



# Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work (Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion)

By Ted Brader

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**Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work (Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion)** By Ted Brader

It is common knowledge that televised political ads are meant to appeal to voters' emotions, yet little is known about how or if these tactics actually work. Ted Brader's innovative book is the first scientific study to examine the effects that these emotional appeals in political advertising have on voter decision-making.

At the heart of this book are ingenious experiments, conducted by Brader during an election, with truly eye-opening results that upset conventional wisdom. They show, for example, that simply changing the music or imagery of ads while retaining the same text provokes completely different responses. He reveals that politically informed citizens are more easily manipulated by emotional appeals than less-involved citizens and that positive "enthusiasm ads" are in fact more polarizing than negative "fear ads." Black-and-white video images are ten times more likely to signal an appeal to fear or anger than one of enthusiasm or pride, and the emotional appeal triumphs over the logical appeal in nearly three-quarters of all political ads.

Brader backs up these surprising findings with an unprecedented survey of emotional appeals in contemporary political campaigns. Politicians *do* set out to campaign for the hearts and minds of voters, and, for better or for worse, it is primarily through hearts that minds are won. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds* will be indispensable for anyone wishing to understand how American politics is influenced by advertising today.

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**Editorial Review**

Review

“Ted Brader has written an illuminating analysis of the emotional basis of political advertising and the strategic calculus guiding politicians’ use of ads appealing to enthusiasm and fear. His counterintuitive research findings overturn conventional wisdom and show that positive ads can polarize and negative can inform.”--Samuel L. Popkin, author of *The Reasoning Voter*

(Samuel L. Popkin)

“Written in an accessible and engaging style, *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds* exposes the gap between political practice, in which emotional appeals in advertising are commonplace, and political science, which, in its fascination with cognition, content, and strategic reasoning, has all but neglected them. This book tests, for the first time, basic propositions about how emotional appeals affect voters’ preferences and behavior. It reminds us of the practical significance of social science and of the theoretical significance of solid experimental results.”--Donald Green, coauthor of *Partisan Hearts and Minds*

(Donald Green)

“Brader brings experimental methods to the study of television political campaign ads for real candidates in a real election campaign. His detailed exploration uncovers a rich array of findings that challenges many conventional beliefs about how campaign ads impact voters. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds* is a rich, lucid exploration of many old and new accounts that makes an important and timely contribution for scholars and practitioners alike.”--George E. Marcus, author of *The Sentimental Citizen*

(George E. Marcus)

“A terrific book. Brader takes contemporary political psychology to campaign ads and discovers something novel in the process. Emotions matter—but not in the ways we commonly suppose. Brader’s book breaks our reliance on that easy understanding and forces us to think more consciously about how images, emotions, cognitions, and political choices are bound together.”--Michael MacKuen, coauthor of *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*

(Michael MacKuen)

“Brader guides the reader through the study of political advertising and makes the case that although many studies have been done, few have systematically analyzed the role of emotion in political campaigns. The author seeks to close this gap through the content analysis of more than 1,400 political ads and an experimental investigation of the effect different type of ads have upon citizens. His work is both timely and original. The findings suggest that negatively charged ads cause citizens to conduct more research on their own. Enthusiastic appeals work to motivate committed voters to political action on behalf of their candidate.”

(*Choice*)

"The methodology, data and argument are presented in a clear, easily accessible and informative manner while maintaining academic rigour. . . . A welcome addition."

(Tobias Jung *Political Studies Review*)

About the Author

**Ted Brader** is assistant professor of political science and faculty associate at the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

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