The Rise and Impact of Fact-Checking in U.S. Campaigns

by

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ABSTRACT

Do fact-checks influence individuals' attitudes and evaluations of political candidates and campaign messages? This dissertation examines the influence of fact-checks on citizens' evaluations of political candidates. Using an original content analysis, I determine who conducts fact-checks of candidates for political office, who is being fact-checked, and how fact-checkers rate political candidates' level of truthfulness. Additionally, I employ three experiments to evaluate the impact of fact-checks source and message cues on voters' evaluations of candidates for political office.

DEDICATION

To My Husband, Aza

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CHAPTER 1

FACT-CHECKING AMERICAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

"A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes."

—Mark Twain

President Obama, while attending the Portland Expo in Portland, Maine in 2010, made the following statement regarding the Affordable Care Act, "*And if you like your insurance plan, you will keep it. No one will be able to take that away from you. It hasn't happened yet. It won't happen in the future."* This pledge by President Obama was rated as PolitiFact's 'Lie of the Year' as well as being classified as the "biggest Pinocchio of 2013" by the Washington Post's Fact-checker.[1]

Fact-checking of political statements has become a routine part of politics. In fact, over the last 10 years, two-thirds of the major newspapers in the United States have begun publishing fact-checks. In addition, several online nonpartisan organizations (like FactCheck.org, PolitiFact.com, and The Washington Posts' The Fact-checker) are dedicated to creating and disseminating fact-checks. The stated goal of these fact-checking organizations is to be a "'consumer advocate' for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics" (FactCheck.org, 2012) and "to help you find the truth in American politics" (Tampa Bay Times PolitiFact.com, 2012).

Despite the increase in fact-checking, little attention has been paid to the content and influence of fact-checking during political contests. What candidates and forms of political communication are being fact-checked by fact-checking organizations? What are

[1]http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/wp/2013/12/16/the-biggest-pinocchios-of-2013/

fact-checkers saying about the truthfulness of candidates' political communications? Do fact-checks influence individuals' attitudes and evaluations of political candidates and their campaign messages?

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold. First, I seek to determine the content of fact-checking through an original content analysis. Then, I employ three original experiments to determine the influence of fact-checking on voters' evaluations of candidates and their political messages. We can discover how confirming and disconfirming cues from fact-checks influence voters' views of a candidate, exploring whether fact-checking of political messages increase or decrease evaluations of candidates. Moreover, we can determine how (dis)confirming fact-checks influence voters' evaluations of campaign messages and if consistent messages are more powerful than inconsistent messages. In addition, we can determine how source cues from fact-checks influence these evaluations and if an individual's partisanship of political knowledge impact these assessment.

Findings from this dissertation suggest that fact-checks have the profound ability to move citizens' assessments of candidates and their political messages. Specifically, I find that message cues are a strong and consistent predictor of evaluations of candidates and political messages. I also find some support for my source cue expectations. That is, in some cases the source of a fact-check influences the persuasiveness of the fact-check on respondents' evaluations of a candidate and a candidate's political communication. Finally, I conclude that partisanship and political knowledge are important intervening variables that impact the persuasiveness of fact-checks.

In the pages that follow, I will summarize the literature on fact-checking. Then I utilize data from Compete Inc., a data firm that collects information on website traffic, to construct the average fact-check website goer. Third, I lay out the theoretical arguments and hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical chapters of this dissertation. Finally, I conclude with an outline of the chapters to follow.

Fact-Checking American Political Campaigns

Fact-checking is on the rise (Graves & Glaisver, 2012; Spivak, 2011; Nyhan & Reifler, 2012) with the number of unique visitors to fact-checking organizations' websites increasing substantially overtime, particularly around elections. For example, more than one million unique users visited FactCheck.org's website during October of 2012 (Compete Inc., 2013).[2] In addition, fact-checking grew exponentially during the 2008 presidential election and the 2012 presidential election "was indeed the most fact-checked election in history" (Carr, 2012). Figure 1.1 demonstrates that the two major fact-checking websites, FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com, are very popular with online visitors. Looking at Figure 1.1 it is apparent that fact-checks are sought out by citizens, especially around elections.

Figure 1.1 About Here

Despite the meteoric rise of fact-checking over the last decade, the literature on fact-checking is sparse. The idea of fact-checking political statements is not a new one. More than two decades ago veteran *Washington Post* political writer – David Broder –

[2]Compete.com, a company that collects data on website use, defines their unique visitor metric as, "The Unique Visitors metric only counts a person once no matter how many times they visit a site in a given month" (Compete Inc, 2013). The company notes that a measure of unique visitors is an important indicator or the popularity of a site. This data is for U.S. users only.

strongly encouraged reporters to monitor the truthfulness of political advertisements (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). Indeed, the precursor to the fact-check - the "ad watch" - was introduced during the 1990 presidential election to inform the public of false or exaggerated candidate advertisements (Pfau & Louden, 1994). The Annenberg Public Policy Center then launched the first fact-checking website in 2003; the *St. Petersburg Times*, *PolitiFact*, and the *Washington Post's Fact-checker* followed suite in 2007.

Many scholars studying the impact of the "ad watch" have employed experiments to parse out the effect of confirming or corrective information. For example, O'Sullivan and Geiger (1995) exposed subjects to an advertisement and "ad watches" describing the advertisement as accurate or inaccurate. The researchers found the candidate targeted in the attack advertisement was less likely to be harmed by the advertisement when the ad was considered inaccurate, compared to when the advertisement was rated as accurate by the "ad watch" story. Min (2002) conducted a similar experiment where subjects were exposed to a newspaper "ad watch" article. All of the subjects were first exposed to either a positive advertisement or a negative advertisement. After reading the text of the advertisement, the subjects then read an analysis of the advertisement describing the advertisement as accurate or inaccurate. Min found when an advertisement was classified as accurate; the advertisement was more effective than when the advertisement was described as inaccurate.

Likewise, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1996) relied on an experiment to examine the impact of a CNN "ad watch" in a series of experiments conducted in 1992. Ansolabehere and Iyengar relied on non-student subjects and recruited more than 300 subjects from the Los Angeles community. In this experiment, subjects were exposed to (1) an "ad watch" criticizing a positive advertisement by Bill Clinton, (2) an "ad watch" criticizing a negative

advertisement attacking George Bush sponsored by Bill Clinton, or (3) an "ad watch" criticizing a negative advertisement attacking Bill Clinton sponsored by George Bush. The "ad watch" was inserted into a local news broadcast and subjects were never exposed to the advertisement only the "ad watch." Ansolabehere and Iyengar found increased electoral support for the candidate sponsoring the advertisement criticized by the CNN "ad watch." This experiment suggested "ad watches" could have an unintended consequence, transmitting the message of the political advertisement being scrutinized.

According to a study commissioned by the Annenberg Public Policy Center, the number of "ad watch" stories doubled from 1992-2007 and then quadrupled between 2004 and 2006 (Bank, 2007). Moreover, major news channels, like MSNBC, CNN, FOX, NPR, and ABC, increasingly cite information from fact-checking organizations in their news broadcasts (Graves & Glaisyer, 2012). Additionally, these fact-checking stories have become an integral component of local television campaign coverage (Papper, 2007).

Fact-checking by newspapers and non-partisan organizations focus on many different types of political communications including TV advertisements, speeches, debates, interviews, and press releases. These fact-checks are widely available to the public, via television news programs, Internet websites, and national and local newspapers. Furthermore, these fact-checks are well liked by the public. According to *Associated Press* spokesman, Paul Colford, fact-checks are "Generally…among the stories most frequently mak[ing] online popularity lists" (Carr, 2012).

Fact-checking has become a mainstay of modern political campaigns. However, we know little about how it influences voters. During the 2012 campaign, a survey

conducted by Social Science Research Solutions for the Annenberg Public Policy Center found people who visited fact-checking websites and news websites could correctly answer more factual questions about politics and government, compared to respondents who did not frequent these types of websites (Flackcheck.org, 2012). Still, it is difficult to know whether people who seek out websites for information about politics become more informed or if people who are more informed seek out websites for political information. Moreover, some scholars have suggested that fact-checks are biased (Ostermeier, 2011) or flawed (Uscinski & Butler, 2013) and are, thus, not useful to citizens seeking information during an election.

Yet others have concluded that visitors to fact-checking websites have higher levels of knowledge (Gottfried, Hardy, Winneg, & Jamieson, 2013) and reader's factual beliefs can be affected by newspaper articles that adjudicate factual disputes (Pingree, Brossard, & McLeod, 2014). Looking to determine the impact of fact-checking on legislative candidates, Nyhan and Reifler (2014) conducted an experiment and found that legislator who were warned about the potential negative impact of a false fact-check were less likely to receive an inaccurate rating from fact-checking organizations than legislators who did not receive the warning. These studies, while interesting, tell us little about the impact of fact-checking on voters' assessments of candidates for public office. The goal of this dissertation is to fill this gap by providing the first comprehensive examination of the content of fact-checking and by providing evidence from three experiments about the impact of fact-checking on citizens' evaluations of candidate and their political statements.

Who Visits Fact-Checking Websites?

Figure 1.1 demonstrated that the two major fact-checking websites, FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com, are very popular with online users, but who are these users? And how are they using fact-checking websites? Visitors to FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com are generally more male than female and tend to be older than 45. These visitors come from a number of income brackets. See Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.

Figure 1.2 About Here
Figure 1.3 About Here
Figure 1.4 About Here

These visitors use of fact-checking web sites mimics the election cycle with visits to these web sites, page views, and average stay on these web sites peaking in September and October before an election. It's important to note that this Compete Inc. data only gives us a partial view of the reach of fact-checking. This data only tells us who visits fact-checking websites over a two year period. What it cannot tell us is who is viewing fact-checks in other contexts like in the newspaper, on the evening news, or as part of a political advertisement.

The Influence of Information during Campaigns

The point of a campaign is to persuade voters and much literature has examined the persuasiveness of candidate messages. For example, the literature on the influence of negative advertising is vast: scholars have concluded that negative advertisements influence evaluations of target candidates (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; 2008; 2004; Geer, 2006; Lau & Pomper, 2002), and may contribute to greater mobilization (Freedman, Franz, & Goldstein, 2004; Fridkin & Kenney, 2008, 2011; Geer, 2006; Geer & Lau, 2006; Kahn & Kenney, 1999), especially if the advertisement provides information that is

directly related to governing issues (Fridkin & Kenney, 2008; 2011). Likewise, the tone of an advertisement can influence voters' evaluations of a candidate if the information provided is relevant to governing (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011).

Others address how messages are mediated by third parties. For example, the instant media analysis of debates influences voters' perceptions of the "winner" of the debate (Hwang, Gotlieb, Nah, & McLeod, 2007; Fridkin, Kenney, Gershon, Shafer, & Woodall, 2007; Fridkin, Kenney, Gershon, & Woodall, 2008.). Furthermore, the slant of newspaper editorials strongly influences voters' candidate preferences (Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998; Druckman & Parkin, 2005) with endorsed candidates receiving more favorable evaluations (Kahn & Kenney, 2002). Moreover, Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2001) notes that the context of a message influences a viewer's interpretation of the message. Thus, the media necessarily mediates a candidate's message because of the limited amount of time any given news network devotes to reporting on a given campaign. Indeed, the vast literature on the impact of message, source, and audience characteristics provides the foundation of my theoretical expectations. I examine a total of ten hypotheses in the chapters that follow. Four of these are message cue hypothesis, three relate to source cues, and three take into account intervening audience characteristics. I will now discus each hypothesis.

The Impact of the Message

Message characteristics -- the what -- or the composition of a message affect the persuasivness of political messages (Druckman & Lupia, 2000, 15). These message effects deal directly with the content of the message being sent. The components of a message's content are the messages relevance (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; Hovland, Janis,

& Kelley, 1953; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; 1984; Lau, 1982; McGraw & Steenbergen, 1997; McGuire, 1964; 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986;), tone (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; 2008; 2004; Geer, 2006; Pomper, 2002), and the confirming or correcting cue (Bullock, 2007; Cobb, 2007; Cobb, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2012).

A plethora of studies from the field of psychology show that message cues are influential when persuading individuals. These studies conclude that in order for individuals to process message cues (and thus be persuaded by them), they must be motivated to think about the message, and must also have the cognitive skills necessary to process the message. An individual's interest in or the relevance of a message influences his motivation to process the message, with interest producing a more influential message (Johnson & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979; 1990; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). In addition, a message is more influential when subjects believe that the message provides an independent evaluation of an issue (Harkins & Petty, 1987). Furthermore, messages that are incongruent with one's existing beliefs can provide the motivation necessary to evaluate the claim (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Maheshwaran & Chaiken, 1991). I argue that the logic of message effects should extend to fact-checks. Specifically, I expect that confirming or corrective information should mediate evaluations of candidates and their political statement. Furthermore, negative (inaccurate) fact-check message should be more powerful than accurate fact-check messages and fact-check messages that are consistent with an individual's partisan position should be more persuasive than inconsistent fact-check messages.

Confirming and corrective information. To begin, message cues imbedded in fact-checks may mediate evaluations of the candidates by providing voters with relevant information about the accuracy of a candidate's message. First, a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should improve overall evaluations of the candidate, while the presences of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluation of the candidate. That is, the confirming or corrective information offered by the fact-check may alter respondents' perceptions of the candidate because it either lends credibility to the candidate or takes away from the candidate's credibility by offering a mechanism that alters the effect of the candidate's message (Entman & Bennett, 2001).

Indeed, evidence from the literature concludes that voters' evaluations of candidates are influenced by both positive and negative message cues about a candidate, even when the information is discredited (Bullock 2007; Cobb 2007; Cobb et al., 2012). Examining the effects of discredited positive information, Cobb, Nyhan, and Reifler (2012) found that when positive information about a candidate is discredited, individuals are incentivised to punish the candidate for the inaccurate information -- even if the mistake is attributed to a third party, e.g. a journalist. Thus, confirming and correcting message cues influence candidate credibility.

Fact-checks offer a number of cues about the accuracy of candidate's messages, with different fact-checking organizations offering different measures of accuracy. The opposing ends of this spectrum are confirming and correcting cues. Confirming cues are fact-checks that indicate an accurate message and correcting cues are fact-checks that indicate an inaccurate message (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). Thus, the statement of accuracy

of the message is the most important message cue because it offers a confirming or discounting cue in a manner that is simple and straight forward (e.g., individuals do not have to do a lot of work to process the cue making the cue more accessible). Stated formally,

Accurate Message Cue Hypothesis: ***The presence of a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should increase overall evaluations of the candidate.***

Inaccurate Message Cue Hypothesis: ***The presence of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluations of the candidate.***

Negativity bias. Furthermore, it has been found that individuals pay more attention to negative arguments (Fiske 1980; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; 1984; Pratto & John, 1991; Steiner, 1979). Indeed, negativity bias has been well documented in the formation of impressions (Anderson, 1974; Birnbaum, 1973; 1974; Fiske, 1980; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972; Lupfer, Weeks, & Dupuis, 2000; Pratto & John, 1991; Rozin & Royzman, 2001; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989; Taylor & Fiske, 1978), political behavior (Bloom & Price, 1975; Kernell, 1977; Lau, 1984; Lau & Pomper, 2004), and decision making(Kahneman & Tversky 1979). In addition, Pratto and John (1991) conclude that negative informaiton is more frequently recalled by individuals than positive informaiton.

Others have examined the impact of negative information on evaluations of candidates for political office. For example, negative advertisements influence evaluations of target candidates (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; 2008; 2004; Geer, 2006; Pomper, 2002), and may contribute to greater mobilization if the advertisement provides relevant governing information (Geer, 2006; Geer & Lau, 2006; Freedman et al., 2004;

Fridkin & Kenney, 2008; 2011; Kahn & Kenney, 1999). Likewise, the tone of an advertisement can influence voters' evaluations of a candidate if the information provided is relevant to governing (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011).

Indeed, Donsbach (1991) found that negative headlines are selected by readers more frequently than positive headlines and Fiske (1980) found that individuals spend more time looking at photos of negative behavior. This may be the result of the perceived salience or the informative nature of negative information (Fiske 1980; Pratto & John, 1991; Steiner, 1979). Given the proclivity toward negative information, it is unsurprising that individuals are better able to recall negative information over positive information (Fisk & Schneider, 1984; Bless, Hamilton, & Mackie, 1992; Pratto & John, 1991; Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996). Given the literature on negativity bias, I expect inaccurate fact-check cues to be more persuasive than accurate fact-check cues. Stated formally,

Negative Message Cue Hypothesis: ***Fact-checks concluding that a communication is misleading will be more powerful than fact-checks indicating that a commercial is accurate.***

Congruency bias. In addition, it is well established that individuals prefer messages that are attitude-consistent or that reinforce existing beliefs (Kinder 2003; Festinger 1957; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). An individual's preference for attitude-consistent information affects the way an individual selects, perceives, accepts, and recalls messages (Baumeister & Newman, 1994; Biek, Wood, & Chaiken, 1996; Chaffee, Saphir, Graf, Sandvig, & Hahn, 2001; Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Kunda, 1990; Lodge & Taber, 2000).

That is, individuals prefer information that is congruent with their existing beliefs. Congruent information in a political context is positive information about ones preferred candidate and negative information about an opposition candidate. On the other hand, incongruent information in a political context is negative information about one's preferred candidate and positive information about an opposition candidate. This confirmation bias has been well documented in political decision making. For example, it has been found that individuals more often select news articles that are congruent to their existing beliefs than incongruent news articles (Taber & Lodge, 2006). In addition, Donsbach (1991) found that voters do indeed prefer congruent information about political candidates. Given the literature on information processing, it is reasonable to expect that a fact-check message cue will be more influential if the message is congruent with an individual's prior beliefs. Stated formally,

***Consistent Message Hypothesis**: A fact-check message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position.*

The Impact of the Source

Source characteristics refer to the actual communicator of the message, or the who. Source effects refer to how specific characteristics of a message source influence the persuasiveness of the message being sent (Druckman & Lupia, 2000, 16). As discussed, the expansive literature from psychology and political science demonstrates that a source's expert status (Clark, et al., 2012; Hovland, et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953), ideology (Conover, 1989; Zaller, 1992), insider status (Carmines & Kuklinski, 1990), likeability (Brady, 1985; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991), party position or affiliation (Lodge & Hamill, 1986; Rahn, 1993), public approval

(Mondak, 1993; Page, Shapiro, & Dempsey, 1987), and trustworthiness (Darmofal, 2005; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Popkin, 1991) can influence the persuasiveness of a message. Understanding the effects of a mediated source on the persuasiveness of a message is important given the large number of source characteristics that can affect the persuasiveness of a message and that most people utilize at least some source characteristics when making political decisions (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001).

Therefore, the source of a fact-check may also shape citizens' evaluations of a candidate in three ways. First, it is reasonable to expect that a fact-check will be influential because it is viewed as credible. In addition, the source of a fact-check may influence the persuasiveness of the fact-check itself. That is, a nonpartisan source maybe more influential than a partisan source because it is deemed credible and a fact-check that is inconsistent with the source's partisanship maybe more influential because it is deemed credible.

Credible sources. The amount of trust an individual has in a source can affect the persuasiveness of the message sent. Darmofal (2005) concluded that individuals follow cues from trusted sources, even if the cues are dubious. Consider, for example, a Republican voter who follows Sarah Palin's Facebook page and reads on August 7, 2009 that the Affordable Care Act provides for 'death panels', or a group of bureaucrats that get to make decisions about an individual's health care.[3] The factually inaccurate statement was debunked by fact-checks and the media, yet, the myth persisted in the minds of almost half of Americans who believed that the Affordable Care Act allowed

[3] Palin, Sarah. August 7, 2009. Statement on the Current Health Care Debate. *Facebook.* See http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=113851103434.

for death panels (Ubel, 2013). A Republican likely follows this cue to help them make a decision in support or opposition of the Act based on Sarah Palin's inaccurate comments. In this case, voters who trusted Sarah Palin as a credible source were misled. In this manner, individual decisions can be helped or hindered by trusted sources. In many cases, the amount of trust an individual places on a given source can be attributed to existing political beliefs and preferences, as well as an individual's life experiences. Furthermore, Johnson, Dunaway, and Weber (2011) found that interest groups and the media are more persuasive than candidates when it comes to the persuasiveness of negative messages because interest groups and the media are preceived by viewers as more credible than candidates themselves. Simply stated, those sources that are perceived as dishonest lack the ability to persuade an individual of the validity of the message they are sending (Aronson & Golden, 1962). Stated formally,

Credible Source Hypothesis: ***Fact-checks will be influential since they are likely to be viewed as credible and emanating from a trustworthy source.***

Nonpartisan sources. Second, source characteristics, like the source's ideology may influence the persuasiveness of the fact-check because partisans are likely to select and to trust media that is congruent with their ideological leanings (Iyengar & Han, 2009; Stroud, 2011). However, citizens do not tune out information that is incongruent with their prior held beliefs, and, indeed, they may pay greater attention to counter attitudinal information (Knobloch-Westerwik & Meng, 2009; Kobayashi & Ikeda, 2009; Chaffee, Saphir, Sandvig, Graf, & Hahn, 2001). For example, Taber and Lodge (2006) found that subjects spend more time reading incongruent information and spend more time counter arguing incongruent information.

In particular, people often seek out corrective information that may conflict with their predispositions if the source of the information is deemed credible (Holbert, Hmielowski, & Weeks, 2012; Holbert, Garrett, & Gleason, 2010; Baumeister & Newman, 1994; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Therefore, I hypothesize that people's desire for accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check that is non-partisan since a non-partisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy. Stated formally,

Nonpartisan Source Hypothesis: ***People's desire for accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check from a nonpartisan source since a nonpartisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy.***

Partisan sources. Third, the well-known slant of partisan media provides citizens with cues about the credibility of a message (Baum & Groeling, 2009; 2010; Baum & Gussin, 2008; Turner, 2007) and thus the source of the fact-check could potentially increase or decrease the persuasiveness of the fact-check (Johnson, Dunaway, & Weber, 2011). For example, a fact-check cue from MSNBC stating that the Democratic candidate is being deceitful may be more influential than the same cue from FOX news because respondents understand that FOX leans conservative and MSNBC leans liberal and thus a cue from MSNBC that the Democratic candidate is being deceitful is more informative than the same message from a conservative leaning source that is inclined toward disagreement with the Democratic position. Put simply, I hypotheses that a source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position. Stated formally,

Source Conflict Hypothesis: ***A source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position.***

The Impact of Audience Characteristics

The third dimension of political persuasion is recipient effects -- the whom (Druckman & Lupia, 2000, 14). There are a number of political attitudes and demographic characteristics that may influence the persuasiveness of a fact-checks message, e.g. partisanship (e.g., Lodge & Taber, 2005; Taber & Lodge, 2006), ideology (Lane, 1962), and political knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; McGuire, 1968, 1972; Zaller, 1992). Not all individuals utilize the same characteristics when making up their minds (Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991). These audience characteristics are mediating factors that interact with the fact-check's source and message cues, as well as the source cues from candidates themselves, to moderate the persuasiveness of fact-checks. Therefore, I have developed three expectations regarding audience characteristics impact on the influence of fact-checking.

Impact of partisanship. An important recipient effect is related to the party identification of individuals. It is a well-established fact that party identification is a long-standing psychological attachment (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, & Weisberg, 2008; Miller & Shanks, 1996). Furthermore, voters use party identification as an information shortcut for political decisions because it is rational (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1991, Zaller, 1992). Scholars examining the influence of motivated reasoning find that prior beliefs are very strong in biasing new information (Taber & Lodge, 2006; Lodge & Taber, 2005). Moreover, Petty and Cacioppo (1977b) found that individuals are more likely to reject a mediating message if it is a topic of

"high ego involvement, commitment, or personal relevance" (645). This is because these individuals (strong partisans and strong ideologues) are incentivized to defend their true positions; they are less pervious to information that conflicts with their beliefs.

Partisanship is a mediating factor that interacts with the fact-check's source and message cues to moderate the persuasiveness of fact-checks. Thus, I have developed a partisanship hypothesis. That is, it is reasonable to expect that voters' who are strong partisans may be more likely to resist fact-check cues, when they run counter to existing beliefs, because strong partisans should be more concerned with defending their true political positions or the position of the candidate with a similar partisan affiliation. Specifically, partisanship should condition the impact of the fact-check on subjects' evaluations of candidates. While this hypothesis does have some overlap with my congruent message hypothesis, this hypothesis is explicit to strong partisans. My congruent message hypothesis, on the other hand, includes all partisans. Stated formally,

Partisanship Hypothesis: ***Partisanship will influence people's susceptibility to fact-checking.***

Impact of political knowledge. Political Knowledge of a respondent may also influence the persuasiveness of a fact-check (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; McGuire, 1968; 1972; Zaller, 1992). Political knowledge, also referred to as political sophistication or expertise, is perhaps the single most studied audience characteristic. Individuals pay more attention to information that directly affects their daily lives (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; 1984; Lau, 1982; McGraw & Steenbergen, 1997; McGuire, 1964; 1989), and a political message is more persuasive if people both comprehend and pay attention to the message. The implications of this scholarship are that the most politically sophisticated

are the most likely to receive new information. However, they are also the least likely to be persuaded by this information because highly politically sophisticated individuals are also the most likely to possess the skills necessary to critically evaluate the claim. That is, highly knowledgeable individuals, because they poses the skills necessary to understand the relationship between a message cue and their predispositions are able to resist a statement if the statement is incongruent with their political predispositions (Zaller, 1992).

Conversely, low information voters are the least likely to receive a message because this group tends to disregard politics. Finally, those who fall into the category of middle information voters are the most likely to be persuaded by information they receive because they receive some information, yet they may be less capable of critically evaluating the claim made (Cobb & Kuklinski, 1997; McGuire, 1989; Zaller, 1992). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that politically knowledgeable individuals, because they have the skills necessary to process a message, will more likely be persuaded by fact-check messages. This will be true especially if the message is of interest or relevant to them, and if the message comes from a nonpartisan source or a source that is making an incongruent statement. Stated formally,

Political Sophistication Hypothesis: ***The impact of fact-checks on people's assessment of political commercials will be more powerful for political sophisticates, especially compared to political novices.***

Tolerance to negativity. Finally, fact-checks – especially corrective ones – may influence how tolerant voters feel about a candidate and their political message. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that an individual's tolerance of political rhetoric,

especially negative political rhetoric, will influence their receptivity to negative advertisements (Funk, 1999; Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). I predict that all individuals will be less tolerant of political messages that are identified as untrue, but that those who are predisposed to be less tolerant to negativity will be the least tolerant of political messages that are identified as inaccurate by a fact-check and they will be the least likely to be persuaded by the negative message. Likewise, those who are predisposed to be less tolerant of negative messages will be less persuaded by negative messages even if they are identified as accurate by fact-checks, while those that are more tolerant of negativity will more likely be persuaded by the original political message that is labeled accurate. Stated formally,

Tolerance to Negativity Hypothesis: ***People with a low tolerance to negativity will be more influenced by the evidence presented in the fact-check if the fact-check indicates that the message is inaccurate and they will be less tolerant of negative messages overall, even if a fact-check states that the message is accurate.***

Summarizing the Theoretical Predictions

I have explained how the message cues and the source cues of a fact-check interact with citizens' characteristics to influence the impact of a fact-check on voters' evaluations of candidates and their political messages. I offer several hypotheses that will answer the empirical questions set out early in this chapter: (1) do fact-checks influence individuals' attitudes and evaluations of candidates' political messages? And (2) do fact-checks influence peoples' evaluations of candidates? Table 1.1 offers a summary of my predictions.

Table 1.1 About Here

Dissertation Outline

The remainder of this dissertation is devoted to examining the content of fact-checking and the impact of fact-checking on voters' evaluations of candidates and candidates' messages. In chapter 2, I describe my methodological approach. Specifically, I will discuss my sample and data collection for my content analysis and three experiments. I rely on an original content analysis of fact-checks from 2003-2012. I sampled and coded 1,267 fact-checks to model the amount and content of fact-checking over the ten year span. I also describe my three experiments which were conducted over the course of three elections.

In chapter 3, I evaluate the amount and content of fact-checks produced over a ten year period. I examine the difference in fact-checking by organization, the types of political communication that are often the subject of fact-checking, the candidates and campaigns that are fact-checked, and what the fact-checkers are finding.

In chapter 4, I examine the impact of fact-checking on evaluations of the tone, usefulness, and accuracy of political advertisements. I also evaluate respondents' acceptance of claims about candidates based on the fact-check message received. This experiment utilizes negative political advertisements aired by PACs during the 2012 Ohio Senate election.

In chapter 5, I utilize a 2013 New Jersey gubernatorial debate to determine the impact of fact-check message and source cues on evaluations of political candidates. I also assess how partisanship impacts the influence of fact-checks.

In chapter 6, I again use political advertisements, but add fact-check source cues to determine how fact-check message cues and source cues influence the persuasiveness

of fact-checks. For this experiment, the negative political commercials used were produced by the Senate candidates in Montana's 2014 election.

In chapter 7, I conclude my dissertation by summarizing my findings and emphasizing the role that fact-checking has in persuading voters. Included in this discussion is a summary of findings about how source, message, and audience effects interact with fact-checking to influences evaluations of candidates and their political messages. This chapter concludes by discussing the implications of these findings. Specifically, it lays out what can be learned about information processing and the campaign process from fact-checking. Finally, this chapter concludes by providing avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND DATA

Fact-checking, by indicating the truthfulness of candidate's political communications, may influence voters' evaluations of a candidate and their political messages. But what does fact-checking during American political campaigns look like and how are voters' influenced by fact-checks? In this dissertation I first examine the content of fact-checking to determine who is being fact-checked, the forms of political communication being checked, and the rulings about the truthfulness of candidate's claims. Second, I employ three experiments to determine the impact of fact-checking on evaluations of candidates and their communications. In the pages that follow, I discuss the design of the content analysis and each of the three experiments. Then I discuss the validity of the experiments.

The Content of Fact-checking

I begin my examination of fact-checking by evaluating what an average fact-check looks like.[4] To do this, I conduct an extensive content analysis of fact-checking organizations and newspaper fact-checks from 2003 to 2012. I begin my examination of fact-checking in 2003 and continue through December 31, 2012. I begin in 2003 because the Annenberg Public Policy Center launched FactCheck.org in 2003, the first official fact-checking organization and the template for the modern fact-check (Spivak, 2010). Thus, my sample period spans ten years of political coverage including three presidential elections, five Congressional elections, and ten years of state and local elections.

[4] An earlier version of this chapter is forthcoming in *The Praeger Handbook of Political Campaigning in the United States*.

To obtain the population of fact-checks, I look at two sources. First, I use *LexisNexis* to identify and collect every newspaper and wire story mentioning the word "fact check" (or "fact-check") in the headline or lead from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2012.[5] I identify 965 distinct fact-checks from 98 different newspapers. The newspapers range from large market newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The New York Post* to small market newspapers such as the *Deseret Morning News* of Salt Lake City, Utah and *The Santa Fe New Mexican*.[6]

Second, fact-checks from major fact-checking organizations were obtained from the organizations' digital archives for the 2003-2012 time period. Of the 117 fact-checking organizations, 16 are from major fact-checking organizations including *FackCheck.org, PolitiFact.com* and its affiliate news organizations*, The Washington Post's Fact-checker, the AZ Fact-check, The Seattle Times Truth Needle*, and *The Denver Post's Political Polygraph*. My search of fact-checking organizations produces 6,043 distinct fact-checks for a total of 7,008 distinct fact-checks for the period of analysis.

I sampled and coded 1,862 of the 7,008 fact-checks, beginning with a random start for each year from 2003 to 2012. Given the radical changes in the amount of fact-checking, I modify my sampling strategy based on the year of the fact-check. For 2003, 2005, and 2006, I code all fact-checks. For 2004, I rely on systematic sampling and use a

[5] When searching newspapers and wire services, I excluded all PolitiFact associated newspapers. PolitiFact is run by the Tampa Bay Times and partners with news organizations in 10 states. See Appendix B for the specific newspapers.

[6]Fact-checks were coded as political fact-check if they checked information of a political nature, e.g. politicians, candidates, campaigns, PACs, parties, etc. Additionally, each article was counted as a fact-check if and only if a claim/fact was explicitly examined and a determination about the truthfulness of the claim was stated. Given these criteria, only 31 of the original newspapers are represented in the final sample.

sampling interval of two. For the most recent period, 2007-2012, I utilize a sampling interval of four. From the original 1,862 fact-checks, I arrive at a sample of 1,267 fact-checks.[7]

I coded for more than 20 fact-check characteristics including the claimant and target of the fact-check and each ones party affiliation. I also coded for the form of political communication being examined, and the fact-check accuracy rating. The code sheet and book can be found in Appendix B. This content analysis allows me to construct the average fact-check by determining who is being fact-check, what forms of political communications fact-checkers are examining, and what the fact-checkers are saying about the truthfulness of a candidate and their communications.

How Fact-checking Influences Evaluations of Candidates and their Political Messages

Next, I utilize a series of experiments to examine the influence of fact-checks on citizens' evaluations of candidates and their political messages. The first experiment utilizes two negative advertisements from the 2012 Ohio Senate election aired by PACs. The second experiment employs one gubernatorial debate from the 2013 New Jersey Gubernatorial election. The third, and final, experiment uses two negative political advertisements from the 2014 Montana Senate election aired by the candidates. Together these three experiments provide a holistic picture of the impact of fact-checking over

[7]Of the 595 non-fact-checks, 10.08% were press releases/announcements, 13.78% were facts of the day, 18.99% were fact-checks, but did not check a fact about a candidate, campaign, politician, party, PAC, or other politically relevant topics, 44.03% were not fact-checks, rather news articles mentioning fact-checking, 3.6% were news quizzes, and 9.4% fell into the other category.

multiple elections and different forms of political communications. Each experiment is discussed in turn.

Experiment 1: a Senate race in Ohio. In the first experiment, I examine whether fact-checks of actual advertisements running during the 2012 U.S. Senate race in Ohio influence people's impressions of the candidates. I chose the Ohio race between Senator Sherrod Brown (D), a one-term incumbent, and State Treasurer Josh Mandel (R), a rising star in Ohio politics. In developing the experiment, I relied on two attack advertisements aired during the Ohio campaign; a negative advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown sponsored by the 60 Plus Association and a negative advertisement attacking Josh Mandel developed by Majority Pac.[8]

I conducted an on-line survey experiment with a nationwide sample of citizens in August of 2012.[9] A total of 452 subjects completed the experiment. All respondents were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions at the start of the Internet survey. The experiment had a two (i.e., advertisement attacking Brown or advertisement attacking Mandel) by three (i.e., no fact-check, accurate fact-check, inaccurate fact-check) design, producing six experimental conditions. At the start of the survey, respondents were given a brief description of the Ohio senate race and then they were directed to click on an Internet link. Depending on their experimental condition the respondent saw the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel or the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown. Some respondents also read either a fact-check claiming the advertisement was accurate or

[8] The websites for the two groups are www.60plus.org and www.majority2012.com.
[9] The survey was conducted by SSI (Survey Sampling International), using a sampling platform called SSI Dynamix.™ Please see http://www.surveysampling.com/modes/SSI%20online/SSI%20Dynamix.aspx for more information about SSI's sampling procedure.

inaccurate. After their exposure to the experimental stimuli, respondents were directed to fill out a short questionnaire assessing their impression of the negative advertisement.

Experiment 2: 2013 New Jersey Gubernatorial debate experiment. I relied on an in-person lab experiment where I employed a one (debate) by three (fact-checks sources) by three (fact-check message cues) experimental design which produced nine experimental conditions and one control condition for a total of ten conditions. The experiment took place over a 3-week period just prior to the November 2013 election. Three hundred twenty-one students were recruited from five political sciences course at Arizona State University in the fall of 2013. In each condition, participants were first exposed to an edited version of one of the 2013 New Jersey gubernatorial debates. The edited version included both candidates' opening and closing statements and three issue area questions/answers. The debate was edited to reduce the total time to about 13 minutes. The experiment was conducted throughout the day with half of all the experimental sessions taking place in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. In nine of the conditions, a fact-check was added as a banner at the bottom of the screen. The fact-checks offered varying message and source cues. Specifically, the fact-checks offer either confirming information (a fact-check that states the information in the campaign message is accurate), corrective information (a fact-check that states the information in a campaign message is inaccurate), or a mix of confirming and corrective information. In addition, the fact-checks source varied (FOX, MSNBC, PolitiFact).

After viewing the debate or viewing the debate with the scrolling fact-check, participants were given a brief description of the New Jersey gubernatorial race and then asked to fill out a survey that asked questions about the debate and fact-check they

viewed. The post-test included questions about the ability of each candidate to deal with specific policy topics discussed in the debate – minimum wage, taxes, and education – as well as respondent's trait assessments of each candidate. A number of political knowledge and demographic questions were also asked.

Experiment 3: 2014 Montana Senate election experiment. For the final experiment, nine hundred and ninety-three valid responses were collected via Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in June of 2014. Subjects were paid $1.00 for their participation. Respondents were required to have a HIT approval rate greater than or equal to 95% and at least 500 approved HITs. All subjects were required to be at least 18 years of age and U.S. citizens.

I employed a two (negative ads) by seven (fact-checks) factorial design which produced fourteen experimental conditions. The experiment started at noon on June 17, 2014 and closed at 10 a.m. on June 18, 2014. On average the survey took 14 minutes and 27 seconds to complete. The survey was built and distributed via Survey Monkey and randomization was used. In each condition, participants were first exposed to one of two negative political advertisements from the 2014 Montana Senate election. This senate election was chosen because it had an early primary and although it was not an open election, the incumbent, Democrat John Walsh, was appointed to the position only four months prior to the state's primary election. That is, compared to the first two experiments that had well known incumbents this experiment utilizes a race that mimics an open race. The two political ads were chosen because they are comparable in terms of the issues discussed in each ad – the federal debt, unemployment, and outsourcing jobs.

Finally, the advertisements were from the politicians, unlike the first experiment where they were from PACs.

In twelve of the conditions, respondents also received a fact-check of the political advertisement. The fact-checks offered varying message and source cues. Specifically, the fact-check stated that the claims in the negative advertisement were either accurate or inaccurate. Additionally, the fact-check source was varied indicating a neutral source (PolitiFact) or a partisan source (FOX or MSNBC). The message cue remained the same for each source. That is, there is one accurate message cue with three different sources cues and one inaccurate message cue with three different source cues.[10]

Before viewing one of the two negative ads, respondents were given a brief description of the Montana Senate race. They were then randomly assigned to view one of the two political ads. After viewing one of the political commercials (conditions 1 and 8) or viewing the political ad and reading a fact-check about the ad (conditions 2-7 and 9-14), participants filled out a survey that asked questions about the advertisement and the fact-check. The post-test included questions about the candidate's records in terms of unemployment, outsourcing jobs, and the federal debt – the three issues discussed in each advertisement. Questions about the candidates' traits were also asked. Finally, a number of political knowledge and demographic questions were asked. After completing the survey, subjects were debriefed and directed to the real FactCheck.org fact-check of the two political ads.

[10] The fact-checks were all based on one fact-check produced by FactCheck.org titled "Montana's Chinese Connection", posted on May 22, 2014. The fact-check can be found here: http://www.factcheck.org/2014/05/montanas-chinese-connection/.

Validity of the Experiments

All three experiments are strong on internal validity. Subjects were successfully randomized into the conditions and there is no difference among the groups in terms of demographic characteristics or political attitudes. Thus, I am confident that differences between groups in each experiment are driven by exposure to the experimental treatment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

While there are some threats to external validity in terms of generalizability and the interaction of the setting and the treatment for each experiment, the threat is reduced by the experimental design. Specifically, each experiment utilized real political communications, from real political races. Additionally, the fact-checks were created from real fact-checks, and, for experiment two and three, the fact-check sources indicated on the fact-checks are also real. That is, the measures in the experiments are realistic and mimic actually campaign information voters would typically see during an election. Finally, the use of three experiments, with three different populations provides a stiff test of the impact of fact-checking. That is, while any one experiment may suffer from threats to external validity, all three experiments together provide strong evidence of the influence of fact-checking on voters during political campaigns.

Summary of Experiments

In summary, I utilize three experiments to test my hypotheses on the influence of fact-checks on citizens' evaluation of political candidates and their messages. Table 2.1 summarizes the three experiments and indicates the hypotheses tested by each experiment, the experimental design, the subject pool, and the medium of campaign

communication. In chapter 3, I begin my examination of fact-checking with my content analysis. Chapters 4-6 present the results from my three experiments.

TABLE 2.1 ABOUT HERE

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE OF FACT-CHECKING IN AMERICAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

This chapter evaluates fact-checks as a way of identifying the average fact-check. I examine fact-check source differences in the quantity and type of fact-check produced over ten years of political campaigns. Additionally, I determine who fact-checkers are fact-checking, what types of political communication are the subject of fact-checks, and the fact-checkers ruling about the truthfulness of candidate's political statements.

Scholarly attention to fact-checking during campaigns has been limited, with most attention focusing on what counts as a legitimate fact-check (Graves & Glaisyer, 2012), the merits and potential effectiveness of fact-checking (Graves & Glaisyer, 2012, Nyhan & Reifler, 2012), and the overall increase in fact-checking during elections (Spivak, 2010). In the present work, I conduct an original content analysis of fact-checks, producing a comprehensive examination of the substance of fact-checking during American political campaigns.

Methods

I conduct an extensive content analysis of fact-checking organizations and newspaper fact-checks from 2003 to 2012.[11] I begin my examination of fact-checks in 2003 and continue through December 31, 2012. I begin in 2003 because the Annenberg Public Policy Center launched FactCheck.org in 2003, the first official fact-checking organization and the template for the modern fact-check (Spivak, 2010). Thus, my sample period spans ten years of political coverage including three presidential elections, five Congressional elections, and ten years of state and local elections.

[11] This Research is supported in part by Arizona State University Graduate Education.

To obtain the population of fact-checks, I look at two sources. First, I use *LexisNexis* to identify and collect every newspaper and wire story mentioning the word "fact check" (or "fact-check") in the headline or lead from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2012.[12] I identify 965 distinct fact-checks from 98 different newspapers. The newspapers range from large market newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The New York Post* to small market newspapers such as the *Deseret Morning News* of Salt Lake City, Utah and *The Santa Fe New Mexican*.[13]

Second, fact-checks from major fact-checking organizations were obtained from the organizations' digital archives for the 2003-2012 time period. Of the 117 fact-checking organizations, 16 are from major fact-checking organizations including *FackCheck.org, PolitiFact.com* and its affiliate news organizations*, The Washington Post's Fact-checker, the AZ Fact-check, The Seattle Times Truth Needle*, and *The Denver Post's Political Polygraph*. (See Appendix B for a complete list of sources included in the final sample and the number of fact-checks for each organization). My search of fact-checking organizations produces 6,043 distinct fact-checks for a total of 7,008 distinct fact-checks for the period of analysis.

I sampled and coded 1,862 of the 7,008 fact-checks, beginning with a random start for each year from 2003 to 2012. Given the radical changes in the amount of fact-

[12] When searching newspapers and wire services, I excluded all PolitiFact associated newspapers. PolitiFact is run by the Tampa Bay Times and partners with news organizations in 10 states. See Appendix B for the specific newspapers.

[13] Fact-checks were coded as political fact-check if they checked information of a political nature, e.g. politicians, candidates, campaigns, PACs, parties, etc. Additionally, each article was counted as a fact-check if and only if a claim/fact was explicitly examined and a determination about the truthfulness of the claim was stated. Given these criteria, only 31 of the original newspapers are represented in the final sample.

checking (see Figure 3.1), I modify my sampling strategy based on the year of the fact-check. For 2003, 2005, and 2006, I code all fact-checks. For 2004, I rely on systematic sampling and use a sampling interval of two. For the most recent period, 2007-2012, I utilize a sampling interval of four. From the original 1,862 fact-checks, I arrive at a sample of 1,267 fact-checks.[14]

Figure 3.1 About Here

My analysis shows that fact-checks average 18 paragraphs, with a median length of 15 paragraphs. Within the fact-check article, an average of 2.8 facts are checked, with each fact averaging about 6 paragraphs. Each fact analyzed contains a claim, an analysis of the claim, and a ruling about the degree of truth presented in the claim. Facts may include additional information about the claimant (e.g., party identification, sex, incumbency status, electoral office) as well as information about the target of the claim.[15]

A majority of the facts examine include both a claimant and a target (54%), while the remaining facts include only a claimant (47%). Box 1 provides an example of a typical fact. In this example, Mitt Romney is the claimant and Barack Obama is the target. Mitt Romney is claiming that the target, President Obama, began his presidency with an apology tour. In my content analysis, I code several dimensions of fact-checks about political candidates including the date of the fact-check, the type of election (e.g. presidential, House race, Senatorial race, gubernatorial race, etc.), who is being checked

[14] Of the 595 non-fact-checks, 10.08% were press releases/announcements, 13.78% were facts of the day, 18.99% were fact-checks, but did not check a fact about a candidate, campaign, politician, party, PAC, or other politically relevant topics, 44.03% were not fact-checks, rather news articles mentioning fact-checking, 3.6% were news quizzes, and 9.4% fell into the other category.

[15] A claimant is the individual who statement is being check by the fact-check and a target is an individual toward whom the statement is directed.

(e.g., is the claimant a presidential candidate, a Senate candidate, a House candidate, an incumbent or challenger, a Democrat or Republican), who is the target, the type of facts being checked (e.g., a statement in a speech, a claim in an advertisement), the source of the fact-check (i.e., the name of the media outlet or the fact-checking organization), and the accuracy of the fact being checked (e.g., very accurate, very inaccurate).

I also code non-campaign fact-checks. These facts often examine the statements and actions of sitting politicians. For example, about 18% of the fact-checks examine politicians' progress on campaign promises. By examining campaign and governing fact-checks, I can increase our understanding of the breadth and depth of fact-checks.[16]

Results: Fact-checking in American Politics

The lion share of fact-checking is being done by fact-checking organization. In particular, PolitiFact and its affiliate newspapers comprise more than one-third (34%) of all the fact-checks examined, followed by FactCheck.org at 28%, and the *Washington Post's* Fact-checker at 15%. The remaining 42 news organizations make up 23% of the sample of fact-checks. Thus, nearly two-thirds of the fact-checks are from two fact-checking organizations – PolitiFact.com and FactCheck.org.

Second, I find that fact-checking is much more common in presidential years than in midterm elections or "odd" election years (e.g., 2011, 2013). In particular, 88% of the facts are checked during presidential years while only about 10% of the facts are checked during midterm elections. Furthermore, facts are most likely to be check for presidential elections (77%), compared to congressional elections (16%), gubernatorial elections

[16] Both the author and a coder unfamiliar with the purpose of the project coded a small sample of fact-checks to check for inter-coder reliability. The two coders had 90.48 percent agreement, with a Cohen's Kappa score of 86.87 percent.

(4%), or other elections (2%). I also find that fact-checking is much more common in general elections, with 57% of facts being checked for general election campaigns, 40% of facts checked during primary campaigns, and a mere 2% of facts examined for runoff, recall, and special elections.

Box 1 Example: Fact from a Fact-check

Fact-checking the Romney campaign

One of Romney's most repeated attack lines is that Obama began his presidency "with an apology tour".

In his 2010 book, *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness,* Romney wrote that Obama was "signaling to foreign countries and foreign leaders that their dislike for America is something he understands and that is, at least in part, understandable. There are anti-American fire burning all across the globe; President Obama's words are like kindling to them."

PolitiFact examined seven separate speeches Romney mentioned as apologies. We found that while Obama used diplomatic language to acknowledge that America hasn't always been perfect, Obama also was quick to point out other countries' shortcomings and misperceptions. He would conclude by suggesting the countries work together and move forward.

Lauren Bloom, a business consultant and author of the book *The Art of the Apology*, noted that Obama's comments can't be considered apologies because he didn't use the words "sorry" or "regret." His on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand comments are more in line with traditional diplomatic language, not formal apologies, she said,

"Gov. Romney is trying to appeal to the inner John Wayne of his readers, and that has a certain emotional appeal," Bloom said. "For the rest of us, a level assessment of less-than-perfect human behavior is perfectly reasonable." PolitiFact rated Romney's oft-repeated charge as Pants on Fire.

Source: Holan, Angie Drobnick. October 21, 2012. Fact-checking foreign policy. PolitiFact.com. http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2012/oct/21/fact-checking-foreign-policy/.

Third, and as expected, the prevalence of fact-checking has increased over time, with 58% of the fact-checking occurring in the most recent election—2012.[17] I also find that fact-checking is not constant over the calendar year. As Figure 3.2 illustrates, the number of facts being checked increases as Election Day approaches.

Figure 3.2 About Here

In summary, I find fact-checking is a much more common practice in recent elections. However, the bulk of fact-checking is done by a small number of organizations. Furthermore, while fact-checking is routine in presidential contests, it is much less common in sub-presidential races for congress, statewide and local campaigns. The uneven distribution of fact-checking may be problematic. First, the availability of information examining the veracity of candidate claims is an important resource in all elections, not just presidential elections. In addition, while presidential contests, especially general election campaigns, tend to be competitive races with opposing candidates enjoying similar levels of resources, the same is not true in most statewide and local contests (Herrnson, 2004). Races for the U.S. House and Senate are often lopsided affairs with little news scrutiny. Precisely because these contests are noncompetitive, objective information sorting through the claims of candidates is an important tool for voters as they try to make their voting decisions.

[17] I find a dramatic increase in fact-checking in the most recent elections even though I sampled every fourth fact-check.

Results: Fact-checking and Campaign Events

Fact-checking has increased significantly in the last few election cycles and the incidence of fact-checking increases near the end of the year, corresponding with the November general election campaign. While political campaigns culminate on Election Day, I examine whether high profile campaign events during the primary and general election season correspond to increases in fact-checking. To investigate the relationship between fact-checking and campaign events, I compare the ebb and flow of published fact-checks during the 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns. As the data in Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 demonstrate, the frequency of fact-checking is responsive to political events. Looking at 2008, fact-checking spikes after the start of the primary season and then increases significantly around the time of the nominating conventions. In addition, fact-checking rises markedly around the time of the three presidential debates.

Figure 3.3 About Here
Figure 3.4 About Here

Fact-checking for 2012 follows a similar trend. The incidence of fact-checking increases after the start of the primary season. During late spring and early summer, fact-checking is less common, but increases in frequency around the conventions, especially the Republican convention. Finally, fact-checking increases again after the presidential debates in October and remains high as Election Day approached. The pattern of fact-checking during presidential campaigns suggests that fact-checking may provide an important resource for voters as they try to sort through the claims made by competing candidates during important primary contests, nominating conventions, and general election debates.

Results: Fact-checking by Partisanship and Status

Given the dominance of a few fact-checking organizations (i.e., two fact-checking organizations comprise two-thirds of all fact-checks examined in this study), it is important to see if the incidence of fact-checking is blind to the claimants' political party. Fact-checking of politicians, in theory, should be balanced across partisan lines. Unless Republicans or Democrats are more likely to stretch the truth, newspapers and fact-checking organizations should be equally likely to checks the claims made by politicians of both parties. When I examine the party of the claims being examined, I find that Republican claims are the subjected to scrutiny 64% of the time, while the claims of Democrats are only examined 31% of the time.

While these results may seem to indicate a partisan bias against Republicans, disaggregating by election year and type of race may help clarify the pattern. In the 2008 presidential campaign between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, I find that the claims of the Republican claimants were subject to examination 53% of the time, while the claims of Democratic claimants were examined 40% of the time.[18]

In 2012, Barack Obama, the Democratic incumbent president, ran uncontested during the nomination campaign, while the nominating campaign for the Republican Party was vigorously contested for months before Mitt Romney was officially nominated during the Republican Convention in late August. Therefore, it is not necessarily

[18] Here I examine only claims made by Democrats or Republicans. However, about 7 percent of claims in the 2008 presidential election and about 19 percent during the 2012 presidential election came from an a individual who identifies as an Independent, Libertarian, Tea Party, or nonpartisan. Additionally, some facts did not explicitly or overtly identify the partisanship of a claimant; these individuals were classified in a Don't Know category.

surprising that more fact-checks are published about claims made by Republicans in 2012. In particular, Republicans made 61% of the statements that were fact-checked in the 2012 presidential campaigns, while only 20% of the facts made by Democrats were checked. Of the 61% of the Republican statements fact-checked in 2012, the vast majority (43%) occur during the primary campaign. Facts about the general election are somewhat more balanced: claims of Republicans are fact-checked 31% of the time, while the claims of Democrats were fact-checked 21% of the time.

Overall, the pattern of fact-checking for presidential campaigns suggests that the claims of Republican politicians are more often subject to fact-checking. Even in 2008, when both Democrats and Republicans were contesting primaries, I find that the claims of Republicans claimants are more likely to be fact-checked.

Republicans have long bemoaned the "liberal press" (for a review, see Watts, Domke, Shah, & Fan, 1999) and the greater amount of fact-checking for Republicans seems to support this contention. Therefore, it is important to see if the partisan balance of fact-checking is more lopsided among certain media organizations. Looking at the presidential campaigns in 2008 and 2012, and eliminating 2012 primary campaign since only the Republican nomination campaign was contested, I see Republican claimants are more likely to be fact-checked, regardless of the source (see Figure 3.5). However, the propensity to focus on Republican statements is most pronounced for the Associate Press Fact-check and least pronounced for PolitFact.com.

Figure 3.5 About Here

While the facts presented by Republicans are more likely to be fact-checked, are these facts more likely to be described as inaccurate, compared to the facts examined for Democratic claimants? If the claims of Republicans are more likely to be described as accurate, compared to the claims of Democrats, then the greater scrutiny of Republican claims is less problematic. I have classified the accuracy statements made in fact-checks into six categories: true, mostly true, half true, mostly false, false, and inconclusive. [19] I find that Republican statements are less likely to be described as accurate (see Figure 3.6). Almost 50% of the statements made by Republican claimants are described as "false," while only 32% of the statements made by Democrats receive the "false" label. Similarly, the statements made by Democrats are more likely to be characterized as true, compared to the statements made by Republicans (32% versus 20%).

Figure 3.6 About Here

[19] The original 18 categories were: 1) True, the statement is true. 2) Mostly True, some slight exaggerations or omissions, but not an outright lie. 3) Half True/ Somewhat True, Somewhat False, moderate exaggerations or omissions. 4) Mostly False, more significant exaggerations or omissions, misleading impressions, significantly twisting the truth, but not necessarily factually inaccurate. 5) False, significant factual errors. 6) Pants on Fire, these are whoppers of a lie. 7) Lie of the year, such a large whopper of a lie that is supersedes all other lies in a given year. 8) Inconclusive, more evidence needed or withholding judgment until more information is available. 9) Can't be qualified, there is no evidence to support/contradict the statement and will likely never be/ the ruling totally depends on ones point of view. 10) True, but False, statements that are technically accurate, but are false because "they create a misleading impression that can be as powerful as an outright lie" (Dobbs 2007). 11) No Flip 12) Half Flip 13) Full Flop 14) Promise Kept 15) Promise in the Works 16) Compromise 17) Promise Stalled 18) Promise Broken. I re-classified the first 10 categories into four categories: true (categories 1, 2), mostly false (categories 4, 5, 6, 7), half true (3, 10) and inconclusive (8, 9) and exclude categories about issue position flips and campaign promises.

When I look at the presidential years of 2008 and 2012, I find the same pattern of results. In 2008, 43% of the statements with Republican claimants are described as false, while only 31% of the statements with Democratic claimants receive a false label. Similarly, only 19% of the Republican statements are classified as true, while almost one-third (31%) of the statements examined for Democratic claimants are described as true.

An examination of the 2012 presidential election illustrates the partisan difference in fact-checking once again. The statements of Republican claimants are described as inaccurate over half of the time (54%), while their statements are described as accurate only 22% of the time. Among the statements examined for Democratic claimants in 2012, less than one-third of the statements are described as false, while one-third of the statements are labeled as true.

In addition to the party of the claimant, the claimant's status as an incumbent or challenger is related to fact-checking. In particular, the statements of challengers are more likely to be fact-checked and are more likely to be classified as false, compared to the facts disseminated by incumbents.[20] For instance, when I examine all facts checked, I find 41 percent are from a challenger (1,471 facts) and 34 percent of all facts from the sample (1,207 facts) check an incumbent.[21] When I examine fact-checks of political commercials, I find 36 percent of facts checked are from challengers (273 facts) and 13 percents of all facts about political ads (103 facts) check an incumbent.

[20] From the entire sample, 41 percent of all facts checked are from a challenger (1,471 facts) and 34 percent of all facts from the sample (1,207 facts) check an incumbent. The remaining 25 percent are spread among PACs, parties, lobbies, unions, appointed individuals, nonprofits, and don't knows.

[21] The remaining 25 percent of the facts made are by PACs, political parties, political action committees, individuals, and others.

Furthermore, as the data in Table 3.1 illustrates, facts from challenger's political advertisements are more often rated "false" than are facts from incumbent's political advertisements (41% vs. 30%), and are less likely to be rated as true (21% v. 33%).[22] The greater scrutiny of challengers' advertisements is probably driven by the propensity of challengers to disseminate a larger proportion of negative advertisements, compared to incumbents (Kahn & Kenney, 2003).

Table 3.1 About Here

While the claims made by challengers are classified as false more often than the claims made by incumbents, the statements made by political action committees and political parties in their sponsored advertisements are even more likely to be classified as false. For instance, nearly half of the claims (48%) made in party sponsored advertisements are considered false, according to fact-checking.

Results: Types of Communications Being Fact-checked

While fact-checking began in the early 1990's as "ad watches," the variety of statements checked for accuracy by the news media and fact-checking organizations has grown more diverse over time. I look at the types of political communications that are being checked, coding for several different forms of political communication.[23] Among

[22] This table is only for political advertisements and only for the true to false facts. Thus I have excluded all other forms of political communication and issue flips/campaign promises. This adds up to 683 facts about ads that fall into the true-false range.

[23] In total, there are 48 forms of communications: Advertisements (negative, contrast, and positive), Speeches, Press Release, Interview, Debate, A statement, A policy, The State of the Union Address, An email, A mailer, campaign promise, newspaper ad, Blog, press conference/news conference, newspaper column, op-ed, twitter/tweet, website, Facebook Post, A letter, A video, a position, a memo, A photo, A robo call, a billboard, congressional hearing, a petition, Campaign Donor History, radio show/address, candidate questioner, press kit, a book, a fact sheet, common claims/rumors, an action, a

all facts examined, 33% are evaluating statements (including speeches and interviews), 21% analyze political advertisements, 17% focus on debates, 6% check a campaign promise, and 3% evaluate the veracity of claims made in emails. The remaining 11% of facts focus on alternative sources of communications.

When advertisements are examined for their accuracy, almost nine out of ten advertisements (88%) analyzed are negative advertisements. Furthermore, among these negative advertisements, almost half (43%) are rated as "false", only 15% are classified as "true," and 41% are considered a mix of true and false.[24]

The types of facts being checked also changes depending on the year. As the data in Figure 3.7 illustrate, during the early days of fact-checking (i.e., 2004), statements made during debates were most frequently examined, with debate statements being checked for their veracity 63% of the time. In comparison, advertisements were less frequently the subject of fact-checking, making up only 21% of the fact-checking in 2004. In the most recent presidential elections, fact-checking has become more diverse, focusing more evenly on debates and advertisements, with a significant rise in fact-checking for statements made in speeches and interviews.

Figure 3.7 About Here

The pattern of fact-checking also varies for on-year and off-year elections. In particular, advertisements make up a majority of fact-checking during non-presidential years, accounting for 61% of all fact-checking in 2006 and 50% of all fact-checking in

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biography, a facial expression, tax calculator, a condom wrapper, a conference call, flier, report, White House Briefing, infographic, campaign website, Comic, not clear/ Other.

[24] I examine the 448 facts about negative advertisements that are classified as true, false, or a mix of true and false. I exclude facts about advertisements from odd election years.

2010. In comparison, advertisements account for less than 30% of all fact-checking in each of the presidential years examined. Instead, fact-checking during presidential years is more likely to concentrate on statements made during speeches and interviews. The difference in fact-checking during presidential and non-presidential years reflects differences in resources. It is more challenging to verify the statements made by hundreds of candidates for congress than to examine the text of speeches and interviews for a handful of presidential candidates.

The type of political communications that are subject to fact-checking varies with electoral office. The data in Figure 3.8 indicate that advertisements are the focus of fact-checking for sub-presidential races. For instance, in primary and general election contests for U.S. House, advertisements make up the bulk of all fact-checking. In fact, more than two-thirds of facts checking in general election contests involving House candidates examine political advertisements.

Fact-checking in presidential campaigns, in contrast, is less likely to focus on the veracity of political commercials. Instead, news organizations and fact-checking organizations spend more time assessing the statements made by claimants. For example, in general election contests, almost half of the fact-checks of claimants focus on the claimants statements. In presidential primary campaigns, statements by claimants are subjected to fact-checking somewhat less often, making up about one third of all fact-checks. While claimants statements are less likely to be scrutinized during presidential primaries, compared to presidential general elections, debates are more likely to be subjected to fact-checking in the primary campaign (45% v. 19%). The greater focus on fact-checking in primary debates, compared to general elections, is likely a consequence

of the greater frequency of presidential debates during the nominating campaign. For example, between December 2011 and February 2012, the Republican presidential candidates took part in nine presidential debates, compared to three presidential debates during the general election period.

Figure 3.8 About Here

Conclusion

Fact-checking of political communications has become a mainstay of the modern electoral campaign. The study reported in this chapter, the most comprehensive examination of the substance of fact-checking to date, documents the meteoric rise of fact-checking. In addition, I find that fact-checking increases in the run-up to the general election and that the incidence of fact-checking spikes after major political events, like debates, primary contests, and conventions.

I also show that fact-checking of political messages is dominated by a few organizations. For example, almost two-thirds of the fact-checks are from two fact-checking organizations: PolitiFact.com and FactCheck.org. The dominance of a few fact-checking organizations is potentially problematic. While these organizations are non-partisan, my results indicate that fact-checking is more common for Republicans than Democrats. Furthermore the statements of Republicans are more likely to be classified as false, compared to the statements of Democrats. Does the partisan difference in fact-checking reflect differences in the candidate's status and partisan control of the government? In this study, I find the bulk of fact-checking occurred during 2008-2012 (see Figure 3.1) and during this period, Republicans did not control the presidency or the U.S. Senate. Therefore, the Republicans out-party status may have encouraged these

candidates to disseminate more negative messages than Democrats, leading to more fact-checking of these communications. Future research is needed to clarify the relationship between partisanship and fact-checking.

The likelihood of fact-checking also depends on the status of the candidates and the type of election. For instance, more than three-quarters of the claimants (77%) subjected to fact-checking are commenting on presidential elections, with congressional claimants accounting for 16% and gubernatorial claimants making up only 4% of all fact-checks. Furthermore, the kind of fact-checking varies by election and by candidate. Among claims made in presidential elections, fact-checking is more diverse, covering statements made in interviews, speeches, and debates as well as arguments presented during commercials. In contrast, fact-checking for congressional and gubernatorial races is more focused on political commercials. For instance, over two-thirds of the fact-checking for claims about House races emphasizes political advertisements, with less than one-quarter of fact-checking examining the content of candidates' speeches or debates.

Fact-checking can help voters become more informed about the candidates. However, these fact-checks need to be non-partisan and available for all candidates, regardless of status and level of election. And, fact-checking should not be limited to analyzing political commercials. Instead, offering citizens a more diverse range of critical assessment of candidates' statements would provide valuable information for citizens as they try to sort out competing claims during campaigns.

CHAPTER 4

FACT-CHECKING NEGATIVE ADS: RESULTS FROM A 2012 SENATE RACE

The content analysis data from the previous chapter revealed some important differences in fact-checks. Specifically, I find that fact-checking is dominated by two fact-checking organizations. In addition, Presidential elections are the most fact-checked elections in American politics. I also found that Republicans were more likely to be the subject of fact-checking than are Democrats. Furthermore, Republicans are less likely than Democrats to receive an accurate rating. Finally, the content analysis revealed that fact-check examine many forms of candidates political communications, but fact-checks of negative political ads comprise the bulk of all fact-checking.

Despite these findings, the content analysis cannot test the impact of fact-checking on the persuasiveness of candidate communication. In order to test the impact of fact-checking on the persuasiveness of candidate messages, I designed three innovative experiments. In this chapter I will discuss the first experiment. The remaining two experiments will be the subjects of chapters 5 and 6. The goal of this chapter is to determine if fact-checks of negative political advertisements influence voters' evaluations of the advertisements usefulness, accuracy, and tone. Additionally, I seek to determine if fact-checks influence voters' assessments of specific claims made in the advertisements.

In this experiment, I examine whether fact-checks of real negative political advertisements influences citizen's impressions of the two senate candidates' messages. I chose the 2012 Ohio senate elections between incumbent Sherrod Brown (D) and challenger Josh Mandel (R), the Ohio state Treasurer. In this present study, I rely on an experiment to investigate the impact of fact-checks on the effectiveness of political commercials. This

experiment builds and improves on previous work in four significant ways. First, by relying on an Internet survey, I am able to recruit a large sample of subjects (i.e., 452 subjects), roughly representative of the nation at large. Second, unlike the previous experiments, I vary subjects' exposure to a political advertisement as well as exposure to a fact-check. Third, subjects participated in the study in the midst of the election, thereby increasing the realism of the study. Finally, I examine fact-checks, instead of "ad watches" since fact-checks are more likely to dominate campaign news in today's elections (Corn, 2012).

Hypotheses

Political messages are first and foremost about persuasion. The architects of campaigns spend nearly all of their time developing and delivering messages aimed at persuading citizens to support their candidates on Election Day. The most common and expedient way for candidates to deliver persuasive messages in U.S. campaigns is via political advertisements disseminated on television and on the Internet. While campaign commercials vary in their content, the vast majority of persuasive messages are negative critiques of opponents (e.g., West, 2010). Competitive campaigns include a steady barrage of back and forth attacks waged by candidates as well as by the political parties and outside groups (e.g., Franz & Ridout, 2010).

In recent elections, the torrent of political commercials has been supplemented with a plethora of fact-checking. These fact-checks provide potential voters with additional information, easily accessible, often free, and routinely inserted into the swill of charges and counter charges distributed during campaigns. This new development generates a key question: Do fact-checks mediate or condition the influence of attack advertisements aimed at voters?

Researchers have begun to examine how corrective information encourages people to adjust their understanding of certain facts.[25] The results of these studies are mixed; Nyhan and Reifler (2010) find corrective information, on average, does not change people's beliefs. Furthermore, people are less likely to use corrective information to update their beliefs when the new information runs counter to their ideological beliefs. In contrast, Berinksy (2012) finds corrective information is more influential, especially when attributed to a credible source.[26]

In developing expectations regarding the impact of fact-checks on people's assessments of political advertisements, I turn to the study of persuasion which began in earnest with Carl Hovland and his colleagues in the 1950s (e.g., Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953), continued with McGuire (1968; 1969; 1972), and was refined with the introduction of dual-mode processing models of persuasion (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Wegener, 1998).

In understanding how people process information, researchers have differentiated between systematic (or central) processing versus heuristic (peripheral) processing. With systematic processing, people attempt to comprehend and evaluate the message's arguments as well as assess the truthfulness of the message. When people rely on systematic processing, characteristics of the message, such as the presence of high quality arguments (Petty & Wegener, 1998), are influential. In contrast, when people are employing the heuristic mode of processing, they will rely on cognitive short cuts; therefore, characteristics

[25] A number of scholars have examined the impact of corrective information on policy attitudes (e.g., Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schweider, & Rich, 2000; Sides & Citrin, 2007).
[26] See also Lewandowky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, and Cook (2012) and Nyhan, Reifler, and Ubel, (2013).

of the source, such as credibility, trustworthiness, or attractiveness will be more powerful (for a review see Petty & Wegener, 1998).

Drawing on findings from the vast literature on persuasion, I can develop expectations regarding the effectiveness of fact-checking of political commercials. The most common approach in fact-checking is bringing publically accessible data (e.g., voting records, attendance, prior speeches, sources of campaign funds, newspaper reports) to bear on the candidates' claims in order to refute or support the assertions made in the advertisements. In addition, fact-checks rely on a number of arguments, not just assessment of a single claim, when assessing the accuracy of commercials. I expect a fact-check will be particularly persuasive because of the quality *and* number of arguments presented in these forms of communication.

In addition, the source for most fact-checks, especially compared to political commercials, will heighten the persuasiveness of fact-check messages. Political advertisements are created by and paid for by the candidates, political parties or groups allied with the candidates. Political advertisements are paid political propaganda. Fact-checks are created by the news media or "watch dog" groups with the expressed intention of objectivity and the stated goal of "searching for the truth" in the advertisements.[27] I expect fact-checks will be influential since they are likely to be viewed as credible and emanating from a trustworthy source. Furthermore, given the amount and quality of the evidence offered in the fact-checks, the fact-check message may be seen as originating from an expert source.

[27] Even though trust in the news media has declined in recent years (Ladd, 2011), I contend that people will be more likely to view a non-partisan fact-checking organization as a trustworthy source, especially compared to the source of a political advertisement.

While I expect fact-checks to be persuasive, certain types of fact-checks may be more influential than others. In particular, a fact-check of a political advertisement can either support or challenge the assertions made in a political commercial. For instance, *PolitiFact* gives the most misleading advertisements a score of "pants on fire," while the most accurate advertisements are rated as "true." Given the well-established negativity bias in information processing (e.g., Taylor, 1991), I expect fact-checks concluding that a commercial is misleading will be more powerful than fact-checks indicating that a commercial is accurate.

Furthermore, I do not expect fact-checks to be uniformly influential across all segments of the electorate. We know people vary in their motivation and ability to process messages (Chaiken, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1998). Thus I expect certain types of citizens will be more affected by fact-checking of political commercials. In particular, I theorize that three distinct characteristics of citizens will condition the influence of fact-checks on attitudes: citizens' levels of sophistication about politics; individuals' tolerance toward negative campaign messages; and people's partisan attachments.

A small subset of the citizenry possesses a significant amount of stored knowledge about politics and a familiarity with candidates and political parties (e.g. Converse, 2006; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997; Zaller, 1992). These individuals have the motivation and the ability to process political arguments more effortlessly and efficiently (McGraw, Lodge, & Stroh, 1990). Given their skills and motivation, I expect political sophisticates to effectively sort through the analytical information presented in fact-checks and employ these bits and pieces of information when assessing political commercials. In other words, I hypothesize

that the impact of fact-checks on people's assessment of political commercials will be more powerful for political sophisticates, especially compared to political novices.

While the importance of political sophistication has been studied extensively for about half of a century, recent research has identified "tolerance towards negativity" as an important characteristic for understanding people's receptivity to negative campaigning (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). In particular, Fridkin and Kenney (2011) find that certain people are far less tolerant of negative information and these individuals are *more* influenced by negative advertising. In contrast, people with higher levels of tolerance are less affected by negative campaigning.

I believe people's tolerance towards negativity will influence their receptivity to fact-checking of negative messages. Citizens who are sensitive to negative campaigning (i.e., individuals with a low tolerance for negativity) will be more adept at identifying negative messages because they are more vigilant and attentive to such information. When presented with a negative message, citizens with low tolerance for negativity will engage in more effortful processing of all information relevant to the negative commercial (e.g., the negative commercial as well as the fact-check analyzing the negative commercial). Therefore, I expect people with low tolerance to negativity will be more influenced by the evidence presented in the fact-check.

Finally, I expect partisanship will influence people's susceptibility to fact-checking. Researchers examining motivated reasoning find partisans are resistant to information challenging their established beliefs and more open to information consistent with their pre-existing attitudes (Lodge & Taber, 2005; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Thus, partisan attachment should condition the influence of fact-checking, depending on partisanship of the candidate

targeted in the negative advertisement. For example, when citizens watch an advertisement attacking a Democrat and the advertisement is followed by a fact-check authenticating the claims in the advertisements, I expect Republicans will be more receptive to the information in the fact-check compared to Democrats. However, when the same advertisement is followed by a fact-check disputing the claims in the negative advertisement, I expect the fact-check will be more influential for Democrats than Republicans.

In summary, fact-checks are expected to be persuasive given their message characteristics (e.g., presentation of evidence; detailed argumentation) and source characteristics (e.g., expert, credible, trustworthy). However, I expect negative fact-checks (e.g., fact-checks contradicting the claims of a negative advertisement) will be more powerful than positive fact-checks. Finally, I hypothesize people's level of political sophistication, intolerance towards negativity, and partisanship will condition their reaction to fact-checking. I turn next to a discussion of my research design.

Method

In this experiment, I examined whether fact-checks of actual advertisements running during the 2012 U.S. Senate race in Ohio influence people's impressions of the candidates. I chose the Ohio race between Senator Sherrod Brown (D), a one-term incumbent, and State Treasurer Josh Mandel (R), a rising star in Ohio politics. The contest was competitive; spending by candidates and outside groups reached nearly $80 million (opensecrets.org).[28] Additionally, there was a great deal of negative advertising by both sides. Broadcast stations aired more than 64,000 ads with the majority of the advertising coming from outside groups, conservative groups like Crossroads GPS and liberal groups, such as the National Education

[28] http://www.opensecrets.org/overview/topraces.php?cycle=2012&display=currcandsout

Association's NEA Fund (Keith, 2012). The Ohio senate race, like approximately 40% of senate campaigns, was hard-fought (Kahn & Kenney, 1999). Furthermore, the spending pattern in the Ohio contest has become typical of hotly contested senate races in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission.*

In developing the experiment, I relied on two attack advertisements aired during the Ohio campaign; a negative advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown sponsored by the 60 Plus Association and a negative advertisement attacking Josh Mandel developed by Majority Pac.[29] I focus on negative advertisements because journalists are more likely to pay attention to negative advertisements (Geer, 2012) and fact-checks of negative advertisements are much more common than fact-checks of positive advertisements (Min, 2002). In addition, my content analysis confirmed that more than 85% of all advertisements that are the subject of fact-checks are negative advertisements.

I examine negative advertisements from outside groups, compared to the candidates' advertisements, because outside groups spent more money than the candidates in key races, including Ohio's senate race, during the 2012 election (Keith, 2012). Indeed, negative advertisements are much more common from outside groups than from the candidates themselves (Fowler & Ridout, 2010). I provide a storyboard for each of the commercials used in the experiment in Appendix B.

I relied on an Internet survey experiment with a two (i.e., advertisement attacking Brown or advertisement attacking Mandel) by three (i.e., no fact-check, accurate fact-check, inaccurate fact-check) design, producing six experimental conditions. At the start of the survey, respondents were given a brief description of the Ohio senate race and then they

[29] The websites for the two groups are www.60plus.org and www.majority2012.com.

were directed to click on an Internet link.[30] Depending on their experimental condition (see Table 4.1), the respondent saw the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel or the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown. For respondents in Conditions 2-3 and 4-5, the respondent also read either a fact-check claiming the advertisement was accurate or inaccurate (e.g., respondents in Conditions 2 saw the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel and then read a fact-check article describing the advertisement as accurate). After their exposure to the experimental stimuli, respondents were directed to fill out a short questionnaire.[31]

Table 4.1 Here

I took a number of steps to increase the realism of the stimulus. To begin, subjects in the experiment were exposed to actual advertisements from an ongoing senatorial campaign. In addition, I relied on actual fact-checks disseminated during the Ohio campaign to create the four simulated fact-check articles utilized during the experiment.[32] Finally, I obtained a

[30] The following is the brief description of the Ohio Senate Race: "Ohio, a microcosm of the country politically, is a crucial battleground state in the upcoming election. In Ohio, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown is running for re-election to a second term. Brown is being challenged by Ohio State Treasurer Josh Mandel. Mandel won his party's primary with 63% of the vote. Brown and Mandel have raised more than $25 million in their bid for the U.S. Senate. That amount makes the contest for the U.S. Senate the most expensive Senate race in Ohio history. And that's not counting outside spending, which is thought to be about $12 million. Polling in the state is close, with Brown enjoying a slight lead in the most recent polls."

[31] See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

[32] See the original http://www.factcheck.org/2012/06/at-it-again/ for a fact-check of the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown and see http://www.majority2012.com/2012/05/news/releases/running-man-facts/ for facts substantiated the claims made in the attack on Josh Mandel. The actual fact-check articles used in the experiment are presented in Appendix B.

large and diverse national sample of respondents instead of using a convenience sample of students. [33]

Sample. To examine the impact of fact-checks on the persuasiveness of negative advertisings, I conducted an on-line survey experiment with a nationwide sample of citizens in August of 2012.[34] A total of 452 subjects completed the experiment. In Table 4.2, I compare the demographic characteristics of the Internet sample with recent census data as well as data from the Pew Research Center for People and the Press. While the sample is more educated than the population, it is representative of the nation in terms of age and gender. Furthermore, the partisan and ideological distributions of the sample are very similar to distributions reported by the Pew Research Center.

Table 4.2 Here

Randomization. All respondents were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions at the start of the Internet survey. There were no statistically significant differences among the six groups in terms of political attitudes (i.e., party, ideology, political interest, and political sophistication) or demographic characteristics (i.e., education, age, and gender). Given the success of randomization, if I find differences across

[33] We secured approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at our institution and followed IRB protocol. Subjects were not made aware of the purpose of the study and were debriefed after the conclusion of the survey. In addition, I excluded Ohio residents from our sample because of the potential to influence citizens' voting decisions in the midst of a highly competitive campaign. We were required to balance the ethical considerations of deceiving potential voters against the potential gains of improving the external validity of the project.

[34] The survey was conducted by SSI (Survey Sampling International), using a sampling platform called SSI Dynamix.™ Please see http://www.surveysampling.com/ssi-media/Corporate/Fact-Sheets-2013/ESOMAR-28 for more information about SSI's sampling procedure.

the groups after respondents' exposure to the political advertisement and the fact-checks, I can be confident that these differences are driven by respondents' experimental treatments.

Survey Questions. Following the introduction of the experimental stimulus, respondents were asked a series of questions assessing their impression of the negative advertisement (e.g., Did you find the advertisement useful?). I also asked questions measuring respondents' evaluations of Brown and Mandel. I gauged respondents' acceptance of the claims made about the candidate during the negative commercials. For example, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement, "Josh Mandel broke his promise to serve out his four year term for treasurer of Ohio when he declared his candidacy for the U.S. Senate." I relied on standard measures used routinely to assess people's political attitudes (e.g. I relied on the standard ANES questions to assess people's partisanship and ideology).

I expect people's reactions to political messages to be conditioned by their level of political sophistication and tolerance for negative messages. To measure political sophistication, I rely on four open-ended factual questions to discourage guessing (Mondak, 2000).[35] The political sophistication index has a mean of 2.2 correct answers and a standard deviation of 1.4. I also asked respondents a number of questions to ascertain their tolerance toward negativity since prior research indicates people with less tolerance toward negativity will be more influenced by negative advertising (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). I rely on a four-item index to assess people's tolerance towards negative messages; the intolerance to negativity index has a mean of 11.4 and a standard deviation of 2.7. I turn now to an

[35] See Appendix B.

examination of the results of the experiment by looking at how fact-checks influence people's reactions to the negative commercials.

Results

Accuracy of Negative Advertisements. In this experiment, people are asked to assess the accuracy of the negative advertisements aimed at the candidates running for Ohio's senate seat. Overall, 18% of the respondents view the advertisements as "not accurate at all," while 39% of the respondents rate the advertisements as "somewhat accurate," and 21% classify the advertisements as "very accurate." People's assessments of the ads' accuracy does not depend on whether they watch the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel or the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown (F=.123, ns). However, as expected, people's views of the accuracy of the advertisements are influenced by their exposure to the fact-check. The findings in Figure 4.1 (i.e., a higher score represents agreement that the ad is accurate) demonstrate that people who are exposed to an advertisement followed by a fact-check asserting the "truthfulness" of the advertisement offer the most positive assessments of the advertisement's accuracy. People who are exposed to a fact-check describing the advertisement as "mostly false" rate the advertisement as significantly less accurate.[36] These results indicate the fact-checks are effective at influencing people's views regarding the veracity of the commercials.

Figure 4.1 Here

Assessments of the Usefulness and Tone of Negative Advertisements. We know citizens often consider the relevance and civility of messages during campaigns. When

[36] This difference, according to the results of the one-way ANOVA, is statistically significant at $p<.01$ ($F=34.93$).

responding to negative advertisements, citizens are more receptive to negative messages focusing on topics relevant to governing (e.g., a challenger's experience). People's attention to relevant messages is well established in social psychology (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Haugtvedt, 1992) and recent work has demonstrated the importance of relevant messages in political communication (e.g., Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). I expect the content of fact-checks may influence people's assessments of the relevance or utility of the negative message. In particular, if a fact-check questions the truthfulness of an advertisement, I expect people will consider the advertisement less useful. Conversely, if a fact-check documents the accuracy of an advertisement, people may view the advertisement as more useful than the advertisement that has not been fact-checked. [37]

In addition to the relevance of negative messages, people also respond to the tone of the messages. It is known from a growing literature on campaigning that negative advertisements vary in their tone, some negative message are delivered in an uncivil manner, while other negative commercials utilize a less contentious tone (Brooks & Geer, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). We also know that people are more likely to notice messages delivered in an uncivil manner, compared to advertisements with a more courteous tone (e.g., Mutz & Reeves, 2005). I am interested in examining whether a fact-check of a negative message influences people's assessment of the civility (tone) of the advertisement. I expect negative advertisements viewed as inaccurate by a fact-check will be viewed more

[37] Twenty-seven percent of the respondents rated the advertisements as "not useful at all," 48% described the advertisements as "somewhat useful," and 25% said the advertisements are "very useful." People's assessments of the ads' usefulness did not vary depending on whether they watched the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel or the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown (F=.746, ns).

harshly by respondents.[38] In particular, I expect people will view these advertisements as embracing a more hostile tone simply because the messages are presenting inaccurate information according to the fact-check. In contrast, advertisements regarded as more truthful by the fact-check are likely to be viewed more favorably by respondents, leading them to view the tone of these commercials as more civil.

The results of these analyses are presented in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3(i.e., a higher score represents agreement that the tone of the advertisement is more civil and the content is more useful). Both tests indicate the fact-check detailing the inaccuracies in the negative advertisement is more influential than a fact-check validating the commercial's claims when predicting people's assessment of the tone and usefulness of the advertisement.[39] More specifically, the fact-check claiming inaccuracies in the attack ad produces a significantly more negative view of the advertisement's utility and tone. The fact-check describing an advertisement as accurate, in contrast, leads to only modest improvements in people's assessments of the usefulness and tone of the negative advertisement. These results suggest that the fact-check detailing falsehoods and inaccuracies in the advertisement is more powerful than the fact-check reinforcing the message presented in the advertisement. The analyses resonate with the literature demonstrating people place greater weight on negative information (e.g., Lau, 1982).

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[38] Overall, 17% of the respondents viewed the advertisements as "overly hostile," 51% classified the advertisements as "somewhat hostile" and 28% rated the advertisements as "not hostile at all." People's assessments of the ads' tone did not vary depending on whether they watched the advertisement attacking Josh Mandel or the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown (F=.127, ns).

[39] The ANOVA examining the impact of experimental condition on ratings of the usefulness of the advertisement is significant (F=7.12, $p<.01$) and the ANOVA examining the impact of the experimental condition on the rating of the tone of the advertisement is significant (F=7.86, $p<.01$).

Figure 4.2 About Here
Figure 4.3 About Here

Accepting Claims in Negative Advertisements. Candidates, interest groups, and campaign consultants rely on negative advertising to promote negative views of their rivals. Typically, commercials containing negative information about candidates highlight such topics as controversial votes in the legislature, weaknesses in a candidate's personal qualifications, or linking candidates to unpopular public policies (Geer, 2006). If citizens accept the negative information disseminated in the advertisements, they will theoretically develop more negative impressions of the targeted candidate.

I am interested in examining whether people's likelihood of accepting negative claims disseminated in advertisements depends on the content and presence of a fact-check. I expect that people are more likely to accept the claims discussed in a commercial if the claims are independently verified by a fact-check message. Conversely, if a fact-check challenges the validity of the commercial's claims, then I predict people will be significantly less likely to accept the commercial's claims.

I examine the relationship between fact-checking and negative information by examining whether people accept some or all of the claims offered in the commercials. For example, in the advertisement attacking Sherrod Brown, the announcer claims Brown has helped increase the national debt by voting for every bailout proposed by President Bush and President Obama. I asked respondents to indicate their degree of agreement with the statement, "Sherrod Brown is responsible for increases in the national debt." Similarly, in the advertisement criticizing Josh Mandel, the announcer asserts Josh Mandel missed important meetings as state treasurer because he was fundraising in Hawaii. I asked

respondents to tell us how much they agreed with the statement, "Josh Mandel has missed important official meetings as Ohio treasurer." I asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with three "factual statements" for each candidate.[40]

I expect people exposed to the negative advertisement will be more likely to agree with the statements about the candidate in the advertisement. But, I expect people who are exposed to a fact-check confirming the allegations will be most likely to agree with the information in the advertisement, while people reading a fact-check challenging the commercial's assertions will be less likely to agree with the advertisement's claims. I compare people's responses to the "factual statements" based on their experimental conditions to test my expectations and the findings are presented in Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5.

To be sure, people's likelihood of accepting the advertisements' messages is affected powerfully by their exposure to the fact-checks. Turning first to subjects exposed to the attack on Josh Mandel, people's scores on the nine-point index varied by more than two points, on average, depending on whether they were exposed to the fact-check asserting the accuracy of the advertisement compared to people exposed to the fact-check challenging the veracity of the statements in the commercials (i.e. 10.00 versus 7.97).[41] Similarly, people exposed to the advertisement aimed at Sherrod Brown are significantly less likely to agree

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[40] See Appendix B for exact question wording for the "factual questions about the candidates." In creating the index, I recoded people's answers so the index ranges from 3 (disagree strongly with each of the assertions) to 12 (agree strongly with each of the assertions). The Brown index has a mean of 7.8 with a standard deviation of 2.1. The Mandel index has a mean of 8.6 with a standard deviation of 2.1).

[41] The mean difference between Conditions 1-3, according to the results of the one-way ANOVA, is statistically significant at $p<.01$ ($F=17.98$, $n=222$). Similarly, the mean difference between Conditions 4-6, according to the one-way ANOVA results, is also statistically significant at $p<.01$ ($F=7.69$, $n=223$).

with the "factual" statements when they are given the fact-check disputing the claims in the advertisement compared to people reading the fact-check claiming the accusations are accurate (i.e., 8.45 versus 7.15).

Figure 4.4 Here
Figure 4.5 Here

People's assessment of the "factual statements" do not differ for (1) people exposed only to the negative advertisement and (2) people exposed to the negative advertisement and the fact-check confirming the accuracy of the negative advertisement (i.e., 9.42 in Condition 1 versus 10.00 in Condition 3, 8.31 in Condition 4 versus 8.45 in Condition 6). These results demonstrate that the negative fact-check is more powerful than the positive fact-check. In fact, people exposed to the negative advertisement, followed by the fact-check questioning the veracity of the advertisement, are less likely to accept the claims about the candidate than people who had not received a negative advertisement attacking the candidate. For instance, people exposed to the advertisement attacking Brown, followed by the fact-check detailing the misstatements in the advertisement, accept fewer claims than people who did not view the advertisement attacking Brown (i.e., these subjects viewed the anti-Mandel advertisement).[42]

How People's Predispositions Affect Responsiveness to Fact-checking. I have demonstrated that fact-checking influences people's assessments of the tone, usefulness, and accuracy of advertisements as well as people's willingness to accept the claims made in these advertisements. I turn now to determine whether certain types of people are more responsive to fact-checking of negative commercials. In the upcoming analyses, I focus only

[42]This difference (7.69 versus 7.15), however, is not statistically significant (at $p<.05$).

on people's reaction to fact-checks detailing inaccuracies in the negative commercials since, in accordance with my theoretical expectation; I have found that inaccurate fact-checks are the most powerful.

The dependent variable for this analysis is an index combining subject's evaluations of the accuracy, tone, and usefulness of the negative advertisement.[43] In order to examine the conditional relationship between people's predispositions and their reactions to fact-checking, I estimate a multiplicative analysis with OLS regression, controlling for forces known to affect people's views of the advertisements. I include a measure of ideology since research suggests that less conservative citizens are more "turned off" by negativity (e.g., Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1997). Similarly, people's interest in politics may alter their views of the negative commercials with politically interested people being more open to all types of campaign communications, including attack advertisements. In addition, intolerance to negativity and political sophistication are included as control variables in the models when I am not estimating their conditional impact. In general, I expect people who are more tolerant of negative advertising will be more likely to view the negative commercial in the experiment more positively, controlling for rival explanations.[44] And, I expect more

[43] We sum people's scores on the accuracy, tone, and usefulness measures (i.e., the measures examined in Figures 1-2) into a single index. This global assessment of the advertisement has a range of 3 to 9, with a mean of 6.2 and a standard deviation of 1.7. The Cronbach's alpha for the composite index is .69.

[44] We also look at how demographic and political predispositions predict levels of tolerance toward negativity and find age, gender, ideology, and interest are significantly related to level of tolerance toward negativity. Older respondents, women, people with low levels of political interest and liberals are less tolerant toward negative advertising, compared to younger respondents, men, politically interested and conservatives respondents. Strength of partisanship and political sophistication are unrelated to levels of tolerance.

sophisticated citizens to evaluate negative messages more harshly than people with less political sophistication (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011).[45]

I examine whether certain people are more responsive to fact-checking by interacting people's exposure to the fact-check challenging the truthfulness of the negative advertisement with (1) people's level of intolerance to negativity and (2) people's level of political sophistication. The results of my analysis are presented in Table 4.3. The findings indicate that political sophistication and intolerance to negativity both condition the impact of the inaccurate fact-check on people's assessment of the commercial. The interaction coefficients are negatively signed and statistically significant in both models.

Table 4.3 About Here

More specifically, the results suggest that as people's intolerance toward negativity increases, the inaccurate fact-check significantly depresses people's view of the negative commercial. For example, for individuals that are most tolerant of negativity (i.e., received a score of 4 on the intolerance toward negativity index), the coefficient estimating the impact of the inaccurate fact-check on people's assessment of the negative commercial is -1.24. In contrast, for people who are least tolerant of negativity (i.e., score a 16 on the intolerance toward negativity index), the coefficient measuring the effect of the inaccurate fact-check on people's views of the negative commercial is -4.96.[46]

Similarly, as people's level of political sophistication increases, the inaccurate fact-check has a significantly greater negative influence on people's impressions of the attack

[45] We examined the additive impact of partisanship and strength of partisanship on people's views of the negative commercials. However, both factors failed to reach statistical significance in the models examined in Table 3.

[46] For information on interpreting multiplicative interactions, see Brambor, Clark, Golder (2006) and Friedrich (1982).

advertisement. Using the coefficients in Table 4.3 to generate point estimates, I estimate that people who are most sophisticated about politics (i.e., scored a 4 on the political sophistication index) and who are exposed to the inaccurate fact-check, give the advertisement an average of 4.5 on the advertisement index. In contrast, people who are least politically sophisticated (i.e., received a score of 0 on the political sophistication index) and who saw the inaccurate fact-check are much more positive about the advertisement, giving the negative advertisement an average of 6.7 on the index. [47]

The results in Table 4.3 also reinforce my earlier analysis by showing that people who are exposed to the fact-check asserting the accuracy of the advertisement offer significantly more positive assessments of the commercial. Furthermore, in the first model in Table 4.3, I see that political sophistication has an additive effect on people's assessments of the negative advertisement, with increases in political sophistication producing significantly more negative impressions of the commercial. In the second model in Table 4.3, I see that people's level of intolerance toward negativity influences their views of the commercial; people who have less tolerance for negative campaigning are significantly more likely to give the negative commercial unfavorable ratings. Finally, the control variables demonstrate as people become more conservative and more interested in politics, they are more likely to give the negative commercial higher ratings.

Next, I look at whether partisanship influences people's responsiveness to fact-checking of negative commercials. For instance, Democrats should respond differently than Republicans to a fact-check challenging the claims made in a negative commercial attacking

[47] In calculating these estimates, I set all control variables at their mean and look at people exposed to the inaccurate fact-check and vary people's level of political sophistication.

Democrat Sherrod Brown. In particular, I expect Democrats to be more willing to accept a fact-check describing the negative advertisement attacking Brown as inaccurate. In contrast, Republicans will be more likely to believe the claims in the negative advertisement attacking Brown and may be more resistant to a fact-check refuting those claims.

To investigate whether partisanship conditions the impact of fact-checking on people's assessment of the accuracy of negative commercials, I need to control for the target of the negative commercial (i.e., Sherrod Brown versus Josh Mandel). In addition, I only look at Democrats and Republicans because I don't expect Independents will be "motivated" to process political information in favor of a particular candidate. As before, I predict people's overall assessment of the quality of the advertisement with OLS regression; I focus on people's reaction to fact-checks detailing the inaccuracies in the negative commercials (i.e., the inaccurate fact-check) and I control for a series of rival factors (e.g., political interest, political sophistication).

The findings, presented in Table 4.4, estimate the conditional relationship between partisanship and people's responsiveness to the negative fact-check. The interaction coefficients are far from statistically significant in both models suggesting partisanship does not condition the impact of fact-checking.[48] In other words, Democrats are not significantly more likely than Republicans to view an advertisement more negatively when the commercial is attacking Democrat Sherrod Brown and it is described as false by a fact-check. Similarly, Republicans are not more likely than Democrats to view the attack on

[48] Given the small number of cases in this analysis, I drop political interest and ideology from the models in Table 4 and look to see whether excluding these variables changes the results. However, the interaction coefficients in the models remain far from statistically significant in the reduced models.

Republican Josh Mandel more unfavorably when a fact-check identifies a series of falsehoods in the advertisement. While I must be cautious given the small number of Republicans and Democrats in my analysis, these findings do not offer strong evidence for motivated reasoning. Democrats and Republicans are not differentially affected by fact-checking of their preferred candidate when asked to assess the quality of an advertisement (i.e. the tone, accuracy, and usefulness of the commercial).

Table 4.4 About Here

While partisans do not react differently to fact-checking when rating the quality of an advertisement, motivated reasoning may be more powerful when Democrats and Republicans are asked to accept the claims of an advertisement either attacking their party's candidate or attacking the candidate of the opposing party. For example, when Democratic candidate Sherrod Brown is the target of an attack characterized as inaccurate by a fact-check article, Democrats may be more motivated than Republicans to accept the message of the fact-check. Therefore, Democrats may be less likely than Republicans to accept the claims made about Sherrod Brown in the negative advertisement when the advertisement is followed by the "inaccurate" fact-check. Similarly, Republicans may be less persuaded than Democrats by an advertisement criticizing Republican Josh Mandel if the advertisement is described as untruthful in a fact-check.

I examine the conditional relationship between partisanship and the impact of the inaccurate fact-check on people's willingness to accept the claims made in the negative commercials. In the model, I also include as independent variables (1) whether the respondent is exposed to a negative commercial about the candidate and (2) whether the respondent is exposed to the negative commercial followed by a fact-check authenticating

the claims of the commercial. In addition, I control for the respondent's level of intolerance toward negativity, political sophistication, political interest, and political ideology. The multiplicative analysis, presented in Table 4.5, suggests partisanship has an inconsistent impact of people's reaction to the inaccurate fact-check. In the model predicting people's willingness to accept claims about Republican Mandel, the interaction between party and exposure to the inaccurate fact-check is statistically significant and positive. The positive coefficient suggests that for people exposed to the fact-check detailing inaccuracies in the advertisement attacking Mandel, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to accept the claims in the advertisement. These results provide support for motivated reasoning since Democratic respondents are more motivated to accept the negative information about Republican Mandel even when these claims are disputed by a fact-check. However, the same finding is not replicated in the model predicting people's likelihood of accepting claims about Democratic candidate Brown.

Table 4.5 About Here

I turn now to one final analysis. I am interested in exploring the conditioning influence of intolerance toward negativity and political sophistication on the power of the fact-check to affect people's likelihood of accepting claims made in the negative ads. I estimate the conditional relationship between intolerance to negativity and the impact of the inaccurate fact-check on people's willingness to accept the claims in the negative commercial as well as the conditional relationship between sophistication and the influence of the inaccurate fact-check on people's acceptance of the claims in the commercial.

I begin by presenting the results for intolerance to negativity in the first two models in Table 4.6. The interaction coefficient is statistically significant and negatively signed in

both models predicting people's willingness to accept the claims about Josh Mandel and Sherrod Brown. These results indicate that as people's intolerance toward negativity increases, the fact-check detailing the advertisement's falsehoods leads people to be less likely to accept the claims in the advertisement. To help illustrate the multiplicative relationship, I derive point estimates where I vary people's level of intolerance to negativity in order to estimate the average number of claims people willingly accept about the candidates. Looking at the model for Sherrod Brown, I estimate that when people who are most tolerant to negativity (i.e., score a 4 on the intolerance to negativity index) are given the inaccurate fact-check, they accept, on average, 9.7 claims made about Sherrod Brown.[49] However, when people who are the least tolerant to negativity (i.e., score a 16 on the intolerance to negativity index) are given the same fact-check, they accept, on average, only about 6.1 claims made about Sherrod Brown. These estimates indicate that people's intolerance to negativity make them more receptive to fact-checks that challenge the validity of the claims in negative commercials.

Table 4.6 About Here

Turning to the results related to the conditioning influence of sophistication in the final models in Table 4.6, one can see that the interaction coefficient is small and statistically insignificant in both models. These results indicate that political sophistication does not condition people's reactions to the inaccurate fact-check. Even though political sophistication does not modify the impact of the fact-check on people's beliefs about the candidates, political sophistication has a significant and powerful additive impact of

[49] In calculating these estimates, I set all control variables at their mean and look at people exposed to the inaccurate fact-check and vary the level of intolerance to negativity.

people's likelihood of accepting the claims about the candidates in the attack advertisements (i.e., the first two models in Table 4.6). That is, political sophisticated individuals are, on average, less likely to accept the claims made in negative advertisements.

In summary, certain types of people are more responsive to fact-checking of political commercials. People with less tolerance for negativity are most receptive to fact-checks questioning the veracity of the claims made in negative advertisements. When exposed to the negative fact-check, individuals with the least tolerance for negativity are more likely to view negative advertisements more critically and least likely to accept the claims in these advertisements. Similarly, when exposed to a fact-check challenging the truthfulness of a negative commercial, people with more political sophistication are more likely to view the attack advertisement more negatively. However, political sophistication does not condition the impact of fact-checking on people's likelihood of accepting the claims in negative advertisements. Finally, I find only mild support for motivated reasoning among partisans. While partisans do not respond differently to fact-checking when evaluating the quality of an advertisement, Republicans are less likely than Democrat to accept the claims made about Republican Josh Mandel when the advertisement is followed by a fact-check questioning these claims.

Conclusion and Implications

Elections provide accountability in representative democracies. Representative democracies cannot flourish without fair, free and regular elections characterized by campaigns where competing candidates explain the current state of public affairs and demonstrate how they intend to lead the nation in the future. The nature of competitive campaigns changes nearly every electoral cycle. The pace of change is rapid and dynamic.

Since President Obama's first election in 2008, campaigns have changed dramatically in terms of campaign finance (e.g., *Citizens United*), communications with voters (e.g., *Twitter*, *Facebook*), the speed in which political advertisements are created and disseminated (e.g., commercials rebutting opponents' attacks appear in less than 24 hours), and polling (e.g., panoply of state polls).

Another dramatic change, building over the last several election cycles, is the assessment and evaluation of the veracity of negative political advertisements by news media organizations and watchdog groups. The availability of information in the public square has increased dramatically over the last few years; it is now easy for citizens to track down the accuracy of the claims made in political commercials. Fact-checks are ubiquitous and are a routine part of the swirl of political information at the ready for citizens to consume. It is important to investigate whether fact-checks play a role in shaping citizens' views of political commercials since advertisements represent an important stream of information in large scale democracies.

The research design was simple. I conducted an Internet experiment with a nationwide sample and placed respondents randomly into one of six conditions, using a 2 X 3 factorial design. I relied on an impressive literature in social psychology to explain why I expect fact-checks to influence people's assessments of the information presented in negative advertisements. I expected sophisticated citizens, people who are less tolerant of negative campaigning, and partisans to be more likely to respond to the information presented in fact-checks. I reasoned that fact-checks challenging the veracity of negative commercials would be more consequential than fact-checking validating the claims of positive advertisements.

The findings of the experiment largely confirmed my expectations. Fact-checks influence people's assessments of the accuracy, usefulness, and tone of negative political ads. The fact-checks also sway citizens' likelihood of accepting the claims made in the advertisements. Fact-checks challenging the truthfulness of the claims of the negative commercial are more powerful than fact-checks authenticating the assertions made in the negative advertisement.

A single experiment, of course, has limitations. For example, the respondents in this study are not evaluating the candidates running for the U.S. Senate in their home state. Similarly, respondents in the study watch a political commercial followed immediately by a fact-check of the commercial. In the midst of political campaigns, fact-checks of commercials may precede exposure to the actual commercials or fact-checking may occur at a later date and may be delivered on television, or in a newspaper account, or via the Internet. More broadly, it is often difficult to generalize from the results of experiments to the real world of political campaigns. For example, I cannot make claims that the attitudes of sophisticated citizens conditioned by fact-checks may shape the outcome of a particular election. Although the experimental setting allows us to isolate more definitively cause and effect, it is challenging to transport those findings to the dynamic world of competitive campaigns involving millions of voters. Nevertheless, this study is an important first step because it is critical to identify the causal impact of fact-checks in the experimental setting before trying to make inferences from data available from campaigns.

At the end of the day, campaigns are propaganda machines orchestrated by candidates. Political commercials, especially 30-second televised negative advertisements, are filled with hostile charges against opponents. In fact, negative ads, compared to positive

or contrast ads, deliver the most information about the competing candidates in terms of voting records, issue positions, and background information (Geer, 2006). Yet, not surprisingly, rival candidates contest most negative attacks. Counterattacks often stress that criticisms are misleading, taken out of context, disingenuous, or a "bald face lies." Citizens, distracted by the business of their daily lives, find it difficult to locate where the truth lies in dueling negative commercials. This back and forth of campaigns is not new. John Stuart Mill, writing *On Liberty* over 150 years ago, noted politics in the public arena is a "rough process of combatants fighting under hostile banners" (Mill, 2010, 49). Mill's words describe, with amazing accuracy, contemporary campaigns in the United States.

The simplicity, availability, reach, and influence of fact-checks point to a new and potentially powerful player in political campaigns. These fact-checks provide a tool for citizens to locate the "truth" in negative political commercials. Indeed, the role of fact-checks resonates with the constitutionally protected tradition of the press to monitor, confront, challenge, and disagree with claims made by candidates and representatives. Political watchdog groups, too, enjoy constitutional protections in the First Amendment, allowing them a voice to help voters sift through competing negative claims.

The ease of access to factual information about politicians, combined with the speed with which enterprising reporters can disseminate such information, has important implications for the conduct and outcome of contemporary political campaigns. For example, if scholars and political strategists compile evidence that fact-checks are linked to voter attitudes, it is possible candidates as well as political organizations will be more cautious as they produce negative campaign advertisements. Or, perhaps elites will adjust

contributions to candidates if the candidates' political messages bear little resemblance to the truth, according to reports from diverse fact-checking organizations.

CHAPTER 5

FACT-CHECKING A POLITICAL DEBATE: RESULTS FROM A 2013 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

The pilot study results suggest that fact-checks of negative political advertisements influence citizen's assessments of the ads' tone, usefulness, and accuracy. That is, respondents are more likely to believe that an advertisement is accurate if the fact-check confirms the advertisement's message. In contrast, respondents are less likely to state that the advertisement is accurate if presented with a fact-check that contradicts the accuracy of the advertisements message. Furthermore, people are more likely to state that the advertisement is hostile when presented with a fact-check that challenges the veracity of the ads claims. Additionally, subjects are more likely to state that the advertisement is not useful when the fact-check disconfirmed its claims.

Moreover, the results from chapter 4 suggest that the presence and message of a fact-check also affects respondents' acceptance of claims made in the advertisement and fact-checks that challenge the truthfulness of claims in the negative ads are more powerful than fact-checks that authenticate claims. That is, the presence of a fact-check that challenges an advertisement's claims results in respondents rejecting the ads' claims about a candidate. Having discovered the impact of fact-checks on respondents' assessments of negative advertising, it is important to determine whether fact-checking influences the impact of other forms of political communication. In addition, it is important to examine the impact of the source of fact-checks on respondents' assessments of candidates for political office. In this chapter, I discuss the hypotheses for the study,

the experimental design, procedures, and methodology, and the results from the debate experiment.

Negative advertising, while the most common form of political communication is not the only form of candidate communication. Thus, I utilize candidate debates in my second experiment to determine if the presence of a fact-check, with confirming or countervailing information presented during a candidate debate, influences respondents' evaluations of candidates.[50] These fact-checks are presented simultaneously with the debate and appear in a scroll box on the bottom of the television screen. Candidate debates are also an appropriate medium of candidate communication for this study because candidate debates are important political events that draw a great number of viewers and receive attention in the news media (Holbrook, 1999). Additionally, my content analysis demonstrated that candidate debates, next to advertisements and candidate statements, are more fact-checked than other forms of political communication.

The goal of the experiment in this chapter is to determine if a fact-check presented simultaneously to a political message, influences evaluations of the candidates. An example of this is the State of the Union address on the White Houses' webpage.[51] During the speech, facts are flashed up on the right hand side of the screen. Another example of this is YouTube's airing of the presidential debates. From time-to-time, facts are placed at the bottom of the screen either confirming or correcting the truthfulness of the statements being made by the candidates. Like the first experiment, accuracy of the fact-check varies. In addition to varying the message cue of the fact-check, I also vary the

[50] The fact check can also be viewed as counter argument disruptions (Miller, Maruyama, Beaber, & Valone, 1976).
[51] See whitehouse.gov

source of the fact-check as being from a liberal (MSNBC), conservative (FOX), or neutral (PolitiFact) source.

In this experiment, I examine whether fact-checks of an actual political debate influence people's impressions of candidates. I chose the 2013 New Jersey gubernatorial election between incumbent Chris Christie (R) and challenger Barbara Buono (D), a New Jersey state senator. The contest was one of two gubernatorial races during the 2013 election cycle. There were two political debates in the weeks leading up to the November election, this experiment utilizes clips from the first debate which took place at William Patterson University on October 8, 2013.

Hypotheses

Political debates are an important component of the campaign. These events give candidates the opportunity to emphasize their record, sometimes inaccurately. There is evidence that people learn from political debates, that this learning is greatest for the most engaged, and that the most informed and partisans are more affected by debates (Holbrook, 1999, 82). However, research also suggests that voters can also be misinformed by debates and after a debate, viewers are likely to hold views consistent with the dominating candidate (Maurer & Reinemann, 2006, 496).

In this study, I had expectations regarding 1) subject's evaluations of the winner of the debate; 2) subject's evaluations of the candidates' debate performance; and 3) the likelihood that a subject would vote for each candidate. In developing expectations regarding the impact of fact-checks on people's assessments of political debates, I use Hovland, Janis, and Kelly's (1953) study of persuasion as a starting point for these expectations. In particular, we know that message, source, and audience characteristics

influence the degree to which candidate messages are effective (Cobb & Kuklinski, 1997; Chaiken, 1980).

To begin, message cues imbedded in fact-checks may mediate evaluations of the candidates by providing voters with relevant information about the accuracy of a candidate's message. First, a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should improve overall evaluations of the candidates' debate performance, while the presences of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluation of the candidates' debate performance. That is, the confirming or corrective information offered by the fact-check may alter respondents' perceptions of the candidates' debate performance because it either lends credibility to the candidate or takes away from the candidate's credibility by offering a mechanism that alters the effect of the candidate's message (Entman & Bennett, 2001).

Next, respondents will be more likely to say a candidate won the debate if they are exposed to a fact-check that confirms the veracity of the candidates' statements. That is, the mediated message may influence assessments of the debate winner because a fact-check is another consideration used by respondents when arriving at a candidate evaluation. Third, the presence of a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should increase the likelihood of a subject stating they would vote for the candidate, while the presence of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease the likelihood of a subject stating they would vote for the candidate. This is because a corrective cue indicates that a candidate lacks honesty and trait evaluations of candidates are linked to individuals' vote choice (Mondak, 1995; McCurley & Mondak, 1995), thus

an individual may be less willing to vote for a candidate when the fact-check message indicates the candidate is being dishonest.

In addition, the source of a fact-check may also shape citizens' evaluations of a candidate in two ways. First, source characteristics, like the source's ideology may influence the persuasiveness of the fact-check because partisans are likely to select and to trust media that is congruent with their ideological leanings (Iyengar & Han, 2009; Stroud, 2011). However, citizens do not tune out information that is incongruent with their prior held beliefs, and, indeed, they may pay greater attention to counter attitudinal information (Knobloch-Westerwik & Meng, 2009; Kobayashi & Ikeda, 2009; Chaffee, Saphir, Sandvig, Graf, & Hahn, 2001). In particular, people often seek out corrective information that may conflict with the predispositions if the source of the information is deemed credible (Holbert, Hmielowski, & Weeks, 2012; Holbert, Garrett, & Gleason, 2010; Baumeister & Newman, 1994; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Therefore, I hypothesize that people's desire for accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check that is non-partisan since a non-partisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy.

Second, the well-known slant of partisan media provides citizens with cues about the credibility of a message (Baum & Groeling, 2009; 2010; Baum & Gussin, 2008; Turner, 2007) and thus the source of the fact-check could potentially increase or decrease the persuasiveness of the fact-check (Johnson, Dunaway, & Weber, 2011). [52] For example, a fact-check cue from MSNBC stating that the Democratic candidate, Barbara

[52] Participants in this study were able to correctly place FOX, MSNBC, and PolitiFact on the ideological scale. Other scholars have also concluded that citizens understand the ideological leanings of these media sources (Levendusky, 2013).

Buono, is being deceitful may be more influential than the same cue from FOX news because respondents understand that FOX leans conservative and MSNBC leans liberal and thus a cue from MSNBC that the Democratic candidate is being deceitful is more informative than the same message from a conservative leaning source that is inclined toward disagreement with the Democratic position. Put simply, I hypotheses that a source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position.

Finally, audience characteristics may interact with these mediating messages and sources, influencing voters' assessments of the candidates. There are a number of political attitudes and demographic characteristics that may influence the persuasiveness of a fact-checks message, e.g. partisanship (e.g., Lodge & Taber, 2005; Taber & Lodge, 2006) and ideology (Lane, 1962).[53] Scholars examining the influence of motivated reasoning find that prior beliefs are very strong in biasing new information (Taber & Lodge, 2006; Lodge & Taber, 2005). Moreover, Petty and Cacioppo (1977) found that individuals are more likely to reject a mediating message if it is a topic of "high ego involvement, commitment, or personal relevance" (645). This is because these individuals (strong partisans and strong ideologues) are incentivized to defend their true positions; they are less pervious to information that conflicts with their beliefs.

These audience characteristics are mediating factors that interact with the fact-check's source and message cues to moderate the persuasiveness of fact-checks. Thus, I

[53] Political Knowledge of a respondent may also influence the persuasiveness of a fact check (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; McGuire, 1968; 1972; Zaller, 1992), however, my sample is highly politically knowledgeable (80.6 percent of respondents are highly knowledgeable) and, thus, I do not have enough variation to test the impact of political knowledge on the influence of the fact checks.

have developed an audience cue hypothesis. That is, it is reasonable to expect that voters' who are strong partisans may be more likely to resist fact-check cues, when they run counter to existing beliefs, because strong partisans should be more concerned with defending their true political positions or the position of the candidate with a similar partisan affiliation. Specifically, partisanship should condition the impact of the fact-check on subjects' evaluations of candidates.

Methods

Subject recruitment. Three hundred twenty-one students were recruited from five political sciences course at Arizona State University in the fall of 2013. Students' received course credit for their participation.[54] Overall 19% of participants were freshmen, 18% sophomores, 29% juniors, and 33% were seniors. Most of the subjects were Social Science majors, with 61% in Political Science. See Table 5.1 for demographics of the sample.

Table 5.1 About Here

Experimental method. I relied on an in-person lab experiment where I employed a 1 (debate) by 3 (fact-checks sources) by 3 (fact-check message cues) experimental design which produced nine experimental conditions and one control condition for a total of ten conditions. The experiment took place over a 3-week period just prior to the November 2013 election.[55] Subjects were instructed to come to ASU's Social Science

[54] A more diverse non-student pool of subjects participated in the first and third experiments, to increase the external validity of the study.

[55] I would like to thank Jillian Courey and Samantha Hernandez for their help running this lab experiment.

Research Center, and upon arrival were randomly assigned to one of the 10 conditions.[56] There was no significant difference among the ten experimental conditions in terms of respondents' demographic characteristics (gender, age, major, year in school) or political attitudes (party identification, ideology, political interest, and political sophistication). Thus, I am confident that differences between the experimental groups are driven by exposure to the treatment.

In each condition, participants were first exposed to an edited version of one of the 2013 New Jersey gubernatorial debates.[57] The edited version included both candidates opening and closing statements and three issue area questions/answers. The debate was edited to reduce the total time to about 13 minutes.[58] The experiment was conducted throughout the day with half of all the experimental sessions taking place in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. In nine of the conditions, a fact-check was added as a banner at the bottom of the screen. The fact-checks offered varying message and source cues. Specifically, the fact-checks offer either confirming information (a fact-check that states the information in the campaign message is accurate), corrective information (a fact-check that states the information in a campaign message is inaccurate), or a mix of confirming and corrective information. In addition, the fact-checks source varied (FOX, MSNBC, PolitiFact).[59] Table 5.2 lists each condition and the number of subjects. See appendix B for varying source and message cues.

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[56] IRB Human Subject approval #STUDY00000076, granted October 11, 2013.
[57] See Appendix B for the edited debate transcript.
[58] See Appendix B for a sample storyboard.
[59] Respondents were aware of the ideological leaning of these sources. When asked, 74% of respondents stated that FOX was mostly conservative, 64.4% stated that MSNBC was mostly liberal, and 85.8% stated that PolitiFact was neutral or that they didn't know.

Table 5.2 About Here

After viewing the debate (condition 1) or viewing the debate with the scrolling fact-check (conditions 2-10), participants were given a brief description of the New Jersey gubernatorial race and then asked to fill out a survey that asked questions about the debate and fact-check they viewed. [60] The post-test included questions about the ability of each candidate to deal with specific policy topics discussed in the debate – minimum wage, taxes, and education – as well as respondent's trait assessments of each candidate. A number of political knowledge and demographic questions were also asked.[61] See appendix B for the survey questions.

Validity. The experiment is very strong on internal validity and can provide evidence of causal relationships (McDermott, 2002; Vavreck & Iyengar, 2011). By controlling for extraneous variables and manipulating only the source and message of the fact-check and randomly assigning subjects to experimental conditions, this experiment allows me to assess the effect of fact-checking on respondents' evaluation of political candidates and their messages.

While experiments are strong with regard to internal validity, experiments are weaker with regard to external validity (Campbell, Stanley, & Gage, 1963, McDermott, 2002). For example, the results of the experiment may be limited in their generalizability across persons, settings, and time. Students in this sample are more politically

[60] The following is the brief description of the New Jersey gubernatorial race: "In the New Jersey Gubernatorial race, Governor Chris Christie is running for re-election to a second term. Christie is being challenged by New Jersey State Senator Barbara Buono. Buono won her party's primary with 88.1% of the vote. Christie won his party's primary with 91.9% of the vote."

[61] The entire experiment took approximately 35 minutes, from the time participants entered the lab until they left.

knowledgeable than the average citizen. Additionally, in the real world it is unlikely that a candidate would make all true statements or all false statements during a political debate. Finally, different forms of political communications may produce different types of effects. Thus results from this experiment may not be directly generalizable to other campaign contexts. However, the main objective of this experiment is to emphasize 'experimental realism' (see Aronson et al., 1990; Rahn & Hirshorn, 1999). This experiment does not seek to replicate the real world setting. Instead, this experiment manipulates key independent variables (source cues and message cues) while holding all other variables constant. In this manner the experiment is able to simulate a real world experience. Furthermore, I utilize two other experiments that utilize political ads – one representative sample and one crowdsourced sample that mimics a representative U.S. sample- to help alleviate the problem of generalizability.

A second threat to external validity is that the interaction of the setting and the treatment is artificial and thus may make the treatment more powerful and thus less generalizable to world outside lab. This threat is reduced to some degree by the experimental design. Specifically, the use of a real gubernatorial debate, real fact-checks, and real fact-check sources decreases the artificial nature of the experiment. In this manner, my measures are realistic and mimic actual campaign information voters would typically receive during the course of an election. Even with these precautions, the laboratory setting is still highly artificial. For example, participants only receive one set of fact-checks from one source. Additionally, there was likely little to no prior engagement with the New Jersey gubernatorial election before entering the lab. Participants watched one 13 minute edited version of one debate and then immediately

were asked to answer numerous questions about the candidates and the debate. In the real world, voters are exposed to candidates over the course of several months and they are often exposed to many types of political communications in the process. Thus, fact-checking may be less influential over the course of an election compared to the experimental setting where participants are exposed to a single form of campaign communication and only one set of fact-checks.

Finally, because the experimental protocol urged careful attention to the debate and the survey, participants likely pay more attention to the debate and fact-checks more than they would in a natural setting where they may be doing many things simultaneously (making dinner, eating dinner, talking on the phone, talking with another in the room, etc). This experiment in combination with the other two experiments gives a quite well rounded approach to the study of fact-checking and increases the validity of the overall study.

Results

Candidate performance. Participants were asked to assess the debate performance of each candidate running for New Jersey governor on a 0 to 10 scale. Overall, respondents gave Chris Christies a mean of 7.7 for his debate performance and Barbara Buono a mean rating of 5.5. Additionally, 80% of respondents indicated that Christie was the winner of the debate and 73% stated that if the election were held today they would "very likely" or "likely" vote for Chris Christie for governor, while only 36% were "likely" or "very likely" to vote for Buono. However, these three assessments – performance, winner, and vote- were each influenced by exposure to a fact-check. The findings in Figure 5.1 (i.e. a higher score means more favorable performance ratings for

the candidate) demonstrate that people in the control condition or people who were exposed to the political debate with a fact-check message cue that stated Christie was accurate and Buono was inaccurate or that gave a mixed accuracy cue, overwhelming believed that Christie performed better than Buono. This is the case in conditions 1 and 5-10.

In contrast, in conditions 2-4, where the fact-check indicated that Buono's statements are accurate while Christie's statements are inaccurate, respondents offered more positive assessments of Buono's debate performance and less positive assessment of Christie's debate performance; making the difference between the two candidates insignificant (e.g. the presence of the fact-check overwhelmingly improved assessments of Buono's debate performance). A one-way ANOVA was used to test the differences among the ten conditions for each candidate. Performance evaluations differed significantly for Buono across the ten conditions, $F=9.29$, $p < 0.001$ and for Christie $F=10.53$, $p < 0.001$.

A Tukey post-hoc comparison of the ten groups revealed that when broken down to fact-check messages and fact-check sources, there is a statistically significant difference for both candidates between the experimental conditions 2-4 (Buono Accurate, Christie Inaccurate) and 5-7 (Christie Accurate, Buono Inaccurate), but no significant difference within message cues (e.g. a fact-check from PolitiFact stating a message is accurate did not produce significantly different results than the same fact-check message cue from FOX or MSNBC). That is, the mean performance evaluation for Buono and Christie is not significantly different between sources with the same message cue. These

results indicate that message cues may be more important than fact-check sources in influencing evaluations of candidates' debate performance.

Figure 5.1 About Here

Additionally, I subset the data into Democrats and Republicans to test my first source cue hypothesis that a respondent will be more likely to accept fact-check cues from a non-partisan source.[62] Figure 5.1a (Democrats) and 5.1b (Republicans) shows that Democratic subjects and Republican subjects do not have a significantly different response to fact-check source cues That is, Republicans and Democrats are not more likely to accept fact-check cues from non-partisan sources.[63] Furthermore, Republicans are not significantly more likely to be persuaded by the FOX news fact-check and Democrats are not more affected by the MSNBC fact-check. This trend is similar for both groups of partisans across all message cues.

Figure 5.1a About Here
Figure 5.1b About Here

Moving next to perceptions of the debate winner, again one sees that the trend of significant between message cues holds true for assessment of the winner of the debate. However, within message cues (e.g. message cues that are the same but are from different sources) has no effect.[64] Looking at Figure 5.2, one can see that in the no fact-check

[62] Individuals who identify as an Independent or answered don't know to the partisanship question are excluded from the analysis in Figures 1a and 1b.

[63] These results were confirmed by a Tukey Post-hoc comparison that determined significant differences for both Democratic and Republican respondents and for both candidates between the experimental conditions 2-4 (Buono Accurate, Christie Inaccurate) and 5-7 (Christie Accurate, Buono Inaccurate), but no difference for these partisans within message cues.

[64] The difference between message groups, according to the results of a one-way ANOVA, is statistically significant at $p<0.001$ ($F=17.73$).

condition, the Christie accurate, Buono inaccurate conditions (5-7), and the mixed accuracy conditions (8-10), there is wide agreement that Christies won the debate. Indeed, the means for these conditions are all above 0.8 and in conditions 5, 7, and 9, 100% of the respondents stated that Christie won the debate. However, in the Buono accurate, Christie inaccurate conditions (2-4), respondents were significantly more likely to state that Buono won the debate with a mean score of 0.5, 0.3, and 0.4 respectively. This indicates that fact-checks verifying the accuracy of Buono's statements were very influential in participants' evaluations of the debate winner. Stated differently, these results indicate that fact-check message cues greatly influence respondent's assessment of the winner.

Figure 5.2 About Here

Again, looking at Democratic respondents and Republican respondents, one can see that the source of the fact-check do not influences partisans evaluations of the debate winner. That is, partisans are not more likely to accept fact-check cues from non-partisan source, nor are they more likely to accept cues from sources that are ideologically similar to themselves.

Figure 5.2a About Here
Figure 5.2b About Here

Finally, looking to likelihood of voting for each candidate, participants said they were very likely or somewhat likely to vote for Christie for governor (72%) and were very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to vote for Buono (64%).[65] However, as with

[65] A one-way ANOVA was used to test the difference between the 10 conditions for each candidate. The results are statistically significant for Christie at $p<0.001$ ($F=10.1$) and for Buono at $p<0.001$ ($F=7.95$).

candidate performance and winner, in conditions 2-4 (Buono accurate and Christie inaccurate), the likelihood of voting flips and respondents stated they were more likely to vote for Buono and less likely to vote for Christie. Additionally, in the PolitiFact source condition for Buono accurate, Christie inaccurate (condition 2); respondents were significantly more likely to vote for Buono over Christie. Overall, it is clear that the presence of a fact-check overwhelmingly helps the Democratic candidate, Barbara Buono, who was the weaker of the two candidates in terms of debate performance. These findings suggest that fact-checks validating the challenger's claims can be an important resource for challengers, regardless of their source.

Figure 5.3 About Here

Once again, when I look at how Democrats and Republicans respond to the source of the fact-check message, Democrats and Republicans are not more likely to be influenced by the non-partisan PolitiFact fact-check. Moreover, Republicans are not significantly more likely to be persuaded by the FOX news fact-check and Democrats are not more affected by the MSNBC fact-check.

Figure 5.3a About Here
Figure 5.3b About Here

Taken as a whole, these results bolster the findings of chapter 4 – the presences and message cue of a fact-check significantly impact citizen's evaluations of candidates. However, this analysis fails to confirm the importance of source cues. That is, respondents are not more likely to accept fact-check cues from the non-partisan source PolitiFact. Nor are they likely to perceive that sources cues that disconfirm the accuracy of a candidate's statement to be more credible when the source has a similar ideological position to the

candidate. Why are source cues ineffective? It may be the case that subjects had less crystallized attitudes about the New Jersey gubernatorial candidates and thus accuracy goals override partisan goals (See footnote 9). In addition, perhaps the nature of the fact-check message puts a premium on accuracy and depresses the likelihood of motivated reasoning.

Furthermore, the sample is highly politically knowledgeable, with 80.6% of respondents falling into the highly knowledgeable category. Kam (2005) concludes that highly politically aware individuals are more likely to be systematic processor and less likely to rely on party cues in developing opinions about issues. That is, instead of using the source cue as a heuristic to help make decisions about the validity of a candidate's statement, respondents may have been engaging in systematic processing (Petty and Wegener, 1998; Chen & Chaiken, 1999). Simply put, respondents evaluate the content of the fact-check message they received while ignoring source branding of the fact-check.[66]

The importance of source cues may be context dependent. Source cues from fact-checks may serve as an important heuristic device in high profile elections and issue debates where attitudes are well formed and, in these cases, there may be more evidence of motivated reasoning. However, in low profile campaigns or campaigns where voters' attitudes are less crystallized, accuracy goals may trump partisan goals.

How people's predispositions affect responsiveness to fact-checking. Having discovered that fact-check messages influence people's views of the debate winner, the candidates performance, and likelihood of voting for the candidates, I will now explore whether certain people more or less likely to be affected by fact-checks. To begin, it is well

[66] There is not enough variation in political knowledge to test source cue effects among low, medium, and highly knowledge respondents. I will take up this issue in the next chapter where more variation allows for a more detailed exploration of this finding.

established that voters utilize party cues to guide their political evaluations (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). Thus, partisanship influences voters' perceptions of candidates because people are motivated to believe that a candidate who shares their party affiliation will also share their positions (Conover, 1981). Therefore, I expect that, in addition to the influence of the fact-check message, partisanship should influence voters' evaluations of the candidates' debate performance, as well as assessment of the debate winner, and their likelihood of voting for each of the candidate. Specifically, a Democrat should give more positive evaluations of a Democratic candidate and a Republican should give more positive evaluations of a Republican candidate, regardless of the fact-check message cue.

In the analyses that follows the variable of interest are the fact-check condition and partisanship. The fact-check condition variable is comprised of four dummy variables: Control Group, Buono Accurate Fact-check Conditions, Christie Accurate Fact-check Conditions, and Mixed Accuracy Fact-check Conditions. In each case, 0 indicates that the respondent was not in the condition and 1 indicates the respondent was in the condition.[67] Partisanship is measured on a 7 point scale where a 1 indicates the respondent is a strong Democrat and a 7 indicates that the respondent is a strong Republican. Additionally, I control for the respondents' gender, and age.[68]

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[67] The Control Group dummy variable is represented in the intercept. 13% of respondents were in the Control Group, 28% of respondents were in the Buono Accurate Fact Check condition, 29% of respondents were in the Christie Accurate Fact Check condition, and 29% of respondents were in the Mixed Accuracy Fact Check condition.

[68] Party ID is measured on a 7 point scale where 1 is strong Democrat and 7 is strong Republican. Don't knows are coded as Independents. The mean score for partisanship is 3.8 with a standard deviation of 1.8. The mean age of the sample is 21 with a standard deviation of 3.1. In addition, 64.2% of the sample is male. Finally, ideology is excluded

The dependent variables for the first part of this analysis are evaluations of Christie and Buono debate performance. Performance for each candidate is measured on a 0 to 10 continuous scale with 0 indicated the candidate did not do very well at all and 10 indicating the candidate did very well. In order to examine the relationship between respondent's predisposition and their reactions to fact-checking, I estimate a linear model for two models.[69]

The results in table 5.3, in addition to indicating that fact-check message cues influence candidate evaluations, show that partisanship is a strong and consistent predictor of evaluation of Buono and Christie's debate performance. For Buono a one unit increase in partisanship decreases evaluations of her performance by -0.22 while a one unit increase in partisanship increases Christie's performance evaluations by 0.13. That is, respondents who identify as Republicans are more likely to negatively evaluate Buono's debate performance and to positively evaluate Christie's performance.[70] Finally, the respondent's gender

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from the model because it is highly correlated with party identification. See appendix B for question wording.

[69] Both candidates debate performance is positively skewed, but not heteroskedastic. Scholars suggest that OLS provides consistent and more precise estimates of skewed data when the data are not heteroskedastic (Manning & Mullahy, 2001). An assessment of Buono's performance has a mean of 5.5 with a mode of 6 and standard deviation of 1.9. A Shapiro-Wilk normality test has a p-value of .000001 and thus I reject the null hypothesis that the sample is taken from a normal distribution. A Goldfeld-Quant test determined that Buono's performance is not heteroskedastic (GQ=1.06, p=0.35). Assessments of Christie's performance have a mean of 7.7 with a mode of 8 and standard deviation of 1.6. A Shapiro-Wilk normality test has a p-value of .000000 and thus I reject the null hypothesis that the sample is taken from a normal distribution. A Goldfeld-Quant test determined that Christie's performance is not heteroskedastic (GQ=0.75, p=0.95).

[70] I estimated the interaction between party identification and people's exposure to a fact check, but the interaction is not significant for Buono or Christie. An F-test indicated that there is no difference between the model with the interaction and the model without the interaction. Thus the simpler model was employed. The lack of significant results suggests that partisanship does not condition the impact of the fact check on people's

negatively and significantly influences evaluations of Buono's debate performance. That is, a male is respondent is more likely to negatively evaluate Buono's debate performance than is a female respondent. Gender does not significantly influence evaluations of Christie's debate performance.

Table 5.3 About Here

Next I evaluate the impact of partisanship on evaluations of the debate winner. The dependent variable is binary where 0 indicates that Buono won and 1 indicates that Christie won. I employ one logit model to determine the influence of the fact-checks and respondents' characteristics on evaluations of the debate winner. Table 5.4 demonstrates that exposure to a fact-check strongly biases evaluations of the debate winner.[71] Also as expected, partisanship strongly and significantly influences respondents' assessment of Christie as the winner. That is, for every unit increase in party identification (i.e. Republican to strong Republican) increases the odds of a respondent stating that Christie won the debate by 1.21 [95% CI: 1.01, 1.46]. Republican respondents' are more likely to state that Christie won the debate than are Democrats.[72] Finally, gender also influences evaluations of the

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evaluations of the candidates' debate performance. That is, Democrats are no more or less likely than Republicans to negatively or positively evaluate a candidates' debate performance based on the presence and message of a fact check.

[71] A one unit increase in the Buono Accurate Fact Check Conditions (i.e. not being in the Buono Accurate condition to being in the Buono Accurate condition) decreases the odds that a respondent will state that Christie won by -0.09 [95% CI: 0.03, 0.26]. However, a one unit increase in the Christie accurate fact check condition increased the odds that a respondent will state that Christie won the debate by 14.1 [95% CI: 2.25, 273.84].

[72]The interaction between party identification and people's exposure to a fact check is not significant. That is, the lack of a significant interaction suggests that partisanship does not condition the impact of the fact check on subject's evaluations of the winner of the debate. Additionally, a chi-squared test indicated that there is not a significant difference between the model with the interaction and the model without the interaction, thus the simpler model without the interaction is presented.

debate winner. That is being male increases the odds of a respondent stating that Christie won the debate by 2.4 [95% CI: 1.15, 5.13].

Table 5.4 About Here

Finally, I examine the influence of audience characteristics and the presence of a fact-check on voters' likelihood of voting for Christie and Buono. I estimate a logistic model for two models. The dependent variables for this analysis is binary where 0 means the respondent is not likely to vote for the candidate and 1 indicates that they would likely vote for the candidate. Table 5.5 illustrates the influence of fact-check messages on voters stated vote choice as well as the influence of partisanship and gender. Beginning with partisanship, evaluations of both candidates are influenced by a respondent's partisanship. A one unit increase in partisanship (i.e. moving from Strong Democrat to Democrat) decreases the odds of voting for Buono by -0.48 [95% CI: 0.39, 0.58]. While a one unit increase in partisanship increases the odds that a respondent will vote for Christie by 1.89 [95% CI: 1.56, 2.33]. That is, a Republican is less likely to state that he would vote for Buono than a Democrat and a Republican is more likely to state that he would vote for Christie if the election were held tomorrow. Finally, gender is positive and significant for Christie, with men being more likely vote for Christie and negative and significant for Buono meaning that women are more likely to vote for Buono than are men. That is, a one unit increase in gender (i.e. Female to Male) decrease the odds that a respondent will state that he will vote for Buono by -0.36 [95% CI: 0.19, 0.67], while a one unite increase in gender increases the odds that a respondent will state that he will vote for Christie by 1.88 [95% CI: 0.99, 3.61].[73]

[73] The interaction between party identification and people's exposure to a fact check is not significant. That is, the lack of a significant interaction suggests that partisanship does

Table 5.5 About Here

Finally, I ran a number of predicted probabilities to determine the influence of partisanship and fact-checks on respondents' likelihood of voting for each candidate. Figure 5.4 shows that despite the fact-check message, Democrats will be more likely to vote for Buono and Republicans will be more likely to vote for Christie.[74] However, the presence and message of a fact-check does influence likelihood of voting for Buono and Christie. In the figure, Strong Democrats are depicted with the solid line, Independents are the dot-dash line, and Strong Republicans are the dash line.

The upper left panel indicates that moving from the no fact-check condition to the Democrat accurate fact-check conditions increases the probability that a strong Democrat will vote for Buono by 47 percent from about 0.45 to 0.92. In addition, the change for Independents is 54% from about 0.10 to about 0.64 and for strong Republicans is nearly 16 percent from about 0.01 to about 0.16. The upper right panel reveals that moving from the no fact-check condition to the Democrat inaccurate fact-check conditions does not influence a strong Democrat's, an Independents, or a strong Republican's likelihood of voting for Buono.

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not condition the impact of the fact check on subject's likelihood of voting for Buono or Christie. However, in a non linear model the lack of a significant interaction is "neither necessary nor sufficient for concluding that there is substantively meaningful interaction among independent variables in their influence on Pr(Y)" (Berry, DeMeritt, & Esarey, 2010, 265). Because of this phenomenon in non linear models, predicted probabilities are necessary for sorting out the influences of these independent variables on the probability that a respondent will state that Christie won the debate. Finally, a chi-squared test for the Buono and the Christie models indicated that there is no significant difference between the simpler models without the interaction and the models with the interaction, thus the simpler model is utilized.

[74] Again, this is in line with motivated reasoning.

The lower left panel illustrates that moving from the no fact-check condition to the Democrat accurate fact-check conditions decreases the probability that strong Republicans, Independents, and strong Democrats will vote for Christie. For strong Republicans the change is approximately 12 percent from 0.99 to 0.87. The change for Independents is 40 percent from 0.9 to 0.5 and for strong Democrats is 40 percent from 0.5 to 0.1. The lower right panel exhibits that moving from the no fact-check condition to the Democrat inaccurate fact-check conditions does not increases the probability that a strong Republican will vote for Christie and increases the probability that an Independent will vote for Christie by 7 percent from 0.9 to 0.97, and that a strong Democrat will vote for Christie by 20 percent from 0.5 to 0.7.

Figure 5.4 About Here

Conclusion

The results from this experiment reinforce the finding from chapter 4 that fact-check messages influence citizens' evaluations of candidates. Specifically, the presence and content of a fact-check message during political debates has the power to influence evaluations of the candidate's debate performance, evaluations of the debate winner, and the likelihood of voting for a candidate. However, I find no support for the hypotheses that the source of a fact-check influences a citizens' opinion of political candidate's. The lack of a source effect may be the result of two things. First, uncrystallized attitudes about the candidates and issues discussed in the debate may lead subjects to utilize accuracy goals in lieu of partisan goals. Second, highly politically knowledgeable individuals are less likely to rely on party cues and more likely to systematically process information in developing opinions about issues (Kam, 2005). Finally, the results from

this analysis provide some support for my audience cue hypothesis; that is, partisanship does influence the probability that a partisan will favorably evaluate a candidate from their own or a different party, but the presence and message cue of a fact-check appears to be the more important factor at work in these evaluations.

The influence of these fact-check messages is especially noteworthy for respondents' overall assessment of Barbara Buono – who clearly underperformed during the debate, compared to Chris Christie. Overall, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that Christie won the debate, except in conditions that indicated the Buono was truthful and Christie was dishonest. Debate performance is also influenced by the presence and message of the fact-check and again, Buono benefits. Indeed, the presence of a fact-check with the message Buono is accurate and Christie is inaccurate results in a statistically insignificant difference in debate performance for the two candidates. Finally, the likelihood of a person stating they would vote for Buono is greater in these conditions.

The results of this study are suggestive but because of its experimental nature, one must be cautious of generalizing to the real political world. First, subjects received the fact-check simultaneous to the debate. Second, in six of the conditions the fact-check message stated that the candidate statements were all true or all false, which is unlikely to occur in reality. Third, participants likely heed the debate and fact-checks more than they would in a regular setting, because the experimental protocol urged careful attention to the debate. Finally, the use of college student as subjects limits the generalizability of the findings. To check for this possibility a more diverse non-student pool of subjects was drawn for a third experiment. This final experiment will be discussed in the following chapter. Despite the shortcomings of this experiment, this experiment permits the study

of the influence of fact-checks on citizens' evaluations of candidates. By controlling for various extraneous variable and manipulating only the message and source of the fact-checks, this study gives clear evidence of causal relationships between the presence and message of a fact-check and overall evaluations of the candidates.

This study is important because it brings together three components of political persuasion -- source effects, message effects, and audience effects -- which are typically explored individually. Second, this study demonstrates the potential of the fact-check to positively influence evaluations of the underdog in a political contest. That is, the odds were clearly against Buono, but fact-check cues that validated her position leveled the playing field in the subjects' eyes and, in some cases, advantaged her. Finally, if fact-checks do indeed influence the persuasiveness of political messages, then I can expect candidates to change their political strategy when communicating with the American people. Specifically, I can expect politicians to be more "honest" in their portrayal of themselves, their records, and their opponents. Put simply, if fact-checking is effective, it becomes ineffective for politicians to stretch the truth and we should expect them to moderate their behavior accordingly.

CHAPTER 6

FACT-CHECKING NEGATIVE POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS: RESULTS FROM A 2014 SENATE ELECTION

The results from the gubernatorial debate experiment suggest that fact-checks of candidates' debate statements influences citizen's evaluations of the candidate's debate performance, evaluations of the debate winner, and the likelihood of voting for a candidate. The findings are particularly powerful for underdog, Barbara Buono, who benefited substantially from the presence of a fact-check that confirmed her statements. Indeed, the findings from chapter 5 reinforce that the message cues provided by fact-checks have the profound ability to move citizens' evaluations of a candidate for political office. I also find that partisanship interacts with these message cues to influence candidate evaluations. However, I find no support for the hypothesis that the source of a fact-check influences a citizens' opinion of political candidate's.

Having discovered the influence of fact-checks on evaluations of gubernatorial candidates, I seek to conclude my examination of fact-checking during political campaigns with a third and final experiment. This experiment brings together components of the first two experiments – negative advertisements and additional source and message cues – to provide one final test of the influence of fact-checks on voters' evaluations of political candidates and their messages. In this chapter, I discuss the

hypotheses for the study, the experimental design, procedures, and methodology, and the results from the 2014 Senate advertisement experiment.[75]

The goal of this experiment is to examine the influence of multiple fact-check message and source cues on evaluations of candidates and their political messages. I began this examination in chapter 4, where I look at the influences of a fact-check's message on evaluations of an advertisement's tone, usefulness, and accuracy. I found that respondents are more likely to believe that an advertisement is accurate if the fact-check confirms the advertisement's message. In contrast, respondents are less likely to state that the advertisement is accurate if presented with a fact-check that contradicts the accuracy of the advertisements message. Furthermore, people are more likely to state that the advertisement is hostile when presented with a fact-check that challenges the veracity of the ads claims. Additionally, subjects are more likely to state that the advertisement is not useful when the fact-check disconfirmed its claims. Moreover, the results from chapter 4 suggest that the presence and message of a fact-check also affects respondents' acceptance of claims made in the advertisement and fact-checks that challenge the truthfulness of claims in the negative ads are more powerful than fact-checks that authenticate claims. That is, the presence of a fact-check that challenges an advertisement's claims results in respondents rejecting the ads' claims about a candidate.

In this experiment, I examine whether fact-checks of political advertisements from Senate campaigns influences impressions of the candidates and their messages. I again utilize negative political advertisements because the findings from my content

[75] Funding for this research was provided, in part, by the Office of the Vice-President for Research and Economic Affairs, the Graduate Research Support Program, and the Graduate College at Arizona State University.

analysis, discussed in chapter 3, determined that fact-checks often focus on political advertising. Indeed, I find that 21% of all fact-checked examine political advertisements. Furthermore, when advertisements are examined for their accuracy, almost nine out of ten advertisements (88%) analyzed are negative advertisements.

I chose the 2014 Montana Senate election between the recently appointed Senator, John Walsh (D) and challenger Steven Daines (R), a member of the House of Representatives.[76] I extend the experiment from chapter 4 by including three source cues (PolitiFact, FOX, and MSNBC), as well as utilizing an inaccurate and an accurate message cue. In addition, this experiment has 993 subjects, nearly two and a half times as many subjects as the pilot study. Finally, this experiment takes place during a mid-term election, providing a well rounded examination of fact-checking in different political contexts. That is, this dissertation examines fact-checking during a presidential election year (2012), an off-year election (2013), and now a mid-term election (2014).

Hypotheses

To reiterate the theoretical expectations from the first two experiments, I expect that message, source, and audience characteristics influence the degree to which fact-checks move assessments of the negative political advertisements messages as well as assessments of the two political candidates. Stated formally,

H1 Negative Message Effect: A fact-check concluding that a commercial is misleading will be more powerful than a fact-check indicating that a commercial is accurate.

[76] John Walsh withdrew from the race on August 7, 2014 after allegations emerged that he had plagiarized a paper while in college. This experiment was complete in June of 2014 prior to the emergence of the allegations and should have no influence on the results of the experiment.

H2 Accurate Message Cue Hypothesis: The presence of a fact-check that confirms the accurate of a candidate's statement should increase overall evaluations of the candidate.

H3 Inaccurate Message Cue Hypothesis: The Presence of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluations of the candidate.

H4 Nonpartisan Source Effect: People's desire for accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check that is non-partisan since a non-partisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy.

H5 Source Conflict Effect: A source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position.

In addition, I will examine a new hypothesis in this chapter – the consistent message hypothesis. It is well established that individuals prefer messages that are attitude-consistent or that reinforce existing beliefs (Festinger, 1957; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948; Kinder, 2003). That is, individuals prefer information that is congruent with their existing beliefs. Congruent information in a political context then is positive information about one's preferred candidate and negative information about an opposition candidate. On the other hand, incongruent information in a political context is negative information about one's preferred candidate and positive information about an opposition candidate. This confirmation bias has been well documented in political decision making. For example, it has been found that individuals more often select news articles that are congruent to their existing beliefs than incongruent news articles (Taber & Lodge, 2001). In addition, Donsbach (1991) found that voters do indeed prefer congruent information about political candidates. Given the literature on information

processing, it is reasonable to expect that a fact-check message cue will be more influential if the message is congruent with an individual's prior beliefs. Stated formally,

H6 Consistent Message Hypothesis: A message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position.

Table 6.1 lists the consistent and inconsistent message cues for Democratic and Republican respondents for both negative advertisements.

Table 6.1 About Here

Methods

Subject recruitment. A total of nine hundred and ninety-three valid responses were collected via Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in June of 2014. [77] Subjects were paid $1.00 for their participation.[78] Respondents were required to have a HIT approval rate greater than or equal to 95% and at least 500 approved HITs. Overall, the sample is somewhat younger, more female, and more educated than the general public. The sample is also more politically knowledgeable and liberal than respondents from 2012 American National Election Study.[79] See Table 6.1 for the demographics of the sample.

Table 6.2 About Here

Experimental methods. I relied on an online experiment where I employed a 2 (negative ads) by 7 (fact-checks) factorial design which produced fourteen experimental conditions. The experiment started at noon on June 17, 2014 and closed at 10 a.m. on June 18, 2014. On average the survey took 14 minutes and 27 seconds to complete.

[77] 185 surveys were rejected because the respondent was not a U.S. citizen. An additional 70 surveys were discarded because they were incomplete, and thus not valid.
[78] IRB Human Subject approval #STUDY00001118, granted June 12, 2014.
[79] Respondents came from 49 States.

Subjects were recruited via MTurk; all subjects were required to be at least 18 years of age and U.S. citizens. The survey was built and distributed via Survey Monkey and randomization was used. There is not a statistically significant difference between conditions in terms of respondents demographics (age, gender, education) or political attitudes (political knowledge, party identification, ideology, interest in politics, voter registration), thus I am confident that exposure to the treatment is driving the difference between experimental conditions (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

In each condition, participants were first exposed to one of two negative political advertisements from the 2014 Montana Senate election. This senate election was chosen because it had an early primary and although it was not an open election, the incumbent, Democrat John Walsh, was appointed to the position only four months prior to the state's primary election. That is, compared to the first two experiments that had well known incumbents, this experiment utilizes a race that mimics an open race.[80] The two political ads were chosen because they are comparable in terms of the issues discussed in each ad – the federal debt, unemployment, and outsourcing jobs.

In twelve of the conditions, respondents also received a fact-check of the political advertisement. The fact-checks offered varying message and source cues. Specifically,

[80] It is important to utilize an open race, or an election that mimics an open race, because voters tend to have more information about incumbents and to recognize incumbents (Jacobson, Fiorina, & Brady, 2003), thus making it possible for respondents to draw on prior held information when making assessments about a negative political advertisement. Moreover, participants are likely to give lower evaluations of incumbents who utilize some types of negative advertisements (see Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). In addition, there is a risk of in-party learning if an incumbent election is used (see Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). Specifically, respondents may evaluate an incumbent more positively or negatively just because they are the incumbent. This experiment was designed with the intention of minimizing the likelihood that respondents had prior knowledge of the candidates and their issue positions.

the fact-check stated that the claims in the negative advertisement were either accurate or inaccurate. Additionally, the fact-check source was varied indicating a neutral source (PolitiFact) or a partisan source (FOX or MSNBC). The message cue remained the same for each source. That is, there is one accurate message cue with three different sources cues and one inaccurate message cue with three different source cues.[81] Table 6.2 lists each condition and the number of subjects. See appendix B for a story board of each negative political ad and 6B for the fact-check message and source cues.

Table 6.3 About Here

Before viewing one of the two negative ads, respondents were given a brief description of the Montana Senate race.[82] They were then randomly assigned to view one of the two political ads. After viewing one of the political commercials (conditions 1 and 8) or viewing the political ad and reading a fact-check about the ad (conditions 2-7 and 9-14), participants filled out a survey that asked questions about the advertisement and the fact-check. The post-test included questions about the candidate's records in terms of unemployment, outsourcing jobs, and the federal debt – the three issues discussed in each advertisement. Questions about the candidates' traits were also asked. Finally, a number of political knowledge and demographic questions were asked. After completing the

[81] The fact-checks were all based on one fact-check produced by FactCheck.org titled "Montana's Chinese Connection", posted on May 22, 2014. The fact-check can be found here: http://www.factcheck.org/2014/05/montanas-chinese-connection/.

[82] The following is the brief description of the Montana Senate race: "Montana, a microcosm of the country politically, is a crucial battleground state in the 2014 midterm election. The election is between Steve Daines (R) and John Walsh (D). U.S. Representative Steven Daines won the Republican primary with 83.4% of the vote. John Walsh, the appointed Senator and former Lt. Governor of the state, won the Democratic primary with 64.1% of the vote. Daines and Walsh have raised more than $6 million in their bid for the U.S. Senate and outside spending is expected to be much more. Polling in the state is close with Daines enjoying a slight lead in the most recent polls."

survey, subjects were debriefed and directed to the real FactCheck.org fact-check of the two political ads. See appendix B for the survey questions.

Validity. Threats to the external validity of this experiment are minimized because the measures in this experiment are realistic and mimic actually campaign information voters would typically see during an election. Although the sample in this experiment is not representative, it does mimic the U.S. public to some degree. Indeed, research has not identified significant differences between MTurk samples and traditional samples and they are, in fact, more representative than a student sample (see Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2013 for a review). In addition, MTurkers do report their demographic characteristics fairly accurately (Rand, 2012). Never the less, MTurkers are more likely than other survey respondents to look for answers to questions on the internet and to move through surveys quickly, and thus pay less attention to survey materials. However, recent research suggests that an MTurk sample is still at least as reliable as non-MTurk samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). To account for attention to the survey, I employed a number of attention checks scattered thought the survey. 97.6% of respondents got all three attention checks correct, thus I am confident that attention to the survey does not pose a threat to the validity of the study.

Results

Assessments of the advertisements. After viewing one of the political ads or one of the political ads and a fact-check, participants were asked to assess the usefulness and accuracy of the advertisement they viewed. Overall 30.5% of participants stated that the advertisement they viewed was "not useful at all", 46.1% stated that the ad was

"somewhat useful", and 22.8% stated that the ad was "very useful".[83] Perceptions of the advertisements accuracy also vary, 27% of respondents stated that the advertisement they viewed was "not accurate at all", 46.8% believed the ad to be "somewhat accurate", and 20.9% indicated that the ad was "very accurate".[84] However, in each case assessments of the political ads were influenced, to varying degrees, by the presences, content, and in a few cases, the source, of a fact-check.[85]

Beginning with assessments of the two negative political advertisements' usefulness, the results from a one-way ANOVA demonstrate that assessments of the advertisements' usefulness are influenced by the presence and content of a fact-check. The difference is significant for both the Anti-Daines ad [$F=11.18$, $p < 0.001$] and for Anti-Walsh ad [$F=16.32$, $p < 0.001$]. A R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc comparison reveals that for the Anti-Daines advertisement, the differences between conditions are the result of a source conflict effect and a nonpartisan source effect. Specifically, the inconsistent message from MSNBC (Condition 7) stating that the Democrats ad attacking the Republican is false, results in significantly less useful ratings of the ad than the no fact-check condition and the three accurate fact-check conditions. This is in the expected

[83] Respondents were asked: Thinking about the content of the advertisement, did you find the advertisement very useful, somewhat useful, not useful at all? 1 indicates that the respondent believes the ad is not useful at all and 3 indicates the ad is very useful. In the first negative ad experiment 27% of respondents stated that the ad was "not useful at all", 48% believed it was "somewhat useful", and 25% indicated that the ad was "very useful".
[84] Subjects were asked: Thinking about accuracy of the advertisement, would you consider the advertisement very accurate, somewhat accurate, or not accurate at all. 1 indicates that the ad is not accurate at all and 3 indicates that the ad is very accurate. 21% of respondents in the first negative advertisement experiment found the ad to be "very accurate", while 39% rated it as "somewhat accurate", and 18% as "not accurate at all".
[85] The difference between assessments of the two advertisements usefulness, tone, and accuracy were statistically significant, thus the two ads must be analyzed separately.

direction because a source cue should be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position. In addition, the neutral message from PolitiFact (Condition 5) stating that the Democrats ad attacking the Republican is false, results in significantly less useful ratings of the ad than the no fact-check condition and the accurate fact-check conditions. This is in the expected direction because a nonpartisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy resulting in more negative evaluations of the advertisement when the neutral fact-check states that the ad is inaccurate.

A R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc comparison reveals that for the Anti-Walsh advertisement, the differences between conditions are the result of an accurate and inaccurate message effect and a nonpartisan source effect. Specifically, the three accurate message conditions result in increased evolutions of the advertisements usefulness, while the three inaccurate message conditions result in decreased evolutions of the ads usefulness. That is, there is a difference between the two message conditions, but not within the message conditions. This is in the expected direction. Additionally, the neutral message from Politifact (Condition 5) stating that the Republicans ad attacking the Democrat is false, results in significantly less useful ratings of the ad than the no fact-check condition. Again, this is in the expected direction. See Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 About Here

In order to test my Consistent Message Hypothesis, the expectation that a message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position, I recoded my experimental conditions into consistent and inconsistent messages. In each case a respondent was given a 1 if the fact-check message was consistent with his partisan beliefs and a -1 if the fact-check message was

inconsistent with his partisan beliefs.[86] Additionally, the source of the fact-check was not significant so the fact-check messages have been combined into accurate and inaccurate fact-check messages.

Figures 6.1a and 6.1b depict respondent's assessments of the two negative political advertisements usefulness by the fact-checks messages' consistency with the respondent's partisanship. For both the Anti-Daines and Anti-Walsh advertisement in the accurate fact-check conditions, consistent messages lead to higher usefulness ratings, but in the inaccurate fact-check conditions, the inconsistent message leads to higher usefulness ratings. Specifically, when the fact-check states that the attack on Republican Steve Daines is accurate, Democrats – those for whom the message is consistent – see the ad as more useful. However, when the attack on Steve Daines is stated to be inaccurate, Republicans are more likely to state that the advertisement is useful.[87] On the other hand, when one looks at the Anti-Walsh advertisement the findings are exactly the opposite. Specifically, when the fact-check states that the attack on Democrat John Walsh is

[86] Individuals who identify as an Independent or stated that they did not know are excluded from this analysis. Respondents in the no fact-check conditions are also excluded because they did not receive a consistent or inconsistent fact-check message.

[87] Results from an UNIANOVA of the Anti-Daines advertisement indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in mean usefulness rating between consistent and inconsistent messages ($p = .321$), but there were statistically significant differences between accurate and inaccurate messages ($p < .000$). There was also a significant interaction between the message consistency and message accuracy, [F=5.26, p<.005]. For messages that are consistent with a respondents partisanship, accurate fact-check messages lead to higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=43.67, p<.001]. For inconsistent messages, accurate fact-check messages result in higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=4.54, p<.034], but the difference between inconsistent messages in both message cues is not significantly different.

accurate people who are Republicans see the advertisement as useful and Democrats wee the advertisement as less useful.[88] In both cases the message consistent subjects are most responsive to a change in the fact-check message.

Figure 6.1a About Here
Figure 6.1b About Here

Assessments of the advertisements accuracy also vary by message and source cues. Again a one-way ANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference between experimental conditions for both advertisements.[89] A R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc comparison is necessary to sort out these effects. The R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc for the Anti-Walsh advertisement reveled that there is an accurate and inaccurate message effect. As expected, accurate fact-checks result in more accurate ratings of the advertisement, while inaccurate fact-checks result in less accurate ratings of the advertisement. That is, there is a difference between message cues, but not within message cues for respondent's assessments of the Anti-Walsh advertisements' accuracy. This finding provides support for my message cue hypothesis, but not for my source cue hypothesis.

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[88] For the Anti-Walsh advertisement an UNIAVOA shows that again there is no statistically significant difference in mean usefulness rating between consistent and inconsistent messages ($p = .539$), but there were statistically significant differences between accurate and inaccurate messages ($p < .000$). As with the Anti-Daines ad, there was also a significant interaction between the message consistency and message accuracy, [F= 14.37, p = .000]. For messages that are consistent with a respondents partisanship, accurate fact-check messages lead to higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=85.81, p<.001]. For inconsistent messages, accurate fact-check messages result in higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=1.76, p<.185], but again the difference between these two is not significant.

[89] The difference was significant for the anti-Walsh conditions at the p<.001 (F=47.43). For the anti-Daines conditions the difference was significant at the p<.001 level (F=36.94).

The R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc for the Anti-Daines ad reveled that there is an accurate and inaccurate message effect, a nonpartisan source effect, and a negative message effect. That is, the three accurate fact-check conditions increase overall evaluations of the ads accuracy; while the three inaccurate fact-check conditions decrease overall evaluations of the ads accuracy and thus there is a message effect. In addition, the consistent message from FOX (condition 6) stating that the Democrats ad attacking the Republican is false results in significantly more accurate ratings of the advertisement than the fact-check from the neutral PolitiFact stating that the ad is inaccurate. This is in the expected direction because I expect less accurate ratings in the neutral inaccurate condition. Specifically, respondents should be more trusting of the neutral cue from PolitiFact and less trusting of a message cue from FOX that is congruent with FOX's political position. In this case, respondents state that the advertisement is more accurate in the FOX condition because FOX is expected to state that the attack on the Republican candidate is false, thus the cue is less trustworthy than the cue from a neutral source like PolitiFact. There is also a negative message effect. That is, the accurate message conditions did not produce significantly different results than the control condition, but the inaccurate message conditions did, thus indicating that the negative message is more powerful in moving subject's assessments of the advertisements accuracy.

Figure 6.2 About Here

As with usefulness, I use assessments of the advertisements accuracy to test my Consistent Message Hypothesis, the expectation that a message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position, Figures 6.2a and 6.2b show respondent's assessments of the two negative

political advertisements accuracy by the fact-checks messages' consistency with the respondent's partisanship and by fact-check message accuracy. Again, Democrats are more likely to that that the Anti-Daines advertisement is accurate when the fact-check message states that the advertisement is accurate; while Republicans are significantly less likely to state that the advertisement is accurate when the fact-check message cues confirms the veracity of the advertisements claims.[90] Figure 6.2b shows similar results for the Anti-Walsh advertisement. That is, when the fact-check states that the claims in the advertisement are accurate, Republicans are likely to state that the ad is accurate and Democrats are significantly less likely to state that the advertisement is accurate.[91] Again, the message consistent respondents are more affected by the change in the fact-check message cue than are respondents who received inconsistent messages.

Figure 6.2a About Here
Figure 6.2b About Here

[90] Results from an UNIANOVA of the Anti-Daines advertisement indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in mean accuracy rating between consistent and inconsistent messages ($p = .371$), but there were statistically significant differences between accurate and inaccurate messages ($p < .000$). There was also a significant interaction between the message consistency and message accuracy, [F= 5.35, p = .005]. For messages that are consistent with a respondents' partisanship, accurate fact-check messages lead to higher evaluations of the ad's accuracy than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=98.53, p<.000]. For inconsistent messages, accurate fact-check messages result in higher evaluations of the ad's accuracy than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=30.55, p<.000].

[91] For the Anti-Walsh advertisement an UNIAVOA shows that again there is no statistically significant difference in mean accuracy rating between consistent and inconsistent messages ($p = .368$), but there were statistically significant differences between accurate and inaccurate messages ($p < .000$). As with the Anti-Daines ad, there was also a significant interaction between the message consistency and message accuracy, [F= 15.58, p = .000]. For messages that are consistent with a respondents' partisanship, accurate fact-check messages lead to higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=204.84, p<.000]. For inconsistent messages, accurate fact-check messages result in higher evaluations of the ad's usefulness than inaccurate fact-check messages [F=26.92, p<.000].

Taken together, the findings from the usefulness and accuracy ratings of the two negative political commercials provide some support for all six of my hypotheses. Indeed, in all four test of congruency bias I find support for my consistent message hypothesis. Additionally, message effects seem to be more powerful in the Anti-Walsh conditions and source effects were more powerful in relation to evaluations of the Anti-Daines advertisements accuracy and usefulness. Finally, a negative message effect is found for assessments of the Anti-Daines ads accuracy.

Accepting claims about the candidates. In addition to question about the advertisement, respondents were also asked about the candidates. Specifically, respondents were asked if the candidates are responsible for the three issues discussed in each negative advertisement: the federal debt, outsourcing jobs to China, and the rise in the unemployment rate.[92] I expect that people are more likely to state that a candidate is responsible for an issue if the fact-check verifies the claims made about the candidate in the political advertisement. However, if the fact-check challenges the veracity of the claims in the ad, then respondents will be less likely to believe that the candidate is responsible for the issue.

To assess the impact of fact-checks on accepting claims about the two candidates, I create an index for each candidate that ranges from 3 (candidate is not responsible for the issues) to 12 (candidate is responsible for the issues). The 'Daines is responsible for

[92] The respondents were asked the following questions about the candidate's involvement with the three issues. 1. [Steve Daines/John Walsh] is responsible for increases in the federal debt. 2. [Steve Daines/John Walsh] is responsible for the outsourcing of American jobs to China. 3. [Steve Daines/John Walsh] is responsible for the rise in the unemployment rate. In each case the respondents were given four choices. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, where 1 equals Strongly Disagree and 4 equals Strongly Agree.

the issues' index has a mean of 6.78 and a standard deviation of 1.98. The 'Walsh is responsible for the issues' index has a mean of 6.4 and a standard deviation of 1.89. Figure 6.3a presents the impact of a fact-check's message and source cues on respondents' acceptance of claims about Steve Daines. Figure 6.3b presents the results for John Walsh. Again the findings vary by advertisement and fact-check viewed.

The results from a one-way ANOVA indicate that there is a significant difference between the experimental groups and respondent's acceptance of the claims made in the Anti-Daines advertisement about Steve Daines' role in the federal debt, the unemployment rate, and the outsourcing of American jobs to China [$F=26.5$, $p<.001$]. The R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc comparison confirms that there is no difference in effect for respondents in the inaccurate fact-check conditions, respondents in the accurate fact-check, and no fact-check condition. That is, the source of the message does not produce significantly different results within message cues, but across message cues there is a negative message effect in two of the three inaccurate fact-check conditions. Specifically, the FOX inaccurate condition (6) does not produce significantly different results from the PolitiFact and FOX accurate conditions (2 and 3). That is, respondents in the FOX inaccurate condition state that Steve Daines is responsible for the issues at the same rate that respondents in the PolitiFact and FOX accurate conditions do. This is in the expected direction because FOX is inclined to state that the Democrats ad attacking the Republican Steve Daines, is inaccurate and thus respondents may believe that the message cue from FOX stating that the advertisement is inaccurate is not a credible message.

These finding indicate mixed support for my negative message hypothesis and source conflict hypothesis. That is, inaccurate fact-checks lead respondents to be less

likely to accept claims in the advertisements compared to accurate claims. In addition, source effects tend to be minimal. Specifically, two of the three inaccurate fact-check conditions produced significantly different results from the control condition and the accurate message cue conditions, while none of the accurate message cue conditions produced results that are significantly different from the control condition. Thus, the inaccurate message cue conditions are more powerful than the accurate fact-check message cue conditions. Additionally, there is support for my source conflict hypotheses. That is, in the PolitiFact and MSNBC inaccurate conditions, respondents stated that Steve Daines was not responsible for the issues. While this is not statistically different from the FOX inaccurate condition, these two conditions are different than the accurate message conditions.

Finally, there is mixed support for the expectation that people are more likely to believe that the candidate is responsible for the issue when the fact-check challenges the claims. And no support for the expectation that people are more likely to state that a candidate is responsible for an issue if the fact-check verifies the claims made about the candidate in the political advertisement. That is, the inaccurate fact-check message is more powerful than the accurate fact-check message because respondents who viewed a fact-check challenging the claims in the advertisement were more likely than respondents in the control condition to state that Steve Daines is responsible for the issues.

Figure 6.3a About Here

The results from a one-way ANOVA indicate that there is a significant difference between the experimental groups and respondent's acceptance of the claims made in the anti-Walsh advertisement about John Walsh's role in the federal debt, the unemployment

rate, and the outsourcing of American jobs to China [F=17.37, p<.001]. When a R-E-G-W-Q Post Hoc comparison is employed the findings indicate that all of the difference is between message cues. That is, there is not a significant difference within the three accurate message cues and no difference within the three inaccurate message cues. However there is a difference between these two sets of messages.

These findings for the anti-Walsh ad support my expectations that people are more likely to state that a candidate is responsible for an issue if the fact-check verifies the claims made about the candidate in the political advertisement, and less likely to believe that the candidate is responsible for the issue when the fact-check challenges the veracity of the claims made in the advertisement. These findings also support my negative message hypothesis that fact-checks concluding that a commercial is inaccurate are more powerful than fact-checks indicating that a commercial is accurate. That is, the accurate message conditions did not produce significantly different results than the control condition, but the inaccurate message conditions did, thus indicating that the negative message is more powerful in moving subject's assessments of the candidates' responsibility for the issues.[93]

Figure 6.3b About Here

Conclusion

The results from this experiment reinforce the finding from chapter 4 and 5 that fact-check messages influence citizens' evaluations of candidates. Specifically, the presence and content of a fact-check message during a political campaign has the power to influence evaluations of a candidate's negative advertisement as being useful and accurate. Additionally, corrective fact-checks have the ability to influence assessment of

[93] I also found this to be the case in my first experiment.

candidate's level of responsibility for issues facing the nation, with respondents being more likely to indicate that a candidate is not responsible for the issues when the fact-check challenges the advertisement's claims. However, unlike the debate experiment, this final experiment also provides some support for my two source cue hypotheses. That is, respondents were more likely to heed the fact-check from a partisan source when the source's message was contrary to the sources ideological position. And, in some instances, respondents heeded the non-partisan fact-check more than the partisan fact-checks.

Indeed, in four out of six tests I find support for my Accurate Message Effect hypothesis, the hypothesis that states that the presence of a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should increase overall evaluations of the candidate. I also find support in four of six tests for my Inaccurate Message Effect hypothesis, the hypothesis that states that the presence of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluations of the candidate. In three out of six tests I find support for my Negative Message hypothesis which states that fact-checks concluding that a communication is misleading will be more powerful than fact-checks indicating that a commercial is accurate. Moreover, in four out of four tests I find support for my Consistent Message hypothesis which states that s fact-check message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position. In addition, I find support for my Source Conflict hypothesis in two out of six tests. The source conflict hypothesis posits that a source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position. Finally, I find support for my Nonpartisan Source hypothesis, or the idea that people's desire for

accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check from a nonpartisan source since a nonpartisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy, in three out of six tests. See Table 6.4 for a summary of the main findings.

Table 6.4 About Here

The results of this study are suggestive but because of its experimental nature, one must be cautious of generalizing to the real political world. First, the subject pool is a convenience sample. In addition, many of the respondents were from states other than the Senate race being examined in this experiment. As with the first two experiments, respondents were prompted to pay attention to the advertisement and the fact-check, and they first viewed the political commercial and were then given the fact-check. In the real world citizens do not pay careful attention to all political messages, and, often, they may see only a fact-check or the fact-check may precede exposure to the political communication.

Despite these shortcomings, the results from all three experiments make clear that fact-checks, and in particular corrective fact-checks, have the ability to move evaluations of candidates and their political messages. In the next chapter I will provide a summary of the findings from this dissertation, as well as the theoretical implications of this study. I will conclude with a discussion of practical advice for candidates.

CHAPTER 7

HOW FACT-CHECKING MATTERS FOR AMERICAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

This dissertation began with the overarching questions of what does fact-checking of American politics look like and how does it influence voters? This puzzle was explored with four questions. 1) What forms of political communication and what political candidates are fact-checkers fact-checking? 2) What are fact-checkers saying about the truthfulness of candidates? 3) Do fact-checks influence voters' attitudes and evaluations of political candidates and their campaign messages? 4) How can fact-checking have a larger impact on American political campaigns? The first three questions were answered in chapters 3-6. In this chapter, I answer the fourth question by considering the larger impact of fact-checking in American politics. I argue that fact-checking matters for American politics because it has the power to influence citizens' evaluations of candidates and their political communications.

The contribution of this research is twofold. First, this research brings together three components of political persuasion -- source effects, message effects, and recipient effects -- which are typically explored individually. Furthermore, this research includes an examination of larger "so what" variables. Specifically, I explored how fact-checks influence voters' perceptions of candidates and their campaign messages. By bringing all of these components together, I have generated a more holistic view of the components of political persuasion.

Second, the focal point of this research is a relatively new phenomenon in American campaigns – fact-checking. I show that fact-checks are utilized by individuals, particularly in the months following up to the 2012 election. Furthermore, evidence from

the experiments show that fact-checks influence how individuals evaluate candidates' messages and candidates themselves. I argue that fact-checks have important effects for how individuals are persuaded by information during a campaign and that source, message, and audience effects combine to influence the persuasiveness of fact-checks. This, in turn, can influence a voter's tolerance toward certain types of candidate messages and this has important consequences for democracy. For example, if voters are persuaded by fact-checking, they could be motivated to change their vote – an effect that was noted in the political debate experiment in chapter 5. Before proceeding to this discussion of the implication of fact-checking I will first provide a brief synopsis of the findings.

Summary of Findings

I began this dissertation by looking at the forms of political communication that are subject to fact-checking as well as the types of political candidates fact-checked over the course of a political campaign. I employed a content analysis where I coded 1,267 fact-checks that were produced between 2003 and 2012. To the best of my knowledge, this is the most comprehensive examination of the content of fact-checking to date. I find that fact-checking increases in the run-up to the general election and that the incidence of fact-checking spikes after major political events, like debates, primary contests, and conventions. I also show that fact-checking of political messages is dominated by a few organizations. For example, almost two-thirds of all fact-checks are from two fact-checking organizations: PolitiFact.com and FactCheck.org.

The likelihood of fact-checking also depends on the status of the candidates and the type of election. For instance, more than three-quarters of the claimants subjected to fact-checking are commenting on presidential elections, with congressional claimants

accounting for 16% and gubernatorial claimants making up only 4% of all fact-checks. Furthermore, the kind of fact-checking varies by election and by candidate. Among claims made in presidential elections fact-checking is much more diverse covering statements made in interviews, speeches, and debates as well as arguments presented during commercials. In contrast, fact-checking for congressional and gubernatorial races is more focused on political commercials. For instance, over two-thirds of the fact-checking for claims about House races emphasizes political advertisements, with less than one-quarter of fact-checking examining the content of candidates' speeches or debates.

Second, I asked what conclusions fact-checking organizations were drawing about the truthfulness of these politicians statements. I found that the statements of Republicans are more likely to be classified as false, compared to the statements of Democrats. Together, these results suggest that fact-checking is on the rise and that fact-checking is dependent on the campaign context.

Then, I asked if fact-checks influence voters' attitudes and evaluations of political candidates and their campaign messages. This question was answered over the course of chapters 4-6 where I employ three experiments and found that yes, in fact, fact-checking does influence voters' attitudes and evaluations of political candidates and their campaign messages.

The first experiment was a nationally representative, on-line sample with 452 respondents. This experiment utilized the 2012 Ohio Senate race between Democratic incumbent Sherrod Brown and Republican challenger Josh Mandel. The experiment employed two negative political advertisements from two PACs. The findings from the

first experiment suggest that fact-checks of negative political advertisements influence people's assessments of the accuracy, usefulness, and tone of negative political ads. The fact-checks also sway citizens' likelihood of accepting the claims made in the advertisements. In addition, I found that fact-checks challenging the truthfulness of the claims of the negative commercial are more powerful than fact-checks authenticating the assertions made in the negative advertisement and that politically sophisticated respondents were more likely to be influenced by the fact-check message cue, compared to political novices.

The second experiment utilized an edited version of a 2013 New Jersey gubernatorial debate between the incumbent Republican governor Chris Christie and the Democratic Challenger Barbara Buono. This experiment relied on a student sample from ASU with a total of 321 respondents. The results from the second experiment expanded the findings from the first experiment by testing a different form of political communication, a political debate, and by expanding the fact-check message cues to both partisan and neutral sources. I conclude the presence and content of a fact-check message during political debates has the power to influence evaluations of the candidate's debate performance, evaluations of the debate winner, and the likelihood of voting for a candidate. In addition, the results from this analysis provide further support for the importance of partisanship. Indeed, I find that partisanship does influence the probability that a partisan will favorably evaluate a candidate from their own or a different party, but the presence and message cue of a fact-check appears to also be an important factor at work in these evaluations because Republicans and Democrats are less likely to favorably evaluate a candidate who has been identified as being dishonest by a fact-check. Finally, I

find that the source of a fact-check does not matter in citizens assessments of the political candidates'. That is, respondents in this experiment are not more or less impacted by the presence of a fact-check from the neutral source PolitiFact.com, nor are the more or less impacted by the presence of a fact-check from the partisan sources FOX and MSNBC.

The third experiment in this dissertation utilized two negative political commercials produced by the candidates in the 2014 Montana Senate election between Democrat John Walsh and Republican Steve Daines. This race mimicked an open-election and I again utilized fact-check source cues from partisan and neutral sources. This experiment utilized a crowd sourced Mechanical Turk sample with a total of 1,098 respondents. In this chapter, I find that the presence and content of a fact-check message during a political campaign has the power to influence evaluations of a candidate's negative advertisement as being useful and accurate. Additionally, corrective fact-checks have the ability to influence assessment of candidate's level of responsibility for issues facing the nation, with respondents being more likely to indicate that a candidate is not responsible for the issues when the fact-check challenges the advertisement's claims. Unlike the debate experiment in chapter 5, this final experiment provides some support for the two source cue hypotheses. Respondents in this experiment were more likely to heed the fact-check from a partisan source when the source's message was contrary to the sources ideological position. And, in some instances, respondents heeded the non-partisan fact-check more than the partisan fact-checks.

Amongst these three experiments there are consistencies and inconsistencies in my findings. Consistently, I find that fact-checking does matter for assessments of candidates and their political statements, but the size of the impact is dependent on fact-

check message cues and, in my final experiment, fact-check source cues. For example, in experiment 1 and 3 where I test the negative message hypothesis, I find that corrective fact-check messages are more influential than confirming fact-check messages. That is, the confirming message do not produce significantly different results from the control conditions. In chapters 5 and 6 where I test my accurate and inaccurate message hypotheses I consistently find that confirming fact-checks increase overall evaluations of the candidates and their political messages; while corrective fact-checks consistently lower overall evaluations of candidates and their political messages. I also consistently find that partisanship impacts the influence of fact-checking in chapters 4 and 5.

On the other hand, I do not consistently find that that source of the fact-check impacts the influence of the fact-check. Indeed, in chapter 5 I find no support for my two source cue hypothesis, but in chapter 6 I do find some support for these hypotheses in certain conditions. The lack of a source effect may be the result of the experimental design for the debate experiment. Specifically, I have a smaller number of participants in each condition, the fact-check is presented simultaneously to the candidate's message, and the participants are highly politically knowledgeable.

The small n may make variance an issue in the debate experiment. The larger sample in chapter 6 may have helped in pulling apart these effects. Additionally, respondents saw the fact-check message as they watched the debate. In the Montana Senate experiment, participants were exposed to the treatment after they viewed the political communication. That is, when a fact-check is viewed in relation to a political message may impact how the fact-check is processed. In addition, highly knowledge individuals tend to be systematic processors (Kam, 2005) who rely on analysis of the

message and not on source cue heuristics to help make decisions about politics. That is, source cues may be more influential in less politically knowledgeable populations.

The use of three experiments, with three different political races, and three different campaign communications provides a well rounded test of the impact of fact-checking on voters' evaluations of candidates and their campaign messages. Indeed, any one experiment may suffer from threats to external validity; all three experiments together provide strong evidence of the influence of fact-checking on voters during political campaigns.

Despite a high level of internal and external validity there are limitations to each of these experiments. Moving forward, I plan to utilize fact-checks from partisan sources like FOX and MSNBC in future experiments. That is, the very way that partisan media organizations construct their fact-checks may impact the source cue effect. For example, a fact-check from Fox News may be much more strongly worded and reach more definite conclusions than a fact-check from a neutral source like PolitiFac.com or FactCheck.org, and thus a source effect could be more prevalent. In my three experiments I utilized only fact-checks from neutral sources and simply changed the labels.

Additionally, the student sample in my debate experiment and the crowd sourced MTurk sample in my final Senate experiment also have limitations. In future experiments on fact-checking I plan to use more nationally representative samples. Both my student and MTurk sample were more politically knowledgeable and liberal than the general population, the lack of variance in these variable made it difficult to test some of my hypotheses. Finally, the experiments discussed in this dissertation used only two types of elections (Senate and Gubernatorial) and two types of political communications (negative

advertisements and debates), while my content analysis confirmed that these campaign types and political communications are often subject to fact-checking, there are other campaigns that are checked more often or just as frequently. That is, future experiments need to consider other electoral contexts (i.e. Presidential, House, and State elections) and other forms of political communications (i.e. interviews, press releases, and positive advertisements).

A Note to Practitioners

I began this dissertation with a quote from President Obama about the Affordable care act that was rated as the biggest Pinocchio of 2013 by the Washington Posts' The Fact Checker. As it turns out, that quote, or a very similar one, was repeated by Obama and other top administrative officials 37 times by PolitiFact.com's count (Jacobson, 2013), and in each case the statement "*And if you like your insurance plan, you will keep it. No one will be able to take that away from you. It hasn't happened yet. It won't happen in the future*." was given a 'Pants on Fire' rating. Indeed, when one looks at this statement it is not that it is totally wrong, but simply wrong enough to mislead citizens about the nature of the new health care system. What the President and his administration ought to have said is that individuals could keep their plans if the plan met the ACA guidelines. Indeed, it is possible that the repetition of this statement and the equal recurrence of a corrective fact-check impacted the way that citizens viewed the credibility of Obamacare, and at the very least, these corrective fact-checks gave Obama's political adversaries fodder for their attack, not only of the ACA, but of Obama as a trustworthy and honest leader.

Students and practitioners of politics have much to gain from examining this misstatement and the subsequent fact-checking frenzy that accompanied it. The first lesson to be learned is surround yourself with good staff. President Obama did not write the aforementioned statement, a speech writer did, and yet politicians are ultimately responsible for everything that comes out of their mouths. Politicians should do themselves a favor by making sure they are surrounded by people who will provide real facts and will write factually accurate speeches and statements. Second, be precise. Political candidates and politicians must be precise in their language. Candidates and politicians have gotten away with being vague about their policy proposals and issue positions, but in an era of fact-checking, vagueness often leads to disaster. Given the negative impact a corrective fact-check can have on a candidates political ambitions, it is better to be truthful the first time around. And third, get out in front of gaffes. That is, if a candidate finds himself in a situation of saying something that is inaccurate, correct it as soon as possible, and don't repeat the statement again.

A Note to Fact-Checking Organizations

The media are an integral component in the American political system. The media informs voters about candidates' issues positions and records, and citizens rely on the media to gather and report accurate information about politics. As with practitioners, the media can also learn a great deal from this examination of fact-checking about their new role as fact-checkers. First, given the importance of fact-checking for political outcomes, it is important that fact-checkers spend time fact-checking substantive policy information and candidates records that provide voters with the most useful information. Along the same line, fact-checkers should move away from focusing on the horse race.

Additionally, fact-checkers must be complete in their assessments of candidate's political statements. Marietta, Barker, and Bowser (n.d.) have concluded that fact-checkers often reach vastly different conclusion on the same issues and statements. This finding suggests that fact-checks need to agree upon a common metric for rating statements, the types of evidence that ought to be included in these assessments, and the types of political messages that are appropriate for fact-checker to weigh in on. The media as fact-checker are charged with providing voters with information that is relevant to making a well-informed vote choice and fact-checking is now an important component of campaign coverage.

Future Research

I plan to extend my work on fact-checking in a number of ways. First, I am interested in examining the influence of fact-checking in presidential elections. Candidates for president are well known and attitudes about them may be crystallized. Thus, we may actually see a much more poignant source cue influence in presidential election. That is, motivated reasoning may override the influence of fact-check messages in presidential elections because citizens' have more prior knowledge of the candidates and issues and more well-formed opinions about the candidates and issues, and thus, fact-checking may be less influential in presidential elections. I am also interested in examining the influence of fact-checking on female vs. male political candidates and challengers vs. incumbents.

Second, I am interested in examining the influence of fact-checking on the certainty or uncertainty of a voter. Given that uncertainty is the result of limited information (Enelow and Heinich 1981) and that voters dislike being uncertain (Bartels

1986), it is reasonable to expect that fact-checks will increase voters' certainty about their position if the fact-check reinforces their original position. If, however, the fact-check offers corrective information that is counter to their original position, then uncertainty may be increased. Increased uncertainty about candidates and policy issues could make voters less likely to turn up at the polls on Election Day or to engage in politics in other ways.

I would also like to explore whether individuals are more or less cynical about candidates and campaigns as a result of fact-checking. As with uncertainty, it is reasonable to expect that the prevalence of corrective fact-checks in the modern campaign could make citizens more cynical about politics because the fact-checks reinforce the stigma that all politicians are liars who are out for themselves. In addition, this increase in uncertainty and cynicism as a result of fact-checking could also impact a voter's efficacy. That is an individual may feel like they understand the substance of politics better as a result of the information gained from fact-checks, but they may also believe that there is less they can do to change the system, i.e. if all politicians are liars, what is the value in participating?

Moreover, if fact-checking is indeed on the rise and more voters are turning to fact-checks for information, then we may begin to see fact-checking as an important heuristic device in U.S. campaigns. That is, the confirming or corrective cue offered by a fact-check may be a powerful short cut for voters who then do not need to conduct their own research about candidates and policy issues. Specifically, fact-checking may become an important heuristic in primary campaigns where voters do not have a partisan cue they

can rely on. It also might be particularly impactful for moderate voters who are less likely to rely on partisan cues.

Finally, I am interested in examining the influence of fact-checking on politician's behavior. Because fact-checking has the profound ability to move evaluations of candidates, it is in the best interest of candidates to become more 'honest' in their presentation of themselves, their records, and their issue positions, and to become more 'honest' in their presentation of their opponents records and issue position. Put simply, if fact-checking is effective, it becomes ineffective for politicians to stretch the truth and we should expect them to moderate their behavior accordingly. To test the impact of fact-checking on politicians behavior I would like to extend my content analysis to see if more accurate ratings are given to a candidate over time and I would like to analyze candidate statements to see if they voluntarily correct misinformation after they earn a false rating. In addition, it would be useful to content analyze candidates political communications to see if they are using evidence produced by fact-checking organizations to bolster their credibility or to call into question their opponent's credibility. Finally, it would be useful to survey candidates for political office to ask them how they view the role of fact-checking in campaigns, if they believe it makes an impact, and if they are aware of what fact-checkers are saying about the accuracy of their campaign communications.

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APPENDIX A

CHAPTER 1: FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.1. Unique Visitors to Fact-Checking Websites: December 2011 to December 2014

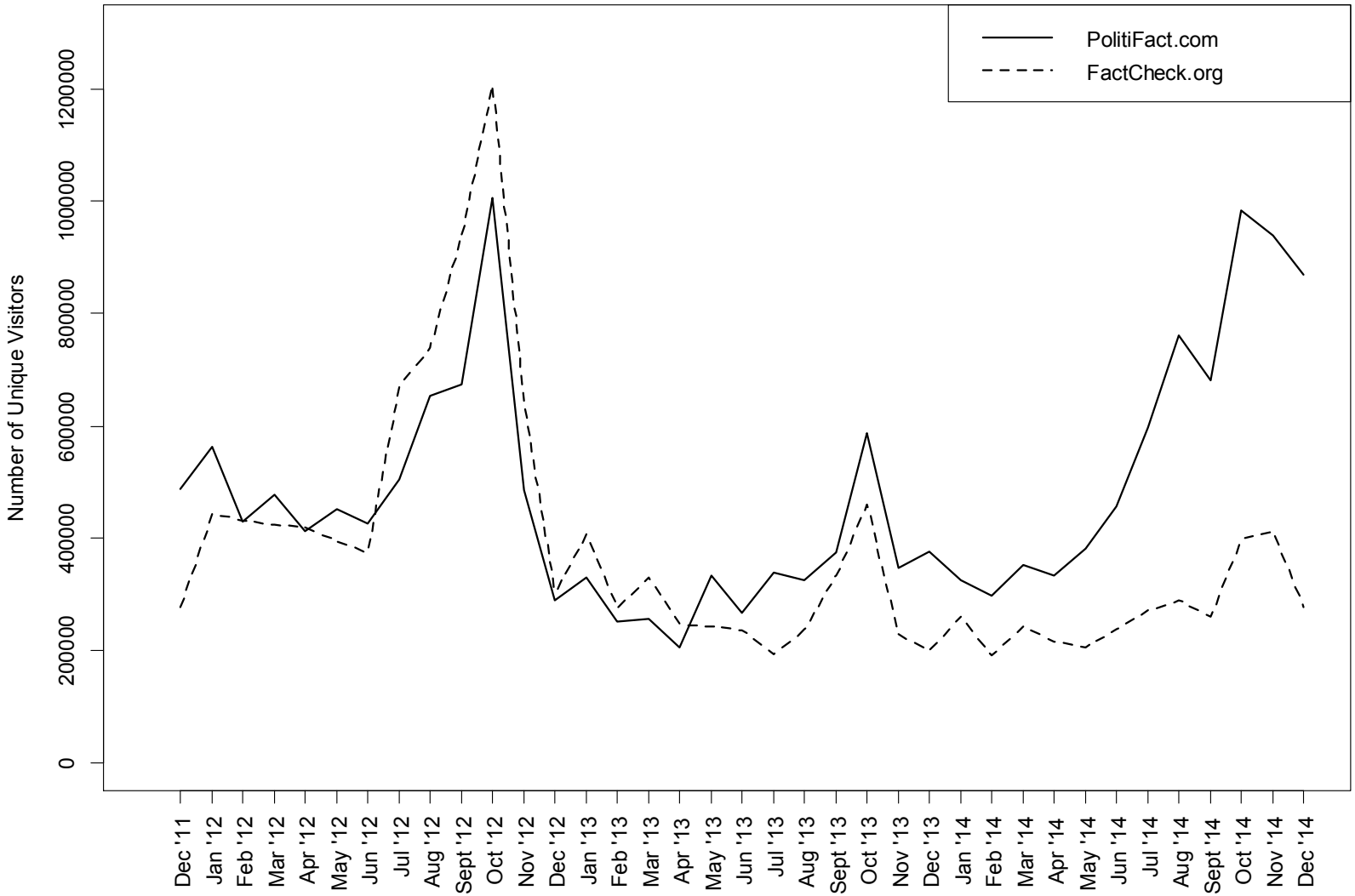


Figure 1.2. Percentage of Visitors to Fact-Checking Websites by Age, March 2012-April 2014

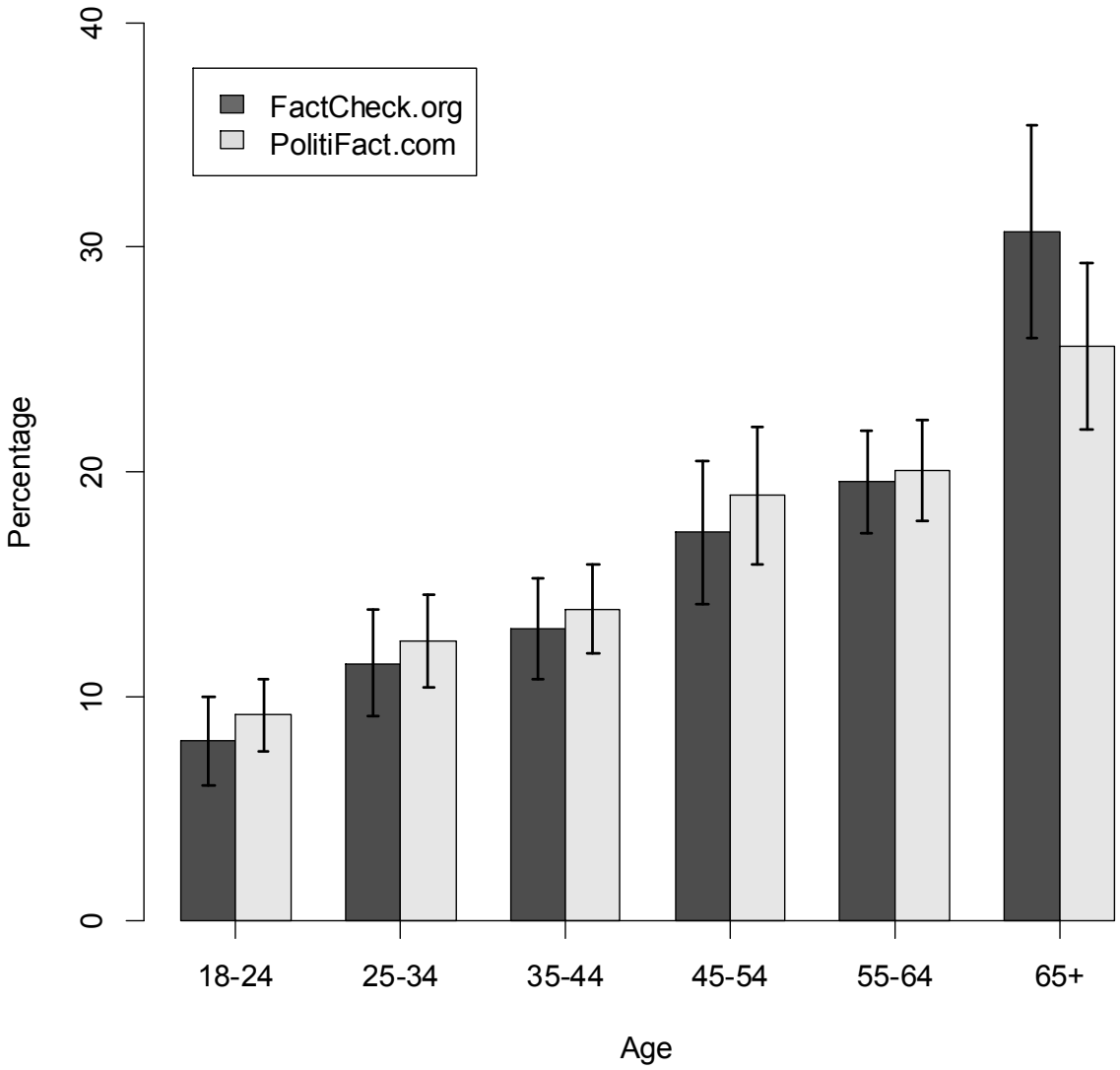


Figure 1.3. Percentage of Visitors to Fact-Checking Websites by Gender, March 2012-April 2014

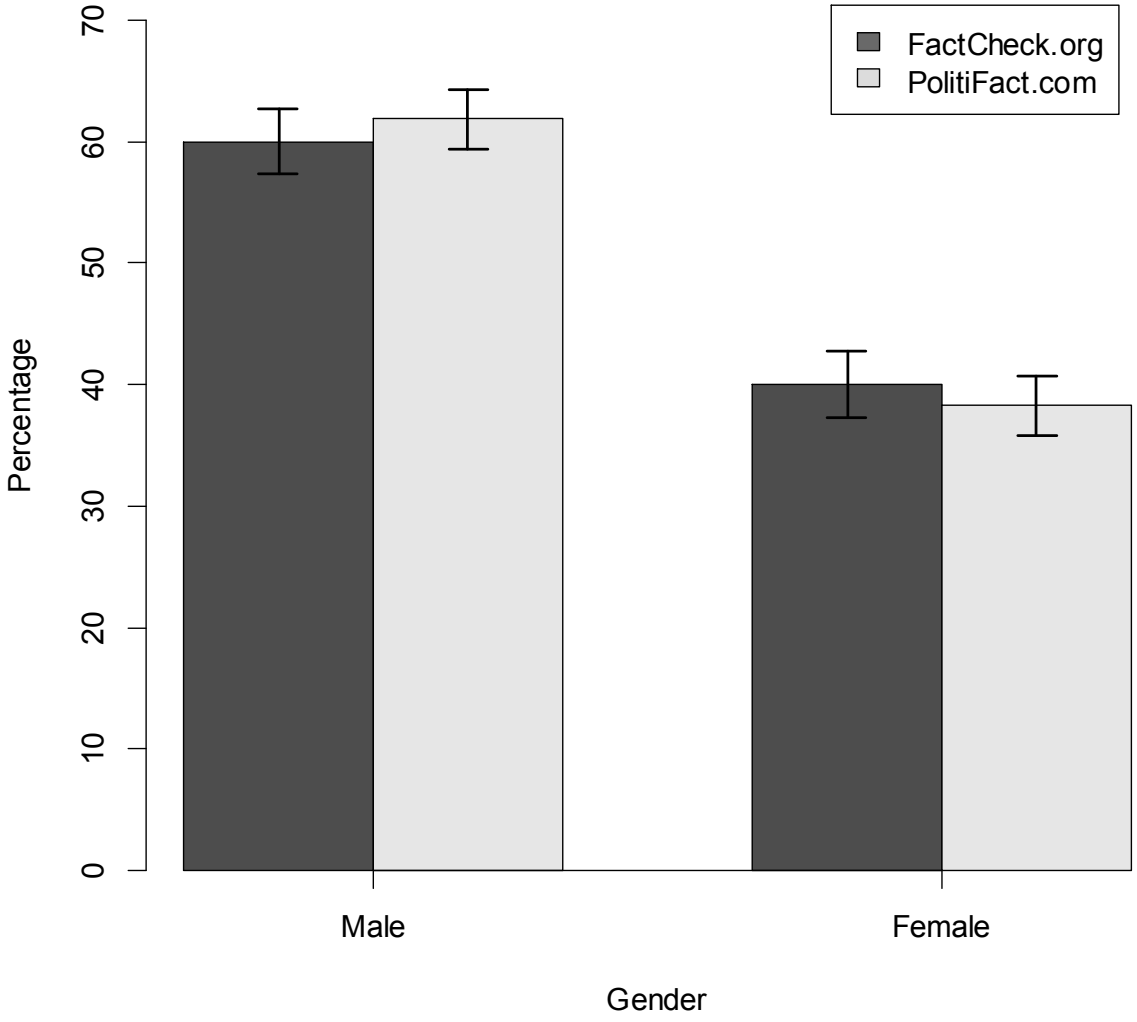


Figure 1.4. Percentage of Visitors to Fact-Checking Websites by Income, March 2012-April 2014

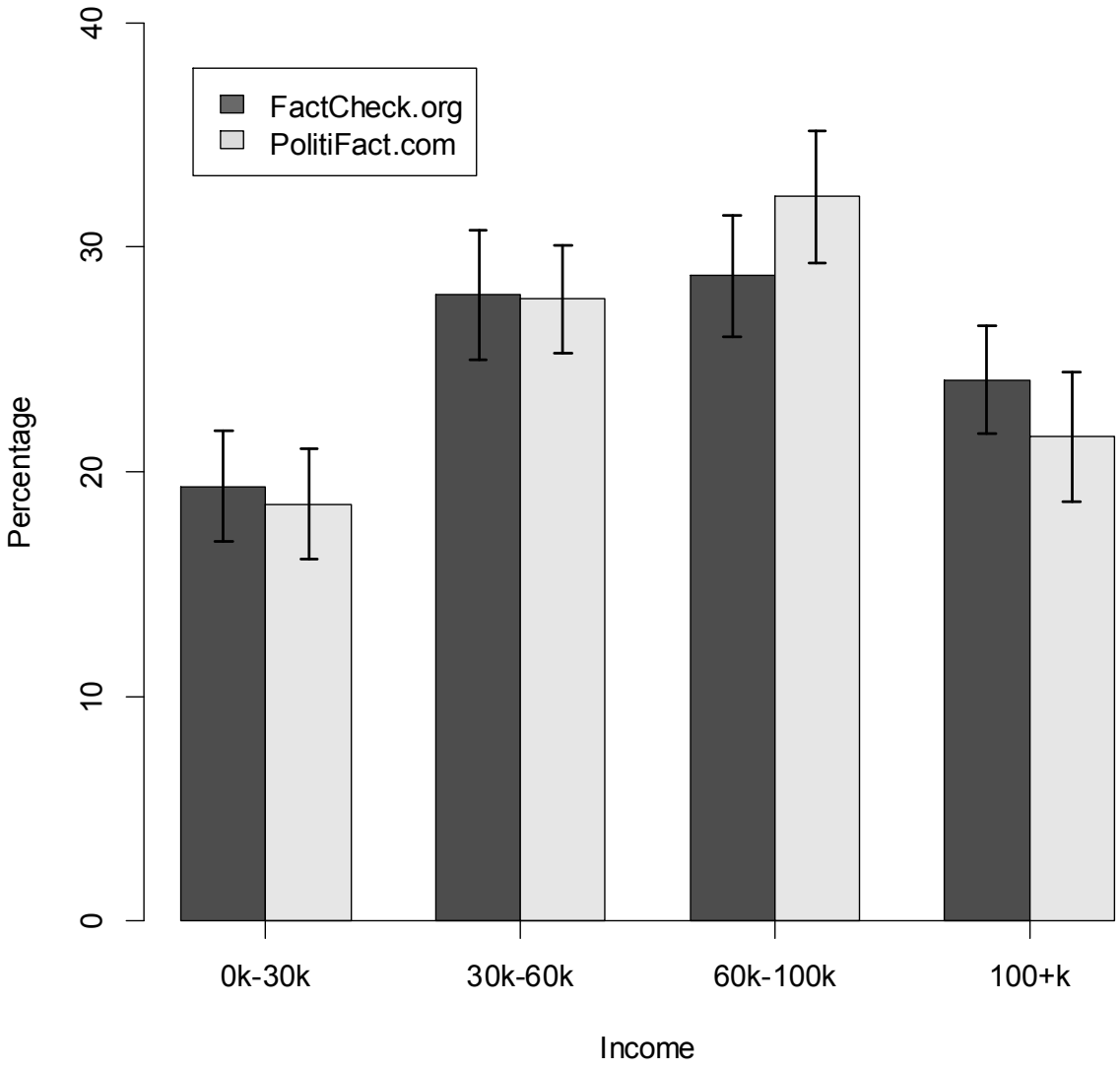


Table 1.1. Summary of Theoretical Expectations

Hypothesis	Statement of Hypothesis	Chapter
Do fact-check message cues influence evaluations of candidates and their political statements?		
Negative Message Cue Hypothesis	Fact-checks concluding that a communication is misleading will be more powerful than fact-checks indicating that a commercial is accurate.	4, 6
Accurate Message Cue Hypothesis	The presence of a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidate's statement should increase overall evaluations of the candidate.	5,6
Inaccurate Message Cue Hypothesis	The presence of a fact-check that offers a corrective cue should decrease overall evaluations of the candidate.	5,6
Consistent Message Hypothesis	A fact-check message cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message is consistent with the respondent's partisan position.	6
Do fact-check source cues influence evaluations of candidates and their political statements?		
Credible Source Hypothesis	Fact-checks will be influential since they are likely to be viewed as credible and emanating from a trustworthy source.	4
Nonpartisan Source Hypothesis	People's desire for accurate information may make them more likely to pay attention to a fact-check from a nonpartisan source since a nonpartisan source may be viewed as more trustworthy.	5,6
Source Conflict Hypothesis	A source cue will be more persuasive if the content of the message conflicts with the source's ideological position.	5,6
How do audience characteristics impact the influence of fact-checks?		
Partisanship Hypothesis	Partisanship will influence people's susceptibility to fact-checking.	4, 5
Political Sophistication Hypothesis	The impact of fact-checks on people's assessment of political commercials will be more powerful for political sophisticates, especially compared to political novices.	4
Tolerance to Negativity Hypothesis	People with low tolerance to negativity will be more influenced by the evidence presented in the fact-check.	4

APPENDIX B

CHAPTER 2: METHOD AND SAMPLE-RELATED DOCUMENTS

Table 2.1. Description of Experiments Used in Dissertation

Experiment	Hypotheses Being Tested	Design	Subject pool	Candidate Communication
Experiment 1	Negative Message Cue Hypothesis Credible Source Hypothesis Partisanship Hypothesis Political Sophistication Hypothesis Tolerance to Negativity Hypothesis	Posttest	Online, Representative, (N=452)	Negative Advertisements
Experiment 2	Accurate Message Cue Hypothesis Inaccurate Message Cue Hypothesis Nonpartisan Source Hypothesis Source Conflict Hypothesis Partisanship Hypothesis	Posttest	On-campus laboratory, students, (N=321)	Gubernatorial Debate
Experiment 3	Negative Message Cue Hypothesis Accurate Message Cue Hypothesis Inaccurate Message Cue Hypothesis Nonpartisan Source Hypothesis Source Conflict Hypothesis Consistent Message Hypothesis	Posttest	Online Amazon Mechanical Turk, crowd sourced, (N=993)	Negative Advertisements

List of fact-check sources included in the content analysis

AZ Fact Check a partnership of the Arizona Republic, Phoenix's 12 News, and Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism (N=83), Bismarck Tribune(N=2), Charleston Gazette(N=1), Dayton Daily News (N=2), Denver Post Political Polygraph (N=5), Deseret Morning News (N=1), Duluth News Tribune (N=1), FactCheck.org (N=350), Lancaster New Era (N=1), Lewiston Morning Tribune (N=1), New York Observer (N=1), Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (N=1), PolitiFact.com-National (N=248), PolitiFact-Florida a partnership of the Tampa Bay Times and the Miami Herald and PolitiFact.com(N=19), PolitiFact-Georgia Florida a partnership of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and PolitiFact.com (N=31), PolitiFact-New Hampshire a partnership of The Telegraph and the Keene Sentinel and PolitiFact.com (N=11), PolitiFact-New Jersey a partnership of The Star-Ledger and PolitiFact.com (N=26), PolitiFact-Ohio a partnership of the Cleveland Plain Dealer and PolitiFact.com (N=10), PolitiFact-Oregon a partnership of The Oregonian and PolitiFact.com (N=1), PolitiFact-Rhode Island a partnership of the Providence Journal and PolitiFact.com (N=4), PolitiFact-Texas a partnership of the Austin American-Statesman and PolitiFact.com (N=61), PolitiFact-Virginia a partnership of the Richmond Times-Dispatch and PolitiFact.com (N=16), PolitiFact-Wisconsin a partnership of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and PolitiFact.com(N=8), Sarasota Herald Tribune (N=1), Seattle Times Truth Needle (N=12), St. Petersburg Times (N=1), Telegraph Herald (N=1), The Associate Press Fact Check (N=124), The Augusta Chronicle (N=3), The Bakersfield Californian (N=1), The Buffalo News (N=3), The Capital (N=1), The Dallas Morning News (N=3), The Washington Post Fact Checker (N=195), The Florida Times-Union (N=21), The New York Post (N=1), The New York Times (N=2), The Orange County Register (N=1), The Record (N=1), The Salt Lake Tribune (N=2), The Santa Fe New Mexican (N=2), The Spokesman-Review

(N=2), The Virgian Pilot (N=1), The Washington Times (N=1), Tri-Valley Herald (N=1), USA Today (N=2), and Wisconsin State Journal(N=1).

Fact-check CodeSheet **article code**

1. Date Coded / /	10. Claimant Republican or Democrat
2. Fact-check Source	10a. Target Republican or Democrat
3. Date of Fact-check / /	11. Claimant Incumbent or Challenger
4. Total Paragraphs	11a. Target Incumbent or Challenger
5. Word Count	12.Claimant Male or Female
6. About Cadidate, Campaign, Party?	12a. Target Male or Female
6a. If No, what is purpose?	13. What is the FC checking
6b. Issue Content	14. If ad, negative, contrast, or positive
7. Year of campaign being checked	15. Policy statement or candidate action
8. What is fact-check about	16. Objective or Biased
9. Type of election	

Questions 17-22		**Claimant 1**	**Target 1**	**Claimant 2**	**Target 2**	**Claimant 3**	**Target 3**	**Claimant 4**	**Target 4**
Name									
State									
Position running for									
Current Position (if available)									
	Other Issue								
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
		Claimant 5	**Target 5**	**Claimant 6**	**Target 6**	**Claimant 7**	**Target 7**	**Claimant 8**	**Target 8**
Name									
State									
Position running for									
Current Position (if available)									
	Other Issue								
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	
(Iss/pars/acc)		/ /		/ /		/ /		/ /	

Content Analysis CodeBook

VARIABLE DESCRIPTION **CODE**

1. Date coded

_____

2. Source of Fact-check:

_____

1=FactCheck.org
2=PolitiFact.com-National
3=PolitiFact-Rhode Island
4=PolitiFact-Georgia
5=PolitiFact-Florida
6=PolitiFact-Oregon
7=PolitiFact-Ohio
8=PolitiFact-New Hampshire
9=PolitiFact-Virginia
10=PolitiFact-New Jersey
11=PolitiFact-Texas
12=PolitiFact-Wisconsin
13=The Fact Checker
14=The AP Fact Check
15=AZ Fact Check
16=Seattle Times Truth Needle
17=Denver Post Political Polygraph
18=Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
19=Public Opinion
20=San Gabriel Valley Tribune
21=Finance & Commerce
22=Tri-Valley Herald
23=Bangor Daily News
24=Las Cruces Sun-News
25=Intelligencer Journal
26=The New York Post
27=The Dallas Morning News
28=The Washington Times
29=The Daily News of Los Angeles
30=Deseret Morning News
31=Idaho Falls Post Register
32=The Hollywood Reporter
33=USA Today
34=The Capital Times
35=The Union Leader
36=The Florida Times-Union
37=Topeka Capital Journal
38=The York Dispatch
39=The Virgian Pilot
40=North Jersey Community-Newspapers
41=The Christian Science monitor
42=Connecticut Post Online
43=Bismarck Tribune
44=The Oakland Tribune
45=Charleston Daily Mail
46=Herald News
47=Pittsburgh Tribune Review
48=Tulsa World
49=The Hill
50=Daily Variety
51=The Spokesman-Review
52=Omaha World Herald
53=Wisconsin State Journal
54=The Salt Lake Tribune
55=The New York Times
56=San Bernardino Sun
57=Sarasota Herald Tribune
58=St. Paul Pioneer Press
59=Chicago Daily Herald
60=Advertising Age
61=The Santa Fe New Mexican
62=The New York Sun
63=Los Angeles Times
64=McClatchy Tribune Business News
65=Chico Enterprise Record
66=The Record
67=The Legal Ledger
68=The Detroit News
69=New York Observer
70=The Augusta Chronicle
71=Vallejo Times Herald
72=Duluth News Tribune

73=Telegraph Herald
74=The Philadelphia Inquirer
75=The Baltimore Sun
76=The Capital
77=Lewiston Morning Tribune
78=Sunday News
79=Sunday Telegram
80=University Wire
81=Wyoming Tribune Eagle
82=The Columbian
83=St. Louis Post Dispatch
84=Enterprise Record
85=Education Week
86=The Orange County Register
87=Palm Beach Post
88=Investor's Business Daily
89=Times Ledger
90=Lowell Sun
91=Eureka Times Standard
92=Deming Headlight
93=Sentinel & Enterprise
94=The Mirror
95=Contra Costa Times
96=Las Vegas Review Journal
97=Chapel Hill Herald
98=Newsday
99=The Bakersfield Californian
100=St. Petersburg Times
101=The Roanoke Times
102=Lancaster new Era
103=The Evening Sun
104=Star News
105=The Buffalo News
106=Charleston Gazette
107=South Bend Tribune
108=The Taos News
109=Star Tribune
110=San Jose Mercury News (Cal)
111=The Berkshire Eagle
112=Dayton Daily News
113=Daily Camera
114=Digital Archives
115=Monterey County Herald
116=The Tampa Tribune
117=Alameda Times-Star

3. Date of Fact-check (day/month/year) _____

4. Length of the Fact-check (Number of Paragraphs) _____

5. Word Count _____

6. Is the Fact-check about a candidate, campaign, politician, party? _____
0=No
1=Yes

6a. If NO, what is the purpose of the fact-check _____
1=fact of the day
2=announcement/press release
3=quiz
4=Is a fact-check but is about something else (what is it checking?) _____
5=not a fact-check
6=Other _____

6b. Content of fact-check? (Stop If 0 for 6a) _____

7. What is the year of the campaign being checked? If not about a campaign, what year ?

1=2004
2=2006
3=2007
4=2008
5=2009
6=2010
7=2011
8=2012
9=2013
10=2005
11=not about a campaign

8. What race/position is the fact-check about _____

1=Presidential Race
2=Vice President Race
3=A Senate Race
4=A House Race
5=A Gubernatorial Race
6=A local race
7=A state race
8=Not about an electoral race
9=All Federal Races
10=Ballot Initiative/ Proposition/ Referendum
11=not clear

9. Is this about a primary race, a general election, or not about an election? _____

1=Primary
2=General
3=Neither
4=Other
5=not clear
6=Recall Election
7=Special Election
8=Runoff Election

10.. Is the individual or group making the claim in the fact-check a Republican or a Democrat? _____

1=Republican
2=Democrat
3=Don't Know/Not Clear
4=Other_____
6=independent
7=libertarian
8=nonpartisan
9=tea party

10a.. Is the claim about a Republican or a Democrat? _____

1=Republican
2=Democrat
3=No target involved
4=Other_____
5=don't know/not clear
6=independent
7=libertarian
8=nonpartisan
9=Both Democrats and Republicans

11. Is the claimant of the fact-check an Incumbent or a Challenger? _____

1=Incumbent
2=Challenger
3=PAC
4=Don't Know/not clear
5=Party
6=other
8=A lobby
9=A union
10= appointed individual
11=non profit

11a. Is the target of the claim an Incumbent or a Challenger? _____

1=Incumbent
2=Challenger
3=Neither
4=Not about another candidate
5=Don't Know/not clear
6=Other
7=Party
8=A lobby
9=A union
10= appointed individual
11=nominee

12. Is the claimant of the fact-check a Male or Female? _____

1=Male
2=Female
3=Neither
4=Don't know/not clear
5=Other

12a. Is the target of the fact-check a Male or Female? _____

1=Male
2=Female
3=Not about another candidate
4=Other
5=Don't Know/not clear
6=Men and Women

13. What is the fact-check checking ?

_____

1=Advertisement
2=Speech
3=Press Release
4=Interview
5=Debate
6=A statement
7=A policy
8=The State of the Union Address
9=An email
10=A mailer
11=campaign promise
12=Other
13=newspaper ad
14=Blog
15=press conference/news conference
16=newspaper column
17=op-ed
18=twitter/tweet
19=website
20=FaceBook Post
21=A letter
22=A video
23=a position
24=a memo
25=A photo
26=A robo call
27=a billboard
28=congressional hearing
29=a petition
30=Campaign Donor History
31=radio show/address
32=candidate questioner
33=press kit
34=a book
35=a fact sheet
36=common claims/rumors
37=an action
38=a biography
39=a facial expression
40=tax calculator
41=a condom wrapper

42=a conference call
43=flier
44=report
45=White House Briefing
46=infographic
47= campaign website
48=Comic
49=not clear

14. If the fact-check is checking an advertisement, is the ad negative, contrast, or positive?_

1=Negative
2=Contrast
3=Positive
4=Don't Know/Unclear

15. Is the fact-check checking a policy statement or a candidate's action? (e.g. voting record, attendance record, etc) _____

1= Policy
2= Action
3=Biography
4=Philosophy
5=not about a specific candidate policy, action, biography, etc.
6=Polling

16. Does the fact-check seem objective or biased? _____

1=Objective
2=Biased

17/18. Claimant/Target Name

1=Obama
2=Romney
3=McCain
4=Biden
5=Hillary Clinton
6=Paul Ryan
7=Santorum
8=Gingrich
9=Ron Paul
10=Perry
11=Huntsman
12=Bachmann
13=Cain
14=Pawlenty
15=Bill Clinton
16=Rand Paul
17=Palin
18=Boehner
19=Huckabee
20=Bush
21=Kerry
22=Cheney
23=Giuliani
24=Edwards
25=Richardson
26=Pelosi
27=Christie
28=Reid
29=60-Plus Association
30=A Club for Growth PAC
31=Adam Hasner
32=Adams
33=AFL-CIO
34=Agenda Project
35=Al Gore
36=Al Melvin
37=Allen
38=American Future Fund
39=American Action Network
40=American Commitment
41=American Crossroads
42=American Energy Alliance

43= American Issues Project
44=American Progress Action Fund
45=Americans for Prosperity
46=Americans for Stable Quality Care
47=Americans for Tax Reform
48=Americans United for Change
49=Amodei
50=Andrew Napolitano
51=Angle
52=Anna McLane Kuster
53=Anne Crakett-Stark
54=Anne Romney
55=Antenori
56=Arizona Education Association
57=Arizona House Democrats
58=Ausley
59=David Axelrod
60=Baker
61=Baldwin
62=Barbara Buono
63=Barbour
64=Barnes
65=Barrasso
66=Barton
67=Becerra
68=Glen Beck
69=Berkley
70=Berman
71=Biggs
72=Bill O'Brien
73=Bill Pascrell
74=Bishop
75=Blasé
76=Bloomberg
77=Blunt
78=Bob McDonnell
79=Boitnott
80=Boustany
81=Boxer
82=Brewer
83=David Brooks
84=Brown (Georiga)
85=Sherrod Brown
86=Scott Brown
87=Brown (California)
88=Brown-Waite
89=Brownback
90=Building A better Ohio
91=Bundgaard
92=Burgess
93=Campaign to Defend America
94=Campbell (Arizona)
95=Campbell (California)
96=Campbell(Texas)
97=Cantor
98=Capitol Hill Blue
99=Carahan
100=Cardon
101=Carney
102=Carter
103=Casey
104=Center for Arizona Policy
105=Chaffee
106=Chaffetz
107= Charles Bass
108=Charlotte Bergmann
109=Chenny
110=Chiarelli
111=Chris Smith
112=City of Atlanta
113=Committee on our Children's Future
114=Committee to Protect Florida
115=Concerned Women for America
116=Conservative Coalition for Alabama
117= Conservatives for Congress
118=Conservatives for Patients' Rights
119=Conway
120=Cornyn
121=Cory Banker
122=Cory Booker
123=Corzine
124=Cotera
125=Craig James
126=Crossroads GPS
127=Ted Cruz
128=Cumming
129=Dave Weldon
130=David Dewhurst
131=David Lewis
132=David Vitter

133=Dean
134=Defeat 1098
135=Defender of Wildlife Action Fund
136=DelBene
137=Jim DeMint
138=Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee
139=Democratic National Committee
140=Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
141=Denish
142=Denniss
143=DeParle
144=Dewhurst
145=DeWine
146=Dial
147=Diciccio
148=Dickinson
149=Dodd
150=Doggett
151=Doherty
152=Donohue
153=Driggs
154=Driscoll
155=Duncan
156=Richard Durbin
157=Ed Gillespie
158=Ehrlich
159=Eisnaugle
160=Emanuel
161=Emmer
162=Employment Policy Institute
163=Farnsworth
164=Fisher
165=Florida Chamber of Commerce
166=Florida Democratic Party
167=Florida Democratic Party for Morgan Bentley
168=Forbes
169=Fort
170=Frank Lautenberg
171=Frank LoBiondo
172=Freedom Path
173=Frelinghuysen
174=Gail Collins
175=Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials
176=Giannoulias
177=Robert Gibbs (white house)
178=Bob Gibbs (Ohio)
179=Gimenez
180=Goddard
181=Goolsbee
182=Gordon
183=Gould
184=Graham
185=Grahm
186=Alen Grayson
187=Gullett
188=Gutierriz
189=Hank Williams JR.
190=Hatch
191=Hayworth
192=Health Care For American Now
193=HealthReform.gov
194=Helen's Hope Chest
195=Hodes
196=Hollywood Women for Obama
197=Horne
198=Hottinger
199=House Republicans
200=Hoyer
201=Hynes
202=Ian Hugh
203=IndependentCourt.org
204=Issa
205=Jay Carey
206=Jay Webber
207=Jeanne Shaheen
208=Jeff Flake
209=Jersey Central Power and Light
210=John Cohen
211=Johnson (Wisconsin)
212=Douglas Johnson – National Right to Life Committee
213=Gary Johnson (libertarian Presidential Candidate)
214=US. Rep Hank Johnson
215=AZ State Sen Candidate Justin Johnson
216=Kagen (Supreme Court

217=Kagen(US. Rep)
218=Kaine (Florida)
219=Tim Kaine (Virginia)
220=Kaine(Kentucky)
221=Kasich
222=Kathleen Sebelius
223=Kavanagh
224=Keep America Safe
225=Keep Austin Healthy PAC
226=Keep Conservatives United
227=Jessee Kelly
228=Kelly (California)
229=Kerlinkowske
230=Kirk (Illinois)
231=Kirk Adams
232=Kitzhaber
234=Klein
235=Klingenschmitt
236=Krugman
237=Kyl
238=Kyrillos
239=LaHood
240=Lamar Smith
241=Leahy
242=LeMieux
243=Let's Get to Work
244=Levine
245=Libertarian National Committee
246=Lieberman
247=Limbaugh
248=Log-Cabin Republicans
249=Lord
250=Lou Greenwald
251=Lummis
252=Mack
253=Maes
254=Majority PAC
255=Maloney (West Virginia)
256=Maloney (New York)
257=Marcy Kaptur
258=Marshalls (Virginia)
259=Marshall (Georgia)
260=Marshall(Nevada)
261=Martinez
262=Massachusetts Democratic Party
263=Matt Salmon
264=McAuliffe
265=McCaughey
266=McClellon
267=McCollum
268=McConnell
269=McDonnell
270=McMahon
271=Melvin
272=Menendez
273=Moore
274=MoveOn.org
275=Murphy (Connecticut)
276=Murphy (AZ)
277=Murphy (Georgia)
278=Murray
279=Nader
280=Napolitano
281=National Republican Congressional Committee
282=National Republican Senatorial Committee
283=National Rifle Association
284=New Mexico Republican Party
285=Niehaus
286=NJ Dem State Committee
287=Nolan
288=Norquist
289=Ocean State Policy Research Institute
290=Olberman
291=Our Washington
292=Ovide Lagmontagne
293=Partman
294=Pascrell
295=Pastor
296=Patients United Now
297=Patraeus
298=Patrick (MASS)
299=Patrick(Texas)
300=Patriot Majority PAC
301=Patterson
302=Paul Gosar
303=Pearce
304=Pence
305=Pete Session

306=Peter Paul Clinton
307=Planned Parenthood/ Planned Parenthood Action Fund
308=Portman
309=Presente.org
310=Priebus
311=Public Employees Unions
312=Putnam
313=Quayle
314=Quinn
315=Ramos
316=Reagan
317=Rendell
318=Republican Governors Association
319=Republican Members of Congress
320=Republican National Committee
321=Republican Party of Florida
322=Republican Party of Georgia
323=Republicans
324=Republicans' Pledge to America
325=Restore our Future
326=Revere America
327=ReVoteWA.com
328=Rex Nutting
329=Reyes
330=Reynolds
331=Rick Ttyler
332=Rob McKenna
333=Robert Watson
334=Robin Vos
335=Rodney Grelinghuysen
336=Roger Goodman
337=Ron Barber
338=Ros-Lehtinen
339=Rosado
340=Rothman
341=Rove
342=Rubio
343=Rumor
344=Sadler
345=Salazar
346=Savage
347=Save First Things First
348=Scarantino
349=Scarborough
350=Schaffer
351=School Superintendents for Arizona School
352=Schultz (FL)
353=Schultz (Wisconsin)
354=Schumer
355=Schwarzenegger
356=Schweikert
357=Rick Scott (FL)
358=Scott(Georgia)
359=Scott(Virginia)
360=Seifert
361=Service Employees International Union
362=Sessions
363=Shapiro
364=Sharon Day
365=Sheila Oliver
366=Shelley
367=Shelley Adler
368=Shoukny
369=Silver
370=Singer
371=Smith (AZ)
372=Smith (Texas)
373=Space
374=Specter
375=Stokes
376=Stanton
377=State Buildings and Construction Trade Council
378=Stephanie Cutter
379=Stephen Colbert Super PAC
380=Stephen Fincher
381=Stevens
382=Stew Radawae
383=Stucky
384=Susan Combs
385=Swift Boat Veterans for Truth
386=Taft
387=Taxpayers for Safer Neighborhoods
388=Terri Proud
389=Texans 4 Prop 2
390=The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
391=The National Republican Trust PAC

392=The Service Employees International Union
393=Thompson (49)
394=Fred Thompson (42)
395=Tim Ryan
396=Todd Hunter
397=Tom Chabin
398=Toomey
399=Tovar
400=Townsend
401=Travis Grantham
402=Trump
403=Turn Right USA
404=Turner (43)
405=Turner (10)
406=United Auto Workers
407=Unknown
408=Unknown Chain Email
409=Unknown Photo
410=Unknown Democrat
411=Unknown Republican
412=Unknown Sender
413=Upton
414=US Chamber of Commerce
415=Vernon Parker
416=Voinovich
417=VoteVets.org
418=Walker (49)
419=Walters
420=Warren
421=Warren Buffett
422=Washington State Hospital Association
423=Washington Times Editorial
424=Washington United for Marriage
425=Weed
426=Jeff Wentworth
427=West (47)
428=Kanye West
429=Whitacar
430=White (43)
431=The White House /statement, staff, advisors, report
432=Whitman
433=Wilson
434=Winning our Future
435=Wisconsin Democratic Party
436=Wisconsin Manufactures and Commerce
437=World Net Daily
438=Democrats
439=American Medical Association Families USA
440=American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
441=Pharmaceutical Research and Manufactures of America
442=Blue Cross Blue Shield
443=Progressive Change Campaign Committee
444=Democracy For America
445=Blog
446=Liberal Blog
447=Conservative Blog
448=Conservative Group
449=PAC Supporting Bachmann
450=NH Democratic Party
451= US. Senators
452=AARP
453=Alito
454= Atwater
455=Ayotte
456=Barrow
457=Bennett (6)
458=Bennett (44)
459=Bill Nelson
460=Nelson (27)
461=Boyd
462=Braley
463=Brandes
464=Braswell
465=Buch
466=Burns
467=Bustler
468=Byrne
469=Charlie Bass
470=Cicillini
471=Coleman
472=Members of Congress
473=Congressional Democrats
474=Crist

475=Curry
476=Dan Lijenquist
477=Artur Davis
478=Wendy Davis
479=Davis (3)
480=Davis (32)
481=Lincoln Davis
482=Deeds
483=Democratic Party
484=Democratic Representatives
485=Democratic Senators
486=Dennis Kucinich
487=Dept of Homeland Security
488=Deter
489=Diou
490=Dobbs
491=Dole
492=Elmendorf
493=Fred Biery
494=Gates
495=Giffords
496=Gilbert Council Candidates
497= Gilmor
498=Gray
499=Hahn
500=Harris
501=Hayes
502=Heinrich
503=Heitkamp
504=Heller
505=Hulburd
506=Hutchison
507=Insurance CEO's
508=Jan Runyan
509=Jay Inslee
510=Jones
511=Kain
512= Kirkpatrick
513=Knecht
514=Liberals in AZ legislator
515=Blanche Lincoln
516=Lincoln (4)
517=Lugar
518=Maggie Hassan
519=Martin
520=Martin Luther King
521=Mathis
522=McGreevey
523=McIntyre
524=Mica
525=Michelle Obama
526=Murkowoski
527=National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
528=Newsmakers Live
529=O'Malley
530=Owens
531=Pewhurst
532=Rassas
533=Ratellini
534=Reichert
535=Republican Party
536=Republican Governors
537=Ribble
538=Rossi
539=Senate Democrats
540=Sestak
541=Shea-Porter
542=Simmions
543=Sink
544=Sotomayor
545=Spokesman-Review
546=Stenton
547=Stern
548=Straus
549=Strickland
550=Texas Democrats
551=The Government
552=The State of Arizona
553=The media
554=Thomas
555=Pierre Thomas
556=Tomblin
557=Udall
558= WA State Legislature
559=Walberg
560=Webster
561=Young (9)
562=Young (14)
563=Abbott

564=Accountability in Government
565=Blue Green Aliance
566=Anna Little
567=Barrientos
568=Bill Maher
569=Bill O'Reilly
570=Blackburn
571=Bond
572=Boren
573=Brazile
574=Broun
575=Calvey
576=Campaign for Primary Accountability
577=Caroline Casagrande
578=Clark
579=Colbert
580=Courtney Combs
581=Conrad
582=Conservatives United
583=Copelin-Wood
584=Corney
585=Crapo
586=David Plouffe
587=David Sciarra
588=Dayton
589=Deal
590=Democratic Party of Georgia
591=Douthat
592=Fletcher
593=Florida Education Association Lobby
594=Freedom's Watch
595=Gableman
596=Garner
597=Gorman
598=Greenspan
599=Gutierrez
600=Harkin
601=Hill
602=Duncan Hunter
603=Iowa for Jobs
604=John McKeon
605=Judicial Confirmation Network
606=Kathleen Falk
607=Kemp
608=King (32)
609=King (15)
610=Latham
611=Laura Bush
612=Lawrence O'Donnell
613=MacIver Institute
614=Markey
615=McKoen
616=Mullen
617=Nadar
618=Neugebauer
619=NJ Republican Party
620=O'Mally
621=Orden
622=George Packer
623=Plouffe
624=Portilla
625=Priorities USA Action
626=Pro Gingrich PAC
627=Red, White, and Blue Fund
628=Reed
629=Republican House Conference
630=Richard Cody
631=Richie
632=Robinson
633=Rodriguez
634=Rogers
635=Jeff Sessions
636=Squires
637=Steele
638=Tancredo
639=Taylor
640=Underwood
641=Vincent Prieto
642=WA State Democratic Party
643=Warner
644=Whitefield
645=Wyden
646=Senor
647=Alabama Education Association Union
648=Butler
649=Henery Cuellar
650=Democratic Presidents
651=Frank Pallone
652=Frishe
653=Hall

654=Heck
655=House Democrats
656=Hudgens
657=Jeb Bush
658=Jimmey Carter
659=Schauer
660=Stark (California)
661=State Dept.
662=Tx Department of Transportation
663=Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
664=Yaardbrough
665=Armstrong
666=Ayers
667=Back to Basics
668=Bilbray
669=Bodker
670= Boyer
671=Chambliss
672=Chisum
673=Clyburn
674=Loren Collins
675= Chris Cummirkey (?)
676=Democratic Platform
677=Ellis
678=Friends of Scott Walker
679=Frist
680=Glass
681=Graves
682=Griffith
683=Haley
684=Halter
685=Hunt (3)
686= AL Hunt - Journalist
687=Hurt
688=Husted
689=Jo Bonner
690=Langevin
691=Maddow
692=McCaul
693=Meek
694=Miller (49)
695=Miller (23)
696=Matt Miller –FMR Bill Clinton Aid
697=Palumbo
698=Pfotenhauer
699=Republican Jewish Coalition
700=Secure America Now
701=Bernie Sanders
702=Stenhouse
703=Tea Party Express
704=Tom Rooney
705=Wills
706=Workers Voice
707=ACLU
708=Berton
709=Holder
710=Insurance Companies
711=Kosmas
712=Lois Frankel
713= O'Saughnessy
714=Sandlin
715=Tom Barrett
716=AFSCME Union
717=America Works USA
718=Americans for Job Security
719=Chuck Norris
720=Gephardt
721=Government is Not God
722=Grassley
723=Hastings
724=Heidi Group
725=Hovde
726=Howell
727=Hulsey
728=Kathie Tovo
729=Lawler
730=Males
731=Manchin
732=Minca
733=New Yorkers for Responsible Leadership
734=Paige
735=Pro Obama PAC
736=Riley
737=Shoukry
738=Weiner
739=Whitehouse
740=Critz
741=Denishek

742=Ginsburg
743=Landrieu
744=Raese
745=Tester
746=Angelucci
747=Cagle
748=Citizens for Transporation Mobility
749=Dan Gross
750=Durrett
751=Gause
752=Labor Union Supporter
753=Mitchell
754=Moram
755=National Review
756=O'Neil
757=Ogden
758=Republican Party of Virginia
759=George Will
760=Buck
761=Chandler
762=Feinstein
763=LaTourette
764=Nash
765=Bergman
766=Bittner
767=Grothman
768=Hinckley
769=Klobuchar
770=liberal Ad
771=O'Donnell
772=Peiwvua
773=Samuel Wurzelbachor
774=Bayn
775=Coons
776=Geithner
777=Fitzgerald
778=Kiernan
779=McNeil
780=Sharpton
781=Renacci
782=Doonesbury Comic
783=Chambers
784=Democratic Governors Association
785=Dooley
786=Our Destiny PAC
787=Baucus
788=Donnelly
789=Parent
790=Citizens for the Republic

19/20. States

1=Alabama
2=Alaska
3=Arizona
4=Arkansas
5=California
6=Colorado
7=Connecticut
8=Delaware
9=Florida
10=Georgia
11=Hawaii
12=Idaho
13=Illinois
14=Indiana
15=Iowa
16=Kansas
17=Kentucky
18=Louisiana
19=Maine
20=Maryland
21=Massachusetts
22=Michigan
23=Minnesota
24=Mississippi
25=Missouri
26=Montana
27=Nebraska
28=Nevada
29=New Hampshire
30=New Jersey
31=New Mexico
32=New York
33=North Carolina
34=North Dakota
35=Ohio
36=Oklahoma
37=Oregon
38=Pennsylvania
39=Rhode Island
40=South Carolina
41=South Dakota
42=Tennessee
43=Texas
44=Utah
45=Vermont
46=Virginia
47=Washington
48=West Virginia
49=Wisconsin
50=Wyoming

21/22. Position Running For Claimant/ Target

1. President
2. VP
3. US Senator
4. US Representative
5. Governor
6. LT Governor
7. State Representative/ State Delegate/State Assemblyman
8. State Senator
9. Mayor
10. City Council
11. Former President
12. Former VP
13. Former Senator
14. Former Representative
15. Former Governor
16. Former LT Governor
17. Former State Senator
18. Former State Representative
19. State Attorney General
20. Supreme Court Justice
21. US. District Judge
22. Attorney General
23. School Board
24. Members of Congress
25. State Supreme Court
26. Former Mayor
27. US General
28.CFO
29.Insurance Commissioner
30.Secretary of State
31.County Commissioner

23/24. Current Position Claimant/Target

1. President
2. VP
3. US Senator
4. US Representative
5. Governor
6. LT Governor
7. State Representative/ State Delegate/State Assemblyman
8. State Senator
9. Mayor
10. City Council
11. Former President
12. Former VP
13. Former Senator
14. Former Representative
15. Former Governor
16. Former LT Governor
17. Former State Senator
18. Former State Representative
19. State Attorney General
20. Supreme Court Justice
21. US. District Judge
22. Attorney General
23. School Board
24/42. Members of Congress
25. State Supreme Court
26. Former Mayor
27. US General/Admiral
28. CFO
29. Insurance Commissioner
30. Secretary of State
31. County Commissioner
32. Campaign Event Organizers
33. Chair of Redistricting Committee
34. CNN Anchor
35. Comptroller
36. Defense Secretary
37. Interior Secretary
38. Treasury Secretary
39. Secretary of Homeland Security
40. State Treasurer
41. District Attorney
43. Transportation Secretary
44. Director CBO
45. Secretary of Health and Human Services
46. First Lady
47. GOP Donor
48. Head of Service Employees International Union
49. Obama Jobs Czar
50. Chair TX Democratic Party
51. Republican Strategist

52. Political Commentator
53.Obama Advisor
54.Union Leader
55. FOX News Commentator/Contributor
56. A Felon
57. Associated Industries of Florida
58. Chairman DNC
59. RNC Chairman
60. MSNBC Commentator/Contributor
61. Businessman
62. City Software Developer
63. Clinton Spokesman
64. Columnist
65. TV/ Radio/Newspaper Host/Anchor/Commentator/Editor
66. Musician/Activist
67. Education Secretary
68. CEO
69. Economist
70. US Ambassador
71. Obama Campaign Manager/ Staff/ Strategist/ Advisor
72. Health and Human Services Secretary
73. Obama's Press Secretary
74. Health Reform Director
75. Police Chief
76. Fmr. Rezko Associate
77. Political Activist
78. Pres Somos Republicans
79. Republican Activist
80. Romney Campaign Manager/ Staff/ Strategist/ Advisor
81. Chaplain/ Reverand
82. Attorney
83. Democratic Strategist
84. Education Activist
85. Fmr. Director NJ Law Center
86. Fmr Fed Reserve Chairman
87. Fmr. Bush Advisor
88. Gubernatorial Candidate Deal's Spokesman
89. Political Comedian
90. Pres RI for Immigration Enforcement
91. director Oregon State Policy Research Institute
92. Fmr. Clinton Aid
93. State Economic Development Commissioner
94. Obama's Chief Economic Advisor
95. President of education Association
96. MARTA Board Chairman
97. Pres of Brady Campaign
98. Catch-A-Dream Foundation Volunteer
99. National Right to Life Committee Member
100. Pary in Jeasus' Name Project – Member
101.President, Americans for Tax Reform
102. Circuit Court Justice

25. Content of statement being checked (all that apply)

1=Defense
2=Troops
3=Foreign Aid
4=Terrorism
5=Iran
6=North Korea
7=Israel/Palestine
8=Homeland Security
45=Iraq/Iraq War
46=Afghanistan
47=China
48=Foreign Policy
49=Veterans
9=Health Care/Medicare/Medicaid
10=Elderly/Soc Sec
11=Welfare
12=Education
13=Prescription Drugs
14=Child Care
15=Business
16=Oil/Gas Prices/Energy
17=Trade
18=Environment/climate change
19=Econ-general/stimulus/auto-bailout
20=Inflation

21=Unemployment
22=Jobs
23=Outsourcing
24=Taxes
25=Budget/Deficit
26=Min Wage
27=Stem Cell
28= Abortion/contraceptives/women's rights
29=Civil Right
30=Prayer in School
31=Gun Control
32=Death Penalty
33=School Voucher
34=Scandal
35=Big Gov't
36=Immigration
37=Ethics
38=Gay Marriage
39=Domestic Partnerships
40=National Debt
41=Crime
42=Illegal Drugs
43=Candidate Background
44=Campaign
45=Other

27. Does the fact-check indicate an accurate or inaccurate statement? _____
(CODE AS MANY AS APPLY & Code only explicitly stated in the text)

Factcheck.org

1=Accurate
2=Mostly Accurate
3=Neither Accurate or Inaccurate
4=Mostly Inaccurate
5=Inaccurate
6=Inconclusive
7=Can't be qualified/presenting competing claims
49=No Rating Given
57=Fast and Loose
59=Other_____

PolitiFact.com Truth-O-Meter

8=True
9=Mostly True
10=Half True
11=Mostly False / Barely True (until mid 2011)
12=False
13=Pants on Fire
14=No Flip
15=Half Flip
16=Full Flop
17=Can't be qualified/presenting competing claims
47=unverifiable
48=Promise Kept
49=No rating given
50=Misleading
51=Promise Broken,
52=Compromise,
53=Promise in the Works
54=Promise Stalled
55=Lie of the Year

The Fact Checker

18=**One Pinocchio**
19=Two Pinocchio
20=Three Pinocchio
21=Four Pinocchio
22=The Geppetto Checkmark
23=An Upside-Down Pinocchio
24=Withholding Judgment
25=No Rating Given
56=True but False

AZ Fact Check

26=Misleading (no stars)
27=Somewhat True, Somewhat False
28=Mostly True (3 stars)
29=True (4 Stars)
30=unsupported (no stars)
31=False
57=Mostly False
58=inconclusive

Seattle Times Truth Needle

32=True
33=Mostly True
34=Half True
35=Mostly False
36=False
37=Can't be qualified
38=Other_____

Other:_____

39=True, but lacks context
40=True, but misleading
41=partial truth
42=Exaggeration
43=lacks context
44=no evidence
45=incorrect
46 A bit of a stretch
60. A bit off
61. A stretch
62. Accurate, but not the whole story
63. Antidotal
64. Backtrack
65. Big Assumption
66. Campaign Promise
67.Can't be Disputed
68. Claiming too much credit
69. Correct
70. Correct, but incomplete
71. Distorted/ Distortion/Distorts the Truth
72. Dubious Claim
74. Extremely Unlikely
75. Fair
76. Fake
77. False Hogwash
78.Fear Mongering
79. Flip/ Flipped
80.Flip Flop
81. Flip-Flop-Flip
82. Grievously Misrepresented
83. His Plan is Similar
84.Ignores the Facts
85. Illegitimate
86. In your opinion
87. Incomplete
88. Inconsistent
89. Inflated Count
90. Inflated Numbers
91. It's Complicated
92. Lacks Evidence
93. legit
94.Mischaracterization/ Mischaracterized
95. Misimpression
96. Misquote
97.Misrepresentation
98.Misstated
99. Misstates the Facts
100. Not backed up by action
101. Needs Clarification
102. Needs Context
103. no
104. Not Entirely True
105. Not Exactly
106. Not Far Off
107. Not Possible
108. Not Really
109. Not the Whole Story
110. Not the whole truth
111. Off Base Assertion
112. Over the top Charge
113. Offensive and Off-Base
114. Outlandish
115. Overly Optimistic
116. Ovesimplification
117. Overstated/ Overstatement
118. Partial Flop

119. Partial Quote Alert
120. Political theater
121. Premature Definition
122. Probably Not true
123. Progress
124. Promise Impossible to Keep
125. Questionable
126. Reinventing History/ Rewriting History
127. Rooted in truth, but misleading
128. scare mongering falsehood
129. Seriously Mischaracterized
130. Sleazy and False
131. Slightly Exaggerated
132. Somewhat Accurate
133. Somewhat False
134. Somewhat Misleading
135. Somewhat True
136. Stretching the facts
137. Tall Statement
138. Tenuous
139. True, but a stretch
140. True, but cherry picking data
141. True, but exaggerated
142. True, but more complicated
143. True, but not the point
144. True, but not the whole story
145. True, but overstated
146. True, but unlikely
147. Trying to have it both ways
148. Twisting the Facts
149. Twists the Truth
150. Uncertain
151. Unfounded
152. Unrealistic
153. Unsubstainted
154. Untrue
155. Wild Exaggeration
156. Wrong
157. Yes

Experiment 1: Ohio Senate Election
Story Board for Negative Commercial Attacking Josh Mandel



(1 Second): When Josh Mandel promised that he would



(5 Second): Definitely serve there for the first four years. He's sworn in,



(9 Second): but just 87 days later Mandel is running for the Senate.



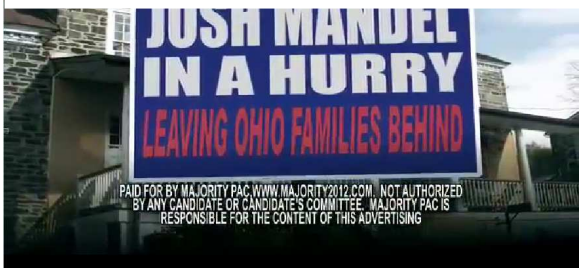
(13 Second): Fundraising from Hawaii to Washington. Missing official meetings.



(17 Second): And Mandel supports a radical budget that would cut jobs,



(21 Second): cut social security, and protect tax breaks for the wealthy.



(25 Second): Josh Mandel in a Hurry, leaving Ohio families behind.



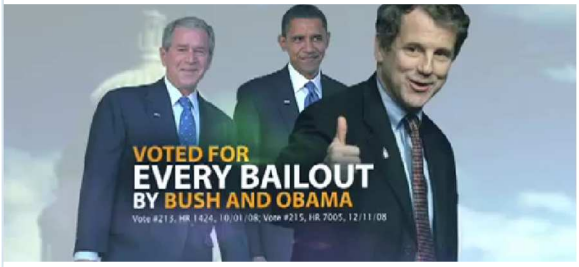
A (29 Second): Majority PAC is responsible for the content of this advertisement.



(1 Second): Has Sherrod Brown been fighting for Ohio? Since Brown's been in



(5 Seconds): he's helped our national debt increase more than 11 trillion dollars



(9 seconds): by voting for every bailout proposed by Bush and Obama



(13 Seconds): He also voted for the failed 831 billion dollar stimulus,



(17 Seconds): and for President Obama's health care takeover -- that Ohioans overwhelmingly reject.



(21 Seconds): Today, more than 400 thousand Ohioans are out of work. Families are struggling



(25 Seconds): and our healthcare costs are skyrocketing.



(29 Seconds): Tell Sherrod Brown we need real results, not more spending.

Assessments of Negative Advertisement

Thinking about the content of the advertisement, did you find the advertisement very useful, somewhat useful, not useful at all?

1. Very Useful
2. Somewhat Useful
3. Not Useful At All
4. Don't Know

Thinking about the tone of the advertisement, would you characterize the tone of the advertisement as overly hostile, somewhat hostile, or not hostile at all?

1. Overly Hostile
2. Somewhat Hostile
3. Not Hostile At All
4. Don't Know

Thinking about accuracy of the advertisement, would you consider the advertisement very accurate, somewhat accurate, or not accurate at all.

1. Very Accurate
2. Somewhat Accurate
3. Not Accurate At All
4. Don't Know

Factual Questions about the Candidates

Now that you have some information about the candidates running for the U.S. Senate in Ohio, we would like you to answer some questions. We understand that you may only have a limited amount of information about the campaign, but we would really like you to try to answer each of the questions.

We will begin by asking you some questions about Sherrod Brown. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

Sherrod Brown is responsible for increases in the federal debt.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Sherrod Brown is responsible for the passage of the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obama Care).

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Sherrod Brown is responsible for the rise in the unemployment rate.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about Josh Mandel, also running for the U.S. Senate in Ohio. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions.

Josh Mandel broke his promise to serve out his four year term for treasurer of Ohio when he declared his candidacy for the U.S. Senate

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Josh Mandel has missed important official meetings as Ohio's treasurer.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Josh Mandel's policies will lead to an increase in the unemployment rate, if elected,

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly

Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means you feel very favorable toward the person and 1 means you feel very unfavorable toward the person, where would you rate Sherrod Brown on this scale

Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means you feel very favorable toward the person and 1 means you feel very unfavorable toward the person, where would you rate Josh Mandel on this scale.

Party Identification
Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Where would you place yourself on the following scale?

1. Strong Democrat
2. Weak Democrat
3. Independent, Leaning towards the Democratic Party
4. Independent
5. Independent, Leaning towards the Republican Party
6. Weak Republican
7. Strong Republican
8. Don't Know

Ideology
One way that people talk about politics in the United States is in terms of liberal, conservative, and moderate ideology. The political views people might hold are often arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7)
Where would you place yourself on this scale?

1. Extremely Liberal
2. Liberal
3. Somewhat Liberal
4. Moderate
5. Somewhat Conservative
6. Conservative
7. Very Conservative
8. Don't Know

Political Interest
Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you are very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in political campaigns?

1. Very Much Interested
2. Somewhat Interested
3. Not Much Interested
4. Don't Know

Tolerance toward Negativity

Next, we would like to ask you a few questions about your views about negative advertisements, in general. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

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

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly
5. Don't Know

Negative advertisements discussing a candidate's personal misbehavior are fair game.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly
5. Don't Know

Hard-hitting commercials attacking the opponent are not helpful during election campaigns.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly
5. Don't Know

I find negative political commercials attacking a candidate for conduct occurring long before the candidate entered public life as uninformative.

1. Agree Strongly
2. Agree Somewhat
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Disagree Strongly
5. Don't Know

Political Knowledge Questions
We would like to ask you a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people are too busy to keep up with these topics, so if you don't know the answer, just skip the question.

Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden?

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not—is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court.

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House to override a presidential veto?

Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. today?

Demographic Questions
Are you a registered voter?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Refused

What was the highest grade or year of school that you have completed? Please stop me when I get to the correct response.

1. Less than high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college
4. Business/vocational school
5. College graduate
6. Graduate/Professional Degree (e.g., M.A., MSW, Ph.D., J.D., M.D)

In what year were you born?

Please indicate your gender

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

Fact-check used in Condition 2

POLITI✔CHECK

The liberal Majority Pac is attacking Josh Mandel, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Ohio. The advertisement makes several claims. First, the advertisement begins by saying that in 2010, Josh Mandel promised to serve as Ohio treasurer for "at least four years." This claim is true. In an editorial board meeting with the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Mandel was asked "If you're elected are you going to run for re-election?" Mandel answered by saying "I will definitely serve there for the first four years."

The advertisement goes on to say that within 87 days of being sworn in as treasurer, Mandel began his run for a U.S. Senate seat. This is true; Mandel was sworn in as treasurer on January 10, 2011 and Mandel filed a statement of candidacy with FEC for a U.S. Senate campaign on April 6, 2011, 87 days later.

The advertisement contends that Mandel has missed official meetings, including skipping fourteen consecutive meetings of the Ohio Board of Deposit since taking office as treasurer in January of 2011. This statement is true, according to an article published by the *Columbus Dispatch* on February 23, 2012.

Finally, the advertisement concludes by saying that Mandel will cut jobs in Ohio, if elected to the U.S. Senate. This contention is based on Mandel's signing a pledge supporting Cut, Cap and Balance plan in June of 2011. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Cut, Cap and Balance plan will cause the loss of roughly 700,000 jobs in the state of Ohio, if passed.

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by the Majority Pac is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 270

Fact-check used in Condition 3

POLITI✔CHECK

The liberal Majority Pac is attacking Josh Mandel, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Ohio. The advertisement makes several claims. First, the advertisement begins by saying that in 2010, Josh Mandel promised to serve as Ohio treasurer for "at least four years." Josh Mandel never made a promise or a pledge to serve a four year term. Instead, during an editorial board meeting with *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Mandel said he "expected to fill out his four year term."

The advertisement goes on to say that within 87 days of being sworn in as treasurer, Mandel began a bid for Ohio's U.S. Senate seat. While it is true that Mandel filed paperwork with the FEC in April of 2011**,** Mandel told a reporter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that he has not made up his mind about running for U.S. Senator, but he filed the necessary papers as a precaution.

The advertisement contends that Mandel has missed official meetings, including skipping 14 consecutive Board of Deposit Meetings. According to an article published by the *Columbus Dispatch*, the meetings of Board of Deposit are obscure sessions where designees of the treasurer routinely attend. Mandel's predecessor who served as treasurer from 2006 through 2010 never attended a Board of Deposit meeting.

Finally, the advertisement concludes by saying that Mandel will cut jobs in Ohio if elected to the U.S. Senate. This contention is based on Mandel's support for the Cut, Cap and Balance Plan. According to the Center on Budget Fairness, the Cut, Cap and Balance Plan will actually create jobs by restoring fiscal restraint. .

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by the Majority Pac is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 276

Fact-check used in Condition 5

POLITI✔CHECK

The conservative 60 Plus Association is attacking Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio for his role in passing health care reform as well as his role in supporting TARP.

The advertisement makes several claims. First, the advertisement asserts that Ohioans rejected the health care reform legislation. This claim is mostly true and refers to a November 2011 vote on a state amendment that said residents couldn't be forced to purchase insurance. Sixty-six percent of those going to the polls voted in favor of the amendment. Furthermore, a poll taken by USA Today/Gallup poll in early 2012 of voters in 12 swing states, including Ohio, validates this claim. In particular76 percent of swing state voters, and 75 percent of voters nationwide, said the health care mandate was unconstitutional. Therefore, the ad's claim that most Ohioans reject the health care reform legislation is mostly true.

The ad also criticizes Brown for voting for "every bailout proposed by Bush and Obama." That claim is true, but the legislation passed with bipartisan support. The ad lists the October 2008 Senate vote for the Troubled Asset Relief Program under President Bush. That bill passed on a 74-25 vote, with a majority of Republicans supporting it. Brown also supported a 2008 bill to loan money to U.S. automakers, though the legislation failed in the Senate.

The ad against Brown is also correct in saying that "more than 400,000 Ohioans are out of work," while an on-screen graphic says "431,000." The April 2012 figures show that 431,318 Ohio residents are unemployed.

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by the 60 Plus Association, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 267

Fact-check used in Condition 6

POLITI✔CHECK

The conservative 60 Plus Association is attacking Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio by dredging up old exaggerations we've seen plenty of times before. The group claims it's a "health care takeover" (false) and that it "cuts $500 billion from Medicare" (misleading).

The ad attacking Brown says that the senator voted for "President Obama's health care takeover that Ohioans overwhelmingly reject." However, the law doesn't allow the government to "takeover" health care. It's true that it expands Medicaid eligibility and provides subsidies to lower-income persons to help them purchase insurance — private insurance. In short, it builds on the well-established system in the U.S. of primarily employer-provided insurance. This is quite different from the single-payer system in Canada and in France and Great Britain.

The ad implies the so-called "bailouts" added significantly to the debt, but that's not the case at all. The ad says that Brown "helped our national debt increase more than $11 trillion by voting" for the bailouts. But TARP is expected to cost taxpayers only $32 billion, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The debt has not "increased more than $11 trillion" since Brown took office in January 2007, an impression implied by the advertisement.

Finally, the ad says that the Senator Brown supported the "failed" stimulus. Brown voted for it, but it's a matter of opinion whether it "failed" or succeeded. While the unemployment rate went up after the stimulus was passed in February 2009, the CBO has estimated that it would have been even higher without the law.

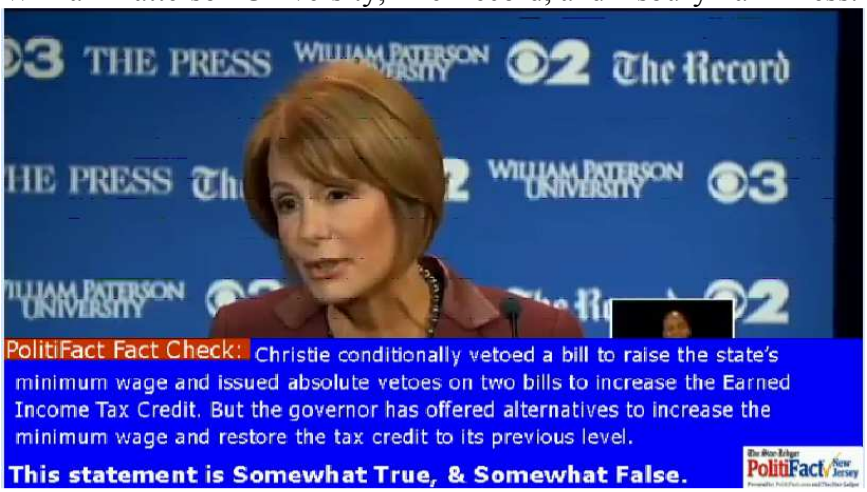
Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by the 60 Plus Association, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 267

Experiment 2: New Jersey Gubernatorial Election
Storyboard for the New Jersey Gubernatorial Debate[94]



20 seconds: Live and uninterrupted, the New Jersey Gubernatorial Debate. Sponsored by: WCBS TV, KYWTV, William Patterson University, The Record, and Asbury Park Press.



1:57-2:26: We live in one of the highest cost of living states in the nations, this is a starvation wage. It's unfortunate that the governor vetoed this legislation, but people are living on a minimum wage in New Jersey while they are barely being able to make ends meet. So many are on public assistance and food stamps and unfortunately this governor's veto is just a reflection of him protecting millionaires and the wealthy and turning his back on the working poor and this is a hallmark of his administration.

[94] Note the banner at the bottom of the screen was changed to reflect each condition (see appendix B). Condition 1, the control condition, did not have a banner at the bottom of the screen. This Storyboard is based on Condition 8.



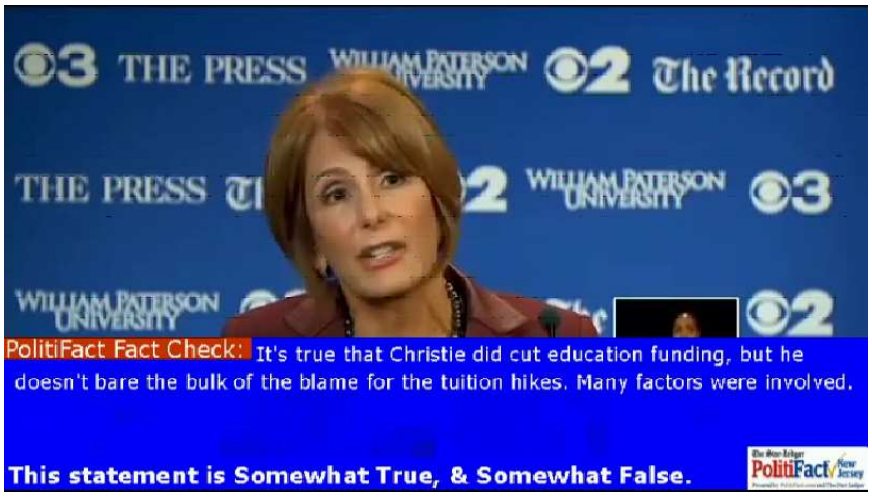
3:00-3:32 The fact is I believe we should increase the minimum wage and I put forward a bipartisan compromise to the legislature, said let's raise it over three years, let's do it responsibly so that businesses can plan that expense so that was doesn't happen is what the National Federation of Independent Business says which we could lose up to 30 thousand job in New Jersey by putting this one dollar one time and tying it to the inflation rate going forward.



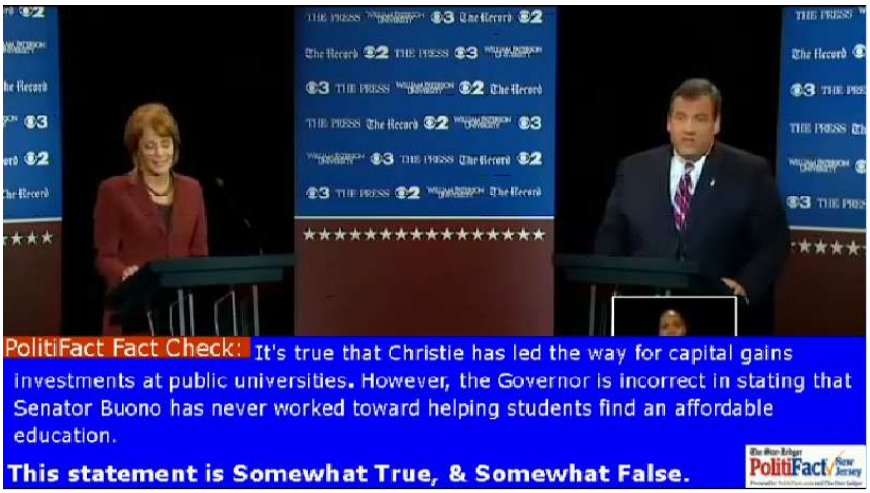
4:27- 5:00: To give civil service reforms so they can consolidate and share more services across municipal and county lines and secondly is to make sure we end the abuse of sick pay throughout the system. Millions and millions of dollars, in fact one billion dollars in sick pay, are pending right now. We can't afford to pay those things anymore. Those two things will help to change the property tax situation significantly in the next four years. So let's remember, property taxes have gone up less than 2 % for two years in a row for the first time in 24 years. The star ledger gave it the headline 'At long last, tax relief'.



5:04- 5:43: This governor came into office, he promised not to raise property taxes, he promised not to cut property tax relief; well he made state history. He had the largest cuts in property tax relief in state history. Property taxes rose on average 20% and in other places more. Tom's River 37%. The facts are the facts rhetorical flourishes aside. And then the governor turns around and vetoes a piece of legislation that would have had millionaires pay their fair share and fund middle class property tax relief. You see that's a major difference between this governor and myself, I believe that millionaires should pay their fair share and fund middle class property tax relief, he doesn't.



8:05-8:43: The jobs of today require more education, more training and we need to make higher education a priority. This governor came in and cut funding for higher education $173 million. Cost of going to Rutgers up 14% in his first 4 years in office. And you know what, when I'm governor I'm going to make higher education a priority, because all of our kids, middle class, working poor, they deserve the right to live up to their full potential too.



8:42-9:31: This is one of those areas where instead of just talking about it we've actually done something. You know for 25 years New Jersey had not invested capital money in institutions like William Patters and others across New Jersey. No new lavatories, no new class rooms, no seat expansion so that more people could go here. I said that's wrong. And right now we're in the midst of a $1.3 billion dollar investment in our state's colleges and universities 176 different projects being funded across the state that's going to expand libratory space, classroom space so that more kids can come to New Jersey and can afford college in New Jersey. This is a big difference in this race. You can talk about it all you like. But the senator has been in the legislator for 20 years, she never did anything about it. We've come into office and actually done something about it by investing $1.3 billion dollars in our state higher education institutions.



12:00: And we would like to thank the candidates for being here this evening.

Fact-checks for each Experimental Condition

Condition 1: NO FACT-CHECK BANNER

Condition 2: Debate with an on the screen nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact – Democratic candidate Accurate, Republican candidate Inaccurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Christie: The governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that the cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE**.

Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Christie: The Governor is incorrect, as a state Senator; Barbara Buono took steps to help New Jersey's students find an affordable education in their home state. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Condition 3: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check FOX – Democratic candidate Accurate, Republican candidate Inaccurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit.
Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.

Christie: The governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that the cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. Bottom Line: **This statement is MOSTLY FALSE**.
Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Christie: The Governor is incorrect, as a state Senator; Barbara Buono took steps to help New Jersey's students find an affordable education in their home state. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Condition 4: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check MSNBC – Democratic candidate Accurate, Republican candidate Inaccurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Christie: The governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that the cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line**: **This statement is MOSTLY FALSE**.

Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Christie: The Governor is incorrect, as a state Senator; Barbara Buono took steps to help New Jersey's students find an affordable education in their home state. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Condition 5: Debate with an on the screen nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact – Democratic candidate Inaccurate, Republican candidate Accurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Buono is incorrect because the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE**

Buono: The Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that **she has voted to raise major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: State law makes clear that the Board of Governors -- not the governor himself -- sets tuition rates for a university **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Condition #6: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check FOX – Democratic candidate Inaccurate, Republican candidate Accurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Buono is incorrect because the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE**

Buono: The Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that **she has voted to raise major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: State law makes clear that the Board of Governors -- not the governor himself -- sets tuition rates for a university **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Condition #7: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check MSNBC – Democratic candidate Inaccurate, Republican candidate accurate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Buono is incorrect because the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE**

Buono: The Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that she has voted to raise major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: State law makes clear that the Board of Governors -- not the governor himself -- sets tuition rates for a university **Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY FALSE.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities**. Bottom Line: This statement is MOSTLY TRUE.**

Condition #8: Debate with an on the screen nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact – mix of accurate and inaccurate for each candidate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. But the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage and restore the tax credit to its previous level**.**
Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. However, the governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase. But the governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population.
Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.

Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. But the Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that she's voted to increase major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding, but he doesn't bare the bulk of the blame for the tuition hikes. Many factors were involved. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities**.** However, the Governor is incorrect in stating that Senator Buono has never worked toward helping students find an affordable education. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Condition #9: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check FOX – mix of accurate and inaccurate for each candidate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. But the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage and restore the tax credit to its previous level. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. However, the governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase. But the governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. But the Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that she's voted to increase major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding, but he doesn't bare the bulk of the blame for the tuition hikes. Many factors were involved. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities**.** However, t**he** Governor is incorrect in stating that Senator Buono has never worked toward helping students find an affordable education. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Condition #10: Debate with an on the screen partisan fact-check MSNBC – mix of accurate and inaccurate for each candidate



ISSUE: MINIMIM WAGE
Buono: Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage and issued absolute vetoes on two bills to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. But the governor has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage and restore the tax credit to its previous level. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Christie: The governor is correct in that he has offered alternatives to increase the minimum wage. However, the governor is incorrect because he doesn't acknowledge that during her time in the Senate, Buono championed bipartisan legislation to simplify the tax code for small business owners, enabling them to expand and hire more workers. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: TAXES
Christie: The Governor is correct that major taxes in New Jersey that generate revenue have not increase. But the governor is incorrect, because he doesn't acknowledge that cut's he's made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Buono: The Senator is correct, the cut's the governor has made to tax-relief programs have resulted in tax increases for certain segments of the population. But the Senator is incorrect, because she doesn't acknowledge that she's voted to increase major taxes in New Jersey 154 times. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION
Buono: It's true that Christie did cut education funding, but he doesn't bare the bulk of the blame for the tuition hikes. Many factors were involved. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

Christie: It's true that Christie has led the way for capital gains investments at public universities. However, the Governor is incorrect in stating that Senator Buono has never worked toward helping students find an affordable education. **Bottom Line: This statement is Somewhat True, and Somewhat False.**

New Jersey Gubernatorial Debate Survey

Now we would like to ask you some questions about the candidates in the political debate you just saw. [*Candidate Questions were flipped in half the surveys]*

In your opinion, who was the winner of the debate?

1. Chris Christie
2. Barbara Buono

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not very well, and 10 being very well how do you feel Christie did during the debate?

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not very well, and 10 being very well how do you feel Buono did during the debate?

In your opinion, does the word "COMPETENT" describe Buono extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "STRONG LEADER" describe Buono extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "HONEST" describe Buono extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "COMPASSIONATE" describe Buono extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

Thinking about minimum wage, how competent do you think Buono is in dealing with minimum wage issues? Do you think Buono is very competent, competent, incompetent, or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

Thinking about the taxes, how competent do you think Buono is in dealing with tax issues? Do you think Buono is very competent, competent, incompetent or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

Thinking about education, how competent do you think Buono is in improving education in the state? Do you think Buono is very competent, competent, incompetent or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

On a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being not very favorable, and 100 being very favorable how do you feel about Buono?

Suppose the election for these candidates was held today. What is the likelihood that you would vote for Buono for Governor? Very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

1. Very Likely
2. Somewhat Likely
3. Not very likely
4. Not at all likely

In your opinion, does the word "COMPETENT" describe Christie extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "STRONG LEADER" describe Christie extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "HONEST" describe Christie extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

In your opinion, does the word "COMPASSIONATE" describe Christie extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

1. Extremely well
2. Quite well
3. Not too well
4. Not well at all

Thinking about minimum wage, how competent do you think Christie is in dealing with minimum wage issues? Do you think Christie is very competent, competent, incompetent, or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

Thinking about the taxes, how competent do you think Christie is in dealing with tax issues? Do you think Christie is very competent, competent, incompetent or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

Thinking about education, how competent do you think Christie is in improving education in the state? Do you think Christie is very competent, competent, incompetent or very incompetent?

1. Very competent
2. Competent
3. Incompetent
4. Very incompetent

On a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being not very favorable, and 100 being very favorable how do you feel about Christie?

Suppose the election for these candidates was held today. What is the likelihood that you would vote for Christie for Governor? Very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

1. Very Likely
2. Somewhat Likely
3. Not very likely
4. Not at all likely
5.

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Where would you place yourself on the following scale?

9. Strong Democrat
10. Weak Democrat
11. Independent, Leaning towards the Democratic Party
12. Independent
13. Independent, Leaning towards the Republican Party
14. Weak Republican
15. Strong Republican
16. Don't Know

One way that people talk about politics in the United States is in terms of liberal, conservative, and moderate ideology. The political views people might hold are often arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). Where would you place yourself on this scale?

9. Extremely Liberal
10. Liberal
11. Somewhat Liberal
12. Moderate
13. Somewhat Conservative
14. Conservative
15. Very Conservative
16. Don't Know

Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you are very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in political campaigns?

5. Very Much Interested
6. Somewhat Interested
7. Not Much Interested
8. Don't Know

We would like to ask you a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people are too busy to keep up with these topics, so if you don't know the answer, just skip the question.

What job or political office is now held by Joe Biden?

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not—is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court.

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House to override a presidential veto?

How many times can an individual be elected president?

Thinking about Congress, do the Republicans currently have a majority in the House of Representatives, the Senate, both the House of Representatives and the Senate, or neither the House of Representative nor the Senate?

1. House of Representatives
2. Senate
3. Both
4. Neither

What job or office is held by John Boehner?

For how many years is a president of the United States elected – that is, how many years are there in one term of office?

If the president vetoes a bill can Congress override his veto?

1. Yes
2. No

For each news source, please indicate if you think each is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular.

	Mostly Liberal	Mostly Conservative	Neither	Don't Know
NBC News	____	_____	_____	_____
ABC News	____	_____	_____	_____
CBS News	____	_____	_____	_____
CNN news	____	_____	_____	_____
Fox News	____	_____	_____	_____
MSNBC News	____	_____	_____	_____

Now thinking about fact-checking by the news media, please indicate if you think the fact-checking from the following sources is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular.

	Mostly Liberal	Mostly Conservative	Neither	Don't Know
MSNBC	____	_____	_____	_____
FoxNews.com	____	_____	_____	_____
PolitiFact-Ohio	____	_____	_____	_____
FactCheck.org	____	_____	_____	_____
PolitiFact.com	____	_____	_____	_____
Washington Post Fact Checker	____	_____	_____	_____

Finally, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself.

What year are you in school?

What is your major?

In what year were you born?

What is your HOME state?

Please indicate your gender

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

Transcript of the New Jersey Gubernatorial Debate

UNKNOWN MALE VOICE: Live and uninterrupted, the New Jersey Gubernatorial Debate. Sponsored by: WCBS TV, KYWTV, William Patterson University, The Record, and Asbury Park Press. Here is your moderator, CBS 2 anchor, Christine Johnson.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Good evening tonight we are live at William Paterson University in Wayne with the candidates for New Jersey Governor will square off in one of only two debates this election season. We bring you tonight's debate in corporation with William Patterson University, CBS 3 our sister station in Philadelphia, the Record, and also the Asbury Park Press. This debate is sanction by the New Jersey election law enforcement commission. Tonight we welcome state senator Barbara Buono and Governor Chris Christie. Joining me tonight to question the candidates: Alford Doblin from the Record, my collogue, Chris May, CBS 3 anchor, and John Schoonejongen from the Asbury Park Press. The candidates will have one minute to answer each question and 30 second for rebuttal. By coin toss senator Buono, you get the first question. Our next question is from CBS 3 anchor, Chris May:

CHRIS MAY: You both believe that the current $7.25 minimum wage should be raised by $1. Governor you believe that it should be increased over a three-year period. Senator you support the November ballot measure that would raise the min wage by a dollar almost immediately, but there are a lot of people, including students in our audience or maybe even older New Jersians who are having to go back to work after retiring that believe they still can't make a living even off of $8.25 an hour. What would you say to them? Senator?

BARBARA BUONO: And I will say to answer this question directly, that I have a hard time believing that we are discussing raising this minimum wage from $7.25 and that this governor vetoed it. In this day and age, we live in one of the highest cost of living states in the nations, this is a starvation wage. It's unfortunate that the governor vetoed this legislation, but people are living on a minimum wage in New Jersey while they are barely being able to make ends meet. So many are on public assistance and food stamps and unfortunately this governor's veto is just a reflection of him protecting millionaires and the wealthy and turning his back on the working poor and this is a hallmark of his administration.

CHRIS MAY: Governor, do you stand by that choice to veto that legislation?

CHRIS CHRISTIE: Yes, I do. And this is one of the places where senator Buono shows her misunderstanding of how to create jobs in New Jersey. The fact is that those cost, those cost she is talking about, um, the money doesn't come off some magic money tree, Chris. The money comes from the pockets and the hard work of those small business owners, the people who own the convenience stores, the bodegas that pay that wage. It doesn't come magically from government and I'm sure that senator Buono understands that. The fact is I believe we should increase the minimum wage and I put forward a bipartisan compromise to the legislature, said let's raise it over three years, let's do it responsibly so that businesses can plan that expense so that was doesn't happen is what the National Federation of Independent Business says which we

could lose up to 30 thousand job in New Jersey by putting this one dollar, one time and tying it to the inflation rate going forward. It's just and irresponsible thing to do. I believe in raising the wage, but let's do it responsibly so we don't hurt business who employs these folks from the beginning.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Alright, John Schoonejongen from the Asbury Park Press.

JOHN SCHOONEJONGEN: Governor, um, property taxes. People are considering leaving their homes in part because they can't afford sky high property taxes. Young people and senior citizens are struggling to afford living in the state because of the property taxes. Can you give us two ideas on how the state can fund essential services without relying so much on property taxes?

CHRIS CHRISTIE: Well John, first off let's see where we've been. For the 10 years before I became governor, property taxes went up 70%. We put forward three common sense reforms in a bi-partisan way that was adopted by the legislature: a 2% cap on property tax with very few exceptions, only four; a change to interest arbitration; and encouragement of consolidation and shared services. Now, the two ideas we have to do more with in the next four years is to give civil service reforms so they can consolidate and share more services across municipal and county lines and secondly is to make sure we end the abuse of sick pay throughout the system. Millions and millions of dollars, in fact one billion dollars in sick pay, are pending right now. We can't afford to pay those things anymore. Those two things will help to change the property tax situation significantly in the next four years. So let's remember, property taxes have gone up less than 2 % for two years in a row for the first time in 24 years. The Star Ledger gave it the headline 'At long last, tax relief'.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Governor Christie, you're out of time. Senator Buono?

BARBARA BUONO: Yes this governor came into office, he promised not to raise property taxes, he promised not to cut property tax relief; well he made state history. He had the largest cuts in property tax relief in state history. Property taxes rose on average 20% and in other places more. Tom's River 37%. The facts are the facts rhetorical flourishes aside. And then the governor turns around and vetoes a piece of legislation that would have had millionaires pay their fair share and fund middle class property tax relief. You see that's a major difference between this governor and myself, I believe that millionaires should pay their fair share and fund middle class property tax relief, he doesn't. I will never balance my budget on the backs of the middle class and the working poor as this governor has done.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Governor, do you have a rebuttal?

CHRIS CHRISTIE: Yeah, I know Senator Buono would never balance her budget that way. I had to balance her budget when I came in in 2010 after she left a 2.2 billion deficit. And she's voted to raise taxes and fees 154 times. Believe me everybody, if you give her the opportunity to have this position here's what will happen: taxes will increase again and again and again and

again. We are going to restrict spending, that's what we've done and that's why you've had property taxes from 7% annual increase go down to less than 2%.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Okay, last rebuttal on this question. Senator Buono?

BARBARA BUONO: Thank you. This governor came in and he raised the cruelest tax of all the tax on the average working family – the property tax. And he raised it by giving millionaires, um, let them off the hook by vetoing legislation. Then he turned around and he raised taxes on the working poor, it was a double whammy. He raised fares on busses and trains by 25% increasing the cost of commuting and cutting service, and then he raised tolls. I mean, you can call a tax, it's a tax it may not be called a tax, but it has the same effect.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Senator your time is up. We thought it would be a good idea here tonight to get the students involved.

BARBARA BUONO: Great.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: So right now we're going to introduce you to a student here at William Patterson University who will ask the candidates a question now. Her name is Lisa Swarn she is a senior majoring in biology and her question will go to Senator Buono first. Lisa?

LISA SWARN: Good evening. My question is, according to newjerseyspotlight.com over the past decade New Jersey has dramatically cut funding for public higher education. As a direct result of this, colleges have raised tuition on already cash strapped students. What will you do to make higher education more affordable for students and their families?

BARBARA BUONO: That is a huge priority of mine because, you know, I put myself through college and law school. I was on my own since I was 19 and let me tell you, I wouldn't be standing here running for governor of the state of new jersey if I didnt have good public institution of higher learning right here in New Jersey that I was able to afford: Montclair State, Rutgers Law school. But you know what? Today I couldn't do it, the tuition at Rutgers law school is over $40,000 and there is something wrong with that picture. The jobs of today require more education, more training and we need to make higher education a priority. This governor came in to office and cut funding for higher education $173 million. Cost of going to Rutgers up 14% in his first 4 years in office. And you know what, when I'm governor I'm going to make higher education a priority, because all of our kids, middle class, working poor, they deserve the right to live up to their full potential too.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Governor Christie, you have one minute.

CHRIS CHRISTIE: Sure, I appreciate your question as well and this is one of those areas where instead of just talking about it we've actually done something. You know for 25 years New Jersey had not invested capital money in institutions like William Patters and others across New Jersey. No new laboratories, no new class rooms, no seat expansion so that more people could go here. I said that's wrong. And right now we're in the midst of a $1.3 billion dollar investment in

our state's colleges and universities 176 different projects being funded across the state that's going to expand libratory space, classroom space so that more kids can come to New Jersey and can afford college in New Jersey. This is a big difference in this race. You can talk about it all you like. But the senator has been in the legislator for 20 years, she never did anything about it. We've come into office and actually done something about it by investing $1.3 billion dollars in our state higher education institutions. I'm proud of that, and I hope it's going to give more students in New Jersey an opportunity to go to school in New Jersey, if they want, and to pursue Any, any discipline they want in a 21st century way.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: thank you Lisa Swarn.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Believe it or not

BUONO: Can I respond to that

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: I'm sorry, but believe it or not it's time for closing statements already. So by coin toss Governor Christie you go first.

CHRIS CHRISTIE: Well Christine, Alford, Chris, and John, um, the folks here at William Patterson, thank you for sponsoring tonight. I am a proud, proud New Jersians and I remember growing up in Livingston, my mother used to tell my brothers and sister and I , um, be yourself because then tomorrow you won't have to worry about trying to remember who you pretended to be yesterday. For four years I've been myself to the people of New Jersey. I've told them the truth about the problems that we had inheriting a $13 billion dollar deficit and balancing it without raising taxes on anyone. Making sure that we have the most education funding ever and reaching across the aisle in bipartisan way to bring solutions. That's why I'm endorsed by 49 Democratic elected officials, that's why we've been able to get things done in Trenton compared to what is going on in Washington D.C. What I promise you if you give me another four years, is I will be myself, I will tell you the truth, I will work as hard as I can, because there is no greater honor and privilege I could ever, ever ask for in my life than to be the governor of the state where I was born and raised. I ask for your vote.

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: Senator, it's your turn now.

BARBARA BUONO: Thank you. My father came to this country when he was 3 years old. His parents, my grandparents, didn't speak any English and they had little formal education, but they knew in the United State their son would have opportunity. So today the daughter of James Buono, an Italian immigrant butcher, is running for governor. Now that's the American dream. The belief that no matter what your circumstances, that your children can have the hope for a better tomorrow. That fight for a better tomorrow is why I'm running. Four years ago we had the highest unemployment in the region, today with 400,000 out of work, we still do. You know it's time to put New Jersey first, to bring good jobs back to New Jersey, and put New Jersey first. And I'm going to be the kind of governor that will do that. I will lift up the middle class. I will put New Jersey back on the road to prosperity and the way I'll do that in the way that has always worked by building up a strong middle class. Thank you very much

CHRISTINE JOHNSON: And we would like to thank the candidates for being here this evening. I also want to thank my colleagues Alford Doblin, Chris May, and John Schoonejongen for being here with me along side this table. I would also like thank William Patterson University for hosting us here this evening. A reminder to everyone here, Election Day is Tuesday November 5th. Your vote does count! For now, I'm Christine Johnson join us on CBS 2 in New York and also on CBS 3 in Philadelphia for the news at 11. Have a good evening

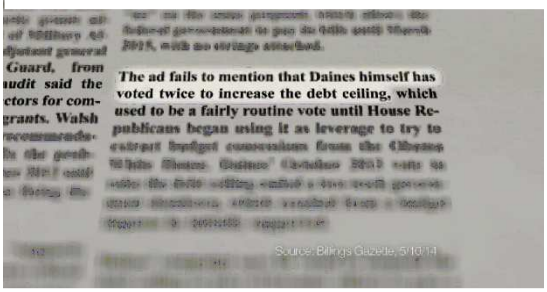
Experiment 3: 2014 Montana Senate Election
Storyboard of Democratic Candidate John Walsh's Negative Advertisement Attaching Republican Steve Daines



(1 Second): I'm John Walsh and I approve this message.



(5 Second): Congressman Daines has gotten comfortable with Washington



(9 Second): His ad fails to mention that Daines himself has voted twice to increase



(13 Second): More jobs? Daines worked for years in China



(17 Second): helping an American company build factories there



(21 Second): At the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American



(25 Second): worker here. Congressman Daines, some free advice



(29 Second): Montanans don't trust dishonest politicians.

Storyboard of Republican Candidate Steve Daines'
Negative Advertisement Attaching Democrat John Walsh



(1 Second): John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve



(5 Second): Now Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds



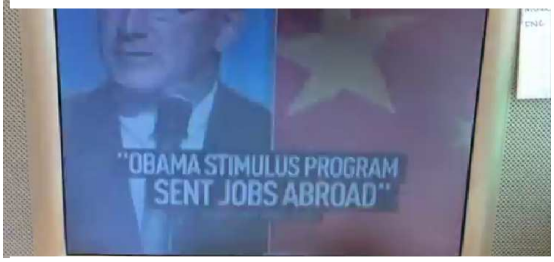
(9 Second): of dishonest attacks. Here are the facts. John Walsh supported



(13 Second): Obama's stimulus, sending our jobs and our tax dollars to China.



(17 Second): John Walsh is the only candidate who has supported shipping



(21 Second): American jobs to China. Steve Daines is the only candidate



(25 Second): who has created jobs in Montana.



(29 Second): I'm Steven Daines and I approve this message.

Fact-checks for each Experimental Condition

Condition 1: Democrat John Walsh Ad Control – No Fact-check

Condition 2 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact Accurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

The ad says Daines worked to build factories in China "at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here." Daines did help Procter & Gamble expand in China in the 1990s, Independently, both of those claims are more or less accurate.

Daines, then 29, worked for P&G in China from 1991 to 1997 to help expand the company's reach there. In 1994, *Management Review* magazine called P&G a "pioneer" in bringing U.S. consumer products into China. And in 1993, P&G announced a plan to "streamline" its operations by closing 30 plants and eliminating 13,000 jobs worldwide — including four plants and 4,000 jobs in the U.S.

The Walsh campaign argues that Daines' experience in China helps to inform his voting record in the House which includes votes in 2013 and 2014 in support of two budge plans that called for a "territorial" tax system in which U.S.-resident multinational corporations would pay no tax on their foreign-source income.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 252

Condition 3 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with partisan fact-check FOX Accurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

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The Walsh campaign argues that Daines' experience in China helps to inform his voting record in the House which includes votes in 2013 and 2014 in support of two budge plans that called for a "territorial" tax system in which U.S.-resident multinational corporations would pay no tax on their foreign-source income.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 252

Condition 4 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with partisan fact-check MSNBC Accurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

The ad says Daines worked to build factories in China "at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here." Daines did help Procter & Gamble expand in China in the 1990s, Independently, both of those claims are more or less accurate.

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The Walsh campaign argues that Daines' experience in China helps to inform his voting record in the House which includes votes in 2013 and 2014 in support of two budge plans that called for a "territorial" tax system in which U.S.-resident multinational corporations would pay no tax on their foreign-source income.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 252

Condition 5 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact Inaccurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

The ad says Daines worked to build factories in China "at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here." Daines did help Procter & Gamble expand in China in the 1990s, but the company says Daines was not involved in strategic corporate decisions. Moreover, the implication that expansion in China came at the expense of U.S. jobs is unsupported.

Daines, then 29, worked for P&G in China from 1991 to 1997 to help expand the company's reach there. In 1994, *Management Review* magazine called P&G a "pioneer" in bringing U.S. consumer products into China. And in 1993, P&G announced a plan to "streamline" its operations by closing 30 plants and eliminating 13,000 jobs worldwide — including four plants and 4,000 jobs in the U.S. But did expansion in China come at the expense of American jobs? We think not. On both of those scores, clear evidence is lacking.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 242

Condition 6 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with partisan fact-check FOX Inaccurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

The ad says Daines worked to build factories in China "at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here." Daines did help Procter & Gamble expand in China in the 1990s, but the company says Daines was not involved in strategic corporate decisions. Moreover, the implication that expansion in China came at the expense of U.S. jobs is unsupported.

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Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 242

Condition 7 Democrat John Walsh Advertisement with partisan fact-check MSNBC Inaccurate



John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. John Walsh, released an ad titled "Free Advice" that accuses Daines of "double-speak," boasting about job creation while helping to outsource American jobs overseas.

Claim:

According to the narrator, "Daines worked for years in China, helping an American company build factories there, at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here."

Historical Context:

The ad says Daines worked to build factories in China "at the same time Daines' company was firing thousands of American workers here." Daines did help Procter & Gamble expand in China in the 1990s, but the company says Daines was not involved in strategic corporate decisions. Moreover, the implication that expansion in China came at the expense of U.S. jobs is unsupported.

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Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by John Walsh, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 242

Condition 8 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement Ad Control – No Fact-check

Condition 9 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact Accurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

Historical Context:

The first line in the ad refers to an apology issued by the Montana Democratic Party for false claims made in a political mailer in 2012 — accusing Daines' former employer, RightNow Technologies, of using government contracts to outsource Montana jobs to India.

The Daines ad then goes on the offensive, claiming "John Walsh supported Obama's stimulus, sending our jobs and our tax dollars to China." It is true that Walsh, then the Adjutant General of Montana, endorsed the controversial economic stimulus in 2009. The Investigative Reporting Project reported that nearly $2.4 billion worth of renewable energy grants included in the $831 billion stimulus package went to foreign developers. They noted a consortium of American and Chinese companies were awarded $450 million in stimulus grants to help build a $1.5 billion wind farm in Texas, using imported Chinese turbines. In 2010, we wrote that it is "correct to say that the stimulus law created jobs for Chinese workers."

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 251

Condition 10 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with partisan fact-check FOX Accurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

Historical Context:

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Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 251

Condition 11 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with partisan fact-check MSNBC Accurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

Historical Context:

The first line in the ad refers to an apology issued by the Montana Democratic Party for false claims made in a political mailer in 2012 — accusing Daines' former employer, RightNow Technologies, of using government contracts to outsource Montana jobs to India.

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Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY TRUE.

Word Count: 251

Condition 12 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with nonpartisan fact-check PolitiFact Inaccurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

Historical Context:

The first line in the ad refers to an apology issued by the Montana Democratic Party for false claims made in a political mailer in 2012 — accusing Daines' former employer, RightNow Technologies, of using government contracts to outsource Montana jobs to India.

Walsh was not a candidate in that 2012 race and had nothing to do with the accusations in the mailer. And the attacks Walsh is now making are tied to Daines' work at Procter & Gamble, not RightNow Technologies. So while the attacks deal with a similar subject — outsourcing — they are otherwise unrelated.

The Daines ad then goes on the offensive, claiming "John Walsh supported Obama's stimulus, sending our jobs and our tax dollars to China." But Walsh wasn't in the Senate at the time and didn't vote on the legislation. A small portion of the stimulus did go to Chinese firms, but Walsh had nothing to do with the award of stimulus contracts.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 249

Condition 13 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with partisan fact-check FOX Inaccurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

Historical Context:

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Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 249

Condition 14 Republican Steve Daines Advertisement with partisan fact-check MSNBC Inaccurate



Steve Daines, the Republican candidate for Senate in Montana, is attacking John Walsh, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Montana. Daines, released an ad that accuses Walsh of "supporting shipping American jobs to China," referring to President Obama's economic stimulus.

Claim:

The ad's narrator begins by airing some old dirty laundry. "Last year, John Walsh's cronies apologized for false attacks on Steve Daines," the narrator states. "Now, Walsh is shamefully using those same kinds of dishonest attacks."

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The Daines ad then goes on the offensive, claiming "John Walsh supported Obama's stimulus, sending our jobs and our tax dollars to China." But Walsh wasn't in the Senate at the time and didn't vote on the legislation. A small portion of the stimulus did go to Chinese firms, but Walsh had nothing to do with the award of stimulus contracts.

Our Ruling:

Bottom Line: This advertisement, aired by Steve Daines, is MOSTLY FALSE.

Word Count: 249

Montana Senate Election Survey

After watching the advertisement (and accompanying fact-check), respondents will answer the following questions.

We would like to begin by asking you some questions about the political commercial you just viewed.

1. Thinking about the content of the advertisement, did you find the advertisement very useful, somewhat useful, not useful at all?
   5. Very Useful
   6. Somewhat Useful
   7. Not Useful At All
   8. Don't Know

2. Thinking about the tone of the advertisement, would you characterize the tone of the advertisement as overly hostile, somewhat hostile, or not hostile at all?
   5. Overly Hostile
   6. Somewhat Hostile
   7. Not Hostile At All
   8. Don't Know

3. Thinking about accuracy of the advertisement, would you consider the advertisement very accurate, somewhat accurate, or not accurate at all.
   1. Very Accurate
   2. Somewhat Accurate
   3. Not Accurate At All
   4. Don't Know

[Order of the Questions about Daines and Walsh will be Flipped so Daines Questions ARE NOT ALWAYS first]

Now that you have some information about the candidates running for the U.S. Senate in Montana, we would like you to answer some questions. We understand that you may only have a limited amount of information about the campaign, but we would really like you to try to answer each of the questions.

We will begin by asking you some questions about Steve Daines. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

9. Steve Daines is responsible for increases in the federal debt.
   5. Agree Strongly
   6. Agree Somewhat
   7. Disagree Somewhat
   8. Disagree Strongly
10. Steve Daines is responsible for the outsourcing of American jobs to China.

5. Agree Strongly
6. Agree Somewhat
7. Disagree Somewhat
8. Disagree Strongly

11. Steve Daines is responsible for the rise in the unemployment rate.
    5. Agree Strongly
    6. Agree Somewhat
    7. Disagree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Strongly

12. In your opinion, does the phrase HONEST describe Steve Daines extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

13. In your opinion, does the phrase AMBITIOUS describe Steve Daines extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

14. In your opinion, does the phrase REALLY CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU describe Steve Daines extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

15. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means you feel very favorable toward the person and 1 means you feel very unfavorable toward the person, where would you rate Steve Daines on this scale

12. How likely do you think it is that Steve Daines will win his bid for the U.S. Senate seat?
    1. Very likely
    2. Somewhat likely
    3. Somewhat unlikely
    4. Very unlikely

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about John Walsh, also running for the U.S. Senate in Montana. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions.

16. John Walsh is responsible for increases in the federal debt.
    5. Agree Strongly
    6. Agree Somewhat
    7. Disagree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Strongly

13. John Walsh is responsible for the outsourcing of American jobs to China.
    5. Agree Strongly
    6. Agree Somewhat
    7. Disagree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Strongly

14. John Walsh is responsible for the rise in the unemployment rate.
    5. Agree Strongly
    6. Agree Somewhat
    7. Disagree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Strongly

15. In your opinion, does the phrase HONEST describe John Walsh extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

16. In your opinion, does the phrase REALLY CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU describe John Walsh extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

17. In your opinion, does the phrase AMBITIOUS describe John Walsh extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?
    1. Extremely Well
    2. Quite Well
    3. Not Too Well
    4. Not Well at All

18. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means you feel very favorable toward the person and 1 means you feel very unfavorable toward the person, where would you rate John Walsh on this scale.

20. How likely do you think it is that John Walsh will win his bid for the U.S. Senate seat?

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Somewhat unlikely
4. Very unlikely

21. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Where would you place yourself on the following scale?
    17. Strong Democrat
    18. Weak Democrat
    19. Independent, Leaning towards the Democratic Party
    20. Independent
    21. Independent, Leaning towards the Republican Party
    22. Weak Republican
    23. Strong Republican
    24. Don't Know

22. One way that people talk about politics in the United States is in terms of liberal, conservative, and moderate ideology. The political views people might hold are often arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7)

Where would you place yourself on this scale?

    17. Extremely Liberal
    18. Liberal
    19. Somewhat Liberal
    20. Moderate
    21. Somewhat Conservative
    22. Conservative
    23. Very Conservative
    24. Don't Know

23. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you are very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in political campaigns?
    9. Very Much Interested
    10. Somewhat Interested
    11. Not Much Interested
    12. Don't Know

Next, we would like to ask you a few questions about your views about negative advertisements, in general. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

24. Some negative advertisements are so nasty that I stop paying attention to what the candidates are saying.
    6. Agree Strongly
    7. Agree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Somewhat

9. Disagree Strongly
10. Don't Know

25. Negative advertisements discussing a candidate's personal misbehavior are fair game.
    6. Agree Strongly
    7. Agree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Somewhat
    9. Disagree Strongly
    10. Don't Know

26. Hard-hitting commercials attacking the opponent are not helpful during election campaigns.
    6. Agree Strongly
    7. Agree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Somewhat
    9. Disagree Strongly
    10. Don't Know

27. I find negative political commercials attacking a candidate for conduct occurring long before the candidate entered public life as uninformative.
    6. Agree Strongly
    7. Agree Somewhat
    8. Disagree Somewhat
    9. Disagree Strongly
    10. Don't Know

We would like to ask you a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people are too busy to keep up with these topics, so if you don't know the answer, just skip the question.

28. Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden?

29. Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not—is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court.

30. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House to override a presidential veto?

31. Do you happen to know how many times an individual can be elected president?

32. Thinking about Congress, do the Republicans currently have a majority in the House of Representatives, the Senate, both the House of Representatives and the Senate, or neither the House of Representative nor the Senate?
    5. House of Representatives
    6. Senate

7. Both
8. Neither

33. Do you happen to know what job or office is held by John Boehner?

34. For how many years is a president of the United States elected – that is, how many years are there in one term of office?

35. If the president vetoes a bill can Congress override his veto?
3. Yes
4. No

36. Do you happen to know what job or office is held by Antonin Scalia?

Now we would like to ask you some questions about how you get your news.

37. How do you get most of your news about national and international issues? Please rank order these outlets from 1 (you use this outlet *most* often for news) to 5 (you use this outlet *least* often for news)

___ Magazines
___ Radio
___ Internet
___ Newspapers
___ Television

39. Some people think that by criticizing leaders, news organizations keep political leaders from doing their job. Others think that such criticism is worth it because it keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done. Which position is closer to your opinion?
1. Keeps leaders from doing their job
2. Keeps leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done
3. Don't Know

40. In general, do you think news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?
1. Get the facts straight
2. Their stories and reports are often inaccurate
3. Don't Know

41. In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side?
1. News organizations deal fairly with all sides
2. News organizations tend to favor one side
3. Don't Know

42. Do you think the press has been too critical, not critical enough or fair in the way it has covered Barack Obama?

1. Too critical
2. Not critical enough
3. Fair

43. Now we would like to ask you about where you get most of your news these days. For each item listed, please indicate if it is something you do regularly, or not. Please check the correct box for each item.

	Yes, regularly	No, not regularly
Watch local TV news	_____	_____
Watch the Fox News cable channel	_____	_____
Watch MSNBC cable news	_____	_____
Watch CNN cable news	_____	_____
Watch CBS national nightly network news	_____	_____
Watch ABC national nightly network news	_____	_____
Watch NBC national nightly network news	_____	_____
Read the newspaper	_____	_____
Listen to radio news	_____	_____
Get news from the Internet /digitally	_____	_____
Cell phone, tablet, or other mobile device	_____	_____

44. For each news source, please indicate if you think each is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular.

	Mostly Liberal	Mostly Conservative	Neither
NBC News	____	_____	_____
ABC News	____	_____	_____
CBS News	____	_____	_____
CNN news	____	_____	_____
Fox News	____	_____	_____
MSNBC News	____	_____	_____

45. Now thinking about fact-checking by the news media, please indicate if you think the fact-checking from the following sources is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular.

	Mostly Liberal	Mostly Conservative	Neither
MSNBC	_____	_____	_____
FoxNews.com	_____	_____	_____
PolitiFact.com	_____	_____	_____
FactCheck.org	_____	_____	_____
PolitiFact.com	_____	_____	_____
Washington Post Fact-checker	_____	_____	_____

We are going to end with a few questions about yourself.

46. Are you a registered voter?
    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. Don't know/Refused

47. What was the highest grade or year of school that you have completed?
    1. Less than high school
    2. High school graduate
    3. Some college
    4. Business/vocational school
    5. College graduate
    6. Graduate/Professional Degree (e.g., M.A., MSW, Ph.D., J.D., M.D)

48. In what year were you born?

49. What is your Home state?

50. Please indicate your gender
    1. MALE
    2. FEMALE

Thank you for your participation. Remember, this is an anonymous survey. The results may be published, but your name will not be.

APPENDIX C

CHAPTER 3: FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 3.1. Total Fact-Checks By Year: 2003-2012

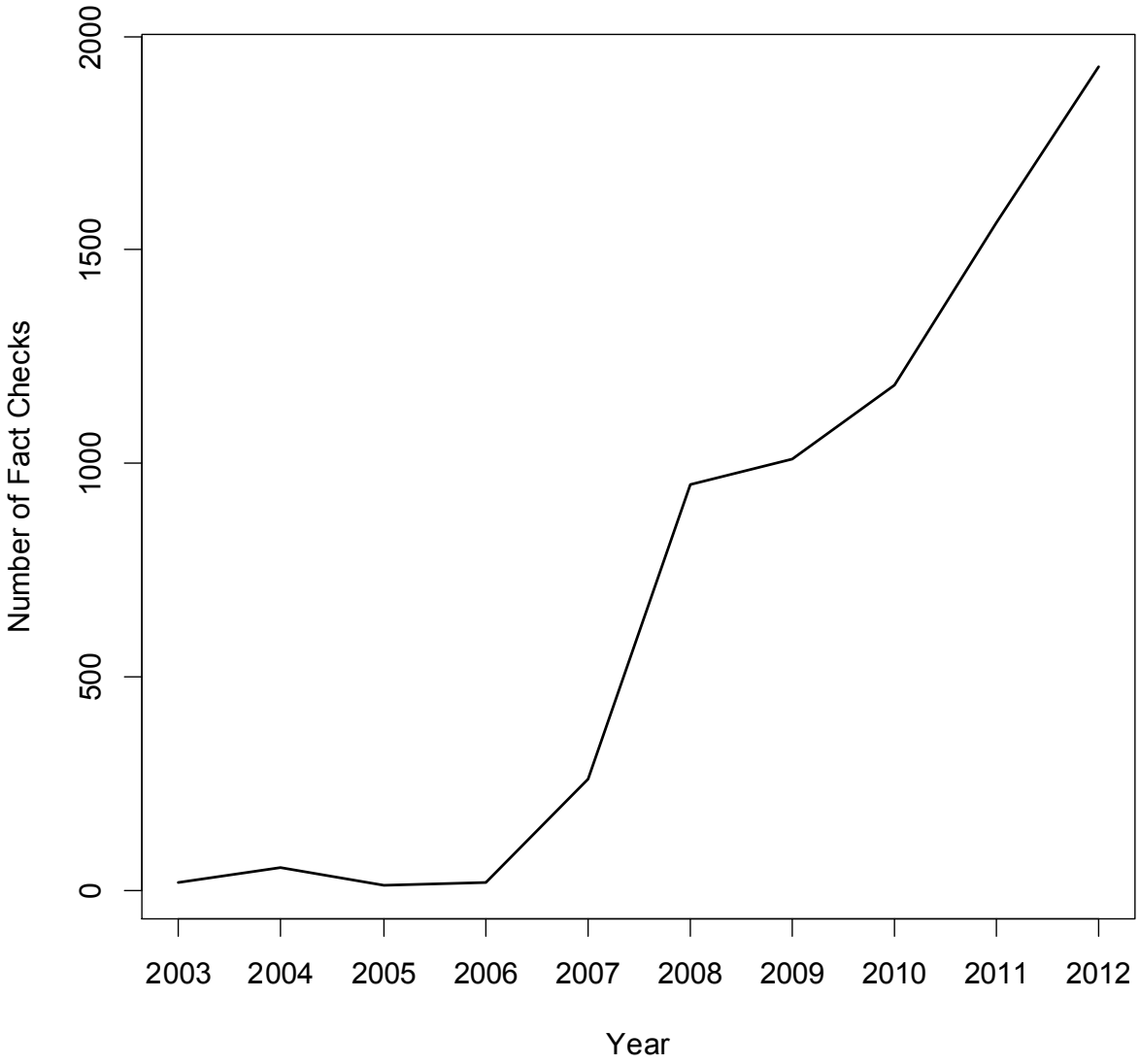


Figure 3.2. Number of Fact-Checks by Month: 2003 to 2012

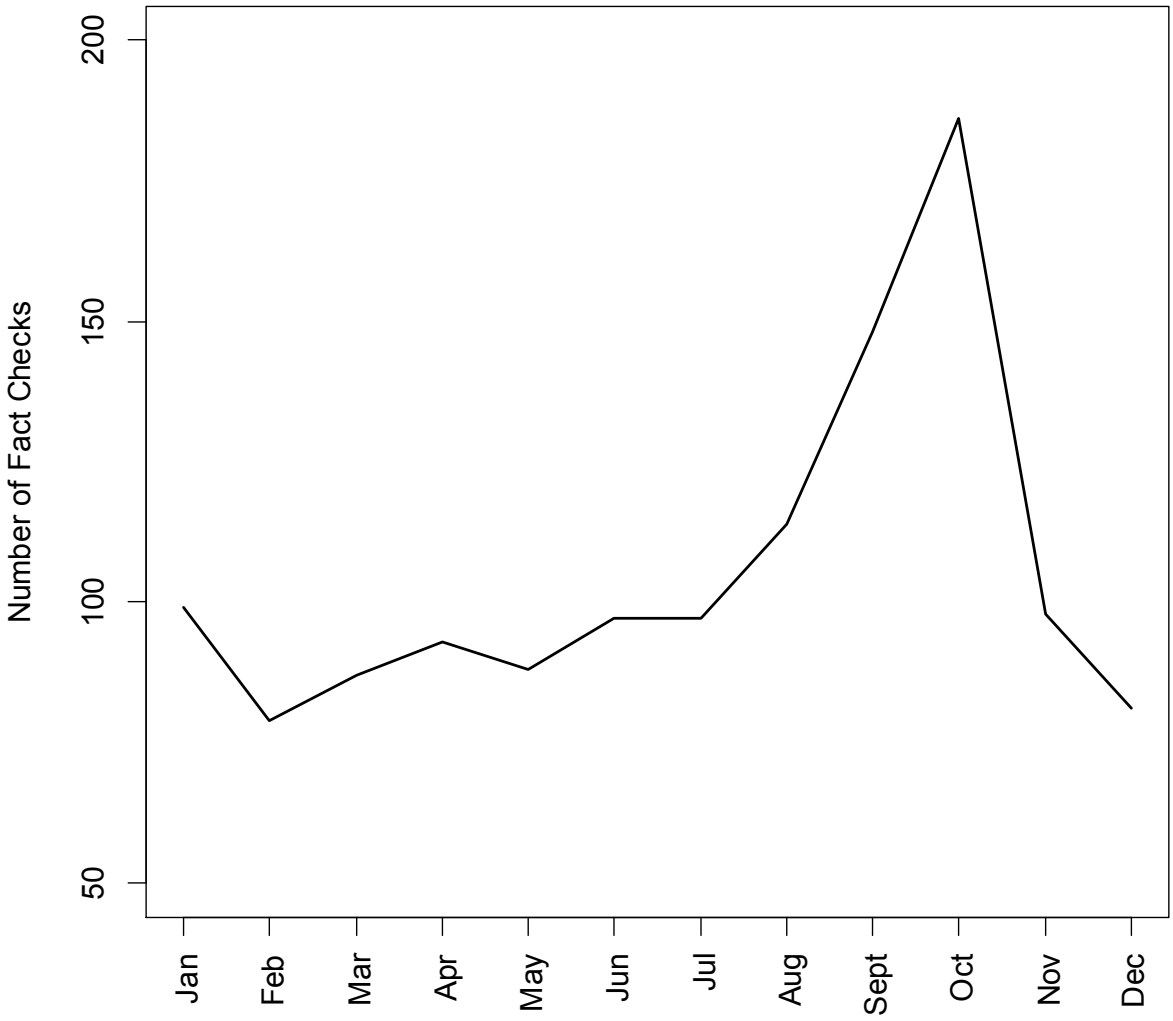


Figure 3.3. Number of Fact-Checks by Week in 2008

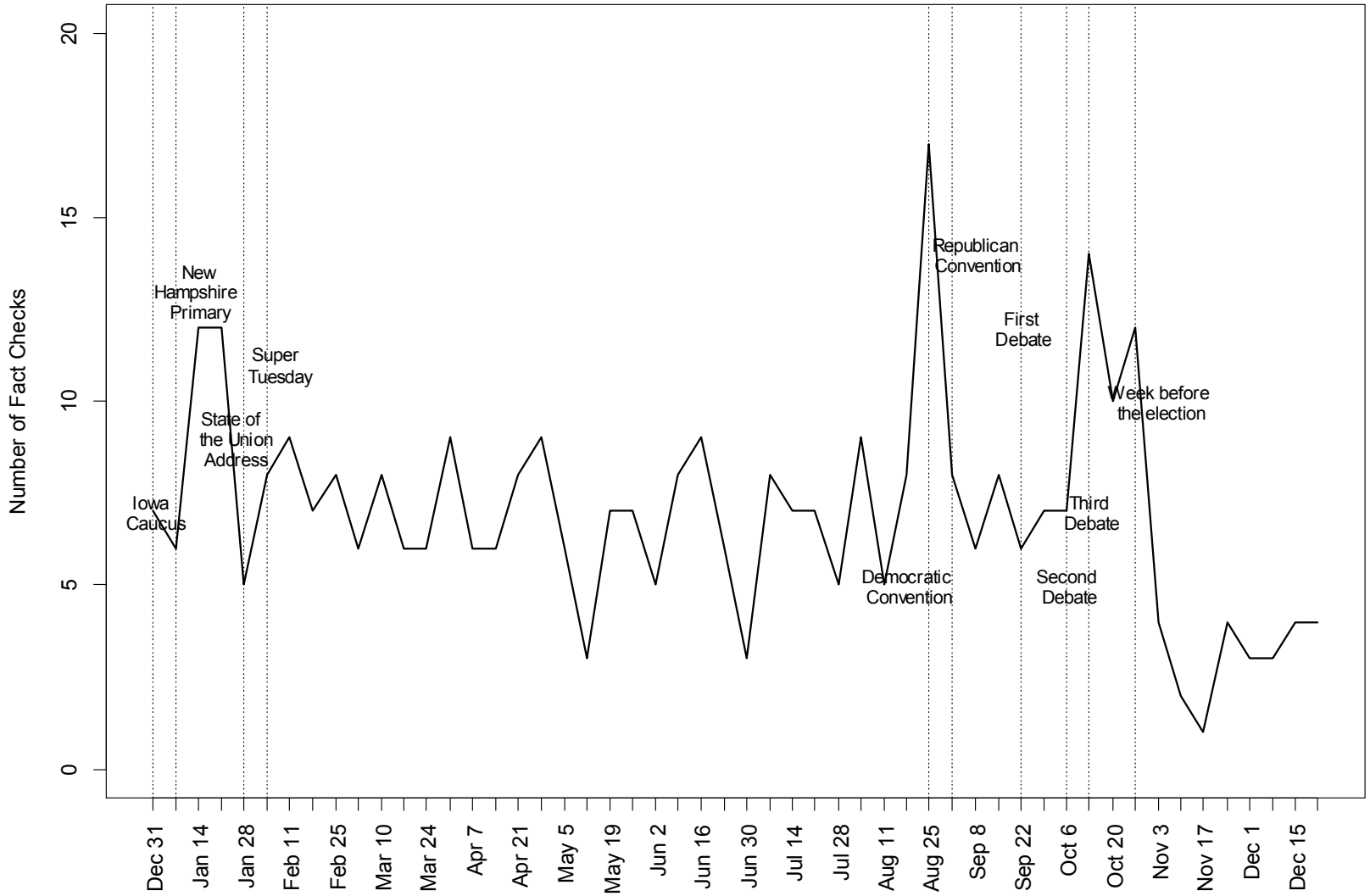


Figure 3.4. Number of Fact-Checks by Week in 2012

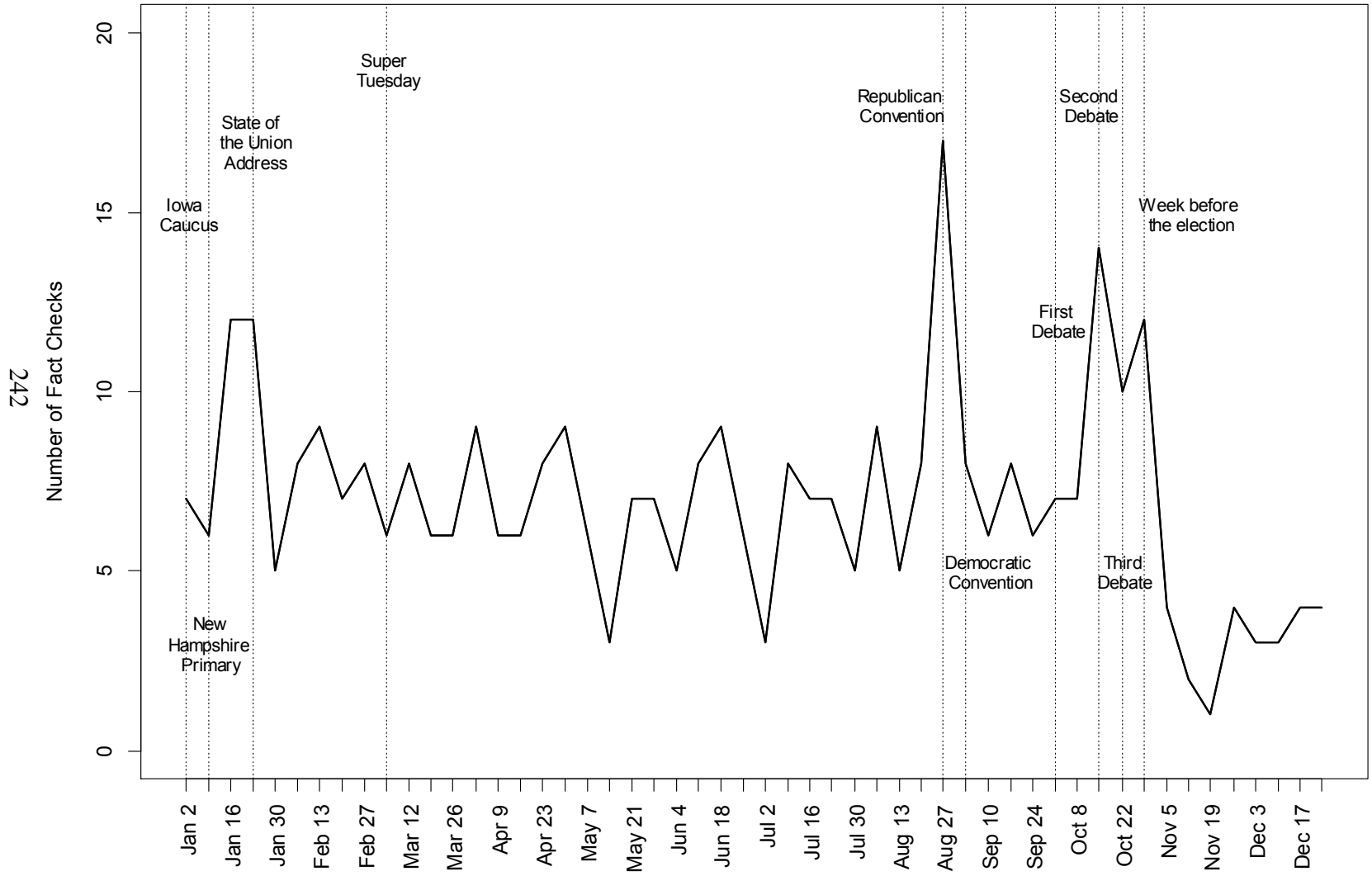


Figure 3.5. Percentage of Claimants by Party and Fact Source: 2008 & 2012 Presidential Election

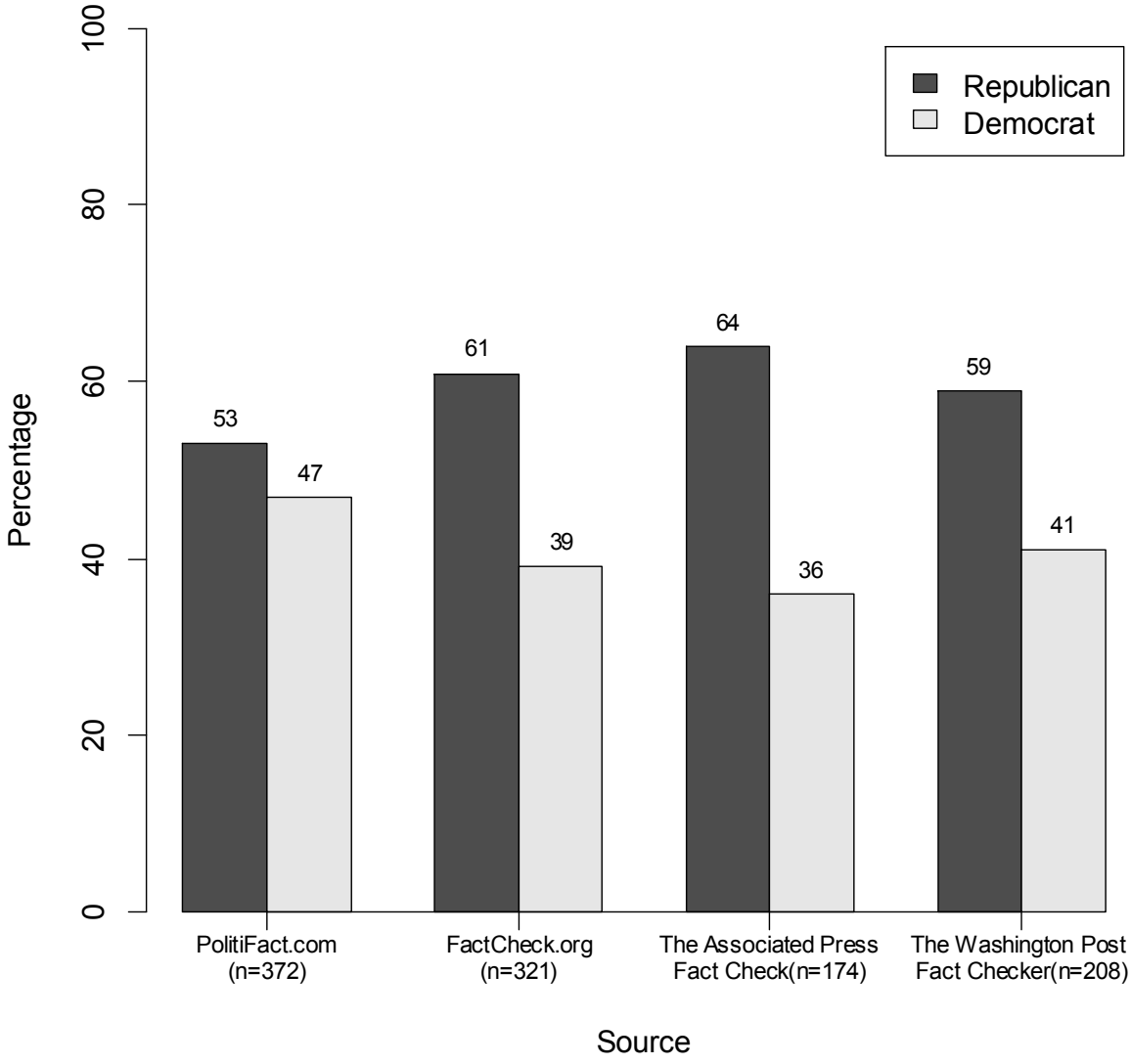
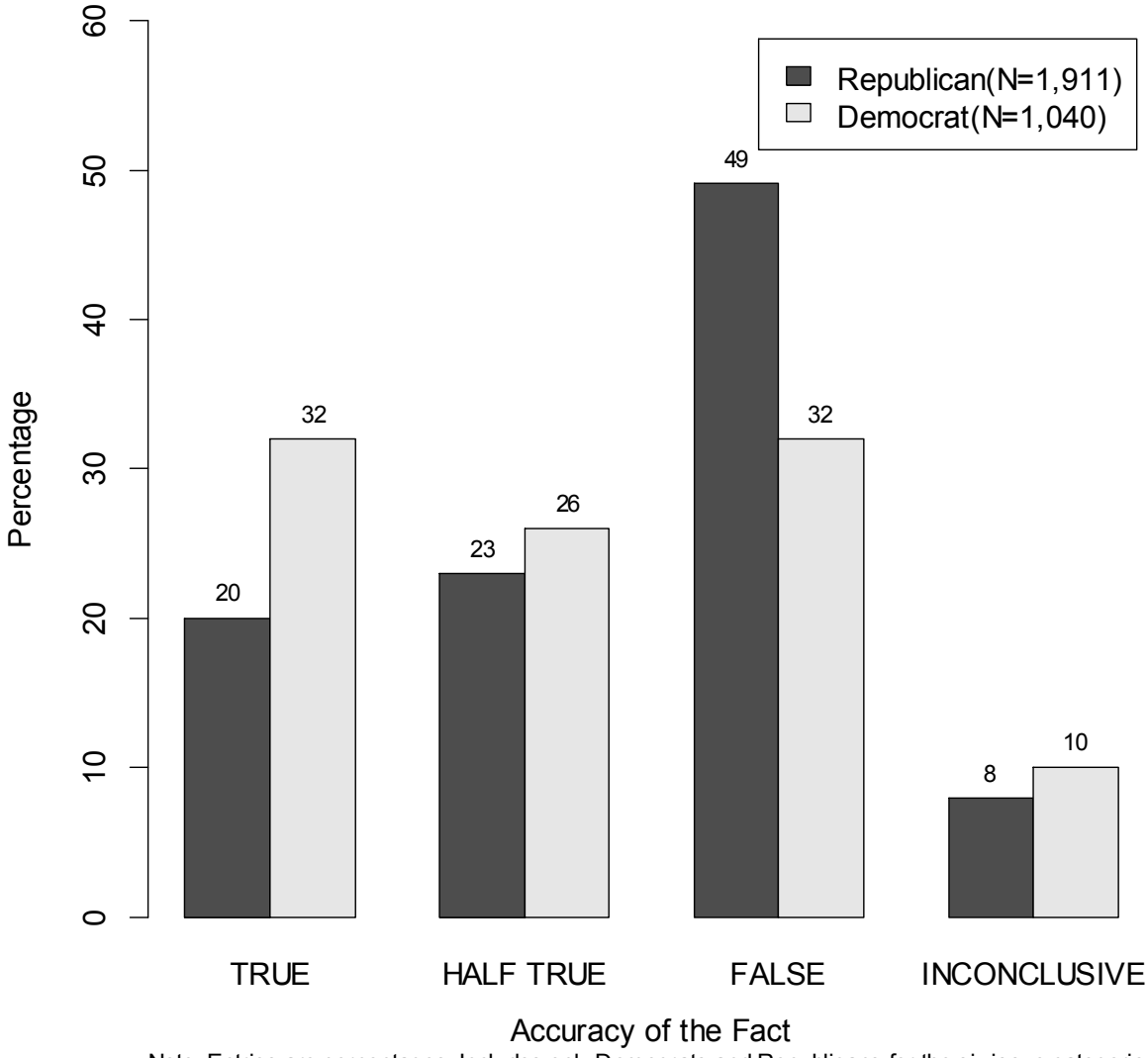


Figure 3.6. Accuracy of Facts 2003-2012 by Partisanship



Note: Entries are percentages. Includes only Democrats and Republicans for the six issue categories.

Figure 3.7. Percentage of Facts by Communication Type and Campaign Year

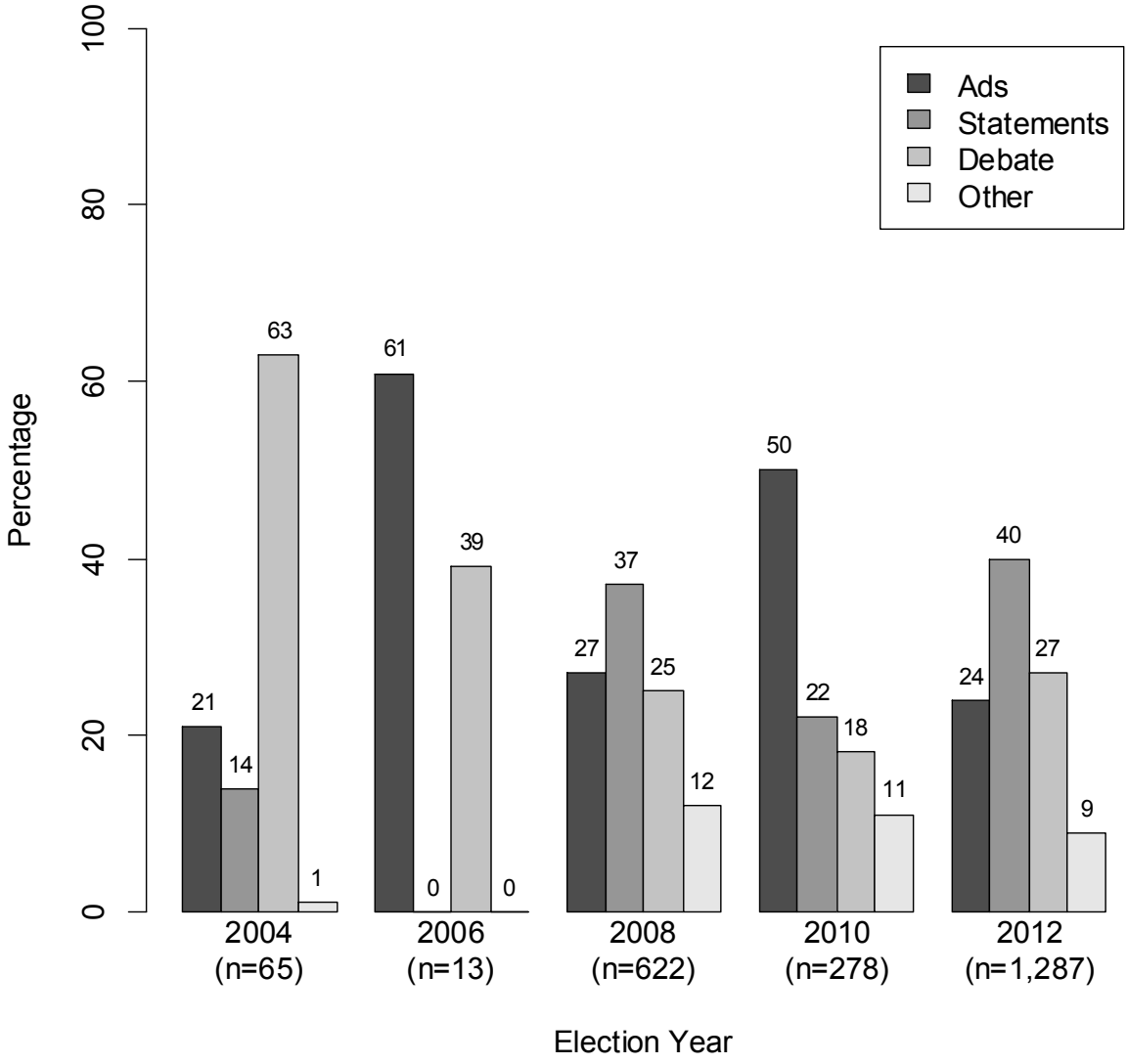


Figure 3.8. Percentage of Candidate Communication Types by Election Type

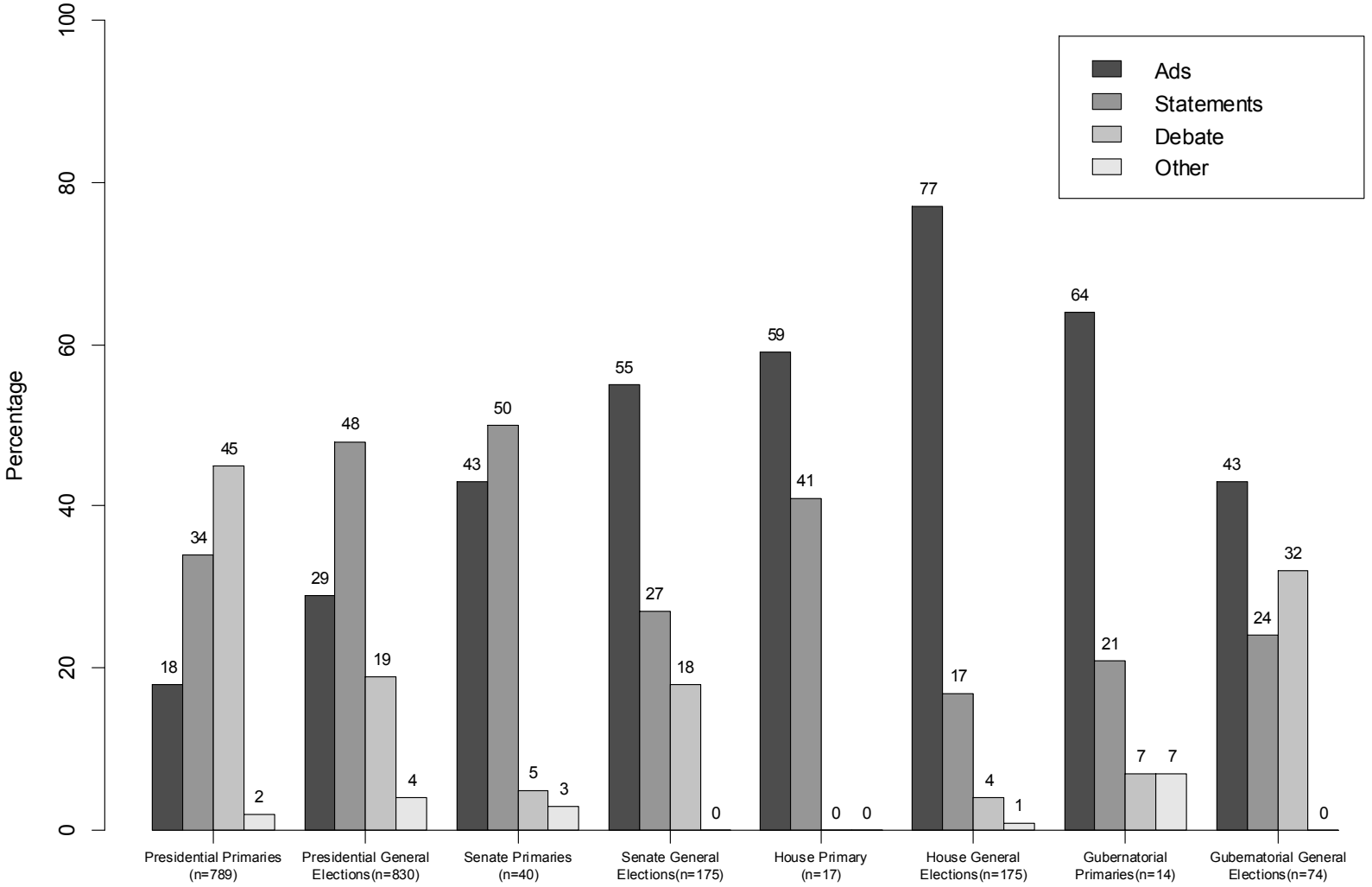


Table 3.1. Accuracy of Claimants Advertisements by Claimant Status

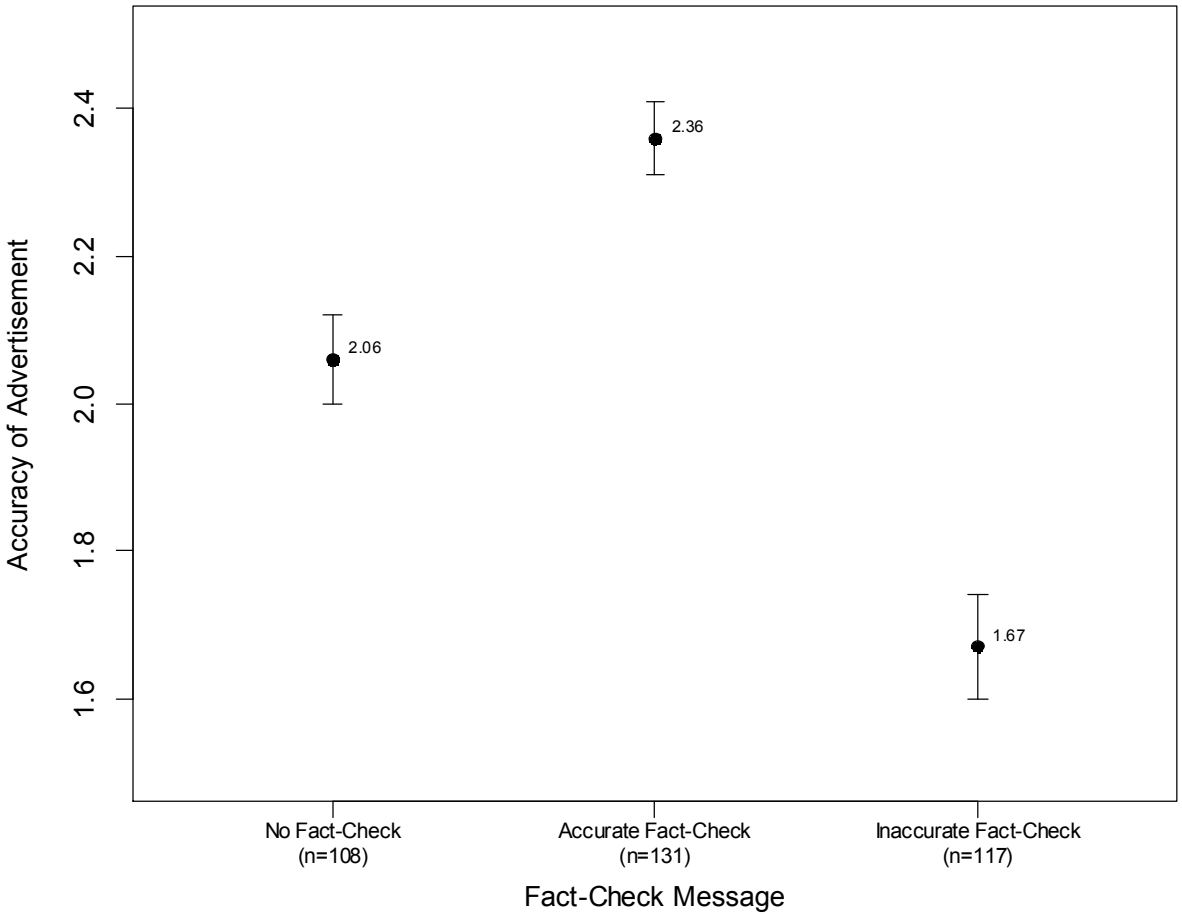
	True	Half True	False	Inconclusive
Incumbent (n=101)	33	32	30	6
Challenger (n=272)	21	35	41	3
PAC (n=245)	23	27	44	6
Party (n=65)	21	25	48	6

Note: all entries are percentages.

APPENDIX D

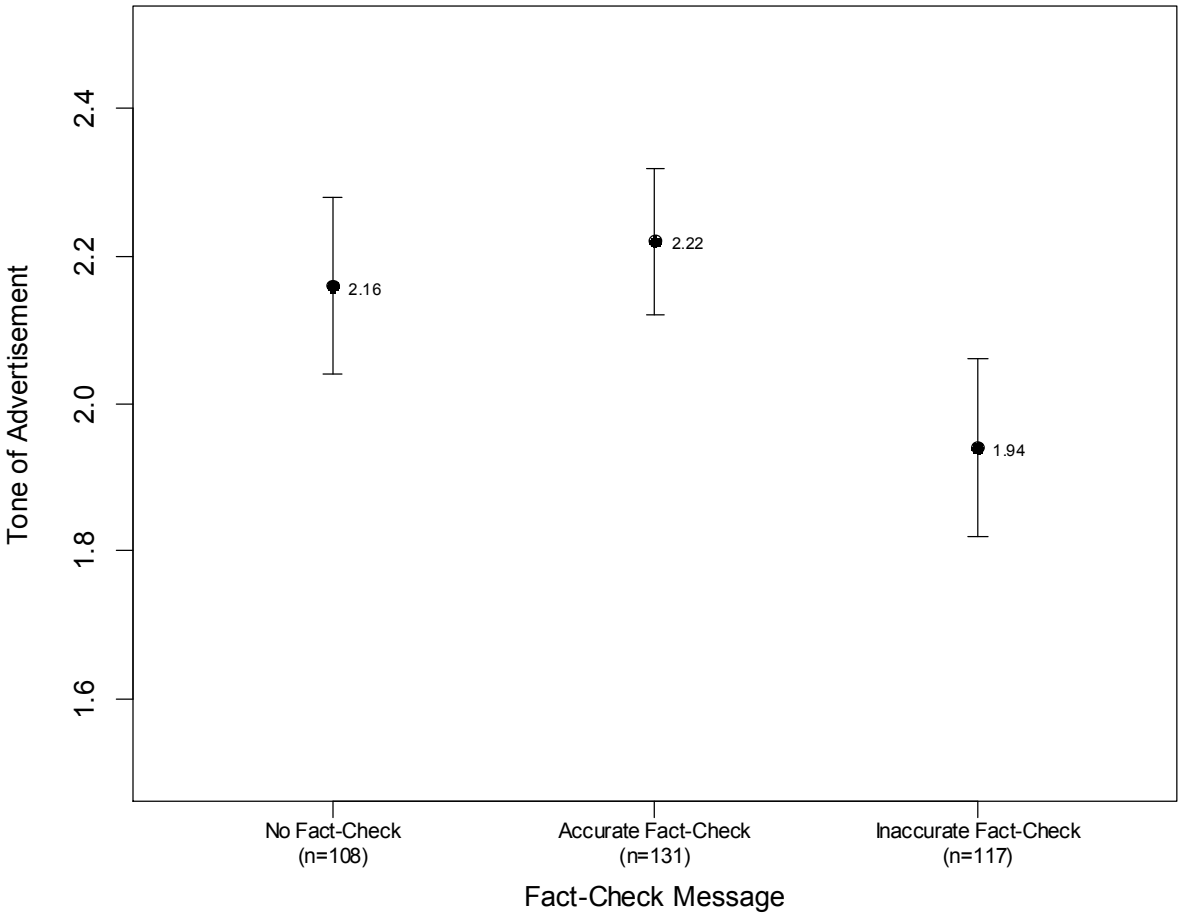
CHAPTER 4: FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 4.1. Assessments of Accuracy of Advertisement by Experimental Condition



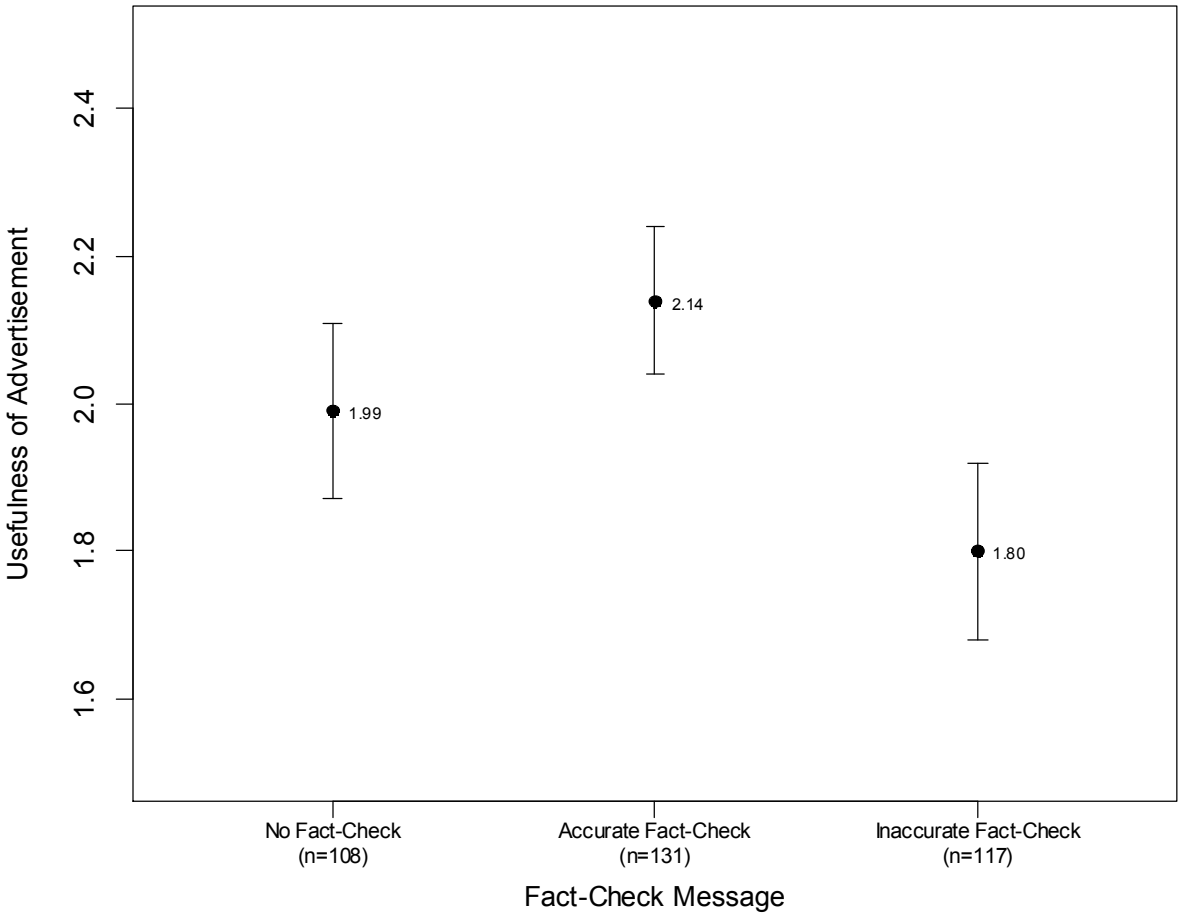
Accuracy of the advertisement is measured on a three-point scale: very accurate (3), somewhat accurate (2), or not accurate at all (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4.2. Assessments of the Tone of Advertisement by Experimental Condition



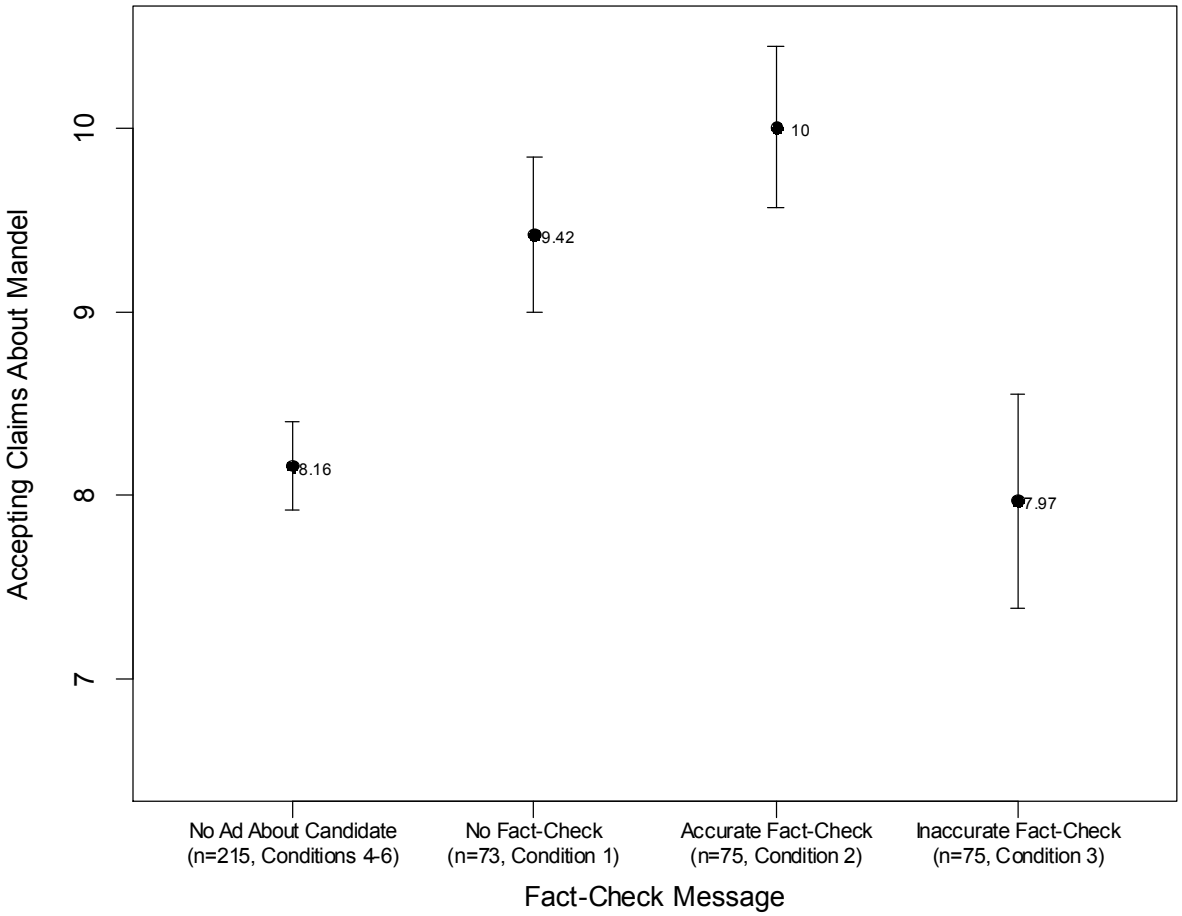
Tone of the advertisement is measured on a three-point scale: not hostile at all (3), somewhat hostile (2), or very hostile (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4.3. Assessments of the Usefulness of Advertisement by Experimental Condition



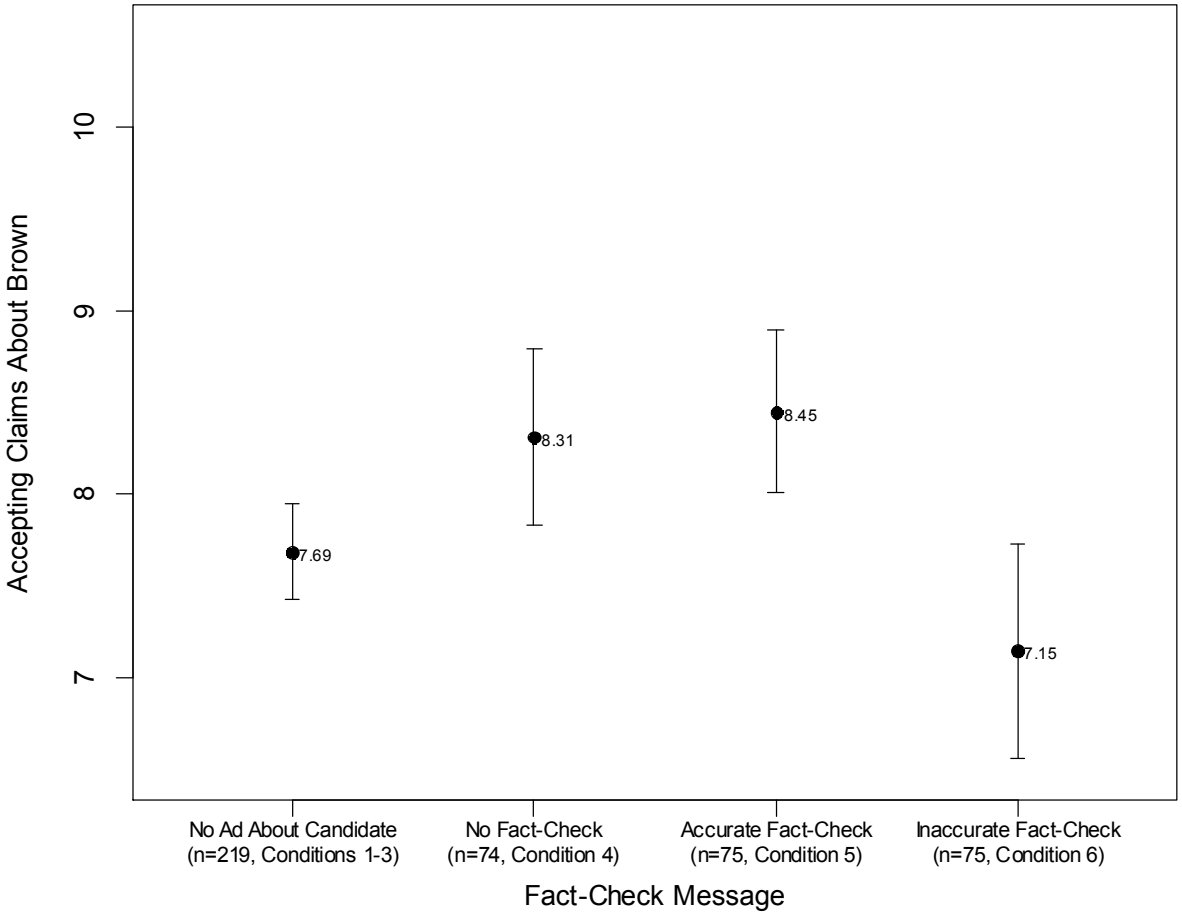
Usefulness of the advertisement is measured on a three-point scale: very useful (3), somewhat useful (2), and not useful at all (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4.4. The Impact of Fact-Checks on Accepting Claims about Mandel



Accepting the claims of the advertisement is measured on a 12-point index ranging from 3 (disagree strongly with each of the 3 claims) to 12 (agree strongly with each of the 3 claims). See text in Appendix B for more information on measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4.5. The Impact of Fact-Checks on Accepting Claims about Brown



Accepting the claims of the advertisement is measured on a 12-point index ranging from 3 (disagree strongly with each of the 3 claims) to 12 (agree strongly with each of the 3 claims). See text in Appendix B for more information on measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Table 4.1. Internet Survey Experiment

Condition	Advertisement	Fact-check Message	N
1	Attack on Josh Mandel	No Fact-Check	76
2	Attack on Josh Mandel	Fact-Check: Accurate Ad	75
3	Attack on Josh Mandel	Fact-Check: Inaccurate Ad	75
4	Attack on Sherrod Brown	No Fact-Check	76
5	Attack on Sherrod Brown	Fact-Check: Accurate Ad	75
6	Attack on Sherrod Brown	Fact-Check: Inaccurate Ad	75

Total N=452

Table 4.2. Comparison of Internet Sample with 2010 Census and 2012 Pew Research Center

	Internet Sample	U.S. Census (2010)[1]
Age		
18-24	12%	13%
25-44	31%	35%
45-64	37%	35%
65 and over	20%	17%
Gender		
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%
Education		
Less than High School	2%	14.4%
High School	22%	28.5%
Some college	35%	21.3%
College Graduate	29%	17.7%
Graduate/Professional Degree	11%	10.4%

	Internet Sample	Pew Research Center (2012)[2]
Party Identification		
Democratic	28%	33%
Independent	42%	38%
Republican	23%	22%
Don't Know	7%	7%
Registered Voter		
Yes	86%	77%
No	14%	23%

	Internet Sample	Pew Research Center (2012)[3]
Ideology		
Extremely Liberal	6%	6%
Liberal	19%	14%
Moderate	34%	35%
Conservative	24%	31%
Very Conservative	11%	9%
Don't Know	6%	5%

[1]U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

[2]Based on survey conducted by Pew Research Center for the People and Press, July 2012 and based on 2508 telephone interviews (1505 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone and 1003 were interviewed on a cell phone.)

[3]Based on survey conducted by Pew Research Center for the People and Press, January 2012 and based on 1502 telephone interviews (902 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone and 600 were interviewed on a cell phone.)

Table 4.3. OLS, Effect of Political Characteristics and Experimental Condition on Overall Assessment of the Advertisement.[1]

	Intolerance to Negativity * Inaccurate Fact-Check	Political Sophistication * Inaccurate Fact-Check
Experimental Conditions		
Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	.53 (.20)**	.53 (.20)***
Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.01 (.84)**	.08 (.35)
Political Characteristics of Respondent		
Political Sophistication	-.28 (.06)**	-.17 (.08)**
Intolerance to Negative Campaigning	-.07 (.04)*	-.14 (.03)***
Ideology	.10 (.05)**	.11 (.05)**
Interest	.25 (.12)**	.22 (.12)*
Interaction		
Political Sophistication * Inaccurate Fact-Check	------	-.38 (.13)***
Intolerance to Negativity * Inaccurate Fact-Check	-.24 (.07)***	------
Constant	6.60 (.58)***	7.25 (.52)***
R-Squared	.24	.25
N	324	324

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10.

[1]Unstandardized OLS coefficients Standard errors in parentheses

Note: The dependent variable is the respondent's overall assessment of the advertisement, which ranges from 3 to 9, with a mean of 6.2 and a standard deviation of 1.7. Accurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the accurate fact-check (conditions 2 and 5), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the inaccurate fact-check (conditions 3 and 6), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Political sophistication ranges from 0 to 4. Intolerance to negative campaigning ranges from 4 (high tolerance) to 16 (low tolerance). Ideology is coded from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Interest is coded from 1 (not much interested) to 3 (very much interested). See Appendix D for exact question wording.

Table 4.4. OLS, Effect of Partisanship and Experimental Condition on Overall Assessment of the Advertisement.[1]

	Assessments of Anti-Mandel Ad	Assessments of Anti-Brown Ad
Experimental Conditions		
Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	.77 (.43)*	.12 (.40)
Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions	-.69 (.65)	-1.13 (.56)
Political Characteristics of Respondent		
Party	-.14 (.56)	.73 (.54)
Political Sophistication	-.36 (.14)***	-.53 (.14)***
Intolerance to Negative Campaigning	-.10 (.07)	-.15 (.06)**
Ideology	-.09 (.12)	.03 (.14)
Interest	.53 (.31)*	.48 (.24)*
Interaction		
Party*Inaccurate Fact-Check	.27 (.82)	-.38 (.77)
Constant	7.04 (1.49)***	8.71 (1.4)***
R-Squared	.28	.36
N	74	81

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10.

[1]Unstandardized OLS coefficients Standard errors in parentheses

Note: The dependent variable is the respondent's overall assessment of the advertisement, which ranges from 3 to 9, with a mean of 6.2 and a standard deviation of 1.7. Accurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the accurate fact-check (conditions 2 and 5), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the inaccurate fact-check (conditions 3 and 6), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Party is coded 1 for Democrats and 0 for Republicans. Political sophistication ranges from 0 to 4. Intolerance to negative campaigning ranges from 4 (high tolerance) to 16 (low tolerance). Ideology is coded from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Interest is coded from 1 (not much interested) to 3 (very much interested). See Appendix D for exact question wording.

Table 4.5. OLS, Effect of Partisanship and Experimental Condition on Acceptance of Claims in Negative Advertisements.[1]

	Accepting Claims About Mandel	Accepting Claims About Brown
Experimental Conditions		
No Fact-Check Conditions	1.44 (.38)***	.68 (.41)*
Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.32 (.39)***	.44 (.42)
Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.00 (1.13)*	.99 (1.50)
Political Characteristics of Respondent		
Party	.32 (.39)	-1.51 (.43)***
Political Sophistication	-.42 (.11)***	-.36 (.12)***
Intolerance to Negative Campaigning	.06 (.05)	-.01 (.06)
Ideology	-.11 (.09)	.04 (.10)
Interest	.39 (.20)**	.37 (.22)*
Interaction		
Party*Inaccurate Fact-Check	1.25 (.71)*	1.29 (.88)
Constant	7.87 (1.05)***	8.89 (1.16)***
R-Squared	.32	.17
N	192	194

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10.

[1]Unstandardized OLS coefficients Standard errors in parentheses

Note: The dependent variable is an index measuring people's acceptance of the claims made about Josh Mandel (or Sherrod Brown). The index for Mandel has a mean of 8.65 with a standard deviation of 8.65. The index for Brown has a mean of 7.83, with a standard deviation of 2.13. Interest is coded from 1 (not much interested) to 3 (very much interested). Party is coded as 1 for Democrats and 0 for Republicans. Political sophistication ranges from 0 to 4. Intolerance to negative campaigning ranges from 4 (high tolerance) to 16 (low tolerance). See Appendix D for exact question wording.

Table 4.6. OLS, Effect of Political Characteristics and Experimental Condition on Acceptance of Claims in Negative Advertisements.[1]

	Accepting Claims About Mandel	Accepting Claims About Brown	Accepting Claims About Mandel	Accepting Claims About Brown
Experimental Conditions				
No Fact-Check Conditions	1.22 (.27)***	.67 (.30)**	1.20 (.28)***	.68 (.30)**
Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	1.94 (.28)***	.53 (.29)*	1.94 (.28)***	.54 (.29)*
Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.01 (1.34)	3.14 (1.27)**	-.06 (.52)	-.46 (.57)
Political Characteristics of Respondent				
Political Sophistication	-.36 (.08)***	-.32 (.08)***	-.34 (.08)***	-.31 (.09)*
Intolerance to Negative Campaigning	.05 (.04)	.005 (.05)	.02 (.04)	-.04 (.04)
Ideology	-.20 (.06)***	.29 (.06)***	-.20 (.06)***	.29 (.06)***
Interest	.39 (.15)**	.29 (.16)*	.38 (.15)**	.30 (.16)*
Interaction				
Political Sophistication * Inaccurate Fact-Check	.39 (.15)**	-.31 (.11)***	------	------
Intolerance to Negativity * Inaccurate Fact-Check	------	------	-.10 (.19)	.01 (.22)
Constant	8.45 (.66)***	6.64 (.67)***	8.73 (.64)***	7.10 (.66)
R-Squared	.24	.14	.23	.12
N	365	369	365	369

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10.

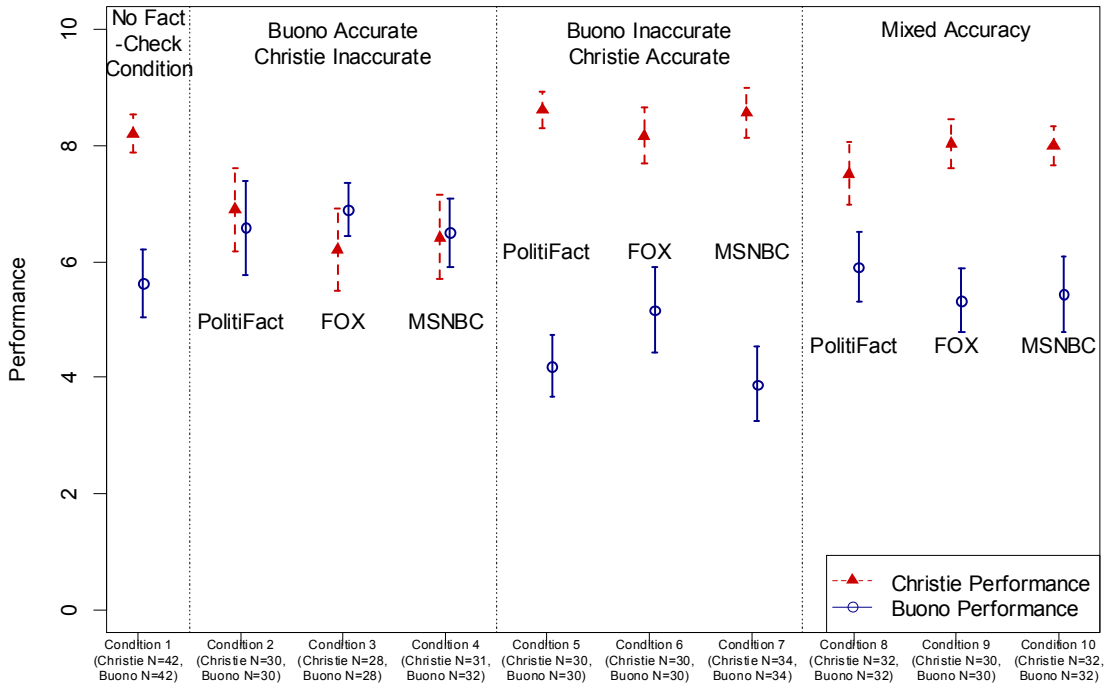
[1]Unstandardized OLS coefficients Standard errors in parentheses

Note: The dependent variable is the respondent's overall assessment of the advertisement, which ranges from 3 to 9, with a mean of 6.2 and a standard deviation of 1.7. Accurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the accurate fact-check (conditions 2 and 5), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Inaccurate Fact-Check Conditions is coded 1 for respondents who read the inaccurate fact-check (conditions 3 and 6), 0 for respondents in other conditions. Political sophistication ranges from 0 to 4. Intolerance to negative campaigning ranges from 4 (high tolerance) to 16 (low tolerance). Ideology is coded from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Interest is coded from 1 (not much interested) to 3 (very much interested). See Appendix D for exact question wording.

APPENDIX E

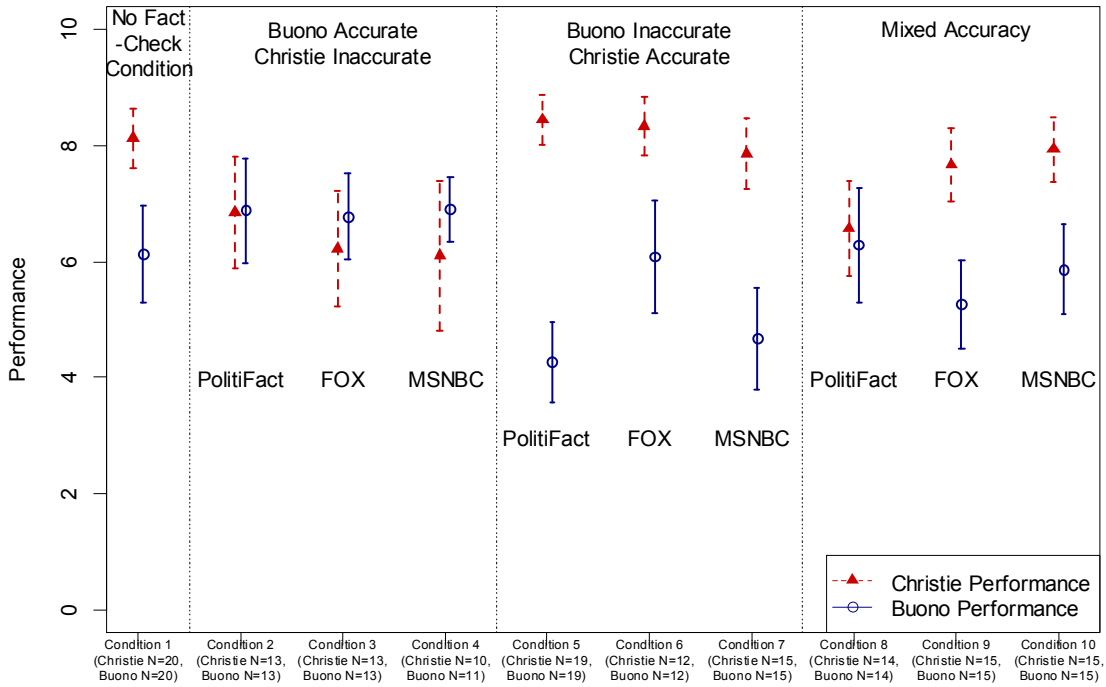
CHAPTER 5: FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 5.1. Respondent's Assessment of the Candidate's Debate Performance by Experimental Condition



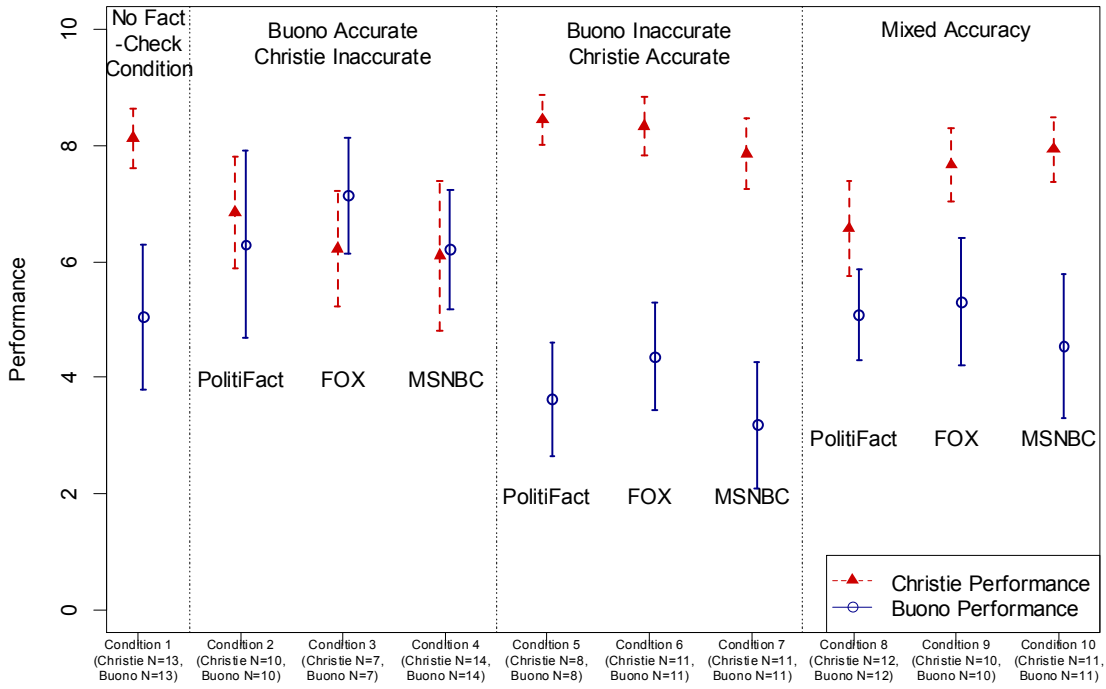
Debate performance is measured on a ten-point scale. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement.
Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.1a. Democratic Respondent's Assessment of the Candidate's Debate Performance by Experimental Condition



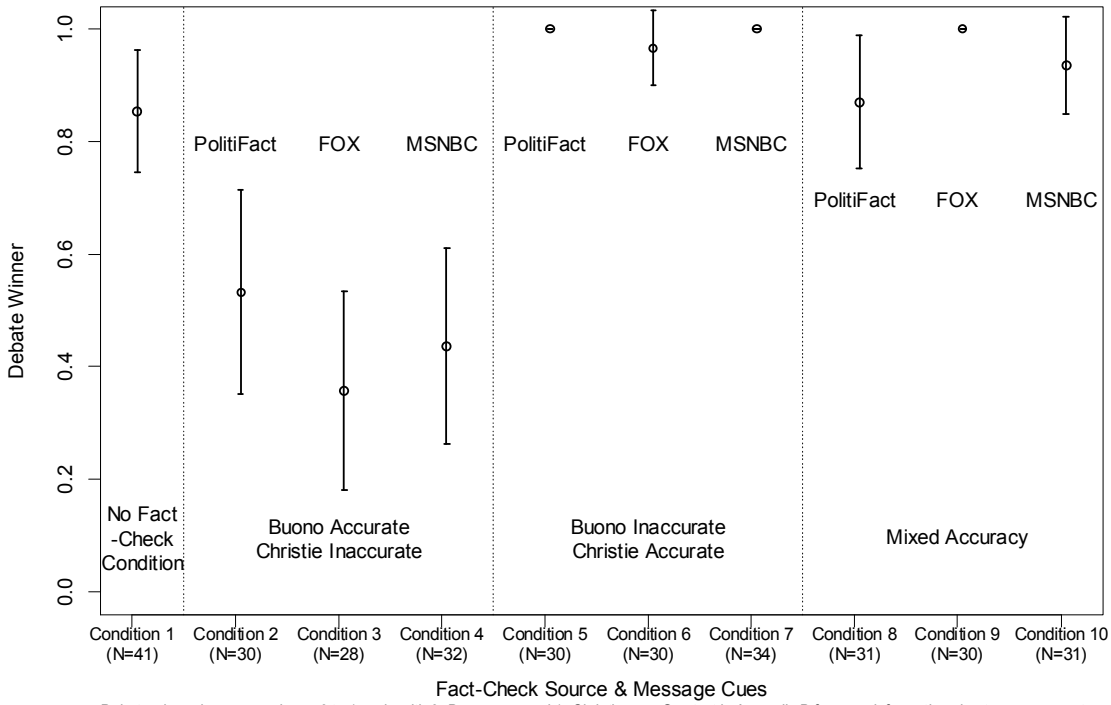
Debate performance is measured on a ten-point scale. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement.
Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.1b. Republican Respondent's Assessment of the Candidate's Debate Performance by Experimental Condition



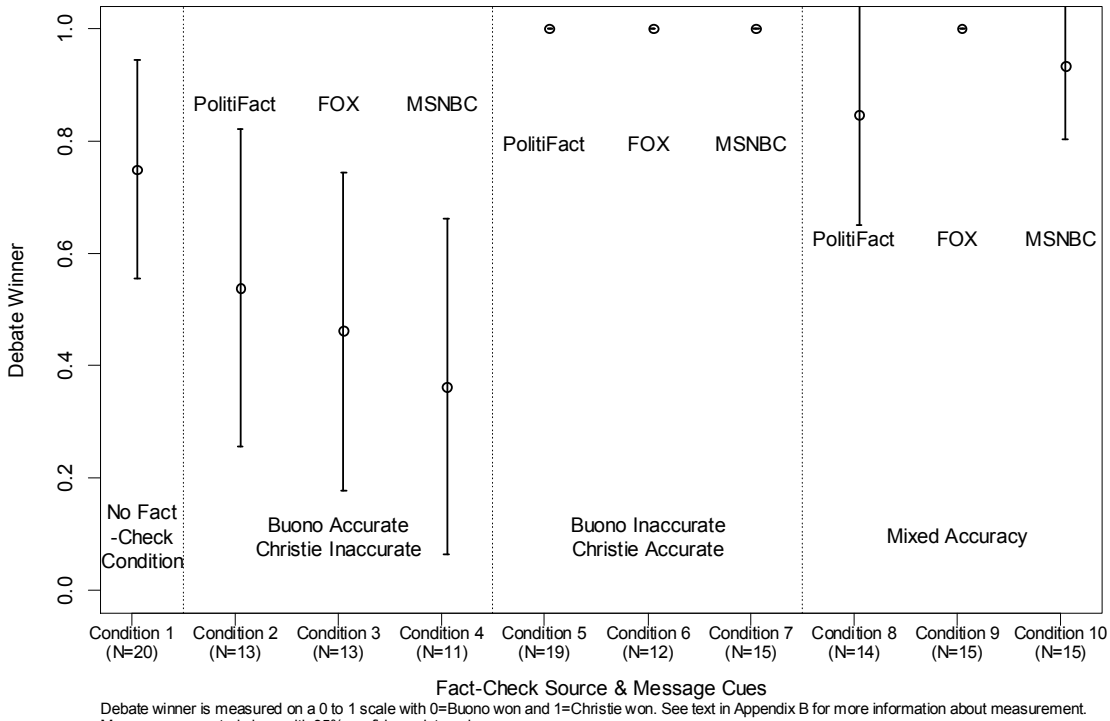
Debate performance is measured on a ten-point scale. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement.
Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.2. Respondent's Assessment of the Debate Winner by Experimental Condition



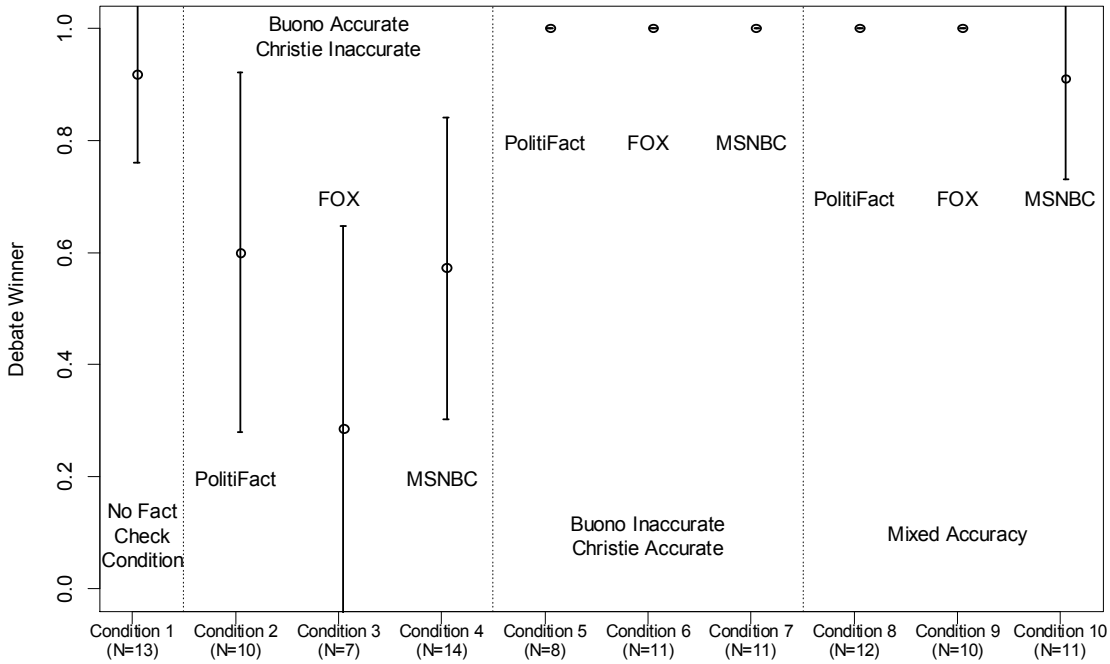
Debate winner is measured on a 0 to 1 scale with 0=Buono won and 1=Christie won. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.2a. Democratic Respondent's Assessment of the Debate Winner by Experimental Condition



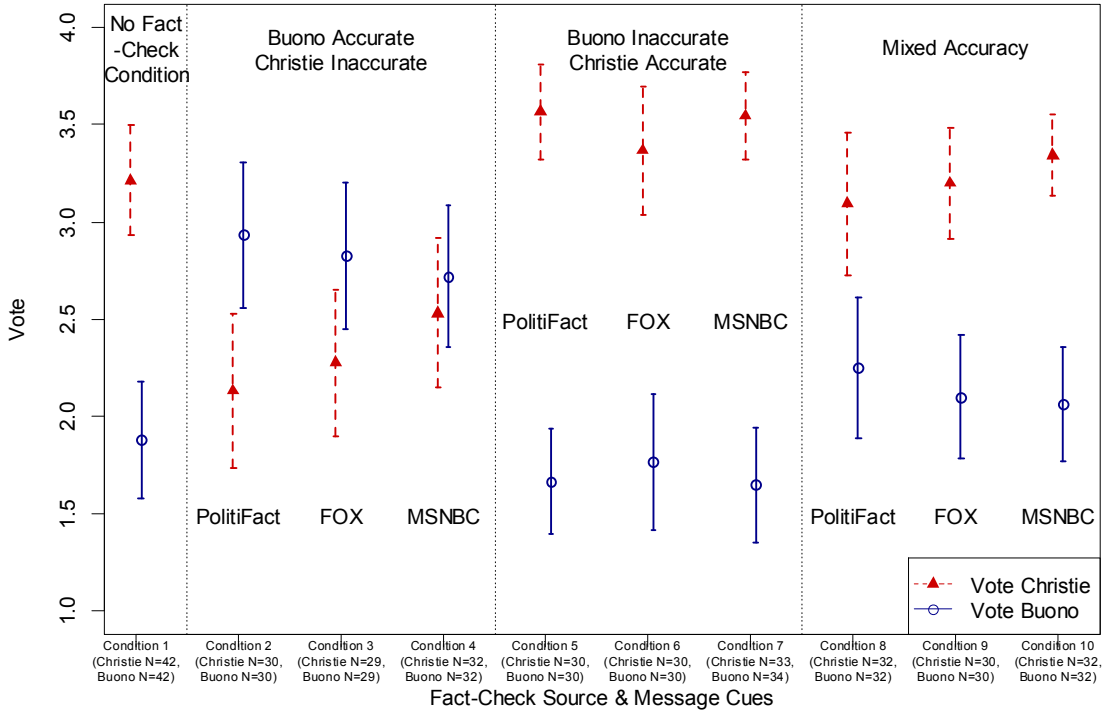
Debate winner is measured on a 0 to 1 scale with 0=Buono won and 1=Christie won. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.2b. Republican Respondent's Assessment of the Debate Winner by Experimental Condition



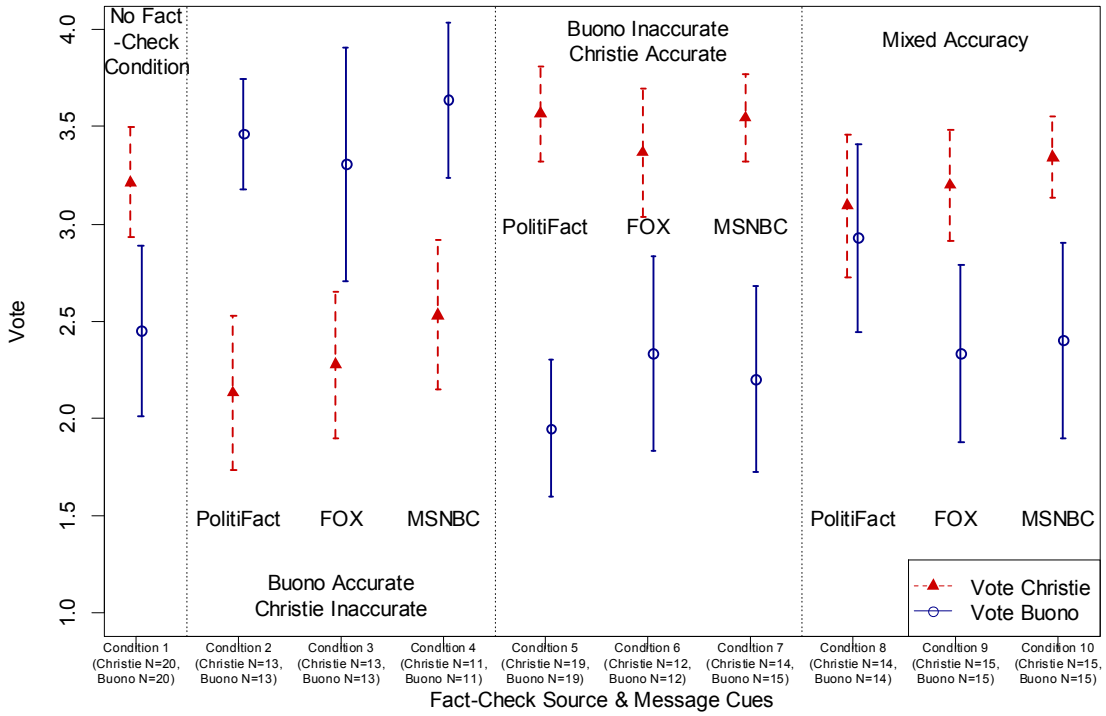
Debate winner is measured on a 0 to 1 scale with 0=Buono won and 1=Christie won. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.3. Respondent's Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate by Fact-Check Accuracy Cue



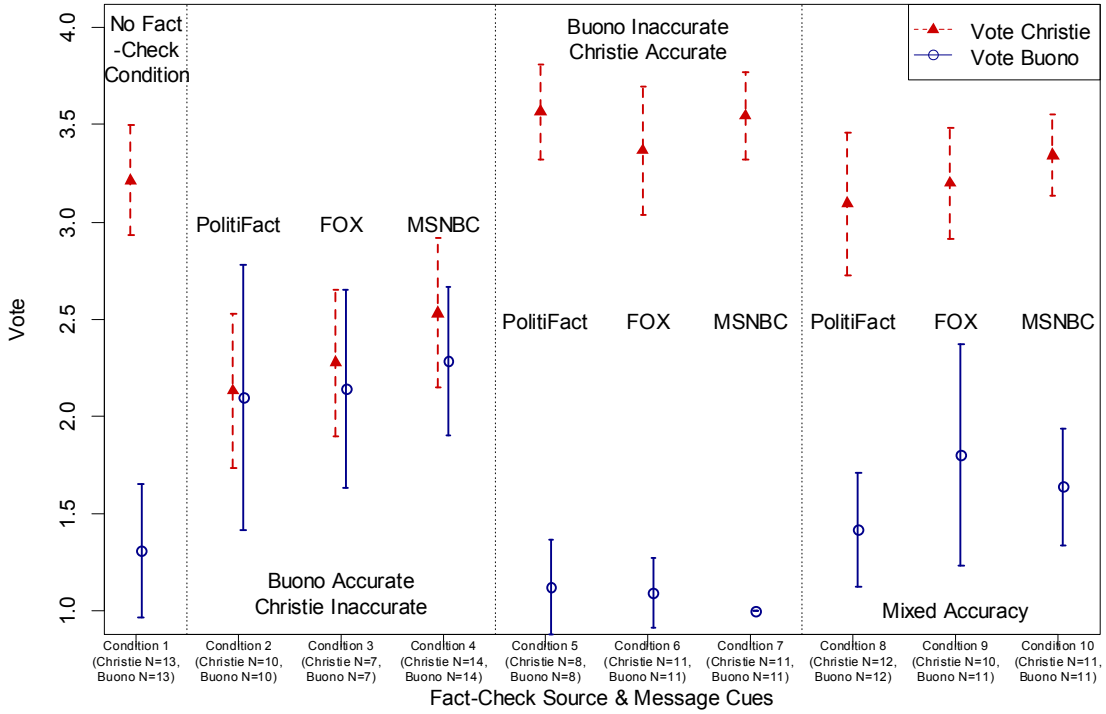
Likelihood of voting is measured on a four-point scale: very likely (4), somewhat likely (3), not very likely (2), not at all likely (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.3a. Democratic Respondent's Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate by Fact-Check Accuracy Cue



Likelihood of voting is measured on a four-point scale: very likely (4), somewhat likely (3), not very likely (2), not at all likely (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.3b. Republican Respondent's Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate by Fact-Check Accuracy Cue



Likelihood of voting is measured on a four-point scale: very likely (4), somewhat likely (3), not very likely (2), not at all likely (1). See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.4. Probability that Respondent will Vote for the Candidate

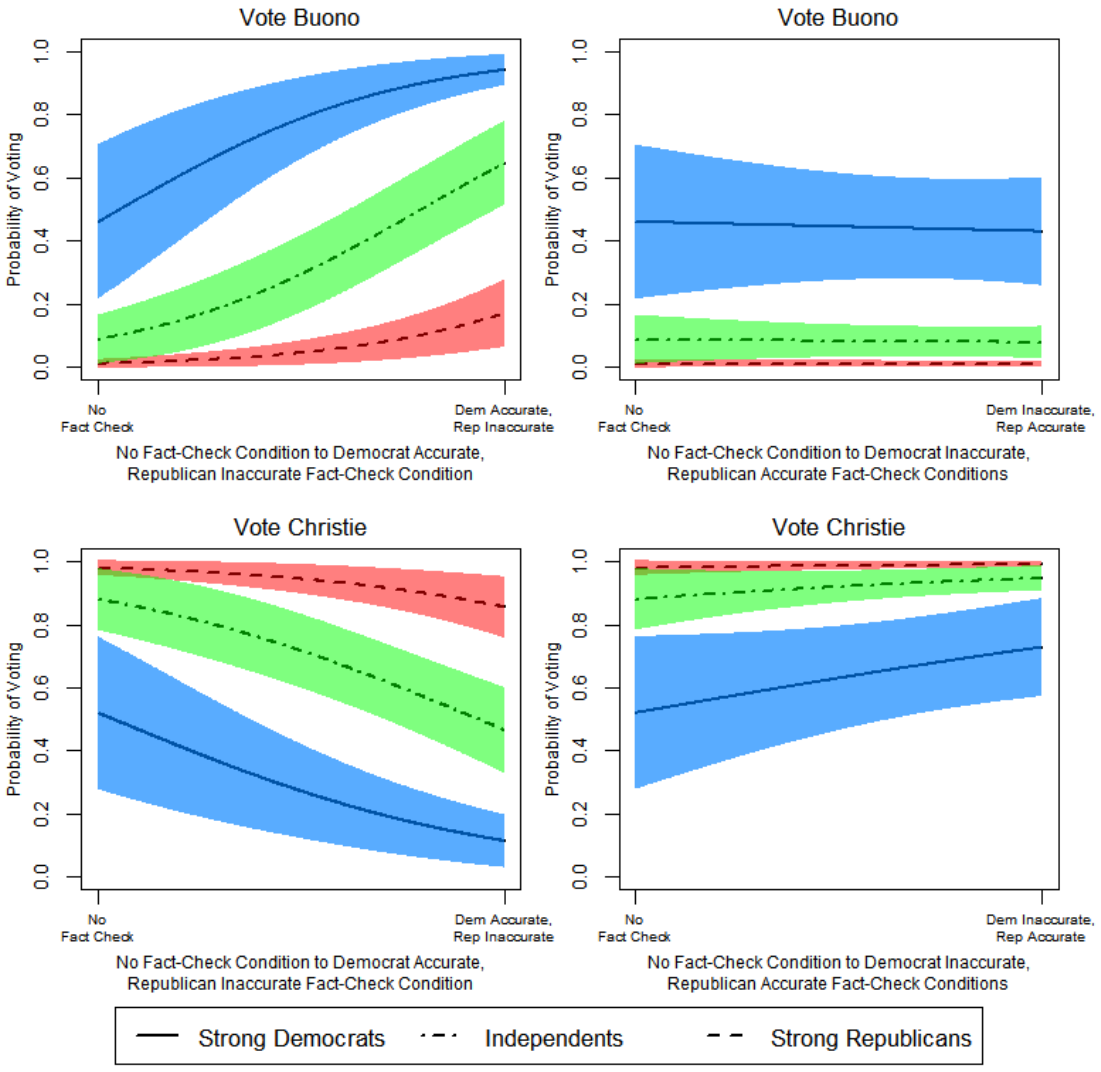


Table 5.1. Comparison of Student Sample with 2010 Census and 2012 ANES

	Student Sample	2010 Census
Age		
18-24	90%	13%
25-44	9.7%	35%
45-64	.003%	35%
65 and over	0.00%	17%
Gender		
Male	64.37%	49%
Female	35.6%	51%
Major		
Humanities	8%	--
Social Science	77.9%	--
Natural Science	2.2%	--
Formal Science	.006%	--
Professional & Applied Sciences	10.6%	--
Year In School		
Freshman	19.3%	--
Sophomore	18.4%	--
Junior	29.3%	--
Senior	32.4%	--
	Student Sample	**2012 ANES**
Political Knowledge		
Low	2.8%	14.3%
Medium	16.5%	33.6%
High	80.7%	52.1%
Political Interest		
Not Much Interested	16.5%	15.2%
Somewhat Interested	47.7%	41.6%
Very Much Interested	35.8%	43.2%
Party Identification		
Democratic	46.08%	52.7%
Independent	16.9%	13.4%
Republican	33.54%	33.9%
Don't Know	3.44%	--
Ideology		
Extremely Liberal	6.56%	3.7%
Liberal	19.37%	12.0%
Somewhat Liberal	16.56%	12.1%
Moderate	24.37%	34.5%
Somewhat Conservative	17.18%	14.9%
Conservative	8.12%	18.9%
Very Conservative	4.37%	3.9%
Don't Know	3.43%	14.3%

Table 5.2. Debate Experimental Conditions

Condition	Fact-Check Source	Fact-Check Message	N
1	Control Group	No Fact-Check	42
2	PolitiFact	Democrat Accurate, Republican Inaccurate	30
3	FOX	Democrat Accurate, Republican Inaccurate	29
4	MSNBC	Democrat Accurate, Republican Inaccurate	32
5	PolitiFact	Democrat Inaccurate, Republican Accurate	30
6	FOX	Democrat Inaccurate, Republican Accurate	30
7	MSNBC	Democrat Inaccurate, Republican Accurate	34
8	PolitiFact	Mixed Accuracy	32
9	FOX	Mixed Accuracy	30
10	MSNBC	Mixed Accuracy	32

Total N=321

Table 5.3.OLS, Effect of Partisanship and the Fact-Check on Assessments of the Candidates' Debate Performance

	Buono	Christie
Buono Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	1.13 (.32)***	-1.73 (.27)***
Christie Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	-1.17 (.32)***	0.22 (.27)
Mixed Accuracy Fact-Check Conditions	0.04 (.33)	-0.43 (.27)
Party Identification	-0.22 (.05)***	0.13 (.04)***
Male	-0.54 (.21)***	0.19 (.18)
Age	0.01 (.03)	-.005 (.02)
Intercept	6.55 (.77)***	7.7 (.65)***
N	320	319
R^2	.25	.24

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10, Standard errors in parentheses

Table 5.4. GLM, Effect of Partisanship and the Fact-Check on Assessments of the Debate Winner

Buono Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	-2.31 (.52)***
Christie Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.64 (1.1)**
Mixed Accuracy Fact-Check Conditions	0.63 (.63)
Party Identification	0.19 (.09)**
Male	0.87 (.37)**
Age	-0.001 (.05)
Intercept	0.79 (1.3)
N	317
AIC	216

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10, Standard errors in parentheses

Table 5.5. GLM, Effect of Partisanship and the Fact-Check on Respondents' Vote Choice

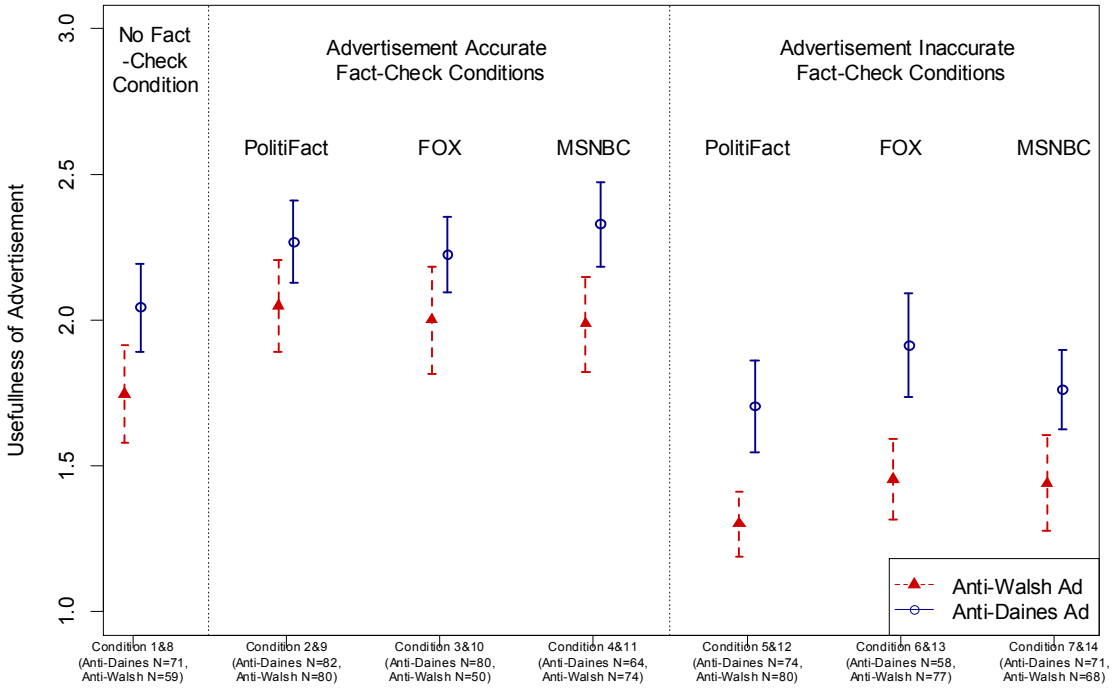
	Buono	Christie
Buono Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	2.95 (.55) ***	-2.13 (.50)***
Christie Accurate Fact-Check Conditions	-0.12 (.51)	0.90 (.53)*
Mixed Accuracy Fact-Check Conditions	0.69 (.51)	0.28 (.51)
Party Identification	-0.72 (.10)***	0.63 (.10)***
Male	-1.01 (.32)***	0.63 (.31)*
Age	0.003 (.04)	-0.02 (.04)
Intercept	1.66 (1.11)	-0.83 (1.13)
N	321	320
AIC	291	273

Note: ***p<.01, **p<.05, * p<.10, Standard errors in parentheses

APPENDIX F

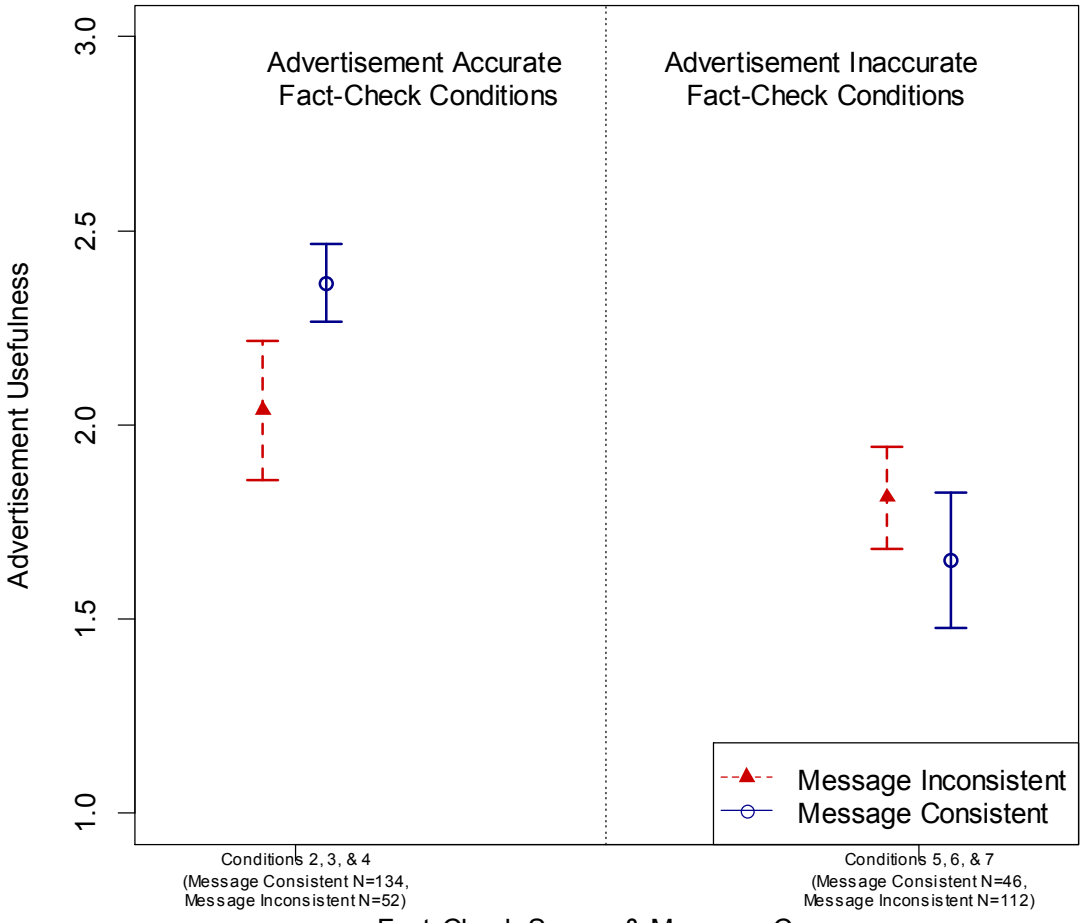
CHAPTER 6: FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 6.1. Respondent's Assessment of the Ads Usefulness by Advertisement Viewed and Fact-Check



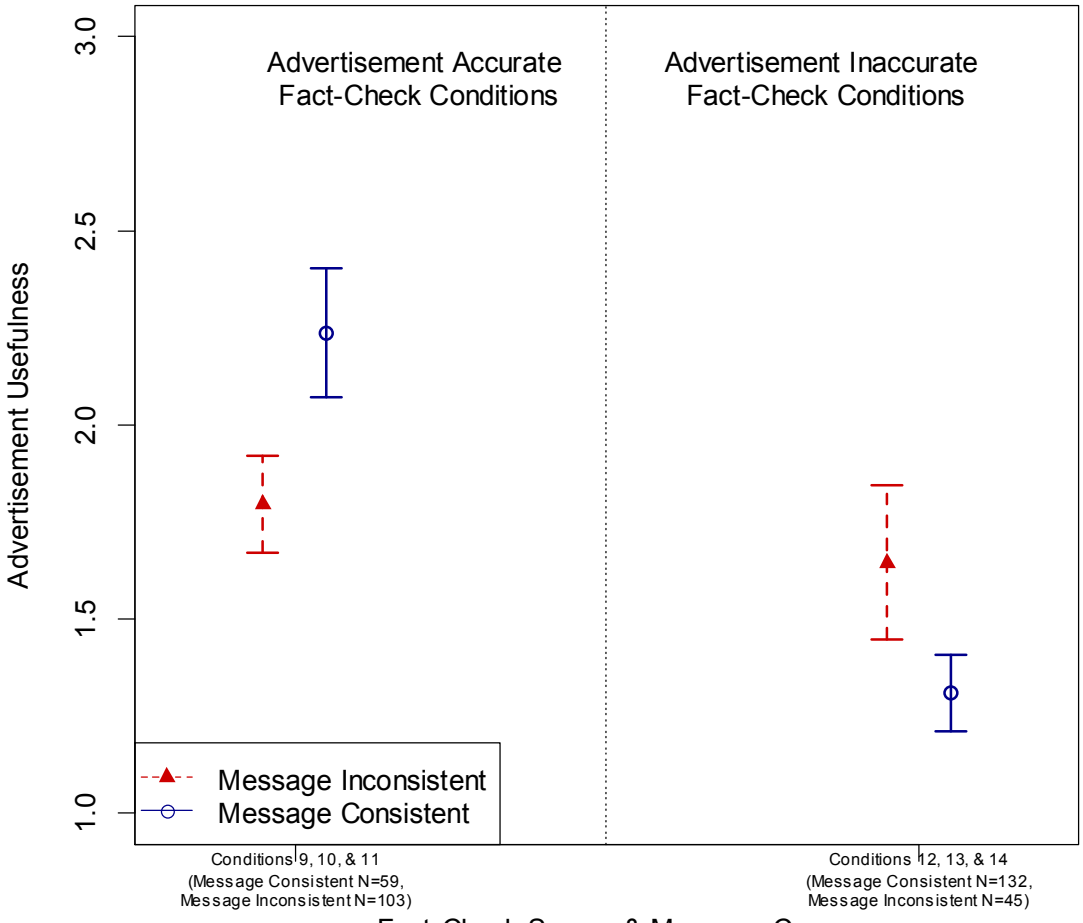
Usefullness is measured on a three point scale where 1 is not useful at all and 3 is very useful. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.1a. Respondent's Assessment of the Anti-Daines Ads Usefulness by Fact-Check Message and Message Consistency



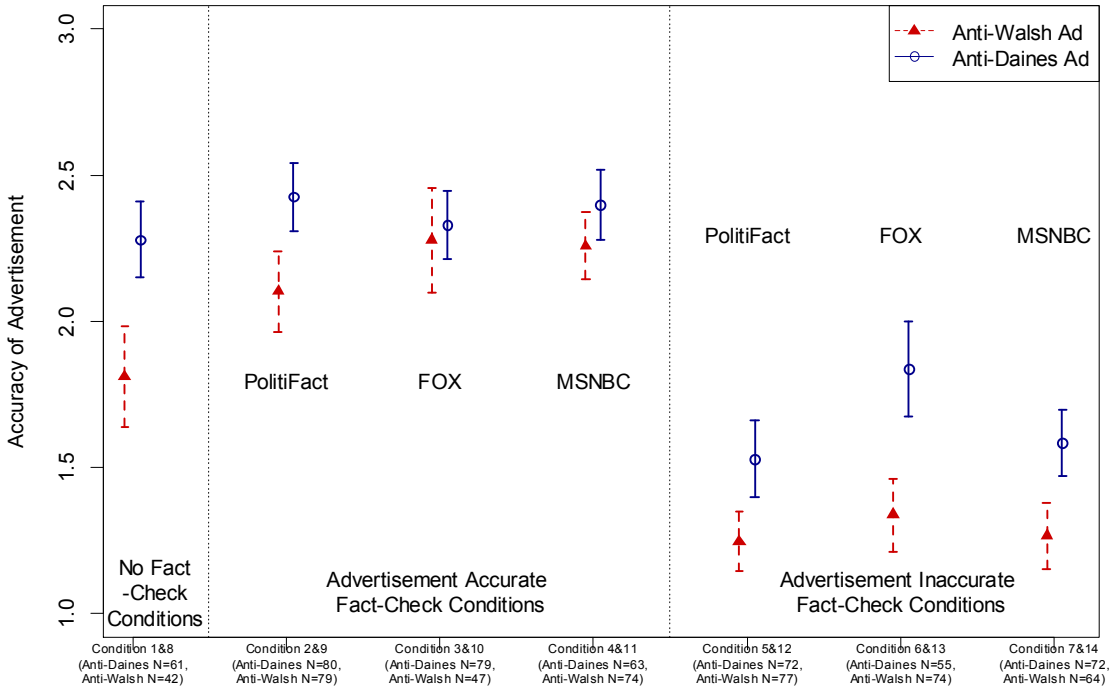
Usefulness is measured on a three point scale where 1 is not useful at all and 3 is very useful. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.1b. Respondent's Assessment of the Anti-Walsh Ads Usefulness by Fact-Check Message and Message Consistency



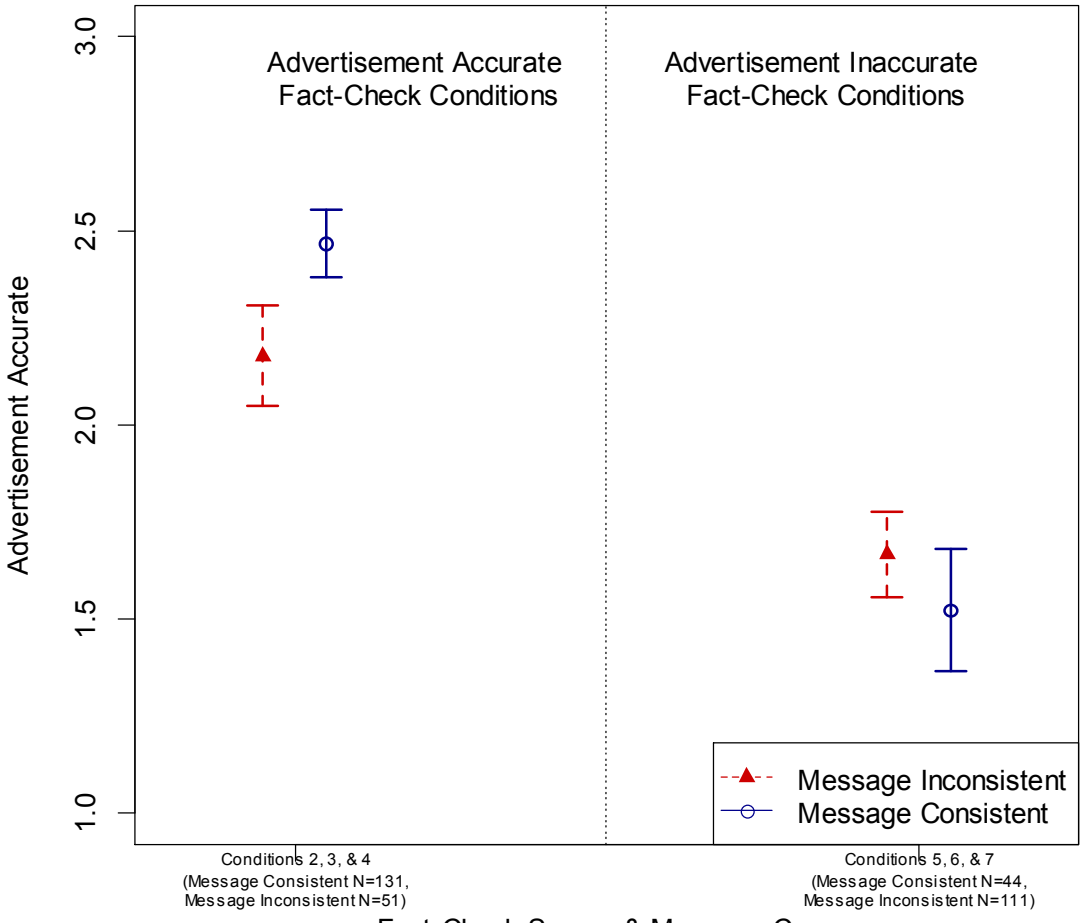
Usefulness is measured on a three point scale where 1 is not useful at all and 3 is very useful. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.2. Respondent's Assessment of the Ads Accuracy by Advertisement Viewed and Fact-Check



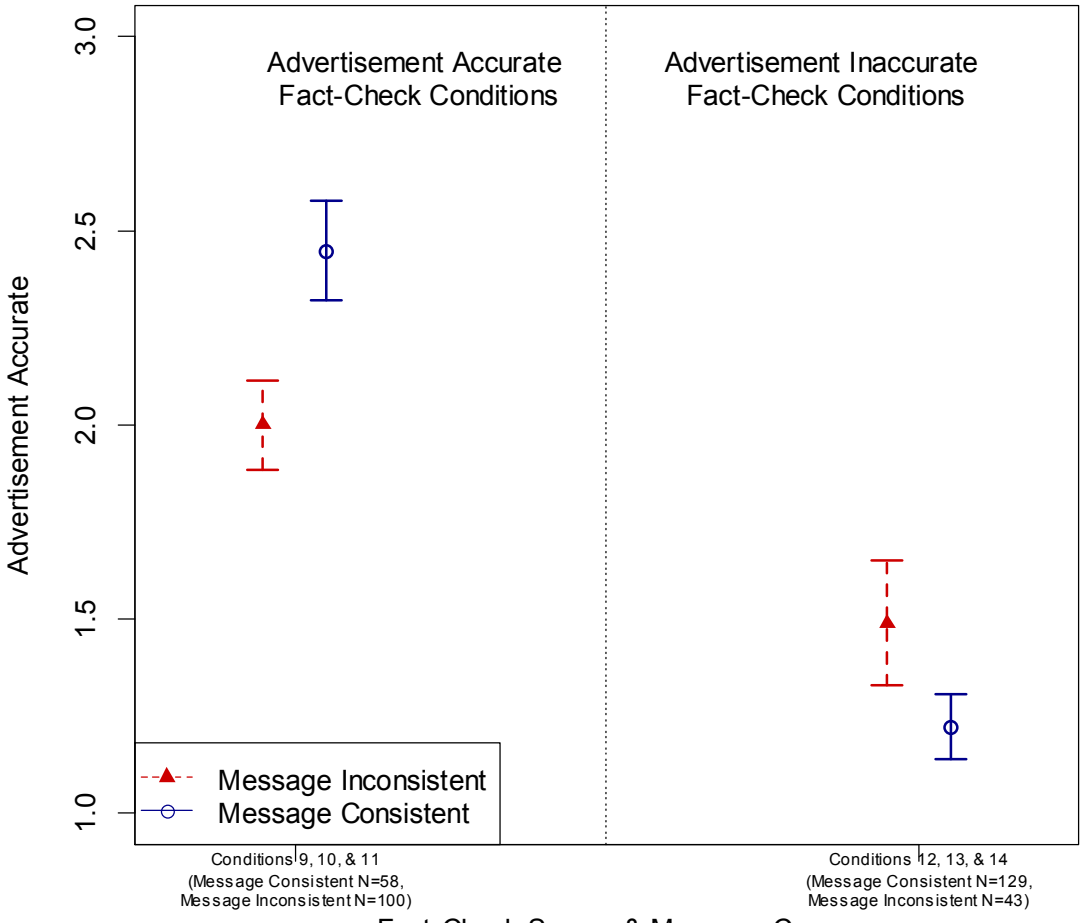
Accuracy is measured on a 3 point scale where 1 is not accurate at all and 3 is very accurate. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.2a. Respondent's Assessment of the Anti-Daines Ads Accuracy by Fact-Check Message and Message Consistency



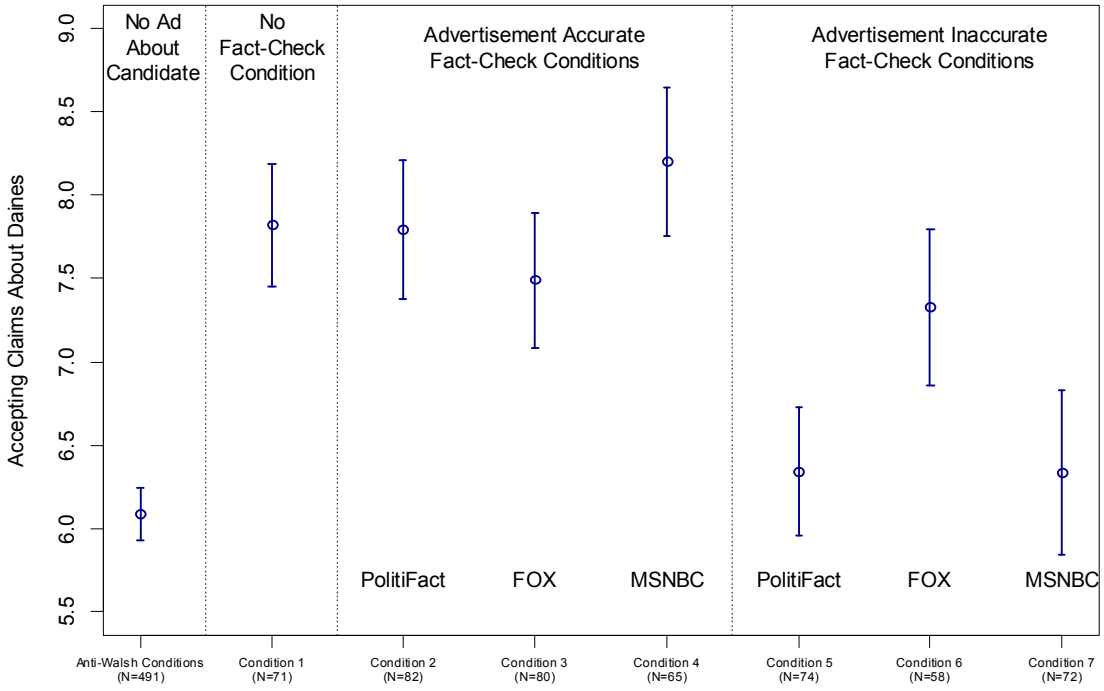
Accuracy is measured on a three point scale where 1 is not accurate at all and 3 is very accurate. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.2b. Respondent's Assessment of the Anti-Walsh Ads Accuracy by Fact-Check Message and Message Consistency



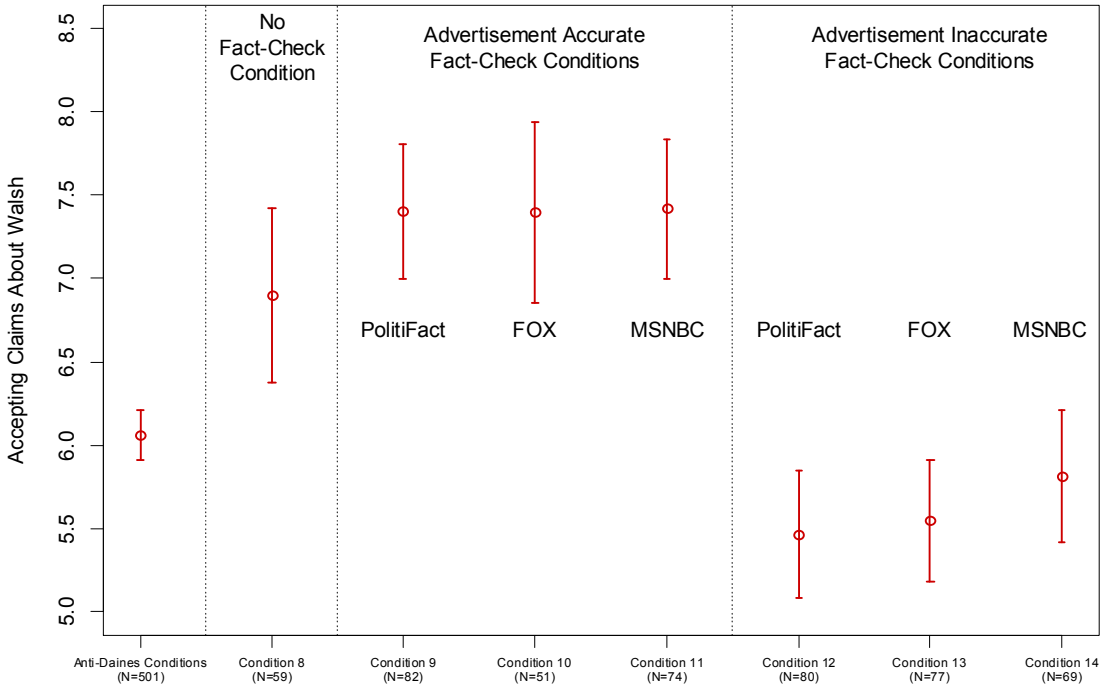
Accuracy is measured on a three point scale where 1 is not accurate at all and 3 is very accurate. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.3a. The Impact of Fact-Checks on Accepting Claims About Steve Daines



Daines is responsible for the Federal Debt/Outsourcing/Unemployment measured on a ten point scale where 3 is strongly disagree and 12 is strongly agree. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6.3b. The Impact of Fact-Checks on Accepting Claims About John Walsh



Walsh is responsible for the Federal Debt/Outsourcing/Unemployment measured on a ten point scale where 3 is strongly disagree and 12 is strongly agree. See text in Appendix B for more information about measurement. Means are presented along with 95% confidence intervals.

Table 6.1. Consistent and Inconsistent Fact-Check Message Cues

Consistent Messages	Inconsistent Messages
If Republican, fact-check states that the attack by Republican Steve Daines on Democrat John Walsh is True.	If Republican, fact-check states that the attack by Republican Steve Daines on Democrat John Walsh is False.
If Republican, fact-check states that the attack by Democrat John Walsh on Republican Steve Daines is False.	If Republican, fact-check states that the attack by Democrat John Walsh on Republican Steve Daines is True.
If Democratic, fact-check states that the attack by Democrat John Walsh on Republican Steve Daines is True.	If Democratic, fact-check states that the attack by Democrat John Walsh on Republican Steve Daines is False.
If Democratic, fact-check states that the attack by Republican Steve Daines on Democrat John Walsh is False.	If Democratic, fact-check states that the attack by Republican Steve Daines on Democrat John Walsh is True.

Table 6.2. Comparison of MTurk Sample with 2010 Census and 2012 ANES

	Mechanical Turk	2010 Census
Age		
18-24	16.5%	13%
25-44	65.5%	35%
45-64	15.3%	35%
65 and over	1.7%	17%
Gender		
Male	59.1%	49%
Female	40.8%	51%
Education		
Less than High School	.006%	14.4%
High School	11%	28.5%
Some college	30.3%	21.3%
Business/vocational School	5.7%	7.6%
College Graduate	40.1%	17.7%
Graduate/Professional Degree	12.1%	10.4%
	Mechanical Turk	**2012 ANES**
Political Knowledge		
Low	7.7%	14.3%
Medium	27.7%	33.6%
High	64.6%	52.1%
Political Interest		
Not Much Interested	16.3%	15.2%
Somewhat Interested	49.3%	41.6%
Very Much Interested	34.2%	43.2%
Party Identification		
Democratic	54%	52.7%
Independent	21.9%	13.4%
Republican	23%	33.9%
Don't Know	1.1%	--
Ideology		
Extremely Liberal	12%	3.7%
Liberal	22.2%	12.0%
Somewhat Liberal	18%	12.1%
Moderate	18.9%	34.5%
Somewhat Conservative	12.7%	14.9%
Conservative	9.9%	18.9%
Very Conservative	5%	3.9%
Don't Know	1.4%	14.3%
Registered Voter		
Yes	91%	85.6%
No	8.7%	12.9%
Don't Know	0.003%	1.4%

Table 6.3. Mechanical Turk Experimental Conditions

Condition	Advertisement	Fact-check	N
1	Attack on Steve Daines	No Fact-check	83
2	Attack on Steve Daines	PolitiFact Accurate	86
3	Attack on Steve Daines	FOX Accurate	89
4	Attack on Steve Daines	MSNBC Accurate	71
5	Attack on Steve Daines	PolitiFact Inaccurate	85
6	Attack on Steve Daines	FOX Inaccurate	62
7	Attack on Steve Daines	MSNBC Inaccurate	82
8	Attack on John Walsh	No Fact-check	63
9	Attack on John Walsh	PolitiFact Accurate	88
10	Attack on John Walsh	FOX Accurate	62
11	Attack on John Walsh	MSNBC Accurate	79
12	Attack on John Walsh	PolitiFact Inaccurate	86
13	Attack on John Walsh	FOX Inaccurate	82
14	Attack on John Walsh	MSNBC Inaccurate	80

Total N=1,098

Table 6.4. Summary of Main Effects by Advertisement Viewed

	Anti-Daines	Anti-Walsh
Useful	• Source Conflict Effect • Nonpartisan Source Effect • Consistent Message Effect	• Accurate Message Effect • Inaccurate Message Effect • Nonpartisan Source Effect • Consistent Message Effect
Accurate	• Accurate Message Effect • Inaccurate Message Effect • Negative Message Effect • Nonpartisan Source Effect • Consistent Message Effect	• Accurate Message Effect • Inaccurate Message Effect • Consistent Message Effect
Accepting Claims	• Source Conflict Effect • Negative Message Effect (2/3)	• Accurate Message Effect • Inaccurate Message Effect • Negative Message Effect