

The Impact of Ranked Choice Voting on Election Cooperation and Civility: Measuring Public Sentiment through a Content Analysis of Campaign-Related Communications

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How Does Ranked Choice Voting Affect Democratic Outcomes?

- Robb (2012): examination of negativity in campaigning
- San Francisco (2002-2008)
- Content analyzed mailers
- Team ads led to coordinated attacks (page 119), though the coordinated attacks were very limited.
- Mostly, the RCV contests more positive

Nov. 9, 1310:02 PM

- I wish RCV would change political behavior and get campaigns to play nice. I fear the old approach of 'trash talk' will continue with the exception that the current powers will merely be sure 3 nobodies also appear on the ballot.

Hypotheses

- In comparing elections, those using ranked choice voting will have a higher level of cooperation and civility than those using traditional elections.
- In comparing elections, those using ranked choice voting will be less negative than those using traditional elections.

Methods

- Part of a larger study using survey methods and examining election data.
- Cities with RCV (Minneapolis, St. Paul & Cambridge) compared to matched cities without.
- Also, a content analysis of campaign discourse (my part)
 - Debates/newspaper articles
 - Comments on newspaper articles
 - Facebook posts
 - Tweets

How to analyze text

- Sentiment analysis
 - Tweets have been analyzed for a variety of reasons
 - Debates/congressional record analyzed
- Originated with stock market analysis
- Not public opinion per se
- Not an analysis to see if newspaper articles are positive or negative about the election reform change or the candidates
- Analysis of microblogging is exploding
 - Larsson and Moe (2012): Swedish elections, 2010
 - Tumasjan et al. (2011) Twitter feeds can help forecast elections, 2009 German federal election

Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count

(Pennybaker, et al., 2007)

- Creates dictionaries of terms used, analyzes verb tense and pronoun use, etc. to determine positive and negative tone, but also other affective categories.
- Pennybaker et al., 2003: “LIWC uses a word count strategy whereby it searches for over 2,300 words or word stems within any given text file. The search words have previously been categorized by independent judges into over 70 linguistic dimensions.”
- Has been used to analyze Congressional debates (Yu, Kaufmann, and Diermeier, 2008)
- Big Five Personality Dimensions

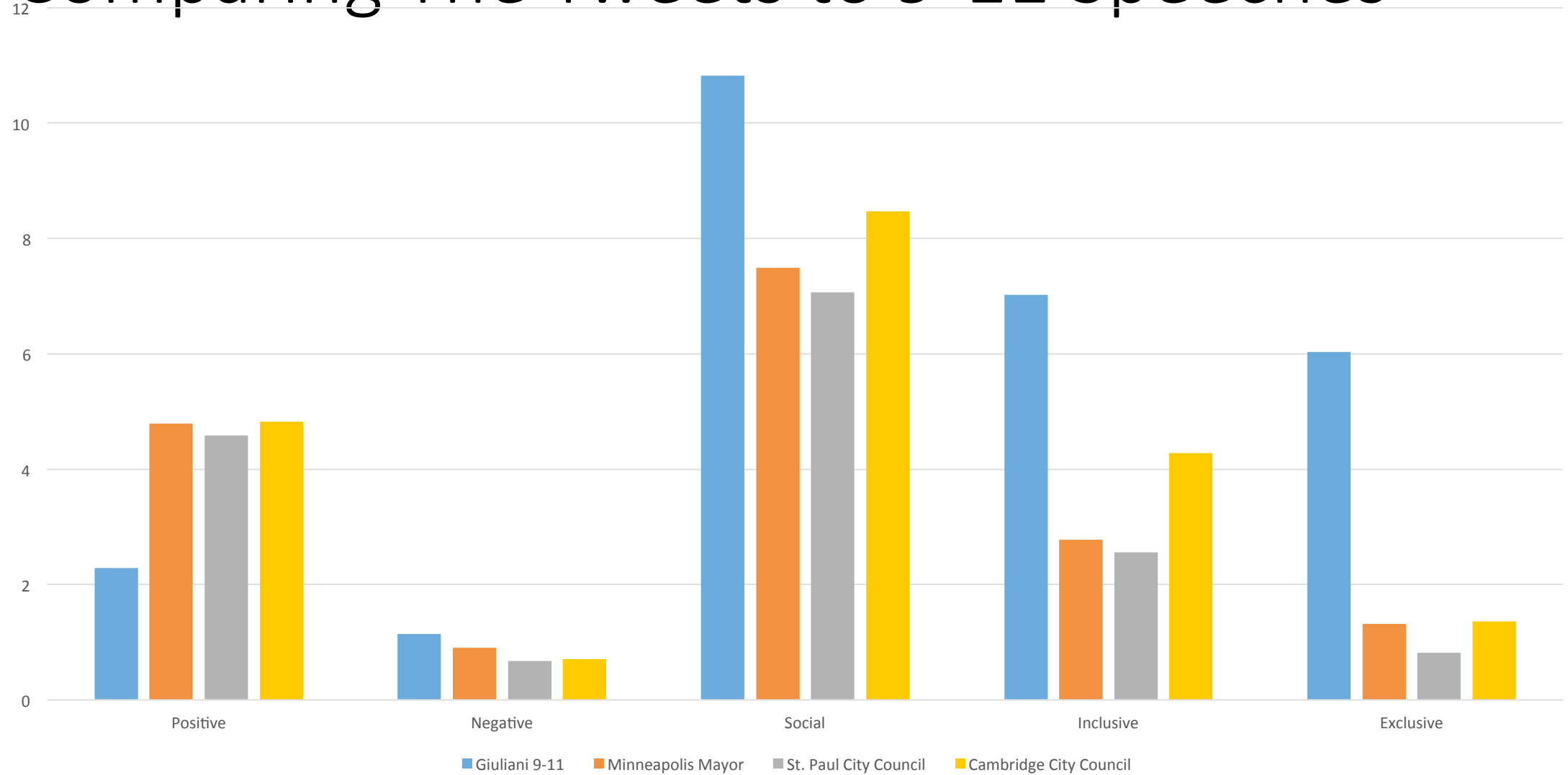
Affective Sentiment

- The “emotion” language people use can measure campaign cooperation and civility:
 - positive emotions
 - negative emotions
 - social communication
 - inclusiveness v. exclusiveness
- Reaction Language
 - anger
 - anxiety
 - future orientation
 - tentativeness v. certainty

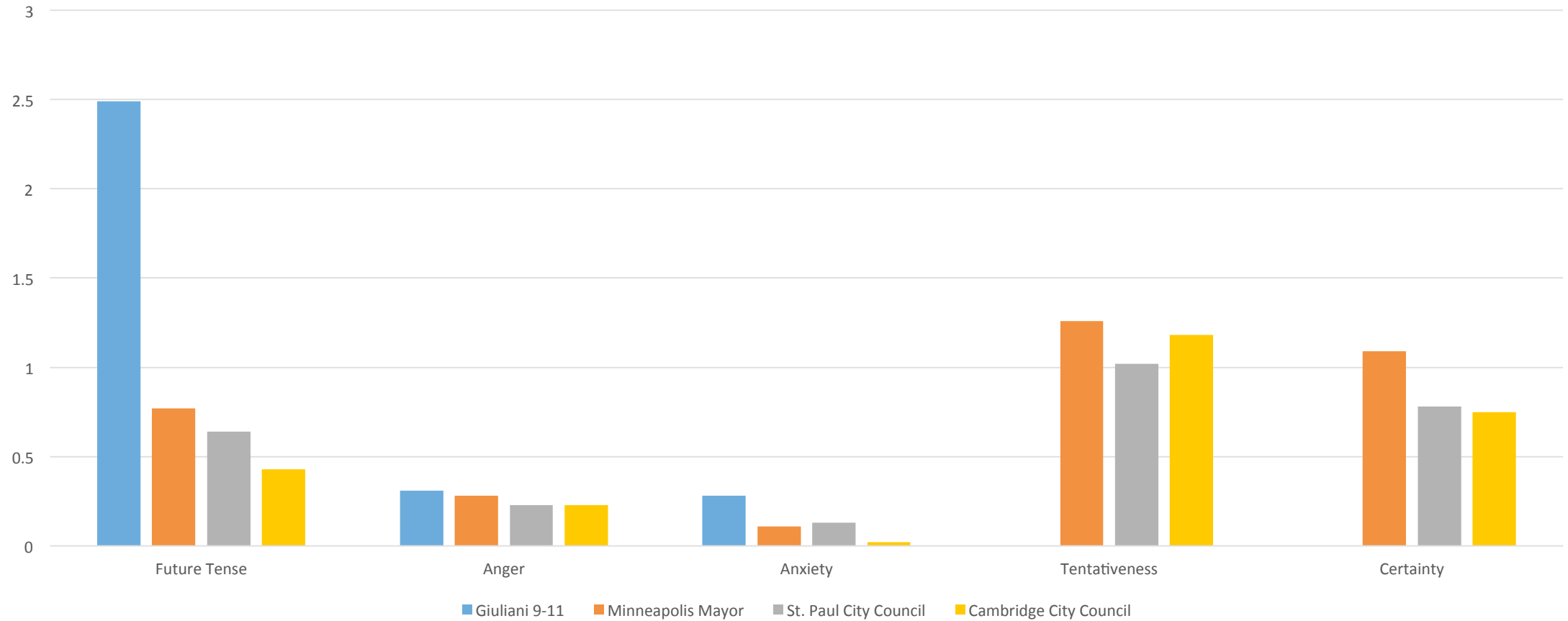
Examples of Tweets...

- Checked out our website lately? Request an absentee ballot! Together We Can - <http://t.co/N5sCBnot3j> via @SusieWeinacht
- #TOGETHERWeCan move our community forward! <http://t.co/S1kYTU7rs6> #Sus4CR
- From the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*: Check out this nut who is running for mayor!
- Have you voted yet? There's still time! The polls are open until 8PM - all you need to do is ARRIVE before 8. Rank Betsy #1! #
- RT @anilsen612: I voted for @betsyhodes for #MplsMayor and I hope you will too. <http://t.co/hx092ozsiU>

Comparing The Tweets to 9-11 Speeches



Comparing the Tweets to 9-11 Speeches



Limitations

- Sarcasm? Irony?
- Not all local-level candidates are using Twitter
- Twitter is an interesting language
- Which tweets to use? (Is a tweet about the Vikings' good game fair game?)
- How is it vertically integrated? (with candidate websites & Facebook)
 - Many viable (and not so viable) candidates are using it
- The more observations, the better the measurement
 - The more tweets, the better the measurement
 - The more units of observation

Conclusions

- One can detect variation among candidates
- Candidates in these RCV cities use more positive language than negative language
- Candidates use more inclusive than exclusive words
- Candidates use social words
- Candidates appear to be more tentative than certain
- Cannot yet make causal conclusions because of the lack of a counterfactual (in this analysis)

Ideally...

- Intensive case study of Minneapolis, MN v. Seattle, WA
- Using all the media sources I have tapped
 - Newspaper articles
 - Comments on the newspaper articles
 - Tweets from the public regarding the newspaper articles
 - Debates
 - Facebook posts