



November 21, 2019

Dr. Fitzpatrick:

I am writing to apply for the Assistant Professor of Mass Communications position in The School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of South Carolina. I am completing my PhD in the School of Communication at the Ohio State University with an expected completion date of May 2020. My dissertation proposal, which constitutes the nearly complete theoretical foundation and study design, was approved by my committee in June 2019. All that remains is data collection, which will occur this fall and winter, data analysis, and the reporting thereof.

My research is principally in the area of political communication with a focus on partisanship. I study news, political discussion, social networks, and entertainment media with an eye toward the influence of and influences on politics in everyday life. As an example, in a study I led that was published in *Mass Communication & Society*, I used geographic data in addition to social network data to show that strong partisans in social environments hostile to their party consumed more partisan media. Examining the consequences of partisan media use, I co-authored a paper forthcoming in *Journal of Communication* that tests a theoretical model in which online partisan media use leads to misperceptions by increasing hostility towards the other party.

Another study I led, published in *Communication Research*, uses a national survey and large-scale content analysis to document a relationship between Americans' political ideology and the values expressed in the music they enjoy. This study is also an example of my engagement with computational methods; I scraped years of Billboard music charts from the web, paired over 30,000 of those songs with lyrics scraped from other sources, performed an automated content analysis of those lyrics, and released a software tool to help others do the same. In an ongoing project, which won the top student paper award from the Theory and Methodology division of AEJMC, I develop a network analytic method for measuring the level of partisan segregation in media use.

I am also a package developer for R, the statistical software, and several of my packages have achieved broad use within and outside communication and related disciplines. As examples, one ("jtools") has been cited in over 60 academic publications and another ("dpm") plays a key role in *Statistical Horizons* training seminars on longitudinal data analysis. Although initially created to facilitate my own research, these have become scientific contributions in their own right. My plans for future research involve further use of computational tools, especially for content analysis and data acquisition, and finding more ways to use them to enhance typical social scientific methods like sample surveys. I am able and willing to help students and colleagues gain computational skills, whether that is in formal courses and workshops or informal settings.

My dissertation project concerns the role of communication, both mediated and interpersonal, in promoting the stability of partisanship. The key theoretical contribution is that, instead of



focusing on the rare changes in partisanship as is the typical media effects approach, I conceptualize stability itself as an effect of communication. Moreover, I focus on the strength of partisan identity as less stable than mere preference of one party over another; identity strength is a construct that is more responsive to communication about politics. These assertions will be tested by measuring the strength of partisan identity, political media use, and political discussion in daily surveys of the same group of people for three weeks to capture fine-grained fluctuations over time. My expectation is that those whose political communications are most friendly to their partisan identity will have the most stability in the strength of those identities. I have also devoted considerable space in the dissertation to defining stability conceptually and empirically, which will be another part of the project's scientific contribution.

I have teaching experience as sole instructor within and beyond my research area, at introductory and advanced (undergraduate) levels, as well as in both face-to-face and online formats. I have built syllabi for each of the courses I have taught except for one in persuasion, a general education course for which syllabi are standardized across instructors. Later, I independently adapted the persuasion syllabus to an online format as my department began to offer its first online courses. As many of the students at my current institution are training for careers in public relations and journalism, my courses tend to be structured around final projects that are similar to communication with clients or the kind of knowledge gathering that journalists do. For instance, my public opinion course culminates in written and verbal reports about the public's views on a chosen topic, person, or firm. Although I adapt according to subject matter and student interest, my predominant approach is to teach from a social scientific perspective and show students not just what is known about communication, but how we know it.

I have included my CV, teaching portfolio, research statement, and writing samples. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jacob Long