**Supporting Information for**

**Gaffe Appeal: A Field Experiment on Partisan Selective Exposure to Election Messages**

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# Manipulation Check

To validate the advertisements we use in the study, a sample (N=156) of workers on Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk crowdsourcing service viewed either a policy advertisement or a gaffe advertisement, randomly assigned. We asked subjects to report the extent to which the ad made them think about “Public Policy,” “Politically relevant facts and figures,” and “The state of the national economy.” To examine whether our ads might manipulate other considerations, we also asked about the extent to which the ad made subjects think about the candidate’s age and race, as well as how novel the ad seemed. As the table below reports, the policy manipulation causes significant differences in terms of focus on the policy-related measures, but no large differences on the other measures.

## Table A1 – Manipulation Check Results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Gaffe condition |  | Policy condition |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Policy measures |  |  |  |  |
|  | Policy |  | 0.286 (0.031) |  | 0.421 (0.031)\*\*\* |
|  | Facts |  | 0.319 (0.034) |  | 0.496 (0.033)\*\*\* |
|  | Economy |  | 0.483 (0.037) |  | 0.675 (0.036)\*\*\* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other measures |  |  |  |  |
|  | Age |  | 0.095 (0.026) |  | 0.128 (0.026) |
|  | Race |  | 0.118 (0.027) |  | 0.109 (0.027) |
|  | Novelty |  | 0.236 (0.032) |  | 0.208 (0.031) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N |  |  | 80 |  | 76 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Mean, by condition. Standard errors in parentheses

\*p<.1 \*\*p<.05 \*\*\*p<.01, for difference of means test

All variables scaled to run 0-1

# Geographical Basis for clusters

The table below reports the state groupings we used, along with age, gender, and relationship categories, to construct clusters for random assignment.

## Table A2 – Geography Clusters

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group Geography=0 |  | Group Geography=1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| State | Population |  | State | Population |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  California | 37,691,912 |  |  Texas | 25,674,681 |
|  New York | 19,465,197 |  |  Florida | 19,057,542 |
|  Illinois | 12,869,257 |  |  Pennsylvania | 12,742,886 |
|  Georgia | 9,815,210 |  |  Ohio | 11,544,951 |
|  New Jersey | 8,821,155 |  |  Michigan | 9,876,187 |
|  Washington | 6,830,038 |  |  North Carolina | 9,656,401 |
|  Indiana | 6,516,922 |  |  Virginia | 8,096,604 |
|  Tennessee | 6,403,353 |  |  Massachusetts | 6,587,536 |
|  Maryland | 5,828,289 |  |  Arizona | 6,482,505 |
|  Minnesota | 5,344,861 |  |  Missouri | 6,010,688 |
|  Alabama | 4,802,740 |  |  Wisconsin | 5,711,767 |
|  Louisiana | 4,574,836 |  |  Colorado | 5,116,769 |
|  Oregon | 3,871,859 |  |  South Carolina | 4,679,230 |
|  Connecticut | 3,580,709 |  |  Kentucky | 4,369,356 |
|  Mississippi | 2,978,512 |  |  Oklahoma | 3,791,508 |
|  Kansas | 2,871,238 |  |  Iowa | 3,062,309 |
|  Nevada | 2,723,322 |  |  Arkansas | 2,937,979 |
|  New Mexico | 2,082,224 |  |  Utah | 2,817,222 |
|  West Virginia | 1,855,364 |  |  Nebraska | 1,842,641 |
|  Idaho | 1,584,985 |  |  Hawaii | 1,374,810 |
|  Maine | 1,328,188 |  |  New Hampshire | 1,318,194 |
|  Rhode Island | 1,051,302 |  |  Montana | 998,199 |
|  Delaware | 907,135 |  |  South Dakota | 824,082 |
|  Alaska | 722,718 |  |  North Dakota | 683,932 |
|  Vermont | 626,431 |  |  Wyoming | 568,158 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total population** | **155,147,757** |  | **Total population** | **155,826,137** |

# Alternative Models

The following tables replicate tables in the paper, but with Tobit, rather than Weighted Least Squares, models. Table A4 presents results from full interactive models (both OLS and Tobit).

## Table A3 – Gaffe Manipulation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) |  | (2) |  | (3) |  | (4) |  | (5) |  |
|  | All Subj. |  | All Subj. |  | Liberals |  | Conservatives |  | Non-ideol. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gaffe ad | 0.284\*\* |  | 0.348\*\*\* |  | 0.633\* |  | 0.396 |  | 0.198\*\* |  |
|  | (0.114) |  | (0.115) |  | (0.327) |  | (0.263) |  | (0.077) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | -- |  | 0.116 |  | 0.182 |  | -0.036 |  | -0.002 |  |
|  | -- |  | (0.113) |  | (0.383) |  | (0.241) |  | (0.090) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Geog. cluster | -- |  | 0.209\*\* |  | -0.130 |  | 0.445 |  | 0.162\*\* |  |
|  | -- |  | (0.098) |  | (0.264) |  | (0.282) |  | (0.080) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relat. cluster | -- |  | 0.009 |  | -0.417 |  | 0.425 |  | 0.145\* |  |
|  | -- |  | (0.109) |  | (0.333) |  | (0.277) |  | (0.084) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age | -- |  | 0.579\*\* |  | 1.412\*\* |  | -1.675\*\* |  | 0.589\*\*\* |  |
|  | -- |  | (0.246) |  | (0.570) |  | (0.812) |  | (0.171) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.588\*\*\* |  | 0.222 |  | 0.194 |  | -0.193 |  | 0.437\*\*\* |  |
|  | (0.088) |  | (0.157) |  | (0.417) |  | (0.440) |  | (0.112) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sigma | 1.714\*\*\* |  | 1.651\*\*\* |  | 2.423\*\*\* |  | 2.302\*\*\* |  | 0.959\*\*\* |  |
|  | (0.177) |  | (0.177) |  | (0.449) |  | (0.479) |  | (0.124) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 846 |  | 846 |  | 282 |  | 282 |  | 282 |  |

Tobit models. Dependent variable = Cluster click-through rate × 10,000.

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Table A4 – Consistency Manipulation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Policy Condition |  | Gaffe Condition |
|  | All Partisans |  | All Partisans |  | Liberals |  | Conservatives |  | All Partisans |  | All Partisans |  | Liberals |  | Conservatives |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consistent ad | 0.104 |  | 0.007 |  | -0.137 |  | 0.530 |  | 0.790\*\* |  | 0.828\*\* |  | 0.889\* |  | 0.935\*\* |
|  | (0.297) |  | (0.284) |  | (0.377) |  | (0.373) |  | (0.395) |  | (0.332) |  | (0.476) |  | (0.367) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | -- |  | 0.388 |  | 0.441 |  | -0.219 |  | -- |  | -0.051 |  | -0.178 |  | 0.026 |
|  | -- |  | (0.301) |  | (0.407) |  | (0.350) |  | -- |  | (0.305) |  | (0.499) |  | (0.328) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Geographic cluster | -- |  | -0.127 |  | -0.639\* |  | 0.454 |  | -- |  | 0.580\* |  | 0.246 |  | 0.658\* |
|  | -- |  | (0.272) |  | (0.345) |  | (0.425) |  | -- |  | (0.299) |  | (0.377) |  | (0.372) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relat. cluster | -- |  | -0.435 |  | -0.829\* |  | 1.018\*\* |  | -- |  | -0.300 |  | -0.397 |  | 0.250 |
|  | -- |  | (0.292) |  | (0.429) |  | (0.474) |  | -- |  | (0.329) |  | (0.469) |  | (0.352) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age | -- |  | 0.035 |  | 0.570 |  | -2.170\* |  | -- |  | 0.944 |  | 2.056\*\*\* |  | -1.622 |
|  | -- |  | (0.649) |  | (0.684) |  | (1.134) |  | -- |  | (0.718) |  | (0.686) |  | (1.152) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.329 |  | 0.380 |  | 0.970\*\* |  | -0.391 |  | 0.332 |  | -0.027 |  | 0.124 |  | -0.295 |
|  | (0.298) |  | (0.417) |  | (0.447) |  | (0.700) |  | (0.268) |  | (0.412) |  | (0.553) |  | (0.532) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sigma | 2.180\*\*\* |  | 2.170\*\*\* |  | 2.091\*\*\* |  | 2.007\*\*\* |  | 2.677\*\*\* |  | 2.485\*\*\* |  | 2.466\*\*\* |  | 2.359\*\*\* |
|  | (0.423) |  | (0.462) |  | (0.588) |  | (0.652) |  | (0.436) |  | (0.462) |  | (0.657) |  | (0.629) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 282 |  | 282 |  | 141 |  | 141 |  | 282 |  | 282 |  | 141 |  | 141 |

Tobit models. Dependent variable = Cluster click-through rate × 10,000.

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

#

## Table A5 – Interactive Models

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | OLS | OLS |  | Tobit | Tobit |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Congenial ad | 0.048 | 0.201 |  | 0.115 | 0.095 |
|  | (0.201) | (0.162) |  | (0.334) | (0.317) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gaffe | 0.038 | 0.235 |  | 0.229 | 0.309 |
|  | (0.178) | (0.148) |  | (0.315) | (0.290) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Congenial ad × gaffe | 0.647\* | 0.434\* |  | 0.667 | 0.727 |
|  | (0.363) | (0.254) |  | (0.507) | (0.457) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | -- | -0.208 |  | -- | 0.183 |
|  | -- | (0.131) |  | -- | (0.229) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Geographic cluster | -- | -0.104 |  | -- | 0.314 |
|  | -- | (0.111) |  | -- | (0.208) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relationship status cluster | -- | -0.260\* |  | -- | -0.373 |
|  | -- | (0.133) |  | -- | (0.237) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age | -- | 1.802\*\*\* |  | -- | 0.458 |
|  | -- | (0.235) |  | -- | (0.424) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.936 | 0.579\*\*\* |  | 0.187 | -0.082 |
|  | (0.142) | (0.167) |  | (0.259) | (0.342) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sigma | -- | -- |  | 2.482\*\*\* | 2.398\*\*\* |
|  | -- | -- |  | (0.059) | (0.119) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 564 | 564 |  | 564 | 564 |

Dependent variable = Cluster click-through rate × 10,000.

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two-tailed tests