



2011 Multi-state Survey on Race & Politics (MSSRP)  
 Prof. Christopher Parker, Principal Investigator

Due to social desirability issues, it’s likely that very few people who believe the president will destroy the country to be true, will answer this question honestly. To compensate for social desirability, we used what’s called “The List Experiment,” a methodological technique developed by James Kuklinski and Matthew T. McClure, professors of political science at the University of Illinois, to elicit answers to sensitive questions. The experiment works as follows. In the baseline condition, half of the respondents are asked four relatively innocuous questions; in the treatment condition, the other half are asked the same four questions, plus the sensitive item. To reduce the likelihood of succumbing to social desirability, respondents are simply asked how many statements are true for them, not which ones. If the treatment is effective, the mean number of items in this condition should always exceed the mean number in the baseline condition where only four questions were asked. The difference between the baseline and treatment conditions, multiplied by 100, indicates percentage of a given group affected by the treatment.

**Mean Level of Those Who Believe Obama will Destroy the Country, by Type of Conservatism**

Condition	All Conservatives	Non-TP Conservatives	TP Conservatives
Baseline	2.01 (.058)	2.11 (.084)	1.89 (.079)
N	230	123	107
Treatment	2.36 (.058)	2.17 (.098)	2.60 (.106)
N	223	123	100
% Believe Obama will Destroy Country	35%	6%	71%
Total N	453	246	207

**Source: Multi-State Survey of Race and Politics (2011)**

In the present case moving from left to right, all conservatives (n = 453) are in the first column, non-Tea Party conservatives (n = 246) are in the middle column, and Tea Party conservatives (n = 207) occupy the third column. So, doing the math, we see that 36% of all conservatives believe Barack Obama is destroying the country (2.36 – 2.00 x 100). As we become more discriminating when it comes to self-identified conservatives, big differences emerge. For instance, as we move to the middle column, we see that 6 percent of non-Tea Party conservatives believe the president is destroying the country versus the 71 percent of Tea Party conservatives who believe this to be true.