Appendix D. Pre-treatment questionnaire

Start of Block: Consent

Q1.1 Dear participant,

Welcome to our study, which is conducted by the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). It is important that you learn about the procedure of this study before it starts, so please read the following text carefully. If anything is unclear to you, feel free to ask the researcher directly, or contact them through email: a.nai@uva.nl. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Goal of the study

The goal of the study is to investigate how people feel about different political messages, for instance in terms of whether they perceive them as informative or relevant (and the reasons why they do so). Our aim is to show that different voters perceive the same message differently.

Procedure of the study

The study takes the form of an online questionnaire, which we are asking you to fill individually and, if possible, in one session. You will be asked a few questions about your political preferences and will be shown some examples of political messages, which we will ask you to read carefully and evaluate. We will also ask you some questions related to your profile, including your personal preferences and character, which will help us to interpret the results.

Participation in the study entails no considerable risks or inconveniences, and takes approximately 15 minutes. After participating, you will receive $1.00.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary: you are not obligated to participate. You may decide to stop your participation during the study, and you can also decide to withdraw after the study. You do not have to provide a reason for stopping. If you decide to stop, your (personal) data will be deleted, except for (personal) data that have already been processed. There are no consequences for stopping, other than you not receiving (full) compensation. You can indicate directly to the researcher that you wish to withdraw from participation, or you can contact the following email address: a.nai@uva.nl.

Privacy

We treat your personal data confidentially, as required by law (the General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR). Personal data are data that can be traced back to you individually, either directly or indirectly. When working with (personal) data, researchers may use external parties, for instance when administering online surveys. In that case, the appropriate contracts with these parties have been arranged in order to warrant your privacy.

Collaborations

In this study, your research data are processed only by UvA researchers.

Data sharing

The results of this study will be shared with other researchers and/or will be shared through a public database (open access), without any (directly identifying) personal data. The results may be used in other future research, which may investigate a different topic than the study you are currently participating in.

Retention period

Research data will be retained for at least 10 years. The link between directly identifying personal data (your contact details and signed information letter) and the research data will be destroyed as soon as possible.

Further information

If you have any questions about this study, either beforehand or afterward, please contact the responsible researcher: Alessandro Nai (a.nai@uva.nl). You can direct any complaints about this study or the researcher(s) to the Ethics Review Board on behalf of the Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR), mailing address: Secretariat of the ASCoR Ethics Committee, University of Amsterdam, PO Box 15793, 1001 NG Amsterdam; telephone: 020-525 3680; email: ascor-secr-fmg@uva.nl. Your complaint or remark will be treated confidentially. If you have any questions or complaints about the processing of your personal data, you can also contact the Data Protection Officer of the University of Amsterdam through fg@uva.nl.

I hope to have provided you with sufficient information. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research, which I greatly appreciate.

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Q1.2 Please check the box below to signal informed consent and knowledge of the information in above, then click on the next button to start the questionnaire. You cannot come back to previously answered questions.

Q1.3 By checking the box below, you agree with the following statements:
I want to participate in this study I have read the information provided above I agree that my data are made publicly available but only 1) anonymously and 2) for academic purposes only I am 16 years old or older

- ○ Yes, I agree with the statements above (1)

Page Break

Q1.4 Due to the nature of the questionnaire, **it is essential that you take the time to carefully read the questions**.

Please make sure that you have fully understood the information that is presented to you, and if needed read the instructions twice. **We automatically check responses** in order to make sure that people have read the instructions for the task and responded carefully.

Thank you!

Now press the button to start the survey.

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Demographics 1

Q2.1 First, a few questions about yourself, which will help us to interpret the results.

Q2.2 What is your gender?

- Male (0)
- Female (1)
- Other, non-binary (888)
- I prefer not to answer (999)

Q2.3 What is your age in years? (example: 58)

_____

End of Block: Demographics 1

Start of Block: Demographics 2

Q3.1 Are you a U.S. citizen?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

Q3.2 Is English your first language?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Is English your first language? = No

Q3.3 You said that English is not your first language. What is your overall passive command (i.e., ability to understand written and spoken English)?

- Very good (5)
- Somewhat good (4)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Somewhat bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Page Break

Q3.4 Below is a list of race categories. From the list, please choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be.

- [ ] Hispanic, Latino (1)
- [ ] White, Caucasian (2)
- [ ] Black, African-American (3)
- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native (4)
- [ ] Asian (5)
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (6)
- [ ] Other (please specify) (888) _____
- [ ] I prefer not to answer (999)

Q3.5

In which State do you currently live?

▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Page Break

Q3.6 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than 1st grade (1)
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade (2)
- 5th or 6th grade (3)
- 7th or 8th grade (4)
- 9th grade (5)
- 10th grade (6)
- 11th grade (7)
- 12th grade no diploma (8)
- High school graduate - high school diploma or equivalent (for example: GED) (9)
- Some college but no degree (10)
- Associate degree in college - Occupational/vocational program (11)
- Associate degree in college - Academic program (12)
- Bachelor's degree (For example: BA, AB, BS) (13)
- Master's degree (For example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA) (14)
- Professional School Degree (For example: MD,DDS,DVM,LLB,JD) (15)
- Doctorate degree (For example: PhD, EdD) (16)
- Other (please specify) (888) _____

End of Block: Demographics 2

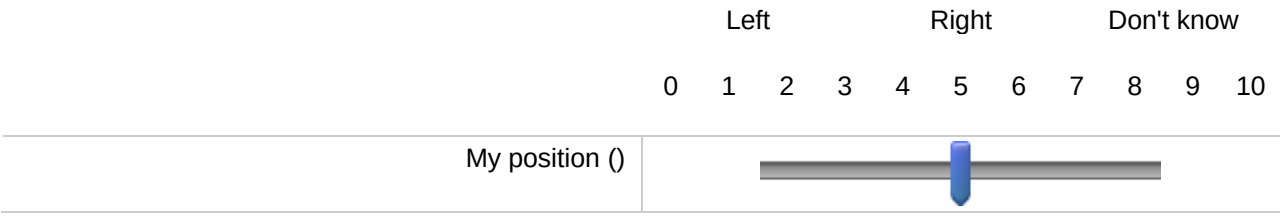
Start of Block: Profile

Q4.1 Generally speaking, how interested are you in what is going on in politics?

- Very interested (4)
- Somewhat interested (3)
- Not very interested (2)
- Not at all interested (1)

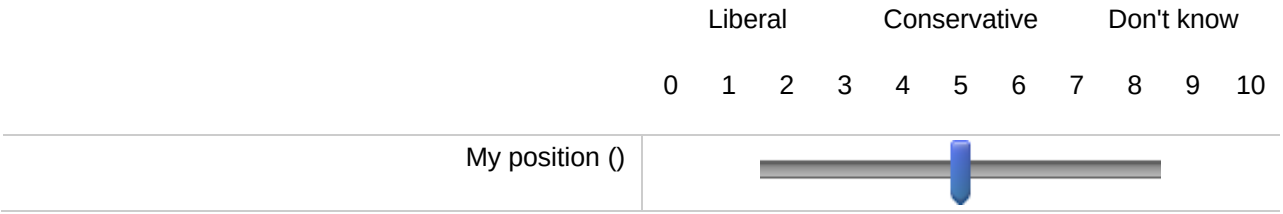
Q4.2

In politics people sometimes talk of “left” and ”right”. Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means "left" and 10 means "right"?



Q4.3

In politics people sometimes talk of “liberal” and ”conservative”. Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means "liberal" and 10 means "conservative"?



End of Block: Profile

Start of Block: Partisanship

Q5.1 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as...

- ○ a Democrat (1)
- ○ a Republican (2)
- ○ an Independent (3)
- ○ No preference (777)
- ○ Other (please specify) (888) _____

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as... = a Democrat

Q5.2 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- ○ Strong (2)
- ○ Not very strong (1)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as... = a Republican

Q5.3 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- ○ Strong (2)
- ○ Not very strong (1)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as... = an Independent

Or Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as... = No preference

Or Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as... = Other (please specify)

Q5.4 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?

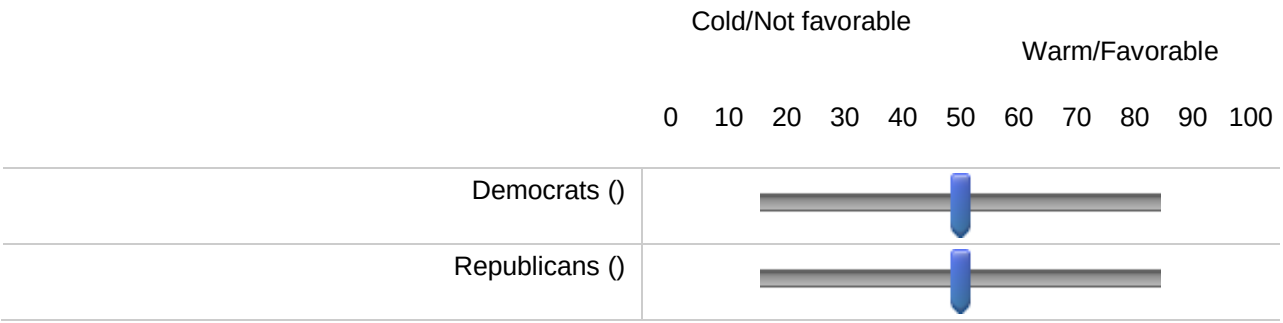
- Closer to Democratic Party (1)
- Neither (777)
- Closer to Republican Party (2)

End of Block: Partisanship

Start of Block: Feeling Thermometer

Q6.1 How do you feel toward the Democratic Party and the Republican Party?

Please set the slider to a number between 0 and 100, where 0 means that you do not feel favorable or feel cold towards the party, and 100 means that you feel favorable or feel warm towards the party.



End of Block: Feeling Thermometer

Start of Block: Big Five Inventory (BFI-10)

Q7.1 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

Q7.2 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am someone who...

	Disagree strongly (1)	Disagree moderately (2)	Disagree a little (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Agree a little (5)	Agree moderately (6)	Agree strongly (7)
...is reserved (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...is generally trusting (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...tends to be lazy (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...is relaxed, handles stress well (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...has few artistic interests (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...is outgoing, sociable (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...tends to find fault with others (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...does a thorough job (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...gets nervous easily (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...has an active imagination (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Big Five Inventory (BFI-10)

Start of Block: Dark Triad

Q8.1 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

Q8.2 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly (1)	Disagree moderately (2)	Disagree a little (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Agree a little (5)	Agree moderately (6)	Agree strongly (7)
I tend to want others to admire me (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to want others to pay attention to me (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to expect special favors from others (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to seek prestige or status (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to lack remorse (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to be callous or insensitive (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to be cynical (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have used tricks or lied to get my way (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to manipulate others to get my way (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have used flattery to get my way (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to exploit others towards my own end (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Dark Triad

Start of Block: AC

Q9.1 Elections are formal decision-making processes by which a population chooses individuals to hold public office. Here we are only interested in whether you read the survey questions attentively. To demonstrate that you have read this instruction, please simply select “other” below and type “eagle” next to it. Do not select any other option. Thanks for reading this, it is appreciated.

What type of activities did you participate in (check all that apply)?

- ○ Attended meeting or rally (0)
- ○ Signed a petition (0)
- ○ Attended a peaceful demonstration (0)
- ○ Looked for information online (0)
- ○ Other (please specify) (1) _____

End of Block: AC

Start of Block: Marginalization

Q10.1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about you?

	Not at all 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very much 10
I feel that my deserved place in society is being taken away from me ()											
I feel that I am kept back from gaining the place in society I deserve ()											

End of Block: Marginalization

Start of Block: Populism, authoritarianism, trait aggression

Q11.1 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly (8)	Disagree moderately (9)	Disagree a little (10)	Neither agree nor disagree (11)	Agree a little (12)	Agree moderately (13)	Agree strongly (14)
What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles (Q11.1_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most politicians do not care about the people (Q11.1_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most politicians are trustworthy (Q11.1_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Politicians are the main problem in the U.S (Q11.1_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a strong leader in government is good for the U.S. even if the leader bends the rules to get things done (Q11.1_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions (Q11.1_6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful (Q11.1_7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q11.2 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly (8)	Disagree moderately (9)	Disagree a little (10)	Neither agree nor disagree (11)	Agree a little (12)	Agree moderately (13)	Agree strongly (14)
Strong force is necessary against threatening groups (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is necessary to use force against people who are a threat to authority (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Police should avoid using violence against suspects (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
People should avoid using violence against others even when ordered to do so by the proper authorities (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using force against people is wrong even if done so by those in authority (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Strong punishments are necessary in order to send a message (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q11.3 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly (1)	Disagree moderately (2)	Disagree a little (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Agree a little (5)	Agree moderately (6)	Agree strongly (7)
Given enough provocation, I may hit another person (Q11.3_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often find myself disagreeing with people (Q11.3_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life (Q11.3_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
There are people who have pushed me so far that we have come to blows (Q11.3_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can’t help getting into arguments when people disagree with me (Q11.3_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason (Q11.3_6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other people always seem to get the breaks (Q11.3_7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have threatened people I know (Q11.3_8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My friends say that I’m somewhat argumentative (Q11.3_9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have trouble controlling my temper (Q11.3_10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things (Q11.3_11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode (Q11.3_12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Populism, authoritarianism, trait aggression

Start of Block: Issue importance

Q12.1 Below are a few issues that have been subject to public debate.

Regardless of your position on these issues, how important are they to you personally?

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Important (3)	Fairly important (4)	Very important (5)
Abortion (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Individual rights & liberties (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Gun ownership (3)	○	○	○	○	○
The economy (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Tax reform (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Inflation (11)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Issue importance

Start of Block: Partisanship 2

Q13.1 Which of the two main parties do you feel **the closest to**?

Please select one party, even if you feel only marginally close to it. If you do not feel close to any of the two parties at all, please select the party you dislike the least.

○ Democrats (1)

○ Republicans (2)

End of Block: Partisanship 2

Start of Block: INTRO TASK

JS

Q14.1 Thank you for your attention so far!

Now we would like to show you some **tweets posted by political candidates** in various Congressional districts, which a **political consulting company intends to use as promotional materials**.

This company is interested in **testing different candidates' profiles.** In the next page, you will see the profile of **two candidates** followed by a collection of their **tweets.** In these tweets the candidates present themselves and sometimes talk about their opponents. You will also see a tweet from a news agency describing the electoral race, which they retweeted.

The two profiles are shown side by side. **We ask you to compare the two profiles, and then answer a few questions about them.** You will complete this task **three times** (each time, comparing two different candidates).

Please review all profiles carefully, and do not hesitate to read them multiple times to make sure you are able to compare them.

Press continue to see the first two profiles.

End of Block: INTRO TASK