

The Self-Prophecy Effect: Increasing Voter Turnout by Vanity-Assisted Consciousness Raising

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Abstract. Persons registered to vote in Seattle, Washington for the November, 1986 general election and a September, 1987 primary election were randomly assigned to treatments in two telephone-conducted experiments that sought to increase voter turnout. The experiments applied and extended a "self-prophecy" technique, in which respondents are asked simply to predict whether or not they will perform a target action. In the present studies, voting registrants were asked to predict whether or not they would vote in an election that was less than 48 hours away. This technique, which previously increased turnout in a small study done during the 1984 U.S. Presidential election, was again effective among moderate prior-turnout voters in the second of the present much larger experiments. The failure of the effect in Experiment 1 was plausibly a ceiling effect due to very high turnout for a U.S. Senate contest in the 1986 election. Successful applications of the self-prophecy technique are facilitated by social desirability of the target action (which leads subjects to predict that they will perform it). However, social desirability of the target behavior is not a sufficient condition for the effect, as indicated by an unexpected nonoccurrence of the effect among low prior-turnout voters in Experiment 2.

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RUNNING HEAD: *Increasing Voter Turnout*

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When asked to predict their behavior, college students overstate their likelihood of performing socially desirable actions. Although this is not surprising, it is remarkable that, once predicted, the socially desirable action is more likely to occur. In a study done with students on the Indiana University campus, Sherman (1980) demonstrated this phenomenon's use to increase the rate of volunteering to do charitable work, and Greenwald, Carnot, Beach and Young (1987) increased voter turnout in the 1984 U.S. Presidential election among a small sample of dormitory-resident students on the Ohio State University campus.

Sherman (1980) labeled this type of finding a *self-erasing error of prediction*, because (a) subjects predicted a higher rate of performing the desirable action than was observed in a control group that made no predictions, but (b) the increased subsequent performance of the action made the (apparent) errors of overprediction not (or less) erroneous. A plausible interpretation of the effect assumes that the subject wishes to project a favorable appearance, and consequently predicts performance (rather than nonperformance) of the target action. The forecast then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, perhaps as a consequence of the subject's subsequently retrieving the prediction and using it as a guide to action. (Theoretical interpretation of the effect is considered further in the concluding Discussion.)

In this article, *self-prophecy effect* is used as a shorthand label for the self-erasing-error-of-prediction phenomenon described by Sherman. In the present two experiments, which are based on the procedures of Greenwald et al. (1987), potential voters were asked to predict whether or not they would vote in an imminent election. These experiments sought to demonstrate that the self-prophecy effect could be applied to produce the practically important effect of increasing voter turnout in a nonstudent population. Because of the generally very high voter turnout in the election on which it focused, Experiment 1 turned out not to provide an effective test of the self-prophecy effect, and will be reported only briefly.¹ Experiment 2, which was done in a primary election that attracted considerably less turnout, provided a more decisive test which both confirmed the self-prophecy effect and revealed a previously unsuspected limiting condition.

Experiment 1

Method

Within each of 29 precincts (averaging about 260 registered voters each), calls were made to all residences of voting registrants for whom telephone numbers were available. The caller initiated an interview with the registrant who could most readily be brought to the telephone at each contacted residence.

¹Experiment 1 nevertheless demonstrated an unexpectedly strong positive relationship between contactability of potential voters by telephone and their turnout in the election. This *contactability bias* phenomenon is described in another manuscript (Greenwald, Vande Kamp, Klinger, & Kerr, 1988) that focuses on the survey-methodological implications of Experiment 1.

The interview consisted of either one or two questions. Three of the four interview conditions were conducted within the 48 hours preceding the November 4, 1986 general election, which included a closely contested U.S. Senate race. The fourth condition was conducted exactly one week following the other three (that is, 5 or 6 days after the election). All target households were called once on Sunday, and retried on Monday if the Sunday call had not been answered.

When a call was answered, the caller said "Hello -- I'm calling with a very brief voter survey. Is [registrant name] at home?" When two or more registrants were at the same residence, the caller sought to interview any one of them, preferably the person who answered the telephone. If a requested registrant who had not answered the telephone was successfully contacted, the caller continued by saying "I'm calling with a very brief survey," and then proceeded with the script given below for each condition.

Prediction-only. "The survey involves only one question, which is asking you to predict whether or not you will vote on Election Day, but not asking for whom you intend to vote. Are you willing to participate?" If the callee agreed to participate, the caller continued, "What is your prediction, then: Do you predict that you will vote or not vote?"

Preference plus prediction. "The survey involves only two questions, about your preferences in the U.S. Senate election. Are you willing to participate?" If the callee agreed, the caller continued, "Whom do you prefer: Brock Adams or Slade Gorton?" [For half of the respondents in both this and the preference-only condition, the order in which the caller gave the two names was reversed.] "The second question is to predict whether or not you will vote on Election Day. Do you predict that you will vote or not vote?"

Preference-only. After asking the preference question as previously described, the caller continued, "Have you received any calls urging you to vote for ___?", filling the blank with the name of the preferred candidate. (This second question was asked primarily so that both preference conditions could be introduced honestly as involving two questions.)

Post-election control. These respondents were contacted on the Sunday and Monday after the election (November 9 and 10). They were asked to participate in a post-election (rather than a pre-election) survey: "The survey involves only one question, which is asking you whether or not you voted on Election Day, last Tuesday, but not asking for whom you voted. Are you willing to participate?" Those who agreed were asked, "Did you vote or not vote on Election Day?"

Results

Voting dependent measure. The King County Records and Elections Division's voting records were available for inspection a month after the election. Data for contactability and turnout are reported in Table 1, which excludes 673 absentee voters (8.9% of the original population), most of whom had likely voted prior to the start of the experiment. (In order to be counted, absentee ballots must be postmarked on election day.)

Table 1

Contactability (n and %) as a Function of Experimental Treatments, and Voting (% in parentheses) as a Function of Contactability and Treatment

(N = 6,862; 673 absentee voters excluded)

	Treatments				Com- bined
	Post- election control	Predic- tion only	Prefer- ence only	Pref. + predic- tion	
Uncontactable (no teleph)	835 47.4% (42.5%)	854 49.2% (45.0%)	854 49.5% (42.6%)	725 44.2% (39.3%)	3,268 47.6% (42.5%)
Working teleph not answered	255 14.5% (65.1%)	297 17.1% (56.6%)	223 12.9% (68.6%)	287 17.5% (59.2%)	1,062 15.5% (61.9%)
Tel. answered, not spoken to	287 16.3% (71.4%)	227 13.1% (70.0%)	272 15.8% (70.6%)	256 15.6% (69.1%)	1,042 15.2% (70.3%)
Declined to participate	69 3.9% (66.7%)	46 2.6% (76.1%)	115 6.7% (80.0%)	121 7.4% (69.4%)	351 5.1% (73.2%)
Agreed to par- ticipate	315 17.9% (87.0%)	312 18.0% (85.9%)	260 15.1% (87.3%)	252 15.4% (86.9%)	1,139 16.6% (86.7%)
Combined	1,761 (59.4%)	1,736 (58.4%)	1,724 (59.6%)	1,641 (57.0%)	6,862 (58.6%)

Note: Because their households were not contacted, in the first two rows of this table population members assigned to the different treatments were not treated differently.

There were no differences among treatments in turnout rate for participants, Chi-square (3df) = 2.58, ns. Additional analyses, using both data on subjects' participation in the preceding five elections over a 2-year period and their level of contactability as covariates, also produced no evidence of treatment effects. However, the unexpectedly high turnout level among participants plausibly created a ceiling effect. The 87.0% turnout among control-group participants (see Table 1) left little room for treatment effects to appear. There were, in effect, only about 30-40 subjects in each condition on whom the treatments could have operated, and a substantial fraction of these may have been prevented from voting by various circumstances.

Discussion

Experiment 1 is inconclusive because of the apparent ceiling effect, which left little opportunity for treatment effects to emerge. However, the high voting turnout among participants is, itself, of substantial interest. Note (in Table 1) that each successive threshold that had to be crossed in order to become a participant in this study (i.e., possession of a working telephone, someone in house answering the telephone, arriving at the telephone, and agreeing to participate) was associated with an increase in turnout. The turnout among the most contactable group of registrants, agreeing participants (86.7%), was almost double that (47.6%) among the least contactable group of registrants, those for whom a working telephone number could not be obtained. A clear implication is that persons contacted in election-related telephone surveys are likely to be (a) a decidedly nonrepresentative sample of *voting registrants*, but (b) nevertheless, an efficient sample of *actual voters*.²

Experiment 2

Overview

Because of the likely ceiling-effect problem in Experiment 1, it was decided to conduct another experiment during an election for which low turnout was expected. Seattle's September 1987 primary election provided the opportunity. Experiment 2's sample was taken from a legislative district in which the contest of greatest interest was a Democratic Party primary contest for a seat in the Washington State House of Representatives. Because Experiment 1 had not been able to replicate the Greenwald et al. (1987) finding, Experiment 2 focused on conducting a replication test. Accordingly, Experiment 1's conditions that examined the effects of asking a preference question on voting behavior were dropped.

The two basic conditions of Experiment 2 were, then, a control condition in which subjects were asked only if they knew the location of their polling place (knowledge-only, K), and a condition in which subjects were asked additionally to predict whether or not they would vote (knowledge-plus-prediction, K+P). A secondary goal of Experiment 2 was to seek further information about which components of Greenwald et al.'s (1987) procedure were necessary to their finding of increased turnout. Greenwald et al. had asked their prediction-condition subjects to provide a reason for the prediction that they would vote (all of their subjects did predict that they would vote), even though the request for a reason was not considered to be a necessary part of their treatment. Accordingly, Experiment 2 included a condition that requested a reason (knowledge-plus-prediction-plus-reason, K+P+R). Lastly, because it was conceivable that the minimal election-relevant interview in Greenwald et al.'s control condition (asking subjects if they knew where to vote) might itself have influenced turnout, a condition that included no mention of the election (contact-only control) was included.

²The implications of these findings for survey methodology are considered in greater detail in a separate report by Greenwald, Vande Kamp, Klinger, and Kerr (1988).

Method

Subjects

A list of all voting registrants in Washington's 43rd legislative district for whom the available data base included telephone numbers was purchased from a commercial list supplier.³ Forty-four of the 161 precincts in the district were selected in a fashion that yielded a socioeconomically broad sample. Before attempting any calls, 1,309 persons who had voted in the previous year's (September 1986) primary election were omitted from the study, on the assumption that they were likely to show a ceiling effect of the sort that interfered with Experiment 1. Potential respondents were contacted at 452 households.⁴ Rates of participation were uniformly high across conditions, averaging 76.7% of contacted subjects. Of the 452 contacted persons, one whose voting record could not subsequently be located at the King County Records and Election Division was dropped from the sample.

Procedure

The five callers included three of the four authors. All telephone numbers available for the selected precincts were called between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. either on Sunday September 13th or Monday September 14th. To the extent that time permitted, telephone numbers that had not been answered on Sunday were retried on Monday. The procedure for attempting to get a registrant to the telephone was the same as in Experiment 1, except for an initial mention (in the present experiment) that the call was for a survey being conducted at University of Washington. For all but the contact-only control treatment, once it was assured that the researcher was speaking to an identified registrant, the introduction to the interview was:

You can help us a lot by answering a [few] question[s] about voter knowledge. There won't be *any* questions about your preferences among candidates or parties. Are you willing to participate?

Respondents who declined were thanked and the call ended. For those who agreed to participate, the caller continued as follows for the different treatments.

Control -- Knowledge only (Control-K). "Thank you. The question is: Do you know the location of the polling place in your precinct?" (Virtually all

³Because telephone numbers for them were not entered into the data base for this list, newly registered voters were not included in the sample.

⁴There was an unexpectedly high proportion of unusable telephone numbers, apparently associated with the length of time that had elapsed between entry of the numbers into the data base and the time at which the list was purchased. Because the researchers did not anticipate the extent of this problem, no effort was made to look up names in the most recent telephone directory, which could have substantially increased the yield of usable numbers.

respondents indicated that they did. The caller provided information to those who did not.)

Knowledge+prediction (K+P). After asking the knowledge question as above, the caller continued: "The next question is: Do you predict that you will vote or not vote in the primary election [the day after] tomorrow?"

Knowledge+prediction+reason (K+P+R). After asking the knowledge and prediction questions, the caller continued: "What would you say is the most important single reason for voting in the primary?"

After answering the last question the interviewee was thanked and the call concluded.

In the *Control – Contact only (Control-C)* condition, upon successful contact with a subject, the request-to-participate followup was:

I have only one question. It concerns the Seattle Seahawks. Are you willing to participate?

If the subject agreed, the caller continued: "Can you tell me the outcome of today's [yesterday's] football game involving the Seattle Seahawks?" This question was chosen in order (a) to match the procedure of the other conditions up to the point of getting a subject to the telephone (i.e., describing a survey being conducted at University of Washington and requesting agreement to participate), but then (b) to ask a question that had no conceivable relation to voting.

Results

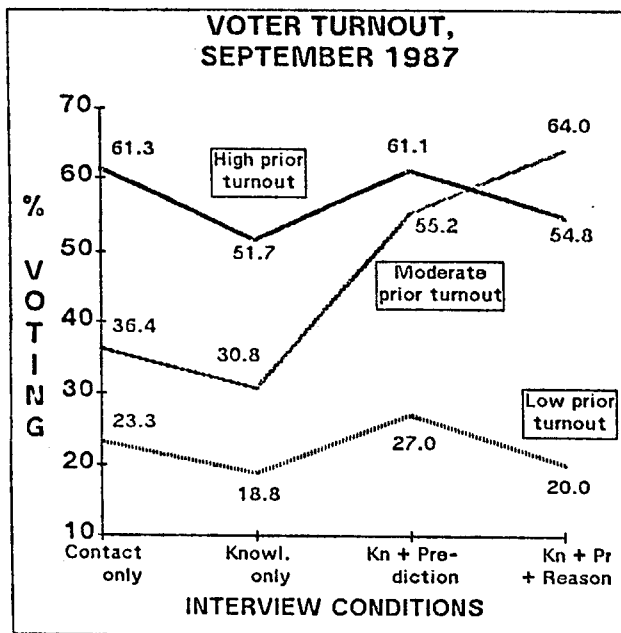


Figure 1. Voter turnout as a function of experimental treatments and prior voting record.

Turnout. Figure 1 presents the data for contacted subjects (including nonparticipants), classified by treatment and voting record in the preceding five elections. It is apparent that there was not only the predicted greater turnout in the two self-prophecy treatment conditions (K+P [40.0%] and K+P+R [41.6%]) than in the two control conditions (Control-C [36.3%] and Control-K [31.0%]), but also an interaction effect such that the self-prophecy effect was confined almost entirely to registrants with moderate prior voting records. Additionally, there was also a strong relation between prior voting and turnout, taking the expectable form that those with strongest record of voting in recent elections were also most likely to vote in the current one. These results are given in more detail in Table 2, which additionally classifies subjects by participant versus nonparticipant status.

The data were tested for significance using three *a priori* contrasts: (a) Control-C versus Control-K -- testing the effect of asking for knowledge of the polling place location; (b) K+P versus K+P+R -- testing the effect of asking for a reason for voting; and (c) (average of Control-C and Control-K) versus (average of K+P and K+P+R) -- testing the self-prophecy effect. Contrasts *a* and *b* had not been predicted to yield significant effects, even though theoretically plausible interpretations of some specific patterns (viz., $K+P+R > K+P$; $\text{Control-K} > \text{Control-C}$) might readily be generated. When the three contrasts were tested over all participants' data, only the self-prophecy effect (Contrast *c*) approached significance, $F(1,447) = 2.44$, 1-tailed $p < .06$.

Given the relation between prior voting record and turnout that is apparent in Figure 1 two further analyses were conducted. The first was a retest of Contrasts *a*, *b*, and *c* using previous voting record as a second classification factor (in addition to experimental treatment).⁵ In this analysis, the self-prophecy effect (Contrast *c*) was statistically significant when tested over all subjects, $F(1,439) = 4.69$, $p < .05$, but also varied significantly as a function of prior voting record, $F(2,439) = 2.98$, 2-tailed $p = .05$, for the interaction of prior voting record with Contrast *c*. In tests of the self-prophecy effect (Contrast *c*) separately for each of the three classifications of prior voting record, the effect was statistically significant only for the moderate prior turnout group, $F(1,121) = 7.69$, 2-tailed $p < .01$. (For both those with weak and strong previous turnout records the self-prophecy effect was only weakly in the predicted direction, and was not statistically significant, $F < 1$.)⁶

⁵In this and subsequent analyses, Contrasts *a* and *b* were repeatedly found to be nonsignificant, and will not be discussed further.

⁶The analyses reported in this paragraph were repeated with a reduced sample that eliminated subjects who refused to participate in the survey before learning anything about its nature. The same pattern of findings was obtained as is reported for the (ordinarily) more conservative analysis that includes these subjects in the treatments to which they were randomly assigned. As in the analysis of the full sample, in the reduced sample (a) the interaction of Contrast *c* with prior voting classification was statistically significant, $F(2,402) = 3.10$, $p < .05$, and (b) the simple effect of Contrast *c* was statistically significant only for moderate-prior-turnout voters, $F(1,110) = 7.69$, $p < .01$.

Table 2: Voter Turnout (%) Rates as a Function of Experimental Treatments

Treatments	Prior Turnout Record							
	Low		Mod.		High		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<hr/>								
Control-C								
Nonparticipants	14	21.4	5	20.0	6	50.0	25	28.0
Participants	46	23.9	28	39.3	25	64.0	99	38.4
All	60	23.3	33	36.4	31	61.3	124	36.3
<hr/>								
Control-K								
Nonparticipants	12	16.7	8	37.5	3	33.3	23	26.1
Participants	36	19.4	31	29.0	26	53.8	93	32.3
All	48	18.8	39	30.8	29	51.7	116	31.0
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K+P								
Nonparticipants	22	18.2	6	66.7	2	50.0	30	33.3
Participants	41	29.3	23	52.2	16	62.5	80	42.5
All	63	27.0	29	55.2	18	61.1	110	40.0
<hr/>								
K+P+R								
Nonparticipants	16	18.8	7	57.1	4	25.0	27	29.6
Participants	29	20.7	18	66.7	27	59.3	74	46.0
All	45	20.0	25	64.0	31	54.8	101	41.6
<hr/>								
All conditions								
Nonparticipants	64	20.3	26	46.2	15	40.0	105	29.5
Participants	152	23.7	100	44.0	94	59.6	346	39.3
All	216	22.7	126	44.0	109	56.9	451	37.0

Note: Low-prior-turnout voters had voted in 1 or 2; moderate-prior-turnout in 3; and high-prior-turnout voters in 4 or 5 of the preceding 5 elections.

Discussion

Confirmation and Limitation of the Self-Prophecy Effect

The present findings confirmed the self-prophecy effect of Sherman (1980) and Greenwald et al. (1987), while also demonstrating limits on the conditions under which it can be demonstrated. The nonappearances of the effect in the generally high turnout context of Experiment 1 and among high-prior-turnout subjects in Experiment 2 were plausibly ceiling effects. In Experiment 2, the self-prophecy effect was substantial only for subjects whose prior voting record was one of moderate turnout. The lack of a self-prophecy effect for Experiment 2's low-prior-turnout subjects is more problematic. The fact that 75% of this group predicted that they would vote indicated that voting was a desirable behavior for them (even though not as desirable as for the moderate [83% predicted voting] or high-prior-turnout [95%] groups). Clarifying the nature of

the dependency of the self-prophecy effect for voter turnout on prior turnout may help not only to establish an explanation of the effect, but also to extend the range of its applicability.

Theoretical Interpretation

The title of this article suggests that the motivational force underlying the self-prophecy effect, as observed in Experiment 2, is a form of vanity. When a callee agrees to be interviewed, the constraints of a social situation are apparently in force even though the interviewer is an anonymous stranger. Perhaps the chief such constraint is that participants in social interactions seek to be regarded favorably (by both self and other -- presumably this applies as much to the interviewer as to the interviewee). This social aspect of the interview situation has been noted previously, for example by Katosh and Traugott (1981), who observed, "[W]e are left with a strong suspicion that some respondents feel compelled to give socially acceptable responses in the interview situation" (p. 533). It may be important to the self-prophecy effect that the interviewee does not recognize this force toward favorable self-presentation in the interview interaction. In this respect, the basis for the self-prophecy effect may be similar to that for the counterattitudinal role playing effect (e.g., Calder, Ross, & Insko, 1973; Collins & Hoyt, 1972), which depends partly on the subject's not recognizing the strong social pressure to comply with the experimenter's request for counterattitudinal performance.

Importantly, the social constraints of the interview are absent when the interviewee subsequently votes. Consequently, the self-prophecy effect must depend on some residual effect of the interview on the target behavior. The residual effect may be an increased access to behavior-supporting cognitions. As a consequence, the decision to perform or not perform the action is less automatic (or less mindless, to use Langer's [1978] term) than it would otherwise be. This interpretation agrees with well established self-perception, attribution, and cognitive dissonance explanations of the manner in which cognition is shaped by behavior, and also fits with the interpretation given by Fazio (e.g., 1988) for increases in attitude-behavior consistency that follow from direct experience with an attitude object. The popular term *consciousness raising* aptly labels this class of residual cognitive effects.

Potential for Application

The findings of the moderate-prior-turnout condition of present Experiment 2, along with those of Greenwald et al. (1987), indicate that the self-prophecy effect can boost voter turnout by as much as 25%. The self-prophecy effect can therefore be used to raise the level of participation in an election. Importantly, it could also be used to influence the *outcome* of an election if the electorate is sharply segmented into partisan groups. By targeting the self-prophecy effect at (say) a well-defined racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic segment of the electorate, the effect on turnout should favor candidates or ballot alternatives preferred by that segment.

The expected vote gain for a candidate from application of the self-prophecy effect can be computed by making assumptions about characteristics of the

electorate. Based on Experiment 2's finding (an increase in turnout of 25% for selected voters), we assume that each appropriately targeted self-prophecy call produces, on average, 0.25 new votes. The net effect on a preferred candidate's vote total is then determined with the aid of a *segmentation coefficient*, which can range from a low of -1.00 (sure vote against preferred candidate) to a high of +1.00 (sure vote in favor).

We can illustrate computation and use of the segmentation coefficient by assuming that (a) one's preferred candidate is a member of an ethnic minority who will capture 80% of that minority's voters, but only 35% of the remainder of the electorate, and (b) members of the minority electorate segment can be recognized from public records (e.g., by surname or residence) with 0.9 probability. In this example, the expected gain is +0.6 votes for each new vote by a member of the minority segment (i.e., someone who votes with 80% probability for the preferred candidate and 20% probability for the opponent), and -0.3 votes for each new vote by a member of the nonminority segment (the corresponding probabilities are 35% and 65%). Because 10% of calls targeted at the minority mistakenly reach a nonminority registrant, the segmentation coefficient is computed by weighting the +0.6 vote gain by .90 and the -0.3 vote loss by .10, resulting in a figure of +.51 [= (.9)(.6) + (-.3)(.1)]. Multiplying this segmentation coefficient value by .25 (the assumed probability of producing a new voter with each self-prophecy call), the expected impact of each completed self-prophecy call in this example is +0.1275 [= (+.51)(.25)] votes.

Consider this example applied to a hypothetical contest in which the minority candidate is trailing by a 52:48 ratio, with expected turnout of only 20% of an electorate of 100,000 registrants (i.e., 20,000 expected voters). With these assumptions the minority candidate should lose by 800 votes (4% of 20,000). To gain 800 votes will require 6,275 [= 800/.1275] self-prophecy calls. This might be possible using a well-organized group of fewer than 50 callers⁷ over a 12-hour calling period, *if* the moderate-prior-turnout component of the minority electorate is large enough. If that component of the electorate does not have as many as 6,275 registrants, it might nevertheless be possible to identify other segments for which the segmentation coefficient is high enough to justify application of the self-prophecy technique.

Nonelection application possibilities. If the proposed theoretical interpretation of the self-prophecy effect is valid, the effect should be applicable in many settings characterized by existing low to moderate rates of performance of clearly desirable actions. Many such situations can be found in the health arena, such as participation in diagnostic screening, immunization, or organ donation programs. For example, persons who will soon need to renew a driver's license could be called and asked to predict what they will do when, on their renewal application, they have the option of indicating whether or not to make organs available for donation. Or, those members of a health maintenance organization who fail to schedule regular physical examinations could be called and asked to predict whether or not they will call to schedule an appointment when they next receive a reminder that they are due for one.

⁷This estimate is based on present Experiment 1, in which 9 callers successfully completed 824 pre-election calls in an average of about 8 hours per caller (i.e., about 11.5 successful contacts per caller per hour).

Is social desirability of the target action necessary or sufficient for the self-prophecy effect? In a recent study by Kahneman and Snell (in press) subjects were asked to predict their choices among three auditory stimuli (tone-sequences) over a sequence of 60 identical trials. These predictions differed from the actual choices of a group that made no predictions, and the actual choices of the prediction group deviated, in the direction of their prediction, from those of the no-prediction group. There was no obvious social desirability of any pattern of tone-sequence choices, leading Kahneman and Snell to suggest that social desirability is not a necessary condition for the self-prophecy effect. Of course, it remains possible that some subtle form of social desirability was operating in their procedure, which included no empirical assessment of the social desirability of alternative predictions. Nevertheless, the present data provide no reason to propose that social desirability of the prediction is a necessary condition of the self-prophecy effect. In the present experiments social desirability of the predicted action serves as the basis for its being predicted by the majority of subjects. Plausibly, other determinants of prediction content could serve the self-prophecy effect equally well. The present findings for low-prior-turnout subjects in Experiment 2 also indicate that social desirability of the predicted action is not a sufficient condition for the self-prophecy effect.

Conclusion

If the presently suggested interpretation of the self-prophecy effect is valid, then its use for social influence is attractive from an ethical viewpoint (at least in comparison to many other influence techniques). This relative attractiveness follows from the technique's assumed dependence on the influencee's perceiving the target action as desirable, and the technique's serving to increase the consistency between the influencee's values and action. In contrast, social influence achieved by many other techniques (e.g., counterattitudinal role playing) rests on the influencee's ignorance of the experimenter's power to elicit compliance, and typically reduces the connection between pre-existing values and action.

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