

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE ROLE AND EFFECTS OF DISCRETE
EMOTION IN NEGATIVE POLITICAL
ADVERTISING

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Communication

This paper is based on the idea that anger, guilt, and fear have a unique impact on persuasive outcomes in political campaigns. Using a negative political advertising context, it was hypothesized that participants would report varied amounts of persuasiveness, varying attitudes toward the target candidate, and dissimilar intention to vote based on the emotion induced and the political orientation (liberalism) of the participant. It was also hypothesized that felt emotion would be highly correlated with persuasion, attitude toward the candidate, and voting intention. Furthermore, it was posited that participants' degree of liberalism would affect their response to the negative message. It was also predicted efficacy would play an important role in facilitating persuasion, attitude toward the candidate, and intention to vote. The data provided mixed support for the predictions. This potential trend toward significance encourages further investigation into the unique effects of fear, anger, and guilt.

THE ROLE AND EFFECTS OF DISCRETE EMOTION
IN NEGATIVE POLITICAL ADVERTISING

By

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2006

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Negative campaigning has been an element of American elections for the past two centuries. Handbills, songs, placards and other campaign paraphernalia accusing candidates of unscrupulous behavior (e.g. murder, atheism, fathering slave children) have been distributed to voters throughout our nation's campaign history. The use of mass media channels has made negative campaigning, specifically negative ads, pervasive.

Although negative ads are widely used, research has produced ambiguous findings regarding their effectiveness. Some studies of negative political advertisements have found "identifiable cognitive, affective, and behavior effects" (Kaid, 2004, p. 166), yet, there is disagreement regarding the magnitude and direction of these effects (Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, & Babbitt, 1999). Moreover, other scholars have argued that negative ads are ineffective, hurting voters' perception of democracy and stifling participation (Ansolabehere, & Iyengar, 1995).

The fact that some studies have yielded strong positive effects of negative ads on outcomes such as attitudes and behaviors and other data are inconsistent with regard to such favorable outcomes suggests the presence of one or more moderating variables. In this thesis it is suggested that one important moderating variable is the type of negative emotion elicited by the political ad. Although scholars recognize that specific emotions are induced by political ads (Brader, 2006), most studies have not examined whether these unique emotions elicit unique effects (Marcus, Neumann, & McKuen, 2000). By examining the specific emotion induced by these political messages, along with moderating factors, a possible explanation for the effectiveness of some negative advertisements may be clearer.

Negative Political Advertising

Defining negative advertisements

Negative political advertising is broadly classified as “political advertising that implicitly or explicitly places the opposition in an inferior position” (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1997, p. 20). Political advertising scholars have provided varying definitions and classifications for negative advertising that leads to different interpretations and results within research (Meirick, 2002). Kern (1989) noted that negative ads are often packaged as softer dismissive commentary on the target or hard-hitting ads that elicit negative emotions. These distinct types of negative ads often lead to unique reactions in voters. In some negative ads, the use of degrading humor and sarcasm aim to raise uneasiness and doubt about the target candidate without vilifying the attacker. Negative ads with serious tones aim to evoke negative emotions, such as fear, guilt, or anger. This thesis is concerned with latter genre of negative political ads that attempt to elicit negative emotions through their messages.

Scholars generally divide negative ads into two descriptive categories: issue ads or image ads. Issue ads present information about governing or policy and generally criticize the target candidate’s record in government or policy positions. Image ads criticize personal qualities or shortcomings of the target or attempt to discredit the target using irrelevant information, known as *mudslinging* (Kahn & Kenney, 2004). Overall, negative political ads have been shown to contain more issue-based information than positive ads (Kaid, 2004; Kaid & Johnston, 1991; Kern, 1989; West, 1993). However, it is also important to note that many ads “dovetail”

(Kern, 1989), using both image and issue information against a target, making the ads difficult to classify (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Clearly, negative ads vary greatly in terms of their content and the emotions they utilize, which may explain the lack of consistent findings regarding their effect.

Employing negative ads

Negative advertising is often decried by the media and critics as a universally abhorrent campaign tactic. As Kaid (2004) noted, however, this generalization is oversimplified. Empirical studies reveal that voters approve of negative issue-comparison ads over image-based personal attacks on candidates (Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Kaid, 2004). Specifically, negative ads are perceived more positively when they focus on issues instead of the opposition's personal characteristics because relevant information is transmitted to voters (Jamieson, 2000). To examine Senate elections, Kahn and Kenney (2004) coupled survey datasets with content analyses of campaign tone and news coverage. They found respondents felt more favorably toward campaigns that used issue-based negative advertising over any type of personal attack on the target candidate.

Additional research reveals that negative ads are generally not dismissed by the electorate. In both experimental (Newhagen & Reeves, 1991) and survey (Roberts, 1995) research, voters recalled more information and images from negative advertisements. Similarly, Lau (1985) found that negative rationales for voting against a candidate were more powerful than positive rationales for supporting a candidate. Therefore, many campaign message strategies, especially those aiming to decrease support for an incumbent, rely on negative messages and advertisements

(Powell & Cowart, 2003). Although their importance is recognized, scholars have limited insight into the causes for the success or failure of a negative ad.

Effects of negative advertisements

Although generally not considered a deciding factor in an election, negative campaign messages can play an integral role in obtaining victory (Powell & Cowart, 2003). Campaigns expect certain results from negative advertising. Specifically “successful negative ads should reduce affect for the target; not reduce affect for the sponsor, or at least increase affect for the sponsor relative to the target; enhance the likelihood of voting for the sponsor rather than the target; and convey a memorable message” (Lau & Pomper, 2004, p. 11). Political practitioners frequently attribute positive changes in their candidates’ polling numbers or negative changes in the oppositions’ polling to negative ads (Lau & Pomper, 2004; Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, & Babbitt, 1999; Pfau & Kenski, 1990; Sabato, 1981). When poll numbers remain static, the content and frequency of airings is modified.

Examinations of negative ads’ effects on attitudes about candidates and voting intentions, however, have yielded discrepant results. Ansolabehere and Iyengar’s (1995) seminal study showed that negative advertisements caused voters to feel more cynical about elections and decreased voter turnout. They used controlled experiments with one or two exposures to specially produced and real television ads to test participants’ attitudes and behavioral intention. During the course of the three year study, over 3,000 diverse participants were recruited for field studies in Los Angeles and Orange County, California to view ads from local, statewide, and national elections. Known as the “demobilization hypothesis,” the authors’ data

revealed negative ads as causing an aversion to voting, an effect they later were able to replicate. (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, & Valentino, 1994; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, & Simon, 1999).

Nonetheless, extant data also indicates that negative advertisements may mobilize voters, a direct refutation of the demobilization hypothesis (Finkel & Geer, 1998; Lau, Siegelman, Heldman, & Babbitt, 1999; Wattenberg & Briens, 1999). These studies have generally focused on information presented within the ad and degree of negativity. For instance, Finkel and Geer (1998) argued that negative campaigns may suppress some voters, but most likely mobilize many more by “producing stronger emotional and affective responses than positive ones” (p. 577). Using a different approach from Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995), Finkel and Geer compared National Election Survey datasets from 1960 to 1992 against a content analysis of presidential campaign advertising from the same period. The data indicated no significance between the presence of attack advertising before an election and decline of voter turnout. Within the field, the contradictory findings may be a result of different methodologies used to analyze the data collected, different types of campaigns examined, and the different *types* of negative messages presented at different times during the campaign (Kahn & Kenney, 1999). These researchers, however, have not examined what kind of negative emotion might have been elicited by the ad, and how these emotions might impact the ad’s effectiveness.

Other studies have examined the varying effects of negative ads used within one political race. Oftentimes, one candidate’s negative ads caused the intended effects while the opponent’s negative ads had unintended effects. For instance,

Roberts' (1995) survey of the 1992 Presidential election found that Bill Clinton's negative ads against George Bush increased positive impressions of Clinton; however, Bush's negative ads decreased positive impressions of Bush. Roberts argued that Clinton's focus on issues and Bush's focus on Clinton himself caused voters to feel differently about the candidates.

Negative ads also present the risk of unintended effects toward the sponsoring candidate (Johnston-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). The existence and predictability of a boomerang effect has caused controversy for political communication researchers (Kaid, 2004). Some studies have indicated voters feel more negatively toward sponsoring candidates instead of the target of the negative ad (Garramone, 1984), with negative ads being considered a main cause of defeat (Jasperson & Fan, 2002). Certainly, many specific cases of potential backlash have been documented at all levels, but without solid empirical evidence the existence of a boomerang effect remains anecdotal. Although direct attack ads have been deemed to have the highest potential for backlash (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991), scholars are unable to explain the thin line between effectiveness and reactance.

Explanations for the effects of negative ads

There are a few basic explanations given within research for the effectiveness of negative advertisements. First, studies show that negative information is more influential than positive information in forming opinions, commonly known as the negativity effect (Allen & Burrell, 2002). The negativity effect is sometimes used to as an explanation for effectiveness of negative ads (Kahn & Kenney, 1999). Allen and Burrell's (2002) meta-analysis of political advertising studies found limited

support for a negativity effect; however, significant heterogeneity existed within the pooled samples. This unexplained variability led the authors to believe that an unknown critical factor affected the variance. Furthermore, they compared these results to Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, and Babbitt (1999), whose data were unclear regarding the critical factor(s) that predict negative effects through meta-analysis.

Other explanations are also offered for the selective effectiveness of negative ads. Negative information in advertisements is viewed as being more persuasive because individuals view negative political information as more interesting and involving (Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Lau, 1985). Using Senate Election Study survey data, Kahn and Kenney's (1999) data was consistent with a statistically significant interaction between the tone of negative information within a campaign and voting behavior, especially for independents and individuals who were not engaged or knowledgeable about politics. Specifically, voting likelihood increased as the negative campaign tone increased and media criticism of the negative tone increased, holding all other variables constant. However, the perception of negativity qualifies the previous statement; when campaigns presented negative information based on issues and perceived relevant information, individuals were more likely to vote; conversely, when harsh personal attacks were used, fewer votes were cast. Although these studies are important to understanding the motivations behind civic engagement, the results do not explain why some negative messages are effective and others do not resonate with voters.

Sigelman and Kugler (2003) noted that research has yet to determine the effects of negative campaigns; they hypothesized that perhaps researchers had not

discovered important moderating variables or that measurement issues are preventing significant results from systematic studies. The authors' investigation found that social scientists often define negative campaigning differently than the public does. They compared their calculated ratings with a NES telephone survey asking participants about the tone of the campaign. Therefore, they argued that the negativity of campaigns is not necessarily in the messages of the campaigns, but rather what the voters are feeling. Indeed, an often overlooked explanation is the role of emotions in political advertisements (Brader, 2006).

Emotions in political communication

In a review of persuasion strategies used in campaign advertising, Kaid (2004) noted that research has yet to fully identify or examine the variables that mediate or moderate negative advertising effects. Attention to the use of emotional appeals in political communication has accounted for a small but significant body of research (Brader, 2006). When examining the relationship between negativity and voter turnout, Finkel and Geer (1998) noted that emotions increase support for candidates or cause cognitive discomfort that facilitates attitude change.

Sabato's (1981) analysis of political advertising aptly noted that "the best political advertisements, positive and negative, follow the principle of not attempting to create, but rather capitalizing on, moods, beliefs, and prejudices already present in the electorate" (p. 170). Appeals to emotion arguably dominate both positive and negative advertisements (Johnson-Cartee, 1997). The study of emotional appeals within political advertisements has focused mainly on classification techniques. By analyzing the "videostyles" of presidential candidates, Kaid and Johnston (2001)

found emotional appeals were used more often than logical or ethical proofs in both positive and negative ads. Their analysis also revealed that emotional proofs, rather than logical or ethical proofs, were dominant in eight of the last 15 presidential candidates' advertisements. Kern (1989) included specific emotions such as guilt, anger, uncertainty, and two distinct types of fear based on anticipation of doom or awareness in a study of televised campaign ads in the 1984 election. She found most negative ads contained messages to elicit uncertainty, followed closely by anger appeals, and then fear appeals. Uncertainty was used in both soft sell ads that used humor and sarcasm to elicit uneasy feelings, and in hard-sell ads, where the threat was more directly presented to viewers. Furthermore, Kern applied the wheel of emotions from advertising studies to visual and audio appeals within political ads. The argument is that advertisements induce certain emotions and that a specific product, or candidate, can then be presented as the solution. Similarly, Brader's (2006) analysis systematically examined ads for their use of enthusiasm and fear, although he acknowledges that ads do appeal to other types of emotions. However, Brader focused on the heuristic elements within televised ads, such as visuals and sound effects, which elicit emotions from viewers.

Previous research has also examined the role of mood or emotions in different political contexts. For instance, Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing (1986) examined emotion and political cognitions in response to political brochures. First, political brochures from social and religious organizations were coded by varying emotional appeals, such as fear, hope, anger, and pity. Rosemen et al. hypothesized participants would be most persuaded by emotional appeals that matched their personal emotional

state. Results revealed that some emotional messages, such as pity and anger, were more effective when matched with the emotional state of the audience; however, fearful participants preferred hopeful messages. These findings are consistent with mood repair literature, which argues that individuals who feel threatened desire reassurance (Nabi, 2002). Roseman et al (1986) also identified three fundamental types of political messages that elicit emotional responses: “people are suffering, and we’ve got to help them (pity); We’ve been treated unfairly by the bad guys, and we’re going to put an end to it (anger); something terrible might happen, unless we act now to avoid it (fear-hope)” (pp. 292-293). Furthermore, the authors argued that political messages must contain some type of optimism to succeed with audiences. This study laid the foundation for examining the role of emotion in political advertising.

It is clear that the impact of negative ads on persuasive outcomes is moderated by other factors. It is also clear from content analyses conducted that negative political ads can encompass several types of negative emotions (Kern, 1989; Brader, 2006). Therefore, it may be the case that these negative emotional appeals within the political ads lead to distinct effects on persuasiveness. In fact, research in both persuasion and emotion reveals that negative emotions are unique and discrete. Scholars of emotion recognize the existence of several negative emotions including guilt, anger, and fear. Hence, it might be that some negative ads are effective because they elicit a specific emotion that motivates more or less careful processing of the message. Therefore, a discussion of discrete emotions is warranted.

Discrete Emotions

Averill (1982) argued that emotions are “socially-constructed syndromes which include individuals’ appraisal of the situation and which are interpreted as passions, rather than as actions” (pp. 6-7). Nabi (2002) found agreement among scholars on the defining elements of emotion: “(a) cognitive appraisal or evaluation of a situation, (b) the physiological component of arousal, (c) motor expression, (d) a motivational component (including behavioral intentions or readiness), and (e) a subjective feeling state” (p. 290). Theories of emotion also share principle themes: (a) people are motivated by emotions, (b) perception, cognition, and behavior are constructed by discrete emotions, and (c) emotional reaction is based on pertinent situations in an individual’s life (Izard & Ackerman, 2000; Nabi, 2002). Marcus (2003) added that “emotion is attached to the salient features of experience, and emotions, once formed, control our reactions, orientations, dispositions, and behavior toward those objects—to persons, events, and circumstances—whether favorably or unfavorably” (p. 189).

Discrete negative emotions alert individuals to a situation; depending on the emotion, an individual may be motivated to consider solutions presented to them by a persuasive message to alleviate the negative emotion. Research has demonstrated the need to treat emotions discretely (Izard & Ackerman, 2000; Mitchell, Brown, Morris-Villagran, & Villagran, 2001; Nabi 1999; 2002; Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986). Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards (1993) explained the importance of identifying specific negative emotions within research to better understand each unique effect: “Once a person feels bad, degrees of ‘badness’ are of little use in predicting whether

the emotion will be sadness, anger, fear, guilt, or some other negative emotion” (p. 741).

To better understand the use of emotion in negative political advertising it is important to distinguish the discrete emotion being used and its specific characteristics. Although fear has received the most attention, important work on anger and guilt has begun to unfold. A discussion of each of these negative emotions, and their use in negative political advertising is provided.

Guilt

Ausubel (1955) defined guilt as “a special kind of negative self-evaluation which occurs when an individual acknowledges that his behavior is at variance with a given moral value to which he feels obligated to conform” (p. 379). Conceptually broad definitions of guilt generally include moral transgression as a key element (Greenspan, 1994; Harder & Greenwald, 1999; Keltner, D. & Buswell, B. N., 1996; Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). An awareness and negative perception of one’s actions leads to guilt (Ausubel, 1955); other conceptualizations have included the violation of a relevant social norm (Kugler & Jones, 1992). O’Keefe’s (2000) meta-analysis of guilt found that individuals generally feel more guilty about violations or transgressions in their relationships; moreover, guilt is “a particularly suitable medium for the operation of social influence” (p. 70).

Guilt has the noteworthy quality of impelling behavior, in reparations or other forms (Miceli, 1992; O’Keefe, 2000). Keltner and Buswell (1996) found guilt was the result of “direct harm to another, brought about by lying, cheating, neglecting another, failing to reciprocate, over hostility, infidelity, and not helping others” (p.

167). Guilt is generally used to motivate behavior through bringing attention to a past or current situation or by causing an individual to anticipate guilty feelings.

Therefore, guilt has the potential to maintain social norms and strongly influence others (Miceli, 1992; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998), because it contains an introspective element (Nabi, 1999). Guilt is considered easier to arouse or induce than other emotions because it is directly related to action or inaction; it can create “inconsistency between the actor’s conduct and the actor’s standards” (O’Keefe, 2000, p.69).

It has long been known that guilty-feeling people are more likely to engage in helping behaviors. Research has demonstrated that messages have associative power between compliance and decreasing negative affect (Boster, Mitchell, Lapinski, Cooper, Orrego, & Reinke, 1999). Boster et al.’s (1999) experimental study indicated that guilty feeling individuals are motivated to ameliorate those negative emotions, and a message that makes salient the negative emotion and the need to reduce it will be more effective. Additionally, guilty feeling participants complied more often overall and reported feeling more relief after complying. These findings further explain the ability of guilty feelings to motivate behavior.

Guilt appeals are often recommendations with absolutions offered as advice within a persuasive message (O’Keefe, 2002). The degree of guilt aroused by the message generally determines its persuasiveness. Messages that use obvious or intense guilt appeals induce a higher level of guilt, but may also lead to anger and deter persuasion (Nabi, 2002). Moderate guilt appeals are more persuasive, especially when the message also cues efficacy (efficacy will be discussed at length later in this

thesis; O'Keefe, 2000). Overall, guilt may lead to deeper information processing and may precipitate other emotions (Nabi, 1999). From a functional standpoint, guilt motivates individuals to relieve themselves through attitude and behavior change.

Ghingold and Bozinoff (1981) found guilt appeals in print advertising were often effective in arousing emotion, although they were not able to determine attitudinal or behavioral change in the context of their experiment. In a later study, however, guilt was isolated as an emotional construct and messages constructed to cause different levels of guilt were successful (Bozinoff & Ghingold, 1983). Their data indicated that the guilt appeals did not lead to noticeable attitude or behavioral changes; as an explanation, the authors posited that one exposure to the appeal was not sufficient and that counter-arguing could have an effect on guilt appeals' effectiveness.

Scholars have also compared the use of high, medium, and low guilt messages (O'Keefe, 2000) on persuasive outcomes. Whereas high guilt messages generally induce the most guilt (Bozinoff & Ghingold, 1983), moderate guilt appeals are often the most effective. In fact, high guilt appeals were less persuasive than low guilt messages (O'Keefe, 2000); and, high guilt messages may leave people feeling manipulated, resulting in anger at the source of the message. In such cases, anger leads to decreased persuasiveness of the message. In the political arena, guilt appeals could cause feelings of manipulation if the ad is opposed to one's favored candidate. Nevertheless, this curvilinear relationship of level of guilt in the appeal on persuasiveness, found in some studies (Yinon, Bizman, Cohen, & Segev, 1976) has not been adequately established. Although some scholars argue that moderate guilt

appeals are the most successful, there have not been enough affirmative studies to uphold this position (O’Keefe, 2000). The communication of guilt from a source (person or media) to an individual can be persuasive, but some scholars argue the guilt induced implicitly is more effective because it causes an internal realization in an individual (Miceli, 1992). Specifically, O’Keefe (2002) argued that “guilt motivates self-affirmation because guilt-inducing actions represent threats to self-integrity” (p. 335).

Research has also focused on ways the anticipation of guilt influences individuals’ attitudes and behaviors. O’Keefe (2000) suggested that guilt messages may not need to induce guilt, just the anticipation of guilt from not following a message’s suggestion. Although the persuasiveness of anticipated guilt has not been extensively researched, past work has demonstrated it has great potential to elicit intention or behavioral change. Scholarship has yet to determine the effect of guilt on depth of information processing (Nabi, 2002). Overall, the literature suggests that as felt guilt increases, persuasiveness increases. Additionally, as awareness of the guilt appeal increases, a feeling of anger at the source of the message increases and persuasiveness decreases.

With few notable exceptions, research on guilt appeals has not been applied within a political communication context. Roseman et al. (1986) coded political messages from religious and social organization for guilt and pity and found that individuals who self-reported as feeling pity were more persuaded by messages that induced pity. Generally, scholars have yet to begin exploring the role of guilt in

political communication. Thus, this study seeks to explore the persuasive nature of guilt through the following predictions:

H1: A message that highlights wrongdoing (i.e., a guilt appeal) will lead to more feelings of guilt and anger than feeling of fear.

H2: As guilty feelings increase favorable outcomes of the message will also increase where favorable outcomes are considered to be attitudes about the candidate and voting intentions.

H3: For individuals who receive a guilt appeal, the relationship between angry feelings and favorable outcomes is dependent upon receiver's attitudes. Felt anger will increase favorable outcomes for receivers who perceive the message to be pro-attitudinal message; for receivers who perceive the message to be counter-attitudinal message, anger will decrease favorable outcomes.

Anger

Anger occurs in an individual when goals or an ideal situation cannot be attained and a perceived third party or circumstance is to blame; or an individual feels an injustice has been done to them or someone they care about (Averill, 1982; Rubin, 1986). Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) argued that anger is caused by inability to attain a goal or to preserve the ego of oneself or someone the individual cares about (p. 15). Lemerise and Dodge (2000) noted that research tends to agree that anger controls a variety of functions, including both negative and positive responses.

Averill (1982) categorized anger on three levels: biological, psychological, and sociocultural. On the psychological level, Averill distinguished instigation of anger and its aim (e.g., vengeance or justice). He noted instigation varies from

explicit wrongdoing, negligence, or the perception of being wronged; at the same time, the aim of anger can range from wanting minor justice to a desire for violence. On a social level, cultural norms provide contexts under which becoming angry is acceptable; specifically, it sets the guidelines for appropriate conduct (Averill, 1982; Lemerise & Dodge, 2000).

Aggression, violence, conflict, and personal discomfort are all possible negative effects of anger (Rubin, 1986); however, an individual may also feel positive motivation when angered (Averill, 1982). Whether the response is constructive or destructive depends on the intensity of anger (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). Although intense anger often has detrimental effects, such as impulsive or aggressive behavior, moderate levels of anger may motivate individuals to more beneficial actions, such as constructive thinking (Averill, 1982). What separates functional anger from dysfunctional anger is the feeling of efficacy. In fact, Turner et al. (2006) argued that anger is functional when people also perceive high levels of efficacy and the anger is focused on a pro-attitudinal topic.

Turner et al.'s (2006) experimental research found that pro-attitudinal messages that created high anger and high efficacy significantly increased the behavioral intentions of participants. Overall, messages that elicit moderate to high levels of controlled anger have the potential to be highly persuasive (Turner et al., 2006). Therefore, their data suggests that as felt anger increases, persuasiveness increases if the message is pro-attitudinal. If the message is counter-attitudinal, however, anger appeals will create anger at the source of the message and therefore will debilitate persuasion.

Research has shown that anger appeals are positively correlated with attitude change; however, anger resulting from reactance of perceived manipulation is negatively correlated with attitude change. Nabi (2002) posited that anger appeals often motivate individuals to contemplate messages geared toward avenging a perceived wrong. Anger appeals that also offer opportunity to deflate anger or incited perceived control were found to be more persuasive (Turner et al., 2006).

Although anger has received some attention within political communication, theoretical work on its effects on persuasiveness has remained largely unexplored. Negative political ads have been coded for anger appeals in past research (Kern, 1989; Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986), yet recent work acknowledged but then excluded anger appeals within the study (Brader, 2006). These classifications have also examined the political issues associated with certain emotions. Oftentimes, anger appeals are paired with economic issues; specifically, the idea that some entity is trying to unfairly take money from the viewer (Kern, 1989). Similarly to other persuasion research, studies on negative political messages have operationalized anger appeals to include a rival force working to thwart the individual's goals (Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986). Even though anger appeals are pervasive in political communication, scholars have yet to apply persuasion research to better understand anger in political communication contexts. Thus, this study attempts to expand understanding of anger's persuasiveness through the following predictions:

H4: Participants who receive a message that highlights wrongdoing (i.e., an anger appeal) they will experience more feelings of anger than feelings of guilt or fear.

H5: For individuals who receive an anger appeal, the relationship between angry feelings and favorable outcomes is dependent upon receiver's attitudes. Felt anger will increase favorable outcomes for receivers who perceive the message to be pro-attitudinal message; for receivers who perceive the message to be counter-attitudinal message, anger will decrease favorable outcomes.

H6: Holding liberalism constant, anger and efficacy will interact to impact favorable outcomes such that high anger and high efficacy will lead to the most favorable outcomes.

Fear

Fear appeals are persuasive messages meant to cause negative feelings within the receiver through a description of the consequences of not following the appeal's recommendations (Berkowitz, 1997; Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Witte, 1992).

O'Keefe (1990) noted fear appeals have incredible potential to change behavior. However, fear appeal research has yielded mixed results in the amount of fear that should be induced through message design (Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Mongeau, 1998). Although early research promoted a curvilinear relationship between a fear appeal and persuasion; many analyses have not found that graphic fear appeals are so explicit that they inhibit persuasion (Boster & Mongeau; 1984; O'Keefe, 1990).

In order to make predictions regarding their impact, however, we can turn to Witte's Extended Parallel Process Model which specifically theorizes about the effects of fear appeals on persuasiveness. Witte (1998) defined fear as a "negatively valenced emotion, accompanied by a high level of arousal, and is elicited by a threat that is perceived to be significant and personally relevant" (p. 424). Fear can cause a

variety of conscious or unconscious responses, including physiological manifestations, such as increased blood pressure and heart rate or shaking of extremities.

The effectiveness of fear appeals is mediated by presence of reassuring or efficacious information (Nabi, 2002). Witte theorized that fear appeals are effective when people believe they have the ability to thwart a threat without significant effort. However, when an individual believes they do not have the ability to follow a recommendation effectively to avoid a threat, they will only try to mitigate their fear through a coping technique, such as denial or ridiculing the seriousness of the threat. The EPPM details the process that leads to message acceptance or rejection. First, fear appeals contain elements of susceptibility and severity, as well as efficacy that are processed by the recipient. The individual perceives the level of severity and their susceptibility to the threat as well as their ability to overcome the threat. When a person perceives a high level of threat and feels efficacious, they are motivated to avoid the danger through adaptation. Witte (1992) noted “when danger control processes are dominating, individuals respond to the danger, not their fear” (p. 338). If an individual does not believe they can avert the threat, they will attempt to mitigate their fear through rebuffing the recommendations in the appeal. Known as fear control, this cognitive process is “designed to control the emotional arousal caused by the threat” (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 10), which may result in dismissal of the message’s recommendations, trivializing the threat. Witte noted that individuals in this mode are trying to cope with the fear, rather than the danger presented in the message.

Therefore, the presence of efficacy seems to be the greatest moderator in predicting the effect of fear appeals. Much of the research has focused on the relationship between controlling fear and danger (Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Nabi, 2002). When a threat seems viable to an individual, they are impelled to mitigate the effect of the appeal because they seek protection (Nabi, 2002). If the individual has confidence in their ability to do what is necessary to control the danger, they cognitively process in a way that may lead to “attitude, intention, or behavioral change directed at averting the threat” (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 10).

A debate surrounding the effectiveness of “high” versus “low” fear appeals has, as stated above, yielded mixed results. When discussing the impact of fear appeals, it is vital to note the strength of the message. O’Keefe (1990) noted that the degree of fear appeals can be defined in two ways: how the message is designed or the audience’s reaction to the message. Boster and Mongeau (1984) found many studies were ineffective at inducing varying levels of fear in participants with designed messages. However, the authors also suggested that corrections could be made in future research to be understood how fear appeals persuade.

It has been well-established that when messages are effective in inducing fear or anxiety, they are more persuasive; the difficulty in designing a message that resonated with an audience has also been noted. Scholars have worked to more specifically define the degree of appeal that is most effective in different contexts with different populations. The process is complicated by individual traits and other variables that may modify or mitigate the persuasiveness of a fear appeal (Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Horowitz, 1969; Witte & Allen, 2000). Therefore, the literature

suggests that as felt fear increases, persuasiveness increases, *if* the individual perceives the power to do something about the threat.

Political communication researchers have examined fear appeals more than any other type of emotion. Although operationalized differently within this research, most definitions of fear appeals focus on threat or impending doom (Kern, 1989; Nelson & Boynton, 1997). Kaid and Johnston (2001) pointed out that nearly 20 percent of presidential advertisements use fear as a dominant emotional appeal. Research on fear appeals in political messages from social and religious groups found that people who self-reported fear were more persuaded by hopeful messages (Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986). Even though scare tactics have received some attention within a political communication context, more empirical work is needed to understand their impact on the electorate. Based on past theoretical work, it is predicted:

H7: Messages that highlight threat (i.e., fear appeals) will cause more feelings of fear than feelings of guilt or anger.

H8: Fear and efficacy will interact to impact favorable outcomes such that high fear and high efficacy leads to the most favorable outcomes regardless of political orientation.

Efficacy

Given that efficacy serves as an important moderator in the emotional appeal literature, especially as with anger appeals and fear appeals it is important that the construct is explicated. Self-efficacy is defined as “people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over

events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994, p. 2). The perception of efficacy influences both cognitive and affective processes, often determining an individual’s motivation level (Bandura, 1989). Inefficacious individuals lack the belief that they can achieve their goals and perceive a lack of control when facing crises (Turner, Rimal, Morrison, & Kim, 2006). Activation of emotions and behavior are moderated by an individual’s perception of their own abilities (Telch, Bandura, Vinciguerra, Agras, & Stout, 1982). Additionally, efficacy is believed to influence individuals’ cognitive processes, from information selection to retention (Turner, Rimal, Morrison, & Kim, 2006).

Perception of efficacy moderates the persuasiveness of many different types of messages, especially emotional appeals. Research on fear (Witte, 1992) and anger (Turner et al., 2006) has demonstrated that individuals are more responsive to messages that include prescription for change, through adapting attitudes or behaviors that alleviate threat, anxiety, or anger. Specifically, an individual’s perception that the message’s recommendation (outcome efficacy) and their ability to accomplish the recommendation (self-efficacy) must overpower the perceived threat (Witte, 1992) or anger (Turner et al., 2006) for a message to be most effective. Messages that are high in anger or fear, but lack efficacy, result in decreased cognitive processing because a solution is not provided (Nabi, 1999; Witte, 1994). Consequently, without efficacy, persuasive outcomes are minimized.

Efficacy’s role within the domain of political attitudes and behavior has been of particular interest to scholars. Political efficacy is defined as the perception that an individual has the ability to influence the government (Reef & Knoke, 1998). Political

efficacy is composed of both internal efficacy, an individual's belief in their ability to comprehend politics and participate in political action, and external efficacy, an individual's belief their political action can influence the actions of government and its institutions (Craig & Maggiatta, 1982). Internal efficacy, external efficacy, and cynicism are often examined as the same construct within political studies; however, the all three constructs have unique effects on voters (Pinkleton, Um, & Austin, 2002); in fact, voters who are high in cynicism and efficacy may engage in political activity (Horn & Conway, 1996).

The effects of negative campaigning on efficacy and cynicism are contested; both concepts are central to the debate swirling around voting turnout and political behavior. Many scholars believe efficacy and cynicism are trait-based characteristics of voters and not the result of negative campaigns, but rather a larger disenfranchisement with government (Powell & Cowart, 2003). Other scholars have argued that an increase in negativity will cause a decrease in voter's internal and external efficacy (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995). Pinkleton, Um, and Austin's (2002) investigation of negativity in political ads on individuals' efficacy and cynicism found that an increase in disgust with political campaigns, but no significant effect on efficacy or cynicism.

RQ1: Will guilty feelings interact with efficacy to impact favorable outcomes?

Summary

Negative advertisements are pervasive within the political system, from local races to presidential contests. Candidates use negative ads to criticize an opponent's personal characteristics, views, or record in attempts to change race dynamics to gain

more support. Whereas numerous studies have confirmed negative political advertisements can affect voters' perception of the candidate, the effect on the target of an attack and the sponsor varies in intensity, depending on moderating factors and outside influences.

Although common wisdom continues to dominate the political field and candidates spend large sums on negative advertising, scholars have been unable to consistently find significant effects on voters (Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, & Babbitt, 1999). Different approaches of focus and method could account for the degree of variability in the findings. Or perhaps, as discussed previously, not all of the moderating variables have been aptly considered. We propose the inconsistent impact of negative ads may be due to the lack of consistency in the negative emotions aroused by such ads.

Method

Participants

Participants ($n = 81$) were recruited from undergraduate communication courses at a large northeastern university. Thirty-seven percent ($n = 30$) were male, 60.5% ($n = 49$) were female, and 2.5% did not identify their gender. The mean age was 21.88 ($SD = 4.721$), ranging from 18 to 52 years of age. Forty-two percent of participants ($n = 34$) were Caucasian; 22% ($n = 18$) were African-American; 16% ($n = 13$) were Asian; 8.6% ($n = 7$) were Hispanic; and the remaining 9.9% of participants were Middle Eastern, Pacific Islanders or did not fit in the provided categories. Approximately half of the participants (49.4%, $n = 40$) were seniors; the remainder (34.6%, $n = 28$) were juniors and (16%, $n = 13$) sophomores.

Design and Procedure

This experimental data was collected five months prior to the State of Maryland gubernatorial election. Although the materials were created for this study, real candidates, real issues, and true facts were employed. A one-way, independent groups experiment with four experimental conditions (political ad type: anger, guilt, fear, and neutral) was employed. Groups of 15 participants met in a conference room and were told they were part of a political advertising study for a tentative candidate in the upcoming midterm election. Each group was randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. The experimental material¹ was described to the participants as a prototype for a political flyer to be handed out during the fall campaign season by the opponents of the governor up for reelection. Participants were asked to read the flyer and complete a thought listing task.

Experimental Messages

Anger Appeal. The anger flyer focused on the rising cost of tuition, pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, and economic issues such as unemployment and raising cost of fuel. The text described how readers' goals were being thwarted by the governor and the ways he had hurt state progress. It featured a photo of Bob Ehrlich in the upper left corner, along with photos of an unhappy looking male student related to rising tuition, a baby with birth defects related to the pollution, and an arrow made of money related to the rising costs in the state of Maryland. The flyer was constructed using information and themes from the main opponent in the race (See Appendix A).

Fear Appeal. The fear flyer focused on the rising cost of tuition, pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, and local crime. The text of the flyer told readers how the

governor enacted policies that threatened their well being and made them more susceptible to harm. It featured a photo of Bob Ehrlich in the upper left corner, along with photos of an unhappy looking male student related to rising tuition, a baby with birth defects related to the pollution, and a crime scene related to local crime. The flyer was constructed using information and themes from the main opponent in the race (See Appendix B).

Guilt Appeal. The guilt flyer focused on the rising cost of tuition, pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, and poverty. The text described ways the governor had hurt others and asked readers if they planned to help those who were harmed by these policies by voting against him. It featured a photo of Bob Ehrlich in the upper left corner, along with photos of an unhappy looking male student related to rising tuition, a baby with birth defects related to the pollution, and an elderly homeless woman on the street. The flyer was constructed using information and themes from the main opponent in the race (See Appendix C).

Control Condition. The control flyer focused on the rising cost of tuition, pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, and public safety. The text told readers the governor's policies had hurt the state, but did not use emotive language. It featured a photo of Bob Ehrlich in the upper left corner, along with a photo of a university building, seagull, and handcuffs. These graphics were chosen for their mundane nature. Information presented in the flyer was constructed using information and themes from the main opponent in the race. Emotional wording and phrases were avoided (See Appendix D).

Participants then completed the packet of measures including emotional response to the flyer, various candidate ratings, persuasiveness of message, negativity of messages, rating of target candidate in the flyer and an open ended question section asking respondents how real they perceived the ad to be and offer any suggestions for improving the session. At the end of the experiment, the participants were fully debriefed about the true nature of the study. The measuring instrument is described below.

Instrumentation

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on each scale to test the construct validity of the scale, using principal component estimates and varimax rotations, specifying one factor. Kaiser's rule (i.e., eigenvalue > 1.00) was used to confirm factors. All scales were determined to be sufficiently internally valid.

Induction Checks. An induction check was used to test the effectiveness of each emotional appeal. A modified Likert scale with fifteen items on a 7-point scale asked respondents to identify their emotions from (1) indicating none of this feeling to (7) a great deal of this feeling. Items included "Reading this flyer made me feel angry," in addition to "The contents of this flyer scared me," and "I would feel guilty if I did not vote against Ehrlich in the upcoming election." Items of the scale were combined to create the anger index ($M = 3.9$; $SD = 1.428$; $\alpha = .842$), fear index ($M = 3.444$; $SD = 1.57$; $\alpha = .911$), and guilt index ($M = 3.39$; $SD = 1.787$; $\alpha = .910$).

Efficacy. General efficacy was measured using Chen, Gully, and Eden's (2001) New General Self-Efficacy Scale, a modified version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale. This 6-point Likert scale of 8 items measured an individual's

perception of their ability to perform different tasks. Sample questions included “I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself” and “Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.” The items were summed to obtain a general efficacy index ($M = 5.389$; $SD = .573$; $\alpha = .958$).

Political Efficacy. Political efficacy was measured using a shortened version of Craig and Maggiotto’s (1982) political efficacy scale, a modified version of a scale used in the American National Election Survey. A three item, 5-point Likert scale measured internal political efficacy. Questions included “candidates for office are interested in people’s votes, but not their opinions,” and “People like me are generally well qualified to participate in political activity and decision-making in our country.” The items were summed to obtain a political efficacy index ($M = 3.11$; $SD = 1.19$; $\alpha = .830$).

Voting Efficacy. A two item scale measuring participants’ efficacy towards voting was constructed. The items included: “My vote in the midterm in the election this fall will matter; and I believe that voting for a candidate in this race is something I can do this fall.” Participants were asked to rate these statements on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 indicates “totally disagree” and 7 indicates “totally agree.” The items were averaged to construct the voting efficacy scale ($M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.85$; $\alpha = .732$).

Political Orientation. Political orientation was measured using self report. Participants were asked to imagine a ruler with 20 marks that measured liberal to conservative political views, with 1 equaling strongly liberal and 20 equaling strongly conservative. Individuals were asked: “Where would you place yourself on this

ruler?” This self-report was used to identify the orientation toward the message ($M = 9.852$; $SD = 4.45$).

Persuasiveness. Participants were asked to rate the persuasiveness of the campaign messages within the flyer. The scale included statements such as “The campaign messages were compelling” and “The messages presented were swaying.” All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree; $M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.61$, $\alpha = .904$).

Attitude Toward Candidate. Participants were asked to rate their desire to vote for Bob Ehrlich in the upcoming election. Items included statements such as “Voting for Bob Ehrlich is a smart choice” and “People should make a strong effort to vote for Bob Ehrlich.” All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree; $M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.51$, $\alpha = .983$).

Voting Intention. Participants were asked to rate their likelihood of voting in the fall election. Attitude toward voting was measured via a scale, with statements such as “I intend to vote in the midterm election this fall” and “I believe voting for a candidate in this race is something I can do this fall.” The two-item Likert scale employed a range from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree; $M = 4.41$, $SD = 2.09$, $\alpha = .852$).

Results

Statistical Analyses

Hypotheses were tested through one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), repeated measures ANOVA, and by examining bi-variate (and

partial) correlations with perceived persuasiveness of message, attitude toward the candidate, and voting intention as the dependent variables.

Tests of Hypotheses

H1: A message that highlights wrongdoing (i.e., a guilt appeal) will lead to more feelings of guilt and anger than feeling of fear.

H4: Participants who receive a message that highlights injustice (i.e., an anger appeal) will experience more feelings of anger than feelings of guilt or fear.

H7: Messages that highlight threat (i.e., fear appeals) will cause more feelings of fear than feelings of guilt or anger.

Hypotheses one, four, and seven all regarded the effectiveness of the emotional appeal at inducing its corresponding emotion. Therefore, all three hypotheses were tested with one series of ANOVAs.

Table 1 contains all of the means and standard deviations for the emotions experienced after receiving the political appeals. Hypothesis one posited that participants receiving the guilt appeal would report higher levels of felt guilt than anger or fear. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed all the participants who received the guilt message (see Table 1) did not feel significantly more guilt ($M=4.07$, $SD=1.88$) than anger ($M=2.78$, $SD=1.51$) or fear ($M=3.18$, $SD=1.50$), as indicated by the lack of a significant main effect for the guilt induction on feelings of guilt, $F(3, 77) = 2.55$, $p=.061$. The data did not support hypothesis one.

Hypothesis four posited that participants who received an anger appeal would report higher levels of felt anger than guilt or fear. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed participants who received the anger message (see Table 1) did not feel significantly more anger ($M=3.62$, $SD=1.50$) than guilt ($M=4.53$, $SD=1.41$) or fear ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.13$), as indicated by the lack of a significant main effect for the anger induction on angry feelings, $F(3, 77) = 2.40$, $p=.07$.

Finally, hypothesis seven predicted that participants receiving a fear appeal would report higher levels of felt fear than anger or guilt. An ANOVA revealed participants who received the fear message (see Table 1) did not feel significantly more fear ($M=3.45$, $SD=1.55$) than anger ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.56$) or guilt ($M=4.01$, $SD=1.57$), as indicated by the lack of a significant main effect for the fear induction on feelings of fear, $F(3, 77) = 2.40$, $p=.074$.

There are several potential reasons for the lack of significant and predicted differences in the felt emotions of the participants. First, it might be that the messages were constructed poorly. Although this is always a viable option, it should be noted that these inductions were created after conducting several pilot tests. In addition, the messages were constructed based on the theoretical message features that such emotional appeals should contain. The induction checks, however, examine participant perceptions—not message features, a natural flaw in message induction checks (see O’Keefe, 2004). Second, it might be that emotional appeals cause a variety of felt emotions. Indeed, as previously mentioned guilt appeals do cause people to feel angry. Finally, the emotions experienced after reading an emotional

appeal may be due to the prior attitude of the audience. The necessary data to test this final point were available, therefore, this was examined.

Participants were separated into two groups based on a median split of the liberalism/conservatism scale; these groups were considered pro-attitudinal (liberalism ≤ 10) or counter-attitudinal (liberalism > 10) to the message (See Tables 2 and 3). These prior attitudes could theoretically lead to different types of emotions being elicited from each discrete appeal.

ANOVAs performed on the pro-attitudinal group (liberalism ≤ 10 ; See Table 2) did not indicate that participants felt more guilt after reading the guilt appeal than other emotions ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.93$). Indeed, more anger ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.58$) than guilt ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.74$) or fear ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.74$) was elicited; but these differences were non-significant. However, significantly more anger ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.20$) than fear ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.36$) or guilt ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.89$) was elicited from participants in the counter-attitudinal group (liberalism > 10 ; See Table 3) in the guilt condition (mean difference = 1.81, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .29$). These results, although not consistent with hypothesis one, were consistent with emotion literature; anger is a common reaction to high guilt appeals.

Among participants in the anger condition (See Table 2), the pro-attitudinal group felt more anger ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.50$) than guilt ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.54$) or fear ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.60$); however, these differences were not statistically significant. Conversely, in the counter-attitudinal group (liberalism > 10) the anger message (See Table 3) elicited more anger ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.19$) than guilt ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.20$) or fear ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.36$) from participants (Mean Difference = -1.81, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .29$).

Although the data was not fully consistent with hypothesis four, these results demonstrated the importance of prior attitude in the effectiveness of anger appeals.

Regarding the fear appeal, the pro-attitudinal group (liberalism ≤ 10 ; See Table 2) indicated fear ($M= 3.47$; $SD=1.46$) was not induced significantly more than guilt ($M=3.34$, $SD=1.25$) or anger ($M= 3.31$, $SD=.90$) in the fear condition. Therefore, pro-attitudinal participants felt similar amounts of fear, guilt, and anger when presented with the fear appeal. Conversely, more anger ($M= 4.21$, $SD=1.31$) than fear ($M=3.43$, $SD=1.83$) or guilt ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.96$) was elicited from participants in the counter-attitudinal group (liberalism > 10 ; See Table 3) in the fear condition; however, these differences were not significant. Similar to the guilt condition, counter-attitudinal participants were more likely to become angry when presented with a negative message; this result is consistent with persuasion literature, although not consistent with the prediction of hypothesis seven.

H2: As guilty feelings increase favorable outcomes of the message will also increase where favorable outcomes are considered to be attitudes about the candidate and voting intentions.

Hypothesis two predicted the feelings of guilt would increase the message's persuasiveness, participants' intention to vote, and produce negative attitudes toward the target candidate.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient testing the relationship between felt guilt and persuasiveness was calculated. The data support this hypothesis, such that as felt guilt increased participants found the flyer more persuasive ($r (79) = .622$, $p < .01$). Additionally, as felt guilt increased, positive attitudes about the target candidate

decreased significantly ($r(79) = -.661, p < .01$). Unfortunately, felt guilt was not significantly correlated to increased voting intentions ($r(79) = .176, p > .05$). These findings provide mixed support for H2.

H3: For individuals who receive a guilt appeal, the relationship between angry feelings and favorable outcomes is dependent upon receiver's attitudes. Felt anger will increase favorable outcomes for receivers who perceive the message to be a pro-attitudinal message; for receivers who perceive the message to be counter-attitudinal message, anger will decrease favorable outcomes.

Hypothesis three posited that participants' response to the guilt appeal would depend on their perception of the message; those who perceived the message as consistent with political attitudes (degree of liberalism) would be more persuaded by the message, have an increased intention to vote, and decrease their ratings of the target candidate. Conversely, participants who perceived the message to be against their current attitude would be less likely to be persuaded, have less intention to vote, but have more positive attitudes toward the target candidate than the pro-attitudinal condition.

Among pro-attitudinal participants in the guilt condition, significant correlations between felt anger and persuasiveness ($r(14) = .554, p < .05$) and felt anger and attitude toward the target candidate ($r(14) = -.765, p < .01$) support hypothesis three. A significant correlation between felt anger and voting intention was not found ($r(14) = .483, p > .05$). Additionally, attitude toward the candidate and voting intention produced a significant negative correlation ($r(14) = -.498, p < .05$).

Statistically, these are considered large correlations, and thus, it is most plausible that the lack of statistical significance is due to the small sample size.

With regard to the counter-attitudinal participants in the guilt condition, felt anger produced no significant correlations between felt anger and persuasiveness ($r(10) = -.038, p > .05$), attitude toward the candidate ($r(10) = .367, p > .05$), or voting intention ($r(10) = .321, p > .05$). Notably, attitude toward the candidate and voting intention produced a significant positive correlation ($r(10) = .641, p < .05$).

These results show the influence of prior attitudes on the effects of anger appeals. As previously documented (see Turner et al., 2005) pro- and counter-attitudinal groups respond to anger messages in very different ways. Pro-attitudinal participants were persuaded by the anger; counter-attitudinal participants react to the source of the negative message. Regardless of the negative message, the more counter-attitudinal participants liked the target candidate, the more motivated they felt to vote for him.

H5: For individuals who receive an anger appeal, the relationship between angry feelings and favorable outcomes is dependent upon receiver's attitudes. Felt anger will increase favorable outcomes for receivers who perceive the message to be pro-attitudinal; for receivers who perceive the message to be counter-attitudinal, anger will decrease favorable outcomes.

Hypothesis five posited that participants' response to the anger appeal would depend on perception of the message; those who perceived the message as consistent with political attitudes (degree of liberalism) would be more persuaded by the message, have an increased intention to vote, and decrease their ratings the target

candidate. Conversely, participants who perceived the message to be against their current attitude would be less likely to be persuaded, have less intention to vote, but rate their attitude toward the target candidate higher than the pro-attitudinal participants.

No significant correlations were detected between felt anger and persuasiveness ($r(19) = -.023, p > .05$), attitude toward the target candidate ($r(19) = -.307, p > .05$), or voting intention ($r(19) = .111, p > .05$) for pro-attitudinal participants. These results do not support hypothesis five. Curiously, a significant positive correlation between felt anger and persuasiveness was found for the counter-attitudinal participants ($r(6) = .734, p < .05$), implying that the anger they felt was toward the target candidate and not the source as would be expected; no other significant correlations were detected for attitude toward the candidate ($r(6) = -.335, p > .05$) or voting intention ($r(6) = -.013, p > .05$).

H6: Holding liberalism constant, anger and efficacy will interact to impact favorable outcomes such that high anger and high efficacy will lead to the most favorable outcomes.

Hypothesis six posited that anger and efficacy would lead to more persuasion, intention to vote, and decreased likeability of the target candidate when controlling for participants' political philosophy.

The interaction of anger and efficacy produced a significant positive correlation with persuasiveness ($r(79) = .3164, p < .01$), intention to vote ($r(79) = .3381, p < .01$), and a significant negative correlation with attitude toward the target candidate ($r(79) = -.2619, p < .01$). These data support hypothesis six and show that

efficacy plays an important role in facilitating persuasion when participants' political orientation (liberalism) is not considered.

H8: Fear and efficacy will interact to impact favorable outcomes such that high fear and high efficacy leads to the most favorable outcomes regardless of political orientation.

Hypothesis eight predicted the interaction of fear and efficacy would lead to more persuasion, intention to vote, and decreased likeability of the target candidate, when controlling for participants' political orientation (degree of liberalism).

The interaction of fear and efficacy had a substantial relationship with persuasiveness ($r(79) = .3135, p < .01$), intention to vote ($r(79) = .2506, p < .05$), and a significant negative correlation with attitude toward the target candidate ($r(79) = -.431, p < .01$). These results support hypothesis eight. Therefore, efficacy plays an important role in facilitating persuasion when participants' political orientation is not considered.

RQ1: Will guilty feelings interact with efficacy to impact favorable outcomes?

Controlling for political philosophy, the interaction of guilt and efficacy correlated significantly with the positive outcomes of increased persuasiveness ($r(79) = .3226, p < .01$), intention to vote ($r(79) = .2582, p < .05$), and more negative attitudes toward the candidate ($r(79) = -.5378, p < .01$). Although this type of interaction has been documented with fear and anger appeals, the combination of guilt and efficacy has yet to be fully explored. These results lend credence to the assertion that efficacy plays an important role in the use of guilt appeals' persuasiveness.

Discussion

This paper was based on the idea that anger, guilt, and fear have a unique and discrete impact on persuasive outcomes in a political campaign. When people process messages that make them feel angry, they will exhibit persuasive outcomes differently than someone who feels guilty or fearful after processing the message. Using a negative political advertising context, it was hypothesized that participants would report varied amounts of persuasiveness, varying attitudes toward the target candidate, and dissimilar intention to vote based on the emotion induced and the political orientation (liberalism) of the participant. It was also hypothesized that felt emotion would be highly correlated with persuasion, attitude toward the candidate, and voting intention. Furthermore, it was posited that participants' degree of liberalism would affect their response to the negative message. Desired outcomes of a negative attack ad, such as increased persuasion, more negative attitudes toward the target candidate, and increased intention to vote against the target candidate were expected; for unfavorable audiences, feelings of anger were expected to be negatively correlated with perceived persuasiveness, attitude toward the target candidate, and voting intention. Finally, based on emotion literature, it was predicted that efficacy would play an important role in facilitating persuasion, attitude toward the candidate, and intention to vote.

The data provided mixed support for the predictions. Although the differences in felt emotions only approached significance, the arguably small sample may have limited the power to detect these effects. This potential trend toward significance encourages further investigation into the unique effects of fear, anger, and guilt.

The unique effect of each discrete emotion on pro- and counter-attitudinal participants was perhaps the most illuminating aspect of this study. The guilt appeal elicited persuasive effects from both groups, regardless of political orientation; consistent with guilt literature, counter-attitudinal participants reacted to the high guilt appeal with anger. Also consistent with past research, pro-attitudinal participants were more persuaded by anger and fear appeals. These results have pragmatic applications in the political arena. When targeting specific audiences, it may be in the practitioner's best interest to use a certain type of emotional appeal.

The level of voter efficacy played a critical role in the persuasiveness of all three emotional appeals. Often considered a central variable in anger and fear appeals, the data demonstrated that efficacy interacts with guilt in a similar fashion to facilitate persuasion. Although this study measured the amount of efficacy a person felt in voting, a future direction could involve varying the level of efficacy within the emotional appeal to better understand efficacy's role in persuasion.

Limitations

The largest setback in this paper was the inability of each appeal to elicit a significant level of the desired discrete emotion, even though messages were pre-tested. The inability to construct messages that do not yield multiple emotions has been problematic for researching discrete emotions (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002). As mentioned previously, a part of the problem lies in how the inductions are checked. The messages are designed based on message features; for example, the guilt appeal included more comments that the target audience might be doing something wrong or immoral. The anger appeal communicated that the audience is being harmed. The

definition of a message is within its features. Therefore, the induction checks should ask, in a separate pilot test, whether the participants noted these features. The feelings people experience after reading a message is the dependent variable. Therefore, one limitation to this thesis, as well as other studies on emotional appeals, is in how the inductions are checked. Future studies should fix these issues.

Additionally, the context may have also caused problems in this study. Although political flyers and direct mail are an important element of many campaigns, their ability to elicit significant levels of emotion has not been established. Many scholars maintain emotions in political advertisements are elicited through the colors of the visuals and sound elements, which were lacking in this study (Brader, 2006; Nelson & Boynton, 1997). Additionally, our sample of university students conceivably did not provide the variance in emotional reaction that could occur in the general population. Perhaps a topic this population felt a higher level of involvement in would yield additional statistically significant results.

Another major limitation was the small sample size utilized in this study. A larger sample would allow for greater power in detecting significant differences within and between the conditions. Because post-hoc analyses revealed differences between pro- and counter-attitudinal groups, more participants than anticipated were needed in each condition. Therefore, the power to detect significance was extremely low and perhaps greatly influenced the findings. Results may have also been affected by sampling in a politically liberal state; however, the mean and standard deviation of the participants ($M=9.85$, $SD=4.54$) on a self-reported scale of one to 20 does not indicate a skewed sample. Rather, the use of target candidate that seemed unpopular

among Democrats and Republicans seems more likely to have affected the felt emotions and persuasiveness of the message.

Future Directions

Despite the limitations, many positive advances toward understanding the effects of discrete emotions in political campaigns were made in this study. Although many of the findings were inconclusive, they have provided a better understanding of the nature of discrete emotions in political persuasion and provide stepping stones for further investigation. Specifically, replicating a study with a larger sample is the next viable route; eventually, a more diverse sample is desirable. The development of more effective messages designs to elicit discrete emotions is another necessary step to develop a more thorough understanding of discrete emotions' role in persuasion. In addition, including thought listing tasks in future studies will allow for a deeper analysis of felt emotion, processing, and perception of the message. Thought-listing tasks have been the main method of analysis for tests of discrete emotion models (Nabi, 2002). Finally, understanding how a political context affects the processing of emotions is imperative. Identifying moderating variables and understanding how people process emotional appeals in political campaign advertising will advance communication research and aid political practitioners in developing more effective persuasive messages.

Notes

1. A pilot test using three distinct groups of participants was conducted to construct the final group of experimental materials. Negative campaign flyers targeting Maryland Governor Bob Ehrlich were constructed using issues from his main competitor's website. Issues tested on these flyers included tuition increases, pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, economic issues, crime in Maryland, and poverty. Flyers were then altered for each condition. The language of the flyers varied with each emotion to induce discreet feelings. The anger flyer stressed outrage at Ehrlich, the fear flyer focused on messages to cause anxiety in readers about Ehrlich's policies, and the guilt flyer focused on shameful treatment of people and the environment by Ehrlich. Graphics were altered slightly, depending on the condition. Participants emotional state before and after reading the flyer was measured. In addition, participants were asked to list there their thoughts in response to the flyer and fill out a packet of measures including persuasiveness, negativity, candidate credibility, and perception of negative advertising. At the end of the study, participants were asked to comment on what they believed would make the flyer elicit more emotion in each condition. The second group in the pilot study viewed one of the flyers and wrote a short essay response. Essays discussed their perception of the flyer and what they believed would make it more persuasive to others. A third independent group did not view any of the flyers, but provided short descriptions of what type of ad would make them feel angry, guilty, or afraid. These responses were all analyzed and changes were made to each flyer.

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