

LABOR UNION COMMUNICATION:
EFFECT OF LABOR MEDIA ON LOCAL UNION VOTE CHOICE

Anji L. Phillips

Dr. Jennifer Stevens Aubrey & Dr. Mitchell S. McKinney, Co-Dissertation Supervisors

ABSTRACT

Framing theory posits the idea that media frames a particular issue, and provides a focus or precedence of that frame to the exclusion of other information. Framing of a candidate or issue may lead voters to have a particular point of view about a candidate or issue based on their media diet (i.e., channel repertoire). The present study investigated the effects of exposure to labor union media on labor union members' evaluation of the gubernatorial candidates in the 2014 State of Illinois election. The author conducted a cross-sectional survey of 201 active and retired labor union members in the State of Illinois recruited from a nonrandom, purposive, network sample. Gender, race, income, party identification, party ideology, and religiosity were all controlled. Results indicated exposure to labor union media, and awareness of the labor union endorsement, but not trust in labor media, predicted a negative evaluation of the Republican candidate (Bruce Rauner). Trust in labor union, but not exposure to labor union media, nor awareness of the labor union endorsement, predicted a favorable evaluation of the union-endorsed candidate (Pat Quinn). Awareness of the labor union endorsement, but not exposure to labor media, predicted a negative evaluation of right-to-work and anti-union laws. Channel repertoire indicated television, followed by newspapers (most trusted medium), radio, and the Internet were most used for political information, but the national labor union website garnered the most trust as a channel.