

Negative campaigning, emotions and political participation.

ZSOLT KISS
University of Oxford
Department of Politics and International Relations
Manor Road Building
Oxford OX1 3DR, United Kingdom
zsolt.kiss@politics.ox.ac.uk

SARA B. HOBOLT
London School of Economics and Political Science
European Institute
Cowdray House
London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom
S.B.Hobolt@lse.ac.uk

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Abstract*

This paper examines the role emotions play in mediating the effect of campaigns on electoral behavior. We argue that election campaigns can shape voters' emotions about the parties which, in turn affect peoples likelihood of turning out. Specifically, we hypothesize that voters who receive campaign communications that make them feel enthusiastic about their preferred party are more likely to turn out, while those who experience anger towards the preferred party or out-parties are more likely to withdraw from politics and not vote. In the middle ground, we expect people who are anxious towards an out-party to increase their likelihood of turning out while anxiety towards the preferred party is not seen to affect turnout intentions. To test these propositions, we employ both experimental and panel data. We conduct a laboratory experiment, using the Dynamic Process Tracing Environment software, in the context of the 2010 British general elections. This experimental setup allows us to examine the role of emotions in the electoral process in a fully controlled environment, and thus offers a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the psychological mechanisms that drive turnout. Finally, by using panel data we replicate the results obtained in the experiment and increase external validity offering further support for the theory.

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Introduction

In most elections parties hire political consultants and invest important resources into constructing elaborate campaigns aimed at maximizing their chances of winning the elections. In order to achieve a victory, “[c]ampaigns seek to increase the number of supporters for their candidate and to encourage those supporters to be politically active” (Brader, 2006, p. 20). In other words, campaigns try to convert and to mobilize. Mobilisation is seen as a key strategy to increase the parties vote share by activating the party’s base of supporters (Bradshaw, 1995).

The general consensus in the literature is that, by using get-out-the-vote techniques (Guzzetta, 2006), campaigns do mobilize voters (Ansolabehere, 2006b; Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2009; Schmitt-Beck & Farrell, 2002). However, the consensus regarding the mobilizing effect of campaigns does not extend to the potential effects negative campaigning has on turnout. On the one hand, studies claim that negativity decreases turnout, depresses interest in politics and increases apathy and distrust (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1997). On the other hand, Finkel and Geer (1998) show that negative ads tend to actually mobilize. Adopting a middle ground position, Kaufman et al. (2008) suggest that negative ads neither mobilize nor do they demobilize, while Vreese and Semetko (2004) agree that negativity does not depress turnout nor does it hinder mobilisation.

Consequently, a very pertinent question arises: *why do different studies reach opposing conclusions with respect to the effects of negative advertising? (How) Is it possible that negative campaigning can both increase and decrease turnout?* To answer these questions, this paper examines the effects campaigns have on turnout by including the role of human emotions. Campaigns are developed to maximize one’s chances of winning the election by appealing to reason and, more importantly, by manipulating through *emotion* (see e.g. (Guzzetta, 2006; Plasser & Plasser, 2002; Shea & Burton, 2006). There are “systematic patterns to the use of specific emotional appeals in

political campaigns” (Ridout & Searles, 2011, p. 454) and humans interpret political events through their affective responses (Kinder & Sears, 1985, p. 672). Consequently, in order to understand the effects of negative campaigns have on turnout the emotions they induce need to be included in the equation.

Consequently, starting from the theory of negative campaigning we develop a theoretical framework which combines this with the theory pertaining to the effect of emotions in politics. We look at how negative campaigning can induce anxiety and anger towards different parties and we examine the effects these emotions have on political participation. On the one hand, we argue that, negative political ads that contain legitimate criticisms induce anxiety, which if experienced towards an out-party increases the likelihood of turnout. However, if anxiety is experienced towards the preferred party turnout will not be affected. On the other hand, negative political communication which is accusatory and attributes blame leads people to experience anger. Experiencing anger towards either the preferred party or an out-party leads to decreases in turnout.

The questions this paper addresses are examined for the case of Britain by using data generated in a laboratory experiment and panel data. The British context was chosen, since it is a political system that has significant similarities with the United States, yet it is characterized by multipartism. Up to this point all such studies have been carried out exclusively in the exceptional two-party context of the United States (see (Brader, 2006; Marcus, 2002). The paper thus offers a preliminary attempt to study how far the theory of emotions and electoral politics can be generalized beyond the two-party US setting.

This paper proceeds as follows. After a brief review of the literature on negative campaigning, turnout and TAI, we present our theoretical model of the role of emotions in the electoral process. We then derive a series of hypotheses. Thereafter we present the experimental design. The results are presented in different stages. First, we show that the campaign messages

(treatments) induce emotions, and then we use both the experimental data and the panel data to examine the effect of campaign-induced emotions on the intention to turn out. Our findings are in line with existent US-based research on the role of emotions in the electoral process.

Campaigns, negativity and turnout

Campaigns are designed with clear goals, which they try to achieve by “carefully discerning voter preferences through scientific survey research, strafing voters based upon these preferences, and then providing a tailored communication to each group” (Shea & Burton, 2006, p. 9). A review of the professional campaign management literature¹ show that, firstly campaigns aim to mobilize their core supporters (Bradshaw, 1995) through positive messages about their party, but also by way of negative messages portraying out parties. Secondly, they strive to decrease out-party supporters’ reliance on partisanship and increase their reliance on issues (Lees-Marshment, 2002; Shea & Burton, 2006) by approaching these individuals with negative communications that targets their preferred party. Given that campaigns try to use negative messages in different ways and with different aims, it is very important to understand what effects campaign negativity actually has on the voter behaviour.

In the US, campaign commercials (or political short ads) are the dominant means of campaign communication (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1997) and they are, in most cases, negative (Kaid, 1999; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006). In the UK, according to Kavanagh (1995), negativity is seen as an undesirable import from the US and both the media and the voters claim to dislike negative campaigns. However, the author goes further and notes that this is paradoxical given that negative campaigns do gain potency due to the controversy they generate (Kavanagh, 1995) and the media is more prone to report negative news (the Nuffield Electoral studies as quoted by

¹ See (Shea & Burton, 2006); (Plasser & Plasser, 2002); (Bradshaw, 1995; Guzzetta, 2006)

Kavanagh, 1995). Even more, following the American model, the level of negativity of British campaigns has increased in recent times (Heerde, 2007; Plasser & Plasser, 2002). Nonetheless there is no clear evidence regarding its effects on turnout. The literature is divided between two competing hypotheses: the demobilisation hypothesis and the stimulation hypothesis.

According to the demobilisation hypothesis negative ads (or attack ads) demobilize by decreasing confidence in public officials and increasing disgust and alienation towards the targeted candidate (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, & Valentino, 1994). Furthermore, Ansolabehere and Iyengar's (1997), using both individual-level experiments and aggregate-level analyses, show that negative advertising decreases the likelihood of turnout for the supporters of the targeted candidate but not for the supporters of the sponsor. Their results are, however, contested by Wattenberg and Brains (1999) who argue that the aggregate study is "deeply flawed" and, as a consequence, Ansolabehere and Iyengar exaggerated the demobilizing effect of negativity. Nonetheless, the demobilisation hypothesis also finds some support in the work of Kahn and Kenney (1999). These authors have a mixed position and argue that depending on the type of ad, negativity can both depress and increase turnout. They show that negative ads which contain legitimate criticisms ("relevant criticism presented in an appropriate manner" p. 878) targeted at a candidate seem to increase the likelihood of casting a ballot. However, ads that strongly "criticize opponents in an accusatory and ad hominem manner" (Kahn & Kenney, 1999, p. 878) depress turnout by increasing disgust with politics. Finally, testing the demobilisation hypothesis through a large scale experiment, Clinton and Lapinski (2004), find no evidence for the claimed demobilizing effect of negativity. They note that "it is never the case that exposure to negative advertising decreases either the reported probability of voting or the actual voting" (2004, p.92). Moreover, they show that political advertising has a weak positive effect on turnout, regardless of the tone. Their conclusions are consistent with the stimulation hypothesis, which finds strong support in the work of Finkel and Geer (1998).

Finkel and Geer (1998) argue that negative ads mobilize as they can induce concerns about the outcome of the election. Negative ads conveying negative information have a greater power to inform as they are more visible and noticeable than positive ads. Furthermore, they induce sharper affective reactions, which coupled with the increase of political information increases the motivation of turning out. In essence, criticising the opponent sends the message that the outcome matters (Finkel & Geer, 1998).

The stimulation hypothesis is also supported by Freedman and Goldstein's (1999) research. They show that negative campaigning, researched in 'real elections with real ads' does not depress 'real turnout'. To the contrary, the authors find evidence that it actually stimulates it. This is consistent with Geer and Lau's (2006) conclusion that campaign negativism stimulated rather the depressed turnout in American elections in the past 20 years (Geer & Lau, 2006).

Finally, through a meta-analysis of the literature Lau, Sigelman, Heldman and Babbitt (1999) conclude that there is "little evidence to warrant the fears of those who believe that electoral participation is imperilled by the increasingly widespread use of negative political advertisements. Participatory democracy may be on the wane in the United States, but the evidence reviewed here suggests that negative political advertising has relatively little to do with it" (1999, p. 856).

Even though not explicitly discussed, the causal mechanisms presented by the proponents of both the demobilization and the stimulation hypotheses have emotional underpinnings. Finkel and Geer (1998) acknowledge that negativity induces affective reactions. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1997) note that negative campaigning demobilizes as it induces disgust; while Kahn & Kenney (1999) state that they make the electorate feel uncomfortable.

Consequently, we argue that looking at the emotions² negative political communications induce is a good starting point in trying to explain the contradictory results detailed above. Specifically, we will focus on the two negative emotions that have been shown to impact political behavior: anxiety and anger.

To understand the role of emotions in a political setting we turn to the Theory of Affective Intelligence³ (henceforth TAI) developed by Marcus and his colleagues (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Marcus, et al., 2000). The TAI identifies several emotional subsystems which regulate the occurrence of emotions: the disposition system⁴ and the surveillance system. While the former is linked to the induction of enthusiasm⁵, the later induces anxiety (Marcus et al., 2000). According to Marcus, anxiety can only be experienced towards the preferred party (Marcus, MacKuen, & Neuman, 2011). Once anxiety towards the preferred party is induced it breaks habit, stimulates information search and reason (Marcus, et al., 2000). However, according to Marcus (2002) anxiety experienced towards the preferred party does not have a direct on impact political participation. This means that negative ads which induce anxiety towards the preferred party do not increase nor do they decrease the likelihood of turnout.

Even though the TAI assumes that anxiety can only be experienced towards the preferred party, we argue that anxiety can also be experienced towards an out-party. The surveillance system, much like the primary appraisal system detailed by Lazarus (1991, pp. 149-152) constantly scans the environment for potential threats. In the political environment, threats

² Emotions are a set of physiological and psychological changes within the body and brain which come as a response to external, situational stimuli (Damasio, 1994; Lazarus, 1991; LeDoux, 1996; Marcus, 2002; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000).

³ The impact of emotions on electoral behaviour has been shown in a number of studies (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Conover & Feldman, 1986; Kinder & Sears, 1985; Simon, 1985), but a systematic theory of the political relevance of emotion has only recently been formulated by George Marcus and colleagues; it is referred to as the Theory of Affective Intelligence (1993, 2000). The theory is based on the neuropsychological approach to emotions developed by Damasio (1994) and LeDoux (1996).

⁴ The disposition system is responsible for “managing reliance on habits and previously learned strategies” (Marcus, 2002, p. 46). Relying on sensory information, it performs a comparison: is the plan going as usual? If it is the habit is continued and the emotional reaction is enthusiasm.

⁵ Enthusiasm has been shown to stimulate the increase of the turnout intention.

perceived to impact a person's well-being can easily emerge from the opposition. While agreeing with Marcus' postulates on anxiety, we also argue that experiencing anxiety is not, by any means, limited to one's preferred party. Consistent with Lazarus, one can easily feel anxious towards any political object, including an out-party, in which case the behavioural consequences will differ from the pattern presented by the TAI. Anxiety experienced towards an out-party is also induced by negative communications but is not seen to have a negative bearing on the habitual activity; rather it actually strengthens the habit and increases the likelihood of political participation. If a person is anxious or worried by the perceived negative effects the policies of an out-party might have on his well being, we argue that the person will be likely to act in a way which would decrease the chances of this threat materializing. This can be achieved by preventing the out-party winning the elections, through turning out and voting habitually (i.e. for the preferred party). These psychological mechanisms are consistent with the assumptions of the stimulation hypothesis. Both Kahn and Kenney (1999) and Finkel and Geer (1998) agree in that negative campaigning increase turnout because people get worried about the potential outcome of the election and following a risk avoidance strategy they go to the polls. Consequently, we state that negative communication that induces anxiety towards ones out-party increases the likelihood of turnout.

With regards to the second negative emotion of interest, anger, recent studies (Bang-Petersen, 2010; Brader, Groenendyk, & Valentino, 2010) show that its induction is linked to the attribution of blame: if the person can attribute blame for the threatening occurrence he or she will experience anger; if not, he or she will experience anxiety (Bang-Petersen, 2010; Brader et al., 2010). In order to credibly attribute blame, a piece of negative political communication needs to contain a harsher, stronger and more accusatory message. However, the demobilization hypothesis claims that it is this precise type of communication that decreases turnout (Kahn &

Kenney). Thus, to understand how such negative communication can depress turnout we look at the behavioural consequences of anger.

MacKuen et al. (2011) argue that anger can only be experienced towards out-parties. However, based on the cognitive appraisal approach (Lazarus, 1991; Weiner, 2001), we argue that besides out-parties, anger can also be experienced towards one's own party. According to Lazarus (1991) anger is a goal-relevant and goal-incongruent emotion, having a similar type of ego-involvement to anxiety. The difference between them is the secondary appraisal pattern. In the case of anxiety this was absent, anger's critical secondary appraisal component is blame (Bang-Petersen, 2010; Lazarus, 1991). Following this logic, a person can easily experience anger towards his or her preferred party. Bang-Petersen (2010) and Lazarus (1991) argue that the behavioral consequence of anger is punishment. MacKuen et al. (2010) show that if anger is experienced towards an out-party, punishment is expressed by heavier reliance on habit and potential withdrawal from politics, which leads to a decrease in turnout intention. Consistently, we argue that if anger is experienced towards the preferred party the instinct to punish will manifest itself through decreased reliance on partisanship and decreased turnout.

All in all, the theoretical framework presented above argues that 'appropriate' negative campaign communication induces anxiety. If anxiety is experienced towards an out-party turnout in the ranks of the sponsor's core supporters will be stimulated. However, if anxiety is experienced towards the preferred party there will be no impact on turnout. Contrarily, if the negative communication is accusatory, that is, it attributes blame for a negative event, anger will be induced. Anger, irrespective of the party it is experienced towards (preferred party or out-parties), is expected to decrease turnout.

Hypotheses

To test our arguments we derive a series of hypotheses. The first step is to examine whether campaign communication does indeed induce the emotional responses we expect. Brader (2006) shows that negative communication is prone to induce anxiety (Brader, 2006). However, when negativity is combined with blame the emotion expressed should be anger (Brader et al., 2010; Bang-Petersen, 2010). As such we develop the following hypotheses:

H1: Negative campaign communication induces anxiety towards the party that it targets.

H2: Negative campaign communication which attributes blame for the actions of a party induces anger towards that party.

The next step is to set out the hypotheses assessing the effect emotions have on turnout:

H3: Anxiety experienced towards a person's preferred party does not impact turnout.

H4: Anxiety experienced towards an out-party increases turnout.

H5: Anger, experienced either towards the preferred party or an out-party, decreases the willingness to turn out and vote.

The following section will briefly present the experimental design and the subsequent section will include the analysis. Following this, we describe the observational data and present the results pertaining to its analysis.

Experimental design

To test these hypotheses, we conducted a randomized and controlled laboratory experiment (Fisher, 1990), as this is the most fruitful design for studying the impact of emotions on political behavior (Bang-Petersen, 2010; Brader, 2006; Brader, et al., 2010; MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010; Marcus, et al., 2000; Redlawsk, Civettini, & Lau, 2007). The advantages of using experiments lie in their increased flexibility and accurate control mechanisms: we can isolate the effect of each single causal variable at a time (Kinder & Palfrey, 1993). This is important as we aim to differentiate between the effects of two negative emotions (anxiety and anger).

Furthermore, experiments have been shown to be well suited to testing campaign effects (Ansolabehere, 2006a; Brady, Johnston, & Sides, 2006).

Consequently, we designed an experiment which mimics, as closely as possible, the natural flow of an electoral campaign. To bring the laboratory experiment slightly closer to real-world conditions we used the Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE). The DPTE software, developed by David Redlawsk and Richard Lau (1997), replicates the chaotic and non-ordered flow of information specific to campaigns (Redlawsk, et al., 2007; Redlawsk & Lau, 2010).

The laboratory experiments were conducted in November 2010 at the Nuffield Centre for Experimental Social Science, University of Oxford. A total number of 251 adults (British citizens), randomly drawn from the CESS subject database, participated. Subjects were first asked to complete a pre-treatment questionnaire containing questions measuring socio-demographics and closeness to the main parties (the Conservatives, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats). Based on the answers to these questions, the software automatically placed each subject into a given experimental cell, assigning them to a set treatment. Following the logic of the between-groups design with post-test (Kempthorne, 1952; Morton & Williams, 2010), the experiment was comprised of five treatment groups and a control group. The stimuli were designed to induce anxiety towards the preferred party in cell 1; anger towards the preferred party in cell 2; anxiety towards an out-party in cell 3; and anger towards an out-party in cell 4. Cell 5 was designated as a control group and it received a placebo.

After having received the stimuli, the subjects entered the post-test phase of the experiment. They were all asked to complete the same questionnaire. This included a battery of questions aimed at evaluating (on a 4 point scale) the strength of each emotion experienced towards each of the parties (Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, & Keele, 2006). Finally, the respondents

were asked to declare whether they would turn out if a General election was held the following day. Figure 1 contains an outline of the experimental set-up.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

We used the randomized complete blocks design to allocate treatments to subjects. Subjects were grouped into blocks according to their partisanship⁶ and then, separately within each block the experimental treatments were randomly assigned.

The treatments consisted of the subjects being exposed to newspaper articles which proxy political communication often found in campaigns. Drawing on the work of Anasolabehere and Iyengar (1997) and Kahn and Kenney (1999) and considering the findings of Bang-Petersen (2010) and Brader, et al. (2010), two types of negative articles were created. On the one hand, in the cells designed to induce anxiety (cell 1 - to the preferred party and cell 3 - towards an out-party) the subjects were exposed to negative articles which legitimately criticize the targeted party, highlighting the negative impact of party policies. On the other hand, subjects in the cells designed to induce anger (cells 2 and 4) were exposed to negative articles which assigned blame and accused the targeted party of causing the negative outcome. Lastly, the control group received a non-political article about biodiversity.

⁶ Partisanship was computed based on the participants' answers to the three party closeness questions in the pre-treatment questionnaire. Each question asked them to declare their closeness to each one of the three main political parties. The party which subjects declared they feel closest to was identified as their partisanship. If the subjects' answers indicated that they are similarly close to two or more parties, the software randomly chose one of those parties. Subjects who declared on a subsequent question that they feel closer to a different party were excluded. The strategy we employ to measure partisanship is consistent with measures used in the British Election Study. Moreover, Barnes et al. (1988) and Mughan (2009) show that measuring party identification in terms of closeness to parties' leads to the same results as the classical measure which asks respondents to declare whether they feel Conservative, Labour etc. More importantly, aside from showing that the two measures capture the same underlying attachment, the authors, along with Keith et al. (1986; 1992), also stress that measuring partisanship in terms of closeness to parties is better suited to multi-party contexts. In such contexts, it is often the case that the same person can have multiple party IDs, that is, he or she can be equally close to two or more parties (Mughan, 2009).

Finally, given that each experimental cell contained subjects with different partisanships, and the treatment was aimed at inducing an emotion towards either the subject's preferred party or an out-party, party-specific scenarios were used. The informational content and tone of the articles were similar for each scenario; it is only the framing that differed.

Analysis of the experimental data

a. Campaigns and emotions

The data generated through the experiments is analysed in two stages. In the first stage we examine the emotion-inducing potential of the campaigns by looking at the differences between the average emotionality in each group. In the second stage, we assess the effect emotions have on the declared intention of turnout.

However, before proceeding, we will discuss the construction and characteristics of the variables which measure emotions. Consistent with Marcus et al. (2006), emotions were measured in the post-test through nine closed-ended questions which asked subjects to state how anxious/angry they felt towards each party. Based on these measures, and knowing each individual's partisanship we computed five new variables which express the strength of the emotions experienced towards each person's preferred party but also towards the out parties. Thus, we have one variable measuring the intensity of enthusiasm for the preferred party on a scale ranging from 0 to 3, where 0 is not at all anxious and 3 is very anxious. Similarly, the other variable measures the intensity of anger experienced towards the subjects preferred party. Finally, we constructed two variables which measure the level of emotions (anxiety and anger) directed at the out parties. The variables were computed as the average between the levels of emotions the subject declared he experienced towards the two parties other than the preferred party.

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, consistent with Boniface (1999), we use independent sample t-tests and their non-parametric counterparts: the Mann-Whitney U test (also known as the Wilcoxon rank sum test) (Sheskin, 2007). We start by dichotomizing the variables measuring the respective emotions. The first three values of the variables measuring emotions towards the preferred party were combined into a single category, while the highest value remained in a category of its own. The variables measuring the levels of anxiety and anger towards out parties were recoded in a similar way: the highest value was kept in its own category, while all the other values were included in another category. The new variables distinguish between people who are very emotional (anxious/angry – value 1) and all other people (value 0).

The results⁷, reported in Table 1, broadly support the expectations. The analyses show that people who were given the anxiety-inducing stimulus which targeted their preferred party are significantly more likely to feel anxiety than people who were in the control group (Dif, 0.06, Sig 0.1). However, when comparing these subjects (in the anxiety-inducing cell) to the subjects in the cell where anger towards the preferred party was induced, the direction of the results is consistent with our hypotheses, however they do not attain statistical significance at any conventional levels.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Next, we tested H2, which states that anger can be induced by a negative campaign communication item which attributes blame. Table 1.b suggests that, contingent on the stimuli they were exposed to, there is a significant difference between people in terms of whether they feel very angry or not. On average, there are more people who say that they are very angry in the experimental cell designed to induce anger towards the preferred party compared to the cell

⁷ Given that the variables are dichotomous we also ran non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests. The results (including significance levels) are in essence identical. For ease of interpretation we only report the t-tests.

inducing anxiety towards the preferred party (Dif. 0.1; Sig <.05) and compared to the control group (Dif. 0.1, Sig. <.05). Thus, it is highly probable that people who are exposed to negative news that attribute blame will be more likely to feel very angry than people who are exposed to negative news that do not attribute blame and are not accusatory.

Moving on to emotions experienced towards out parties, we can observe in Table 1.c that, on average, people who are exposed to a negative political communication item relating to an out party, declare that they are more anxious than people receiving the anger inducing stimuli (Dif. .180; Sig <.05) or the control group (Dif. .276; Sig <.05). Similarly, subjects exposed to a negative article which places blame on an out party, on average, experience higher levels of anger towards out parties when compared to people who received a negative item in which blame was not attributed (Dif. .280; Sig <.05) or people who were not exposed to a political article (Dif. 235; Sig < .05).

In sum, it can be concluded that hypotheses 1 and 2 are sufficiently supported by the data. This confirms our expectations and suggests that negative political communication can induce both anxiety and anger. Moreover, depending on the target, either emotion can be induced towards both the preferred party or out-parties. Particularly, the results show that negative communication which legitimately criticizes a given party induces anxiety. Contrarily, negative communication that assigns blame induces anger.

b. Turnout intentions and emotions

To offer a potential answer to the dilemma discussed in the introduction the second stage of the analysis looks at the relationships between emotions (which were affected by the campaign) and the intention to turn out⁸. According to the theory, aside from knowledge and

⁸ Consistent with Boniface (1999) and Fisher (1990), we began by examining the effect the campaign (proxied by different treatments) had on intention of turning out. However, the experimental manipulation did not have

education, turnout is seen to be also influenced by emotions induced by campaigns. As was hypothesized, anger (irrespective who it is experienced towards) has the power to depress the likelihood of turning out. However, anxiety experienced towards the preferred party, an emotion which is also induced by negative campaigning is not believed to have any effect on turnout (Marcus, et al., 2000), while anxiety experienced towards out-parties is expected to increase the tendency to turn out. Thus, if the hypotheses are shown to be accurate, it would seem that some negative political communication does indeed have the potential to depress turnout (consistent with Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997), however other types of negative ads do not, which is consistent with the findings of Finkel and Geer (1998).

To test this we run ordered logistic regressions which, aside from the emotion variable, also included controls (knowledge, education, demographics and measures of personality). Turnout was measured in the post-test as a variable which indicates if the subject intends to vote (value 1), if he is undecided (coded as value .5) or whether he intends to abstain from turning out (value 0). This variable, of course, does not measure actual turnout; it only reports a person's subject assessment of a potential action he or she might perform.

The results, presented in Table 2 (Figure 2 displays the predicted probabilities) support hypotheses 3 and 4. Anxiety experienced towards the preferred party is not seen to have any impact on turnout. Nonetheless, anxiety experienced towards an out-party increases the chances of participation which sheds further light on the political emotional process of anxiety.

significant effects. The lack of statistical significance can be attributed to small effect sizes. It needs to be kept in mind that the subjects were exposed to only one brief item of print communication. There were no audio or visual stimuli included and Brader (2006) and Dillard (1994) state that as opposed to print communication, it is non-verbal communication that is best suited to induce emotions. Moreover, while the stimuli have increased the likelihood of people feeling very emotional, they have not made drastic changes such as, for instance, making the vast majority of subjects in cell 1 feel very anxious while also decreasing their anger levels in cell 2, and it is a change such as this that is technically required for the manipulations to have visible direct effects on turnout. Under these circumstances, rejecting the hypotheses is premature and would possibly lead to Type II errors (see (Ellis, 2010; Robinson & Levin, 1997; Ziliak & McCloskey, 2008) for a discussion on statistical versus substantive significance).

Moving on, if the level of anger experienced towards the preferred party increases by one unit (from 'not very angry' to 'somewhat angry') the probability of turning out is predicted to decrease by five percentage points. Consequently, becoming very angry from not angry at all would produce roughly a 20 percentage point difference in the probability of turning out to vote, which is in accordance with the expectations. However, anger experienced towards an out-party does not seem to significantly affect the intention to turn-out, thus hypothesis 5 cannot be fully corroborated.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

To conclude, the analysis of the data collected through the experiment shows that negative political communication can induce anxiety which, depending on the party it is experienced towards either increases turnout or does not affect it. Consequently, we can state that if a negative campaigning target a person's preferred party it will not affect turnout, which is consistent with the findings of Clinton and Lapinski (2004). However, if a similar type of communication target's out-parties, the likely effect is an increase in the likelihood of turnout. This finding is, of course consistent with the stimulation hypothesis. Finally, if an item of negative communication attributes blame and has an accusatory tone, it induces anger. Once anger is induced it most likely decreases turnout, offering support for the demobilization hypothesis.

Even though the results support our claims, to increase the external validity of these findings, in the next section we will replicate the results presented here using panel data.

The panel study

To increase the external validity of the findings and to further develop our understanding of the effects of negative campaigning, we carry out an analysis of the impact of campaign exposure, and emotions on the likelihood of turning out.

The data we use were collected within the British CCAP study in two waves. Both the sampling procedure and the application of the questionnaires were performed on-line by YouGov. The sample is representative for the adult population of Britain, however, it is not, strictly speaking a random probability sample.

The data were collected before the May 6th 2010 General Elections. The first waves was fielded in late January 2010, while for the second wave people were surveyed in mid April 2010. Utilizing the data generated by these two waves will insure that the analysis captures the behavioural patterns displayed by the respondents before the start of the campaign and those towards the end of the campaign, thus allowing for conclusions regarding the effects of the campaign to be drawn. Wave 1 contains 2748 respondents and wave 2 5847 participants. Out of these, 2238 individuals are common in both waves. However, given that the research is only concerned with the supporters of the three main parties, these numbers decrease to 1995, 4578 and 1594, respectively.

According to Bartels, one of the “primary virtues of panel data is that they allow for direct observation of individual-level change in attitudes and perceptions in response to campaign events” (2006, p. 142). He identifies two major analytical approaches in assessing panel data. On the one hand, the researcher could analyse the change in the variables of interest as a function of intervening characteristics or events. On the other hand, new opinions, attitudes or behaviours may be analysed as a consequence of old opinions, attitudes or behaviours and intervening characteristics or events (Bartels, 2006).

Using the approaches discussed by Bartels, the data will be pooled and using path models we will analyse the effects of campaign exposure and emotions on the changes in the likelihood of turnout between people, and within people.

The dependent variable is the likelihood of turnout. The surveys in both waves ask respondents to declare how likely it is, on a ten point scale, that they will turn out if there were elections held the next day. It is important to note that this variable does not measure actual turnout; it is only an indicator of a person's declared intention, at the time the poll was administered. Even though it is the most widely used, it has been shown that this measure overestimates actual turnout, however, it has an increased accuracy (i.e. it overestimates less) when used in national elections which traditionally have a higher rate of turnout (Crespi, 1988, pp. 79-84). Consequently, to be clear, similar to the previous section the analyses undertaken here examine the impact of emotions on a person's declared willingness to participate in an election and not actual participation.

The main explanatory variable is campaign exposure. Even though this variable does not strictly measure exposure to negative political, it can nonetheless be used as a proxy. Given that campaigns do use negative stimuli, increasing campaign exposure can imply the increase of exposure to negativity. Campaign exposure was computed as an averaged index of a set of eleven dichotomous variables⁹ which indicate whether the respondent has experienced a given campaign activity in the seven days prior to the survey being administered. Consequently, the resulting variable is a continuous variable with values ranging from 0 to 1. Value 0 indicates that the respondent did not experience any of the campaign activities the survey asked about, while

⁹ In the last seven days have you: 1. Seen a political broadcast on TV?; 2. Received a piece of campaign mail (post or e-mail)?; 3. Received a pamphlet on my door; 4. Discussed a candidate with someone?; 5. Received a visit from a campaign worker?; 6. Heard party political broadcasts on the radio?; 7. Went to hear a candidate speak?; 8. Got a phone call from a candidate?; 9. Visited a political party web site?; 10. Visited a candidate web site?; 11. Watched video of candidate on the internet?.

value 1 indicates that he experienced all of them¹⁰. Our models will assess the direct effect of campaign exposure on turnout, but we will also simultaneously assess the impact campaign exposure has on each emotion of interest, and the effect these emotions have on turnout. Consequently, our analyses will allow us to observe both the direct and the indirect (mediated by emotions) effects of exposure on turnout.

As mentioned above, emotions are inserted in the models as mediating variables. They are seen to mediate the effect of campaign exposure on turnout (exposure affects emotions and emotions affect turnout). We expect campaign exposure to increase the level of both anxiety and anger, which in turn should affect turnout in the direction predicted by the theory. In each individual wave, emotions were measured in a similarly to the experiment.

The models also include political knowledge and interest in elections as control variables. Political knowledge, measured similarly to the experimental analysis, is computed as an additive index of five questions which test factual knowledge about politics and the electoral process. Interest in election was measured on a 5 point scale, through a question which asks people to declare how interested they are in the May 6th elections. Both political knowledge and interest in the election were only measured in one wave. In addition to these variables, the analyses will also contain the appropriate socio-demographic controls: gender, age, education and income. Due to the lack of such measures in the surveys, the analyses cannot control for the effects of personality.

Panel data allows us to test how a time-varying independent variable affects the variance of the dependent variable within the same person, between two points in time. Moreover, pooling the two datasets we can also examine if the explanatory and mediating variables are all responsible for the changes in the values of the dependent variable between people. The first

¹⁰ Cronbach's α : .640. Given this value and the large sample size it is adequate to conclude that the items reliably measure the same phenomenon (DeSante, 2011). Consequently, the use of a cumulative scale is appropriate.

strategy can be implemented by using the within-effects (mediated) model, while the later is implemented through the between-effects (mediated) model.

The following paragraphs detail the set-up of the pooled path model and illustrate its results. The within-effects path model, is based on the simultaneous estimations of the set of equations detailed below:

$$\begin{aligned} \left(Turnout_{it} - \overline{Turnout}_i \right) = & \alpha + \beta_1 \left(AnxietyPP_{it} - \overline{AnxietyPP}_i \right) + \beta_2 \left(AngerPP_{it} - \overline{AngerPP}_i \right) + \beta_3 \left(AnxietyOP_{it} - \overline{AnxietyOP}_i \right) + \\ & + \beta_4 \left(AngerOP_{it} - \overline{AngerOP}_i \right) + \beta_5 \left(CampaignExp_{it} - \overline{CampaignExp}_i \right) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i). \end{aligned}$$

$$\left(AnxietyPP_{it} - \overline{AnxietyPP}_i \right) = \alpha + \beta_1 \left(CampaignExp_{it} - \overline{CampaignExp}_i \right) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i).$$

$$\left(AngerPP_{it} - \overline{AngerPP}_i \right) = \alpha + \beta_1 \left(CampaignExp_{it} - \overline{CampaignExp}_i \right) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i).$$

$$\left(AnxietyOP_{it} - \overline{AnxietyOP}_i \right) = \alpha + \beta_1 \left(CampaignExp_{it} - \overline{CampaignExp}_i \right) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i).$$

$$\left(AngerOP_{it} - \overline{AngerOP}_i \right) = \alpha + \beta_1 \left(CampaignExp_{it} - \overline{CampaignExp}_i \right) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i).$$

This fixed effects path model includes all the variables operationalizing the given emotions. All the other socio-demographic controls are constant over time for an individual and thus are omitted from the analysis. Moreover, having measured political knowledge and interest in elections in only one wave, they become time-invariant and are also omitted.

The fixed-effects estimator, thus, shows what the expected change in a person's likelihood to turn out is if the frequency with which the given emotion is experienced increases by 1 and if campaign exposure reaches its maximum. Simultaneously, this model also shows the within person change in the frequency of experiencing negative emotions if campaign exposure increases from the minimum to the maximum. The results are displayed in Figure 3. Aside from the direct effects, the diagram also illustrates the indirect effect, channelled through emotions, of campaign exposure on turnout.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

The results of the fixed effects analyses¹¹ shows that the over-time increase of campaign exposure increases the likelihood of turning out, however it also significantly increases the frequency with which negative emotions are experienced (except in the case of anxiety experienced towards the preferred party). Looking now at the effect of emotions, anxiety experienced towards an out-party produce an over-time increase in the likelihood of a given person to go to the polls. This is consistent with the results of the experiment which showed that anxiety experienced towards the out-party increase the likelihood of turnout. Moreover, this analysis shows that the indirect effect of campaign exposure on turnout channelled through anxiety towards out-parties is positive and significant, meaning that this emotion does indeed mediate the effect of the campaign on vote choice.

Aside from understanding within person changes it is also important and interesting to observe what the expected difference in the likelihood of turning out between two people is, if they differ in how often they experience a given emotion and if they differ in the level of campaign exposure. This can be estimated by using the between-effects (mediated) model. To estimate this model the mean between each person's level of emotionality at $t1$ and $t2$ is regressed on the means of the explanatory and control variables and of the regular regression residual ϵ . The unit-specific residual ν is not included as a mean because it is constant over time. Simultaneously, the mean of emotions is regressed on the mean of campaign exposure. Once again we employ a path model, which we detail below:

¹¹ Both the fixed-effects mediated model and the between-effects mediated model were implemented by using the technique developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) . The variables were first time-demeaned, or meaned, respectively.

$$\overline{Turnout}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{AnxietyPP}_i + \beta_2 \overline{AngerPP}_i + \beta_3 \overline{AnxietyOP}_i + \beta_4 \overline{AngerOP}_i + \beta_5 \overline{CampaignExp}_i + \beta_6 \overline{Knowledge}_i + \beta_7 \overline{Intrest}_i + \beta_8 \overline{Age}_i + \beta_9 \overline{Sex}_i + \beta_{10} \overline{Education}_i + \beta_{11} \overline{Income}_i + \nu_i + \bar{\varepsilon}_i.$$

$$\overline{AnxietyPP}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{CampaignExp}_i + \nu_i + \bar{\varepsilon}_i.$$

$$\overline{AngerPP}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{CampaignExp}_i + \nu_i + \bar{\varepsilon}_i.$$

$$\overline{AnxietyOP}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{CampaignExp}_i + \nu_i + \bar{\varepsilon}_i.$$

$$\overline{AngerOP}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{CampaignExp}_i + \nu_i + \bar{\varepsilon}_i.$$

One assumption of the model is that ν_i is not correlated with the explanatory variables; any such correlation would lead to biased estimates. There is no strong reason to think that the frequency with which a person experiences a given emotion towards his or her preferred party is highly correlated with the unit-specific error given that emotions are conceptualised as physiological reaction of the body in the face of external exogenous stimuli. However, these physio-psychological reactions are measured here through self-report items. Consequently, even though Marcus et al. (2006) show that these measures are valid assessments of the underlying physiological processes; the potential for correlations becomes a caveat of this procedure.

The outcome of the within-effects analysis can be compared to the results of the between models, displayed in Figure 4. The results are consistent with the previous findings. Once again campaign exposure is seen responsible for increasing the frequency with which negative emotions are experienced. Turning now to emotions, it can be concluded that, as expected, anger experienced towards the preferred party decreases the willingness to turn out, while anxiety experienced towards out-parties increase it. Anxiety experienced towards the preferred party, as theorised, does not impact turnout. Finally, campaign exposure has a positive direct effect on turnout. This pattern is maintained when the effect of exposure is channelled through anxiety experienced towards out-parties, but it is reversed when channelled through anger experience towards the preferred party. If campaign exposure increases and anger is induced the likelihood

of turnout will decrease. This means that when the increase of campaign exposure induces anger towards the preferred party, it's positive direct effect on turnout decreases.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to tackle the question of why different studies reach opposing conclusions with respect to the effects of negative campaigning. We set out to assess how it is possible that negative campaigning can increase turnout, can decrease turnout and can have no effect on turnout. To this end we argued that depending on the particular emotion a negative item of campaign communication induces, its effect on turnout can widely vary.

As such, we started by experimentally showing that depending on tone, framing and targeting, negative campaigns can induce either anxiety or anger. In brief, our results are consistent with Brader (2006), however, the effects we discover are consistent, but small. This is perhaps not surprising given that participants were only exposed to a single newspaper article, rather than a long electoral campaign. Our findings show that negative articles that do not attribute blame are seen to induce anxiety, while negative accusatory articles which attribute blame for sub-optimal outcome induce anger. This finding is consistent with the work of Bang-Petersen (2010), Brader et al. (2010) and Lazarus (1991) regarding the induction of anger.

Subsequently, we addressed the effects negative communication and emotions have on turnout. The results are consistent across the two data sets we used and show that anxiety experienced towards an out-party increases the likelihood of turnout. Conversely, anger experienced towards the preferred party is shown to decrease the intention of turning out. However, consistent with the hypotheses, anxiety experienced towards the preferred party does

not have a negative impact on turnout: the results show that this emotion does not significantly impact turnout.

The analyses undertaken here clearly illustrate that negative campaigns can, at the same time, decrease turnout, have no effect on turnout and increase turnout. The particular type of effect negative campaigning has on turnout is driven by two factors: framing of the ad and the political object it targets. If the negative campaign ad targets a person's preferred party and attributes blame for the negative situation it portrays it in, it will likely have a negative effect on turnout. However, if such an ad does not attribute blame it will have no bearing on the likelihood of turnout. Finally, if a negative ad targets an out-party and does not attribute blame it will most probably lead to an increase in the likelihood of going to the polls.

As can be noticed these findings are consistent with the results presented by all articles cited in the review of the literature. Consistent with Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1997), Ansolabehere et al. (1994) and Khan and Kenney (1999) we have shown that negative campaigning that assigns blame can decrease turnout. Consistent with Clinton and Lapinski (2004) we have shown that if anxiety towards the preferred party is induced by 'legitimate criticisms', negative campaigning does not affect turnout. Finally, consistent with Freedman and Goldstein (1999), Geer and Lau (2006) and Finkel and Geer (1998) we illustrated that 'legitimate criticism' included in negative campaigning increases turnout.

Consequently, we would like to stress that, even though important, the tone of campaign communication is not singular in determining campaign effects. Through examining emotions, this paper eloquently illustrates that framing and targeting also play significant roles in shaping the effects negative campaigning have on turnout. The same item of negative communication, depending on which party it is experienced towards can increase turnout or can have no effect on it. Furthermore, depending on how the item is framed, it can increase or decrease turnout. Consequently, in order to understand how campaign advertising can affect political behavior,

scholars need to go beyond just looking at the influence of 'negative campaigning' and concentrate on differentiating the effects of the distinct types of negative communication.

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FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. The experimental setup

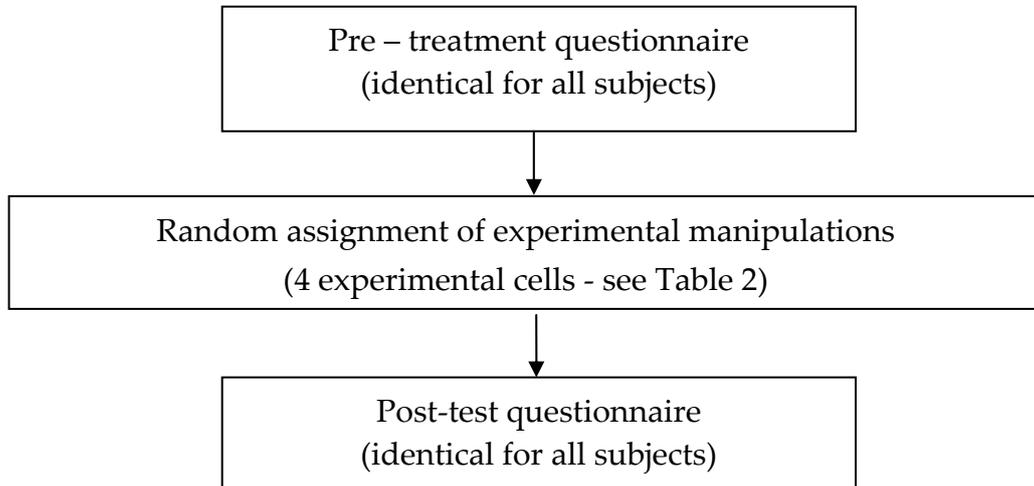


Table 1.
T-test employing the dichotomized variables
measuring emotions

T-test between the experimental cells	Mean Diff.	P-value	Cohen's D Effect Size
a. Anxiety			
Cell 2 (anxiety to PP) vs. Cell 3 (anger to PP)	.037	.216	.15 Small
Cell 2 (anxiety to PP) vs. Cell 6 (control)	.056	.101	.26 Small
b. Anger			
Cell 3 (anger to PP) vs. Cell 2 (anxiety to PP)	.101	.022	.41 Moderate
Cell 3 (anger to PP) vs. Cell 6 (control)	.099	.029	.39 Moderate
c. Anxiety OP			
Cell 4 (anxiety to OP) vs. Cell 5 (anger to OP)	.180	.019	.43 Moderate
Cell 4 (anxiety to OP) vs. Cell 6 (control)	.276	.000	.72 Large
d. Anger OP			
Cell 4 (anxiety to OP) vs. Cell 5 (anger to OP)	.280	.000	.71 Large
Cell 4 (anxiety to OP) vs. Cell 6 (control)	.235	.003	.56 Large

Note: One tailed P-values¹²

¹² Using one-tailed significance tests is appropriate considering the fact that the hypotheses are directional (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Kimmel (1957) argues that a researcher should “use a one-tailed test when a directional hypothesis is deducible from psychological theory but results in the opposite direction are not deducible from coexisting psychological theory” (Kimmel, 1957, p. 353).

Table 2.
The effect of emotions on turnout

	<u>Model 1</u> (Effect of anxiety)	<u>Model 2</u> (Effect of anger)	<u>Model 3</u> (Effect of anxiety OP)	<u>Model 4</u> (Effect of anger OP)
Anxiety PP	-.365 (.264)			
Anger PP		-.536 * (.219)		
Anxiety OP			.107 * (.056)	
Anger OP				.080 (.052)
Political knowledge	.498 * (.189)	.493 * (.188)	.386 * (.184)	.432 * (.181)
Level of education	.152 (.145)	.139 (.149)	.172 (.141)	.204 (.141)
Gender	.529 (.427)	.552 (.422)	.353 (.405)	.396 (.397)
Age	-.013 (.020)	-.006 (.021)	-.017 (.019)	-.016 (.019)
Extroversion	.130 (.134)	.101 (.137)	.133 (.131)	.115 (.133)
Agreeableness	-.290 + (.170)	-.274 (.176)	-.325 + (.175)	-.296 (.173)
Conscientiousness	-.100 (.150)	-.110 (.152)	-.044 (.144)	-.051 (.142)
Emotional stability	.074 (.137)	.062 (.142)	.047 (.137)	.061 (.138)
Openness	-.287 (.193)	-.336 + (.203)	-.284 (.189)	-.332 (.190)
<i>Occupation (8 dummies)</i>		<i>not significant</i>		
<i>Pseudo R²</i>	.094	.113	.131	.127
<i>N</i>	281	280	285	285

Note: Results of ordered logistic regressions.

Results are statistically significant at * $p < .05$; + $p < .1$

Dependent variable: Turnout intention

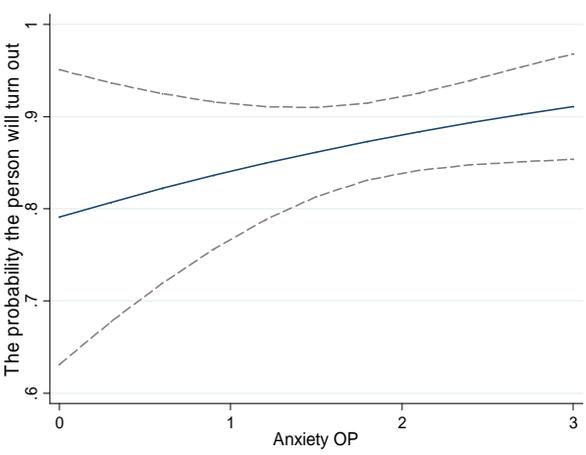
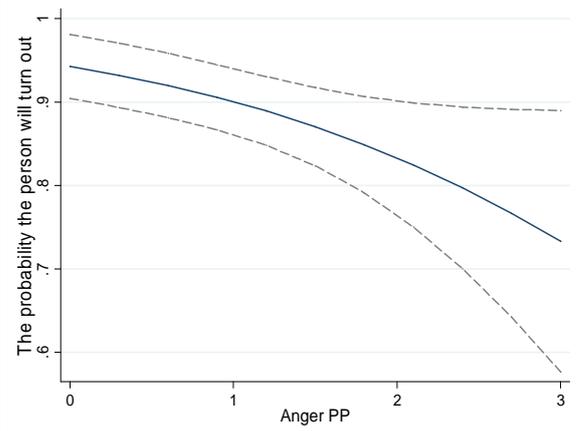


Figure 2.

The estimated effect of emotions on the predicted probability of turnout

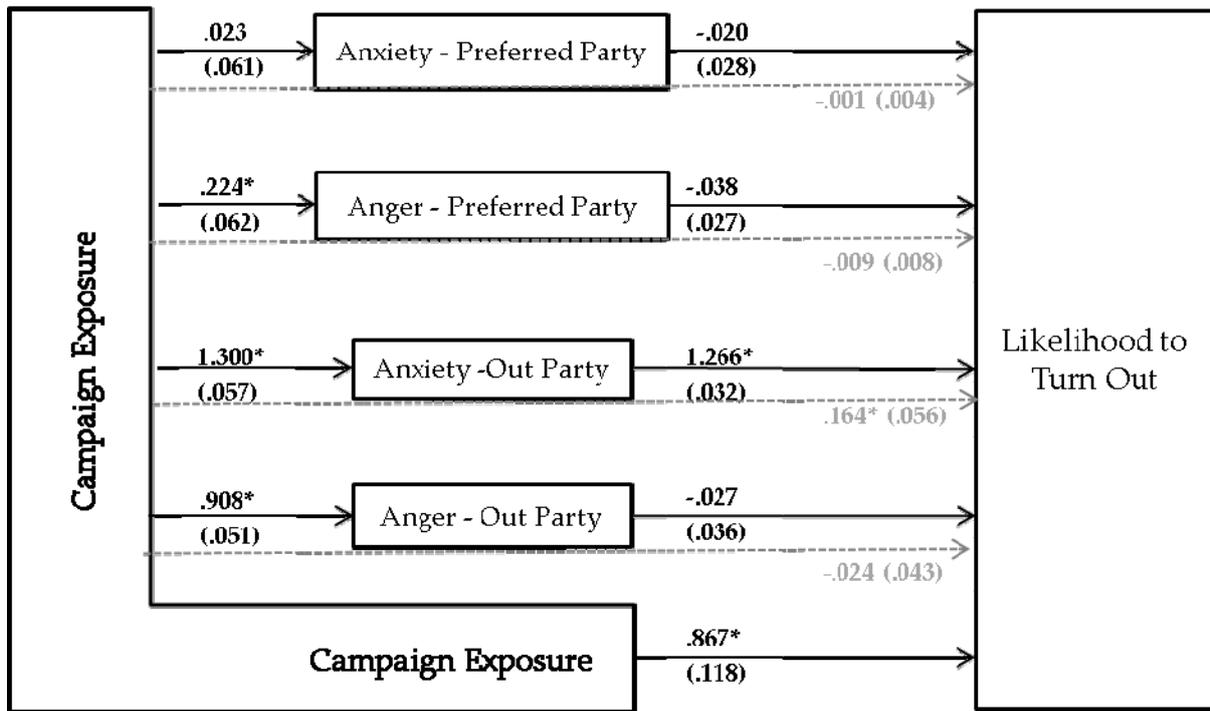


Figure 3. The effects of campaign exposure and emotions on turnout over time. Fixed-effects mediated model.

Direct Effect → Indirect Effect → $R^2 .014; N 6526$

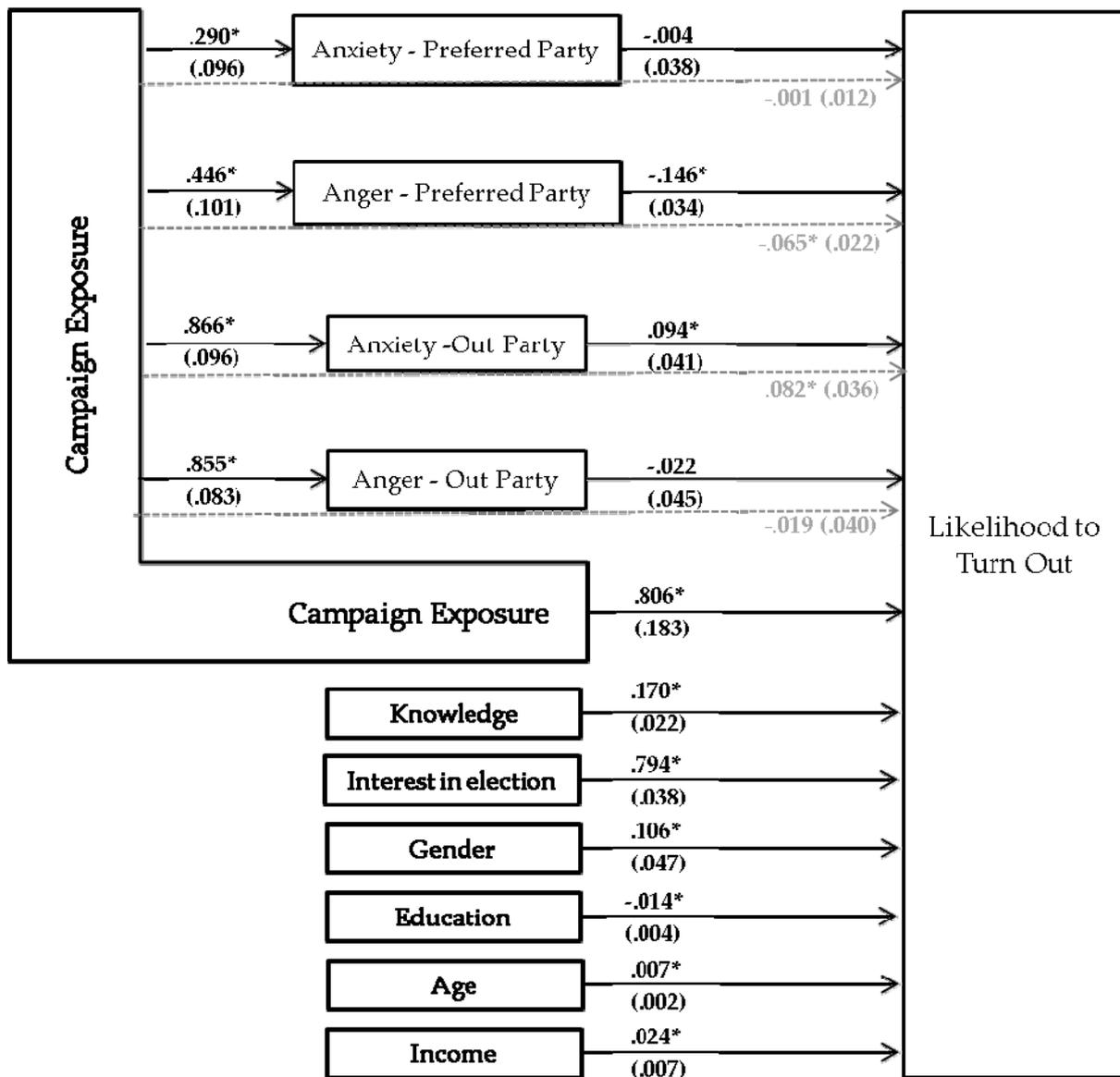


Figure 4. The effects of campaign exposure and emotions on turnout over time. Between-effects mediated model.

Direct Effect —> Indirect Effect - - -> R² .146; N 5638

