Appendix
Coding Instructions

Introduction

The following coding instructions have been adapted from **?** and **?** who distinguish between *negative* and *positive* appeals in their study of negative campaigning. The main question that informs our analysis is to what extent negative campaigning strategies differ across communication channels and whether we can observe an effect of a party's standing in the polls, ideological extremity and issue ownership on negative campaigning strategies across these channels. We are primarily interested in measuring negative campaigning, which we define as all forms of criticism levelled against political opponents (**?**). The opposite would be positive campaigning, which includes all forms of self-praise and claims of political actors (**?**). To measure negative campaigning, we focus on the 2017 General Elections in the Netherlands and analyze campaign messages that appeared in political parties' Facebook posts, in several talk shows, and in newspaper coverage.

Instructions

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in our study is the *appeal*. Appeals are any mention in which parties either 1) praise themselves or 2) criticize their opponent (**?**). More specifically, we look at *issue appeals*. These appeals refer to plans or policies of a party or specific candidate. Thus, parties either praise themselves in relation to plans or policies or criticize their political opponents for their plans or policies.

The context in which the appeals are read is the communication channel, which in our study is either the talk show, the newspaper or party's Facebook page. Appeals can vary in length, but end when a different aspect of the party or politician is praised or attacked. To find all the appeals the text should be carefully read and sentences including critique towards opponents or self praise of parties should be dissected.

Examples of issue appeals from **?**:

- '*Labour, labour, labour that is what matters*'. (three positive issue appeals)

- '*We want healthcare improvement*'. (one positive issue appeal)

- '*The next cabinet will be as unable to change the healthcare waiting list as the former*'. (two negative issue appeals one attacking the upcoming cabinet, one attacking the former)

Not coded

Mobilization appeals (i.e. appeals aimed at mobilizing people to get out and vote), parties' self-criticism (i.e. parties leveling criticism at themselves), and *character-based* negative appeals (i.e. attacks aimed at personal traits, competence) were not coded. Furthermore, only appeals were coded and not other text surrounding the appeals. This includes for instance sentences as: '*The campaign has never been that exciting*' and '*The prime minister spoke at the conference*' (**?**).

Special coding instructions

appeal. Paste all the individual appeals made during the 4-week campaign period ahead of the 2017 Dutch General Elections.

neg. What type of appeal is made? Positive appeals are any mention of self-praise and negative appeals are any reason or criticism to vote against the opposing parties.

0 = Positive

1 = Negative

issue_theme. To which issue is the appeal related? Coders can choose from a list of 19 common issues (based on 2016 KiesKompas research **?**, see our online research compendium for more information), as described in Table A1.

par. Which party is making the appeal? Which party is posting the appeal on Facebook? Which party (or political actor on behalf of a party) is making the appeal in the talk show? Which party (or political actor on behalf of a party) is quoted or paraphrased in newspaper content? Note that there can only be one source per appeal.

cda Christen Democratisch Appel (Christian Democrats)

cu ChristenUnie (Christian Union)

d66 Demcraten '66 (Democrats '66)

fvd Forum voor Democratie (Forum for Democracy)

gl GroenLinks (Greens)

pvdd Partij voor de Dieren (Animal Rights Party)

pvda Partij van de Arbeid (Social Democrats)

sgp Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (Orthodox Christians)

sp Socialistische Partij (Socialists)

vvd Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (Liberal Conservatives)

50plus 50Plus Partij (Elderly Party)

medium. On which platform did you find the appeal?

fb Facebook page of political party

np Newspaper

ts Talk show

from. What is the medium source? (For Facebook posts, these are coded as parties, see 'par')

pauwjinek Pauw en Jinek

wnl WNL op Zondag

max Tijd voor Max

telegraaf De Telegraaf

volkskrant De Volkskrant

date. When was the appeal made? For example: When was the Facebook post with the appeal posted? When did the talk show with the appeal air? Or when was the newspaper article with the appeal published?

Table A1

Issue Themes

	Code	Issue	Example
1	environ	Environment and nature	Environmental policies, combating climate change, caring for/restoring nature, animal welfare
2	social	Social security and pensions	Monetary assistance, employment benefits, wages, support for maintenance of children, pensions, sick leave, social protection
3	foreignaid	Foreign aid	Transfers of resources to developing countries, either directly or through multilateral institutions
4	jobs	Labour market	Job creation, job availability, unemployment rates
5	edu	Education	Policies and plans related to lower, middle and higher education, vocational education, semi-vocational education, (research) universities
6	health	Healthcare	Healthcare plans, health insurance, hospitals, national health, premiums, care for the elderly, care homes, healthcare professionals
7	norm	Norms and values	Emphases of local, regional, national, cultural values and norms, interpersonal norms and values (how one is ought to behave)
8	agrar	Agriculture	Agricultural reform, bio industries, animal slaughter, agricultural safety and standards
9	admin	Institutional reform	Proposal of referendums, direct election of mayors and president, new threshold for parties to enter parliament
10	housing	Housing	Availability of (affordable) housing, quality standards, public housing, inheritance tax, mortgage rate deduction
11	econ	Taxes, budget and the economy	Increasing or decreasing taxes, government budget, references to the state of the (national) economy, purchasing power, national debt
12	entrep	Entrepeneurship	Small business owners, trading, trading policies
13	gov	Governmnet efficiency	More transparent, more efficient government
14	defence	Defence	Military spending, military operations, NATO, national security
15	mobility	Mobility	Public transit, high way maintenance, traffic congestion, alternative ways of traveling, air travel
16	crime	Crime reduction	Reduction and prevention of crime, punishments, decriminalisation
17	terror	Terrorism prevention	Prevention of domestic or international terrorism
18	eu	European Union	Policies and plans related to European Union, the EU commission, EU parliament, councel of the EU, European council, national sovereignty (vis-á-vis EU), monetary union
19	imm	Immigration	Immigration policies, Dutch citizens with immigrant background, refugee policies, asylums