

Experimental Stimuli: Taped Political Speech

Text of Prompt:

The prompt below was read to experimental subjects by our Malian research assistants, Subjects were then shown a videotape of the political speech recorded by a Malian actor. The text of the speech follows below.

We are going to show you a videotape of a political speech by an independent candidate who is considering a campaign for National Assembly. Then, we will ask you some questions about your reaction to the speech and your feelings about the politician. Our goal is to understand what makes political speeches effective in Mali.

Before we show you the video, we would like to tell you a little about the candidate. His name is Amadou [*candidate last name*].* In his speech, he will discuss the policies and programs he would support if elected to office.

Now we will show you the speech. Thank you for your help and your cooperation.

* N.B. This sentence was omitted, for experimental subjects who were randomly assigned to the “no last name” condition.

English Translation of Videotaped Speech:¹

My dear countrymen:

I am here today to ask for your vote in my candidacy for the National Assembly. As a resident of our Commune for over 30 years, I too am familiar with the challenges we face: unemployment, not because of a lack of interest, but because of a lack of opportunity; a lack of modern infrastructure, from the shortage of paved roads and bridges to our aging airport that has yet to be modernized to the unfulfilled promises of a government housing project; a struggling school system that is not able to educate all of our sons and daughters; and of course, the poverty and frustration found among so many of our brothers. Although our country strives for equality, Bamako is still highly unequal, from the discrepancy in concentration of paved roads to the unfair education system. Why is it that some areas have their electricity cut daily while others do not? Why is it that some of our children are going to school regularly while others are not? Why are some men and women able to find stable jobs with the government while others are forced to look outside of our Commune, outside of Bamako, even outside of Mali for opportunities??

It does not have to be this way. Mali is an extraordinary country with a dignified past. Our country is diverse yet peaceful and Bamako exemplifies this. Other countries have recognized our progress as well as our readiness to form partnerships: we have signed a contract with the Millennium Challenge Corporation and we were chosen as one of the beneficiary nations of the initiative of President Bush against malaria. Yet so much more can be done, especially in Bamako and particularly within our Commune.

¹ The recorded speech was delivered in the Bambara/Bamanakan language.

If you elect me as your representative, I will fight for goals we all believe in: greater employment opportunities in our Commune so people can help themselves, expanded access to education, greater infrastructure, public housing projects, greater care for sick mothers and children and of course, decreased poverty among our brothers and sisters. I will work with the other members of the National Assembly to ensure that our Commune receives the resources it needs – the resources it deserves – from books to malaria medication to jobs. Economic development is key across all of Mali and it is equally important here in our Commune– I will fight for that. I will fight to sustain our healthy and peaceful democracy, and I will fight to improve the quality of life here in our Commune. These are attainable goals and I have the determination and skills to achieve them. After 30 years as a citizen of our Commune, 15 years in business and 10 years in education, I am ready to put my experience to good use in fighting for our rights and ideals. I have the backing of our current representative to the National Assembly because he knows that I will fight for our shared ideals of peace, democracy, development and equality.

So please, my dear brothers and sisters, allow me to humbly ask for your support and help in this upcoming election. If you vote for me, I will listen to your concerns and I will address them because they are my concerns too. I will not let you down. I thank you for your attention and your support during this election.

Long live our commune and long live Mali, in a united and peaceful Africa!