Do Negative Political TV Ads Decrease Voter Turnout?

One of the most useful skills we can teach you is the ability to evaluate social scientific studies. All of you will need, at one point or another, to read a published research article, make sense of it, and figure out whether you can trust the findings. In this week's problem set, we are going to practice just that.

For this purpose, we are going to read sections of: Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4, pp. 829–838.

You will find the article with the highlighted sections I want you to focus on here: **link to pdf**

Please answer the following questions *based on the highlighted sections of the text*:

1. Is this a causal study? In other words, is the aim of the study to estimate the causal effect of a treatment on an outcome? Yes or no? (2.5 points)

2. Is this a randomized experiment or an observational study? Explain your reasoning. (2.5 points)

3. What is the treatment the study is interested in estimating the effects of? (Technically, the study is interested in the effect of two different treatments. For this whole problem set, just focus on one of them.) (5 points)

4. What is the outcome variable? (5 points)

5. What was the unit of observation? In other words, what does each observation represent? (2.5 points)

6. How many people participated in this study? (Hint: you may need to look into the table containing the results of the analysis) (2.5 points)

7. What was the estimated average causal effect of the treatment on the outcome? In other words, what were the findings of the study? (Make sure to include the assumption, why the assumption is reasonable, the treatment, the outcome, as well as the direction, size, and unit of measurement of the average treatment effect) (10 points)

8. How strong is the internal validity of this study? In other words, have the researchers accurately measured the causal effect on the sample of individuals who were part of the study? Please explain your reasoning. (10 points)

9. How strong is the external validity of this study? In other words, can we generalize the results to a population outside of the sample? Please explain your reasoning and be specific about what population you think the findings can or cannot be generalized to. (10 points)