

How the Emotional Tenor of Ad Campaigns Affects Political Participation

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WARNING: *This draft reflects work in progress. The results reported herein are likely to change with further improvements in the analysis. In fact, we guarantee they will change! We welcome and encourage feedback, but caution all readers against placing too much trust in the results. They reflect our best efforts so far, but many known corrections and checks for robustness have not been completed at this time.*

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Abstract

A vigorous debate about the impact of negative (vs. positive) ads on voting behavior has produced mixed results, and some studies have begun to differentiate forms of negativity by source and target. We argue for distinguishing further between message valence and attempts to elicit specific emotions. Recent research suggests that emotions strongly influence political behavior. We extend this line of work to study the impact of advertising campaigns on political participation. To do so, we construct a unique dataset that matches national survey respondents to the emotional tenor of presidential ad campaigns in their media market. We find that, while “mudslinging” often deters political participation, both positive and negative emotional appeals often increase participation.

Introduction

Scholars have conducted dozens of studies into the impact of political advertising, focusing heavily on the effects of *tone*—that is, whether the ad is negative or positive. Despite compelling early evidence of a demobilization effect from attack advertising (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995), several subsequent studies have found either no impact or the opposite effect (Finkel and Geer 1998; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Goldstein and Freedman 2002a; Wattenberg and Briars 1999). Meta-analyses indicate we can draw no confident conclusions from the literature as a whole regarding the effects of advertising negativity on participation (Lau et al. 1999; Lau and Sigelman 2005). Scholars, however, have increasingly recognized that “negativity” can refer to many things, even in the context of political ads and election campaigns. Kahn and Kenney (2004), for example, differentiate “mudslinging” from both advertising and press criticism of candidates, and find that the former demobilizes voters while the latter types of negativity

mobilize. Building on Brader's (2006) efforts to highlight the distinct role of emotional appeals, we argue for further differentiating negativity in the nature or valence of the advertising message (i.e., tone) from efforts to elicit a variety of negative emotions such as fear, anger, or sadness.

Although the systematic study of emotions in our discipline is arguably still in its infancy, political scientists are rapidly incorporating psychological theory of emotions into our understanding of citizens' reasoning and engagement. Emotions are central to processes of both opinion formation (Huddy et al. 2005; Kinder 1994; Lodge and Taber 2005; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Rahn 2000; Redlawsk, Civettini, and Lau forthcoming; Way and Masters 1996) and political communication (Brader 2005; Graber forthcoming; Huddy and Gunnthorsdottir 2000; Hutchings et al. 2006; Sullivan and Masters 1988). There is already a good deal of survey and experimental evidence showing a motivational impact on political involvement from anxiety or fear (Brader 2006; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Rudolph, Gangl, and Stevens 2000; Valentino et al. 2006), enthusiasm (Brader 2005, 2006; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000), and anger (Valentino et al. 2006).

Although many studies have examined the impact of emotions on citizen behavior, there has been little effort to systematically investigate when and to what effect political actors target these emotions. We need not look far afield to observe instances of emotional politicking. For example, party activists stage rallies and conventions to drum up enthusiasm among the faithful (Popkin 2002). Social movements strive to elicit feelings of sympathy and guilt among the population at large (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001). Terrorists, as their name implies, aim to unleash fear (Nacos 2000). And, of particular interest to us here, candidates expend inordinate resources appealing to the hopes and fears of the populace using television advertisements (Brader 2006).

In this paper, we investigate the consequences of candidates' efforts to elicit emotions over the course of electoral advertising campaigns. We begin by reviewing our current understanding of emotions, especially as related to their influence on motivation and action. We then describe a novel dataset, combining information on the attributes of ads, the airing of ads, and the behavior of citizens. In the initial exploration detailed here, we estimate the impact of the message tone and emotional tenor of ad campaigns on citizens' interest, attention, and participation.

The impact of emotions and emotional appeals

The most recognizable quality of emotions is our conscious experience of them, denoted "feelings" in the literature. Emotions also make their appearance in common lore and philosophy as mental dispositions that are opposed to "reason." Today, however, psychologists and neuroscientists increasingly see emotions as performing a critical function, providing feedback to individuals about the significance of objects and events in relation to their goals. Furthermore, this feedback can occur outside of awareness, freeing individuals for more intentional processing. Thus, emotions may be closer to the seat of reason than to its undoing.

More specifically, recent theories imbue emotions with two distinctive features, in addition to their conscious manifestation as feelings. First, emotions function as *relevance detectors*, providing feedback on the significance of environmental features for an individual's well-being, (Frijda 1986). Further, , emotions fulfill *directive functions*, preparing an individual to respond to events (Damasio 1999). In political science, the fullest theory based upon this conception of emotions is Marcus et al.'s (2000) affective intelligence model of disposition and surveillance systems and their impact on political behavior. The disposition system affects levels of enthusiasm as it regulates the performance and learning of routines in goal-oriented behavior,

whereas the surveillance system affects levels of anxiety as it adjusts behavior to deal with novelty or threats in the environment.

While psychologists agree that emotions serve vital feedback and regulatory functions, differences remain in their conceptualizations of the structure of emotions and their predictions concerning the role of specific emotions (Marcus 2000). What then might we predict about the effects of different kinds of emotional appeals? Emotions are perhaps first and foremost *motivational* forces, impulses for attention, thought, and action (Lazarus 1991; Zajonc 1998). Thus, we expect most basic emotions to provide an impetus for action. However, emotions steer behavior in distinct directions, including “toward” withdrawal from or avoidance of particular situations (e.g., sadness and, on occasion, fear). Emotions also vary in intensity or arousal level both within and across the same “emotional family.” For example, sympathy or compassion tends to be a less intense emotion than anger, while related responses such as in the fear family can range from mild anxiety to terror. In general, we expect that as emotions increase in intensity so too will the strength of the behavioral push.¹

Political scientists have indeed found evidence to date that at least three basic emotions can stimulate political action. Consistent with affective intelligence theory, Marcus and colleagues (2000) find that anxiety predicts attention to news and participatory acts beyond voting, while enthusiasm predicts interest in campaigns and at most mild increases in participation. Brader (2005, 2006) finds that enthusiasm appeals broadly boost interest and participation, while fear appeals tend to trigger more costly forms of participation. There is also evidence that fear or anxiety can also provoke the desire to contact candidate campaigns (Brader 2006) and the actual

¹ The direction of this push may change, however, as scholars have posited that certain emotions, like fear, may initially prompt the confronting or dealing with some threat, while extreme levels of fear may cause individuals to avoid and try to ignore the threat altogether.

contacting of elected officials (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2004). Recent studies have also begun to distinguish the effects of fear and anger more clearly (Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese forthcoming; Lerner et al. 2003; Lerner and Keltner 2001). Valentino and colleagues (2006) find that anger has a powerful impact on political action, especially “hard” or costlier forms of participation, while fear seems to more readily provoke “easy” or low-cost participation.²

There are of course many more emotions than these three, particularly for those adopting an appraisal or discrete emotions perspective (Lazarus 1991). Even the dual system affective intelligence model takes notice of other emotional states such as the low arousal outputs of the disposition and surveillance systems—sadness/depression and calm (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). But political scientists have yet to study the impact of these low arousal states or any other emotions. Although other emotions undoubtedly hold relevance for politics, the three-emotional emphasis of current research may capture quite well the emotions relevant to campaign advertising in the United States. While evidence from the 2000 election suggests that nearly a quarter of ads and airings made “unimpassioned” appeals, the vast majority of emotional ads were dominated by appeals to enthusiasm, fear, and anger (Brader 2006; Brader and Corrigan 2005). Moreover, this research finds that appeals to pride overlap heavily in appearance and antecedents with enthusiasm, consistent with how pride is usually treated within affective intelligence theory. Appraisal approaches stress pride’s distinctive aspects that suggest a lower potential for high arousal (Lazarus 1991). Finally, a very small share of ads and airings in 2000

² Scholars have also begun to examine the individual and situational attributes that may condition the motivational impact of emotions, such as resources (Valentino et al. 2006), efficacy (Rudolph, Gangl, Stevens 2000), and sophistication (Brader 2006). Similarly the role of such moderators has been highlighted in recent work on advertising tone (Kahn and Kenney 2004) and on contrasting the motivational impact of threats versus opportunities (Miller et al. 2002). We believe this line of exploration is likely to be very fruitful in specifying when particular emotions motivate political action. Nonetheless, in the current version of this paper, we do not address the role of such moderators.

featured appeals to amusement, sympathy/compassion, or sadness. Based on either an appraisal or affective intelligence view of those emotions, we should expect their impact on participation in general to range from modest in the first two cases to null or demobilizing for sadness.

Data and Methods

Overview

Past work has shown (see Brader, 2005) that the 2000 campaign cycle in the U.S. produced substantial variation in different types of emotional appeals. Can we discern how citizens responded to these appeals? In this section we detail the construction of a dataset that connects a random sample of individuals in the continental U.S. to the ad environment of their locale in terms of emotional appeals. We also describe our dependent measures and predictors for a preliminary analysis relating citizens' attention and motivation during the campaign to the types of emotional appeals present in their local media market.

Before moving into the details of the dataset and analysis, it is worth bringing into view some of the methodological challenges we have confronted in attempting to assess the effects of emotional appeals. First, it is theories about the psychology of emotions at the individual level that lead us to investigate the possibility that advertisements with differing characteristics may have differential effects. Yet, the models we estimate will actually specify the association between the candidates' choices to air particular types of ads in particular places and the attitudes and behaviors of citizens. We cannot rule out spurious causes, such as the choices of the candidates to target media markets whose citizens have particular characteristics. Further, we cannot directly measure the advertisements to which any particular individual was exposed.

Hence we are unable to distinguish a citizen who actually saw the ads aired in a place from one who learned about the campaign from conversations with others.

On the other hand, by connecting aspects of campaign ad environment to individual survey responses, we gain an aspect of external validity that has not been possible in purely experimental studies of the impact of emotional appeals and advertising tone. Lacking the captive audience of an experiment, campaigns may actually duke it out at enormous cost to shift a possibly marginal number of votes or mobilize a small number of citizens.

Data

Here we discuss in detail the construction of the dataset that allowed us to investigate individual responses to attributes of the campaign environment. Our goal was to infer the effects of emotional appeals in televised political advertisements on U.S. citizens within the top 75 media markets. Readers not interested in further details of the construction of these data can proceed to the Design section below.

Specifically, our data on individual-level attitudes and responses to the campaign came from the 2000 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) commissioned by the Annenberg School for Communication and the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (Romer et al., 2004). The 2000 NAES provides a particularly rich opportunity to examine the real-world effects of ads on citizens. The NAES was a national rolling cross-section, designed to allow researchers to observe the impact of the campaign as it unfolds over time. In particular, participants were randomly selected over time by random digit dialing, and new participants were released into the sampling frame at a constant rate in order to ensure that the number of attempted contacts using each phone number is also constant over time. The part of the NAES we make use of is the national rolling cross-section, which consisted of 58,373 individuals

interviewed from mid-December 1999 to mid-January of 2001. The interview rate was approximately 100 per day during the Presidential primaries (up to April), 50 per day during the summer, and 300 per day from mid-July until the time of the election. The NAES dataset includes estimates of the various media markets in which the survey respondents resided at the time of their interviews.

Independently, we developed a set of measures of the advertising environment in the 2000 campaign (see Brader & Corrigan, 2005). A research team at the Howard Marsh Advertising Archives at the University of Michigan assembled a collection of advertisements from the 2000 campaign for the purpose of content analysis. Our source was the collection of videos available from the National Journal, collected for purposes of posting on their website. The Marsh team—under the direction of Ted Brader, Vince Hutchings, and Nicholas Valentino—coded the videos for emotional appeals and many other characteristics. This effort led to the construction of approximately 250 content variables coded for 1,570 unique ads. Our source for the dates and locations that the ads aired was the Wisconsin Advertising Project (Goldstein, Franz, Ridout 2002), which was built using ad tracking data provided by the Campaign Media Advertising Group (CMAG).³ The Wisconsin Advertising Project obtained and cleaned the CMAG data, coded tone, issue-references, and other features of ad content, and prepared the data for release to

³ Use of the Wisconsin Advertising Project data requires the following acknowledgement: “The data were obtained from a joint project of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law and Professor Kenneth Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and includes media tracking data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group in Washington, D.C. The Brennan Center-Wisconsin project was sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brennan Center, Professor Goldstein, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.”

the research community.⁴ That project yielded approximately 50 variables coded for each of 900,000 airings across all major races in the covered media markets.⁵

Merging the two datasets proved to be challenging, since each unique ad in our content data had to be matched by hand to a unique ad in the Wisconsin Advertising Project data, using only our video archive and the CMAG storyboards. We were able to assign content-coding to 29% of unique ads in the Wisconsin Advertising Project data, while establishing the airing dates and times for 60% of the ads in our data. However, if we break the ads down by election type, we find that we were able to assign content coding to only 26% of all airings in House races, 33% for issue advocacy ads, 45 to 46% for gubernatorial and Senate races, and 67% of Presidential airings. See Brader & Corrigan (2005) for a more extensive discussion of the procedure by which we were able to link our content analysis of ads to the patterns of airing dates and times provided by the Wisconsin Advertising Project.

To form the final individual-level dataset, we developed summary statistics describing the volume of airings and the types of emotional appeals that occurred within each of the top 75 media markets, and merged this information into the NAES survey data, excluding survey respondents who lived in areas for which we had no data on airings, and those who were interviewed after the campaign. Since the NAES was modular—so that not all questions were

⁴ For the purpose of analysis, we made use of our own measure of tone, though the CMAG measure and our own were highly correlated (see Brader and Corrigan 2005).

⁵ The dataset provided by the Wisconsin Advertising Project contains slightly over 970,000 observations. Roughly 27,000 ads represent contests other than gubernatorial and federal races (and are something other than issue advocacy). In addition, there appear to be a small fraction of duplicate cases in the dataset, defined as repeated observations of the same ad airing at the same time on the same channel in the same media market. Because the time variable is recorded only at the level of one minute, it is possible that the same 30-second ad aired twice within the same minute (though this is likely a generous assumption). We excluded from our analysis, therefore, only those 7,000 duplicate cases that exceeded the number of airings possible in one minute (e.g., three or more 30-second ads). If we dropped the assumption that the same ad might air back-to-back, we would eliminate another 6,500 cases.

asked of every respondent, at every time during the campaign—the actual number of complete cases available for our analyses was approximately 5,000 to 15,000 observations for each analysis, depending on the span of time in which the NAES contained the dependent variable of interest.⁶

Design

For our preliminary inquiry into the impact of appeals, we restrict our attention to hypotheses concerning the relationship between features of the presidential general election campaigns. We also consider only the impact of emotional appeals in television advertisements on attention to and participation in those campaigns. In particular, we investigate whether the types of emotional appeals that aired during the 2000 general election led to variations in measures of citizens' interest in politics and the campaigns,⁷ their attention to news related to the campaigns,⁸ their declared intention to vote in November,⁹ three forms of low intensity participation (discussing politics, advocating for a candidate, and displaying a sign for a candidate), and three forms of high intensity participation (attending a campaign meeting, working for a candidate, and donating money). Unfortunately, the NAES 2000 survey does not provide a very good measure of vote intentions, as the question did not utilize widely accepted wording designed to reduce social desirability effects—thus, roughly 90% respondents indicate an intention to vote.

⁶ Fortunately, the random assignment of survey respondents to question modules meant that those participants that remain should be close to a random sample of the population consisting of those who live in the top 75 media markets in the United States.

⁷ Survey questions assessing interest in government, in the ongoing campaign, and in winning the election were combined into a 3-point scale assessing political interest.

⁸ We have constructed a scale (coded 0-1) from survey responses in which respondents indicate the extent to which they pay attention to campaign news from local, national, radio, and Internet news.

⁹ In 2000, some localities offered early voting. Those citizens who said they had already voted were coded as having intended to vote.

Researchers in political communications have debated the impact of the tone of campaign news coverage and advertising. Whether an ad exclusively promotes the sponsoring candidate, or instead to some extent criticizes the opponent, may impact whether citizens are discouraged and withdraw from politics, or whether they stimulated to pay even more attention to the campaign (e.g. Iyengar et al., 1999; Goldstein & Freedman, 1999, respectively). Furthermore, while much of the literature has yielded inconclusive results with respect to the effects of negativity (Lau et al. 1999), more recent work suggests that mudslinging—i.e. character attacks against one’s opponent—may lead citizens to turn against the sponsoring candidate, and decrease their interest in the campaign (Kahn and Kenney 2004). Therefore, we estimate separately the impact of advertising tone in general and mudslinging: the percentage of local airings that include criticism of the opponent, and the extent to which they make personal or character attacks. Note that, while Kahn and Kenney (2004) coded the negativity of ads, they derived their measure of mudslinging from whether neither, one, or both campaign managers in post-election interviews explicitly accused their opponent of mudslinging. While following their lead in differentiating mudslinging from other forms of criticism, we wished to ensure we had a more precise and reliable measure of mudslinging *in the ad campaign*.

To investigate the impact of tone and appeals in the 2000 election, we examine the impact of the composition of *general election presidential advertisements* during preceding weeks of the campaign. Thus, we assess the impact of cumulative exposure to the date of the interview. For each dependent variable, the model includes the total number of ads aired in a respondent’s media market, the advertising tone variables mentioned above, and the number of ads containing strong, dominant appeal to each of seven emotions (fear, anger, enthusiasm, pride, sadness, compassion, and amusement).

We of course expect individual attributes and other features of the electoral environment to influence attention and motivation. For example, we expect interest in the campaign, motivation, and voting intent to increase as the election becomes more proximal, and therefore we control for the amount of time remaining prior to the election (and its square). We also control for the census mailback rate in the respondent's state to take some account of the civic culture of a state, independent of prior campaign or political activity. Finally, we include several individual level factors previously shown to be predictors of interest and participation, including education, age (and its square), gender, race (black), ethnicity (Hispanic), marital status, citizenship, political knowledge, partisanship (partisan or not), church attendance, and length of residency. Although income is sometimes relevant for participation, especially donating money, we exclude it at this time due to the large number of missing cases.

Results and Discussion

Detailed discussion of the results has been removed from the current draft, because new results require a complete overhaul of the section. Tables 1 through 5 report the new results for key explanatory variables and should be fairly self-explanatory. The tables report estimations from ordinary least squares regression at this time, in order to facilitate substantive interpretation of the results. For acts of participation, maximum likelihood estimation of probit or logit models is more appropriate; such estimation does have modest effects occasionally on the precision of particular estimates, but the general conclusions still hold. To conserve space, the tables omit the mostly individual-level level control variables, because they are not our primary concern.

The tables also omit estimates for the three least common sorts of emotional ads in our data—those predominantly appealing to sadness, compassion (sympathy), or amusement

(humor). Due to the small number of airings and even smaller number of ads on which they are based (one or two unique ads in some cases!), we are uncertain how much to faith to place in these estimates. These ads have a significant effect on political engagement or participation in some cases. For example, “sad ads” appear to have a large positive impact on interest, both measures of attention, and four of six acts of participation beyond voting, while exerting a negative impact on trust. Amusement has a positive impact in two cases, and compassion in only one (i.e., not much more likely than chance, given the number of estimations).

We will simply summarize the key new results from the tables. The coefficient for overall advertising volume is consistently negative, though it only reaches or approaches statistical significance in three instances (interest, efficacy, and donations). This is in contrast to the positive effects found in at least one other study using the CMAG data (Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein 2004). Nonetheless, it is probably good to remember that, in our models, the effect of overall advertising volume serves as a baseline, and the substantive impact obtains only for that subset of ads which are promotional spots lacking a strong emotional appeal.

In regards to advertising tone, our findings underscore the value of differentiating types of message negativity. As the share of attack ads increases in a campaign, we observe a rise in interest, attention, efficacy, discussion, advocacy, and—perhaps most surprisingly—trust. For many of these aspects of engagement and participation, however, we also see the effects diminish and even reverse as the attacks become more personalized (i.e., as “mudslinging” increases). We also observe that mudslinging has the sort of strong negative effect on voter intentions (despite the poor NAES measure) and internal efficacy that was originally observed in Ansolabehere and Iyengar’s (1995) study of attack advertising. In sum, consistent with Kahn and Kenney’s (2004) analysis of Senate campaigns, we observe mostly negative effects on engagement and

participation from mudslinging in presidential ad campaigns, while observing mostly positive effects from the proportion of attack ads in general (i.e., primarily from issue-based criticism). Moreover, these parallel results emerge despite our reliance on a different and arguably more reliable operationalization of the variable. We defined mudslinging at the extent to which an ad engages in personal or character attacks and assessed it through content analysis of the actual ads, whereas Kahn and Kenney based their assessment on whether campaign managers accused opponents of mudslinging in post-election interviews.

Our main goal in this paper was to examine the extent to which emotional appeals produce effects on political participation distinct from those of message tone. In numerous instances, we did discover that the specific emotional tenor of the presidential ad campaigns had effects even when controlling for negativity and mudslinging. On a more substantive level, the most important distinction is in the nature of the impact on participation. The observed effects of emotional appeals were overwhelmingly positive. Unlike a lot of preceding work that has contrasted the effects of specific emotions (Brader 2005; Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese forthcoming; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000), our study highlights the common capacity of the most widely used emotional appeals to stimulate political action. This is consistent with the motivational nature of emotions in general and high arousal emotions in particular. Pride ads had a positive effect most often (in 7 out of 12 cases). In fact, this likely reflects the impact of ads that appealed both strongly to pride and enthusiasm, as there were very few ads in which pride alone was the dominant appeal. Enthusiasm and fear ads each had significant positive effects on one-third of the outcomes. These results, including a stronger overall pattern of effects on participation and engagement for positive emotions, are consistent with our previous experimental findings (Brader 2005, 2006).

In light of recent evidence (and a good deal of theory) suggesting a powerful mobilizing role for anger (Valentino et al. 2006), we are surprised that anger ads registered an effect that approached or surpassed statistical significance in only two cases. This may stem from the fact that we have not yet examined the role of moderating factors, such as feelings of efficacy and control, that are thought to condition the impact of anger. It may also be due to our focus on the effects of cumulative campaign exposure rather than recent advertising exposure. Emotions are episodic and some of their effects may be as well. Anger, in particular, is often experienced as a very intense emotion (thus, the expectation of mobilizing effects) that is difficult to sustain over long periods of time without severe health consequences (Lazarus 1991).

Returning to the big story, however, it is clear that a number of distinct emotional appeals all serve to boost engagement and participation on occasion. It may be most telling in this regard that only one of the significant estimates among all those for these four types of emotional ads is negative. (Among insignificant estimates, positive coefficients outnumber negative coefficients by a ratio of three to one.)¹⁰ In addition, this negative effect of pride ads on media usage actually parallels suggestive evidence from earlier experimental work that feel-good emotions may direct attention away from the campaign and salient issues, in contrast to the effects of fear (Brader 2006).

Conclusions

Mounting evidence of the importance of emotions for political reasoning and behavior suggest that political scientists would do well to understand how political actors evoke these

emotions and the consequences for political behavior. In this paper, we sought to demonstrate the general importance of emotional appeals for the motivational impact of advertising campaigns and the particular value of disentangling different types of message and emotional negativity in the debate over “negative” advertising. Our initial effort focuses on the impact of advertising tone, mudslinging (character attacks), and several types of emotional appeals on voter interest, attention, and participation. For these analyses, we rely on advertising and survey data from the 2000 presidential general election campaign.

We reach three main conclusions. First, we find mudslinging tends to decrease engagement and participation, while issue-based negativity tends to boost engagement. This pattern of results fits with recent efforts to move forward in the inconclusive debate over the effects of negative advertising by differentiating forms of negativity (Kahn and Kenney 2004). Second, we find that emotional appeals are neither simply a new label for advertising tone nor just a mediator of the effects of tone. Although they can be significantly correlated (Brader 2006; Brader and Corrigan 2005), advertising tone and emotional appeals each have effects that hold up when controlling for the other variables. Third, we find that fear, enthusiasm, and pride appeals all have strong mobilizing effects on political engagement and participation. This is largely consistent with recent experimental and survey evidence on the three emotions (Brader 2006; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Valentino et al. 2006). But, while other studies have often emphasized subtle distinctions in the motivational impact of these motivations, we call attention to the broadly motivational role that all three emotions share, while finding little in the way of a clear pattern as to which emotion affects which aspect of behavior in which context.

¹⁰ If we included the other three rarer sorts of emotional ads, we would find that ten out of eleven significant coefficients are positive, as well as a majority of insignificant coefficients (15:9).

The results we have presented here are obviously preliminary. Much work remains to be done to improve on these estimates. For example, we wonder whether our model is optimal in capturing the temporal dynamics of effects. For our analysis so far, we examine the long-term effects of cumulative exposure over the campaign. In future analyses, we may wish to examine other ways to specify a “window” of time in which we might expect recent exposure to be more effective. Our preliminary analysis also uses ads and response variables related to the 2000 Presidential campaign partly due to their availability in the NAES together with a measure of respondent media market location. However, the data we have assembled concerning the dynamics of tone and emotional appeals includes data on issue airings as well as airings from campaigns at other levels—House, Senate, and gubernatorial races. Moreover, we may examine whether aggregate datasets, with their larger number of cases, or the NES, with its better selection of attitudinal variables, might allow us to specify more appropriate models for the impact of tone and emotional appeals. Finally, though our analysis was limited to attention and motivation, in the future we hope to examine the impact of these appeals on citizens’ attitudes towards the candidates. Because we can differentiate Republican and Democratic appeals, for example, we will be able to ask whether particular types of emotional appeals might be less or more effective at “mobilizing the faithful” or “converting the undecided.”

Finally, on a more theoretical level, the scattered nature of our findings on emotional appeals invites further exploration and hypothesis testing to see whether we can offer more precise explanations for observing these effects. For now, it remains a mystery why we observe each emotion having an impact on some behaviors in some elections but not in others. Nonetheless, it is good to remember that human emotions are impulses, not reflexes, and individuals have the capacity to choose whether to act on those impulses or not in all but the

most extreme situations (LeDoux and Phelps 2000; Scherer 1994). Indeed, appraisal theories of emotion stress individual and situation attributes that can affect both the arousal of specific emotions and how individuals “cope” with them (Lazarus 1991). Some studies of emotion and politics have emphasized how factors such as sophistication, efficacy, and resources can moderate the impact of emotions on behavior (Brader 2006; Rudolph, Gangl, and Stevens 2000; Valentino et al. 2006). *Precisely because* we lack data on which emotions the appeals in these ads actually elicited (i.e., whether they were effective), paying greater attention to such individual and situational moderators may allow us to isolate better the impact of the emotional tenor of the campaigns. While the present research lends strong support to the real-world impact of emotion in ad campaigns, we have much more to learn about that process and what we have learned raises new questions.

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Table 1. Impact of Presidential Ad Campaigns on Interest and Attention

	Interest in the Campaign	General Media Consumption	Attention to Campaign News
Advertising Volume (#)	- 4.7*** (1.2)	- 0.7 (1.0)	- 0.9 (1.0)
Percentage of Attack Ads	5.1*** (1.3)	- 0.3 (1.2)	2.0* (1.1)
Mean Extent of Mudslinging	- 9.4*** (3.0)	2.4 (2.7)	- 2.0 (2.6)
Fear Ads (#)	6.4*** (2.3)	3.4* (2.0)	2.2 (1.9)
Anger Ads (#)	6.0* (3.4)	2.8 (3.0)	2.8 (2.9)
Enthusiasm Ads (#)	5.4*** (1.3)	0.8 (1.2)	0.6 (1.1)
Pride Ads (#)	8.0* (4.7)	- 7.4* (4.2)	- 0.8 (4.0)
<i>N</i>	22,614	22,798	22,713

Note: Entries are coefficients (standard errors) from OLS regression. For volume and emotion variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variable per 1,000 ads aired in the media market. For attack and mudslinging variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variables for a shift from the minimum to maximum values (i.e., 0 to 100% attack ads, or no mudslinging to only mudslinging). Results not shown for sadness, compassion, and amusement ads, as well as for control variables (education, age, age squared, gender, black, Hispanic, citizenship, political knowledge, partisan, church attendance, length of residency, time left in the campaign, time left squared, and mailback rate).

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10, ^p < .12

Table 2. Impact of Presidential Ad Campaigns on Political Efficacy and Trust in Government

	Internal Political Efficacy	Trust in Government
Advertising Volume (#)	- 3.3 [^] (2.1)	- 1.2 (1.2)
Percentage of Attack Ads	5.4** (2.5)	6.2*** (1.5)
Mean Extent of Mudslinging	- 12.2** (5.7)	-4.2 (3.3)
Fear Ads (#)	4.8 (4.1)	-1.0 (2.4)
Anger Ads (#)	1.1 (6.3)	4.2 (3.7)
Enthusiasm Ads (#)	4.0* (2.4)	1.3 (1.4)
Pride Ads (#)	22.3*** (8.7)	16.5*** (5.1)
<i>N</i>	10,962	10,960

Note: Entries are coefficients (standard errors) from OLS regression. For volume and emotion variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variable per 1,000 ads aired in the media market. For attack and mudslinging variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variables for a shift from the minimum to maximum values (i.e., 0 to 100% attack ads, or no mudslinging to only mudslinging). Results not shown for sadness, compassion, and amusement ads, as well as for control variables (education, age, age squared, gender, black, Hispanic, citizenship, political knowledge, partisan, church attendance, length of residency, time left in the campaign, time left squared, and mailback rate).

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10, [^]p < .12

Table 3. Impact of Presidential Ad Campaigns on Intentions to Vote

	Intention to Vote in General Election
Advertising Volume (#)	- 1.5 (1.3)
Percentage of Attack Ads	0.0 (1.5)
Mean Extent of Mudslinging	- 6.5* (3.4)
Fear Ads (#)	1.1 (2.6)
Anger Ads (#)	3.3 (3.9)
Enthusiasm Ads (#)	2.3^ (1.5)
Pride Ads (#)	0.7 (5.4)
<i>N</i>	22,701

Note: Entries are coefficients (standard errors) from OLS regression. For volume and emotion variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variable per 1,000 ads aired in the media market. For attack and mudslinging variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variables for a shift from the minimum to maximum values (i.e., 0 to 100% attack ads, or no mudslinging to only mudslinging). Results not shown for sadness, compassion, and amusement ads, as well as for control variables (education, age, age squared, gender, black, Hispanic, citizenship, political knowledge, partisan, church attendance, length of residency, time left in the campaign, time left squared, and mailback rate).

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10, ^p < .12

Table 4. Impact of Presidential Ad Campaigns on Low Intensity Acts of Participation

	Discuss Politics with Other People	Try to Persuade Others How to Vote	Display a Sign for a Pres. Candidate
Advertising Volume (#)	- 1.4 (1.2)	- 3.1 (2.6)	- 2.0 (1.4)
Percentage of Attack Ads	2.8** (1.4)	- 6.9** (3.0)	1.7 (1.6)
Mean Extent of Mudslinging	- 7.0** (2.9)	- 18.2*** (6.9)	3.8 (3.6)
Fear Ads (#)	5.9** (2.4)	1.8 (5.2)	3.7 (2.7)
Anger Ads (#)	1.6 (3.6)	2.3 (7.7)	- 2.0 (4.1)
Enthusiasm Ads (#)	1.2 (1.3)	3.0 (3.0)	2.2 (1.6)
Pride Ads (#)	5.2 (5.1)	19.0* (10.7)	20.5*** (5.6)
<i>N</i>	19,620	11,162	11,176

Note: Entries are coefficients (standard errors) from OLS regression. For volume and emotion variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variable per 1,000 ads aired in the media market. For attack and mudslinging variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variables for a shift from the minimum to maximum values (i.e., 0 to 100% attack ads, or no mudslinging to only mudslinging). Results not shown for sadness, compassion, and amusement ads, as well as for control variables (education, age, age squared, gender, black, Hispanic, citizenship, political knowledge, partisan, church attendance, length of residency, time left in the campaign, time left squared, and mailback rate).

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10, ^p < .12

Table 5. Impact of Presidential Ad Campaigns on High Intensity Acts of Participation

	Attend a Meeting for Pres. Candidate	Work for Pres. Candidate	Donate Money to a Pres. Candidate
Advertising Volume (#)	- 1.6 (1.1)	- 1.0 (0.8)	- 2.7* (1.6)
Percentage of Attack Ads	0.2 (1.3)	- 0.9 (0.9)	- 0.3 (1.8)
Mean Extent of Mudslinging	0.6 (3.1)	- 1.0 (2.1)	3.8 (4.1)
Fear Ads (#)	- 0.5 (2.3)	- 0.5 (1.6)	6.1** (3.1)
Anger Ads (#)	5.6^ (3.5)	- 0.6 (2.4)	- 2.3 (4.6)
Enthusiasm Ads (#)	1.7 (1.3)	1.2 (0.9)	3.4* (1.8)
Pride Ads (#)	12.4*** (4.8)	11.6*** (3.3)	- 1.7 (6.3)
<i>N</i>	11,174	11,171	11,154

Note: Entries are coefficients (standard errors) from OLS regression. For volume and emotion variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variable per 1,000 ads aired in the media market. For attack and mudslinging variables, coefficients reflect the percentage point change in the dependent variables for a shift from the minimum to maximum values (i.e., 0 to 100% attack ads, or no mudslinging to only mudslinging). Results not shown for sadness, compassion, and amusement ads, as well as for control variables (education, age, age squared, gender, black, Hispanic, citizenship, political knowledge, partisan, church attendance, length of residency, time left in the campaign, time left squared, and mailback rate).

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10, ^p < .12