

Why blog about politics?

Results from a representative, case-control survey

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Motivation

Why blog ~ Why participate?

- ▶ Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980)
- ▶ Rosenstone and Hansen (1993)
- ▶ Verba, Schlozman, Brady (1995)
- ▶ Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001)

Agenda

- ▶ Case-control
- ▶ Content validation
- ▶ Motivations for new directions in
- ▶ Sampling, imputation, and instrumentation

Case-control design

Blogger survey

U.S. Political bloggers
Repr. sample ($n=606$)
Online, self-admin.
Same questions
Nov. 2010 - May 2011

EGSS survey

U.S. Adults
Repr. sample ($n \sim 1,100$)
Online, self-admin.
Same questions
Feb. 2010 - Oct 2010

Results 1

	Total Participation	Blog
(Intercept)	-1.46 *	-7.42 *
Pol. interest	1.03 *	5.11 *
Pol. efficacy	0.35 *	-0.03
Civic skills	0.23 *	0.19
Income	0.42 *	0.51
Education	0.28 *	3.77 *
Working	-0.10	0.04
Age	0.54 *	-1.09 *
Over 65	0.11	-1.05 *
Married	0.05	-0.16
Race: white	0.03	-0.06
Female	0.11 *	-0.92 *
<i>N</i>	1101	1564

Results 2

	Blog	Vote	Donate	Advertise	Contact	Attend
(Intercept)	-7.42 *	-3.70 *	-7.49 *	-5.67 *	-5.57 *	-5.53 *
Pol. interest	5.11 *	1.92 *	2.02 *	1.91 *	2.95 *	3.90 *
Pol. efficacy	-0.03	1.18 *	1.12 *	1.29 *	0.47	0.46
Civic skills	0.19	0.90 *	0.39 *	0.77 *	0.59 *	0.50 *
Income	0.51	1.48 *	1.73 *	0.60	0.55	1.52 *
Education	3.77 *	1.41 *	0.77 *	0.20	0.84 *	-0.12
Working	0.04	-0.12	0.04	-0.21	-0.50 *	-0.48 †
Age	-1.09 *	2.42 *	3.43 *	0.66	1.00 †	-1.22 †
Over 65	-1.05 *	0.61	0.22	0.49	-0.01	0.61 †
Married	-0.16	0.34 †	0.26	0.13	0.18	-0.41 †
Race: white	-0.06	-0.04	-0.08	-0.00	0.39 †	-0.07
Female	-0.92 *	0.31 †	-0.05	0.41 *	0.30 †	0.24
N	1564	1101	1101	1101	1101	1101

Conclusions 1

1. Bloggers are activists.
2. Online paths to activism are different.
3. Bloggers' motives find expression in content.
4. High-bandwidth participation matters for democracy.

Validated content design

Blogger survey

...

Blog content

HTML

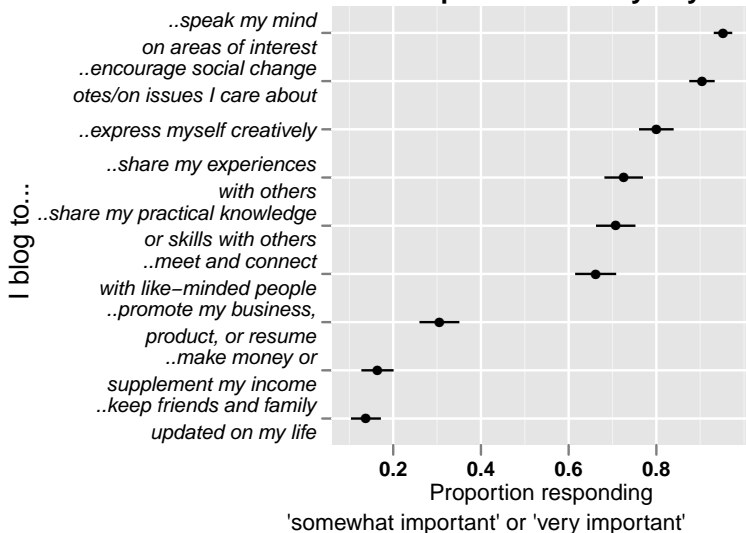
Text

Links

Motivations

Here are some reasons people give for blogging.

How important are they to you?



Comparing motivations and content: Analysis

1. Construct scales from survey results

- ▶ Party
- ▶ Revenue
- ▶ Idealism
- ▶ Particularized benefits

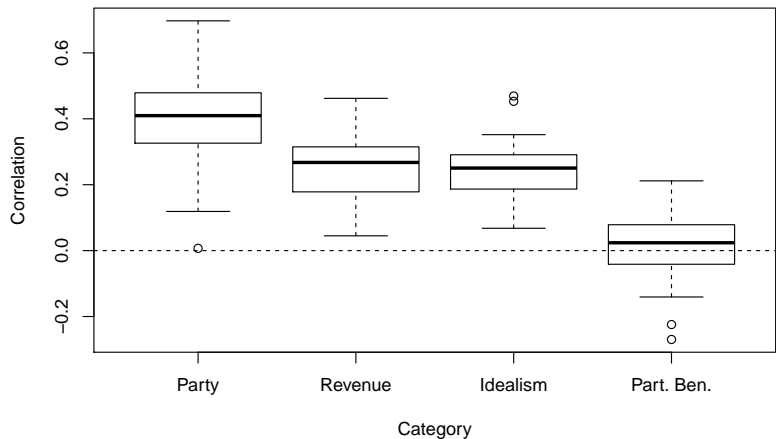
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2. Download blog content
3. Vectorize blog content

Comparing motivations and content: Analysis

1. Construct scales from survey results
 - ▶ Party
 - ▶ Revenue
 - ▶ Idealism
 - ▶ Particularized benefits
2. Download blog content
3. Vectorize blog content
4. Bootstrap 50 times:
 - 4.1 Split into training and testing set
 - 4.2 Regress scales \sim content in the training set
 - 4.3 Calculate correlation between actual and predicted scale values in the testing set

Comparing motivations and content: Results



Conclusions 2

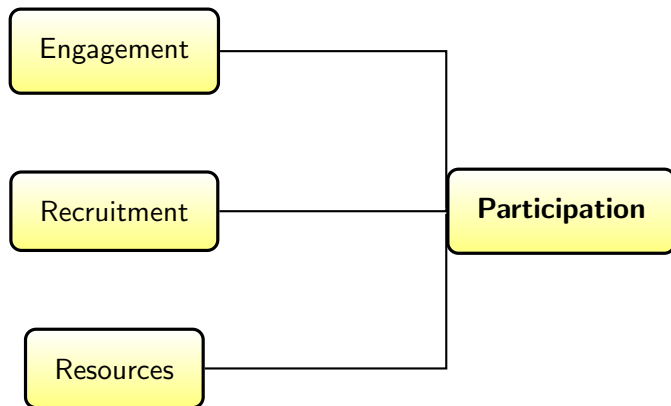
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High-bandwidth participation

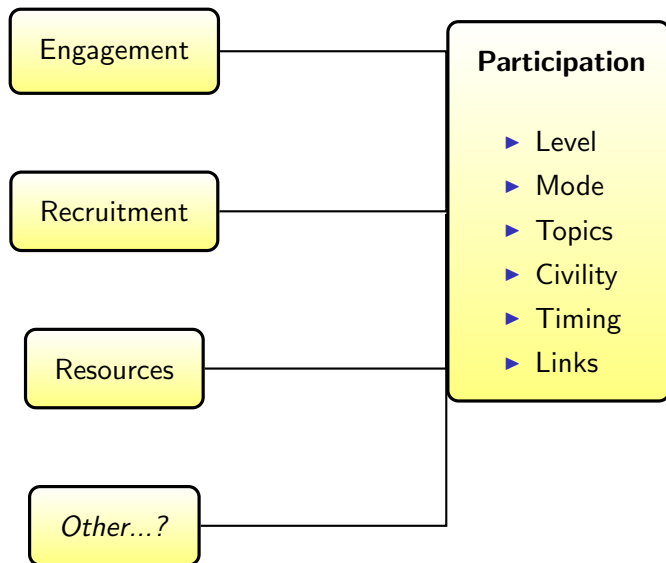
“Capable of conveying a complex message.”

- ▶ Blogging
- ▶ Water cooler discussion
- ▶ Letters to the editor
- ▶ Contacts with officials

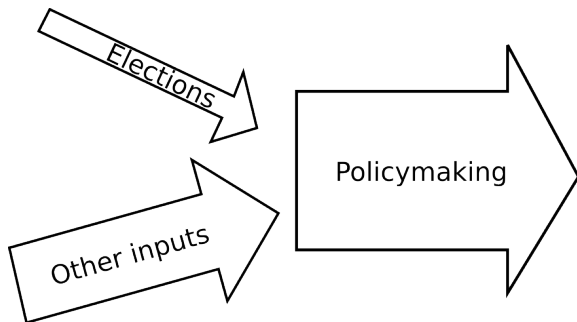
Participation: Elaborating the DV



Participation: Elaborating the DV



A democratic bandwidth problem



Conclusions 3

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4. High-bandwidth participation matters for democracy.

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?

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