**CHANGES IN THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO SMILES OF THE 2012
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' DURING THE ELECTION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Little research has considered the emotional response of the voting public to a politician's smile and whether the outcome of an election mitigates this experience. This study examines changes in self-reported happiness, anger, and distress to different types of smiles by either President Barack Obama or his opponent Mitt Romney immediately prior to the 2012 presidential election and again in its aftermath. How does the public respond emotionally to the facial displays made by the winners and losers once the election is decided? To ensure a representative sample an internet platform collected responses to different types of smiles made by each candidate before and after the election. The findings revealed differences in the emotional responses from followers of both candidates. Obama's followers reported an increase to happiness when shown examples of his smile after the election and no change in response to Romney smiles. However, a Romney's followers reported a minimal change in emotional response to his facial displays but a substantial increase in anger and distress toward Obama's smiles post-election. This finding is important as it sheds light on the emotional shifts that may occur in voters throughout elections.

Key Words: Leadership, followers, winning, losing, facial displays, smiles, emotional response, presidential elections, consensual losers, individual differences

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracies are concerned with establishing political winners and losers through free and competitive elections. As part of allowing non-violent transition of control, with the winner peacefully proceeding to a position of power, the loser and her or his followers are expected to accept the outcome. That does not mean that the losing candidate's feelings and those of her or his followers are not marked by a range of emotions such as decreased happiness and increased sadness and disappointment in the aftermath (Krizan, Miller, & Johar, 2010), just that the losers must wait until the next electoral cycle to compete.

Presidential elections often elicit stronger feelings and expectations towards the candidates than do other elections (Seibt, Schubert, Zickfeld & Fiske, 2018). Since at least the advent of television, individuals often feel stronger emotional connection with putative leaders than to the political parties and their policy agendas (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). These feelings towards the candidates are expected to be accentuated not only as the election draws near and the stakes escalate to their highest, but also after the election occurs (Rand et al., 2009).

The election's aftermath is felt not only psychologically by both competitors and their followers, but also physiologically. The winners of competitive contests experience lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol (Sherman et al., 2012) and higher levels of testosterone (Verbeke, Belschak, Ein-Dor, Bagozzi & Schippers, 2018). Followers, likewise share changing hormonal levels with stronger partisans of losing candidates experiencing greater reduction in testosterone (Apicella & Cesarini, 2011) and

elevated levels of cortisol (Stanton, LaBar, Saini, Kuhn, & Beehner, 2010) when compared with supporters of the winning candidate.

It is not surprising that the biological substrate influencing the emotional response may be implicated in the perception of candidates for leadership and is affected by information concerning winners and losers (Waismel-Manor, Ifergane, & Cohen, 2011). Thus, electoral results may be seen as influencing the emotional response of individuals to the facial displays of presidential candidates. Here, individuals are not only more likely to pay attention to leaders and serious candidates for leadership positions (Ohlsen, van Zoest, & van Vugt, 2013), they are also more likely to be emotionally affected by their nonverbal display behaviour (Stewart, Salter, & Mehu, 2009); smiling is one class of nonverbal signal effective across a range of social contexts, including leadership.

Smiling is important due to it being an appropriate and socially accepted part of interactions, which nevertheless conveys different messages, ranging from affiliation to threat (Rychlowska et al, 2017). Followers interpret smiles to judge leaders beyond the content of a specific verbal message. For example, a single televised performance by a politician who makes an inappropriate facial display can cast widespread doubt on the incumbent's motivation and even ability to lead (see Bucy, 2016). The smile's ability to effectively communicate occurs due to a variety of muscles enabling a wide range of nuanced displays (Ekman & Rosenberg, 1997). Indeed, recent work has shown that subtle differences in the musculature associated with the smile can convey affiliation or dominance interchangeably during the course of an electoral debate (Senior, Ridout & Stewart, 2019).

There is little doubt that facial displays such as anger-threat are used to assert dominance over other contenders, outsiders, and even supporters, but the major means by which leaders obtain consensus and support is through displays of happiness-reassurance. In other words, the array of smiles that signal a lack of threat and willingness to cooperate are effective in political discourse (Stewart, Bucy, & Mehu, 2015). The influence of this facial display may be accentuated or attenuated depending on the relationship between the candidate and the observer. Followers are more likely to have stronger empathetic response to those they support than to those opposed. For instance, supporters of President Obama perceived greater happiness encoded in each of his different type of smiles than did those who did not follow him (Stewart & Ford Dowe, 2013). Although party identification leads to stronger empathy and counter-empathy (e.g., fear-evasion in response to anger-threat) in response to the preferred party's candidate display behaviour when compared with the other party's candidate, a more direct measure of support is voting. Whether the intention to vote, or having voted for a candidate, this activity is a fundamental indicator of support and followership.

While a good deal of research has considered emotional response to politicians' facial displays prior to elections, only one (to our knowledge) has considered change during the electoral period (Sullivan & Masters, 1988), and none have considered response to the facial displays of winners and losers by their respective followers. Sullivan and Masters (1988) found that Republican Ronald Reagan's re-election bid in 1984 was marked by a nearly doubled response in voter happiness to his smiles from January to October of that year, whereas Democratic Party nominee Walter Mondale

experienced no such increase, as his smile did not elicit any significantly positive change in attitudes in either month. However, it must be noted that while this study provides insight into the emotional dynamics over the course of a campaign, it is limited by its reliance on more molar approach to facial displays which, as detailed above, may not sufficiently detect the nuanced nature of smiles.

The purpose of this study is to consider how followers of 2012 U.S. presidential candidates Barack Obama and Mitt Romney react emotionally to their facial displays of their smile in conveying happiness-reassurance both prior to the election and then in its aftermath. Of special interest is the winner's "honeymoon period" as well as the response to the loser of the election. It is specifically hypothesised that there will be significant differences in the emotional response of partisan groups of followers before and then after the election when presented with facial displays of their preferred candidate and that there will be significantly greater negative emotional responses by followers of the losing candidate (Romney) when presented with smiles displays by the winning candidate (Obama). A further, and exploratory, analysis will be carried out to examine the effects of the underlying messages that each of the smile displays convey.

2. METHOD

A within-subjects design that collects data one week prior to the election and then again two weeks after the election was used. This allowed evaluation of emotional response to the between-subject treatment as participants viewed different smiles by each candidate. Participants were randomly presented smiles that either represented

a pure a form of happiness-reassurance as possible (with Obama an amusement smile, with Romney a posed smile) or a “mixed” emotion smile (for Obama, a controlled-amusement smile; for Romney a contempt smile). Participants in this study were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk to better allow generalization to the U.S. population as a whole (Krupnikov & Levine, 2014).

2.1. Stimuli

The stimuli used for this study consist of six 7-10 second facial displays from President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney in which the candidates are presented in standardized head and shoulder shots in front of neutral backgrounds. For Obama, video was taken from CSPAN coverage of White House Correspondents Dinner on 2 May 2010; video for Romney came from Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) meeting 11 February 2011. Both of these events show the candidates responding to laughter and/or applause from their respective audiences from a one-camera perspective. This in turn allows for unimpeded and uninterrupted coding of the nonverbal behaviour of both candidates (see Table 1). The smile displays taken from these speeches were chosen on the basis of their representing theoretically distinct types of smiles that scholars have successfully used in previous research (Stewart & Ford Dowe, 2013; Stewart et al., 2015).

3.1. Description of the smile displays

3.2. Mitt Romney

In his first happiness display, Mitt Romney displayed a “posed smile.” Here, *zygomatic* lip corner pull up and at an angle is evident yet controlled by the lower facial muscles; furthermore, the display was not accompanied by contraction of the *orbicularis oculi* muscle surrounding the eyes. With this display, Romney exhibited a moderate-sized smile with his lips closed and pressed up with his lower lip; furthermore, his upper lip was pulled up during the display by the muscle associated with disgust, the *levator labii*. Romney’s other happiness display is a “contempt smile.” Here, the side of Romney’s face is pulled upwards and at an angle by his right *zygomatic* muscle into a unilateral smile; during this display he also exhibited signs of disgust through his top lip being pulled up as well as his nose wrinkling.

3.3. Barack Obama

Barack Obama’s first happiness display can be best classified as an “amusement smile.” This is due to not only the prototypical *zygomatic* muscle contraction in the lower face while at the same time the eyes are moderately narrowed through contraction of the surrounding *obicularis oculi* muscles, as seen in the “enjoyment smile,” but also his revealing his teeth as well as through a slight jaw drop. The second smile considered is a “controlled smile.” Here, President Obama engages in what appears to be an enjoyment smile, albeit one in which the eyes are obscured from view for a large proportion of the clip. Here, his lip corners are pulled up and back, revealing his teeth in a manner similar to the first smile before he engages the “chin raiser” muscle to control the display. More specifically, the chin raiser presses his lower lip up to the point of pushing it out and over his upper lip, concealing his smile.

3.4. FACS codes for the smiles displays used in this study.

Although the aim of this work was less upon emotional response to specific configurations of the AU's and the timing of their appearance, and more upon the influence of changing circumstances on participant response, even the short time period in which the display behavior is coded (5-10 seconds) the incredible complexity and fluidity of facial display behavior is revealed. While it must be noted that technology plays an important role in the coding of this behavior, with quality and appropriateness of the video limiting accuracy and flexibility of this study, greater precision has been arrived at, and can be expected to be further developed well into the future of analysis of political, as well as more general social behavior. To differentiate between the types of the displays, the video clips were coded using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) by a qualified rater.

3.5. Procedure

Participants were presented the videos through a web-experiment using MPEG-4 video clips embedded in a web-page with emotion terms and sliders situated to the right. The video clips were presented with a five-second countdown. Each participant first viewed a baseline trial and then viewed one of four combinations of video clips: Romney's smile which consisted of a posed display, conveying affiliative intent and a contempt display which conveys a dominant intent. Examples of Obama's smile contained an amusement display which conveys social reward or a controlled smile which conveys affiliation. Each participant viewed the same four videos in a

randomised factorial design during both the pre-election and post-election data collection.

Table 1: FACS codes for Mitt Romney's and Barack Obama's facial displays

Title	Time Seconds (Frames)	Facial Action Unit (AU)/Strength (a-e)/(Frames [on-set to off-set])
Mitt Romney Facial Displays (15 fps)		
Romney Posed Smile	10.80 (163)	Upper: Lower: 9 (b 70-104) + L10 (b 11-106) R12 (d 3-106) + 39 (99-104) Head: 51 (c 0-4) + 52 (b 12-47; c 62-106)
Romney Contempt Smile	7.00 (106)	Upper: Lower: 10 (b 2-8; c 123-156) + 12 (c 23-100) + 17 (b 2-3; b 35-163) + 25 (b 5-10) Head: 51 (d 0-10) + 52 (c 77-89) + 54 (c 0-8; e 89-132)
Barack Obama Facial Displays (30 fps)		
Obama Controlled Smile	7.13 (224)	Upper: 71 (96-166) Lower: 25c + 26b (0-27) – 12e (119-188) – 25c (128-188) – 17d (187-224) Head/Eye: 52c (0-91) – 54c (82-158) – 51d (158-208) 54c (208-224)
Obama Amusement Smile	8.26 (267)	Upper: 6c (154-232) Lower: 12e (136-267) – 25d (103-267) – 26b (61-262) Head/Eye: 52d + 53c (100-176) – 54 (164-177)

3.6. Participants

Participants engaged with the study in the week prior to the presidential election (1-5 November 2012) and then again two weeks after the presidential election (20 November – 4 December 2012). A total of 214 participants took part in both stages of this study, with 107 (49.3%) identifying their intent to vote for Obama prior to the election and acknowledging they voted for him; 49 (22.6%) did the same for Romney, whereas the remaining 61 participants (28.1%) either did not vote, voted for another candidate, or switched their vote. The average age of participants was 35 years old

ranging from 18 to 72 years. Due to age having a significant influence on response to President Obama in prior research this variable was included as a covariate (Fisher, 2010). There were slightly more males taking part in the study (47.2% female), with over three-quarters of participants identifying as white (76.2%).

3.7. Measures

Emotional response was assessed through six slider bars arrayed to the right of the video stimuli. The strength of the emotion felt was indicated when participants moved the slider bar across the screen, progressing from “Not at all”/0 to “Extremely”/100 with the default setting being “Not at all” with a small tick mark indicating the centre of each scale. The six felt emotion terms were combined into three 100-point variables, with “happiness” (Happy + Excited), “anger” (Angry + Disgusted) and “distress” (Fearful + Anxious) being constructed. The resulting Cronbach’s α for the scales ranged from .737 to .942.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Effects of Mitt Romney’s Smiles on voter perception

Findings concerning the emotional response of happiness to Romney’s smiles suggest no significant change as a result of the election. We see no main effect of the electoral period on the emotional response to happiness for Romney’s smiles, $F(1, 208) = .008$, $p = .930$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$. Likewise, none of the between-subject characteristics significantly interacted with the electoral period, either as covariate

(electoral period X age, $F(1, 214) = .072$, $p=.789$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$) or as specific factors (electoral period X followership, $F(2, 208) = .895$, $p=.410$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$; electoral period X smile type, $F(1, 208) = .061$, $p=.805$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$; electoral period X followership X smile type, $F(2, 208) = 1.236$, $p=.293$, partial $\eta^2 = .012$). As can be expected followership is highly significant with a large effect size, $F(2, 208) = 71.009$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2 = .406$ (see Table 2), although the other between-subject variables are non-significant (age, $F(1, 208) = 2.274$, $p=.133$, partial $\eta^2 = .011$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = .753$, $p=.387$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$; followership X smile type $F(2, 208) = 1.103$, $p=.334$, partial $\eta^2 = .010$).

Table 2: Mean Emotional Response and Standard Deviation by each group of followers to smiles made by each of the two candidates. Responses from those individuals who declared themselves as being undecided or who declared that they would vote for a candidate other than Obama or Romney are included for comparative purposes.

Followership	Response to Mitt Romney			Response to Barack Obama		
	Happiness	Anger	Distress	Happiness	Anger	Distress
Obama	11.406 (1.665)	38.308 (2.153)	33.261 (2.026)	51.935 (2.234)	7.394 (2.007)	10.568 (1.735)
Romney	46.415 (2.500)	10.303 (3.233)	13.540 (3.041)	14.495 (3.310)	42.691 (2.973)	37.096 (2.571)
Undecided	15.449 (2.53)	24.479 (2.913)	21.390 (2.741)	28.894 (2.998)	17.991 (2.693)	16.231 (2.329)

The electoral period, while having no direct effect on the emotional response of anger to Romney's smiles in general, $F(1, 208) = .074$, $p=.786$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$, does have a significant effect on how his followers respond to his different smile types, albeit with a small-to-medium effect size, $F(1, 208) = 4.133$, $p=.043$, partial $\eta^2 = .019$. Specifically, while feelings of anger increase from before the election ($M= 21.087$; $SD = 2.787$) to after the election ($M=26.714$; $SD = 2.773$) in response to Romney's posed smile, the opposite was true for his contempt smile. Here, less anger was experienced to his

contempt smile after the election ($M = 22.886$; $SD = 2.856$) than just before it ($M = 26.766$; $SD = 2.870$).

Despite this general change in response to Romney's smiles, Obama's followers show no significant change in their anger response when shown Romney's facial displays, $F(2, 208) = .963$, $p = .384$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$, generally or to the smile types specifically, $F(2, 208) = .136$, $p = .873$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$. Finally, followers age did not interact with the electoral period, $F(1, 208) = .075$, $p = .784$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$. The between-subjects analysis shows that while followership is yet again a significant factor with a large effect on how Romney's smiles are responded to emotionally both prior to and after the election, $F(2, 208) = 27.042$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .206$, with the expected counter-empathy felt towards the opposition candidates (see Table 1), none of the other between-subject variables reached significance (age, $F(1, 208) = .034$, $p = .854$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = .082$, $p = .775$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$ and follower X smile type $F(2, 208) = .154$, $p = .858$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$).

Romney's followers showed no difference in their distress to his smiles across the two electoral periods, $F(1, 208) = .000$, $p = .985$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$ and the electoral period did not interact with the smile type, $F(1, 208) = .007$, $p = .935$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$. Obamas followers also show no change in their distress response to Romney's smiles, $F(1, 208) = 2.732$, $p = .067$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$. The three way interaction between electoral period, followership and smile type, $F(1, 208) = 1.613$, $p = .202$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$ and the effect of the voters age, $F(1, 208) = .000$, $p = .988$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$, do not influence any change in distress. The between-subjects analysis shows that while followership is significant and has a large effect, $F(2, 208) = 16.115$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .134$, none

of the other between-subject variables reach significance (age, $F(1, 208) = .079$, $p=.779$, partial $\eta^2 <.001$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = 2.024$, $p=.156$, partial $\eta^2 =.010$; followership X smile type $F(2, 208) = .483$, $p=.618$, partial $\eta^2 =.005$).

4.2. The effects of Barack Obama's Smiles on voter perception.

Voters happiness to Obama's smiles did increase as a result of the electoral period, $F(1, 208) = 3.401$, $p=.067$, partial $\eta^2 =.016$ ($T_1M = 29.622$; $SD = 1.985$; $T_2M = 33.927$; $SD = 1.999$) but this did not reach significance. There was also no difference in response to Obama's two different smiles, $F(1, 208) = 1.444$, $p=.231$, partial $\eta^2 =.007$. Likewise, followership did not interact with the electoral period $F(2, 208) = .670$, $p=.513$, partial $\eta^2 =.006$). The age of the followers also failed to reach significance across the two electoral periods $F(1, 208) = 3.350$, $p=.069$, partial $\eta^2 =.016$ as did the three-way interaction between the electoral period, the participant's followership, and the type of smile $F(2, 208) = 1.620$, $p=.200$, partial $\eta^2 =.015$). However, followership did have an expected, significant and strong effect, $F(2, 208) = 48.912$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2 =.320$ on judgements of happiness. The other variables are non-significant (age, $F(1, 208) = .492$, $p=.484$, partial $\eta^2 =.002$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = .025$, $p=.875$, partial $\eta^2 <.001$; followership X smile type $F(2, 208) = .267$, $p=.766$, partial $\eta^2 =.003$).

Analysis of emotional response of anger to Obama's smiles finds that respondent change is significantly different across the two different electoral periods $F(1, 208) = 3.793$, $p=.053$, partial $\eta^2 =.018$. Here, there is an overall increase in participant felt anger ($T_1M = 20.794$; $SD = 1.658$; $T_2M = 24.590$; $SD = 1.754$). Concurrently, the

between-subjects measure of followership significantly interacts with electoral period, $F(2, 208) = 4.819$, $p=.009$, partial $\eta^2=.044$.

While the follower age interacts with the electoral time period for the emotional response of anger to Obama's smiles, $F(1, 208) = 3.852$, $p=.051$, partial $\eta^2=.018$, neither the type of smile presented to Obamas followers, $F(1, 208) = .917$, $p=.339$, partial $\eta^2=.018$, nor the interaction between electoral period, followership and type of smile $F(2, 208) = 1.227$, $p=.295$, partial $\eta^2=.012$, are significant. Only followership plays the hypothesized significant and powerful role, $F(2, 208) = 48.912$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2=.320$ all other variables are non-significant (age, $F(1, 208) = .492$, $p=.484$, partial $\eta^2=.002$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = .025$, $p=.875$, partial $\eta^2<.001$; followership X age $F(2, 208) = .267$, $p=.766$, partial $\eta^2=.003$).

Participant emotional response of distress to Obama's smiles is significantly affected by change in electoral period, $F(1, 208) = 7.697$, $p=.006$, partial $\eta^2=.036$, as participants on the whole indicated increased levels of distress from prior to the election ($T_1M = 18.975$; $SD = 1.566$) to after the election ($T_2M = 23.640$; $SD = 1.648$). There was likewise a significant and moderately strong interaction of electoral period and followership, $F(2, 208) = 6.328$, $p=.002$, partial $\eta^2=.057$. Here, Romney followers reported an increase of fifteen points in distress in response to Obama's smiles ($T_1M = 29.588$; $SD = 3.117$; $T_2M = 44.603$; $SD = 3.280$). On the other hand, the estimated marginal means suggests no real change in distress to Obama's smiles display by his followers ($T_1M = 9.931$; $SD = 2.103$; $T_2M = 11.204$; $SD = 2.214$) or by those not strongly supporting either the Republican or Democratic Party candidates ($T_1M = 17.351$; $SD = 2.283$; $T_2M = 15.112$; $SD=2.972$).

Although there was no interaction between the within-subject change in electoral period and type of smile presented to his followers $F(2, 208) = .204$, $p = .652$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, there was a three-way interaction between electoral time, followership and the smile type, $F(2, 208) = 3.623$, $p = .028$, partial $\eta^2 < .034$. Here, we see subtle changes in Obama's followers' distress when considering his different types of smiles, with a slight reduction in response to his amusement smile and a slight increase in distress to his controlled smile. For those supporting either third parties or not aligning with either candidate, we see a similar decrease in distress response to Obama's amusement smile but a decrease in distress to his controlled smile. However, Romney followers indicated increased distress felt in response to both smiles although the increase was amplified in response to Obama's amusement smile with an over twenty-point increase from just before the election to the weeks after the electoral results were in. While there was an increase of over seven points in distress felt by Romney supporters in response to Obama's controlled smile, this increase brought it to parity with that felt in response to Obama's amusement smile.

Here age did have a significant effect on the experience of distress during the pre- to post-electoral period $F(1, 208) = 7.785$, $p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .036$. Between-subjects analysis of participant response shows that followership also plays a highly significant role, $F(2, 208) = 48.264$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .317$ (see Table 1). All other variables failed to reach significance (age, $F(1, 208) = 1.497$, $p = .223$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$; smile type, $F(1, 208) = .083$, $p = .774$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$; followership X age $F(2, 208) = .258$, $p = .773$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$).

5. DISCUSSION

The first anticipated finding is that supporters of their respective candidates are differentiated by their respective emotional response. Across all contrasts considering Barack Obama's and Mitt Romney's facial displays followership plays a highly significant, and the most powerful, role in influencing participant emotional response. There is a high level of empathy and counter-empathy by the candidates' respective followers (Gabriel & Masch, 2017). Specifically, a greater emotional response of happiness by Obama's and Romney's respective followers is revealed, while at the same time there are higher levels of anger and distress engendered towards the opposition leader. For their part, third party candidate supporters and the unaffiliated find themselves at a midpoint between the Romney and Obama supporters, albeit with a slightly more positive emotional response to the incumbent.

The change in anger response to Mitt Romney's smiles may potentially be due to his perceived capacity (or lack thereof) to influence political outcomes. Specifically, Romney's contempt smile might have less force as a tool communicating in-group antipathy due to his loss in status. At the same time, the increased anger in response to his posed smile might reflect a general perception by the participants that Romney was unable to confer any political standing and reflect a concurrent participant response of displeasure.

The second expected finding concerned differences in negative emotions when followers are presented with the facial displays of the candidate they do not support. Here the response associated with Barack Obama's smiles suggest that there was

significant or near-significant change in participants' emotional response, with a slight increase in happiness and anger, and a significant increase in felt distress. Not only do all respondents show slight change, Romney supporters, in particular, exhibit substantially increased felt anger and distress in response to Obama's smiles, regardless of their type. When considered more closely, we see that Obama supporters, and those associating themselves with third parties or unaffiliated, do not appear to have substantial change in their emotional response to the president's different types of smiles. However, Romney supporters experience dramatic change in how they view both smiles and emotionally respond with distress. Here, Obama's amusement smile evokes an over one-fifth increase in distress to match levels felt towards his controlled smile, which in turn saw a slight increase in this emotional response.

Regarding the exploratory analysis of the different types of smiles it is worth bearing in mind that, like most findings concerning nonverbal display behaviour, context plays an important role in influencing the signal's capacity and power to influence the observer's response. This study is no different; supporters of political candidates are affected by electoral results generally and in response to specific types of smiles by both the winner and the loser. While the 2012 presidential election may be considered a special case, as it involved a sitting ethnic minority incumbent and a religious minority challenger, the inferences drawn here are precisely due to strong feelings felt towards these candidates in an intensely contested race. As a result, we expect the findings are applicable not only to national level races, but also lower level political positions and those contested in a range of contexts. That said it examination of the

effect of candidate on each smile type i.e., a within-subjects contrast comparing specific smiles types across politician would be informative in future.

In this study, it was found that follower response to candidate facial displays has a strong effect. Specifically, we see empathy with the preferred candidate's display with the emotional response of happiness. Likewise, we see counter-empathy from the opposition followers in terms of felt anger and distress. Followers of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney mirror each other's emotional response while those unaffiliated with either candidate experiencing emotion at a mid-point between the two.

Regarding change in emotional response to the presidential candidate displays by their respective followers, the expected "Honeymoon Effect" did not occur. Instead of increased feelings of happiness towards President Obama's smiles, in the wake of his re-election feelings towards him either remained stable, or in the case of Romney's followers, led to increased feelings of the competitive emotions of anger and distress. This enhanced distress is expected, given the biophysiological findings concerning decreased testosterone and increased cortisol in losers and their supporters, and the concomitant decrease in willingness to re-engage in competition (Apicella & Cesarini, 2011; Waismel-Manor et al., 2011). However, the increased response of anger to both President Obama's smiles, while not necessarily unexpected, is still surprising. This response is likely because Romney's followers and the partisan media covering his campaign fully expected him to triumph with the resultant loss leading to antagonism towards Obama (Krizan et al., 2010). Finally, while we see a substantial change in distress by Romney's followers in response to Obama's smiles to the point where they do not appear to differentiate between amusement and controlled smiles, as there is a substantial increase specifically in response to his amusement smile, this does not

necessarily reflect change in the accuracy in smile identification (Bernstein et al., 2010), but the perceived consequences of supporting the losing candidate.

The finding that is most unexpected was that responses to Mitt Romney's displays were mostly resistant to his loss of the 2012 presidential election. Specifically, research findings reviewed here and popular expectations point towards diminished response to his displays as a result of his greatly diminished relevance. When participants exhibited significant change in response to his displays, it was to the different smiles exhibited. Specifically, there was decreased felt anger to Romney's contempt smile, whereas his posed smile showed an increase in anger response. The changed response might reflect Romney's reduced status, especially as displays of contempt are usually aimed at in-group members that exhibit incompetence or some other form of social failure (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011), and presumably are reserved for high-status group members to utilize in their leadership capacity. This would lead us to assume that Romney's reduced ability to induce feelings of anger indicates his diminished influence and status. On the other hand, increased participant feelings of anger in response to Romney's posed smile, a smile largely used as a social lubricant, may reflect its reduced capacity as an emotional emollient. However, any inferences drawn are limited by research design restrictions, which constrain interpretation of emotional appraisals made by participants in this study.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Future endeavours might not only take into consideration a full range of contexts where winning and losing occurs and a greater array of facial displays, but also utilize

a broader array of measures such as psychophysiological responses (Bucy & Bradley, 2004). Such work could examine follower empathy and counter-empathy towards winners and losers throughout the entire electoral process, especially regarding the longer-term aftermath. This is especially important in light of research suggesting that while there is a rebound in follower happiness following electoral defeat (Pierce, Rogers, & Snyder, 2016), the continued health of functioning democratic political systems relies upon the most important of followers: the consensual loser.

7. REFERENCES

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