

Appendix to Chapter 3

Survey Question Wording, Studies 1, 2, and 3

Study 1: National Pre-election Survey Experiment, October 2008

[Version A: negative]

How would you feel if a political candidate began to use negative campaigning, that is, began to run ads to give you information about what his opponent had done in office? Would you feel very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not at all angry?

- 1 Very angry
- 2 Somewhat angry
- 3 Not very angry
- 4 Not at all angry
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

What if these ads, while negative, told the truth about the opponent? Would these ads be much more acceptable, somewhat more acceptable, or no more acceptable than other negative ads about an opponent?

- 1 Much more acceptable
- 2 Somewhat more acceptable
- 3 No more acceptable
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

[End Version A]

[Version B: without "negative"]

How would you feel if a political candidate began to run ads to give you information about what his opponent had done in office? Would you feel very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not at all angry?

- 1 Very angry
- 2 Somewhat angry
- 3 Not very angry
- 4 Not at all angry
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

What if these ads told the truth about the opponent? Would these ads be much more acceptable, somewhat more acceptable, or no more acceptable than other ads about an opponent?

- 1 Much more acceptable
- 2 Somewhat more acceptable
- 3 No more acceptable
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

Study 2: New Jersey Pre-Election Survey Experiment, October 2009

[Start split ballot; random one-half for each version]

[Version A: Negative]

[The following questions all start with the following stem:] Thinking about political campaigns in general now, how would you feel if a candidate used a negative ad to talk about an opponent's [INSERT ITEM]. Would you feel very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not at all angry?

[ROTATE ORDER OF ITEMS]

- Lack of experience
- Prior record in office
- Family
- Position on issues

[Response options]

- 1 Very angry
- 2 Somewhat angry
- 3 Not very angry
- 4 Not at all angry
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

How often do negative ads tell the truth about an opponent? Is it often, sometimes, or rarely?

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

[End Version A]

[Version B: Without "Negative"]

Thinking about political campaigns in general now, I am going to describe some ads political candidates have run in the past. For each, tell me if you think a candidate running such an ad would be running a negative campaign. Let's start.

A candidate runs an ad that talks about an opponent's: [INSERT ITEM]. Would this candidate be running a negative campaign?

[ROTATE ORDER OF ITEMS]

- Lack of experience
- Prior record in office
- Family
- Position on issues

[Response options]

- 1 Yes, negative
- 2 No, not negative
- 3 Depends (Vol)
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

And how would an ad that talks about an opponent's [INSERT ITEM] make you feel? Would you feel very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not at all angry?

- 1 Very angry
- 2 Somewhat angry
- 3 Not very angry
- 4 Not at all angry
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

How often do ads tell the truth about an opponent? Is it often, sometimes, or rarely?

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

[End Version B; End split ballot]

[ALL RESPONDENTS]

Are negative ads that tell the truth about the opponent much more acceptable, somewhat more acceptable, or no more acceptable than negative ads that do not tell the truth?

- 1 Much more acceptable
- 2 Somewhat more acceptable
- 3 No more acceptable
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refusal

Study 3: CCES Survey Experiment, 2010

In all versions, the five topics were:

- A candidate talks about an opponent's lack of experience.
- A candidate talks about an opponent's position on issues.
- A candidate says that an opponent is an atheist.
- A candidate says that an opponent has been convicted of fraud.
- A candidate talks about an opponent's family.

[Version A: Negative]

[Show all five topics in grid format for each question]

Following are things a candidate might say in a negative ad. For each, how believable would this kind of ad be?

[response options: very believable, somewhat believable, not very believable, don't know]

For each of these negative ads, how angry it would make you feel?

[response options: very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, not at all angry, don't know]

For each of these negative ads, would it make you more likely to vote for the candidate running the ad, that candidate's opponent, or would it have no impact your vote?

[response options: vote for candidate, vote for opponent, no impact on vote, don't know]

[End Version A]

Version B: "Is this negative" Asked First]

[Show all five topics in grid format for each question]

Following are things a candidate might say in an ad. For each of these ads, indicate whether it would be a negative ad.

[response options: yes, negative; no, not negative; don't know]

For each of these ads, how believable would this kind of ad be?

[response options: very believable, somewhat believable, not very believable, don't know]

For each of these ads, how angry it would make you feel?

[response options: very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, not at all angry, don't know]

For each of these ads, would it make you more likely to vote for the candidate running the ad, that candidate's opponent, or would it have no impact on your vote?

[response options: vote for candidate, vote for opponent, no impact on vote, don't know]

[End Version B]

[Version C: "Is this negative" Asked Last]

[Show all five topics in grid format for each question]

Following are things a candidate might say in an ad. For each of these ads, how believable would this kind of ad be?

[response options: very believable, somewhat believable, not very believable, don't know]

For each of these ads, how angry would it make you feel?

[response options: very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, not at all angry, don't know]

For each of these ads, would it make you more likely to vote for the candidate running the ad, that candidate's opponent, or would it have no impact on your vote?

[response options: vote for candidate, vote for opponent, no impact on vote, don't know]

For each of these ads, indicate whether it would be a negative ad.

[response options: yes, negative; no, not negative; don't know]

[END VERSION C]

Questionnaires and Experiments from Study 4

Initial Questionnaire—Introductory Questionnaire Asked of All Participants

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?
 - Strongly approve
 - Somewhat approve
 - Somewhat disapprove
 - Strongly disapprove

2. In politics, do you consider yourself to be a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or something else?
 - Republican
 - Democrat
 - Independent
 - Something else

3. [IF DEMOCRAT] Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
 - Strong Democrat
 - Not very strong Democrat

4. [IF REPUBLICAN] Do you consider yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
 - Strong Republican
 - Not very strong Republican

5. [IF INDEPENDENT] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republicans or the Democrats?
 - Republicans
 - Democrats
 - Neither party

6. In general, are you very conservative, somewhat conservative, moderate, somewhat liberal, or very liberal, when it comes to politics?
 - Very conservative
 - Somewhat conservative
 - Moderate
 - Somewhat liberal
 - Very liberal

7. Have you ever done any of the following? Just click on each one that you have done and leave the box blank for those you have not done. [Question Type: multiple answer using checkboxes]

- Donate money to a political campaign
- Worked with a political group to advocate for a policy or position
- Participated in a political protest
- Volunteered with a political campaign
- Voted in an election

8. If you think about most of the candidates for national elected offices, how competent do you think they usually are?

- Very competent
- Somewhat competent
- Somewhat incompetent
- Very incompetent

9. In the 2008 election for president, which candidate did you vote for?

- Barack Obama
- John McCain
- Some other candidate
- Was eligible but did not vote
- Was not eligible to vote in 2008

10. In the 2012 caucuses/primaries for president, which candidate did you vote for?

- Mitt Romney
- Rick Santorum
- Newt Gingrich
- Ron Paul
- Another candidate
- Was eligible but did not vote
- Was not eligible to vote

11. How likely are you to vote in the presidential election in November 2012?

- Very likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Will not be eligible to vote [SKIP TO Q13]

12. If the presidential election were today, would you vote for Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, someone else, or would you not vote?

- Barack Obama
- Mitt Romney
- Someone else
- Would not vote

13. How much of the time do you think you can trust the media—television, newspapers, online media—to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

14. When you think about most candidates for national elected offices, do you think they are usually very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, somewhat untrustworthy, or very untrustworthy?

- Very trustworthy
- Somewhat trustworthy
- Somewhat untrustworthy
- Very untrustworthy

15. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

Out-of-Context Quotes Experiment

1. Let's imagine political candidate Tom Smith ran a TV ad in which he said the following about his opponent Stu Jones:

My opponent was right when he said, "If we keep talking about the economy, we're going to lose." He's done a terrible job dealing with our economic problems.

How fair would it be for Tom Smith to run an ad that says this?

- Very fair
- Somewhat fair

- Somewhat unfair
- Very unfair

[Follow-up Question Assigned at Random]

- A. [OUT OF CONTEXT] Now imagine a fact-check organization has reported that the quote Smith used in his ad, “If we keep talking about the economy, we’re going to lose,” was part of a longer statement made by his opponent, Stu Jones. Jones’s full statement was: “My opponents’ campaign actually said, and I quote, ‘if we keep talking about the economy, we’re going to lose.’” Knowing this, do you still think it was [response to initial quote] of Smith to run this ad?
- B. [IN CONTEXT] Now imagine a fact-check organization has reported that the quote Smith used in his ad, “If we keep talking about the economy, we’re going to lose,” was part of a longer statement about his opponent, Stu Jones. The full statement read: “According to one Jones insider, Jones privately told donors that he needs to change the topic, saying, ‘If we keep talking about the economy, we’re going to lose.’” Knowing this, do you still think it was [response to initial quote] of Smith to run this ad?
- Yes, strongly
 - Yes, somewhat
 - No, somewhat
 - No, strongly

2. Stu Jones has also run ads that talk about his opponent, Tom Smith. His most recent ad says:

It is sad that Tom Smith says, “I don’t care what the unemployment rate’s going to be.” Smith should care. We all should care.

How fair would it be for Tom Smith to run an ad that says this?

- Very fair
- Somewhat fair
- Somewhat unfair
- Very unfair

[Follow-up Question Assigned at Random]

- A. [OUT OF CONTEXT] Now imagine a fact-check organization has reported that the quote Jones used in his ad, “I don’t care what the unemployment rate’s going to be,” was part of a longer statement made by his opponent, Tom Smith. Smith’s full statement was: “My campaign is about a broader economic philosophy. I don’t care what the unemployment rate’s going to be. My campaign doesn’t hinge on unemployment rates and growth rates. It’s about something more foundational—that the government creates an atmosphere for jobs to be created in the private sector.”

Knowing this, do you still think it was [response to initial quote] of Smith to run this ad?

- B. [IN CONTEXT] Now imagine a fact-check organization has reported that the quote Jones used in his ad: “I don’t care what the unemployment rate’s going to be” was part of a longer statement from his opponent, Tom Smith. The full statement read: “I am much more worried about inflation than unemployment. I don’t care what the unemployment rate’s going to be. Those that need jobs can find them, but if we let inflation get out of control we’re in real trouble.” Knowing this, do you still think it was [response to initial quote] of Smith to run this ad?

- Yes, strongly
- Yes, somewhat
- No, somewhat
- No, strongly

Ad Questions—Asked of All Participants Immediately after Viewing Each Ad

1. In the box below please tell us very briefly what the ad you just watched was about.
2. Have you ever seen this ad before?
 - Yes
 - No
3. How believable is the ad you just watched?
 - Very believable
 - Somewhat believable
 - Not very believable
 - Not at all believable
4. How appropriate is the subject matter of this ad for use in a political campaign?
 - Not at all appropriate
 - Not very appropriate
 - Somewhat appropriate
 - Very appropriate
5. Did watching this ad make you very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not at all angry?
 - Very angry
 - Somewhat angry
 - Not very angry

- Not at all angry
6. Would you be more likely to vote for a candidate who ran an ad like this, more likely to vote for that candidate's opponent, or would it have no effect on your vote?
 - More likely to vote for the candidate running the ad
 - More likely to vote for the opponent
 - The ad would have no effect on my vote
 7. Thinking about the ad you just saw, do you consider it to be a negative ad?
 - Yes
 - No
 8. On a scale of 0–5, with 0 being “Not at all negative” and 5 being “Extremely negative, how negative do you consider the ad you just watched to be? [Question Type: Slider]

Experiment on the Helpfulness of Ads: [Administered after Viewing All Ads]

Many different groups are running ads this year for and against various candidates. How helpful do you find ads that:

[Order Randomized]

1. Talk about a candidate's faith and religion
2. Make broad claims about a candidate's future plans for governing
3. [one of the following four options is randomly shown:]
 - a. talk about an opponent's voting record on the issues
 - b. show the inconsistencies of an opponent's position on issues
 - c. talk about the differences between the candidates' positions on the issues
 - d. talk about why one candidate's position on the issues is better than the other's
4. [one of the following three options is randomly shown:]
 - a. say that the opponent's campaign has been very negative
 - b. say that the opponent's campaign has been very negative
 - c. criticize the opponent for running a negative campaign

[Response Options]

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful

- Not very helpful
- Not at all helpful

Post Study Questionnaire: Asked of All Participants after Viewing All Ads and Completing All Other Questions

1. In the ads that you just saw, candidates made many claims about themselves or their opponents. Now imagine that some of the claims in those ads were false. If that were the case, how important would it be to you to know that there are false claims? Would it be very important, somewhat important, or not too important?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not too important
2. With which ONE of the following statements do you agree more? If a candidate tells a lie in an ad:
 - It would be easy for me to find out.
 - It would be very hard for me to find out.
3. With which ONE of the following statements do you agree more? If a candidate tells a lie in an ad:
 - Other candidates should point it out in their ads.
 - Other candidates should leave it to the media to point out.
4. With which ONE of the following statements do you agree more? If a candidate tells a lie in an ad:
 - I can usually tell just from watching it.
 - I usually need someone else to point it out to me.
5. With which ONE of the following statements do you agree more? If a candidate tells a lie in an ad:
 - The media can be trusted to report when candidates lie
 - I cannot rely on the media to tell me about it.

Now we have some final questions about campaign ads in general we would like you to consider. For each, please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

6. Some negative advertisements are so nasty that I stop paying attention to what the candidates are saying.

7. Mean-spirited commercials attacking the opponent are appropriate during election campaigns.
8. Negative advertisements attacking a candidate's personal life are inappropriate.
9. I find negative political commercials attacking the opponent's personal life as a young person to be interesting.

Finally, we have a few questions to allow us to classify responses by groups.

10. What is your highest level of education?

- Not a high school graduate
- High school graduate but no college
- Some college but no bachelor's degree
- Bachelor's degree of any kind
- Advanced degree (Master's, Doctorate, Professional)

11. Please indicate your gender:

- Male
- Female

12. Are you a US citizen?

- Yes
- No

13. Thinking about religion and belief in God, which of the follow best describes you?

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Another religious denomination
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Something else

14) On average, how often do you attend religious services, not including weddings and funerals?

- Never
- Rarely—Less than once a month
- Once or twice a month

- Weekly or more often

15. What is your race? If you consider yourself of mixed race, click all that apply.

[Question Type: Multiple Answer]

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Native American
- Something else

16. Regardless of your race, are you of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

- Yes
- No