THREE ESSAYS ON DISAFFECTION IN AMERICAN POLITICS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine the processes that lead individuals to feel disaffected from various aspects of American government, and furthermore, to understand how those feelings of disaffection shape engagement within the political sphere. This dissertation consists of three essays, each of which will focus on a specific instance of the development or expression of disaffection in American politics. In "Grinding to a Halt: Micro- and Macro-Evidence of the Negative Effects of Gridlock on Citizens' Evaluations of Political Parties," I explore how the parties inability to reach legislative compromises, thus producing gridlock, shapes the public's attitudes towards them. Micro-level analyses reveal that some members of the mass public express concern over gridlock, and that this concern is related to lower evaluations of both one's own party, as well as the opposition, but macro-level analyses reveal that actual increases in gridlock are related only to decreases in favorability toward the out-party. In "Public Opinion and The Politicization of Federal Agencies," I employ a content analysis and survey experiment to explore how the association of federal agencies with "politics as usual" may harm perceptions of the agencies' legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. I find that agencies of the federal government are routinely covered in media as politically or strategically motivated actors, however, these depictions only appear to damage agency reputations among Democrats. Finally, in "Alie(n)ation: Political Outsiders in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election," I combine ANES open-ended responses with recently developed text analysis tools to investigate how two dimensions of political alienation—including input-based and output-based alienation—shape attitudes towards candidates that present themselves as a challenge to the political system (i.e., political outsiders). I find that those alienated on either dimension are more likely to prefer outsider candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders because of their anti-establishment orientations, but only input-based alienation is related to vote choice.

DEDICATION

To my mother, father, brother, and grandparents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Legend has it that upon exiting from the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was asked by the townspeople what type of government the Convention had formed, to which Franklin replied, "A Republic, if you can keep it." Whether historically accurate or not, the phrase highlights the central challenge of the democratic system of government, which is that it requires maintenance of the relationship between the people and the institutions that represent them, and that the deterioration of this relationship can lead to systemic collapse. Ominously, recent developments in the American political sphere have indicated that the relationship between the American people and their government may be on shaky ground: the emergence and relative success of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in both the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections suggested that a non-negligible proportion of the American public desired candidates that would challenge the political establishment; the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic led federal agencies such as the CDC and the FDA to become embroiled in fierce political battles, coinciding with a deep wedge being driven in the American public over masks and vaccines; and perhaps most concerning was the literal attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6th over unfounded accusations of election tampering made by President Trump. Each of the anecdotal events described above is troubling in its own right, but viewed together they point to many Americans' deep-seated feelings of anger and frustration with the current political system. In many ways, these events signal the growth of *disaffection* among members of the mass public, and the beginning of what could be a pivotal moment in American politics.

Disaffection in this dissertation is used as umbrella term to describe the deterioration of the psychological attachment between an individual and some component of the political system (or perhaps the system in its entirety). The term 'psychological attachment,' here, is intended to be broadly defined, as it could take on several forms; this attachment may be characterized by a

tendency to trust an institution, to look favorably upon that institution, or to accept the outputs of those institutions as legitimate and legally-binding. Disaffection, then, is what happens when these attachments begin to crumble. When citizens lose trust in the justice system to treat all people equally under the law, when federal agencies are viewed as incapable of executing laws for which they are responsible, or when people believe that elections were not fairly conducted—these are all considered instances of disaffection.

The events that I initially pointed to as defining our current political culture are perhaps the most extreme manifestations of disaffection in recent memory, but they help to highlight just how consequential it can be. If we wish to avoid the harm that could stem from future tragedies of a similar sort, it is vitally important that scholars of public opinion begin to question the nature of disaffection. This requires us to ask: When and why do individuals become disaffected from certain political institutions? How does disaffection shape the way people interact with those institutions? And what might this tell us about the possibility of easing the disaffection that currently grips the nation? Finding answers to these questions—as this dissertation attempts to do—is a necessary first step to healing the nation's wounds. Otherwise, left unchecked, the growth of disaffection has the potential to contribute to the slow demise of the Republic.

Not only does the recent growth of disaffection in American politics have dire consequences for the long-term survival of this nation, but it also has consequences for the survival of democracy as the ideal form of government more broadly. After the dangers of totalitarian forms of government were laid bare in the atrocities of the mid 20th century, many nations gained inspiration from American democracy as they instituted reforms. However, the arrival of the 21st century has presented a whole host of new challenges that have tested America's international reputation as a model of democracy. For instance, the policy-making process of the U.S., which typically moves at a less than glacial pace, has often failed to address some of the most pressing issues facing the nation. Additionally, the competition between political parties to control the levers of power has not only exacerbated the problems inherent in the policy-making process, but has fundamentally

reshaped the way we feel about, think of, and act toward our fellow citizens. Foreign actors wishing to undermine confidence in democracy can point to these challenges, and the disaffection they create, as examples of the flaws of democratic government. The Chinese government used this exact tactic following the events of January 6th, criticizing the U.S. for supporting pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong while failing to prevent such a terrible event on its own soil. If American democracy is to retain any sense of honor, it is crucial that we identify and address the sources of peoples' disaffection from our current political system.

The purpose of this dissertation, then, is to examine the processes that lead individuals to feel disaffected from various aspects of American government, and furthermore, to understand how those feelings of disaffection shape engagement with the American political process. This dissertation will consist of three essays, each of which will focus on a specific instance of the development or expression of disaffection in American politics. In "Grinding to a Halt: Micro- and Macro-Evidence of the Negative Effects of Gridlock on Citizens' Evaluations of Political Parties," I use open-ended survey responses and text analysis at the micro-level, and original data and time-series analysis at the macro-level, to question how the parties' (in)ability to pass legislation in important issues in Congress influences peoples' attitudes towards the political parties—their own, as well as the opposition. In "The Politicization of Federal Agencies," I employ a survey experiment and content analysis to explore how the association of federal agencies with "politics as usual" may harm perceptions of the agencies' legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. And in "Alie(n)ation: Political Outsiders in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election," I combine ANES open-ended responses with recently developed text analysis tools to explore how two dimensions of political alienation, including *input-based* and *output-based alienation*, shape attitudes towards candidates that present themselves as a challenge to the political system (i.e., political outsiders).

The findings presented in these three essays provide important insights on disaffection in American politics. I show, for instance, that some members of the public explicitly express concern over gridlock, and that these individuals are less favorable toward their own party and the oppo-

sition. However, in the aggregate, actual increases in gridlock only appear related to decreases in out-party favorability. This finding has important implications, as it is possible that these changes in favorability will later translate into changes in vote choice or party identification. I also show that federal agencies are fairly frequently covered in the media in a way that frames them as strategic or political actors, and at least for Democrats, this coverage can reduce support for agencies' rules and policies. This might suggest that the media has played a larger role than previously believed in shaping the public's expectations of agencies, as agencies generally weren't rewarded for appearing as apolitical, principled actors. And finally, I show that both alienation from the inputs of the political system (e.g. loss of faith in the electoral process), as well as the outputs of the political system (e.g., cynicism toward elected officials), drove some of Trump's and Sanders' success in the 2016 election. If feelings of alienation—and disaffection, more broadly—continue to fester in the American public, we may see an increasing number of opportunistic 'political outsiders' emerge to meet the demand for anti-establishment candidates.

2. GRINDING TO A HALT: LEGISLATIVE GRIDLOCK AND CITIZENS' EVALUATIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, divisions between the Democratic and Republican Parties in Congress have periodically left many of the nation's most important issues unaddressed (Binder 2015). Scholars are just beginning to understand the public's reactions to disorder in the legislative process, finding, for instance, that people are averse to the uncivil behavior that occurs between partisan elites (Ramirez 2009; Skytte 2021). However, what remains unclear is whether the mass public recognizes the parties, in particular, as responsible for the gridlock that frequently characterizes the legislative branch, and if so, how this might shape people's attitudes toward the parties—their own party, as well as the opposition.

In this paper, I argue that members of the American public are conscious of, and concerned about, gridlock in the legislative process, and that they identify the parties as responsible for this outcome. I argue this because most Americans are not driven by deeply-held ideological beliefs, and instead simply desire that the legislative branch find solutions to pressing issues (Wolak 2020; Egan 2014). Therefore, to degree that Congress is characterized by gridlock, I expect the mass public to respond by lowering their evaluations of both their own party and the out-party. I test my argument with observational data at both the micro- and macro-levels. I begin at the micro-level where I use open-ended responses to the American National Election Studies' (1984-2020) "most important problem" question to show that some members of the mass public indeed recognize Congressional gridlock as an issue, and that the degree to which one sees gridlock as an issue is negatively related to both in- and out-party favorability. Then, I combine Binder's (1999) measure of Congressional gridlock and original measures of party favorability to perform a time-series analysis, which shows that gridlock is also detrimental to party favorability in the aggregate, though

only as it relates to the out-party. The public, it appears, is more hesitant to blame their own party for the shortcomings of Congress.

This paper contributes to the public opinion, party politics, and legislative politics literatures in two clear ways. First, I provide empirical evidence demonstrating that gridlock in Congress is a conscious (albeit small) consideration in the minds of the American people, and that the two major parties are seen as the primary actors responsible for the institution's failure to address pressing issues. Recent literature has shown that Congress' favorability as a whole is harmed when failing to compromise (Flynn and Harbridge 2016), but whether this punishment extends to the parties has thus far remained unknown. A second and related contribution is to show that, for the most part, punishment for gridlock is attributed specifically against the out-party. Precisely how representatives navigate the difficult waters of taking principled stands while also considering the electoral impact of failing to pass legislation has been the subject of recent scholarly work (e.g., Harbridge and Malhotra 2011). My findings speak to this literature in showing that political parties as a whole receive little to no blowback from their members in the mass public when gridlock increases, helping to further explain to why representatives may take such uncompromising positions.

2.2 PUBLIC OPINION AND THE AILING LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Scholars of political behavior often argue that peoples' many political attitudes and behaviors are driven, in part, by their desire to see important political issues be addressed. The primary way in which representatives can address the issues that concern the public is to draft and pass legislation. However, tensions between the Democratic and Republican Parties in the legislative branch periodically complicate this task. Evidence indicates that there is a growing degree of inter-party polarization, as well as intra-party solidarity, in Congress (e.g., McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016). Members of Congress also appear rather polarized and hostile in their online communications (Heseltine and Dorsey 2022), in their campaigning (Fowler, Franz, and Ridout 2021), and in their interpersonal interactions on the floor (Dietrich 2021). But perhaps more im-

portantly, evidence suggests that, at times, the contentiousness between the parties can result in rather high levels legislative gridlock. Binder (1999, 523) defines gridlock as "the relative ability of the political system to reach legislative compromises that alter the status quo," and shows that the level of gridlock has even reached as high as 75% in some years. The reason this is important is that the amount of gridlock in the legislative process is among the most relevant indicators of the performance and overall health of legislature as an institution, and may signal to the public that the parties and their members in Congress failed to deliver on the promises they made in the last election cycle. How the public's attitudes towards the parties might respond to such perturbations is a question of central importance in this paper.

Recent scholars have shed light on how the hostility and disorder that often characterize Congress shapes the attitudes and behaviors of members of the mass public. The polarization of partisan elites, for instance, helps the mass public recognize the differences between the two parties, thereby strengthening peoples' attachment to their own party and their animosity to the opposing party (Hetherington 2001; Banda and Cluverius 2018). Clear divisions between the parties in Congress also appear to be related to lower approval of the legislative branch as a whole (Ramirez 2009), though not necessarily related to approval of individual members (Harbridge and Malhotra 2011). Finally, uncivil behavior between Congressional elites (e.g., bickering, name-calling, tribalism) can reduce trust in Congress even when accounting for elites' level of issue polarization (Skytte 2021).

The literature described above clearly shows that evaluations of the legislative branch, as a whole, are influenced by the performance of the institution and the behavior of its members. However, what remains to be explained is whether the public associates the two major parties, in particular, with gridlock in the legislative process, and if they do, whether gridlock can harm the public's favorability toward the parties. Members of the mass public do not identify with or vote for Congress as an institution, but they do identify with parties and vote for their members. This makes it crucial for scholars of public opinion to understand how the public evaluates the parties in

light of their (in)ability to work together to solve legislative issues. In the next section, I propose a novel argument regarding the relationship between gridlock in the American legislative process and party favorability.

2.3 GRIDLOCK AND PARTY ATTITUDES AND THE MICRO- AND MACRO-LEVELS

Does the American public recognize Congressional gridlock as a problem, and if so, how does this shape the public's attitudes toward the responsible actors, mainly the two major political parties? Here I argue that the public is indeed concerned about gridlock in the legislative process, and given the parties' role in the shaping the outcomes of that process, I expect the public to look less favorably upon those parties when their ability to address important issues decreases. Likewise, an improvement in the parties' ability to address important issues should increase the public's favorability toward them. I support my argument by pointing to to evidence of the public's flexibility in the policies they would find preferable to gridlock, and also evidence that the failure of Congress to address important policies can be reputationally or electorally harmful for the institution and its members.

One of the primary reasons that gridlock may harm party favorability is that, although partisanship remains an influential driver of some attitudes and behaviors, most people are not deeply ideologically committed across the spectrum of issues, and thus find a wide range of policy alternatives to be preferred to gridlock. Even in this polarized era, many in the mass public consider themselves near the ideological 'middle of the road' (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017), and do not use ideological terms when verbally conceptualizing their partisanship (Allamong et al. 2022). Individuals are also known to easily shift their issue attitudes in response to rather mild stimuli, such as media frames (Chong and Druckman 2007) and cues from political elites (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Levendusky 2010), even when those elite cues point in an ideological direction that is contrary to the party's typical leanings (e.g., Republicans led to support liberal policies, Barber and Pope 2019). Many are even said to have "double-peaked preferences" (Egan 2014),

particularly on consensus issues, in the sense that they prefer the policy proposals from both the left *and* the right to the status quo. This is to say that, for the most part, the public does not appear rigid in its preferences, and in fact, appears somewhat willing to concede some political points so long as important issues get addressed.

The flexibility of the public in their ideological beliefs, and their openness to a range of policy alternatives, suggests that the public may specifically desire that Congress and its actors (i.e., the political parties) seek compromise, and may punish them when they fail to do so. Evidence for this expectation is easily be found in public opinion polls, which show that the public is largely favorable toward compromise and are concerned about the political battles that are seemingly dividing the nation (Tyson 2019; Bailey and Elbeshbishi 2021). Academic work finds similar patterns, with the large swaths of the public desiring compromise even from their own party (Wolak 2020). In fact, many individuals would prefer the out-party's policy over gridlock on consensus issues (Flynn and Harbridge 2016). Thus it appears that the public desires that their representatives pass legislation on important issues, and that they are willing to punish Congress when they fail to live up to expectations.

The reasons presented above lead naturally to my argument that gridlock will be negatively related to both in- and out-party favorability. The Democratic and Republican parties have controlled Congress for more than a hundred and fifty years, and many in the public consider themselves a member of one party or the other. It is reasonable to believe, then, that the public recognizes the parties as an integral part of the legislative process. As scholarsip shows (e.g., Binder 2015), that process is periodically characterized by substantial degrees of gridlock, stemming in part from hostile relations between the two parties. Given the public's largely non-ideological beliefs, their voiced support for actors that seek compromise, and the salience of the parties in Congress, my primary expectation is that gridlock is broadly harmful to party favorability, reducing people's evaluations of the out-party, as well as their own.

A central contribution of this paper is to explore the relationships between gridlock and party

favorability at both the micro- and macro-levels of analysis. At the micro-level, it is reasonable to expect variation in the degree to which individuals are concerned with gridlock—some people simply care more about it than others. But to the extent that one *is* concerned about gridlock, and recognizes the parties as responsible for that outcome, I expect this to correspond to less favorable evaluations of the in- and the out-party. Establishing these micro-foundations, showing that the public conscious considers gridlock and relates it to the parties, is vital before moving to the macro-level of analysis. At this level, the first consideration is the nature of the relationship between gridlock and party attitudes, as this theoretic relationship will inform the empirical model that I estimate. Theoretically speaking, then, my expectation is that increases (decreases) in gridlock lead to negative (positive) changes in both in- and out-party favorability, and that these changes to party favorability will be short-lived. The rationale here is that the public is likely not sufficiently attuned to the affairs of Congress to be able to detect the precise level of gridlock, and is instead responding to relative *changes* in gridlock—that is, when Congress' ability to address important issues worsens across terms (positive change in gridlock), evaluations of the parties will temporarily fall (negative change in party favorability). Similarly, an increase in Congress' ability to address important issues (negative change in gridlock) should relate to temporary increases in party favorability (positive change). However, as a new Congress takes office, party leadership is reshuffled, and issues rise and fall off the national agenda, I expect both gridlock and party favorability to quickly return to their respective equilibria. This implies that a first differences model is most appropriate (discussed in greater detail in the 'Macro-Level Analysis' section).

My next step is to apply a mixed-method empirical approach to assess my theoretic expectations at both the micro- and macro-levels. I begin by describing the ANES data and text analytical tools that I apply at the micro-level, and present findings that unpack how individuals think about and respond to Congressional gridlock. Then, I follow a similar procedure at the macro-level, describing my data source (original party favorability data) and empirical approach (time-series analysis) before showing showing that Congressional gridlock affects party attitudes in the aggre-

gate.

2.4 MICRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS: ANES OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

The first empirical exercise occurs at the micro-level, and relies upon decades of data from the American National Election Studies (1984-2020). Here I combine open-ended responses about the 'most important problems' in the country ($N = 17,493$) with closed-ended responses about attitudes towards the parties to show that people who identify gridlock as an issue tend to have lower evaluations of both their own party, as well as the out-party. I will first describe my data, empirical approach, and expectations in greater detail before presenting my findings.

2.4.1 Data and Approach

The open-ended question that I am particularly interested in asks, "what do you think are the most important problems facing this country?" and allows respondents to provide up to three 'mentions.'[1] The responses to this question are a valuable resource to scholars of public opinion in that they allow us to see where the concerns of the public may lie, free from the constraints of closed-ended questions which necessarily limit the range of issues that the public can identify as important. While researchers at the ANES manually coded these responses into set categories in the past, responses from the 2012 survey onward have not been coded in this same way. Fortunately, newly-developed tools of text analysis greatly assist researchers in categorizing large numbers of such responses. I apply one such tool which is shown as effective at categorizing ANES responses—the Structural Topic Model or STM (Roberts et al. 2014a).[2] Beyond its ability to identify interesting conceptual categories in open-ended responses, the STM is valuable in that it generates document-level topic proportions for each topic in the model, which can then be compared numerically to other variables. My intention with the STM, then, is to model the open-ended 'most important problem' responses, to identify the degree to which Congressional gridlock is a

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1. For the purpose of these analyses, all mentions provided by a respondent are merged into a single 'cell' (i.e., observation).

2. Roberts et al. (2014a) specifically demonstrates the efficacy of the STM on the 'most important problem' responses, and shows that the models categorization is equally accurate compared to human coders.

concern to the public, and to assess whether greater concern about gridlock is related to lower in- and out-party favorability at the individual level.[3]

To measure evaluations of the in- and out-party, I rely upon the ANES feeling thermometers, which are scales ranging from 0-100 on which respondents rate the Democratic and Republican Parties. My measures of in-party and out-party favorability (respectively) are specifically created by measuring how favorable Republicans (Democrats) are toward the Republican (Democratic) Party, and how favorable Republicans (Democrats) are toward the Democratic (Republican) Party.[4] Descriptive statistics for these and other ANES measures are available in Appendix A.2.

With these ANES data I will empirically evaluate my primary theoretic expectation at the micro-level, which is that individuals who identify legislative gridlock as a pressing issue will hold both parties responsible, resulting in lower favorability ratings of one's own party as well as the opposition. More formally, I do this by comparing the proportion of one's 'most important problem' response dedicated to the 'gridlock' topic from the STM to their evaluations of the in- and out-party using the ANES feeling thermometers, with the expectation that the relationship should be negative (Hypothesis 1). This hypothesis rests on the expectation that the public will indeed recognize gridlock as one of the many issues facing the nation, and although there is no corresponding statistical test, I will support this expectation with descriptive evidence.

H1: *Greater use of the 'gridlock' topic will have a negative relationship with both in- and out-party feeling thermometers*

2.4.2   Findings

Does the American public identify legislative gridlock as an important issue facing the nation? After estimating the topic model, I manually inspect the topics that are generated (full results

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3. For brevity, the discussion of model construction and evaluation has been moved to Appendix C.3.

4. Leaners have been coded as partisans. Pure independents included in the generation of the STM as their responses provide useful, additional information to the model to help sharpen the topics that are found. Pure independents do not have measures of in- and out-party favorability, however, so they are excluded from the regression analyses of party favorability.

| (a) Word Cloud | (b) Example Responses |
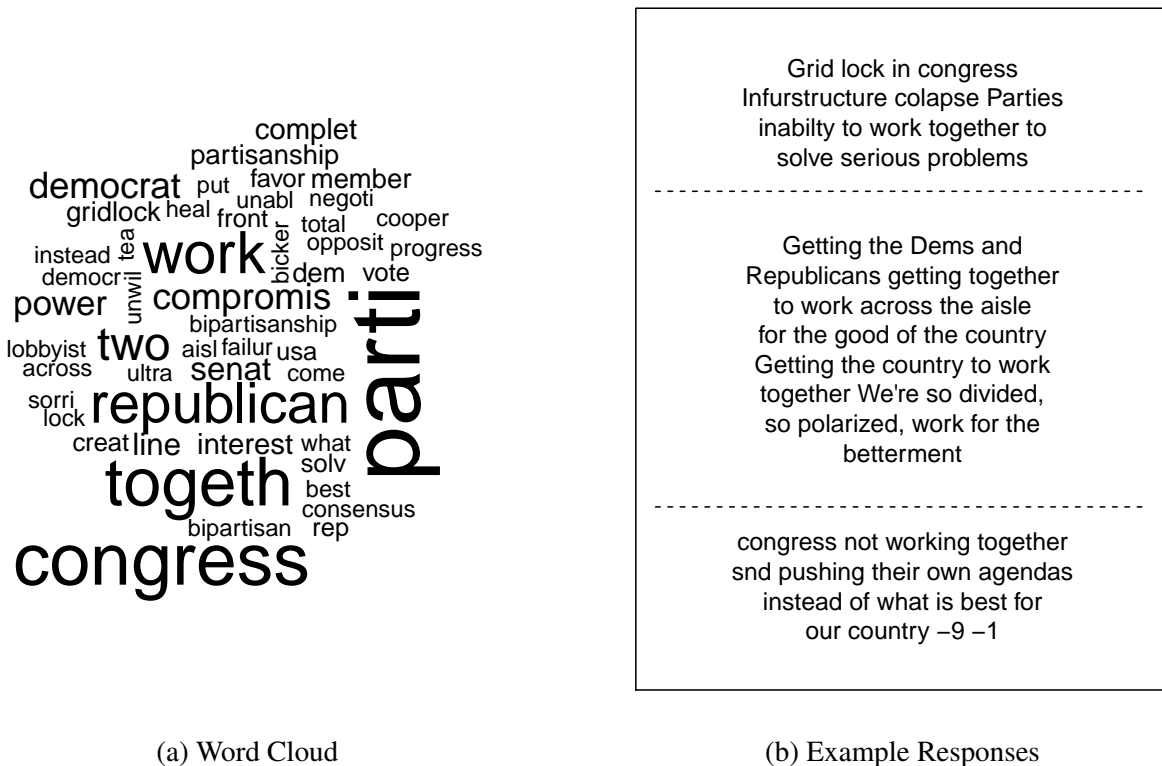
Figure 2.1: Exploring the 'Gridlock' Topic

in Figure C.5, Appendix A.2). Although certain issues such as the economy and healthcare are mentioned in the greatest proportions (5.9% across all documents), I do find that there is a somewhat less prevalent topic (1.3% across all documents) that appears related to gridlock in Congress (Topic 47, marked in red in Figure C.5). To get a sense of the content of the gridlock topic, Figure 2.1 provides a word cloud showing words that are highly representative of the topic (2.1a), with each word's size being proportionate to its probability of appearing in the gridlock topic, as well as three exemplary responses that dedicate a large proportion of their content to the topic (2.1b).

In Figure 2.1a we see that Congress and the Democratic and Republican Parties are mentioned often in the context of the gridlock topic. Importantly, the surrounding terms make clear that respondents are specifically concerned with the parties' ability to work together, as indicated

by words such as 'compromise,' 'bipartisanship,' and even the term 'gridlock' itself. Figure 2.1b then demonstrates how such words are used in context, with respondents stating their concern with the "parties inability to work together to solve serious problems," and emphasizing that "the good of the country" must be placed ahead of the parties' "own agendas." This is precisely the type of language that we might expect to see used in the context of Congressional gridlock, and importantly, its evident that the two parties are often associated with the issue. Moving forward, I will refer to this as the 'gridlock' topic.

I now proceed to the more pressing task at hand, which is to examine whether concern over gridlock is related to lower evaluations of the parties (i.e., the in- and out-party). I test this hypothesis in Table 2.1, with OLS models regressing the in-party ($M = 70.5, SD = 19.0$; Column 1) and out-party ($M = 28.5, SD = 23.6$; Column 2) feeling thermometer ratings on the proportion of one's 'most important problem' response dedicated to the 'gridlock topic' ($M = 0.013, SD = 0.026$). These models also control for a number of potential confounders, including the strength of one's partisan and ideological identities, political interest, sex, age, and year fixed-effects.[5]

Looking first at Column 1, we see that increased use of the gridlock topic is negative and significantly related to in-party feeling thermometer evaluations ($\beta = -11.160, p < 0.05$), as expected. In more substantive terms, a one standard deviation increase in the proportion of one's 'most important problem' response dedicated to the gridlock topic translates to a 0.30 point decrease on the in-party feeling thermometer. Column 2 shows that use of the gridlock topic is also negative and significantly related to the out-party favorability ($\beta = -14.204, p < 0.05$), with a one standard deviation increase in the gridlock topic producing a 0.37 point decrease on the out-party feeling thermometer. This exercise suggests that concern about gridlock in Congress is related to one's attitudes towards the parties (i.e., both the in- and out-parties), though in absolute terms, the size of these relationships appears somewhat small. It is also important to consider that the distribution of the the proportion use of the gridlock topic is heavily right-skewed (see Figure A.3,

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5. Summary statistics available in Table A.2 in Appendix A.2.

Table 2.1: Effect of Use of 'Gridlock' Topic on In- and Out-Party Feeling Thermometers, ANES, 1984-2020

	In-Party Therm.	Out-Party Therm.
MIP: Gridlock	−11.160**	−14.204**
	(5.079)	(5.963)
Party Strength	26.382***	−12.457***
	(0.491)	(0.577)
Ideological Strength	3.041***	−16.060***
	(0.428)	(0.502)
Political Interest	4.818***	−7.132***
	(0.548)	(0.644)
Female	2.826***	1.734***
	(0.260)	(0.305)
Age	3.418***	1.502***
	(0.733)	(0.861)
Constant	48.496***	64.033***
	(0.735)	(0.864)
Year Fixed Effects?	*Yes*	*Yes*
Observations	17,493	17,493
R^2	0.196	0.277
Adjusted R^2	0.196	0.277

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Data from all presidential years between 1984–2020 excluding 2004 (data were unavailable for that year)

Appendix A.2), with a few people dedicating a large part of their response to this topic, but most speaking on this topic relatively little. Nevertheless, in support of Hypothesis 1, concern over gridlock does appear related to lower evaluations of the in- and out-parties.

2.5 MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS: TIME-SERIES

Having demonstrated that gridlock is a conscious consideration at the micro-level, and that concerns about gridlock are negatively related to party attitudes, my next task is to show that a relationship exists between gridlock and party attitudes *in the aggregate*. I do so using a time-series analysis ($N = 20$) that combines Binder's (1999) measure of legislative gridlock with a novel measure of party favorability. Here I describe both data sources, as well as my approach to modeling them, before presenting empirical results testing my theory at the macro-level.

2.5.1 Data and Approach

The measure of Congressional gridlock in my analyses comes from Binder (1999), who considers the institution to be gridlocked to the extent that it could have, but fails to address important issues on the national agenda. Binder's (1999) contribution is to propose a method of identifying the issues of national importance from unsigned editorials in the *New York Times*, and then examining if Congress has passed legislation on those issues or not. The justification for using unsigned editorials from the *Times* is that the paper has long been considered the nation's "paper of record," and thus any political issues raised in the editorials is an indication that the issue has reached some minimal threshold of public salience. While some may be concerned that the issues addressed in the unsigned editorials of the *New York Times* may reflect the ideological biases of the paper's editorial team, Binder (1999) attempts to quell these concerns by noting that her measure of gridlock considers not only those editorials that support a given piece of legislation, but also those that show opposition.

This measure of gridlock covers the 95th (1977-1979) through the 114th Congress (2015-
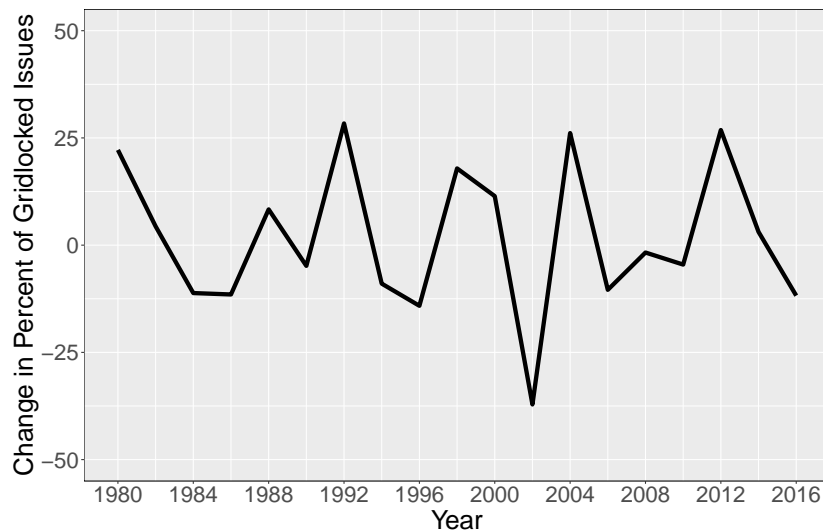
Figure 2.2: Changes (First Difference) in Gridlock, 95th (1977-1979) - 114th Congress (2015-2017)

2017).[6] I am theoretically interested in the session-to-session changes in the percent of issues gridlocked, so I plot these changes in Figure 2.2. This figure shows clearly that the level of gridlock is not constant through time, nor is it simply increasing every period—sometimes gridlock increases from Congress-to-Congress and sometimes it falls. It is these changes in Congress' ability to address important issues that I believe the public is responding to. We see, for instance, that there was a sizable positive change (~26%) in the percent of gridlocked issues between the 104th (1995-1997) and the 105th (1997-1999) Congress' (as indicated by the positive value in 1998). During this same time period, both in- and out-party favorability saw changes in the negative direction (1.4 point and 1.0 point negative changes, respectively). Across the entire series the average change is 1.71, the median absolute change is 11.43, and the standard deviation is 17.3.

My measures of in- and out-party favorability are original to this paper, and are created using

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6. In my analyses, each Congress is assigned to the year that corresponds to the last full-year of their term. For example, the 95th Congress was in session between January 4, 1977 and December 15, 1977 (first session), and between January 19, 1978 and October 15, 1978 (second session), so the 95th Congress corresponds to 1998 in the data.

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Table 2.2: Surveys Used to Generate In- and Out-Party Favorability

Survey Firm	# of Surveys	Loadings (In-Party/Out-Party)
ANES	16	.970/.990
Gallup	10	.963/.980
Gallup2	5	.543/.871
CBS	4	.606/.784
CBS/New York Times	8	.871/.852
PSRA	3	.668/.232

Stimson's (2018) dyad ratios algorithm. This algorithm allows researchers to combine measures from different survey outlets—all of which are assumed to tap into the same latent attitude—into a continuous time-series measure.[7] The latent attitude that I am interested in is partisans' attitudes towards their own party and the opposition. Therefore, I rely upon the Roper Center's 'iPoll' database to gather survey items that I believe are tapping into this latent attitude. I searched the database using words such as 'favorable, 'favorability,' and 'party,' restricting my search to surveys where the full survey dataset was available.[8]

Table 2.2 provides information on the survey items that were used in the algorithm, including the survey firm that conducted the survey, the number of surveys used from each firm, and the respective loadings on the in-party and out-party favorability measures. Question wording for each of the items that went into the algorithm can be found in Table A.1 of Appendix A.1. The loadings from the generated in- and out-party favorability series given in Table 2.2 represent the "product moment correlations between the latent dimension estimates and the raw indicators," (Stimson 2018, 210). Positive loadings indicate that the surveys from a particular firm move in the same direction as the latent series, while negative loadings indicate that surveys from a firm

7. Scholars have previously applied this algorithm to generate various measures of political concepts such as policy mood (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Enns and Kellstedt 2008) and macro-interest (Peterson et al. 2020).

8. Survey top-lines on party favorability are easily accessible from the Roper Center's iPoll database, but measuring in-party and out-party favorability requires that I know the party identification of each survey respondent. Therefore, for each survey containing a question on party favorability, I downloaded the entire dataset and parsed Republican (Democratic) attitudes towards the Republican (Democratic) and Republican (Democratic) attitudes towards the Democratic (Republican) Party.
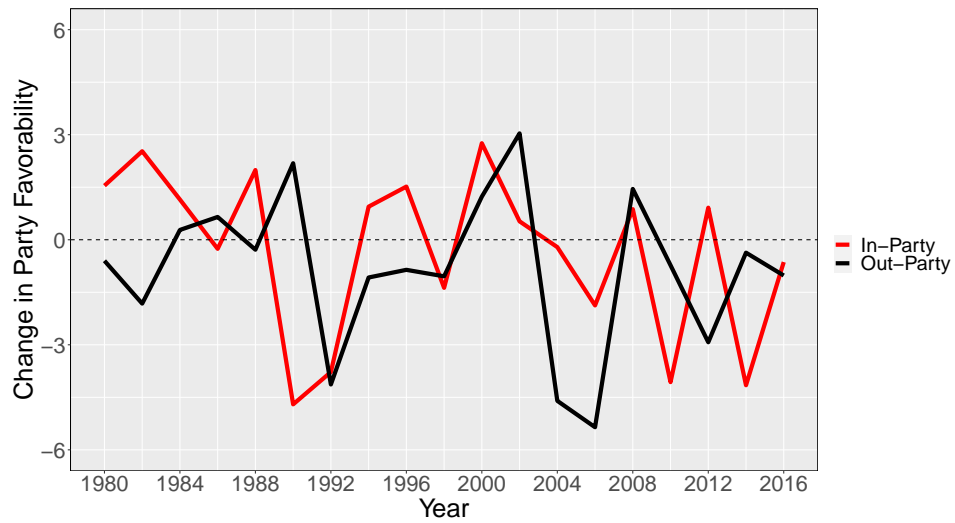
Figure 2.3: Change (First Difference) in In- and Out-Party Favorability

move in the opposite direction. This implies that the latent series produced from the algorithm more closely follow those surveys with the highest, positive loadings. The loadings of the ANES and Gallup series, for instance, are well above 0.9, indicating that they are highly influential in the construction of the latent series. On the other hand, the PSRA surveys do tend to move in the same direction as the latent series as indicated by its positive loadings, but the relatively small size of the loading indicates that the latent series does not follow the PSRA series as neatly. With this one exception, most series demonstrate fairly high and positive loadings, giving me confidence that the items I've collected are consistently tapping into the same latent attitudes—in-party and out-party favorability—and that their inclusion in the algorithm is appropriate.

My theoretic interest here is the changes in party favorability (as opposed to their levels), so in Figure 2.3 I plot these changes for both the in-party (red) and out-party (black) series. This figure shows, for instance, that between 1978 and 1980 in-party favorability underwent a 1.5 point change in the positive direction while out-party favorability underwent a 1.8 point change in the

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negative direction. The average change in in-party favorability was -0.3 points ($SD = 2.4$) with a median absolute change of 1.5, while the average change in out-party favorability was -0.8 point ($SD = 2.2$) with a median absolute change of 1.1.

With these data I empirically evaluate my primary theoretic expectation at the macro-level, which is that positive changes in the amount of Congressional gridlock will be related to negative changes in in- and out-party favorability. This represents my second hypothesis (H2 below), and is tested by estimating the first difference models in Equations 1 and 2 and examining the size and significance of β_1.

$$\Delta InPartyFav_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta Gridlock_t + \epsilon_t \tag{2.1}$$

$$\Delta OutPartyFav_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta Gridlock_t + \epsilon_t \tag{2.2}$$

Assuming that neither the party favorability nor the gridlock series in levels were not integrated to an order greater than one, this suggests that $\Delta InPartyFav$, $\Delta OutPartyFav$, and $\Delta Gridlock$ are all $I(0)$ series, and thus Equations 1 and 2 are considered "$I(0)$ balanced."[9] Pickup and Kellstedt (2022, 2) note that this particular type of equation balance is necessary to ensure that the test statistics and standard errors from one's empirical model are reliable. With my model now balanced, I can proceed to estimating the models in lines 1 and 2 and assessing the results in light of my second hypothesis. I start with a bivariate specification before including elite polarization (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016) and the percent of strong partisans in the mass public as covariates, both in first differences.[10] Polarization is a potential confounder as it is known to be re-

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9. An alternative argument is that gridlock and party favorability are (co-)integrated series, and have both short-term and long-term equilibrium relationships between them. This argument would call for a more general modeling approach such as the general error correction model (GECM). I estimate a GECM in Table A.4 in Appendix 2.3 separately for in- and out-party favorability. The results support my expectation that there are short-term, but no long-term, equilibrium relationships between gridlock and party favorability.

10. Elite polarization calculated as the absolute difference between the median Republican and the median Democrat in the U.S. House and Senate. Results in Table 2.3 use the House measure of polarization, but the results do not change in any meaningful way when using the Senate measure (see Table A.3 in Appendix A.3).

lated to both gridlock (Binder 1999) and party attitudes (Hetherington 2001). The percent of strong partisans is another potential confounder, as representatives may see a growth in strong partisans—who tend to be more favorable toward their party—as a sign that the public is committed to certain policy goals and that the representative should not compromise (Harbridge and Malhotra 2011).

H2: *Positive changes in Congressional gridlock will be related to negative changes in in-party and out-party favorability*

2.5.2 Findings

The main results are presented in Table 2.3. Looking first at the bivariate specifications in Column 1 and 2, we see that, as expected, changes in gridlock are significantly related to negative changes in out-party favorability ($\beta = -0.067, p < 0.05$). That is, the public appears slightly less favorable toward the opposing party when Congress fails to address important issues. However, the same reputational damage does not extend to one's own party, as changes in gridlock appear totally unrelated to changes in in-party favorability ($\beta = -0.003, p = 0.47$). This finding is not in line with expectations, but it is somewhat revealing about exactly who the public blames for legislative gridlock—mostly the other team.

The results do not appear to change in any meaningful way when elite polarization and the percent of strong partisans are added as covariates in Columns 3 and 4. The covariates do not appear to have any consistent relationship with party favorability, as only change in the percent of strong partisans appears to have a significant relationship in the in-party favorability model ($\beta = 0.445, p < 0.05$). Looking at the main variables of interest, however, see that that positive changes in gridlock are once again unrelated to changes in in-party favorability ($\beta = -0.008, p = 0.39$), and positive and significantly related to changes in out-party favorability ($\beta = -0.064, p < 0.05$). Substantively, these results suggest that increase in gridlock of 27 points—as occurred occurred between the 111th and the 112th[th] sessions of Congress in President Obama's first term—is related

Table 2.3: First Differences Models - Gridlock and Party Favorability

	In-Party	Out-Party	In-Party	Out-Party
	Basic Model		w/ Controls	
ΔGridlock	−0.003	−0.067**	−0.008	−0.064**
	(0.033)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.026)
ΔElite Polarization			24.138	−7.731
			(23.181)	(21.524)
ΔPct. Strong Partisan			0.445**	−0.243
			(0.196)	(0.182)
Constant	−0.327	−0.727	−1.058*	−0.415
	(0.561)	(0.449)	(0.594)	(0.551)
Observations	19	19	19	19
Adjusted R^2	−0.058	0.230	0.234	0.249

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

to a 1.7 point drop in favorability toward the out-party. Considering that the standard deviation of the out-party measure is about 2.2 points, this means an increase of gridlock this size produces a roughly three-quarter standard deviation change in out-party favorability, a relationship which is by no means negligible in size and is perhaps best described as moderate. Overall, these results provide mixed support for my second hypothesis, as increases in gridlock only appear related to decreases in favorability toward the opposition, but not to one's own party.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most rudimentary expectation the public has for their representatives is that those representatives use their legislative powers to address issues of importance. Meeting this expectation in the American two-party system generally requires some degree of cooperation between the Democratic and Republican Parties in Congress, but the tension and animosity that exists between

them have, at times, produced high degrees of legislative gridlock (Binder 1999). The contribution of this paper is to question how the public responds to such gridlock, and more specifically, to question whether the public attributes blame to the parties for their failures to addressing pressing issues. I argued that the public attributes blame to their own party, as well as the opposition, when Congress falls into gridlock, the reasons being that many in the public are not deeply committed to ideological positions (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017), and are favorable towards compromise both in principle and in practice (Flynn and Harbridge 2016; Wolak 2020; Egan 2014). Furthermore, I believe evidence of these relationships could be found at both the micro- and macro-levels, with individuals expressing concern over gridlock holding lower evaluations of the in- and out-parties, and the public as a whole changing it's party evaluations (in the short-term) in response to changes in the amount of Congressional gridlock.

After testing my expectations at both the micro- and macro-levels, the results show a tendency of partisans to blame only the out-party for gridlock. At the micro-level, open-ended responses about the country's "most important problems" showed that a small, but noticeable percent of the public is explicitly concerned about gridlock in the legislative process. It was also the case that the more concern one expressed about gridlock, the less favorable one felt toward both the in- and out-parties. However, at the macro-level, a time-series analysis revealed that the public as a whole does not attribute blame for gridlock symmetrically, and instead, punishes only the out-party. The public does not appear to blame their own party for the shortcomings of Congress, nor do they reward them, but the public certainly blames "the other team" for the failures that do occur.

The findings presented in this study lead to several important implications worthy of consideration. The first is that partisan elites may not need worry much about legislative debates resulting in stalemate, as any punishment from their partisan supporters will be directed toward the opposition. Members of Congress regularly grandstand on the House or Senate floor in hope of signaling their partisan or ideological commitments to their base, and when these behaviors eventually lead to important issues receiving no legislative solution, any backfire from the public appears to be

aimed at the out-party. A second and closely related implication is that any gridlock that does occur in the legislative process can be weaponized against the opposing party. Of course, finger-pointing is not a new tactic in politics, but the results presented here suggest that tactic is truly effective when pointing to the out-party as responsible for gridlock. This may also allow parties and their members in office to divert attention away from their own (perhaps poorly formed) policy solutions, and instead focus on the out-party as the obstructing force in Congress.

Two potential avenues for future research are suggested from this work. The first avenue is to further explore the process by which individuals learn of Congressional gridlock. I assumed in this paper that changes in the level of gridlock are detectable, and that the public does indeed detect them, but the precise mechanics of this process remain elusive. One possibility is that most people learn about gridlock from partisan media, which has previously been shown capable of shaping peoples' image of the out-party in a negative way (Levendusky 2013). Those learning of gridlock from partisan media that purposefully paints the out-party as the villain may have fewer opportunities to see their party as responsible for Congress' failures. The second potential avenue for research is to further dissect exactly when, and on what issues, people will deal punishment to the in- and out-parties for legislative gridlock. The measure of gridlock applied in this study aggregates across many issues, but previous studies have shown that the type of issue under consideration (e.g., consensus vs. non-consensus, Egan 2014; Flynn and Harbridge 2016) shapes the range of alternatives that the public is willing to accept. The public may also have different reactions to gridlock under various institutional arrangements, such divided (as opposed to unified) government, or the presence of an in-partisan (as opposed to out-partisan) president. Panel data that traces evaluations of the parties throughout the legislative process—as institutional arrangements change and as various issues receive legislative redress or not—would be particularly useful in disentangling the public's responses to gridlock.

3. PUBLIC OPINION AND THE POLITICIZATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability of federal agencies to successfully implement policy depends, in part, on their ability to gather support from the mass public. Recent work at the intersection of public administration and public opinion has sought to identify the factors that generate that support (e.g., Lee and Van Ryzin 2020; Teodoro and An 2018), and have found that bureaucratic reputation (Carpenter and Krause 2012)—or beliefs about what an agency is, does, and is capable of—plays a key role. An important, but unexplored, dimension of bureaucratic reputation that may also shape the public's attitudes towards federal agencies is beliefs about an agency's political motivations. Although they are typically considered politically neutral institutions, agencies can sometimes appear as politically-motivated, such as when presidents strategically appoint an ideologically similar agency head to steer the agency's policy priorities (Lewis 2008; Moe 1985).[1] Especially in today's divisive political environment, events such as these that portray federal agencies as political bodies may then become the subject of media attention, thereby opening a pathway through bureaucratic reputation—and therefore public support—may be shaped. How do politicized portrayals of federal agencies shape public support for those agencies and their initiatives?

In this project, I argue that agencies appearing to be motivated by political considerations as opposed to the core principles and values of an agency will receive less specific support—or support for the performance and policy outputs of the agency—and diffuse support—or more stable beliefs about the legitimacy of an agency (Easton 1975)—from the mass public. I motivate this argument by looking to findings from the judicial politics literature (e.g., Hitt and Searles

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1. An important note on terminology: scholars of public administration use the word "politicization" to refer specifically to the process whereby a president appoints an ideologically-similar agency head to steer the policy direction of an agency (e.g., Richardson 2019). Scholars of public opinion apply the term in a more encompassing manner, using "politicization" to describe any instance in which objects or actors are framed as politically- or strategically-driven, especially those driven by partisan politics (e.g., the politicization of sports coverage, Peterson and Muñoz 2020). I will generally use the term "politicization" in its broadest sense unless stated otherwise.

2018; Gibson and Caldeira 2009), which shows that support for that institution and its outputs can be damaged when the Court is portrayed in media as political actors. However, I also consider that, unlike the Supreme Court, there are numerous federal agencies and not all are perceived ex ante as apolitical or ideologically-centrist (Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis 2018; Clinton et al. 2012). Insofar as ideological tendencies represent political motivation, I argue that the public will hold higher standards for agencies typically considered ideologically moderate (e.g., United States Postal Service), and to punish those agencies to a greater extent when they appear politicized compared to agencies typically seen as ideologically-driven (e.g., Environmental Protection Agency).

This project takes a two-step empirical approach to understand how the politicization of federal agencies shapes attitudes towards them. I begin with a content analysis of mainstream news sources in order to characterize the types of coverage received by federal agencies. A fairly high prevalence (∼45%) of politicized coverage across multiple sources provides initial reason to believe that such coverage could shape public support for federal agencies. Next, I conduct a survey experiment where respondents read a news article about an agency's effort to implement new rules or directives. In the article, I randomly present an agency of a particular ideological orientation—either moderate or ideologically-driven (left- or right-leaning)—and then vary whether the agency's efforts are driven by a political appointee sympathetic to the president's policy priorities (politicized agency head) or an appointee that is faithful to their agency's mission (principled agency head). The results show a drop in support for the agencies' actions, but only among Democrats. Republicans and independents, on the other hand, show surprising resilience to politicized messages. Furthermore, agency ideology plays only a minimal role in moderating the effect of politicization.

This paper contributes to our understanding of public opinion toward federal agencies in two ways. First, I identify a new dimension of bureaucratic reputation with the potential to shape public support for federal agencies and their policies—that is, the public's beliefs about the political

motivations of agencies. The effects of politicization on support for democratic institutions is well established in other fields (e.g., judicial politics), but I go a step further in arguing and demonstrating that politicization is also an important determinant of support for agencies of the federal government (though again the effect is limited to Democrats). Second, I uncover a mechanism through which the public may come to view federal agencies as mere political actors, which is through media coverage of federal agencies and their appointees. Understanding the formation of bureaucratic reputation from the public's perspective is an important and blooming area of inquiry in the public administration and public opinion literatures, and my finding that media plays a (limited) role in the shaping public perceptions of agencies' political motivations suggests that other dimensions of reputation may also be cultivated through this mechanism.

3.2 REPUTATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS FEDERAL AGENCIES

How the public feels toward, and interacts with, agencies of the federal government will be shaped in large part by the reputation of those agencies in the eyes of the public. Perhaps the most widely used definition of bureaucratic reputation comes from Carpenter and Krause (2012, 26) who say that reputation is "a set of beliefs about an organization's capacities, intentions, history, and mission that are embedded in a network of multiple audiences." Reputation is often thought to consist of four dimensions including: *performative reputation*, or beliefs about an agency's ability to perform its essential duties; *moral reputation*, or beliefs about an agency's adherence to principles of right and wrong; *procedural reputation*, or beliefs about an agency's tendency to follow established processes; and *technical reputation*, or beliefs about an agency's ability to operate in technically sophisticated policy environments (Carpenter and Krause 2012).

The importance of reputation lies in its ability to provide agencies with the leverage and resources they need to face the challenges of implementing public policy. Reputation allows agencies to pursue "bureaucratic autonomy" (Carpenter 2001), or the ability to work toward an agency's mission with minimal interference from outside actors such as the legislative and judicial branches.

Reputation can also help agencies to sustain their power and prestige in the face of criticism over an agency's actions and missteps. Carpenter (2014), for instance, describes how the accumulated reputational power of the FDA allows the agency to navigate the treacherous waters of regulating potentially dangerous pharmaceuticals. The fact that agencies act strategically to protect their reputation (Maor, Gilad, and Bloom 2013; Maor 2020)—for example, selectively seeking public input on tasks that are more likely to fail (Moffitt 2010) or emphasizing descriptive representation in the agency (Wright, Mummolo, and Marr 2022)—speaks to the power of reputation as a tool for federal agencies. Those agencies that wish to be successful in their mission of implementing public policy, and that wish to exercise their authority with greater discretion, must be conscious of their reputation in the eyes of their multiple audiences.

Recently, scholars have become particularly interested in examining agency reputation from the perspective of a particular audience: the mass public. Lee and Van Ryzin (2020), for example, showed that the public does not hold all agencies with equal regard, rating agencies such as NASA more favorably than agencies such as the IRS. Furthermore, the public's evaluations of federal agencies are shaped by individual-level factors such as ideology, trust in government, sex, and race (Lee and Van Ryzin 2020). Others have sought to understand the impact of salient symbols associated with an agency on public support for that agency and their policies. For instance, Alon-Barkat (2020) shows that symbols such as agency logos and celebrity endorsements can increase citizen trust of an agency. Teodoro and An (2018) show that individuals are more supportive of policy implementation when performed by a specific agency (e.g., Department of Energy, EPA, USACE) as opposed to the generic "federal government." And finally, Marvel (2016) shows that exposure to a USPS television commercial containing salient symbols associated with the agency increased public evaluations of the agency's performance. These studies suggest that bureaucratic reputation from the public's perspective plays a key role in shaping the public's interactions with, and attitudes toward, federal agencies and their policies.

3.3 PUBLIC OPINION AND THE POLITICIZATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

While previous research demonstrates the development of a favorable reputation can help agencies to gain the public's support for their policies and mission, a particular facet of agency reputation that has yet to be examined is the public's beliefs about agencies' political motivations. Surely it is Congress that drafts and pass legislation, but through their responsibility for implementing said legislation, scholars have long noted (e.g., Long 1952) that federal agencies play a role in shaping public policy, and thus at times may appear as political actors. Presidents also implicitly recognize the political power of federal agencies when they intentionally install agency heads that are more favorable toward their policy goals (Moynihan and Roberts 2010), such as President Trump's selection of former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler as head of the Environmental Protection Agency (Schwartz 2018). When the public observes an agency acting as though it is pursuing political ends, how might this shape public support for that agency's initiatives or broader mission?

I argue that federal agencies that appear more motivated by politics than by their agency's mission and principles will receive less specific and diffuse support from the public. In doing so, I focus a particular channel through which public attitudes toward agencies may be shaped: media coverage. I provide two reasons to support my argument. The first reason is that there is growing evidence indicating that support for another major political institution, the U.S. Supreme Court, is similarly damaged when it is framed in media coverage as engaged in politics. Hitt and Searles (2018) show that 'game frame' coverage of Supreme Court decisions—emphasizing political battles over principled decision-making—reduces agreement with and acceptance of those decisions. Gibson and Caldeira (2009) show that exposure to television ads framing the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Court as a purely political act led to reductions in diffuse support. And Johnston and Bartels (2010) find that both diffuse and specific support for the Court is reduced when one is exposed to more "sensationalist" media sources (e.g., political talk radio and cable news) that often

refute the idea that the Court is uniquely principled and apolitical compared to other institutions. If public support for perhaps the most revered institution in the American political system is reduced when that institution is portrayed as engaged in politics, we may expect public support for federal agencies to follow a similar pattern.[2]

The second reason that the politicization of federal agencies may lead to a reduction in public support is that politicization isknown to damage the relationships between federal agencies and several of their key audiences. Employees of an agency, for instance, are more likely to leave their agency, and less likely to invest in skill development, when presidents use their appointment power to steer the policy of an agency in the president's preferred ideological direction (Richardson 2019). This implies that politicization matters not only for an agency's ability to hire and retain workers, but may affect agency performance by discouraging employees to develop in their capacities. The politicization of an agency can also make that agency less responsiveness to requests for assistance from Congress or the public (Wood and Lewis 2017). This is especially true for Congress members that are not of the same party of the president (Lowande 2019). If politicization is capable of affecting the way that agencies interact with its key audiences, such as its employees or the representative body whose laws they're tasked with implementing, then it may also be capable of eroding the relationship between agencies and members of the mass public.

Together, these two reasons support my primary expectation that the public will be less supportive of the rules and policies of an agency (i.e., specific support), and less supportive of the broader mission of an agency (i.e., diffuse support) when it takes on a reputation as a political actor. One of the primary channels through which I expect this to occur is media coverage of federal agencies. Driven by their desire to draw and maintain viewership, news outlets may cover agencies in a way that frames agencies' actions as though they are pursuing political ends or engaged in

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2. It is worthwhile to note that—in contrast to more overtly political institutions such as Congress and the Presidency, but similar to the Supreme Court—many federal agencies receive broadly favorable views from members of both political parties. For instance, agencies such as the United States Postal Service, NASA, and the National Park Service were viewed favorably by upwards of 80% of the public in 2019 (see Pew Research Center 2019).

political battles. When the public encounters this type of coverage, then, I expect there to be a resultant drop in support, particularly in comparison to news coverage the depicts agencies as acting with principle and without political bias.

While politicization is generally expected to reduce public support for agencies, it is also important to consider that some agencies are perceived ex ante as more ideologically-driven—and potentially, more political—than others. Using a survey of federal executives, Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis (2018) found tremendous variation in assessments of various agencies' ideological tendencies, with some agencies rated as more liberal or left-leaning (e.g., Department of Housing and Urban Development) and other agencies rated as more conservative or right-leaning (e.g., Department of Homeland Security). To the extent that ideological predispositions reflect political motives, the public may expect agencies that typically lean left or right to pursue political goals in their normal course of business. Therefore, I expect politicized coverage to be more detrimental to public support for agencies typically seen as lacking ideological bias (i.e., politically moderate) compared to agencies seen as predisposed toward ideological ends.

Before testing the theoretic expectations presented here, it is important to show that federal agencies receive real and substantial coverage in the media, and that this coverage does sometimes portray agencies as politically-motivated actors. This exercise is vital if we wish to contextualize the real world impact of politicized coverage on agency support. Therefore, I now turn to describing my approach and findings from a content analysis of press coverage of federal agencies, before using a survey experiment to examine the effects of various types of coverage on public support for agencies.

3.4 POLITICIZED COVERAGE OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

I characterize coverage of federal agencies by performing a content analysis using the "NexisUni" academic research database. From this database, I gathered news stories ($N = 481$) about six agencies of the federal government (EPA, HUD, USPS, USDA, DOD, DHS). I chose these

agencies because they are among the most broadly recognizable agencies of the federal government, and because they are ideologically diverse (i.e., EPA & HUD as more liberal; USPS & USDA as more moderate; and DOD & DHS as more conservative; Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis 2018). Coverage of these agencies was compiled from five different sources including *The New York Times, USA Today, Tampa Bay Times, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *USNews.com* with coverage ranging from January 1st, 2020 to December 31st, 2021 (two full years).[3] I chose these specific sources because they contain a mix of web and print content that targets audiences at various geographic levels (e.g., regional newspapers like *Tampa Bay Times* and national newspaper like *NYT*).[4] Content from these sources should provide a broadly representative image of the types of written coverage of federal agencies that individuals are likely to encounter. Additionally, examining two years of coverage, spanning across the Trump and Biden administrations, allows me to see whether coverage of agencies is sensitive to events in the broader political environment, such as the 2020 presidential campaign.

In this coverage, I am particularly interested in determining how often agencies are portrayed as strategic, political actors. Therefore, my overall objective is to code articles according to the dominant frame of the article, which can either be (1) a 'politicized' or so-called 'strategic game frame,' or (2) a 'principled' or 'issue frame.'[5] Articles applying a politicized/game frame may portray agencies or their personnel as acting with strategic personal, political, or ideological motivations, and may pay little attention to substantive policy concerns. Articles applying a principled/issue frame portray the agency as acting in accordance with the agency's core mission,

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3. News sources with stronger partisan or ideological biases such as CNN.com and FoxNews.com, which may be more likely to frame federal agencies in a way that fits the outlets' political agenda, were not available from the "NexisUni" database. Future research may wish to investigate if there are systematic differences in coverage across partisan outlets.

4. An added reason for picking the *Tampa Bay Times* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* was that they endorsed different candidates in the 2020 presidential election (Biden and Trump, respectively), and its possible that these underlying political preferences influence their coverage of federal agencies. Including both sources in this analysis will allow me to characterize any differences in their coverage of federal agencies.

5. This dichotomy comes from the work of Hitt and Searles (2018). The coding procedure used in this project is an adaptation from their work. Full details of the coding procedure can be found in Appendix B.4.1.

unmotivated by political or strategic concerns. Articles that focus solely on the announcement, implementation, or impact of policy, without portraying those happenings as a struggle between political actors, also fall into the principled/issue category.

To determine the dominant frame, I inspected the contents of each article (with an emphasis on the headline and lead) and coded several sub-indicators of politicized/game or principled/issue coverage. For instance, I coded whether an article referred to an agency or its stakeholders as 'winners' or 'losers,' which is usually indicative of politicized/game frame coverage. Indeed, references to stakeholders as winners/losers were more common when the politicized/game frame dominated the article (72.1%) compared to articles where the principled/issue frame dominated (7.1%). I also coded whether an article explicitly stated that an agency's actions were based on legally or Constitutionally granted powers—an indicator of of principled/issue frame coverage— and found that it occurred in 7.52% of coverage where the principled/issue frame dominated and only 1.86% of coverage where the politicized/game frame dominated. After coding the article for all sub-indicators, a final judgement was made as to which frame appeared to be the dominate one in the article.[6] Table B.10 in Appendix B.4 shows the full range of sub-indicators that were coded.

3.4.1   Findings from Content Analysis

So how are agencies of the federal government portrayed when they become the subject of media attention? I begin by describing the various ways in which the content of articles that apply a predominantly politicized/game frame may differ from articles that apply a principled/issue frame. This is done through an examination of a sample of article headlines and key words or phrases that typify coverage of either type. From Table 3.1, we see that articles applying a politicized/game frame often portray political actors such as 'Trump,' 'Biden,' or 'Top DHS Officials' as engaged in political battle. A June 2021 piece from the *New York Times*, for instance, describes the departure of agency personnel not as a problem for the agency's ability to fulfill their duties, but as a

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6. An independent coder was asked to review ∼10% of all articles and code the dominant article. Simple agreement between the principal researcher and the independent coder was 83% with a kappa value of 0.66, which is typically considered a moderate and acceptable level of intercoder reliability (McHugh 2012).

Table 3.1: Characterizing Coverage Type (Politicized/Game Frame vs. Principled/Issue Frame)

Agency	Headline	Source	Date
Politicized/Game Frame			
EPA	"EPA Announces Controversial Emissions Rules"	*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*	08/14/2021
HUD	"Exodus of Top Experts from Trump-Era HUD is Headache for Biden"	*New York Times*	06/19/2021
USDA	"Plants pressured feds to stay open; Industry wrote draft similar to Trump's order"	*USA Today*	09/16/2020
USPS	"'Get used to me': Postmaster evokes Trump style in Biden era; Louis DeJoy may be the closest thing to the former president left in the nation's capital and there's little President Joe Biden can do about it."	*Tampa Bay Times*	06/07/2021
DHS	"Whistleblower: Top DHS Officials Sought to Halt Reports on Russian Election Interference"	*USNEWS.com*	09/09/2020
DOD	"Biden Faces Legal, Political Complications in Mandating Coronavirus Vaccine for Troops"	*USNEWS.com*	04/30/2021
Keywords			
bureaucratic battle; disenfranchised; dismantling; dominate; gutted; manipulated; provoking; strip away; undermining; winning			
Principled/Issue			
EPA	"Local Leaders Press EPA on Lead Water Needs"	*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*	06/05/2021
HUD	"HUD plan makes climate a priority in housing; 'Climate resilience' a factor in loans, grants "	*USA Today*	10/08/2021
USDA	"USDA Extends School Lunch Deliveries"	*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*	09/02/2020
USPS	"What's an Essential Service in a Pandemic? The Post Office"	*New York Times*	04/17/2020
DHS	'Joy and skepticism among immigrants after judge restores DACA. Many rush to apply; Florida is home to about 25,000 DACA recipients.	*Tampa Bay Times*	12/08/2020
DOD	"U.S. Military Branches Block Access to TikTok App Amid Pentagon Warning"	*New York Times*	01/04/2020
Keywords			
America's favorite government agency; committed; essential institution; exists to serve; experience; expertise; lawful order; respected; sincere; thanks			

Note: Keywords were randomly selected from larger list shown in Appendix B.4

political 'headache' for President Biden. This type of language—where federal agencies and its stakeholders engage in 'bureaucratic battles'—is characteristic of political/game frame coverage.[7]

Table 3.1 also shows several headlines and key words or phrases from coverage the predominantly applies a principled/issue frame. Headlines such as 'USDA Extends School Lunch Deliveries' suggest that articles with a principled/issue frame focus more specifically on policy and its impact, and not on the strategies of political actors. In these articles, words such as 'committed,' 'expertise,' and 'respected' describe agencies that stand by their principles and work toward achieving their mission. These headlines and key words or phrases work well to characterize coverage that primarily applies a principled/issue frame.

Having described the type of content that is typical of politicized/game frame and principled/issue frame coverage, I now move to examining how these frames are applied across agencies

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7. It is important to note that not all articles that are critical of an agency are necessary applying a politicized/game frame. For instance, an April 2021 article from the *Tampa Bay Times* argued that the EPA needed to do more to regulate 'phosphogypsum,' a toxic waste product that has contaminated ecosystems in Florida. Though critical of the agency's actions up to that point, the issue is not framed as a battle between political actors.

and outlets. Therefore, in Figure 3.1 I plot the raw number of articles by agency (3.1a) and by source (3.1b), along with the percent of articles that apply principled/issue frames (blue) or politicized/game frames (red). The first thing to notice is that there is substantial variation in the amount of coverage that agencies receive, with Department of Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency receiving approximately three times the coverage of agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and the United States Postal Service. Together, DHS and the EPA account for approximately two-thirds (68.0%) of all coverage. Additionally, there is clearly variation in the proportion of news coverage of these agencies that predominantly applies a politicized/game frame (as compared to a principled/issue frame). For instance, a large majority of coverage of the USDA uses a principled/issue frame (82.4%). At the same time, the USPS—which did not receive extensive coverage in the sample–was primarily portrayed using a politicized/game frame (61.1%). Most of this coverage of the USPS focused on President Trump's efforts to control the agency (often through Postmaster General Louis DeJoy) due to its role in processing mail-in ballots in the 2020 presidential election. All agencies in the sample were observed to have been covered using a politicized/game frame, often to a substantial extent.

Turning next to Figure 3.1b, we see there is variation in the amount of coverage of federal agencies by source, as well as in the type of frames that these sources tend to apply. Clearly the vast majority of coverage comes from the *New York Times*, which accounts for just more than half of all coverage (54.9%). The amount of coverage across the remaining sources—*Tampa Bay Times*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *USNEWS.com*, and *USA Today*—appears in roughly equal proportions. In terms of the frames applied by these sources, coverage from the *New York Times* uses politicized/game frames more than half the time. Coverage from *USNEWS.com* provides slightly less politicized/game frame coverage in comparison (42.3%), while the remaining three sources all use politicized/game frame coverage about a quarter of the time. Across all sources, 44.7% of coverage uses predominantly politicized/game frames in stories about these six federal agencies.

With two full years of coverage, I can also examine how coverage of federal agencies varied
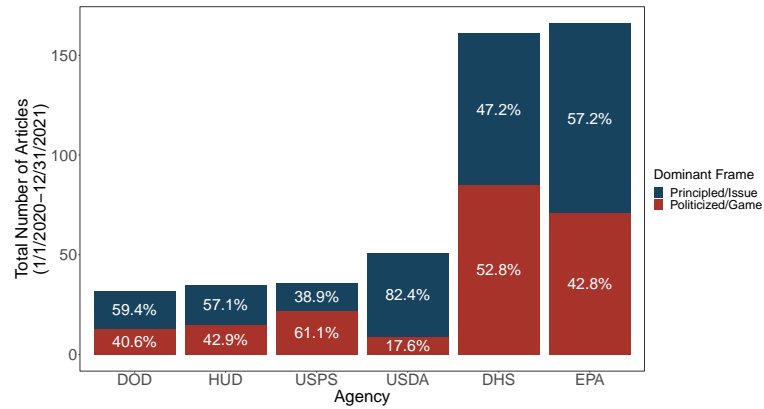
(a) By Agency
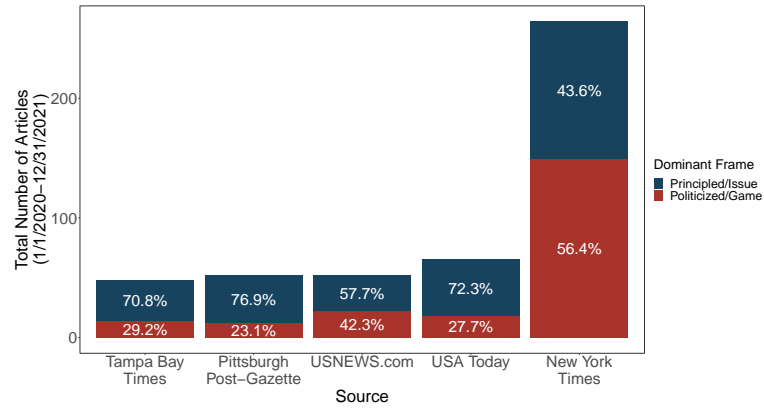
(b) By Source

Figure 3.1: Number of Articles and Percent of Articles Using 'Politicized/Game Frame' Coverage, By Source and By Agency (January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021)

across the election cycle and through the transition into the Biden administration. Figure 3.2 shows the cumulative number of articles over time, separated by the dominant frame of the coverage in 3.2a and by agency in 3.2b. From Figure 3.2a we see that there was a roughly equal balance in the number of articles applying politicized/game frames as compared to principled/issue frames from January to April of 2020, but as the election season heated up through October, the balance of coverage (regarding agencies of the incumbent Trump-administration) moved toward politicized/game frames. Following the election in November, and into July of the first year of the newly-elected

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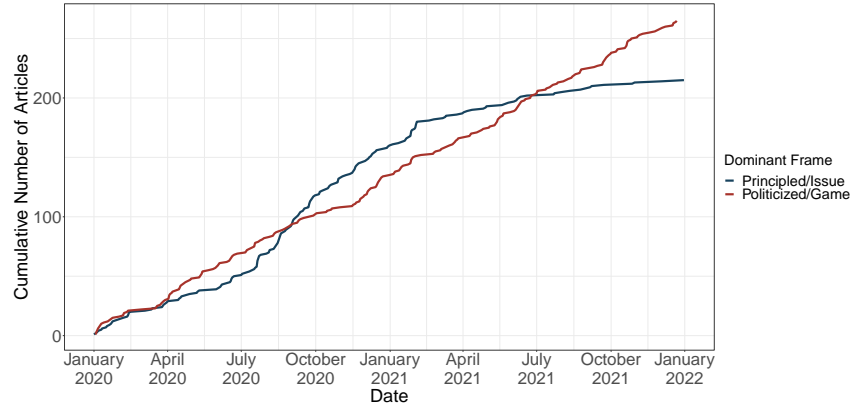
(a) By Dominant Frame
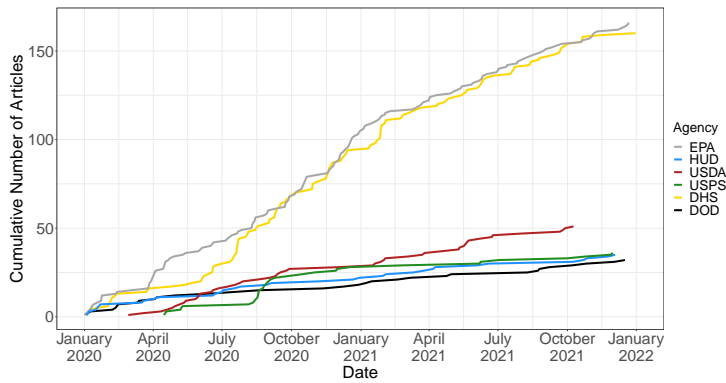
(b) By Agency

Figure 3.2: Cumulative Number of Articles Over Time, By Dominant Frame and By Agency (January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021)

Biden administration, coverage shifted toward more principled/issue frames. However, from July 2021 through the end of the year, politicized/game frame came to dominate once again. This descriptive look at the application of various frames to cover agencies of the federal government suggests that electoral cycles may play an important role in determining the balance of coverage of agencies (politicized/game frame vs. principled/issue frame) that the public is likely to encounter.

My final exercise is to examine the coverage of various agencies over time (Figure 3.2b). As suggested earlier by Figure 3.1a, the majority of coverage focused on the EPA (grey) and DHS

(gold). Notably, the cumulative number of articles about these two agencies tracks consistently across the series. That these two agencies dominate the coverage is also interesting considering that they are thought to be more ideologically pre-disposed (i.e., EPA as more liberal, DHS as more conservative) as compared to agencies like the United States Postal Service and the Department of Agriculture (see Figure B.2). Coverage of HUD (light blue), USDA (red), USPS (green), and DOD (black) is less prevalent than coverage of DHS and EPA, but like the latter two agencies, the cumulative number of articles about the former four agencies follow roughly similar patterns through time. Also notable is the jump in articles about the USPS around August of 2020. At this time, there was a growing concern that President Donald Trump was weaponizing the Postal Service to tip the election in his favor, prompting a number of articles to be written on the subject. The reason this pattern stands out is that, as the results of the experiment will show in the next section, Democrats are particularly susceptible to politicized coverage. The fact that articles on the politicization of the Postal Service were rising in prevalence in the run-up to the 2020 election raises question about what electoral effect, if any, this coverage may have had.

3.5 THE EFFECT OF POLITICIZED COVERAGE ON PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AGEN-CIES

Now we have seen that federal agencies receive a non-negligible amount of press coverage, and that this coverage sometimes frames agencies' actions as based on politics, my next task is to examine the effect of this politicized coverage of federal agencies on public support for them. I do this through the use of a 2×2 factorial survey experiment, conducted in February 2022 on the Lucid survey platform ($N = 911$).[8] The survey begins by collecting a battery of demographics and political indicators (e.g., age, ethnicity, sex, PID, ideology) before asking respondents to read a short news article that discusses an agency head's effort to implement new agency rules or directives (see Table B.1, Appendix B.1 for descriptive statistics of sample). For example, one article discusses Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas' new directive to immigration officers of the Department

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8. This survey experiment was pre-registered. An anonymized copy of the pre-registration form can be found <u>here</u>.

of Homeland Security (DHS) to use greater discretion in deciding whether to detain or deport undocumented immigrants. The articles used in the experiment are inspired by real news articles from legitimate sources.[9]

There are two components of each article that are randomized.[10] First, I randomize whether the implementation strategy is framed as being led by (1) a politically- or strategically-motivated agency head (politicized/issue frame), or by (2) a principled agency head dedicated to their agency's mission (principled/issue frame).[11] The politicized agency head is "described by experts as dedicated to the president's policy priorities," and is quoted as saying that their agency is "aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent [issue] agenda."[12] The principled agency head, on the other hand, is "described by experts as dedicated to the mission of the [agency abbreviation]," and provides a quote that uses language from their agency's mission statement.

The second randomization is whether the article discusses either (1) an agency with a reputation as ideologically moderate, or (2) an agency with a reputation as ideologically left- or right-leaning. Randomizing the agency being presented allows me to examine whether the effects of politicization vary with agency ideology. However, concerns may arise if I were to pick and compare only one agency of each type, as there may be idiosyncratic features of these agencies that obscure any meaningful comparison. I avoid this concern by choosing multiple agencies of each type (*moderate* vs. *left-/right-leaning*) and randomizing within each condition, with the expectation that those idiosyncrasies wash-out when comparing the two types of agencies. Table 3.2 shows the various agencies selected for this experiment, with the first two agencies (USPS, USDA; top half of Table 3.2) being considered ideologically moderate and the last four agencies (bottom half

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9. Appendix B.2.1 contains the full text of the articles used in the experiment and links to the real articles that inspired them.

10. 83.1% of respondents successfully identified the agency described in the article.

11. This dichotomy between politicized and principled actors is commonplace in the literature on the politicization of the U.S. Supreme Court (e.g., Hitt and Searles 2018; Woodson 2015).

12. This quote is adapted from the actual words of EPA Administrator Michael Regan. Link to source can be found **here**.

Table 3.2: Summary of Experimental Materials

Agency	Agency Ideology	Agency Head	Article Topic
United States Postal Service (USPS)	Moderate	Louis DeJoy	Cost-cutting
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Moderate	Tom Vilsack	Green agricultural
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Left-Leaning	Michael Regan	Water pollution
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Left-Leaning	Marcia Fudge	Evictions
Department of Defense (DOD)	Right-Leaning	Lloyd Austin	Military training
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	Right-Leaning	Alejandro Mayorkas	Immigration

of Table 3.2) being considered ideologically left- (EPA, HUD) or right-leaning (DOD, DHS).[13] These agencies were selected because they are arguably equal in their salience to the public, and because they have agency heads (mostly appointed by the Biden administration) that have been publicly involved in the implementation of new rules and directives.[14] Column 3 of Table 3.2 lists the agency heads mentioned in the articles and Column 4 lists the topics of the new rule or directive being implemented by the agency.

The outcome of interest is survey respondents' levels of specific and diffuse support for the agency covered in the article.[15] The measures of specific support are intended to capture one's attitudes towards the agency's short-term outputs and include (1) a measure of approval of the new rule or directive being implemented by the agency, (2) a 101-point feeling thermometer to rate the agency overall, and (3) a measure assessing the agency's performance in general. These items are combined into a single index using principal components analysis and re-scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing greater specific support.[16] The measure of diffuse support is more concerned with respondent's beliefs that the agency has a legitimate governmental function.

13. To create the experimental stimuli, initial judgments of agency ideology were motivated by Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis (2018) who generated their estimates of agency ideology through a survey of experts. To determine whether the mass public perceives agency ideology in a similar manner, respondents in this project's pre-test and full experiment were asked to judge the ideological tendencies of eight agencies (six from Table 3.2 plus NASA and VA) immediately after completing the experimental outcomes. Figure B.1 and B.2 in Appendix B.1.3 show that the public does indeed perceive meaningful ideological differences between agencies, in line with the evaluations of experts.

14. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy was installed by an all Trump-appointed Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service.

15. See Appendix B.1.2 for question wording of all dependent variables.

16. Results of principal components analysis for the specific and diffuse support indices provided in Tables B.2 and B.3 of Appendix B.1.2, respectively.

Here, I create a measure of diffuse support for federal agencies by adapting Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence's (2003) measure of diffuse support for the Supreme Court. This measure is an index created from three items that ask respondents for their level of agreements with statements such as: the agency should be abolished if many people disagree with the agency's various policies; the agency generally have a lesser role in a certain policy area; and the agency can be trusted to make decisions that are right for the country as a whole. Responses to these statements are also combined using principal components analysis and re-scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing greater diffuse support.

3.5.1 Hypotheses

With this experimental design, I can test two hypothesis that match my theoretic expectations. First, I expect that—all else held constant—individuals reading about an agency that is framed as a political or strategic actor will show less specific and diffuse support toward that agency compared to individuals reading about about an agency that is framed as more dedicated to its mission and principles. And second, I expect that the negative effects of politicized frames on individuals' specific and diffuse support for agencies will be smaller for agencies seen as pre-disposed to ideological ends (i.e., agencies seen as left- or right-leaning) compared to agencies seen as acting without ideological bias (i.e., more moderate agencies). This leads me to present Hypotheses 1 and 2 as follows:

Hypothesis 1: *Agencies that appear as politically motivated will receive less specific and diffuse support than agencies that are motivated by principled commitment to their mission*

Hypothesis 2: *The negative effect of politicization on specific and diffuse support will be smallest for left-/right-leaning agencies, and greatest for moderate agencies*

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3.5.2 Experimental Results

I begin by testing my first hypothesis that agencies portrayed in media coverage as strategic, political actors will receive less specific and diffuse support compared to agencies portrayed as more principled actors. This is done by regressing the measures of specific and diffuse support on indicators for having read about a moderate agency (reference group is left-/right-leaning agency) and for having read an article with a politicized/game frame (reference group is an article with a principled/issue frame).[17] The results are given in Table 3.3. Here we see that the coefficient on politicized/game frame is in the expected direction (negative) for both outcomes, suggesting that agencies receive less specific and diffuse support when they have been portrayed as strategic political actors. However, neither of these estimates reach statistical significance. From this initial analysis, Hypothesis 1 surprisingly receives little to no support.

A possible explanation for the lack of support for Hypothesis 1 is that partisanship is driving individuals to respond to politicized frames in heterogeneous ways, obscuring my ability to detect a significant effect of politicized frames in the aggregate.[18] It may be that Republicans are less supportive of federal agencies in general, regardless of the agency's motivation for pursuing new rules or directives. The nature of the experimental stimuli may also account for these partisan differences, as all articles except for one (i.e., USPS) are about the actions of an agency head appointed by the Biden administration. This design choice was made to preserve the experiment's external validity.[19]

I explore a potential moderating effect of partisanship by regressing the measures of specific and diffuse support on an interaction between an indicator for the type of frame a respondent saw in the article and the respondent's partisanship (treated as categorical with leaners as partisans). The

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17. The pre-analysis plan stated that I would include partisanship and ideology as co-variates to increase precision. The statistical and substantive interpretations of either hypothesis do not change when these co-variates are included (see Tables B.4 and B.5 in Appendix B.3).

18. It is important to note that this exploratory analysis regarding the moderating effect of partisanship was not specified in the pre-analysis plan.

19. It would be unrealistic to ask respondents to read about and judge hypothetical agencies or agency heads, and may not allow me to generalize the results to actual agencies of the federal government.

Table 3.3: Effects of Agency Ideology and Article Frame on Agency Support

	Specific Support	Diffuse Support
Moderate Agency	0.011	−0.013
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Politicized/Game Frame	−0.014	−0.013
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Constant	0.613***	0.518***
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Observations	911	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

results shown in Table B.6 of Appendix B.3 suggest that the only potential instances of moderation relate to specific support, with the negative effect of politicized coverage on specific support being significantly larger for Democrats as compared to independents (Column 1; Δ=-0.064, $p < 0.05$). When we compare the difference in the effect size between Democrats and Republicans (Column 2; Δ-0.036, $p = 0.17$), we see that the relationship is in the expected direction (reduction in specific support larger among Democrats), but it falls short of statistical significance. These partisans differences in specific support are also visualized in Figure 3.3, once again emphasizing that politicized/game frame coverage only had a meaningful effect on the specific support of Democrats (Δ= 0.036 or 3.6%; $p < 0.02$). In no instances do I find a moderating effect of partisanship on diffuse support. Overall, these results provide some support for Hypothesis 1 among Democrats, though I am hesitant to draw firm conclusions given the weak statistical evidence.

My next task is to evaluate Hypothesis 2 that the effect of politicized/game frames should

(a) Democrats   (b) Republicans

(c) Independents
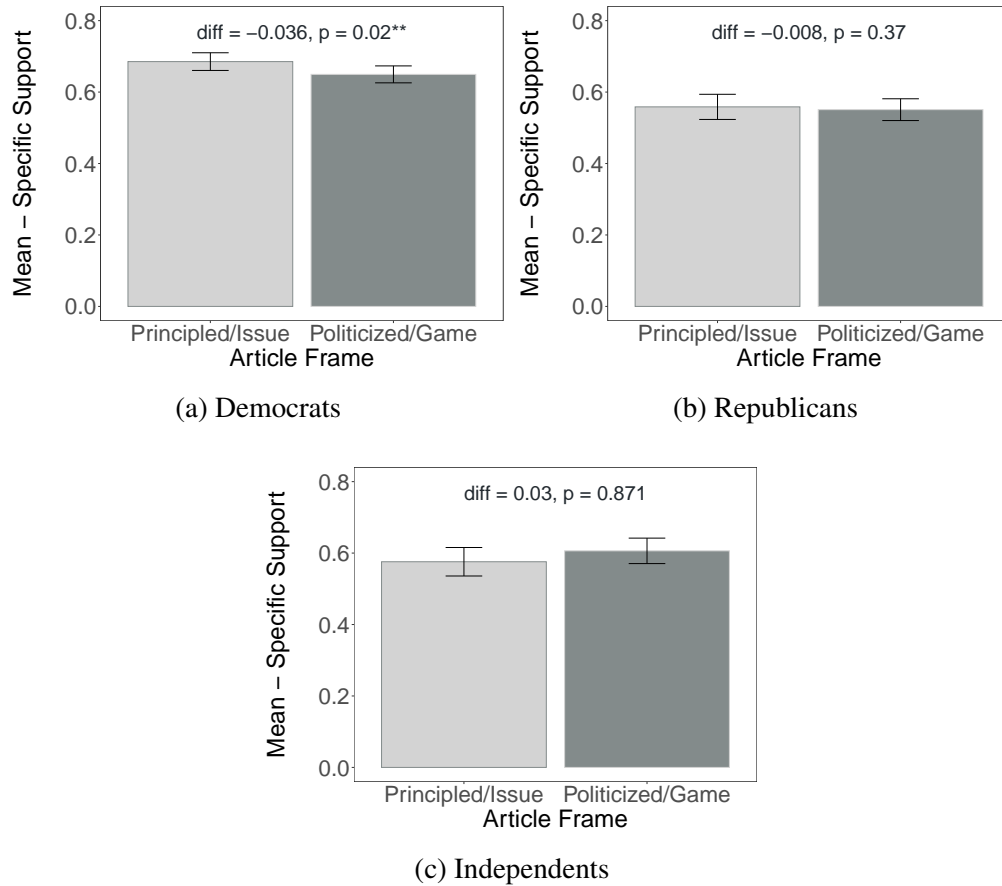
Figure 3.3: Mean Specific Support by Partisanship and Article Frame, with 95% CIs

Note: Estimate and p-value (one-tailed) presented above bars are from t-tests of the mean difference in specific support between those reading article with a 'politicized/game' frame (right bar) and those reading articles with a 'principled/issue' frame (left bar). Leaners included as partisans.

be greatest for moderate agencies. This hypothesis is tested by regressing the measures of specific and diffuse support on an interaction between an indicator for having reading an article about a moderate agency and an indicator for having read an article with a politicized/game frame, with the expectation that the interaction term will be negative and significant. The results are presented in Table 3.4 and show no support for this hypothesis. The interactive term is incorrectly signed (positive) for both outcomes and does not reach statistical significance. There is no evidence here to suggest that magnitude of the effect of politicized coverage varies meaningfully with agency ideology.

Table 3.4: Interactive Effects of Agency Ideology and Article Frame on Agency Support

	Specific Support	Diffuse Support
Moderate Agency	0.001	−0.017
	(0.019)	(0.020)
Politicized/Game Frame	−0.023	−0.017
	(0.019)	(0.020)
Moderate Agency ×	0.017	0.007
Politicized/Game Frame	(0.026)	(0.028)
Constant	0.617***	0.520***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Observations	911	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

Given that politicized coverage only appeared to be harming specific support among Democrats in my tests of Hypothesis 1, it may be the case that partisanship is once again driving my results. Therefore, I specify the same interactive models as shown in Table 3.4, but I subset the data by partisanship. The model results for Democrats (with leaners), pure independents, and Republicans (with leaners) are shown in Table B.7 of Appendix B.3. However, the model results reveal that, even among partisan subgroups, there is little to no support for my expectation that the negative effect of politicized coverage on agency support should be greatest for moderate agencies. Patterns of specific support among Democrats follow the general pattern that I expected, with politicized frames producing a drop in support for left-/right-leaning agencies (-0.023 or 2.3%, $p = 0.148$) and a slightly larger, as well as statistically significant, drop in support for moderate agencies (-0.05 or 5.0%; $p < 0.05$). This pattern can be seen clearly in Figure 3.4a, which shows the Democrats'

(a) Democrats

(b) Republicans

(c) Independents
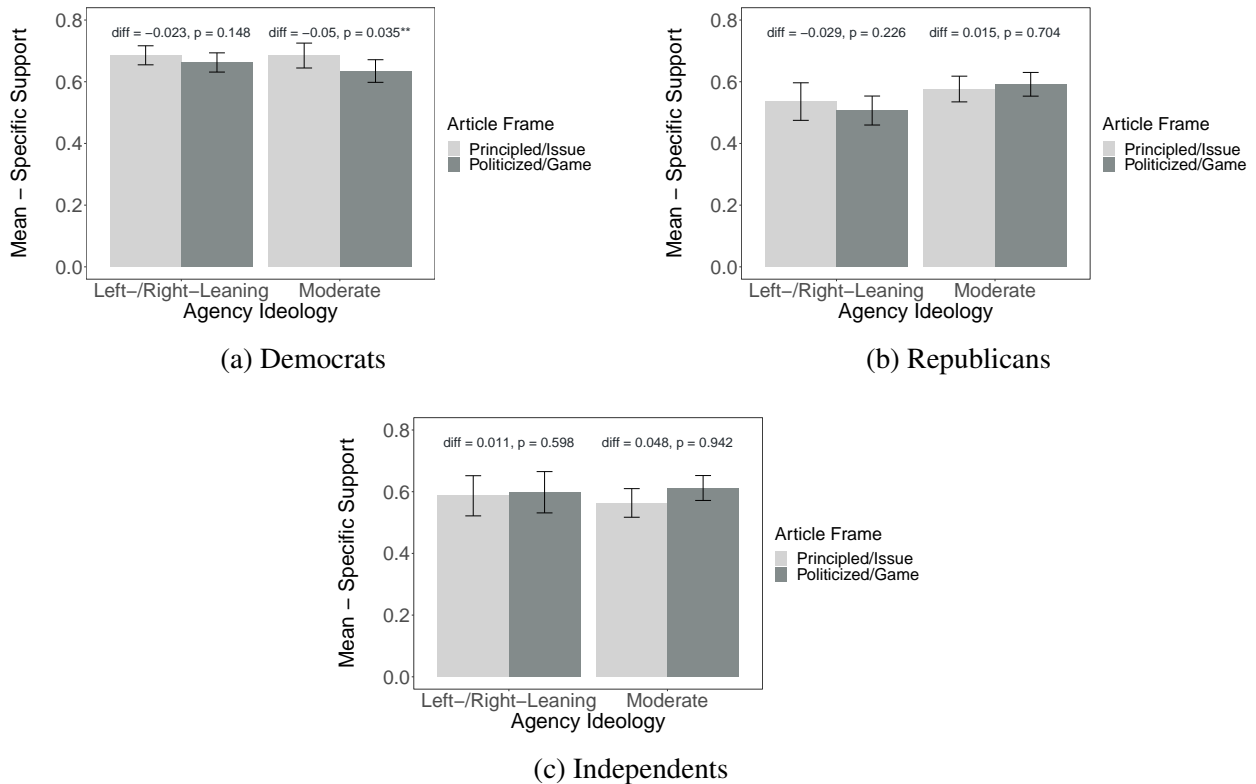
Figure 3.4: Mean Specific Support by Agency Ideology and Article Frame, with 95% CIs

Note: Estimate and p-value (one-tailed) presented above bars are from t-tests of the mean difference in specific support between those reading articles with a 'politicized/game' frame (right bar) and those reading articles with a 'principled/issue' frame (left bar). Difference-in-differences are not statistically significant for any partisan sub-group (see Table B.7 in Appendix B.3). Leaners included as partisans.

mean level of specific support by article frame and agency type (Republicans and independents shown in Figures 3.4b and 3.4c, respectively). However, a test of the interaction between article frame and agency ideology among Democrats as shown in Table B.7 (Column 1) is insignificant, suggesting that there is little difference in the effect of politicization between the two types of agencies for Democrats.[20] I conclude that Hypothesis 2 is unsupported in this analysis.

20. A test of a triple interaction (Table B.8 in Appendix B.3 between the article frame, agency ideology, and partisanship does indicate that the difference in the effect of politicization across the two agency types is significantly different for Democrats compared to all other respondents (i.e., Republicans and Independents.)

3.6   DISCUSSION

Through a content analysis of news coverage of six federal agencies from five unique media sources, I found that a substantial portion of such coverage applies politicized/game frames when describing agencies and their actions. I also found substantial variation in the balance of coverage (principled/game frame vs politicized/issue frame) across agencies and across media sources. However, the results of a survey experiment that examines how these various types of coverage influences public support for federal agencies found little effect. The only loss in support due to politicized coverage came from those identifying as Democrats. There was also some suggestive evidence that Democrats reacted more strongly to politicized coverage of more ideologically moderate agencies (e.g., USDA, USPS), but a lack of statistical significance keeps me from drawing firm conclusions.

In many ways, these results are surprising. Findings in the judicial politics have shown a clear negative effect of politicization on various forms of support for the U.S. Supreme Court, but such an effect was largely absent in response to the politicization of federal agencies. One possible explanation for these mostly null results is the nature of the experimental stimuli. Nearly all articles in the experiment discussed actions taken by an appointee of the Biden administration, making it unclear how Republicans might have responded if they had read articles primarily about actions being taken by an appointee of a co-partisan president. Another possibility is that the reaction to politicized coverage may have been stronger if politicization entailed directing the agency to perform actions outside of its authority or in direct conflict with the agency's core mission. Even the articles that used a politicized frame in the experiment did not indicate that the president was directing the agency to perform actions outside the scope of their responsibilities, it only suggested that their motivation was to fulfill their own political and strategic goals which may have constrained the amount of public support that could be lost. A final possibility is that the public simply cares little about the motivations an agency provides for its actions. As Carpenter and Krause (2012)

note, bureaucratic reputation is multi-faceted and constantly evolving, so a small shift in one aspect of reputation (i.e., political/ideological motivations) may have little effect on overall agency support. Future research would benefit from empirical designs that help to uncover the mechanism at play.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The belief that governments receive their powers from the consent of the governed is a cornerstone of representative democracy. For agencies of the U.S. federal government, this consent—in the form of cooperation and support from members of the public—is not guaranteed. Instead, the extent to which the public provides their cooperation and support depends, to some extent, upon agency reputation. This project questions whether agencies that take on a reputation as politically motivated experience a loss in both specific and diffuse support from the public. By looking to findings in the judicial politics literature (e.g., Gibson and Caldeira 2009; Hitt and Searles 2018), I theorized that such a loss in support from the public should occur when agencies appear to pursue political goals.

My empirical analyses explore one particular medium through which federal agencies may be portrayed as political or strategic actors: media coverage of their actions. A primary contributions of this work, then, is to characterize the type and amount of coverage received by agencies of the federal government. Through a content analysis of mainstream press sources, I revealed that coverage of federal agencies portrays them as political or strategic actors a near majority of the time. Surprisingly, however, a survey experiment revealed that politicized coverage of federal agencies only harms specific support—or support for the short term outputs of agencies—among those that identify as Democrats.

The findings presented in this paper are revealing in their own right, but much remains to be done to fully understand how the politicization of agency reputation shapes interactions with their multiple audiences. For instance, there is more to be said on when and why agency heads

may choose to obscure or reveal their political motivations to the mass public. If agency support is largely robust to politicized coverage as my survey experiment seems to suggest, agency heads may have little regard for how their actions are portrayed. Additionally, the analysis of media coverage of federal agencies from various sources was admittedly limited in scope, and did not include coverage from outlets with more overt partisan connections (e.g., CNN and Fox News). These outlets—compared to the national and local print and web sources analyzed in this paper—may provide an even larger proportion of coverage of federal agencies using politicized/game frames, though this work is left for future research.

4.   ALIE(N)ATION: POLITICAL OUTSIDERS IN THE 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Presidential election cycles in the United States often follow a familiar pattern: Democratic and Republican politicians with the greatest name recognition jump into their party's primary, seeking not only the support of voters, but also the blessings of prominent party leaders.[1] The winners of these primary elections are typically established political figures, often having held office at either the state or federal level and having demonstrated service and loyalty to their party. The 2016 election cycle broke from this tradition, however, in that it featured so-called "political outsiders" on both sides of the aisle: Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Neither candidate had previously held a leadership position within their party, with Sanders having been one of the few Independents in the U.S. Senate and Trump having never occupied an elected office. And yet, both Trump and Sanders received a substantial proportion of the primary vote, and even more surprising is that Trump would go on to win the general election over his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, whom many would consider the ultimate "political insider."

Recent scholarly efforts to identify the sources of Trump's and Sanders' support have mostly considered factors that fall along social and economic lines such as status threat (Mutz 2018), social identities (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018; Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021), or racial and anti-immigrant resentment (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Hopkins 2021). However, there has been less consideration of the role of negative attitudes towards our political structures in elevating these two political outsiders to national prominence. In this paper, I argue that Trump and Sanders were uniquely positioned to capture "protest votes" (Alvarez, Kiewiet, and Núñez 2018; Southwell and Everest 1998)—or votes cast *against* a particular entity—from individuals that felt disaffected from

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1. This is, more or less, the central argument in *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform* (Cohen et al. 2009).

the political system, also known as the "politically alienated" (Olsen 1969). I highlight two specific dimensions of political alienation, including *input-based alienation*—or alienation from the inputs to the political system such as the electoral process—and *output-based alienation*—or alienation from the outputs to the political system which is often characterized by distrust or cynicism directed toward the government. I argue that both dimensions of alienation are capable of influencing one's evaluations of the candidates, as well as their vote choice. Alienation on either dimension will make individuals attracted to candidates like Trump and Sanders specifically because they present a challenge to the political system, but only output-based alienation is expected to be related to support for outsiders at the ballot box. Input-based alienation, however, precludes the use of elections (a political system input) to signal discontent, making it unclear if the presence of outsiders in the race will be sufficient to prime turnout for those alienated on this dimension.

To empirically evaluate my argument, I rely on data from the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES) and the January 2016 wave of the Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics' (ISCAP) panel study. I begin by using a semi-automated text-analysis approach—the Structural Topic Model (Roberts et al. 2014b)—to explore open-ended survey responses describing what people liked about Trump and Sanders. Topics emerge from the models that are directly related to Trump's and Sanders' statuses as political outsiders. The ability of the Structural Topic Model to estimate relationships between variables of interest and topic usage allows me to show that both input- and output-based measures of alienation increase the likelihood that people state a preference for Trump and Sanders due to their "outsider" status. Importantly, these relationships are robust to the inclusion of co-variates that are known predictors of Trump's or Sanders' support, such as ideology, sexism, attitudes towards social and racial groups, attitudes toward immigration, and authoritarianism (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Dyck, Pearson-Merkowitz, and Coates 2018; Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018; Mutz 2018; Knuckey and Hassan 2020). Having established that political alienation shapes the way that people view outsider candidates, I then show that alienation also affected vote choice—those alienated on the

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output dimension were more likely to vote for Trump and Sanders in the 2016 election, while input-based alienation largely did not benefit these candidates.

There are two ways in which the findings presented here contribute to our understanding of the relationship between public opinion and voting behavior. First, I unpack a mechanism underlying the protest vote. A protest vote is, by definition, a vote cast for a candidate as a means of signaling discontent with the political system, but no previous work has explicitly shown that the politically alienated think of candidates in this way. Through the use of open-ended responses, however, I show that the politically alienated did in fact see Trump and Sanders as vectors for voicing one's discontent, paving the way for a protest vote. Second, I demonstrate that political alienation played a significant role in Trump's and Sanders' electoral success, even when accounting for the factors that are already known to prime support for these candidates (e.g., racial and anti-immigrant animus, identity, status threat, etc.). These results suggest that a more complete understanding of the surprising success of these non-traditional candidates, and similar candidates that may emerge in the future, requires serious consideration of the role of political alienation.

4.2 POLITICAL ALIENATION: DEFINITION AND EFFECTS

What does it mean to be politically alienated? The definition given by Citrin et al. (1975, 3) closely reflects the popular conceptualization of political alienation as a "relatively enduring sense of estrangement from existing political institutions, values, and leaders." Typically, feelings of alienation are considered "diffuse" (Easton 1965) in nature, meaning they stem from evaluations of the political system in the broadest sense, and not from evaluations of specific political actors or policies. This definition performs well in capturing the essence of political alienation, but the precise ways in which one is estranged from the political system, and how those feelings of estrangement might influence other political attitudes and behaviors, remain unclear. As such, a number of scholars have delineated the various modes, dimensions, or categories of alienation.

Early work on political alienation often applied the typology of social psychologist Melvin

Seeman (1959), who identified five different modes of alienation including *powerlessness*, *norm-lessness*, *meaninglessness*, *isolation*, and *self-estrangement*. Scholars working from this typology often narrowed in on a single dimension and examined its effect on various political attitudes or behaviors, such as Horton and Thompson (1962) who examined the influence of powerlessness on negative voting. Over time, however, inconsistencies in the operationalization of these five dimensions and a lack of theorizing about their unique effects on political behavior led most scholars to adopt a two-dimensional conceptualization of political alienation, which I will also apply here. The labels used to describe these dimensions have not remained consistent, so an additional contribution I make here is to connect the dots between previous works on alienation that have focused on similar theoretic concepts using different terminology.

The first dimension relates to an individual's beliefs about their inability to use the political process to affect the "inputs" (Almond and Verba 1963; Easton 1965) to the political system. This dimension of alienation encapsulates concepts such as "(in)efficacy" (Campbell et al. 1960; Aberbach 1969), "political powerlessness" (Finifter 1970), and "attitudes of incapability" (Olsen 1969). To avoid using all of these synonymous terms interchangeably, I will simply refer to alienation on this dimension as *input-based alienation*.[2] An example of input-based alienation would be if an individual felt that elections were an ineffective mechanism for capturing the attention of politicians. Elections are one of, if not the, primary means of making one's views known to those in positions of power, and when one feels that this process is failing, feelings of (input-based) alienation are likely to ensue.

The second dimension of political alienation relates to one's feelings of discontentment or cynicism directed at the "outputs" of the political system (Almond and Verba 1963; Easton 1965). This dimension encapsulates concepts such as "(dis)trust" (Aberbach 1969), "cynicism" (South-

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2. While the *input-based* and *output-based alienation* terminology is novel to this project, the conceptual distinction is not—for instance, Olsen (1969) spoke of "attitudes of incapability" and "attitudes of discontentment" while Finifter (1970) distinguishes between "political powerlessness" and "political normlessness". I have introduced this new terminology with the hopes of standardizing the language we use to describe these dimensions, and also to facilitate the discussion between previous scholars of alienation that have used different terminology.

well and Everest 1998), "political normlessness" (Finifter 1970), and "attitudes of discontentment" (Olsen 1969). To again avoid confusion, I simply refer to alienation on this dimension as *output-based alienation*. An example of an individual that is alienated on the output dimension is one who feels that the government is untrustworthy and that politicians don't represent the best interests of the people. Importantly, it should be noted from this example that one's feelings of output-based alienation are directed toward the government outputs *as a whole*, and not toward specific policies like healthcare or tax reform. Of course it is possible that government failure on issues such as these can contribute to output-based alienation, but I am theoretically and empirically interested in broader feelings of alienaiton.

Broadly speaking, the primary way in which feelings of alienation are known to influence one's political attitudes is that they produce a sense of "negativism" (Horton and Thompson 1962). For instance, Thompson and Horton (1960) found that the politically alienated were more likely to hold unfavorable views toward a local school bond referendum.[3] Citrin et al. (1975) also showed that the politically alienated held more negative evaluations of the current political climate and were more willing to support systemic change. This is to say that one's feelings of political alienation from the broader political system are known to spillover into one's attitudes toward more specific objects in the political environment, often casting them in a negative light.

The distinction between input- and output-based alienation becomes important when we consider their effects on political action. On the one hand, alienation from the inputs of the political system often appear negatively related to several forms of political participation such as voting (Horton and Thompson 1962; Aberbach 1969; Southwell and Everest 1998) and discussing politics

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3. Both Thompson and Horton (1960) and Citrin et al. (1975) use indexes of alienation that tap into both input- and output-based alienation, but neither set of authors explore the bi-dimensionality of alienation when assessing it's role in promoting negativism.

with others (Olsen 1969; Finifter 1970).[4] Given that input alienation is the belief that one is incapable of influencing what goes into the political system, it is unsurprising that those alienated on this dimension would not often use the political process to air their grievances. On the other hand, alienation from the system's outputs appears typically unrelated to political participation (Finifter 1970; Olsen 1969), as those harboring such feelings may or may not see the political process as a viable mechanism for signaling their discontent. These two dimensions of alienation, though they are known to have a similar negative effect on political attitudes, appear to have unique effects on political behaviors.

The tendency for alienation to produce a sense of negativism is insightful in its own right, but it is especially relevant when we consider the role of alienation in elections. This is because the negativism that characterizes alienation may influence how one chooses to vote. One possibility explored in the literature is that alienation can increase the chances of casting "negative" or "protest" votes, which are votes cast with the intention of signaling one's discontent. For instance, several early studies of political alienation examined the effects of alienation in the context of local referenda where, unlike typical elections for office, voters are given the option to explicitly vote against a particular measure (Mc Dill and Ridley 1962; Horton and Thompson 1962; Thompson and Horton 1960). These studies were consistent in their finding that the politically alienated were disproportionately more likely to vote against the referendum. In the more traditional election setting, scholars such as Aberbach (1969) and Southwell and Everest (1998) have argued that the politically alienated cast protest votes for the insurgent candidacies of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Ross Perot in 1992 (respectively), though neither of these works provides evidence to indicate that these candidates' insurgent status was a conscious consideration of the politically alienated

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4. As previously mentioned, input-based alienation is inversely related to political efficacy, which scholars sometimes break down further into internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about their own ability to influence the political system, while external efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about the ability of our political institutions to be influenced by society more broadly (Southwell and Everest 1998). I do not have specific theoretic expectations for each of these sub-components of efficacy, but I do note that authors often posit similar expectations for either component (Fox 2020; Southwell and Everest 1998). Refer also to fn 7.

when deciding who to vote for. More recently, alienation was suspected as a possible explanation for the success of the Brexit movement in the United Kingdom, though Fox (2020) found that political alienation had only a weak relationship with support for the movement.

What remains unclear from the literature is an indication of *how* alienation might produce a sense of negativism in the context of U.S. national elections. How can we be certain that a vote cast for an outsider candidate is meant as a sign of protest without first exploring the considerations motivating the vote? In the next section, I will argue that the candidacies of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the 2016 election provided a unique opportunity to explore the mechanism behind protest voting in U.S. national elections.

4.3 ALIENATION AND OUTSIDERS IN THE 2016 ELECTION

As Templeton (1966) noted long ago, most typical presidential elections feature establishment-type candidates from either party, and the debates tend to center around prominent political issues of the day. In these elections, feelings of alienation are likely to play only a minor role: input-based alienation may dampen participation in the electoral process as it's known to do in other political contexts, while feelings of output-based alienation may take a backseat to partisan or ideological considerations (Finifter 1970). However, the 2016 election deviated from this pattern as both major parties' primary elections featured so-called political outsiders. Donald Trump, a New York businessman with no prior office-holding experience, infiltrated the ranks of the Republican Party and would go on to win the presidency over the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton. Bernie Sanders, as one of only a handful of independents to ever hold a seat in the U.S. Senate, put up a serious fight in the 2016 Democratic primary. What role did political alienation play in elevating these candidates to national prominence?

I argue that the politically alienated were attracted to Trump and Sanders in the 2016 election due to their "political outsider" personas, thus paving the way for these candidates to capture protest votes. Throughout the campaign, both candidates made explicit appeals to those feeling

disaffected from the political system. Consider the following statement from Trump who is tapping into the feelings of output-based alienation when speaking at a campaign rally in Sioux City, Iowa (Jackson 2016):

> At the heart of this election is a simple question: will our country be governed by the people or will it be governed by the corrupt political class?

This rhetoric sounds very much the same as the rhetoric of Bernie Sanders, who said the following at the Brookings Institution the same day he announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination (Dews 2015):

> There is a lot of sentiment that enough is enough, that we need fundamental changes, that the establishment – whether it is the economic establishment, the political establishment, or the media establishment – is failing the American people.

The sort of "negativism" embodied in these statements—that the political system is corrupted and failing—should resonate most with those that feel alienated. For this reason we should expect political alienation—be it input- or output-based—to be related to the belief that Trump and Sanders are preferable due to their outsider status.

Political alienation may shape attitudes towards certain presidential candidates, but was it also a driver of vote choice? I argue that political alienation can motivate individuals to cast protest votes for political outsiders, but that this process occurs primarily through feelings of output-based alienation. The specific type of protest vote that I am considering here is referred to by Alvarez, Kiewiet, and Núñez (2018) as an "insurgency party protest voting" and it describes the act of voting for fringe, or "insurgent," parties or candidates as a means of signaling disaffection with other aspects of the political system (e.g., mainstream political parties). In the 2016 election, Trump and Sanders were clearly the insurgent candidates in the race and the quotes provided above indicate that these candidates clearly saw themselves as opponents of the political establishment. If I can show that feelings of alienation shaped how people viewed Trump and Sanders (i.e., seeing them as political outsiders), and also show that alienation predicts the Trump and Sanders vote, this would

be highly indicative of a protest vote.

Why might input- and output-based alienation have different effects on the likelihood of protest voting? I begin by considering the potential role of input-based alienation. As noted earlier, there is evidence to suggest that input-based alienation can discourage participation in the political process (e.g., Aberbach 1969). The relationship here is straightforward—one is not likely to participate if they feel distant from the input mechanisms. In the case of the 2016 election, then, this might suggest that the presence of outsiders in the race would be insufficient for those with input-based alienation to set aside their lack of faith in the political system's input mechanism in order to cast a protest vote. However, it is also possible that the unique circumstances of the 2016 election reshaped the relationship between participation and input-based alienation. As Southwell and Everest (1998) note, U.S. national elections rarely give people the chance to vote for a candidate that represents an opposition to the political system. Perot's third-party bid in the 1992 presidential election is the closest example in recent decades, at least until Trump and Sanders emerged in 2016. The prospect of voting for a political outsider, especially those that have infiltrated the ranks of major parties, may have provided to needed incentive for those with input-based alienation to cast a protest vote.

Compared to input-based alienation, alienation from the political system's outputs is more readily expressed through one's political behaviors. The relationship here is also straightforward—if one disapproves of what the system produces, the remedy is to try to adjust the system to provide more favorable outcomes. In the context of national elections, this may entail voting for candidates that appear likely to disrupt the current political order if elected (Aberbach 1969; Southwell and Everest 1998), though again there is no available evidence to suggest that the politically alienated consciously consider a candidate's outsider status before casting their vote. As the quotes above appear to indicate, however, the candidacies of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in 2016 were centered on the idea that they would serve as that disruptive force by taking on the "corrupt political class" or the failing "political establishment," positioning both candidates to benefit from protest

votes. This should lead us to expect those with output-based alienation in 2016 to be motivated to turnout and vote for either Trump or Sanders.

4.4 DATA AND METHODS

To examine the effects of political alienation in the context of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, I primarily rely upon data from the American National Election Studies (ANES). The ANES data are particularly well-suited for my purposes as they contain items that capture several dimensions of political alienation (Mason, House, and Martin 1985), as well as information on vote choice, party affiliation, attitudes on topics like immigration and race, and various demographics. The ANES data also include open-ended responses about the things that respondents 'like' about the two major parties' nominees for president, allowing me to examine whether feelings of alienation shaped individual's stated reasons for liking Trump (specifically, that he is an outsider). Unfortunately, the ANES does not include open-ended questions about the candidates in the primary elections (e.g., Bernie Sanders), but such questions were asked in the January 2016 wave of the Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics (ISCAP) panel study.[5] Therefore, I use the ISCAP data to examine how alienation may have also shaped perceptions of Bernie Sanders as a political outsider (and thus a potential vector for a protest vote). The remainder of this section will focus on describing these data in greater detail, along with my approach to model them.

4.4.1 Measures of Alienation

From the ANES data, I operationalize input-based and output-based alienation using measures of *electoral inefficacy* and *cynicism*, respectively.[6] The first, *electoral inefficacy*, is a measure of input-based alienation and it comes from a single item that asks, "How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what people think?" to which individuals

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5. The Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics (linked here) is located at the University of Pennsylvania and has been conducting a panel study of American adults since 2012. The data used in this analysis come from wave 10 (January 2016) of this population-based online panel.

6. From the ANES data, my measures of input-based (*electoral inefficacy*) and output-based (*cynicism*) alienation demonstrate only a weak correlation ($r = 0.28$).

may respond (0) "A good deal," (1) "Some," or (2) "Not much." This question captures alienation from the inputs to the political system specifically as it relates to elections. While others have used more general measures of political efficacy when operationalizing output alienation (e.g., Aberbach 1969), the *electoral inefficacy* item is appropriately focused on the context in which I expect alienation to have an effect (i.e., elections).[7] I have rescaled this variable to range between 0 (electorally empowered) and 1 (electorally inefficacious).

The second variable, *cynicism*, is a measure of output-based alienation and is derived from the 'No Trust' and 'Big Interests' items that are part of the ANES 'Cynicism' index (Mason, House, and Martin 1985). The 'No Trust' item asks, "How often can you trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right?" and the 'Big Interests' item asks, "Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all people?" Answers to these questions are combined to form a scale that ranges from 0 (not at all cynical) to 1 (completely cynical).[8] From their analysis of the various measures of political alienation contained in the ANES, Mason, House, and Martin (1985) conclude that the two items I am using here form "a single latent construct reflecting a lack of trust in the ability of the federal government to act in ways that people regard as right and fair." (p. 145). From this definition, it is clear that this measure of *cynicism* reflects alienation from the outputs of the political system.

Although the ISCAP panel is somewhat limited in the number of measures of alienation it contains, there are two measures that I will use when analyzing the relationship between alienation and perceptions of Sanders as an outsider, including *electoral inefficacy* and *political system ille-*

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7. Unfortunately, the traditional 'internal' and 'external' efficacy items used by others to measure output alienation (e.g., Fox 2020; Southwell and Everest 1998) were measured post-election, where as the 'cynicism' and 'electoral inefficacy' items that I employ were measured pre-election. I choose to rely solely upon pre-election measures of alienation to avoid issues of time-dependency (i.e., levels of alienation being affected by the outcome of the election).

8. Possible answers to the 'No Trust' item include: (1) "Always," (2) "Most of the time," (3) "About half the time," (4) "*Some of the time*," or (5) "*Never*." Answers to the 'Big Interests' item include: (0) "For the benefit of all people" or (1) "*Run by a few big interests*." To form the *cynicism* scale, respondents are given a point for each cynical answer (italicized) that they provide, creating an initial measure that ranges from 0 (No cynical answers) to 2 (All cynical answers), which I then rescale to range between 0 and 1. The Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient for these two items is 0.54.

gitimacy.[9] The first, electoral inefficacy, is the same as the ANES measure of electoral inefficacy described above. The second, political system illegitimacy, taps into feelings of diffuse support for our current governing system. This measure asks respondents to state how much they agree or disagree with the four following statements:

1. I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of.

2. Our system of government is in need of some serious changes.

3. Whatever its faults may be, our form of government is best for representing the interest of the country's citizens.

4. At present I feel very critical of our political system.

While this measure clearly captures alienation from the political system, it is not immediately clear if it is tapping into alienation from the inputs or the outputs. For example, agreeing that the political system needs serious changes (Statement 2) does not make clear if it is the system's inputs, outputs, or both that need changing. I operate under the assumption that these statements tap into both dimensions and use principal components analysis to create a single index that ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values representing stronger beliefs that the political system is illegitimate.[10]

4.4.2 Hypotheses

My argument regarding the effects of political alienation in national elections leads naturally to several expectations. First, I expect that both input-based and output-based measures of alienation will increase the likelihood that a respondent likes Trump or Sanders for their outsider qualities. From the ANES responses about Trump, this implies that both *electoral inefficacy* (an input-based measure) and *cynicism* (an output-based measure) should be positively related to the view of Trump as an outsider (Hypothesis 1). From the ISCAP responses about Sanders, both *electoral inefficacy* (an input-based measure) and *political system illegitimacy* (a measure of both

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9. From the ISCAP data, my measures of *electoral inefficacy* and *political system illegitimacy* are only weakly correlated ($r = 0.27$).

10. All items in scale have PCA loadings in same direction and in roughly equal proportion. See Table C.1 in Appendix C.1.1.

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dimensions of alienation) should be positively related to the view of Sanders as an outsider (Hypothesis 2).

Hypothesis 1: *Both Electoral Inefficacy and Cynicism should increase the likelihood of liking Trump because he is an outsider*

Hypothesis 2: *Both Electoral Inefficacy and Political System Illegitimacy should increase the likelihood of liking Sanders because he is an outsider*

Next, I consider the effect of input-based measures of alienation on voting behavior. On one hand, I might expect input-based measures—specifically *electoral inefficacy* from the ANES data—to promote abstention in the 2016 election (Hypothesis 3a), as those that feel alienated from the inputs to the political system may avoid using those mechanisms (e.g., elections) to signal their discontent, even in the presence of political outsider candidates. So although input-alienation may lead to a stated preference for outsiders, that preference may not manifest in vote choice. On the other hand, it may be the case that those with input-based alienation (i.e., the electorally inefficacious) are particularly inclined to turn out and vote for the outsiders Trump and Sanders (Hypothesis 3b), as these individuals have the most to gain from seeing outsiders win and follow through on their promises to upend the political system. Such a finding would clearly be at odds with previous literature showing that input-based alienation depresses political participation, but would provide valuable insight into the mechanism behind the protest vote. From this, I am led to propose two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: *Electoral Inefficacy increases the likelihood of abstention in the*

2016 primary and general elections

Hypothesis 3b: *Electoral Inefficacy increases the likelihood of turning out to vote*

for Sanders and Trump in the 2016 primaries and general election

Finally, I expect that output-based measures of alienation—specifically *cynicism* from the ANES data—will increase the likelihood that individuals turn out to vote for Sanders in the Democratic primary and for Trump in the Republican primary and general election (Hypothesis 4). As scholars have noted, the two major parties' candidates for presidents are typically establishment figures (Templeton 1966; Cohen et al. 2009), but with Trump and Sanders in the race, those that were unsatisfied with the outputs of our political system were given a rare opportunity to use the national election process to signal their disaffection. If those with feelings of output-based alienation are indeed capitalizing on this opportunity, I expect this form of alienation to be directly related to voting behavior in terms of turnout and vote choice. This leads to my final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: *Cynicism increases the likelihood of turning out and voting for Sanders*

in the Democratic primary and for Trump in the Republican primary

and general election

4.4.3 Open-Ended Responses and the Structural Topic Model

To understand whether the politically alienated were more likely to state a preference for Trump or Sanders due to their outsider statuses (Hypotheses 1 and 2), I rely on open-ended responses about these two candidates from the ANES pre-election survey taken during the general

election campaign and the ISCAP panel study.[11] The open-ended question from the ANES that I am interested in asked all respondents, "Is there anything in particular about Donald Trump that might make you want to vote for him?" If respondents provide a first thought, the interview follows up by asking "anything else?" until the respondent provides up to five mentions or says "no."[12] Of the 4,270 respondents in the 2016 sample, approximately 1,853 respondents (∼44%) provided a response to this question, and of those, 1,099 respondents (∼26%) had complete co-variate data. Unfortunately, open-ended responses about Bernie Sanders are unavailable from the ANES as the open-ended questions were only asked about candidates in the general election (i.e., Trump and Clinton).

Open-ended responses about Bernie Sanders, then, come from the January 2016 wave of the ISCAP panel study. In the survey, respondents that identified as either Democrat or Republican were asked which candidate they prefer in their party's primary election.[13] The question that I am interested in specifically asks "Let's say a friend asked you why you were supporting [Democrat/Republican candidate] in the primary election. In one sentence, what would you say?" Here I am limited to analyzing only Democratic respondents (including leaners) that initially stated a preference for Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary. Of the 2,471 respondents in this wave, 785 (51%) identified as Democrat and roughly a third (∼32%) of those Democrats preferred Sanders. After removing observations with incomplete covariate data, I am left with 174 respondents.

The open-ended responses were provided from either source as raw text and had not been coded into discrete categories based on their content (as the ANES has done in the past).[14] Fortunately, several forms of (semi-) automated content analysis have emerged to assist researchers

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11. The redacted ANES open-ended responses used in this analysis are publicly available from the organization's web page (https://electionstudies.org).

12. For each respondent, their initial response and all follow-ups to the interviewers prime are contained in a single document (or cell) per respondent. There is no unique identifier to separate each respondents 'likes' into different cells, so all mentions from a respondent must be analyzed together. Respondents that provided no 'likes' about Trump are coded as Not Applicable (NA), so their data cannot be used in the estimation of the Structural Topic Model.

13. Respondents were not asked about candidates from the out-party's primary election.

14. Information on pre-processing these texts is given in Appendix C.3.1.

in categorizing large bodies of text (Grimmer and Stewart 2013). I use one such approach, the Structural Topic Model (Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley 2019a), to assist me in categorizing these open-ended responses about Trump and Sanders. Roberts et al. (2014b) has previously shown that the topics that emerge from a Structural Topic Model performed on open-ended responses are coherent and often mimic the categories assigned by human coders (e.g., the ANES 'Most Important Problem in Washington' question). As my results show, the STM also performs quite well with the open-ended responses about Trump and Sanders.

The intuition behind the Structural Topic Model is simple: identify clusters of words that tend to co-occur (i.e., topics). This is the same basic intuition underlying more common forms of topic models such as LDA (Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003), but the STM is unique in the sense that it allows researchers to include covariates that they suspect will affect 1) the use of certain topics (*prevalence*), or 2) the use of specific words within a topic (*content*) (Roberts et al. 2014b). My expectation is that feelings of political alienation will increase the frequency with which respondents use the "political outsider" topic to describe Trump or Sanders, so I choose to specify cynicism and electoral inefficacy as prevalence covariates for the ANES responses about Trump, and specify political system illegitimacy and electoral inefficacy as prevalence covariates for the ISCAP responses about Sanders.[15]

One advantage of the Structural Topic Model—compared to manual coding or supervised machine learning approaches—is that the researcher need not provide a set of 'training' documents from which each topic should be built.[16] Instead, the STM takes a 'bottom-up' approach, allowing the machine to generate topics from the data. However, the STM does still require a small amount of supervision as the researcher must decide the number of topics (K) that are to be found. Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley (2019a) note that there isn't necessarily a universally correct number of topics

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15. Partisanship is also included as a prevalence co-variate in the Trump model given the crucial role it plays in shaping many political behaviors, but is not specified as a prevalence co-variate in the Sanders model since only Democrats had the potential to give a response about Sanders.

16. Supervised approaches to document classification are dependent on the researchers coding scheme.

for a given set of documents, and advise researchers to rely on substantive knowledge of the data and, if necessary, explore models that range in their number of topics and select the model that demonstrates favorable properties (e.g., high semantic coherence and exclusivity). Appendix C.3.2 contains a more thorough discussion of the process that I used select the number of topics, which led me to estimate a model with 27 topics for the responses about Trump and a model with 13 topics for the responses about Sanders.

4.4.4   Models of Voting Behavior

My examination of the effects of alienation on voting behavior in the 2016 election centers largely on the results of two models, both of which use ANES data. I begin by using a multinomial logit to model the effects of electoral inefficacy and cynicism in the 2016 primary elections. Here, I restrict my sample to respondents from states that hosted open primaries on Super Tuesday in 2016 and use vote choice as the dependent variable with the options being "Sanders, "Trump," "Other," and "Did Not Vote."[17,18] Restricting my sample in this way allows me to avoid the possibility of unobserved time-dependencies that could arise from pooling respondents that voted at different points in the election cycle. Additionally, focusing on open primaries allows me to include both Democrats and Republicans in the same model, while also allowing for the possibility that some individuals voted for candidates of the out-party. This model includes electoral inefficacy and cynicism as the primary predictors alongside a range of co-variates that are known to influence support for Trump or Sanders such as: attitudes towards Democratically-aligned social groups including Blacks, Muslims, Hispanics, and LGBT (Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021; Hopkins 2021); indicators of status threat such as opposition to free-trade and beliefs about the military threat posed by China (Mutz 2018); authoritarian tendencies (Knuckey and Hassan 2020), racial and partisan identification (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018); anti-immigrant attitudes (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck

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17. "Other" includes all candidates other than Trump or Sanders—regardless of partisanship—that ran in the 2016 primary elections.

18. States hosting open primaries on Super Tuesday in 2016 include: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

2018; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018); sexism (Valentino, Wayne, and Oceno 2018; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018), Evangelical identity (Margolis 2020), and a host of more common co-variates such as economic evaluations, political interest, ideology, income, education, sex (female), and age.[19,20]

Next, I estimate a multinomial logit for the general election, where the dependent variable is once again vote choice, with the options being "Clinton," "Trump," "Other," and "Did Not Vote." This model includes the same primary predictors (electoral inefficacy and cynicism) and co-variates (listed above) as the model of the primary election. Unlike the model of the primary election, however, the sample for the general election is not limited to particular states.

4.5 RESULTS

I begin by exploring the results of the Structural Topic Models. Figures 4.1a and 4.1b present the top 6 topics from the Trump and Sanders models, respectively, along with their expected topic proportions across all documents in their respective corpora.[21] I have assigned a label (light gray text) to each topic based on the words that are most closely associated with each topic, and also through an examination of documents that contain a high proportion of a particular topic. The topics that arise are both coherent and insightful—for instance, the topic most commonly mentioned by ANES respondents related to Trump's experience in business (expected topic proportion ≈ 0.06). For ISCAP respondents, the most prevalent topic about Sanders related to his caring nature towards others and his desire to represent their beliefs and interests (expected topic proportion ≈ 0.12). Clearly the STMs performed quite well at identifying the various themes that underlie Trump's and Sanders' support.

In this analysis, the topics that are of particular interest are those labeled "Political Out-

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19. All variables rescaled to range between 0 and 1. See Appendix C.2 for more information about the variables used in these analyses.

20. Some of the co-variates included in these models were recorded after the general election, raising additional concerns about unobserved time dependencies. I present the primary and general election models with pre-election variables only in Tables C.7 and C.8 of Appendix C.5. These models show little to no change from the fully specified models in the main text.

21. Figures C.5a and C.5b in Appendix C.3.3 show the expected topic proportions for all topics.
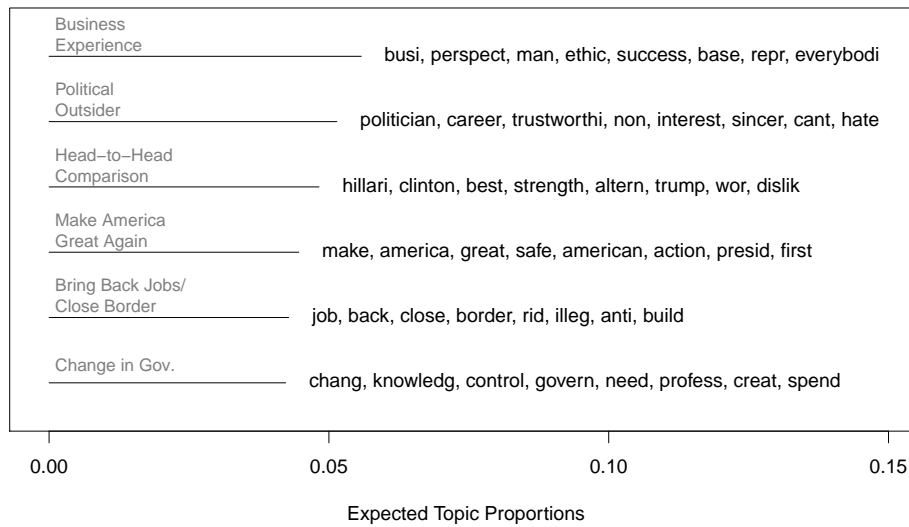
(a) Trump
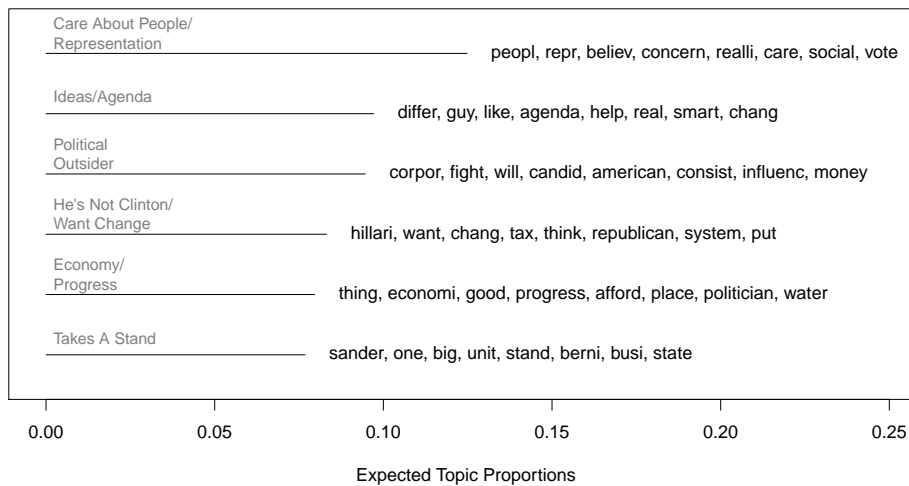
(b) Sanders

Figure 4.1: Expected Topic Proportion for Top 6 Topics with FREX Words

Note: Researcher designated labels given in parentheses, FREX words are those that are both frequent and exclusive to a topic

sider."[22] In the Trump model, the outsider topic is expected to account for roughly 5% of the average response, whereas in the Sanders model the outsider topic is expected to account for roughly

22. In Appendix C.4, I show that an "outsider" topic does not arise when we explore the open-ended responses about other candidates in the 2016 presidential election race including Hillary Clinton (Figure C.7) and the numerous candidates in the Republican primary (Figure C.6).

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10% of the average response. The word stems associated with these topics in Figure 4.1 indicate that part of Trump's and Sanders' appeal was due to their perceived disassociation from politics and the political system. For Trump, the political outsider topic is characterized by such words as "politician," "career," "trustworthi," and "interest." For Sanders, words such as "fight," "corpor(ate/ation)," "influence," and "money" are used often in this topic. While there is no doubt that the words associated with these outsiders topics are suggestive, they are not fully revealing. Therefore, I have also provided several verbatim responses in Figures 4.2a and 4.2b that, according to the models, have dedicated a large proportion of their content to the outsider topic.
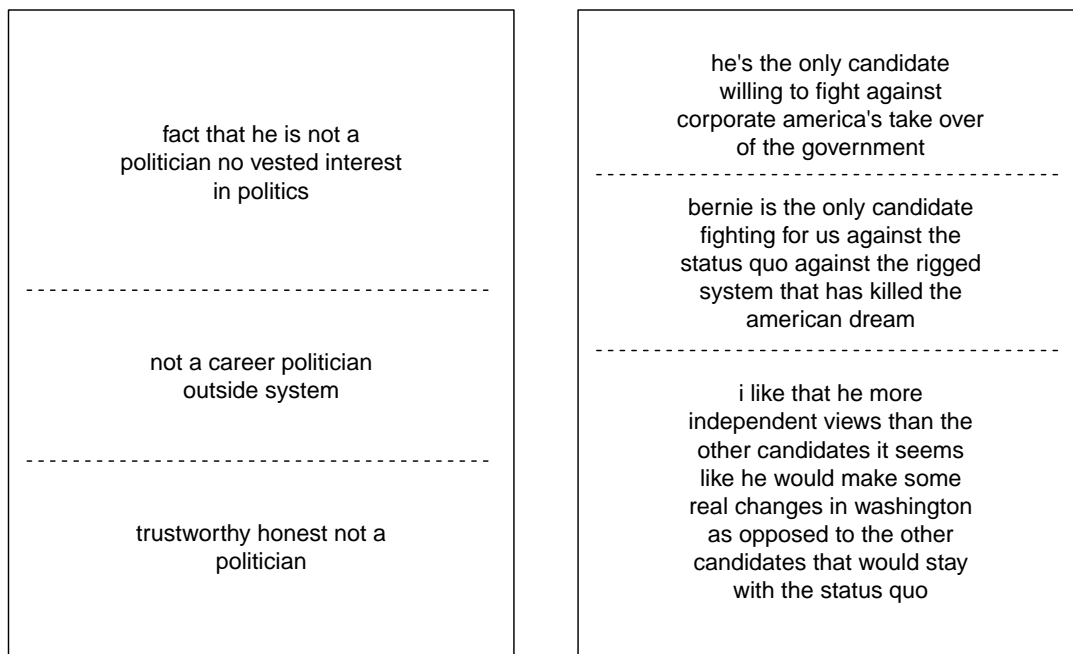
(a) Trump - Political Outsider Topic

(b) Sanders - Political Outsider Topic

Figure 4.2: Exemplary Texts from Political Outsider Topics

Looking first at Figure 4.2a, the responses indicate that Trump was liked specifically because he lacked political experience. Some respondents saw it as a positive that Trump was "not

(a) Trump - STM Coefficient Plot　　　　(b) Sanders - Coefficient Plot
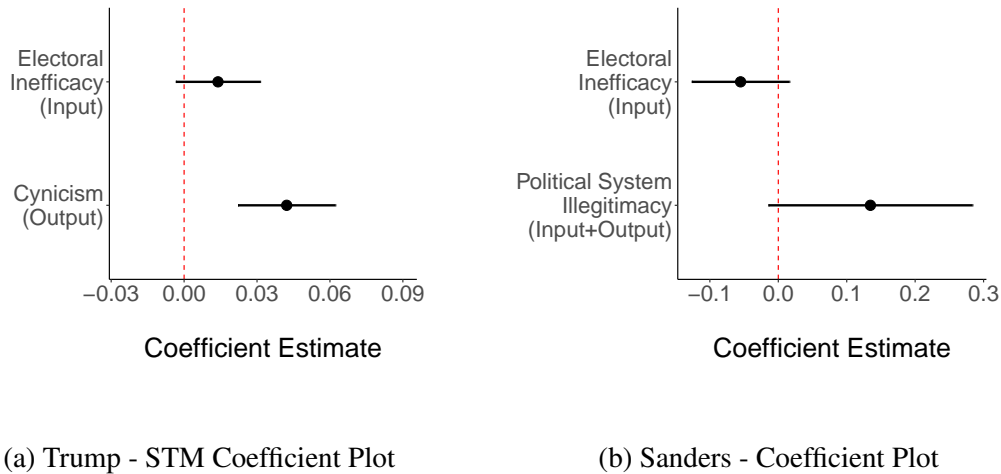
Figure 4.3: Coefficient Plots - Effects of Electoral Inefficacy and Cynicism on Use of Political Outsider Topic

Note: 90% confidence intervals shown. Estimates shown in 4.3a and 4.3b taken from Tables C.2 and C.3, respectively, in Appendix C.3.3. Both models include extensive batteries of co-variates which have been omitted from this figure.

a career politician" and was "outside [the] system." The responses about Sanders in Figure 4.2b convey a similar negative orientation toward political structures, but use somewhat different language. Here, respondents liked that Sanders was challenging "the status quo" and fighting against the institutions that are often perceived as having undue leverage in Washington such as "corporate america." It is interesting to note that these differing descriptions of Trump and Sanders as political outsiders align quite well with with left-wing versus right-wing populist typology identified by Lacatus (2021). Left-wing populists—a title often ascribed to Sanders—are known to take stances against corporations and the wealthy while right-wing populists—a label often attributed to Trump—espouse producerist and anti-political elite rhetoric. That these models detect these intricacies in language should be taken as an indication of the models' utility and validity.

　　Were the politically alienated particularly inclined to view Trump and Sanders as political outsiders (Hypothesis 1 and 2)? I answer this question by regressing the proportion of a document dedicated to the outsider topic on measures of alienation (conducted separately for Trump and

Sanders), while controlling for a range of factors that may influence support for either candidate. In the Trump model, the measures of alienation include electoral inefficacy and cynicism, and I control for such factors as anti-immigrant sentiments (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018), attitudes toward Democratic-aligned social groups (Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021; Hopkins 2021), sexism (Valentino, Wayne, and Oceno 2018), authoritarian tendencies (Knuckey and Hassan 2020), status threat (Mutz 2018), evangelical identification (Margolis 2020), and partisanship. In the Sanders model, the measures of alienation include electoral inefficacy and political system illegitimacy, and I control for such factors as status threat (Mutz 2018), partisan strength, and sexism (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018).[23] Both models also include ideology, economic assessments, age, income, education, race, and sex as co-variates. I focus on the effects of the alienation measures on use of the outsider topic as shown in Figure 4.3, but the full model results can be found in Tables C.2 and C.3 of Appendix C.3.3.

The coefficient plot in Figure 4.3a reveals that both electoral inefficacy and cynicism have the expected positive effect on the use of the outsider topic to describe Trump.[24] Given that both variables range between 0 and 1, the coefficients here (representing a one-unit change in the predictor) indicate that a move from the minimum to the maximum values of electoral inefficacy and cynicism produces a 1.4% ($p < 0.1$; one-tailed) and 4.2% ($p < 0.01$; one-tailed) increase, respectively, in the proportion of a document dedicated to the outsider topic. The size of these relationships are roughly the same as those found in previous applications of the Structural Topic Model to ANES open-ended responses (e.g., Roberts et al. 2014b).[25] Additionally, because documents in mixed-membership models (such as the STM) are comprised of multiple topics, it is rare that a document

23. While Mutz (2018) is interested in the effect of status threat on Trump support (measured with the social dominance orientation index), I choose to include it in the Sanders model as it is possible that an affinity for outsiders is a reflection of a preference for social hierarchy, more broadly. As we will see, the results do not support this possibility.

24. In Tables C.2 and C.3 in Appendix C.3.3 I show that the use of other common topics is largely not driven by political alienation. Those who are more cynical, for instance, are no more likely to use any of the other top topics than those that are less cynical, and are actually less likely to use the 'Make America Great Again' topic.

25. In Figure 18 on page 1080, Roberts et al. (2014b) show that, among Republicans, an increase from 13 (high school) to 17 (college) years of education produces a $\approx$3% reduction in the use of the 'war' topic from the ANES Most Important Problem open-ended responses.

will dedicate all of its content to a single topic. The document with the highest observed use of the 'outsider' topic, for instance, only dedicated about 60% of its content to that topic. Therefore, it is safe to say that a 1-4% increase in the use of the 'outsider' topic as a result of changes in feelings of electoral inefficacy or cynicism represents a meaningful effect, providing clear support for Hypothesis 1.

In Figures 4.3b, we see that political system illegitimacy—which taps both input- and output-focused alienation—has a similarly positive effect on the use of the outsider topic to describe Sanders. The coefficient estimate on political system illegitimacy suggests that a one-unit change in this measure is significantly related to a 13.3% ($p < 0.10$; one-tailed) increase in the proportion of the document dedicated to the outsider topic. The same cannot be said of electoral inefficacy, as the relationship between this measure and use of the outsider topic to describe Sanders appears negative but statistically insignificant. A possible reason for this null effect is the selection process for providing open-ended responses in the ISCAP panel. Only those that stated a preference for a candidate in the Democratic primary were asked to justify their preferences, whereas those that said they likely wouldn't vote in the primary were not asked for their justifications.[26] Figure C.1 in Appendix C.1.2 reveals that individuals that stated they were unlikely to vote in the primary were far more electorally inefficacious compared to supporters of any other candidates, including Sanders supporters, so while these non-voters may have indicated an affinity for Sanders due to his outsider status if asked, the data do not allow me to investigate this possibility. These results with respect to political system illegitimacy provide suggestive, but not definitive, evidence in favor of Hypothesis 2.

My next task is to examine the effects of input-based and output-based alienation on voting behaviors in the 2016 presidential election. As noted above, I estimate separate multinomial logit models of vote choice for the primaries and for the general election. Interpretation of the

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26. This issue does not apply to the ANES data, as all respondents where asked what (if anything) they liked about Trump, regardless of their partisanship or candidate preference in the primary elections.

coefficients from a multinomial logit is notoriously tricky, however, as the coefficients represent the change in the log-odds of selecting a particular outcome *over some baseline category* as the result of a one-unit increase in the predictor. Instead of assessing statistical significance from the regression table, researchers are encouraged to calculate and interpret more substantively meaningful quantities of interest (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000; Paolino 2020). Therefore, for both models, I simulate the predicted probability of selecting each outcome (along with 90% confidence intervals) as electoral inefficacy and cynicism move from their lowest (0) to their highest (1) values using the observed values approach (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013).

I begin by examining the effects of alienation in the open primary elections held on Super Tuesday in 2016. The model's output is presented in Table C.5 of Appendix C.5 and the predicted probabilities of vote choice are presented in Figure 4.4. Looking at the plots in the left column of Figure 4.4, we see that electoral inefficacy had no meaningful effect on the Trump vote, and a negative but statistically insignificant effect on the Sanders vote (-0.043, 90% CI[-0.102,0.019]). This indicates that input-based alienation—at least in this particular election—does not motivate people to vote for outsiders in the way that was anticipated by Hypothesis 3b. If anything, input-based alienation appears to promote abstention as indicated by the positive (0.031, 90% CI[-0.057,0.119]), but statistically insignificant, relationship between electoral inefficacy and the decision to not vote in the bottom-left plot of Figure 4.4. These results are more supportive of Hypothesis 3a, but should not be considered conclusive.

In the right column of Figure 4.4 we see that the effects of cynicism on vote choice in the primaries are more favorable to Trump and Sanders. Moving from the lowest to highest values of cynicism increase the probability of voting for Sanders by 7.0% (90% CI[0.018,0.117]) and for Trump by 1.7% (90% CI[-0.089,0.095]), though the latter effect does not quite reach statistical significance. Interestingly, we also see increases in cynicism reducing abstention by 3.2% (90% CI[-0.111,0.045]). Firm conclusions should not be drawn here as this effect does not reach statistical significance, but given that alienation was predictive of liking Sanders for his outsider qualities,
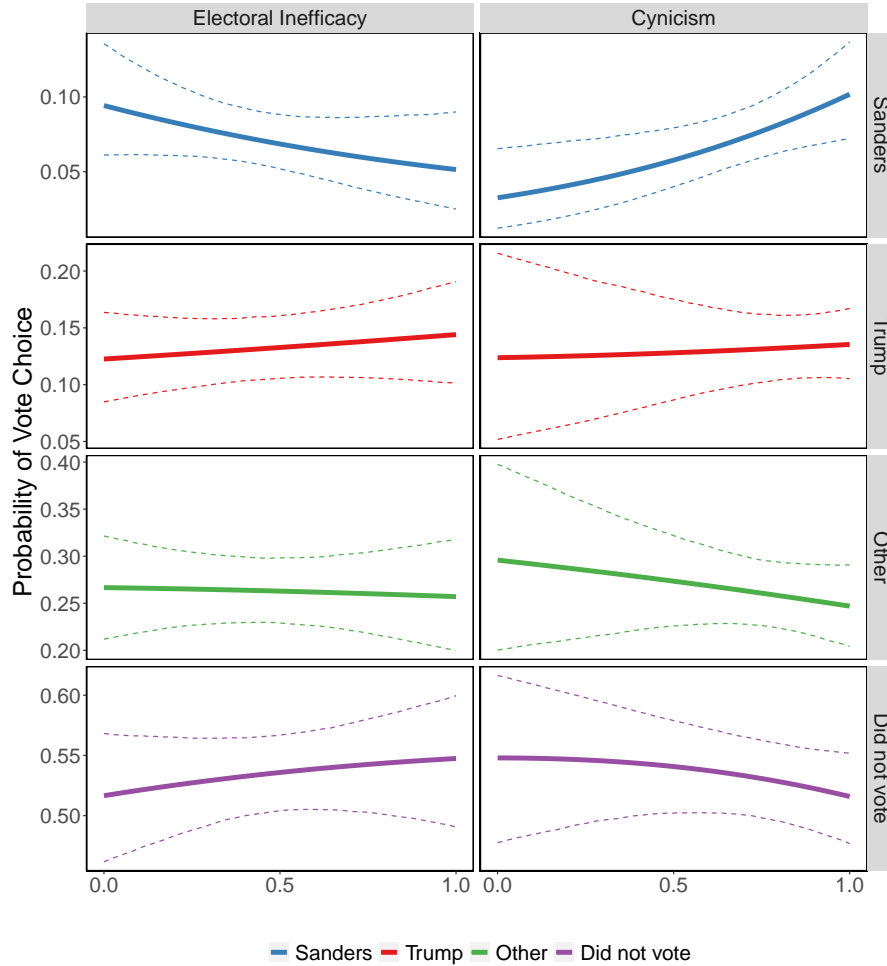
Figure 4.4: Predicted Probabilities - Vote Choice in 2016 Primary Election

Note: 90% confidence intervals given. Estimates come from Multinomial Logit in Table C.5 of Appendix C.5

and that output-alienation was related to the Sanders vote, these results are consistent with protest voting. I conclude that Hypothesis 4 has mixed support with respect to Sanders in the primary elections.

Now I turn to examining the effects of input- and output-based alienation in the general election. Table C.6 of Appendix C.5 shows the output from the multinomial logit and Figure 4.5 shows the predicted probability of voting for Clinton, Trump, some other candidate, or not voting at all as cynicism and electoral inefficacy vary from their minimum to their maximum values. In the left
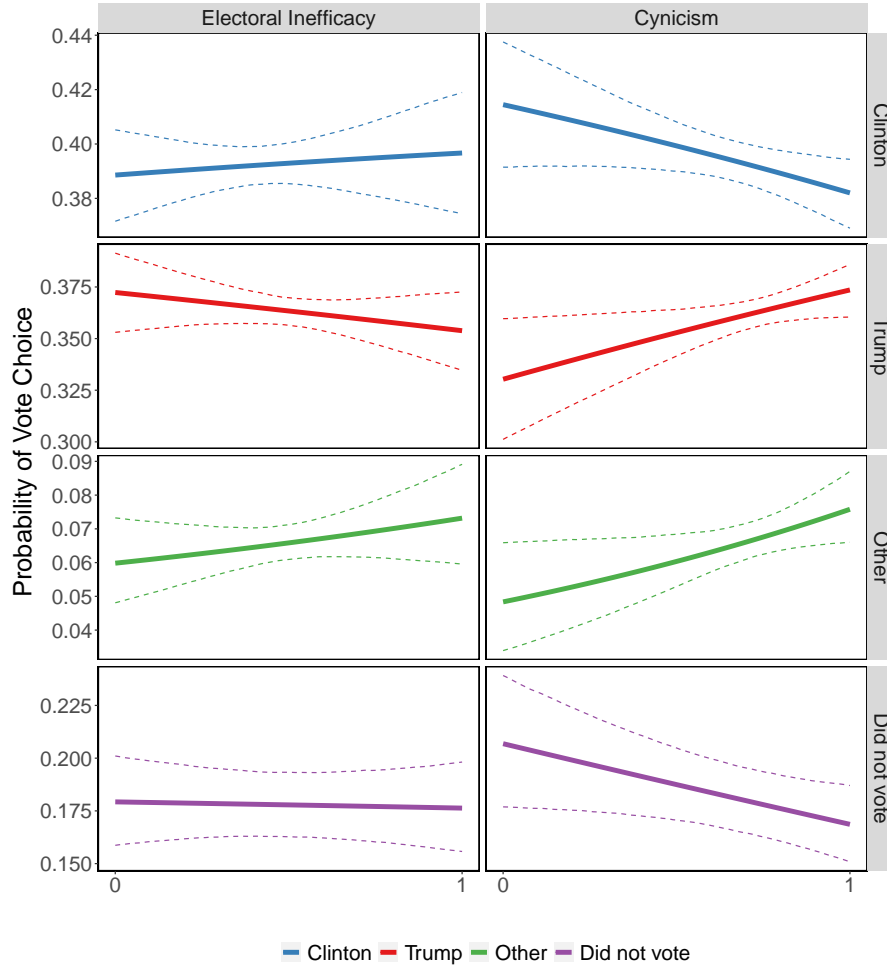
Figure 4.5: Predicted Probabilities - Vote Choice in 2016 General Election

Note: Estimates come from Multinomial Logit in Table C.6 in Appendix C.5

column of Figure 4.5, we see that electoral inefficacy did not encourage the Trump vote, demonstrating an unexpected, but insignificant, negative effect (-0.018, 90% CI[-0.055,0.017]). While there is a slight positive relationship between electoral inefficacy and voting for a third-party, this relationship is similarly insignificant. There is essentially no effect of electoral inefficacy on the Clinton vote or abstention. These results appear to support neither Hypothesis 3a nor 3b—input-based alienation did not boost turnout for Trump, nor did it discourage participation on election day.
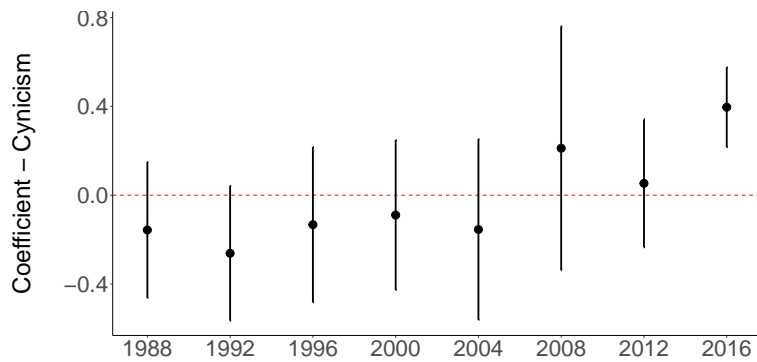
Figure 4.6: 'Cynicism' Coefficient - Turnout Models

Note: Estimates come from models in Table C.4 in Appendix C.5

Turning now to the right column of Figure 4.5, it is clear that cynicism played a larger role than electoral inefficacy in determining vote choice. Moving from the lowest to highest values of cynicism significantly reduces the probability of abstention by 3.8% (90% CI[-0.077,-0.001]) while simultaneously increasing the probability of voting for Trump by 4.4% (90% CI[0.005,0.082]). This is precisely what we would expect if output-based alienation inspired protest votes in favor of Trump. Equally interesting is the fact that cynicism appears to reduce the probability of voting for the political insider in the race, Hillary Clinton (-0.032, 90% CI[-0.065,-0.001]), and increase the probability of voting third-party (0.028, 90% CI[0.002,0.051]). In total, it appears that cynicism played a key role in generating protest votes in Trump's favor—and to Clinton's detriment—consistent with Hypothesis 4.

A possible objection to my argument that Trump's outsider candidacy is responsible for uniquely boosting turnout in this election is that cynicism may be related to turnout even in elections with more traditional or establishment-type candidates. To alleviate this concern, I estimate models of voter turnout for each of the last eight elections and then compare the coefficients on cynicism with the results presented in Figure 4.6. The only election year in which cynicism appears related to turnout is 2016, where the relationship appears positive and significant. The ability of the political outsider, Trump, to motivate the politically alienated to support him at the ballot

box is a phenomenon that appears unique to 2016.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Political alienation describes a feeling of estrangement from the inputs and outputs to the political system, and is often accompanied by a sense of negativism towards political processes and structures (Horton and Thompson 1962). For those with input-based alienation, political participation is not seen as a useful mechanism for signaling discontent, and for those with output-based alienation, opportunities to translate one's negative attitudes into action are rarely available. However, I have argued and demonstrated that the 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle was an opportunity for the politically alienated to cast protest votes at the national level due to the presence of two outsider candidates: Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. I showed that the politically alienated—be it input- or output-based—were more likely to say they liked Trump and Sanders specifically because they stood opposed to the political system. Then, I showed that protest votes largely occurred through output-based alienation, increasing the likelihood of voting for Sanders in the primary and Trump in the general election, while at the same time increasing turnout (more so in the general election). It is important to note the the relationships I uncovered between alienation and both candidate evaluations and vote choice are robust to the inclusion of multiple factors that are known to influence Trump or Sanders support, such as status threat, social identities, racial resentment, modern sexism, and authoritarianism (Mutz 2018; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Hopkins 2021; Valentino, Wayne, and Oceno 2018; Knuckey and Hassan 2020). Finally, I showed that the effect of output-based alienation on turnout in 2016 was unique to that election cycle—in the last eight general election, cynicism appears to have boosted turn only in 2016.

This analysis has contributed to our understanding of the relationship between alienation and voting behavior in two clear ways. First, I have unpacked a mechanism underlying the protest vote in U.S. presidential elections. While Southwell and Everest (1998) suggested that output-based

alienation promoted protest votes in favor of Perot in the 1992 election, the motivations underlying these votes had yet to be uncovered. My examination of the open-ended responses about Trump and Sanders reveals that their status as political outsiders was an important consideration for the politically alienated, and at least for those with output-based alienation, those feelings of alienation translated into a vote. Second, I have helped to round-out our understanding of how two non-traditional candidates could achieve such success in a presidential election. The role of identity in supporting the rise of Trump and Sanders is well established (e.g., Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018; Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021), but my results suggest that a fuller understanding of their success requires consideration of the role played by anti-establishment sentiment. Even when the role of identity was taken into account, political alienation still drove candidate evaluations and vote choice in various ways.

As a final consideration, it is important to note that I have remained agnostic about the specific sources of peoples' feelings of political alienation. As I have defined it, true feelings of alienation should have pre-existed the emergence of Trump and Sanders, and should not have developed due solely to the rhetoric of these two political outsiders. Indeed, Figure C.2 shows that the ANES measure of electoral inefficacy increased only slightly between 2012 and 2012, while cynicism remained consistent during this same time period (with Democrats even showing a slight decrease). Given that our political system typically changes at a rather glacial pace, it makes sense that feelings of alienation would be slow-developing, as well. This is not to say, however, that feelings of political alienation that lie dormant cannot become politically relevant. In fact, I believe that this was likely the case in 2016—Trump and Sanders both used their platforms to help voters make the connection between their candidacies and voters' feelings of political alienation, which some have appeared to use motivation for their vote choice. Identifying the specific source of such attitudes remain beyond the scope of this project, but provide fertile ground for future research.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I sought to understand the processes through which feelings of disaffection from American political institutions develop among members of the mass public, and furthermore, to understand how disaffection may shape important political attitudes and behaviors such as candidate evaluations and the vote choice, among others. Each of the chapters contained in this dissertation provided a snapshot into either the development or expression of disaffection with respect to various government institutions.

In Chapter 2, I explored how gridlock in the legislative process shaped citizens' evaluations of the political parties—their own, as well as the opposition. Through an analysis of citizens' thoughts on the "most important problems" in the nation, I found that some explicitly mentioned gridlock as a problem, and associated that problem with two parties. Furthermore, those expressing greater concern over gridlock were shown to hold less favorable views of both their own party, as well as the out-party. Moving to the macro-level, however, I find that increases in the actual level of gridlock are only related to out-party evaluations—that is, people generally do not appear to blame their own party for any shortcomings in the legislative process.

In Chapter 3, I examined how public support for agencies of the federal government (e.g., EPA, the U.S. Postal Service) is shaped by news coverage that "politicizes" those agencies, or portrays them as strategic, political actors as opposed to principled, bureaucratic organizations. A content analysis of six agencies over a two-year time period revealed substantial levels ($\sim$45%) of politicized coverage, though there was inter-agency heterogeneity in type and amount of coverage received by each agency. A survey experiment then revealed that this politicized coverage reduced support for agency policies (i.e., specific support) among Democrats, while this coverage had no influence on the evaluations of Independents or Republicans, nor did it influence public perceptions of agencies' legitimacy (i.e., diffuse support).

And in Chapter 4, I investigated the role of feelings of political alienation—or disaffection from the *inputs* or the *outputs* of the political system—in the (relative) electoral success of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump in 2016 U.S. presidential election. An analysis of the public's open-ended thoughts about Sanders and Trump revealed that many viewed these candidates as "political outsiders," and more importantly, feelings of political alienation were positively related to these perceptions. I then showed the feelings of alienation also encouraged "protest votes" in favor of Trump and Sanders, but only through output-based alienation, as those alienated from the inputs to the political system (e.g., the electoral process) were unlikely to use those mechanisms to express their feelings through their vote.

Together, these three chapters have revealed that disaffection is a complex, but nevertheless influential, force in American politics. There are several overarching lessons to be learned from the essays on disaffection presented here. First, feelings of disaffection can be aimed at a wide variety of institutions, either individually or collectively. Political parties (Chapter 1), federal agencies (Chapter 2), and the various other political institutions that are central to our democratic system have nuanced relationships with members of the mass public that are subject to deterioration under the right (or wrong) conditions. The second lesson is that there are a variety of mechanisms through with disaffection may develop. Disaffection toward the political parties, for instance, may result from the parties' failure to address meaningful political issues through the legislative process (Chapter 1), while disaffection toward federal agencies may develop, for some people, through perceptions that agencies are seeking political goals (Chapter 2). This dissertation has provided some insight on the extent to which these mechanisms may overlap across institutions—for instance, by applying literature on politicization of the Supreme Court to federal agencies in Chapter 2—but work remains to be done to more generally outline the mechanisms of disaffection. A third and final lesson is that the expression of disaffection can take on many different forms: people may simply begin to feel less favorable toward an institution, or they may lose support in an institution's policies, or they may feel that their connection to the political system, as a whole, has disintegrated.

How feelings of disaffection might transform from mild distrust of a specific institution, to a total sense of alienation from the political system in its entirety, remains unclear. Tracking the development and expression of disaffection through time through and across institutions would provide tremendous insight on this process.

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APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL FOR 'GRINDING TO A HALT: MICRO- AND
MACRO-EVIDENCE OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GRIDLOCK ON CITIZENS'
EVALUATIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES'

A.1 Party Favorability Measures

Table A.1: Party Favorability Sources and Questions

ANES	We'd also like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. When I read the name of a group, we'd like you to rate it with what we call a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50-100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward the group; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably towards the group and that you don't care too much for that group. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward a group you would rate them at 50 degrees. If we come to a group you don't know much about, just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.
Gallup	Next, we'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these people – or if you have never heard of them. How about: The Republican (Democratic) Party?
Gallup2	Next, I'd like you to rate the political parties on a scale. If you have a favorable opinion of the party, name a number between plus on and plus five – the higher the number, the more favorable your opinion. If you have an unfavorable opinion of the party, name a number between minus one and minus five – the higher the number the more unfavorable your opinion. First, how would you rate the Republican (Democratic) Party... Next, how would you rate the Democratic (Republican) Party...
CBS	(In general), is your opinion of the Republican (Democratic) Party favorable or not favorable?
CBS/New York Times	(In general), is your opinion of the Republican (Democratic) Party favorable or not favorable?
PSRA	Now I'd like your views on some people and things in the news. As I read from a list, please tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of who or what I name. First, would you say your overall opinion of the Republican (Democratic) Party is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?
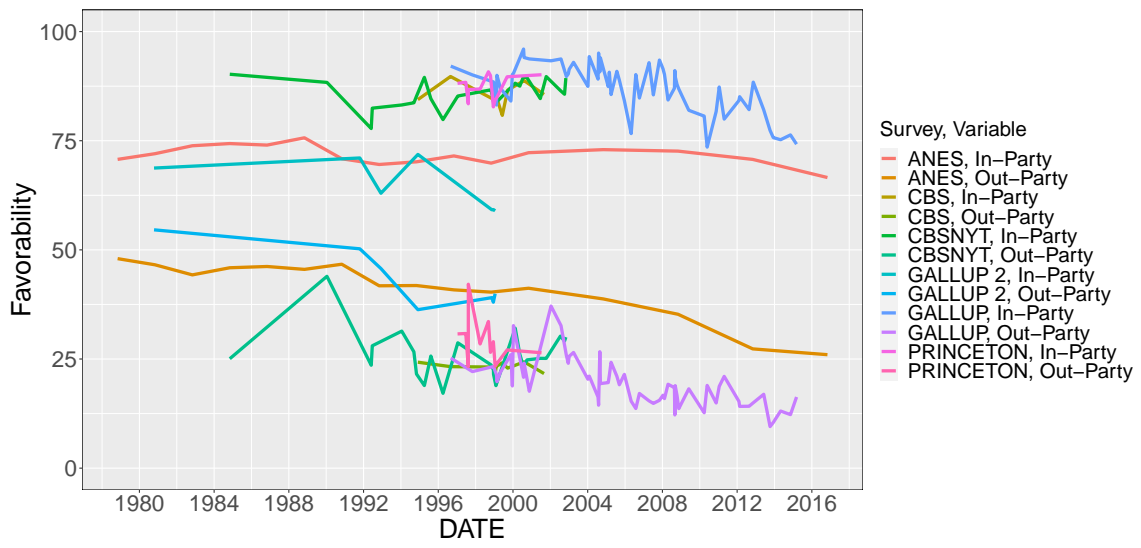
Figure A.1: Plot of Survey Marginals Used to Generate In-Party/Out-Party Favorability

A.2 Supplemental Analyses at the Micro-Level

A.2.1 Structural Topic Model: Estimation and Evaluation

I select the number of topics using a built-in function from the `stm` package (Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley 2019b). This function applies an algorithmic approach from Lee and Mimno (2014) to finding the number of topics, as opposed to the default approach of estimating the model with a researcher-specified number of topics. The algorithm suggested a 64 topics model, and upon inspection, output of the initial model was quite clean (i.e., coherent and cohesive topics). This is approximately the number of topics that the ANES uses to manually code the "most important problem" responses (69 topics), and the number of topics estimated in Roberts et al. (2014a) in their analysis the same open-ended responses (60 topics). As Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley (2019b, 13) note, there is not necessarily a "correct" number of topics, and the output of the algorithm approach should not be taken as such. However, the 64-topic model I discovered from the algorithm appears to be a an appropriate and suitable model for my purposes, so I choose this model for my primary analyses.

Topic 22: economi, job, healthcar, creat, lose, oversea, loss, creation
Topic 12: care, health, insur, afford, expens, avail, coverag, doctor
Topic 49: peopl, mani, work, without, kill, advantag, deserv, starv
Topic 16: racism, healthcar, polic, inequ, equal, incom, wealth, white
Topic 11: think, can, one, just, lot, know, dont, say
Topic 35: need, help, enough, better, home, take, hungri, train
Topic 55: problem, middl, class, import, also, face, anoth, east
Topic 13: educ, welfar, reform, employ, fund, qualiti, emphasi, urban
Topic 48: drug, crime, gun, violenc, aid, use, abus, street
Topic 37: govern, big, busi, live, level, matter, black, feder
Topic 39: unemploy, high, rate, interest, inflat, still, jobless, number
Topic 17: immigr, illeg, border, come, obamacar, alien, legal, open
Topic 32: social, secur, elder, medicar, program, benefit, fund, age
Topic 10: lack, law, support, respect, leadership, enforc, good, uniti
Topic 54: get, back, stop, hard, bring, along, choic, rid
Topic 59: media, elect, corrupt, news, vote, fraud, lie, riot
Topic 5: polit, divis, divid, hate, polar, countri, among, unrest
Topic 62: tax, pay, rais, less, lower, higher, fair, bill
Topic 40: nation, debt, trillion, owe, bankrupt, enorm, deeper, explod
Topic 30: pandem, virus, coronavirus, due, handl, vaccin, spread, mask
Topic 23: deficit, trade, feder, import, reduc, general, export, farmer
Topic 31: like, make, thing, feel, seem, see, year, instead
Topic 46: money, much, give, power, send, countri, way, amount
Topic 4: poor, homeless, poverti, rich, low, hunger, citi, richer
Topic 34: war, affair, relat, afganistan, inmigr, start, religion, bail
Topic 33: cost, medic, increas, wage, live, rise, servic, plan
Topic 58: presid, trump, elect, current, donald, court, administr, suprem
Topic 53: covid, control, respons, shut, result, number, effect, etc
Topic 43: spend, control, govt, entitl, limit, program, wast, gover
Topic 28: issu, militari, abort, involv, gay, women, stronger, minor
Topic 20: democrat, china, liber, freedom, polic, left, socialist, constitut
Topic 56: racial, race, relat, justic, injustic, discrimin, gender, tension
Topic 61: chang, climat, address, effect, lead, resourc, mass, earth
Topic 50: world, keep, countri, tri, peac, stay, whole, forc
Topic 29: econom, situat, crisi, grow, dispar, growth, includ, stabil
Topic 2: school, children, public, colleg, kid, young, parent, teacher
Topic 3: price, energi, food, compani, gas, industri, oil, dollar
Topic 47: parti, congress, togeth, work, republican, two, compromis, democrat
Topic 51: moral, famili, valu, societi, declin, abort, babi, marriag
Topic 18: way, find, differ, fact, other, long, fix, side
Topic 26: budget, defens, cut, balanc, strong, must, handl, maintain
Topic 42: environ, protect, environment, pollut, clean, wast, water, air
Topic 60: take, away, god, countri, wrong, taken, turn, first
Topic 63: right, now, civil, human, corona, answer, iran, yes
Topic 52: foreign, polici, deal, posit, influenc, weak, privat, sector
Topic 27: nuclear, arm, russia, america, weapon, central, race, reagan
Topic 57: american, america, life, politician, run, offic, allow, everi
Topic 38: bad, someth, done, good, got, noth, area, day
Topic 36: will, becom, continu, biden, end, never, start, hope
Topic 15: terror, threat, fight, terrorist, fear, recess, whether, domest
Topic 14: global, hous, warm, infrastructur, market, invest, stock, fail
Topic 25: want, person, corpor, popul, greed, everybodi, action, top
Topic 21: system, crimin, next, union, capit, vote, prison, broken
Topic 1: group, base, general, great, individu, hatr, religi, safeti
Topic 24: everyon, everyth, anyth, let, els, around, someon, anyon
Topic 65: countri, ethnic, way, especi, good, creat, citizen, support
Topic 64: fiscal, leader, cliff, trust, respons, self, terribl, fall
Topic 7: concern, financi, student, futur, new, loan, generat, assist
Topic 41: state, time, unit, none, stand, attack, gone, moment
Topic 19: well, alway, paid, mean, understand, idea, rest, guess
Topic 45: look, toward, place, move, part, happen, ignor, past
Topic 44: intern, due, relationship, direct, manag, process, abil, white
Topic 6: improv, obama, iraq, depress, ecomoni, most, bush, barack
Topic 8: free, hand, basic, food, hold, rule, check, stamp
Topic 9: mental, communiti, worker, reason, attitud, exampl, non, set

0.00   0.02   0.04   0.06   0.08   0.10   0.12

Expected Topic Proportions

Figure A.2: Expected Topic Proportions From All Topics - STM

Histogram of gridlock.dt$Topic47

Figure A.3: Histogram of Gridlock Topic

Table A.2: Summary Statistics: ANES Data (1984-2020)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
MIP: Gridlock	17,493	0.013	0.026	0.0005	0.004	0.012	0.568
In-Party Thermometer	17,493	70.505	19.051	0	60	85	99
Out-Party Thermometer	17,493	28.543	23.584	0	3	50	99
Party Strength	17,493	0.723	0.276	0	0.3	1	1
Ideological Strength	17,493	0.427	0.316	0.000	0.000	0.667	1.000
Political Interest	17,493	0.776	0.265	0.000	0.667	1.000	1.000
Female	17,493	0.521	0.500	0	0	1	1
Age	17,493	0.495	0.182	0.000	0.354	0.636	0.939

A.3 Supplemental Analyses at the Macro-Level

Table A.3: First Differences Models - Gridlock and Party Favorability, with Senate Measure of Elite Polarization

	In-Party	Out-Party	In-Party	Out-Party
	Basic Model		w/ Controls	
ΔGridlock	−0.003	−0.067**	−0.026	−0.084***
	(0.033)	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.026)
ΔElite Polarization			−45.206	−46.422*
			(29.766)	(26.178)
ΔPct. Strong Partisan			0.558***	−0.211
			(0.183)	(0.161)
Constant	−0.327	−0.727	−0.350	−0.138
	(0.561)	(0.449)	(0.541)	(0.475)
Observations	19	19	19	19
Adjusted R^2	−0.058	0.230	0.288	0.374

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

Table A.4: General Error Correction Models - Gridlock and Party Favorability

	In-Party	Out-Party
In-Party Favorability$_{t-1}$	−0.383	
	(0.303)	
Out-Party Favorability$_{t-1}$		−0.061
		(0.125)
ΔGridlock	−0.059	−0.094**
	(0.063)	(0.041)
Gridlock$_{t-1}$	−0.094	−0.055
	(0.093)	(0.063)
Constant	35.905	4.105
	(28.598)	(6.600)
Observations	19	19
Adjusted R^2	−0.083	0.171

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

Table A.4 provides General Error Correction Models (GECMs) of gridlock and party favorability (in-party in Column 1, out-party in Column 2). In the in-party model, we see that neither the lagged levels of the in-party favorability (In-Party Favorability$_{t-1}$) nor the lagged levels of gridlock (Gridlock$_{t-1}$) are statistically significant, suggesting that there is no long-term equilibrium that exists between them. Similar to the main model presented in the paper, we also see that the short-term change in gridlock (ΔGridlock) also has no relationship to in-party favorability. Moving to out-party model, however, the evidence supports my initial decision to apply a first differences model to the relationship between gridlock and party favorability. As in the main results, there does appear to be a short-term equilibrium relationship between gridlock and out-party favorability, as positive changes in gridlock produce a negative and statistically significant negative chance in out-party

favorability ($\beta = -0.094, p < 0.05$). There is no long-run equilibrium relationship between these variables, though, as the lagged levels of out-party favorability and the lagged levels of gridlock are once again statistically insignificant. Thus it appears that the first differences model—which assumes no long-term equilibrium relationships between variables—was the appropriate modeling decision.

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL FOR 'PUBLIC OPINION AND THE POLITICIZATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES'

B.1   Survey Information

B.1.1   Demographics

Table B.1: Descriptive Statistics of Lucid Sample

Variable	Lucid Sample ($N = 911$)*	US Population[†]
Median Age	44	38.5
Female	48.2%	50.8%
Education (>High school)	92.2%%	88.0%
Party ID		
Democrat (incl. leaners)	45.0%	44%
Pure Independent	16.9%	11%
Republican (incl. leaners)	38.1%	45%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	72.4%	76.3%
Black	11.6%	13.4%
Latino/Hispanic[††]	6.1%	18.5%
Asian	4.8%	5.9%

*N represents the number of unique respondents in the sample.

[†]US population estimates for age, sex, education and race/ethnicity come from the US Census Bureau's "QuickFacts" (2022), and partisanship from Gallup (2022).

[††] US population estimate of Latino/Hispanic includes those of any race, so are also included in other applicable categories. Same is not true of Lucid sample.

B.1.2 Dependent Variables

There are two primary dependent variables in this paper's analyses: (1) specific support and (2) diffuse support for the federal agency shown in the experimental stimuli. The measure of specific support is created from three separate items, all of which are combined with principal components analysis (PCA). The first item gauges respondents' level of agreement with the rule or directive described in the article by asking:

- Overall, do you agree or disagree with the [agency abbrev.]'s [plan] as described in article?

The agency abbreviation and the text description of the rule or directive found in the article were piped in to the above question. The second item gauges respondents' assessments of the agency's performance by asking:

- How well do you think the [agency abbrev.] does its main job in government? Would you say it does a great job, a pretty good job, a not very good job, or a poor job?

Finally, I gauge respondents' general levels of affect or confidence in the agency through the use of a feeling thermometer. The question wording is as follows:

- Next, I would like to get your feelings toward the [agency abbrev.] using something we call a feeling thermometer. You can use any number between 0 and 100 to express your feelings. Ratings above 50 degrees mean that you are favorable and warm toward the agency, while those below 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the agency. You would rate the agency at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward it.

Table B.2 shows the loadings of these three items on the first three components. We see that all three items load on the first component in roughly equal magnitudes and in the same direction. The first component accounts for 70.4% of the variance.

Table B.2: PCA - Specific Support (All Items)

	PC1	PC2	PC3
Main Job	-0.60	0.37	0.70
Agree w/ Policy	-0.52	-0.85	0.01
Agency Therm.	-0.60	0.36	-0.71

My measure of diffuse support (also called "institutional loyalty" or "legitimacy") is adapted from the work of Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence (2003), who were interested in measuring diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court. Their measure asks respondents to provide their level of agreement with several statements about the Supreme Court. I have adapted these statements to focus on institutional loyalty toward federal agencies. The full text of the three institutional loyalty statements that I include in the survey are given here:

- Item 1: If the [agency abbrev.] start setting policy guidelines that most people disagree with, it might be better to do away with the [agency abbrev.] altogether.

- Item 2: The right of the [agency abbrev.] to implement certain types of controversial policies should be reduced

- Item 3: The [agency abbrev.] can usually be trusted to implement policies that are right for the country as a whole

Table B.3 shows the loadings of the three diffuse support items on the first three principal components. We see that all items load in the same direction on the first component, and while the first and second items load in roughly equal magnitudes, the third items has a slightly smaller loading. Together these three items accounts for 52.3% of the variance.

B.1.3 Agency Ideology Rating

Table B.3: PCA - Diffuse Support (All Items)

	PC1	PC2	PC3
Do away with agency	0.67	-0.21	-0.71
Reduce right to implement policy	0.67	-0.24	0.70
Trust to implement policy	0.32	0.95	0.02
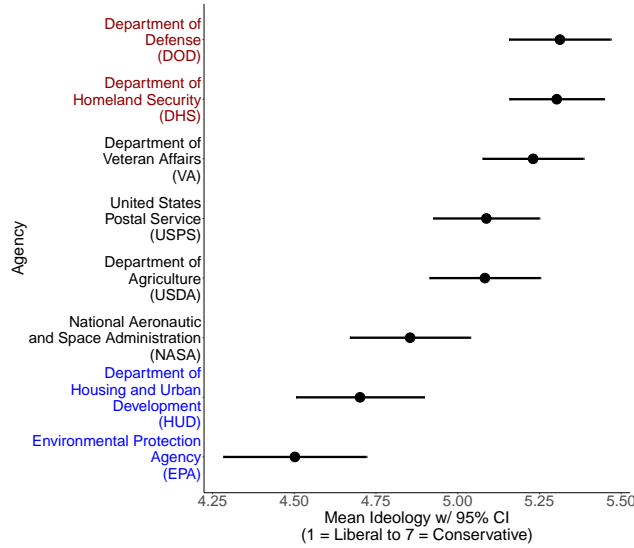
Figure B.1: Agency Ideology Ratings: MTurk Pre-test
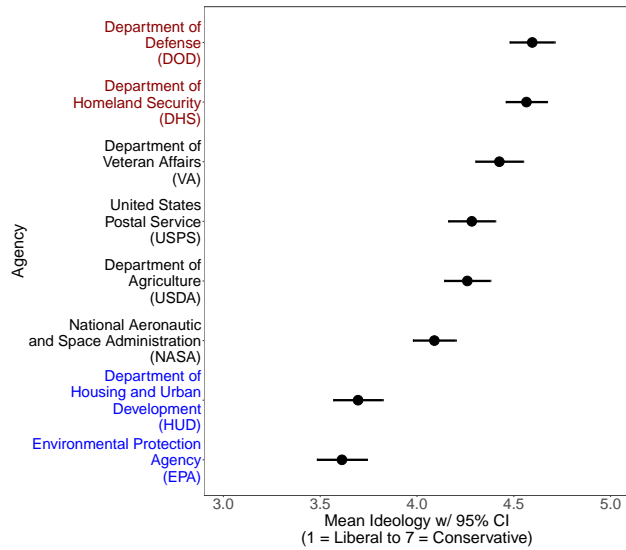
Figure B.2: Agency Ideology Ratings: Lucid Experiment

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B.2 Experimental Materials

B.2.1 Treatment Articles

The articles used in the experiment are provided below, with articles about 'Moderate Agencies' shown in Section B.2.1.1 and articles about 'Left-/Right-Leaning Agencies' in Section B.2.1.2. The text in red indicates the *politicized* condition whereas the text in blue indicates the *non-politicized* condition.

B.2.1.1 Moderate Agencies

- United States Postal Service (USPS) **Link**

Citing [the former president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to provide affordable mail service], USPS Postmaster General announces plan to pursue new cost-cutting measures

The United States Postal Services (USPS) says that mail deliveries could be delayed by a day or more under new cost-cutting efforts announced this week. The decision was led by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy who was appointed during the Trump administration and who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the former president's policy priorities/the mission of the USPS].

USPS officials, bracing for steep losses from the nationwide shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have warned they will run out of money by the end of September without help from Congress. The service reported a $4.5 billion loss for the quarter ending in March 2020, before the full effects of the shutdown sank in.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy noted that the USPS, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the former president's urgent cost-cutting agenda/is committed to its mission of providing the nation with reliable, affordable, and universal mail service."

The proposed plan eliminates overtime for hundreds of thousands of postal workers and says employees must adopt a "different mindset" to ensure the Postal Service's survival during the coronavirus pandemic. And though the plan "is not yet finalized, it will certainly include new and creative ways for us to fulfill our mission, and we will focus immediately on efficiency and items that we can control," said spokesperson Dave Partenheimer.

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Link**

Citing [the president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to support sustainable agriculture], USDA Secretary announces plans for large-scale climate projects

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced plans to finance a series of large-scale projects aimed at developing markets for climate-smart farming and forestry practices. The decision was led by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, a Biden administration appointee who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the president's policy priorities/the mission of the USDA].

USDA officials noted that these new markets would include sustainability supply chain initiatives and commitments from companies to reduce emissions within their own supply chains and production facilities. Officials added that opportunities also include markets for low-carbon biofuels and renewable energy.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Secretary Tom Vilsack noted that the USDA, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent agricultural agenda/is committed to its mission of promoting agricultural production and economic opportunity."

The proposed plan cites the USDA's Commodity Credit Corp. (CCC) as the source of its spending authority. A spokesperson for the department said recently that the department is working to figure out how early adopters of climate-friendly practices can be included in the program.

B.2.1.2 Left-/Right-Leaning Agencies

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) **Link**

Citing [the president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to protect the environment], EPA Administrator announces plan to restore state and tribal power to protect waterways

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to restore a rule that grants states and Native American tribes authority to block pipelines and other energy projects that can pollute rivers, streams, and other waterways. The decision was led by EPA Administrator Michael Regan, a Biden administration appointee who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the president's policy priorities/the mission of the EPA].

A provision of the Clean Water Act gives states and tribes power to block federal projects that could harm lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands within their borders. Washington state blocked construction of a coal export terminal in 2017, saying there were too many major harmful effects including air pollution, rail safety, and vehicle traffic, while New York regulators stopped a natural gas pipeline, saying it failed to meet standards to protects streams, wetlands, and other water resources.

In a statement to the Associated Press, EPA Administrator Michael Regan vowed to work diligently to protect clean water, adding that the EPA, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent climate agenda/is committed to protecting human health and the environment."

The EPA's decision calls for restoration of the Section 401 provision, under which a federal agency may not issue a license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in any discharge into navigable water unless the affected state or tribe certifies that the discharge is in compliance with the Clean Water Act and state law, or waives certification. The revised rule is expected to take effect in roughly two months

- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) **Link**

Citing [the president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to provide affordable housing], HUD Secretary announces rule aimed at preventing evictions from public units

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is rolling out a new rule aimed at preventing evictions for tenants in public housing after the federal eviction moratorium expired in August. The decision was led by Department Secretary Marcia Fudge, a Biden administration appointee who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the president's policy priorities/the mission of HUD].

The rule will prohibit individuals living in housing subsidized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development from being evicted from their homes for not paying rent unless the tenants are given a 30-day notice and information regarding federal emergency rental assistance that may be available.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Secretary Marcia Fudge noted that HUD, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent housing and urban development agenda/is committed to its mission of creating sustainable and quality affordable homes for all."

The new rule comes after the expiration of a federal eviction moratorium left millions of Americans at risk of being pushed out of their homes amid the pandemic. A spokesperson for the department said recently that while rules are typically enacted 30 days after they are registered, authorities will likely implement the regulation right away.

- Department of Defense (DOD) **Link**

Citing [the president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to protect national security], DOD Secretary announces plans for air operations, ground exercises in Australia

The Department of Defense (DOD) announced plans for further air defense cooperation measures with Australia and for an increase to the number of troops stationed in the area. The decision was led Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, a Biden administration appointee who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the president's policy priorities/the mission of the DOD].

The announcement follows recent indications that the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Pacific ally would begin sharing nuclear submarine technology in the face of a growing threat from China. In November, the United States and Australia also formalized an agreement to cooperate on the development of long-range prototype bombers and hypersonic weapons.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Secretary Lloyd Austin noted that the DOD, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent national defense agenda/is committed to its mission of deterring war and ensuring our nation's security."

The DOD's plans specifically emphasize the United States' commitment to Australia, and calls for increased military exercises, training, and sharing of defense technology. The plans are set to initiate within the next several months, but in the meantime a spokesperson for the department says that the department will continue monitoring potential adversaries and remains prepared to address any near-term challenges.

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) **Link**

Citing [the president's policy agenda/the agency's mission to secure the country], DHS Secretary issues new arrest and deportation guidelines to immigration services

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued broad new directives to immigrations officers Thursday saying that the fact that someone is an undocumented immigrant "should not alone be the basis" of a decision to detain and deport them from the United States. The initiative was led by Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas who has thus far been described by experts as dedicated to [the president's policy priorities/the mission of the DHS].

The new instructions seek to direct the department's public safety mission by training agents in the use of "prosecutorial discretion," in which they weight the pros and cons in determining whether to detain and deport someone. Officials say that the agency simply does not have the resources to deport all undocumented immigrants it encounters.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas noted that the the DHS, "is aggressively using its rulemaking authority to advance the president's urgent immigration agenda/is committed to its mission of ensuring a safe, secure, and prosperous Homeland."

The DHS's directives call for immigration officers to de-prioritize arresting and deporting farmworkers and the elderly. Additionally, the directives say that agents should avoid detaining those who land on their radar because they spoke out against "unscrupulous" landlords or employers, or at public demonstrations. The directives are expected to take full effect within the next two months.

B.3 Supplemental Experimental Analyses

Table B.4: Effects of Agency Ideology and Article Frame on Agency Support, with Co-variates

	Specific Support	Diffuse Support
Moderate Agency	0.016*	−0.010
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Politicized/Game Frame	−0.014	−0.013
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Partisanship	0.011***	0.008**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	−0.023***	−0.010**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	0.657***	0.524***
	(0.032)	(0.035)
Observations	911	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

Table B.5: Interactive Effects of Agency Ideology and Article Frame on Agency Support, with Co-variates

	Specific Support	Diffuse Support
Moderate Agency	0.010	−0.012
	(0.018)	(0.020)
Politicized/Game Frame	−0.021	−0.016
	(0.018)	(0.020)
Moderate Agency × Politicized/Game Frame	0.013	0.005
	(0.025)	(0.028)
Partisanship	0.011***	0.008**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	−0.023***	−0.010**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	0.661***	0.525***
	(0.033)	(0.036)
Observations	911	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

Table B.6: Interactive Effects of Politicization and Partisanship on Agency Support

	Specific Support		Diffuse Support	
Moderate Agency	0.017*	0.017*	−0.009	−0.009
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Politicized/Game	−0.007	0.029	−0.027	−0.012
	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.022)	(0.033)
Democrat	0.128***	0.110***	0.057***	0.016
	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.022)	(0.028)
Independent	0.019		0.040*	
	(0.027)		(0.029)	
Republican		−0.019		−0.040*
		(0.027)		(0.029)
Politicized/Game Frame × Democrat	−0.029	−0.064**	0.025	0.010
	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.039)
Politicized/Game Frame × Independent	0.036		0.015	
	(0.037)		(0.040)	
Politicized/Game Frame × Republican		−0.036		−0.015
		(0.037)		(0.040)
Constant	0.549***	0.568***	0.483***	0.523***
	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.025)
Observations	911	911	911	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

Table B.7: Interactive Effects of Agency Ideology and Article Frame on Agency Support, by Partisanship

	Democrats		Independents		Republicans	
	Specific Support	Diffuse Support	Specific Support	Diffuse Support	Specific Support	Diffuse Support
Moderate Agency	−0.001	−0.055**	−0.023	−0.014	0.041	0.040
	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Politicized/Game Frame	−0.023	0.001	0.011	−0.052*	−0.029	−0.018
	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Moderate Agency × Politicized/Game Frame	−0.027	−0.005	0.037	0.071*	0.044	−0.012
	(0.035)	(0.042)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Constant	0.686***	0.561***	0.587***	0.526***	0.536***	0.456***
	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Observations	407	407	155	155	349	349

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

Table B.8: Interactive Effects of Agency Ideology, Article Frame, and Partisanship on Agency Support

	Specific Support
Moderate Agency	0.018
	(0.025)
Politicized/Game	−0.023
	(0.025)
Democrat	0.131***
	(0.026)
Moderate Agency × Politicized/Game Frame	0.049*
	(0.034)
Moderate Agency × Democrat	−0.019
	(0.037)
Politicized/Game Frame × Democrat	0.00002
	(0.036)
Moderate Agency × Politicized/Game Frame× Democrat	−0.076*
	(0.051)
Constant	0.554***
	(0.018)
Observations	911

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Reference group for Moderate Agency is Left-/Right-Leaning Agency
Reference group for Politicized/Game Frame is Principled/Issue Frame
Reference group for Democrats is non-Democrats (i.e., Republicans and Independents)
Both outcomes scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values representing stronger support

B.4 Content Analysis

B.4.1 Procedure

Data collection for the content analysis presented in this paper was conducted using the following procedure.

1. For each agency (EPA, HUD, USDA, USPS, DHS, DOD), perform a "NexisUni" search using the following criteria:

   - Sources: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and *USNews.com*

   - Dates: Calendar Years 2020 and 2021 (01/01/2020 - 12/31/2021)

   - Search terms: Articles must include agency name and abbreviation. Abbreviation may or may not include periods. This decision was made because a visual inspection of articles that only used the agency name or only used the agency abbreviation revealed that articles of this type rarely had the agency as the central focus.

     – Example: the following phrase was used to search for articles related to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: ("Environmental Protection Agency" AND "EPA") OR ("Environmental Protection Agency" AND "E.P.A.")

2. From initial search results, download only those articles in which references to agency are legitimate and in which agency is main subject (see Table B.9 for descriptive statistics)

   - In this content analysis, I am interested in articles that discuss the actions, findings, and happenings of federal agencies. Some of the common topics in articles that I consider to be about the "actions, findings, and happenings of federal agencies" include the release of agency studies; the appointment and dismissal of key agency actors; the announcement of new policies, rules, or procedures; changes to existing policies, rules, or procedures; lawsuits or accusations of wrongdoing; and grants, awards, or other accolades. This list is not exhaustive, but it does indicate that the primary criteria for inclusion in this analysis that the agency must be one of, if not the, main subjects of the article.

   - There were a number of articles identified in the initial search that contained search terms, but were not focused specifically on the actions or members of an agency as indicated above. For instance, an article about the opening of a new municipal recycling facility may cite an EPA statistic, but is not a story about the agency, per se. Additionally, stories about state agencies (e.g., the Ohio Department of Agriculture) were gathered in the search, but are not of interest in this analysis.

   - A determination of whether a story is about an agency, or not, was made through a manual inspection of each article's content, with a heavy emphasis placed on the headline and lead. Some articles were easily recognized as focused on an agency, such as

Table B.9: Descriptive Statistics - NexisUni Search Results (By Outlet and Agency)

Outlet	Agency						Total
	EPA	HUD	USDA	USPS	DHS	DOD	
New York Times	120/298 (40.3%)	22/58 (37.9%)	18/58 (31.0%)	18/27 (66.7%)	70/125 (56.0%)	16/25 (64.0%)	264/591 (44.7%)
USA Today	8/24 (33.3%)	6/13 (46.2%)	7/34 (20.6%)	2/3 (66.7%)	38/49 (77.6%)	4/6 (66.7%)	65/129 (50.4%)
USNews.com	2/23 (8.7%)	1/16 (6.2%)	7/32 (21.9%)	2/2 (100.0%)	32/41 (78.0%)	8/9 (88.9%)	52/123 (42.3%)
Tampa Bay Times	20/41 (48.8%)	1/4 (25.0%)	4/17 (23.5%)	7/8 (87.5%)	13/20 (65.0%)	3/6 (50.0%)	48/96 (50.0%)
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	16/72 (22.2%)	5/15 (33.3%)	15/36 (41.7%)	7/9 (77.8%)	8/17 (47.1%)	1/4 (25.0%)	52/153 (34.0%)
Total	166/458 (36.2%)	35/106 (33.0%)	51/177 (28.8%)	36/49 (73.5%)	161/252 (63.9%)	32/50 (64.0%)	481/1092 (44.0%)

a December 2021 piece from *USNews.com* entitled "DOD: Effect of Vaccine-Related Troop Discharges Not Yet Known," which is clearly about the Department of Defense. However, some articles required further inspection, such as a December 2020 piece from *The New York Times* entitled, "Dear Santa: It's Been a Hard Year," which is actually a story about a United States Postal Service program that handles thousands of letters addressed to Santa Clause each year.

- As noted in the main text, I ensure that my article selection procedure is replicable by asking an independent coder to perform the search procedure above for a sample of documents (48 documents or ~10%). I then compared my coding decisions to theirs and found that there was 83% simple agreement between the author and the independent coder.

3. Code articles in Excel spreadsheet according to criteria given in Appendix B.4.2

B.4.2   Coding Categories and Criteria

Articles collected in the NexisUni search are hand-coded according to the following criteria. Many of the coding categories and criteria, as well as the language used to describe the categories and criteria, come directly from the work of Hitt and Searles (2018), and have been adapted for my purpose of examining coverage of federal agencies.

1. Dominant frame of the article?

- Article will be coded as 0 for 'principled/issue frame' or 1 for 'strategic game frame'
- Strategic game frame
  - Include stories that frame the agency's actions as a game, as personality contest, as strategy, or as personal relationships between political actors (e.g., president) and the agency not related to the content of the policy being implemented. Stories that focus on the strategy of bureaucrats (e.g., agency heads) or politicians, on the image of the agency or individual actors, on political power or institutional credibility as a goal in and of itself, and on public opinion related to the decision should count here.

- Principled/issue frame
  - Includes news stories that focus on issues and issue positions that emanate from the agency's actions, on real-life conditions with relevance for the agency's actions, on repercussions and policy implications of the agency's actions, and on what has happened or what someone has said and done to the extent that it deals with or is depicted as relevant to the agency's actions.

2. Mention Political Actors

   - Does the story mention the agency head, political parties, Congress, or the president?
   - Automated via `R` statistical software.

3. Focus on Agency Head

   - Does the story focus primarily on the agency head and their actions, specifically?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

4. Political Views of Agency Head

   - Does the story make reference to the political values of the agency head?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

5. Politicization

   - Does the article make reference to the president attempting to control the agency for political or strategic gain, often (but not necessarily) through political appointments?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

6. Public Opinion Toward Agency

   - Does the article make reference to public opinion toward the agency?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

7. Stakeholders as Winners/Losers

   - Does the story make reference to politicians, parties, or other stakeholders winning or losing in the context of the agency's actions?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

8. Agency Strategy

   - Does the article make reference to the agency or its personnel/representatives acting in a strategic or game-like manner?
   - 0 = No, 1 = Yes

9. Agency Strategy - Motive

- Does the article provide a motive for the agency or its personnel/representatives acting in a strategic or game-like manner?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes

10. Stakeholder Strategy

- Does the article make reference to stakeholders of the agency (e.g., politicians, parties, constituents, etc.) acting in a strategic or game-like manner?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes

11. Stakeholder Strategy - Motive

- Does the article provide a motive for stakeholders of the agency acting in a strategic or game-like manner?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes

12. Law/Constitutional Authority

- Does the story claim that the agency's actions were based on law and/or Constitutionally-granted powers?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes

13. Maintaining Legitimacy

- Does the story claim that the agency or agency head acted in a way as to maintain the agency's legitimacy, credibility, reputation, or integrity?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes

14. Sports and War

- Does the story make use of language of sports and war?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- If Yes, words or phrases, separated by ;

15. Games and Strategy

- Does the story make use of language of games and strategy?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- If Yes, words or phrases, separated by ;

16. Principles

- Does the story make use of language of maintaining principles?
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- If Yes, words or phrases, separated by ;

Table B.10: Features of 'Politicized/Game Frame' and 'Principled/Issue Frame' Coverage

Dominant Frame	About Agency Head?	Agency Head Political Views?	Politicization?	Public Opinion Toward Agency?	Stakeholders Winning/Losing?
Principled/Issue	5.64%	1.5%	0%	2.63%	7.14%
Politicized/Game	12.56%	6.05%	47.91%	3.72%	72.09%

Dominant Frame	Agency Strategy?	Agency Strategy - Motive?	Stakeholder Strategy?	Stakeholder Strategy Motive?
Principled/Issue	4.89%	2.26%	7.52%	4.89%
Politicized/Game	71.16%	62.79%	91.63%	89.3%

Dominant Frame	Legal/Constitutional?	Legitimacy/Credibility? -	About Agency Actions?
Principled/Issue	7.52%	9.4%	89.47%
Politicized/Game	1.86%	3.72%	1.4%

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL FOR 'ALIE(N)ATION: POLITICAL OUTSIDERS IN THE

2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION'

C.1   ISCAP Data

C.1.1   Political System Legitimacy

The first principal component in these items explains 46% of the variance in the outcome.

Table C.1: Political System Legitimacy - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Would rather live under our system of gov. than any other	0.510
System of gov. needs serious changes	0.443
Our form of gov. is best for representing citizen's interests	0.537
Feel very critical of our political system	0.505

C.1.2   Descriptive Statistics

C.1.3   Co-variates

Original coding schemes provided below. All variables were rescaled to range between 0 and 1 for all analyses. Question wording is provided were necessary.

- Age

  – Coding: in years

- Black -

  – Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No
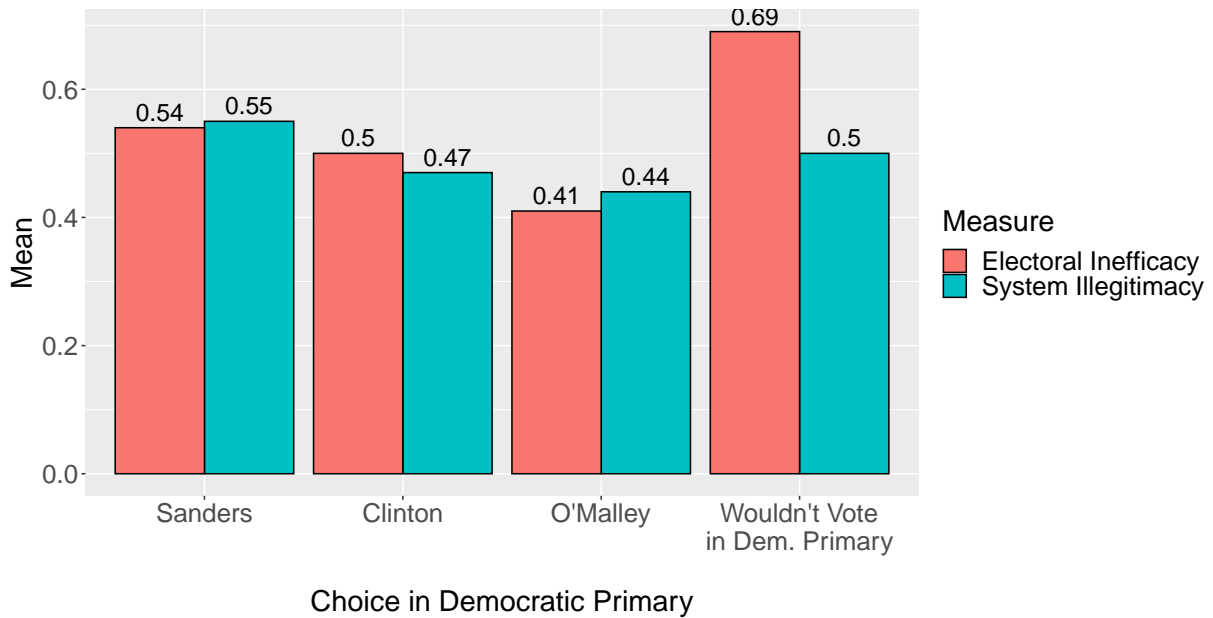
Figure C.1: Mean of ISCAP Alienation Measures by Candidate Preference in Democratic Primary

Note: Sample limited to Democrats only as Republicans were not asked about their candidate preference in the Democratic primary

- Economic Assessments - Retrospective/Personal

  – Question Wording: "We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living here are better off, worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?

  – Coding: (1) A lot better off, (2) A little better off, (3) A little worse off, (4) A lot worse off, (5) Just about the same

  – These items were re-arranged so that the highest value represented beliefs that the one's financial situation had gotten a lot better, the lowest value represented beliefs that one's financial situation had gotten a lot worse, and middling values represented beliefs that one's financial situation had only gotten a little better, stayed the same, or gotten a little worse.

- Economic Assessments - Retrospective/Sociotropic

  – Question Wording: "Thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?"

  – Coding: (1) Gotten a lot better, (2) Gotten a little better, (3) Gotten a little worse, (4) Gotten a lot worse, (5) Stayed about the same

- These items were re-arranged so that the highest value represented beliefs that the economy as a whole had gotten a lot better, the lowest value represented beliefs that the economy had gotten a lot worse, and middling values represented beliefs that the economy had only gotten a little better, stayed the same, or gotten a little worse.

- Education

  - Coding: (1) Less than high school, (2) High school diploma, (3) Some college, no bachelors degree, (4) Bachelors or above

- Female

  - Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

- Income

  - Coding: in quintiles

- Ideology

  - Coding: (1) Extremely liberal, (2) Liberal, (3) Slightly liberal, (4) Moderate, middle of the road, (5) Slightly conservative, (6) Conservative, (7) Extremely conservative

- Modern Sexism Index (MSI)

  - Item comes from Wave 11 (Sep-Nov 2016) of ISCAP Panel
  - Created by additively indexing responses to the three statements below. Each item re-coded so that higher values = more sexism before the items are combined (more sexist answer in parentheses).
    * Item 1: "When women demand equality these days, they are actually seeking special favors." (Agree)
    * Item 2: "Women often miss out on good jobs because of discrimination." (Disagree)
    * Item 3: "Women who complain about harassment cause more problems than they solve." (Agree)
    * Coding: (1) Agree strongly, (2) Agree somewhat, (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Disagree somewhat, (5) Disagree strongly

- Partisan Strength

  - Coding: (1) Independent, (2) Leaning partisan, (3) Partisan, (4) Strong partisan

- Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

  - Created by averaging responses to the four statements below. Each item re-coded so that higher values = strong social dominance orientation before the four are combined (SDO responses in parentheses).

* Item 1: "In setting priorities, we must consider all groups." (Oppose)
* Item 2: "We should not push for group equality." (Favor)
* Item 3: "Group equality should be our ideal." (Oppose)
* Item 4: "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups." (Favor)
* Coding: (1) Extremely oppose to (10) Extremely favor

- White

  - Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

C.2   ANES Data

C.2.1   Descriptive Statistics
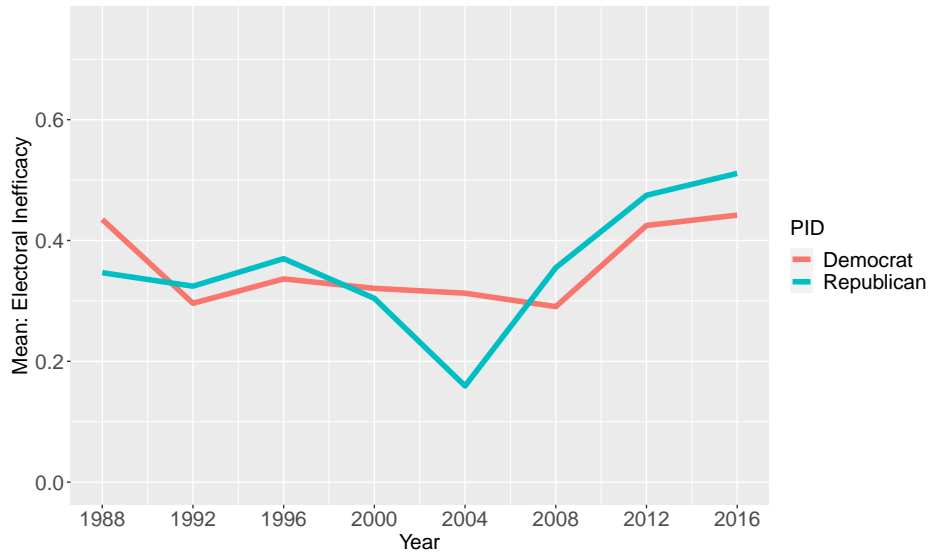
(a) Electoral Inefficacy
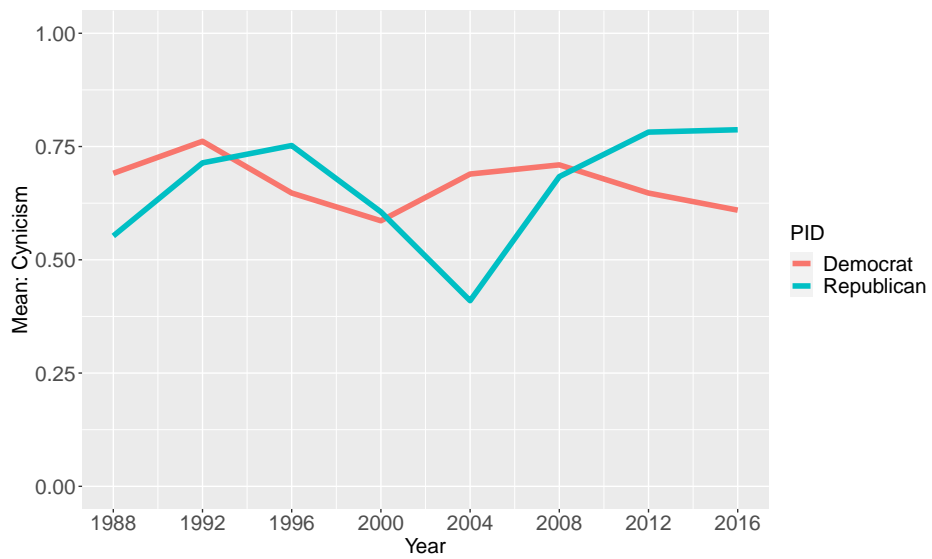
(b) Cynicism

Figure C.2: Mean of ANES Measures of Electoral Inefficacy and Cynicism, 1988-2016

C.2.2 Co-variates

Original coding schemes provided below. All variables were rescaled to range between 0 and 1 for all analyses. Question wording is provided were necessary.

- Age

    - Coding: in years

- Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

    - Created by averaging responses to the three question below. Each item re-coded so that higher values = more anti-immigrant sentiment before the three are combined
    - Birthright citizenship

        * Question Wording: "Some people have proposed that the U.S. Constitution should be changed so that the children of unauthorized immigrants do not automatically get citizenship if they are born in this country. Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose this proposal?"
        * If R favors or opposes this change, strength of attitude is probed
        * Coding: (1) Favor a great deal, (2) Favor a moderate amount, (3) Favor a little, (4) Neither favor nor oppose, (5) Oppose a little, (6) Oppose a moderate amount, (7) Oppose a great deal

    - Childhood arrivals

        * Question Wording: "What should happen to immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children and have lived here for at least 10 years and graduated high school here? Should they be sent back where they came from, or should they be allowed to live and work in the United States?"
        * Upon answering the above prompt, strength of attitude if probed
        * Coding: (1) Should send back - favor a great deal, (2) Should send back - favor a moderate amount, (3) Should send back - favor a little, (4) Should allow to stay - favor a little, (5) Should allow to stay - favor a moderate amount, (6) Should allow to stay - favor a great deal

    - Build wall with Mexico

        * Question Wording: "Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose building a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico?
        * If R favors or opposes this change, strength of attitude is probed
        * Coding: (1) Favor a great deal, (2) Favor a moderate amount, (3) Favor a little, (4) Neither favor nor oppose, (5) Oppose a little, (6) Oppose a moderate amount, (7) Oppose a great deal

- Anti-Trade Attitudes

- Question Wording: "Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the U.S. making free trade agreements with other countries?"
  - If R favors or opposes, strength of attitude is probed
  - Coding: (1) Favor a great deal, (2) Favor moderately, (3) Favor a little, (4) Neither favor nor oppose, (5) Oppose a little, (6) Oppose moderately, (7) Oppose a great deal

- Child-Rearing Authoritarianism

  - Created by averaging responses to the following four statements. Authoritarian traits are indicated in italics.
  - Question Wording: "Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have..."
    - Item 1: Independence or *Respect for elders*
    - Item 2: Curiosity or *Good manners*
    - Item 3: *Obedience* or Self-reliance
    - Item 4: Being considerate or *Well-behaved*
  - Coding: (1) Non-authoritarian trait, (2) Both, (3) Authoritarian trait

- China as Threat

  - Re-coded so that higher values = strong beliefs that China's military is a threat
  - Question Wording: "Do you think China's military is a major threat to the security of the United States, a minor threat, or not a threat?
  - Coding: (1) Major threat, (2) Minor threat, (3) Not a threat

- Democratic-Aligned Group Thermometers

  - Created by averaging responses to the feeling thermometers for the following four Democratic-aligned groups: Blacks, Muslims, LGBT, and Hispanics
  - Coding: (0) Least favorable attitudes, (100) Most favorable attitudes

- Economic Assessments - Prospective/Sociotropic

  - Question Wording: "What about the next 12 months? Do you expect the economy in the country as a whole to get better, stay about the same, or get worse? [If R answers 'get better' or 'get worse'], Much better or somewhat better?/Much worse or somewhat worse?"
  - Coding: (1) Get much better, (2) Get somewhat better, (3) About the same, (4) Get somewhat worse, (5) Get much worse
  - These items were re-arranged so that the highest value represented beliefs that the economy had gotten a lot better, the lowest value represented beliefs that the economy had gotten a lot worse, and middling values represented beliefs that the economy had only gotten somewhat better, stayed the same, or somewhat worse.

- Economic Assessments - Retrospective/Sociotropic

    - Question Wording: "Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse? [If R answers 'gotten better' or 'gotten worse'], Much better or somewhat better?/Much worse or somewhat worse?"

    - Coding: (1) Much better, (2) Somewhat better, (3) About the same, (4) Somewhat worse, (5) Much worse

    - These items were re-arranged so that the highest value represented beliefs that the economy had gotten a lot better, the lowest value represented beliefs that the economy had gotten a lot worse, and middling values represented beliefs that the economy had only gotten somewhat better, stayed the same, or somewhat worse.

- Education

    - Coding: (1) Less than high school, (2) High school diploma, (3) Some college, no bachelors degree, (4) Bachelors or above

- Evangelical

    - Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

- Female

    - Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

- Ideology

    - Coding: (1) Extremely liberal, (2) Liberal, (3) Slightly liberal, (4) Moderate, middle of the road, (5) Slightly conservative, (6) Conservative, (7) Extremely conservative

- Income

    - Coding: in quintiles

- Independent

    - Pure independents only
    - Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

- Modern Sexism Index (MSI)

    - Created by additively indexing responses to the three statements below. Each item re-coded so that higher values = more sexism before the items are combined (more sexist answer in parentheses).

        * Item 1: "When women demand equality these days, How often are they are actually seeking special favors?" (Always)

· Coding: (1) Always, (2) Most of the time, (3) About half the time, (4) Some of the time, (5) Never

  * Item 2: "Should the news media pay more attention to discrimination against women, less attention, or the same amount of attention they have been paying lately? [If R answers 'more attention' or 'less attention'], how much more/less attention should media pay to discrimination against women?

    · Coding: (1) A great deal more attention, (2) Somewhat more attention, (3) A little more attention, (4) Same amount of attention, (5) A little less attention, (6) Somewhat less attention, (7) A great deal less attention

  * Item 3: "When women complain about harassment, how often do they cause more problems than they solve?" (Always)

    · Coding: (1) Always, (2) Most of the time, (3) About half the time, (4) Some of the time, (5) Never

- Political Interest

  – Coding: (1) Not much interested, (2) Somewhat interested, (3) Very much interested

- Republican

  – Leaners included

  – Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

- White

  – Coding: (1) Yes, (0) No

C.3 Structural Topic Model

C.3.1 Pre-Processing

Before estimating Structural Topic Models on the open-ended responses about Trump and Sanders, I started by pre-processing the texts which includes removing unnecessary punctuation, numbers, and stop words (e.g., "it," "what," "is"), converting all characters to lowercase, and correcting spelling. I also chose to remove terms that appear in no more than one document. Following these pre-processing steps, I am left with 1,099 documents and 549 terms in the corpus of texts about Trump, and 174 documents and 133 terms in the corpus of texts about Sanders.

C.3.2 Model Selection

Roberts et al. (2014b) note that there is not necessarily a correct number of topics for any given corpus, so they recommend that researchers make this selection based on substantive knowledge that they many have about the content of the texts, and that they consider the purpose for which the texts will be used. Additionally, Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley (2019a) provide the `searchK` function in their `stm` package to allow researchers a more empirically-driven method of selecting of the number of topics. Following this advice, I note that the 2008 ANES Likes/Dislikes about Candidates were manually coded by ANES staff into roughly 30 topics, so I expect roughly the same number of topics to be found in the 2016 responses about Trump. Unfortunately, I cannot rely on previous iterations of the ISCAP panel to guide me on the number of topics in the Sanders texts in a similar way. However, given that ISCAP respondents were asked to provide a one-sentence justification for preferring a particular primary candidate—whereas ANES respondents can provide up to 5 mentions—I suspect that the number of topics in the Sanders texts will be no more than, and perhaps less than, the number of topics in the Trump texts. With this in mind, I then proceed by using the `searchK` function to generate models that range in the number of topics—for the Trump texts I generate models ranging from 20 to 36 topics, and for the Sanders texts, I generate models that range from 5 to 19 topics. I generate performance diagnostics from
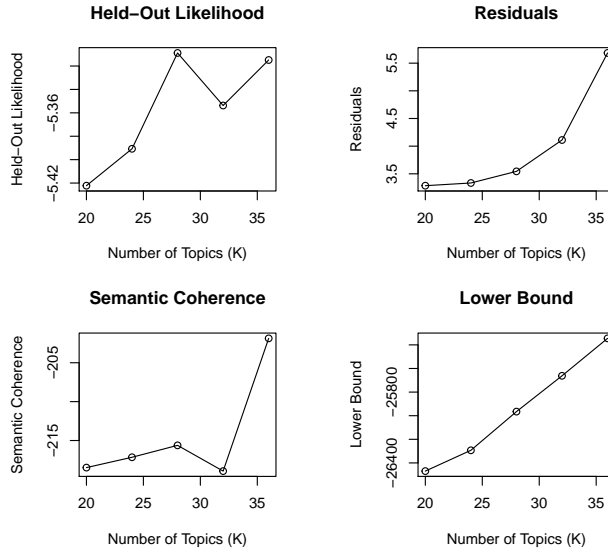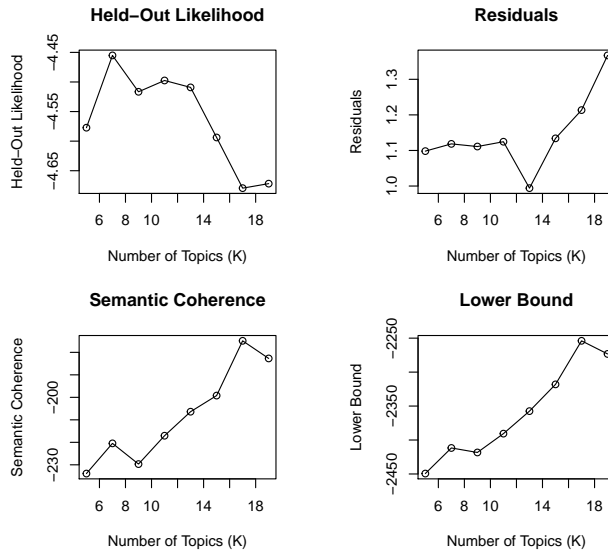
(a) Trump

(b) Sanders

Figure C.3: Determining the Number of Topics to Model, Diagnostics
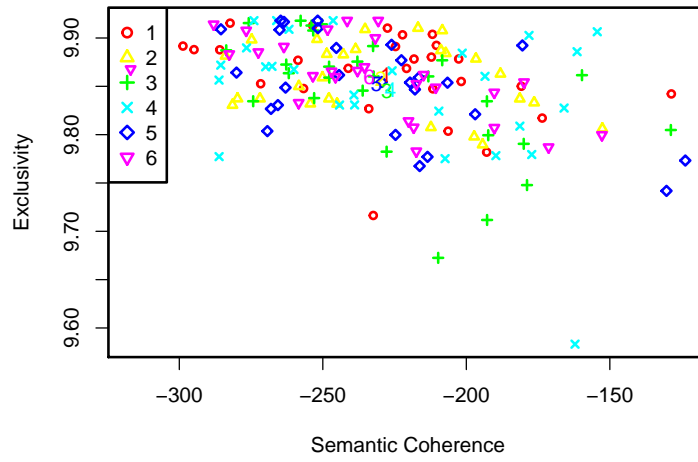
(a) Trump
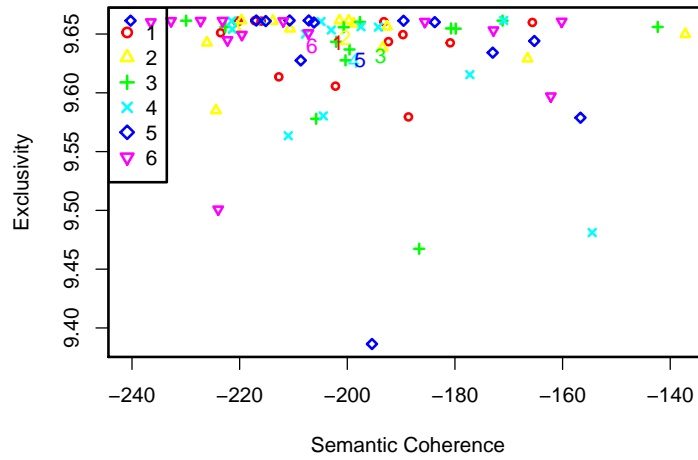
(b) Sanders

Figure C.4: Comparing Semantic Coherence and Exclusivity of Models with Various Initializations

these models such as held-out likelihood, residuals, semantic coherence, and lower bound and plot them in Figures C.3a and C.3b.

In selecting the number of topics, we are looking for the held-out likelihood and semantic coherence to be high while the residuals should be low. For the Trump texts, models with ≈ 27 topics seem to fit this pattern quite well, while ≈ 13 topics seems more appropriate for the Sanders text. After estimating models in this more narrow range, I ultimately settle on a model with 27 topics for the Trump texts and 13 topics for the Sanders texts. Because the results of the STM are sensitive to initialization, the last step before finalizing the model is to use the `selectModel` function to generate several models on either set of texts. From each of the model runs, I plot the semantic coherence and exclusivity, shown in Figure C.4. Notice that models 1 through 6 all show roughly the same values of semantic coherence and exclusivity. Because the models performed so similarly, I manually inspected the topic content from several of the models, and selected the model where the FREX (Frequent-Exclusive) words logically went together and a common theme could be discerned from exemplar texts.

C.3.3 Model Results

Topic 23: busi, man, success, perspect, repr, ethic, everybodi, typic
Topic 5: politician, career, non, interest, trustworthi, sincer, self, alway
Topic 13: hillari, clinton, best, trump, strength, altern, year, much
Topic 24: make, america, great, american, can, first, presid, trump
Topic 6: job, back, illeg, border, bring, build, wall, close
Topic 21: chang, need, govern, control, knowledg, creat, spend, abl
Topic 15: better, pro, court, suprem, outsid, life, justic, nomin
Topic 11: like, feel, just, take, might, money, social, toward
Topic 7: polici, financ, agr, foreign, trade, care, health, agreement
Topic 4: believ, businessman, tell, leader, problem, truth, heart, rich
Topic 26: economi, view, conserv, sen, honesti, parti, cut, creation
Topic 14: polit, stand, afraid, correct, part, owe, insid, turn
Topic 2: republican, two, evil, support, lesser, person, gun, kind
Topic 18: think, secur, candid, someth, now, probabl, valu, tri
Topic 25: get, militari, establish, way, done, year, mean, bad
Topic 22: countri, say, money, fix, use, famili, obama, much
Topic 10: strong, honest, stanc, reform, talk, veteran, acumen, progress
Topic 12: mind, speak, background, straight, new, forward, fresh, face
Topic 3: good, lot, right, well, everyth, amend, second, got
Topic 17: immigr, differ, legal, fight, surround, least, terrorist, vet
Topic 1: vote, issu, nation, trump, candid, love, tough, voic
Topic 16: peopl, know, may, law, skill, mani, come, real
Topic 27: idea, run, tax, washington, attitud, stop, direct, savvi
Topic 9: want, hope, realli, trust, system, someon, stronger, point
Topic 8: experi, seem, econom, work, abort, choic, protect, understand
Topic 20: will, help, plan, fact, deal, abil, anyon, handl
Topic 19: thing, can, leadership, hes, track, benefit, bad, one

Expected Topic Proportions

(a) Trump

Topic 13: peopl, repr, believ, concern, realli, care, social, vote
Topic 5: differ, guy, like, agenda, help, real, smart, chang
Topic 6: corpor, fight, will, candid, american, consist, influenc, money
Topic 12: hillari, want, chang, tax, think, republican, system, put
Topic 8: thing, economi, good, progress, afford, place, politician, water
Topic 7: sander, one, big, unit, stand, berni, busi, state
Topic 11: agr, know, improv, socialist, honest, health, true, polici
Topic 1: clinton, back, relat, middl, class, straightforward, bring, put
Topic 9: seem, better, belief, close, mani, trump, berni, truth
Topic 4: issu, countri, liber, sincer, trustworthi, evil, three, common
Topic 3: say, run, trust, campaign, year, anyon, sen, can
Topic 10: best, need, quo, status, system, understand, view, poor
Topic 2: idea, support, histori, make, record, truli, berni, current

Expected Topic Proportions

(b) Sanders

Figure C.5: Expected Topic Proportion for All Topics

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Table C.2: Effects of Electoral Inefficacy and Cynicism on Use of Top 6 Trump Topics

	Business Experience (1)	Political Outsider (2)	Head-to-Head Comparison (3)	Make America Great Again (4)	Bring Back Jobs/ Close Border (5)	Change in Gov. (6)
Electoral Inefficacy	0.022* (-0.008)	0.014* (-0.011)	-0.007 (-0.012)	-0.012 (-0.011)	0.005 (-0.008)	0.009* (-0.006)
Cynicism	-0.007 (-0.01)	0.042* (-0.012)	0.016 (-0.014)	-0.018* (-0.013)	0.011 (-0.01)	-0.007 (-0.008)
Independent	0.018* (-0.013)	-0.001 (-0.016)	0.043* (-0.017)	0.006 (-0.016)	-0.009 (-0.012)	0.009 (-0.011)
Republican	0.009 (-0.009)	0.005 (-0.012)	0.026* (-0.013)	-0.005 (-0.013)	0.006 (-0.01)	0.021* (-0.008)
Anti-Immigrant Attitudes	-0.008 (-0.013)	-0.006 (-0.018)	0.000 (-0.02)	0.003 (-0.018)	0.006 (-0.013)	-0.004 (-0.012)
Democratic-Aligned Group Therm.	-0.013 (-0.02)	0.009 (-0.024)	0.006 (-0.026)	-0.003 (-0.025)	-0.019 (-0.02)	0.009 (-0.015)
Modern Sexism Index	-0.013 (-0.02)	-0.029 (-0.03)	0.011 (-0.028)	0.012 (-0.028)	0.013 (-0.021)	-0.005 (-0.018)
Child Rearing Authoritarianism	0.009 (-0.01)	0.005 (-0.013)	-0.014 (-0.015)	-0.007 (-0.013)	-0.003 (-0.011)	0.002 (-0.008)
China as Military Threat	0.003 (-0.01)	0.013 (-0.012)	-0.004 (-0.013)	0.014 (-0.012)	-0.001 (-0.01)	-0.005 (-0.009)
Oppose Trade	-0.006 (-0.011)	0.007 (-0.013)	-0.006 (-0.014)	0.012 (-0.013)	0.006 (-0.012)	0.000 (-0.008)
Prospective Econ. Assessments	0.007 (-0.012)	-0.009 (-0.017)	-0.023 (-0.019)	0.036* (-0.018)	0.01 (-0.013)	0.000 (-0.011)
Retrospective Econ. Assessments	0.001 (-0.012)	0.014 (-0.016)	0.007 (-0.017)	-0.017 (-0.016)	-0.02* (-0.012)	0.002 (-0.011)
Ideology	-0.017 (-0.019)	-0.013 (-0.023)	0.038* (-0.027)	0.000 (-0.023)	-0.002 (-0.019)	-0.003 (-0.015)
Political Interest	-0.004 (-0.009)	-0.005 (-0.015)	0.001 (-0.014)	-0.002 (-0.013)	0.007 (-0.01)	-0.001 (-0.009)
Income	0.011 (-0.008)	0.003 (-0.013)	-0.002 (-0.013)	-0.01 (-0.011)	-0.006 (-0.01)	0.003 (-0.007)
Education	-0.009 (-0.011)	0.012 (-0.015)	0.003 (-0.017)	0.004 (-0.015)	-0.001 (-0.011)	-0.002 (-0.01)
Evangelical	0.001 (-0.009)	-0.002 (-0.012)	0.008 (-0.015)	-0.006 (-0.012)	-0.002 (-0.009)	-0.004 (-0.008)
White	0.004 (-0.008)	0.007 (-0.011)	0.005 (-0.012)	0.005 (-0.011)	-0.004 (-0.009)	0.005 (-0.007)
Female	0.001 (-0.006)	-0.008 (-0.008)	0.002 (-0.009)	0.004 (-0.007)	0.001 (-0.006)	-0.002 (-0.005)
Age	0.000 (-0.012)	0.020 (-0.017)	-0.011 (-0.018)	0.003 (-0.017)	-0.001 (-0.013)	0.019* (-0.012)
Constant	0.057* (-0.027)	-0.005 (-0.036)	0.006 (-0.041)	0.044 (-0.037)	0.036 (-0.028)	0.016 (-0.024)
Observations	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Standard errors in parentheses
All variables scaled to range between 0 and 1
Leaners are included as partisans.

Table C.3: Effects of Electoral Inefficacy and Cynicism on Use of Top 6 Sanders Topics

	Care About People/ Representation (1)	Ideas/ Agenda (2)	Political Outsider (3)	He's Not Clinton/ Want Change (4)	Economy/ Progress (5)	Takes A Stand (6)
Electoral Inefficacy	0.104*	-0.115*	-0.055	-0.005	-0.054*	0.076*
	(-0.048)	(-0.039)	(-0.044)	(-0.024)	(-0.04)	(-0.03)
Political System Illegitimacy	0.145*	-0.089	0.134*	-0.065	0.089	0.139*
	(-0.099)	(-0.075)	(-0.091)	(-0.056)	(-0.08)	(-0.061)
Partisan Strength	0.008	0.015	-0.013	0.003	-0.009	0.002
	(-0.037)	(-0.03)	(-0.038)	(-0.021)	(-0.031)	(-0.025)
Ideology	-0.082	0.035	-0.068	0.051	-0.01	0.055
	(-0.088)	(-0.065)	(-0.078)	(-0.046)	(-0.073)	(-0.058)
Sociotropic Econ. Assessments	0.031	-0.018	0.006	-0.006	0.001	-0.004
	(-0.063)	(-0.048)	(-0.056)	(-0.034)	(-0.051)	(-0.043)
Personal Econ. Assessments	-0.077	0.003	0.061	-0.029	0.015	-0.035
	(-0.068)	(-0.055)	(-0.059)	(-0.039)	(-0.06)	(-0.05)
Social Dominance Orientation	-0.01	0.023	0.068	-0.008	-0.051	-0.007
	(-0.104)	(-0.08)	(-0.087)	(-0.051)	(-0.079)	(-0.07)
Modern Sexism Index	0.052	0.01	-0.005	0.025	-0.015	-0.018
	(-0.087)	(-0.074)	(-0.08)	(-0.05)	(-0.071)	(-0.063)
Age	-0.092	-0.02	-0.006	0.01	-0.007	-0.015
	(-0.106)	(-0.078)	(-0.087)	(-0.054)	(-0.077)	(-0.065)
Education	-0.044	0.005	0.026	0.007	0.007	-0.006
	(-0.065)	(-0.049)	(-0.056)	(-0.033)	(-0.054)	(-0.04)
Income	0.002	-0.025	-0.031	0.01	0.009	-0.01
	(-0.051)	(-0.038)	(-0.043)	(-0.026)	(-0.042)	(-0.035)
Black	0.02	-0.028	0.035	-0.013	-0.021	-0.002
	(-0.068)	(-0.043)	(-0.053)	(-0.032)	(-0.045)	(-0.045)
White	-0.03	-0.003	0.02	-0.002	0.01	-0.029
	(-0.045)	(-0.032)	(-0.04)	(-0.021)	(-0.031)	(-0.031)
Female	0.001	0.009	-0.037*	0.009	0.006	0.015
	(-0.035)	(-0.024)	(-0.028)	(-0.017)	(-0.024)	(-0.022)
Constant	0.113	0.2*	0.036	0.095	0.063	-0.001
	(-0.15)	(-0.109)	(-0.135)	(-0.085)	(-0.124)	(-0.092)
Observations	174	174	174	174	174	174

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests
Standard errors in parentheses
All variables scaled to range between 0 and 1
Leaners are included as partisans.

C.4 Modeling responses on other candidates

A potential concern regarding my analysis of open-ended responses about Trump and Sanders is that it does not reveal whether being perceived as an "outsider" is a phenomenon unique to these two candidates. Surely Trump and Sanders are not the only outsiders in the history of U.S. presidential elections (e.g., Ross Perot in 1992), but if their outsider personas were truly responsible

for capturing the support of the politically alienated in 2016, then there should be no mentions of "outsider" qualities when the public is asked to evaluate candidates other than Trump and Sanders in that election.

I perform two exercises to show that perceptions as an outsider were less relevant for candidates other than Trump and Sanders. First, on the Republican side, I rely on the open-ended responses on the things that Republicans respondents liked about their most preferred candidate in their party's primary from the ISCAP panel. This means that I combined all responses about candidates in the Republican primary into a single corpus, including Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, Chris Christie, Jeb Bush, John Kasich, Marco Rubio, Mike Huckabee, Rand Paul and Ted Cruz (N=258). In essence this forms a corpus of texts representing the things that Republicans like about their preferred candidate in the primary (not including Trump), and the expectation is that there should be no topic dedicated to candidates' outsider qualities (or if there is, its expected frequency should be small).

Figure C.6 shows the expected topic proportions for all topics from a 15-topic model of the texts about Republican primary candidates other than Trump. Noticeably, there is no topic dedicated to candidates outsider qualities like we saw with Trump (Figure 4.1a). In fact, there is actually a topic dedicated to candidates experience in politics (Topic 10), which is the conceptual opposite of being an outsider. This descriptive analysis clearly shows that, at least on the Republican side, it was Trump that was uniquely perceived as an outsider.

Next, on the Democratic side, I use the open-ended responses on the things that all ANES respondents liked about Hillary Clinton ($N = 1,148$). Here again the expectation is that Clinton should not be described as an outsider—a reasonable expectation given that she was one of the most qualified candidates to ever seek the office. Figure C.7 shows the expected topic proportion for all topics from a 28-topic model of the texts about Clinton, and as expected, respondents largely viewed the former Senator as connected to and experienced in politics. Topics 9 and 14, for instance, use words such as 'experi(ence),' 'servic(e),' 'record,' 'profess(ional),' and 'com-

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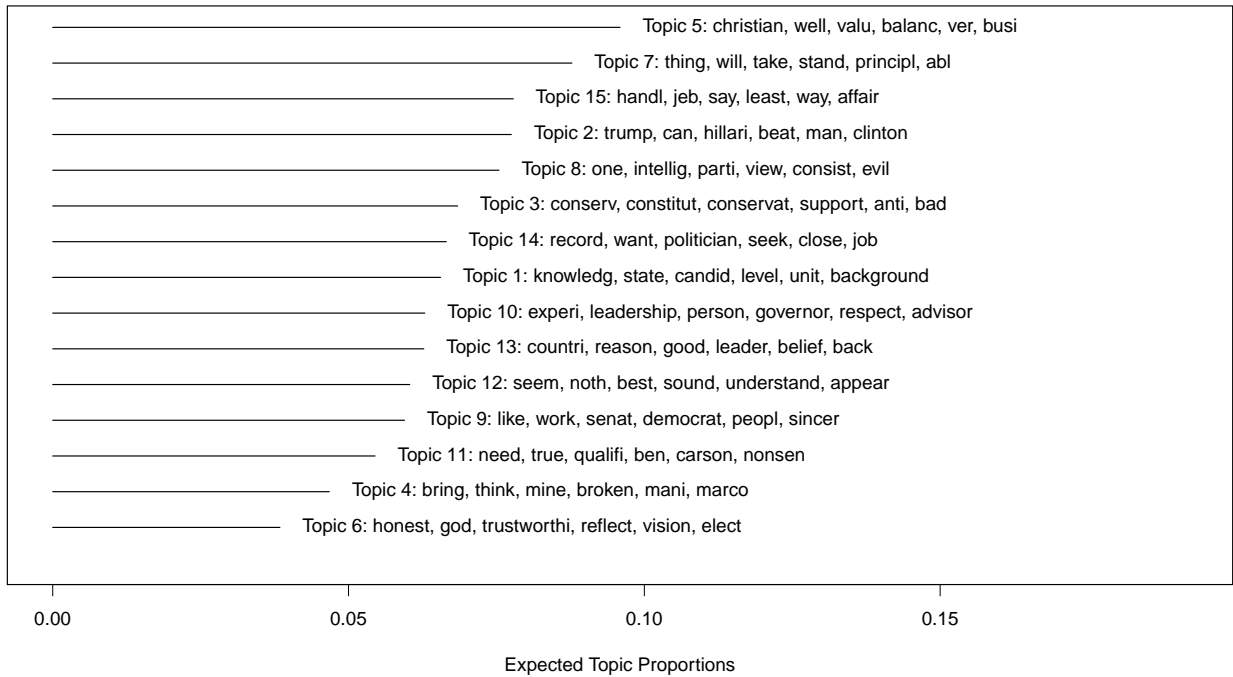
Figure C.6: Expected Topic Proportion for All Topics, Candidates in 2016 Republican Primary Except Trump, ISCAP

pet(ant/ance)' to describe Clinton. Importantly, there is no topic that depicts Clinton as an outsider opposed to the current political order as there was in the Sanders models. This is again consistent with the idea that candidates like Trump and Sanders were uniquely able to capture the support of the political alienated specifically because these candidates were seen as outsiders.

Topic 9: experi, compet, govt, exten, field, basic, relev, wise
Topic 18: trump, choic, trust, pro, ground, career, connect, feminist
Topic 17: polit, knowledg, previous, dishonesti, spent, truth, champion, caus
Topic 14: polici, understand, servic, record, public, profess, domest, court
Topic 23: democrat, will, shes, well, nation, life, whole, belief
Topic 19: presid, femal, first, platform, ladi, ration, former, redact
Topic 13: qualifi, candid, job, make, repr, say, environ, moder
Topic 28: care, seem, bill, health, share, gun, control, gender
Topic 21: issu, agr, social, educ, healthcar, econom, secur, idea
Topic 7: foreign, strong, leader, plan, tempera, hard, exten, favor
Topic 12: woman, good, lot, diplomat, charact, republican, noth, happen
Topic 10: countri, can, want, person, run, one, class, middl
Topic 1: view, time, politician, feel, long, affair, talk, mine
Topic 6: work, thing, support, everyth, tri, everyon, track, far
Topic 24: govern, just, liber, year, mani, focus, feder, evil
Topic 8: think, posit, interest, might, also, stuff, respon, give
Topic 11: state, secretari, import, senat, continu, economi, advoc, sec
Topic 26: experienc, famili, background, high, past, wage, rai, minimum
Topic 2: equal, vote, best, immigr, progress, tax, reason, pay
Topic 25: intellig, histori, smart, abil, dedic, basic, negoti, calm
Topic 5: like, fact, chang, come, get, way, may, matter
Topic 16: women, valu, qualif, system, thought, two, beat, appear
Topic 22: right, peopl, know, last, interest, listen, just, loyal
Topic 27: offic, hous, white, take, level, head, alreadi, know
Topic 20: stanc, world, much, stand, husband, general, pretti, steadi
Topic 3: children, help, done, get, concern, got, oppon, actual
Topic 4: better, differ, colleg, option, now, mean, vast, altern
Topic 15: believ, great, deal, probabl, see, propo, humanitarian, clear

Expected Topic Proportions

Figure C.7: Expected Topic Proportion for All Topics, Hillary Clinton, ANES

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C.5 Models of Voting Behavior

Table C.4: Turnout in the 1988-2016 U.S. Presidential Elections

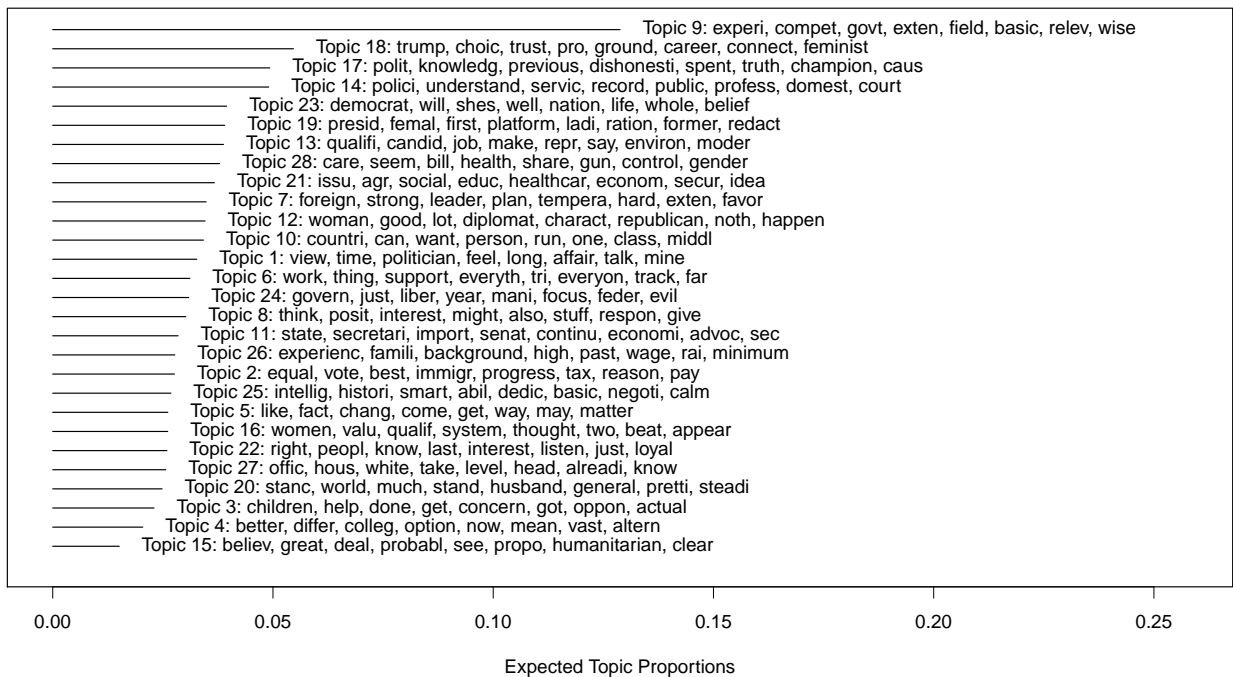|	*Dependent variable:*							
	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Electoral Ineff.	−0.222	−0.182	−0.176	−0.635***	−0.334	−1.102***	−0.223	−0.088
	(0.198)	(0.187)	(0.225)	(0.228)	(0.310)	(0.386)	(0.181)	(0.105)
Cynicism	−0.157	−0.262*	−0.133	−0.089	−0.155	0.212	0.053	0.396***
	(0.186)	(0.185)	(0.213)	(0.205)	(0.247)	(0.334)	(0.175)	(0.109)
Independent	−0.479**	−0.843***	−0.781***	−0.857***	−0.969***	−1.053***	−0.948***	−0.844***
	(0.226)	(0.189)	(0.250)	(0.232)	(0.293)	(0.381)	(0.167)	(0.111)
Republican	0.085	−0.334**	0.154	0.097	0.110	−0.065	0.070	−0.103
	(0.153)	(0.144)	(0.171)	(0.176)	(0.225)	(0.315)	(0.143)	(0.083)
Education	2.165***	2.281***	1.973***	1.746***	1.636***	1.720***	1.511***	1.115***
	(0.277)	(0.269)	(0.302)	(0.305)	(0.386)	(0.510)	(0.199)	(0.127)
Political Interest	2.116***	1.801***	2.139***	1.819***	1.793***	1.314***	1.471***	0.890***
	(0.210)	(0.189)	(0.236)	(0.244)	(0.279)	(0.380)	(0.174)	(0.108)
Income	1.767***	1.675***	1.686***	1.351***	1.050***	0.515	0.747***	0.352***
	(0.274)	(0.244)	(0.301)	(0.309)	(0.351)	(0.495)	(0.190)	(0.112)
White	−0.327*	0.391**	0.060	0.528***	0.646***	0.156	0.346**	0.320***
	(0.221)	(0.194)	(0.233)	(0.225)	(0.265)	(0.307)	(0.191)	(0.094)
Black	−0.299	0.415**	0.126	0.861***	0.641**	0.542*	1.022***	0.530***
	(0.272)	(0.247)	(0.307)	(0.321)	(0.336)	(0.386)	(0.240)	(0.144)
Age	3.028***	2.496***	2.795***	1.877***	0.906**	1.915***	2.397***	0.883***
	(0.358)	(0.321)	(0.396)	(0.408)	(0.460)	(0.647)	(0.273)	(0.155)
Constant	−2.419***	−2.313***	−2.436***	−2.058***	−1.652***	−1.052**	−1.742***	−1.618***
	(0.310)	(0.289)	(0.361)	(0.359)	(0.405)	(0.562)	(0.268)	(0.154)
Observations	1,483	1,907	1,329	1,231	890	453	2,386	3,909
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,373.297	1,617.800	1,151.529	1,074.497	740.082	415.487	1,848.943	4,601.912

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

These regression estimates used to produce Figure 4.6.

Table C.5: Effect of Cynicism and Election Unresponsiveness on Vote Choice in 2016 Primary Election, Multinomial Logit

	Sanders	Trump	Did Not Vote
Electoral Inefficacy	−0.971	0.210	−0.102
	(0.761)	(0.544)	(0.383)
Cynicism	1.665**	0.157	−0.152
	(0.800)	(0.688)	(0.412)
Republican	−2.132**	16.676***	0.445
	(1.017)	(0.683)	(0.410)
Independent	−0.476	15.965***	−0.392
	(0.774)	(0.711)	(0.548)
Political Interest	1.450**	1.647***	1.083***
	(0.805)	(0.658)	(0.443)
Ideology	−1.418	0.536	0.446
	(1.282)	(1.119)	(0.707)
Anti-Immigrant Attitudes	0.583	1.186*	0.506
	(1.113)	(0.836)	(0.597)
Democratic-Aligned Group Therm.	0.853	−3.011**	1.043
	(1.611)	(1.291)	(0.871)
Child-Rearing Authoritarianism	−2.081**	−0.887	−1.138**
	(0.952)	(0.699)	(0.486)
Modern Sexism Index	0.247	0.314	0.526
	(2.089)	(1.302)	(0.919)
China as Military Threat	−0.518	−0.462	0.394
	(0.684)	(0.602)	(0.405)
Oppose Trade	0.328	−0.647	−1.563***
	(0.963)	(0.623)	(0.494)
Prospective Econ. Assessments	−0.647	1.870**	−0.006
	(1.295)	(0.828)	(0.607)
Retrospective Econ. Assessments	−0.864	−1.773**	−0.786*
	(1.124)	(0.860)	(0.604)
Income	0.318	0.238	0.760**
	(0.705)	(0.563)	(0.403)
Education	1.321*	2.871***	1.199**
	(1.011)	(0.837)	(0.510)
Evangelical	−25.520***	0.181	0.720*
	(0.000)	(0.543)	(0.446)
White	0.128	0.478	0.135
	(0.668)	(0.538)	(0.356)
Black	1.563**	−10.514***	1.651***
	(0.833)	(0.00000)	(0.537)
Female	−0.381	0.353	0.383*
	(0.471)	(0.382)	(0.261)
Age	−1.107	3.467***	2.792***
	(1.196)	(0.868)	(0.599)
Constant	−2.858	−22.267***	−4.591***
	(2.299)	(1.239)	(1.203)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	906.966	906.966	906.966
Observations =	482	482	482

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

All predictors range between 0 and 1

Reference category for dependent variables is 'Any candidate other than Trump or Clinton'

Analysis limited to Super Tuesday states with open primaries

Table C.6: Effect of Cynicism and Election Unresponsiveness on Vote Choice in 2016 General Election, Multinomial Logit

	Clinton	Trump	Other
Electoral Inefficacy	0.105	−0.117	0.225
	(0.218)	(0.224)	(0.293)
Cynicism	−0.006	0.577**	0.714**
	(0.226)	(0.246)	(0.322)
Republican	−1.665***	1.745***	0.429*
	(0.223)	(0.230)	(0.283)
Independent	−1.574***	0.301	−0.033
	(0.228)	(0.270)	(0.300)
Political Interest	1.256***	1.219***	0.851***
	(0.224)	(0.233)	(0.299)
Ideology	−0.335	2.686***	1.027**
	(0.410)	(0.450)	(0.574)
Anti-Immigrant Attitudes	−1.537***	1.521***	−0.929**
	(0.343)	(0.343)	(0.464)
Democratic-Aligned Group Therm.	1.110**	0.175	0.991*
	(0.494)	(0.508)	(0.660)
Child-Rearing Authoritarianism	−0.957***	−0.108	−0.745**
	(0.266)	(0.280)	(0.363)
Modern Sexism Index	1.191**	−0.241	−0.235
	(0.545)	(0.543)	(0.748)
China as Military Threat	0.154	0.099	−0.376
	(0.225)	(0.242)	(0.305)
Oppose Trade	−0.304	0.983***	0.182
	(0.286)	(0.292)	(0.388)
Prospective Econ. Assessments	0.013	0.471*	−0.481
	(0.362)	(0.358)	(0.483)
Retrospective Econ. Assessments	1.826***	−0.334	1.150***
	(0.343)	(0.346)	(0.466)
Income	0.894***	0.526**	0.437*
	(0.235)	(0.243)	(0.316)
Education	1.087***	0.984***	0.971***
	(0.279)	(0.288)	(0.393)
Evangelical	0.518*	0.459*	0.599*
	(0.354)	(0.306)	(0.397)
White	0.265*	0.920***	0.508**
	(0.185)	(0.216)	(0.269)
Black	1.329***	0.356	0.962**
	(0.304)	(0.514)	(0.471)
Female	0.224*	0.363**	0.270*
	(0.152)	(0.157)	(0.204)
Age	2.144***	2.116***	0.226
	(0.339)	(0.346)	(0.467)
Constant	−3.239***	−7.411***	−4.444***
	(0.697)	(0.758)	(0.958)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,523.970	3,523.970	3,523.970
Observations =	2,417	2,417	2,417

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

All predictors range between 0 and 1

Reference category for the dependent variables is 'Any candidate other
than Trump or Clinton'

Table C.7: Effect of Cynicism and Election Unresponsiveness on Vote Choice in 2016 Primary Election, Pre-election Variables Only, Multinomial Logit

	Sanders	Trump	Did Not Vote
Electoral Inefficacy	−0.575	0.096	−0.057
	(0.693)	(0.524)	(0.371)
Cynicism	1.552**	0.119	−0.107
	(0.755)	(0.670)	(0.403)
Republican	−1.875**	15.745***	0.280
	(0.940)	(0.577)	(0.394)
Independent	−0.260	14.983***	−0.495
	(0.739)	(0.613)	(0.533)
Political Interest	1.416**	1.332**	1.198***
	(0.758)	(0.627)	(0.419)
Ideology	−2.184**	0.379	0.098
	(1.200)	(1.083)	(0.666)
Anti-Immigrant Attitudes	−0.086	1.279*	0.014
	(1.083)	(0.771)	(0.564)
Prospective Econ. Assessments	−0.375	1.397**	0.189
	(1.134)	(0.774)	(0.578)
Retrospective Econ. Assessments	−0.583	−1.597**	−0.491
	(1.057)	(0.820)	(0.584)
Income	0.341	0.147	0.989***
	(0.654)	(0.541)	(0.392)
Education	1.696**	2.872***	1.515***
	(0.961)	(0.770)	(0.498)
Evangelical	−27.583***	0.050	0.652*
	(0.000)	(0.522)	(0.430)
White	0.625	0.428	0.249
	(0.631)	(0.516)	(0.341)
Black	1.437**	−14.929***	1.634***
	(0.803)	(0.00000)	(0.527)
Female	−0.435	0.063	0.452**
	(0.449)	(0.350)	(0.248)
Age	−1.620*	3.354***	2.613***
	(1.136)	(0.824)	(0.579)
Constant	−3.601**	−23.132***	−5.007***
	(1.546)	(1.024)	(0.901)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	910.968	910.968	910.968
Observations =	482	482	482

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

All predictors range between 0 and 1

Reference category for dependent variables is 'Any candidate other
than Trump or Clinton'

Analysis limited to Super Tuesday states with open primaries

Table C.8: Effect of Cynicism and Election Unresponsiveness on Vote Choice in 2016 General Election, Pre-election Variables Only, Multinomial Logit

	Clinton	Trump	Other
Electoral Inefficacy	0.067	−0.108	0.218
	(0.217)	(0.222)	(0.292)
Cynicism	0.056	0.619***	0.764**
	(0.222)	(0.243)	(0.320)
Republican	−1.646***	1.701***	0.419*
	(0.220)	(0.227)	(0.279)
Independent	−1.508***	0.281	0.005
	(0.224)	(0.267)	(0.298)
Political Interest	1.340***	1.256***	0.943***
	(0.221)	(0.228)	(0.295)
Ideology	−0.756**	2.625***	0.627
	(0.394)	(0.440)	(0.551)
Anti-Immigrant Attitudes	−1.937***	1.601***	−1.261***
	(0.326)	(0.323)	(0.441)
Prospective Econ. Assessments	0.041	0.423	−0.466
	(0.358)	(0.353)	(0.476)
Retrospective Econ. Assessments	1.945***	−0.394	1.236***
	(0.340)	(0.341)	(0.459)
Income	0.982***	0.466**	0.537**
	(0.231)	(0.238)	(0.312)
Education	1.309***	0.889***	1.190***
	(0.269)	(0.276)	(0.381)
Evangelical	0.435	0.399*	0.530*
	(0.351)	(0.303)	(0.393)
White	0.321**	0.944***	0.569**
	(0.179)	(0.213)	(0.265)
Black	1.350***	0.310	0.919**
	(0.303)	(0.507)	(0.468)
Female	0.223*	0.346**	0.261*
	(0.148)	(0.154)	(0.201)
Age	1.921***	2.006***	−0.036
	(0.327)	(0.337)	(0.457)
Constant	−2.490***	−6.791***	−4.410***
	(0.463)	(0.530)	(0.654)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,548.554	3,548.554	3,548.554
Observations =	2,417	2,417	2,417

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; one-tailed tests

All predictors range between 0 and 1

Reference category for the dependent variables is 'Any candidate other than Trump or Clinton'