Supplemental Information for

Do Negatively Framed Messages Motivate Political Behavior?

Evidence from Four Field Experiments

Field Experiment 1: Population and Treatments

Population

Our partner organization selected the experimental population based on the following criteria:

- Registered voters in four states with a "strong" match between phone listings and voter file records according to Catalist LLC, a consumer data firm specializing in information on registered voters.[1]

- Registered voters with a predicted probability of voting between 30 percent and 70 percent based on a predictive voter turnout model provided by Catalist LLC. This criterion was based on previous research that voter mobilization contacts have maximum impact for registered voters with a 50-50 chance of turning out (Green & Gerber, 2008, p. 174; Arceneaux & Nickerson, 2009; Niven, 2004; Hillygus, 2005; Parry, et al., 2008).

- Registered voters expected to trust information about political issues from our partner organization based on a proprietary micro-targeting model.

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[1] In practice, the strong match usually means a match of address and full name. Medium and weak match phone numbers include records that match only on address and last name, address only, etcetera. The standard practice of our partner organization, based on extensive experience with voter contact phone calls, was to use only strong match phone numbers.

- Multiple-voter households were excluded from this experimental population, defined by multiple registered voters associated with the same phone number.

- Registered voters who had requested an absentee/mail ballot, or cast early in-person ballot prior to October 27, 2010, were excluded from the experiment.[2]

Individuals selected by our partner organization were randomly assigned to four conditions: control, base script, positive frame script, and negative frame script. We exclude the base script from our analysis because the calls were made by a different call center than the negative frame and positive frame scripts. Mann and Klofstad (2015) find significant differences in treatment delivery quality and impact on turnout across call centers, so we cannot distinguish between call center effects and script effect. Since we are interested in the effect of the negative-positive frame manipulation, our analysis focuses on individuals who participated in phone calls through the delivery of this element of the script. Table S1 reports the balance across covariates from the voter registration file for subjects who responded to the calls and the call response rate for each script among all numbers dialed.[3]

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[2] The exclusions for early voting and absentee/mail ballots were based on data obtained from election officials by Catalist LLC.

[3] Response rate is the number of phone calls completed through the delivery of the treatment manipulation divided by all eligible records. This calculation follows the American Association of Public Opinion Research's Standard Definitions Response Rate 2 (AAPOR 2011).

The data for the calls and the individual level voter turnout data were provided by Catalist LLC, a firm specializing in data on registered voters.[4]

Treatment

The common text of both voter mobilization scripts drew upon recent successful voter mobilization field experiments.

- Nickerson and Rogers (2010) found that prompting registered voters to make a plan for voting (implementation intentions) makes voter mobilization phone calls more effective than conventional appeals to civic duty or requests to pledge to vote (Michelson, García Bedolla, & McConnell, 2009). Our script asked respondents when they planned to vote and how they planned to get to the polls.

- Panagopoulos (2011) found that thanking registered voters for voting in a recent election increased voter turnout by exerting social pressure in a way that did not provoke anger or backlash. Our script thanks registered voters for voting in recent elections.

- Gerber and Rogers (2009) found increases in self-reported intention to vote when the phone calls provided a positive descriptive social norm about

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[4] Voters who did not appear on the post-election voter rolls were coded as non-voters. We cannot exclude voters who drop from the voter rolls, because the administrative process for removing a record from the voter rolls is conditional on non-voting under the federal National Voter Registration Act of 1993. If the treatment increases turnout, it makes voters more likely to remain on the rolls. Thus, exclusion of non-voters from both the treatment and control groups will bias the estimate of the treatment effect.

voting. Therefore, our script labels the respondent as "the kind of person who cares about your community and who votes," and suggests joining "the thousands of people like you who will vote on Tuesday."

- The script also asked respondents to pledge to "fill out the entire ballot" for all candidates and referendums to reduce roll-off for lower salience contests, although we have no expectation that this will influence turnout (Mann, 2011).[5]

The substantive content for the negative-positive frame manipulation was defined by our partner organization, and we assisted with devising the respective frames. The scripts were reviewed by our partner organization's staff and legal counsel for political considerations and compliance with state and federal tax law, communications law, and other applicable regulations and laws.

The voter mobilization phone calls were made by a commercial call center on behalf of a political consulting firm on Saturday, October 30 and Sunday, October 31, 2010, prior to Election Day on Tuesday, November 2, 2010. The call center agents were instructed to make the interactions seem "chatty" and "personal." We conducted remote telephone monitoring sessions with the call center throughout the field period and encountered no problems with adherence to the scripts. The full scripts for each call are below.

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[5] The fifth element of the script requested an email address from the respondent to enable our partner organization to send vote reminders (Dale & Strauss, 2007; Malhotra, et al., 2011). Less than 1 percent of respondents provided emails, so we do not address this part of the script here.

Field Experiment 1: Positive Script

Hello, is <name on list> there?

Hi! This is <caller name> calling from the <organization name>. We're not asking for money today and we're not campaigning for or against any candidate.
We're just calling to thank you because our records show you voted in recent elections. Since you're the kind of person who cares about your community and who votes, we know we can we count on you to join the thousands of people like you who will vote on Tuesday.

1) On Tuesday, are you planning to vote in the morning, at lunchtime, in the afternoon, or in the evening?

    If unsure of time or slow/no response, prompt: It's important to plan ahead so you don't forget to vote on Election Day. When do you think will be most convenient for you to vote on Tuesday, November 2nd?

    Record:
    1 – if response is a time of day (morning, lunch, afternoon, evening, any specific time)
    2 – if response is already voted early or by mail -(do not read) – *That's great. Thanks for voting already. Sorry to bother you. Goodbye.*
    3 – if response is Not sure/Don't know
    4 - [Refused]

2) Do you plan to vote while you are on your way to [from] work or out running errands, or do you have to make a special trip to go to vote?
    Record:
    1 – To/From work or errands
    2 – Special trip
    3 – Not sure of polling place location

    [*If Yes*] Great!

    [*If No / Not Sure*] That's okay. You can look up your polling place on the web at Vote411 dot org. You can also call your local election office to find out where to vote.

3) There are a lot candidates and issues on the ballot this year, and each of them is important for our future. It takes all of us to get involved so that we can

improve the economy and enjoy clean air and clean water. We're asking people to pledge to fill out their entire ballot, can we count on you to try to fill out the entire ballot?

Record:

1 – Yes

2 – No

3 – Maybe/Don't Know/Wouldn't say --

[If No/Maybe/Don't know] I know there are a lot of things on the ballot but each of them is an important opportunity to improve our future. Please cast your vote on as many as you can because there is so much at stake at the local, state and national level this year.

4) Many people are more likely to remember to vote if they get a reminder. I'd like to send you a reminder about voting on Tuesday. Can you please give me an email address where I can send you a reminder? We won't give or sell your email to anyone else.

Email: _____@_____

[*If email provided*] Thanks!

[*If email not provided*] That's okay.

[Close] I know life can get hectic, but it's important to remember to vote this Tuesday even if things come up because we have a lot to gain in this election. It looks like a lot of people will be voting this year, so thank you for being a good citizen who votes and for your promise to vote on Tuesday!

Thanks for your time. Goodbye.

Field Experiment 1: Negative Script
Hello, is <name on list> there?

Hi! This is <caller name> calling from the <organization name>. We're not asking for money today and we're not campaigning for or against any candidate.
We're just calling to thank you because our records show you voted in recent elections. Since you're the kind of person who cares about your community and who votes, we know we can we count on you to join the thousands of people like you who will vote on Tuesday.

1) On Tuesday, are you planning to vote in the morning, at lunchtime, in the afternoon, or in the evening?

   If unsure of time or slow/no response, prompt: It's important to plan ahead so you don't forget to vote on Election Day. When do you think will be most convenient for you to vote on Tuesday, November 2nd?
   Record:
   1 – if response is a time of day (morning, lunch, afternoon, evening, any specific time)
   2 – if response is already voted early or by mail -(do not read) – *That's great. Thanks for voting already. Sorry to bother you. Goodbye.*
   3 – if response is Not sure/Don't know
   4 - [Refused]

2) Do you plan to vote while you are on your way to [from] work or out running errands, or do you have to make a special trip to go to vote?
   Record:
   1 – To/From work or errands
   2 – Special trip
   3 – Not sure of polling place location

   [*If Yes*] Great!

   [*If No / Not Sure*] That's okay. You can look up your polling place on the web at Vote411 dot org. You can also call your local election office to find out where to vote.

3) There are a lot candidates and issues on the ballot this year, and each of them is important for our future. It takes all of us to get involved so that we can

avoid job loss and protect clean air and clean water. We're asking people to pledge to fill out their entire ballot, we count on you to try to fill out the entire ballot?
Record:
1 – Yes
2 – No
3 – Maybe/Don't Know
4 - [Refused]

[If No/Maybe/Don't know] I know there are a lot of things on the ballot but too much is at stake to lose any of them. Please cast your vote on as many as you can because there is so much at stake at the local, state and national level this year.

4) Many people are more likely to remember to vote if they get a reminder. I'd like to send you a reminder about voting on Tuesday. Can you please give me an email address where I can send you a reminder? We won't give or sell your email to anyone else.
    Email: _____@_____
[*If email provided*] Thanks!
[*If email not provided*] That's okay.

[Close] I know life can get hectic, but it's important to remember to vote this Tuesday even if things come up because we have a lot to lose in this election. It looks like a lot of people will be voting this year, so thank you for being a good citizen who votes and for your promise to vote on Tuesday!
Thanks for your time. Goodbye.

Field Experiments 2-4: Population and Treatments

Population

Field Experiments 2-4 use the same experimental population. Our partner organization defined a list of 60,619 households in early December 2011. Households were defined by unique phone number, and only one individual in each household was contacted. Each unique phone number was randomly assigned to the negative frame or positive frame. Table S2 reports the balance across household level covariates from the voter registration file for subjects who responded to the calls.

The entire population was randomly assigned to a calling order. This set-up was used to allow our partner organization to start and stop the patch-through calls at their discretion without delays to define and conduct random assignment. Field Experiment 2 utilized the first 13,439 records in the experimental population. Field Experiment 3 utilized the next 13,781 records and Field Experiment 4 utilized the final 33,399 records.

Our partner organization selected the experimental population based on the following criteria:

- Registered voter in a western state where the experiments were conducted.

- Individual records were consolidated to households defined by unique phone number for random assignment.

  o Call center agents asked for any targeted individual at the phone number on contact, but treated only one person reached at each phone number.

- A phone number was available on the voter file.

- Received a high score on a proprietary model indicating likelihood of willingness to take action on environmental issues in the state.

- Hispanic ethnicity according to a commercial model of likely ethnicity.

Treatments

Field Experiments 2-4 utilized patch-through calls to the Office of the Governor in a western state. This type of patch-through call is a standard tactic of mobilizing "grassroots" support for policy advocacy. The calls for each experiment were made by the same call center, which our partner organization has worked with on these types of calls for several years.

The state administrative rules targeted for advocacy and substantive content of the scripts were chosen by our partner organization. We assisted with devising the respective positive and negative frames for each script. The scripts were reviewed by our partner organization's staff and legal counsel for political considerations and compliance with state and federal tax law, communications law, and other applicable regulations and laws.

For each experiment, calls were made on weekdays during regular office hours for government agencies so the calls to the governor's office would be answered when patched through. The calls for Field Experiment 2 were made from December 5 to December 9, 2011. The calls for Field Experiment 3 were made from January 13 to January 23, 2012. The calls for Field Experiment 4 were made from April 24 to May 2, 2012. Field Experiment 4 replicates Field Experiment 3 with the

same script. The opportunity for replication arose from a delay in the rule-making

process by the state agency.

Field Experiment 2: Positive Script
"Hi may I please speak with [name1] [name2]?" [record the name/id of whomever
we spoke with]

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm calling from <organization name>. I'm not trying to sell
you anything or ask you for money—I just want to talk to you about a critical issue
being decided in <state> right now…

Last year, <state> adopted a strong rule that reduces carbon pollution by the biggest
polluters in the state. The rule is driving a clean energy economy in our state,
creating good-paying jobs when we need them the most. And by reducing carbon
pollution, the rule helps keep the air we breathe clean and safe, so our families and
communities are healthier.

Unfortunately, Governor <name> wants to overturn the rule that reduces carbon
pollution in <state>… She appointed a new Environmental Improvement Board that
is supporting big polluters' efforts to dismantle the rule. The Board is meeting now
to make its decision.

By keeping the rule, we can create good-paying jobs in the clean energy sector—at a
time when we desperately need them. We'll also improve our air quality and
become a national leader in tackling climate change.

If Governor <name> hears from enough <citizens of state>, she'll think twice about
trying to overturn the rule. She can request that her Environmental Improvement
Board keep the carbon rule in place.

We can patch you through to Governor <name>'s office right now. All you have to do
is tell her staff that you want her to fight for clean energy jobs for <state>, and to
protect the health of our families and communities by keeping the carbon pollution
rule the way it is. Can we patch you through to her office right now?

(code) YES: "Great! Just remember to tell the staff that you want clean energy jobs
and healthy communities by keeping the carbon pollution rule the way it is. Thanks
so much, and I'm patching you through now."

(code) NO: "Thank you very much for your time." TERMINATE.

(code) Undecided/don't know. "I can give you the office number for Governor <name>, so you can call later. The number for the Governor's office is ###-###-####. Thanks very much for your time, and I hope you'll let Governor <name> that you support keeping the carbon rule the way it is." TERMINATE.

(code) REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE: "Thank you. Goodbye."
(code) DO NOT CALL: "Thank you. Goodbye."

(code) Hung up before reaching target
(code) Language Barrier
(code) Deceased
(code) Refused (from other than target)
(code) Privacy Manager
(code) Wrong Number
(code) Modem/Fax
(code) Not in Service
(code) Changed
(code) Invalid Number

TERMINATION MESSAGE:
Thank you very much for your time.

Field Experiment 2: Negative Script
"Hi may I please speak with [name1] [name2]?" [record the name/id of whomever we spoke with]

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm calling from <organization name>. I'm not trying to sell you anything or ask you for money—I just want to talk to you about a critical issue being decided in <state> right now…

Last year, <state> adopted a strong rule that reduces carbon pollution by the biggest polluters in the state. The rule is driving a clean energy economy in our state, creating good-paying jobs when we need them the most. Preventing this pollution protects our families and communities from the devastating threats of climate change—including the horrific wildfires and drought faced by <state>.

Unfortunately, Governor <name> wants to overturn the rule that reduces carbon pollution in <state>... She appointed a new Environmental Improvement Board that is supporting big polluters' efforts to dismantle the rule. The Board is meeting now to make its decision.

If the rule is dismantled, we will lose the good-paying jobs in the clean energy sector—at a time when we desperately need them. We'll also make the threats of climate change worse—including greater risks of wildfires and drought.

But if Governor <name> hears from enough <citizens of state>, she'll think twice about trying to overturn the rule. She can request that her Environmental Improvement Board keep the carbon rule in place.

We can patch you through to Governor <name>'s office right now. All you have to do is tell her staff that you're worried about losing clean energy jobs and the threats of climate change, so you want to keep the carbon pollution rule the way it is. Can we patch you through to her office right now?

(code) YES: "Great! Just remember to tell the staff that you're worried about losing clean energy jobs and the threats of climate change, and want her to keep the carbon pollution rule the way it is. Thanks so much, and I'm patching you through now."

(code) NO: "Thank you very much for your time." TERMINATE.

(code) Undecided/don't know. "I can give you the office number for Governor <name>, so you can call later. The number for the Governor's office is ###=###-####. Thanks very much for your time, and I hope you'll let Governor <name> that you support keeping the carbon rule the way it is." TERMINATE.

(code) REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE: "Thank you. Goodbye."
(code) DO NOT CALL: "Thank you. Goodbye."

(code) Hung up before reaching target
(code) Language Barrier
(code) Deceased
(code) Refused (from other than target)
(code) Privacy Manager
(code) Wrong Number
(code) Modem/Fax
(code) Not in Service

(code) Changed
(code) Invalid Number
TERMINATION MESSAGE:
Thank you very much for your time.

Field Experiment 3 & 4: Positive Script
"Hi may I please speak with [name1] [name2]?" [record the name/id of whomever we spoke with]

Hi, my name is <caller name>, and I'm calling from <organization name>. I'm not trying to sell you anything or ask you for money—I just want to talk to you about a critical issue being decided very soon…

In 2008, <state> adopted a rule—called the 'pit rule'—that requires oil and gas companies to dispose of their toxic waste properly to keep our groundwater safe from contamination.

Unfortunately, Governor <name> wants to overturn the rule that keeps our water clean… She appointed a new Oil Conservation Commission that is meeting soon to consider dismantling the rule.

With a strong pit rule, we can make sure our water is clean and safe.

If Governor <name> hears from enough people, she'll think twice about trying to dismantle the rule. She can request that her Oil Conservation Commission keep the pit rule, and make it stronger.

We can patch you through to Governor <name>'s office right now. All you have to do is tell her staff that you want her to protect our water with a strong rule for oil and gas waste pits. Can we patch you through to her office right now?

(code) YES: "*Great! Just remember to tell the staff that you want a strong oil and gas pit rule to keep our water clean and safe. Thanks so much, and I'm patching you through now.*"

(code) NO: "*Thank you very much for your time.*" TERMINATE.

(code) Undecided/don't know. *"I can give you the office number for Governor <name>, so you can call later. The number for the Governor's office is ###-###-####. Thanks very much for your time, and I hope you'll let Governor <name> that you support a strong pit rule."* TERMINATE.

(code) REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE: "*Thank you. Goodbye.*"
(code) DO NOT CALL: "*Thank you. Goodbye.*"

Field Experiments 3 & 4: Negative Script
"Hi may I please speak with [name1] [name2]?" [record the name/id of whomever we spoke with]

Hi, my name is <caller name>, and I'm calling from <organization name>. I'm not trying to sell you anything or ask you for money—I just want to talk to you about a critical issue being decided very soon…

In 2008, <state> adopted a rule—called the 'pit rule'—that requires oil and gas companies to dispose of their toxic waste properly so that it doesn't contaminate our groundwater.

Unfortunately, Governor <name> wants to overturn the rule that keeps oil and gas waste out of our groundwater… She appointed a new Oil Conservation Commission that is meeting soon to consider dismantling the rule.

Without the pit rule, our water is at risk of irreversible contamination.

If Governor <name> hears from enough people, she'll think twice about trying to dismantle the rule. She can request her Oil Conservation Commission not to weaken or get rid of the rule.

We can patch you through to Governor <name>'s office right now. All you have to do is tell her staff that you don't want toxic waste contaminating our water, so you want a strong rule for oil and gas waste pits. Can we patch you through to her office right now?

(code) YES: "Great! Just remember to tell the staff that you want a strong oil and gas pit rule so our water doesn't get contaminated. Thanks so much, and I'm patching you through now."

(code) NO: "*Thank you very much for your time.*" TERMINATE.

(code) Undecided/don't know. "I can give you the office number for Governor <name>, so you can call later. The number for the Governor's office is ###-###-####. Thanks very much for your time, and I hope you'll let Governor <name> that you support a strong pit rule." TERMINATE.

(code) REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE: "*Thank you. Goodbye.*"
(code) DO NOT CALL: "*Thank you. Goodbye.*"

Manipulation Checks

In June 2017, we recruited 608 adults living in the United States from the Amazon Mechanical Turk panel to participate in a brief study designed to check the treatment manipulations across the four experiments. Participants were compensated $0.50 for their time. The sample was typical of MTurk experiments: fairly diverse in terms of age (M = 35, SD = 11.5), education (47% reported having a college degree), gender (44% female), race (73% white), and income (median between $35,000 and $50,000). The sample skewed to the left side of the political spectrum (58% identified as Democrats and 27% identified as Republicans, including Independents who lean toward one of the parties; 54% identified as liberal and 24% identified as conservative). This Mechanical Turk population is not identical to the population selected by our partner organizations (see Tables S1 and S2), but we have no reason to expect that the demographic differences between the manipulation check and the experiments are correlated with differences in perception of positive and negative frames (Mullinix, Leeper, Druckman, & Freese, 2015).

We randomly assigned participants into three groups for each of the three treatment manipulations: voter mobilization experiment manipulation in Field Experiment 1 (n = 205), patch through script for Field Experiment 2 (n = 209), and patch through script for Field Experiments 3 and 4 (n = 190). Within each of these subsamples, we randomly assigned subjects to read either the negative or positive script used in the relevant field experiment and then describe the script using a

semantic differential task. The question for this task instructed participants as

follows: "Below are pairs of opposite words (e.g., good/bad). Please indicate how

closely you belief each word relates to the statement you just read." Participants

were presented with two word pairs (randomly rotated) — Positive/Negative and

Gain/Loss — and asked to place their response on a 9-point scale where the positive

word was a 1 and the negative word was a 9.

Field Experiment 1 Manipulation Check

We randomly assigned participants to read either the positive (n = 98) or

negative frame (n = 107). Participants in the positive frame condition read the

essential element of the treatment manipulation in the actual field experiment: "It

takes all of us to get involved so that we can improve the economy and enjoy clean

air and clean water." Similarly, for the negative frame, participants read, "It takes all

of us to get involved so that we can avoid job loss and protect clean air and clean

water."

The two semantic differential items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.82$).

Participants in the negative frame group rate the frame more negatively than

participants in the positive frame group ($M_{negative} = 3.02$, $M_{positive} = 2.49$, $d = 0.31$, t_{203}

$= 2.25$, $p = 0.013$, one-tailed).

Field Experiment 2 Manipulation Check

We randomly assigned participants to read either the positive (n = 110) or

negative frame (n = 99). Participants assigned to the positive frame read the full

script from Field Experiment 2: "Last year, New Mexico adopted a strong rule that reduces carbon pollution by the biggest polluters in the state.   Unfortunately, The governor wants to overturn the rule that reduces carbon pollution in [state].   By keeping the rule, we can create good-paying jobs in the clean energy sector—at a time when we desperately need them. We'll also improve our air quality and become a national leader in tackling climate change." Similarly, participants assigned to the negative frame read, "Last year, New Mexico adopted a strong rule that reduces carbon pollution by the biggest polluters in the state.   Unfortunately, The governor wants to overturn the rule that reduces carbon pollution in [state].   If the rule is dismantled, we will lose the good-paying jobs in the clean energy sector—at a time when we desperately need them. We'll also make the threats of climate change worse—including greater risks of wildfires and drought." Even though most of our participants did not live in the state in the script, we retained the script's original language to avoid using deception.

The two semantic differential items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.94$). Participants in the negative frame group rate the frame more negatively than participants in the positive frame group ($M_{negative} = 7.25$, $M_{positive} = 5.3$, $d = 0.79$, $t_{207} = 6.14$, $p < 0.0001$).

Field Experiments 3 and 4 Manipulation Check

We randomly assigned participants to read either the positive (n = 88) or negative frame (n = 102). We modified the script slightly so that we could present the issue as a potential policy proposal that participants could encounter in their

own state. The positive frame read, "With a strong pit rule, we can make sure our water is clean and safe.   If governor's office of [participant's state] hears from enough people, they will think twice about trying to dismantle the rule. The governor can request that the state keep the pit rule, and make it stronger.   You could tell the governor right now. All you have to do is tell the governor's office that you want the state to protect our water with a strong rule for oil and gas waste pits." The negative frame read, "Without the pit rule, our water is at risk of irreversible contamination.   If governor's office of [participant's state] hears from enough people, they will think twice about trying to dismantle the rule. The governor can request that the state not to weaken or get rid of the rule.   You could tell the governor right now. All you have to do is tell the governor's office that you don't want toxic waste contaminating our water, so you want a strong rule for oil and gas waste pits." We were able to identify participants' state from their computer's IP address.

The two semantic differential items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.86$). Participants in the negative frame group rate the frame more negatively than participants in the positive frame group ($M_{negative} = 4.79$, $M_{positive} = 3.59$, $d = 0.57$, $t_{188} = 4.07$, $p < 0.0001$).

Power Calculations

Experiment 1 as designed and conducted had the power (85%) to reliably detect treatment effects as small as 2.1 percentage points (with a margin of error of 1.5 points).

The patch through calls in Experiments 2 – 4 had the power (85%) to reliably detect treatment effect sizes as small as 6.9, 7.6 and 5.2 percentage points respectively. Pooled together, they could detect treatment effect sizes as small as 3.7 points.

While these treatment effects do not allow for fine grained analysis of the treatments, they do allow us to rule out the large effect sizes frequently detected in laboratory settings.

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