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Beyond Party Identification:

How Elites Shape Public Opinion and Ways They are Constrained

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the

degree Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Andrew Austin Gooch

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Beyond Party Identification:

How Elites Shape Public Opinion and Ways They are Constrained

by

Andrew Austin Gooch

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles 2015

Professor Lynn Vavreck, Chair

My work is on the importance of elite rhetoric in shaping public opinion despite the fact that party identification operates as an efficient cue for most voters. With a representative sample of respondents, nine experiments, five different elite cues, and four different issues, I show that the role of elite rhetoric on public opinion is more than just simple cueing. Elites matter to public opinion, but in a more dramatic way than we recognize. I show consistently across all experiments that elites must justify their issue positions with coherent content in order to generate support, and in this way, elites can amplify the role that party identification has on shaping attitudes about issues. Lastly, when elites use emotional stories to personalize an issue, they are able to reach across party lines and generate support among out-party members. These justifications, if delivered as a story, can also lead to more favorable evaluations of the elites delivering the justification.

But it's not that simple. While elites can lead opinion in more ways than we previously realized, they are also subject to more constraints than we understood. To demonstrate this, I test the alternative hypothesis that elites can say anything and voters will blindly follow. I show that elites cannot give any justification and expect voters to support their issue positions; they must provide

coherent reasons to generate support. Elites also cannot gain popular support for wholly undesirable policies. Because elites are constrained by justifications and issues, their ability to shape public opinion is more limited than previously characterized.

The dissertation of Andrew Austin Gooch is approved.

John R. Zaller

Michael Tesler

Lynn Vavreck, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

Dedicated to my parents, Bob and Fran Gooch, for not telling me to quit and get a real job.

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Acknowledgements

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I owe the biggest debt of gratitude to Lynn Vavreck, my dissertation advisor. Even before starting the dissertation, Lynn put me on a path to succeed as her research assistant for an NSF-funded project about survey methodology. And the development of my dissertation is a direct result of her guidance over the years. This dissertation started as a two page summary based on a hazy idea about two years ago, and with Lynn's mentorship and encouragement over the years, it is now a six chapter dissertation. I am forever indebted to her wisdom and direction.

I also thank John Zaller and Michael Tesler for their support and critiques. John and Michael were particularly helpful in pushing me toward making my argument as comprehensive as possible. Many of my experiments were iterative, and with each new result, John and Michael would point out new aspects of my project to investigate further. My experiments started with basic cues and argument treatments, and many of my follow-up experiments included a new addition based on the insightful comments of John or Michael. By the end, many aspects of my project were greatly improved from John Zaller pushing me on the tough questions.

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Chapter 1:

A Desire for The Public's Opinion

*"The perverse and unorthodox argument of this little book is that voters are not fools. To be sure, many individual voters act in odd ways indeed; yet in the large the electorate behaves about as rationally and responsibly as we should expect, given the clarity of the alternatives presented to it and the character of the information available to it."*

- V.O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate*, page 7.

1   A Desire For The Public's Opinion

Letting the people decide has never been so popular. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, electoral democracy has spread throughout the world, and with this new form of government, countries instilled a distrinct set of principles that allow citizens to engage with politics through voting, freedom of speech, and joining political parties. Figure 1 shows this transformation, which originally appeared in Jason Brownlee's (2009) article on democratic transitions in the *American Political Science Review.* From 1987 to 2008, the number of electoral democracies nearly doubled.

Figure 1: *Total Number of Democracies in the World, 1987 to 2008 (Brownlee 2009)*
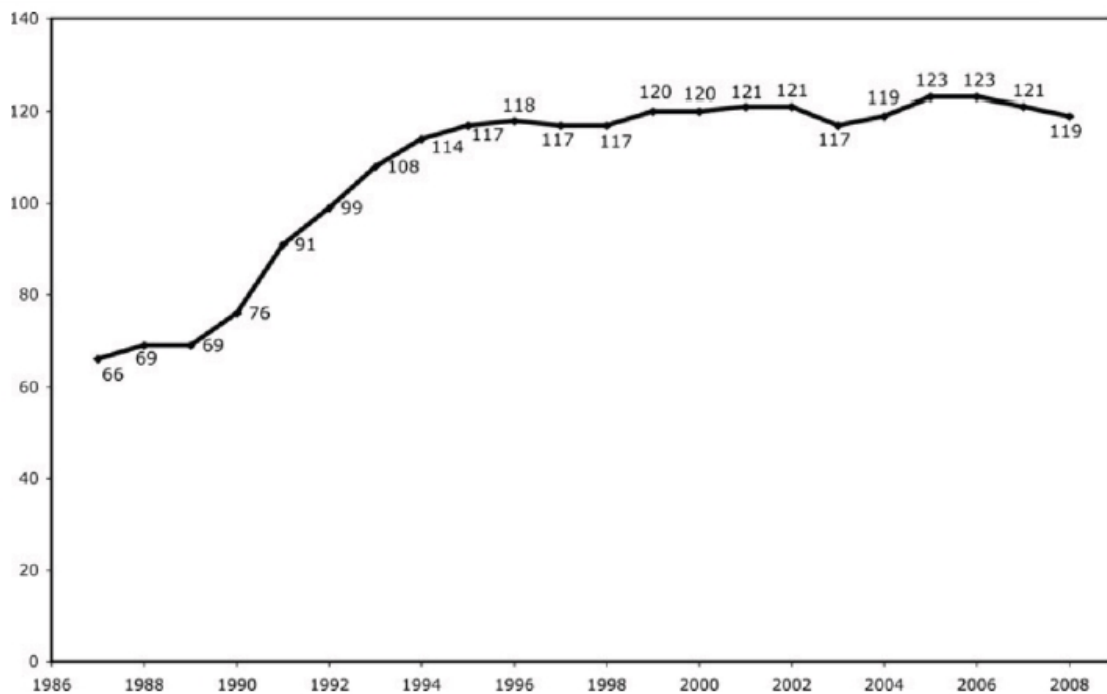
Note: This figure originally appears in Jason Brownlee's "Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 53, No. 3, July 2009, Pp. 515532

But there is an irony to this rapid embrace of democracy. Most scholarship dating back to the 1950's demonstrates that citizens are incapable of competently participating

in a democracy (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Converse 1964). A significant amount of research says that most voters are unknowledgeable about politics, and therefore, the majority of citizens cannot form competent opinions about public affairs (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992, 2013; Popkin 1994; Keeter and Delli Carpini 1997; Kinder 1998; Althaus 2003; Lenz 2012). From their seemingly random responses to survey questions about issue positions, it sometimes appeared that individuals picked their answers based on a coin flip (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992). Why are citizens so unknowledgeable about politics? Lippmann (1922) first observed that most citizens spend the bulk of their day tending to concerns that have little to do with politics: work life, family, social activities. As a result, "the picture inside people's heads do not automatically correspond with the world outside" (Lippmann 1922, 31). So while electoral democracy is touted as the best form of government worldwide, the conventional wisdom says that most citizens are unable to reason among policy choices on their own, and so this leaves open the possibility for strong elite influence on issue positions.

2 Cues, Rhetoric, Or Both?

Decades of work shows that elites can shape public opinion by using cues to generate support for issues (Converse 1964; McGuire 1969; Zaller 1992; Rahn 1993; Bartels 2008; Lodge and Taber 2013; Matsubayashi 2013). By "elite", I mean "persons who devote themselves full time to some aspect of politics or public affairs", such as "politicians, higher level government officials, journalists, some activists, and many kinds of experts and policy specialists" (Zaller 1992, 6). The most efficient elite cue that provides a shortcut to opinion formation about issues is party identification (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Downs 1957; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Jacoby 1988; Mondak 1993; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Bartels 2008; Lewis-Beck, Norpoth, Jacoby and Weisberg 2008; Berinsky 2009; Nicholson 2009). In fact, some

claim the effect is so strong that elite cues are more important to voters than their own feelings and thoughts about issues (Zaller 1992; 2013; Cohen 2003; Berinsky 2009; Lenz 2009; 2012). The most striking evidence comes from studies of opinion change over time that show an individual will switch their position on an issue to match their preferred party or politician instead of reconsidering their support for the politician (Abramowitz 1978; Zaller 1992; Lenz 2009; 2012; Tesler 2014). This observation led to the conclusion that voters are "blindly following" elites for various reasons, such as trusting the party, but none of which have to do with the content of issues (Lenz 2012).

As robust as the findings on cues might be, elite rhetoric tends to contain more than just cues — elites do not just announce their issue positions and party identification in isolation. For example, presidential speeches and advertisements contain elite cues, but they also include justifications in the form of arguments, emotional stories about voters, and statements that claim credit for policies (Chapter 3). The content of campaign speeches and advertisements is also strongly associated with voters' likes and dislikes about a presidential candidate's traits and issue positions (Vavreck 2009). Therefore, observational results that are collected when elites publicly debate issues cannot distinguish between the effect of cues and other justifications. And the issue positions and their justifications are never selected at random. The choices that voters have available are limited to one or two central issues that the two parties are willing to compete on (Sniderman and Bullock 2004). And the information on these central issues is truncated by elites so that only the most persuasive justifications are delivered to the public. In addition, knowledge on issues seem to improve when candidates stake out distinct positions (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979; Levendusky 2009). Elite cues might be driving public opinion, as suggested by some scholars, but it might also be something else, like the well-crafted justifications that elites defuse to the mass publics.

The idea that opinion formation on issues might be more than just elite cuing has a basis in the literature as well. The same policy can elicit different levels of public support

when framed differently; for example, an appeal framed around 95 percent employment instead of 5 percent unemployment can lead to two very different interpretations about the labor market (Tversky and Kahneman 1981; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Iyengar 1991; Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997; Jacoby 2000; Druckman and Nelson 2003; Druckman 2004; Chong and Druckman 2010; Druckman, Fein, Leeper 2012; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). Moreover, elites can prime voters to consider an issue more strongly when evaluating candidates (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Johnston, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Levendusky 2009; Vavreck 2009). If policy information is perceived to be delivered in an unbiased way, it can play a stronger role than elite cues (Lee 2002; Bullock 2011; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Tomz and Van Houweling, 2014 manuscript, presented at UCLA in 2015). Elites can also use justifications to moderate the negative effect of flip-flopping on an issue position (Tomz and Van Houweling, 2014 manuscript, presented at UCLA in 2015). In other words, the issues that candidates choose to talk about, and how they talk about them, might influence opinion formation beyond party identification.

3   Plan For The Dissertation

The dissertation proceeds with four more chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature of party identification, elite rhetoric, and framing effects. Chapter 3 details a content analysis of presidential campaign rhetoric from 1964 to 2012 to show that elites speak in more than partisan cues when communicating with the public. In party convention speeches, nominees use a variety of partisan cues, but they also speak in the form of arguments and emotional stories as a way of justifying their platforms. Moreover, this combination of arguments and stories differs by incumbency. Incumbents are significantly more likely to tell stories than use arguments. Although my content analysis does not answer why this difference exists, I speculate that challengers are forced to be more ex-

plicit with their issue positions to demonstrate that they are credible challengers, and this incentive to be specific produces more arguments than stories. Incumbents, on the other hand, have already demonstrated their credibility, and as a result, they are free to be ambiguous with their rhetoric through emotional stories.

Chapter 4 presents a series of experiments that separate a basic partisan cue from justifications that elites might use during a campaign or public debate. My results show that partisan cues alone only partially drive public opinion. Associating a cue with an issue position does not increase support for an issue, and it only has the potential to create backlash. To increase support for issues, elites must provide justifications for their positions. Most support for an issue comes from voters that have the same party identification as the elite delivering the justification, and in this way, the effect of party identification on attitudes about issues is amplified with a justification. But not any justification from an elite will do – specious reasons to support a policy are not persuasive, even among voters that identify with the elite's party identification. Partisan cues are important to public opinion, but this informational shortcut needs to be accompanied with a justification.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that the form of justifications is important for public opinion. I argue that stories about citizens affected by an issue have a differing effect on public opinion compared to abstract arguments told by elites. Unlike arguments, stories can persuade opposing-party voters to support an issue, and stories lead to an increase in favorability for the elite telling the story. However, this change in favorability is driven by in-party voters, which is consistent with finding that show most people vote for their own party's nominee during an election (Sides and Vavreck 2013). Taken together, elites matter to public opinion, but in a more nuanced way than we previously recognized. I show consistently across all experiments that elites must justify their issue positions with coherent content in order to generate support, and in this way, elites must go beyond party identification to shape public opinion.

Chapter 2:

Past Work On Party Identification, Elite Influence, and Framing Effects

"Many citizens, as was argued, pay too little attention to public affairs to be able to respond criticially to the political communications they encounter; rather, they are blown about by whatever current of information manages to develop the greatest intensity."

- John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, page 311.

1   Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on party identification and how elites frame issues to their advantage. I start with one of the most important variables to public opinion, party identification. I review party identification as a group affect in the vein of early voting research by the Columbia and Michigan School before showing that issues also play a role through framing effects by elites. And lastly, I conclude by arguing that much of the public's attitudes about issues is determined by the issues that elites choose to compete on. Because of this very limited menu of issues, sometimes just one issue during a presidential campaign, voters attempt to maintain consistency with their party by adopting their candidate's position on the most salient issue of the campaign. And because elites so rarely make the mistake of using weak frames to justify their issue positions, it is almost impossible to observer voters *not* be persuaded on issues during a campaign.

2   Party Identification as a Group Affect

Early voting research characterized party identification as a sociological attachment to a social group (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954). Voters learn about party identification from their parents, and their party choice typically reflects the family's social/economic class and religious/ethnic background. Party identification and voting is hereditary; it is passed on from generation to generation. "Just as young people learn from their elders, say, the religion and the table manners appropriate to their situation, so do they learn the appropriate political beliefs" (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954, page 200). Berelson et al. (1954) argue that heredity voting occurs because of a lack of political involvement. Most voters do not know details about campaign issues, so party identification provides an easy shortcut for political attitudes and behavior.

Berelson et al. (1954) also investigate the alignment of attitudes about issues and

party identification. If voters strongly identify with their party, their attitudes about unions and other New Deal-Fair Deal policies are more aligned with their party's position than weak party identifiers (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954). And by the end of the 1948 campaign, those who support the New Deal-Fair Deal are more likely to vote for Truman, and those who are resistant to unions are more likely to support Dewey. The authors argue that New Deal-Fair Deal policies were consequential to bringing home partisans to Truman, and they show that the Truman campaign message focused strongly on New Deal-Fair Deal issues. "Truman devoted almost 80 per cent of his speeches to the discussion of current domestic issues facing the country — labor, price control, farm policy, housing, conservation, social security, taxes, and general party philosophies on such matters (e.g., the New Deal)" (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954, 237).

In *The American Voter*, citizens learn which party to support from parental socialization early in life as well, and over time, this party support crystalizes and shapes the development of attitudes about issues (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). Party identification is stable from election to election, and most voters do not change their party affiliation during their life. Party identification serves as the most influential factor in the voting calculus. Why do voters rely so much on their party identification? National politics and the complexities of government are far removed from the average citizen, so voters use party identification as a "simple cue to evaluate what cannot be matters of personal knowledge" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960, 128). Campbell et al. describe party identification as a continuum of intensity, where high intensity party identifiers vote for the same party in almost every elections. Those in the middle of the party identification continuum are less attached to their party, and as a result, these individuals do not vote for the same party every election. Attitudes toward candidates and issues are related to party identification as well. Strong Democrats and strong Republicans, on average, have attitudes about candidates and issues that are more similar to their party's position than weak Democrats, Republicans, or Independents (see Figure 6.1 and 6.2 in

The American Voter). But most citizens do not have consistently Democratic or consistently Republican attitudes when comparing several issues together; most will mix and match attitudes about issues that are associated with both parties.

Unlike Berelson et al. (1954), the authors of *The American Voter* (1960) do not suggest that voters have attitudes about issues before the campaign, and then later arrive at a candidate choice by the end of a campaign. Instead, Campbell et al. (1960) argue that the role of party identification is "two-directional" with regard to attitudes about issues (134). In fact, the authors argue that the influence of party identification on attitudes about issues is far more important than the influence of attitudes about issues on party identification. If a partisan identifier has "attitudes not consistent with his party allegiance, that allegiance presumably will work to undo the contrary opinion" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960, 135). The authors leave open the possibility that voters could switch party identification when they have differing opinions with their party, but they assert that this direction of realignment rarely happens. Instead, partisan predispositions shape attitudes about candidates, issues, and political events.

Exceptions exist where the public does lead elite behavior, but the policies are usually limited to race and immigration (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Lee 2002; Tesler and Sears 2010; Lenz 2012). Lee (2002) argues that legislation like the 1965 Voting Rights Act are a result of non-elite activism, and much of the progress of civil rights is a elite-level reactions to the public's opinion on the issue. Elite and mass-level opinion is not fixed, and during times of social movements, like civil rights era, the opinions of elites are unaligned with the public (Lee 2002). During the civil right movement, elites struggled to define events like Selma, and as result, elites could not lead opinion on race issues. But outside these rare social movements, top-down elite driven opinion is the usual way in which voters form attitudes (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Zaller 1992).

3   Going Full Circle?

The most comprehensive and theoretically rigirous work on elite influence on the public is *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Zaller 1992), which builds on earlier work showing that voters hold inconsistent attitudes about issues and are generally not ideological (Converse 1964). Zaller (1992) shows that mass opinion is driven by elite communications. An individual's attitude toward an issue or event is moderated by political knowledge and partisan predispositions. Individuals form and change opinions through a three-step process that is called the Receive-Accept-Sample model (Zaller 1992). Individuals must first receive a message from an elite, they accept the message if it is consistent with their predispositions, and then they sample an attitude based on whichever is salient at the time (Zaller 1992). As a result, elites are only concerned with *latent* opinion instead of the current distribution of attitudes on issues (Zaller 1992). In other words, elites will stake out positions on the basis of where they expect mass opinion to be on a subject. And it is not the case that highly aware individuals do not need partisan cues — because they have the most exposure to elite rhetoric, highly aware individuals are most aligned with their party on issues (Zaller 1992).

Recent research on the question of party identification suggests that the traditional view of group attachment still has much explanatory power (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Green et al. (2002) show that major political events can change how voters evaluate candidates and parties, but these evaluations do not cause voters to reconsider their party identification because it is a social attachment that is almost never altered, like a religious denomination. The revisionist view of party identification argues that voters would update their running tally, and over time, this updated evaluation might tip the balance in favor of switching party identification (See Fiorina 1981). In the revisionist view, a Republican president in office during a long period of economic growth, for example, might cause some Democratic voters to change their identification to Republican. But Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) show that party switching

rarely occurs, and instead the hypothetical Democratic voter would simply view the Republican president in a more favorable light without changing party affiliation (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Why is party identification so stable? The more a party is established in a society, the greater stability in party identification within the electorate because the party cultivates strong symbols and group imagery that voters can identify with over time (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002).

Gabriel Lenz posits a theory of blind following, where voters adopt the issue positions of their preferred party or politician "for reasons having little or nothing to do with policy" (Lenz 2012, 2). In other words, adopting a party's position is automatic through exposure, and it is not a result of persuasion. Even voters who have previously held attitudes about issues switch their attitude to match their preferred politician instead of reconsidering their vote choice. Politicians are mainly judged by voters based on party affiliation or other "superficial traits such as his or her appearance" because voters lack well-developed attitudes about issues (Lenz 2012, 185). Candidates must campaign so that voters can align their attitudes about issues with their vote, but this alignment is based almost solely on a partisan cue. Because voters change their attitudes about issues to match their favorite candidate with little to no thought given, "democracy is inverted" because politicians prescribe attitudes about issues to voters and not the other way around (Lenz 2012, 2 and 3).

Lenz shows blind following on issues from reexamining classic studies in American politics, including the Berelson et al.'s *Voting* (1954) discussed previously, and he finding that the original conclusions from these study suffers from "observational equivalence" (Lenz, 2012, page 3-7). Observational equivalence occurs when the causal direction of a statistical model is unknown — meaning, scholars cannot decipher whether voters switch their candidate preferences based on their attitudes about issues, or whether voters switch their attitudes about issues to match that of their preferred candidate. Most priming studies before Lenz ignored the possibility that voters switch their attitudes about issues

to match their preferred candidate, even though it is statistically indistinguishable as measured. And because of this observational equivalence, Lenz concludes that voters are not aligning their previously held attitudes about issues with candidates; instead, voters are blindly adopting attitudes from their preferred candidate. In the 1948 study, for example, voters were not actually selecting candidates based on their attitudes toward the New Deal-Fair Deal. Voters instead picked a preferred candidate early in the campaign, and then adopted the candidate's New Deal attitudes by the end of the campaign (2012). Lenz goes on to say that this empirical regularity is debilitating to democracy because voters will not be able to hold politicians accountable for their issue positions. Candidates can change positions at any time, and voters will blindly follow along (Lenz 2012).

But this observational work — going all the way back to *The American Voter* — measured attitudes about issues using face-to-face interviews, and recent experimental work shows that respondents tend to be less ideological in face-to-face interviews (Vavreck 2015 manuscript). When sitting down with an interviewer in the face-to-face setting, respondents are more likely to give moderate answers and "don't know" responses to questions about issue positions, but respondents hold more consistently liberal or conservative attitudes about issues when completing the exact same survey by themselves using a computer (Vavreck 2015 manuscript). Respondents are also less knowledgeable about politics during a face-to-face interview relative to a self-completed survey; for example, a larger percentage of respondents can name the U.S. Vice President with a self-completed survey (Gooch and Vavreck 2015 manuscript). These experimental findings suggest that the conclusions about voters being woefully ignorant about politics and non-ideological about issues are at least partially mode-dependent. Without the added pressure of an interviewer, respondents appear to be much more competent members of a democracy.

4   Importance of Party Does Not Imply That Issues Are Irrelevant

But just because voters change opinions on the most salient issue during a campaign does not imply that voters are thoughtlessly following elites, especially when elites never just announce their issue positions without justifying them. Voters might be blindly following based on party identification, but they might also be evaluating elite rhetoric that persuades them to switch positions on an issue. Voters are not be political junkies, but by the end of a presidential campaign, voters are better able to recognize general policy differences between candidates (Mayer 1996; Alvarez 1998; Hillygus and Shields 2007). The 2004 American National Election Studies (ANES) data, for example, show that a strong majority of voters were able to correctly place the presidential candidates on a variety of policy issue by the end of the campaign, including both salient and non-salient issues: 92% could correctly place the candidates on defense spending and aid to blacks, 82% on government spending, 66% on gun control, and 64% on the environment (Hillygus and Shields 2007).

Using data from 1952 to 2000, Vavreck (2009) shows that the content of speeches and advertisements are strongly associated with voters' likes and dislikes about a candidate's issue positions (page 123). The content of candidate advertisements significantly predicts what voters like and dislike about a candidate's positions on the economy, foreign policy, and candidate traits. And the content of candidate speeches are most strongly associated with evaluations of candidates' domestic policy positions. As a result, there is a strong association between candidate rhetoric and voters' evaluation of candidates' issue position. This connection suggests that candidates deliver information beyond party identification that individuals use in their voting calculus.

Nicholson shows that a partisan cue alone induced no additional support for the issues among "in-partisans"; meaning, the Obama cue did not increase support among

Democratic identifiers and the McCain cue did not increase support among Republicans (Nicholson 2011). Instead, the partisan cue in Nicholson's study was most effective in increasing *opposition* to the issues among "out-partisans". Republicans were more likely to oppose the issue if Obama is cued, for example. But Democrats were not more likely to support the issue with an Obama cue, and Republicans were not more likely to support the issue with a McCain cue. The "presidential nominees, the de facto party leaders during a presidential election campaign, did not persuade the party faithful" to support their issue positions (Nicholson 2011, 12). And so Nicholson shows that a backlash against an issue can occur from simple cues, which fits within Lenz's observational results, but the partisan cue alone did not cause *support* for an issue. Partisan cues do matter for opinion formation on issues, but in a unexpected way if Lenz's theory of blind following is correct. Something more is needed to generate support, potentially elite rhetoric and framing.

When policy information is made clear to voters, it can be more important than party identification in shaping attitudes about issues (Bullock 2011). Unlike previous observational studies, Bullock (2011) randomizes party cues and policy information in order to measure the impact of each variable, and he finds that the policy information, and not the cue, is the biggest predictor of attitudes about issues. Contrary to assertions from observational work about the effect of cues on voters, "the cue does not reduce their attention to the information. If anything, they enhance it" (497). This is an important distinction from scholars who claim cues are an informational shortcut (Downs 1957 or Popkin 1994, for example), where informational shortcuts like party cues make individuals less likely to seek out policy information. Although Bullock (2011) cannot speak to seeking out information, his experiments show that individuals are *not* less likely to use policy information even if it is accompanied by a partisan cue.

Moreover, Tomz and Van Houweling (2014 manuscript) show that issue positions and party have a strong influence on vote choice in the same way as Bullock's (2011) experiments. Tomz and Van Houweling (2014) experimentally manipulate a hypothetical

candidate's party and positions on issues to measure how voters respond to a candidate switching positions on issues. As expected by decades of research on party identification, when the voter shares the same party identification as the candidate, the voter is more likely to support the candidate. Specifically, "Democratic voters provide 17 percentage points more support for Democratic candidates than they do for otherwise identical Republican candidates" and this percentage is roughly the same for Republicans as well (Tomz and Van Houweling 2014, 8). But they also show an unexpected finding according to the party identification literature – the independent impact of issue positions on vote choice is *almost double* that of party identification. That is, the impact of taking the same issue position as a voter translates to an additional 31 percent support for the candidate compared to 17 percent for party identification. These experiments show that the importance of issues is drastically understated in observational studies.

5   Beyond Party ID: Arguments as Emphasis Frames

Party identification is clearly an important factor shaping public opinion. But party identification does not create immunity to framing effects, and so party identification does not fully drive public opinion. Framing effects "occur when (often small) changes in the presentation of an issue or an event produce (sometimes large) changes of opinion." (Chong and Druckman 2007). For example, one of the first framing studies showed that people are more likely to supportive of a surgery when they are told that 95 out of 100 patients survive compared to five out of 100 patients die (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). Both potential outcomes from the surgery are logically equivalent, but the frame that includes the word "die" can drastically alter support for the surgery. These framing effects occur even when the frame is not emotionally charged. For example, individuals that are guessing the answer to the multiplication problem $(9*8*7*6*5*4*3*2*1)$ will guess higher, on average, than individuals that were exposed to the math problem in

the reverse ordering of $(1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5 * 6 * 7 * 8 * 9)$. Therefore, the frame does not have to emotionally charge – a frame can be as subtle as rearranging numbers.

However, framing effects in politics are usually not from semantic differences of the same object (see Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013 for examples). Instead, framing effects occur when different arguments elicited different attitudes from an individual, Druckman and his colleagues define arguments as "directional issue or emphasis frames" (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013, 57). When an elite describes an issue, she emphasizes "a subset of potentially relevant considerations" for which individuals use to construct an attitude (Druckman and Nelson 2003, 730). Zaller (1992), for example, shows that different messages for supporting or opposing oil drilling produce framing effects. Support for drilling is determined by a frame about dependence on foreign oil, or the need to develop alternative sources of energy, determines their support for drilling. Another classic example of framing in politics is a hate group's right to free speech when having a rally; survey respondents will be more likely to support the rally with the free speech frame than without it (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997; Chong and Druckman 2010). And when the hate group rally is framed in terms of the possibility of violence, support for the rally drops (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997; Chong and Druckman 2010).

Therefore, framing effects in politics act a way for citizens to connect with an issue — why they should support or oppose it. Unlike sematic differences or rearranging numbers, framing political issues can have implications for multiple values or considerations — for example, an individual might support the hate rally for free speech reasons, but another individual might oppose it for safety reasons. And since the knowledge of citizens is limited, an argument frame can help citizens make a more informed opinion about politics, and experiments like Sniderman and Theriault (2004) show this very result. For example, those at the lower level of the political knowledge spectrum benefit the most from competing arguments about issues (Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Therefore, when

individuals change attitudes about an issue, as shown by Lenz (2012), this switching could just as easily been a result of rhetoric beyond a physiological attachment to a political party. In addition, Tomz and Van Houweling (2015) show that a candidate can minimize the impact of switching positions on an issue by using arguments, demonstrating that voters are influenced by justifications from elites for a new issue position (Tomz UCLA Talk, April 13, 2015).

But not all frames are created equal, and some are more effective than others. Frames can be strong or weak, and the way in which scholar determine frame strength is very straight-forward. Respondents in surveys or experiments are simply asked to rate the effectiveness of different arguments, from very persuasive to not at all persuasive (Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2010; Druckman and Leeper 2012; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). Most of the results on the strength of frames are intuitively pleasing. Strong frames can drastically move opinion if it is the only alternative presented to an individuals, and strong frames are more persuasive than weak frames (Druckman 2010; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). When the strength of two opposing frames is equal, neither will shape opinion because each frame will cancel each other out (Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2004).

The impact of strength, however, is conditional on party competition — when the parties are closely divided on an issue than the strength of the frame is important (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Druckman 2004). That is, strong arguments from the opposing party are more persuasive than weak argument from one's own party. When the parties are not polarized, the party label only becomes important to individuals when the strength of both frames is equal. In other words, when arguments do not provide a definitive side of the issue to take, individuals default to their party identification (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). But if the parties are polarized on an issue, individuals tend to support their party's position even with a weak frame (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Druckman 2004).

Elsewhere, Druckman and his colleagues also show timing of the frames can also moderate their effectiveness (Chong and Druckman 2010; Druckman, Fein and Leeper 2012). When elites are competing in an election, the frames that come toward the end of a campaign are more impactful than earlier frames (Chong and Druckman 2010). But if a citizen is motivated to learn about a policy, the initial frames that an individual is exposed to will be the driving force of their attitudes about issues (Druckman, Fein and Leeper 2012). Taken together, frames can drastically change how individuals view almost any issue position, but these framing effects are moderated by party identification and timing.

6   Menu Dependence as Imposing Order to Public Opinion

One of the most recognizable quotes from V.O. Key about the connection between elites and voters is still a reflection of modern politics, "the voice of the people is but an echo. The output of an echo chamber bears an inevitable and invariable relation to the input ... the people's verdict can be no more than a selective reflection from the alternatives and outlooks presented to them" (1966, 2). When shaping public opinion, elites try to steer the "menu" of policy choices toward the options that they want to compete on (Key 1966; Sniderman and Bullock 2004). In other words, the issues that elites choose to debate, and the persuasive frames they use to justify their positions, are not picked at random. Some issues are a regular debated by elites and others are completely ignored. As a result, I agree with Sniderman and Bullock's concept of menu dependence that the "more central an issue is to electoral competition, the greater the effort that political actors, including political parties, will make to call the electorate's attention to them" (Sniderman and Bullock 2004, 348). Therefore, voters can only react to the menu of issues provided by elites, and the menu of issues is always framed in a way

to persuade voters toward elites' issue positions.

When trying to understand the role of partisan cues and argument frames when shaping public opinion, it is essential to remember that citizens can only make choices based on what is presented to them. Elites strategically pick issues that can benefit their candidate or party – they want to excel at being persuasive. For example, candidates have no incentive to campaign on issues that will lose them votes. If candidates expect latent opinion on an issue to be different by the end of a campaign, then public opinion on an issue before the campaign is irrelevant because voters have not seen the "menu" of issues yet. For example, many Republicans supported George W. Bush at the beginning of the 2000 campaign, but they also had inconsistent opinions with Bush on privatizing Social Security (Lenz 2012). By the end of the campaign, voters switch positions on Social Security instead of switching candidates.

From this perspective of menu dependence, when voters switch issue positions to match their preferred candidate, they are attempting to maintain consistency given the available menu of issues (Sniderman and Bullock 2004). And that menu is usually very limited, sometimes to only one issue with two competing frames, like Social Security in 2000. Because of this very limited menu and highly strategic framing, voters attempt to maintain consistency by adopting their candidate's position on the most salient issue of the campaign after being exposed to persuasive rhetoric. And because elites so rarely make the mistake of picking the wrong issue or frame, it is impossible to observe the effect of poor frames or unpopular issues. I would argue that observing a campaign with poor frames or unpopular issues would not cause the type of following on issues observed by Lenz (2012). Since I cannot observe this counterfactual, I experimentally test this idea in the Chapter 4.

7   Conclusion

Even though party identification is a constant presence in American politics, the frames and arguments that elites use can also shape public opinion. And by limiting the choices to one issue with two positions, elites impose order on voters' attitudes about issues. This chapter demonstrates that seperating the party from the frame is impossible in observational work, and only experimental works can disentangle the two effects. This typology will organize the rest of my dissertation. In the next chapter, I categorize the form of rhetoric used by elites in speeches and advertisements, demonstrating that candidates speak in a variety of frames beyond just partisan cues. Chapter 4 and 5 test this different types of rhetoric, and I show that each has a unique impact on public opinion. Moreover, I test specious frames and issues — something that is not found in actual campaigns — to show what would happen if elites pick a bad menu to present to the public.

Chapter 3:

The Form of Elite Rhetoric in Speeches and

Advertisements

1   Do Elites Only Signal Party Identification in Their Rhetoric?

This chapter explores the form of elite rhetoric, what candidates say and how they say it, as a first step toward understanding how elite rhetoric influences voters. In order to know how candidates present their justifications — if they even speak beyond party cues – I conducted a content analysis of stump speeches, advertisements, radio addresses, and nominating convention speeches. Using a content analysis of 26 convention speeches from 1964 to 2012, 120 general election stump speeches from 2008 and 2012, and 53 advertisements from 2008 and 2012, I show a majority of elite rhetoric is in the form of arguments (a series of premises and conclusions) and emotional stories as justifications for their candidacies. Simply partisan cues, on the other hand, represent less than 10 percent of all speeches and advertisements in my dataset.

This content analysis furthers my argument about the role of justifications by showing that candidates speak to voters using various forms of rhetoric and not just partisan cues. It is true that elites signal party identification to voters, but the vast majority of their rhetoric is in the form of arguments, stories, and statements that claim credit claim for past performance.[1] As robust as the findings on partisan cues might be, my content analysis shows that the bulk of elite rhetoric is not simply cues delivered to the public. Candidates do not just announce their issue positions and party identification in isolation. Therefore, public opinion data that are collected when elites are campaigning cannot distinguish between the effect of cues and other types of rhetoric.

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[1]And several other more minor types of rhetoric explained in the appendix.

2   Convention Speeches and the Usefulness of Elite Rhetoric

Succiently stated by Popkin (1994), "each campaign tries hard to make its side look better and the other side worse" (232). In other words, candidates try to persuade voters of their efficacy while also attempting to undercut the competency of their opponent. To that end, previous content analyzes found that campaign speeches serve as a tool for praising a party or candidate, attacking the opposing candidate or party, and defending the candidate or party from attacks (Benoit, Blaney, Pier 2010; Benoit 1999; Benoit, Blaney, Pier 1998; Benoit and Gustainis 1986). For example, Benoit and Gustainis (1986) found that both of the 1980 keynote convention speeches praised their own party and candidate, while attacking the opposing party and candidate. Using convention speeches from 1960 to 1996, Benoit, Blaney, and Pier (2010) show that speeches include self-praising 51 percent of the time in their rhetoric and attacks on the opposition 48 percent of the time. In addition, candidates rarely defend their candidacy or party from attacks (only 1 percent of rhetoric). In other words, candidates mainly split their time between praising themselves and criticizing their opponent.

A variety of patterns exist in the rhetoric of convention speeches. First, the content of speeches differ based on incumbency — challengers attack the other side more than praising themselves and incumbent praise themselves more than attacking (Benoit, Blaney, and Pier 2010, 74). Convention speeches address issue positions slightly more than character traits, where candidates reference specific issues with 56 percent of their speeches and character traits with 46 percent of their speeches (Benoit, Blaney, and Pier 2010). Benoit, Blaney, and Pier (2010) did not find much variation over time, except that the rhetoric has gotten more negative in recent elections. Elsewhere, Grossmann and Hopkins (2015 MPSA manuscript) argue that the content of rhetoric in speeches differs by party: Republican speeches are more ideologically-oriented but Democratic speeches appeal to a

variety of groups with specific policy arguments. Previous content analyzes, however, do not investigate the form of rhetoric — whether candidates are delivering partisan cues or something else entirely.

Does the rhetoric in speeches influence voters? Perhaps most directly, Vavreck (2009, p.123) shows that the content of campaign speeches and advertisements is strongly associated with voters' likes and dislikes about a candidate's traits and issue positions. The content of news media, on the other hand, does not significantly predict attitudes held by voters. Somewhat less directly, Erikson and Wlezien (2012) show that the most nationally recognized venue for candidate speeches — the party nominating convention — plays a major role in the alignment between vote choice and political variables like party identification, the party platform, and attitudes about issues. Party identification and attitudes about issues significantly predict vote choice by Election Day, but these variables are insignificant before the first party convention (Erikson and Wlezien 2012). Explained variance in vote choice models also drastically increases after the conventions. For example, the R^2 in a vote choice model using data from 1952 to 2000 goes from .17 before the conventions to .70 by Election Day.

This change in public opinion as the election approaches might be caused by partisan cues because they are so prevalent during campaigns, but politicians rarely take a position without trying to frame the debate in a way that will increase support for their position (Bullock 2011; Zaller 1992, 95-96). And in this chapter, I demonstrate that elite rhetoric is more than just partisan cues. As a result, variables beyond party identification might also drive public opinion.

3   Data and Method

My analysis of elite rhetoric includes 26 convention speeches by each party nominee from 1964 to 2012, 120 general election stump speeches from 2008 and 2012, and 53 ad-

vertisements from 2008 and 2012. Stump speeches from 2008 and 2012 were randomly selected from the American Presidency Project database at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The convention speeches came from the Annenberg/Pew Archive of Presidential Campaign Discourse at the University of Pennsylvania. And lastly, advertisements came from The Living Room Candidate website.

In the pre-coding phase, I read 20 stump speeches and watched 20 ads by Mitt Romney and Barack Obama from the 2012 campaign with the goal of observing patterns in their rhetorical form. From studying these speeches and ads, four forms of rhetoric recurred throughout: formal arguments, personalized stories about voters or the candidate's background, listing accomplishments, and simple appeals to party identification. From these observations, I created content analysis codes for each type of rhetoric, which are explained in more detail in the next section.

In order to confirm that my coding scheme is replicable and not arbitrary, I taught a content analysis course twice with 22 undergraduate political science majors in total at UCLA during the Spring and Fall quarters of 2014.[2] A summary of instructions and an example of a coded speech can be found in the appendix. After a five week instruction period, I did an inter-rater reliability (IRR) test to confirm that my coding scheme is replicable. The IRR test was a combination of Romney and Obama speeches, where students had to identify 68 appeals that needed codes. All text in speeches received a code, leaving no text un-coded. I did not indicate where codes may or may not be needed, and the students had no indication of how many codes to use total. As a result, the IRR test provides no assistance identifying the forms of rhetoric in the speech.

I found a high IRR between my research assistants and myself, which demonstrates that my coding scheme is replicable by anyone who receives instruction. The average correlation between my codes and my students was .7919 with a range of .6721 to .9627.

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[2]The coding scheme changed slightly from the Spring to the Fall, but the conclusions drawn from the data did not change.

The most common disagreement among coders occurred when classifying premises and conclusions of arguments (defined in the next section), where one coder thought a premise is a conclusion and vice versa. Once students passed the IRR test, they became an invaluable resource helping me coded the 146 speeches and 53 advertisements found in this study.

4   Types of Elite Rhetoric:

Arguments, Stories, Credit Claiming, and Partisan

Cues

This section explains the four major types of rhetoric used by candidates. More detailed coding instructions, and a sample of a coded speech, can be found in the appendix.

4.1   Argumentation

The most prominent campaign message found in candidate communications is argumentation, which includes a conclusion and a series of premises to support the conclusion (Walton 1989; 2007; 2013). On average, 58 percent of all convention speeches contain argumentation. Arguments are made up of a series of propositions, which are units of language that are either true or false (Walton 1989). An argument makes a claim by the proponent (in my case, a politician or party), and this claim is represented as the *conclusion* of the argument (Walton 1989; 2007; 2013). This conclusion is supported by a series of statements, called *premises*, which are meant to support a conclusion (Walton 1989; 2007; 2013).

A reasonable, or logical, argument is one that is logically impossible for all the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false. Reasonable arguments are "truth-preserving"

— conditional on the premises being true, the conclusion must be true too (Walton 1989, 115). Candidates and parties try their best to present reasonable arguments to justify their candidacy. A classic example of a reasonable argument from Doug Walton (1989) is as follows:
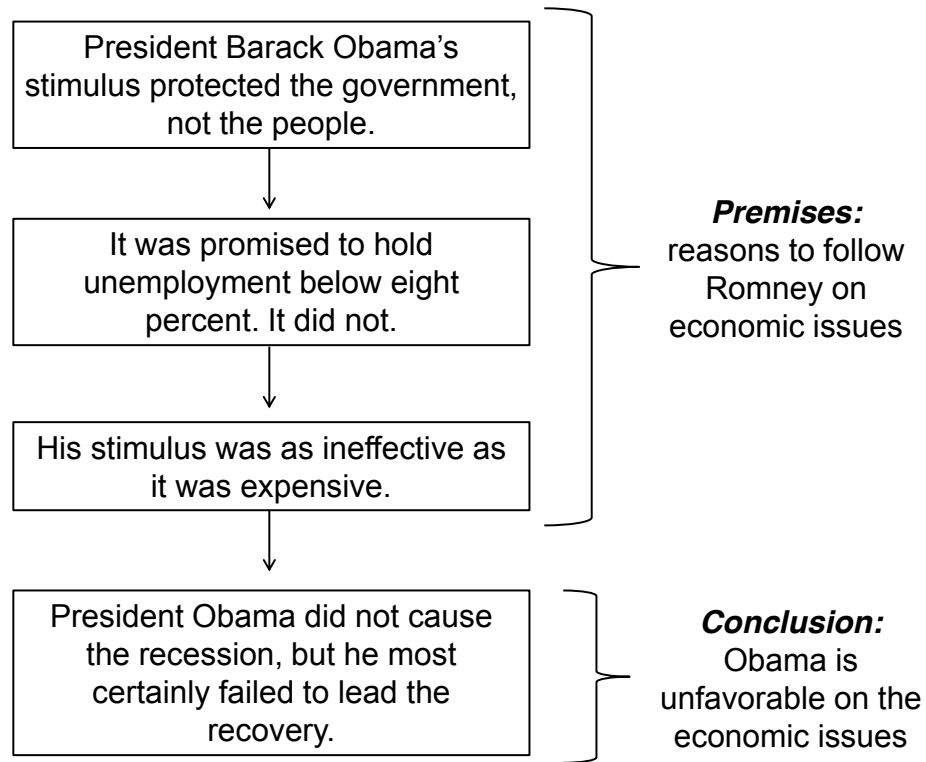
If inflation is receding; the government's economic policies are sound. Inflation is receding. Therefore, the government's economic policies are sound.

This reasonable argument is made up of three propositions: the first two are premises and the last is the conclusion. The conclusion is noted with a juncture of "therefore", and the premises provide reasons for those hearing the argument to accept the conclusion. It can be more generally stated as:

If A, then B. A exists. Therefore, B.

With a complete argument, conclusions tend to be statements of support for a candidate or issue, and premises provide justifications to support the candidate or issue. Figure 1 displays an example of an argument from the 2012 presidential campaign supplied by Mitt Romney in an advertisement. This Romney argument contains three premises and one conclusion (four appeals to argumentation total). The premises are assertions about how Obama's stimulus plan did not live up to expectation, which are meant to support the broader conclusion that Obama failed to lead the economic recovery.

I use a diagram method that originated in philosophy (and applied more recently in law, communications, and computer science research) that connects premises and conclusions called an argumentation scheme (Walton 1989; Freeman 1991; Rowe, Macagno, Reed, and Walton 2006). An argument scheme is made up of two basic components: 1) a set of nodes that display premises and 2) conclusions with corresponding arrows joining the points (Freeman 1991). The premises and conclusions are the text verbatim from a document, and the argumentation schemes provide structure that represents common types of arguments.

Figure 1: *Example of a Complete Argument in a Mitt Romney Advertisement*

```
┌─────────────────────────┐ ┐
│  President Barack Obama's │ │
│ stimulus protected the   │ │
│ government, not the people.│ │
└───────────┬─────────────┘ │
            ↓                 │    ***Premises:***
┌─────────────────────────┐  │    reasons to follow
│    It was promised to hold│  │      Romney on
│   unemployment below eight│  ├    economic issues
│     percent. It did not.  │  │
└───────────┬─────────────┘  │
            ↓                  │
┌─────────────────────────┐  │
│ His stimulus was as       │  │
│ ineffective as it was     │  │
│ expensive.                │  │
└───────────┬─────────────┘ ┘
            ↓
┌─────────────────────────┐ ┐
│ President Obama did not    │ │   ***Conclusion:***
│ cause the recession, but he│ ├    Obama is
│ most certainly failed to   │ │   unfavorable on the
│ lead the recovery.         │ │   economic issues
└─────────────────────────┘ ┘
```

Notes: Taken verbatim from Mitt Romney's advertisement called "Failed Recovery".

Unlike advertisements, speeches usually contain a variety of arguments (and non-arguments, which are discussed later), and coding arguments in speeches becomes more complicated. Below is a quote from one of Mitt Romney's stump speeches from the 2012 campaign. This quote occurs toward the beginning of his speech, just after a few non-argument statements in the introduction:

*Four years ago, candidate Obama promised to do so very much, but he has fallen so very short [**Conclusion**]. He promised to be a "post-partisan president" but he became the most partisan — blaming, attacking, dividing [**Premise 1**]. He was going to focus on creating jobs [**Premise 2**]. Instead, he focused on Obamacare, which killed jobs [**Premise 3**]. He said he was going to cut the federal deficit by half; then he doubled it [**Premise***

*4]. He said that the unemployment rate would now be 5.2%; today we learned that it is 7.9% — it is 9 million jobs short of what he promised [**Premise 5**].*

Speeches typically go from topic to topic, and an overarching conclusion can typically be found at the beginning or end of a paragraph or series of paragraphs. In the example above, the conclusion is the first sentence: "Four years ago, candidate Obama promised to do so very much, but he has fallen so very short." Romney is concluding that Obama promised a lot but did not accomplish his goals, so *the premises must give reasons why this conclusion is true.*

For a premise to go with this conclusion, it must demonstrate that Obama promised something but did not deliver. Longer arguments, like the example above, sometimes use a key word to develop a repetitious cadence that helps the audience follow along (the key word in Romney's speech above is "promised"). However, arguments do not have to be a long list of premises — many arguments will be short and contain just one to two premises with one conclusion.

4.2   Stories

Storytelling is a type of justification that candidates use to make a personal connection with an issue or character trait, and it is the second most prevalent form of rhetoric. In convention speeches from 1964 to 2012, presidential candidates made appeals to stories with 26 percent of their rhetoric. I found that candidates tell three types of stories: stories about sympathetic citizens they have met, stories about their own biography, and stories recounting historical events. When candidates tell stories about sympathetic citizens, they are most likely describing a person who is affected (positively or negatively) by an issue. Candidates tell stories about their biography as a way of breaking the ice with voters who might not be familiar with their candidacy. Biographical stories can also serve as justifications for issue positions or justifications for their general view the world. Or,

stories are used to recount historical events, usually with subtle references to present-day issues. Figure 2 displays three examples of stories in convention speeches: 1) Al Gore tells a story about a senior citizen who cannot afford her medication, 2) Barack Obama tells a story about his grandmother that shaped his view about equal opportunity, and 3) George W. Bush tells a symbolic story about climbing a hill with vague references to persevering after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Figure 2: *Examples of Storytelling*

Sympathetic Citizen Story by Al Gore, 2000

"I met Jacqueline Johnson in St. Louis, Mo. She worked for 35 years as a medical assistant, caring for others. Now she's 72 years old and needs prescription medicines to care for herself. She spends over half of her Social Security check, her only source of income, on her pills. I invited her here tonight. And Mrs. Johnson, I promise you once again: I will fight for a prescription drug benefit for all seniors under Medicare."

Biographical Story by Barack Obama, 2012

"My grandparents were given the chance to go to college, buy their first home, and fulfill the basic bargain at the heart of America's story: the promise that hard work will pay off; that responsibility will be rewarded; that everyone gets a fair shot, and everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules – from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC. I ran for President because I saw that basic bargain slipping away."

Historical Recounting Story by George Bush, 2004

"Since 2001, Americans have been given hills to climb and found the strength to climb them. Now, because we have made the hard journey, we can see the valley below. Now, because we have faced challenges with resolve, we have historic goals within our reach, and greatness in our future. We will build a safer world and a more hopeful America and nothing will hold us back."

Notes: Taken verbatim from the convention acceptance speeches of Al Gore, Barack Obama, and George W. Bush respectively.

4.3   Credit Claiming

The third most prominent type of rhetoric is credit claiming without an argument or story. Challengers only claim credit with 2 percent of their convention speeches, but incumbents claim credit 12 percent of the time. Credit claiming can also be coded simultaneously with arguments or stories when permitted. Credit claiming is used most often by incumbents, mainly because they have a presidential record to brag about. This type of rhetoric can differ from arguments because there is no connection between premises and conclusions; it is simply a list of (sometimes unrelated) accomplishments to demonstrate past performance as a president or leader. Credit claiming can take the form of tangible accomplishment, similar to how Mayhew (1974) argues that Representatives credit claim about particularistic policies or pork. Or, credit claiming can take the form of a stories that the candidate uses to demonstrate their past leadership ability. Below are two examples of credit claiming in convention speeches. The first is from Ronald Reagan in 1984 and another from Bill Clinton in 1996. I code each sentence as an appeal to credit claiming.

Figure 3: *Examples of Credit Claiming*

"I have addressed parliaments, have spoken to parliaments in Europe and Asia during these last three-and-a-half years, declaring that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. And those words, in those assemblies, were greeted with spontaneous applause."	***Ronald Reagan 1984***

"Forty million Americans with more pension security, a tax cut for 15 million of our hardest working, hardest pressed Americans and all small businesses. Twelve million Americans — 12 million of them taking advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Law so they could be good parents and good workers. Ten million students have saved money on their college loans."	***Bill Clinton 1996***

Notes: Taken verbatim from the convention acceptance speeches of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton respectively.

4.4   Partisan Cues

Partisan cues, representing nine percent of speeches, typically appear at the beginning of speeches, or they are followed by argumentation or stories in the body of speeches. Partisan cues differ from argumentation in that no premises or conclusions exist, and therefore, a justification to support the nominee is missing beyond just party identification. Or, the form of the rhetoric might appear to be an argument, but the conclusion is only supported by an appeal to party identification. Moreover, partisan cues compliment past presidents of the same party, or simply reference the "Democrats" or "Republicans"

without an argument or story accompanying it.[3] Partisan cues signal to voters that the candidate is one of their own, and perhaps not a coincidence, partisan cues occur more in party convention speeches compared to stump speeches and advertisements. Figure 4 below displays three examples of partisan cues in convention speeches. I code each sentence as an appeal to partisan cues.

Figure 4: *Examples of Partisan Cues*

"It is the cause of Republicanism to ensure that power remains in the hands of the people. And, so help us God, that is exactly what a Republican president will do with the help of a Republican Congress."	**Barry Goldwater 1964**

"Thank you, President Ford and President Bush. And God bless you, Nancy Reagan for your moving tribute to President Reagan. By the way, I spoke to President Reagan this afternoon, and I made him a promise that we would win one more for the Gipper. Are you ready?"	**Bob Dole 1996**

"We are the party of Roosevelt. We are the party of Kennedy. So don't tell me that Democrats won't defend this country. Don't tell me that Democrats won't keep us safe."	**Barack Obama 2008**

Notes: Taken verbatim from the convention acceptance speeches of Barry Goldwater, Bob Dole, and Barack Obama respectively.

These examples demonstrate how candidates use partisan cues to connect themselves with their party, which might be enough of a justification for some voters. For example, Barry Goldwater used partisan cues as a lead-in to arguments about issues, the role of

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[3]Partisan cues can be double coded with arguments or stories, but those occasions are less common.

government, and the distinction between himself and Democrats. The example in Figure 4 shows how Goldwater asserts a position for Republicans without providing a justification other than referencing his party. Bob Dole's partisan cue references a popular Republican president, Ronald Reagan, and Dole's assertion implies that a vote for him would fulfill a promise to Reagan. The partisan cue from Barack Obama also includes referencing a popular party president, Franklin Roosevelt, and the only justification given to support his assertion about keeping America safe is that he is also a Democrat like FDR.

5   Quantifying Elite Rhetoric

5.1   A Macro View Of Campaign Messages In Convention Speeches: Data From 1964 To 2012

Figure 5 and 6 show the percent of argumentation, storytelling, accomplishments, and partisan cues in each candidate's acceptance speech from 1964 to 2012.[4] The Election years are listed at the top, and the challenging candidate is on the left of each election year. On average, 58 percent of all convention speeches contain argumentation, and 26 percent of speeches are storytelling. Accomplishments and partisan cues vary by incumbency, where incumbents list more accomplishments and challengers are more likely to signal partisan cues. These results demonstrate that partisan cues are never delivered in isolation — candidates use different types of elite rhetoric in addition to party cues.

Differences exist between challengers and incumbents, where challengers use argumentation more than incumbents, and this pattern is especially evident from 1988 to 2012 in Figure 6. On average across all years, incumbents only use argumentation in 53 percent of their rhetoric, but challengers argue 62 percent of the time. Using a t-test of means,

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[4]There is also a category called "Other", which is a catch-all for types of messages that are used infrequently in speeches. A breakdown of those remaining codes is available in the appendix.

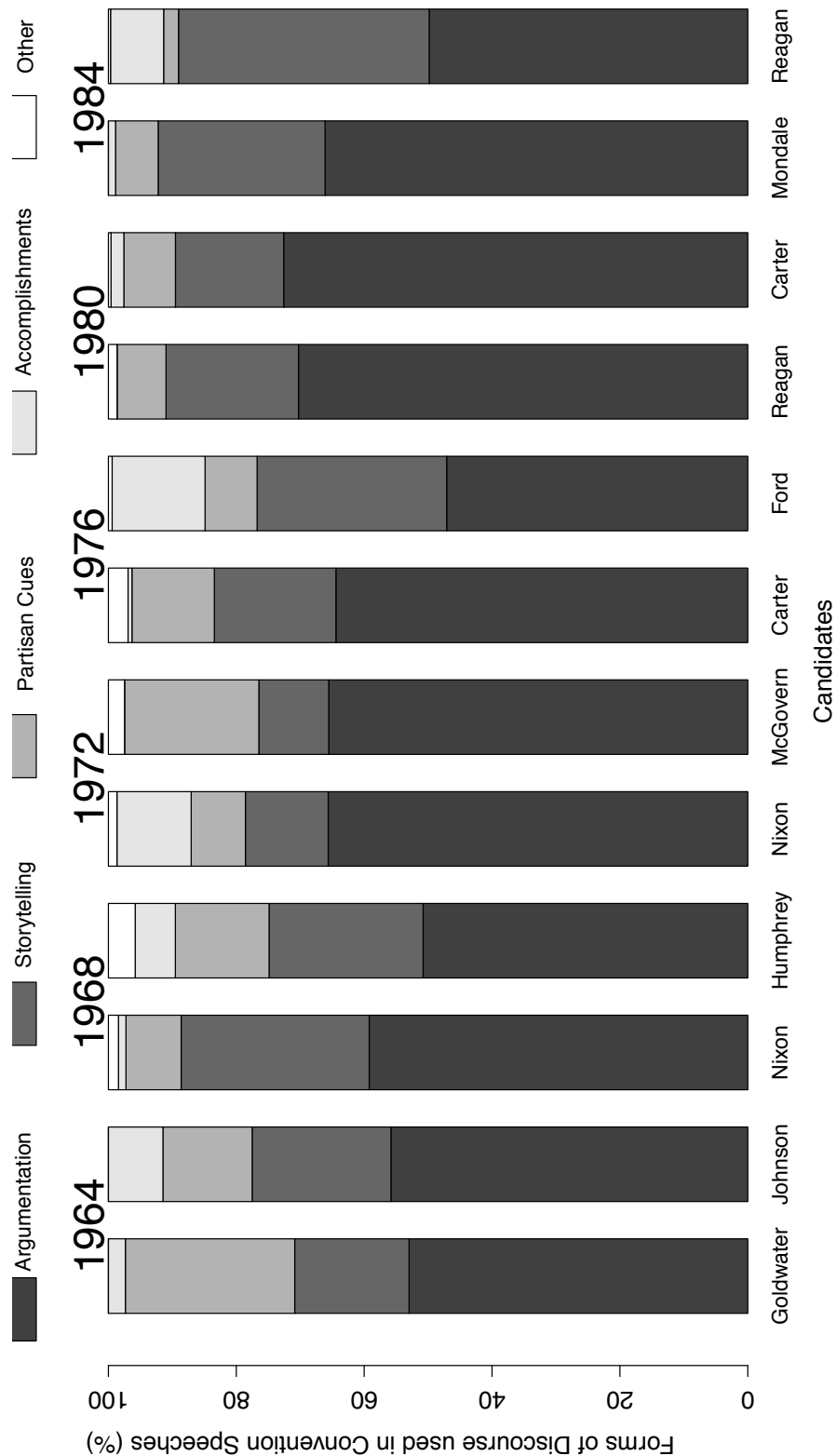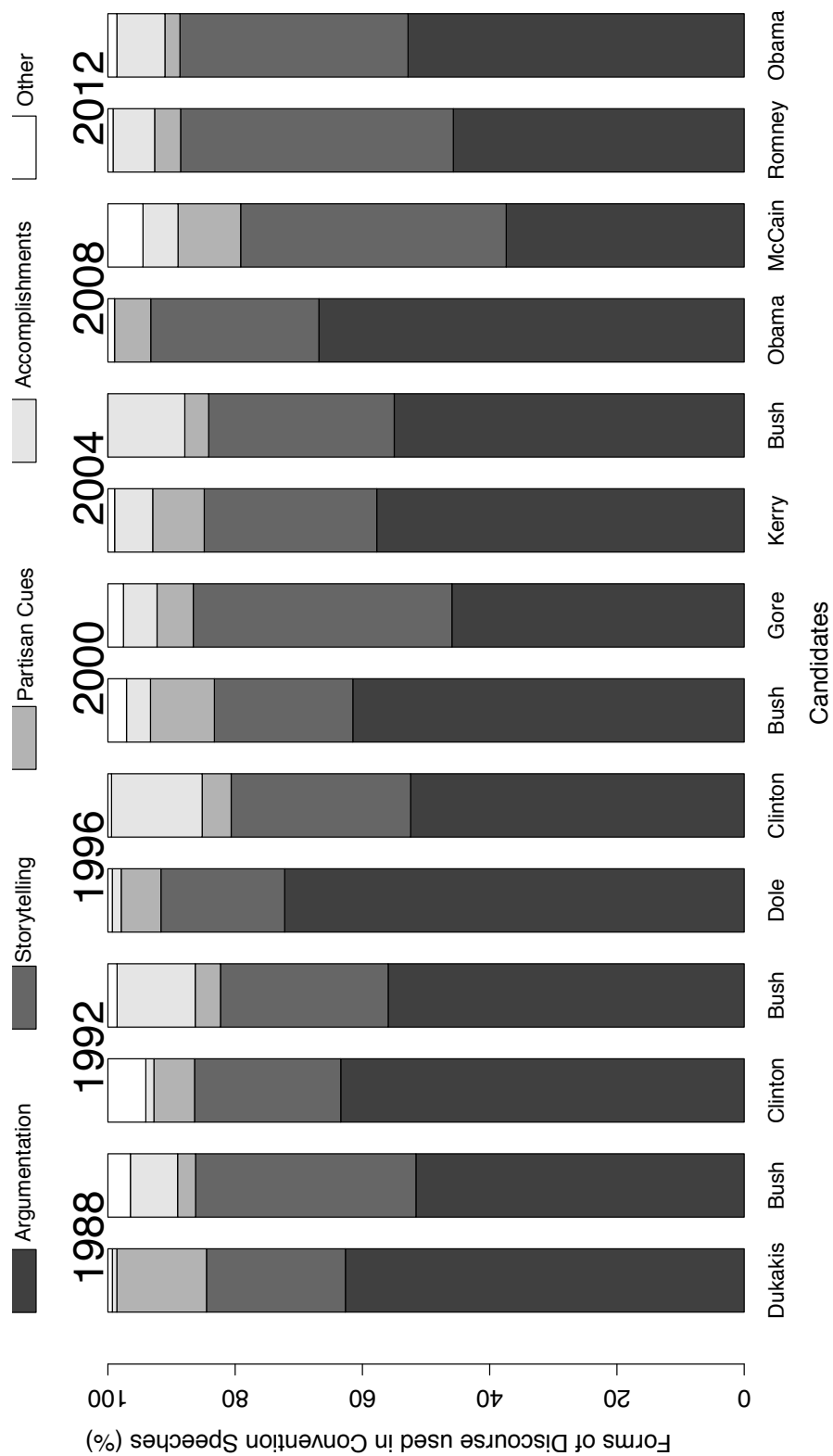Figure 5: *Form of Convention Speeches: 1964 - 1984l*

Figure 6: *Form of Convention Speeches: 1988 - 2012*

this difference is significant at a 99 percent level. Ronald Reagan, for example, went from 70 percent argumentation as a challenger in 1980 to 50 percent argumentation as an incumbent in 1984. Instead of arguing, incumbents tell stories and list accomplishments (credit claim) more frequently. Incumbent rhetoric includes 29 percent storytelling and 9 percent accomplishments; whereas, challengers use storytelling 23 percent and only credit claim 2 percent of the time. And these differences in incumbency are also significant at a 99 percent level. Barack Obama, for example, told stories 36 percent of the time as an incumbent in 2012 but only 26 percent as a challenger in 2008. But even with these difference by incumbency, the broad takeaway from this analysis is that elites communicate is more than party cues.

5.2   Within-Candidate Change in Storytelling

In this section, I explore the difference between individual presidents when they go from challenger to incumbent candidates, and I argue that candidates tell more stories when they run as incumbents than challengers. In addition, I show that this incumbency difference in storytelling is time-dependent, where modern incumbents tell more stories than incumbents in the 1970's and earlier. These results add further evidence that candidates do not speak only with partisan cues. Instead, candidates are strategically picking their rhetoric, sometimes based on their incumbency status, presumably because they believe their rhetorical choices have an effect on voters.

Instead of comparing all challengers and incumbents like the previous section, this analysis shows within-candidate change in types of rhetoric. Some candidates might have a natural proclivity to tell more stories, and so comparing across candidates over time might be misleading. Some in the media, for example, characterize Bill Clinton as a natural storyteller (Hallman 2004), and so comparing him with George H.W. Bush or Bob Dole might overstate Clinton's level of storytelling. However, my within-candidate

analysis confirms the findings in the previous section: a given candidate will tell more stories as an incumbent than a challenger.

Figure 7 on page 19 displays the percentage point difference in storytelling for the five incumbents in my convention speeches dataset: Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Clinton, W. Bush, and Obama. Positive points mean a given president told more stories when he ran as an incumbent than a challenger, and each point is accompanied by 95 percent confidence intervals. Results show that Reagan, Obama, Bush, and Clinton told more stories in their convention speeches as incumbents than challengers. And with the exception of Reagan, this difference in storytelling increased with every subsequent president.

Why do incumbents tell more stories than challengers? These observational results do not address this question, but there are a few potential factors that are worth speculating about. First, incumbents might simply know more citizens from being in office for four years, and therefore, they have more stories to tell about them. Alternatively, in an attempt to look presidential and above petty bickering, presidents might be avoiding argumentation in favor of stories about citizens, themselves, or the country as a whole. Challengers, on the other hand, might be more pro-active with their argumentation because they represent interest groups and voters who are dissatisfied with the status quo. This dissatisfaction might lead to more attacks on the incumbent party and less storytelling.

A final speculation about the difference by incumbency, which I think might be the most fruitful explanation, is that incumbents tell more stories than challengers because they will not be penalized by ambiguous rhetoric. Challengers, on the other hand, are forced to be more specific about their issue positions to show that they are a credible opposition candidate. As a result, challengers need to be more specific about their issue positions in order to distinguish themselves from incumbents, which incentivize challengers to use more arguments than incumbents. However, further research is needed to adjudicate this hunch from the others.

Figure 7: *Presidents Tell More Stories When They Campaign as Incumbents than Challengers*
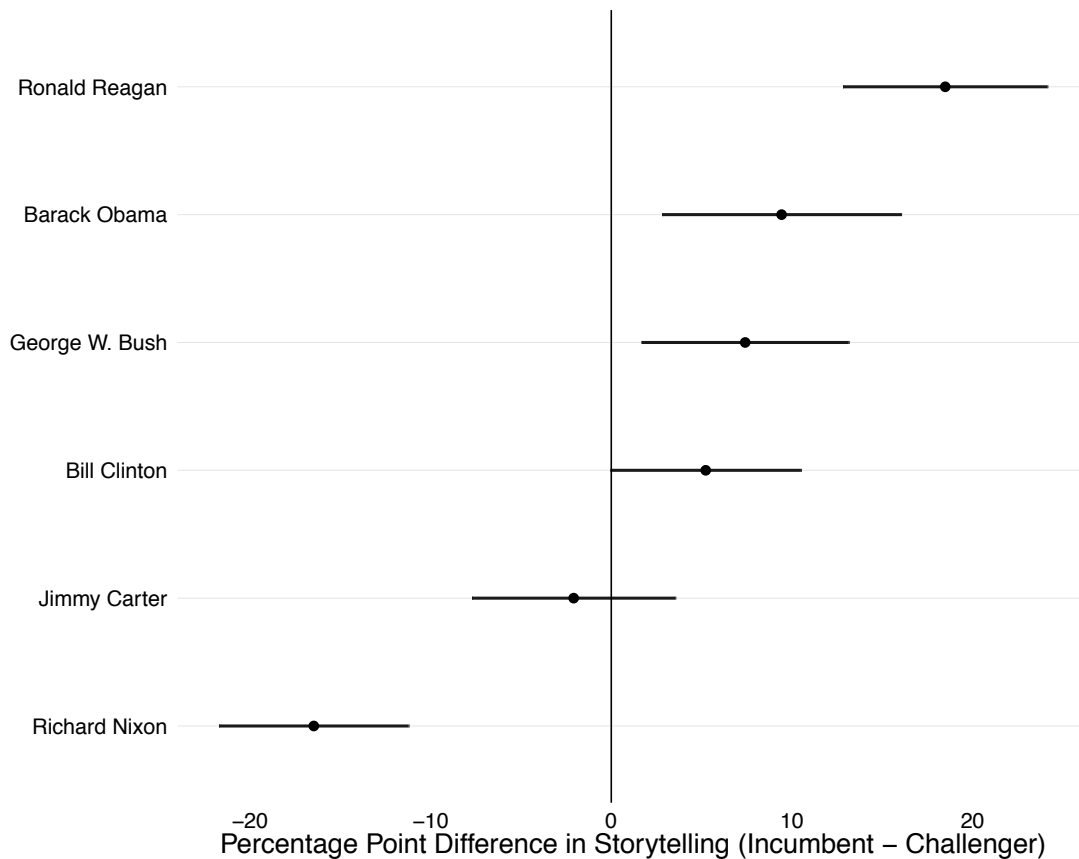
Notes: Data come from a content analysis of convention speeches 1964 to 2012; only two-term presidents included in plot to show within-candidate change. Percentage point difference in amount of storytelling when candidates are incumbents compared to challengers with 95 percent confidence intervals. Results show that candidates tell more stories as incumbents than challengers.

Why does storytelling by incumbents increase with time? This phenomenon might be influenced by the change in how parties determine their nominee. From the McGovern-Frasier reforms initiated in 1972, the party nominee is now determined through a series of primary contests months before the conventions, and as a result, conventions are no longer a behind-the-scenes negotiation among party bosses to determine a nomination. Presently, parties use conventions to introduce the public to their candidate and platform, and the event more closely resembles well-choreographed theatre than a smoke filled backroom.

As a result, modern incumbents might feel the need to put on a performance for a general audience, and therefore, they tell more stories than past incumbents.

Because of these content analysis results, I experimentally test the influence of stories on public opinion formation compared to arguments (this analysis can be found in Chapter 5). From these experiments, I show that stories persuade out-party voters when arguments do not, and unlike arguments, stories can increase the favorability of the candidate telling the story. As a result, elites might tell stories because they have a unique influence on public opinion, which is only now materializing in this new era of conventions.

5.3   Stump Speeches and Advertisements: 2008 and 2012

I posit that stump speeches and advertisements contain more argumentation than convention speeches. The audiences at stump speeches might be more activist-orient because many occur at local and national interest groups, and as a result, the content of rhetoric is more explicit about policy. The distribution of argumentation and stories does not differ from stump speeches to advertisements, but this result is far from conclusive because of the limited number of ads used in the analysis (53 ads across two general elections).

Figure 8 on the following page displays the percent of rhetoric dedicated to arguments and stories in stump speeches and ads. Incumbent candidates are the left point within each panel, and each point includes 95 percent confidence intervals. The top two panels show the percent of arguments in 2008 and 2012. Unlike convention speeches, I do not find a difference in the level of argumentation or stories between challenger and incumbent. However, both McCain and Obama used significantly more argumentation in 2008 compared to Obama and Romney in 2012, suggesting that the economic crisis of 2008 forced candidates to be more explicit about their policy positions with arguments.

Figure 8: *Arguments and Stories in the 2008 and 2012 Campaigns*
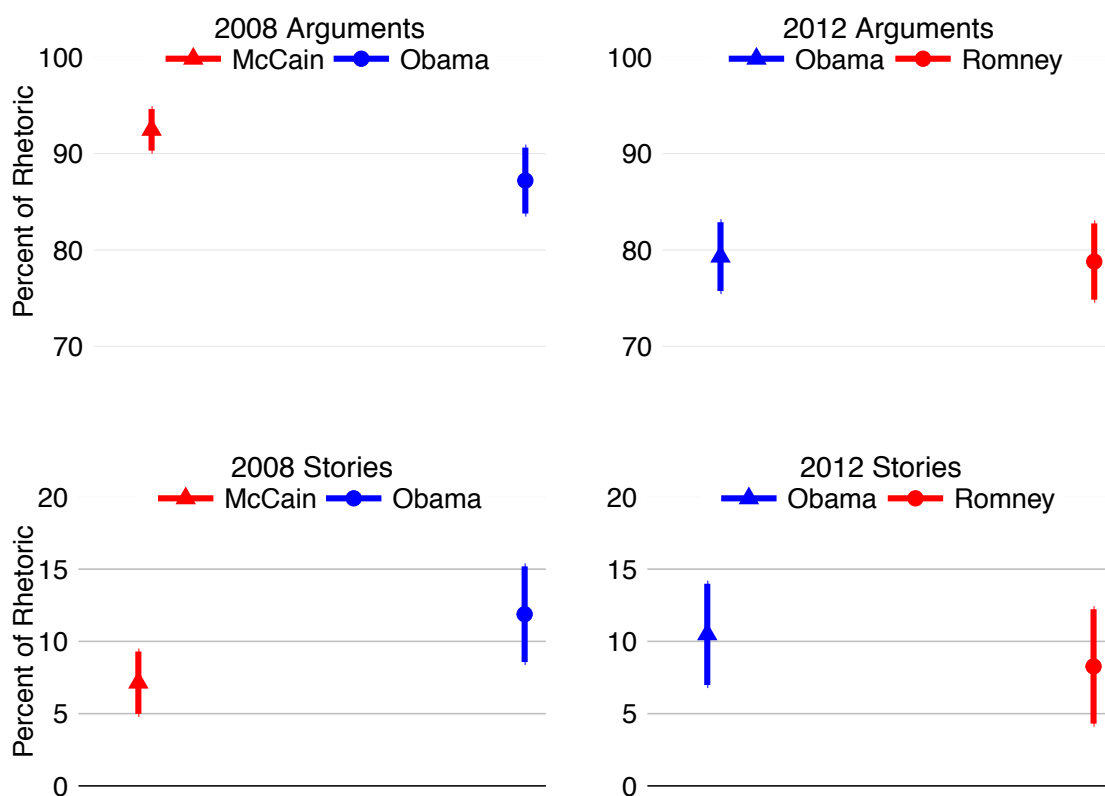
However, candidates did not tell more stories in 2012 to compensate for their lack of argumentation. Instead, both Obama and Romney listed their accomplishments, and claimed credit for past achievements. Obama's credit claiming resembled past presidents – he would list policy accomplishments and economic indicators as achievements. Challenging candidates generally credit claim less, but Romney would regularly discuss his role in making the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City a success. In addition, Romney listed achievements from his tenure as Governor of Massachusetts with an emphasis on

working across the aisle with Democratic legislators.

The broad takeaway from stump speeches is the same as convention speeches: candidates do not just speak in the form of partisan cues. All candidates give justifications for their positions in the form of arguments or stories. In addition, candidates credit claim with past accomplishments to demonstrate their competency.

6   Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates that elites do more than transmit partisan cues to voters. Presidential speeches and advertisements contain elite cues, but they also include justifications in the form of arguments, emotional stories about voters, and statements that claim credit for policies. Therefore, observational results that are collected when elites publicly debate issues cannot distinguish between the effect of cues and other justifications. Elite cues might be driving public opinion, as suggested by some scholars, but in the chapters to follow, I show experimentally that justifications like arguments and stories move public opinion in greater magnitude than partisan cues alone.

Chapter 4:

How Elites Shape Attitudes about Issues

and How They are Constrained

1   Introduction

1.1   Elite Cues and Public Opinion Formation

Decades of work shows that elites can shape public opinion by using cues to generate support for issues (Converse 1964; McGuire 1969; Zaller 1992; Rahn 1993; Bartels 2008; Lodge and Taber 2013; Matsubayashi 2013). The most efficient cue that provides a shortcut to opinion formation about issues is party identification (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Downs 1957; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Jacoby 1988; Mondak 1993; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Bartels 2008; Lewis-Beck, Norpoth, Jacoby and Weisberg 2008; Berinsky 2009; Nicholson 2009). In fact, some claim the effect is so strong that elite cues are more important to voters than their own feelings and thoughts about issues (Zaller 1992; 2013; Cohen 2003; Lenz 2009; 2012). The most striking evidence comes from studies of opinion change over time that show an individual will switch their position on an issue to match their preferred party or politician instead of reconsidering their support for the politician (Abramowitz 1978; Zaller 1992; Lenz 2009; 2012; Tesler 2014). This observation led to the conclusion that voters are "blindly following" elites for various reasons, such as trusting the party, but none of which have to do with the content of issues (Lenz 2012).

As robust as the findings on cues might be, elite discourse tends to contain more than just cues — elites do not just announce their issue positions and party identification in isolation. For example, presidential speeches and advertisements contain elite cues, but they also include justifications in the form of arguments, emotional stories about voters, and statements that claim credit for policies. The content of campaign speeches and advertisements is also strongly associated with voters' likes and dislikes about a presidential candidate's traits and issue positions (Vavreck 2009). Therefore, observational results that are collected when elites publicly debate issues cannot distinguish between the effect of cues and other justifications. Elite cues might be driving public opinion, as suggested

by some scholars, but it might also be something else, like the justifications that elites provide for their issue positions.

The idea that opinion formation on issues might be more than just elite cuing has a basis in the literature as well. The same policy can elicit different levels of public support when framed differently; for example, an appeal framed around 95 percent employment instead of 5 percent unemployment can lead to two different interpretations about the labor market (Tversky and Kahneman 1981; Iyengar 1991; Jacoby 2000; Druckman 2004; Druckman, Fein, Leeper 2012). Elites can prime voters to consider an issue more strongly when evaluating candidates (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Johnston, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Levendusky 2009; Vavreck 2009). If policy information is perceived to be delivered in an unbiased way, it can play a stronger role than elite cues (Bullock 2011; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Tomz and Van Houweling, 2014 manuscript, presented at UCLA in 2015).[1] Elites can also use justifications to moderate the negative effect of flip-flopping on an issue position (Tomz and Van Houweling, 2014 manuscript, presented at UCLA in 2015). In other words, the issues that candidates choose to talk about, and how they talk about them, might influence opinion formation beyond party identification. No previous study, however, experimentally separates the effect of cues from other justifications used by elites. Thus, important questions about the nature of elite influence on public opinion remain unsettled. Elite influence on public opinion may not be as straightforward as it seems.

Everyone agrees that elite cues influence attitude formation and change, but in this paper, I use a large amount of representative survey data ($n = 8,267$) and a series of experiments to show that the justifications delivered by real candidates of both parties move attitudes on issues in much greater magnitude than simple elite cues. Elites shape public opinion, but in a more dramatic way than we recognize. My results suggest that elite cues alone move only a small portion of individuals; elites can amplify this effect by

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[1] Also see Bullock (2011) for a thorough review of past evidence on the role of cues and information.

giving reasons for their issue positions. But, I also show that elites are constrained by the content of their justifications and issue positions. Elites cannot deliver any justification for an issue and expect to move public opinion, and they cannot persuade individuals on any issue. Because elites are constrained by justifications and issues, their ability to shape public opinion is more limited than previously characterized.

1.2 Hypotheses about Elites and Public Opinion

I used several population-based, randomized survey experiments and test two main hypotheses about the effect of elite cues and the justifications that elites use to promote issue positions. The first hypothesis derives directly from decades of research on elite cues: party identification is an efficient shortcut for most voters, and it conveys enough information about whether a voter should support an issue position. The second hypothesis derives directly from the work on policy information and framing: the content of issues and how they are framed influences attitudes about issues. And the second hypothesis also includes a corollary about the content of the policy information delivered by elites.

Party Identification Conditions Voters' Attitudes Information about what party or presidential candidate supports a particular issue influences voters' positions on that issue.

Justifications Amplify the Role of Partisanship Information about what party or candidate supports a particular issue, *with a justification for the particular position*, will affect voters' positions on the issue in greater magnitude than when voters know only party and not the justification.

Corollary 1: Only coherent justifications will amplify the role of partisanship; specious justification from elites will not increase support for issue positions.

In summary, I expect party identification to affect individuals' positions on issues. For

example, Democratic identifiers will support issues from Democratic elites and Republican identifiers will reject them. However, I expect this relationship to amplify when an elite provides a justification for an issue position — that is, more individuals support an issue position with a justification than when only party identification is known. If, as some scholars suggest, the rhetoric used by elites does not matter for opinion formation, then the added coherent justification should not increase support beyond the cue. And finally, I argue that specious reasons will not persuade individuals to adopt issue positions from elites. By specious, I mean a justification with content that is superficially plausible, but actually wrong. I go into more detail about the differences between specious and coherent justifications in the sections to follow.

2   A Series of Randomized Experiments

2.1   Data and Methods

Elites use various types of messages when delivering information to voters; they do not only speak in partisan cues. To disentangle the effect of partisan cues from other types of messages, I will use randomized Internet experiments with a representative sample of likely voters. This paper presents results from a series of randomized experiments with a sample size of 8,267, across three different issues, and five different elite cues.[2]   The survey research firm Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates fielded my experiments with a regularly maintained pool of opt-in respondents from which they construct representative samples of the voting population.[3]

The overarching design of my experiments randomized respondents into one of three

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[2]The final section also presents a follow-up experiment using a new issue with a sample size of 976.

[3]I also used post-stratification weights for gender, age, race, and party identification to maintain representativeness. Penn, Schoen and Berland uses click-testing, time-monitoring, and other tools to ensure that respondents are not "professional survey-takers" who rush through questionnaires or simply guess at questions. An internal report on the quality of respondents is conducted each quarter.

groups: 1) a control group in which respondents are simply asked whether they favor or oppose an issue, which acts as the counterfactual average of not receiving any information or cue (Green and Gerber 2012); 2) an elite cue group that asks if respondents support or oppose an issue if it was proposed by a candidate or party; or 3) a cue plus justification group that asks if respondents support or oppose an issue if it was proposed by a candidate or party *but* also with a justification that a candidate might use to support the issue. By holding the partisan cue constant in both treatment groups, I can measure the additional support that is generated by the justification, which directly tests the theory of blind following from elite cues against my argument about the role of justifications.[4]

I also force variation on the quality of the justifications delivered by elites, which I am unable to observe during campaigns because most justifications by elites are coherent. In other words, I tested justifications for issue positions that are coherent, which real elites actually use, against specious justifications that are (for the most part) unobservable. By specious justifications, I mean an argument that might ostensibly appear correct, but upon close examination, should be rejected as false. A specious justification lacks a coherent connection with an issue position. If specious justifications advocated by elites are effective at increasing support for an issue, then the content of elite rhetoric is unimportant, and therefore, voters are simply taking cues from elites.

2.2   Simulating Issue Positions and Justifications for Elites

I tested three issues with varying levels of familiarity to the public. By familiarity, I mean the level of exposure to an issue from elite messaging (Zaller 1992). Unfamiliar

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[4]Randomizing into each group guarantees orthogonality between the groups and the outcome observed, so any different between conditions must be attributed to the group assignment. Randomness also produces balance on all observable characteristics that might influence the outcome. And because the experiment is balanced on observables, it will also be balanced on unobservable characteristics. To assess randomness, I regressed the treatment assignment on several demographic and political variables like age, education, race, gender, and party identification. None of the variables were statistically significant or provided predictive power on the treatment assignment, and therefore I can conclude that the randomization worked as intended.

issues are not debated regularly by elites, and therefore, most individuals have not been exposed to any messages about unfamiliar issues. Familiar issues are a regular feature of campaigns and public debates, and as a result, individuals are more likely to be exposed to elite messaging about familiar issues (Zaller 1992, 120). Because of this exposure to familiar issues, individuals have a "large store of preexisting considerations that act to dilute the effect of a new message" (Zaller 1992, 154). Consequently, I selected issues for my experiments that vary in familiarity so that my results are not dependent on how familiar or unfamiliar an issue is to the public. I tested two unfamiliar issues that are not aligned with party identification: increasing the length of the school day by an hour for kindergarten through 12th grade and colonizing the moon.[5] Additionally, I tested one familiar issue, social security reform, which elites have debated regularly during presidential campaigns, most notably George W. Bush and Al Gore in 2000.[6] President Bush also picked social security reform as his major policy goal after the 2004 election (Sahadi 2005).

Increasing the length of the school day and colonizing the moon are unfamiliar political issues, but increasing the length of the school day is a slightly more familiar issue than colonizing the moon. Voters might have heard the debate about lengthening the school day at the state or local level, have children in public school, or simply attended public school themselves. Increasing the length of the school day became law in five states (Colorado, Connecticut, New York, Tennessee, and Massachusetts). Potential presidential candidate, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, argued in his 2014 State of the State address, "I believe we need to take bigger and broader steps to adjust our approach to K-12 education to address the new competitive world we live in. ... It is time to lengthen both the school

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[5]Using unfamiliar issues in experiments provides the benefit of observing attitudes about issues that are unaligned with party identification in the control group, but then become aligned with party after a treatment of elite cues and justifications. This process simulates observational data that show voters are unaligned with a candidate's issue position before a campaign, and then become aligned with a candidate by Election Day. Also see Levendusky 2009 for a discussion of experiments on low-salience issues, and observational evidence of stem cell research becoming aligned by party after being debated publicly.

[6]See Lenz 2012 for an analysis of attitude change on social security during the 2000 campaign.

day and school year ... student achievement is lagging at the exact moment when we need improvement more than ever in order to compete in the world economy..." (CBS Philadelphia 2014). I used a similar justification in my treatment conditions so that my experiments mimicked real-world argumentation.

State-level public opinion data about increasing the length of the school day indicates that the issue is not aligned by party. A poll conducted by The Times Union and Siena College in New York in June of 2014 found that 36 percent of Republicans and 37 percent of Democrats favor increasing the length of the school day. This non-partisan support is consistent over time as well — a poll conducted at the state-level by Virginia Commonwealth University in 2008 found that 36 percent of Republicans and 39 percent of Democrats favored increasing the length of the school day. These non-partisan polling results, coupled with the fact that it is not regularly discussed by elites at the national-level, suggest that individuals hold very few considerations about lengthening the school day, making it an unfamiliar issue.

Colonizing the moon is an even more unfamiliar issue than lengthening the school day, and it was only mentioned once by a defunct presidential candidate, Newt Gingrich, toward the end of the 2012 Republican primaries. Gingrich declared that America "will have the first permanent base on the moon" by the end of his second term in office, but this issue position was not taken seriously by other candidates or the media (Sneed 2012). In fact, colonizing the moon is such an unfamiliar issue that I cannot find any reliable polling results on it.

In addition, I tested one long-standing partisan issue, social security reform. Elites have debated various social security reforms for decades, and these public debates have even led to attitude change about social security (Lenz 2012). In my experiment, I tested a proposal to raise the social security contribution rate for high income earners, and my justification for this reform mirrors an argument used by the Obama Administration.[7]

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[7]See the White House website page on Social Security for more information on this position and their

The question wording for each of my experimental conditions, across all three issues, is as follows:

Table 1: *Experimental Design*

	Social Security Reform	**Lengthening the School Day**	**Colonizing the Moon**
Control	Would you favor or oppose a proposal to raise the Social Security contribution rate for high income individuals, or haven't you thought much about this?	Would you favor or oppose increasing the length of the school day by an hour for Kindergarten through 12th grade, or haven't you thought much about this?	Would you favor or oppose colonizing the moon, or haven't you thought much about this?
Elite cue	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by (Vice President Joe Biden OR former presidential candidate Mitt Romney)…	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by (President Barack Obama OR the Republican party)…	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by (President Barack Obama OR former presidential candidate John McCain)…
Cue plus coherent justification	… because all seniors should be able to retire with dignity, not just a privileged few…	… in order to keep American students competitive in the global economy in science and math…	… in order to discover potentially lifesaving minerals not available to doctors on earth…
Cue plus specious justification	… because all seniors should be able to go on more vacations…	… in order to teach vocational skills in areas America is still competitive like cosmetology and automotive repair…	… in order to start building an embassy for future relations with non-human beings…

The control group acts as a baseline measurement of attitudes toward each issue. The elite cue group tests the role of just party cues on opinion formation (hypothesis 1). The next condition adds a justification that might be posited by a candidate or party to support an issue, which tests if a justification amplifies the effect of party (hypothesis 2). If the distribution of attitudes in these two conditions is indistinguishable, then party cues are the only reason that voters align their positions on issues with elites, and this outcome would confirm theories of blind partisan following. I predict that the condition with the coherent justification will affect voters' positions on issues in greater magnitude

justifications.

than when voters know only the elite cue. In the last treatment condition, I tested the corrollary to hypothesis 2 about the content of the justification. If the content of elite rhetoric is irrelevant to opinion formation — if candidates can say anything and voters still follow — then the specious justifications should have the same influence as the coherent justification. If specious justifications do *not* increase support for issue positions, then elites are constrained by the reasons they use to defend their issue positions.

3   Results

3.1   Treatment Effects: Overall Change in Support

My two treatment conditions that flow from my hypotheses are 1) a partisan cue or 2) a partisan cue plus a coherent justification. Figure 1 below show the difference in support from the control group for these two conditions for all three issues. Plotting symbols are percentage point differences with 95 percent confidence intervals, where positive values are increased support relative to the control and negative values are decreased support relative to the control. For the most familiar issue, social security, the elite cue only modestly increases support, and for the two unfamiliar issues, the elite cues *decrease* support overall. However, the cues plus coherent justifications *increase* support for all three issues. These initial results confirm my second hypothesis that the justifications provided by elites add information beyond just party identification — to increase support for an issue, elites have to do more than cueing. The partisan cue results, however, are at odds with my hypothesis that elite cues increase support for issues. But since the cues are inherently partisan, treatment effects most likely interact with a voter's party identification, and the next subsections explore this possibility.

Figure 1: *Treatment Effects: Change in Support for Each Issue Relative to the Control*
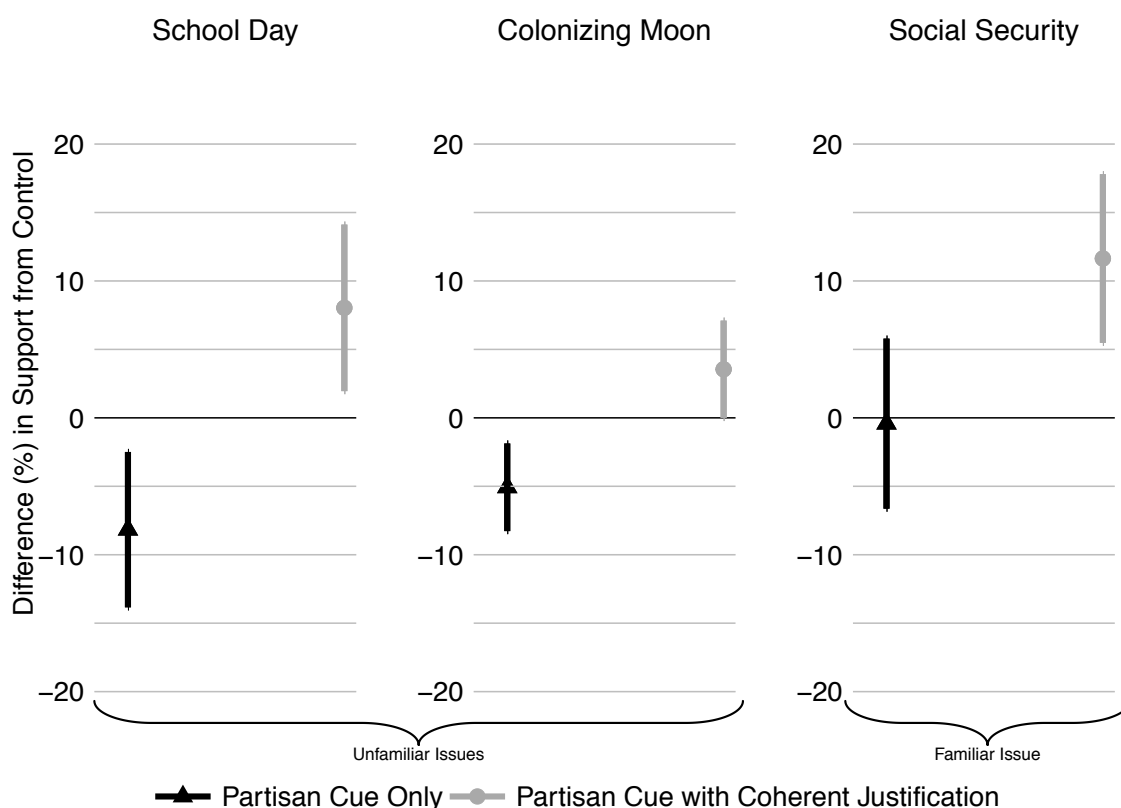
Notes: Data come from a representative Internet sample size of 7,291 likely voters. Results are difference in support relative to the control group. Length of school day and colonizing the moon are unfamiliar issues and social security is a familiar issue. Triangle plotting symbol is change in support in the partisan cue treatment and circular plotting symbols are difference in support in the partisan cue with a coherent justification treatment, with 95 percent confidence intervals. Results show an increase in support in the partisan cue plus coherent justification group relative to the control for all three issues. For school day and colonizing the moon, the unfamiliar issues, support decreases from a partisan cue alone relative to the control.

3.2   Partisan Cue Treatment Conditions by Party Identification

The next three subsections separate the results by party identification, and this sub-section specifically analyzes the cue-only conditions. If cues only cause individuals to adopt issue positions, then the Barack Obama cue, for example, should cause Democrats

to support the issue and Republicans to oppose it. And likewise, the Republican party cue should cause Republican respondents to support the issue and Democrats to oppose it. Figure 2 on the following page shows the results of three partisan cue treatment conditions (all Democratic cues) relative to the controls. Plotting symbols are arranged by party identification, where the most left point in each plot is the in-party relative to the cue with Independents in the middle.[8]

Results show that my hypothesis about partisan cues increasing the match between voters and parties is only partially correct. In-party identifiers are not more likely to support the issue from an elite cue, but out-party identifiers are more likely to oppose lengthening the school day and colonizing the moon. In other words, the Obama cue does not galvanize support among Democrats to lengthen the school day — it only serves to increase opposition among Republicans. Support for the familiar issue, social security, does not change with a partisan cue. In Figure 3, I find a similiar pattern of out-party backlash against Republican cues without in-party support.

These results suggest that individuals need more than just cues to adopt issue positions from elites. Simple elite cues hardly influence opinion formation, but when cues do move opinion, it only serves to increase opposition among out-party individuals. Even though these results run contrary to many observational conclusions about party identification, recent experimental results by Nicholson (2011) also shows out-party opposition without in-party support from elite cues. The next section takes his results a step further by adding an experimental condition that includes a justification with each cue.

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[8]I will be displaying my experimental results as a different from the control by party identification, with 95 percent confidence intervals, throughout this paper. The left point will always be in-party respondents relative to the cue.

Figure 2: *Lack of Change in Support Relative to Control Group, Democratic Cues and No Justification*
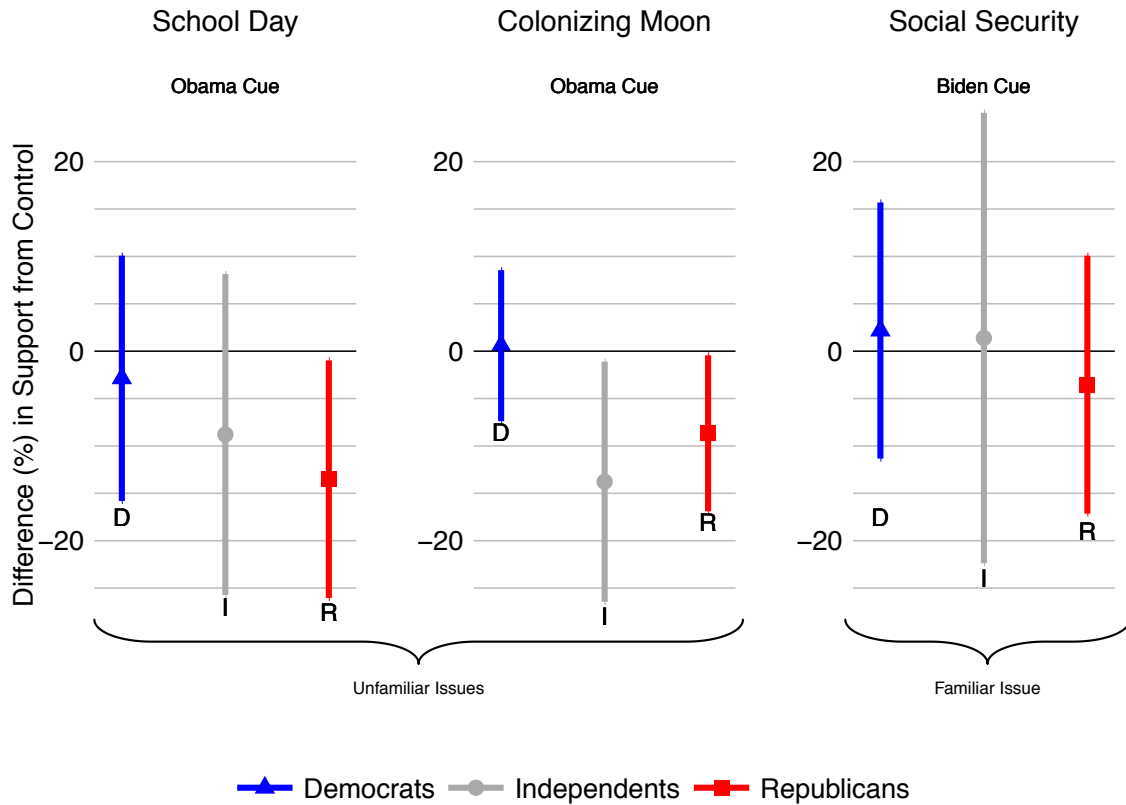
Notes: Results are from three Democratic cue experiments with no justification included. Length of school day and colonizing the moon are unfamiliar issues and social security is a familiar issue. Sample size for social security is 481, lengthening the school day is 498, and colonizing the moon is 1,291. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Results show no difference in attitudes relative to the control group among in-party respondents for all issues, but out-party respondents are less likely to support the issue with a partisan cue relative to the control for unfamiliar issues.
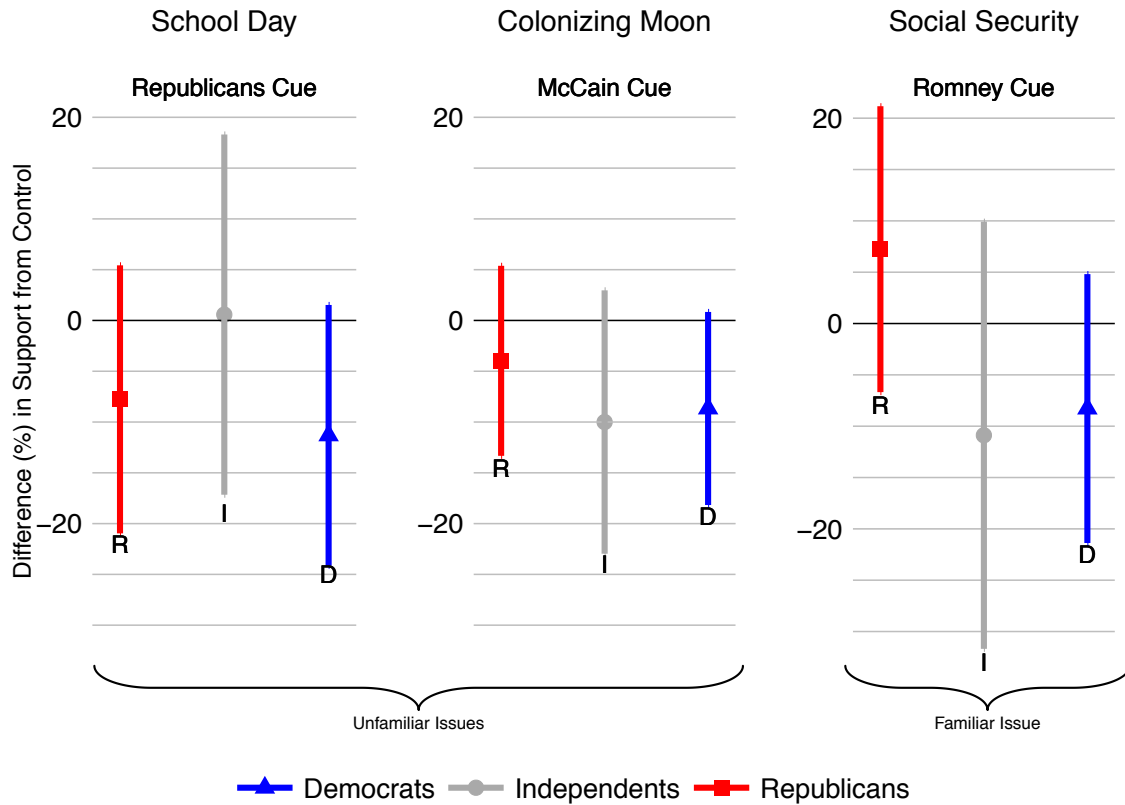
Figure 3: *Lack of Change in Support Relative to Control Group, Republican Cues and No Justification*

Notes: Results are from three Republican cue experiments with no justification included. Sample size for social security is 509, lengthening the school day is 498, and colonizing the moon is 638. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Results show no difference in attitudes relative to the control group among any party identification, but the drop in out-party support is significant at a 90 percent level.

3.3   Justifications Amplify the Effect of Party

Figure 4 and 5 display the change in support by party identification for the cue plus coherent justification treatment relative to the control for all three issues. Figure 4 shows Democratic cues and Figure 5 shows Republican cues. The justifications, which are iden-

tical within each issue, causes a dramatic increase in support among in-partisans, but the treatment has little effect among out-partisans and independents. I find a 20-point increase in support for lengthening the school day relative to the control among in-partisans. Democrats are significantly more likely to support the issue with the justification from Obama, and Republicans are significantly more likely to support the issue with the exact same justification from the Republican party. But out-party identifiers do not support the issue with the justification — a match on party identification must exist for an increase in support. Independents have a non-significant increase in support regardless of which party offers the justification.

For the issue of colonizing the moon, I find a similar pattern of in-partisan support and out-party opposition. The Obama cue and the justification caused a 17-point increase in support among Democrats, and the McCain cue and justification caused a 10-point increase in support among Republicans. Differences also exist within treatment conditions, where in-party respondents are significantly more supportive than out-party respondents (p-values from t-tests are smaller than .01 for both unfamiliar issues). For social security, the justification from Joe Biden or Mitt Romney causes a significant increase in support relative to the control, but the dramatic out-party backlash does not persist with social security, a familiar issue. All in-party respondents are also significantly more supportive of each issue in the cue plus justification groups than the cue only groups in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 4: *Change in Support Relative to Control Group, Democratic Cue And Coherent Justification*
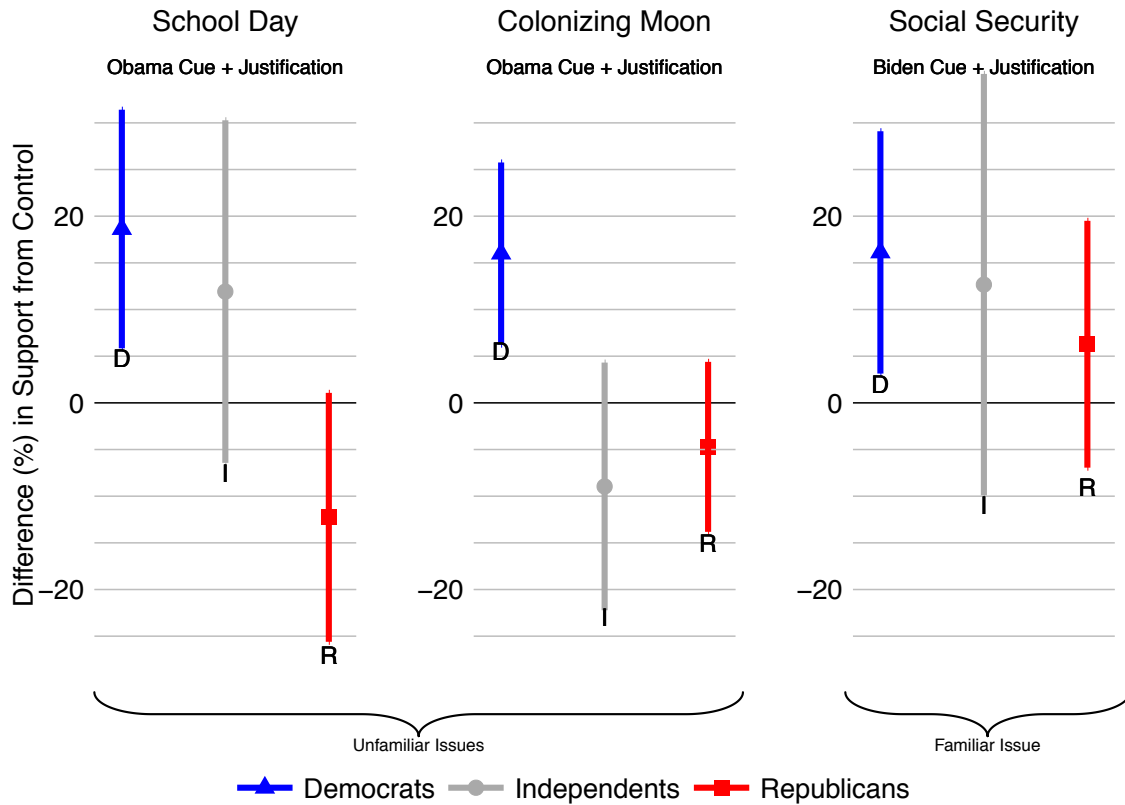
Notes: Results are from three experiments that included Democratic cues with a coherent justifications. Length of school day and colonizing the moon are unfamiliar issues and social security is a familiar issue. Sample size for social security is 507, lengthening the school day is 464, and colonizing the moon is 1,258. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Results show a significant difference in support relative to the control group among in-party respondents for all issues, but out-party respondents are no more likely to support the issue relative to the control. A two-sided t-test shows within treatment differences for the unfamiliar issues as well — Democrats are significantly more supportive of the issue position in question relative to Republicans (lengthening the school day and colonizing the moon have p-values less than .01).

Figure 5: *Change in Support Relative to Control Group, Republican Cue And Coherent Justification*
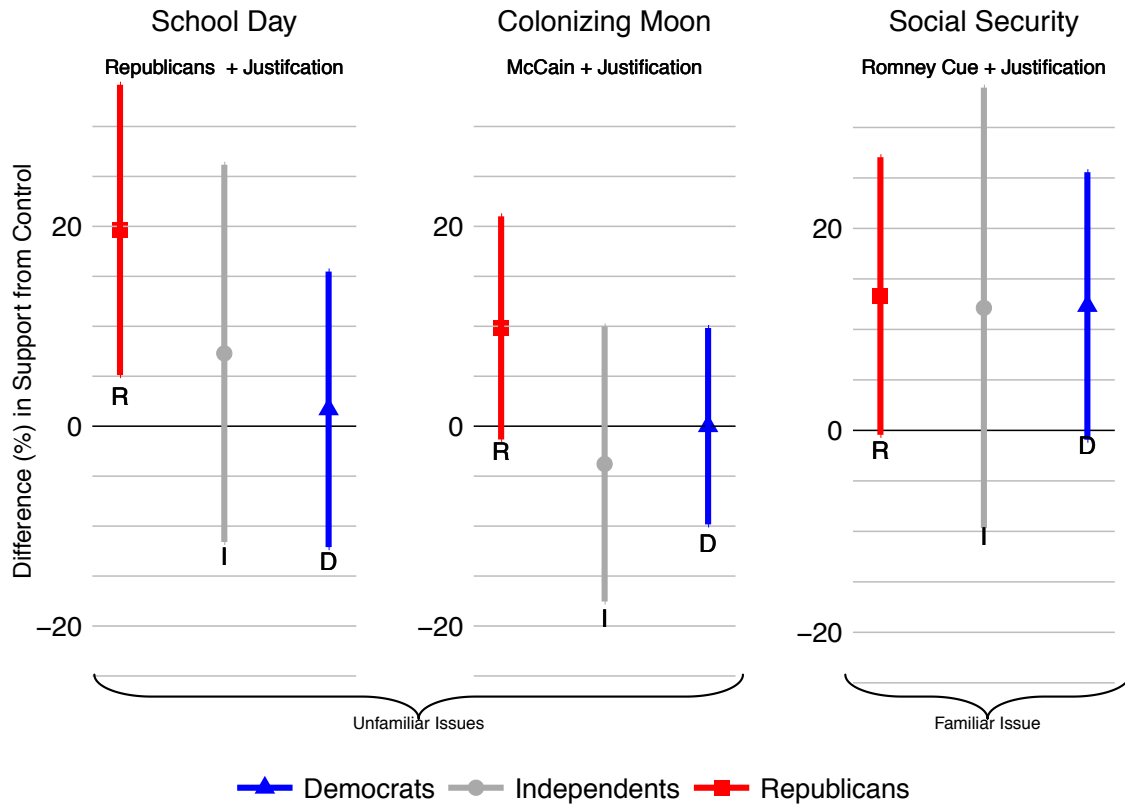
Notes: Results are from three experiments with Republican cues plus coherent justifications. Length of school day and colonizing the moon are unfamiliar issues and social security is a familiar issue. Sample size for social security is 496, lengthening the school day is 509, and colonizing the moon is 653. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals around each. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Results show a significant difference in support relative to the control group among in-party respondents for lengthening the school day, and the difference approaches significance for colonizing the moon and social security. But out-party respondents are no more likely to support the issue relative to the control. In addition, differences exist within the school day treatment group, where Republicans show significantly more support than Democrats when given a Republican cue and justification.

It is the case that candidates must give a justification for their positions in order to increase support among their party faithful. Therefore, justifications that candidates

deliver beyond simple cues do have an impact on attitudes about issues. An elite cue plus a justification, however, does not increase support for issues among out-party members, which suggests that the effect of party is only amplified when the justification is delivered by an elite that shares the same party identification.

3.4   If They Can Say Anything, Then It's Just Cueing

I posit that specious justifications do not affect individuals' positions on issues even if they know the party or candidates. In other words, elites cannot say anything and expect voters to follow on issues. If elites can give any justification for their issue positions, no matter how specious, and voters still follow, then the actual content of the justification would not matter all that much. If that were the case, elites could simply provide any random or incoherent justification in order to generate support for issues. I show in this subsection that elites are constrained to coherent reasons for their issue positions.

The problem with observational data is that elites rarely use specious justifications during campaigns, and therefore, it is difficult to parse out the effect of coherent vs. specious justifications (much like the effect of cues). The content of justifications could still influence attitude formation even if little variation exists in public debates and campaigns. To test this notion, I created experimental conditions for social security, lengthening the school day, and colonizing the moon in the same way as my cue and justification groups in my previous sections. But the content of these justifications differ in an important way; each justification has content that is superficially plausible, but actually wrong. If I am correct that elites are constrained to non-random, coherent justifications, then the party amplifying effect among in-partisans that I found in the previous section should *not* persist with a specious justification. See Table 1 on page nine for the exact question wording of each specious justification.

Figure 6 shows the difference in support for only unfamiliar issues with a specious

justification relative to the control. The first two panels of Figure 6 are Democratic cues and the third panel is a Republican cue. Results show that the specious justification is unsuccessful at generating support for all issues. And the difference in support among respondents between the coherent and specious justification is stark — 20 points or more for all three groups, a difference significant at a 95 percent level. These results demonstrate that elites of both parties are constrained by the reasons they provide for issue positions.

Figure 7 shows the specious justification group for social security, a familiar issue, and these results demonstrate unanimous opposition for both partisan cues. All party identification groups reject social security reform with a specious justification, and they do so at a much greater magnitude than school day and colonizing the moon. On average, support drops by 23 points regardless of the partisan cue or party identification. The content's impact is even more stark when comparing specious to coherent – for example, support among Democrats flips by 36 percentage-points when the content changes from coherent to specious with a Biden cue. This is also the only treatment conditions that show a significant difference from the control among Independents, who tend to have fewer considerations than partisans (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992).

Individuals might be able to reject a specious justification about social security (a familiar issue) more often than lengthening the school day and colonizing the moon (unfamiliar issues) because of their larger store of considerations about familiar issues (Zaller 1992). A larger store of considerations might make it easier for individuals to identify a specious justification, which prevents them from adopting an issue position. However, this finding is tentative and needs to be replicated with more familiar issues and cues.

Overall, this section demonstrates that candidates are constrained by the content used in their justifications; they cannot say anything and expect voters to blindly follow as some suggest (Bartels 2008; Lenz 2012; Zaller 2013). If candidates do not provide coherent justifications for their issue positions, the alignment between elites and citizens on issues that is found in observational data would not exist. Since the bulk of justifications used

by elites are coherent, observational data reveals the effect of both cues and *coherent* justifications together.

Figure 6: *Lack of Change in Support Relative to Control Group for Unfamiliar Issues, Both Party's Cues And Specious Justifications*
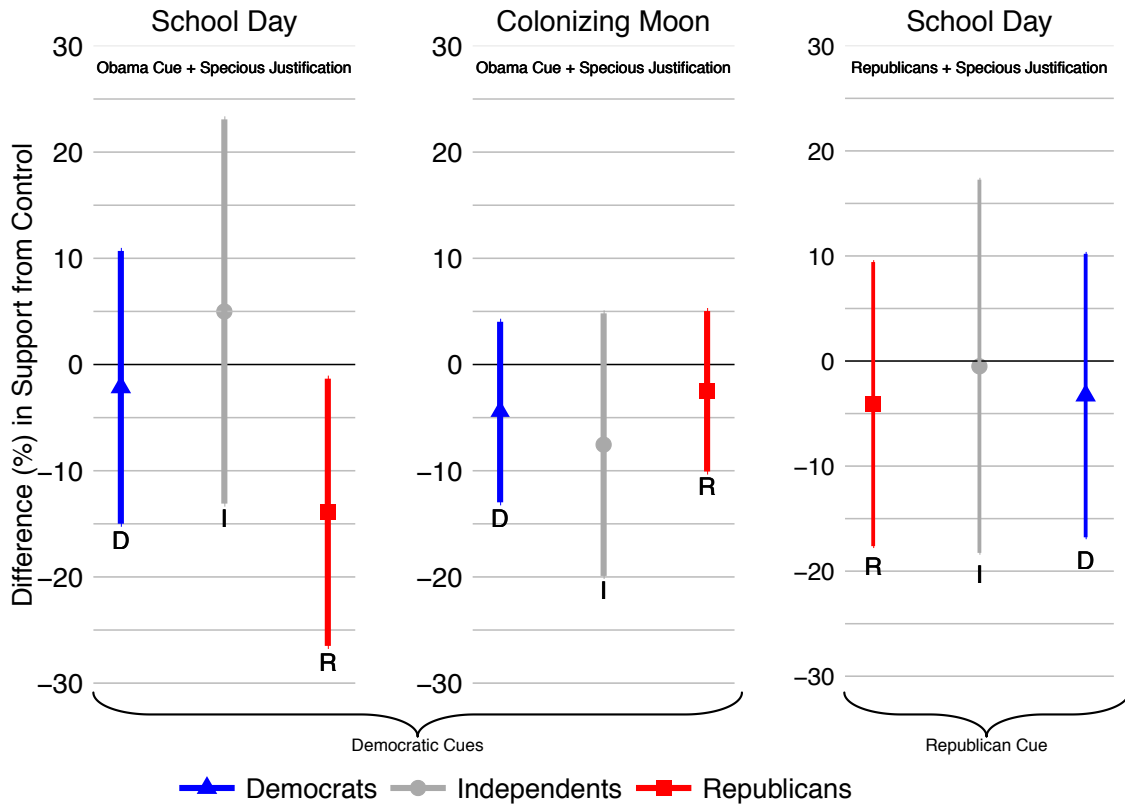
Notes: Results are from three experiments that included two Democratic cues and one Republican cue, with specious justifications. All the issues in this plot are unfamiliar issue. Sample size for lengthening the school day with an Obama cue is 482, lengthening the school day with a Republican cue is 507, and colonizing the moon is 956. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Results show no difference from the control for any party identification except Republicans in the Obama cue, school day group. These results suggest that elites cannot provide any specious justification during a public debate and expect voters to adopt their issue positions; therefore, elites are constrained by the content of their justifications.

Figure 7: *Change in Support Relative to Control Group for a Familiar Issue, Both Party's Cue And Specious Justification*
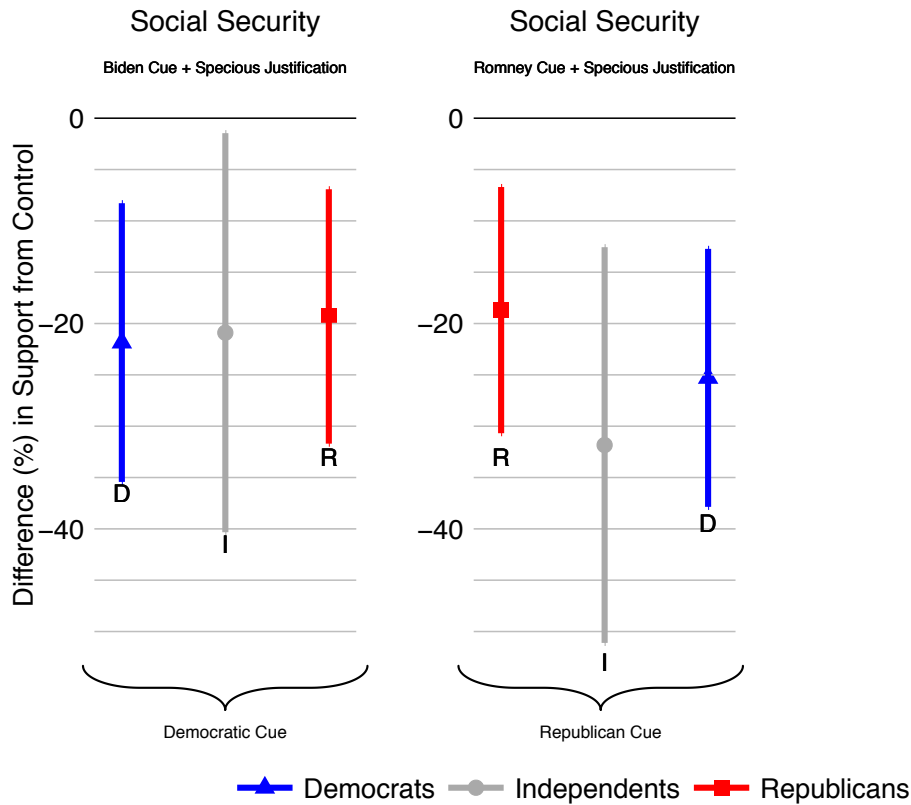
Notes: Results are from a Democratic cue, and a Republican Cue, with a specious justification relative to the control. Sample size is 487 for the Democratic experiment and 505 for the Republican experiment. Social security is a familiar issue. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. Triangle plotting symbols are Democrats, circular plotting symbols are Independents, and square plotting symbols are Republicans, with 95 percent confidence intervals around each. The left-most points in each plot are in-party respondents relative to the cue. Unlike unfamiliar issues, results show significantly less support from the control for social security reform across all party identification groups. Potentially because individuals store of considerations is higher for familiar issues like social security (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992), individuals can more easily reject issue positions that are justified with specious reasons.

4   Robustness Check: War with China

4.1   Can Elites Persuade on Any Issue?

In the previous sections, I showed that elites are constrained to coherent justifications for issues positions — elites cannot say anything and expect to shape public opinion. And as further confirmation that elites are constrained, I present a test of whether candidates can generate support for an issue that is wholly unpopular, war with China. For my argument about the role of justifications beyond party identification, elites should not be able to deliver ostensibly coherent justifications and elicit support for an issue that is unanimously unpopular. If candidates are able to create justifications and gain popular support for an issue that would otherwise be unpopular, then candidates are not constrained by the content of their issue positions. But if I am correct, individuals should not follow elites on an unpopular issue like war with China even if they are presented with persuasive justifications.

In January 2014, at a luncheon hosted by the Center for the National Interest, political scientist John Mearsheimer stated that a military conflict between the United States and China is more likely than a U.S.-Soviet conflict was during the Cold War (Keck 2014). Because of geographical and economic reasons, Mearsheimer argued that "it is inevitable that the U.S. and China will engage in an intense strategic competition, much like the Soviet-American rivalry during the Cold War. While stressing that he didn't believe a shooting war between the U.S. and China is inevitable, Mearsheimer said that he believes a U.S.-China Cold War will be much less stable than the previous American-Soviet" cold war (Keck 2014). However, these tensions are predicted to be as much as ten years away (assuming these predictions are even creditable) (Keck 2014). By all accounts, China poses no serious military threat to the United States as of today or in the immediate future. As a result, I argue that war with China — as an issue that might be espoused by a president in 2014 — would be an unpopular proposition, even with

Professor Mearsheimer's justification of inevitability. Although polling data is limited on this issue, war with China is not supported in the electorate. A Gallup poll in 2013 shows that only 14 percent of respondents see China as an "enemy" of the United States, and a majority describe China as an "ally" or "friendly" (Polling Report 2014).

In general, public opinion responses to war declarations by presidents can produce a "rally around the flag" outcome where the president receives bi-partisan support for war (Lee 1977; Norrander and Wilcox 1993). But even going back to World War II, support for military intervention divides along partisan lines, which suggests that support for war is driven by party cues (Berinsky 2009). To test this notion, I created two persuasive arguments in support of war with China to test in an experiment similar to my previous iterations. Below are the three treatment conditions:

Table 2: *Experimental Design*

Unpopular Issue:
War with China

Control	Would you favor or oppose a proposal to go to war with China, or haven't you thought much about it?
Elite cue	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by President Barack Obama to go war with China…
Cue plus persuasive justification 1	… because it is inevitable and it would be better to strike sooner rather than later…
Cue plus persuasive justification 2	… because China faces numerous allegations of human rights violations against its own people and this is a threat to American values…

The first cue plus justification treatment tests a justification similar to Mearsheimer's inevitability argument, and I take it a step further by asserting that the U.S. should strike now. The second justification treatment uses an appeal to human rights considerations. Past presidents used human rights violations as an impetus for war – for example, Clinton's justification for war in Bosnia, one of George W. Bush's justifications for War with Iraq, and even Obama's recent threat of war with Syria because of its use of chemical weapons against its own citizens. Although these justifications might be persuasive, I expect them to fail to increase support for war even among in-party members because elites are constrained by the content of issues.

4.2   War with China Experimental Results

My results show that war with China is an implausible issue – in the control group with no cue or justification, only 4 percent of respondents favor war and there is no difference by party identification. In addition, 55 percent of respondents oppose war with China in the control. The left panel in Figure 8 displays the difference in support for war with China in the partisan cue treatment relative to the control, and much like my previous results, a partisan cue alone does not differ much from the control group. However, there is a floor effect due to the lack of support in the control group (only four percent), so when support drops by four percent in the partisan cue group, support for war is essentially zero.

The middle and right panel of Figure 8 shows the difference in support in the justification treatments relative to the control. Results show that the in-party respondents are slightly more likely to support war, but the results are not significant at a 95 percent level. There is also no significant difference between Democrats and Republicans within each treatment group. The effect size is much smaller than my justification groups for social security, lengthening the school day, and colonizing the moon as well — an additional 8

points of in-party respondents support war with China compared to more than 15 point for the other three issues. In addition, support for war with China among in-party members only reaches 12 percent with a justification compared to 73 percent support among in-partisans for social security reform with a justification. As a result, justifications and cues for wholly undesirable issues can only move a very slim minority of individuals.

Figure 8: *Lack of Change in Support Relative to Control for an Unpopular Issue, War with China*
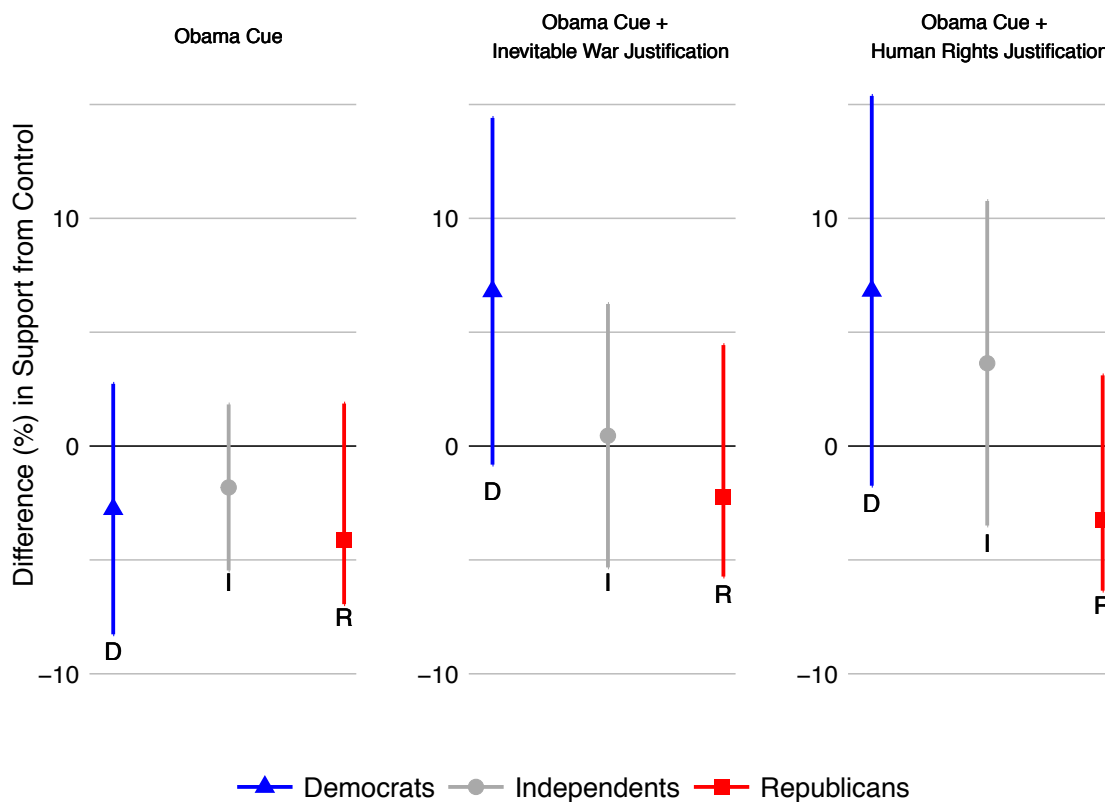
Notes: The experiment included three treatment conditions: partisan cue with no justification, partisan cue with a justification about inevitability, and a partisan cue group with a justification about human rights violations. The points represent percentage-point differences in support in treatment groups relative to the control. The sample size is 976. Results show a non-significant difference in support relative to the control group among all party identifications. Support among in-partisans goes from 4 percent in the control to 7 and 12 percent in both of the treatment groups that included a justification.

5 Constrained by Justifications and Issue Positions

My results show that elites can shape public opinion on issues, but only when they use coherent justifications. Previous evidence from campaigns and public debates do not show these types of constraints because elites rarely make the mistake of using specious justifications. Lenz (2012) shows many cases where voters adopt the issue positions of elites after a campaign, but the justifications used to persuade individuals are not haphazardly decided. Elites are strategically picking justifications that have the possibility to generate popular support for issues, like the ones used in this study. In other words, there are limits to which justifications can be used successfully, but we almost always observe elites using coherent ones. And when elites deliver coherent justifications similar to the ones used in this study, voters are likely to adopt issue positions from elites in the same way that is found in observational data.

In addition, when an issue position is unpopular, candidates will reposition themselves so that it does not hurt their standing with the public, suggesting that not any issue position will do. Lenz (2012) shows that Carter switched his position on defense spending, and Dutch elites switched their positions on nuclear power after the Chernobyl disaster. In both cases, elites tried to align themselves with public opinion for fear of losing public support. Current party leaders show this type of constraint as well. Barack Obama, for example, was against gay marriage in 2008 when only 39 percent of the public supported it (Pew Research 2014), and then repositioned himself after a majority of Americans began to support gay marriage (and also right before his re-election campaign). Even going back to John Kerry's bid for president in 2004, Bill Clinton advised Kerry to support a Federal Marriage Amendment, banning gay marriage, as a way to neutralize what was an unpopular issue at the time (Shrum 2007). This repositioning demonstrates that elites are constrained by the sentiments felt by the public on issues.

In addition, Congressional Republicans in 2014 showed signs of constraint when ne-

gotiating a budget with the White House. In 2013, Republicans successfully shutdown the government as a way of signaling their opposition to the Affordable Care Act, but this position came with public backlash. "In the aftermath, eight in 10 Americans say they disapprove of the shutdown. Two in three Republicans or independents who lean Republican share a negative view of the impasse. And even a majority of those who support the Tea party movement disapprove" (Balz and Clement 2013). This total lack of support for the shutdown in 2013 was not lost on Republicans elites in 2014. Even with an additional 13 seats in the House and nine seats in the Senate, Republican legislators easily passed a spending bill that prevented another government shutdown in December 2014. All these stylized examples demonstrate elites strategically selecting issues and justifications because they are constrained by public opinion.

6   Conclusion

With a sample size of 8,267 likely voters, four different elite cues, four different issues and an experimental design, my results show that the role of elite rhetoric is more than just simple cueing. Below is a table summarizing the percent support for each issue by experimental condition. My results show that elites can move public opinion on issues, but the public will not blindly follow from simple cues or specious arguments from elites. I show consistently across all experiments that elites must provide coherent justifications for their issue positions in order to generate support, and in this way, elites can amplify the role that party identification has on shaping attitudes about issues. In the next chapter, I show that justifications in the form of emotional stories about citizens, which are used regularly by elites to promote their issue positions, can increase the favorability of the elites telling the stories.

But its not that simple. While elites can lead public opinion in more ways than we previously realized, they are also subject to more constraints than we understood. To

demonstrate this, I tested the alternative hypothesis that elites can say anything and voters will blindly follow. I showed that elites cannot give any justification and expect voters to support their issue positions; they must provide coherent reasons to generate support. And when issues are familiar to individuals, they can more easily detect specious arguments. Elites also cannot gain popular support for wholly undesirable policies. Taken together, separating the effect of elite cues and justifications reveals the important and nuanced contribution that elite rhetoric has on public opinion.

Table 3: Summarizing Percent Support by Treatment Condition Across Issues

Conditions	Social Security %	School Day %	Moon %	China %
Control group	45	34	15	6
Elite cues	45	26	13	2
Cues plus coherent justifications	58	42	22	7, 12
Cues plus specious justifications	24	29	10	-
Sample size	1,993	1,997	3,301	976

 Notes: Percent support for a given issue within each treatment condition. Results show a consistent pattern across all issues: more support exists when elites provide coherent justifications for issue positions. Partisan cues alone do not increase support and may even reduce support for issues. Specious reasons reduce the level of support for an issue. Coherent justifications consistently increase support across all issues.

Chapter 5:

Ripping Yarn: Elite Storytelling during Campaigns

"Don't say the old lady screamed. Bring her on and let her scream."

-Mark Twain.

1 Introduction

1.1 Ben is Back in Construction and Home For Dinner Every Night

Barack Obama proudly told the story of Ben and Rebekah during the 2015 State of the Union:

> *Seven years ago, Rebekah and Ben Erler of Minneapolis were newlyweds. She waited tables. He worked construction. Their first child, Jack, was on the way. They were young and in love in America, and it doesn't get much better than that. "If only we had known," Rebekah wrote to me last spring, "what was about to happen to the housing and construction market." As the crisis worsened, Ben's business dried up, so he took what jobs he could find, even if they kept him on the road for long stretches of time. Rebekah took out student loans, enrolled in community college, and retrained for a new career. And slowly, it paid off. They bought their first home. Rebekah got a better job, and then a raise. Ben is back in construction – and home for dinner every night. "It is amazing," Rebekah wrote, "what you can bounce back from when you have to... we are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times."*

During public debates and campaigns, elites use emotional stories about voters, or stories about their own background, as a way to personalize issues for voters. Barack Obama, for example, could have rattled off economic indicators that demonstrate a recovering economy, but instead he wove a story about a family that experienced the recovery firsthand. Why do elites tell stories? And what effect do they have on voters?

In this chapter, I examine the role of stories in elite rhetoric and show that stories shape public opinion in different ways than abstract arguments. My results show that stories from politicians affect individuals differently based on party identification. In-party individuals will support an issue at the same rate regardless if candidates deliver a story or an argument. In fact, elites cannot generate support for an issue from opposing-party individuals when delivering an argument. Opposing-party individuals, however, support an issue significantly more when candidates tell a story instead of an argument. This suggests that elites strategically use stories as a way to personalize an issue for voters that might not come along with them based on party identification. And unlike an argument, a story can increase the favorability of candidates, and this increased evaluation is driven by in-party individuals. Therefore, previous research that failed to find a connection between elite rhetoric and favorability might have tested the wrong from of communications, abstract arguments, instead of emotional stories (Cohen 2003; Lenz 2012; Broockman and Butler 2015).

1.2   How Prevalent Are Stories in Elite Rhetoric?

In convention speeches from 1964 to 2012, presidential candidates made appeals to stories with 26 percent of their rhetoric.[1]   Additionally, differences exist between candidates from the challenging party compared to the incumbent party. Candidates from the incumbent party tell stories 29.3 percent of the time compared to 23.5 percent by challengers, a difference that is significant at a 99 percent level using a t-test. I found that candidates tell three types of stories: stories about sympathetic citizens they have met, stories about their own biography, and stories recounting historical events. When candidates tell stories about sympathetic citizens, they are most likely describing a person who is affected (positively or negatively) by an issue. Candidates tell stories about their biography as a way of breaking the ice with voters who might not be familiar with

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[1]See Chapter 3 for a detailed breakdown of elite rhetoric.

their backgrounds. Biographical stories also serve as justifications for issue positions or their general view the world. Or, stories are used to recount historical events, usually with subtle references to present-day issues. Figure 1 shows examples of all three types of stories.

Figure 1: *Examples of Storytelling*

Sympathetic Citizen Story by Al Gore, 2000

"I met Jacqueline Johnson in St. Louis, Mo. She worked for 35 years as a medical assistant, caring for others. Now she's 72 years old and needs prescription medicines to care for herself. She spends over half of her Social Security check, her only source of income, on her pills. I invited her here tonight. And Mrs. Johnson, I promise you once again: I will fight for a prescription drug benefit for all seniors under Medicare."

Biographical Story by Barack Obama, 2012

"My grandparents were given the chance to go to college, buy their first home, and fulfill the basic bargain at the heart of America's story: the promise that hard work will pay off; that responsibility will be rewarded; that everyone gets a fair shot, and everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules – from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC. I ran for President because I saw that basic bargain slipping away."

Historical Recounting Story by George Bush, 2004

"Since 2001, Americans have been given hills to climb and found the strength to climb them. Now, because we have made the hard journey, we can see the valley below. Now, because we have faced challenges with resolve, we have historic goals within our reach, and greatness in our future. We will build a safer world and a more hopeful America and nothing will hold us back."

Notes: Taken verbatim from the convention acceptance speeches of Al Gore, Barack Obama, and George W. Bush respectively.

Why do incumbents tell more stories than challengers? I speculate that incumbents tell more stories than challengers because they will not be penalized by ambiguous rhetoric. Challengers, on the other hand, are forced to be more specific justifications about their issue positions to show that they are a credible opposition candidate. As a result, challengers need to be more specific about their issue positions in order to distinguish them-

selves from incumbents, which incentivize challengers to use more arguments than incumbents. Incumbents, on the other hand, do not need to provide specific policy details to be credible because they are already a proven commodity, and instead incumbents can rely on storytelling.

2   The Literature of Stories and Hypotheses

2.1   Stories Help Information Processing and Assigning Responsibility

Unlike an abstract argument, sociologists and narratologists define a story by establishing a time and place, and they have an easily identifiable beginning, middle, and end (Genette 1983; Polkinghorne 1988; Gergen and Gergen 1988; Richardson 2002; Polletta 2006). Stories have characters and protagonists with points of view about the world, and these points of view encourage listeners to sympathize with the protagonists (Polkinghorne 1991; Genette 1983). Stories typically have a gap in time that serves to show differences in points of view — "me as I am now and me at the time I experienced the events that I am recounting" (Polletta 2006, 9). For the person telling the story, this gap in time, and change in point of view, serves to create an authority over an issue. For example, African American members of Congress told stories about Martin Luther King, Jr. as a way to legitimize their role as leaders of black interests (Polletta 2006).

Cognitive psychology has investigated the role of stories for some time, and the general conclusion is that stories are a driving force in how individuals store information and interpret events (Baumeister and Newman 1994; Harvey, Orbuch and Weber 1992; Howard, 1991; Gergen and Gergan 1988; Bruner 1986; but also see Fiske (1993) and Baumeister and Newman (1994) for a comprehensive review of the literature.). Some even argue that individuals do not evaluate others (or themselves) in terms of propositions and state-

ments, and instead individuals use stories about specific incidents as a way of justifying their attitudes (DeRaad 1984). Why do individuals rely so heavily on stories to process their lives? Possibly because stories are easy to understand and provide a "richness" that an abstract generalizations lack (Baumeister and Newman 1994). For many individuals, "describing an incident as a detailed story is closer to the experience itself, and therefore requires less complex information processing, than providing an abstract summary of the principles and causal relations involved in the event." (Baumeister and Newman 1994, 677). The cognitive psychology literature suggests that stories are important to individuals, but much of this research examines the role of interpersonal storytelling as opposed to storytelling by partisan elites.

In political science, the effects of framing information can influence perceptions of events and issues (Tversky and Kahneman 1981; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Iyengar 1991; Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997; Jacoby 2000; Druckman and Nelson 2003; Druckman 2004; Chong and Druckman 2010; Druckman, Fein, Leeper 2012; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). However, almost no study addresses framing in terms of stories compared with abstract arguments, with the exception being Iyenger's analysis of thematic and episodic frames in the news media (1991). The news media can frame issues in a thematic or episodic way during broadcasts — essentially telling stories with a current event — and these frames can change how citizens hold elites accountable (Iyengar 1991). The government is held more accountable for issues mentioned in the news when the narrative connects to a broader theme as opposed to a narrative about an isolated incident (Iyengar 1991). Therefore, if Iyengar's (1991) results hold for elites that tell stories as well, then candidates might be able to change attitudes about themselves by using a story that connects to an issue.

2.2   Hypotheses About Elites and Stories

In the previous chapter, I found that candidates can shape opinions about issues in greater magnitude with a justification than a partisan cue alone. But upon closer examination, much of this change in public opinion comes mostly from the in-party — voters that already identify with the elite giving the justification. Democratic respondents that saw a justification about an issue from Mitt Romney, for example, did not increase support relative to the control group. But if telling a story is "closer to the experience itself", then a story from a candidate might be more palatable to out-partisans than an argument that only serves to summarize the "principles and causal relations" of an issue (Baumeister and Newman 1994, 677). This research in cognitive psychology leads me to my first hypothesis about the role of stories.

Stories Increase Support More Than Arguments: Information about what candidate supports a particular issue, with a justification in the form of a story, will affect voters' positions on the issue in greater magnitude than a justification in the form of an abstract argument.

Corollary 1: Justifications in the form of stories will affect *out-partisans'* positions on the issue in greater magnitude than a justification in the form of an argument.

The second hypothesis below takes the Iyenger (1991) narrative results a step further and predicts that an elite can also change her favorability when she successfully persuade on issues with a story. The government is held accountable when policy information is framed in the form a narrative that connects to a broader theme (Iyenger 1991); therefore, an elite that connects an issue to a braoder theme with a story might be to change attitudes about themselves in a favorable way. Previous research that finds no movement in candidate evaluations only tested justifications from elites in the form of arguments and abstraction (See Lenz (2012) SCHIP experiments on page 198 where "supporters argued..." and "opponents argued..." in his experimental conditions. Also see Broock-

man and Butler's (2014 manuscript) feild experiments using state Senators with weak and strong arguments). These results about narrative framing lead me to my second hypothesis.

Stories Increase Elite Favorability: When elites succeed in changing attitudes about issues in a favorable way from a story, and not an argument or cue alone, they will also increase their own favorability among voters.

3   Data and Methods

This chapter presents results from a series of randomized experiments with a sample size of 8,053 likely voters online, comparing the impact of cues, arguments, and stories. The survey research firm Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates fielded my experiments with a regularly maintained pool of opt-in respondents from which they construct representative samples of the voting population.[2]

The overarching design of my experiments is the same as the previous chapter, and I also use the issues lengthening the school day and Social Security reform. The Internet survey randomizes into: 1) a control group in which respondents are simply asked whether they favor or oppose an issue, which acts as the counterfactual average of not receiving any information or cue (Green and Gerber 2012); 2) an elite cue group that asks if respondents support or oppose an issue if it was proposed by a candidate or party; 3) a cue plus justification group that asks if respondents support or oppose an issue if it was proposed by a candidate or party *but* also with a justification that a candidate might use to support the issue. These justifications can come in one of two forms: brief abstract arguments that candidates might say during a campaign, or a justification that is in the

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[2]I also used post-stratification weights for gender, age, race, and party identification to maintain representativeness. Penn, Schoen and Berland uses click-testing, time-monitoring, and other tools to ensure that respondents are not "professional survey-takers" who rush through questionnaires or simply guess at questions. An internal report on the quality of respondents is conducted each quarter.

form of a story about a sympathetic citizens affected by an issue. A comparison of the arguments and stories are in the table on the following page:

Table 1: *Experimental Design with Story Treatment Group*

	Social Security Reform	**Lengthening the School Day**
Control	Would you favor or oppose a proposal to raise the Social Security contribution rate for high income individuals, or haven't you thought much about this?	Would you favor or oppose increasing the length of the school day by an hour for Kindergarten through 12th grade, or haven't you thought much about this?
Elite cue	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by Vice President Joe Biden…	Would you favor or oppose a proposal by (President Barack Obama OR former presidential candidate Mitt Romney)…
Cue plus argument justification	… because all seniors should be able to retire with dignity, not just a privileged few…	… in order to keep American students competitive in the global economy in science and math…
Cue plus story justification	When talking about Social Security, Vice President Joe Biden said: I recently met Barbra Johnson. She worked as an administrative assistant in a children's hospital for almost 40 years, caring for others. She's 70 years old now and happily retired. But like most seniors nowadays, Barbra cannot afford medication, medical supplies, and nursing care from her Social Security benefits. Day-to-day expenses are impossible for Barbra to meet. She worked hard her whole life and deserves more from an outdated Social Security program.	When talking about public schools, (Vice President Joe Biden OR former presidential candidate Mitt Romney) said: Even though Bobby Wintlock always prepares, he struggles with math and science just like millions of other American students. Three years ago, Bobby's school day increased by an hour, giving him more time in the classroom to learn math and science than ever before. Bobby now excels at math and science, and he wants to study astrophysics in college. If he goes on to pursue his dream, Bobby will be the first in his family to attend college.

In order to test my second hypothesis, all respondents are asked how favorable they are of Mitt Romney and Joe Biden after the experiment. The wording for these question are identical to the wording used on ANES Internet questionnaires. If my hypothesis is correct, the favorability of each candidate will be significantly higher for those randomized into the story group relative to the control, cue, or argument groups. Based on previous experiments (Lenz 2012; Broockman and Butler 2014 MS), I do not expect my argument group to be more favorable of a given candidate compared to the control or cue group.

4   Results

This section separates the results by party identification like my previous chapter. Each plot will display differences from the control group for the cue, cue plus argument, and cue plus story groups. Each plot is for a given issue and candidate combination; for example, Biden and Social Security. Plotting symbols are arranged by party identification, where the most left point in each plot is the in-party relative to the cue with Independents in the middle.

4.1   Opposing Party is Open to Stories, Not Arguments

In this section, I argue that voters are more open to supporting issue from the opposing party when justifications are in the form of stories. Figures 2-4 shows three different tests of my first hypothesis and corollary using two issues and two cues.

Figure 2 shows the difference from the control group for Joe Biden and increasing the length of school day broken out by party identification. Like all my previous cue treatment condition, I find a null results from this experiment as well (first panel of Figure 2). In order for voters to adopt an issue position, candidates must deliver justifications, and these results are in the second and third panel.

The second and third panel partial confirms my first hypothesis. It is not the case that the overall level of support is higher in the story treatment — more Independents and Democrats support lengthening the school day with an argument. However, Republicans support lengthening the school day by an additional 9 points with a story compared to the control. These results conflict with my hypothesis that stories move *all* voters more than arguments, but my corollary is supported because opposing-party Republicans are more persuaded by stories.

Figure 2: *Joe Biden and School Day, Change in Support Relative to the Control*
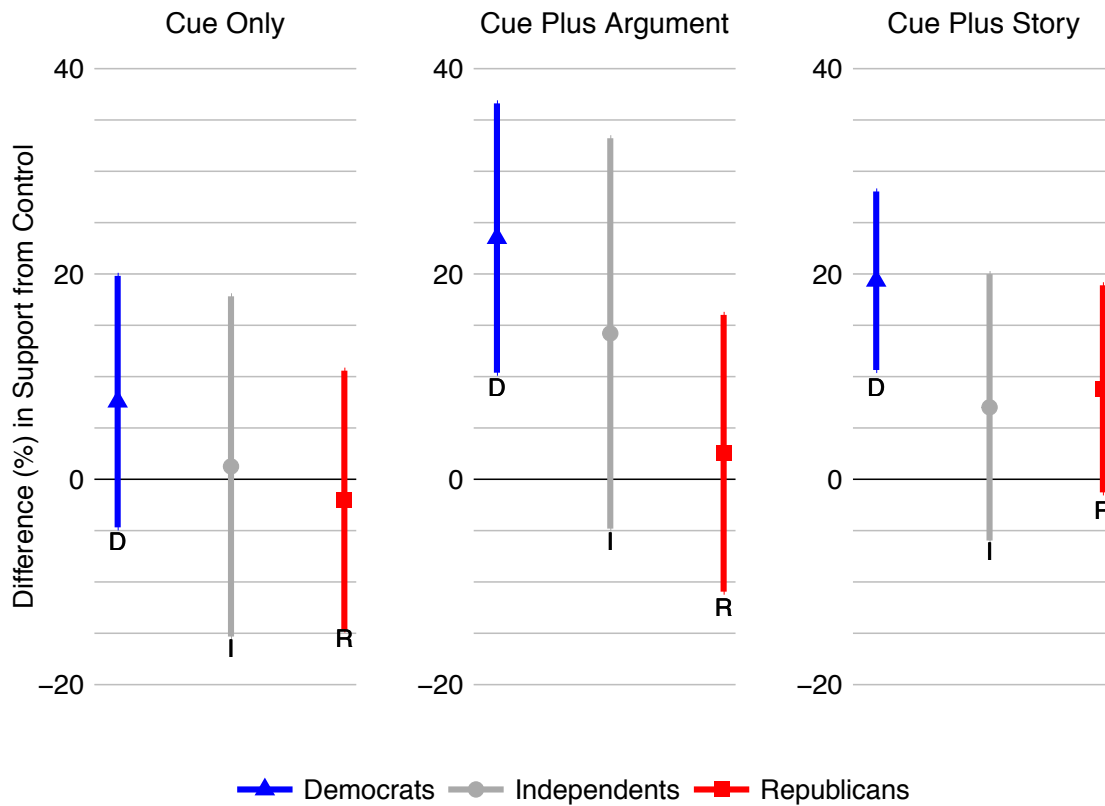
Notes: Data come from a representative Internet sample size of 1,812 likely voters. Note that the story treatment condition has twice the sample size as the cue and cue plus argument treatments. Results are difference in support relative to the control group broken out by party identification. Each point has a 95 percent confidence interval. Results show an increase in out-party support with a story but not an argument. Cues alone continue to produce a null result.

Figure 3 shows results from the equivalent experiment about lengthening the school day, but the cue is now former presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Confirming several of my previous experiments, the cue only treatment does not move opinion on lengthening the school day for any party identification. And similar to my Joe Biden results in Figure 2, in-party voters will only support their candidate with a justification either in the form of an argument or a story.

My results in Figure 3 also provide more evidence against my first hypothesis that stories will generate more support than arguments across all voters, but my corollary is supported again by this Mitt Romney experiment. Democrats do not increase support for lengthening the school day from an argument from Mitt Romney (middle panel), but Democrats show a 13 point increase in support relative to the control from a story (right panel). Taking Figure 2 and 3 together, stories and arguments have the same influence on in-party voters, but stories are more effective at generating support among opposing-party voters.
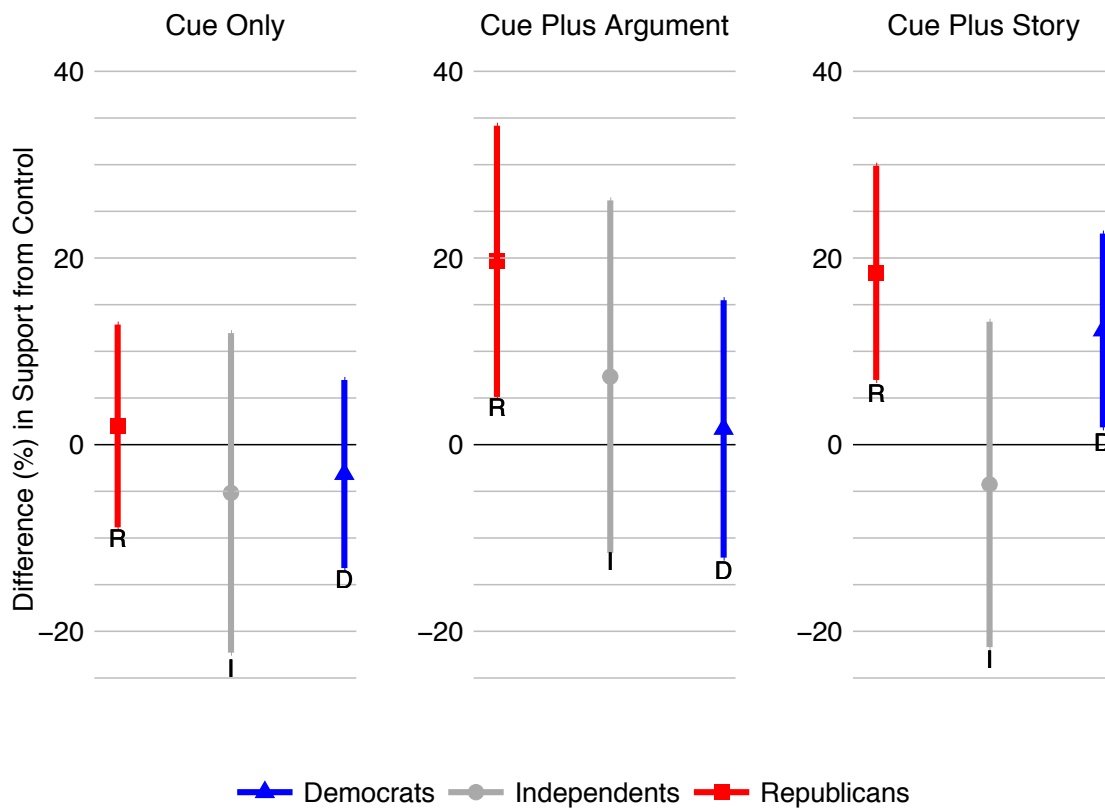
Figure 3: *Mitt Romney and School Day, Change in Support Relative to the Control*

Notes: Data come from a representative Internet sample size of 1,747 likely voters. Note that the story and cue treatment conditions has twice the sample size as the cue plus argument treatment. Results are difference in support relative to the control group broken out by party identification. Each point has a 95 percent confidence interval. Results show an increase in out-party support with a story but not an argument. Cues alone continue to produce a null result.

Figure 4 displays results from a randomized experiment with Joe Biden as the cue and the issue of Social Security, and these results differ from lengthening the school day. First, the partisan cue treatment shows a near significant level of backlash among Republicans and Independents. For the argument and story treatments, the level of movement from the control is diminished compared to lengthening the school day (an unfamiliar issue). For example, in-party support differences from the control for Social Security in Figure 4 are roughly half the size of the difference from the control for lengthening the school day in Figure 2.

Figure 4: *Joe Biden and Social Security, Change in Support Relative to the Control*
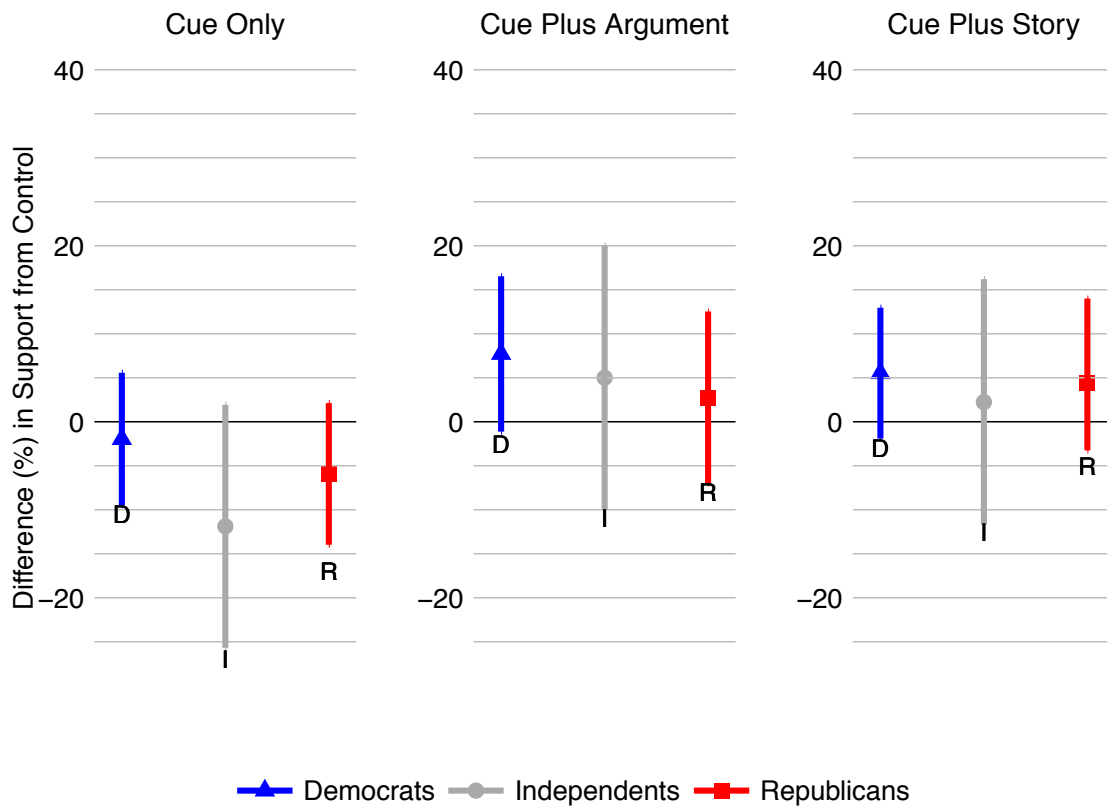
Notes: Data come from a representative Internet sample size of 2,540 likely voters. Results are difference in support relative to the control group broken out by party identification. Each point has a 95 percent confidence interval. Results show an increase in out-party support with a story but not an argument. Cues alone continue to produce a null result.

Although the effect size is smaller, the results in Figure 4 are consistent with my lengthening the school day experiments in that they all reject my first hypothesis. That is, an overall difference does not exists between arguments and story when it comes to changing opinion on policy positions as seen in the third panel of Figure 4. In addition, the opposing party is not more receptive to stories than arguments about Social Security. These results are only a first test, but they suggest that stories are less effective for more familiar issues.

Taken these experiments together, these results reject my first hypothesis, but provide some evidence for my corollary about opposing-party opinion formation. The overall level of support relative to the control is the same for arguments and stories; it is not the case that stories are more persuasive than arguments in the aggregate. But heterogeneous treatment effects do exist by party identifications for new issues, specifically the influence of stories on opposing-party opinion formation. If a Democratic party leader tells a story about a citizens affected by a unfamiliar issue, Republican voters are more open to supporting the Democrat's policy position. And this works similarly for Republican party leaders and Democratic voters even when the issue content and justifications are held constant. These results do not hold for opinion change on the issue of social security, potentially because opposing-party voters have more considerations on the issue. That being said, more data needs to be collected with a variety of cues and issues in order to pinpoint exactly when stories influence opinion formation and change (and when they do not). I am currently in the field with a new story experiment that I talk about briefly in the conclusion.

5   Candidate Evaluations Improve From Stories

In this section I argue that stories, and not arguments, can improve a candidate's favorability despite the fact that stories and arguments have a similar effect on attitudes

about issues. Some scholars argue that individuals rarely change their evaluations of candidates after learning about the candidates' issue positions (Zaller 1992; Cohen 2003; Bartels 2008; Lenz 2009; 2012; Tesler 2014; Broockman and Butler 2014 unpublished manuscript). Other research, however, shows that issue positions staked out by candidates can influence candidate evaluations (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Johnston, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Vavreck 2009; Kenski, Hardy, and Jamieson 2010). In this section, I challenge the idea that rhetoric about issues have no influence on candidate evaluations, and in doing so, I show that stories about issues can make a candidate more favorable in the eyes of voters.

Using innovative field experiments, Broockman and Butler (2014 MS) show that candidate evaluations of state legislators do not change after individuals are exposed to arguments about issues. However, unlike my experiments, Broockman and Butler's (2014 MS) experiments tested evaluations of relatively unknown state legislators, and the types of justifications used are only weak and strong *arguments.* In the results to follow, I show that evaluations of well-known elites like Joe Biden and Mitt Romney are more favorable among respondents who were exposed to their *stories.* Therefore, individuals might be more invested in evaluating Biden and Romney compared to state legislators, but the more dramatic difference in our experiments is the content of the rhetoric: stories and not arguments. And this content difference might be driving changes in candidate evaluations.

After the story experiments in the previous section, I asked a follow-up candidate evaluation question. All respondents saw the evaluation question regardless of treatment assignment except for those in the Romney-argument treatment condition, unfortunately, because it simply was not asked during that experiment. Figure 5 shows the change in evaluations of Joe Biden from the control group for each treatment condition. If my second hypothesis is correct, candidate evaluations should increase for the story treatments relative to the control, but I should find no difference in evaluations for the argument treatments.

Results in Figure 5 confirm my hypothesis about stories changing candidate evaluations. Stories are the only treatment conditions that are different than zero at a 95 percent level for both issues. In addition, a t-test of means between the story treatment and the other two conditions combined yields a significant difference at a 95 percent level, demonstrating the unique effect of stories on candidate evaluations. Without the story treatment conditions in my experiments, my two other treatment conditions would confirm past research of no change in favorability from elite rhetoric; it is the additional treatment condition of stories that previous research missed when studying candidate evaluations.

Lastly, Joe Biden's evaluation increases are not driven by the opposing-party respondents. Using a t-test of means, Democratic identifiers were significantly more favorable of Biden in the story condition, but this significant difference does not hold for Republican identifiers. In other words, the changes in Joe Bidens evaluations are driven by Democrats, the in-party respondents, and not Republicans even though they were more supportive of lengthening the school day with a story than an argument. This nuanced point is important because it is consistent with what we know about voting in the real world — voters rarely support candidates from a different party during a presidential election. In the 2012 election, for example, well over 90 percent of voters with a party identification voted for their party nominee (Sides and Vavreck 2013). Therefore, the profile of voters that are more favorable of Biden from a story experiment are also the same types of voters that might vote for him during an election, demonstrating that my favorability results have some external validity.

Figure 5: *Joe Biden Evacuations after School Day Experiment*
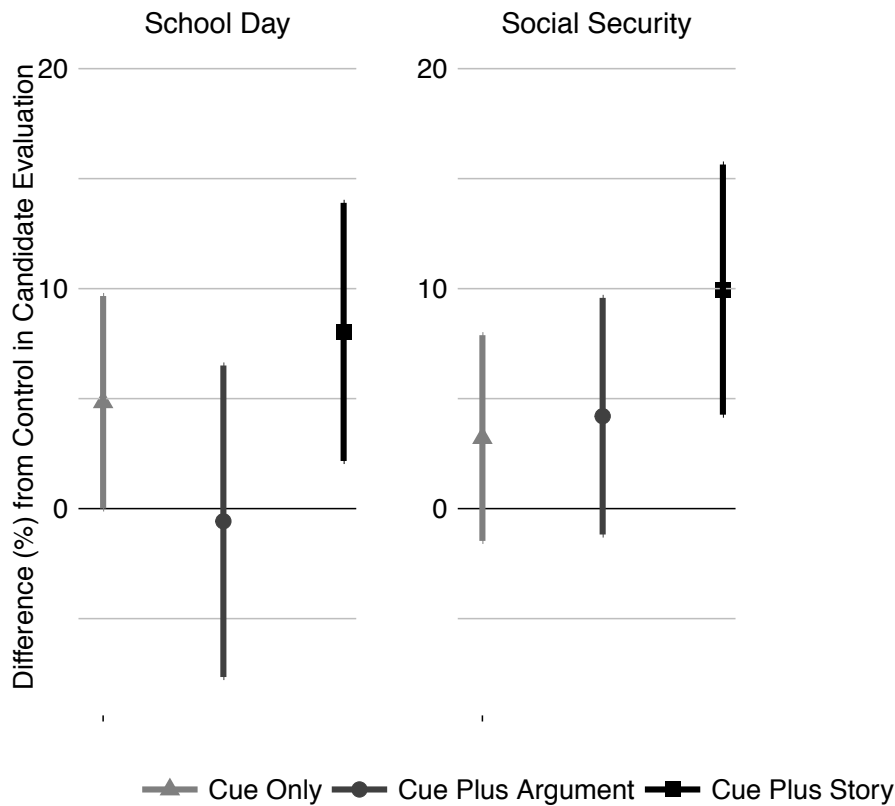
Notes: Data come from a representative Internet sample size of 4,352 likely voters. Results are difference in favorability for Joe Biden relative to the control group. Favorability was asked of all respondents after the experiment. Results show that only stories signficantly improve favorability for Biden. And this favorability increase is driven by Democratic identifiers.

Table 2 below confirms that my story results are not limited to one party — evaluations of Mitt Romney increase from a story as well. Unlike Biden, Mitt Romney did not get a small but insignificant pump in favorability from the cue treatment. But Romney did improve his favorability, by almost 9 points, from telling the exact same story and Biden about increasing the length of the school day. These results further confirm my second hypothesis about the role of stories and candidate evaluation.

Table 2: *Mitt Romney Favorability asked School Day Experiment*

	Control Group	Cue Only	Cue Plus Story
Choices	%	%	%
Favorable	**33.5**	**32.8**	**42.0**
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	15.3	16.7	13.7
Unfavorable	37.2	37.5	25.1
Have't heard enough to say	13.9	13.0	9.2
Sample size	352	323	336

Note: Mitt Romney favorability asked of all respondents after the experiment with Romney as the cue. Results are broken out by experimental condition. The left column is respondents who were randomized into the control, middle column is the partisan cue treatment, and the right column is respondents who were randomized into the story condition. Results show an increase in favorability among respondents who were in the storytelling treatment. Favorability was not asked of those in the argumentation group, and so it is omitted from this table.

6   Conclusion and Further Research on Stories

In this chapter, I showed that stories have a unique impact on public opinion. Stories can help elites reach across the aisle to persuade opposing-party voters on issues, and they can change the favorability of the elite telling the story. Both these outcomes, opposing-party persuasion and change in favorability, do not occur from cues or cues plus arguments. These results suggest that a story with a sympathetic figure affected by an issue is closer to the experience itself than an abstract argument about the same issue. This personalization of an issue might give elites a level of credibility, or genuineness, to voters that abstract arguments do not. And this level of credibility on an issue might then lead to more favorable opinions of the person telling the story.

But because my argument and story justifications are so different, it is difficult tell if the personalization within the story is moving favorability or something else in the rhetoric. To get at this problem with my further research, I will be conducting experiments comparing rhetoric with more subtle differences to pinpoint the exact causal mechanism. I recently completed an experiment in this vein that I could not include in the body of this chapter because of time constraints. But I briefly discuss these results below.

Table 3 shows two experimental conditions that I recently fielded to test the hypothesis that the personalization of the story is the driving factor behind changes in candidate favorability. The design of this experiment is the same as the previous: 1000 respondents are randomized into one of three groups: a control group asking if they favor or oppose raising the contribution rate for Social Security, a cue plus story group that explicitly mentions a sympathetic citizen to personalize the justifications, or a cue plus story group that is an anonymous version of the same story. Table 3 shows the rhetorical differences bolded in red. The personalized story explicitly mentions a woman's name and her occupation, and the anonymous story describes the same situation but with a general term "seniors" and no specific occupation (however, respondents are told in both conditions

that they spent their life "caring for others"). Unlike my argument condition, my anonymous story has an identical frame as my personalized story; therefore, any difference in favorability must be due to the personalization.

Table 3: *Anonymous Story vs. Personalized Story Experiment*

When talking about Social Security, Vice President Joe Biden said:

Personalized Story

I recently met **Barbra Johnson. She worked as an administrative assistant in a children's hospital** for almost 40 years, caring for others. **She's** 70 years old now and happily retired. But like most seniors nowadays, **Barbra** cannot afford medication, medical supplies, and nursing care from **her** Social Security benefits. Day-to-day expenses are impossible for **Barbra** to meet. **She** worked hard **her** whole life and deserves more from an outdated Social Security program.

OR

Anonymous Story

I recently met **with seniors. Many have worked** for almost 40 years, caring for others. **They're** 70 years old now and happily retired. But like most seniors nowadays, **they** cannot afford medication, medical supplies, and nursing care from **their** Social Security benefits. Day-to-day expenses are impossible for **them** to meet. **They** worked hard **their** whole life and deserves more from an outdated Social Security program.

Notes: Experiment that randomizes respondents into a personalized story or a anonymous story about social security. Joe Biden favorability is asked of all respondents after. Control group asking about increasing the contribution rate for Social Security not shown.

Favorability is asked after the randomized experiment above, and results confirm my hypothesis about the effect of personalized stories. Voters in the personalized story condition were more favorable of Joe Biden than voters in the control group by **nine percentage points**. However, voters in the anonymous story condition were actually *less* favorable of Joe Biden by **one percentage point**, which is consistent the effect of ar-

guments on candidate evaluation. In addition, the anonymous story condition does not increase support for the issue position among Republicans relative to the control, while the personalized story does persuade the opposing-party on the issue. Although this is only one experiment, it is a more controlled test of personalized stories compared with a more abstract justification. Because of the similarities across treatment groups, the difference in candidate favorability must be due to the personalization in the story and not the details of the story. My future research will continue to assess the value of stories told by elites.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion and Next Steps

1   Conclusion

My work is on the importance of elite rhetoric in shaping public opinion despite the fact that party identification operates as an efficient cue for most voters. With a representative Internet sample of 11,266 respondents, ten experiments, five different elite cues, and four different issues, I showed that the role of elite rhetoric on public opinion is more than just simple cueing. Elites matter to public opinion, but in a more nuanced way than we recognized in the party identification literature. I show consistently across all experiments that elites must justify their issue positions with coherent content in order to generate support, and in this way, elites can amplify the role that party identification has on shaping attitudes about issues. Lastly, when elites use emotional stories about citizens to personalize an issue, they are able to reach across party lines and generate support among opposing-party individuals. Additionally, personalized stories, not abstract arguments, can lead to more favorable evaluations of the elites telling the stories.

But it's not that simple. While elites can lead opinion in more ways than we previously realized, they are also subject to more constraints than we understood. To demonstrate this, I test the alternative hypothesis that elites can say anything and voters will blindly follow. I show that elites cannot give any justification and expect voters to support their issue positions; they must provide coherent reasons to generate support. Elites also cannot gain popular support for wholly undesirable policies. Because elites are constrained by justifications and issues, their ability to shape public opinion is more limited than previously characterized.

2   Future Research

My future research will continue to explore how elites are constrained by rhetoric. In addition to experiments on stories, my future work will explore constraints to messages,

but with a different (more expansive) definition of constraints to include the role of chance: 1. Who are they? How do gender, race, and age constrain the issue positions and justifications staked out by elites? 2. Who are running against them? How do characteristics of opponents constrain issue positions and justifications? 3. Fundamentals, such as the state of the economy.

All these variables, which are not under the control of elites, might influence the justifications used to support issue positions, and I plan to continue using experiments to probe these questions. For example, Senators Rand Paul and Marco Rubio might both deliver the same justification about the issue of immigration because they are members of the same political party. But because of Rubios Hispanic ethnicity, the message about immigration might be more effective coming from Rubio because his Hispanic background implies a personal connection to the issue. Or maybe the same message coming from Rand Paul would resonate more with voters that are ethnocentric or racially resentful because Paul is white. In other words, candidates might be constrained to certain types of political communications because of their prior experiences or race (all of which are due to chance and not choice).

A candidates message might also be constrained due to their opponents characteristics, which we know very little about. Candidates often try to highlight their decades of experience while campaigning, and this credit claiming might be hugely valuable when staking out policy positions. However, decades of experience, as a justification for an issue position, might looks old and dated compared to a younger opponent, much like John McCain compared to Barack Obama in 2008. Lastly, candidates might also be constrained by chance with respect to the state of the economy or the current policy mood in the electorate, and these conditions might limit the justifications used by elites. I would like to explore these different types of constraints experimentally moving forward in my career.

1 Appendix

1.1 Content Analysis Summary Guide

PS 199: Fall 2014 Summary Content Analysis Guide

Place a given code, say $< P >$ or $< C >$ in front of the first word, and my program will count the total number of codes within each speech or advertisement.

Appeals: We count appeals — every time a candidate mention a new topic, it gets a new code. If there are two sentences, one after another, that basically says the same thing like: "We cannot let that happen. We won't let that happen" then we counts those as one appeal. This reduces redundancy and prevents inflating the number of codes. But sometimes speeches have semi-colons that separate two different appeals (usually two different premises).

Complete Arguments — an argument is a series of premises (or just one) and a connecting conclusion. For a series of statements to be a full argument, it must contain both a premises and a conclusion. Roughly 50-70% of speeches will be coded as premises and conclusions, and therefore, candidates mainly speak in the form of arguments.

Premises $< P >$

- If you code a premise, it must go with a conclusion. You cannot have standalone premises (those are enthymemes).

- Premises are typically justification for some issue or policy.

- Premises are reasons why the conclusion is true.

- Premises have to be on the same topic as conclusions.

- There are usually several premises before a conclusion, but sometimes there is just one premise.

- Typically multiple premises will appear one after another, and each adds a slightly different perspective to an issue. Then the conclusion comes before the premises or immediately after.

- Rhetorical questions are premises IF and only IF it is accompanied by a conclusion. Otherwise it is an enthymeme.

Conclusions $< C >$

- For a conclusion code to be used, it has to be followed by or proceeded by premises.

- Conclusions are broader statements that tie all the premises together.

- Conclusions often times are the actual issue that a candidate supports/opposes. IE: "And that's why I support cutting taxes for the middle class." "I will change energy policy for the better." "The president is out of touch on spending." Followed by (or preceded by) a series of premises to support these conclusions.

- Conclusions appear at the beginning or end of a paragraph usually (probably more at the end than beginning).

- If you are stuck on a sentence, trying to decide if it is a premise or conclusion, try substituting the word "Therefore" at the beginning of the sentences. This will make it easier for you to determine which sentence comes first (the one that comes first is the premise). In other words, if information in sentence A is needed for sentence B to make sense, then sentence B is probably the conclusion and A is the premise.

Enthymemes $< E >$

- Enthymemes cannot be double coded with premises or arguments.

- Enthymemes are half arguments, where a statement is either a conclusion or a premise.

- Try to be conservative on your use of enthymemes — really try to code it as a premise or conclusion first. But if the statement is really out of nowhere, then code it as an enthymeme.

- They tend to be off topic — a conclusion or premise out of nowhere.

- Enthymemes are rhetorical questions IF and only IF there is no answer given to the question. If there is an answer, then the rhetorical question is the premise and the answer is the conclusion. For example, "Where is the president taking us in the Middle East?" without a follow up about the presidents policy in the Middle East.

Stories $< ST >$

- Stories cannot be double code with premises or conclusions.

- Stories has 1 of 3 content:

- (1) Story about specific voters voters. ie: Sally, Jimmy, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors in this town. "I met Fred in Ohio and he worked 30 years as carpenter, and now he spends half of his social security on prescription drugs. Thats unfair and we need to change the policy!"

- (2) Story about their own background. ie: where they grew up, story about their wife, story about their parents, etc.

- (3) Story about the current state of the world. It can be as bland as "we have an election in 4 days". Or stories can reference an event WITHOUT talking about a candidate or policy. For example, "we climbed a steep mountain after the terrorist attacks but we made it out of the darkness together no talk of candidates or policies, just referencing an event but with beginning, middle, and end (like a traditional story).

- Stories might be a series of premises and conclusions, but it is the *content* that distinguishes it from an argument. It is meant to personalize an argument being made, or set the scene for a specific argument to follow (the latter is typically a "state of the world" story).

- Stories sometimes talking about how great America is in general (no policy specifics), sometimes referencing past wars or US accomplishments like landing on the moon or winning the Olympic games.

Call to Action $< CA >$

- Call to action can be double coded with arguments and maybe even stories.

- You will rarely use this code. It will tend to only occur at the beginning and end of speeches.

- When candidates ask for 1 of 3 things ONLY:

- (1) Vote for me.

- (2) Volunteer for me.

- (3) Donate money to my campaign.

Partisan Cues $< PC >$

- Partisan cues are meant to signal to voters that a candidate is of their party.

- Partisan cues can be double coded with premises, conclusions, or stories.

- These usually appear the beginning of speeches. The candidate will say something nice about their political party, their running mate, or local politicians. When they occur in the body of speeches, partisan cues are usually premises for an argument. For example, "Republicans believe in lower taxes. Therefore, you should not vote for Obama". In this example, the premise (first sentence) is also a partisan cue.

- Partisan cues also occur when a candidate talks about a previous president of their *own* party. For example, Mitt Romney talking about Ronald Reagan, or Barack Obama talking about Bill Clinton.

- Partisan cues are *not* appeals to the other party, or comments about their opponent. The former would be a bi-partisan cue, Mitt Romney talking about FDR for example, and the latter are usually arguments that are used to attack the other party or candidate. Although these statements mention partisan names and parties, we do not code these statements as partisan cues because they do not demonstrate allegiance to a party for voters.

Local Compliment $< LC >$

- Local Compliments can be double coded with premises, conclusions, or stories.

- LCs occur when candidates say something nice about the local place they are giving a speech. I included the city and state of each speech at the top of each sppech, so please be aware of the location while coding.

- LCs do not occur in TV Ads that we have access to.

- These also tend to be at the beginning and end of a speech, but are sometimes peppered into stories. For example, story about a voters and their social security check that lives in Ohio and the candidate just happens to be in Ohio giving a speech. These would be double codes with story. This is not to be confused with just single coded local compliments when candidates just say something randomly nice about their current location.

Mission Statements $< MS >$

- Mission statement cannot be double coded with premises, conclusions or stories. There might be a case where it is double coded with partisan cues.

- Mission statements look like an extra conclusion. You might code what looks like a normal conclusion, but then the candidate gives another broader, meaningless conclusion right after. That is a mission statement, and they occur only a couple times within a speech.

- For example, statements after a conclusion like "And that is why I am running for president" IF and only IF there is another legitimate conclusion used to complete an argument before this statement. In other words, mission statements are the second conclusion.

- They sound like the type of statement that someone might make during a job interview — "And that is what I'll do if you hire me!".

- These statements make no specific reference to any issues, just broad leadership qualities, what they bring to the table, what is on their to-do list as a president, etc. For example: "And if you elect me, I will restore honor and integrity to the White House, occurring after a conclusion to an argument.

Credit Claiming $< CC >$

- Credit claiming occurs when candidates talk about their past accomplishments or claim credit for policy outcomes.

- Credit claiming can be double coded with any other code available but it will most often be coded with premises or conclusions, if it gets double coded at all

- Credit claiming can be policy related "I passed X bill and it put Y people back to work"

- Credit claiming can show prestige or learning "I met with Democrats and Republicans during the crisis, and I learned that is the best way to get things done" or "I traveled to England to give a speech and the UK parliament gave me a standing ovation for my leadership."

- Credit claiming are mainly used by incumbent presidents/party, challengers credit claim less simply because they do not have a presidential record to run on. Obama in his 2008 convention speech, for example, had zero credit claiming appeals. A more experienced candidate like McCain discussed his past accomplishments with the military, bi-partisan campaign reform, anti-ear mark legislation, among other credit claiming.

1.2   Exercpt for a Coded Speech

Coded by Katerina Bernasek (research assistant) on December 9, 2014.

John McCain October 1, 2008 in Bluebell, Pennsylvania

$< LC >$I appreciate the warm welcome to Pennsylvania, and the hospitality of Montgomery County Community College. $< ST >$Tomorrow will be the third and final presidential debate, and just 21 days remain until Americans choose their next president.

< P >Over the last 21 days, we have seen once-sturdy Wall Street institutions vanish, we have seen huge swings in the market both down and up, and we have seen new federal commitments in the hundreds of billions of dollars. < P >We have seen how suddenly a crisis can unfold these last several weeks, and how great the costs can be in jobs, savings, lost opportunities and taxpayer dollars. < C >What we need to see now is swift and bold action to lead this country in a new direction.

< P >If I am elected president, I will help to create jobs for Americans in the most effective way a president can do this - with tax cuts that are directed specifically to create jobs, and protect your life savings. < P >I will stand up to the corrupt ways of Washington, the wasteful spending and the abuses of power and I will end these abuses, whatever it takes. < P >I will lead reforms to help families keep their homes, and retirees to keep their savings, and college students to pay their tuition, and every citizen to afford health care, and America to reclaim its energy independence. < C >These will be my priorities. < P >We cannot spend the next four years as we have spent much of the last eight: waiting for our luck to change. < P >The hour is late and our troubles are getting worse. < C >We have to act immediately. We have to change direction now. We have to fight.

< M >That is what I will do in my term as president, and when I leave office I can promise you that this nation will not be on the same path it is today. < P >I will not play along with the same Washington games and gimmicks that got us into this terrible mess in the first place. < C >I am going to Washington to fight for you. < P >I will begin by making certain that the 700 billion dollars already committed to economic recovery is not used to further enrich the very people and institutions that invited these troubles with their own reckless conduct. < C >Instead of just propping up institutions deemed "too big to fail" in this crisis, we will use more of this public money to help businesses and homeowners that may be too small to survive.

< P >This financial crisis started with our housing crisis, and we cannot fix our

markets and the economy until we fix the housing crisis. < P >My plan will protect the value of your home and get it rising again by buying up bad mortgages and refinancing them so if your neighbor defaults he doesn't bring down the value of your house with him. < P >I will direct the government to refinance troubled mortgages for homeowners and replace them with mortgages they can afford. < P >This is what we did during the Great Depression and we can do it again. < P >Helping families who face default, foreclosure, and possible bankruptcy helps all homeowners, and will begin the process of recovery from this crisis. < C >With so much on the line, the moment requires that government act - < M >and as president I intend to act, quickly and decisively.

< C >When the government does provide funds to shore up companies, the terms will be demanding, there will be complete transparency and the safety net for our financial system will not become a golden parachute for failed executives. < P >Moreover, we will not merely inject billions of dollars into companies and walk away hoping for the best. ¡P¿We will require that those companies be reformed and restructured until they are sound assets again, and can be sold at no loss - or perhaps even a profit - to the taxpayers of America.

< P >And when that is accomplished, in each instance, government will relinquish its interest in these private companies. < P >We're going to get government out of the business of bailouts and equity stakes, and back in the business of responsible regulation. < P >We will learn from this crisis to prevent the next one, with much stricter oversight. < P >No more wild overleveraging, no more liabilities concealed from the public and from shareholders, no more bundling of assets to maximize profit by assuming insane risks. < P >Those days are over on Wall Street. < C >With new rules of public disclosure and accounting, my reforms will make certain these betrayals of shareholders and the public trust are never repeated.

< C >We must restore trust to our financial system. < P >On my orders, the Department of the Treasury will guarantee one hundred percent of all savings accounts

for a period of six months. ¡P¿This will calm the understandable fears of widespread bank failure, while also restoring rational judgment to the choices of the market.

$< C >$As president, I will also act to protect investors - especially those relying on their investments for retirement. $< P >$Current rules mandate that investors must begin to sell off their IRAs and 401Ks when they reach age 70 and one half years old. $< P >$Those rules should be suspended to spare senior citizens from being forced to sell their stock just as the market is hurting the most. $< P >$Under the emergency measure I propose, we will also cut the tax rate for withdrawals from tax-preferred retirement accounts to ten percent. $< P >$Retirees have suffered enough and need relief, and the surest relief is to let them keep more of their own savings.

$< C >$It is essential that we avoid an exodus of capital from the market. $< P >$Senator Obama yesterday offered up a proposal that would have the effect of encouraging early withdrawal of funds from 401(k) accounts, by suspending penalties through 2009. $< P >$This is an invitation to capital flight, and therefore to continued instability in the market, at a moment when exactly the opposite is needed. $< P >$Any family that takes part in this will not see the benefits of the market recovery that smart policy can help bring about.

$< C >$In my administration, we will instead revive the market by attracting new investment. $< P >$I will cut in half the capital gains tax on stocks purchased and held for more than a year - from a rate of 15 to 7.5 percent. $< P >$This vital measure will promote buying, raise asset values, help companies and shore up the pension plans for workers and retirees. $< P >$We should also not penalize Americans who are forced to sell investments in today's tough markets.

$< P >$I will increase the amount of capital losses from $3,000 to 15,000$, which can be deducted from your ordinary income in tax years 2008 and 2009. $< P >$So much of this decline in our markets and value destruction was due to the failure of Congress and the

Administration to come out with a timely rescue package. < P >Investors are always responsible for their investment decisions, but the hard earned savings of Americans should not be penalized by the erratic behavior of politicians. < C >It will not be enough for the federal government to correct the excesses of Wall Street without reforming its own reckless practices.

< C >Spending in Washington is out of control and I am going to rein it in. < P >As president, I will veto the pork barrel special interest projects that are wasting your tax dollars, driving up our debt, and weakening our dollar. < P >I have proposed a one year spending freeze with certain exceptions for such things as defense and veteran care. < P >We are going to use that year to turn Washington inside out and get rid of wasteful, inefficient programs that do no one any good.

< C >While we put government back on your side, we must reform our tax system to deliver needed tax relief to working Americans, and to create jobs. < P >I will double the child deduction, from 3,500 dollars to 7,000 dollars. < P >Every person in America who chooses it will receive a 5,000 dollars towards the purchase of health insurance - health plans that will be theirs to keep, even if they change jobs or move to another state. < P >And we will reduce the federal business tax rate from 35 percent - the second-highest in the world - to 25 percent. < P >I am also proposing today that for those who are between jobs, we eliminate all taxes on unemployment benefits. < E >It is unclear to me why the government taxes money it has just sent you, and we should relieve this burden from Americans who've been hit the hardest.

< P >Reducing business tax rates has the potential to stop and reverse the rise of unemployment, and could create millions of new jobs. < P >Despite the frequent changes to my opponent's tax plans in recent months - he seems to revise them with each new poll - his plan to raise taxes on 50% of small business income has survived. < P >And even as he rails against companies that shut down their plants and move overseas, he refuses to cut the tax rate that drives many of these companies away.

< P >A typical middle-class family of four making 42,000 dollars a year with health insurance will get 4,350 more dollars under my plan than they would under Senator Obama's plan. < P >That example of 42,000 a year in wages is especially relevant, because just last year Senator Obama voted to raise taxes on individuals making that amount.

< P >Senator Obama is also the same fellow who requested a million dollars a day in pork barrel earmarks ... who thinks that wasting 18 billion dollars a year in earmarks is not worth worrying about, < P >who proposed a near doubling of the taxes on dividends and capital gains during the primary, < P >who has voted 94 times for tax increases or against tax cuts, < P >who is promising almost a trillion dollars in new spending, < P >who came to the Senate a few years ago and already earned the title of its most liberal member - < P >this is the man who now presents himself as a tax cutter and champion of middle-class America.

< P >He is an eloquent speaker, but even he can't turn a record of supporting higher taxes into a credible promise to cut taxes. < P >What he promises today is the opposite of what he has done his entire career. < P >Perhaps never before in history have the American people been asked to risk so much based on so little.

1.3 Randomization Check

Following the lead of Bullock (2011), I checked the randomization in my treatment assignments by regressing demographic variables on the treatment assignment. If each treatment group is equal, then the coefficients on each demographic should be near zero and non-significant. In other words, a given demographic does not predict being in one group over another. My regressions occurred before I weighted the data, and the five predictor variables that I use are: race, gender, age, residing in the south, and party identification. Results are below, and they show that each group is similar with regard to observable variables. Therefore, each group should also be equal on unobservable variables.

Table 1: *February 2014: Colonizing the Moon*

	Control	Cue	Cue + Just
Intercept	.35 (.09)	.31 (.09)	.34 (.09)
Gender	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Race	.03 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Age	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)
South	-.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)
Party ID	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)

Sample size = 1002

Table 2: *March 2014: Colonizing the Moon*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**
Intercept	.37 (.09)	.22 (.09)	.41 (.09)
Race	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Gender	-.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Age	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)
South	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.02)
Party ID	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)

Sample size = 963

Table 3: *April 2014: Colonizing the Moon*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.31 (.08)	.21 (.07)	.19 (.07)	.29 (.07)
Race	-.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Gender	.00 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.03 (.03)
Age	-.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
South	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Party ID	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)

Sample size = 1223

Table 4: *May 2014: School Day*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.26 (.07)	.26 (.07)	.30 (.07)	.17 (.07)
Race	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Gender	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Age	-01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Party ID	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Sample size = 1223				

Note: For some unexplainable reason, the survey research firm did not ask the state of residence on the April poll, and so I do not have a southern variable in this model.

Table 5: *June 2014: School Day*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.21 (.08)	.19 (.08)	.27 (.07)	.33 (.08)
Race	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Gender	-.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	-.01 (.03)
Age	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
South	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.04 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Party ID	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Sample size = 992				

Note: Treatment groups differ by region. Control has more southern respondents, and cue plus justification has too few. This also affects the intercepts.

Table 6: *August 2014: School Day*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.33 (.08)	.20 (.08)	.40 (.08)	.07 (.08)
Race	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Gender	-.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Age	-.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
South	.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	-.03 (.03)	.01 (.01)
Party ID	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)

Sample size = 992

Note: Treatment groups differ by region here as well, but the difference is not significant.

Table 7: *October 2014: School Day*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.31 (.08)	.34 (.08)	.19 (.08)	.16 (.09)
Race	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Gender	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Age	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)
South	.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
Party ID	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)

Sample size = 961

Table 8: *December 2014: Social Security*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.13 (.08)	.33 (.08)	.36 (.08)	.18 (.08)
Race	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Gender	-.03 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Age	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
South	.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Party ID	.01 (.02)	-.04 (.04)	-.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)

Sample size = 997

Note: Variation in party identification, but the difference is not significant.

Table 9: *February 2015: Social Security*

	Control	**Cue**	**Cue + Just**	**Cue + Bad Just**
Intercept	.12 (.08)	.38 (.08)	.25 (.08)	.25 (.08)
Race	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Gender	.05 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Age	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
South	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.03 (.01)
Party ID	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)

Sample size = 1227

Note: Variation in gender, but the difference is not significant.

1.4 Weighting

My survey data is weighted to reflect a representative population. But the survey firm, Penn Schoen and Berland, sends email invitations to potential respondents with an eye toward a representative population. Potential respondents opt-in to their panel, and the firm knows the demographic breakdown of each respondent. Respondents are then targeted to match the desired sample of each survey. So even though I use weights, the sample's original distribution on demographics is not drastically different than a weighted sample (as seen below).

I used post-stratification weights built into the survey package in R. I used the Census from 2012 to weight based on race, gender, and age. After my weights are applied, the mean weight is 1.07 with a median of 1.17, and the maximum weight is 1.52. These results demonstrate that the average person is only weighted up by .07 to .17 from their original demographics, and the largest increase is 1.52 for one person. Weights are typically considered inappropriate if a respondent represents 2.5 or more, so my weights are reasonable with a maximum of 1.52.

Below are the table of demographics before and after the weights are applied to show that my weighting procedure does not drastically change my sample. The biggest difference between my weighted percentages and my fielded sample involve race, where I had to weight down whites and weight up African Americans. This changes both demographic size by roughly 5 percentage points.

Table 10: *Distribution of Gender Before and After Weighting Procedure*

	Before Weights	After Weights
Gender	%	%
Male	48.44	47.29
Female	51.56	52.71

Table 11: *Distribution of Age Before and After Weighting Procedure*

	Before Weights	After Weights
Age	%	%
18 - 24	8.19	9.00
25 - 64	76.70	69.00
65+	15.11	22.00

Note: Such large age categories are used because my question wording does not match the Census categories, so I had to collapse categories between 25 and 64 in order to get them to match a number to weight.

Table 12: *Distribution of Race Before and After Weighting Procedure*

	Before Weights	After Weights
Race	%	%
White	78.69	73.74
African American	7.86	13.39
Hispanic	7.22	8.42
Other	6.23	4.44

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