes that individuals are informed enough to craft arguments about the topic at hand, political knowledge is expected to be positively related to the decision to try to persuade others. Indeed, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009, 56) find a positive and statistically significant relationship between attempts to persuade others and political knowledge. Interestingly, knowledge is not a significant predictor of engagement in non-persuasive forms of discursive participation, which suggests that actively promoting a position requires a higher degree of information than other, non-persuasive forms of political conversation. Thorson (2014) demonstrates that individuals who try to persuade others have more knowledge of candidate's policy positions and can provide more arguments in support of their position. One explanation is that potential persuaders intentionally marshal additional arguments and information in preparation for their persuasive encounter.[15]

One important caveat regarding the role of political information is that the impact of information is highly contingent on confidence. For example, some of the gender gap in information derives from women providing more "Don't Know" answers, although they have

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[15] Individuals who are the target of persuasive efforts also have increased knowledge of opposing viewpoints, suggesting some room for information being an effect of persuasive encounters, and not just a cause (Thorson 2014).

similar levels of information when they are pushed to guess (Lizotte and Sidman 2009).

Even when controlling for information levels, women are less likely than men to express an

opinion about political issues (Atkeson and Rapoport 2003). The lack of confidence among

women has specific impacts on their willingness to advocate positions in face-to-face

deliberative settings (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). Although information has a

demonstrated positive impact on engagement in political persuasion, the effect of information

should be understood as contingent on the potential persuader having enough confidence in

their information and abilities to actively defend their position.

Political Interest and Attention. The idiosyncrasies of individual preferences are such that

some people find it personally rewarding to follow current events and keep up-to-date on

political developments, and politically interested people may derive social and psychological

benefits from talking about politics with their friends and family. To some extent,

explaining political participation is akin to describing participation in a hobby, as it is an

endeavor that people choose to undertake in their free time. Finding politics interesting and

enjoyable makes it more likely to occupy someone's free time and energy. Additionally,

news media consumption is positively related to participation in political conversation, even

accounting for political information (Kim, Wyatt, and Katz 1999; Koch 1994), suggesting

that, aside from innate interest, political news consumption stimulates discursive

participation.

More specifically, political interest and attention have been shown to have positive,

statistically significant relationships with attempts to persuade others (Jacobs, Cook, and

Delli Carpini 2009, 56), with Hansen's analysis even going so far as to say that interest is the

most important predictor of persuasive behavior (1997, 84). Using a slightly different

dependent variable (willingness to persuade a hypothetical "person you know" who holds a different opinion), Kim, Wyatt, and Katz (1999) also find effects for news media use, but find that the general effects of news consumption drop out once information and attention about the specific issue are accounted for. Their findings suggest that general attention and information may just be a proxy for how much an individual knows and cares about the particular issue at hand.

Personality

A growing body of recent research evaluates the effects of personality traits on the nature and level of participation in political conversation and other political activities. Personality may interact with social contexts in ways that alter the individual-level cost-benefit calculus to facilitate participation by some personality types and discourage it by others. In terms of the psychological stress incurred from the interpersonal interaction, individuals who have a personality that avoids interpersonal interaction and, especially, conflict, may find attempting to persuade others an uncomfortable, risky, and prohibitively costly endeavor. However, for people whose personality leads them to engage with others, seek out new experiences, and thrive on conflict, attempting to persuade others may actually provide them a sense of satisfaction and psychological benefit (Lyons et al. 2016).

Research on the Big 5 Personality traits demonstrates that personality does influence persuasive behavior. Specifically, openness to experience and extraversion are positively related to both discursive and campaign participation (Hibbing, Ritchie, and Anderson 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010).[16] In direct models of

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[16] See Mondak 2010, chap. 2, for a detailed description of the history and measurement of the Big Five traits.

attempts to persuade, conscientiousness and agreeableness have no statistically significant effect, while emotional stability has a small but statistically significant negative relationship with persuasive behavior (Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010). It is worth pointing out that these null findings for agreeableness and conscientiousness are interesting in their own right. An *a priori* expectation is that individuals who want to be agreeable and maintain harmony in their relationships would avoid trying to persuade others in much the same way that agreeable people avoid political discussion generally (Gerber et al. 2012) and avoid disagreement in political discussion more specifically (Lyons et al. 2016). However, that expectation does not hold up in the data, suggesting that persuasion is indeed a distinct phenomenon from general political discussion and disagreement.

There are two competing expectations for the effect of openness to experience on persuasive participation. First, Mondak (2010) sees openness to experience as having a generally politicizing effect on individual attitudes and behavior, which would suggest a stronger inclination to try to persuade others. This is consistent with evidence that those who are high in openness to experience discuss politics at higher rates (Hibbing, Ritchie, and Anderson 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008). On the other hand, if persuasion is driven primarily by intensely and unquestioningly held opinions about a few personally important topics, and a strong desire that others hold those opinions, too, then openness to experience should have an overall negative relationship with attempts to persuade. Mondak (2010, 158) and Mondak, et al. (2010, 10) find that openness to experience is positively related to attempts to influence the votes of others, which suggests that persuasive behavior draws on motivations of innate curiosity, or a desire for intellectual exchange, rather than advocating an entrenched belief system.

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Extraversion also has a consistently strong, positive relationship with general political participation. Mondak (2010) hypothesizes that extraversion is most important for forms of participation that require social interaction, especially with large groups (i.e. attending a meeting or rally). Since persuasion happens in the context of political discussion, and political discussion happens mostly among individuals who are already in someone's social network (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Mutz 2006), there is not a strong expectation that extraversion should increase attempts to persuade.[17] Extraversion does have a positive relationship with the size of discussion networks, and the rate of discussion with weak ties (Hibbing, Ritchie, and Anderson 2010), but it is not a significant predictor of overall frequency of political discussion or attempts to persuade others (Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010).

Opinion Strength

It seems uncontroversial to hypothesize that people who hold strong opinions are more likely to engage in persuasion than people who are ambivalent or otherwise uncertain. To take the negative case, individuals who are less sure or less extreme in their position on an issue will probably not feel compelled to convince others to share their perspective. This premise fits well with traditional models of campaign behavior, where the often unwritten assumption is that individuals become involved in politics because of the strength of their opinions, which are causally prior to their decision to be involved. However, opinion

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[17] Hibbing, Ritchie, and Anderson (2010) find that people high in extraversion are more likely to discuss politics outside of close personal relationships, i.e. among clubs, church, and work contacts.

strength is a very complex concept, and the particular measurement of attitude strength may lead to different conclusions.[18]

For example, following the same pattern as other political behaviors, stronger(weaker) party attachment is related to a higher(lower) rate of attempts to persuade others, with true independents being the least likely of all to try to persuade (Keith et al. 1992). Note that this applies to strength of partisanship, but not party identification – there is no expectation that Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, or liberals will attempt to persuade at any higher rate than any others. There is some doubt cast on this conclusion when we turn to the social influence literature, though. Although the direction of causality is unknown, Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague find that "strong partisanship is virtually coterminous with an absence of disagreement" (2004, 23). At least to the extent that disagreement is an important precondition for persuasive behavior (although see the subsection on disagreement later in this chapter), individuals with the strongest party attachments are also the least likely to have the opportunity to persuade.

Additionally, Munson's (2008) work on pro-life activists indicates that strength of opinion is an insufficient explanation for activism. In fact, nearly one-quarter of the interviewed pro-life activists had been pro-choice at some point, and their mobilization into pro-life causes preceded and encouraged the development of their pro-life attitudes. Indeed, helping participants to form, clarify, and articulate their opinions is one of the hypothesized benefits of deliberative encounters (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Mutz 2008).

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[18] A single question asking individuals whether they "care" about an issue or candidate is insufficient to allow precise measurement or clear interpretation of the resulting data. In fact, Krosnick et al. (1993) identify 10 separate attributes of attitudes related to attitude strength, and conclude that these attributes are not merely different ways of operationalizing one or even a few latent factors (see also Krosnick and Petty 1995).

Applied to persuasion, if trying to persuade others is a way in which some people habitually approach political conversation, attempts to persuade others may be the cause of attitude formation and crystallization, rather than the result.

It may also be the case that being an opinionated person about many things, not necessarily having strong opinions about a particular issue or ideology, would increase the propensity for persuasion. Opinionation (holding opinions about many things) seems to be a stable individual characteristic that represents a separate underlying construct from political interest and competence, although it is related to both (Krosnick and Milburn 1990). Krosnick and Milburn (1990) find gender, race, and life-cycle effects on political opinionation that persist even after accounting for interest and competence, indicating that some individuals will, by nature, express opinions about more public issues than others.

IV. Social Context

The social context in which people live has direct impacts on their beliefs and actions, and as Huckfeldt (2014) explains, the emphasis on individual characteristics at the expense of social contexts is a misleading approach to the study of political behavior. I next address some possible sources of social influence on individual persuasive behavior. There is no existing research that directly addresses the impact of social networks on attempts to persuade others, but there is a robust literature on social influence that can aid in the generation of plausible hypotheses and interesting research questions.

Social Norms about Political Conversation

Is it acceptable to talk about politics among your friends, family, and coworkers? How do you handle disagreements? Would overtly pressuring others to change their opinions strain

interpersonal relationships? In most cases, the specific rules and norms of political discussion are not well articulated, in large part because they vary based on the context of the discussion and the identities of the participants (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). Huckfeldt and Sprague summarize it by saying "the nature and content of social influence and social communication in election campaigns are fundamentally structured by the social context – by the social composition of the environments where individuals reside, work, go to church, and so on" (1995, 5).

Americans do seem to be aware of political discussion norms and are sensitive to their violations or pressures for conformity (Sinclair 2012). The eggshells upon which one must walk to successfully navigate political disagreement are perhaps one reason why politics sits alongside sex and religion as a taboo topic for mixed company. Gerber et al. (2012) experimentally determine that known disagreement is one reason why some people avoid talking about politics with their friends, and choose other less contentious topics instead. Norms of politeness in face-to-face conversation are extremely strong, and political conversation is expected to remain polite even in the face of strong disagreement, which sometimes leads to self-censoring or avoidance of political topics altogether (see Schmitt-Beck and Lup 2013). Experimental research demonstrates that violation of these norms, even in televised discourse between political elites, generates adverse physiological responses and correspondingly decreases trust in government among viewers (Mutz and Reeves 2005; see also Mutz 2007, 2016).

Some of the effect of social norms is likely to be mediated by individual-level traits. Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie (2014) explore conditional effects of positive and negative orientations toward conflict. Orientations toward conflict do not affect the frequency of

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discussion on their own, but individuals with positive orientations toward conflict gain more from disagreement in political discussion, as evidenced by higher levels of information, tolerance, and political participation.[19] Similarly, Mutz (2006) shows that people who avoid conflict but find themselves in politically heterogeneous discussion networks are less likely to discuss politics and participate politically. Additionally, one reason women are less assertive in political conversations is that they are more sensitive to social norms and have stronger motivations to maintain friendly interpersonal dynamics (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). Because they are so dependent on the particular contexts and personalities involved, it is difficult to formulate a general statement of the social norms that govern political conversations. However, the impact of social norms on the occurrence and nature of political discussion, including the decision to try to persuade, should not be discounted.

Direct Social Influence

Studies of voter turnout indicate that social influence can have a powerful impact on the decision to vote (Bond et al. 2012; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008). Indeed, campaign organizations often explicitly rely on the assumption that a higher rate of participation in someone's social network increases the social pressure for them to think or act similarly (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; McClurg 2004), and that campaign contacts from friends and neighbors are more effective than contacts from strangers in a distant phone bank (McKenna and Han 2014). Through informal social pressure, high levels of activism are expected to generate even more political activism. Likewise, theories of deliberative

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[19] Political participation in Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie (2014) is a 6 item scale, which, as is common in the literature, does not distinguish persuasion from other forms of behavior, so no direct insights can be gleaned here.

democracy that prioritize informal talk assume that more talking engenders more interest and information, which in turn produces more political talk with new discussion partners (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Walsh 2004). However, persuasion is an interaction in which both sender and receiver need to be involved and take on particular roles, which may impose some limits on participation rates. Voting, donating to campaigns, displaying signs, and talking about politics are all activities that have no theoretical ceiling. By contrast, if everyone is trying to persuade, who is being persuaded?

There is no existing research on the effect of having more persuaders in a social network on an individual's propensity to engage in attempts to persuade. There are two possible hypotheses for this effect. First, as already alluded to, it is possible that having more people in a network who try to persuade increases the perception of disagreement and increases ambivalence (Mutz 2006), leading some people to "bow out" of the conflict by choosing not to engage in persuasive behavior. Alternatively, more political persuasion may create social norms that are more tolerant of overt persuasion as an approach to political discussion, leading more people to advocate on behalf of their preferred positions in the same or subsequent political conversations.

Political Disagreement

Political disagreement is a central feature of the literature on social influence, although it is best understood as a middle step in a larger social and political process. Speaking generally, the theory is that social processes generate political discussion networks that have more or less heterogeneity, and the exposure to (or lack of) differing viewpoints has consequences for the opinions and behaviors of the discussants. Therefore, existing research

addresses heterogeneity in social networks as both an interesting outcome to be explained in its own right, and as an explanatory variable for other forms of behavior.

One important consideration is whether attempts to persuade others in political discussion are a significantly different phenomenon from political disagreement. Logically speaking, there is less room for persuasion if the message sender and receiver completely agree on an issue.[20] If persuasion is defined as an *outcome,* rather than a *behavior,* then any encounter between individuals holding differing opinions that results in some convergence of views by one or both discussion partners is evidence that persuasion occurred. Indeed, Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2004) conceptualize persuasion in this way in their extensive treatment of the phenomenon of political disagreement within discussion networks. In this perspective, the only difference between political disagreement and persuasion is whether the encounter actually resulted in changed opinions.[21]

However, if attempts to persuade are understood as an intentional behavior undertaken by some individuals in their political conversations, regardless of their success, then persuasive behavior remains a distinct concept from merely reducing disagreement in political conversations.[22] A strategic political persuader would be most likely to target discussants

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[20] Of course, persuasion can also change the intensity or certainty with which an opinion is held, or the receiver's actions based on that belief (i.e. persuading someone to show up to vote, if they already support your preferred candidate). In this case, attempts to persuade may occur even in situations where there is not strong attitudinal disagreement.

[21] Somewhat closer to the mark, Stoker and Jennings (2008) examine reported changes of opinion due to the influence of a spouse and find that influence and similarity between spouses increases over the length of the marriage. Note, however, that although they separate interpersonal influence from shared environmental factors, this approach still does not address the intentionality of the attempt to persuade.

[22] Following the recommendation of Gass and Seiter (2004), I prefer to use the term *persuasion* to identify intentional attempts to persuade, and the term *influence* for changes in opinion that resulted from a stimulus that did not specifically intend to persuade. This distinction is also used by Thorson (2014).

with whom they have the highest probability of success. Thus differences of opinions may provide more opportunity to persuade, but within the context of each conversation individuals may choose to just express their opinions, or to "agree to disagree" if they know efforts to persuade are likely to be fruitless. Conversely, when a point of disagreement is reached between individuals who usually agree and share a great deal of common ground, perhaps discussion partners are more willing and comfortable trying to demonstrate why their discussion partner is in the wrong on this one particular issue (Morey, Eveland, and Hutchens 2012). Most research focuses on strict agreement and disagreement, and ignores conversations with undecided or ambivalent discussants, who are most vulnerable to persuasion (Thorson 2014). Therefore, it is not really expected that the broad patterns of agreement and disagreement that so clearly shape the formation of political discussion networks and patterns of political discussion are going to have the same implications for efforts at political persuasion.

Additionally, the experience of disagreement may also directly impact rates of discussion and political participation, although the empirical evidence is mixed. Some work posits that individuals in situations of disagreement become more tolerant of opposing views and ambivalent about their own opinions, and this ambivalence leads them to withdraw from political activity (Mutz 2002, 2006; Valenzuela, Kim, and Gil de Zuniga 2012). However, these findings are disputed and several recent studies find no evidence that turnout and other participation rates are different between individuals exposed to political disagreement and those who are not, especially when controlling for orientations toward conflict (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Pattie and Johnston 2009; Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie 2014).

Scholars on both sides of the participation debate agree that exposure to disagreement in political conversation is associated with higher levels of ambivalence, political tolerance, and information about both their own and opposing positions, whether or not it depresses participation. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2004) report that discussants who interact with proponents of both Bush and Gore in the 2000 election were better able to identify the positive *and* negative aspects of both candidates (see also Thorson 2014). Consistent with the causal mechanism posited by Mutz (2002, 2006) they report that this exposure to diversity increases ambivalence and depresses interest in the election. Although Wojcieszak (2011) finds that this effect is conditional on attitude strength, individuals with moderate opinions report more ambivalence after exposure to disagreement, while individuals with strong opinions polarize further. Similarly, McClurg (2006) suggests that some of these conflicting results can be explained by accounting for expertise in the political networks, where additional expertise in the network improves levels of information and confidence, counteracting the ambivalence that derives from disagreement.

To date, there are no studies that specifically model the effects of disagreement or ambivalence on attempts to persuade others. The conflicted and conditional nature of the existing literature leads to two competing sets of expectations. First, more exposure to political disagreement increases opportunities for persuasive interactions, and, in turn, may increase an individual's store of political information to draw on in building their case (Lyons et al. 2016; Thorson 2014). For those who have positive orientations to conflict and already strong opinions, disagreement may provide a psychological benefit and additional attitude polarization that will encourage them to advocate their positions to others in political conversation. Conversely, exposure to political disagreement may result in more information

about both sides of an argument, thereby causing discussants to become ambivalent, increasing their tolerance for opposing viewpoints, and depressing motivation to persuade others.

Nature of Relationship

The nature of the relationship between political discussants may also have an impact on whether someone tries to persuade their discussion partner in a given political conversation.[23] Disagreement is most likely to be encountered in discussion networks that are large and low density, meaning there is little overlap between one person's discussion network and another's (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Valenzuela, Kim, and Gil de Zuniga 2012), because disagreement becomes more likely as relationship ties become weaker (Mutz 2006). However, the impact of network size and social organizations on diversity is contingent on the type of relationship, and workplace contacts are much more likely to bring political diversity to social networks than are friends, family, or fellow church members (Mutz 2006). Online, larger social networks and more interactions with weak ties are associated with higher levels of political participation, but only when there is a high level of agreement; exposure to disagreement depresses participation (Valenzuela, Kim, and Gil de Zuniga 2012). From this perspective, if disagreement is a precursor to attempts to persuade, then political persuasion would be most expected among those with whom the persuader has the weakest social ties (acquaintances, coworkers).

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[23] Existing research on the nature of the relationship between discussion partners focuses on the presence of disagreement, and does not extend to direct modeling of persuasive attempts. Therefore, to the extent that disagreement is related to or indicative of persuasive behavior, the following literature provides some guidance in how particular kinds of relationships might facilitate or inhibit persuasive behavior.

However, stronger relationships may be more resistant to the risks of political disagreement. Political discussion with a particular discussion partner becomes more frequent as relationship ties become stronger (Mutz 2006). Additionally, there is some risk to the harmony of the relationship associated with overt attempts to persuade. Morey, Eveland, and Hutchens (2012) demonstrate that although strong ties are the most likely to generate political agreement, the added safety of the relationship also makes them the setting in which individuals are most likely to discuss political disagreements. Applying this finding to persuasion, the frequency of discussion and resilience of relationship is expected to lead to political persuasion happening most often in closer interpersonal relationships (spouses, close friends, family members), even accounting for the less frequent occurrence of disagreement.

Organizational Membership

Membership in civic, professional, or hobby groups has been linked to traditional political participation in a variety of ways (Putnam 2000). Organizational membership gives people a chance to develop civic skills, and more opportunities to be invited to participate, either formally through grassroots mobilization by the organization or informally through contact with other group members (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).   In the case of political persuasion, one might expect that the larger and (possibly) more diverse social networks developed through organizational association would provide more opportunities to try to persuade others in the course of regular conversation. Furthermore, increased interaction with like-minded others through a social group could provide exposure to the arguments and discursive narratives that could be used to advocate the position in conversations outside the group. Although there is certainly some endogeneity, where the people who have time, resources, and motivation to be engaged in

civic or other organizations are also the ones who are likely to participate politically, group membership is certainly correlated with, and a plausible contributor to, levels of political activism.

However, the empirical evidence does not support that conclusion. Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009, 56) find that organizational membership is positively related to persuasion about an issue, but there is no statistically significant relationship with persuasion about vote choice during an election. Other work on discursive participation finds that while organizational membership does increase the size of discussion networks (Baybeck and Huckfeldt 2002), voluntary associations do not generate many named political discussants, and group membership does not substantially contribute to the level of opinion diversity in a discussion network (Mutz 2006). Even Putnam's (2000) seminal work on organizational membership and social capital does not address political discussion or attempts to persuade others, in large part because rates of both activities have been relatively constant for decades, and so do not correlate with trends in declining participation and social capital. If persuasion is an instrumental form of campaign behavior, then perhaps organization membership may contribute the skill-development and mobilization to increase attempts to persuade. However, if persuasion is a form of discursive behavior, organizational membership is unlikely to have a direct effect on attempts to persuade.

Mode of Communication

Deliberative theory prioritizes face-to-face interaction as the most likely to achieve the benefits promised by deliberation (Mendelberg 2002). However, the explosive rise in the use of social media for campaigning and political discussion has led to a great deal of research about the potential of online communication to revive deliberative democracy, and how the

nature of political participation and conversation changes when it occurs in a mediated, impersonal, or anonymous online forum (Baek, Wojcieszak, and Delli Carpini 2012; Sunstein 2001). Specifically, some have wondered if mediated or anonymous communication allows individuals to be more brazen in sharing or pushing strong opinions than they would otherwise be in person (Sunstein 2001). The strong impact of social norms on discursive behavior begs the question of whether less personal forms of communication (even phone or email, when compared with face-to-face talk) mitigates the pressure to be polite and non-confrontational, increasing overt attempts to persuade. Additionally, social media generates its own culture and set of conversational norms, which may have distinct impacts on political expression (Choi 2014; Gil de Zuniga, Jung, and Valenzuela 2012).

There is a contested relationship between online news acquisition, social media use, and political participation (Boulianne 2009), where the effects of internet use are shown to depend on the purpose behind the internet use (Gil de Zuniga, Jung, and Valenzuela 2012). Even controlling for off-line discussion frequency, political discussion on social media has a demonstrated positive effect on political participation (Hyun and Kim 2015).[24] Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) include internet discussion in their examination of discursive participation. However their 2003 data still include many economic and educational disparities in internet access and use that affect political participation rates using this medium.

One challenge in research on social media is that the lines between expressive and persuasive communication are increasingly blurred, and probably depend on the message

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[24] This study, conducted in South Korea, finds increases in a scale of political participation behaviors, which includes political persuasion (with no differentiation between on- and off-line persuasive efforts).

posters' perceptions of their intended audiences. The public nature of online participation means that a great deal of political commentary on social media may have textual characteristics of persuasive communication, except that it is not directed at persuading anyone in particular. Additionally, it is not clear whether the common question wording for persuasive attempts – "did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against a particular candidate"- would cue survey respondents to think about online participation.[25] Data that accurately conceptualize the nature of political participation online and its effect on discursive participation is needed to better formulate a clear expected relationship.

V. Political Context

In addition to the effects of individual traits and social norms, the broader political context may have an influence on whether people decide to engage in persuasive behavior. At the most basic level, the political context determines which issues or candidates are salient for discussion at any given time. Even the strongest opinions about a politician's fitness for office will not lead to an attempt to persuade if the politician is not running for office in the current election cycle. Likewise, the particular issues on the ballot in a referendum or proposition, or the issues that are salient due to current events or media coverage, are more likely to be discussed and persuaded about than issues that are less currently relevant. Individuals who are predisposed to political persuasion, and whose social norms allow for or

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[25] The wording "talk" implies a back-and-forth, verbal exchange, rather than a one-off expression of position (as is the norm on Twitter, or a blog post, for example). Also, the question encourages respondents to think about efforts directed at particular people, which may not apply to the amorphous, public audience of online posts.

encourage persuasive participation, may still be unlikely to persuade if the broader political context is incongruent with their issue or candidate priorities.

In addition to issue or candidate salience, an individual's perception of being in the majority opinion, the competitiveness of the election environment, and the type of election may have direct impacts on motivations to persuade.

Minority Status

Considering the transition from the immediate social context to the broader political context, there has been a great deal of work regarding the impact of perceptions of being in the minority or the majority opinion. Although the empirical evidence has been mixed, Noelle-Neumann's *Spiral of Silence* theory posits that the social pressures on individuals who feel like they are in the overwhelming minority will suppress their political voice (Noelle-Neumann 1974; and see Glynn, Hayes, and Shanahan 1997 for a meta-analysis of the follow-up studies). In what they claim to be a direct test of the effect of the *Spiral of Silence* on persuasive behavior, Kim, Wyatt, and Katz (1999) find that respondents who felt they were of the majority opinion were more likely to report a willingness to try to persuade a hypothetical person they knew who holds the opposite opinion. They found effects for perceptions of majority status at both the national level and in the immediate social network, although the national-level effects were much weaker than more local perceptions.

Electoral Competition

More competitive elections are expected to increase voter turnout and other forms of political interest and activism (Donovan 2007; Patterson and Caldeira 1983; Tolbert and Franko 2014). A highly competitive race receives more media coverage, lowering the

information costs, and increases the probable impact of individual votes, increasing the potential benefits. Thinking about non-voting activities, donating money or displaying a sign in a hotly contested election has much more potential impact than in an uncontested election, shifting the cost-benefit calculus in favor of more participation. When the outcome is less certain, media and citizens are likely to find the election more interesting, and therefore pay more attention. Given the empirically demonstrated connections between political interest, political attention, and attempts to persuade (Hansen 1997; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009), these mechanisms are expected to function for political persuasion in the same way as other forms of political behavior.

Research on the gender gap in persuasive behavior has examined a variety of specific ways in which campaigns may motivate women to be more interested and involved in the election. Hansen (1997) finds a significant spike in women's persuasive activity during the 1992 "Year of the Woman" campaign season, but only when there was a woman running for a prominent office on their ballot. Absent a high level of novelty and media attention, the gender gap returned in the 1994 election cycle. Atkeson (2003) extends this analysis and finds that it is not enough to have more female candidates on the ballot, female candidates must be competitive in the election to increase women's persuasive engagement. Alternatively, Stokes-Brown and Neal (2008) posit that women candidates who emphasize economic issues in the campaign increase women's rates of persuasive participation. Although these studies do not provide a straightforward prescription for how campaigns can improve women's persuasive participation, they do demonstrate that the campaign environment has the potential to activate latent interest in ways that motivate participation.

Campaign Mobilization

Another mechanism by which electoral competition can increase political activity, including persuasive behavior, is indirectly through the increased efforts of campaign organizations. Campaign mobilization has a demonstrated ability to induce citizens to vote and otherwise participate in politics (Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), and there is specific evidence that campaign contacts are related to a substantial increase in the propensity to try to persuade others (McClurg 2004, 419; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 171). This is especially significant because campaign contact does not increase the reported frequency of political discussion, but it does seem to qualitatively alter the content of the discussions that do happen. If this is true, and campaign contact is a causal force in motivating attempts to persuade, then further research into the most effective appeals (and targets of those appeals) is urgently needed.

However, there are a few caveats to keep in mind when interpreting the positive effect of campaign mobilization on persuasive participation. First, there is no existing academic evidence of the extent to which campaigns actively try to motivate supporters to persuade on their behalf, and it is a tenuous link to expect that all dinner-table or water-cooler attempts to persuade were caused by a direct request from a campaign organization. Some scholars have argued that mobilization is a less powerful explanation of increased turnout in competitive elections than the direct effects of media coverage and campaign interest described previously (Hogan 1999). Similarly, changes in mobilization efforts or effectiveness are unable to explain recent declines in political participation (Goldstein and Ridout 2002).[26]

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[26] Or increases in political persuasion, as the case may be?

Finally, campaigns are known to target those who are already most likely to participate, so this may be a spurious relationship.

Type of Election

Like all forms of participation, aggregate rates of persuasion are generally lower in midterm elections than presidential elections (Thorson 2014, 355). But even beyond aggregate differences that can be explained by variations in levels of attention, interest, and information, is it possible that the identities and motivations of persuaders for, say, a local school bond election are different from those for a presidential candidate. There are two dimensions of context that may affect rates of persuasion: issues versus candidates, and local versus national elections.

Issue v. Candidate: Very few published measures of persuasion distinguish between different kinds of content of the persuasive effort. In a rare exception, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) differentiate between trying to persuade someone about an issue, and trying to persuade someone about whom to vote for. Forty-seven percent of respondents reported trying to persuade someone about an issue, and 31 percent reporting trying to persuade about a candidate.[27] For the most part, the direction and significance of demographic, social capital, and political capital predictors is the same for issue and candidate persuasion. As already noted, organizational membership is positively associated

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[27] There are some methodological caveats to note about the persuasion rates reported by Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini. The survey was conducted in 2003, and asked retrospectively about 2002 (a midterm election), so the rate of persuasion about a candidate is comparable to what is found in ANES for the 2002 midterm election (Thorson 2014). In a deviation from any other published measure of persuasion, the issue persuasion question asks whether the respondent "tried to persuade someone about your view on a political issue," without any reference to campaigns or elections. The acontextual nature of the question may be responsible for the much higher response rate for issue persuasion.

with non-electoral issue persuasion but not with candidate persuasion, while candidate persuasion has a negative relationship with political trust that is not present in issue persuasion. Interestingly, their model of issue persuasion does not present a gender gap, although the gender gap in candidate persuasion is only marginally statistically significant once controls for political capital are included. These differences are not explained in Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini's work, and require further testing to corroborate and fit to a theoretical model; however, it is at least some empirical evidence that the difference between issue and candidate persuasion deserves further explanation.

Local v. National: Generally speaking, national level elections inspire more attention and participation than local elections, perhaps because of the increased media coverage which reduces information costs. To the extent that political persuasion follows the trends of other forms of political behavior, we expect more persuasion about national than local elections in general. However, issue activists, who are involved in particular community causes or who care passionately about a particular issue, may be able to have more impact at the local level, and so would be more likely to try to persuade others about their causes on that level. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect some differential interactions where individuals who are motivated by their desire to influence a particular cause may be drawn more towards local elections, whereas political generalists may be drawn to national elections in which there is more exposure and interest from others in their discussion networks.

VI: Summary

The previous sections have reviewed the findings of the empirical literature, and the hypothesized expectations where empirical results are not yet available, for dozens of factors that might influence someone's decision to try to persuade others about politics. It is now

useful to take a step back and use broader strokes to identify a set of variables and expected relationships that distinguish discursive participation from campaign participation. Many of these differences will be tested in later sections as a way of determining the ways in which persuasive behavior is better understood as a form of discursive participation or campaign participation.

As both discursive participation and campaign participation are dimensions of a broader concept of general political participation, there are a number of individual-level traits that inspire participation, but which are not useful for distinguishing between the two dimensions. Most of these non-distinguishing variables are measures of political capital, and emphasize an individual's non-participatory engagement in politics. The expected relationships between these variables and discursive or campaign participation are the same, and persuasion follows the same pattern. These variables are undeniably important facilitators of persuasive behavior, and will often be included in the empirical models that follow. However, they are unable to directly address the theoretical question at the heart of this work. These variables are listed below, with the demonstrated relationship in parentheses (positive "+", negative "-", or no relationship "0"). They are also subdivided by whether existing research has already demonstrated the particular relationship with persuasive behavior.

Empirically Demonstrated Non-Distinguishing Influences on Persuasive Behavior:

Self-reported Interest in Campaigns (+)
Attention to Campaigns (+)
Social Trust (+)
Political Trust (0)
Political Knowledge (+)
Openness to Experience (+)
Gender (-)

Hypothesized Non-Distinguishing Influences on Persuasive Behavior:

Opinionation (+)
Salience of Isssue/Candidate (+)
Conflict Avoidance (-)

There also exist a number of characteristics of individuals, social contexts, and political contexts that have different effects (demonstrated or hypothesized) for discursive participation and campaign participation and so can be used to distinguish between the two. Campaign participation is an instrumental behavior that is expected to be motivated by external forces and goals, whereas discursive participation is more motivated by internal dispositions and the dynamics of one's social environment. The list below enumerates some variables that are expected to distinguish between discursive or campaign motivations for persuasive behavior. Each listed variable represents an expected departure from the external and instrumental motivations of campaign participation, and therefore identifies ways in which persuasion is expected to be more akin to discursive participation.

Empirically Demonstrated Distinguishing Influences on Persuasive Behavior:

Age (-)
Race (0)
Income (0)
Education (0)
Internal Efficacy (+)
Extraversion (0)
Organizational Membership (0)
Perception of Being in the Minority (-)
Issue Persuasion (rather than Candidate) (+)

Hypothesized Distinguishing Influences on Persuasion:

Social Norms of Politeness (-)
Exposure to Disagreement (+)
Closeness of Relationship (+)
Online Communication (?)
Campaign Mobilization (0, although + in some research)
Competitiveness of Election (+)

At the individual level, the biggest difference is the expected role of traditional socio-economic resources in facilitating participation. Education, income, age, and race all have well-established positive relationships with voting or other forms of campaign participation. However, the hope of discursive participation hinges on overcoming these resource-based barriers. In previous work, education, income, and race have all been shown to have little relationship with persuasive participation, and age is negatively related to persuasion (as opposed to the positive relationship found with voting and many forms of campaign participation.)

To the extent that political persuasion is not expected to be an instrumental campaign activity, external efficacy is hypothesized to have a positive relationship with campaign participation, but not necessarily deliberative or persuasive participation. Instead, previous research has demonstrated a strong positive effect of internal efficacy on persuasion, which is much more tenuously related to campaign participation. Additionally, extraverted personalities have been shown to be more active political participations, but extraversion does not increase frequency of discussion or attempts to persuade others. Both of these factors indicate that persuasion is located more in an internal or interpersonal sphere, lacking the strong connection to the broader political context.

There is less existing research about social context, so the expectations in this area are more open-ended. There is demonstrated evidence that having a larger social network or being a member of more organizations does not increase the likelihood of engaging in persuasive behavior, although it does increase the likelihood of campaign participation. Other features of the social context are expected to make people more comfortable with the act of persuasion, specifically: exposure to disagreement, having a close relationship with the

discussion partner, and usually agreeing with the discussion partner. These factors decrease the risk associated with violating social norms and straining interpersonal relationships, whereas little exposure to disagreement or strong norms of politeness may increase the perceived costs.

Finally, the political context may interact with individual traits in a unique way that facilitates or inhibits persuasive behavior. Although campaign mobilization has been shown to be positively correlated with persuasive behavior, I question the extent to which contact by a campaign is causally connected to persuasive participation. The particular nature of the election, including the competitiveness or perception of being on the winning side, are expected to have less influence on persuasive behavior than they do on other forms of campaign participation.

In the following chapters, I will examine many of these relationships using a variety of survey data sources. This will allow me to replicate and elaborate on relationships that have already been demonstrated in previous research, as well as testing new hypotheses that help build a general theory of persuasive participation. I begin in Chapter 3 by statistically evaluating the similarities and differences that persuasive behavior shares with both campaign participation and discursive participation. I look at a wide range of possible predictors of persuasive behavior and identify which are the most important predictors of persuasion and how those compare with other forms of participation. In Chapter 4, I use panel data to explore persuasive behavior as it actually occurs, with particular emphasis on the social and temporal aspects of persuasion. Finally, in Chapter 5, I explore the dynamics of persuasive behavior throughout the course of a particular election cycle and explore the motivations of persuasion in more depth. Using this variety of approaches, I am able to

address to some extent all but one of the hypothesized relationships (I do not have data on

conflict avoidance), and replicate all but two of the previously demonstrated empirical results

(except extraversion and perception of holding a minority opinion).

Chapter 3: Political Persuasion and Dimensions of Political Behavior

I. Introduction

Democracy is expected to be a system of government in which government actions reflect the will of the people. The most direct voice that American citizens have in their own governance is voting to select the individuals who will represent their interests in decision-making bodies. However, voting is not the only way that people voice their preferences or affect governmental policy-making, and scholars of political participation have identified a wide array of ways in which Americans are active in politics and other civic affairs.

Not all forms of participation in the public sphere have the same goals or are inspired by the same motivations. While some activities might affect who gets elected, others try to directly influence public policy, and still others might try to resolve community problems without involving official government institutions. Indeed, scholars have discussed various "dimensions" of political participation for decades, with the expectation that behaviors that have similar motivations or intentions can be described as clustering on one dimension, and that different dimensions are distinct from each other in a meaningful way (Claggett and Pollock 2006; Verba and Nie 1972; Zukin et al. 2006).

In current empirical research, attempts to persuade others are associated with two distinct types of political participation. Most often, persuasive behavior is included as one form of campaign, or electoral, participation, which is composed of behaviors aimed directly at aiding specific candidates or causes in securing a victory during an election (Verba and Nie 1972; Zukin et al. 2006). Other forms of campaign participation often include displaying a sign or bumper sticker, donating money, working for a campaign, or attending a meeting or rally. Along with attempts at persuasion, these activities are commonly used to form a scale

of political participation that is used in a variety of settings as a control for an individual's level of political activism.

Increased recent attention to models of deliberative democracy underscores the importance of everyday political conversation as a crucial mechanism by which citizens develop and voice their opinions and suggests another role for attempts to persuade others in the democratic process. Talking about politics is often used as a measure of non-participatory engagement in politics, akin to reported political interest or attention to political news. However, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009; see also Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004) describe a discursive dimension to political participation, in which they argue that talking about politics is a form of political participation in and of itself, and that although it usually does not directly impact policy outcomes, discursive participation has important implications for our understanding of political participation, public opinion, and democratic governance. Discursive participation might include political conversation in formally organized events, such as deliberative polls (Fishkin 1995), issue forums (Gastil 2000), or town hall meetings (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014; Mansbridge 1983). More often, though, discursive participation is informal, "everyday talk" about politics that occurs within existing social networks (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Mutz 2006; Walsh 2004). In their empirical analysis, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini include attempts to persuade others as a form of discursive participation, alongside talking about politics, online political communication, and attendance at formal deliberative meetings.

Understanding persuasion as a form of discursive participation in some ways distances it from actual political processes and outcomes. If persuasion is a form of campaign participation, then it is best understood as an instrumental activity undertaken with an

intention to influence electoral outcomes (i.e. getting more people to vote in your preferred way so that your candidate will win). However, when understood as a form of discursive participation, an attempt to persuade others represents one way in which some individuals process their own political beliefs, psychologically engage with the political system, and navigate the social norms of their discussion environments. Therefore, the motivations, costs, and benefits of persuasion are expected to align more closely with those of deliberation or discursive participation than those of campaign participation.[28]

The first step in better understanding attempts to persuade from the perspective of discursive participation is to examine whether persuasion does indeed share more in common with discursive participation than other forms of political or campaign participation. The following sections present two empirical approaches to examining the relationship between attempts to persuade and other forms of political behavior. First, I use factor analysis to examine the relationships between attempts to persuade and other forms of campaign behavior and discursive participation. Second, I use machine learning techniques to identify the most important statistical predictors of many forms of behavior, including attempts to persuade others. These most important predictors can then be compared across behaviors to identify the aggregate similarities and differences among the behaviors based on what is correlated with engagement in each activity. This is not a causal argument attempting to explain what motivates people to engage in persuasion or discursive participation. Rather, the use of non-parametric machine learning provides a diagnostic approach to describing how

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[28] For example, see Thorson's (2014) work on how both the attempt to persuade and having someone else attempt to persuade you increase information about both sides of a political issue, which is one of the hypothesized benefits of deliberation (see Mendelberg 2002).

the dimensionality and correlates of discursive participation differ from other forms of political behavior.

The contributions of this work are threefold. First, I provide evidence for a discursive dimension to political participation, and put it in context of other established dimensions. Second, I examine the relationship of attempts to persuade others to both the campaign and discursive dimensions of participation, and find that attempts to persuade are distinct from other forms of campaign participation in a number of ways. Third, this effort represents a methodological contribution in the application of machine learning methods to substantive political science inquiry. Although these machine learning techniques are not designed to directly test a specific hypothesis, the analysis of the statistical relationships between variables in this deductive way can still provide valuable evidence that speaks directly to important and testable theoretical questions.

II. Dimensions of Political Behavior: Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a traditional tool for identifying how different forms of political participation "fit" together. Factor analysis uses the correlations between item responses to identify the structure of latent, unobservable "factors" that are reflected in the observed data. In terms of political behavior, factor analysis has been used to identify which of many possible civic or political acts demonstrate the same kind of public engagement. In prior work, political persuasion has always loaded most strongly on the factor containing other forms of campaign behavior, such as displaying a sign, donating money to a campaign, or volunteering for a party or campaign organization.

However, because factor analysis identifies latent dimensions based on the interrelationships between the various variables that are included in the analysis, adding

similar items has the potential to change the resulting factor structure. Factor analysis of campaign behaviors is quite well-established in the political science literature, but the most prominent works do not include any other form of discursive participation, and have not identified a particular discursive dimension of political behavior.[29] Attempts at persuasion load on a campaign participation dimension because that is the best fit *of the items that are included,* but when at least two other discussion-based measures are included in the factor analysis, a discursive dimension to participation emerges, and persuasion forms a part of that dimension (Claggett and Pollock 2006). If persuasive behavior is indeed more related to discursive participation than campaign participation, the inclusion of other forms of discursive participation will cause persuasive behavior to shift to the discursive dimension, consistent with the results of Claggett and Pollock (2006).

Verba and Nie (1972, chap. 4) provide a seminal factor analysis of modes of political participation, where they identify three empirical clusters in political participation: Campaigning, Voting, and Communal Acts.[30] In more recent years, however, political scientists have pushed to expand the definition of what constitutes political participation. Zukin et al. (2006) convened focus groups to build a comprehensive scale of the ways in which people are involved in public or community affairs. They identify a 19-item scale of political participation, which they group into three dimensions of participation: Civic, Electoral, and Political Voice. The results of both Verba and Nie's and Zukin et al.'s factor

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[29] Political discussion with friends and family members is frequently asked about in political surveys, but it has been viewed as a form of engagement, akin to reported political interest or levels of news consumption, rather than active participation, and so is not included in the factor analysis (see footnote 4 of chapter 3 in Zukin et al. 2006).

[30] Verba and Nie also identify one non-political dimension, which is based on individuals who contact elected officials for resolution to a personal, specific problem, rather than to address a larger socio-political issue. This non-political dimension is omitted from the present discussion.

analyses are reproduced in Columns 1 and 2 of Table 3.1, where the dimension is listed in italics in each cell, followed by the reported factor loading for each item on that dimension.[31] To the extent that there are repeated indicators, and in spite of different naming conventions, the factor structure is highly consistent across these studies.[32] These established analyses are then directly compared with original analysis that includes additional measures of discursive participation and therefore tests for the possibility of a discursive dimension.

Factor Analysis Data and Methods

The 2012 iteration of the American National Election Studies Time Series Study (2012 ANES)[33] includes a broad range of political participation questions, which allows for an almost direct replication of the work by Zukin et al. (2006).[34] The third column of Table 3.1 provides a replication of Zukin et al.'s (2006) work using the 2012 ANES data, with a few caveats. First, it should be noted that, prior to rotation, the items all load heavily onto a single factor. This is expected, as all of the items are intended to measure the level of civic

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[31] While there is no definitive cut point for the minimum acceptable factor loading, a loading of at least .4 (or occasionally .3) is usually considered sufficient for exploratory factor analysis.

[32] One notable difference is that the use of multiple items to identify voting behavior leads to the creation of a separate voting factor in Verba and Nie's formulation that is absent in Zukin et al.'s approach, where voting instead loads on their Electoral dimension. Additionally, Verba and Nie did not include any of the measures that make up Zukin et al.'s expressive dimension of Political Voice, so that is a new addition.

[33] The 2012 ANES is a survey of eligible voters in the United States conducted around the 2012 presidential election, with interviews taking place from September 2012 through January 2013. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2,054 respondents in two waves (one pre-election, one post-election); online surveys were completed by 3,860 respondents in four shorter waves (two pre-election, two post-election). The majority of questions were the same across interview modes.

A full description of the study is available at www.electionstudies.org. The data used in this analysis is the July 1, 2013 update, downloaded from www.sda.berkeley.edu.

[34] The question wording for both Zukin et al. (who use an original survey) and the present study, along with descriptive statistics for the ANES data, can be found in Appendix 3A.

and political activity in which an individual engages. However, the high level of inter-

correlation between the items in the various factors demonstrates that the factors are not

independent, as is assumed when orthogonal rotations are conducted. For this reason, an

oblique rotation (*promax*) is used in the following analysis.[35] Additionally, because all items

in the participation inventory are binary, a factor analysis based on Pearson's correlation is

inappropriate. Instead, I calculate the polychoric correlations between items, and use this

correlation matrix, rather than the raw individual-level data, to conduct the factor analysis.[36]

In spite of a different data sample, some differences in question wording, and some

adjustments in the specific methodological approach, the replication in Table 3.1 corresponds

admirably with the results reported by Zukin et al. Notably, in all of the first three columns,

attempts to persuade others scale with other forms of electoral or campaign behavior.

The final column of Table 3.1 provides results that test for the existence of a discursive

participation dimension, and whether attempts to persuade fit better with campaign behavior

or discursive participation.[37] Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) provide the most

comprehensive exploration of the form and nature of discursive participation conducted to

date. They identify six different types of discursive participation: talking about politics; one-

to-one online political discussions; discussions in online forums or groups; formal or

informal meetings about community issues; attempts to persuade about a stance on an issue;

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[35] This is consistent with Verba and Nie's recommendation to use an oblique rotation (*binormanin*), although the specific rotation method is different. This is a divergence from Zukin et al. who use an orthogonal rotation (*varimax*). However, to the extent that the replication is consistent with the findings of Zukin et al., the details of the rotation selected do not appear to make a substantively important difference. Additionally, a number of additional rotations were tested for the analysis in Column 4 (including *varimax*), and the *promax* rotation displayed provides the most simplified factor structure.

[36] See http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/faq/efa_categorical.htm for a description of this method, and example code for Stata.

[37] The full results of this factor analysis are available in Appendix 3B.

and attempts to persuade about a vote choice. Of these, the 2012 ANES data allow for the inclusion of four relatively comparable discursive participation items: talking about politics; sending a political message on Facebook or Twitter; attendance at a meeting about a school or community problem; and attempts to persuade about a vote choice.[38]

Table 3.1: Factor Analysis of Political Participation

	(1) Verba & Nie	(2) Zukin et al.	(3) Replication	(4) Extension
Persuade others how to vote	*Campaign* .54	*Electoral* .55	*Electoral* .46	*Discursive* .49
Work for Party / Candidate	*Campaign* .79	*Electoral* .47	*Electoral* .79	*Electoral* .89
Attend Political Meeting / Rally	*Campaign* .79			*Electoral* .84
Contribute Money to Party/Candidate	*Campaign* .74	*Electoral* .62	*Electoral* .59	*Electoral* .55
Membership in Political Club	*Campaign* .80			
Display Campaign buttons, stickers, etc.		*Electoral* .73	*Electoral* .68	*Electoral* .64
Regularly vote in elections (*Only Local Elections in Col. 1*)	*Voting* .81	*Electoral* .55		
Presidential Vote - Most Recent	*Voting* .91		*Voting* .88	*Voting* .85
Presidential Vote - Prior Election	*Voting* .90		*Voting* .91	*Voting* .91
Work with others to solve a local problem	*Cooperative* .75	*Civic* .69	*Civic* .62	*Civic* .74
Form a group to work on local problems	*Cooperative* .77			
Active membership in community problem-solving organizations	*Cooperative* .56	*Civic* .65	*Civic* .63	*Civic* .65
Volunteer for a nonpolitical organization		*Civic* .75	*Civic* .85	*Civic* .81
Raise money for charity		*Civic* .48	*Civic* .46	*Civic* .43
Contact local leaders	*Cooperative* .60			
Contact state or national leaders	*Cooperative* .44			
Attend meeting on school/community issue				*Civic* .70
Contact elected official		*Voice* .47	*Voice* .65	*Voice* .63

[38] Question wording and descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix 3A.

Protest	Voice .60	Voice .60	Voice .45
Boycott	Voice .56		
Sign a written petition (*Includes Online Petition in Col. 4*)	Voice .52	Voice .50	Voice .41
Call into radio talk show	Voice .50	Voice .64	Voice .51
Contact print media	Voice .42	Voice .77	Voice .71
Door-to-door canvass	Voice .33		
Discuss politics with family / friends			Discursive .62
Send political message via social media			Discursive .66

Cells contain the dimension label in italics, followed by the reported factor loading.
Sources: Col. 1 – Verba and Nie (1972); Col. 2 – Zukin et al. (2006);
Cols. 3 & 4 – Original replication using the 2012 American National Election Studies.

Factor Analysis Results

The results in the final column of Table 3.1 support the expectation that a discursive dimension to political behavior emerges when additional measures of discursive participation are included in the factor analysis. The deliberative participation dimension includes talking about politics with friends and family members, sending a political message on a social networking site, and attempting to persuade others. The inclusion of a form of online communication in a discursive dimension of political participation is encouraging for those exploring the possibility of online communication for enhancing deliberative democracy.[39] However, the formal deliberative element of the discursive activities – attendance at a meeting about a school or community issue – was more strongly related to civic participation than informal discursive participation.[40] In light of this evidence that attending a meeting

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[39] See the volume edited by Davies and Gangadharan (2009).
[40] The survey question does not determine whether those who attended actually spoke at the meeting or participated in any other way, which might account for some of the disparity.

bears more in common with other forms of problem-oriented civic participation than discussion with friends and family, deliberative theory may need to rethink the relationship between everyday talk and the kind of deliberative participation that happens in more formally organized settings.

Additionally, persuasion loads more strongly on the deliberative factor than on the campaign factor. Although attempts to persuade loaded on the campaign dimension in all previous models (columns 1 – 3), the inclusion of other discursive activities leads to a switch for political persuasion, while the remaining items are unaffected. The factor loading of political persuasion on the campaign dimension drops from .46 (column 3) to .28 (full results in Appendix 3B) once other items in a discursive dimension are included. Furthermore, the new loading on the discursive dimension is .49, which represents a substantially stronger relationship than the campaign dimension loading of .28. However, there is often not a clear line between various dimensions of political behavior (see Zukin et al. 2006), and political persuasion is admittedly the weakest item in the discursive participation factor. It would be premature to completely disconnect persuasion from campaign behaviors. However, the shift of political persuasion to the discursive dimension also provides significant evidence that the unquestioning inclusion of attempts to persuade in scales of campaign participation is inappropriate.

One potential concern is that because persuading necessarily requires talking about politics the two items might be so highly correlated that they may load on the same factor even if they do not share common underlying characteristics. For example, approximately half of the people who report discussing politics say they tried to persuade someone else, but

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However, this question is directly comparable to that used by Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) to identify formal deliberative participation.

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only a very small number (4% of respondents) report trying to persuade someone and say

they do not talk about politics. It is possible that persuaders being a direct subset of

discussants might lead to an inordinately strong relationship between these variables that

could adversely affect the factor structure. However, there is a very similar relationship

between voting and persuading, where approximately half of reported voters also tried to

persuade someone else, and only 4% of respondents who tried to persuade say they did not

vote. To the extent that both discussion and voting have a similar descriptive relationship

with persuasion but still load on different factors, there is added confidence that the factor

analysis is identifying a substantive difference between these two types of participation.[41]

III. Most Important Predictors of Persuasion: Machine Learning

Factor analysis identifies commonalities between variables by looking at the statistical

relationships among a number of (in this case) dependent variables, without reference to

possible independent variables. However, this is not the only way to examine the similarities

and differences that characterize a set of outcome variables. In this section, I use two

machine learning approaches in an effort to reinforce and add conceptual depth to the results

of the factor analysis. These techniques look at the statistical relationships between the

dependent variables and a wide variety of predictor variables, and comparison of the results

across the various dependent variables allows for further description of their similarities and

differences. Because machine learning is, by nature, atheoretical and designed to generate

predictions based on as few starting assumptions as possible and without concern for

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[41] Additionally, the Pearson correlation between discussion and persuasion is .33. While this is among the highest correlations in the data, it is within a normal range for items in the same factor of this data and not high enough to elicit concern. A correlation matrix for all campaign and discursive participation variables is available in Appendix 3C.

interpretability, some have questioned its use in the social sciences. However, political scientists are increasingly recognizing the potential for machine learning in providing empirical answers to long-standing theory-based questions (Muchlinski et al. 2016). The following sections represent one effort to incorporate the descriptive evidence achieved by the application of machine learning into substantive political science research. The consistency in the results of factor analysis and machine learning methods provides additional confidence in the overall conclusions about the relationship of political persuasion to dimensions of campaign participation and discursive participation.

Methods Overview

As described in the previous chapter, there is a huge variety of potentially relevant predictors of attempts to persuade others. The 2012 ANES is a large survey, with the potential to test the relationships between persuasion and dozens of independent variables. In an effort to develop a parsimonious explanation that retains statistical rigor and takes advantage of the incredible amount of available data, I next employ two machine learning statistical tools: *random forest* and *lasso*.[42] These approaches avoid the researcher bias that might come from arbitrary decisions about which variables to trim from the models, and provide a guide to help determine which of the many potentially significant coefficients are actually of substantive importance in predicting attempts to persuade and other forms of political behavior. These methods do not directly test causal hypotheses or produce interpretable coefficient estimates, but they are useful in identifying the strongest predictors

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[42] For more on the growing use of machine learning techniques, such as random forests, in social sciences, see Grimmer (2015) or Varian (2014).

of attempts to persuade and comparing them with other forms of campaign participation and discursive participation.

The 75 independent variables included in the machine learning analysis are listed in Table 3.2. In a number of cases, multiple versions of questions addressing a similar topic were asked, or the same question was asked in both the pre- and post- election questionnaires. In order to avoid excessive redundancy in the modeling, which can lead to underestimates of variable importance, only one measure is used in the analysis. Where both are available, questions from the pre-election questionnaire were retained over questions from the post-election questionnaire, as the temporally prior measurement reduces endogeneity concerns. Also, questions with fewer response categories were selected over similar questions with more response categories.[43]

The two machine learning techniques have their own advantages and biases, which will be discussed in more detail later. However, in this case, I find that they come to very similar substantive results. As analysis tools, they provide a great deal of substantive insight into what kinds of variables most strongly predict persuasive behavior and identify which of the many potential explanatory theories deserve further pursuit. Furthermore, because statistically significant regression coefficients can be found for most explanations in a sample of this size, they do not provide a clear picture of substantive importance. Analysis of most

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[43] For example, the binary "Did you watch any programs about the campaign on television?" was included rather than "During a typical week, how many days do you watch national news on TV, not including sports?" Questions with fewer categories were selected because random forests can be biased towards variables with more response categories, although this is corrected for in the particular implementation used here. Additionally, to the extent that we are looking for coherent substantive interpretation of the relationships, a single binary variable is more straightforward than treating an ordinal variable as interval or including a series of dummies.

important variables allows for comparison of which independent variables have substantively

stronger connections to each of the different forms of political participation.

Table 3.2: Independent Variables Included in Machine Learning Analysis

Demographics	Political Capital	Political Attitudes
Female	Campaign Interest	Strong Preference for Pres Candidate
Age	News Source: Social Media	Bible is Word of God
Attends Church	News Source: Blogs	American Identity Important
Religion is Important	News Source: Internet	Emotion When See Flag
Education	News Source: TV	Journalists Provide Fair Election Coverage
Married	News Source: Newspaper	Voters Offered Real Choice
Veteran/Military Status	News Source: Radio	Rich Buy Elections
Union Member	Trust Gov to do Right	It Makes a Difference Who Is In Power
Union Member in Household	Gov Run by Big Interests	Who People Vote For Makes a Difference
Hispanic	Government Wasteful	Satisfied with US Democracy
Black	Government Corrupt	Therm Difference: Pres Candidates (10 pt)
White	Elections Make Gov Pay Attention	Therm Difference: Parties (10 pt)
Owns Home	Political Knowledge, out of 7	Independent
Years at Current Address	Efficacy: Politics too Complicated	Republican
Income	Efficacy: I Understand Politics	Strength of Party ID
Homosexual/Bisexual	Efficacy: Public Officials Care	Care who wins Pres Election
Opinionation	Efficacy: No Say in Gov	Should Adjust Morality to Changing World
Authoritarianism Scale		New Lifestyles = Societal Breakdown
	Social Norms	Should Be Tolerant of Diff Moral Standards
Political Activity	Social Trust	More Emphasis on Traditional Family Ties
Registered to Vote	Member of Civic Organization	Financial Change Past Year
Voted in 2008 General	Can See Both Sides of Disagreement	Expected Financial Change Next Year
Voted in 2012 General	Someone Tried to Persuade R	Should Gov Use Scientific Approaches
Voted in 2012 Primary		
Voting is a Duty	Political Environment	
Ever Discuss Politics	Close Pres Race in State	
	Voter Mobilization Contact	
	Campaign Contact	
	Parties are Different	

One common statistical problem that arises where many explanatory variables are present

in a dataset is overfitting the data. When models are overfit, some variables may appear

highly significant for the analyzed data, but when applied to a new sample they are not

significant and the model performs poorly. In order to avoid results that are idiosyncratic features of this dataset, it is essential to self-consciously take measures that avoid overfitting the data and improve the generalizability of the results. As implemented here, both random forest and lasso use cross-validation methods where the models are developed using a subset of the data, and their predictive accuracy is tested on the remaining portion. When repeated many times, this helps combat overfitting (Gareth et al. 2013).

Classification Trees and Random Forests

Classification trees are a non-parametric statistical tool that can be useful in determining what attributes best predict a binary outcome (see Chapter 8 of Gareth, Witten, Hastie, and Tibshirani, 2013 for an introduction). The classification tree takes the set of available predictors, and at each "branch" in the tree (called a *node*), determines which predictor results in a binary split of the data (or *predictor space)* that most improves the overall classification of cases into the outcome categories.[44]   In this way, the classification tree divides the overall set of observations into subgroups that share similar attributes and (ideally) have the same value for the dependent variable. The iterative process ends when only a small number of cases (i.e., 1) are left in each of the remaining subgroups, known as "leaves" or *terminal nodes*.

At each node, the classification tree selects the variable (and split of that variable) that will result in the most improvement in the classification of respondents into groups (i.e. persuaders vs. non-persuaders). Variables chosen earlier in the process are therefore understood as more "powerful" or "better" predictors of persuasive behavior than those

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[44] One advantage of the random forest algorithm is that ordinal or categorical data can be included in its original form, and the algorithm will automatically determine which category (or categories) should be used to define the split.

chosen later in the process. Although this process does not provide a point estimate for the independent, causal effect of a single attribute on the overall outcome, the subdivision of respondents into groups provides a profile of individuals who are most (or least) likely to engage in persuasive behavior.

However, a single classification tree is often lacking in overall predictive accuracy and prone to overfitting (Gareth et al. 2013, 303). A random forest algorithm "grows" a whole forest of classification trees as described above, with two differences. First, the tree is grown from a random subset of the data, with accuracy tested on the "out-of-bag" sample. Second, at each node, the algorithm is only allowed to select from a random subset of the available predictor variables. This results in significant variation in the placement of variables from one tree to the next.[45] Then, the relative importance of the various predictors is compared across all of the trees in the random forest, resulting in a ranking of which variables most efficiently classify the observations. The random forest provides a means for comparing the available independent variables to determine which attributes are the most efficient predictors of persuasive behavior.

Variable importance is calculated by randomly permuting the values for the variable in each tree and then calculating the mean decrease in predictive accuracy (percent of cases correctly classified), called the permutation importance score. The idea is that if the variable values are replaced with random, and therefore uncorrelated, data, the comparison provides a numerical evaluation of the independent influence of each variable on the overall

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[45] This is an important way of dealing with correlated variables in the dataset. For example, if two variables are highly correlated, but one has a slightly better improvement in prediction accuracy, the first will always be chosen and, because a related split was already conducted, the second may not be chosen until much later in the tree (if at all). The use of a random subset of variables for each node allows for an independent estimation of the importance of each variable.

classification accuracy.[46] However, one shortcoming to this approach is that the calculations

assume no correlation between the predictor variables, so variables which are not in

themselves important (i.e. home ownership), but which are correlated with other variables

that are efficient predictors (i.e. income), may receive an artificially high rating. As of this

writing, it is not computationally feasible to correct for correlation among predictor

variables; therefore the use of other methods (such as lasso, which does not suffer from this

bias) is valuable in providing an independent check and informing correct interpretation of

the results.

Random Forest Results

Using the random forest algorithm, I identify which of the 72 independent variables

included are the most efficient predictors of different forms of political behavior. There are

three different dependent variables, which are generated based on the results of the factor

analysis: 1) attempts at political persuasion, 2) campaign participation – displaying a

sign/sticker, donating to a campaign, working for a campaign, or attending a political rally,

and 3) discursive participation – discussing politics and sending political messages via social

media. All three of the dependent variables are binary, indicating whether the respondent

reported engaging in any of the included political behaviors. The strength of this approach is

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[46] There is a second method of calculating variable importance, which involves averaging
the decrease in Gini (purity of the terminal nodes) for each branch where the split is defined
based on each variable. However, this measure is biased towards variables that have more
potential splits, and is not recommended for situations where there are multiple classes of
data (Strobl, Boulesteix, Zeileis, & Hothorn, 2007).
    This bias can also a problem for the permutation accuracy calculation when the sampling
of predictor variables occurs with replacement, but is unbiased when sampling without
replacement occurs. The analysis presented here includes sampling without replacement
using the *cforest* command in the R package *party* (Hothorn et al. 2006; Strobl et al. 2007,
2008).

that it allows for a direct comparison of the most important predictors of three different types

of participation. Because each analysis draws from the same large pool of predictor

variables, the relative importance of different predictors can be compared to generate a sense

of the similarities and differences between the three forms of participation. The results of

this analysis are depicted in Figure 3.1. The top 10 most important variables for all three

outcomes are displayed, and the bars represent the permutation importance score. Higher

values indicate that the variable is a more efficient predictor of whether someone will engage

in each type of behavior.[47]

The random forest results provide further evidence of the connection between political

discussion and attempts to persuade others. Political discussion is the most important

variable for predicting political persuasion, while it is the 7th most important variable for

predicting campaign participation.[48] The high importance of political discussion also reflects

a practical relationship. It is hard to "talk to someone and try to show them why they should

vote for or against a party or candidate" if you never talk to anyone about politics.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that political discussion is the most efficient predictor of

persuasive behavior.

Consistent with the expectations outlined in Chapter 2, and with Hansen's conclusion that

political interest is the strongest predictor of attempts to persuade (Hansen 1997, 84),

attention to the political campaign follows discussion in importance. In fact, attention to the

campaign is the second most important variable for all three types of political behavior. The

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[47] The permutation importance score is not an interpretable relational parameter, and it
does not signify a directional or causal relationship. However, it is useful in distinguishing
which variables have a stronger connection to the outcome of interest, and allows for an
ordering of variables based on their importance as predictors.

[48] Political discussion is not included as a predictor of discursive participation.

Figure 3.1: Random Forest: Most Important Variables
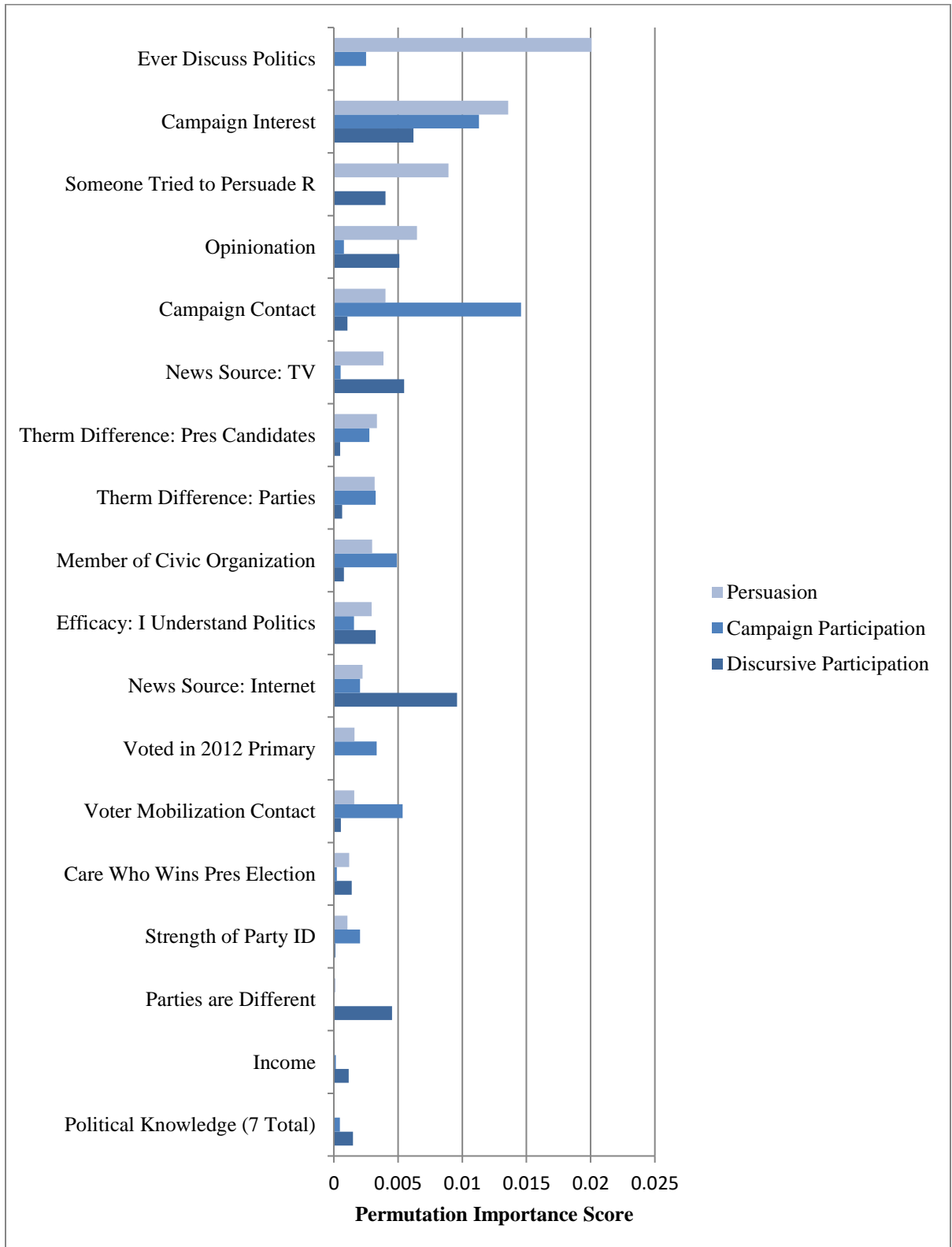
high and consistent importance of political interest indicates that any form of participation and engagement in politics cannot be understood without accounting for individual interest and investment in political events.

third most important variable for predicting attempts to persuade is whether someone else tried to persuade the respondent. This is also a highly important variable for discursive participation (#7), but not for campaign participation (#31). This supports the hypothesized role for social norms in discursive participation, where, rather than having a set of influential people who always do the persuading and a set of malleable or ambivalent targets of persuasion, persuasive efforts begat persuasive efforts. Further exploration of the temporal ordering and specific circumstances of reciprocal persuasive efforts is necessary to understand the social dynamics and causal relationships involved in this process.

Opinionation and attitude extremity are also among the most important variables predicting persuasion. Self-perception of having a lot of opinions is related to engagement in persuasive behavior and discussion, but much less predictive of campaign participation. However, the difference in the 10-point like/dislike ratings of both candidates and parties are related to both persuasion and campaign participation, but are not as related to discursive participation. Attitudes, then, seem to affect participation in two ways. Having a lot of opinions leads people to talk a lot about politics, but perceiving a bigger difference between the available political options leads to more activism on behalf of a cause. This is one area where political persuasion seems to bridge the gap between discursive participation and campaign activism, and clarify some of the ambiguity regarding the role of opinions in political participation (see the discussion in Chapter 2).

The most important variable for predicting campaign participation is direct contact by a political candidate or party. Contact by a campaign is also among the most important variables for both political persuasion (#5) and discursive participation (#11), but the magnitude is much smaller. This confirms the expectations laid out in Chapter 2, where direct mobilization has a demonstrated relationship with persuasive participation, but is not expected to motivate the majority of persuasive attempts in everyday conversations. The role of campaign contact in producing discussion, persuasion, and participation also deserves further exploration, some of which is provided in Chapter 5.

There are four measures of efficacy included in the random forest algorithm, but only one – the most direct measure of internal efficacy, whether the respondent is confident in their ability to understand politics – is among the most important variables for all three measures of political participation. This suggests that internal confidence in a capacity to participate in politics is more important than a belief that the system will respond to individual efforts or opinions for all forms of participation. The role of both internal and external efficacy will be examined in more depth in both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Finally, the most important predictor of discursive participation is using the internet as a source for political news. As a practical matter, the discursive participation outcome includes individuals who send messages via social media. Therefore, internet use for political information is going to be an efficient classifier to distinguish the segment of the population who use the internet for political purposes. However, underscoring the importance of engagement in the campaign, the use of all four forms of media by which people seek political information (internet, television, newspaper, and radio) are among the most important variables for all three types of participation.

There are some additional interesting findings in what is *not* an important predictor. For example, and contrary to the expectations laid out in Chapter 2, objective political information is an important predictor for discursive participation (#8), but not for campaign participation (#26) or persuasion (#56). This indicates that attempts to persuade are not just a manifestation of expertise, and that a focus on increasing information may improve discussion rates but is probably insufficient for motivating both campaign participation and persuasion. Contrary to conventional wisdom, income and education also do not break into the top 10 list for any form of political participation. Several specific attitudes, including patriotism, civic duty, or attitudes about government function, were also not among the most important variables. Similarly, although having a big difference in feelings about the candidates or parties is very important for all three outcomes, actual partisanship (Republican vs. Democrat) is not an important predictor. Participation seems to depend more on the personal trait of having a lot of strong opinions, and is not determined by the particular content of those opinions.

The random forest results indicate ways in which persuasive behavior is similar to both discursive participation and campaign participation. However, the similarities to discursive participation occur with more important (higher ranked) variables than the similarities to campaign participation. Specifically, persuasion and other forms of discursive participation are highly connected to psychological engagement and social norms in a way that campaign participation is not. But persuasive behavior also retains some of the reactivity to the election (campaign contact and attitude extremity), that characterize campaign participation.

Lasso Methods

Like random forest, lasso provides a statistical way to narrow a large field of potential predictors into a manageable set of most influential variables. Lasso takes an iterative approach to logistic regression, which limits the variables in each model to those that most efficiently predict the binary outcome of interest. For each logistic regression, lasso sets a parameter, λ, which penalizes the model for the sum total of the (normalized) coefficients.[49] A λ of 0 would have no penalty, and would therefore give the same results as a typical least squares logistic regression model. As λ increases, the model must determine how to allocate the scarce available total value for the coefficients, which is done by assigning a coefficient of 0 to more variables – effectively removing them from the model. For the remaining variables, larger coefficients are allocated to the variables with the most predictive value.

Because of the zero-sum accounting and normalized parameters of lasso, the coefficients are not easily interpreted, and there is not yet an accepted method of calculating standard errors or performing a significance test. Therefore, in addition to the results from the lasso displayed Table 3.3, I report a logistic regression model including the most important variables identified by each lasso, which lends itself to more familiar substantive interpretation.

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[49] The tricky part of lasso is determining the appropriate value of λ. A single lasso calculation will report the models that result from each of a series of possible λ values, but does not provide any guidance as to which value (and resulting logit model) is most appropriate. Therefore, I use cross-validation to identify the best value for λ. Cross-validation divides the data into 10 parts (folds), then uses 9/10 to fit a lasso model, and then predicts the outcomes for the remaining 1/10 of the data. This is iterated over all folds to provide estimates of the average prediction error for each potential value of λ. From there, it is common to identify either the value of λ that corresponds to the minimum mean prediction error, or the first λ that comes within one standard error of the minimum. I use the latter, as it is less likely to overfit the data.

Lasso and Logit Results

The lasso algorithm produces a larger range of most important variables, but examining the top candidates and comparing with the random forest results is instructive. Table 3.3 includes the same variables (in the same order) as Figure 3.1, with full results available in Appendix 3D. For persuasion, the lasso estimation does not identify any additional important variables beyond what was included in the random forest results. Although the rank ordering is slightly different, the top six most important variables predicting persuasion are identical between lasso and random forest (political discussion, campaign interest, someone else persuading the R, opinionation, campaign contact, and TV news). The same is true for the top 6 variables for discursive participation (internet news, someone else persuading the R, TV news, parties are different, campaign interest, and opinionation), and the top 5 variables for campaign participation (campaign contact, campaign interest, voter mobilization, organizational member, and primary voter; although race is also of high importance in the lasso results, see Appendix 3D). There is a high degree of consistency in the top most important variables between the two estimation techniques, which provides added confidence in the strong predictive power of these explanatory variables.

There are also substantial differences in the most important predictors between the different forms of political participation. While discursive participation is most strongly related to variables that signify interest in the political process and development of political opinions, campaign participation is more related to contact with civic, political, and campaign organizations. Persuasion includes more variables that overlap with discursive participation, such as discussion, campaign interest, and TV news, but campaign mobilization and organizational membership are still strong predictors of persuasion,

providing some continued overlap with campaign participation. Attempts to persuade others

retain elements of both discursive and campaign participation. Persuasion is more activist in

nature than other forms of discursive participation, but the most important variables have

more overlap with discursive participation than campaign participation.

Table 3.3: Lasso Estimation of Most Important Variables

	Attempts to Persuade		Discursive Participation		Campaign Participation	
	Lasso	**Logit**	**Lasso**	**Logit**	**Lasso**	**Logit**
Ever Discuss Politics	.76	.98 (.10) ***			.22	.39 (.12) ***
Campaign Interest	.45	.46 (.07) ***	.39	.39 (.08) ***	.53	.56 (.08) ***
Someone Tried to Persuade R	.32	.66 (.08) ***	.83	.97 (.12) ***		
Opinionation	.11	.25 (.05) ***	.35	.37 (.06) ***	.01	.09 (.06)
Campaign Contact	.13	.23 (.08) **	.19	.24 (.10) *	.60	.73 (.09) ***
News Source: TV	.10	.44 (.11) ***	.58	.68 (.11) ***		
Therm Difference: Pres Candidates (10 pt)	.03	.08 (.02) ***	.01	.02 (.02)	.03	.04 (.02) *
Therm Difference: Parties (10 pt)	.01	.04 (.02) *	.01	.01 (.02)	.03	.03 (.02)
Member of Civic Organization	.08	.32 (.08) ***	.07	.10 (.10)	.34	.53 (.08) ***
Efficacy: I Understand Politics	.03	.11 (.04) **	.18	.19 (.05) ***	.03	.06 (.05)
News Source: Internet	.00	.23 (.08) **	.69	.67 (.10) ***	.23	.38 (.09) ***
News Source: Newspaper	.01	.22 (.08) **	.10	.18 (.10)	.15	.33 (.09) ***
Voted in 2012 Primary	.03	.29 (.08) ***			.26	.43 (.08) ***
Voter Mobilization Contact	.02	.28 (.08) ***	.15	.23 (.10) *	.34	.53 (.08) ***
Care Who Wins Pres Election			.27	.31 (.14) *		
Strength of Party ID					.01	.08 (.05)
Parties are Different			.47	.48 (.13) ***		
Income			.02	.03 (.01) ***		
Political Knowledge			.15	.18 (.04) ***		
Intercept	-2.81	-5.23 (.23) ***	-5.37	-6.30 (.57) ***	-4.21	-6.56 (.31) ***
N		3970		3970		3970

* p<.10, ** p<.05, ***p<.01. Standard errors for the coefficients in the logit models are given in parenthesis. Full results available in Appendix 3D.

One benefit of the lasso results is that they are based on logistic regression, and the most important variables can then be incorporated into a traditional model with a more straightforward relational interpretation. In the logistic regression models, not all of the variables identified by the lasso as important are statistically significant. This is not surprising, as the algorithm selects variables that improve the classification of the subset of variables that are not yet accurately classified.[50] When variables identified relatively late in the process are then used in a model with other control variables to predict the full set of results, they may not be statistically significant. Even so, the top most important variables are statistically significant, with signs in the expected directions.

Variables which capture political capital, meaning interest, knowledge, and previous political activity are important across all three forms of political participation. Consistent with the results of the random forest in the previous section, interest in the campaign and attention to political news in a variety of formats is highly important for all three dependent variables. Objective political knowledge, on the other hand, is only an important predictor of discursive participation. Additionally, internal efficacy (confidence in one's own ability to understand politics) is important and has a statistically significant positive relationship with political discussion and political persuasion. By contrast external efficacy (expectation of government responsiveness to individual efforts) has a statistically significant relationship with campaign behavior, but internal efficacy is not statistically significant.

Among the individual-level traits, echoing the random forest results, opinionation is a positive and statistically significant predictor of both persuasion and discursive participation, but not of campaign participation. However, while holding a lot of opinions is related to

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[50] See Lo, Chernoff, Zheng, and Lo (2015) for a more thorough discussion of the relationship between highly significant and highly predictive variables.

discursive and persuasive behavior, the overall results of the logit and lasso models indicate that there are not necessarily specific political attitudes that motivate more political participation than others. Aside from opinionation, there are no other individual-level predictors that have a consistent effect on political persuasion. In spite of what much political science research claims about the value of resources in motivating political participation, income and education are not found to be important predictors of attempts to persuade by either metric. Income is an important and statistically significant predictor of political discussion (probably largely due to the inclusion of online participation in the measure of discursive participation), but otherwise income and education are not important predictors of any of the three forms of political participation. This may be because income and education influence participation indirectly, and more direct variables are available (and important) in the analysis.

Moving to the effects of the social and political context, we find that persuasion shares similarity with both discursive participation and campaign participation. Again consistent with the results of the random forest, someone else attempting to persuade the respondent has a positive relationship with both persuasion and discursive participation, but not campaign participation. As expected, social norms are an important piece of understanding persuasion as a form of discursive participation.

On the other hand, the respondent's relationship with the broader political environment matters for persuasion and campaign participation in a way that it does not affect discursive participation. Membership in a civic organization, voter mobilization contact, and contact by a political campaign all have positive effects on persuasion and campaign participation. However, confirming some key differences between campaign participation and persuasion,

not all features of the political context motivate attempts to persuade. The perceived closeness of the presidential race does not affect political persuasion or discursive participation, but is important for campaign participation. Direct contact seems to be important for motivating participation, but the likelihood of impacting national outcomes (by competitiveness of election or changes in policy direction) does not seem to be an important reason why some people try to persuade others.

IV. Discussion

The analysis in this chapter uses three different statistical analyses to explore whether attempts to persuade others are more like other forms of discursive participation or more like campaign participation. Factor analysis uses the statistical relationships between the dependent variables themselves to identify underlying dimensions of similarity and difference among forms of political participation. The two machine learning algorithms allow for the comparison of important independent variables across the different kinds of participation. The use of all three approaches adds confidence in the results and depth to our understanding of different forms of political participation.

The results confirm the existence of a discursive dimension of political participation, which is comprised of attempts to persuade others, informal political conversation, and political messaging on social media sites. Using data from the 2012 ANES, I am able to replicate the factor structure reported in the influential works of Verba and Nie (1972) and Zukin et al. (2006), which include political persuasion among the forms of active campaign involvement. However, previous research does not account for the possibility that there is a discursive dimension to political participation, and does not consider the potential for attempts to persuade others to fit in the discursive dimension. The analysis presented here

contributes to our understanding of political participation by directly testing for the existence of a discursive dimension to political participation. By including four measures of discursive participation, I find evidence for the existence of a discursive dimension to political participation and that attempts to persuade others loads more heavily on the discursive factor than on the campaign participation factor.

Additionally, using two machine learning techniques (random forest and lasso), I identify the variables that are the most efficient predictors of attempts to persuade, discursive participation, and campaign participation. The random forest and lasso algorithms narrow more than 70 independent variables down to a handful of "most important" predictors; and the results are highly consistent across methods. This allows me to go beyond just looking at the dependent variables and inferring the characteristics of the underlying factor to actually examining the relationship of the various dimensions to potential predictor variables. Comparison of the most important variables across the different forms of participation reveals important systematic differences that conform to theoretical expectations about the nature of discursive and campaign participation. This analysis reveals that even though persuasive behavior retains some similarities to campaign participation, it has more in common with discursive participation.

Specifically, discursive participation is related to increased interest in the campaign, attention to political news, and high levels of opinionation, while campaign participation is most related to external social and political forces, such as membership in civic organizations or contact by a party or campaign organization. Political persuasion shares more important variables with discursive participation, but in some ways bridges the gap between "just talking" about politics and active engagement in the political process.

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There has been a great deal of normative discussion and empirical research about whether everyday political conversation among the mass public is sufficient to revitalize democracy (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Mendelberg 2002; Mutz 2008). Much of this literature relies on demonstrating connections between discursive or deliberative participation and further political action. The results of this chapter suggest that political persuasion bears more in common with other forms of discursive participation than with the campaign behaviors with which it is usually scaled. However, paying more attention to the qualitative differences in how people approach political conversation – specifically, whether or not they try to persuade others when they talk about politics – suggests one way in which political discussion may become more than "just talk."

These results also represent a caution for future political behavior scholars in their use of scales of political participation. In particular, the distinctiveness of political persuasion from other forms of campaign participation suggests that future research should more carefully consider whether and how to include measures of interpersonal persuasion in statistical models. This is not to say that all previous applications of participation scales are incorrect or misleading, but we should be more forthcoming about the inherent assumptions we make when creating those scales, and the ways that the assumptions might affect the results and their interpretations. Persuasive behavior is predicted by a set of factors that is quite distinct from other forms of campaign participation, and the continued inclusion of persuasion in participation scales may obscure important findings in areas where persuasion is most different (i.e. the effects of competition or campaign mobilization).

The final contribution of the present work is methodological. Machine learning techniques are gaining increasing popularity both in academia and the private sector.

Machine learning methods are prized for their inductive approach that is free of researcher bias, a characteristic that is both an advantage and disadvantage. The advantage of avoiding bias in the selection of variables is contrasted with the lack of a direct test of a causal theoretical model or interpretable coefficients. Researchers must carefully select appropriate methods and be clear about their justification and application to a particular research project; but, when done properly, the results can be extremely informative and shed new light on important social science questions. The analysis presented here is one example of how these techniques can provide evidence relevant to answering theory-driven political science questions.

The analysis presented in this chapter paints in relatively broad strokes. Rather than emphasizing the development of specific causal models or estimation of particular parameters, this chapter examines the statistical properties of relationships between variables. While this statistical overview is valuable in identifying how persuasive behavior relates to other dimensions of political behavior, it provides little concrete understanding of the process or motivations of political persuasion. The next chapter aims to fill in some of these details by addressing both descriptive features of persuasive behavior and causal modeling of the motivations for persuasion over time.

Chapter 4: The Who, What, When, and Why of Interpersonal Persuasion

Whether in elections or policymaking, all political outcomes fundamentally hinge on *persuading* others to support a preferred position. For politicians and other elite actors, the reasons why they try to persuade others are often quite clear – they would like to gather support for their policy positions or candidacy, and persuading others is instrumental to their success. However, the reasons why the political layperson attempts to persuade their friends, family, or coworkers are not as clear, as these individuals receive little direct, tangible benefit from attempting to persuade others. Building on the broad brushstrokes of the analyses in the previous chapter, the aim of this chapter is to unpack the black box and examine the nature of persuasive behavior by directly answering several fundamental questions: Who, What, When, and Why. Investigating these questions reveals a number of ways in which persuasion may not fit with the traditional expectations of campaign behavior, and moves towards a clearer understanding of the nature and function of persuasive behavior as a form of democratic participation.

As a fundamental democratic action, persuasion yields little individual-level reward but has the potential to drive huge shifts in aggregate public opinion. Indeed, interpersonal influence has been considered an important mechanism for the diffusion of political attitudes for more than a half century (Gamson 1992; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Although there is mounting empirical evidence demonstrating that interpersonal influence occurs (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Lyons et al. 2016; McClurg 2006), there is very little understanding of how persuasion happens in everyday conversations. The implications of political persuasion

for democratic theory and practice cannot be assessed without first adequately describing the occurrence and function of interpersonal persuasion in the mass public.

The prior chapters of this work have given significant cause to doubt that all forms of participation are motivated by the potential for influencing elections or policy outcomes. Campaign participation is therefore expected to be outward-facing, where external forces stimulate engagement in an external political process. However, interpersonal persuasion may be better understood as a way in which individuals psychologically engage with the political system than as a direct form of campaign participation. The theory tested here is that individuals try to persuade others as a way of processing their own political considerations and beliefs as they navigate the social norms of their discussion networks; they do not necessarily persuade because they believe changing other people's views will move political outcomes in their preferred direction. As such, individual psychological traits and social influences are expected to have a more substantial impact on persuasive behavior than external forces.

Using the framework of Who, What, When, and Why people engage in persuasive behavior, I examine how internal and social factors facilitate persuasion. Each section provides some evidence towards resolving significant debates or ambiguities that are present in the existing empirical and theoretical literature on interpersonal persuasion. Taken as a whole, this empirically-grounded and nuanced description of persuasion improves not only our academic understanding of persuasive behavior, but also provides practical insights into an important mechanism by which public opinion and electoral outcomes are shaped.

One way that the social and instrumental differences in political persuasion can be explored is by examining who people target in their attempts to persuade others. If

persuasion is mostly about getting a "win" for their candidate or issue, then we would expect to find that most persuaders are individuals who are passionately committed to a particular cause, and therefore try to persuade everyone in their social networks to have as much impact as possible. However, if persuaders attend closely to social dynamics, they might be willing to persuade some kinds of contacts but not others. For example, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1988) find that people strategically select political discussants from among the contacts available in their social networks. Perhaps the selection of a target for persuasion is also a strategic subsample of political discussion partners. Additionally, although disagreement is not equivalent to persuasion *per se,* Mutz (2006) finds that disagreement is systematically more likely to come from some kinds of relationships (i.e. coworkers) than others (i.e. family). Examining the target of persuasive endeavors can inform us about the relative weight of instrumental versus social motivations for persuasive endeavors.

Next, examining the particular subject matter of persuasive efforts provides insight about how persuasion interacts with other kinds of participation. Specifically, persuasion is a relatively low-cost endeavor (in terms of time and monetary resources), and so it is often seen as a precursor, or at least a natural companion to, other forms of campaign involvement. If individuals are really trying to influence the outcome of elections through their participation, then it seems reasonable to expect, say, campaign donors to make their dollars count by directly trying to influence others' attitudes about that same issue or candidate. However, if the end goal of attempts to persuade is not about winning the election, then persuasion may occur about a wide variety of issues, whether or not the individual is actively participating on behalf of that issue in other ways.

Past empirical work has demonstrated but not discussed a consistent negative relationship between attempts to persuade and age (Hansen 1997; Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). The discussion of "when" takes advantage of the panel nature of the Youth Parent Socialization Panel to explore this particular puzzle and determine whether life-cycle effects or generational replacement are responsible for the decline. Examining the life-cycle trends of different forms of participation is one way of exploring the similarities and differences between persuasion and other forms of participation, and allows for further theory-building about the factors that influence the decision to try to persuade.

Finally, three potential explanations of "why" people choose to persuade are explored: 1) because they care a lot about the issue/candidate, 2) because they are interested in politics, and 3) because someone asked them to. The first suggests an instrumental motivation, directly connected to achieving a desired outcome on a personally important issue. The second is an individual-level psychological explanation, where the decision to persuade comes from individual enjoyment of politics generally, and not a particular cause. The third is an external motivation where social contacts or campaign organizations directly instigate participation. All three explanations are likely true to some extent for different individuals, however examining the relative importance of instrumental, individual, and social motivations in a single model is instructive.

The following analysis contributes to our understanding of political behavior in several ways. First, it provides a descriptive look at the landscape of persuasive behavior in the United States over time, a perspective that has not been well-described in previous work on persuasion. Second, by specifically examining a variety of ambiguities in existing literature provides a clearer conceptual understanding of the individual and social (rather than external

or instrumental) motivations for political persuasion. Third, a better foundational understanding of the mechanism of interpersonal persuasion is essential to improving models of the diffusion of public opinion and understanding the role and potential of discursive participation in democratic government.

I. Data and Methods

The Youth-Parent Political Socialization Panel (YPSP) began in 1965 with a nationally representative survey of high school seniors (G2) and their parents (G1).[51] The students and parents were then re-interviewed in 1973 and 1982, and the students were interviewed a final time in 1997.[52] I have combined the four-wave student data (ICPSR #4037) with the three-wave parent data (ICPSR #9553) to create one dataset that includes 935 students and 898 parents who participated in all waves of the survey. From the original sample, 45% of G1 (parents) and 56% of G2 (students) respondents are retained across all waves and included in this analysis. For the majority of the analysis, the data have been reshaped into a panel, where each completed survey is a separate observation and most individual respondents are represented by three or four observations (one for each wave of the survey).

There are several advantages to using the YPSP to explore persuasive behavior. First, while many political surveys focus on behavior during a particular election cycle or race, the YPSP asks respondents to report their political activities since the last wave of the survey (a span of 8, 9, or 15 years), which allows for a more representative look at the natural occurrence of persuasive behavior over a variety of political contexts. Additionally,

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[51] See the appendix to *The Political Character of Adolescence* (Jennings and Niemi 1974) for a full description of the original data collection.

[52] The student generation's children (G3) were also interviewed in 1997, but they are not included in this analysis.

respondents in two waves of the survey (1973 and 1982) were asked to describe whom, when, and about what they attempted to persuade. The detailed and often open-ended nature of these responses allows for a more robust descriptive picture of persuasion as it occurs than closed-ended accounts in a single context. Second, the panel nature of the data allows for the exploration of changes in political behavior across the life cycle, and captures variation in political behavior as a result of changes in individual circumstances and characteristics.

The primary dependent variable of interest is whether individuals reported an attempt to persuade others about a political candidate or issue. Persuasion was the first behavior asked about in a battery of 9 political activities,[53] after the following introduction:

> I have a list of some of the things that people do to help make an election come out the way they want it to. I wonder if you could tell me whether you have done any of these things during any kind of public election? By that I mean elections for public office or votes on issues, propositions, referenda, and so on. First, did you ever talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote one way or the other?[54]

After respondents reported whether they attempted to persuade someone else, they were asked to identify the target(s) of their persuasive behavior – friends, family members, coworkers, or some combination of the three. Furthermore, in the second and third waves of the survey, they were asked to report the year and subject of their persuasive attempts (2 mentions in 1973, 3 mentions in 1982). These additional questions are also used as dependent variables to examine the occurrence of persuasive behavior.

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[53] In 1965: Only 5 behaviors were included in the battery, and students (G2) were not asked about political participation at all (including persuasion).

[54] There are two caveats to note about this question wording. 1. The text primes respondents to think about persuasion as something they do to "help make an election come out the way they want it to." I argue elsewhere that this is not the primary motivation for persuasion. 2. The presumed intention of the attempt to persuade is to change someone else's *behavior*, specifically their vote choice, rather than trying to change someone else's *opinion*. These assumptions in the question wording may make depress recall of persuasive interactions that were non-electoral in nature, and may make it more difficult to gauge the extent of non-electoral motivations for persuasion.

Importantly, the panel nature of the data allows for the inclusion of respondent-level fixed effects, which account for all stable individual-level traits that might influence an individual's propensity to persuade others. Therefore, factors that vary at the individual level over the several survey waves can be included as explanations for variations in individual decisions to persuade, while simultaneously ruling out the possibility that unobserved, stable individual-level characteristics are creating spurious correlations. In models where fixed effects are included, individual-level traits that have little or no variance across survey waves (e.g., gender) cannot also be included as independent variables, and so are omitted.

II. How Much?

Before moving on to the more substantive questions regarding persuasive behavior, it is useful to provide some background information regarding the rates of persuasion in the survey, and this sample's comparison to the nationally representative American National Election Studies (ANES). Figure 4.1 displays the percent of respondents in each wave of the YPSP who reported voting in the last presidential election and attempting to influence the vote of someone else. This is paired with the matching presidential election-year ANES response rates for the same two questions.

Figure 4.1: Rates of Voting and Persuasion Behavior
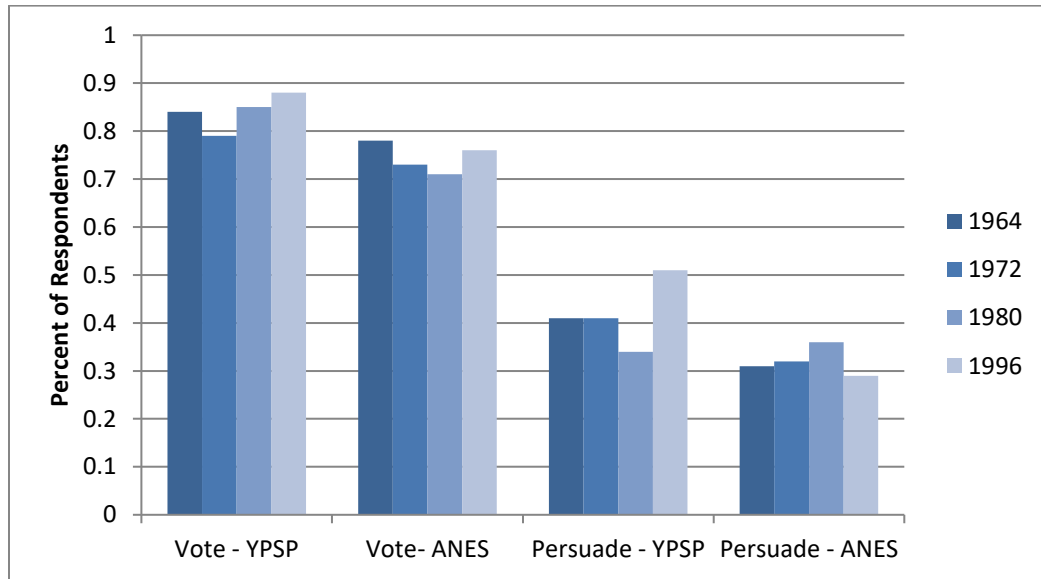
Notes on Figure 4.2: YPSP reports of voting behavior in the most recent presidential election are paired with ANES voting rates from the same presidential election year.

YPSP retrospective reports of persuasion span the entire timeframe between survey waves, whereas ANES reports are only from the listed presidential election year, and are therefore not a direct comparison (YPSP are expected to be higher because of the longer timeframe).

For YPSP: 1964 is based on G1 responses in 1965; 1972 is based on G1 and G2 responses in 1973; 1980 is based on G1 and G2 responses in 1982; and 1996 is based on G2 responses in 1997.

Overall, YPSP respondents report more political activity than ANES respondents. On average, YPSP respondents have 5-10% higher rates of voting and persuading than the corresponding ANES respondents. About 80 percent of YPSP respondents reported voting in the last presidential election, and about 40 percent reported attempting to persuade someone else. The YPSP rates of voting and persuasion are both higher than the ANES estimates, and clearly higher than the actual turnout rates for those years.

There are at least two factors that contribute to the atypically high activism of the YPSP respondents. First, the sample is skewed towards the well-educated, as high school seniors and their parents were the sample, which removes all high school drop-outs (and their parents) from the sampling frame. Second, the protest generation of which the G2

respondents were a part was characterized by an unusually high degree of activism (Jennings and Beck 1979). Therefore, the YPSP data should be taken with caution when estimating population parameters, keeping in mind that the politically inactive segments of the population are likely to be underestimated, and that any analysis that includes G2 responses will report higher levels of participation overall.

Additionally, because the following analysis is based on panel data, Figure 4.2 depicts the total number of survey waves in which respondents (G1 and G2 combined) reported an attempt to influence the vote of others. The modal response is no persuasion reported in any wave of the survey (37%), indicating that more than a third of the respondents never intentionally tried to persuade someone else. When compared with only 14% of respondents who never engaged in any of the other eight forms of political participation, there remains a sizeable segment of the population who is willing to be politically engaged in other ways, but unwilling to try to persuade others. On the other end of the spectrum, while some individuals are habitual persuaders who will go to bat for their preferred cause(s) regularly, there are just as many who are motivated enough to get involved for one issue or election cycle, but do not continue that behavior in future elections. There is a roughly equal division between persuasion in one, two, and three waves of the survey (24%, 19%, and 20%, respectively).[55]

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[55] Recall that, because G2 respondents were not asked about political participation in 1965, each generation is asked about persuasion in 3 waves; making 3 the max for both G1 and G2.

Figure 4.2: Number of Survey Waves in Which Persuasive Behavior was Reported
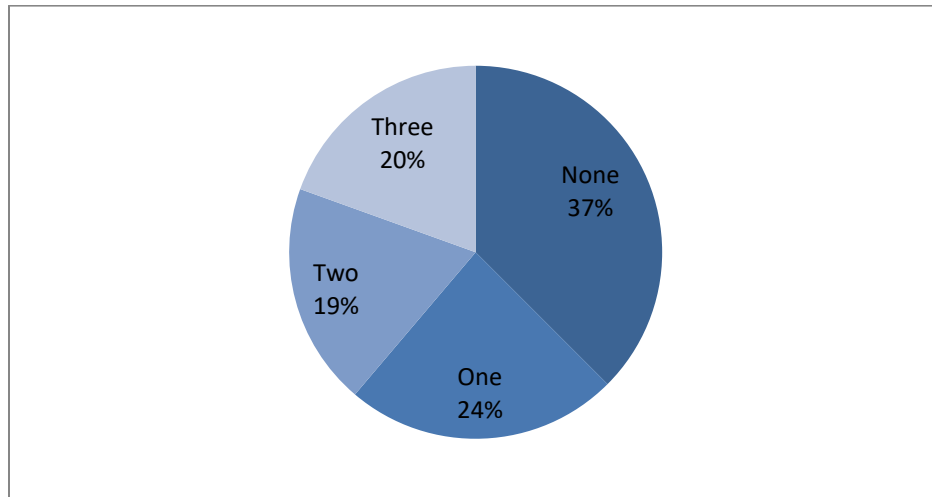
Looking at the data from a different angle, approximately 50% of respondents who reported an attempt to persuade in one wave of the survey did so again in the next survey wave. By comparison, approximately 75% of presidential election voters in one wave voted again in subsequent survey waves. Likely persuaders are somewhat less consistent than likely voters, and changes in individual circumstances or political context must be accounted for to gain a complete understanding of the varying motivations for political persuasion.

III. Who?

Moving now to the substantive question of "Who?" – when people try to persuade someone else, who is the target of the persuasive attempt? On the one hand, if persuaders are wholly motivated by their passion for a particular cause, we would expect they would try to persuade as many people as possible to take their side. However, it is also possible that persuaders react to the social context in particular ways. For example, maybe political disagreement is more palatable in stronger relationships where there is less risk of alienation, and then we would expect to see more persuasion among family and friends than coworkers.

On the YPSP, respondents reported whether they tried to persuade their coworkers, friends, family members, or some combination of the three.[56] Figure 4.3 presents a proportional Venn diagram of the targets of persuasive efforts reported by both generations in all 4 waves of the survey.[57]

Figure 4.3: Targets of Persuasive Activity
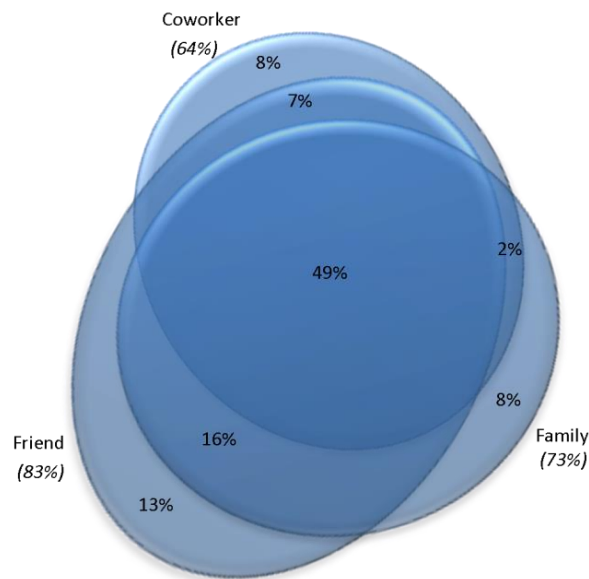
The main substantive insight from Figure 4.3 is that half (49%) of the respondents report trying to persuade all three kinds of targets (coworkers, friends, and family members). Because most people are trying to persuade two or more relationship types within their networks, the nature of their relationship with the target is unlikely to be the primary motivating factor for whether they try to persuade someone else. Rather, it seems that persuaders are choosing to take that action for other reasons, such as intensity of feeling

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[56] In 1965, "all three" was not a coded response. Based on the distribution in the other survey years, I counted all of the "other combination" responses as "all three."

[57] The unit of analysis in this diagram is the survey, so most individual respondents are counted 3 times. There is no substantive difference if the proportions are calculated separately by generation or survey wave.

about the issue or their personal orientation to political discussion, and then trying to persuade anyone with whom they have a political conversation.

However, there are still 29% of persuaders who report targeting only one relationship type.[58] This leaves a substantial portion of respondents who may be comfortable persuading one contact in their network, but who would not necessarily take a persuasive approach in conversations with other contacts. Mutz (2006) reports that political disagreement is most likely to come from contacts with whom social ties are weaker, especially coworkers. If attempts to influence others were merely another way of measuring the occurrence of disagreement in political discussion, then coworkers should also be the most common target of persuasive attempts. However, coworkers are the least commonly reported discussion target, and persuasive attempts are dispersed across all relationship types. Individuals do not seem to be more comfortable targeting one relationship type across the board, i.e. it is probably not universally true that it is "safer" in some way to persuade coworkers than family members. The social norms that govern persuasive behavior, then, are not determined by modes of communication with different types of people, but instead seem to derive from an individual's perception of appropriate political conversation based on their whole network.

In addition to the raw frequency of persuasion of different target types, the panel nature of the data also allows for examination of whether individuals persuade the same kinds of targets over time. For example, if someone reported persuading a family member in 1973,

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[58] Keep in mind also that this presumes all persuaders have regular contacts in their social networks that fit all three relationship types; the reality is that unemployed respondents or single respondents living alone may not have coworkers or regular family contacts to try to persuade. This means that only looking at the incidence of "all three" leaves some under-reporting of individuals who have fewer than three types of contacts, but who do persuade all types available in their networks.

how likely are they to report persuading a family member again in 1982? If the relationship

with the other person has a strong influence on the decision to persuade, we would expect

people to persuade the same kinds of targets at relatively high rates across time. Low rates of

repeat persuasion would indicate that the nature of the relationship has less influence than

other contextual factors on the decision whether or not to persuade. Figure 4.4 depicts the

occurrence of repeat persuasion of the same target type. Each bar shows the percent of people

who persuaded the same relationship type in both waves (numerator), given that they

attempted to persuade *someone* in both waves (denominator).

Figure 4.4: Rates of Repetition of Persuasive Behavior
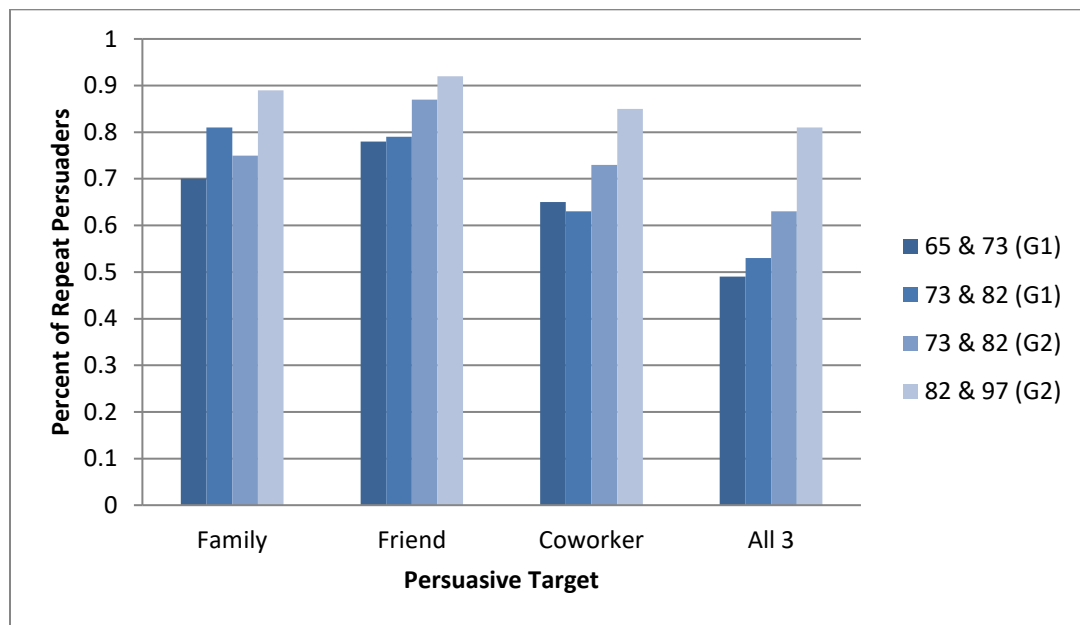
Only about 50 percent of people who reported persuading in one wave of the survey

repeat the behavior in the next wave. However, Figure 4.4 shows that, of those who do report

persuading in subsequent survey waves, most of them target the same relationship types. The

lowest level of re-occurrence is for co-workers, which is understandable as coworkers are the

most volatile relationship type due to job changes or retirement. Friends and family members were repeat targets for over 70 percent of repeat persuaders in all waves of the survey.

Understandably, the likelihood of repeatedly targeting all three relationship types is significantly lower. Because social networks naturally shift over time, it is unlikely that all of an individual's social contacts remain constant from one wave to the next, causing some variation in their propensity to target different relationships.[59] To the extent that people engage in persuasion in both elections, and have stable networks, they do attempt to persuade others with whom they have the same kind of relationship in subsequent years. Interpersonal relationships appear robust enough to withstand political advocacy, and the norms of political discussion that allow for possibly confrontational persuasive behavior in these networks are fairly stable over time.

IV. What?

Now that we have addressed *who* persuaders are targeting when they try to persuade others, *what* issues or candidates form the subject of their persuasive endeavor? It is possible that the kinds of people who persuade about national-level candidates do so for significantly different reasons than those who persuade about more local candidates or on behalf of a preferred issue position. Additionally, the substance of persuasive endeavors can be leveraged to examine the relationship between persuasion and other kinds of participation by addressing whether persuasion is a stepping-stone to other forms of participation on the same issue.

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[59] It should also be noted that the levels of repeat contact for the final panel period (82 - 97) are much higher than the earlier waves. The likely cause is the longer time span for this wave – 15 years and 4 presidential elections after the prior wave, whereas the other waves only cover 8-9 years and 2 presidential elections.

The first step is to identify what people actually try to persuade about. In the 1973 and 1982 survey waves, YPSP respondents were asked to identify two (1973) or three (1982) issues or candidates that they had tried to persuade about since the previous wave of the survey. The benefit of the long time frame of this question is that, although we can expect there to be recency bias, it does not limit responses to a particular race or election cycle, and therefore captures the natural occurrence of persuasive behavior over a long timeframe. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide cross-tabulations of the first two issues or candidates that were the subject of persuasive efforts, where each cell represents the percent of persuaders who targeted each type of issue(s) or candidate(s).[60]

Table 4.1: Reported Topics of Persuasive Behavior: 1965-1973

		Second Mention				
		None	Presidential Candidate	Other Candidate	Issue	Total
First Mention	Presidential Candidate	.39	.12	.06	.05	.62
	Other Candidate	.09	.03	.03	.02	.17
	Issue	.11	.03	.01	.05	.20
	Total	.59	.18	.10	.12	1.00

Table 4.2: Reported Topics of Persuasive Behavior: 1973-1982

		Second Mention				
		None	Presidential Candidate	Other Candidate	Issue	Total
First Mention	Presidential Candidate	.28	.16	.05	.02	.51
	Other Candidate	.14	.02	.06	.03	.25
	Issue	.16	.01	.01	.06	.24
	Total	.58	.19	.12	.11	1.00

Notes: Cells contain percent of persuaders who reported each combination of topics.

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[60] Only 76 respondents in 1982 provided a third issue/candidate, so for simplicity and comparability, Table 1b is limited to just the first two mentions.

The most common subject of persuasive behavior is a presidential candidate. In 1973 68% of individuals who attempted to persuade did so about a presidential candidate, and 55% in 1982.[61] In spite of being the least likely elections for one person to make a difference, national elections capture a majority of media attention, and it would appear they are also the subject for a majority of persuasive endeavors.

However, although most respondents persuade about the presidential race, alone or in combination with another issue/candidate, a sizeable minority persuade exclusively about one or more non-presidential issues or candidates – 31% in 1973 and 46% in 1982. The existence of this group of non-presidential persuaders indicates the presence of significant variation in the subject matter of persuasion, and that only focusing on the highly-publicized national-level political campaigns may be misleading. Future research should seriously consider how persuasive behavior might change across electoral contexts.

Furthermore, perhaps due to the high participation rates, persuasion is often seen as a lower cost political behavior in the traditional scale of campaign activities, at least in terms of expended time or money. The underlying theory of many campaign managers is that if you can get individuals to commit to participating in a low-cost political activity, they are more likely to continue and agree to higher-cost activities. For instance, a candidate's mobilization efforts might start by making sure people are registered to vote; if they are, they might ask for a commitment to vote on Election Day; if they are already a committed voter, they might ask them to try to convince their friends and family to also vote; and so on (see McKenna and Han 2014 for how the Obama campaign applied this logic to developing their volunteer

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[61] Interestingly, there was less reported presidential persuasion in the 1982 wave, which included the more competitive 1980 presidential election, than the 1973 wave, which included the comparably less competitive 1972 election (at least based on the final vote margins).

campaign staff). If an attempt to persuade is the first element of a Guttman scale of political participation and functions as a stepping stone to more costly behavior, then we would expect people who participate in campaigns in other ways to have also attempted to persuade others about the same issues or candidates.

Table 4.3 presents the coincidence of persuasive activity with other forms of campaign participation. The campaign participation scale includes 8 other items,[62] whether the respondent has: 1) Attended any political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that; 2) Done any other work for a party, candidate or issue; 3) Worn a campaign button or put a campaign sticker on your car; 4) Given money or bought any tickets to help a particular party, candidate, or group pay campaign expenses; 5) Written a letter, sent a fax or e-mail message, or talked to any public officials; 6) Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine giving any political opinions; 7) Taken part in a demonstration, protest march, or sit in; and 8) worked with others to try to solve some community problems. If respondents reported engaging in any of the other 8 activities, they are listed as "some" in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Coincidence of Persuasion and Campaign Participation

		Attempted to Persuade		
		No	**Yes**	*Total*
Other Campaign Participation	**None**	**.31** **(1465)**	**.06** **(289)**	*.37* *(1754)*
	Some	**.30** **(1423)**	**.33** **(1561)**	*.63* *2984*
	Total	*.61* *(2888)*	*.39* *(1850)*	*1.00* *(4738)*

Notes for Table 4.3: G1 and G2 are combined, and the unit of observation is the survey, such that each respondent is represented by three observations (one for each wave).

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[62] Except for the G1 respondents in the 1965 survey wave, where only the first four campaign activities are recorded.

Nearly one-third of respondents did not persuade and did not participate in any other campaign activities; an additional third both persuaded and participated in another way. A very small minority, only 6 percent, persuaded and did nothing further, which partially supports the expectation that persuasion is a stepping-stone to other forms of behavior. However, that support is not clear-cut, as 30 percent of respondents participate in other, presumably more costly, ways but do not report any attempt to influence someone else's vote. A pretty significant segment of the population is willing to donate time, money, or other effort on behalf of a candidate or cause, but is unwilling to talk to friends, family, or coworkers to try to win their support. Most people who persuade do also participate in other ways; however the converse does not necessarily apply, which indicates that persuasion is perhaps not as easy or costless of an initial step in political participation as it seems on face value.

To take it one step further, if persuasion scales directly into other forms of participation, then persuasion and the campaign activities should be about the same issues or candidates. The YPSP also included the issues or candidates on behalf of which respondents completed other political behaviors. Table 4.4 limits the cases to just individuals who reported trying to persuade, and displays what percent also performed other political activities about either the same issue or different issues.

Table 4.4: Subject Matter of Persuasive and Other Campaign Activity

| | | **Additional Activity on Same Issue** | | |
		None	**Some**	*Total*
Additional Activity on Different Issue	**None**	**.27** (366)	**.05** (70)	*.32* (436)
	Some	**.35** (473)	**.33** (457)	*.68* (930)
	Total	*.61* (839)	*.39* (527)	*1.00* (1366)

Notes for Table 4.4: G1 and G2 are combined, and the unit of observation is the survey. Cells show percent of persuaders who engaged in additional campaign activities.

Overall, more than a third of persuaders also participated in other campaign activities for the same issue, but the vast majority of them (87 percent) also participated in support of other causes about which they did not persuade. Conversely, three-fifths of persuaders completed no additional activities on that topic, and nearly half of those (35 percent of the total sample of persuaders), did participate on behalf of another cause. Although individuals who persuade are likely to go on and engage in other campaign behaviors (only a quarter did not participate in any other campaign activities), the additional activity is not necessarily about the same issue. Engaging in persuasion on behalf of a political cause or issue does not seem to be strongly related to an individual's likelihood of engaging in additional activities about the same issue relative to different issues. Although persuasion does appear to indicate a more activist or engaged approach to politics generally, it is not necessarily a stepping stone to additional activity about the same issue.

V. When?

Third, the YPSP data are uniquely equipped to provide insight into the question of when individuals try to persuade others. Specifically, are there generational or life-cycle effects such that some individuals are more likely to try to persuade than others because of their age or birth cohort? Prior research has demonstrated a significant, negative effect of age on persuasive behavior,[63] however a cross-sectional survey cannot determine whether these effects arise out of changing norms of political discussion or a true effect of age on participation. Because the YPSP has three waves of responses for two generations, we can shed some light on the relationships between age, generation, and persuasion.

To put it in context, the trends for persuasion over the life cycle are compared with five other common forms of political activity. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 present the percent of G1 respondents who voted, attempted to persuade, attended a rally, displayed a button or sticker, worked for a campaign, or donated money, by respondent's age. [64] Figure 4.6 demonstrates that although voting becomes more probable as citizens age, excepting a small dip at the end of life when mobility and cognitive resources begin to decline (Burden et al. n.d.), the probability of persuasion trends in the opposite direction. The percent of individuals who say they voted in the last presidential election continues to rise steadily until the early 70s before

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[63] These effects are found in a prior working paper, available upon request. Based on the National Annenberg Election Studies Data, there is a significant negative relationship between age and attempts to persuade, which is robust to the inclusion of a wide range of other predictor variables.

[64] These four non-voting political activities are included because a shorter participation scale was used in '65 than in later survey waves, so these are the only four that are consistently asked across all three waves of G1 surveys. G2 is not included in these graphs for two reasons: 1) G2 has a higher overall participation rate, and their inclusion at the younger end of the spectrum may artificially inflate the life cycle effects, and 2) the long time frame for the question asked in 1997, when G2 is 50, makes the response rates less comparable and averaging together problematic.

tapering off at the upper limits of the age range. Meanwhile, the probability of engaging in persuasion peaks between 40 and 50 years of age, and declines steadily from that point.

Figure 4.5: Persuasion and Voting Behavior by Age
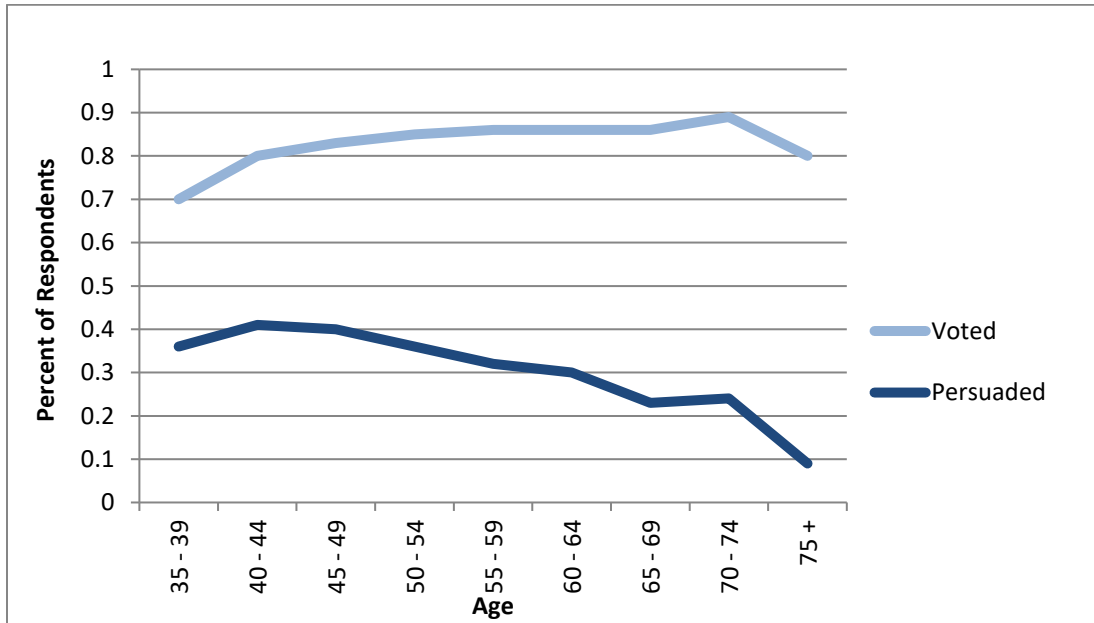
Figure 4.6: Persuasion and Campaign Behavior by Age
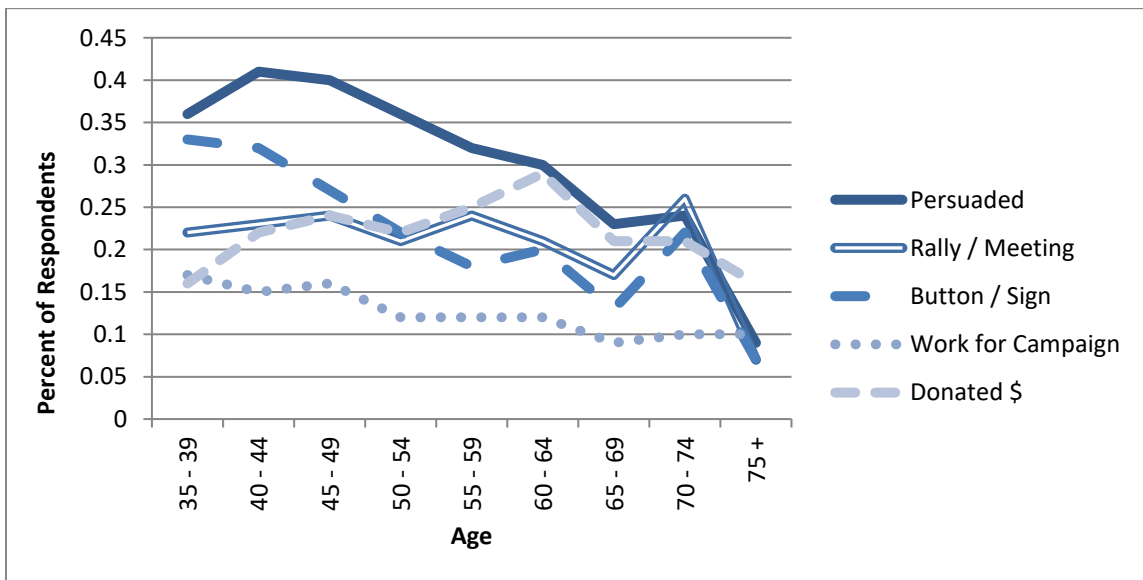
* Data is based on G1 respondents, over three waves of interviews.

The effect of age on other forms of behavior is less consistent, as demonstrated in Figure 4.7. The percent of respondents who attend a rally fluctuates substantially, but the average remains fairly constant over the life cycle. While fewer people report wearing a button or displaying a sign or bumper sticker, this behavior follows a similar downward sloping trend as respondents age. By contrast, the percent of respondents who donate money rises steadily until the gap of nearly 20 percentage points that exists between persuasion and donating at age 35 is completely eliminated at age 65. Finally, the percent of respondents who work for a campaign declines incrementally with each wave of the survey, but in a much less drastic fashion than the decline of persuasion (a 7 point total decline for working, versus a 35 point total decline for persuasion).

The negative effect of age is robust to individuals' latent propensities to persuade, and a logistic regression that includes individual-level fixed effects finds a statistically significant negative effect of age on the likelihood of persuasive behavior, as shown in Model 1 of Table 4.5. The disparity in overall trends by age is evidence that the motivations and necessary resources for persuasive participation may be significantly different than those required for other forms of political engagement, especially voting and donating.[65]

However, life cycle is not the only factor at play, and as previously hinted at by Figure 4.5, there is evidence for some generational differences between G1 and G2. Across all age ranges, G2 has a higher rate of persuasive behavior than G1. Even the lowest level of G2 persuasion (age 34; .40.6%), is roughly equivalent to G1 at their best (age 40; 40.5%). The

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[65] Two notes about other model specifications: 1) The effect appears to be fairly linear, and an age-squared term is not significant in the model and does not change the direct age coefficient. 2) As expected, the parallel model predicting voting behavior has a positive and statistically significant coefficient.

results of the second model in Table 4.5 indicate that the G2 cohort is significantly more

likely to report engaging in persuasion attempts than the G1 cohort, even when controlling

for respondent age.[66] The likely explanation for the generational difference is the increased

activism of the protest generation (Jennings and Beck 1979). However, a second possible

explanation is that changing social norms lead to different expectations about the role of

political opining in discussion across generations. Additional data for recent cohorts that

have been socialized into a more polarized and interactive online political environment

would be indispensable in evaluating whether the G2 cohort is uniquely active, or whether

changing social norms lead subsequent generations to also persuade at higher rates.

Table 4.5: Logit Models of Persuasion by Age

	(1)	(2)
Age	-.01*	-0.01***
	(.00)	(0.00)
G2 Cohort Dummy	--	.43*
		(.08)
Fixed Effects	Yes	--
	784 Groups	
Constant	--	-.21*
		(.16)
N	2346	5465
Psuedo R2	0.005	0.016

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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[66] Some of the generational effect is likely to be overstated because of the increased reporting of persuasion derived from the long timeframe of response for the third wave of G2's survey (15 years, including 4 presidential elections, as compared to 8 – 9 years and 2 presidential elections for the other survey waves), there is still evidence for some generational difference in approach to political persuasion, based on the other waves.

VI. Why?

Human motivation for action is complicated and convoluted and often misunderstood, even by the actors themselves. That being said, this section explores three potential explanations for why some people might attempt to persuade others. The first explanation is that they have strong opinions and care passionately about a particular cause, and so want to advocate for a favorable public outcome (whether in an election or on a policy issue). Evidence for this explanation would be a positive relationship between persuasive behavior and opinion strength (opinionation, or strength of partisan attachment). A positive coefficient for external efficacy, or the belief that the political system responds to the preferences of people like the respondent, would further support this instrumental explanation.

The second explanation is based on individual-level engagement with the political process. First, individuals must have enough interest in political issues that they are willing to expend the cognitive resources to learn about, form opinions, and discuss them. However, it is worth noting that as undeniably important as engagement is to persuasive behavior, as a concept it does not provide a great tool for differentiating why some people attempt to persuade while others talk frequently about politics or engage in other ways without ever trying to persuade. Therefore, consistent with other forms of political behavior, political interest is seen here as a necessary individual trait that creates a propensity to persuade, but it is not seen as a sufficient explanation on its own.

Political interest is also expected to interact with the political context in order to impact political persuasive behavior. In one of the few studies that specifically examines political persuasion as a form of behavior (or, as she calls it, political "proselytizing"), Hansen

(Hansen 1997) finds that the persistent gender gap in persuasive behavior is minimized in contexts where prominent women are on the ballot (see also Atkeson 2003; Stokes-Brown and Neal 2008). In other words, she demonstrates that a particularly salient electoral climate is able to activate some people's latent propensity and make them political persuaders, when they otherwise would not engage in this way. The opposite is also expected to be true – people who care little about the issues or candidates in the current election, or whose passionate causes are not currently salient, are less likely to engage in persuasion.

Finally, some people may engage in persuasion because someone asked them to. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), suggest that individuals need to be mobilized in order to participate in politics. It is unclear the extent to which campaigns actively try to mobilize people to engage in informal persuasive behavior,[67] but in general, mobilization to persuade appears to be much less common than voter mobilization or donation solicitations. A social capital theory of mobilization, such as that described in the Civic Voluntarism Model (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), relies less on direct contacts by official campaign organizations and more on individuals being put in social contexts where they have the opportunity to participate, or to be asked to participate by others in the social group. If this is the case, we would expect those who have more social interactions, say those who are married, currently employed, attend church frequently, or participate in civic organizations to have larger networks that would provide more opportunity to persuade.[68] However, Mutz

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[67] This is addressed more fully in another chapter of my dissertation, available upon request.

[68] While Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2004) do not directly address persuasive communication, they analyze the persistence of disagreement in political discussion networks and conclude that larger networks are more likely to sustain diversity of opinion. Under the debatable assumption that persuasion occurs more often in high-diversity environments, this work would also support the expectation that larger networks would lead to more persuasion.

(2006) finds that political discussion with others who disagree is not affected by network size or involvement in civic organizations. The extent to which organizations are responsible for mobilizing persuasion is a crucial indicator of whether persuasion is motivated by the same factors as other forms of campaign participation.

Table 4.6 presents the results of two logistic regressions predicting the binary outcome of whether or not someone will attempt to persuade others. The first model estimates the coefficients for stable demographic variables, using a pooled data set in which individual surveys are the unit of analysis, and the data include both generations and all three waves. The second model includes individual-level fixed effects (and therefore omits stable demographic characteristics, and drops all observations for which the dependent variable has the same value in all survey waves). The independent variables are drawn from the corpus of other survey questions asked in each wave of the survey, and are from the same wave of the survey as the reported attempt to persuade (the dependent variable).

There are a few variables (opinionated, internal efficacy, group membership, and age) for which the coefficients are statistically significant in the first model, but lose significance when fixed effects are included. To some extent the disparity is expected, as the inclusion of fixed effects captures all observed and unobserved stable individual-level traits, and therefore may swamp the effect of these individual-level characteristics, especially if their variance within individuals over time is low. In real terms, the coefficients in the first model describe the correlations that exist based on variation *across* different survey responses; while the second model describes variation explained *within* individual respondents over time. Therefore, it is more valuable to look at the overall picture of both models than to spend a great deal of effort explaining differences between the two estimations.

Table 4.6: Logit Models of Persuasion

	(1)	(2)
Individual Traits		
Opinionated	0.09***	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.04)
Self Confidence	-0.02	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.05)
Social Trust	0.02	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.04)
Political Trust	-0.08**	0.10*
	(0.03)	(0.06)
Political Engagement		
Political Interest	0.59***	0.23**
	(0.06)	(0.11)
Political Knowledge	0.15***	0.21**
	(0.04)	(0.09)
R Can Understand Politics	0.36***	0.21
	(0.09)	(0.16)
Voting Not Only Way to Have a Say	0.45***	0.33**
	(0.08)	(0.16)
Gov't Cares About Opinions	0.04	-0.00
	(0.07)	(0.11)
Independent	-1.06***	-1.64***
	(0.17)	(0.33)
Leans Toward Party	-0.42***	-0.75***
	(0.12)	(0.21)
Weak Partisan	-0.60***	-0.67***
	(0.10)	(0.19)
Social Contacts		
Frequency of Church Attendance	0.03	-0.08
	(0.03)	(0.07)
Employed	0.06	0.28*
	(0.10)	(0.16)
Married	-0.09	0.06
	(0.11)	(0.22)
Organization Member	0.43***	0.21
	(0.11)	(0.18)
Demographics		
Household Income (Quintiles)	0.04	-0.12**
	(0.03)	(0.06)
Age	-0.02***	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.01)
Female	-0.21**	
	(0.09)	
White	-0.23*	
	(0.12)	
Some College	0.24**	
	(0.10)	
College Graduate	0.45***	
	(0.13)	
Fixed Effects		510 Groups
Constant	-1.65***	
Pseudo R2	.15	.08
Observations	3845	1343

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; Model 1 is estimated using clustered standard errors and controls for survey wave (not shown).

The first four variables are scales of individual-level opinions or traits. In the first model, individuals who are highly opinionated are more likely to try to persuade, but the coefficient is not statistically significant when fixed-effects are included. Strength of opinion appears to be a relatively stable individual-level characteristic that does not explain within-subject variation from one survey wave to the next as well as it explains variation between different respondents. Self-confidence and social trust are not significant predictors in either model. The positive and statistically significant coefficient for political trust in the second model indicates that when individuals feel some additional trust in government they are more likely to try to influence others to vote for their preferred causes or candidates. As expected, self-evaluated political interest and objective political knowledge (based on a 5-question quiz) are both positively related to an individual's propensity to persuade. These are cognitive resources that contribute to the ability and willingness someone has to persuade about politics.

The next three variables measure variations of political efficacy, which are all coded so that high levels of efficacy have higher numerical values. Although none are great measures,[69] the first is a generally accepted measure of internal efficacy, and individuals who disagree that "sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on" are more likely to report engaging in persuasion. However, much like opinion strength, this measure is a better predictor of differences across

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[69] Of the questions asked in the YPSP, the "complicated" question is the most common for measuring internal efficacy, although it has been shown to capture elements of both internal and external efficacy. The best measure of external efficacy in the panel, "People like me don't have any say about what government does," is not included in the first wave of the Socialization Panel and so is not included in the analysis. However, it is not statistically significant in models where it is included. See Craig, Niemi, and Silver (1990) and Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991) for more information on measurement of efficacy.

respondents than within individuals, and is not significant in the second model after the inclusion of fixed-effects.

Internal efficacy is followed by two evaluations of the political system's responsiveness to the respondents' behavior or opinions, in the abstract. Individuals who disagree that voting is the only way to have a say in what government does are more likely to persuade in both models. This is unsurprising as it would display a high degree of cognitive dissonance for individuals to continue persuasive or other political behaviors if they believed voting was the only way to make their opinion heard. However, this logic does not extend to beliefs about the actual responsiveness of government officials to public opinion, and the third efficacy measure, "How much attention do you feel the government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do?" is not significant in either model. This indicates that persuasion is more strongly related to an individual's beliefs about their own capacity for action than to their expectation that the political system will respond to their participation.

The last three variables under political engagement are a set of dummy variables capturing strength of partisan affiliation, with strong partisan as the baseline category.[70] The negative and statistically significant coefficients for all three variables in both models indicate that individuals with weak or no party attachments are less likely to try to persuade than individuals with strong party ties. The positive effect of strong partisan identification is expected, given that strong partisans are likely to have more stable attitudes and strong convictions in their beliefs to form the basis of persuasive participation.

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[70] Party affiliation (Republican/Democrat) is not a significant predictor of attempts to persuade – strength of opinion matters much more than content. Party affiliation is omitted from the analysis to avoid collinearity arising from the overlapping "true independent" category that is used in both sets of variables.

The next variables are indicators of the likelihood that respondents have regular social interactions with others that would provide them more opportunity to persuade. Being married, employed, and frequently attending church have no effect on persuasive participation, while organizational membership is statistically significant in the first model, but no longer significant once fixed effects are included. Although Mutz (2006) finds that exposure to political disagreement is most likely to come from coworkers and least likely to come from membership in civic organizations, this is not strongly supported by the data, as employment status is not a statistically significant predictor of within-subject persuasive behavior. Rather, this is evidence that modeling disagreement in a discussion network is not akin to modeling persuasive behavior in a discussion network.

On the other hand, models of social capital expect organizational membership to positively encourage political participation (Putnam 2000; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), and to make participation more powerful (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012). When evaluated alongside opinion strength and internal efficacy, which are also only significant in the model without fixed effects, the picture that emerges is one of important variation between (rather than *within*) respondents, where individuals who have strong beliefs about the world, feel confident in their ability to understand politics, and proactively belong to civic, community, or professional organizations are the most likely to persuade. However, as these factors do not explain variation in persuasive behavior *within* subjects over time (Model 2), it is unlikely that increasing group membership would lead directly to more persuasive participation.

The final section represents demographics, most of which are omitted for the second model because there is little or no variance within individuals over time. As expected,

income is not an essential resource for persuasive behavior, and it is not a significant predictor of persuasion in the first model (between subjects). In fact, in the second model, increased income is actually negatively related to the likelihood of persuasive behavior, when explaining variation within subjects over time. As already shown, older people are less likely to persuade, and this effect persists after the inclusion of a number of other control variables. In yet another demonstration of a persistent gender gap (e.g., Hansen 1997), women are less likely to persuade. Interestingly, white respondents are also less likely to persuade, which leaves an open question for future research to corroborate and explain.[71] Finally, more educated individuals are more likely to try to persuade others, which is expected based on the well-documented relationship between political engagement and education.

Overall, the results of these two models indicate that individuals who are predisposed to care about politics, who are informed, who have strong opinions, and who believe that they are capable of understanding and having a say in the political process are more likely to engage in persuasive behavior. On the other hand, a few individual traits do not seem to have a strong relationship, such as self-confidence, frequency of social contact, or belief that government officials will actually respond to the attitudes they express.

VII. Conclusion and Discussion

The analysis presented here uses data from the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel to describe persuasive behavior, focused on the Who, What, When, and Why of persuasive endeavors in the United States over time. Returning to the theoretical model presented in Chapter 2, it is useful to examine how individual, social, and political factors influence

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[71] I found a similar race effect in the National Annenberg Election Studies data from 2008, but I assumed it was just due to the racial context of that particular election. The re-occurrence of this reverse racial gap is an open opportunity for further research.

persuasive participation, and how these factors compare to the expectations of other forms of campaign participation. An important element of this discussion is identifying the gaps in the story where further research is needed to provide empirical evidence for (or against) the theory presented here.

First, individual traits. As the analysis in the "why" section demonstrates, there are some key individual-level features without which it is hard to imagine persuasion occurring. People who are interested in politics, have some information, have relatively strong opinions, and see themselves as capable political actors are more likely to try to persuade than individuals lacking these qualities. These individual predispositions are especially important for a behavior where traditional economic resources, such as time and money, are not strictly necessary for enabling engagement. In fact, one interpretation of the disparate trends for voting and persuading as citizens age is that the additional time left for political participation after people finish raising families and enter retirement is beneficial for time-costly endeavors such as voting, but does not provide the same boon to time-neutral activities such as persuasion.

Second, individual traits interact with social norms as individuals determine whether or not to take a persuasive approach to a political topic of conversation. Social capital or political mobilization are often seen as important factors driving the decision to participate in politics. Indeed, most people do not seek out opportunities to donate money or work for a campaign unless they are invited to do so. Additional data are necessary to fully address the role of mobilization and social capital in persuasion, but the data from the YPSP cast doubt on the extant expectation that having additional social contacts facilitates political persuasion.

That said, most people persuade multiple categories of individuals (friends, family members, and coworkers), indicating that persuasive conversations are happening in a variety of interpersonal contexts. The existing depictions of the social sources of political disagreement (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Mutz 2006) do not line up with the nature of persuasive participation described here. The particular ideological (dis)agreement or interpersonal relationship with the specific discussion partner is perhaps not as central to the decision to persuade as the perception that persuasion is a generally appropriate way to have a political conversation. The high incidence of repeated persuasion of the same relationship type demonstrates that individuals are comfortable returning to that mode of conversation. Additional exploration into the existence and impact of localized norms of political discussion is warranted, especially in light of the potential for generational effects hinted at by this data, and by the use of social media for political discussion that arose after the completion of the YPSP.

Which brings us to the third element: the political context acts as a filter to determine which issues have enough political relevance to merit persuasive behavior. If an issue that an individual already cares about is also politically salient, they are more likely to attempt to persuade than if there is mismatch between their own priorities and the current political context. One bit of evidence for this comes from the "what" analysis, where the most common topic of persuasion is presidential candidates. Those attempts to persuade are happening in an electoral context where the candidates are identified and salient. Political campaigns or other current events put issues and candidates into the public sphere in such a way that discussion – and, in turn, persuasion – about those issues becomes natural and expected; whereas persuasion about other issues would be incongruous. However, there is an

important causality question that is not answered here. It is possible that the political context forces individuals to think, form opinions about, and discuss issues in such a way that they are then motivated to persuade about them. While it is a chicken-and-egg problem, it would be useful to identify whether media coverage and political climate can be enough to motivate individuals to persuade who otherwise would not, or whether it only serves to activate individuals who are already predisposed to persuasive behavior.

Interpersonal influence is an undeniably important element of how people form opinions and make political decisions. However, the mechanism by which that happens – interpersonal persuasion – has not been carefully examined in its own right. By taking a close look at persuasion in practice, the analysis of this chapter demonstrates that persuasion is characterized by unique features that make it distinct from the other forms of political behavior with which it is usually scaled. This chapter emphasized the internal dynamics of persuasive behavior, with particular attention to individual-level changes over time. However, external social and political cues also play a role in motivating or inhibiting persuasive behavior. Chapter 5 continues to examine the "why" of interpersonal persuasion by comparing the dynamics of persuasion to other forms of campaign participation over the course of a single presidential election.

Chapter 5: Why Do Voters Try to Persuade Each Other? Interpersonal Persuasion as Discursive Participation

When political persuasion is modeled alongside other forms of campaign participation, the underlying assumption is that it shares an end goal or motivational purpose with the other forms of campaign behavior. It is common sense to expect that individuals who donate money or spend time working for a campaign do so because they hope to – and believe they can in some small way – improve their preferred candidate's likelihood of winning. If attempts to persuade others are indeed correctly understood as a form of campaign behavior, then there should be evidence that individuals try to persuade others because they expect to make a difference in the overall outcome of the election. However, if persuasive behavior is best understood as a form of discursive participation, the end goals of attempts to persuade others would be related to individual engagement and interpersonal dynamics, rather than to electoral gains. While very little research in either the campaign participation or discursive participation literatures specifically models persuasive behavior as a distinct phenomenon, they each provide a useful set of expectations for what might motivate attempts to persuade others. Using data from the 2008 National Annenberg Election Studies Phone Survey, this chapter explores the motivations for self-reported persuasive behavior and compares these predictors to models of other traditional forms of campaign participation.

Comparing the competing expectations derived from the theoretical frameworks of these two dimensions of political participation and testing the implications can improve our understanding of what motivates some people to attempt to persuade others, and, eventually, of the role of interpersonal persuasion in the democratic process. Although a complete inventory of all possible reasons why some people choose to engage in persuasive behavior

and others do not is beyond the scope of this chapter, focusing on a few key distinctions between campaign participation and discursive participation allows for identification of the dimension of participation to which persuasive behavior is most closely connected. Furthermore, connecting persuasive behavior to these broader dimensions of participation connects it to existing literature in a way that generates a more robust understanding of the nature and effects of interpersonal political persuasion in the mass public.

I. Theory and Hypotheses

In an effort to compare and contrast the motivations of persuasion with those of other forms of campaign participation, this chapter examines four main explanatory factors: 1) Reactivity to the electoral context, 2) Responsiveness to campaign mobilization efforts, 3) Differential impacts of internal and external efficacy, and 4) Social norms about political disagreement. The different perspectives of campaign participation and discursive participation generate diverging expectations for the role of each of these explanations in motivating persuasive behavior. Comparing persuasive behavior with other forms of participation in each of these areas provides substantial evidence that persuasion is more akin to discursive participation than campaign participation.

Reactivity to the Electoral Context

Campaign participation, as it has been defined here, is directly connected to the outcome of elections.[72] Therefore, it follows that the ebb and flow of campaign participation will closely track the ebb and flow of the electoral cycle. Broadly speaking, more competitive

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[72] Although this usually refers to the election of a particular candidate to office, it may also include issue-based voting opportunities, such as propositions, referenda, or bond elections.

elections are expected to increase voter turnout and other forms of political interest and activism (Donovan 2007; Patterson and Caldeira 1983; Tolbert and Franko 2014). Although there is very little research that directly addresses attempts to persuade others as a distinct electoral behavior, there is a small set of studies that explore the situations under which the particular campaign environment is able to reduce the persistent gender gap in reported attempts to persuade others. Hansen (1997) finds that when more women run in well-publicized races for high-profile offices that women voters become more likely to engage in persuasive behavior (what she calls "political proselytizing"). These findings have been qualified by Atkeson (2003) who shows that female candidates only increase rates of attempted persuasion if the race is competitive, and by Stokes-Brown and Neal (2008) who conclude that female candidates motivate more persuasive attempts among women voters if they emphasize economic issues rather than traditional "women's issues." In all three studies, and consistent with the effects on other forms of campaign participation, the authors find particular circumstances in which features of the campaigns are able to increase rates of persuasive behavior.

Highly competitive elections attract more media attention and public interest, and as political discussion is a manifestation of political interest, rates of political expression also increase in competitive electoral environments (Settle et al. 2015). However, it is also worth pointing out that in an era of declining electoral competitiveness at sub-national levels (McDonald and Samples 2006; Donovan 2007), aggregate rates of attempts to persuade seem to be increasing (Thorson 2014). Because discursive participation is often disconnected from the actual institutions of politics, interpersonal political discussion may also be much less reactive to shifts in the electoral environment than other forms of campaign participation.

Discussion is not constrained in the same cyclical manner as, say, financial donations or displaying lawn signs, and may occur in a more uniform way throughout the election cycle. Therefore, if attempts to persuade others are a form of campaign behavior, there should be a high degree of reactivity to the electoral context such that people are more likely to attempt to persuade at key moments in the election when their efforts will have more impact. By contrast, if it is a form of discursive participation, it may still increase in more competitive races, but should be much less reactive to the particular developments and timing of a particular electoral cycle.

Campaign Contact

An axiom of political behavior research is that people, even if they have the proper resources and interest in politics, are unlikely to participate unless they are asked (Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Campaign mobilization efforts are a central component to explaining levels of campaign participation. Therefore, if political persuasion is a form of campaign participation, then direct contact by a campaign organization should increase an individual's likelihood of trying to persuade others. Indeed, this correlation has been found in previous research, where individuals who have been contacted by a campaign are much more likely to report having attempted to influence someone else's vote than individuals who have not been contacted by a campaign organization (McClurg 2004, 419; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 171).

On the other hand, direct contact by a campaign has been shown to have no impact on the reported frequency of political discussion (McClurg 2004). To the extent that frequency of political discussion is indicative of discursive participation, then, campaign mobilization is not expected to be a strong motivator of discursive participation. The data available to

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McClurg (2004) and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) only allow for estimation of correlational models, and therefore the demonstrated increase in persuasive behavior may be a spurious artifact of campaigns' efforts to target voters who are already likely supporters. From this perspective, if interpersonal persuasion is a form of discursive participation, then campaign mobilization should be a much less important motivation for persuasion than it is for other forms of campaign participation.

Internal and External Efficacy

Political efficacy is a measure of "citizens' perceptions of powerfulness (or powerlessness) in the political realm" (Morrell 2003, 589). It is traditionally divided into external and internal efficacy, where external efficacy refers to the belief that government actors and institutions respond to the political will of ordinary citizens, and internal efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own capacity to be an effective political participant. External efficacy has a prima facie connection to campaign participation. Even though most voters are probably aware that their votes have an infinitesimally small chance of influencing the outcome of an election, voters who take the additional steps to display signs, donate money, attend rallies, and work for a campaign probably have some belief that these actions will improve their preferred candidate's likelihood of winning an election. However, citizens may talk a lot about politics without any belief that the political system is going to respond to the opinions they express. Rather, discursive participation has a much stronger expected link to internal efficacy, because a willingness to talk about politics requires some degree of confidence in one's own capacity to understand complex political issues. Therefore, a stronger relationship with external efficacy would indicate that persuasion is more like

campaign participation, whereas a stronger relationship with internal efficacy would indicate that it is more similar to discursive participation.

Existing research provides mixed evidence on this front. Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) use an undifferentiated scale of political efficacy and find no effect on rates of interpersonal persuasion attempts. In a more direct test using a specific scale of internal efficacy, Hansen (1997) finds a statistically significant positive relationship between internal efficacy, which she calls "political self-esteem," and attempts to persuade. Similarly, women's lower levels of confidence generally has been linked with their decreased participation and leadership in group discussions (see Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014). To the extent that persuasion is considered to be a form of discursive participation, it is expected to be highly related to internal efficacy, although it may be much less directly related to external efficacy.

Social Norms

One way in which discursive participation is fundamentally different than many other forms of political participation is the interpersonal nature of the activity. Voting, donating money, even displaying a sign or working for a candidate, can be done without much direct interaction with other people in one's social network, and possibly little exposure to disagreement. Discursive participation, on the other hand, requires a direct engagement with other people. Even as important as social norms are for motivating voting and other forms of participation (Bond et al. 2012; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008; Lake and Huckfeldt 1998), there is substantially higher potential for social norms to influence the frequency and content of political discussion. People are acutely aware of social norms for conversation, and

violations of those norms negatively impacts political trust and perceptions of democratic legitimacy (Mutz and Reeves 2005; Mutz 2007, 2016).

Additionally, the decision to engage in political conversation depends on the perceived political makeup of an individual's social network (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1988). Gerber, Huber, and Dougherty's (2012) experimental work demonstrates that people will actively avoid discussing politics in situations of known disagreement. Kim, Wyatt, and Katz (1999) also find that individuals who feel they hold a majority opinion are more likely to try to persuade those who disagree with them. However, proponents of deliberative democracy hope that individuals who are exposed to reasoned disagreement become more open-minded and better able to articulate their own and competing viewpoints (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009; Mendelberg 2002), and specific evidence for this outcome has been found as a result of exposure to attempted persuasion (Thorson 2014). An individual's perceptions of the attitudes of their discussion partner and whether disagreement is socially acceptable in political conversation in their discussion network is likely to have a strong effect on the decision to engage in discussion, and, in the context of that discussion, to express a different viewpoint, and even try to persuade others to share their view.

By contrast, the effect of social norms is likely to be quite different for campaign participation. Good citizenship norms motivate people to participate in politics, especially when they are in social networks with other highly engaged citizens (Lake and Huckfeldt 1998). But norms created by disagreement in political disagreement may have a negative effect on campaign participation. Mutz (2006) argues that exposure to political disagreement leads individuals to become ambivalent and withdraw from other forms of political activity while individuals in relatively homogeneous networks will be more active participants,

although this finding is contested (see Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie 2014). Discursive participation is expected to occur more frequently as a result of regular exposure to political disagreement, whereas campaign participation may be inhibited by such exposure.

Control Variables: Individual Traits

There are a number of empirically established individual-level traits that are also important foundations for understanding patterns of political participation generally and persuasive behavior specifically. Hansen (1997) concludes that political interest is the most important factor in motivating attempts to persuade others, a finding that is replicated in Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009). Indeed, interest is both an essential individual-level trait and the likely causal mechanism for how changes in the external campaign environment lead to increases in political participation. Additionally, the related concepts of political information and attention to political news media are important to account for, as knowing about politically salient topics and having information to support your position are essential for advocating a particular position.

Resource-based models of campaign participation often find that individuals with more income, education, information, and time are more likely to participate in electoral politics (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In an early study specifically addressing the gender gap in attempts to persuade, Cirksena (1996) finds that differences in news consumption and, to a lesser extent, education are strongly related to persuasive behavior, but marital, parental, and employment statuses (proxies for time) were not significant predictors. Similarly, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) report a positive relationship between income and attempts to persuade others. However, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) demonstrate that the effects of income, education, and race disappear

from their model once indicators of "political capital" (efficacy, trust, knowledge, interest, attention, and tolerance) are included in the model.[73] Overall, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini find that discursive participation is plagued by far fewer of the resource-based socio-economic biases that characterize campaign participation.

One final motivating factor, attitude strength, is expected to be relevant for motivating persuasive behavior under both the discursive and campaign participation views. Separate from actual content, attitude strength refers to the durability of an attitude and the impact it has on actual behavior (Krosnick and Petty 1995). Individuals who have stronger opinions, in this case referring to those who see a great deal of difference between the alternatives and hold their views with a high degree of certainty, are expected to be more likely to try to persuade others to take their side. Conversely, it is hard to imagine someone who sees little difference between the alternatives or is unsure about their own opinion trying to shape the opinions of others.

II. Data and Methods

The data analyzed here come from the 2008 National Annenberg Election Studies Phone Survey (NAES08-Phone), which is a project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The survey was a rolling cross section (RCS) survey of 57,976 respondents conducted from December 17, 2007 through November 3, 2008. All survey respondents completed a detailed demographic profile and were asked questions covering similar topic areas, but the specific content was updated regularly in response to developments throughout the campaign cycle. The RCS design usefully allows for the

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[73] Of these measures of political capital, only knowledge, interest, and attention are significant predictors of both forms of persuasive behavior (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009, 56).

tracking of political persuasion throughout the complete election cycle, rather than a single retrospective recall of persuasive behavior at any point in the campaign. Immediately following Election Day, a random sample of 3,737 respondents who had been interviewed during the three months prior to the general election also completed a second re-interview survey. Because of the nature of the re-interview sample, and the questionnaire design, the re-interview sample used in the analysis is limited to only individuals who reported voting for one of the major party candidates.[74]

To the extent that the results are comparable between the RCS and re-interview samples, there is added confidence in the robustness of the findings, specifically that the identified differences between persuaders and non-persuaders are not an artifact of differences between voters and non-voters. Additionally, the use of various subgroups to specify different models throughout the election cycle, both by subdividing the RCS data by election phase and by comparing to the re-interview sample, safeguards against the possibility of overfitting the model to the unusual characteristics of a particular sample. The high level of consistency between comparable models based on different subsamples gives added confidence in the generalizability of these results.

Dependent Variables

First, it is necessary to explicitly define *persuasion* as a form of political behavior, rather than a process or an outcome. Previous work on persuasion in political science has largely focused on what makes something "persuasive." Most research therefore defines a persuasive message as one that actually results in a change or reinforcement of the message

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[74] This is not expected to significantly bias the results, but it is important to keep in mind when comparing models from the pre-election RCS to the post-election re-interview sample. Additional details can be found in Appendix A.

recipient's opinion or behavior; conversely, a non-persuasive message is one that fails to produce any change. For example, dual-process models of information processing or attitude formation (Lodge and Taber 2013; Petty and Cacioppo 1986) emphasize the receiver's reaction to the message, most of which is expected to be automatic and subconscious, and which only occasionally constitutes reasoned or intentional evaluation of an argument.[75]

By contrast, thinking about persuasion as a political *behavior* shifts the focus to the sender's conscious decision to employ a message with the explicit purpose of influencing the receiver's attitudes in some way. When thinking about attempts to persuade in the context of everyday political conversations, the psychological engagement demonstrated by the message sender is the same regardless of whether the attempt is successful. The message sender has chosen to expend some psychological effort, and perhaps risks incurring social or emotional costs, in an effort to change the attitudes or actions of their discussion partner, and these costs are greater than those of discussing politics without trying to persuade others. Therefore, persuasion is measured here based on reported intention: if survey respondents reported a self-aware attempt to influence the vote of someone else when they talked about politics, they engaged in persuasive behavior, even if their discussion partner was not aware of the attempt and no opinions changed as a result of the interaction.

In the RCS survey, 26,525 respondents were asked whether they had tried to influence someone else's presidential election vote. This question was also asked of all re-interview

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[75] These theories do not directly address the intentions or motivations of the message sender as they craft a persuasive or non-persuasive message. However, some portion of persuasive attempts may be more or less automatic responses by individuals who habitually take a particular position. Future work should examine the possibility of extending Lodge and Taber's (2013) framework to message senders. For the present purposes, and because the question wording asks about an intentional expenditure of effort, it is assumed that attempts to persuade are a "System 2," reasoned and intentional process on the part of the message sender.

survey respondents. Throughout the course of the election cycle, the NAES08-Phone asked six different versions of the question. An important advantage to the NAES08-Phone questions is that all six versions limit the respondents to thinking about whether they "talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates," which provides consistency in the subject matter for the persuasive behavior. The full text of each of these questions is available in Appendix B, along with analysis of how question wording affects response rates.

However, there are two key factors which are important to keep in mind when evaluating the statistical analysis that follows. The first is that participation rates of all kinds are higher during the general election than during the primary, which makes it difficult to combine responses across phases of the election cycle. Second, there were two different temporal parameters provided to respondents throughout the survey. During the active campaign phases of the election cycle, respondents were asked about their persuasive activity *in the past week;* whereas interviews conducted after the elections asked about persuasion *during the presidential campaign.*[76] As expected, individuals who are asked only about the past week report persuasive behavior at lower rates than individuals who are asked about the entire primary or general campaigns. Because of these campaign cycle and question wording effects, I run separate models to predict responses to different versions of the question.

In order to compare persuasion to the other forms of campaign participation, parallel models are run with a dummy dependent variable indicating whether the respondent participated in any other form of campaign behavior. As opposed to a count of campaign activities, this specification allows for the use of logit models and therefore provides the most

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[76] Complete details about the timing and wording of the various questions can be found in the supplemental information.

direct comparison to the models predicting persuasion. The additional campaign participation questions ask the respondents whether they have: 1) given money to a presidential candidate; 2) done any work for one of the presidential candidates; 3) gone to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that; or 4) wore a presidential campaign button, put a campaign sticker on their car, or placed a sign in their window or in front of their house. Slightly different forms of the questions were asked at different points in the campaign, and the differences in temporal scope mirror the variations in the persuasion questions. Unfortunately, only two of the four forms of campaign participation were asked about during the primary campaign period, and so I do not provide the comparison to campaign behaviors for that phase.

Independent Variables

The independent variables used in this analysis are also drawn from the pool of survey questions asked of each NAES08-Phone respondent. Because different questions or versions of questions were asked at different points in the RCS survey, all independent variables of interest cannot be included simultaneously. For the most part, however, other questions in the survey adopt the same temporal parameters as the persuasion questions (behaviors in the past week, or summative over the course of the primary/general campaigns). Additionally, related sets of questions that may be useful when testing a broad theory were often asked concurrently.

There are a number of key independent variables by which I distinguish between the motivations of discursive participation versus campaign participation, in accordance with the explanations provided in the theory section. First, if persuasion is reactive to the electoral context, then during the primary election cycle the difference between a decided Republican

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primary and a very competitive Democratic primary should lead to a partisan difference in persuasive efforts. If no difference exists, persuasion may not be driven by the competitiveness of the campaign. Second, if persuasion is a form of campaign behavior that responds to external motivations, then contact by political campaigns should result in increased levels of persuasive behavior. Third, internal and external efficacy can help distinguish the nature of motivation for participation. Campaign participation is expected to have a positive relationship with external efficacy. By contrast, to the extent that it is a form of discursive participation, persuasive behavior should have a stronger positive relationship with internal efficacy and little or no relationship with external efficacy. Finally, exposure to disagreement and attempted persuasion by other social contexts suggest social norms that are tolerant of persuasive activity, and are expected to be positively related to reports of persuasive activity.

Additionally, control variables are included to account for four broad sets of alternative explanations. [77] 1) Individual resources, including education, income, and political information both about the candidates specifically and politics generally. 2) Campaign engagement, including attention to the campaign, on-line and off-line political discussion, following campaign news, and watching general election debates (re-interview sample only). 3) Attitude strength, including strength of party attachment,[78] difference in thermometer ratings of the candidates, and timing and certainty of the vote decision (re-interview sample only). 4) Demographics, including race, gender, age, and religiosity.

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[77] A complete list, including descriptive statistics, is available in Appendix C.

[78] Keith, et al. (1992) find that independent "leaners" and weak partisans have similar rates of persuasion, while strong partisans are more likely to persuade and true independents are much less likely to engage in the behavior. For this reason, independent "leaners" are included as partisans in the party identification variable.

III. Results and Discussion

Reactivity to the Electoral Context

If the end goal of political persuasion is to influence the outcome of an election, perhaps by getting more people to vote for a particular candidate on Election Day, then it should respond in predictable ways to the ebb and flow of the campaign cycle. If persuasion is reactive to the electoral context in this way, there should be higher rates of persuasion as the election gets closer, more persuasion in a hotly contested election, and little to no persuasion in the days and weeks following Election Day. There is some preliminary evidence that this is the case. [79] However, on further examination these differences are not nearly as significant or robust as might be expected. As already noted, rates of interpersonal persuasion attempts are somewhat higher prior to the general campaign than during the primary campaign season; but in real terms the difference between primary and general election attempts to persuade is surprisingly small, only 1.5 percentage points. Comparative rates of each form of campaign participation over the election cycle are presented in Figure 1.

The most striking feature of Figure 1 is the exceptionally high rate of reported attempts to persuade during the primary campaign season *by individuals in states that had already had their primary election.* If persuasion is understood as a form of campaign participation, where the ultimate goal is changing the way other people vote, then these individuals are being asked about persuasion when their primary election is over, the general election is still

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[79] Since primary elections are not concurrent, some individuals during the primary campaign season were interviewed before their primary election occurred, while others were interviewed after their primary had taken place. The control variable in the second model of Table 1 indicates a statistically significant difference, where individuals interviewed after their state's primary had already occurred were less likely to report trying to persuade someone else in the past week. However, this same control variable is not statistically significant in all models, such as Model 1 of Table 5.1, and Models 1, 4, and 5 of Table 5.3.

at least six months away, and the candidates for the general election have not yet been decided (the Obama/Clinton race was still underway.) In this context, there is probably not much of an electoral purpose for trying to influence someone else's vote in interpersonal conversation. However, 23% of respondents still report an attempt to influence someone else's vote during the past week. Only three percent fewer people report trying to persuade after their primary election than before it.[80]

Figure 5.1: Rates of Campaign Activity over the Election Cycle
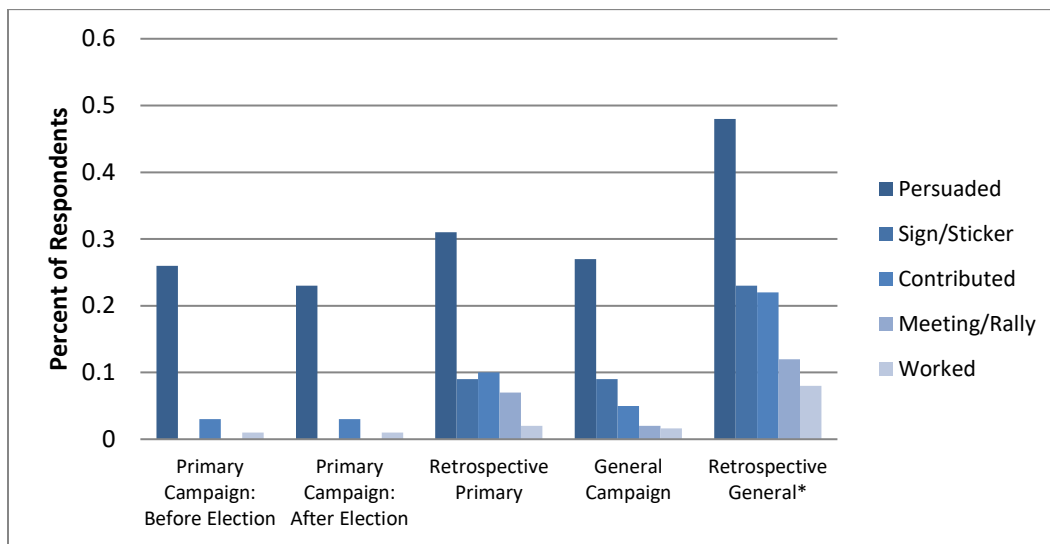
The retrospective general data are limited to individuals who reported voting for McCain or Obama in the general election.
**The primary campaign and general campaign questions ask only about participation in the past week, while the retrospective questions ask about the campaign as a whole.*

If individuals were rational actors with an end goal of influencing election outcomes, participation should be much more responsive to the campaign cycle than it is. These results make much more sense if persuasion is instead seen as a form of psychological engagement, or a way that some people process political information and ideas within their discussion

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[80] For a discussion of alternative explanations for the high rate of persuasion after the primary election, see Appendix D.

networks. In this case, persuasion in the discussion network is not about the electoral

outcomes, and so may occur at any time, as individuals perhaps try to reduce their own

political uncertainty, process new information, navigate disagreement, achieve consensus in

their discussion networks, or adhere to norms of political conversation.

Further evidence that persuasion does not react to the broader electoral context is drawn

from a unique feature of the 2008 primary election. In the 2008 primary season, the

Republican candidate, John McCain, became the presumptive nominee relatively early in the

process, on March 4. The Democratic candidates endured a much longer race, and Barack

Obama did not become the presumptive nominee until June 3. This leaves a three month

period in the primary season where the Republican nominee was decided, but there was still a

close contest for the Democratic nomination. If having their preferred candidate win the

election is a motivating factor for individuals who try to influence the votes of others, when

looking only at this specific window, it is expected to see higher rates of persuasion among

Democrats than among Republicans. However, a simple comparison of means test comparing

the rates of persuasion between Democratic and Republican respondents who had not yet had

their primary and were interviewed during this period indicates no statistically significant

difference between the two groups (N=628, mean diff. = .05, p=.14).

Continuing the analysis, Table 5.1 reports the results of nine logistic regressions which

predict persuasion and other forms of behavior through the various phases of the election

cycle. Aside from the primary campaign (Models 1 and 2), the results are paired by the phase

in the election cycle, so that there are comparable models predicting persuasion and other

forms of campaign behavior for each phase of the election. The key independent variables

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Table 5.1: Logit Models of Persuasion and Campaign Activity over the Election

	Primary Campaign		Retrospective Primary		General Campaign				Retrospective General	
	Persuasion		Persuasion	Other Participation	Persuasion		Other Participation		Persuasion	Other Participation
	(1) Mar 11 – Jun 3	(2) Jan 11 – May 29	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
External Instrumental Motivations										
Democrat	0.08 (0.09)	0.06 (0.06)	0.09 (0.11)	0.55 (0.14)***	0.00 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.07)	0.39 (0.11)***	0.27 (0.10)**	-0.29 (0.11)**	0.26 (0.11)*
Independent	-0.50 (0.18)**	-0.55 (0.12)***	-0.57 (0.24)*	-0.74 (0.36)*	-0.36 (0.17)*	-0.36 (0.16)*	-0.52 (0.27)	-0.86 (0.27)**	-0.83 (0.23)***	-0.50 (0.26)
Contacted by Any Campaign	0.51 (0.12)***	0.37 (0.08)***	0.75 (0.11)***	0.97 (0.13)***	0.19 (0.08)*		0.88 (0.10)***			
Contacted by Preferred Campaign									0.50 (0.12)***	1.32 (0.12)***
Contacted by Another Campaign									-0.36 (0.15)*	-0.38 (0.16)*
Internal Efficacy 2			0.26 (0.16)	0.14 (0.19)		0.14 (0.11)		-0.07 (0.14)	0.21 (0.17)	-0.17 (0.19)
Internal Efficacy 3			-0.41 (0.87)	-1.30 (1.22)		0.66 (0.48)		0.26 (0.58)	-0.10 (0.83)	-0.76 (0.94)
Internal Efficacy 4			0.35 (0.17)*	-0.10 (0.21)		0.12 (0.12)		-0.00 (0.15)	0.28 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.20)
Internal Efficacy 5			0.42 (0.17)*	-0.01 (0.20)		0.25 (0.11)*		-0.08 (0.15)	0.38 (0.18)*	0.14 (0.19)
External Efficacy 2			-0.09 (0.14)	0.17 (0.18)		-0.05 (0.09)		0.16 (0.13)	-0.24 (0.15)	0.14 (0.16)
External Efficacy 3			0.01 (0.74)	1.05 (0.76)		-0.09 (0.47)		-0.42 (0.77)	-0.79 (0.68)	-0.85 (0.79)
External Efficacy 4			0.00 (0.15)	0.25 (0.18)		-0.04 (0.10)		0.19 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.15)	0.09 (0.16)
External Efficacy 5			-0.11 (0.16)	0.12 (0.19)		0.00 (0.10)		0.46 (0.13)***	-0.06 (0.15)	0.32 (0.16)*
Social Norms										
Someone Else Tried to Influence R's Vote									1.37 (0.10)***	0.19 (0.10)
Resources										
General Political Knowledge	0.02 (0.16)	-0.11 (0.11)	0.41 (0.21)*	0.27 (0.25)	0.07 (0.14)	-0.01 (0.14)	0.18 (0.19)	-0.09 (0.17)	0.49 (0.20)*	0.12 (0.22)
Candidate Policy Position Knowledge	0.66 (0.22)**	0.42 (0.13)**	1.06 (0.32)**	0.91 (0.39)*	0.49 (0.20)*	0.65 (0.19)***	0.70 (0.26)**	1.21 (0.25)***	-0.05 (0.26)	0.38 (0.28)
Education	-0.04 (0.02)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.03)*	0.01 (0.03)
Income	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Campaign Engagement										
Follow Campaign Closely	0.25 (0.07)***	0.41 (0.04)***	0.50 (0.09)***	0.29 (0.11)**	0.40 (0.06)***	0.41 (0.06)***	0.42 (0.09)***	0.50 (0.08)***	0.26 (0.10)**	0.43 (0.11)***
Days Discussed Politics	0.26 (0.02)***	0.26 (0.01)***	0.13 (0.02)***	0.10 (0.03)***	0.22 (0.02)***	0.20 (0.02)***	0.15 (0.02)***	0.14 (0.02)***	0.10 (0.02)***	0.08 (0.02)***
Days of Campaign Info: Radio	0.03 (0.02)*	0.03 (0.01)***	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05 (0.01)***	0.05 (0.01)***	0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***
Days of Campaign Info: TV	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)*	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)
Days of Campaign Info: Paper	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	0.08 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)*	0.05 (0.02)**	0.04 (0.01)**	0.01 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)*
Days of Campaign Info: Online	0.03 (0.02)*	0.03 (0.01)**	0.02 (0.02)	0.07 (0.02)**	0.03 (0.01)*	0.04 (0.01)***	0.04 (0.02)*	0.05 (0.01)***	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Discussed Politics Online	0.73 (0.12)***	0.67 (0.07)***							0.44 (0.12)***	0.39 (0.12)**
Num. Debates Watched									0.17 (0.04)***	0.11 (0.04)**

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Table 5.1, cont'd.

	(1) Mar 11 – Jun 3	(2) Jun 11 – May 29	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Attitude Strength										
Weak Partisan	0.11 (0.12)	0.06 (0.07)	-0.08 (0.15)	0.23 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.10)	-0.09 (0.10)	0.10 (0.15)	0.15 (0.14)	0.19 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.15)
Strong Partisan	0.54 (0.10)***	0.37 (0.06)***	0.16 (0.13)	0.50 (0.16)**	0.12 (0.08)	0.16 (0.08)*	0.49 (0.12)***	0.62 (0.11)***	0.44 (0.12)***	0.55 (0.12)***
McCain/Obama Therm Diff			0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)**	0.12 (0.01)***	0.12 (0.01)***	0.15 (0.02)***	0.15 (0.01)***	0.11 (0.02)***	0.08 (0.02)***
Ever Changed Mind About Vote									-0.17 (0.12)	-0.11 (0.12)
When Made Voting Decision									0.17 (0.04)***	0.21 (0.05)***
Demographics										
Female	-0.13 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.11)	0.00 (0.13)	-0.22 (0.07)**	-0.19 (0.07)**	0.01 (0.09)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.39 (0.10)***	0.08 (0.10)
Age	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)***
Education	-0.04 (0.02)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.03)*	0.01 (0.03)
Income	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Frequency of Church Attendance	0.09 (0.03)**	0.07 (0.02)***	0.09 (0.04)*	-0.06 (0.05)	0.07 (0.03)*	0.08 (0.03)**	0.07 (0.04)*	0.06 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)
Black	-0.29 (0.14)*	-0.09 (0.09)	-0.33 (0.20)	1.19 (0.21)***	-0.15 (0.13)	-0.36 (0.13)**	0.93 (0.14)***	0.89 (0.13)***	-0.46 (0.19)*	0.62 (0.20)**
Hispanic	-0.10 (0.17)	0.15 (0.10)	-0.21 (0.23)	0.13 (0.27)	0.29 (0.15)	0.30 (0.14)*	0.34 (0.20)	0.14 (0.18)	-0.18 (0.24)	0.20 (0.27)
Asian	-0.12 (0.35)	-0.07 (0.21)	0.46 (0.37)	-1.53 (0.77)*	0.01 (0.30)	0.10 (0.27)	-0.26 (0.48)	0.10 (0.38)	-0.94 (0.51)	0.02 (0.55)
Other Race	0.30 (0.22)	0.22 (0.15)	0.22 (0.27)	0.24 (0.32)	-0.02 (0.21)	-0.01 (0.19)	0.46 (0.24)	0.41 (0.23)	-0.33 (0.31)	0.60 (0.32)
Interviewed After Primary	-0.21 (0.11)	-0.19 (0.05)***	0.01 (0.12)							
Question Wording				0.23 (0.06)***						
Intercept	-2.80 (0.31)***	-3.16 (0.19)***	-3.58 (0.93)***	-6.72 (0.64)***	-3.73 (0.28)***	-3.88 (0.28)***	-6.02 (0.40)***	-6.58 (0.39)***	-3.89 (0.49)***	-7.37 (0.57)***
AIC	4270.53	9977.88	2468.92	1875.98	5268.24	5876.55	3457.90	3993.17	2925.91	2690.56
BIC	4430.78	10158.77	2657.11	2065.18	5426.17	6083.36	3618.40	4201.21	3148.87	2913.67
Log Likelihood	-2110.27	-4963.94	-1201.46	-904.99	-2610.12	-2907.27	-1704.95	-1965.59	-1424.95	-1307.28
Deviance	4220.53	9927.88	2402.92	1809.98	5220.24	5814.55	3409.90	3931.17	2849.91	2614.56
Num. obs.	4491	10258	2214	2283	5328	5833	5928	6068	2611	2621

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$; Robust standard errors in parentheses.

are party identification during the primary elections, contact by political campaigns, and internal vs. external efficacy. The results in each of these areas will be addressed in detail in the following sections. The remaining variables are included as controls. Not all variables are available in all periods, but as many control variables as are available are included in each model.

The first model of Table 5.1 presents a logistic regression predicting attempts to persuade, restricted to individuals who were interviewed between March 11 and June 3, 2008.[81] If persuasion is responsive to the campaign environment, would expect to see Democrats in this time frame to have higher rates of persuasion than Republicans. However, there is no statistically significant difference between rates of persuasion for Democrats and Republicans. This indicates that even the substantial contextual difference between a hotly contested Democratic primary and a decided Republican primary did not affect persuasive activity for members of these two groups.

Campaign Contact

Common narratives explaining campaign participation claim that part of how individuals connect their own involvement to broader electoral outcomes comes from contact by campaign organizations or other civic groups (Putnam 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). A direct request from a known contact or campaign organization can tip the scales to motivate participation from those who already have the resources and disposition to do so. But how does campaign contact fare when the requested object is the less tangible effort of the

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[81] These dates are one week after McCain secured the nomination, so that the days leading up to the clinching primaries are not included in the reports of persuasive behavior, to the day before Obama secured the votes for the Democratic nomination.

individual to persuade friends, family, or coworkers to vote for the preferred candidate?

Figure 5.2 depicts the overall percent of respondents who persuaded and participated in other

campaign behaviors, subdivided by whether or not they reported being contacted by any

political campaign. Overall, persuasion is much more common than the other forms of

campaign behavior, and less than half of the individuals who tried to persuade reported

receiving campaign contact. By contrast, approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of

individuals who participated in other ways reported being contacted by a political campaign.

Campaign contact is less likely to adequately explain persuasive participation than other

campaign behaviors.

Figure 5.2: Campaign Contact and Political Participation
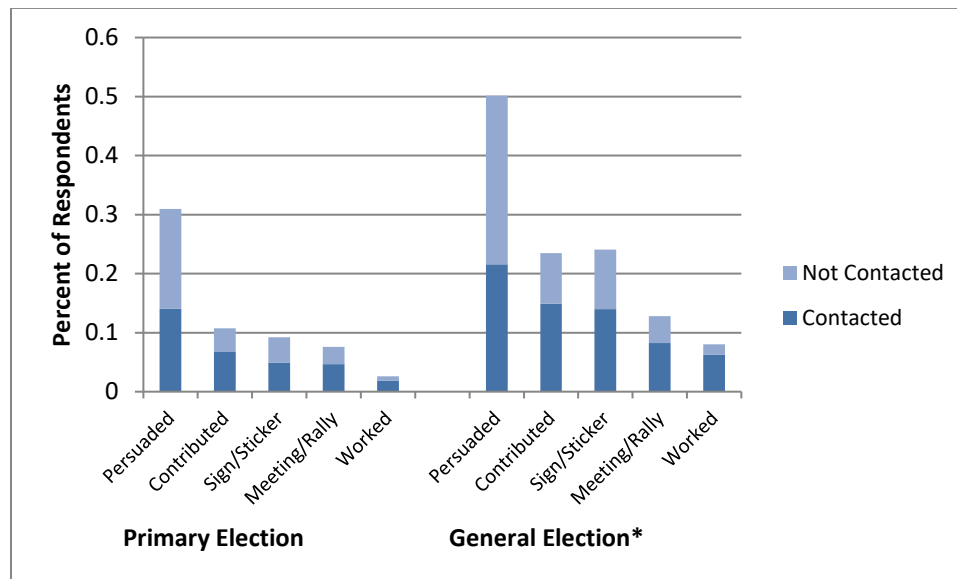
*Note: The General Election sample is limited to individuals who voted for McCain or Obama, which leads to higher reported participation rates for this subsample.

Returning to Table 5.1, and consistent with the expectations from campaign behavior

literature, the four models that predict persuasion for each phase of the campaign (Models 2,

3, 5, and 9) indicate positive and statistically significant relationships between contact by a political campaign and attempts to persuade others. The same is true for the three models that predict traditional campaign participation (Models 4, 7, and 10). Overall, direct campaign contact does appear to have a positive relationship with persuasive behavior, which is consistent with the expectations of the campaign participation theory.

However, these results are only correlational, and it is well-documented that campaigns selectively mobilize individuals who are already supportive of the candidate and likely to participate (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Ideally, support for a causal claim that campaign mobilization is a motivating force in getting people to try to influence the votes of their friends, family, or coworkers would include direct observational or experimental evidence demonstrating that this is a request specifically made by campaign organizations, and that individuals act in response to this request. This is especially true for the 2008 Obama campaign, which, along with the 2012 campaign, relied to an unprecedented extent on volunteer efforts for organizing, mobilizing, and recruiting campaign supporters. Specifically, the campaign organizers made a concerted effort to have local campaign volunteers, backed by the campaign's powerful data analytics, contact and persuade undecided or sporadic voters within their neighborhoods or networks, rather than relying on paid staffers in remote phone banks (McKenna and Han 2014).

For about one month immediately following the primary election, the NAES08-Phone Survey tried to measure such a phenomenon. In a sequence of survey questions they asked respondents: 1) if they had been contacted by the Obama or Clinton campaigns, 2) if that contact had been via an online method, 3) if they received an email that contained a request to "contact other people to ask them to vote for Senator Obama (Clinton)", and 4) if they

actually did so as a result of the email request. This provides a unique window into a very specific interaction with campaign organizations that was intended to produce a particular persuasive behavior on the part of the respondent. In total, 51 survey respondents during this time (2.6%) reported receiving such a request, and 19 of them (1.0%) said they actually followed through with it. Although there were surely other requests to persuade made by campaign organizations via other modes of communication (at a rally, in-person, or via phone), the exceptionally small reach of this targeted request, combined with the descriptive picture in Figure 5.2, casts some doubt on the importance of campaign mobilization as a widespread instigator of persuasive behavior.

Certainly direct campaign contact can be an important stimulus for those volunteers to whom the request is made, but there remains a large portion of the population, in 2008 and historically, who continue to try to influence others' votes as a spontaneous effort unconnected with campaign mobilization. Even the staggering 2.2 million volunteers who were a part of the 2012 Obama campaign organization (McKenna and Han 2014) still only account for 3.3% of the nearly 66 million total Obama voters, a figure which remains orders of magnitude smaller than the 50% of voters who reported trying to influence someone else's vote. The overall conclusion here is that, where they do occur, campaign requests are positively related to attempts to persuade others. However, there is not yet evidence that this is a common enough request to fully explain all persuasive behavior, and there is still a need to explain why more than half of individuals who report an attempt to persuade do it without having any contact from a political campaign.

Internal and External Efficacy

The final piece of evidence suggesting that a desire to influence the outcome of the election may not be a strong motivation for persuasion comes from the relative importance of two individual psychological predispositions: internal and external efficacy. In the NAES08-Phone survey, internal efficacy is measured by the level of agreement with the statement "Sometimes politics seems so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on"; external efficacy is based on agreement with the statement "People like me have no say over what the government does." In both cases, higher values indicate more disagreement with the statements, and therefore higher levels of efficacy. The correlation between the two is only .29 for the RCS sample and .32 for the re-interview sample.

For the models where internal and external efficacy are included,[82] there is a striking difference in the role of these two predispositions in motivating persuasion versus other campaign participation. Internal efficacy is a statistically significant predictor of persuasive behavior in all three models (3, 6, and 9; looking particularly at the coefficient for the most efficacious individuals, or "5s"), while external efficacy is not significant for any of them. Conversely, when looking at other forms of campaign participation, internal efficacy is not statistically significant in any model (4, 8, and 10), but external efficacy is significant in all three. In other words, the belief that average citizens can have an influence on political outcomes is related to whether individuals choose to donate money, work for a campaign, display signs, or attend a meeting, but is not related to whether or not they try to persuade

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[82] Internal and external efficacy questions were not asked during the primary campaign season, and were only asked of a random half of the sample during the general campaign season; they were asked of all respondents who were interviewed retrospectively about the primary and general elections.

others. Instead, political persuasion is related to individuals' evaluations of their own

capacity to be politically engaged.[83]

Social Norms

Thus far, the results have indicated mostly what persuasion is not; namely, it is not

motivated by a connection to the external political process to the same extent as other forms

of campaign behavior. But that does not explain what factors *are* responsible for widespread

persuasive activity in the mass public. Because persuasion occurs within the context of

political conversations that individuals are having *with their friends, family members, or co-*

workers, social norms about political discussion and disagreement are likely to have a

significant impact on the decision to try to persuade someone else.

The first indicator that social norms may have a significant influence on take-up of

persuasive behavior is the overwhelming prevalence of face-to-face communication as the

mode for persuasive attempts. The explosive rise in the use of social media for political

campaigning has led to a great deal of discussion and research about how the nature of

political participation and conversation changes when it occurs in a mediated, impersonal, or

anonymous online forum (Baek, Wojcieszak, and Delli Carpini 2012; Sunstein 2001).

Specifically, some have wondered if the opportunities for mediated or anonymous

communication have allowed individuals to be more brazen in sharing or pushing strong

opinions than they would otherwise be in person (Sunstein 2001). The 2008 Obama

campaign was a landmark in regards to the active use of social media to mobilize younger

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[83] Unfortunately, in spite of widespread use in political science, the measure used in NAES08-Phone to test internal efficacy is subject to some debate, and has been shown to capture elements of both internal and external efficacy (Morrell 2003). Hansen (1997) uses a more robust four-item scale of internal efficacy, which she re-names "political self-esteem," and finds substantial and statistically significant effects on persuasive behavior.

populations. In spite of this, nearly all individuals who reported trying to influence someone

else's presidential vote did so in person. (See Table 5.2.)

Table 5.2: Mode of Political Persuasion

	Single Method	Multiple Methods	Total
In-Person	4,497 *(85%)*	788 *(15%)*	5,285 *(100%)*
Phone	501 *(45%)*	620 *(55%)*	1,121 *(100%)*
Online	273 *(36%)*	485 *(64%)*	758 *(100%)*
Mail	22 *(15%)*	122 *(85%)*	144 *(100%)*

Furthermore, the majority of people who used modes other than face-to-face

communication used multiple modes. This suggests that, at least in 2008, the impersonality

of online communication did not lead to an unusual rise in persuasion using only this method.

In fact, as the mode of communication becomes less personal, with less direct, unmediated

interaction, it seems to be used less frequently for persuasive purposes. More updated data

are certainly necessary to evaluate the continued impact of online communication for patterns

of persuasion. However, in 2008 the face-to-face dynamic was an important conversational

element for individuals who attempted to influence others' votes. The interpersonal dynamics

of attempts to persuade should not be overlooked, even in the digital age.

Although the present data do not allow for an exhaustive exploration of the interpersonal

dynamics of individuals in their discussion networks, there are a few telling indicators that

demonstrate the importance of accounting for interpersonal context when explaining

persuasion as a form of discursive participation. The NAES08-Phone asked a subset of their

respondents during the RCS and all respondents in the re-interview sample whether someone

else (alter) tried to influence the vote of the survey respondent (ego) during the election. Unfortunately, the data are not detailed enough to identify whether the attempts to persuade between ego and alter were concurrent or reciprocal, or whether they occurred in different conversations with different discussants. However, as all political interactions add to the ego's overall perception of what political conversation normally looks like, having an alter try to persuade the ego is certainly a signal about the social norms within their network. Individuals who are exposed to more disagreement and persuasive tactics in their conversations may be more comfortable taking those approaches themselves, perhaps because they perceive little risk of alienating or offending their discussion partners. Conversely, those exposed to no persuasion may perceive overt attempts to persuade as violating norms about the way disagreement is handled within their discussion networks.

The results for the re-interview sample can be found in Model 9 of Table 5.1. The coefficient for a reciprocal persuasive effort is statistically significant and positive, which indicates that egos are more likely to report a persuasion attempt if an alter has also tried to influence the ego's vote.[84] Table 5.3 presents an additional series of logit models relevant to the role of social norms in facilitating attempts to persuade others. The first three models of Table 5.3 include whether an alter tried to influence the ego using the available data for each

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[84] Understandably, having an alter try to influence the ego's vote is not strongly related to take-up of other forms of campaign participation (see Model 10 in Table 1), and the survey does not ask parallel reciprocal participation questions for other behaviors (i.e. someone in the neighborhood displayed a sign for an opposing candidate). With the present data, little can be said about the role of social norms in motivating other forms of campaign participation, although it has been extensively studied in other research (Campbell 2008; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008; Lake and Huckfeldt 1998; Mutz 2006). For the remainder of the section, I will focus exclusively on the evidence for the role of social norms in moderating persuasive behavior.

of the RCS election phases, and the coefficient is positive and statistically significant in all models.

One limitation to the present data is that respondents are not asked to describe the nature of their relationship with their discussion partners. It is reasonable to expect that individuals behave differently in discussions with family than they do with friends, coworkers, or strangers (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991). However, for two brief periods in the spring and early summer, covering about two months total, the NAES08-Phone included a series of questions about political discussion and persuasion that asked the respondents to think specifically about their interactions with the individual with whom they have the closest relationship. The questions were only asked of respondents who specified a preferred presidential candidate and who had talked about politics in the past week. Additionally, the influence questions did not limit the timeframe to the past week, and instead asked if the respondent, or their closest relation, had *ever* tried to influence the other's vote.

A complete comparison of the effects of different types of relationships is left for future research. Even so, this question does allow for examination of persuasion for relationships that we would expect to be relatively similar, at least in terms of their overall importance to the respondent. The fourth model of Table 5.3 presents the results for this new dependent variable, along with variables indicating whether the closest relation ever tried to influence the respondent, and whether the respondent and their closest relation prefer the same 2008 presidential candidate. Again we see a sizeable reciprocal effect, where individuals whose closest relations have tried to influence them are much more likely to report having tried to influence their closest relations. This further confirms the expectation that persuasion may be a norm of conversation that is accepted in some interpersonal contexts, but not in others.

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Table 5.3: The Effect of Social Norms on Persuasive Behavior

	(1) Primary Campaign	(2) Retrospective Primary	(3) General Campaign	(4) Closest Relation	(5) Primary Campaign
Social Norms					
Someone Else Tried to Persuade R	0.98 (0.10)***	0.77 (0.14)***	1.40 (0.07)***		
Very Little Disagreement					0.18 (0.16)
Some Disagreement					0.65 (0.17)***
Quite a Bit of Disagreement					0.88 (0.23)***
Great Deal of Disagreement					0.96 (0.23)***
Closest Relation Tried to Persuade R				2.87 (0.11)***	
Closest Relation Prefers Same Candidate				-0.74 (0.13)***	
External Instrumental Motivations					
Democrat	0.05 (0.12)	0.08 (0.14)	-0.09 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.12)	0.05 (0.12)
Independent	-0.42 (0.25)	-0.76 (0.31)*	-0.66 (0.16)***	-0.12 (0.25)	-0.60 (0.25)*
Contacted by Any Campaign	0.43 (0.16)**	0.78 (0.13)***		0.31 (0.17)	0.38 (0.16)*
Internal Efficacy 2		0.34 (0.19)			
Internal Efficacy 3		-0.88 (1.17)			
Internal Efficacy 4		0.28 (0.21)			
Internal Efficacy 5		0.49 (0.21)*			
External Efficacy 2		-0.05 (0.17)			
External Efficacy 3		-0.05 (0.88)			
External Efficacy 4		0.08 (0.17)			
External Efficacy 5		-0.26 (0.19)			
Resources					
General Political Knowledge	-0.03 (0.21)	0.51 (0.25)*	0.23 (0.13)	0.30 (0.21)	0.15 (0.20)
Candidate Policy Position Knowledge	0.61 (0.30)*	1.32 (0.38)***	0.40 (0.19)*	0.55 (0.32)	0.69 (0.29)*
Education	-0.07 (0.03)**	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.03)*
Income	0.03 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Campaign Engagement					
Follow Campaign Closely	0.30 (0.09)**	0.46 (0.10)***	0.45 (0.06)***	0.23 (0.09)*	0.31 (0.09)***
Days Discussed Politics	0.23 (0.03)***	0.13 (0.03)***	0.16 (0.02)***	0.08 (0.03)**	0.23 (0.03)***
Days of Campaign Info: Radio	0.05 (0.02)**	0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.01)**	0.04 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02)*
Days of Campaign Info: TV	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Days of Campaign Info: Newspaper	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Days of Campaign Info: Online	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)*	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Discussed Politics Online	0.83 (0.15)***			0.62 (0.19)***	0.87 (0.15)***

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Attitude Strength

Weak Partisan	0.01 (0.15)	-0.14 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.16)	0.04 (0.15)
Strong Partisan	0.26 (0.13)*	0.13 (0.15)	0.24 (0.08)**	0.34 (0.14)*	0.31 (0.13)*
McCain/Obama Thermometer Difference		0.07 (0.02)***	0.13 (0.01)***		
Demographics					
Female	0.01 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.13)	-0.21 (0.07)**	-0.18 (0.11)	0.12 (0.11)
Age	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.02 (0.00)***
Frequency of Church Attendance	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.05)	0.04 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	0.08 (0.04)*
Black	-0.09 (0.18)	-0.19 (0.23)	-0.20 (0.13)	-0.25 (0.20)	-0.13 (0.18)
Hispanic	-0.13 (0.23)	-0.43 (0.28)	0.27 (0.14)	0.26 (0.23)	-0.08 (0.23)
Asian	-0.17 (0.45)	0.57 (0.45)	0.13 (0.27)	0.60 (0.44)	-0.24 (0.45)
Other Race	0.38 (0.31)	0.38 (0.32)	-0.21 (0.19)	0.21 (0.33)	0.44 (0.31)
Interviewed After Primary	-0.21 (0.16)			0.02 (0.18)	-0.16 (0.16)
Question Wording		0.21 (0.16)			
Intercept	-3.30 (0.44)***	-5.36 (1.21)***	-4.23 (0.28)***	-2.13 (0.45)***	-3.54 (0.45)***
Log Likelihood	-1173.65	-869.26	-2936.32	-1102.96	-1212.99
Deviance	2347.30	1738.51	5872.64	2205.92	2425.98
Num. obs.	2295	1563	5733	2494	2335

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Unsurprisingly, individuals who agree with their closest relations about the current presidential candidates are less likely to report trying to influence them. The results for this smaller sample based on somewhat different questions are largely in line with the first models of Table 5.3, giving further confidence in the overall picture that is developing about the importance of interpersonal disagreement and discussion norms for persuasive activity.

One likely reason individuals do not try to persuade others and are not the targets of persuasion in their political discussions is that they already agree with the people with whom they discuss politics. For a few months during the primary campaign season, the NAES08-Phone asked respondents to report the perceived level of disagreement when they talked about politics with their friends and family, on a 5-point scale. The final model in Table 5.3

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includes the reported level of disagreement as a series of dummy variables, in which no

disagreement is the baseline category.[85] There is a strong and statistically significant effect,

where individuals who experienced more disagreement when they talked about politics in the

past week were more likely to report attempting to persuade someone else in the past week.

Mutz (2006) argues that more disagreement depresses other forms of campaign participation,

although it is beneficial for deliberative models of democracy. Because rates of persuasion

are enhanced by exposure to disagreement, there is further evidence that persuasion is more

akin to discursive or deliberative participation, rather than campaign participation. It is

plausible that attempts to persuade highlight disagreement in the respondents mind, leading

to higher recall and reporting of disagreement, and therefore these results should not be taken

as causal on face value. However, they do demonstrate that variations in the norms of

discussion networks are correlated with the level of persuasive activity that occurs in the

network.

Finally, it is useful to shift focus slightly, and, instead of looking at the occurrence of

persuasion, explore the situations where political discussion regularly occurs *without* any

attempts to persuade taking place. There are a substantial number of discussion networks

where no one engages in persuasion. Even when the sample is restricted to just respondents

who discussed politics every single day in the past week, and so they are clearly engaged,

informed, and interested, 40% of respondents still report no attempts to influence occurring

in their political discussions (by ego or alter). Figure 3 illustrates the number of interactions

in which no one persuades, persuasion occurs in one direction only (by alter or ego), or the

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[85] This model (and the data in Figure 5.3) is limited to individuals who discussed politics
at least once in the preceding week, as only individuals who reported talking about politics
were asked this question.

respondent is both the instigator and the target of persuasion in political conversations, broken down by the reported level of disagreement in the discussion network.

The data presented in Figure 5.3 show that as disagreement becomes more prevalent, individuals are more likely to report some persuasion occurred in their discussion networks, suggesting that diversity or disagreement in the discussion network may be an important precondition for persuasive attempts to occur. It is also notable that even among the respondents who reported a great deal of disagreement in their political discussions during the past week, the most common outcome is still to have no persuasion occur. So, even though disagreement may provide more opportunity for individuals to try to persuade their discussion partners, it is not a sufficient condition, and merely increasing diversity in discussion networks would not necessarily increase the volume of persuasive behavior. Individual psychological engagement and social norms about discussion remain crucial explanatory elements, beyond mere exposure to disagreement.

Figure 5.3: Reciprocal Persuasion by Level of Political Disagreement
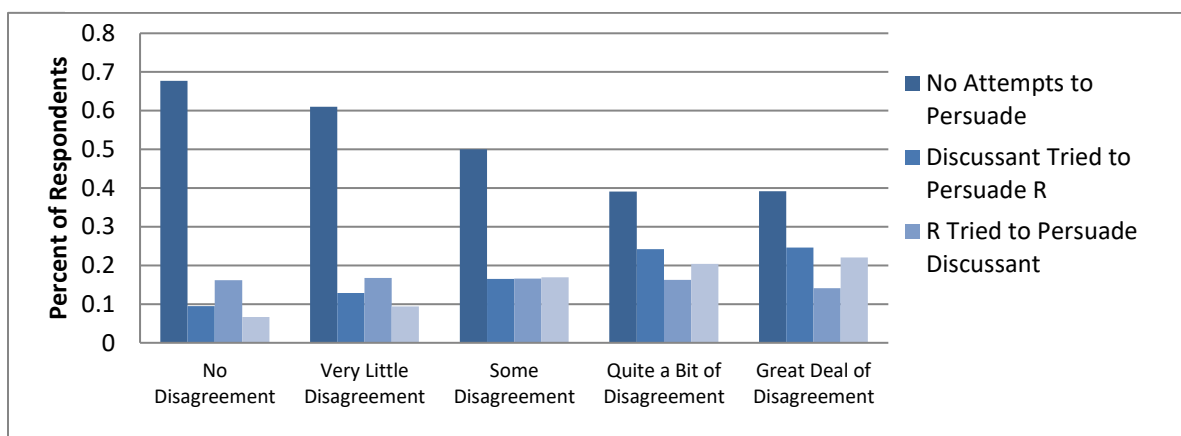
IV. Conclusion

Persuasion does not conform well to established models of campaign behavior. Specifically, attempts to influence the vote of others do not seem to be strongly motivated by an externally-focused desire to make a difference in the outcome of an election. Persuasion is not highly reactive to the electoral cycle or context, is not widely mobilized by campaign organizations, and is not predicted by external efficacy. Rather, persuasion seems to be a form of discursive participation, which is located more in the internal and interpersonal sphere, and is best understood as a way in which some people psychologically engage with politics in the course of their daily conversations about important issues. Persuasive behavior is correlated with higher levels of internal efficacy, and occurs more frequently in discussion contexts where persuasion and disagreement are more common. The main results are consistent across many different subsamples of the respondents, and are robust to different question wordings and phases of the electoral cycle.

Political persuasion is interpersonal by nature, and occurs within the context of conversations that individuals are having, usually face-to-face, with their friends, family or coworkers whose opinions and continued goodwill are highly valued. It is this distinguishing feature that sets political persuasion apart from the other forms of campaign behavior, and requires that campaigns and scholars alike understand (and perhaps encourage) this undeniably important interaction in a way that is unique from other forms of electoral participation. For individuals who are engaged in the campaign and have stronger opinions, individual predispositions and the norms of political discussion within the respondent's discussion network have a strong influence on attempts to persuade.

However, many interesting and important questions cannot be answered here simply because the necessary data are not available in the NAES08-Phone survey. As such, this work should not be viewed as a complete depiction of the personal and social roots of persuasive activity, but should rather be taken as an invitation for further research. A deeper exploration of how self-confidence, conflict-avoidance or other individual-level characteristics and personality traits affect persuasion is warranted. Additionally, more detailed information about political discussion networks, and especially the role of persuasion in specific political conversations, is essential to illuminating the central role of interpersonal dynamics and social norms in facilitating interpersonal persuasion.

Furthermore, the story presented here is limited to the 2008 American Presidential Election. Additional data from other elections would help to identify how the psychological and social processes that affect rates of persuasive behavior apply across different electoral contexts (local, state, or international). In fact, there is some evidence from the international scene that individuals' collective willingness to stand up for their preferred candidate may be significantly affected by the dominant social narrative exerting pressure to support the frontrunner in order to avoid isolation (Noelle-Neumann 1974). Furthermore, individuals may behave differently when the subject of the vote is an issue rather than a candidate. Think, for example, about how persuasive behavior may be different for a local school bond election rather than a presidential election. More work is needed to understand both the consistencies and the variations across contexts.

Considering the great importance of interpersonal influence for both scholars and campaign managers, and the normative implications of persuasive behavior for expectations about deliberative democracy, interpersonal persuasion deserves serious consideration as a

distinctive form of political participation. This unique way of interacting with the political

system is not explained well by current models of campaign behavior, and should instead be

further evaluated as a form of discursive participation with causes and consequences that are

different from non-persuasive talk or other forms of electoral participation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Political persuasion is a unique form of political participation. As citizens move beyond information gathering and dispassionate discussion to advocate on behalf of a particular cause or candidate, they engage with the political system in a new way. These lay advocates for political causes make up approximately one-third of the electorate and constitute a substantial force shaping public opinion. This research project explores the motivations of interpersonal persuasion in an attempt to better understand both the causes of persuasive behavior and the nature of political participation more generally.

For decades, political scientists have treated attempts to persuade others as an instrumental behavior motivated by an expectation that getting more people to agree with their opinions will lead to a higher probability of their preferred causes or candidates achieving policy or electoral success. However, political persuasion is also a subset of political discussion; some people choose to take a persuasive approach to political conversation, while other similarly informed and passionate discussants do not. The prior chapters demonstrate that political persuasion bears much in common with other forms of discursive participation, which are motivated more by individual orientations towards the political system and the social norms of discussion networks than by the external political environment. Even within the context of discursive participation, though, political persuasion is a unique behavior, and a better understanding of it may provide some answers as to how "just talk" can connect to broader political outcomes in important ways.

The empirical analysis in this dissertation uses three survey data sources to explore what motivates political persuasion and how it is distinct from other forms of campaign participation. Using a variety of analytical approaches, the empirical results largely reinforce

the conclusion that persuasion is better understood as an internally-motivated form of political engagement that is highly moderated by the social context. However, this analysis is not exhaustive, and there remain additional questions to be addressed in future research. This chapter briefly summarizes the conclusions of the present project, discusses some practical and theoretical implications of those conclusions, and identifies areas for future research.

I. The Paradox of Persuasion Revisited

Let us first return to the Paradox of Persuasion, presented in Chapter 1, to see what resolution the empirical results discussed here can provide to the paradox. For the economically rational voter, the costs of persuasion (time, energy, risk to social relationships) should far outweigh the benefits (the miniscule likelihood of successfully persuading someone who then casts a deciding vote). However, approximately one-third of citizens (half of the people who discuss politics in a particular election) still try to show their friends, family members, or coworkers why they should vote a particular way in a given election. The research presented in this chapter indicates that the costs and benefits associated with persuasive behavior are not the purely instrumental motivations expected by the Downsian framework.

The main argument of this research project is that the intended benefit of persuasive activity is not associated with the probability of affecting the outcome of an election or public policy. This instrumental goal is both definitionally and empirically associated with other forms of campaign behavior, such as donating money or displaying a sign or bumper sticker. However, attempts at persuasion are motivated more by internal and social factors than an external connection to the campaign environment. In the framework of discursive

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participation, the benefits of attempts to persuade are the result of the intrinsic interest in and enjoyment of politics, the added understanding generated by discussion, and the opportunity for opinionated and conflict-oriented people to satisfy those personality predispositions. Political persuasion, then, is more about what the individual stands to gain from the social engagement with interesting public issues than about the possible impact they have on the electoral system.

Within the context of political discussion, the costs of political persuasion are negligible. For individuals who are already informed and engaged enough to talk about politics, persuasion takes no money, and little extra time or effort. However, persuasion still requires taking a strong position, which "costs" certainty, confidence, and information that not all discussants have. Politics is such a charged and controversial topic that discussion requires adherence to social norms and attention to interpersonal dynamics. Therefore, some discussants may be unwilling to engage in persuasive behavior because they do not want to risk straining interpersonal relationships. To the extent that persuasion and disagreement can be normalized in social networks, political persuasion can pose less risk to interpersonal harmony, which increases the likelihood of participation in this way. Interpersonal persuasion depends heavily on intrinsic engagement in politics and on the social context in which it occurs, and the costs and benefits must be understood in that perspective rather than through strict ties to the institutional political process.

II. Summary of Results

Chapter 2 presented a model of the various elements that influence political persuasion. These included individual-level traits, social norms, and features of the broader political context. The important theoretical implications of this model lie in the details of what

specific factors in each of these areas are related to the decision to attempt to persuade others

and how these are similar to or different from the factors that motivate campaign

participation and discursive participation. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present a variety of analytical

approaches to addressing these various influences on persuasive behavior. The empirical

results of those chapters are summarized here.

Individual-Level Traits

There are a number of individual-level traits that have confirmed importance for

motivating all forms of political behavior. Chapters 3 and 5 indicate that discussing politics

frequently, being interested in the campaign, and paying regular attention to news media

about politics are positively related to all forms of political participation. However, other

seemingly apparent individual-level influences on participation have different relationships

with persuasion than with discussion or campaign participation. For instance, education,

income, and race have very little net explanatory power for attempts to persuade others,

although they have long been demonstrated as important facilitators of campaign

participation. In fact, white respondents were less likely to report attempts to persuade

others, which leaves an interesting puzzle for future research. Likewise, age has a negative

relationship with persuasion that is unique among types of participation and deserves further

exploration. There is a well-established gender gap in political persuasion; however, once

other indicators of political capital and efficacy were accounted for, gender was no longer a

significant variable in most of the empirical models presented here.

Additionally, general political knowledge is related to discussion and to other forms of

participation, but does not have a consistent effect on attempts to persuade others. Instead,

specific political knowledge about the issue or candidates that are the focus of persuasive

behavior is more important than general information (Chapter 5). Even so, it remains to be determined whether advocates of a particular cause are necessarily better informed than other discussants.

As hypothesized, opinionation has a positive influence on persuasion and other forms of discussion and, to a lesser extent, campaign involvement. The panel analysis in Chapter 4 also indicates that opinionation matters more as a stable individual-level characteristic, meaning that a general disposition towards having a lot of opinions and being self-efficacious enough to confidently express them is a fairly consistent disposition that has more explanatory power distinguishing between people than do individual variations in these traits over time. Strong opinions about particular issues are also important motivators of persuasion. In Chapter 5, attitudes about the presidential candidates had a stronger relationship to attempts to persuade about the presidential race than other more general attitudes, such as partisan strength.

One consistent finding throughout the empirical chapters is the differential importance of internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy, which suggests confidence in the ability to understand politics, is an important predictor of persuasive behavior using the machine learning techniques in Chapter 3, with a statistically significant effect in models of persuasion in Chapters 4 (YPSP) and 5 (NAES08). However, it is not a significant variable when modeling other forms of persuasive behavior. By contrast, external efficacy, which describes the perception of being able to influence actual political outcomes, is significant for campaign participation but not for persuasion (Table 5.1). This indicates that persuasion is motivated more by an individual's own orientation towards politics, rather than the instrumental, external goals that characterize other forms of campaign participation.

Social Norms

Political persuasion happens in an interpersonal context, which gives social norms and interpersonal dynamics a particularly strong influence over the decision to engage in this form of participation. Even individuals who are interested in politics, who have many strong opinions, and who are confident in their understanding of political issues may still choose not to persuade others if they feel that the social context is not conducive to persuasive behavior. Social norms about political discussion are very strong, and tend to emphasize avoidance of disagreement and confrontation.

There has been a great deal of research on the effects of disagreement on political interest, information, engagement, and participation. However, the empirical findings have been mixed and seem to depend on individual traits (Testa, Hibbing, and Ritchie 2014) and characteristics of the social network (McClurg 2006). The hypothesized effect of disagreement on political persuasion is mixed. Attempts at persuasion do appear to be a distinct phenomenon from mere exposure to disagreement. Persuasion is an intentional attempt to change opinions that discussants may choose to engage in (or not) when confronted with differences of opinions. The perception of exposure to disagreement is associated with higher levels of persuasive behavior, an effect which is probably the result of both increased opportunities to persuade, and the generation of social norms that tolerate more disagreement in discussion. By contrast, highly homogenous political environments may stifle disagreement, and enhance the perception of holding a minority view which suppresses persuasive behavior (Kim, Wyatt, and Katz 1999).

One of the strongest predictors of persuasive behavior is whether an alter tried to persuade the ego at some point. Having the experience of being the target of a persuasive

attempt communicates information about social norms in ways that facilitate persuasive behavior. While this survey question is also an indicator of regular political conversation with alters who are engaged and opinionated, having someone else try to persuade the ego provides a signal to the ego that overt persuasion is an acceptable way to have a political conversation. This signal may reduce the uncertainty about the risk of violating social norms, and therefore makes persuasive behavior less (potentially) costly increasing the likelihood of participation. Additional evidence for this effect comes from the reverse case, where the most commonly reported response among political discussants is that neither alter nor ego attempt to persuade others, which indicates the existence of a social taboo on overtly persuasive behavior in some discussion networks.

However, in other ways interpersonal dynamics have less influence than might be expected. For instance, although the relationship type (i.e. friend, family member, co-worker), has a great deal of influence on frequency of political discussion and exposure to disagreement (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Mutz 2006), the analysis in Chapter 4 shows that most persuaders target multiple relationship types. There is not a consistent pattern where one particular type of relationship is most likely to be targeted by persuaders. Perceptions of social norms are likely to come from all of an ego's interpersonal interactions, perhaps including online or mediated discourse. Although discussants are strategically selected from social networks (Lake and Huckfeldt 1998), there is no evidence of systematic differences between the targets of persuasion. Additionally, membership in civic organizations motivates campaign participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), but it does not add diversity to discussion networks (Mutz 2006) or substantially increase attempts to persuade others.

Political Context

The overwhelming evidence of the empirical research presented here is that the external political context has surprisingly little influence on the decision to engage in persuasive behavior. During the 2008 presidential election, attempts to persuade others were not highly reactive to the political context. More competitive primary races and changes in the electoral cycle did not significantly affect overall levels of persuasive behavior. Although there is previous evidence that more engaging campaigns can increase persuasive behavior among women (Atkeson 2003; Hansen 1997; Stokes-Brown and Neal 2008), these works do not provide evidence that the increase in persuasion is due to an instrumental desire to help a particular candidate win the election. Rather, persuasion is better understood as a manifestation of individual interest and engagement, meaning a discursive way to process information and attitudes that provides inherent enjoyment or social benefits rather than instrumental electoral gains.

The role of campaign mobilization remains somewhat unclear. There is no strong evidence that increasing campaign requests for persuasion would necessarily increase actual persuasive behavior. There is a statistically significant, positive relationship between campaign contact and attempts to persuade in several empirical models using different data sources. However, the majority of people who reported engaging in interpersonal persuasion were not contacted by a particular campaign organization. It is hard to imagine that spontaneous dinner table or water cooler political conversations turn persuasive as the direct result of campaign requests. Campaign contact does not increase overall rates of discussion (McClurg 2004), but it is related to higher rates of persuasive conversation. Whether this is a

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causal effect or a spurious result due to campaigns targeting engaged citizens requires additional empirical testing.

III. Practical and Theoretical Implications

The empirical results presented here improve our understanding of political participation as a general concept. This project has compared the motivations and correlates of two dimensions of political participation: campaign participation and discursive participation. These two dimensions of participation are characterized by very different motivations and end purposes, and systematically different types of people engage in different types of participation for different reasons. Campaign participation is undertaken by people who have resources to contribute (time, money) and who are connected to political campaigns and civic organizations such that they are asked to participate. Discursive participation is a reflection of individual interest in politics and the political capital (engagement, efficacy) that provide the confidence to participate. Discussion is also a primarily social activity, and so interpersonal dynamics and social norms shape the type of discursive participation undertaken in a particular situation. Persuasion shares more features in common with other indicators of discursive participation, but the differences from non-persuasive discussion also highlight the point that there are a variety of qualitatively distinct ways in which people may engage in discursive participation. Clarifying the dimensions of political participation and how they have distinct causes and consequences improves the theoretical understanding and empirical specification of future behavioral research. For example, future researchers should be self-consciously aware of the implications of including persuasive behavior in general participation scales, as doing so may add unwanted noise to the data and obscure the results.

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There does appear to be a "type" of person who is more inclined to persuasive behavior. However, their behavior depends a great deal on the social context in which they are embedded. More exposure to disagreement, especially exposure to persuasive attempts on the ego by alters in their discussion networks, creates social norms which facilitate the ego's attempts to persuade. Unfortunately for campaign managers, there is still not a clear indication that campaign contact is causally responsible for motivating attempts to persuade others. So how can campaign managers activate these individuals on their behalf?

Changes in the broader political context, such as the competitiveness of the election or direct contact by a political campaign, may serve to activate political interest and therefore indirectly facilitate persuasive participation. However, when compared with the effects of individual level traits and social norms, the external cues may not be the most direct path to encouraging persuasive behavior. Messaging to motivate persuasive behavior may be most effective when it avoids a direct approach of asking people to persuade with the explicit goal of helping the candidate win the election. Instead, campaign organizations may be better served to encourage non-confrontational political discussion across lines of political difference, although experimental testing of various messages would be appropriate to confirm this hypothesis. Campaigns and political elites could also model norms of discourse that allow for disagreement and position-taking in non-confrontational ways. These indirect approaches may increase discursive participation across the board, including persuasive participation, without contributing to polarization and withdrawal from political participation due to discomfort with disagreement, conflict, or ambiguity.

The profile of a persuader is different from the typical expectations of the politically active in some meaningful ways. Of particular importance, the persuaders are not necessarily

white, wealthy, and organizationally active. Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2012) describe how formal organizations serve to amplify the political voice of socially and economically advantaged citizens, with consequences for representation and policy-making. However, attempts to persuade others are a very direct form of expressing political voice that suffers to a much smaller degree from these biases and which is less responsive to formal organizational cues than other forms of participation. Continued empirical and theoretical emphasis on the role of persuasion and discursive participation may provide some insights into how to minimize the upper-class accent of the "unheavenly chorus" of political interests.

But do we actually *want* more people to engage in persuasive behavior? Is that a normatively desirable democratic goal? There is an assumption that democracy works best when more citizens are engaged and that participation should generally be encouraged, rather than discouraged. To the extent that interpersonal persuasion has been considered a form of campaign participation, it is assumed that more persuasion would mean more people are involved in the election process. However, this research project has questioned the assumption that political persuasion should be included as a form of campaign behavior, with substantial empirical evidence that it is not motivated by a desire to influence public outcomes.

Deliberative scholars who promote discursive participation would also advocate an overall increase in discussion and deliberation as a way to improve democratic outcomes. However, it is not clear whether the model deliberative citizen is compatible with the persuading personality. If the persuading personality is rigid, manipulative, confrontational, and unwilling to consider possible alternatives or update their preconceptions, increasing the level of persuasion might undermine many of the outcomes expected from empathetic,

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reasoned, and open-minded deliberation. The empirical results presented here are in some ways encouraging and others discouraging. Attempts to persuade are motivated by strong opinions, but the positive effects of openness to experience and opinionation indicate that perhaps this is a personality trait that might not be incompatible with a willingness to consider alternative views. Persuaders are more engaged and invested in the issues or candidates, and attempts to persuade might provide a crucial link between discursive participation and the political process. Given the right set of social norms, it may be possible for discussants to engage in persuasive behavior in ways that remain non-confrontational or empathetic enough to reap the hypothesized benefits of political discussion. More empirical work is necessary to understand the role of interpersonal persuasion in deliberative settings.

As a discipline, political science needs to think much more carefully about the normative and practical role of interpersonal persuasion. Continued empirical work on persuasion will help to clarify, and hopefully resolve, some of these concerns. A better understanding of the role persuasion does play in political discussion and participation would further identify the possible democratic functions of this behavior, and allow empirical and theoretical scholars to develop an ideal model of the role of interpersonal persuasion and practical approaches to encourage citizens to participate in the most desirable way.

IV. Directions for Future Research

The results presented here provide substantial evidence that political persuasion is a unique form of political behavior that deserves further research attention. Attempts to persuade others have internal and social motivations that are quite distinct from the instrumental goals of other forms of campaign participation. Political persuasion is better understood as a form of discursive participation, and more nuanced attention to the varieties

of discursive participation would enhance our understanding of both political participation as a broad concept and the potential for discursive participation to enhance deliberative democracy in practice. However, the scope of this project is limited, and it raises as many questions as it answers. There are several fruitful avenues for future analysis.

First, the research here relies entirely on self-reports of persuasive behavior. Although there are theoretical and practical reasons that make this an expedient measure, we also know very little about the considerations that survey respondents take into account when forming an answer to this question. Cognitive interviewing would be helpful in establishing a better conceptual framework for what is, and what is not, included in the scope of responses. For instance, it would be helpful to know whether respondents include in their response online commenting, door-to-door canvassing, or times when someone asked their opinion or advice about the issues or candidates. As natural-language processing and other computer-based methods advance, perhaps it will also be possible in the future to identify markers of persuasive speech that can be used as an independent validation. An independent data source such as this would allow for estimation of the extent and direction of social desirability bias in survey self-reports.

Second, the internet and social media have drastically changed the way in which people interact with their social contexts and express political opinions. The majority of this project has emphasized face-to-face conversation, in large part because that is what most people report using in the particular surveys analyzed here. Social scientists are working hard to define the implications of social media for political participation, public opinion, and social norms more generally. Comparing on-line and off-line efforts at persuasion may help us to

better understand both the role of persuasive behavior in the internet age and the effects of on-line communication on political expression and participation.

Aside from the online context, more work is needed to examine the effects of specific social and political contexts on persuasive participation. For instance, the data sources used here were insufficient to examine the full extent of social norms and interpersonal dynamics that affect interpersonal persuasion. How do people select a target for political persuasion? Or, put another way, what considerations do people have in mind when they "bite their tongues" and choose not to persuade in a given situation? The importance of maintaining interpersonal harmony for social reasons (i.e. having a pleasant Thanksgiving dinner) might factor into this decision. Additionally, persuaders may choose targets that they feel they have a higher probability of successfully persuading, such as individuals who are undecided or who usually agree with them. Additional data are necessary to explore these interpersonal dynamics.

The data in Chapter 3 indicate that persuasion most often occurs about presidential candidates. However, that particular question wording limited respondents to thinking about persuasion in an electoral context. Persuasion about particular issues in a non-electoral context may be even more common that election-oriented persuasion (Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini 2009). Because political persuasion has always been considered a form of campaign participation, the role of interpersonal persuasion about political topics in non-electoral contexts has not received much empirical attention. To the extent that persuasive behavior is a form a discursive participation with weak ties to particular electoral contexts, more information about persuasion in non-electoral contexts would be enlightening.

Furthermore, the differences in persuasive behavior in local, state, or national contexts should be examined.

Finally, this project has identified a number of resources that are and are not necessary for facilitating persuasive behavior. Specifically, income, education, social connectedness, and information are not strongly related to persuasive behavior, but interest, opinionation, and internal efficacy do motivate persuasion. However, the lingering puzzles of an inverse race gap and negative relationship with age suggest that persuasion may draw on a set of resources or have social motivations that are not yet completely understood. Further attention to both of these questions, along with the continued gender gap, may help to determine the particular resources that facilitate persuasive participation. Understanding these resources within a framework of discursive participation may help to move forward in practical recommendations on how to improve the state of deliberative democracy in America.

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Appendices

Appendices to Chapter 3

Appendix 3A: Factor Analysis Variables

Variable	Zukin et al. Wording	ANES 2012 Wording	% Yes
Work with others to solve a local problem	Have you ever worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live? IF YES, Was this in the last 12 months or not?	During the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you worked with other people to deal with some issue facing your community?	28.9
Volunteer for non-political organization	Have you ever spent time participating in any community service or volunteer activity, or haven't you had time to do this? By volunteer activity, I mean actually working in some way to help others for no pay. IF YES, Have you done this in the last 12 months? I'm going to read a list of different groups that people sometimes volunteer for. As I read each one, can you tell me if you have volunteered for this type of group or organization within the last 12 months?	Many people say they have less time these days to do volunteer work. What about you, were you able to devote any time to volunteer work in the last 12 months or did you not do so?	41.4
Active membership in community problem-solving organizations	Do you belong to or donate money to any groups or associations, either locally or nationally? Are you an active member of this group/any of these groups, a member but not active, or have you given money only?	How many organizations are you currently a member of?	45.9
Raise money for charity	[Now I'm going to read you a quick list of things that some people have done to express their views. For each one I read, please just tell me whether you have ever done it or not. (FOR EACH YES, PROBE: And have you done this in the last 12 months, or not?)] Personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a charitable cause – this is separate from sponsoring or giving money to this type of event? And have you ever done anything else to help raise money for a charitable cause?	During the past 4 years, have you ever given money to a religious organization, or have you not done this in the past 4 years? Not counting a religious organization, during the past 4 years, have you given money to any other organization concerned with a political or social issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	66.7
Regularly vote in elections	We know that most people don't vote in all elections. Usually between one-quarter to one-half of those eligible actually come out to vote. Can you tell me how often you vote in local and national elections? Always, sometimes, rarely, or never?	In 2008 Barack Obama ran on the Democratic ticket against John McCain for the Republicans. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?	77.5
		[Summary measure of pre- and post-election self-report of voting in the 2012 presidential election.]	74.4
Persuade others how to vote	When there is an election taking place do you generally talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one	We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the	38.8

	of the parties or candidates, or not?	campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?	
Display campaign buttons, stickers, etc.	Do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house, or aren't these things you do?	Did you wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or place a sign in your window or in front of your house?	15.0
Contribute money to Party/Candidate	In the past 12 months, did you contribute money to a candidate, a political party, or any organization that supported candidates?	During an election year people are often asked to make a contribution to support campaigns. Did you give money to an INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE running for public office?	11.7
Work for Party/Candidate	From volunteering sequence, respondent indicated having volunteered for "A political organization or candidates running for office"	Did you do any (other) work for one of the parties or candidates?	3.9
Contact elected official	[Now I'm going to read you a quick list of things that some people have done to express their views. For each one I read, please just tell me whether you have ever done it or not. (FOR EACH YES, PROBE: And have you done this in the last 12 months, or not?)] Contacted or visited a public official – at any level of government – to ask for assistance or to express your opinion?	During the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you telephoned, written a letter to, or visited a government official to express your views on a public issue?	19.9
Contact print media	Contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue?	During the past 4 years, have you written a letter to a newspaper or magazine about a political issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	4.2
Call into radio talk show	Called in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion on a political issue, even if you did not get on the air?	During the past 4 years, have you called a radio or TV show about a political issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	3.1
Protest	Taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?	Protest	5.9
Sign a written petition	And have you ever signed a written petition about a political or social issue?	During the past 4 years, have you signed a petition on paper about a political or social issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	22.8
		[*For column 4 only, also includes:*] During the psat 4 years, have you signed a petition on the Internet about a political or social issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	34.3
Boycott	NOT bought something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it?		
Door-to-door canvass	Have you worked as a canvasser—having gone door-to-door for a political or social group or candidate?		
Attend political meeting / rally		Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate?	5.9

Variable	Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini Wording	ANES 2012 Wording	% Yes
Discuss politics with family / friends	How often do you have informal face-to-face or phone conversations or exchanges with people you know about public issues that are local, national, or international concerns? I'm talking about exchanges or conversations of any length. Would you say you do this every day, a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, or less often than this?	Do you ever discuss politics with your family or friends?	66.5
Send political message via social media	How often do you use e-mail or instant messaging to talk INFORMALLY with people you know about public issues that are local, national, or international concerns. Would you say you do this every day, a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, or less often than this?	During the past 4 years, have you ever sent a message on Facebook or Twitter about a political issue, or have you not done this in the past 4 years?	19.22
Attend meeting on school/community issue	Since the beginning of LAST YEAR – that is since January of 2002 – have you attended a formal or informal meeting organized by yourself, by someone else you know personally, or by a religious, social, civic, governmental or political group to specifically discuss a local, national, or international issue—for example, neighborhood crime, housing, schools, social security, election reform, terrorism, global warming, or any other public issue that affects people?	During the PAST 12 MONHTS, did you attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?	23.5
Persuade Issue	People are active in their community and express their beleifs in many ways. I will now list some activities that people sometimes take part to stay active and to express their beliefs. For each, please tell me if you have done it in the last year – that is since January of 2002. Tried to persuade someone about your view on a public issue.		
Persuade others how to vote	[…] Tried to persuade someone else about whom to vote for in a local, state or national election.	We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?	38.8
Internet Deliberation	Just thinking about the time since the beginning of last year – that is, since January 2002- have you participated in any INTERNET chat rooms, message boards, or other online discussion groups organized to SPECIFICALLY discuss a local, national, or international issue?		

Appendix 3B: Full Factor Analysis Results

	Electoral	Voting	Civic	Voice	Discursive	*Uniqueness*
Work for Party / Candidate	**0.89**	-0.03	0.08	0.02	-0.02	0.18
Attend Political Meeting / Rally	**0.84**	-0.04	0.15	0.07	-0.12	0.23
Contribute Money to Party/Candidate	**0.55**	0.28	-0.07	0.07	0.07	0.40
Display Campaign buttons, stickers, etc.	**0.64**	0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.11	0.50
Presidential Vote - Most Recent	0.05	**0.85**	-0.07	-0.02	0.06	0.25
Presidential Vote - Prior Election	-0.05	**0.91**	-0.01	0.09	-0.07	0.23
Work with others to solve a local problem	0.05	-0.07	**0.74**	0.19	-0.03	0.30
Active membership in community orgs	-0.03	0.08	**0.65**	0.04	0.07	0.47
Volunteer for a nonpolitical organization	0.11	-0.07	**0.81**	-0.17	0.05	0.38
Raise money for charity	-0.02	0.30	**0.43**	-0.12	0.08	0.64
Attend meeting on school/community issue	0.07	-0.05	**0.70**	0.18	-0.05	0.37
Contact elected official	0.00	0.18	0.24	**0.63**	-0.08	0.35
Protest	0.20	-0.16	0.10	**0.45**	0.20	0.46
Sign a petition	-0.08	0.16	0.08	**0.41**	0.32	0.48
Call into radio talk show	0.10	-0.09	-0.08	**0.51**	0.23	0.55
Contact print media	0.14	0.06	0.01	**0.71**	-0.07	0.40
Persuade others how to vote	0.28	0.08	-0.05	0.00	**0.49**	0.49
Discuss politics with family / friends	0.01	0.19	0.00	-0.04	**0.62**	0.49
Send political message via social media	-0.12	-0.14	0.05	0.13	**0.66**	0.59
Variance	5.51	3.68	4.82	4.90	4.77	
Proportion	0.50	0.33	0.44	0.44	0.43	

Appendix 3C: Pearson Correlation Matrix

	Voted in 2008	Voted in 2012	Displayed Sign	Donated Money	Worked for Campaign	Attempted to Persuade	Discusses Politics	Attend Public Meeting	Politics on Social Media
Voted in 2008	1.00								
Voted in 2012	0.57	1.00							
Displayed Sign / Sticker	0.13	0.13	1.00						
Donated Money	0.16	0.15	0.29	1.00					
Worked for Campaign	0.07	0.08	0.28	0.31	1.00				
Attempted to Persuade	0.18	0.22	0.25	0.25	0.19	1.00			
Discusses Politics	0.23	0.26	0.15	0.18	0.10	0.33	1.00		
Attend Public Meeting	0.12	0.10	0.20	0.16	0.16	0.18	0.16	1.00	
Politics on Social Media	0.07	0.10	0.16	0.14	0.10	0.21	0.19	0.13	1.00

Appendix 3D: Full Lasso Results

	Attempts to Persuade		Discursive Participation		Campaign Participation	
	Lasso	Logit	Lasso	Logit	Lasso	Logit
Political Capital						
Ever Discuss Politics	.76	.98 (.10) ***			.22	.39 (.12) ***
Campaign Interest	.45	.46 (.07) ***	.39	.39 (.08) ***	.53	.56 (.08) ***
News Source: TV	.10	.44 (.11) ***	.58	.68 (.11) ***		
News Source: Internet	.00	.23 (.08) **	.69	.67 (.10) ***	.23	.38 (.09) ***
News Source: Newspaper	.01	.22 (.08) **	.10	.18 (.10)	.15	.33 (.09) ***
News Source: Radio			.31	.36 (.10) ***	.12	.23 (.08) **
News Source: Blogs			.03	.19 (.20)	.05	.31 (.13) *
News Source: Social Media			.16	.27 (.11) *		
Voted in 2012 Primary	.03	.29 (.08) ***			.26	.43 (.08) ***
Voted in 2012 General			.26	.39 (.14) **		
Registered Voter			-.13	-.37 (.14) *		
Efficacy: I Understand Politics	.03	.11 (.04) **	.18	.19 (.05) ***	.03	.06 (.05)
Efficacy: Politics (Not) too Complicated			.04	.06 (.04)		
Efficacy: No Say in Gov			.06	.10 (.04) *	.04	.08 (.04) *
Who People Vote For Makes a Difference			.14	.18 (.05) ***	.00	.04 (.04)
Political Knowledge			.15	.18 (.04) ***		
Individual Traits						
Opinionation	.11	.25 (.05) ***	.35	.37 (.06) ***	.01	.09 (.06)
Education			.02	.03 (.05)		
Income			.02	.03 (.01) ***		
Black			.11	.31 (.15) *	.28	.59 (.11) ***
Hispanic			-.08	-.11 (.14)		
Veteran			-.24	-.42 (.13) **		
Homeowner			-.13	-.31 (.12) **		
Finances Better Over Past Year			-.01	-.06 (.04)		
Authoritarian Personality			-.04	-.07 (.04)		
Social Norms						
Someone Tried to Persuade R	.32	.66 (.08) ***	.83	.97 (.12) ***		
Member of Civic Organization	.08	.32 (.08) ***	.07	.10 (.10)	.34	.53 (.08) ***
Political Context						

Voter Mobilization Contact	.02	.28 (.08) ***	.15	.23 (.10) *	.34	.53 (.08) ***
Campaign Contact	.13	.23 (.08) **	.19	.24 (.10) *	.60	.73 (.09) ***
Parties are Different			.47	.48 (.13) ***		
Political Attitudes						
Strong Preference for Presidential Candidate					.08	.28 (.13) *
Therm Difference: Pres Candidates (10 pt)	.03	.08 (.02) ***	.01	.02 (.02)	.03	.04 (.02) *
Therm Difference: Parties (10 pt)	.01	.04 (.02) *	.01	.01 (.02)	.03	.03 (.02)
Republican			.12	.19 (.12)		
Independent			-.01	-.09 (.16)		
Strength of Party ID					.01	.08 (.05)
Care Who Wins Pres Election			.27	.31 (.14) *		
Gov Run by Big Interests			.13	.21 (.13)		
It Makes a Difference Who Is In Power			.04	.05 (.04)		
Journalists Provide Fair Election Coverage			-.03	-.04 (.06)		
Should Not Adjust Morality to World			.01	.05 (.04)		
Social Trust			.08	.13 (.05) *		
Gov Should Use Science to Solve Probs			.02	.06 (.05)	.00	.10 (.04) **
Feel Emotional When See Flag			.04	.07 (.05)		
Government is Wasteful			-.10	-.18 (.10)		
Government is Corrupt			-.07	-.13 (.06) *		
Satisfied with US Democracy			.04	.10 (.07)		
Intercept	-2.81	-5.23 (.23) ***	-5.37	-6.30 (.57) ***	-4.21	-6.56 (.31) ***
N		3970		3970		3970

Appendices to Chapter 5

Appendix 5A: Data and Sample Details

The post-election re-interview sample is significantly biased towards the politically active. For example, 92% of individuals who were re-interviewed reported having voted in the election, which is significantly higher than the actual 2008 turnout rate of 57%. Additionally, several of the questions that provide important control variables in the analysis (such as certainty about the vote choice) were only asked of individuals who reported having voted, and who voted for McCain or Obama (not a third-party candidate). Therefore, the analysis for the post-election data is limited to only individuals who voted for McCain or Obama in the general election. However, it is not expected that this limitation will significantly bias the overall analysis. In practical terms, the limitation of the re-interview dataset changes the baseline group to whom the persuaders are compared. For the RCS models, the persuaders are compared to all other citizens who did not try to persuade; for the re-interview models the persuaders are compared to voters who did not try to persuade.[86] Furthermore, 48% percent of voters in the NAES re-interview data report an attempt to persuade, which is very comparable to the 50% of voters who reported an attempt to persuade in the 2008 wave of the American National Election Studies. This suggests that although the overall sample over-represents voters, the voters themselves are not significantly more politically involved than expected.

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[86] 96% of persuaders in the re-interview data report having voted, so the composition of that group is not significantly affected by removing non-voters from the sample.

Appendix 5B: Dependent Variable Question Wording

NAES Variable	Question Text	Used in Model	Dates Asked	N	% "Yes"	Sample Split	β†
KB03	In the past week, have you talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?	1, 3	1/11/08 – 5/29/08, 6/9/08 – 7/1/08	13,758	24.3	From 6/9 – 7/1: random split with KB06	<baseline>
KB04	In the past week, have you talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?	3	8/8/08 – 11/3/08	9,357	27.1	From 8/8 – 8/10: random split with KB05	.028 (.006)
KB05	In the past week, have you tried to convince anyone why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?		8/8/08 – 8/10/08	367	17.3	Random split with KB04	-.070 (.020)
KB06	During the presidential campaign, have you talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?	2	6/9/08 – 7/1/08	737	23.0	Random split with KB03	.056 (.017)
KB07	During the presidential primary campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?	2	7/2/08 – 8/4/08	2,210	31.1		.068 (.011)
KB08	During the presidential general election campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?	4	Post-Election Re-interview	3,721	50.0	Restricted to McCain/Obama voters	.223 (.009)
KB17	Have you ever tried to show [the person you have the closest relationship with] why they should vote for or against a candidate?	5	3/7/08 – 3/34/08, 5/2/08 – 6/8/08		37.9	Restricted to Rs with a preferred candidate who talked about politics in the past week	

†*The linear probability model was run as an OLS regression using only a dummy variable for each question wording to predict the probability of a "yes" response. Constant = .244. All coefficients significant at the p<.001 level.*

The main difference in question wordings is the temporal boundaries provided to the respondent for their persuasive activity. Prior to both the primary and general elections, individuals were asked to report attempts to influence the presidential vote of someone else *in the past week* (KB03; KB04). However, once Clinton conceded the Democratic nomination to Obama in early June, half of the respondents were asked to report whether they had attempted to influence someone else's vote *during the presidential campaign* (KB06; KB07). Using a comparison of means test for this split-ballot question wording experiment, it is unsurprisingly confirmed that individuals who were asked about the longer time frame (the presidential campaign) were more likely to report persuasive efforts than those asked only about the past week (mean diff= .118, p=.002). Similarly, for the sample of respondents who were re-interviewed, the mean response for the pre-election RCS question asking about persuasion *in the past week* was significantly lower than the mean response for the post-election question that asked about the *presidential general election campaign* (mean diff =.176, p=.000).

Additionally, participation rates of all kinds are usually higher for general elections than primary elections, and therefore respondents during the general election (for both the week-long and campaign-long question wordings) are expected to report more influence attempts than respondents during the primary season. A comparison of means for the "past week" questions in the primary and general election seasons confirms that reported persuasive behavior was slightly more common during the general election (mean diff = .015, p=.038). Each of these findings was further confirmed using a basic logistic regression that predicts the likelihood of saying "yes" based only on dummy variables for each question wording. All

coefficients were statistically significant at the .01 level, and in the expected directions. The full results are available in the final column of the question wording table.

For three days (8/8/08 – 8/10/08) the NAES experimented with an alternate wording (KB05) that asked individuals if they "tried to convince anyone" to vote for or against a presidential candidate, rather than using the more common wording of whether the respondent "talked to any people and tried to show them" why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates. This was also run as a split-ballot experiment, and the comparison of means test shows that individuals asked the "convince" wording were less likely to report attempts at influencing someone else's vote (mean diff = .051, p=.100). Responses to this version of the question are not included in any of the reported analysis.

Appendix 5C: Independent Variables

Variable Name	Brief Description	RCS: Mean (St. Dev.)	Re-interview: Mean (St. Dev.)
External Instrumental Motivations			
Party ID	Democrat, Republican, or true Independent; "leaners" included with partisans	R: .41 D: .50 I: .08	R: .42 D: .52 I: .06
Contacted by Any Campaign	Dummy: R contacted by any campaign (in past week//during election)	.14 (.35)	
Contacted by Preferred Campaign	Dummy: R contacted by candidate they voted for		.30 (.46)
Contacted by Another Campaign	Dummy: R contacted by candidate they did not vote for		.13 (.33)
Internal Efficacy	Politics is too complicated for someone like R to understand (5-point scale, higher=disagree)	3.04 (.56)	3.52 (1.52)
External Efficacy	People like R have no say over government (5-point scale, higher=disagree)	2.78 (1.54)	3.23 (1.54)
Social Norms			
Someone Else Tried to Influence R's Vote	Dummy: Someone else tried to influence R's vote	.31 (.46)	.46 (.50)
Discussion Disagreement	Level of disagreement in R's political discussions (5-point scale; higher=more disagreement)	2.47 (1.03)	
Closest Relation Tried to Persuade R	Dummy: R's closest relation has ever tried to persuade R	.37 (.48)	
Closest Relation Prefers Same Candidate	Dummy: R and closest relation prefer same presidential candidate	.78 (.42)	
Resources			
General Political Knowledge	Percent correct of 4 questions about politics in general	.53 (.31)	.58 (.20)
Candidate Policy Position Knowledge	Percent correct of questions about presidential candidate's policy positions (between 5 and 15 questions asked of all Rs)	.41 (.22)	.72 (.28)
Education	Highest grade completed (9-point scale)	5.56 (2.31)	5.89 (2.26)
Income	Household income (RCS: 9-point scale; Re-interview: 10-point scale)	5.94 (2.25)	5.93 (2.18)
Campaign Engagement			
Follow Campaign Closely	How closely R follows presidential campaign (4-point scale; higher=more closely)	3.23 (.81)	3.58 (.62)
Days Discussed Politics	Days R discussed politics in past week	3.70 (2.62)	4.71 (2.49)
Days of Campaign Info: Radio	Days in past week R listened to talk radio about the presidential campaign	1.71 (2.56)	2.05 (2.71)
Days of Campaign Info: TV	Days in past week R watched TV about presidential campaign	5.47 (2.45)	5.98 (2.11)
Days of Campaign Info: Paper	Days in past week R read campaign news in paper	2.88 (3.01)	3.48 (3.09)
Days of Campaign Info: Online	Days in past week R saw campaign info online	2.09 (2.87)	2.93 (3.11)
Discussed Politics Online	Dummy: R discussed politics online during general election	.10 (.31)	.21 (.41)
Num. Debates Watched	Number of general election debates watched		2.9 (1.4)
Attitude Strength			
Strength of Party ID	Strong, weak, or lean towards preferred party	Lean: .27 Weak: .25 Strong: .48	Lean: .27 Weak: .23 Strong: .50
McCain/Obama Therm Diff	Absolute value of difference in (10-point) thermometer ratings of Obama and McCain	3.67 (2.88)	3.88 (2.74)
Ever Changed Mind About Vote	Dummy: R ever thought they would vote for the other candidate		.30 (.46)
When Made Voting Decision	When R decided presidential vote (6-point scale, higher=earlier)		5.00 (1.41)
Demographics			
Female	Dummy: R is female	.58 (.49)	.56 (.50)
Age	R Age at time of interview, in years	53.26 (15.96)	55.08 (14.67)
Frequency of Church Attendance	Frequency of religious attendance (5-point scale; higher=more frequent)	2.91 (1.34)	2.88 (1.34)
Race	5 category race/ethnicity self-identification	White: .81 Black: .08 Hispanic: .06 Asian: .02 Other: .03	White: .86 Black: .07 Hispanic: .04 Asian: .01 Other: .03
Other Controls			
Interviewed After Primary	Dummy: R interviewed after their state's primary election	.52 (.49)	
Question Wording	Dummy: Persuasion question asked is KB07 (baseline: KB06)	.75 (.43)	

Appendix 5D: High Rates of Persuasion After the Primary Election

There are three possible alternative explanations for the high rate of persuasion after primary elections: 1) individuals are trying to persuade friends or family who live out of state and who have not yet had their election, 2) individuals are already looking forward to the general election, and 3) response error leads to over-reporting of persuasive behavior. While these are all almost certainly occurring, they are insufficient explanations for why the rate of persuasion does not have a significant drop after the state's primary election is over. As most persuasion reportedly occurs in-person, persuasion across state lines is unlikely to account for such a high continuation of the behavior after the election. Response error may take the form of social desirability pressure to say "yes" even when no persuasion happened, or poor recall, especially where the specific time frames are involved. However, there is no reason to expect social desirability norms to be stronger after the primary election than before it, so the error rate is expected to be roughly equivalent before and after the election. In this case, unless social desirability accounts for nearly all "yes" responses in each time period, there is still, by comparison, an unexpectedly high degree of persuasion occurring during the post-primary period. Finally, although some individuals surely get an early start on persuasion for the general election, recall that the general election candidates are not yet known at the time these individuals are interviewed. And if persuasion were instrumental and responsive to the campaign as expected by the campaign participation literature, we would still expect it to be significantly higher as things became more competitive near Election Day.