

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE NEGATIVE POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON VOTING  
BEHAVIOR IN THE 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE ROLES OF  
PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY

by

KRISTEN ELLEN CAMERON

(Under the Direction of Spencer F. Tinkham and Jeff Springston)

ABSTRACT

Through an examination of two online negative political advertisements with manipulated sponsorship (*Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Rebuilding America Now, Priorities USA Action*) and three separate controls (*Republican Advertisement without Sponsor, Democrat Advertisement without Sponsor, and No Advertisement/No Sponsor*), this study considers the effects that the 2010 Supreme Court Case, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* has had on the perception of online negative political advertisement sponsorship. Results of this study on the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election reinforce earlier findings regarding millennials in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election (Cameron & Tinkham, 2015) in which the trustworthiness dimension of sponsor credibility acts as a mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. Findings from the current study on the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election show that Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility acts as a full mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. In addition, this study also investigated the role of sponsor authenticity (*positive authenticity* and *negative authenticity*). Results indicate that Hillary Clinton's positive dimension of

authenticity also acts as a full mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsorship and relative vote preference.

INDEX WORDS: Online Negative Political Advertising, Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, Stand by Your Ad Provision, PROCESS, Mediation Analysis, 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

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## DEDICATION

To my parents, Bruce and Karen Cameron and also to my brother, Brent Cameron, for their never-ending support and love.

Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for your constant support and love throughout the process of completing this goal and so many others. Thank you for encouraging me to maintain a healthy work-life balance, and for modeling what that looks like. Thank you for instilling in me the knowledge that nothing is as important as time spent with loved ones, especially when it is time spent with loved ones on a beach or by the water. Thank you for the midnight phone chats when I needed a sounding board, an editor, a laugh, advice, love, encouragement, and most likely all of the above. Thank you for being who you are and for loving me so fiercely. I love you and am so proud to be your daughter and sister.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The strategies used by Presidential Candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election could not have differed more from one another. As the former Secretary of State under President Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign focused on her perceived *expertise* and *trustworthiness*-dimensions that (along with attractiveness) are considered to encompass source credibility. Conversely, Donald Trump's stream-of-consciousness-style tweets and emphasis that his candidacy was self-funded (rather than influenced by Washington, D.C. "insiders") contributed to the perception that his campaign was focused on his perceived *authenticity*.

Each deeply divisive on their own, Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's successful general election nominations and pre-election polls pointed to a deep chasm in the nation's ideologies. Over 80 percent of voters reported that the election cycle had left them disgusted (Martin, Sussman, & Thee-Brenan, 2016) despite legislation intended to curb the negative trend, such as the federal Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) "Stand By Your Ad" provision, intended to regulate issue advocacy in the form of "electioneering communications."

The Federal Election Commission- an independent regulatory agency whose purpose is to enforce campaign finance law in U.S. federal elections- defines an electioneering communication as "any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication that refers to a clearly identified federal candidate, is publicly distributed within 30 days of a

primary or 60 days of a general election, and is targeted to the relevant electorate” (Federal Election Commission). While intended to discourage negative political advertising by forcing sponsors to associate themselves and their candidates with a negative message, recent studies indicate that “Stand By Your Ad” legislation does not, in fact, serve its purpose (Kim, Tinkham, & Laricsy, 2007; Cameron & Tinkham, 2015).

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election was noteworthy for more than just negativity, however. The election was only the second U.S. Presidential Election to take place following the landmark Supreme Court Case, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. In the 5-4 decision announced January 21, 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the First Amendment protecting freedom of speech prohibits the government from restricting the independent expenditures by nonprofit organizations, for-profit corporations, and labor unions. Together with several previous Supreme Court rulings, the decision meant an end to the strict campaign finance limitations that corporations and unions had previously been held to.

The ruling led to the creation of hundreds of independent political action committees called super-PACs, which were permitted to raise unlimited sums of money (often called “dark money” due to the lack of information surrounding its origin) from corporations, unions, and individuals; but not permitted to contribute or coordinate directly with political parties or candidates. Since the *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling, super-PACs have become a key contributor at every political campaign level- from elections for local positions on the school board of education to the highest electable office in the United States- the Presidency.

### *Purpose of the Study*

This study examines the various sponsorship and messaging strategies used by both the Clinton and Trump campaigns as well as their respective super-PACs in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Through an analysis of online negative political advertisement treatments, including: *Hillary Clinton sponsorship, Donald Trump sponsorship, Priorities USA Action sponsorship, Rebuilding America Now sponsorship, Democrat ad without sponsor, Republican ad without sponsor, and a control without ad or sponsor*, this study investigates the role of perceived versus actual sponsorship on vote intention and relative vote preference. This study also investigates additional variables, including: *Hillary Clinton Expertise, Donald Trump Expertise, Sponsor Expertise, Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness, Donald Trump Trustworthiness, Sponsor Trustworthiness, Donald Trump positive authenticity, Donald Trump Negative Authenticity, Hillary Clinton positive authenticity, and Hillary Clinton Negative Authenticity* as potential covariates and mediators in the relationship between sponsorship and final vote preference.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *The 2016 United States Presidential Election*

Historic. Polarizing. Shocking. These adjectives all seem to fall short when describing the events culminating in the election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States.

In one of the most unexpected upsets in presidential campaign history, Donald Trump “put together the winning coalition of non-college educated, working class, and non-urban voters [who] turned out in record numbers [to vote for him]” (Denton, p. 1, 2017). While Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, she failed to garner the votes necessary to win the Electoral College and with it the election. In only four previous elections out of 58 has the Electoral College vote failed to correspond with that of the popular vote (1824, 1876, 1888, and 2000). With the election of Donald Trump, 2016 became the fifth election to have different popular and Electoral College vote outcomes. Astoundingly small, a grand total of 77,759 votes in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan determined the highest elected political office in the United States of America (56 Interesting Facts About the 2016 Election).

A divisive candidate in every sense of the word, critics of Donald Trump were quick to caution that his election was the result of the hate, racism, xenophobia, and homophobia of his supporters. However, data collected both days before the election and from Exit Polls shows that it was the *issues* that determined the outcome of the election

more than anything. The majority of voters felt that, when it came to major issues, Hillary Clinton would continue President Obama's policies and expected Donald Trump would change them (Coombs, 2016). For some then, a vote for Trump could be interpreted more as a rejection of the policies of President Obama than as an affirmation of Donald Trump. A Rasmussen poll reported on November 9, 2016 also found that 62 percent of voters indicated the candidate's specific policy proposals were more important than their character. These same sentiments were echoed in data reported in the Exit Polls among Trump voters:

- 85 percent of Trump supporters viewed the fight against ISIS as going "very badly;"
- 56 percent of Trump supporters reported that the Supreme Court; nominations were "the most important factor" in the election;
- 64 percent thought immigration was the most important issue;
- 86 percent agreed with building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border;
- 83 percent thought Obamacare "went too far" (Coombs, 2016).

### Women in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

Two major firsts for women in politics occurred during the 2016 Presidential Election: Hillary Clinton became the first female presidential nominee for a major party and Republican Strategist Kellyanne Conway was the first female to successfully manage a presidential campaign.

In her Election Night Concession Speech, Hillary Clinton focused on a hopeful future for women in U.S. politics, "And to all the women, and especially the young women, who put their faith in this campaign and me, I want you to know that nothing has made me prouder than to be your champion. Now, I know we still have not shattered that highest and hardest glass ceiling, but some day someone will and hopefully sooner than we might think right now" (*Hillary Clinton's Concession Speech*).

In the United States, women hold 19 percent of elected government offices (Sharma, 2016). Despite the lack of positions held by women, 78 percent of men and 79 percent of women said they could vote for a woman for president (*Should Women Vote First for Women?*). Although women voted against Trump by one of the largest margins in history, Hillary Clinton failed to convert those votes for her own. A major assumption of the Hillary Clinton's 2016 election was that her candidacy would be highly appealing to women (Riley, 2016; Denton, 2017). The expectation of "female solidarity" and "sisterhood" among all women, though, proved overzealous as young women (third-wave feminists) tended to support Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton (Denton, 2017).

Emerging in 1989 with the term "intersectionality," third-wave feminist philosophy addresses concerns of women of color, lower socioeconomic class, and other marginalized groups. To these women, Clinton embraced an older, more traditional brand of feminism "more concerned with female empowerment- in particular with white, middle-class, American female empowerment- than with broader issues of social and economic justice" (Mirhashem, 2015).

Others questioned Hillary Clinton's authenticity as a feminist, citing her husband, President Bill Clinton, as a major force behind her impressive resume. Camille Pagilla, a critic of Bill Clinton, writes, "She's been handed job after job, but primarily due to her very un-feminist association with a man" (Pagilla, 2016). Many women also took issue with the way Hillary Clinton defended and even stood by her husband in the wake of the sexual misconduct allegations made against him by Monica Lewinski, failing to reconcile the modern #metoo supporting Hillary Clinton with the 1990s version who took to discrediting any and all of her husband's accusers (Chozick, 2016).

Kellyanne Conway, then a longtime Republican pollster who had made the art of “appealing to women” a political career, joined Donald Trump’s election campaign in August 2016 as his third campaign manager. With the election of Donald Trump, Conway became the first woman to successfully run an American presidential campaign and the first woman to run a Republican general election presidential campaign. Conway worked to soften Trump’s rhetoric and helped focus his message. A mother of four herself, Conway often stressed an understanding of the challenges faced by women both in the workplace or at home (Malone, 2016).

### The Internet in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

The 2016 Presidential Election marks a major change in the way candidates post and share video content. Referred to as “the social media election of 2016” (McCabe, 2015), the 2016 election demanded the incorporation of “social and digital media into [the] political campaign,” without which the “candidate [had] almost no chance of being competitive” (Hendricks and Schill, 2017, p. 121).

Eighty-six percent of Americans in 2016 reported using the Internet. Of those, nearly 80 percent reported being active on Facebook, 32 percent on Instagram, 31 percent on Pinterest, 24 percent on Twitter, and 29 percent on LinkedIn (Greenwood, Perrin, and Duggan, 2016). In addition to these social media statistics, the majority (75 percent) of Americans are smartphone owners and use them to access social media platforms (Lockhart, 2016). According to *The Hill*, “as Americans continue to make using social media a part of their routines, candidates are as well” (McCabe, 2015).

The dominating role of technology was uncontested in the 2016 election. Michael Slaby, the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Integration and Innovation Officer for

President Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns, respectively, recognized that the 2016 cycle experienced a "whole-scale shift in the norms of campaign communications" (Slaby, 2016). However, while social media also served to insulate voters and their opinions. Four out of ten people blocked content on social media which exhibited differing views to theirs. Eight out of ten simply ignored content that they didn't agree with. This self-filtering inevitably leads to an electorate that

Hillary Clinton posted about five videos per day on Facebook and Twitter, with an embedded video in about a quarter of her total tweets and Facebook posts. Trump, meanwhile, averaged about one video a day on social media, with only two percent of his tweets including embedded videos.

Voters also increasingly gained information on the 2016 Election online, with 44 percent of U.S. adults reporting having learned information on election in the past week from social media. Additionally, 24 percent of voters received news of the 2016 election from either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton's social media posts (more than those who turned to either the candidates' websites or emails, which combined only accounted for 15 percent) (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Finally, even though Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton posted to social media at similar rates, Donald Trump gained far more Facebook shares (8,367 to 1,636, respectively), Facebook comments, (5,230 to 1,070, respectively), Facebook reactions (76,885 to 12,537, respectively) and Twitter retweets (5,947 to 1,581, respectively) (Pew Research Center, 2016).

### Political Advertising in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

The 2016 presidential election also marked a shift in political journalism and media coverage. Gone are the days of “he said, she said” journalism, where the news reports each side equally, in favor of a “more aggressive journalism that sought to prioritize accuracy over balance” (Byers, 2017). Trump’s “confrontational style and often sweeping generalizations or falsehoods” forced journalists to challenge, contextualize, fact check, and even editorialize. In turn, the mainstream media appeared to be “bias, overtly hostile, liberal, and cheerleading for [Hillary] Clinton” (Denton, 2017). “Journalists have been unburdened from their adherence to blanket neutrality that we lived with before Trump came along,” said Vivian Schiller, the former president and CEO of National Public Radio (Byers, 2016).

When comparing the numbers, televised advertising spending was considerably less in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election compared to previous elections, especially when figures are normalized and adjusted for inflation, population growth, and income growth (Galka, 2016). This election also marked the first time since Ford lost to Carter in the 1976 U.S. Presidential Election that the candidate who spent the most money lost (Galka, 2016). Perhaps reflecting his unorthodox campaign strategy of dominating the news cycle through tweets and off-the-wall speeches, Donald Trump seemed baffled when it came to *why* exactly he needed to spend money and buy advertisements. At a campaign rally in June, 2016, Trump was quoted as saying,

“First of all, I don’t even know why I need so much money. You know, I go around, I make speeches. I talk to reporters. I don’t even need commercials, if you want to know the truth” (Ronayne & Colvin, 2016).

With this significant decrease in advertising spending came, unsurprisingly, a significant decrease in actual political advertisements. The Wesleyan Media Project,

which reports the numbers of advertisements aired by candidates, parties, and outside groups, found that, between September 16, 2016 and October 13, 2016, only 117,000 political advertisements were aired (less than half the 256,000 advertisements aired during the same time during the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election). Within the 117,000 ads aired, Hillary Clinton out-aired Donald Trump more than 3:1 (89,457 to 27,628, respectively). Among the outside groups supporting both candidates, Priorities USA Action, a Super PAC in support of Hillary Clinton, aired 21,398 ads at an estimated cost of \$20 million and Rebuilding America Now, a Super PAC supporting Donald Trump, aired 2,660 ads at a cost of \$2.1 million. (Presidential Ad Volumes Less than Half of 2012, 2016).

While the narrative of earlier political campaigns is typically guided by the rhetoric of televised political advertisements (McManus, 2016), this was clearly *not* the case in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Despite this, Dunn and Tedesco (2017) argue that political advertising remained a significant campaign tool for candidates in the 2016 presidential election.

### *Political Communication*

The study of political communication, defined as the “role of communication in the political process,” (Chaffee (1975, p.15) can trace its roots to Aristotle’s (2015) seminal fourth century B.C. work, *Rhetoric*. Political communication itself is an “extension of a centuries-long effort to understand relationships between ‘rhetoric’ and ‘politics’” (Gronbeck, 2004, p. 151). “Politics is conversation, talk, argument and persuasion, and communication” (Boynton, 1996, p. 102); therefore, “if politics *is* communication, it makes sense to study politics *as* communication (Smith, 2015, p. 1).

A form of political communication, political advertising first emerged in campaigns in the 1950's, most notably in Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1952 U.S. Presidential Campaign. It has since become a "staple of communication in democracies around the world" and the "dominant form of communication between candidates and voters in the United States" (Kaid, 2004, p. 155).

While the nature of political advertising is constantly evolving, this study accepts a broad definition encompassing several defining characteristics of modern political advertising:

“(1) control of the message and (2) use of mass communication channels for message distribution” (Kaid, 1999, p. 423).

Because forms of political communication other than political advertising are “subject to interpretation or filtering by news media or other participants in the political process,” the “ability to control completely the message presented to the audience is one of the greatest advantages of all forms of political advertising” (Kaid, 2004, p.156).

An additional, less-broad definition of political advertising is provided by the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Established within the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974 following reports of serious financial abuses in the 1972 U.S. Presidential Election, the FEC is tasked with administering and enforcing federal campaign finance law. The independent regulatory agency refers to political advertising as *electioneering communications*, which they define as,

“any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication that refers to a clearly identified federal candidate, is publicly distributed within 30 days of a primary or 60 days of a general election, and is targeted to the relevant electorate.”

While both definitions encompass the overall meaning of political advertising, this study proposes a third, more robust definition for the purpose of this research:

“Political advertising includes any communication which (1) uses mass communication channels for message distribution (including broadcast, cable, satellite, or internet) and (2) clearly identifies a candidate for political office.”

This combines definitions provided by Kaid (1999) and the FEC, while adding the internet as a potential mass communication channel for dissemination of a political ad (which, surprisingly, is not included in the FEC’s definition of an electioneering communication).

### *Political Advertising Research*

In the United States, political advertising research is largely centered on *televised* political advertising and is generally categorized into research on political advertising *content* or political advertising *effects* (Kaid, 2004). The first to use a systematic approach when analyzing image and issue content in political ads, Joslyn’s (1980) content analysis study was replicated for additional content including: issue/image content, negative/positive content, presence of partisan appeals, emotional tone, and use of fear appeals (Kaid, 2004). Research regarding issue/image content and negative/positive content is discussed below.

#### Issue vs. Image

Rooted in the classic study of Democrat theory requiring the electorate to possess “information and knowledge” so as to contribute to the wisdom of the decision,”

(Berelson, 1966, p. 318) the majority of political ads focus on issue-based rather than image-based content, regardless of the medium (Kaid, 2004).

Issue-based televised political advertisements are usually more prevalent than image-based televised political advertisements by 60 to 80 percent (Joslyn, 1980) and have proven to be an important source of information for voters. While these short “spots” tend to address vague rather than specific issue positions, they contribute at least as much as other media sources to educate the electorate on issues (Joslyn, 1980). In the 1972 U.S. presidential election, both Patterson and McClure (1976) and Hofstetter and Zukin (1979) reported a greater amount of issue content in political advertising compared to televised network news, reiterating Joslyn’s (1980) research. This research was again confirmed in studies of political ads in the 1980s (Kern, 1989) and 1990s (Center for Media and Public Affairs, 1996; Lichter & Noyes, 1996), when analyses of the 1996 primaries found candidate-sponsored ads and speeches to be three times more issue-dominant than televised news sources. In a comprehensive study of political ads from 1952 to 1996, Kaid and Johnson (2001) determined that 66 percent of all advertising used in presidential general elections was issue-dominant. Findings covering the 1988 presidential general election through the 2000 presidential general election also show issues stressed more frequently than image, with 78 percent of the political advertisements in 2000 classified as issue advertisements (one of the highest percentages in history) (Kaid, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002). In the 2004 presidential election, the candidate’s campaigns emphasized one (or more) issues in over 80 percent of campaign ads (Kaid & Dimitrova, 2005).

Research also suggests that each party “owns” particular issues, and when politicians stress the issues most relevant to their own party, they tend to be more

successful (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994). Republicans tend to “own” foreign policy issues such as national defense, government spending/deficit, taxes, and illegal drugs, while Democrats “own” issues surrounding domestic policy like education, health care, jobs/labor, poverty, and environment (Benoit & Hansen, 2002). Additionally, news coverage of issues can lead to voter support for the party that has “ownership” over the issue (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Beyer, Knutsen, & Rasch, 2014).

### Negative vs. Positive Political Advertising

Not surprisingly, negative and positive advertisements are usually discernable through an identification of the subject of their message. While negative advertisements tend to criticize the candidate’s opponent, positive advertisements highlight the candidate’s positive characteristics or accomplishments (Kaid & Johnson, 1991). Despite both negative and positive political advertisements debuting in the 1952 Presidential Election, the negative advertisements used in the “Eisenhower Answers America” series were a far cry from the negative advertisements typical in modern political ads. For instance, while the ads attacked the Democrat Party, they did not name Eisenhower’s opponent, Adlai Stevenson, by name.

Surlin and Gordon (1977) define modern attack advertising (referred to in this study as negative political advertising) as, “advertising which attacks the other candidate personally, the issues for which the other candidate stands or the party of the other candidate.” According to Garramone (1984), the intended effect of negative political advertising is “to create negative feelings toward the targeted candidate and positive feelings toward the sponsoring candidate” (Garramone, 1984, p. 250). According to Kaid

(2000) negative advertisements “concentrate on what is wrong with the opponent, either personally or in terms of issue or policy stances” (p 157).

Since the inception of negative political advertisements, campaigns have produced both memorable and effective negative political advertisements. Perhaps the most well-known negative political advertisement, the 1964 spot known as “Daisy Girl” aired only once, foiling the innocence of a young girl against nuclear war. Other negative political ads include the Willie Horton ad which used the issue of crime against Michael Dukakis in 1988, the wind surfer ad used against Kerry in 2004 showing the various opposing positions Kerry had taken on the same issue, and the Dukakis tank ride ad from 1988 showing Dukakis looking inept and not-at-all leader-like in a war tank.

The use of negative advertising has steadily increased since it was first used in 1952. Negative political advertisements accounted for about 38 percent of aired ads, however, negative ads made up more than half of the ads for both parties in the 1992 and 1996 elections. Bill Clinton reached all-time-high percentages of negative advertisements in these elections, with 69 percent of ads going negative in 1992 and 68 percent of ads going negative in 1996. The trend continued into the 2000 Presidential Election, with 62 percent of Al Gore’s ads going negative compared to 37 percent of George Bush’s ads (Kaid, 2002). Overall, 46 percent of the ads in 2000 were positive, 29 percent were labeled pure negative, and 25 percent were considered to be comparative/contrast ads.

In a study of over 800 political advertisements aired between 1960 and 1988, Kaid and Johnson (1991) found that negative advertisements tend to be more issue-oriented than positive advertisements. Later analyses of the 1992, 1996, and 2000 Presidential Elections confirmed that this finding still held true (Johnson & Kaid, 2002; Kaid & Johnson, 2001). Several studies (Benoit, 1999; Kaid, 2002; Kaid & Johnson,

2001) also found differences among political parties and the frequency of negative advertising, with Democrats utilizing negative ads significantly more than Republicans in presidential races from 1952 to 2000.

When reviewing negative advertising use by challengers versus incumbents, it appears that challengers in presidential elections do not use significantly more negative ads than incumbents- this is contrary to popular wisdom which suggests that challengers are more likely to “go negative” in a bid to unseat the incumbent (Kaid & Johnson, 2001). The opposite is true in elections below the presidential level, with a study by Tinkham and Weaver-Laricsy (1990) finding that congressional candidates used attack advertising more in an effort to attack the incumbent, with a later study (Tinkham and Weaver-Laricsy, 1995) confirming these findings. In an analysis of Senate ads between 1984 and 1994, Hale, Fox, and Farmer (1996) found that the usage of negative ads was more likely to be done by challengers, candidates in large states, and those engaged in competitive races. Goldstein, Krasno, Bradford, & Seltz (2000), in an analysis of Senate and Congressional campaigns in 1998, found that attack ads were more likely to be utilized in races that were more competitive and were also more likely to be sponsored by parties rather than candidates.

According to Democrat pollster Paul Maslin, many candidates believe they have no choice when deciding whether or not to go negative. “The techniques have gotten so refined, the weapons so powerful, that if you don’t use them, you will lose them, because the other side will use them on you” (Taylor, 1989, p. A14).

Regardless of how candidates feel about using negative political advertisements, the effectiveness of the messages cannot be denied. Studies show negative political advertisements are highly effective tools in instilling a negative feeling toward the target

of the advertisement and are also more likely to be recalled by voters when evaluating candidates. This is especially true with late deciders (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1989; Basil, Schooler, & Reeves, 1991; Tinkham & Lariscy, 1993; Kahn & Kenny, 2000). Negative political advertisements have also been shown to effect voting behavior (Kaid & Boyston, 1987; Roddy & Garramone, 1988; Basil et al., 1991; Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995).

While research suggests negative political advertisements are an effective way to gain voters and win the election, it should be noted that certain aspects of negative political advertisements can also cause a backlash effect against the sponsor of the advertisement. According to Lariscy and Tinkham (2004), for a negative political advertisement to be effective it must be plausible. Lariscy and Tinkham further explain that,

“When viewing an attack ad, individuals certainly do not know if the information is true. Beyond the accuracy or perceived truthfulness, it seems to be quite important- if a message is going to work- that listeners would find the content within the realm of possibility” (Lariscy & Tinkham, 2004, p. 19).

In a study of over 800 presidential advertisements aired between 1960 and 1988, Kaid and Johnson (1991) found that negative advertisements tended to be more issue-oriented than positive advertisements. These same results were confirmed in an analysis that included political advertisements from the 1992, 1996, and 2000 presidential elections (Johnson & Kaid, 2002; Kaid & Johnson, 2001).

In a study of the 1990 and 1992 U.S. congressional elections, findings indicate that challengers “go negative” more often than their incumbent counterparts, with

challengers for congressional seats viewing negative political advertisements as a more central attack strategy than their incumbent counter-parts (Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy, 1990; Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy, 1995).

### The Boomerang Effect

Lariscy and Tinkham (2004) operationalize the term “boomerang effect” as a “backlash” which causes viewers to have a strong, immediate reaction *against* the attacker and empathy *for* the victim of the attack. Issue-based negative political advertisements are more likely to result in acceptance rather than cause a negative backlash against the candidate. Character-based negative political advertisements, however, that are considered an unfair personification of the attacked candidate or family member’s character are more likely to draw criticism from voters (Lariscy & Tinkham, 2004).

Studies show that voters disapprove of negative political advertising (Lariscy & Tinkham, 2004; Garramone, 1984; Hill, 1989). Garramone (1984) found 40 percent of viewers became more negative toward the sponsoring candidate after watching a political attack advertisement, while only 4 percent became more positive toward the sponsoring candidate. According to Hill (1989), voter responses directed toward the ad sponsor are more positive for sponsor-positive advertisements than for comparative (sponsor positive/opponent-negative) or opponent-negative political advertisements. This suggests that the use of comparative or opponent-negative political advertisements may produce negative reactions from voters, may reflect negatively on the ad sponsor, and may have little impact upon the opposing candidate when compared to sponsor-positive ads.

According to Kaid and Boydston (1987), negative political advertisements sponsored by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) in a congressional election were effective in lowering the evaluation of the targeted candidate. The study also found that negative political advertisements sponsored by a political action committee (PAC) tended to be more effective with voters than the same negative political advertisement sponsored by the candidate (Garrazone, 1984, 1985; Garrazone & Smith, 1984; Shen & Wu, 2009).

Kaid and Dimitrova (2005) attribute this advantage of PAC advertising to the credibility of a source that the audience does not consider to be tied to either campaign. Also, voters with lower levels of political information efficacy and information about the campaign are more likely to be affected by political advertising than those with higher levels of political involvement (Cundy, 1986; Rothschild & Ray, 1974).

### Women in Politics

Following outrage over the treatment of Professor Anita Hill in the confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas in 1991, 1992 became known as the “Year of the Woman,” with a surge of women running for elected office at varying levels across the United States (Kaid, 2004). With this surge came a greater interest in the campaign styles of these female political figures, which in turn led to more research on women as political candidates.

Like their male counterparts, female politicians in the 1980s tended to focus their political advertising strategies on *issue* as opposed to *image* ads (Benze & DeClercq, 1985; Johnston and White, 1993; Kahn, 1993, 1996). In an analysis of political advertisements from 38 candidates for U.S. Senate in the 1984 and 1986 elections, Kahn

(1993) found that women were actually even *more* likely than men to do so. However, as far as the issues that are focused on, “men are more likely to discuss economic issues such as taxes and the federal budget, while women spend more time talking about social issues and social policy, such as education and health policy (p. 489).

The differences reported between men and women in political advertising campaigns diminished by the 1990s, with Bystrom and Kaid (2002) reporting that male and female candidates from 1990 to 1996 were equally as likely to focus on the economy, budget/deficit, crime, or defense/military. The trend changed again in 1998 when female candidates again highlighted health care and education issues more. When running against each other, both genders seem to “emphasize mostly ‘masculine’ traits such as strength, aggressiveness, performance, and experience balanced with such ‘feminine’ attributes as honesty, sensitivity, and understanding” (Bystrom and Kaid, 2002, p. 164).

According to Kaid (2004), female candidates for political office struggle most with how to demonstrate enough toughness and strength in political advertising to appear competent for political office but not so much so that they appear “too aggressive” or “offensively masculine” (p. 177). The gender differences are evident at various levels of political office, with men in the 1980s using more negative advertising strategies in gubernatorial elections and women going negative more often in smaller, Senate-level campaigns (Kahn, 1996; Trent and Sabourin, 1993). The 1990s again saw women level the field in the use of negative advertising, with female candidates using negative advertising as much as and sometimes more than their male counterparts (Bystrom, 1995; Bystrom and Kaid, 2002; Bystrom and Miller, 1999; Kahn, 1993, 1996).

When challenging each other for political office, women are also more likely than men to appear and speak more in their own advertisements, dress more formally, and

smile more frequently. Women were also more likely to use testimonial formats for their advertisements than men in addition to more special effects (Bystrom and Kaid, 2002).

### Modern U.S. Political Campaigns: The Internet and Social media

Political campaigning is continuously changing and evolving based on technology, legislation, and research. One major development regarding political campaign strategies occurred with the creation of the Internet and subsequent advent of both Internet 2.0 and social media.

While the Internet was first used for political communication by Bill Clinton's campaign during the 1992 general election (Whillock, 1997), the 2004 election "marked the year in which online politics finally reached a 'mainstream' audience (Rainie, Cornfield, and Horrigan, 2005, p. iii). "Roughly 75 million Americans (approximately 37% of adults) went online in 2004 to get political developments up through Election Day" (Rainie, et al., 2005, p. i).

In 2008, Smith and Rainie (2008) found for the first time that more than half of the voting age population used the Internet to get news and information about the election. The 2008 Presidential Election signaled the adoption of the Internet as a legitimate political source similar to a newspaper or television report, with 74 percent of Internet users (55 percent of Americans) going online to seek political involvement or to get news and information about the election (Smith and Rainie, 2008; Laricsy, Tinkham & Sweetser, 2011; Himelboim, Laricsy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2012).

According to Pew, candidates were "experimenting with regularly posting videos in 2008 and 2012 as YouTube increased in popularity, though to a minimal degree" (Pew Research Center, 2016). Sixty-six percent of registered voters who use the Internet (55

percent of all registered voters) went online during the 2012 election season to watch these videos related to the election campaign or political issues. Specifically, 36 percent reported going online to watch political advertisements. This process is highly social, with 62 percent of Internet-using registered voters (52 percent of all registered voters) having had others recommend online videos about the election or politics to them, and 23 percent of Internet-using registered voters (19 percent of all registered voters) encouraging other individuals to watch online videos related to political issues (Duggan, 2012).

The spread of information via the Internet continued into the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election and is reviewed in the above section entitled, “The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.”

### *U.S. Political Campaign Legislation*

As U.S. election cycles continue to expand, more and more money is demanded to sustain campaigns through their entirety. This campaign money is directly tied to the First Amendment and the complicated relationship that campaign money has with freedom of speech in America. Critics of recent campaign finance laws argue that the money will have a corrupting influence on campaign, since it gives the one with the largest checkbook the loudest voice. “Balancing the interests of donors with the influence money has on elections is one of the biggest challenges for courts” (Myers, 2017, p. 260).

Since the first federal campaign finance law- the Tillman Act of 1907- was passed, federal campaign finance law trends have continued to evolve and change. “Examining the history of campaign finance law in the U.S. shows that this balance has been in a state of flux with current legal trends favoring corporations’ right to engage in

political speech” (Myers, 2017, p. 260). The following is an examination of *modern* political campaign laws, beginning with the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 and ending with *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

### Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) (Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, 2002) was enacted on March 27, 2002 with most provisions taking effect by November 6, 2002. The Act was created to regulate the so called “soft money” popular in the 1990s. Instead of adhering to the federal fundraising regulations of the FEC, soft money was raised under state regulation since the money was not intended for use either in or at the federal level. The fact that the lesser regulated soft money was being used for “grass-roots activities” that in turn helped federal candidates was of no use.

In an effort to curb the use of soft money in federal elections, the Bipartisan Campaign Act of 2002 (BRCA), also referred to as the McCain-Feingold Act, was enacted. The law banned soft money from being used in federal elections and also regulated issue advocacy in the form of “electioneering communications,” which the Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress defined as:

“political advertisements that refer to a clearly identified federal candidate and are broadcast within 30 days of a primary or 60 days of a general election.”

Electioneering communications are also commonly referred to as “issue ads” since their content typically discusses issues instead of advocating for or against a candidate’s election or defeat.

In addition to soft money regulations, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 includes requirements regarding disclosure. The BCRA states that any electioneering communication made by a super PAC, even if the ad does not expressly advocate the election or defeat of a federal candidate, must include a disclaimer. Likewise, radio and television ads authorized by a candidate must include an audio statement approving the ad such as, “I am Mitt Romney and I approve this message” in addition to either a full screen view of the candidate making the statement or an image of the candidate occupying at least 80 percent of the screen height and a “clearly readable” written disclaimer (Patterson, Gale, Hawkins and Hawkins, 2004). This part of the BCRA is popularly called the “Stand by Your Ad” disclosure (SBYA).

This SBYA provision was intended to force candidates for political office and the PACs supporting them to associate themselves with the negative political messages that were designed to negatively affect the target of the advertisement. Lariscy and Tinkham (2004) suggest that:

“The logic behind the provision is that candidates and the independent organization that sponsor ads for them will be less likely to “go negative” or to levy particularly vicious attacks if the candidates personally are tied to the message for fear of backlash or boomerang” (Lariscy & Tinkham, 2004, p.19).

The BCRA was challenged by Republican Senator Mitch McConnell and other reform opponents in *McConnell v. FEC*, arguing that the Act infringed on free speech, which is protected under the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Buckley v. Valeo* in 1976. Supporters of the Act countered the opposition with the argument that speech accruing from those contributions was indirect and could therefore be regulated without infringing

on constitutional protection. The BCRA was ultimately upheld, leading to some political groups to attempt to introduce soft money into federal elections through the use of 527s, named such because they are filed under tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. §527.

Technically PACs, the term “refers to an organization that does not raise money under FECA requirements because they do not expressly advocate for a candidate or a party” (Myers, 2017, p. 265).

### Super Political Action Committees (super-PACs)

Political Action Committees (PACs) have existed since the 1940’s (Mayer, 2012). Historically, PACs have been most important to corporate and special interest groups who, being prohibited and limited in their ability to influence elections through direct contributions, used such advertising as a way to influence electoral outcomes (Kaid & Jones, 2004).

Although super-PACs are not supposed to fund candidates directly, respected media outlets consistently refer to super-PACs in support of a particular candidate as the candidate-s own super-PAC (Donald Trump and Rebuilding America Now, Hillary Clinton and Priorities USA Action). Due in part to this tendency to “claim” a super-PAC for the candidate, once can understand how voters (especially those not interested in politics) could assume that candidates and super-PACs work together during the campaign process.

### Source Identification and Disclosure Legislation

Source identification is an important (and legally required) part of political advertising. Both the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act and the Federal Election

Commission contain requirements for television and radio ads that “refer to a clearly identified federal candidate and are distributed (targeted) to the relevant electorate with a particular time period before the election.” Under these regulations, electioneering communications disseminated to an electorate via radio, television, print, and other campaign communications must now have a disclaimer (referred to in this study as a *disclosure*) notice.

A disclosure notice is defined as a statement placed on a public communication that identifies the person(s) who authorized the communication. Disclosure notices are required for federal electioneering communications by individuals, political committees, and other persons. Examples of public communications that require the use of a disclosure notice include: public communications coordinated with a federal candidate (i.e., in-kind contributions or coordinated party expenditures) that are paid for by a political committee or that contain express advocacy or a solicitation; independent expenditures; electioneering communications; communications that solicit funds for a federal candidate or a federal political committee or that contain express advocacy; and political committees’ web sites.

#### *Candidate or Individual Disclosure*

An electioneering communication or public communication in which an individual advocates for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate or solicits funds for use in a federal election is required to have a disclosure notice.

As defined by FEC regulations, the term ‘electioneering communication’ includes: a broadcast, cable, or satellite communication that refers to a clearly identified candidate, is publicly distributed within 30 days before a primary election or within 60 days before a general election, and in the case of congressional candidates only, is

targeted to the relevant electorate (can be received by 50,000 or more persons in the district or state the candidate seeks to represent) (2 U.S.C. § 100.29).

As defined in FEC regulations, the term ‘public communication’ includes; broadcast, cable or satellite transmission; newspaper; magazine; outdoor advertising facility (e.g. billboard); mass mailing (defined as more than 500 pieces of mail matter of an identical or substantially similar nature within any 30-day period); or any other general public political advertising. It should be noted that a general public political advertisement does not include Internet advertising, except for communications placed for a fee on another person’s web site.

#### *Political Action Committee (PAC) Disclosure*

Electioneering communications by political action committees are also required by the BCRA and FEC to contain a disclosure. This disclosure is required even when the political advertisement does not expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a federal candidate for office.

The required disclosure must contain the name of the political action committee or other person responsible for the communication. The name of the sponsoring committee’s connected organization and, in electioneering communications disseminated via television, must also include an image of the representative making an audio statement. A written statement and contact information must also be included at the end of the electioneering communication.

#### *Citizens United v. FEC*

Overturning *McConnell v. FEC* and *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* in which Justice Thurgood Marshall held that:

“Michigan law banning corporate use of money for independent expenditures supporting or opposing specific political candidates was constitutional and did not violate the First Amendment” (Myers, 2017; *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce*, 1990),

*Citizens United v. FEC* was poised to usher in a new era in U.S. campaign finance law.

In 2009, the Supreme Court heard the case *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. The case involved the documentary, *Hillary: The Movie*, which had been produced by the nonprofit conservative group Citizens United. A lower court held that the film was a form of regulated electioneering, but Citizens United challenged both this holding and the idea that political documentaries, even those created by corporations, are protected by the First Amendment and cannot constitutionally be regulated by BCRA, to the Supreme Court.

On January 21, 2010, the Supreme Court of the United States held:

“Political spending is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment, and the government may not keep corporations or unions from spending money to support or denounce individual candidates in elections. While corporations or unions may not give money directly to campaigns, they may seek to persuade the voting public through other means, including ads, especially where these ads were not broadcast” (SCOTUS blog, 2003).

Following the *Citizens United v. FEC* holding, President Barack Obama gave his first State of the Union address in front of a joint session of congress on January 27, 2010, during which he commented on the newly passed Supreme Court decision,

“With all due deference to separation of powers, last week the Supreme Court reversed a century of law that I believe will open the floodgates for special interests- including foreign corporations- to spend without limit in our elections. I don’t think American elections should be bankrolled by America’s most powerful interests, or worse, by foreign entities. They should be decided by the American people. And I’d urge Democrats and Republicans to pass a bill that helps to correct some of these problems.”

The bill proposed in response to President Obama’s urging was the 2014 *McCutcheon v. FEC*, which ultimately struck down the cap on the aggregate amount an individual could contribute to a campaign or super-PAC in a calendar year (Myers, 2017).

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### Source Credibility

A concept originating from fourth-century B.C. Greek philosopher Aristotle’s work, *The Rhetoric*, source credibility stems from the concept of *ethos* (the character of the speaker), which Aristotle writes is “the most potent of all the means to persuasion” (Aristotle, 1960, p.10). Modern literature regarding the credibility of the source of a message- referred to here as *source credibility*- commonly includes dimensions of expertise and trustworthiness first operationalized by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953). A third dimension, attractiveness, was included in later source credibility studies by Ohanian (1990). All three dimensions of source credibility are formally defined and operationalized below.

Source credibility is defined as the merger of two dimensions- expertise and trustworthiness, with expertise defined as, “the extent to which a communicator is

perceived to be a source of valid assertions” and trustworthiness as, “the degree of confidence in the communicator’s intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid” (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953). It is this perceived expertness and trustworthiness of the communicator that can “determine the credence given them” when “acceptance is sought by using arguments in support of the advocated view” (as in the case of many negative political advertisements) (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953).

This original conceptualization of source credibility was studied extensively in the fields of advertising (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Caballero and Solomon, 1984; DeSarbo and Harshman, 1985; Kahle and Homer, 1985; Mowen and Brown, 1981; Wynn, 1987), communication (Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, 1969; McCroskey, 1966; Miller and Baseheart, 1969; Whitehead, 1968), and psychology (Berscheid, 1966; Chaiken, 1979; Johnson, Torcivia, and Popprick, 1968; McGinnies and Ward, 1980; Mills and Harvey, 1972; Ross, 1973; Wu and Shaffer, 1987), but was not operationalized into a reliable and valid scale until Ohanian’s (1990) study of celebrity endorser’s source credibility.

Ohanian’s (1990) study included the original two dimensions (expertise and credibility) of source credibility but also added a third dimension- attractiveness. The study defined attractiveness as, “physical attractiveness of the source to the listener, and to a lesser extent, the emotional attractiveness of the source” (Ohanian, 1990). Once operationalized, the scale’s final dimensions consisted of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

As the first dimension of source credibility, expertise includes the source’s competence, expertise, and qualifications with regard to the object or message. Expertise is an important dimension of source credibility, and past research shows that perceptions

of a brand are often influenced by the perceived competence of the source of the message. For instance, company presidents- who exhibit high levels of perceived competence and product knowledge- were more effective than regular spokespersons when endorsing their products (Rubin et al., 1982).

The second dimension of source credibility, trustworthiness, includes elements of both trust and acceptance of the speaker and the message. Trustworthiness refers to how truthful, sincere, or honest a brand spokesperson is (McCroskey and Teven, 1999). Hovland et al. (1953) hypothesize that high levels of trustworthiness by the sponsor of the message would lead to a greater acceptance of the message than if the sponsor of the message had a moderate or low trustworthiness. Garramone (1984) reiterates a similar concept, finding that “the more truthful a negative political advertisement is perceived, the greater should be its impact” (Garramone, 1984, p. 251).

As the third dimension of source credibility, attractiveness includes elements of beauty, sexiness, chicness, and elegance. Defined as how physically and emotionally appealing the consumer perceives the spokesperson to be, many studies (Baker and Churchill, 1977, Chaiken, 1979, Kahle and Homer, 1985) show that attractiveness is a very persuasive factor in influencing the consumer’s approval of brands.

Conflicting data has also been reported, however, in which source credibility led to either more persuasion (Kelman and Hovland, 1953), no persuasion (Rhine and Severance, 1970), or in some cases even resulted in a boomerang effect (Sternthal, Dholakia, and Leavitt, 1978). These conflicting findings led to the development of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which outlines and provides evidence for a general model of attitude change.

### Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides a framework for organizing, categorizing, and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communication. It is often referred to as a model of “attitude change,” with *attitude* defined as, “general evaluations people hold in regard to themselves, other people, objects and issues” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

But why is *attitude* important when discussing *persuasion*? Do attitudes predict behaviors? While several early studies (LaPiere (1934; Corey, 1937) failed to predict behavior from attitudes, later scholarship (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1974; 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; 1980; Davidson and Jaccard, 1979) concluded confidently that attitudes are related to and can predict behaviors.

The ELM describes two different “routes” to persuasion. The first, referred to as the central route, occurs as a result of a person’s “thoughtful consideration of the object or issue at hand” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Next, the peripheral route, occurs as a result of “some simple cue in the persuasion context (e.g. an attractive source) that induced change without necessitating scrutiny of the central merits of the issue-relevant information presented” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In other words, the central route “results from thinking about the issue or arguments under consideration,” whereas peripheral route persuasion “results from non-issue-relevant concerns such as impression management motives, the attractiveness of the message’s source, or one’s social role” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981).

Several factors affect whether it is the central or peripheral route that is used in any given scenario. When both motivation and the ability to think about the message are high, the use of the central route increases. Conversely, because the chances for

substantial thought are low, persuasion occurs along the peripheral route when motivation and/or the ability to think are low (Cacioppo, Petty & Stoltenberg, 1985).

Under conditions of high elaboration, “the person’s cognitive activity is directed at relating the information in a persuasive appeal to what is already known about the topic in order to evaluate the merits of a recommendation and thereby identify the most veridical position on an issue” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Under these high elaboration conditions, people are both capable and highly motivated to process message arguments. When this is the case, strong arguments (rather than weak ones) are more effective, regardless of a source’s credibility or attractiveness. Because both the ability and motivation to process message arguments are high, people with high elaboration focus on the true merits or the persuasive message. Additionally, the credibility of the source does not equate to a “simple acceptance or rejection cue. Rather, it is considered and evaluated alongside all other available information” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

In conditions of low elaboration, “the person may be engaged in a great deal or in very little cognitive activity; the person may be cognizant of searching for and selecting a simple affective cue of decisional rule with which to respond to the appeal or they may not.” Intended message recipients are “unmotivated and unable to process a message” and instead “rely on simple cues in the persuasion context, such as expertise or attractiveness of the message source.” Regardless of the strength of the argument, a positive source will be more persuasive than a negative one when the message receiver has a low level of elaboration.

These high and low elaboration likelihoods are meant to be viewed as a continuum, with each route opposite each other. Day-to-day persuasive messages are unlikely to be classified in either category; however, and instead land somewhere in the

middle of the continuum. In this moderate level of elaboration, the message should include both a highly credible source and a strong argument if it is to be successfully persuasive (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

### Authenticity

In the field of advertising and marketing research, authenticity refers to “any type of textual or visual stimulus that conveys an illusion of the reality of ordinary life in reference to a consumption situation” (Stern, 1994, p. 388). A more recent definition of authenticity is from Grayson and Martinec (2004), who differentiated between “indexical” and “iconic” authenticity. Indexical authenticity refers to situations when a brand or persona is seen as original, while iconic authenticity refers to situations when a subsequent brand or persona mimics or recreates the essence of the original brand or persona. Through advertisements, an illusion which is “mimetic” of reality is created, with its purpose being to persuade audiences to agree with advertisers’ points of view, thereby liking advertised brands and products more than before. The illusion is most often conveyed in advertisements through the use of brand endorsers, public figures including celebrities, well-known athletes, and fictitious characters or personas who appear in ads so as to persuade an audience to like and purchase branded products (Atkin and Block, 1983; Jin and Phua, 2014; Walker, Langmeyer, and Langmeyer, 1993). Based on Stern’s (1994) definition, to be authentic is to imitate real life, showing imagined persons responding to imagined circumstances through invented acts. Authenticity in advertisements is achieved when brand endorsers’ performances in the ads, based on their physical appearances, vocal utterances, and actions, is seen by an audience as being so real and effective, such that the audience becomes willing to suspend disbelief and in

doing so, accepts the advertised message as truth (Bruner, 1994; Cohen, 2002; MacCannell, 1973).

More recently, advertising researchers have found that authenticity is an important factor predicting advertising effectiveness, as authentic spokespersons are able to better allow consumers to transfer their feelings toward these spokespersons to brands and products that are advertised (Beverland, Lindgreen, and Vink, 2008; Miller, 2015; Phua and Tinkham, 2016). When spokesperson ethnicity, gender, and other physical characteristics are congruent with consumers and advertised brands or products, they are seen as being more authentic, leading to more positive brand-related outcomes (Moulard, Garrity, and Rice, 2015; Shoenberger and Dahmen, 2017). Similarly, marketing research has found that consumption of brands and products perceived as being authentic to one's lifestyle and personal goals, such as environmental protection (Ewing, Allen, and Ewing, 2012), LGBTQ rights (Kates, 2004), fashion (Choi, Ko, Kim, & Mattila, 2015), and running communities (Chalmers, 2007), can lead to positive brand outcomes when they help consumers achieve social status goals. In political communication research, studies have also found that voters prefer political candidates that are seen as being authentic (Edwards, 2009; Sweetser and Lariscy, 2008; Tinkham, Lariscy, and Avery, 2009). As such, authenticity is a quality inherent in consumption behaviors that is highly valued by individuals motivated to reduce uncertainty, in line with Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### *Experimental Design*

This study was conducted in the form of a posttest-only randomized experiment with three controls. Advertisement sponsorship was tested as the independent variable and included four randomly assigned sponsorship attribute cells: *Hillary Clinton-Sponsored Ad*, *Priorities USA Action-Sponsored Ad*, *Donald Trump-Sponsored Ad*, *Rebuilding America Now-Sponsored Ad*, and three separate controls (*Republican Attack Ad- No Sponsor*, *Democrat Attack Ad- No Sponsor*, and *No Ad/No Sponsor*). Two measures of vote choice, *vote intention* and *relative vote preference*, were included as the primary dependent variables. Other secondary dependent variables include constituent perceptions of both candidates (*candidate credibility* and *candidate authenticity*) and sponsor characteristics (*sponsor credibility* and *sponsor authenticity*).

#### *Sample*

##### Recruitment of Survey Participants

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowdsourcing internet marketplace enabling individuals (known as workers) and businesses/scientists (known as requesters) to coordinate the use of human intelligence to perform surveys and other tasks that computers are unable to do. Requesters post jobs (known as Human Intelligence Tasks, or HITs) such as completing surveys for research,

choosing the best among several photographs of a storefront, writing product descriptions, or identifying performers on a CD. Workers can then browse among existing jobs and complete them in exchange for a monetary payment pre-determined by the employer. For this study, MTurk workers were offered USD \$0.50 in exchange for completing the 15-minute survey.

Research shows that MTurk worker demographics more closely mimic the U.S. population than college undergraduate samples (Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis, 2010) and are more representative of the U.S. population in terms of gender, age, race, and education than conventional in-person convenience samples (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz, 2012). Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling (2011) also assert that “the quality of data provided by MTurk met or exceeded the psychometric standards associated with published research” (p. 5). Overall, there has been a rise of scientific studies using Internet crowdsourcing marketplaces (Birnbaum, 2004) and a six-fold growth in the number of studies using MTurk in the past ten years (Sheehan & Pittman, 2016).

#### Respondent Eligibility

Two screening questions were used to ensure that only potential voters were included in the sample. The questions included: *are you 18-years-old or older*; and *are you a U.S. citizen*?

Of the 3,157 participants who began the survey, 2,339 respondents completed the survey and were therefore eligible to be included in the sample. Of these participants, 10 did not consent to their information being used, 10 did not meet the age requirement of 18 years-old, and 643 participants reported that they were not U.S. citizens; these respondents were all removed from the sample.

The final sample consisted of 1,676 respondents, all of whom self-reported that they were at least 18 years-old and were U.S. citizens.

### *Questionnaire*

#### Source Credibility

Credibility was tested using Harmon and Coney's (1982) unidimensional 6-item, five-point semantic differential source evaluation scale. The scale utilized bipolar adjectives (*trustworthy-not trustworthy, open-minded-closed-minded, good-bad, expert-not expert, experienced-not experienced, and trained-untrained*) originally derived from Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz's (1969-1970) safety and qualification factors which Harmon and Coney (1982) state are "analogous to the trustworthy and expert dimensions first identified by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953)" (Harmon & Coney, 1982, p. 257).

#### Authenticity

Authenticity was measured using 21-items modified from Illicic and Webster (2016) on five-point Likert type scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Items included: *[Presidential candidate name] tries to act in a manner consistent with his/her held values, even if others criticize or reject him/her for doing so; [Presidential candidate name] cares about honesty and openness in close relationships with others; [Presidential candidate name], in general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he/she really is; People can count on [Presidential candidate name] being who he/she really is regardless of the situation; [Presidential candidate name] wants people to understand the real him/her rather than just his/her public image; [Presidential candidate name] rarely if ever puts on a "false face" for people to see; [Presidential candidate name] wants people to understand his/her*

*strengths; [Presidential candidate name] spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to people even if they are unimportant to him/her; [Presidential candidate name] would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with someone; [Presidential candidate name] often uses silence to convey agreement even though he/she really disagrees; [Presidential candidate name] often does things that he/she doesn't want to do merely not to disappoint people; [Presidential candidate name] is willing to change him/herself if the reward is desirable; People will be shocked or surprised if they discovered what [Presidential candidate name] keeps secret or privileged; People, if asked, could accurately describe what kind of person [Presidential candidate name] really is; [Presidential candidate name] finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than his/her true identity; [Presidential candidate name] is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing his/her true beliefs and values; [Presidential candidate name] wants people to understand his/her weaknesses; [Presidential candidate name] behaves in ways that typically expresses his/her values; [Presidential candidate name] frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality he/she really doesn't; [Presidential candidate name] makes it a point to express to people how much he/she truly cares for them; [Presidential candidate name] believes it is important for people to understand his/her values and goals.*

#### Candidate Characteristics

Constituent's perceptions of candidate and sponsor characteristics were measured using a unidimensional candidate characteristics scale first operationalized by Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) and further developed by Kaid (2004). The scale measured twelve-items on a five-point semantic differential scale and used bipolar adjectives including: *unqualified-qualified, unsophisticated-sophisticated, dishonest-honest,*

*unbelievable- believable, unsuccessful-successful, unattractive- attractive, unfriendly- friendly, insincere-sincere, calm-excitabile, aggressive-unaggressive, weak-strong and inactive-active.*

### Feeling Thermometer

Participants were asked to use a sliding feeling thermometer scale to indicate how “hot” or “cold” they felt toward *Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump*, and the *Sponsor of the Ad*. Participants could choose any degree, 0-100, with 51-100 indicating varying levels of “hot,” 0-49 indicating varying degrees of “cold,” and 50 indicating a neutral feeling towards the candidate or sponsor.

### Campaign Participation

Campaign participation was measured by asking the respondent several questions regarding their voting behavior, including: *are you a registered voter, have you voted in presidential elections before, did you vote in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, did you vote in the 2012 U.S. presidential election, are you planning to vote in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, in what state are you eligible to vote, and for whom will you vote in the 2016 U.S. presidential election*, with responses for this question including: *Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, undecided, I will not vote, and other*. Additionally, *will you vote in 2016* was asked to measure those who planned to vote in 2016, but not necessarily for the U.S. presidency. *How will you vote*, with responses including: *Early/absentee vote, voting booth on November 8, and I will not vote*, was also included.

### Party Identification

Party identification was measured using Chaffee and Choe’s (1980) 2 item, five-point branching question asking the respondent to select the political party they most

identified with (*strong Democrat to strong Republican/Liberal to Conservative*).

Participants were also asked to identify their particular political identification (*Strong Democrat, Weak Democrat, Leaning Democrat, Independent, Leaning Republican, Weak Republican, and Strong Republican*).

### Manipulation Check

Awareness of advertisement sponsorship is crucial for the study to be able to accurately identify whether sponsor perception is predictive of vote preference. Therefore, a manipulation check was also present asking participants to select the sponsor of the advertisement they watched in the study, with choices including: *Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Priorities USA Action, Rebuilding America Now, the advertisement was not sponsored, I did not see an advertisement, and I don't know*.

### Demographics

Lastly, the questionnaire addressed participant demographics including *age, gender (male or female), level of education (less than high school, high school graduate, some college, 2-year degree, 4-year degree, master's degree or equivalent, professional degree, and doctorate)*.

## *Stimuli Development*

### Negative Advertisement Selection

Two separate issue advertisements expressly advocating for the election or defeat of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton were chosen from the YouTube accounts of Priorities USA Action and Donald Trump. Both ads were originally thirty-seconds long and conformed to all Federal Election Commission requirements of express advocacy electioneering communications.

Modifications were made to the two original ads to extend their disclosure statement until the thirty-five second mark in order to achieve a 7-second disclosure. Using Adobe Premiere Pro, both ads were also edited to remove the original disclosure statements and audio voiceovers. These disclosure images and voiceovers were replaced with copies of the disclosure images used in *Hillary Clinton* and *Rebuilding America Now* disclosure. The voiceovers used in these candidate disclosures were also added to the manipulated super-PAC ads. Additionally, two ads without any sponsorship attribution were created by removing the disclosure image and voiceovers from the original ads and extending the background audio from the original ads.

The final ads used in the study include: a *Hillary Clinton-sponsored ad* (Priorities USA Action Ad with manipulated disclosure and extended duration), a *Donald Trump-sponsored ad* (Donald Trump ad with extended duration), a *Priorities USA Action ad* (Priorities USA Action ad with extended disclosure), a *Rebuilding America Now ad* (Donald Trump ad with manipulated disclosure and extended disclosure), a *Democrat ad without sponsor* (Priorities USA Action ad with disclosure removed), and a *Republican ad without sponsor* (Donald Trump ad with disclosure removed).

### Experiment

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the seven treatment conditions once they completed two screening questions: (1) Are you 18 or older, and (2) Are you a U.S. Citizen, to which they had to answer both questions in the affirmative. Random assignments one through six generated one of the manipulated political advertisements for the participant to view. The seventh random assignment generated a skip question to enter immediately into the survey.

After either watching one of the six manipulated political advertisements or generating the “skip” option, participants were immediately asked to identify the sponsor of the ad they had just watched. Choices included: *Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Rebuilding America Now, Priorities USA Action, the ad I saw was not sponsored, and I did not see an ad*. Participants then completed the survey, which included items regarding the authenticity, source credibility, candidate characteristics, and image of Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and the sponsor of the ad. Additional items included vote intention (*Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Donald Trump, Other, I will not vote*); mode of voting (*early voting, absentee voting, voting at the poll on November 8, 2016*); and previous voting behavior. Participants were also asked to self-report their level of political efficacy and political involvement score, and a feeling thermometer measuring how they feel (hot or cold) toward Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

### *Hypotheses and Research Questions*

Based on the research reviewed above, the following hypotheses and research questions are suggested:

Past research (Cameron and Tinkham, 2015) on the 2012 U.S. presidential election has shown that when an online negative political advertisement is sponsored by the candidate, it was more successful in generating positive vote intention toward that candidate than if a super-PAC in support of the candidate sponsored the online negative political advertisement. This finding directly disputes the conventional wisdom with which the Stand by Your Ad legislation was based upon, namely that association of a candidate with an online negative political message would negatively impact that candidate’s ability to generate voter goodwill and in turn positive vote intention toward

that candidate. With this finding in mind, both hypothesis 1a and 1b test the sponsored advertisements (*Democrat-sponsored* and *Republican-sponsored*, respectively) to determine if candidate-sponsored online negative political advertisements in the 2016 U.S. presidential election will also disprove the conventional wisdom used by the Stand by Your Ad legislation.

**H 1a:** *An online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

**H 1b:** *An online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

Cameron & Tinkham (2015) found that perception is reality when it comes to the perceived source of a message. That is, perceived sponsorship acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference than does actual sponsor. Perception of sponsorship should then also be investigated in this study to determine which is a more powerful predictor of vote preference in favor of the candidate- *actual sponsor identity* or *perceived sponsor identity*. With this in mind, the study proposes two additional hypotheses- each separated into an *a* (*Democrat*) and *b* (*Republican*)- to explore how sponsor perception might be related to vote intention:

**H 2a:** *For those who are aware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

**H 2b:** *For those who are aware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

**H 3a:** *For those who are unaware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more*

*positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

***H3b:*** *For those who are unaware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

Acknowledging the differences between generational cohorts, this study also seeks to understand whether the generational cohorts (millennials, generation X, and baby boomers) differ in their perception of the sponsor and whether that in turn affects the prediction of relative vote preference. Therefore, research questions 1a, 1b, and 1c aim to identify whether actual or perceived sponsorship acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers:

**RQ 1a:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Millennials?*

**RQ 1b:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Generation X?*

**RQ 1c:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Baby Boomers?*

If actual or perceived sponsor acts as a predictor of relative vote preference in any of the research questions listed above, further analysis of the additional dependent variables should be conducted to test for the presence of mediators. Therefore, RQ 2 is proposed as a final research question:

**RQ 2:** *Do any of the secondary dependent variables act as potential mediators in the relationship between unaware millennials and relative vote preference?*

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

Participants ranged from 18 to 87 years old, with a mean age of 36.44.

Unsurprisingly, the sample was made up of largely millennials (58.1 percent) who fall into the 18 to 35 age range. Females accounted for 51.7 percent (866 females to 810 males). Interestingly, most respondents (27.2 percent) identified their political party as independent. The sample was well-educated, with the majority (91.2 percent) reporting at least some college. The sample was also politically active, with 92.6 percent reporting that they are registered voters. The majority of the sample also voted in the 2008 (67.8 percent) and 2012 (73.93 percent) U.S. presidential election and 88.6 percent planned to vote in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

**Table 1: Participant Profiles (Generations)**

<b>Generations</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Millennials (18-35)</i>	973	58.1%
<i>Generation X (36-51)</i>	468	27.9%
<i>Baby Boomers (52-70)</i>	218	13.0%
<i>Silent Generation (71-88)</i>	17	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	1676	100%

**Table 2: Participant Profiles (Gender)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Male</i>	810	48.3%
<i>Female</i>	866	51.7%
<b>Total</b>	1676	100%

**Table 3: Participant Profiles: (Highest Level of Education)**

<b>Highest Education Achieved</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Less than High School</i>	10	0.6%
<i>High School Graduate</i>	138	8.2%
<i>Some College</i>	363	21.7%
<i>2-year degree</i>	176	10.5%
<i>4-year degree</i>	636	38.0%
<i>Master's degree or equivalent</i>	265	15.8%
<i>Professional Degree</i>	56	3.3%
<i>Doctorate</i>	32	1.9%

**Table 4: Participant Profiles (Registered Voter)**

<b>Are you a Registered Voter?</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	1553	92.7%
No	94	5.6%
I don't know	29	1.7%

**Table 5: Participant Profiles (Political Identification)**

<b>What political party do you most identify with?</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Strong Democrat</i>	360	21.5%
<i>Leaning Democrat</i>	362	21.6%
<i>Independent</i>	456	27.2%
<i>Leaning Republican</i>	302	18.0%
<i>Strong Republican</i>	196	11.7%

**Table 6: Participant Profiles (Political Involvement)**

<b>Did you vote in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1136	67.8%
No	513	30.6%
I don't know	27	1.6%
<b>Did you vote in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1239	73.93%
No	418	24.94%
I don't know	19	1.13%
<b>Are you planning to vote in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1485	88.6
No	126	7.5
I don't know/I'm not sure	65	3.9

### *Development of Independent Measures*

In this experimental design, multiple scales used in previous research were included as independent variables. It is therefore important to empirically examine how these response measures both were related to each other and performed in terms of their scale reliability and validity. In order to do this, factor analyses were computed, and standardized scores were derived based on items that were highly correlated and exhibited discriminant validity. These derived scores, which differed somewhat from the scales as originally conceptualized, were then employed in subsequent analyses in order to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions.

## Perception of the Candidate and Sponsor

### *Expertise Dimension of Credibility*

Twenty-seven source expertise items were factored together and separated into three factors (Table 7a). The three factors explained 67.276 percent of the variance. All 27 items highly loaded onto their respective factors, with communality scores ranging between .856 and .604. Although standardized factor scores were used in the analysis, estimated Cronbach's alpha reliabilities are also reported. Factor one was determined to represent Hillary Clinton's expertise dimension of source credibility; it contains nine items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.946. Factor two was determined to represent the sponsor's expertise dimension of source credibility; it contains nine items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.939. Factor three was determined to represent Donald Trump's expertise dimension of source credibility; it contained nine items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.927.

### *Trustworthiness Dimension of Source Credibility*

Eighteen source trustworthiness items were factored together and separated into three factors (Table 7b). The factors explained 78.679 percent of the variance. Factor one was determined to represent Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility; the final dimension contained six items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.951. Factor two was determined to represent Donald Trump's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility; the final dimension contained six items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.949. Factor three was determined to represent the sponsor's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility; the final dimension contained six items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.937.

### *Positive Authenticity*

Twenty-six items relating to positive source authenticity were factored together, forming two dimensions (Table 8a). The factors explained 64.411 percent of the variance. Factor one was determined to represent the positive dimension of Hillary Clinton's authenticity scale. The final dimension contained 13 items with a Cronbach's Alpha Score of 0.959. Factor two was determined to represent the positive dimension of Donald Trump's authenticity scale. The final dimension contained 13 items with a Cronbach's Alpha Score of 0.947.

#### *Negative Authenticity*

Eight items relating to negative source authenticity were factored together, forming two dimensions (Table 8b). The two factors explained 62.990 percent of the item variance. Factor one was determined to represent the negative dimension of Donald Trump's authenticity scale. The final dimension contained four items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.808. Factor two was determined to represent the negative dimension of Hillary Clinton's authenticity scale. The final dimension contained four items with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.796.

#### Actual Sponsor

The independent variable *actual sponsor* indicates the actual sponsor of each advertisement. Actual sponsors for the Republican ad included: *Donald Trump*, *Rebuilding America Now*, *Republican Advertisement/No Sponsor*, and *No Advertisement/No Sponsor (Control)*. The Democrat ad actual sponsors included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Priorities USA Action*, *Democrat Advertisement/No Sponsor*, and *No Advertisement/No Sponsor (Control)*. When analyzing actual sponsor perceptions, the actual sponsor measure is used for the independent variable.

### Sponsor Awareness

Originally meant to be a confirmation of sponsor manipulation, respondents were unaware of the actual sponsor as nearly as much (generation X and baby boomers) or more frequently (millennials) than they were aware of the actual sponsor. Given that this study included five additional seconds of sponsor identification (seven seconds total) compared to actual online negative political advertisements and such large percentages of each generational cohort could not correctly identify the actual sponsor of the online negative political advertisement, this finding merited additional study.

### Perceived Sponsor

With such a large percentage of each generational cohort incorrectly identifying the actual sponsor of each online negative political advertisement, the perceived sponsor measure was created to determine how the perception of the sponsor differed from the actual sponsor. The item was developed from the original manipulation question, “*Who sponsored the advertisement you watched in this study?*” Participants were asked to choose one of the following available choices. Potential answers included: *Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Priorities USA Action, Rebuilding America Now, The ad I saw did not have a sponsor, I did not see an ad, and I don’t know*. Perception of the sponsor is used as the independent variable when analyzing the unaware cohort, as the actual sponsor independent variable would yield little discernable results.

### *Development of Dependent Measures*

#### Vote Intention

The dependent variable *Vote Intention* is a measure of the intended 2016 U.S. presidential election vote reported by each respondent. The item, “*For whom will you vote in the 2016 Presidential Election*” included the following responses: *Donald Trump* ( $n=495$ , 29.5%), *Hillary Clinton* ( $n=853$ , 50.9%), *Gary Johnson* ( $n=86$ , 5.1%), *Jill Stein* ( $n=52$ , 3.1%), *Undecided* ( $n=81$ , 4.8%), *Other* ( $n=19$ , 1.1%), and *I will not vote* ( $n=90$ , 5.4%). Respondents who chose *Gary Johnson* or *Jill Stein* were included in the *Other* item so that the final vote intention variable included, *Donald Trump* ( $n=495$ , 29.5%), *Hillary Clinton* ( $n=853$ , 50.9%), *Other* ( $n=157$ , 9.4%), *Undecided* ( $n=81$ , 4.8%), and *I will not vote* ( $n=90$ , 5.4%). While this measure does indicate each respondent’s intended vote, it fails to report the strength of that vote. With this in mind, the *Relative Vote Preference* measure was created.

#### Relative Vote Preference

A more sensitive measure of vote intention in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was achieved by merging two separate feeling thermometer variables regarding Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton with the vote intention variable. The resulting *relative vote preference* variable is further described below.

Each of the feeling thermometer variables asked participants to indicate how “hot” or “cold” they felt toward Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Each feeling thermometer variable contained a sliding scale with a minimum score of 0 to indicate a “cold” feeling toward the candidate and a maximum score of 100 to represent a “hot” feeling toward the candidate. Participants could choose any number between the minimum and maximum values to describe how they felt toward each candidate. The

difference between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's feeling thermometer scores were then assessed, with those who felt more "hot" toward Donald Trump having a positive feeling thermometer score and those who felt more "hot" toward Hillary Clinton receiving a negative feeling thermometer score.

The *feeling thermometer* difference score and *vote choice* variables were then merged together by ensuring that each participant's feeling thermometer score reflected their vote intention selection. Those participants whose feeling thermometer score was not consistent with vote intention (n=58) were removed from the study. Of these 58 respondents, 27 with a negative feeling thermometer difference score (which would indicate feeling more "hot" toward Hillary Clinton) reported that they planned to vote for Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Similarly, 31 respondents with a positive feeling thermometer difference score (indicating feeling more "hot" toward Donald Trump), reported that they planned to vote for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; 99 respondents had scores of 100, indicating the maximum relative vote preference score in favor of Donald Trump. Similarly, 158 respondents had scores of -100, indicating the maximum relative vote preference score in favor of Hillary Clinton. A total of 94 respondents had scores of 0, indicating a voter "on the fence" in regard to their relative vote choice.

### *Hypothesis 1 Testing*

To determine if an online negative political advertisement sponsored by a candidate and attacking the challenger candidate would be more effective in generating positive vote preference for the candidate than the same ad sponsored by a super-PAC in support of the candidate, a crosstab analysis comparing the *actual sponsor* and *vote*

*intention* was run for each advertisement (*Democrat-sponsored* and *Republican-sponsored*). It should be noted that both those participants who were *aware* of the actual sponsor and those who were *unaware* of the actual sponsor were included in this analysis.

***H 1a:*** *An online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

To test hypothesis 1a - whether a Democrat advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton would result in more positive vote intention than the same ad sponsored by Priorities USA Action, the super-PAC supporting her - actual Democrat sponsor and vote intention was analyzed in a crosstab analysis. Actual Democrat advertisement sponsors included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Priorities USA Action*, *Democrat Ad/No Sponsor*, and *No Ad (Control)*. Vote intention items included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Donald Trump*, *Undecided*, *Other*, and *I will not Vote*. See Table 13 for a visual depiction of the following information.

In this sample, Hillary Clinton was the clear winner over Donald Trump in every condition. However, Priorities USA Action did succeed in generating more positive vote intention (51.9%) for Hillary Clinton in their sponsored advertisement versus when Hillary Clinton herself sponsored the online negative political advertisement (51.4%). The candidate-sponsored advertisement did perform better than both the control group (49.6%) and the Democrat advertisement/no sponsor (47.9%) condition, though. The relationship between Actual Sponsor and Vote Intention for the Democrat advertisement group was not significant,  $F(1,952) = .238, p = .626$  (NS).

Analysis of the data shows that, when including both those participants who are aware and unaware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored

by the candidate's campaign (Hillary Clinton) is not the most successful in terms of generating positive favor for the sponsoring candidate. Instead, it is the super-PAC sponsored advertisement (Priorities USA Action) that generated more positive favor for the candidate supported by the super-PAC. The directional hypothesis H 1a must be rejected since the relationship between actual sponsor and vote intention was not significant and it was the super-PAC-sponsored condition (not the candidate-sponsored condition) that generated the most positive favor for the candidate.

**H 1b:** *An online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

To test hypothesis 1b – whether a Republican ad sponsored by Donald Trump would result in more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by Rebuilding America Now, the super-PAC supporting him - actual Republican sponsor and vote intention was analyzed in a crosstab analysis. Republican advertisement sponsors included *Donald Trump*, *Rebuilding America Now*, *Republican Ad/No Sponsor*, and *No Sponsor/No Ad (Control)*. Vote intention items included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Donald Trump*, *Undecided*, *Other*, and *I will not vote*. See Table 14 for a visual depiction of the following information.

Vote percentages again put Hillary Clinton in the clear lead against Donald Trump in every sponsor condition. Donald Trump, though, did surpass the super-PAC supporting him (Rebuilding America Now) in terms of generating more positive vote intention (30.6% to 29.4%, respectively). Donald Trump's candidate-sponsored advertisement also successfully achieved higher vote intention scores than the Republican advertisement/no sponsor condition (28.0%) and the control condition (29.0%). While

this was quite an interesting finding, the relationship between actual sponsor and vote intention in the Republican advertisement group was again not significant  $F(1,955) = .069, p = .792$  (NS).

Analysis of the data shows that, for the Republican advertisement condition, the candidate-sponsored condition was the most successful in garnering votes in favor of the candidate. The directional H 1b hypothesis must be rejected, though, as the relationship between the actual sponsor and vote intention was not significant.

### *Hypothesis 2 Testing*

Hypothesis 1 tested whether actual sponsorship was a significant predictor of vote intention for each of the ads in the study. While the super-PAC sponsored advertisement generated more positive vote intention toward the candidate in the Democrat-sponsored advertisement, the candidate-sponsored advertisement managed to generate more positive vote intention for the candidate in the Republican-sponsored condition. However, neither formed a significant relationship with the dependent variable, vote intention. Taking into account the large number of participants unable to correctly identify the actual sponsor in each condition, this study proposes a second hypothesis. Hypothesis 2 is identical to the original hypothesis, except that it solely investigates the relationship between *actual* sponsor and vote intention among those participants who were able to correctly identify the sponsor of the advertisement they watched. Therefore, hypothesis 2 states:

***H 2a:*** *For those who are aware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

To test hypothesis 2a, a crosstab analysis comparing the *actual sponsor* and *vote intention* was run for each ad (*Democrat-sponsored* and *Republican-sponsored*). It should be noted that only those participants who were *aware* of the actual sponsor were included in this analysis. See Table 15 for a visual depiction of the following information.

Democrat advertisement sponsors included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Priorities USA Action*, *Democrat ad/ No Sponsor*, *No Ad/No Sponsor (Control)*. Vote intention items included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Donald Trump*, *Undecided*, *Other*, and *I will not vote*. While Hillary Clinton again held the winning vote in each of the sponsor conditions, 48.8 percent of those who watched a negative political ad sponsored by Hillary Clinton responded positively to her, whereas 50.4 percent of those who watched a negative political ad sponsored by Priorities USA Action responded positively for Clinton. Clinton's sponsorship did result in higher vote percentages than both the Democrat Ad/No Sponsor group (44.4 percent) and the control group (46.4 percent), however. The relationship between Actual Sponsor and Vote Intention for the Democrat advertisement group was not significant,  $F(1,557) = .353, p = .553$  (NS).

Analysis of the data shows that, for the Democrat advertisement condition, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by the candidate's campaign is not the most successful in terms of generating positive favor for the sponsoring candidate. Instead, it is the super-PAC sponsored advertisement that generated more positive favor for the candidate supported by the super-PAC. The directional hypothesis H 2a must be rejected since the relationship between actual sponsor and vote intention was not significant and it was the super-PAC sponsored condition (not the candidate sponsored condition) that generated the most positive favor for the candidate.

**H 2b:** *For those who are aware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

To test hypothesis 2b, whether, when aware of the sponsor, a Republican advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump would result in more positive vote intention than if the same advertisement was sponsored by Rebuilding America Now, the super-PAC supporting him, actual Republican sponsor and vote intention was analyzed in a crosstab analysis. See Table 16 for a visual depiction of the following information.

Republican advertisement sponsors included: *Donald Trump*, *Rebuilding America Now*, *Republican Ad/No Sponsor*, and *No Ad/ No Sponsor (Control)*. Vote intention items included: *Hillary Clinton*, *Donald Trump*, *Undecided*, *Other*, and *I will not vote*. Hillary Clinton was again the winner in each condition; however, Donald Trump did come close to eclipsing Clinton in the Republican Ad/No Sponsor condition, in which Clinton received 45.9 percent of the vote and Trump received 43.2 percent. Trump received the highest percentage of votes in this condition, followed by the candidate sponsored condition (34.9 percent), the Rebuilding America Now condition (30.8 percent), and the control condition (29.0 percent). Again, the relationship between actual sponsor and vote intention in the Republican advertisement group was not significant  $F(1,484) = .292, p = .589$  (NS).

Analysis of the data shows that, for the Republican advertisement condition, an online negative political ad without a sponsor was the most successful in garnering votes in favor of the candidate. However, the directional H 2b hypothesis must be rejected as the relationship between the actual sponsor and vote intention was not significant and it was the condition without a sponsor (not the candidate-sponsored condition) that generated the most positive vote intention for the candidate.

### *Hypothesis 3 Testing*

The previous two hypotheses tested for possible significant relationships between the sponsor of the advertisement and vote intention. Hypothesis 1a and 1b tested for significance between the sponsor of the advertisement and vote intention among those respondents who correctly *and* incorrectly identified the sponsor of the advertisement. Results of both directional hypotheses were non-significant and were therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2a and 2b investigated the relationship between the sponsor and vote intention among those respondents who correctly identified the sponsor of the advertisement they watched in this study. Like H 1a and H 1b though, both directional hypotheses failed to form significant relationships between actual sponsor and vote intention and were therefore rejected.

Like Hypotheses 2a and 2b, Hypotheses 3a and 3b investigate a potential significant relationship between sponsor and vote intention. However, Hypotheses 3a and 3b focus on those respondents who *incorrectly* identified the sponsor of the advertisement they watched in this study. Hypothesis 3a states:

***H 3a:*** *For those who are unaware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Hillary Clinton will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton.*

To test hypothesis 3a, a crosstab analysis of *perceived* sponsor (only those respondents unable to correctly identify the correct sponsor of the advertisement) and vote intention was run for the Democrat advertisement. Results are visually depicted in Table 17 and discussed below.

While *actual* Democrat advertisement sponsors included: *Hillary Clinton, Priorities USA Action, Democrat ad/ No Sponsor, No Ad/No Sponsor (Control)*, the *perceived* sponsors reported also included: *Donald Trump, Rebuilding America Now, Ad was not sponsored, I did not see an ad, and I don't know*. Vote intention items remained the same and included: *Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Undecided, Other, and I will not vote*.

Of those who incorrectly perceived Hillary Clinton to have sponsored the advertisement watched in this study, 62.3 percent also voted for Hillary. However, Priorities USA Action still garners more positive vote preference (73.3 percent) toward Hillary when the super-PAC is perceived (although incorrectly) to have sponsored the online negative political advertisement. The relationship between perceived sponsor and vote intention for the Democrat advertisement was non-significant,  $F(1,432) = 3.391$ ,  $p = .066$  (NS), meaning that H 3a must be rejected as it is a non-significant, directional hypothesis.

***H 3b:*** *For those who are unaware of the sponsor, an online negative political advertisement sponsored by Donald Trump will result in a more positive vote intention than if the same ad was sponsored by a super-PAC in support of Donald Trump.*

To test hypothesis 3b, a crosstab analysis of *perceived* sponsor (those respondents unable to correctly identify the correct sponsor of the advertisement only) and vote intention was run for the Republican advertisement. Results are visually depicted in Table 18 and discussed below.

While *actual* Republican advertisement sponsors included *Donald Trump, Rebuilding America Now, Republican Ad/No Sponsor, and No Sponsor/No Ad (Control)*, respondents also reported perceiving the sponsor to be: *Hillary Clinton, Priorities USA*

*Action, Ad was not sponsored, I did not see an ad, and I don't know.* Vote intention items remained the same and included: *Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Undecided, Other,* and *I will not vote.*

Of those who incorrectly identified Donald Trump as the sponsor of the advertisement watched in this study, 31.9 percent chose him as their candidate choice. This is 6.9 points higher than the positive vote intention garnered by Rebuilding America Now, the super-PAC in support of Donald Trump. For the first time in this study, the vote preference for a candidate when that candidate sponsors the advertisement is more positive than when the advertisement is sponsored by a super-PAC in support of that candidate. Results of this study are also significant,  $F(1,470) = 13.055$ ,  $p = .000$ , meaning that this directional hypothesis can be accepted.

Perhaps what is most interesting about these results is the fact that a large number of people ( $n=77$ ) incorrectly identified Donald Trump as the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement that *attacked him*. Likewise, 114 respondents incorrectly chose Hillary Clinton as the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement that *attacked her*. Another interesting finding in these results is the number of respondents who chose either super-PAC (Priorities USA Action,  $n = 15$  or Rebuilding America Now,  $n = 7$ ) as the perceived sponsor of the advertisement in this study. These low numbers suggest that super-PACs are not well-known or understood, and if a respondent isn't sure of the sponsor of an online negative political advertisement, a PAC is the least likely to be assigned the perceived sponsorship role.

It could be posited that, since this study was not completed in a laboratory setting, participants were processing the information much more *peripherally* than *centrally*. By allowing participants to watch the study's political advertisements on their laptops

through the popular and familiar video-hosting platform, YouTube, less attention and energy went into the process of watching the advertisement. This study also acknowledges the possibility that respondents were paying little attention to the advertisement and simply assigned sponsorship based on one of several possible speakers in each of the videos, not taking care to understand who the *actual* sponsor was. These results speak to the amount of advertisements, and especially political advertisements, that we see every day in the weeks and even months leading up to a presidential election.

### *Research Question 1 Testing*

To test RQ 1, both actual and perceived sponsor were tested for a relationship with relative vote preference in each of the age cohorts (*millennials*, *generation X*, and *baby boomers*). A more sensitive measure of vote intention, relative vote preference was measured so as to have a better understanding of the subtle differences in each generational cohort and among those participants who are aware and unaware of the actual sponsor of the online negative political advertisement. Results are also depicted visually in Table 19.

**RQ 1a:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Millennials?*

To test Research Question 1a, *perceived* sponsor and *actual* sponsor were tested as potential predictors of relative vote preference. In the millennial cohort, the relationship between actual sponsorship and relative vote preference was not significant,

$F(1,459) = 1.977, p = .160$  (NS); however, the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference was found to be significant  $F(1,510) = 4.034, p = .045$ .

Because perceived sponsorship significantly predicted relative vote preference among those millennials who were unable to correctly identify the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement they watched in this study, further analysis should be conducted to determine whether any of the additional dependent variables in the study act as mediators in the relationship.

**RQ 1b:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Generation X?*

To test Research Question 1b, *perceived* sponsor and *actual* sponsor were tested as potential predictors of relative vote preference. For those in Generation X, actual sponsor did not form a significant relationship with relative vote preference,  $F(1, 249) = 1.658, p = .199$ . Perceived sponsor also failed to form a significant relationship with relative vote preference,  $F(1,214) = 3.189, p = .076$  (NS).

**RQ 1c:** *Which- perceived or actual sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- acts as a more powerful predictor of relative vote preference among Baby Boomers?*

To test Research Question 1c, *perceived* sponsor and *actual* sponsor were tested as a potential predictors of relative vote preference. Within the baby boomer cohort,

actual sponsor did not form a significant relationship with relative vote preference,  $F(1,116) = 1.883, p = .173$  (NS). Perceived sponsor also failed to form a significant relationship with the dependent variable,  $F(1,96) = .001, p = .970$  (NS).

### *Research Question 2 Testing*

RQ 1a determined a significant relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference among those millennials who were unable to identify the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement. This relationship should be examined further to test for mediation by one of the additional dependent variables in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. Therefore, this study proposes a second research question to test for the presence of potential mediators in this relationship:

***RQ 2:*** *Do any of the secondary dependent variables act as potential mediators in the relationship between unaware millennials and relative vote preference?*

### *Mediation Analysis*

To test RQ 2, a mediation analysis must be completed. The following literature and analysis details each step in the process of identifying and confirming potential mediators.

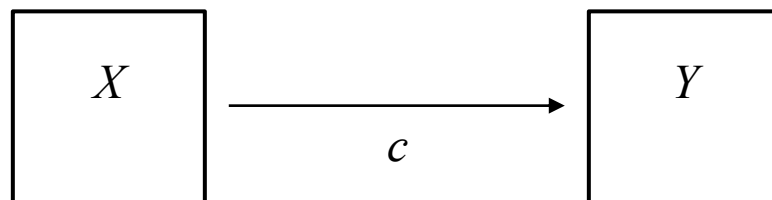
#### Literature

Mediation analysis among the social sciences is becoming more and more common, with only 36 mentions of mediation in 1980 compared to 1,198 in 2010 (Kenny, 2018). The *causal steps method* to mediation analysis, made popular by Baron and Kenny (1986), has been used to determine the vast number of published mediation analyses and is still used to some extent today. The causal steps method- in which the mediator is presumed to cause the outcome and not vice versa- relies on four steps, outlined below. A coordinating graphical depiction is also shown in Figures 1 and 2.

1. Causal variable ( $X$ ) significantly predicts outcome variable ( $Y$ ). If the null hypothesis that the total effect  $\tau_c$  equals zero is rejected, the criterion is met, and the second step may proceed. If not, all testing stops (Figure 1, *path c*).

#### **Figure 1: Unmediated Model**

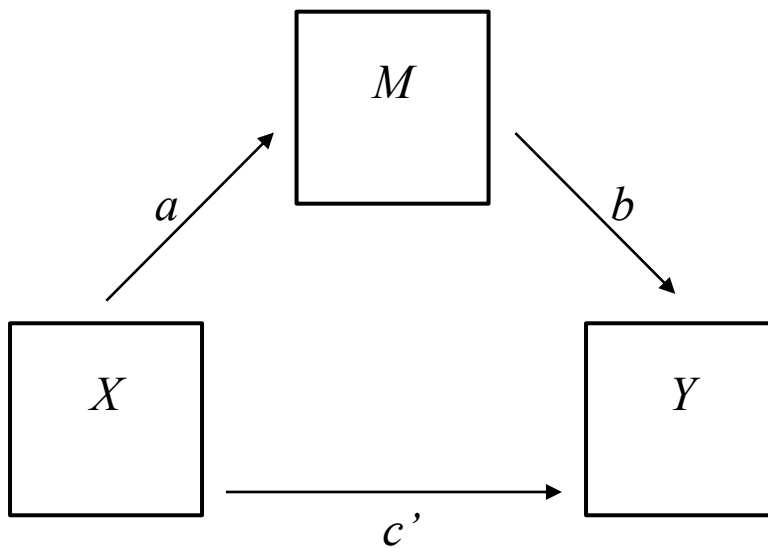
*The total effect ( $C$ ) of the causal variable ( $X$ ) on the outcome variable ( $Y$ )*



2. Causal variable ( $X$ ) significantly predicts the process variable ( $M$ ). If *path a* is statistically significant, the second criterion is met, and the third step may proceed. If *path a* is not significant, all testing stops (Figure 2, *path a*).
3. Process model ( $M$ ) significantly predicts outcome variable ( $Y$ ) controlling for causal variable ( $X$ ). If *path b* is statistically significant, the third criterion is met, and the fourth step may proceed. If *path b* is not significant, all testing stops (Figure 2, *path b*).
4. If steps 1, 2, and 3 are all met with statistical significance, the direct effect of causal variable  $X$  (Figure 2, *path c'*) is compared to the total effect (Figure 1, *path c*). If *path c'* is closer to zero than *path c* and *c'* is not statistically significant, process variable ( $M$ ) is said to be a complete mediator in the relationship of causal variable ( $X$ ) on outcome variable ( $Y$ ). If *path c'* is closer to zero than *path c* but *path c'* is statistically significant, process variable ( $M$ ) is said to be a partial mediator in the relationship of causal variable ( $X$ ) on outcome ( $Y$ ) (Hayes, 2018).

### Figure 2: Simple Mediation Model

*The effect of the causal variable ( $X$ ) on the outcome variable ( $Y$ ) is mediated by the process variable ( $M$ ), whereas **path  $a$**  measures the effect of ( $X$ ) on ( $M$ ), **path  $b$**  measures the effect of ( $M$ ) on ( $Y$ ), controlling for ( $X$ ). The causal variable ( $X$ ) influences the outcome variable ( $Y$ ) directly (**path  $c'$** ) and indirectly (**path  $ab$** ) through the mediator ( $M$ ) (Hayes, 2013, p. 1919).*



According to Hayes (2012), “modern thinking does not require evidence of a total effect prior to the estimation of direct and indirect effects” (p.13). Other studies (Cerin & MacKinnon, 2009; Hayes, 2009; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, and Petty, 2011; Shrout & Bolger, 2002; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010) agree with this notion, although in some cases the total effect will be observed to be significantly different from zero. Instead of making inferences based on the statistical significance of the paths that define it ( $a$  and  $b$ ), Hayes (2012) suggests instead to use the explicit quantification of the indirect effect itself and asymmetric bootstrap confidence intervals. Hayes also notes that, while the Sobel test

is popular and widely used, it is “hard to justify and recommend as it assumes incorrectly that the sampling distribution of the product of the paths that define the indirect effect is normal (Hayes, 2009). According to Hayes (2018), a “rejection of the null hypothesis that the indirect effect is zero (or an interval estimate that doesn’t include zero is sufficient to support a claim of mediation of the effect of  $X$  on  $Y$  through  $M$ ” (p. 43).

While Hayes (2018) suggests that the tests of significant for the individual paths  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are not required to determine whether  $M$  mediates the effect of  $X$  on  $Y$ , this study relies on a combination of significance testing and indirect effect testing to confirm mediation. For this study, we will use significance to initially test mediation. Once mediation is implied by significant relationships in paths  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ , the indirect effect will be examined to ensure the bootstrap confidence for the indirect effect does not straddle zero, which provides evidence of a statistically significant indirect effect.

### Analysis

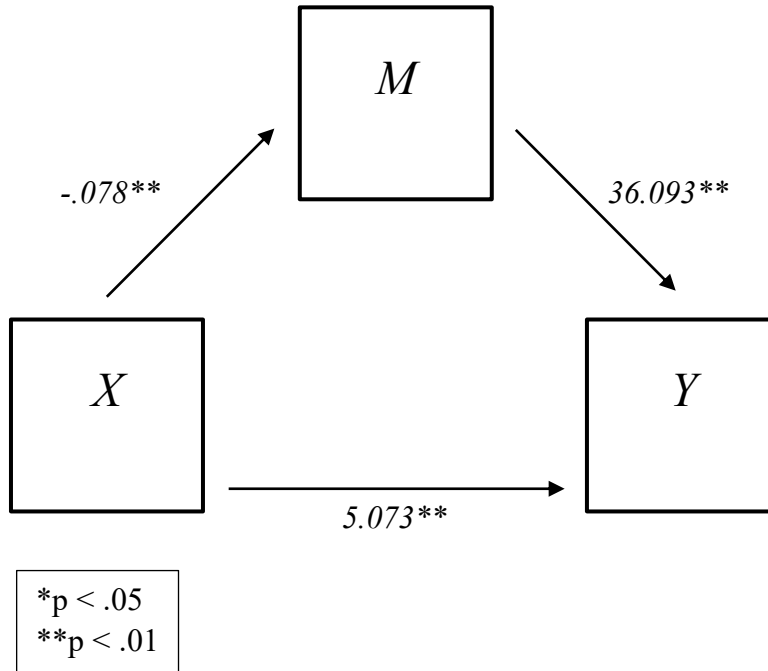
To assess whether any of the covariate variables act as mediators, the computational procedure PROCESS will be used. Designed by Andrew Hayes, PROCESS is a “computation tool for observed variable path analysis-based moderation and mediation analysis as well as their integration as conditional process analysis. In addition to estimating model coefficients, standard errors,  $t$ - and  $p$ -values, and confidence intervals using ordinary least squares regression, PROCESS generates direct and indirect effects in mediation models” (Hayes, 2018, p.551).

In research question 1, the causal variable ( $X$ ) was shown to significantly predict the outcome variable ( $Y$ ) among unaware millennials. Therefore, since the null hypothesis that the total effect  $\gamma c$  equals zero was rejected, the first criterion for mediation was met, and the second step may proceed.

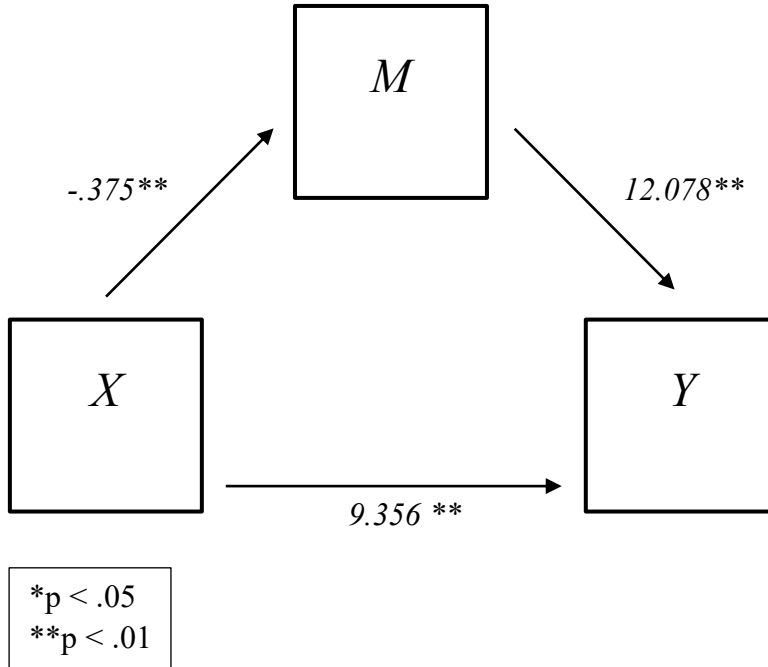
The second criterion for mediation states that the causal variable ( $X$ ) must significantly predict the process variable ( $M$ ). Perceived sponsorship ( $X$ ) predicted several potential mediators, including: Donald Trump Expertise,  $F(1,510) = 12.356, p = .000$ ; Sponsor Expertise,  $F(1,266) = 40.571, p = .000$ ; Donald Trump Trustworthiness,  $F(1,510) = 20.843, p = .0000$ ; Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness,  $F(1,510) = 26.462, p = .000$ ; Sponsor Trustworthiness,  $F(1,266) = 40.849, p = .000$ ; Hillary Clinton Positive Authenticity,  $F(1,510) = 25.625, p = .000$ ; and Hillary Clinton Negative Authenticity,  $F(1,510) = 19.152, p = .000$ .

The third criterion of mediation testing stipulates that the process model ( $M$ ) significantly predicts outcome variable ( $Y$ ) controlling for causal variable ( $X$ ). If *path b* is statistically significant, the third criterion is met, and the fourth step may proceed. This third criterion was significant in all of the potential mediators: Donald Trump Expertise,  $F(2,509) = 262.227, p = .000$ ; Sponsor Expertise,  $F(2,265) = 6.487, p = .001$ ; Donald Trump Trustworthiness,  $F(2,509) = 278.343, p = .000$ ; Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness,  $F(2,509) = 200.145, p = .000$ ; Sponsor Trustworthiness,  $F(2,265) = 3.326, p = .032$ ; Hillary Clinton Positive Authenticity,  $F(2,509) = 139.576, p = .000$ ; and Hillary Clinton Negative Authenticity,  $F(2,509) = 5.022, p = .007$ .

According to Hayes (2018), if steps 1, 2, and 3 are all met with statistical significance, the direct effect of causal variable  $X$  (Figure 2, *path c'*) is compared to the total effect (Figure 1, *path c*). If *path c'* is closer to zero than *path c* and *c'* is not statistically significant, process variable ( $M$ ) is said to be a complete mediator in the relationship of causal variable ( $X$ ) on outcome variable ( $Y$ ). If *path c'* is closer to zero than *path c* but *path c'* is statistically significant, process variable ( $M$ ) is said to be a partial mediator in the relationship of causal variable ( $X$ ) on outcome ( $Y$ ).

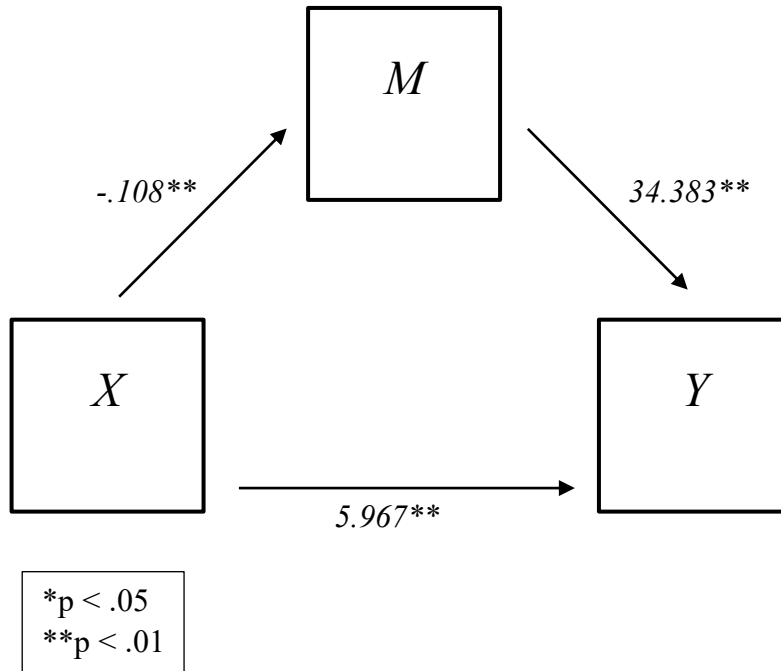
**Figure 3:** *Donald Trump Expertise Indirect Effect Analysis*

The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the Donald Trump expertise dimension of source credibility (Figure 3) is -2.810, which is the product of path  $a$  (-.078) and path  $b$  (36.093) and is also the difference between path  $c$  and path  $c'$  ( $2.263 - 5.073 = -2.810$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are -4.413 to -1.197. These confidence intervals do not straddle zero, meaning that the Donald Trump expertise dimension of source credibility may continue to be analyzed as a potential mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. Because path  $c'$  is significant, the Donald Trump expertise dimension of source credibility must be analyzed as a potential partial mediator. However, it fails that test since path  $c$  is closer to zero than path  $c'$ . Therefore, the Donald Trump expertise dimension of source credibility must be rejected as a potential mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference.

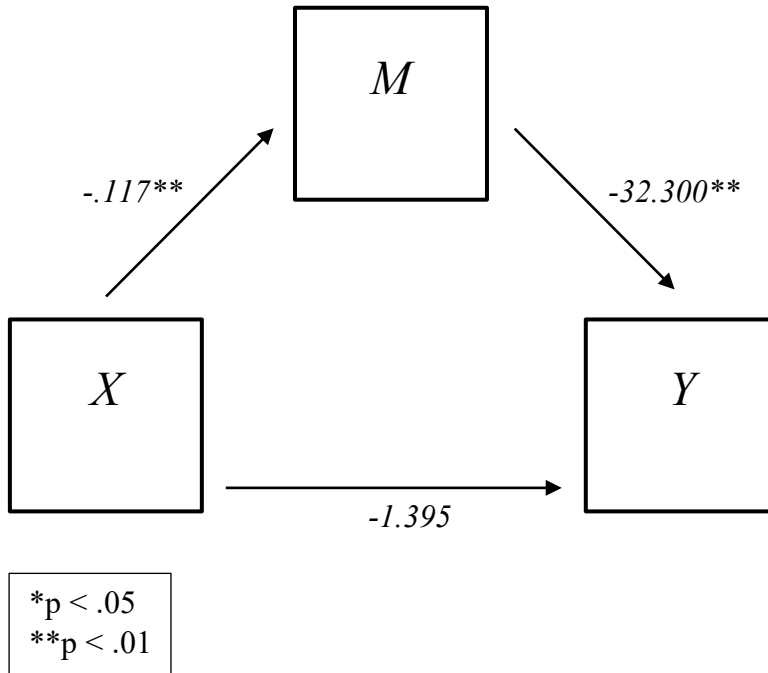
**Figure 4:** *Sponsor Expertise Indirect Effect Analysis*

The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the sponsor expertise dimension of source credibility (Figure 4) is  $-4.527$ , which is the product of path  $a$  ( $-.375$ ) and path  $b$  ( $12.078$ ) and is also the difference between path  $c$  and path  $c'$  ( $4.829 - 9.356 = -4.527$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are  $-8.666$  to  $-1.342$ . These confidence intervals do not straddle zero, meaning that sponsor expertise passes the first test in the final mediation process. Because path  $c'$  is significant, sponsor expertise must be analyzed as a potential *partial* mediator. However, further analysis rules out sponsor expertise as a potential partial mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference since path  $c$  is closer to zero than path  $c'$ .

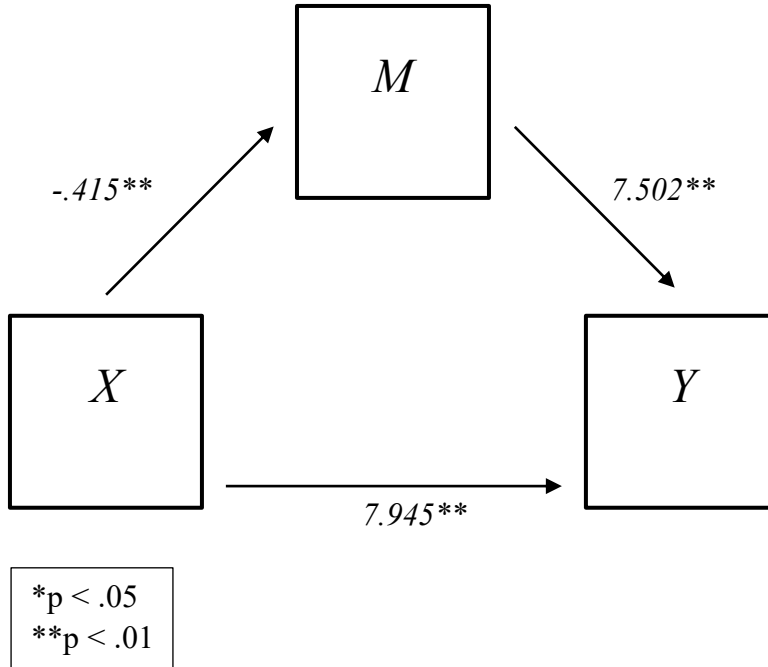
**Figure 5:** *Donald Trump Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*



The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the Donald Trump trustworthiness dimension of source credibility (Figure 5) is -3.704, which is the product of path *a* (-.108) and path *b* (34.383) and is also the difference between path *c* and path *c'* ( $2.263 - 5.967 = -3.704$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are -5.219 to -2.075. As this does not straddle zero, Donald Trump trustworthiness may proceed to the final mediation analysis testing. Because path *c'* is significant, Donald Trump trustworthiness must be tested as a potential *partial* mediator. However, since path *c* is closer to zero than path *c'*, this study must reject the Donald Trump trustworthiness dimension of source credibility as a potential partial mediator.

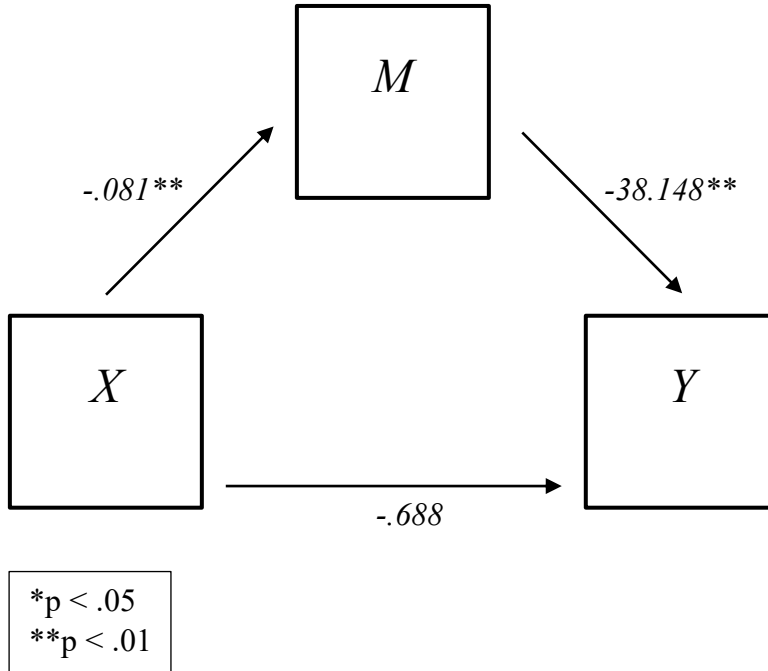
**Figure 6:** *Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*

The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the Hillary Clinton trustworthiness dimension of source credibility (Figure 6) is 3.782, which is the product of path  $a$  ( $-.117$ ) and path  $b$  ( $-32.300$ ) and is also the difference between path  $c$  and path  $c'$  ( $2.387 - -1.395 = 3.782$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are 2.396 to 5.220. This does not straddle zero, meaning the mediation analysis can continue. Because path  $c'$  is non-significant ( $p = .097$ , NS), the analysis can continue to analyze the Hillary Clinton trustworthiness dimension of source credibility as a potential *full* mediator. Additionally, path  $c'$  ( $-1.395$ ) is closer to zero than path  $c$  ( $2.387$ ). Therefore, the mediation testing can confidently accept the Hillary Clinton trustworthiness dimension of source credibility as a full mediator of the relationship between perceived source credibility and relative vote preference.

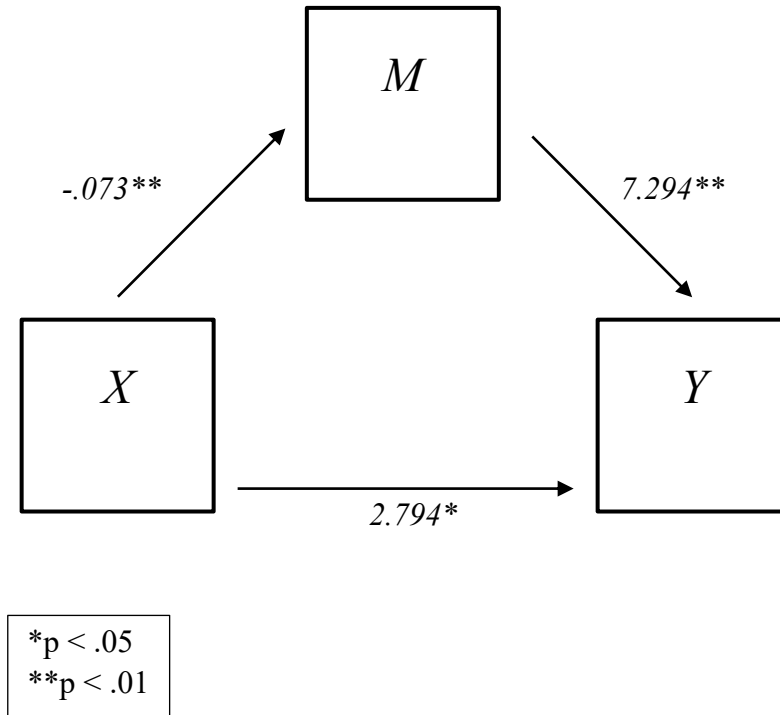
**Figure 7:** *Sponsor Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*

The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the sponsor trustworthiness dimension of source credibility (Figure 7) is -3.116, which is the product of  $a$  (-.415) and  $b$  (7.502) and is also the difference between  $c$  and  $c'$  ( $4.8129 - 7.945 = -3.116$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are -7.074 to .087. As this does not straddle zero, the mediation testing can continue. Because path  $c'$  is significant, sponsor trustworthiness must be tested as a potential *partial* mediator. However, sponsor trustworthiness must be rejected as a potential partial mediator due to path  $c$  being closer to zero than path  $c'$ .

**Figure 8:** *Hillary Clinton Positive Authenticity Indirect Effect Analysis*



The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the Hillary Clinton positive dimension of authenticity (Figure 8) is 3.075, which is the product of path  $a$  ( $-.081$ ) and path  $b$  ( $-.38.148$ ) and is also the difference between path  $c$  and path  $c'$  ( $2.387 - -.688 = 3.075$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are 1.845 to 4.370. As these confidence intervals do not straddle zero, the mediation testing may continue. Since path  $c'$  is non-significant ( $p = .441$ , NS), the Hillary Clinton positive dimension of authenticity can be tested as a potential *full* mediator. Furthermore, path  $c'$  ( $-.688$ ) is closer to zero than path  $c$  ( $2.387$ ), meaning that Hillary Clinton's positive dimension of authenticity is confirmed as a full mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference.

**Figure 9:** *Hillary Clinton Negative Authenticity Indirect Effect Analysis*

The indirect effect of perceived sponsor on relative vote preference through the Hillary Clinton negative dimension of authenticity (Figure 9) is  $-.531$ , which is the product of path  $a$  ( $-.073$ ) and path  $b$  ( $7.294$ ) and is also the difference between path  $c$  and path  $c'$  ( $2.263 - 2.794 = -.531$ ). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect are  $-1.092$  to  $-.019$ . These bootstrap confidence intervals cross zero, meaning that there is no evidence for the Hillary Clinton negative dimension of authenticity to be a mediator. Additional evidence to reject the Hillary Clinton negative dimension of authenticity as a potential mediator include the fact that path  $c'$  is significant (meaning that the variable should be tested as a potential *partial* mediator rather than a potential *full* mediator). Path  $c$  is also closer to zero than path  $c'$ . Any of these findings would disqualify the Hillary

Clinton trustworthiness dimension as being a potential mediator in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Through an analysis of actual and perceived sponsor as potential predictors of vote intention and relative vote preference, this study aimed to further study previous research findings (Cameron and Tinkham, 2015) illustrating a significant relationship of the causal variable, perceived sponsor ( $X$ ) on the outcome variable, relative vote preference ( $Y$ ). This study was also intended to be used as a means of further exploring earlier findings regarding the mediation of the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference by the sponsor's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility ( $M$ ).

Data for this study was collected through the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), generating a sample of 3,157 participants. That sample was drastically reduced to 1,676 participants due to participants not completing the survey ( $n=818$ ), not meeting requirements of the study ( $n=653$ ), or not consenting to their data being used ( $n=10$ ). The sample was further divided into generational cohorts of millennials ( $n=973$ ), generation X ( $n=468$ ), baby boomers ( $n=218$ ), and the silent generation ( $n=17$ ). Due to the small number of participants who fell into the silent generation category, that generational cohort was removed from the sample. The final analysis consisted of 1,676 participants who were part of either the millennial, generation X, or baby boomer generational cohorts.

The main independent variable, sponsor (*actual* and *perceived*), was tested as a potential predictor of vote intention in Hypothesis 1a (*Democrat sponsored advertisement*) and Hypothesis 1b (*Republican sponsored advertisement*). Those who were both aware and unaware of the sponsor were included in this analysis to determine if there was an overall effect between sponsor and vote intention. Hypothesis 1a and 1b also investigated whether a candidate-sponsored advertisement in each of the conditions (*Democrat Sponsored Advertisement* and *Republican Sponsored Advertisement*) would generate more favorable vote intentions toward that candidate than if the advertisements were sponsored by super-PACs in support of the candidate. In the first condition (H 1a), Priorities USA Action, the super-PAC in support of Hillary Clinton, was more successful in generating positive vote intention for Hillary Clinton than when Hillary Clinton herself appeared as the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement. The relationship between sponsor and vote intention in Hypothesis 1a was also non-significant ( $p=.626$ , *NS*) and the directional hypothesis H 1a was rejected. In the second condition (H 1b), Donald Trump succeeded in generating more positive vote intention for himself in the candidate-sponsored condition than did Rebuilding America Now, the super-PAC supporting him (30.6 percent to 29.4 percent, respectively). However, the relationship between sponsor and vote intention was non-significant in this condition as well ( $p = .792$ , *NS*), forcing the rejection of directional hypothesis H 1b.

Those participants *unable* to correctly identify (*unaware participants*) the sponsor of the advertisement watched in this study ( $n = 836$ ) was near even with those *able* to correctly identify (*aware participants*) the sponsor of the advertisement watched in this study ( $n = 840$ ). While this question was originally intended to be used as a manipulation check to verify that manipulation of the sponsor of the advertisement was successful, the

large number of respondents unable to correctly identify the sponsor of the advertisement watched in this study was cause for concern. Therefore, the study included two additional hypotheses (H 2a & 2b and H 3a & 3b) that closely mirrored H 1a and 1b but separated *unaware* (*perceived sponsor*) and *aware* (*actual sponsor*) participants. In Hypothesis 2a, *actual* sponsor was crossed with vote intention in the Democrat advertisement condition to determine whether, when the participants are *aware* of the actual sponsor of the online negative political advertisement watched in this study, the candidate-sponsored advertisement would prove to be a more positive predictor of vote intention for that candidate than the super-PAC sponsored advertisement. Again, Priorities USA Action, the super-PAC supporting Clinton, proved to generate more positive vote intention as a sponsor than the Hillary Clinton sponsored advertisement condition (50.4 percent to 48.4 percent, respectively). However, the relationship between the actual sponsor and vote intention for the Democrat sponsored ad was non-significant ( $p = .553$ , *NS*) and the directional H 2a was rejected. Hypothesis 2b tested whether, among those participants who correctly identified the sponsor of the advertisement in the Republican sponsored advertisement condition, the candidate-sponsored advertisement would garner more positive vote preference for the candidate than a super-PAC sponsored advertisement. In this condition the candidate, Donald Trump, was more successful than the super-PAC supporting him (Rebuilding America Now) in gaining more positive vote preference for himself (34.9 percent to 30.8 percent, respectively). However, the Republican advertisement/No sponsor succeeded in eclipsing every condition and generating the most positive vote preference in Donald Trump's favor. In this condition, Donald Trump's vote intention score was the highest of any of the conditions (43.2 percent) and nearly surpassed Hillary Clinton's vote intention score (45.9 percent) within the same

condition. Even though this was an exciting finding, H 2b was rejected due to the non-significance of the relationship between actual sponsor and vote intention ( $p = .589$ , *NS*) and the fact that the candidate sponsored advertisement condition was not successful in garnering the most positive votes for the candidate.

The third hypothesis tested in this study reviews the vote intention of those participants *unable* to correctly identify the sponsor of the advertisement watched in this study. Previous research on the 2012 U.S. presidential election (Cameron & Tinkham, 2015) determined that *perceived* advertisement sponsor is a more powerful predictor of vote intention than *actual* advertisement sponsor. To determine whether this finding would hold true for the data collected on the 2016 U.S. presidential election, *perceived* sponsor was tested as a potential predictor of vote intention for both the Democrat sponsored advertisement (H 3a) and the Republican sponsored advertisement (H 3b). To test H 3a, perceived sponsor was tested as a potential predictor of vote intention in the Democrat sponsored advertisement. Findings indicated that it was the super-PAC (Priorities USA Action) rather than the perceived candidate (Hillary Clinton) that garnered the most positive vote preference toward Hillary Clinton in this condition (73.3 percent to 62.3 percent, respectively). Because of these findings and the non-significance of the relationship between perceived sponsor and vote intention ( $p = .066$ , *NS*), the directional H 3a was rejected. Next, to test H 3b, whether the candidate sponsored advertisement in the Republican sponsored condition would generate more positive vote intention for the candidate than a super-PAC supporting the candidate, perceived sponsor was tested as a potential predictor of vote intention. Findings for H 3b show that, among those who were *unaware* of the actual sponsor of the Republican advertisement condition, those who *perceived* Donald Trump to be the sponsor reported a higher vote

intention in favor of Donald Trump than those who incorrectly identified the super-PAC in support of Donald Trump (Rebuilding America Now) to be the sponsor (31.9 percent to 25.0 percent, respectively). H 3b also formed a significant relationship between *perceived* sponsor and vote intention ( $p = .000$ ). Given these results, the directional H 3b is accepted.

The lack of significance between actual sponsor and vote intention was surprising and led to RQ 1, which tests whether- *perceived* or *actual* sponsor of an online negative political advertisement- is more predictive of relative vote preference among Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. Intended to be a more sensitive measure of vote intention, relative vote preference was used as the dependent variable in this analysis to ensure any relationship between the independent and dependent variables would be recognized. RQ 1a tested whether actual or perceived sponsor served as a predictor for relative vote preference among Millennials. While the relationship between *actual* sponsor and relative vote preference was non-significant ( $p = .160$ , *NS*), *perceived* sponsor was found to significantly predict relative vote preference among Millennials ( $p = .045$ ). This significant relationship merits mediation testing, which will be discussed later on in this section. Moving on to RQ 2b, *perceived* and *actual* sponsor were tested as potential predictors of relative vote preference among those in Generation X. Neither the *actual* nor *perceived* sponsor conditions resulted in significance ( $p = .199$ , *NS*;  $p = .076$ , *NS*, respectively). In RQ 2c, the *perceived* and *actual* sponsor was again tested as potential predictors of relative vote preference, this time among Baby Boomers. Again, both *actual* and *perceived* sponsorship resulted in non-significant results ( $p = .173$ , *NS*;  $p = .970$ , *NS*).

### Mediation Analysis

As noted in RQ 1a, *perceived* sponsor acted as a predictor of relative vote preference among unaware millennials. These significant results warrant a mediation analysis to test whether any of the other dependent variables in the sample mediate the relationship between *perceived* sponsor and relative vote preference. To analyze the sample, this study used an SPSS plug-in known as PROCESS, developed by Andrew Hayes and discussed in *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* (Hayes, 2018).

Using mediation methodology developed by Baron and Kenny (1986), Judd and Kenny (1981), James and Brett (1984) and Hayes, 2018), it was determined that both Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility and Hillary Clinton's positive dimension of authenticity act as full mediators in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. It should also be noted that, while Hayes's (2018) PROCESS method is more recent and therefore less published than Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation method, the results of the mediation analyses for both Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility and Hillary Clinton's positive dimension of authenticity have been verified in both methods.

### *Implications*

One of the most interesting aspects of Hypothesis 3a and 3b was the amount of people who not only *incorrectly* identified the sponsor of the advertisement they watched, but incorrectly identified the sponsor as the candidate *being attacked*. For instance, of those who were *unable* to correctly identify the sponsor of the advertisement in the Democrat advertisement condition attacking Donald Trump, 17.74 percent ( $n = 77$ )

incorrectly identified the sponsor as Donald Trump. Similarly, of those who were *unable* to correctly identify the sponsor of the advertisement in the Republican advertisement condition attacking Hillary Clinton, 24.15 percent ( $n = 114$ ) incorrectly identified the sponsor as Hillary Clinton. Additionally, very few participants chose either super-PAC as the sponsor in either condition ( $n = 22$  in the Democrat sponsored condition;  $n = 30$  in the Republican sponsored condition). This makes sense, as super-PAC names change with each election cycle. Whereas both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are household names and faces, these super Political Action Committees appear and disappear without even having to disclose the sources of their funding prior to the election.

While the Stand By Your Ad provision was intended to reduce the number of negative political advertisements in each election cycle by forcing candidates to associate themselves with both positive and negative messages (and thus potentially causing a boomerang effect against that candidate when associated with an attack advertisement), non-recognizable super-PACs have provided an alternative way to attack opponents in the last two U.S. presidential elections since the 2010 Supreme Court Case *Citizens United v. FEC*. While conventional wisdom dictates that candidates should distance themselves from negative political advertisements by letting super-PACs (rather than the candidate themselves) attack opponents, findings from both the 2012 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections indicate that, among millennials, candidates who are perceived to “own” the sponsorship of negative political advertisements enjoy a higher vote preference percentage in their favor. That is, among those millennials who were *unable* to correctly identify the sponsor of the online negative political advertisement watched in this study, perception is reality and reality is what is perceived. When Hillary Clinton was *perceived* to be the sponsor of the Democrat sponsored online negative political

advertisement, she recorded a huge margin of relative vote preference in her favor compared to Donald Trump (62.3 percent to 22.2 percent, respectively). Hillary Clinton's relative vote preference margin rose even higher when she was perceived to be the sponsor of the Republican sponsored attack ad which actually *attacked* her (80.7 percent to 13.2 percent, respectively). Although at a lesser effect, the same also held true for Donald Trump. When he was *perceived* to sponsor the Republican sponsored advertisement, he received 31.1 percent of the vote. This was a significantly higher relative vote preference than he garnered from those who did not recall seeing an advertisement in this condition (26.8 percent). Similar to Hillary Clinton, even though the Democrat sponsored advertisement *attacked* him, Donald Trump still enjoyed a large increase in relative vote preference (46.8 percent) compared to those who did not recall seeing an advertisement (32.9 percent).

While Hillary Clinton wasn't able to translate her seemingly large lead into a victory in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, both her trustworthiness dimension of source credibility and her positive dimension of authenticity did act as full mediators among millennials in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote intention. These results are interesting since the study was originally undertaken with the expectation that Hillary Clinton's expertise dimension of source credibility and Donald Trump's authenticity would be the variables that acted as mediators in the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. These findings indicate that, among millennials, the significant relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference acts through Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility and her positive dimension of authenticity. Perhaps the effect of these variables was heightened when compared to her opponent, Donald Trump, who was

constantly fact-checked and corrected by the news media for the inaccuracies he communicated throughout the campaign on both social media and at campaign rallies. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, made a point to direct voters (although not successfully) to her website, where she listed her positions on various issues and included verified facts to support these positions. Additionally, as the First Lady of President Bill Clinton and the Secretary of State under President Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton was more well-known as a politician than was Donald Trump, who at the time was more recognized for his role as a cut-throat businessman on NBC's *The Apprentice*.

#### *Future Research*

This study continues a stream of research on source effects of persuasion in U.S. Presidential Elections in the post-Citizens United era. Findings show that, among millennials who were *unable* to correctly identify the sponsor of a political advertisement, Hillary Clinton's trustworthiness dimension of source credibility as well as Hillary Clinton's positive dimension of authenticity fully mediate the relationship between perceived sponsor and relative vote preference. However, more research needs to be conducted to understand these mechanisms further, especially since relationships predicted to be significant- such as the one between actual sponsor and relative vote preference- resulted in non-significance.

While a newer software for gathering data, MTurk did succeed in diversifying the sample to include additional age cohorts not easily studied, such as Generation X, Baby Boomers and those in the Silent Generation. Studies in the social sciences would benefit greatly from this "wider net" of diversity present on such platforms, especially in being able to generalize the findings to a larger sample of the population being studied.

The 2016 U.S. presidential election marked only the second U.S. presidential election since the advent of the 2010 Supreme Court Case, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. With this in mind, *perceived* and *actual* sponsor of negative political advertisements should continue to be studied as potential predictors of vote preference. Additional potential mediating variables should also be thoughtfully studied to determine their role in the mediation of these primary relationships.

## TABLES

**Table 1: Participant Profiles (Generations)**

<b>Generations</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Millennials (18-35)</i>	973	58.1%
<i>Generation X (36-51)</i>	468	27.9%
<i>Baby Boomers (52-70)</i>	218	13.0%
<i>Silent Generation (71-88)</i>	17	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	1676	100%

**Table 2: Participant Profiles (Gender)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Male</i>	810	48.3%
<i>Female</i>	866	51.7%
<b>Total</b>	1676	100%

**Table 3: Participant Profiles: (Highest Level of Education)**

<b>Highest Education Achieved</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Less than High School</i>	10	0.6%
<i>High School Graduate</i>	138	8.2%
<i>Some College</i>	363	21.7%
<i>2-year degree</i>	176	10.5%
<i>4-year degree</i>	636	38.0%
<i>Master's degree or equivalent</i>	265	15.8%
<i>Professional Degree</i>	56	3.3%
<i>Doctorate</i>	32	1.9%

**Table 4: Participant Profiles (Registered Voter)**

<b>Are you a Registered Voter?</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	1553	92.7%
No	94	5.6%
I don't know	29	1.7%

**Table 5: Participant Profiles (Political Identification)**

<b>What political party do you most identify with?</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Strong Democrat</i>	360	21.5%
<i>Leaning Democrat</i>	362	21.6%
<i>Independent</i>	456	27.2%
<i>Leaning Republican</i>	302	18.0%
<i>Strong Republican</i>	196	11.7%

**Table 6: Participant Profiles (Political Involvement)**

<b>Did you vote in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1136	67.8%
No	513	30.6%
I don't know	27	1.6%
<b>Did you vote in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1239	73.9%
No	418	24.9%
I don't know	19	1.1%
<b>Are you planning to vote in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election?</b>		
Yes	1485	88.6
No	126	7.5
I don't know/I'm not sure	65	3.9

**Table 7a: Expertise Dimension of Source Credibility Factor<sup>1</sup>**

	<i>Factor</i>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton is...</i>			
<i>Trained: Untrained</i>	<b>.909</b>	-.007	.065
<i>Unsuccessful: Successful</i>	<b>.897</b>	-.020	.077
<i>Experienced: Not Experienced</i>	<b>.880</b>	-.008	.031
<i>Expert: Not Expert</i>	<b>.857</b>	.021	-.023
<i>Inactive: Active</i>	<b>.852</b>	.015	.068
<i>Unsophisticated: Sophisticated</i>	<b>.823</b>	.030	-.025
<i>Unqualified: Qualified</i>	<b>.806</b>	.014	-.092
<i>Strong: Weak</i>	<b>.777</b>	.007	-.039
<i>Unfriendly: Friendly</i>	<b>.710</b>	.031	-.097
<i>The Sponsor of the Ad I Saw in this Study is...</i>			
<i>Experienced: Not Experienced</i>	-.063	<b>.896</b>	-.062
<i>Expert: Not Expert</i>	-.062	<b>.892</b>	-.065
<i>Unqualified: Qualified</i>	-.025	<b>.892</b>	-.010
<i>Trained: Untrained</i>	-.041	<b>.888</b>	-.074
<i>Unsophisticated: Sophisticated</i>	-.048	<b>.869</b>	-.032
<i>Unfriendly: Friendly</i>	-.047	<b>.829</b>	.002
<i>Unsuccessful: Successful</i>	.095	<b>.733</b>	.084
<i>Inactive: Active</i>	.196	<b>.651</b>	.138
<i>Strong: Weak</i>	.132	<b>.619</b>	.065
<i>Donald Trump is...</i>			
<i>Unfriendly: Friendly</i>	-.062	.009	<b>.810</b>
<i>Trained: Untrained</i>	-.070	.034	<b>.809</b>
<i>Unsuccessful: Successful</i>	.116	-.071	<b>.802</b>
<i>Experienced: Not Experienced</i>	-.089	.025	<b>.801</b>
<i>Unqualified: Qualified</i>	-.123	.025	<b>.794</b>
<i>Expert: Not Expert</i>	-.117	.040	<b>.792</b>
<i>Unsophisticated: Sophisticated</i>	-.072	.013	<b>.784</b>
<i>Inactive: Active</i>	.160	-.010	<b>.732</b>
<i>Strong: Weak</i>	.082	-.027	<b>.700</b>

1. Oblique pattern matrix computed using a Promax rotation. The 2-factor structure explains 67.276% of the item variance.

**Table 7b: Trustworthiness Dimension of Source Credibility Factor<sup>1</sup>**

	<i>Factor</i>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton is...</i>			
<i>Dishonest: Honest</i>	<b>.953</b>	.075	-.006
<b><i>Trustworthy: Not Trustworthy</i></b>	<b>.941</b>	.044	.017
<i>Insincere: Sincere</i>	<b>.917</b>	.088	-.010
<b><i>Good: Bad</i></b>	<b>.905</b>	-.069	.001
<b><i>Open-Minded: Closed-Minded</i></b>	<b>.835</b>	-.108	.005
<b><i>Believable: Unbelievable</i></b>	<b>.779</b>	-.037	-.024
<i>Donald Trump is...</i>			
<b><i>Open-Minded: Closed-Minded</i></b>	.072	<b>.932</b>	-.030
<b><i>Good: Bad</i></b>	-.008	<b>.928</b>	.006
<b><i>Trustworthy: Not Trustworthy</i></b>	.006	<b>.928</b>	-.009
<i>Dishonest: Honest</i>	-.022	<b>.898</b>	-.012
<i>Insincere: Sincere</i>	-.049	<b>.867</b>	-.003
<b><i>Believable: Unbelievable</i></b>	-.069	<b>.767</b>	.034
<i>The Sponsor of the Ad I Saw in this Study is...</i>			
<b><i>Good: Bad</i></b>	-.002	-.014	<b>.922</b>
<b><i>Trustworthy: Not Trustworthy</i></b>	.023	.026	<b>.904</b>
<i>Dishonest: Honest</i>	.025	.067	<b>.863</b>
<i>Insincere: Sincere</i>	.022	.031	<b>.862</b>
<b><i>Open-Minded: Closed-Minded</i></b>	.052	.010	<b>.857</b>
<b><i>Believable: Unbelievable</i></b>	-.129	-.129	<b>.786</b>

1. Oblique pattern matrix computed using a Promax rotation. The 2-factor structure explains 78.679% of the item variance.

**Table 8a: Positive Authenticity Factor**

	<i>Factor</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<b><i>I think Hillary Clinton...</i></b>		
<i>In general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who she is.</i>	<b>.888</b>	<b>-.010</b>
<i>People can count on Hillary Clinton being who she really is regardless of the situation.</i>	<b>.883</b>	<b>-.030</b>
<i>Cares about honesty and openness in close relationships with others.</i>	<b>.879</b>	<b>-.031</b>
<i>Wants people to understand the real her rather than just her public image</i>	<b>.870</b>	<b>.011</b>
<i>Tries to act in a manner consistent with her held values, even if others criticize or reject her for doing so.</i>	<b>.831</b>	<b>-.026</b>
<i>Behaves in ways that typically expresses her values.</i>	<b>.828</b>	<b>.040</b>
<i>Believes it is important for people to understand her values and goals.</i>	<b>.820</b>	<b>.019</b>
<i>Spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to people even if they are unimportant to her.</i>	<b>.812</b>	<b>-.029</b>
<i>Is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing her true beliefs and values.</i>	<b>.797</b>	<b>.004</b>
<i>Rarely, if ever, puts on a “false face” for people to see.</i>	<b>.791</b>	<b>.011</b>
<i>Wants people to understand her weaknesses.</i>	<b>.773</b>	<b>.085</b>
<i>Makes it a point to express to people how much she truly cares for them.</i>	<b>.749</b>	<b>.012</b>
<i>Wants people to understand her strengths.</i>	<b>.706</b>	<b>-.042</b>
<b><i>I think Donald Trump...</i></b>		
<i>Wants people to understand the real him rather than just his public image.</i>	<b>-.015</b>	<b>.865</b>
<i>In general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he is.</i>	<b>-.017</b>	<b>.859</b>
<i>Cares about honesty and openness in close relationships with others.</i>	<b>-.051</b>	<b>.847</b>
<i>People can count on Donald Trump being who he really is regardless of the situation.</i>	<b>-.041</b>	<b>.826</b>
<i>Believes it is important for people to understand his values and goals.</i>	<b>.004</b>	<b>.816</b>
<i>Rarely, if ever, puts on a “false face” for people to see.</i>	<b>-.041</b>	<b>.794</b>
<i>Spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to people even if they are unimportant to him.</i>	<b>.029</b>	<b>.783</b>
<i>Tries to act in a manner consistent with his held values, even if others criticize or reject him for doing so.</i>	<b>-.001</b>	<b>.781</b>
<i>Makes it a point to express to people how much he truly cares for them.</i>	<b>-.004</b>	<b>.761</b>
<i>Behaves in ways that typically expresses his values.</i>	<b>.073</b>	<b>.732</b>
<i>Wants people to understand his weaknesses.</i>	<b>.101</b>	<b>.729</b>
<i>Is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing his true beliefs and values.</i>	<b>-.013</b>	<b>.697</b>
<i>Wants people to understand his strengths.</i>	<b>-.017</b>	<b>.672</b>

1. Oblique pattern matrix computed using a Promax rotation. The 2-factor structure explains 64.411% of the item variance.

**Table 8b: Negative Authenticity Factor**

	<i>Factor</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<b><i>I think Donald Trump...</i></b>		
Frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality he really doesn't	<b>.827</b>	-.042
Finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than his true identity	<b>.817</b>	.006
People will be shocked or surprised if they discovered what he keeps secret or privileged	<b>.792</b>	.081
Would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with someone	<b>.747</b>	-.050
<b><i>I think Hillary Clinton...</i></b>		
Frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality she really doesn't	-.036	<b>.824</b>
Finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than her true identity	.022	<b>.821</b>
People will be shocked or surprised if they discovered what she keeps secret or privileged	.037	<b>.774</b>
Would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with someone	-.020	<b>.731</b>

1. *Oblique pattern matrix computed using a Promax rotation. The 2-factor structure explains 62.990% of the item variance.*

**Table 9: Participation Profiles (Actual Sponsor; Unaware and Aware X Generational Cohorts)**

<b>Actual Sponsor</b>		<b>Millennials (18-35)</b>	<b>Generation X (36-51)</b>	<b>Baby Boomers (52-70)</b>	<b>Silent Generation (71-88)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>n</i>	134	76	28	4	242
	%	55.4%	31.4%	11.6%	1.7%	100%
<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>n</i>	135	72	34	4	245
	%	55.1%	29.4%	13.9%	1.6%	100%
<i>Rebuilding America Now</i>	<i>n</i>	145	57	34	2	238
	%	60.9%	23.9%	14.3%	0.8%	100%
<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	<i>n</i>	135	78	21	3	237
	%	57.0%	32.9%	8.9%	1.3%	100%
<i>Rep. Ad/No Sponsor</i>	<i>n</i>	135	61	40	3	239
	%	56.5%	25.5%	16.7%	1.3%	100%
<i>Dem Ad/No Sponsor</i>	<i>n</i>	139	70	26	1	236
	%	58.9%	29.7%	11.0%	0.4%	100%
<i>Control</i>	<i>n</i>	150	54	35	0	239
	%	62.8%	22.6%	14.6%	0.0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	973	468	218	17	1676
	<b>%</b>	58.1%	27.9%	13.0%	1.0%	100%

**Table 10: Participation Profiles (Generation Cohorts X Sponsor Awareness)**

	Aware		Unaware	
	<i><b>n</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>	<i><b>n</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
<i>Millennials (18-35)</i>	461	54.88%	512	61.24%
<i>Generation X (36-51)</i>	251	29.88%	217	25.96%
<i>Baby Boomers (52-70)</i>	119	14.17%	99	11.84%
<i>Silent Generation (71-88)</i>	9	1.07%	8	0.96%
<i>Total</i>	840	100%	836	100%

**Table 11: Participation Profiles (Perceived Sponsor; Unaware and Aware X Generational Cohorts)**

<b>Perceived Sponsor</b>		<b>Millennials (18-35)</b>	<b>Generation X (36-51)</b>	<b>Baby Boomers (52-70)</b>	<b>Silent Generation (71-88)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>n</i>	228	109	50	3	390
	%	58.5%	27.9%	12.8%	0.8%	100%
<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>n</i>	254	100	42	4	400
	%	63.5%	25.0%	10.5%	1.0%	100%
<i>Rebuilding America Now</i>	<i>n</i>	56	28	15	2	101
	%	55.4%	27.7%	14.9%	2.0%	100%
<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	<i>n</i>	83	57	17	1	158
	%	52.5%	36.1%	10.8%	0.6%	100%
<i>The ad was not sponsored</i>	<i>n</i>	78	17	15	0	110
	%	70.9%	15.5%	13.6%	0.0%	100%
<i>I did not see an ad</i>	<i>n</i>	180	77	47	3	307
	%	58.6%	25.1%	15.3%	1.0%	100%
<i>I do not know</i>	<i>n</i>	94	80	32	4	210
	%	44.8%	38.1%	15.2%	1.9%	100%
<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>	973	468	218	17	1676
	%	58.1	27.9	13.0	1.0	100%

**Table 12: Source Credibility X Authenticity Correlation**

		D.T. Expert.	H.C. Expert.	Sponsor Expert.	D.T. Trust.	H.C. Trust.	Sponsor Trust.	D.T. Pos. Auth.	D.T. Neg. Auth.	H.C. Pos. Auth.	H.C. Neg. Auth.
<b>D.T. Expert.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	1	-.539**	.748**	.911**	-.517**	.716**	.790**	-.222**	-.471**	.391
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>H.C. Expert.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	-.539**	1	-.388**	-.565**	.796**	-.429**	-.449**	.347**	.781**	-.253**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>Sponsor Expert.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	.748**	-.388**	1	.739**	-.366**	.916**	.678**	-.191**	-.353**	.433**
	<i>N</i>	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513
<b>D.T. Trust.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	.911**	-.565**	.739**	1	-.510**	.771**	.795**	-.287**	-.480**	.399**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>H.C. Trust.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	-.517**	.796**	-.366**	-.510**	1	-.342**	-.447**	.331**	.856	-.335**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>Sponsor Trust.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	.716**	-.439**	.916**	.771**	-.342**	1	.664**	-.236**	-.348**	.443**
	<i>N</i>	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513
<b>D.T. Pos. Auth.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	.790**	-.449**	.678**	.795**	-.447**	.664**	1	-.093**	-.377**	.387**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>D.T. Neg. Auth.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	-.222**	.347**	-.191**	-.287**	.331**	-.236**	-.093**	1	.372**	-.346**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>H.C. Pos. Auth.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	-.471**	.781**	-.353**	-.480**	.856**	-.348**	-.377**	.372**	1	-.346**
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958
<b>H.C. Neg. Auth.</b>	<i>Correlation</i>	.391	-.253**	.433**	.399**	-.335**	.443**	.387**	-.346**	-.217**	1
	<i>N</i>	958	958	513	958	958	513	958	958	958	958

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 13: Actual Sponsor; Aware and Unaware X Vote Intention (Democrat Ad)<sup>1</sup>**

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	Total
Actual Sponsor	<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>n</i>	125	70	12	23	13	243
		%	51.4%	28.8%	4.9%	9.5%	5.3%	100%
	<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	<i>n</i>	123	67	8	23	16	237
		%	51.9%	28.3%	3.4%	9.7%	6.8%	100%
	<i>Dem. Ad/No Sponsor</i>	<i>n</i>	113	76	12	24	11	236
		%	47.9%	32.2%	5.1%	10.2%	4.7%	100%
	<i>Control</i>	<i>n</i>	118	69	13	31	7	238
		%	49.6%	29.0%	5.5%	13.0%	2.9%	100%
	Total	n	479	282	45	101	47	954
		%	50.8%	29.5%	4.7%	10.3%	4.7%	100.0%

1.  $F(1,952) = .238, p = .626$  (NS)

**Table 14: Actual Sponsor; Aware and Unaware X Vote Intention (Republican Ad)<sup>1</sup>**

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Actual Sponsor</b>	<b><i>Donald Trump</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	121	74	9	25	13	<b>242</b>
		<b>%</b>	50.0%	30.6%	3.7%	10.3%	5.4%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Rebuilding America Now</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	129	70	9	17	13	<b>238</b>
		<b>%</b>	54.2%	29.4%	3.8%	7.1%	5.5%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Rep. Ad/No Sponsor</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	124	67	17	14	17	<b>239</b>
		<b>%</b>	51.9%	28.0%	7.1%	5.9%	7.1%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Control</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	118	69	13	31	7	<b>238</b>
		<b>%</b>	49.6%	29.0%	5.5%	13.0%	2.9%	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>957</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1.  $F(1,955) = .069, p = .792(NS)$

**Table 15: Actual Sponsor; Aware only X Vote Intention (Democrat Ad)<sup>1</sup>**

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Actual Sponsor</b>	<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>n</i>	104	65	10	21	13	<b>213</b>
		<i>%</i>	48.8%	30.5%	4.7%	9.9%	6.1%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	<i>n</i>	65	36	5	15	8	<b>129</b>
		<i>%</i>	50.4%	27.9%	3.9%	11.6%	6.2%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Dem. Ad/No Sponsor</i>	<i>n</i>	16	12	3	5	0	<b>36</b>
		<i>%</i>	44.4%	33.3%	8.3%	13.9%	0.0%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Control</i>	<i>n</i>	84	53	9	28	7	<b>181</b>
		<i>%</i>	46.4%	29.3%	5.0%	15.5%	3.9%	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>559</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>29.7%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1.  $F(1,557) = .353, p = .553$  (NS)

**Table 16: Actual Sponsor; Aware Only X Vote Intention (Republican Ad)<sup>1</sup>**

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Actual Sponsor</b>	<b><i>Donald Trump</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	88	66	6	20	9	<b>189</b>
		<b>%</b>	46.6%	34.9%	3.2%	10.6%	4.8%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Rebuilding America Now</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	43	28	4	6	10	<b>91</b>
		<b>%</b>	47.3%	30.8%	4.4%	6.6%	11.0%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Rep. Ad/No Sponsor</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	17	16	1	1	2	<b>37</b>
		<b>%</b>	45.9%	43.2%	2.7%	2.7%	5.4%	<b>100%</b>
	<b><i>Control</i></b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	77	49	9	27	7	<b>169</b>
		<b>%</b>	45.6%	29.0%	5.3%	16.0%	4.1%	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>486</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1.  $F(1,484) = .292, p = .589$  (NS)

Table 17: Perceived Sponsor; Unaware Only X Vote Intention (Democrat Ad)<sup>1</sup>

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	Total
Perceived Sponsor	<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<b>n</b>	73	26	3	10	5	<b>117</b>
		<b>%</b>	62.3%	22.2%	2.6%	8.5%	4.3%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	<b>n</b>	11	1	2	1	0	<b>15</b>
		<b>%</b>	73.3%	6.7%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<b>n</b>	35	36	4	2	0	<b>77</b>
		<b>%</b>	45.5%	46.8%	5.2%	2.6%	0.0%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Rebuilding America Now</i>	<b>n</b>	2	3	0	0	2	<b>7</b>
		<b>%</b>	28.6%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>Ad was not Sponsored</i>	<b>n</b>	14	6	2	1	0	<b>23</b>
		<b>%</b>	60.9%	26.1%	8.7%	4.3%	0.0%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>I did not see an ad</i>	<b>n</b>	38	27	1	11	5	<b>82</b>
		<b>%</b>	46.3%	32.9%	1.2%	13.4%	6.1%	<b>100%</b>
	<i>I do not know</i>	<b>n</b>	61	29	7	9	7	<b>113</b>
		<b>%</b>	54.0%	25.7%	6.2%	8.0%	6.2%	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>434</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1.  $F(1,432) = 3.391, p = .066$

Table 18: Perceived Sponsor; Unaware Only X Vote Intention (Republican Ad)<sup>1</sup>

			Vote Intention					
			<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>I will Not Vote</i>	Total
Perceived Sponsor	<i>Hillary Clinton</i>	n	92	15	3	2	2	114
		%	80.7%	13.2%	2.6%	1.8%	1.8%	100%
	<i>Priorities USA Action</i>	n	11	11	2	2	0	26
		%	42.3%	42.3%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	100%
	<i>Donald Trump</i>	n	65	44	7	13	9	138
		%	47.1%	31.9%	5.1%	9.4%	6.5%	100%
	<i>Rebuilding America Now</i>	n	3	1	0	0	0	4
		%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
	<i>Ad was not Sponsored</i>	n	12	8	3	2	1	26
		%	46.2%	30.8%	11.5%	7.7%	3.8%	100%
	<i>I did not see an ad</i>	n	25	15	4	7	5	56
		%	44.6%	26.8%	7.1%	12.5%	8.9%	100%
	<i>I do not know</i>	n	59	28	9	7	5	108
		%	54.6%	25.9%	8.3%	6.5%	4.6%	100%
	Total	n	267	122	28	33	22	472
		%	56.6%	25.8%	5.9%	7.0%	4.7%	100.0%

1.  $F(1,470) = 13.055, p = .000$

**Table 19: Perceived and Actual Sponsor X Relative Vote Preference (c)**

	<i>df 1, df 2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Dependent Variable</i>				
<i>Perceived Sponsor: Millennials Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 510	4.034	.008	<b>.045</b>
<i>Actual Sponsor: Millennials Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 500	2.201	.005	.160
<i>Perceived Sponsor: Generation X Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 214	3.189	.015	.076
<i>Actual Sponsor: Generation X Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 249	1.658	.007	.199
<i>Perceived Sponsor: Baby Boomers Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 96	.001	.000	.970
<i>Actual Sponsor: Baby Boomers (Aware) Relative Vote Preference</i>	1, 116	1.883	.016	.173

**Table 20: Unaware Millennials; Perceived Sponsor X Potential Mediators (a)**

	<i>df 1, df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b><i>Potential Mediators</i></b>				
<i>Donald Trump Expertise</i>	1, 510	12.356	.024	<b>.000</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton Expertise</i>	1, 510	1.025	.002	.312
<i>Sponsor Expertise</i>	1, 266	40.571	.132	<b>.000</b>
<i>Donald Trump Trustworthiness</i>	1, 510	20.843	.039	<b>.000</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness</i>	1, 510	26.462	.049	<b>.000</b>
<i>Sponsor Trustworthiness</i>	1, 266	40.849	.133	<b>.000</b>
<i>Donald Trump + Authenticity</i>	1, 510	3.354	.007	.068
<i>Donald Trump - Authenticity</i>	1, 510	.020	.000	.888
<i>Hillary Clinton + Authenticity</i>	1, 510	25.625	.048	<b>.000</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton - Authenticity</i>	1, 510	19.152	.036	<b>.000</b>

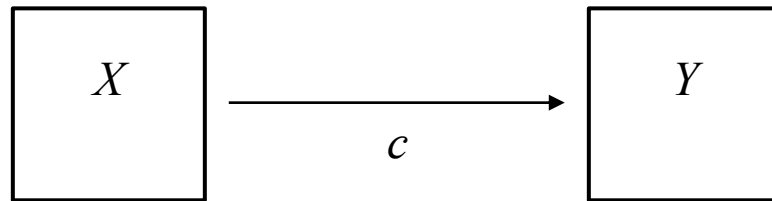
**Table 21: Unaware Millennials; Mediation Analysis (*b* & *C'*)**

	<i>df 1, df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b><i>Potential Mediators</i></b>				
<i>Donald Trump Expertise</i>	2, 509	262.227	.507	<b>.000</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				<b>.000</b>
<i>Sponsor Expertise</i>	2, 265	6.487	.047	.001
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				<b>.013</b>
<i>Donald Trump Trustworthiness</i>	2, 509	278.343	.522	<b>.000</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				<b>.000</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness</i>	2, 509	200.145	.440	<b>.000</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				.073
<i>Sponsor Trustworthiness</i>	2, 265	3.483	.026	<b>.025</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				<b>.037</b>
<i>Hillary Clinton + Authenticity</i>	2, 509	139.576	.354	<b>.000</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				.236
<i>Hillary Clinton - Authenticity</i>	2, 509	5.022	.019	<b>.015</b>
<i>Perceived Sponsor</i>				<b>.015</b>

## FIGURES

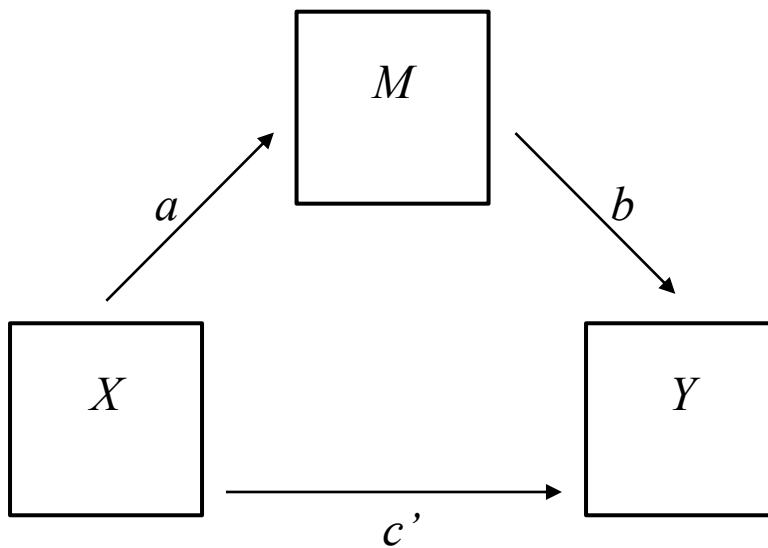
**Figure 1: Unmediated Model**

*The total effect ( $C$ ) of the causal variable ( $X$ ) on the outcome variable ( $Y$ )*

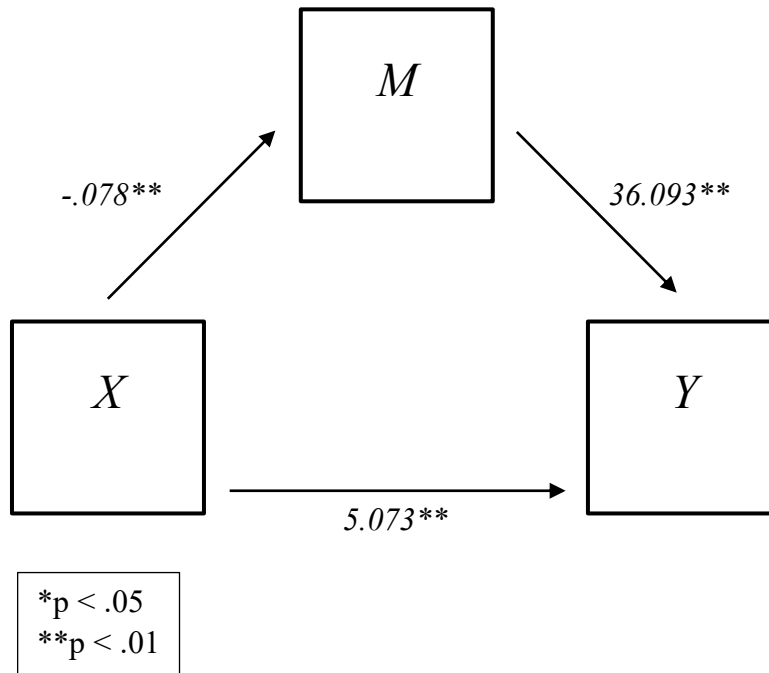


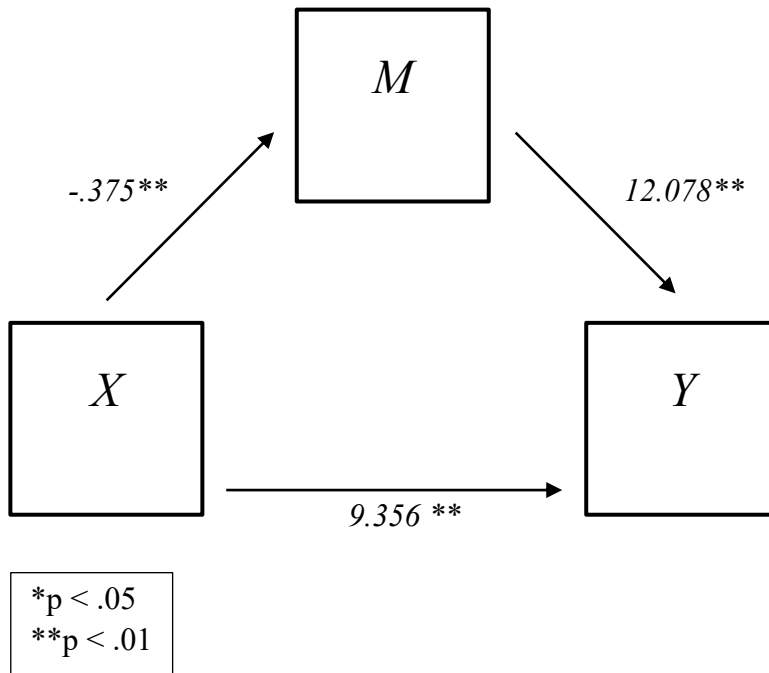
**Figure 2: Simple Mediation Model**

*The effect of the causal variable ( $X$ ) on the outcome variable ( $Y$ ) is mediated by the process variable ( $M$ ), whereas **path  $a$**  measures the effect of ( $X$ ) on ( $M$ ), **path  $b$**  measures the effect of ( $M$ ) on ( $Y$ ), controlling for ( $X$ ). The causal variable ( $X$ ) influences the outcome variable ( $Y$ ) directly (**path  $c'$** ) and indirectly (**path  $ab$** ) through the mediator ( $M$ ) (Hayes, 2013, p. 1919).*

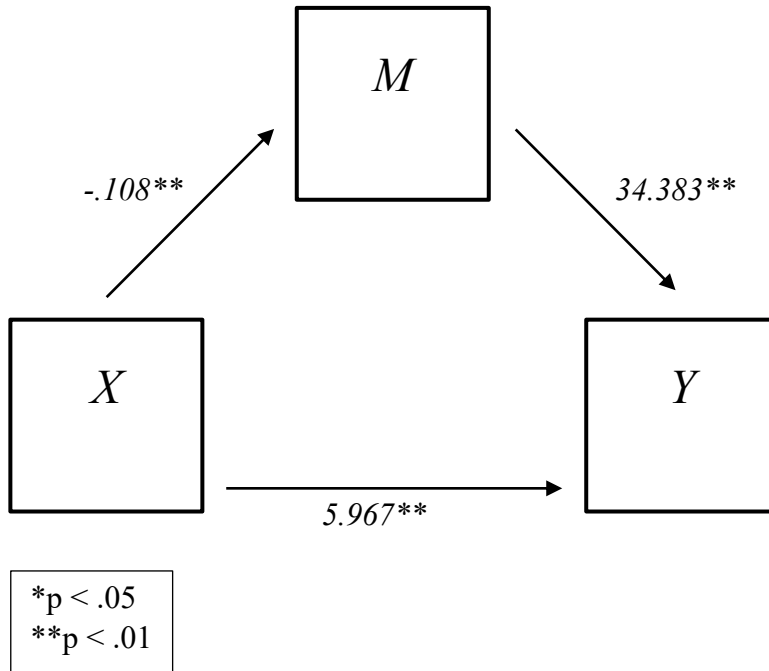


**Figure 3:** *Donald Trump Expertise Indirect Effect Analysis*

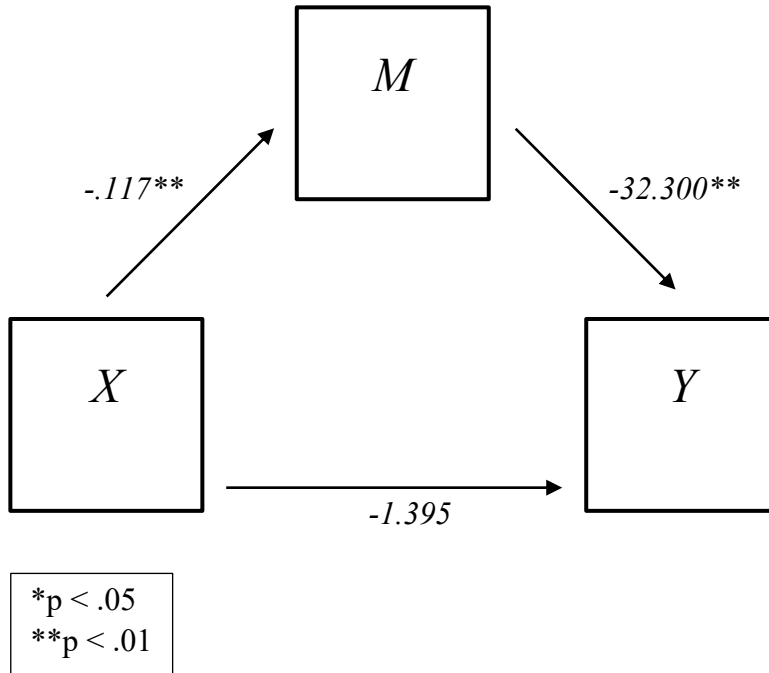


**Figure 4:** *Sponsor Expertise Indirect Effect Analysis*

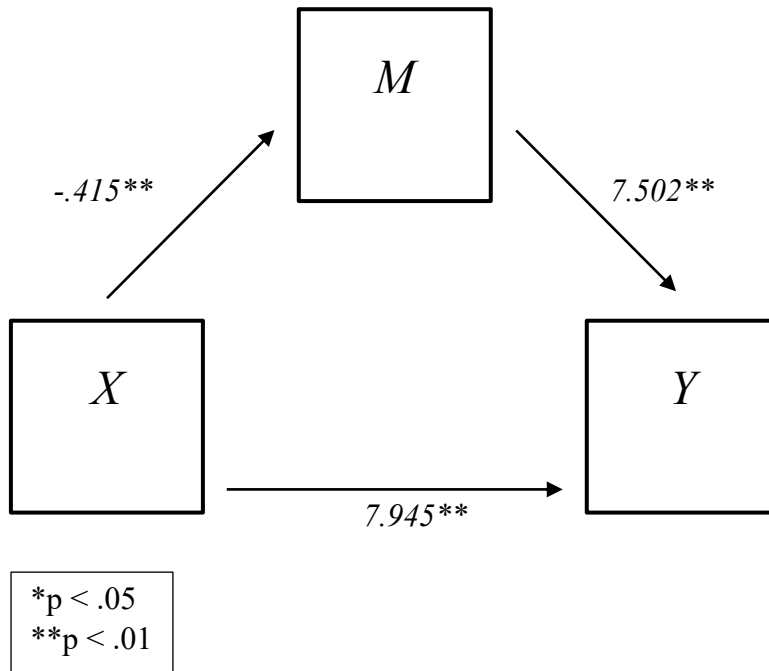
**Figure 5:** *Donald Trump Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*



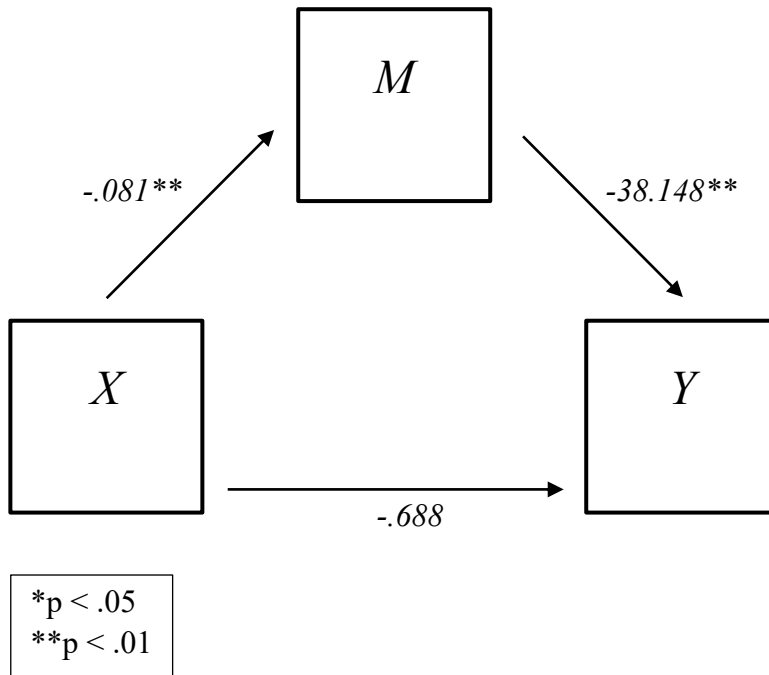
**Figure 6:** *Hillary Clinton Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*



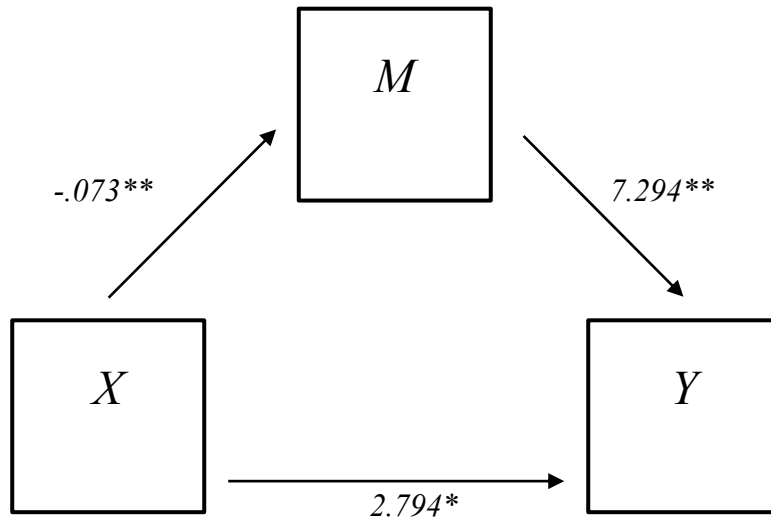
**Figure 7:** *Sponsor Trustworthiness Indirect Effect Analysis*



**Figure 8:** *Hillary Clinton Positive Authenticity Indirect Effect Analysis*



**Figure 9:** *Hillary Clinton Negative Authenticity Indirect Effect Analysis*



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## APPENDICES

#### APPENDIX A: CONSENT

You agree to participate in a research study titled "ELECTION 2016" conducted by Kristen Cameron under the direction of Dr. Joe Phua of Grady College at the University of Georgia (706-542-4984/joephua@uga.edu). You understand that your participation is voluntary and you can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can ask to have all of your information returned to you, removed from the research records, or destroyed. You attest that you are an adult aged 18 years or older.

##### 1. REASON / PURPOSE

The reason for this study is to look at reaction to election 2016 information. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you may be asked to do the following things: 1) Answer questions about your political ideology, personality, media use, and beliefs about politics and/or candidates.

2) View campaign-related material from election 2016 which will last no more than 30 minutes.

##### 2. BENEFITS

The personal benefits are that you may learn something new about the election and issues and/or candidates. The researcher also hopes to learn more about the effectiveness of campaign materials.

##### 3. INCENTIVES

There are no incentives.

##### 4. PROCEDURES

You may be asked to view campaign related materials from election 2016. In order to make this study a valid one, some information (about your participation or the study) will be withheld until completion of the study.

##### 5. DISCOMFORT OR STRESS

No risk is expected, but you may experience some discomfort or stress during the study regarding revealing political information about yourself. If you are uncomfortable with providing personal political information about your beliefs you may skip that section.

## 6. RISK

There is no risk expected. Your decision about participation will have no bearing on your grades or class standing.

## 7. PRIVACY

While there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology of Internet communications itself, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed and confidentiality will be guaranteed to the extent possible once the data are received by the researcher. In addition, all IP addresses will be stripped before the data are received by the researcher. The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used. In fact, the published results will be presented in summary form only.

## 8. FURTHER QUESTIONS

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research now or during the course of the project.

## 9. FINAL CONSENT

Your continued participation indicates your agreement to participate in the above described research project.

## 10. RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION:

Primary Contact:

Kristen Cameron

Telephone: 912- 571-2469

Email: kcam@uga.edu

PI Contact: Dr. Joe Phua

Telephone: 706-542-4984

Email: joephua@uga.edu

Please keep (print) this, and ask the researcher if you have any questions. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, Telephone: (706)542-3199; E-Mail Address: IRB@uga.edu.

- ☐ I understand that I DO agree to participate in this study.
- ☐ I understand that I DO NOT agree to participate in this study

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Are you 18 or older?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you a U.S. citizen?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Who sponsored the advertisement you watched in this study?

- ☐ Hillary Clinton
- ☐ Donald Trump
- ☐ Priorities USA Action
- ☐ Rebuilding America Now
- ☐ The advertisement was not sponsored
- ☐ I did not see an advertisement
- ☐ I do not know

The SPONSOR of the ad I saw in this study is

	1	2	3	4	5	
TRUSTWORTHY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT TRUSTWORTHY
OPEN-MINDED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	CLOSED-MINDED
GOOD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	BAD
EXPERT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERT
EXPERIENCED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERIENCED
TRAINED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNTRAINED

The SPONSOR of the ad I saw in this study is:

	1	2	3	4	5	
UNQUALIFIED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	QUALIFIED
UNSOPHISTICATED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	HONEST
BELIEVABLE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	FRIENDLY
INSINCERE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SINCERE
CALM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EXCITABLE
AGGRESSIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT AGGRESSIVE
STRONG	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	WEAK
INACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ACTIVE

The SPONSOR of the ad I saw in this study is:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Honesty and integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strength and decisiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity for effective leadership of the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making clear the candidate's position on the issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to inspire confidence by the way the candidate speaks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

HILLARY CLINTON IS...

	1	2	3	4	5	
TRUSTWORTHY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT TRUSTWORTHY
OPEN-MINDED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	CLOSED-MINDED
GOOD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	BAD
EXPERT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERT
EXPERIENCED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERIENCED
TRAINED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNTRAINED

HILLARY CLINTON is ...

	1	2	3	4	5	
UNQUALIFIED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	QUALIFIED
UNSOPHISTICATED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	HONEST
BELIEVABLE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	FRIENDLY
INSINCERE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SINCERE
CALM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EXCITABLE
AGGRESSIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT AGGRESSIVE
STRONG	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	WEAK
INACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ACTIVE

## HILLARY CLINTON exhibits...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Honesty and integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strength and decisiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity for effective leadership of the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity about his/her position on the issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to inspire confidence by the way the candidate speaks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## HILLARY CLINTON (is) .....

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
comfortable in his/her own skin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
presents positions consistent with his/her true beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consistently represents his/her true beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
messages reveal his/her true self.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
believes what he/she says he/she believes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
does what he/she says he/she will do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
messages are authentic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
public persona is authentic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

private  
persona is  
very different  
than his/her  
public  
persona.



too political.



Based on  
what the  
candidate  
says, we can  
trust our  
interpretation  
of him/her.



I think HILLARY CLINTON:

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Tries to act in a manner consistent with his/her held values, even if others criticize or reject him/her for doing so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cares about honesty and openness in close relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he/she really is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People can count on _____ being who he/she really is regardless of the situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Wants people  
to understand  
the real  
him/her  
rather than  
just his/her  
public image.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rarely if ever,  
puts on a  
“false face” for  
people to see.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wants people  
to understand  
his/her  
strengths.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Spends a lot  
of energy  
pursuing goals  
that are very  
important to  
people even if  
they are  
unimportant  
to him/her.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Would ignore  
an issue  
rather than  
constructively  
work it out if  
in  
disagreement  
with someone.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Often uses  
silence to  
convey  
agreement  
even though  
he/she really  
disagrees.



Often does  
things that  
he/she doesn't  
want to do  
merely not to  
disappoint  
people.



Is willing to  
change  
him/herself if  
the reward is  
desirable.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

People will be  
shocked or  
surprised if  
they  
discovered  
what

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

keeps secret  
or privileged.

People, if  
asked, could  
accurately  
describe what  
kind of person

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

really is.

Finds it easy  
to pretend to  
stand for  
something  
other than  
his/her true  
identity.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Is willing to  
endure  
negative  
consequences  
by expressing  
his/her true  
beliefs and  
values.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wants people  
to understand  
his/her  
weakness.

☐☐☐☐☐

Behaves in  
ways that  
typically  
expresses  
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☐☐☐☐☐

Frequently  
pretends to  
deliver  
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when in  
actuality  
he/she really  
doesn't.

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Makes it a  
point to  
express to  
people how  
much he/she  
truly cares for  
them.

☐☐☐☐☐

Believes it is  
important for  
people to  
understand  
his/her values  
and goals.

☐☐☐☐☐

DONALD TRUMP IS...

	1	2	3	4	5	
TRUSTWORTHY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT TRUSTWORTHY
OPEN-MINDED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	CLOSED-MINDED
GOOD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	BAD
EXPERT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERT
EXPERIENCED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT EXPERIENCED
TRAINED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNTRAINED

DONALD TRUMP is ...

	1	2	3	4	5	
UNQUALIFIED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	QUALIFIED
UNSOPHISTICATED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	HONEST
BELIEVABLE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNATTRACTIVE
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CALM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EXCITABLE
AGGRESSIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOT AGGRESSIVE
STRONG	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	WEAK
INACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ACTIVE

DONALD TRUMP exhibits...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Honesty and integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strength and decisiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity for effective leadership of the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity about his/her position on the issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to inspire confidence by the way the candidate speaks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## DONALD TRUMP (is) ...

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
comfortable in his/her own skin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
presents positions consistent with his/her true beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consistently represents his/her true beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
messages reveal his/her true self.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
believes what he/she says he/she believes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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messages are authentic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
public persona is authentic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

private  
persona is  
very different  
than his/her  
public  
persona.

☐
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☐
☐
☐

too political.

☐
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☐
☐
☐

Based on  
what the  
candidate  
says, we can  
trust our  
interpretation  
of him/her.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

I think DONALD TRUMP:

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Tries to act in a manner consistent with his/her held values, even if others criticize or reject him/her for doing so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cares about honesty and openness in close relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he/she really is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People can count on _____ being who he/she really is regardless of the situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Wants people  
to understand  
the real  
him/her  
rather than  
just his/her  
public image.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rarely if ever,  
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Spends a lot  
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☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Would ignore  
an issue  
rather than  
constructively  
work it out if  
in  
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☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Often uses  
silence to  
convey  
agreement  
even though  
he/she really  
disagrees.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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he/she doesn't  
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Is willing to  
change  
him/herself if  
the reward is  
desirable.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

People will be  
shocked or  
surprised if  
they  
discovered  
what

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

\_\_\_\_\_ keeps secret  
or privileged.

People, if  
asked, could  
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kind of person

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

\_\_\_\_\_ really is.

Finds it easy  
to pretend to  
stand for  
something  
other than  
his/her true  
identity.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Is willing to  
endure  
negative  
consequences  
by expressing  
his/her true  
beliefs and  
values.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Wants people  
to understand  
his/her  
weakness.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Behaves in  
ways that  
typically  
expresses  
his/her  
values.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Frequently  
pretends to  
deliver  
something  
when in  
actuality  
he/she really  
doesn't.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Makes it a point to express to people how much he/she truly cares for them.



Believes it is important for people to understand his/her values and goals.



PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

BELOW...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a friend asked me about the presidential election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indicate your agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Whether I vote or not has no influence on politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One never knows what politicians think.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One can be  
confident that  
politicians will  
always do the  
right thing.



Politicians  
often quickly  
forget their  
election  
promises after  
a political  
campaign is  
over



One cannot  
always trust  
what  
politicians  
say.



I consider  
myself well-  
qualified to  
participate in  
politics.



I think that I  
am better  
informed  
about politics  
and  
government  
than most  
people.



I feel that I  
have a pretty  
good  
understanding  
of the  
important  
political issues  
facing our  
country.



What are the MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES you feel are facing the nation right now?

☐ #1 Issue \_\_\_\_\_

☐ #2 Issue \_\_\_\_\_

☐ #3 Issue \_\_\_\_\_

☐ #4 Issue \_\_\_\_\_

☐ #5 Issue \_\_\_\_\_

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ACCESS THE FOLLOWING SOURCES TO GET NEWS  
OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE \*\*2016 ELECTION\*\*?

	Never	Once a week	2-3 times a week	4-6 times a week	Daily
Newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Television (i.e. FOX News, CNN)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issue- oriented websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State or local government websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political candidate website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternative news organization (i.e. Politico, Talking Points Memo, Drudge Report)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

International news organizations (i.e. BBC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio news organizations (NPR, Radio America, Air America)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News satire website (i.e. The Onion, The Daily Show)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commentary, experience, or issues (online news group, website or blog)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, other)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Feeling Thermometer: Indicate how "COLD" (0) or "HOT" (100) you are toward the following by sliding the bar.

Hillary Clinton	
Donald Trump	

Display This Question If:

*“Who sponsored the advertisement you watched in this study?”*

*“The advertisement was not sponsored”* is not selected;

-And-

*“Who sponsored the advertisement you watched in this study?”*

*“I did not see an advertisement”* is not selected;

-And-

*“Who sponsored the advertisement you watched in this study?”*

*“I do not know”* is not selected.

Feeling Thermometer: Indicate how "COLD" (0) or "HOT" (100) you are toward the following by sliding the bar.

Sponsor of the Advertisement	
------------------------------	--

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW...

	Yes	No	I don't know/ I'm not sure yet
Are you a registered voter?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you voted in U.S. Presidential Elections before?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you vote in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you vote in the 2012 U.S. Presidential election?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you planning to vote in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you a registered voter?

- ☐ Yes (proceed to below question)
- ☐ No

In what state are you eligible to vote?

- ☐ Alabama (AL)
- ☐ Alaska (AK)
- ☐ Arizona (AZ)
- ☐ Arkansas (AR)
- ☐ California (CA)
- ☐ Colorado (CO)
- ☐ Connecticut (CT)
- ☐ Delaware (DE)
- ☐ District of Columbia (D.C.)
- ☐ Florida (FL)
- ☐ Georgia (GA)
- ☐ Hawaii (HI)
- ☐ Idaho (ID)
- ☐ Illinois (IL)
- ☐ Indiana (IN)
- ☐ Iowa (IA)
- ☐ Kansas (KS)
- ☐ Kentucky (KY)
- ☐ Louisiana (LA)

- ☐ Maine (ME)
- ☐ Maryland (MD)
- ☐ Massachusetts (MA)
- ☐ Michigan (MI)
- ☐ Minnesota (MN)
- ☐ Mississippi (MS)
- ☐ Missouri (MO)
- ☐ Montana (MT)
- ☐ Nebraska (NE)
- ☐ Nevada (NV)
- ☐ New Hampshire (NH)
- ☐ New Jersey (NJ)
- ☐ New Mexico (NM)
- ☐ New York (NY)
- ☐ North Carolina (NC)
- ☐ North Dakota (ND)
- ☐ Ohio (OH)
- ☐ Oklahoma (OK)
- ☐ Oregon (OR)
- ☐ Pennsylvania (PA)

- ☐ Rhode Island (RI)
- ☐ South Carolina (SC)
- ☐ South Dakota (SD)
- ☐ Tennessee (TN)
- ☐ Texas (TX)
- ☐ Utah (UT)
- ☐ Vermont (VT)
- ☐ Virginia (VA)
- ☐ Washington (WA)
- ☐ West Virginia (WV)
- ☐ Wisconsin (WI)
- ☐ Wyoming (WY)

FOR WHOM WILL YOU VOTE IN THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?

☐ Hillary Clinton

☐ Donald Trump

☐ Gary Johnson

☐ Jill Stein

☐ Undecided

☐ I will not vote

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE SELECT THE POLITICAL PARTY YOU MOST IDENTIFY WITH...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strong Democrat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strong Republican
Liberal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Conservative

I am:

- ☐ Strong Democrat
- ☐ Weak Democrat
- ☐ Leaning Democrat
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Leaning Republican
- ☐ Weak Republican
- ☐ Strong Republican

WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

☐ Male

☐ Female

What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ 2-year degree
- ☐ 4-year degree
- ☐ Master's degree or equivalent
- ☐ Professional degree
- ☐ Doctorate

WILL YOU VOTE IN 2016?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not eligible to vote

HOW WILL YOU VOTE?

- ☐ Early/absentee vote
- ☐ Voting booth on November 8
- ☐ I will not vote
- ☐ I haven't decided

APPENDIX C: SYNOPSIS OF TEST ADVERTISEMENTS

**Hillary Clinton Sponsored Advertisement**

**JOE KERNAN:** I got shot down over Vietnam and spent 11 months in a POW camp. What Donald Trump said about our members of the military being captured is a disgrace.

**DONALD TRUMP:** He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured.

**JOE KERNAN:** When you fly over enemy territory, the odds might be against you being able to come home. Donald Trump doesn't understand the weight of sending Americans into harms way. He's unfit to be president.

**HILLARY CLINTON:** I'm Hillary Clinton and I approve this message.

**Priorities USA Action Sponsored Advertisement**

**JOE KERNAN:** I got shot down over Vietnam and spent 11 months in a POW camp.

What Donald Trump said about our members of the military being captured is a disgrace.

**DONALD TRUMP:** He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured.

**JOE KERNAN:** When you fly over enemy territory, the odds might be against you being able to come home. Donald Trump doesn't understand the weight of sending Americans into harm's way. He's unfit to be president

**SPEAKER:** Priorities USA Action is responsible for the content of this advertising.

**Democrat Ad- No Sponsorship Advertisement**

**JOE KERNAN:** I got shot down over Vietnam and spent 11 months in a POW camp.

What Donald Trump said about our members of the military being captured is a disgrace.

**DONALD TRUMP:** He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured.

**JOE KERNAN:** When you fly over enemy territory, the odds might be against you being able to come home. Donald Trump doesn't understand the weight of sending Americans into harm's way. He's unfit to be president

**Donald Trump Sponsored Advertisement**

**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty-points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Maybe it's because the Director of the FBI said you lied about your email.

**DIRECTOR COMEY:** There was classified material emailed.

**SPEAKER:** Or maybe it's because your policies have allowed ISIS and terrorism to spread. Or maybe it's because you call Americans deplorable.

**HILLARY CLINTON:** You could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables.

**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty- points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Do you really need to ask?

**DONALD TRUMP:** I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message.

**Rebuilding America Now PAC Sponsored Advertisement**

**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty-points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Maybe it's because the Director of the FBI said you lied about your email.

**DIRECTOR COMEY:** There was classified material emailed.

**SPEAKER:** Or maybe it's because your policies have allowed ISIS and terrorism to spread. Or maybe it's because you call Americans deplorable.

**HILLARY CLINTON:** You could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables.

**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty-points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Do you really need to ask?

**SPEAKER:** Rebuilding America Now PAC is responsible for this message.

**Republican Ad- No Sponsorship Advertisement**

**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty-points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Maybe it's because the Director of the FBI said you lied about your email.

**DIRECTOR COMEY:** There was classified material emailed.

**SPEAKER:** Or maybe it's because your policies have allowed ISIS and terrorism to spread. Or maybe it's because you call Americans deplorable.

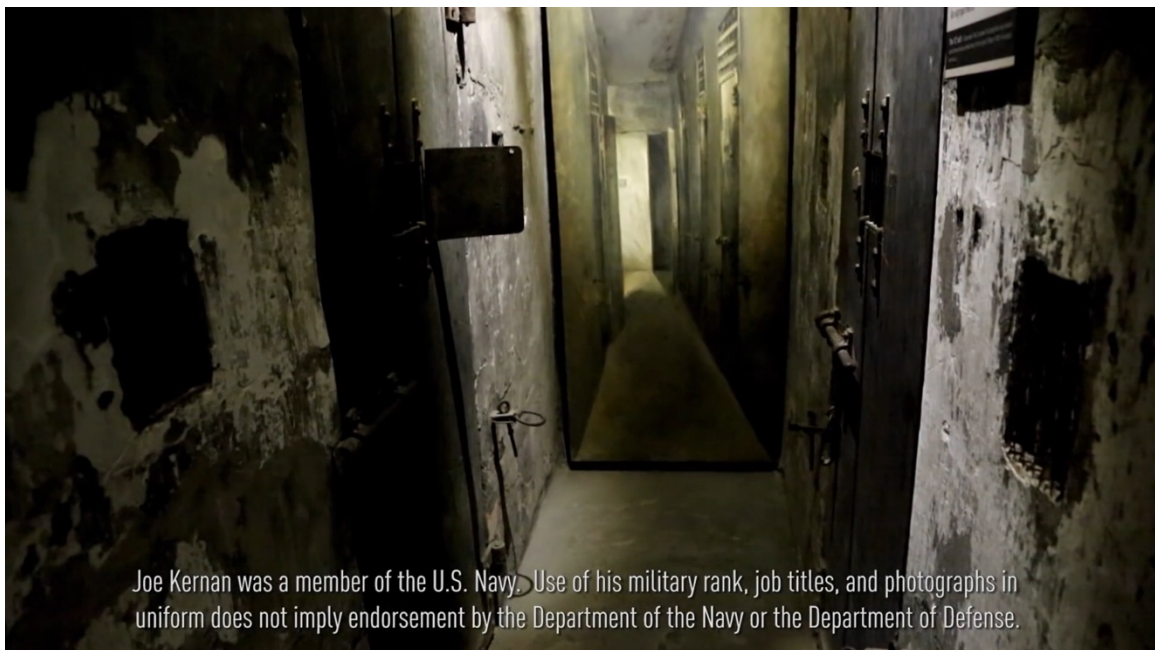
**HILLARY CLINTON:** You could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables.

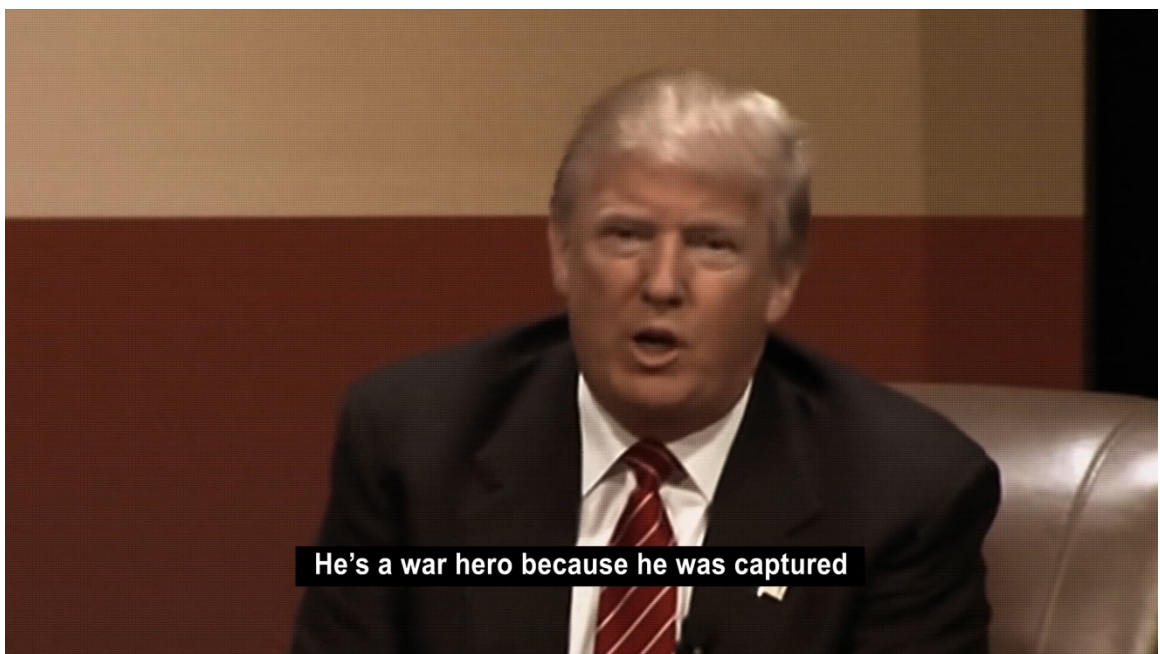
**HILLARY CLINTON:** Why aren't I fifty-points ahead (?) you might ask.

**SPEAKER:** Do you really need to ask?

APPENDIX D: ADVERTISEMENTS (STILL CUTS)

Hillary Clinton Sponsored Advertisement









## During Vietnam War

530 Navy aircraft lost in combat

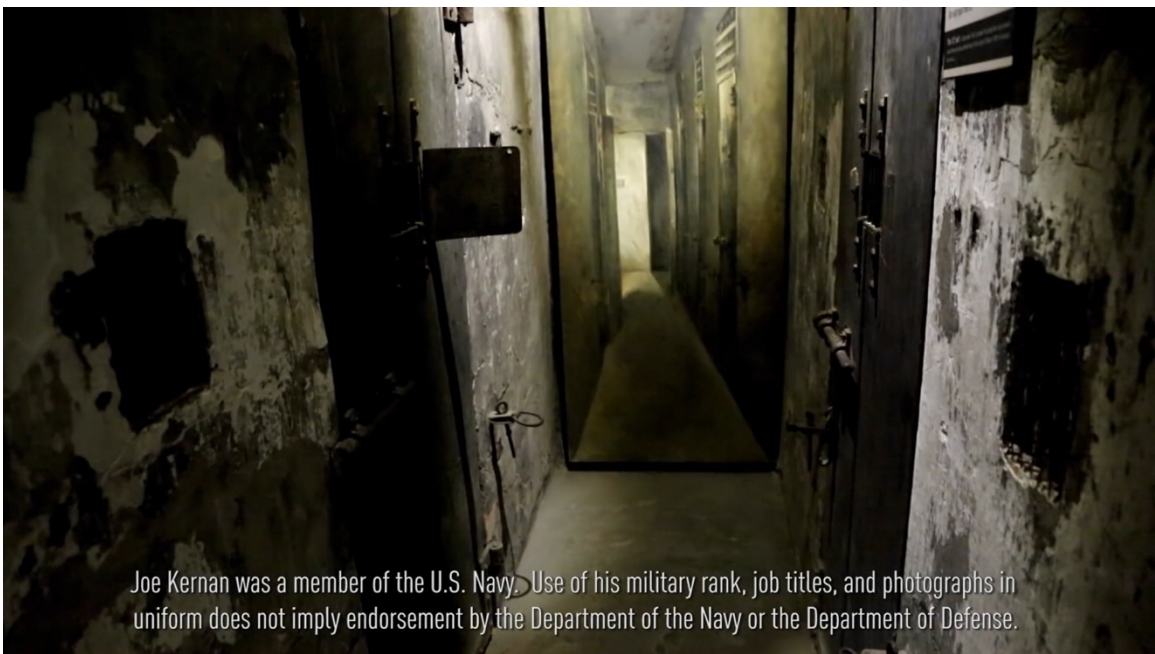
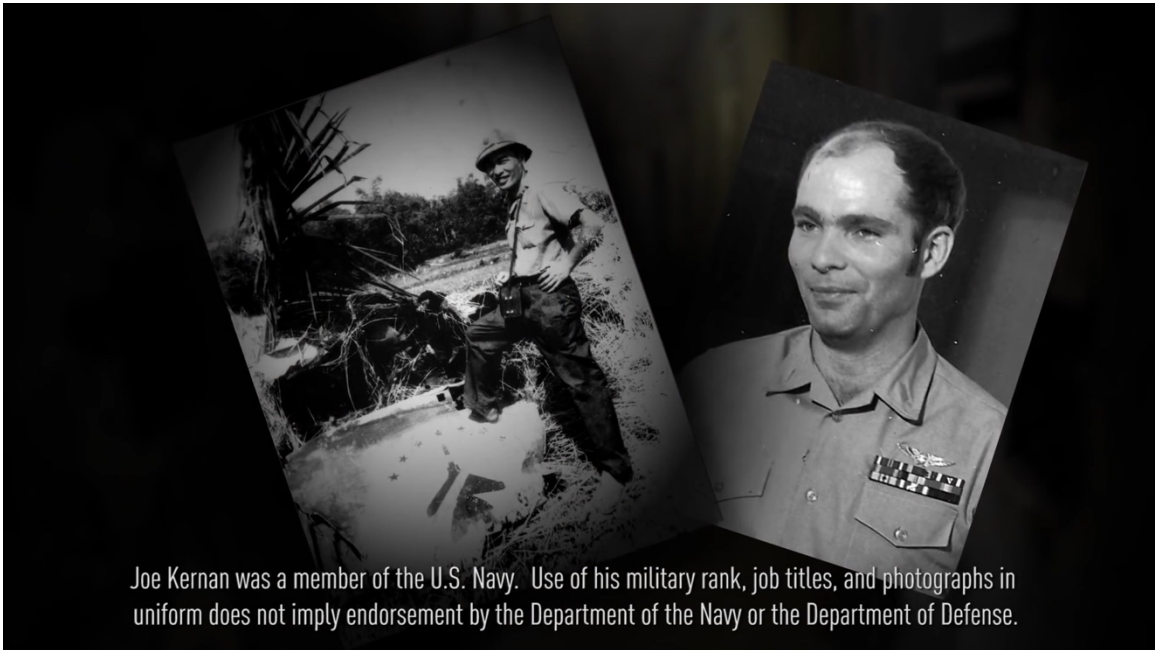
377 pilots and crew killed

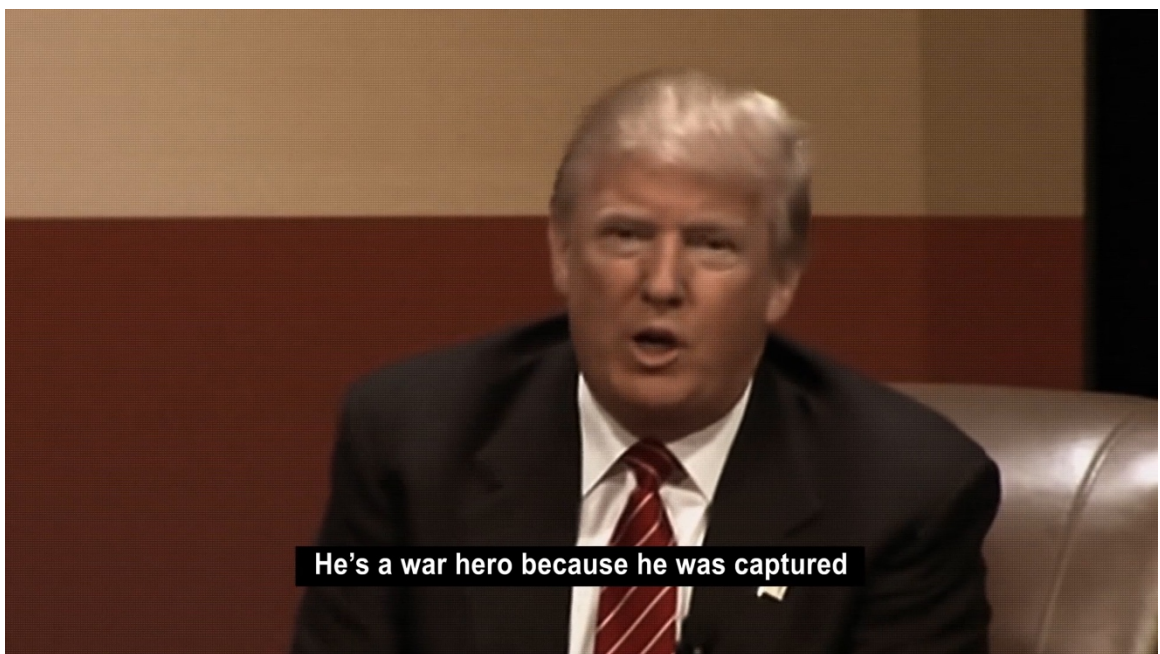
179 taken prisoner





Priorities USA Action Sponsored Advertisement









## During Vietnam War

530 Navy aircraft lost in combat

377 pilots and crew killed

179 taken prisoner

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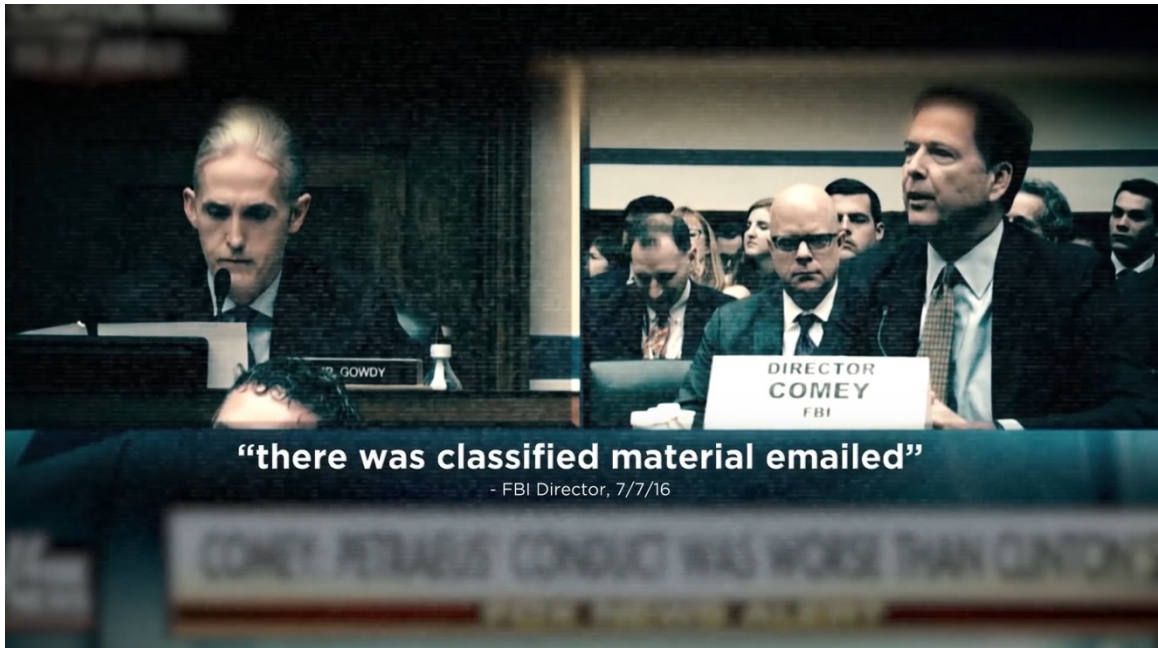
Donald Trump  
**UNFIT TO BE PRESIDENT**

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Donald Trump Sponsored Advertisement

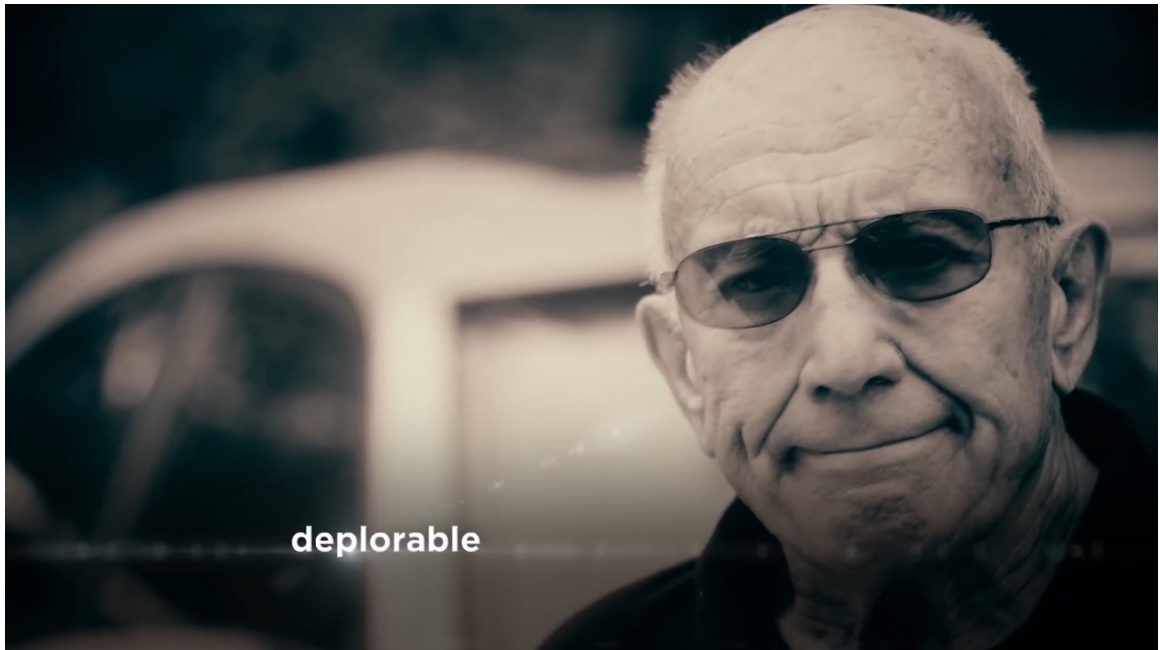
















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