

ABSTRACT

Title of Document:

“MEDIA PRIMARIES: THE ROLE OF NEWSWORTHINESS VALUES IN SHAPING ISSUE COVERAGE IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES.”

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Presidential primary candidates vie for the attention of voters by emphasizing specific issue stances or prioritizations. Yet not all candidates get their messages across. Why does the media follow the candidate’s agenda in some cases but not others?

I answer this question by noting the role professional values play in journalists’ evaluations of “newsworthiness” and the important political ramifications those professional values have. Journalists prefer news stories that feature conflict, human-interest components, are timely, and are simple. I argue that there may be ways candidates can cue these values via their rhetoric and that the structure of primaries may affect how journalists apply these values when crafting coverage. I further argue that media outlets should differ in how strongly they prioritize these values. Finally, I argue that the media ignoring a candidate’s message should affect how voters evaluate candidates and how well voters are able to “correctly” vote.

I show that the amount of anger language and candidate-based appeal rhetoric are positively correlated with the level of similarity between a candidate’s and the media’s

agendas. I also show that expanding primary fields, where the contextual simplicity of the race is shrinking, are correlated with reductions in agenda similarity between candidates and the media. I also show that these effects are not homogenous across media outlets.

Newspapers react more strongly to anger in candidate messages than TV news while news outlets with tighter space constraints are more responsive to declines in contextual simplicity.

To assess the ramifications of these findings on political behavior I designed a laboratory experiment to test the effects of candidate-media agenda similarity on candidate evaluations and “correct” voting behavior. Subjects exposed to the low convergence treatment displayed higher rates of incorrect voting behavior.

Collectively, these findings improve our understanding of the political repercussions of journalism’s professional values and provide insights into an oft-overlooked level of election. They also illustrate the normatively undesirable effects of low convergence. I close with a discussion of how to create a more efficient, media-centric primary process.

MEDIA PRIMARIES: THE ROLE OF NEWSWORTHINESS VALUES IN SHAPING
ISSUE COVERAGE IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2020

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Dedication

To my Mom and Dad, brother and sister. They know full well what a dork I am, but here's more proof just in case.

And to Emily, who is my partner, in this as in everything.

Acknowledgements

The preparation of this manuscript was dramatically shaped and improved by dozens without whom it never would have existed. I've amassed quite a (figurative) debt and, as is tradition, this is the place to pay some small amount of it off.

I benefited from a committee composed of fantastic scholars. My adviser and mentor, David Karol, encouraged me to ask broad, fundamental questions about politics and gave me the freedom to work toward answers to those questions how I thought best. He, along with Mike Hanmer, Danny Hayes, and Patrick Wohlfarth, also served as exemplars of how to ask and answer political questions in a rigorous and thoughtful manner. From conversations, classes, comments on papers, and from reading their own scholarship I learned a lot about how to be a political scientist. Mark Feldstein, who served as the Dean's Representative, helped me see how this could speak beyond the niche of political science to other audiences who are also interested in the role of the media in American politics.

I also benefited from comments and conversations with other faculty members at UMD including Antoine Banks, Ernesto Calvo, and Lily Mason. I would also like to thank Frances Lee. In her Congress grad seminar in the Spring semester of my first year she assigned her book, *Beyond Ideology*, as a means of talking with us about the awesome amount of work that goes into a book-length research project. It sounded terrible. But she was clearly so proud of the work she had put in and that served as good motivation when I found myself in my own cycle of laborious coding and data cleaning.

My fellow graduate students were wonderful colleagues and friends. Chief among them are Caitlin McCulloch and Jared McDonald. They were always game to talk

through ideas, proffer advice, and to test the products of new recipes I wanted to try out. I also benefited from the advice and friendship of Annie Gomez-Vidal, Kelsey Hinchliffe, Charlie Hunt, Brandon Ives, Andrew Lugg, Neil Lund, Katti McNally, Alauna Safarpour, Raymond Williams, and Julian Wamble.

My family supported me throughout this intellectual journey which was a tremendous source of comfort. My Mom and Dad have always indulged my inquisitiveness. At some point the process of answering my questions shifted from disappearing into the woods for a few hours to explore to spending too much time at holidays looking at spreadsheets. They never skipped a beat. My brother and sister were happy to take time to grab a beer and talk basketball when I finally got tired of staring at those spreadsheets.

Most importantly, I'd like to thank Emily Kustina. We met when I thought maybe I would be a journalist who wrote about politics. Now I'm a political scientist who writes about journalists. She's been my partner throughout. We've shared in each other's successes and the not-quite-successes. Her love and support made this possible.

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Chapter 1: The Role of Journalists in Media-Centric Primaries

As unconventional as the 2016 primaries were in some notable regards, they were remarkably similar to preceding election cycles in the candidates' determination to shape media narratives. It's not hard to see why. Media coverage has long been thought essential to succeeding in any national election. But while candidates may have preferences for what the media should do, the media is an independent institutional capable of playing by its own rules (Cook 1998, Sparrow 1999, 2006, Zaller 1999). But these rules do not result in absolute, deterministic outcomes. Sometimes the media follows along with what one candidate would prefer their coverage say but not another.

There are numerous examples. The eventual Republican nominee, Donald Trump, campaigned extensively on issues of immigration and trade and these messages certainly permeated media coverage. Potential voters who interacted with the campaign primarily via the media likely got that message. But one of Trump's rivals and the one-time frontrunner, Jeb Bush, had a different experience. While Bush gave speeches discussing macroeconomic trends, foreign policy, and healthcare, the media consistently questioned his previous stances on immigration and education, specifically support for Common Core.

Ohio Governor John Kasich and Texas Governor Rick Perry both campaigned extensively on economic issues and appeals to their executive career accomplishments. For the former, that message eventually got through and he was able to compete well into the primary cycle. For the latter, the media instead talked about an impending lawsuit in the Texas court system. He dropped out of the race more than three months before the Iowa caucus.

Among the Democrats, a similar story played out. The frontrunner and eventual nominee Hillary Clinton began her campaign talking about the need for education reform. Her first campaign events were roundtables at community colleges in Iowa. Her rival, Bernie Sanders, spoke primarily of economic populism. His message got across while Clinton's was subsumed in coverage of Benghazi hearings and stops at Chipotle.

Why does the media pick up the messages of some candidates but not others? Is it that the media just finds some topics inherently more interesting? That would not seem to be the case. The media talked about education with regards to Jeb Bush, who was not campaigning on that issue, but not with regards to Hillary Clinton, who was initially making that a cornerstone of her platform.

Is the media biased against one party or another? If that were so, then there would not be situations where the media is following the agendas of some Republicans (Democrats) but not others, as described above.

Does the media just gravitate toward scandal? While that might explain the extensive coverage of Benghazi and email servers for Hillary Clinton and the lawsuit for Rick Perry, Donald Trump was constantly surrounded by scandals or gaffes but still got his message through among the negative coverage (Patterson 2016). Scandal coverage does not seem to erase the possibility of agenda permeation.

Does the media focus on issues that divide the parties? While Trump's rhetoric on immigration may have been particularly extreme, it was not that out of step with many of his rivals for the nomination. And this would not explain why John Kasich got his economic message through but Rick Perry didn't.

Does the media just follow the agenda of the frontrunner? Once again, this does not comport with the above examples. Jeb Bush was the frontrunner early on and could not drive coverage. And Hillary Clinton was the frontrunner throughout and faced a similar limitation.

Does the media follow the agendas of insurgents, then? While that might explain the success in messaging that Trump and Sanders had, it does not match with the messaging success of establishment exemplar John Kasich.

None of these potential explanations seem to fit the evidence all that well. In this dissertation, I will lay out and test a theory that does. Doing so involves understanding campaign media coverage from the perspective of the journalist on the trail. What do they see and hear? How do they evaluate it? What about a candidate's message do they see as newsworthy?

Doing so reveals a series of newsworthiness values that all journalists are taught and utilize and a particular context in which a subset of these journalists will apply these values. These values include preferences for content that involves conflict, possesses a human-interest angle, is simple, and is timely. In practice, this means that the media followed Trump's message because it was angry and contained lots of attacks (high conflict), was framed largely around his own personal brand (high human interest), and was easy to comprehend and explain (high simplicity). The media ignored Jeb's message because it did not appeal to those values, partially because Jeb was trying to downplay his connections to the unpopular presidency of his brother (low human interest). The media followed Kasich's economic message because it was framed from his blue-collar perspective (high human interest) while ignoring Perry's economic message because it

discussed mostly abstract macroeconomic trends (low human interest and simplicity). The media ignored Hillary's education agenda because it was intentionally crafted to avoid conflict with the accomplishments of the Obama administration (low conflict) and was disconnected from her own interactions with the American education system (low human interest). Conversely, the media followed Bernie Sanders's economic populist message because it featured attacks and anger aimed at economic elites like the "big banks" and the "1%" (high conflict).

Appreciating these values can help explain who gets their messages across in primaries and who doesn't. This is important not only because primaries, like presidential general elections, are contests where candidates compete for voter attention primarily through the media (Cushion and Thomas 2018) but also because primaries feature a set of rules that create circumstances that affect how journalists assess newsworthiness values. The context in which a newsworthiness value is applied is crucial for its interpretation and primaries are a distinct context because of the rules in place (Norrander 2010). For example, a reporter covering a natural disaster and one covering a primary would both agree that conflict is an important newsworthiness value. For the former, conflict in context likely means who was physically, mentally, financially, or emotionally harmed and in what capacity. For the latter, conflict in context will be most likely found in expressions of anger since there is little risk of physical confrontations and the multicandidate and intraparty nature of the race limits the strategic utility of other, more direct expressions of conflict (more on that in the following chapter).

An understanding of these values is also important because of their broader implications for electoral politics more generally. Given the intraparty and multicandidate

nature of primaries, the ability to successfully convey a message through the media that highlights specific issue positions and/or prioritizations is a crucial element of differentiating oneself from the competition. Given the serial nature of presidential primaries, being able to consistently do so is similarly essential as not all voters will be paying attention at one time. Furthermore, primaries structure choice for general elections and broader opinions of the political parties, meaning the implications that primaries have do not end at the convention.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain in greater depth the features of primary campaigns and the implications of those features on the communication environment. I then discuss previous research on candidate and media messaging in primaries and compare with studies of general elections. In doing so I seek to situate this dissertation among other studies of primaries and show what the novel contribution I am making is to this literature on campaigns and elections. I then conclude with a short outline of the plans for the remainder of the dissertation.

Rules of the Primary

Presidential primaries are radically different from general elections in a number of key respects (Kendall 2000). As one cartoonist put it, “Imagine a sport where you spend 1 year [hopping] on one leg and not using the other, then suddenly having to run a marathon.”¹ Table 1.1 provides a list of six of the biggest differences between primaries and general elections. It also contains a short description of how this difference fundamentally alters the process by which candidates and the media navigate their

¹ <http://www.smbc-comics.com/comic/primary-caregivers>

strategic content choices. This description is not meant to be exhaustive but to make salient an important point: Because primaries feature such different rules, they create radically different communication environments than other types of campaigns.

Table 1.1: Distinctive Features of Presidential Primaries and Effects on Candidates and Media

Feature of Primaries	Effect on Candidates	Effect on Media
Multicandidate	Need to differentiate from others, diversify agenda	Cannot solely rely on both-sides version of objectivity
Intraparty	Greater emphasis on persuasion	Must provide more context to general audience
Smaller differences between candidates	Need to differentiate from others	Must seek out nuanced sources of distinction
Different electorate (size, interest, demographics)	Need to target messages within broader population	Tradeoff between appealing to interested audience and appealing to general audience
Serial	Need to sustain message; target to different regional constituencies	Established, defined steps to process can peg stories to
Long	Need to sustain message	Avoid repetition of storylines, seek out timely stories

Presidential primaries are multicandidate affairs. The exact number of candidates can vary dramatically throughout and across primaries. At the low end, the 2000 Democratic primary consisted of only two candidates. At the high end, the 2016 Republican primary featured 17 notable candidates and the 2020 Democratic primary featured as many as 28 (depending on who is counted as “major” or “notable”). From the perspective of the candidate, this can make identifying a distinctive appeal difficult. Defining what sets you apart from the others can be tricky when there are so many others for comparison. From the perspective of the media, this can make the both-sidesism that has come to define journalistic approaches to objectivity (e.g. Bennett 1990) a difficult

proposition. There may not always be only two sides to a story when there are so many candidates willing to offer a perspective.

Primaries are also intraparty contests. For candidates, this can mean that voters committed to other candidates are more persuadable than those in general elections as they do not need to be convinced to overcome the psychological pull of their partisan identity (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954, Campbell et al. 1960, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). For the media, this requires giving context on factions within parties – for example the religious right and business interests for the Republicans or pro-choice organizations and organized labor for Democrats – as these may be important fault lines within the race.

The candidates competing in presidential primaries are typically more similar than they are in other races. Many agree on most of the important issues, in principle if not entirely in practice. This once again leads candidates to an emphasis on differentiation. For the media, they must seek out nuanced sources of distinction to tell the candidates apart.

The electorate itself tends to be dramatically different in primaries. A much smaller percentage of the population is particularly interested in politics enough to want to participate in such convoluted elections (Geer 1988, Kaufman, Gimpel, and Hoffman 2003, Norrander 2010). For candidates, this means targeting messages more precisely to those who are likely to actually participate in the primary process is necessary. For the media, this creates a tradeoff. Providing content to this subsection of voters may mean pushing content that is uninteresting to a general audience.

Presidential primaries occur serially rather than in one big national election. For candidates, this means that messages must be sustained over time. After all, voters may not be paying attention at the same time. Those in the early states may be locked in, but the voters in states on the first Super Tuesday have weeks to go before they need to make any decision. Getting a message out early isn't enough to guarantee support in later races. In addition, this invites some message tailoring by region: signaling policies about ethanol subsidies when campaigning in Iowa and federal funding for high-speed rails once the race shifts to California. For the media, this serial nature creates a defined set of steps that the primary process will take. This is useful for setting scheduled news events that allow some preplanning as to the form coverage will take.

Finally, primaries are much longer than general elections. The time from the convention to Election Day tends to be 3-4 months. The earliest candidates typically jump in 6-12 months before the first in an extended concatenation of caucuses and primaries. Once again, this highlights a need for sustained messaging from candidates. For the news media, it can stress the value of timeliness. The longer the primary goes on, the less novel a candidate can become.

It should be clear from this discussion that presidential primary contests are dramatically different from presidential general elections. As both the presidential primaries and general elections are the only contests carried out nationally, this makes them a unique campaign environment within the American political context. Furthermore, as this discussion highlights, the differences between primaries and general elections in terms of formal rules and structure can, and likely do, alter the strategic messaging calculations of both candidates and the media. Because no other political

context is as individually driven as campaigns, this further makes primaries a unique communication environment within the American political context. And because primaries fundamentally shape the electoral coalitions, common perceptions of political parties, and options in general elections, they are an important communication environment as well.

Studies of Primaries and Media

With these important points established, I now turn to a discussion of what we currently know about communication in presidential primaries so as to discuss how this dissertation pushes forward the discipline's collective knowledge. Within political science, the most prominent work has studied the quantity of media coverage. Some have looked at quantity measures as independent variables to explain who wins (Bartels 1988, Cohen et al. 2008) and who loses (Haynes et al. 2004) in primaries while others have looked at quantity of coverage as a dependent variable, theorizing on how the media decides who to cover (Haynes and Murray 1998, Sides, Tessler, and Vavreck 2018, Sides and Vavreck 2013). These studies do not tell us much on what the media talks about, however.

Communication scholars have studied candidate messaging and media content at this more granular level, but much of it has been looking at the two categories separately rather than the relationship between them. Scholars of candidate rhetoric, especially those working from the functional theory tradition, have collected candidate messages in various mediums including campaign ads (Benoit and Rill 2012, Kaid 1994, 1998, Kaid and Ballotti 1991, Payne, Marlier, and Baukus 1989, West 2010), debates (Glantz, Benoit, and Airne 2013), press releases (Cho and Benoit 2005, Haynes, Flowers, and

Gurian 2002), and mailers (Benoit 2007). Others have taken larger collections of campaign text and checked for how comparable the messaging is across multiple mediums (Benoit et al. 2011). But studying solely candidate messages does not tell us how the media decides what topics to emphasize.

A similar limitation is present among studies of mass media content in presidential primaries. In-depth examinations of media content in isolation from the candidate messages that seek to drive it cannot illuminate the relationship between the two. As such, while content analysis of various newspaper and network television transcripts (Benoit, Hansen, and Stein 2004, Brady 1989, Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, Johnson 1993, Just et al. 1996, King 1990, Lichter and Smith 1996, Robinson and Sheehan 1983, Steger, 1999) are descriptively interesting, they do not shed much light on the central question in this dissertation.

There are only a handful of studies that do make this comparison (Conway et al. 2015, Conway-Silva et al. 2018, Flowers, Haynes, and Crespino 2003, Kendall 1993, 2000, Tedesco 2001, 2005, Vinson and Moore 2007). These studies provide great insight but generally don't directly lay out a theoretical structure for why some candidates succeed at driving media narratives while others fail. Instead, most are descriptive and note that there do tend to be differences between the issues candidates discuss and those the media emphasize, without explaining *why* these differences arise. As such, this important question is not currently answered within the literature.

Comparison to Studies of General Elections and Media

Scholars studying presidential general elections have posed this question, however (Ku, Kaid, and Pfau 2003). Some have found that the media is generally on a

similar page as the candidates (Dalton et al. 1998, Stempel and Windhauser 1991). Others argue that there are differences and that those gaps can be politically meaningful (Hart 2000, Patterson 1980, 1994, 2016). Many of these studies are either primarily descriptive or structural equation model tests of the reciprocal influence between candidates and media. But others have incorporated novel theories as well. Hayes (2010) notes the role of competitiveness and time in moderating the relationship between candidate messaging and media coverage in presidential general elections. And Vavreck (2009) looks at the role of external economic conditions in shaping the strategic messaging choices of general election candidates, when the candidates advantaged by favorable economic conditions seek to keep the media attention on that subject, and when the candidates who do not benefit from the strength of the economy are able to raise insurgent issues via the mass media.

These studies highlight the importance of questioning the relationship between candidate messages and media coverage. But because primaries are so radically different from general elections in ways that fundamentally alter the political and communication environments, the theories and results they offer cannot be neatly generalized to this different level. As such, there remains an important question about primaries – why does the media follow the agendas of candidates in some instances but not in others? – that is not currently addressed in the existing literature and cannot be answered by looking at similar literatures on different election circumstances.

Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation seeks to answer this important question by noting the vital role newsworthiness values play in structuring the decisions journalists make when covering

campaigns. Chapter 2 expounds on this point by situating theories of professional norms, from which theories of newsworthiness values stem, among other theories of news creation forces that comprise the media's institutional "logic" (Altheide 2004, 2013, Asp 2014). Chapter 2 then offers a novel theoretical contribution: Newsworthiness values are general principles to journalists but are only meaningful when defined with a particular context. The chapter ends by explaining how the political context that primary elections create, including the unique features described above, can be defined from the perspective of a journalist covering a campaign to derive testable hypotheses about how newsworthiness values shape coverage in presidential primaries.

Chapter 3 lays out the data and methods that will be used to test these hypotheses. This dissertation utilizes a multi-method approach, but the primary methods involve using text as data. The chapter outlines how the corpora were gathered and processed using a combination of human-coded content analysis, dictionary-based text analysis, and unsupervised topic modeling and to what end. It also describes the structure of the experiment that is employed for one of the empirical chapters.

Chapters 4-7 are the empirical chapters. Chapter 4 tests the theory as it applies to candidate-level variation in newsworthiness values. Chapter 5 tests the theory as it applies to variation created directly from the multicandidate, long, and serial nature of primaries. Chapter 6 tests how the emphasis of newsworthiness values according to the medium in which specific media outlets operate. It is useful for understanding why the media values certain traits as newsworthy. And Chapter 7 tests the implications of the findings from the preceding three chapters on evaluations of candidates, political behavior, and normatively desirable "correct" voting actions.

The dissertation concludes with Chapter 8, which summarizes the central results, expounds on the normative implications of the role of newsworthiness values in presidential primary coverage, and offers suggestions on how the parties and the media can create a presidential primary process that will lead to the selection of more normatively preferable candidates as the standard bearers of the parties.

Chapter 2: The Contextual Application of Newsworthiness Values

A journalist on the primary trail, like a journalist covering any beat, encounters a slew of information. She must then sift through to make the “news” version of the campaign. Among the information the journalist encounters there is likely to be a candidate’s preferred message: the candidate’s agenda. In some cases what the journalist reports, which will go on to be part of the media’s agenda, will closely resemble the candidate’s agenda. At other times the candidate and media agendas will be radically different, depicting two different versions of the campaign’s message or narrative. Understanding what leads to this difference involves understanding the decision-making process of that journalist. As she sits down to create the news, what is she going to be considering?

This chapter will argue that a core consideration for this intrepid reporter is a set of professional norms called newsworthiness values. These newsworthiness values serve as guidelines for converting the external world, candidate agendas included, into the media’s agenda. These values are important to the daily operation of the media as an institution. As such, they manifest significant political power, especially within the confines of a campaign where public opinion and behavior is so intimately intertwined. This only serves to make questions on the way these newsworthiness values operate and their malleability more significant.

Mirror Theory v. New Institutionalism

The power of the news is often tied to the ability of journalists to craft the image of the world their audience will ultimately hold. This serves as a baseline assumption,

well-rooted in empirical evidence, for popular (Lippmann 1997[1922]) and scholarly (Edelman 1988) critics of the media. Journalists will often defend themselves via references, in some capacity, to mirror theory. They will argue that they do not exercise any power of their own at all. Instead, they merely reflect the world as they encounter it to their audience. Or, as Gans (1979, p. 79) put it, “events determine story selection, with journalists simply holding a mirror to them and reflecting their image to the audience.”

Mirror theory denies that the media is an institution. Instead, it posits a more agentic role for the media within the political sphere. This non-institutional assumption therefore puts it in line with a popular assumption made by scholars who utilize media reports as accurate descriptions of real-world events. But evidence comparing real-world war casualty data to media reports (Althaus et al. 2011), or economic data to media coverage (Soroka 2012), or crime data to media coverage (Graber 1984, Soroka 2014), or populations of opinion polls against those used by the media (Groeling 2008, Searless, Ginn, and Nickens 2016) suggests that the media is often unrepresentative of external events. More importantly, it is unrepresentative in systematic, institutional ways.² This is important because while mirror theory suggests the media plays only a token role in crafting the image of the political world that exists for news consumers, empirical evidence suggests that the media is not quite so disorganized or powerless.

Because of this empirical evidence with regards to the media’s political power and systematic nature, I align myself with the institutionalist perspective on the mass

² Mirror theory is also pragmatically unlikely. The real world contains a very large amount of potential news stories while the space or “newshole” available to journalists to report on them – be it column inches, minutes on a television news program, or hours in a day – is ultimately finite. Some things have to end up on the proverbial cutting room floor and those decisions are meaningful moments of non-arbitrary journalism decision making.

media (Cook 1998, Sparrow 1999, 2006). This theoretical tradition notes that because most media outlets appear to follow similar procedures and produce largely homogenous outputs (Lawrence 2006), the most apt conceptualization of the media is as a single institution where each media outlet comprises a separate actor (Strömbäck and Esser 2014a). From a political science perspective, this institutional nature comes with two important caveats. First, the media is most accurately conceptualized as an institution that operates in the political realm, not necessarily as a political institution. As Benson (2006, p. 196, emphasis in original) put it, “Is journalism a political institution? Perhaps. But first and foremost it is a journalistic institution that *refracts* rather than simply reflects the play of external forces.” While the media interacts with political elites, covers politics, and shapes political attitudes its organizational structure is not designed to achieve purely political ends. Second, the media institution is a predominantly informal one. While all institutions are shaped by a combination of formal rules and informal norms, for the media the balance between the two is disproportionately shifted toward the latter.³ This helps explain why so many individuals who work in the journalism institution have such difficulty articulating the means by which the institution operates (Ryfe 2006). Combined, this apolitical and informalized nature contributes to the media’s operation in the modern political realm as an accidental political institution.

³ A note on terminology: Many sociologists studying the media from a new institutionalist perspective refer to informalized standards and practice as “rules.” I subscribe to a more political science-oriented terminology where “rules” are formally stated and clearly enforceable, whereas informal practices are instead referred to as “norms.” The media institution does have formalized rules. This includes those that are externally imposed like public policy (Freedom of Information Acts, Shield Acts) and court decisions (*The New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*) and intrainstitutional (style guides, editorial chains of command). However, most decision making operates based on informalized procedures, which I will refer to exclusively as “norms.”

The daily operation of the media institution is affected by several different types of norms (Boydston 2013). The precise number and categorization of these norms is a source of division within the political communication discipline to the point where there remains a diverse collection of organizational schemas and typologies on the subject (Bennett 1996, Kaplan 2006, Shoemaker and Reese 1996, Strömbäck and Esser 2014b). I will not pile on by devising a new typology here. That said, I discuss several of the most influential types of norms: economics, technology, professionalism, and individual preferences. Ultimately, this dissertation concerns the influence of professionalism norms, and more specifically a set of values that comprise a key element of these norms. But understanding professionalism relative to other influences is important for contextualizing the theoretical and empirical contributions of this dissertation, making such a discussion valuable.

Economic Motivations

Most media outlets in America are privately owned businesses and are therefore subject to the same profit-seeking motivations other businesses face. This subjects them to the same laws of supply and demand that any capitalist organization plays by. Scholars following in an economic tradition have produced work highlighting the effects these economic laws have on media content.

From a demand-side perspective, this means tailoring media content to audience demands. This applies to both type of content (Hamilton 2004) and the ideological slant of content (Puglisi and Snyder 2015). Supply-side economics theorizes that media outlets should take the cost of producing news into consideration (Hamilton 2004). This means that even if the audience has a strong preference for investigative news content and a

slightly weaker appreciation for soft news, if the soft news is significantly cheaper to produce then media outlets may avoid meeting audience preferences to maximize profit.

Others have noted that increased media mergers, both horizontally and vertically, leads to circumstances where media corporations might actually be financially benefited in the long-term by sacrificing short-term profits that could be had by sticking to supply- and demand-side economics (Gilens and Hertzman 1999). As media outlets become increasingly entangled in corporatist entities that would seek to maximize profits in other ventures, disregarding the profits reaped directly from media content for greater profits from those other entities becomes more palatable.

Some posit that different ownership structures might be willing to moderate the influence of economic incentives by being more or less insistent on profit maximization. Dunaway (2008) shows that local media outlets owned by publicly traded media companies tended to provide more horserace news content, presumably because of audience demand for such content (Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn 2004), while media outlets that were owned by an individual or not publicly traded were more willing to deliver less popular, more politically divisive substantive content.⁴

Technological Imperatives

News production and content is often dramatically shaped by the state of technology of the time. In part, this stems from the economic motivations described above. Improvements to printing technology made it cheaper to produce newspapers, which in turn affects the cost of supplying news, for example. But technological

⁴ This aligns with historical work on individual media magnates who have from time to time put profits aside in service of a perceived public good (Tiffit and Jones 1999).

innovation can also provide opportunities to fundamentally alter the means of producing news beyond adjusting economic calculus. For example, Mutz (2015) argues that improvements to cameras contributed to the rise of political debate programs that rely on close-up shots to incite uncivil visuals. And Usher (2014) argues that the rise of digital media led *The New York Times* newsroom to adopt more interactive, participatory, and immediate forms of news.

That said, others suggest that the role of technology on newsmaking is overstated. Hindman (2009) suggests that the internet has largely replicated the analog media environment. And studies of multiple types of media outlets suggest similar newsmaking principles at work (Druckman 2005, Hayes 2014). Still, while conventional wisdom hot takes that posit each technological change as a fundamental alteration to the preceding norms of the media institution clearly overstate the case, it remains a distinct possibility that changing mediums do indeed affect newsmaking principles.

Individual Preferences

A separate, more psychologically grounded literature on newsmaking influences begins with a seemingly mundane observation: journalists are human beings. As such, they are predictably subject to all the same phenomena that guide typical thought processes. Journalists, like everyone else, display an asymmetrical bias toward negative information, for example (Soroka 2014). Notably, here the force acting on the newsmaking process operates at the individual level. It is the individual who shapes the news to reflect their own subjective sense of what is interesting, in line with the natural outcomes of evolutionary biology.

The same pattern works for the foundational insights into political behavior as well. The same group-based thinking that dominates how American citizens think about politics (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954, Campbell et al. 1960, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008) explain how journalists make assumptions when covering various political topics, whether they be racial (Gilens 1999), gendered (Heldman, Carroll, and Olson 2005, Niven and Zilber 2001), or ideological (Patterson and Donsbach 1996). The core insight here is the same as the one posited in the famous Mr. Gates study: The practice of journalism leaves significant wiggle room for individual decision-making influenced by subjective perspectives (White 1950).

Professional Norms

Finally, the disciplines of sociology and communications have provided another key insight: Journalism is a profession and therefore has created and employed a series of standards and practices used to define what journalism is and is not, should and should not be.

Many of these standards and practices are not formalized, but they do carry informal benefits and sanctions. Following the rules of journalism can come with awards, professional prestige, and increased financial compensation. Breaking from the rules of journalism can come with professional ostracism and removal from the profession entirely. As such, these standards and practices can extend quite powerfully over individual journalists.

The literature on these professional values is broad. Generally, the literature can be classified into two categories based on the methodology employed. The first is grounded in content analysis methods. Some analyze media coverage and look for

patterns that define the reporting on the page or in the transcript (e.g. Harcup and O'Neill 2001, 2017, Lang and Lang 1983). Others compare a sample of news reports against some predefined population of news events so as to measure not only differences within what is covered but also differences between what is and is not covered at all (e.g. Lee 2009, Shoemaker, Danielian, and Bredlinger 1991). The second uses an ethnographic method. Scholars following in this tradition embed themselves in the newsrooms of journalists and study their behavior, noting what news events they encounter, which they chose to follow up on, and then how the coverage of those few selected topics is structured (e.g. Anderson 2013, Gans 1979, Tuchman 1978, Usher 2014).⁵ This literature is often more exploratory and descriptive, but still provides useful insights. Collectively, these studies lay out a procedure journalists and editors follow from the search for potential news items, to the selection of news stories, to the crafting of that story, to the placement of news stories into a collective news product.

Coexistence of Newmaking Influences

All of these theories have at least some veracity. The news is indeed shaped by the realities of economic motivations, technology, individual preferences of journalists, and professional norms. Collectively, these various newsmaking influence form a “media logic” (Altheide 2013).⁶

⁵ For a critical review of many of these studies, see Cottle (2007).

⁶ Communication scholars argue that, as elites increasingly utilize the media as an intermediary, media logic will become more pervasive in structuring politics (Kepplinger 2002). This represents a process known as mediatization (Asp 2014, Strömbäck 2008). With mediatization, succeeding in any political communication endeavor requires a keen understanding of and willingness to adapt to the media’s institutional logic (Deacon and Stanyer 2014). An elite, including a candidate, who wants to build an agenda through the media (e.g, Dalmus, Hänggli, and Bernhard 2017, Lang and Lang 1983) must find ways to accommodate the media’s collective preferences. This had produced several repercussions: the expanding role of a new class of communication specialists or “spin doctors” (Esser, Reinemann, and Fan

If all of these influences are active in the newsmaking process, then do they operate purely independently from one another? Not always. Sometimes they do indeed interact in meaningful ways. Indexing theory (Bennett 1990, Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007), which argues that news coverage will be shaped by the prevailing attitudes of political elites, is partially grounded in an interactive theory that sees the cost effectiveness of uncritically indexing elite attitudes being reinforced with professional assessments of objectivity, for example. There the norms build on each other, making the result a firmer part of news creation.

At other times, the forces clash. Zaller (1999) shows how professional norms toward informative, critical coverage of elites can come into conflict with demand-side economics for titillating and scandalous coverage. The push and pull of the two is resolved depending on the extent of the market pressure. When market pressure is weak (when the news outlet faces less competition and therefore has a stronger hold on the audience), the professional value wins out. When market pressure is strong (when there is competition), economic motivations drive coverage. Hayes and Guardino (2010) show that when there is a general lack of disagreement between American domestic elites, journalists will still practice particular professional norms and avoid purely indexing the consensus that other newsmaking forces push them toward.

2001), increasing efforts to subsidize the cost of news product through the dissemination of potential content and scheduling of pseudo-events that cede some agency to the media (Gandy 1982, Lancendorfer and Lee 2010, Sellers and Schaffner 2007, Turk 1986), and the proliferation of other strategic news management techniques (Pfetsch 1999, Sanders et al. 2011). I explain how elites might be able to engage with newsworthiness values as means of exercising more control over the media agenda later on in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

To be sure, there is still more work to be done on the interrelations of these various forces. But before such work can commence a stronger grasp on the individual forces in isolation is necessary. This dissertation aids in that effort in focusing on the role of professional norms. While the preceding work on professional norms is undeniably valuable, much of it has neglected the importance of context. Put simply, professional values are general but their application is specific. Because the media exists primarily as an institution in a context broader than just politics, the professional norms are developed for purposes other than achieving some sort of political end. Therefore, all journalists are taught the same (or at least remarkably similar) norms in journalism school. Norms that are reinforced as the reporter begin working at a news desk. But the application of these values is dependent on the circumstances that an individual journalist finds herself working in. Yet much of the academic work cited above has limited itself to descriptive analysis at the general level. This is important because the context-dependent (i.e. specific) application is where political repercussions can occur. Context matters. The theoretical contribution of this dissertation, which I now turn to, is to show how much.

A Contextual Theory of Newsworthiness Values

Having situated professional norms within a broader context of newsmaking forces, I now turn to a deeper dive into the successes and shortcomings of the literature. As discussed above, professional norms are informal standards and practices that journalists, as members of the profession, subscribe to. The process by which journalists come to know and implement these norms is unstructured but occurs primarily during formal education in journalism programs at universities and during early career socialization process as interns or cub reporters.

The values themselves can be traced to a number of origin points. Some argue that they are the necessary byproducts of working in a high-pressure, time-sensitive career (Tuchman 1978, Fishman 1980). Others note that technology, in addition to its independent effect on newsmaking, also dictates how the media structures content via professional norms as a secondary, indirect form of influence (Usher 2014). Because journalists conceptualize themselves as storytellers and because the conventions of storytelling are inextricably tied to the medium of the story, technological innovation that introduces functionally new mediums or significantly alters existing mediums can bring changes to the profession of journalism. And others argue that professional norms are means of standardizing content to the preferences of the audience (Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn 2004).

Professional norms appear to be sticky but not permanent. Gans's (1979) foundational work lists eight "enduring values." Several decades later, in a revised edition to his work, Gans (2004 [1979]) notes that those same values appear to still be in place. Other ethnographers have also found that those values are still holding firm as well (Anderson 2013, Usher 2014). But there is still some room for new norms to develop and old values to be updated. As mentioned above, Usher (2014) argues that new professional norms of immediacy, participation, and interactivity have developed in recent years. And studies on the social history of objectivity in newsmaking identify several historical periods where the meaning of objectivity for journalists seems to shift to a new interpretation (Kaplan 2006, Schudson 1978). As such, professional norms appear durable but not permanent.

As mentioned above, the literature on professional norms is exceptionally broad and features perspectives from multiple disciplines. While the result has many of the advantages of robust pluralistic systems, it also features some of the weaknesses inevitable to independent academic institutions: it can be a bit disjointed. There is a tremendous range in scope, for example, with some studies serving as deep dives into single norms (Schudson 1978) and others documenting dozens of norms (Harcup and O’Neill 2001, 2017). Some studies cover similar topical ground and discuss related concepts but use entirely different names. And others propose typologies that are unrelated to the organizational systems used by others.

That said, a careful survey of this diverse literature exposes a number of commonalities concerning an important subset of professional norms: newsworthiness values (Shoemaker 2006, Shoemaker, Danielian, and Bredlinger 1991, Strömbäch, Karlsson, and Hopmann 2012). Newsworthiness values represent the attributes journalists seek out in potential stories. The scholarly literature lists dozens, if not hundreds, of different types of newsworthiness values. For my purposes, I utilize a shorter list. These include conflict, timeliness, human interest, and simplicity, which are frequently mentioned across a number of studies.⁷ A survey of journalism textbooks (Table 2.1) reveals a similar list.

The table also provides a number of additional newsworthiness values. My decision to limit the theoretical thrust of this dissertation to only four instead of a broader

⁷ Informally, my own experience as a journalism student lines up with these norms as well. In my Intro to Journalism class, we were taught six newsworthiness norms. Thanks to the ingraining effect of biweekly quizzes, I can confidently report that those six were prominence, proximity, timeliness, conflict, unusualness, and human interest. Four of the five listed above appear in the above list. My belated gratitude to Prof. George Miller.

swath was motivated by two primary considerations. First, because these values are of particular importance due to the potential ramifications they could have. If the media does indeed prioritize content that meets these values then candidates and parties are incentivized to produce political messages and scenarios that meet these preferences. The end result is more conflict-laden, personalistic, shortsighted, and simplistic political messages and, subsequently, political contests. The normative implications of such an incentive structure are so significant that investigating the effects of these newsworthiness values in particular is a top priority.

Second, because many of these other values provide only muddled theoretical expectations. Proximity can be ruled out due to the national media focus of this dissertation, as can prominent people given that candidates for party nominations almost uniformly meet that standard. Impact should likely be satisfied by the possibility that the candidate could win a major party nomination, thereby making them viable contenders for the most powerful political figure in the world. The only ones that remain that haven't previously been listed are the infrequently mentioned audience demands (which I argue is best conceptualized as a potential source of newsworthiness values rather than a value in and of itself) and good visuals (likely important but hard to capture for the purposes of this project).

As I mentioned, others have noted these norms. Some have even mentioned that they might carry political repercussions (Cook 1998). But I offer the novel theoretical contribution that the consequences these values produce can only be understood from a purely contextual lens. These values have been observed and documented in general. The ethnographic work cited above was done in newsrooms overall, not politics desks. The

content analysis was similarly applied to overall coverage, not any specific campaign or politics section. They are general media values, not political media values.

It makes sense to study newsworthiness values, at least initially, in this manner given the media's institutional identity. The media covers politics, yes, but that is not all that it does. News includes a much broader collection of topics than merely the political and so it needs norms that are not domain specific. But that consequently means that the media applies apolitical standards to craft political coverage. Doing so requires a translation of these general principles into the specifics of politics. The process of doing so is where the media's status as an accidental political institution can create unintended political effects. As such, a politically minded and context-dependent study is needed to tease out the ramifications of the media's general newsworthiness values.

Practically, what this means is that while these values are internalized by all journalists, what constitutes "conflict" or "simple" varies according to the subject the journalist is covering. Separated from the context that the particular journalist will encounter, these values are unusably vague. Put another way, whether in a journalism classroom or as a new employee at a news desk, all would-be journalists are taught the same values. Some of those reporters will cover political campaigns while others will cover sports, popular culture, or technology. What these values mean varies between those contexts, although reporters in all of these contexts would agree on the importance of the criterion.

Table 2.1: Mentions of Newsworthiness Norms in Various Journalism Textbooks

	Proximity	Timeliness	Prominent People	Impact	Unusual	Human Interest	Conflict	Audience Demands	Good Visuals	Simple
Mencher (1986)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Metzler (1986)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Metz (1990)	X	X	X	X		X				
Garrison (1990)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Laakaniemi (1995)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Ryan and Tankard (2005)	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	
Pape and Featherstone (2005)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Sissons (2006)	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Spark and Harris (2011)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Rich (2013)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			

This is the core of the contribution of this dissertation project. I am examining a particular context, presidential primary contests, which is itself understudied. I am taking a generalized theory of newsworthiness values (that has existed in the communications literature and occasionally been cross-pollinated into political science in some limited capacities) and specifying it for this chosen context. I now turn to creating the contextualized hypotheses that will be tested.

Hypotheses in Context

Via the marriage of the particular context of presidential primaries (informed by the literature review conducted in the introductory chapter) and generalized theories of newsworthiness values (discussed in the preceding section), a new, context-dependent theory of newsworthiness values can be used to derive testable hypotheses of the relationship between candidate and media agendas in presidential primary contests.

Importantly, these hypotheses should test two things. First, do newsworthiness values exert a substantively meaningful effect on media content in presidential primaries? And second, what are the political, context-based ramifications of these newsworthiness values? I proceed from this point in four sections, each corresponding to an empirical chapter that follows.

Candidate-Induced Differences in Newsworthiness

First, I consider the application of this context-dependent theory from the perspective of the candidate. This portion of the dissertation – Chapter 4 – deals with candidate-level variation in appeals to newsworthiness values. Other scholars have noted that when elites, or the specialists they employ (Esser, Reinemann, and Fan 2001), want

to build an agenda through the mass media as a means of affecting public opinion (Dalmus, Hänggli, and Bernhard 2017, Lang and Lang 1983), they can attempt to strategically manage the media by engaging in activities meant to placate the media's content preferences (Pfetsch 1999, Sanders et al. 2011). Often this is done by leveraging the finite resources of the media via information subsidies, i.e. providing potential news stories that the media can accept as they are or use as inspiration for their own coverage (Crouse 1975, Gandy 1982, Lancendorfer and Lee 2010, Turk 1986). The most common forms of information subsidies are press releases, although other forms like events organized to attract media attention can also be an effective means of working with journalism's newsmaking procedures (Sellers and Schaffner 2007). While there is some evidence to suggest that information subsidization or other forms of strategic news management can become more effective when techniques incorporate appeals to newsworthiness values (Flowers, Haynes, and Crespin 2003), in general we know little about how newsworthiness values could be used by political elites in a similar manner. My theory posits that journalists covering candidates on the trail will be looking for signals of values like conflict, human interest, and simplicity. How they come to be recognized will depend on the nature of political campaigns. As such, I turn to the means by which much of political campaigns are conducted, rhetoric, to argue that candidates can signal to journalists through the use of rhetorical newsworthiness cues.

Conflict involves at least two parties with wants or needs that are incongruous and efforts by the parties to achieve their desires at the expense of the other. In politics this conflict is typically verbal attacks on explicitly specified targets. But, in primaries, this is not the most appropriate conceptualization. Given the multicandidate and intraparty

nature of these contests there is a very wide array of potential targets: co-partisans also vying for the nomination, cross-partisan elites, and organized coalition interests to name just a few. Some of this conflict, however, is made unlikely by the primary calendar (Haynes and Rhine 1998). A candidate can engage in a conflict with implicit or abstract targets. For example, by discussing an unpopular war but not explicitly mentioning the individuals who have overseen it or via an economically populist message where the targets are an abstract amalgamation of political and economic elites.

Defining conflict by the rhetorical presence of a second, adversarial party is therefore not the best fit for how a journalist encounters conflict-laden messages in this particular context. Consider a second possibility: emotional appeals to anger. Scholars of emotion define anger as “a sense of displeasure plus the urge to do some of the things that remove or harm its agent” (Frijda 1988, p. 351). This displeasure can be found in the oppositional nature of conflict, while the “urge to do some of the things that remove or harm its agent” captures the active nature that conflict entails. Anger can also be a form of conflict expressed against an implicit or abstract entity, unlike defining conflict via the presence of an explicitly identified target. Candidates who have angrier speaking styles should therefore be more appealing to journalists’ sense of conflict as a form of newsworthiness, who will then respond with coverage more representative of the issues the candidate emphasizes. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1.1 (Conflict Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more anger-laden language the candidate invokes.

Notably, this does not preclude the possibility that attacks would also be perceived as invoking conflict. But many attacks will also be expressed via the use of

anger so they are also not going overlooked in the theoretical formulation. And while it is possible that an attack could be articulated without anger, I would argue that the specific context in which this theory is applied minimizes that possibility. While it is possible that a candidate could engage in non-angry conflict with another candidate, journalists should see an angry attack as inherently more conflict-laden than an attack prefaced by “I respectfully disagree.”

Moving on to the human-interest value, journalists should be attracted to more relatable stories. In the context of a campaign, candidates can vary in this regard by differing in how often they invoke themselves. Campaigns that utilize more candidate-centric rhetoric, i.e. making the candidate’s accomplishments, biography, or traits a larger part of the campaign agenda or otherwise utilizing a more personalistic style, should be more appealing to journalists’ preference for human-interest angles because they are offering a personified element to their campaigns. This leads me to the hypothesis that:

H1.2 (Human-interest Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more the candidate utilizes candidate-based appeals.

I provide two distinct contextual definitions of rhetorical simplicity. First, journalists should find clear language to be more newsworthy. I refer to this as linguistic simplicity. More readily interpretable language should appeal to journalists because it will represent political speech that minimizes confusion and is most easily repackaged into news products. Second, reporters should find candidate messages that are narrowly focused to have a simpler structure to their agenda. I refer to this as narrative simplicity. Candidates who define their agenda with a small number of issues should have a more

straightforward message for journalists to convey in their coverage than candidates who embrace a wide array of issues. Therefore, the two rhetorical simplicity hypotheses are:

H1.3 (Linguistic Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the simpler the language the candidate invokes.

H1.4 (Narrative Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the narrower a range of issues a candidate message is focused on.

Rules-Induced Differences in Newsworthiness

Second, I consider how the nature of the primary process itself might affect how journalists interpret newsworthiness. Presidential primaries are unique among American elections for a number of reasons outlined in the introductory chapter. Two of the most salient differences are the multicandidate field and the long, serial process. Given the first-past-the-post nature of American politics, most elections are contested between only two candidates. While general elections may occasionally feature third-party candidates who get non-trivial percentages of the overall vote, primaries routinely feature far more numerous viable contenders. Furthermore, while general elections are commonly measured from the conventions to Election Day, a difference of usually 2-4 months, the first primary candidates often announce nearly a year before a single caucus or primary.

The long, multicandidate nature of primaries should create a set of circumstances that systematically vary the timeliness and contextual simplicity journalists perceive the race, and therefore the candidates, as possessing. Starting with an application of timeliness, I expect that media responsiveness to a candidate's agenda will, on average, decrease as the primary campaign goes on and the candidate's agenda becomes old news.

H2.1 (Timeliness Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between candidate messaging and media coverage will be greater earlier in the primary campaign than later in the primary season.

Second, I consider how the multicandidate nature of primaries and the volatility that introduces interacts with media preference for news stories that are simple. As the field expands to include more potential nominees, evaluating the messages of each candidate should become more complex. It will be harder for journalists to divine the most important fault lines between candidates and contextualize their agendas. And in reverse, the winnowing of the field should simplify the race for journalists as it narrows down the options of other potential issues to discuss instead of the candidates' agendas. The introduction of new candidates into the race is accompanied by more permutations of potential comparisons among candidates and more arguments about what constitutes salient issues. This leads to journalists having more uncertainty as to the state of the race, while contractions in the size of the field should have an opposite, clarifying effect. In short, changes in the size of the field, fluctuations made possible by the multicandidate nature of primaries, should create variable circumstances of contextual simplicity. This leads to my second hypothesis:

H2.2 (Contextual Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between candidate messaging and media coverage will decrease when the field expands.

Media Differences in Emphasis of Newsworthiness Values

Third, I consider how professional values might vary across outlets. Prior research provides some reason to think that different media outlets might exhibit different

emphases of the same values (Cook 1998, Gans 1979), although others argue that the similarities are more significant than the differences (Druckman 2005, Hayes 2014).

Investigating these media-level differences can provide insight into the origins of these newsworthiness values. Earlier in this chapter I described three theories as to why newsworthiness values form. These include routinization, technology, and audience preferences. Following the logic of these three theories leads to expectations for how different mediums can vary in predictable ways that would lead to differences in salience of newsworthiness values. Studying these differences can increase our understanding of the sources of these values.

Doing so is important because having a better grasp on the sources of values is crucial to assessing how the media can improve in the future. For example, if we conclude that the media's emphasis on conflict in coverage is leading to a normatively undesirable news product, the process of weakening the influence of that newsworthiness value is invariably tied to the value's origin point. If the newsworthiness value of conflict originates in journalism's need to satisfy audience demands, then the path to minimizing its influence would likely be increasing support for public media outlets in the short term and attempting to shift audience preferences in the long term. Such a remedy would be ineffective if the source of the newsworthiness values is technological, however.

Starting with routinization, this theory hypothesizes that professional norms, and newsworthiness values as a specific class of those norms, stem from necessity on the part of the journalist. Each reporter has to sort through information pertinent to their beat, identify what is to become news, and then create that product daily and on deadline (Fishman 1980, Tuchman 1978). Because the task is onerous, journalists identify

standards that they can apply repeatedly to information they encounter as a consistent means of evaluation. As such, the origin point for the norms lies in the divination of a practical means of taking the near-infinite world of information and reducing it down to the finite “newshole.”

This means that the influence of the resulting norms should be inversely related to the overall size of the newshole that medium presents. A transcript from a broadcast news program represents only a fraction of the news content in a newspaper, and as such reporters working for a broadcast news program need to be even more discerning in identifying what constitutes news. The space available to report on news is even broader in the 24/7 cable news medium and therefore the influence of newsworthiness values should be weaker still among these outlets if routinization theory is applicable.

H3.1 (Routinization Hypothesis) The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with stricter space constraints.

Technologically based theories argue that norms develop based on the form that the media outlet takes, forms that are a function of the tools available to journalists. Part of the professional self-conception of journalists is as modern-day storytellers. Storytelling is tied to the medium (Usher 2014), as literary and visual mediums lend themselves to distinct conventions. These conventions are a function of what is and what is not possible with the way the technology of choice permits a connection between storyteller and audience. For example, increased camera quality makes facial close-ups an aesthetically acceptable way of conveying an image and so they become more prominent in television news packages (Mutz 2015).

This theory suggests that visual and textual mediums should differ in their emphases of newsworthiness values. Visual mediums, whether broadcast or cable, have to match the text of coverage with images. While text mediums do include accompanying visuals, the content is still overwhelmingly rhetorical. This should create different storytelling conventions across the two types of news mediums, which in turn results in differing emphases of particular newsworthiness values.

H3.2 (Technology Hypothesis) The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will vary between television media outlets (either broadcast or cable) and text-based media outlets.

The theory of newsworthiness values as formalizations of audience preferences is closely related to economic theories of news creation (Hamilton 2004). In this formulation, newsworthiness values are professional rationalizations for giving the consumer what they want. If the media prioritizes conflict, it is because that's what the audience craves.

This implies that media outlets differ in the prioritization of these values to the extent that their audiences differ in how they prioritize them. The ability to test this theory therefore depends on assessments of variation in audience patterns by media type. The literatures on political knowledge and selective exposure suggest that there are differences in the level of political sophistication audiences of particular media outlets possess. Broadcast television news audiences are generally less politically sophisticated (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Alternatively, the audience for partisan media tends to be the most politically interested, although the prestige press audience is not far behind (Stroud 2011). This implies that, if the audience preferences theory is to find support,

there should be variation in the utilization of newsworthiness values, and specifically the simplicity value, along these lines. It stands to reason that less sophisticated audiences will prefer simpler content while more sophisticated audiences will be more receptive of politically sophisticated content. Broadcast outlets should therefore prioritize simplicity more than any other media type, while partisan media outlets should prioritize simplicity the least.

H3.3 (Audience Preferences Hypothesis) The influence of newsworthiness values, especially simplicity, on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with less politically sophisticated audiences.

Behavioral Implications

Finally, do these differences in convergence matter for structuring vote choice in presidential primaries? The media effects literature, specifically concerning the role of agenda setting (e.g. Feezell 2018, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, King, Schneer, and White 2017, McCombs and Shaw 1972), suggests that there is good reason to think so. And previous evidence suggests that agenda convergence between candidate and media can affect subjects in a lab setting (Hayes 2008). But the circumstances for that experiment were a statewide general election, not a presidential primary. The primary electorate is radically different than a statewide or national general electorate in terms of political opinions and their ultimate goal: to select a representative of a party, not a political officeholder. As such, it is important to test if the same effects hold in this context.

H4.1 (Candidate Support Hypothesis): Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will be more supportive of the candidate than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral

situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will be less supportive of the candidate than a control group.

In addition, it is worth considering the normative impacts of high or low convergence. As discussed at greater length in the concluding chapter, I argue that candidates are better arbiters of agenda focus than the media. The primary goal of any candidate when devising a messaging strategy is to identify and lay out the combination of issue appeals that will represent their “best case.” The media face a number of competing incentives, including satisfying their professional norms (which are not necessarily the same as finding the most informative and normatively desirable content). I argue that these competing incentives make the media more likely to wander away from content that is of actual use to primary voters. As such, I argue that voters exposed to high convergence will actually be best situated to correctly identify the candidate that they would support if they were exposed to a set of complete information, what is known in the literature as “correct” voting.

H4.2 (Correct Support Hypothesis): Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will display more correct support than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will display less correct support than a control group.

I recognize that this claim may be divisive. Importantly, I am not suggesting that the media should be uncritical of candidates. Candidates might correctly identify the issues voters care most about but then exaggerate or outright lie about their proposals and qualifications on that issue. Instead, what I am suggesting is that the media should be

critical of candidates but about the issues that the candidate has identified as parts of her best case. Ultimately, however, this is an empirical claim and is therefore testable.

Summary

This chapter has given the reader a broad introduction to the institutional media, media logic, newsmaking, and journalism’s professional norms literatures and the position of newsworthiness values within these literatures. It describes the generalized nature of the professional values and expounds on the need for context-dependent formulations. It then lays out context-specific hypotheses to test the role of newsworthiness values in presidential primaries. These hypotheses are summarized in Table 2.2. In the next chapter, I discuss the data and methods that will be employed to test these hypotheses.

Table 2.2: Hypotheses to be Tested

Chapter	Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis Name	Hypothesis Description
4	1.1	Conflict	Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more anger-laden language the candidate invokes.
4	1.2	Human-interest	Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more the candidate utilizes candidate-based appeals.
4	1.3	Linguistic Simplicity	Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the simpler the language the candidate invokes.
4	1.4	Narrative Simplicity	Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the narrower a range of issues a candidate message is focused on.
5	2.1	Timeliness	Agenda similarity between candidate messaging and media coverage will be greater earlier in the primary campaign than later in the primary season.
5	2.2	Contextual Simplicity	Agenda similarity between candidate messaging and media coverage will decrease when the field expands.

6	3.1	Routinization	The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with stricter space constraints.
6	3.2	Technology	The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will vary between television media outlets (either broadcast or cable) and text-based media outlets.
6	3.3	Audience Preferences	The influence of newsworthiness values, especially simplicity, on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with less politically sophisticated audiences.
7	4.1	Candidate Support	Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will be more supportive of the candidate than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will be less supportive of the candidate than a control group.
7	4.2	Correct Support	Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will display more correct support than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will display less correct support than a control group.

Chapter 3: Methodology of Corpora Construction and Experimental Design

In designing and testing these hypotheses, I made a significant number of methodological decisions that need to be appreciated in analyzing the empirical results in the chapters to come. To prevent these empirical chapters from being overwhelmed with methodological discussion and in the interest of scientific transparency, I discuss these various decisions here. To keep this chapter itself as accessible as possible, I have also attempted to make this chapter as parsimonious as possible by siloing the most technical aspects in Appendix A.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss the most fundamental question related to all the analysis: Who counts as a presidential primary candidate? Next, I walk through the creation and processing of the Presidential Primary Announcement Corpus (PPAC) which is used in chapter 4 and 6. I then proceed to discuss the collection, parsing, processing, and modeling of the Presidential Primary Communication Corpus (PPCC), which is the primary data source for the analysis in chapters 5 and 6. Finally, I discuss the experimental design implemented in Chapter 7.

Who Counts?

The formal barriers to entry as a candidate for a party nomination are virtually non-existent. One merely need announce that they are a candidate and the task is essentially done. This was the path taken by Lawrence Lessig, a Harvard Law professor and campaign finance activist, in 2016. Lessig declared that he was seeking the Democratic nomination and by virtue of that announcement he technically was. Should

Lessig be included because he announced, even if it is improbable he ever would have been an actual contender for the party nomination?

Formal barriers do exist further along the line. State party organizations can establish rules as to who appears on the ballot and the national party committees can establish rules as to who is allowed to appear in the debates. The barriers, however, are heterogeneous and subject to change. Some states attempt to or successfully alter rules to favor native candidates⁸, frontrunners⁹, or incumbent presidents.¹⁰ Furthermore, some candidates leave the race before any debates occur let alone actual voting. Tom Vilsack, then the lame-duck governor of Iowa, announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination in November, 2006 but dropped out of the race by February, 2007. Even though he did not catch on, he was still a prominent Democratic figure who could conceivably have performed well in the caucus in his home state. Should he be ruled out because he did not make it far enough to encounter these hurdles?

In dealing with these complications, I favor a system that weeds out the fringe candidates while also preserving those who were viable, if ultimately unsuccessful. I want only those candidates who were officially announced but actively campaigning. To generate such a list, I use *Associated Press* coverage of primary announcements as an initial starting point. The AP, as a newswire, should document the announcement of any person with a significant profile while ignoring only those who can safely be overlooked because, while they may have declared themselves candidates, they are unlikely to

⁸ Weigel, David. "Ky. GOP rule change allows Paul to run for Senate amid his White House bid." *Washington Post*, August 22, 2015.

⁹ Levy, Clifford J. "McCain on Ballot across New York as Pataki Gives In." *The New York Times*, February 4, 2000.

¹⁰ Isenstadt, Alex. "Republicans to Scrap Primaries and Caucuses as Trump Challengers Cry Foul." *Politico*, September 6, 2019.

commit to any actual costly campaigning. To build this list, I started by applying a Boolean search with phrases such as “running for President,” “jumped into the Presidential race,” and “announces candidacy” in Nexis Uni’s archive of *Associated Press* stories with a start date of 2 years before the nomination convention and an end date of the last primary for each election cycle. I downloaded the headlines of all of these stories and read through them to identify the candidates, saving the text of the story covering an announcement. If an AP story specifically referenced a candidate as running as a favorite son, then that candidate was not included in the database.

I then further limited this list by seeking a specific date at which the candidate withdrew from the race, announced the suspension of campaign activities, or endorsed an opponent. Candidates who do not end their campaigns but do not amass any delegates going into the convention are clearly not bearing the cost of campaigning. Any candidate who met these two criteria was removed from the database. This took care of a handful of specific cases where announcements came from non-viable but still visible people that the AP covered for reasons beyond the sincerity of the campaign.¹¹ Stories covering both the announcement and suspension of campaigns have been individually saved as .txt files and are available for review upon request.

The results of this process were a list of candidates for the major party nominations from 1984-2016¹² that included 117 individual campaigns: 69 Republicans

¹¹ The most notable (and humorous) example of this is the actor Tom Laughlin, who “said his campaign started out as movie project about a Norman Schwarzkopf-like general who returns to the United States after a war only to find his county ‘in the toilet.’ The general decides to run for president to save the country.”

¹² I used this range of years because the C-SPAN wasn’t launched until 1979 and their archive prior to the 1984 campaign is sparse.

and 48 Democrats. I then collected some observational data about these campaigns: candidate race, ethnicity, gender, prior work experience, etc.

Presidential Primary Announcement Corpus

Corpus Collection

Using this list of candidates, I proceeded to collect a corpus concerning the formal announcement of the campaigns. I used the formal announcement rather than the announcement of the formation of an exploratory committee (or the less common announcement of the intention to consider forming an exploratory committee) because not all eventual candidates enter the exploratory committee phase and some candidates decide not to run after forming an exploratory committee, most notably Sarah Palin in 2012.

The corpus contains text representing both candidate messaging and media messaging. For the candidates, this text is the announcement speech or, in a few instances, announcement letters or emails.¹³ Announcement speeches were obtained from several databases, most notably the C-SPAN video archives and the American Presidencies Project (Peters and Woolley 2020). Between these resources, I was able to retrieve an announcement speech for 110 of the 117 candidates.¹⁴

¹³ Jim Webb-2016, Joe Biden-2008

¹⁴ In both 2016 and 2008, Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy via a short video rather than a formal speech. Carly Fiorina did the same in 2016. Al Sharpton's 2004 campaign was run primarily through the media without many traditional campaign events, including an announcement. Orrin Hatch launched his 2000 campaign via a press release. George H.W. Bush did not actively campaign against his primary challenger in 1992. The only candidate who does seem to have given a formal announcement speech that I could not retrieve was Elizabeth Dole in 2000. The Dole library at the University of Kansas reports that they do have a copy of the speech but that it is not currently available to the public or scholars. All of these candidates are omitted from the analysis.

The media messaging portion of the corpus includes news articles and stories about the candidates from a number of mainstream media outlets: *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*,¹⁵ and ABC News,¹⁶ Fox, and MSNBC.¹⁷ For each media outlet, I searched the candidate's name in Nexis Uni and downloaded all news items starting from the date of the candidate's announcement and ending one week after the announcement. I then manually processed each story, removing those that mentioned the candidate briefly but were not principally about the candidate. In doing so, I also removed stories where the candidate was the subject of an attack from another candidate. That story or article was instead attributed to the candidate who carried out the attack. Including the story for both would have effectively double-counted the story and misrepresented the overall media environment. Articles from the print outlets that mentioned both candidates in a purely comparative manner were excluded, however this made up a relatively small segment of the overall corpus. Because transcripts from the television news channels, and especially the cable channels, had to be parsed at a finer grade of detail, often requiring extracting only a segment from a transcript for an entire program, I was able to separate the comparative pieces to include both candidates with greater ease. The product of these efforts was a collection of 2101 total media documents: 508 from *The New York Times*,

¹⁵ The choices of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are straightforward. Other studies have similarly focused on these major papers (e.g. Ku et al. 2003, Vavreck 2009), other news sources follow their lead (Crouse 1975, Protess and McCombs 1991), and they are well archived throughout the entire time frame I am interested in.

¹⁶ I choose ABC News for pragmatic reasons. Of the three broadcast television news programs, it is archived the furthest back in the Nexis Uni database.

¹⁷ Fox and MSNBC were included to account for the resurgence of partisan media in American politics. This portion of the corpus is not included in the analysis for chapter 4 and 5, however, as the goal of those chapters is to assess the role of news norms in the mainstream press. They are included in the replication analysis examining variation in newsworthiness values among media outlets in Chapter 6, however. Fox transcripts are available in Nexis Uni starting prior to the 2000 primaries. MSNBC transcripts become available in November, 1999 and are therefore not available for the candidate announcements in the 2000 electoral cycle..

998 from the *Washington Post*, 172 from ABC News, 609 from Fox, and 420 from MSNBC.

Content Analysis Procedures

To measure the issue agenda of the candidates and the media in the corpus, I constructed a codebook based on a condensed version of the Comparative Agendas Project codebook¹⁸ (Baumgartner and Jones 2009) and topics I expected from the literature to be invoked by candidates and the media in campaigns (Hart 2000, Patterson 1994, Seifert 2012). This codebook was applied to the corpus of text with each paragraph coded into one of 15 categories: domestic economy, government assistance programs, social issues, candidate-based appeals, international affairs, natural resources, education, immigration, trade, populism, government's role, crime, American values, horserace, and a non-codable category to make the codebook exhaustive.¹⁹ This codebook was applied to the corpus by a single coder: me. The decision to personally hand-code was made to glean a richer understanding of the corpus and campaign history. A second coder was employed to double-code a randomly drawn subsample of 200 candidate speech

¹⁸ The codebook can be reviewed at <http://www.comparativeagendas.net/pages/master-codebook>.

¹⁹ Coding each paragraph into a single topic category was necessary to calculate the dependent variable. The codebook was implemented hierarchically with an initial attempt to code the paragraph into one of 12 categories. If that was unsuccessful, I then considered if the paragraph fell into the horserace, American values, or non-codable categories. This hierarchical process was used because candidates frequently would frame issue content in an American values manner (i.e. "We need to ban abortion because the Founders guaranteed us a right to life") while the media would frequently frame issue content via a horserace lens (i.e. "Will focusing her speech on economic policy affect her favorability ratings in the polls?"). An individual hearing the speech or consuming the media content would still get issue content from these appeals, so to prevent the exclusion of this meaningful issue content I sought to preserve it. A full explanation of coding procedures can be found in Appendix B.

paragraphs and 200 *The New York Times* coverage paragraphs (percentage agreement = 79%, Cohen's kappa = .76).²⁰

Measuring Convergence

With the corpus of candidate speeches and media coverage coded by paragraph into a single issue category, I then assembled the data using a candidate-media outlet dyad as the unit of analysis. As an example, this means that Jeb Bush-NYT, Jeb Bush-WaPo, and Jeb Bush-ABC are three separate units. For each unit, I calculated the percentage of the candidate's speech that was in each issue category, omitting non-codable. I then calculated the percentage of the media coverage for that unit that was in each issue category, once again omitting non-codable. With these percentages, I was able to calculate a convergence score.

Convergence scores are a simple, easily interpretable, and conveniently continuous measure of how similar or dissimilar two agendas are (Hayes 2010, Hayes and Lawless 2016, Ridout and Mellen 2007, Sigelman and Buell 2004). Put plainly, convergence scores compare the proportions of attention dedicated to different issue topics in two different sets of text. The formula for convergence scores is as follows:

$$I = 1 - \frac{|c_1 - m_1| + |c_2 - m_2| + \dots + |c_j - m_j|}{2}$$

Where I denotes the issue convergence score, c refers to the proportion of the first actor's agenda that was dedicated to issue j , and m refers to the proportion of the second actor's

²⁰ A more thorough discussion of intercoder reliability procedures and results as well as several validation tests can be found in Appendix B.

agenda that was dedicated to issue j . I ranges from 0 (perfect divergence) to 1 (perfect convergence).

If the candidate and the media outlet are talking about the same issues in similar proportions, the absolute value of the difference between the two will consistently be low, making the numerator small, resulting in a small quotient being subtracted from 1. If the candidate and the media outlet are talking about different issues or similar issues but in wildly different proportion, then the absolute values of the differences between the two will consistently be large, making the numerator large, resulting in a large quotient being subtracted from zero.

Presidential Primary Communication Corpus

I constructed a second, more expansive corpus to answer additional questions about how the structure of primaries affects candidate-media convergence by altering newsworthiness. This corpus uses the same initial list of candidates and media outlets (*The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, ABC News, Fox, and MSNBC) but contains text from each from the start of each candidate's campaign until its end. For the candidate who wins the nomination (and any candidates who refuse to withdraw or does not endorse another candidate), the end date is the day before the start of the party convention. Because Fox and MSNBC are not archived for the 1996 election, I limited this analysis to candidates and media coverage from 2000-2016. This still leaves 77 candidates, 51 Republicans and 26 Democrats.

Corpus Construction

While the American Presidency Project (Peters and Woolley 2020) once again served as a useful starting point for constructing this corpus, much of the text came from the C-SPAN video archives. The text that accompanies the C-SPAN video archives is either from the Federal News Service or from closed captioning. Some videos are not accompanied with a transcript.²¹ In those instances, I either transcribed the video myself if it was short or ran an MP3 version of the speech through an automated transcript service.²² The result of these efforts is a corpus of 2611 candidate speeches.

To obtain the text of media coverage of these campaigns, I searched each candidate's name on Nexis Uni with specified publication via Boolean search and then limited the results to the appropriate time frame. Once again, some of the stories that are associated with a candidate are not really *about* the candidate. Articles in *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post* may make mention of Ted Cruz but be primarily about another candidate or a different topic altogether. More strikingly, Fox and MSNBC transcripts are primarily for entire programs. So even if Ted Cruz was discussed in a segment from an hourly program like *Hardball* or *Hannity*, that segment is in a transcript along with everything else that was discussed. Each file had to therefore be assessed for relevance to the candidate. For some, especially the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* articles in the era of search engine optimization, that could be accomplished via a cursory inspection of the headline. For many others, however, it required checking the contents of each file one by one.

²¹ A representative from the C-SPAN archive informed me that this would be because C-SPAN does not own the rights to that particular video.

²² Based on a qualitative inspection, the quality of these transcripts appears to be extremely high. They would struggle with some names like "Kucinich" but otherwise resulted in highly accurate transcripts.

Once the textual wheat had been separated from the chaff, I separated metadata from text via an automated process and constructed the media element of the corpus. Only news articles by *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post* are considered for analysis in Chapter 5. Even limiting the corpus in this manner for that chapter results in a collection of 29,336 separate documents. The ABC News, Fox, and MSNBC portion of the corpus is added to the analysis for Chapter 6. It adds an additional 23,399 documents.

Topic Modeling

This quantity of text is far too large for any sort of detailed content analysis. It would be extremely expensive and time-consuming to manually code all this text according to a predetermined codebook like the one used on the PPAC. Therefore, I turn to computational methods.

A detailed discussion of different computational methods is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Grimmer and Stewart 2013), but as a parsimonious overview I will outline three broad classes of possibilities: dictionaries, supervised topical modeling, and unsupervised topic modeling. Dictionary methods use sets of specified words that a specially designed software applies to a collection of documents, tallies the sum of mentions, and outputs a result. Dictionary methods are only as good as the dictionaries themselves, and this presents the central dilemma. Given the breadth of the corpus constructed here, defining dictionaries that will adequately capture the heterogeneity of political topics discussed over 16 years would be remarkably difficult. And preexisting topical dictionaries, like the Lexicoder dictionaries, are designed to assess topics in legislation, not campaign contexts. My content analysis of announcement speeches resulted in several topics for which there are not preexisting dictionaries, like horserace

coverage or populism, that would need to be designed and validated. As simple and intuitive as dictionary methods might be, in this instance the realities of implementation of such a method are deceptively tricky.

Supervised topic models come in a number of shapes and sizes, but the overall purpose of any of them is to take a pre-classified “training set” of documents that has been coded based on some guideline, examine what alignment of words can best explain that classification, and then replicate that pattern on an unclassified corpus. They are best used when the researcher has a strong grasp on what the topics of interest are. For my particular case, the training set would be the hand-coded PPAC, the topics would be the 15 categories that I devised for that codebook, and the topic model would seek to replicate that 15-category coding scheme on the PPCC.

There would be a number of clear advantages to such a method. A supervised topic model would lead to a coding scheme that is immediately comparable against the PPAC, for instance. But there are downsides as well. For starters, the content analysis performed on the PPAC could handle the inherent topical drift that occurs over decades in politics. Foreign policy speeches once concerned with the Soviet Union become focused on Kosovo become focused on Iraq become focused on Syria, for example. Without external interference, a supervised topic model would struggle with these distinctions. Trying to account for this would involve running a series of smaller supervised topic models on isolated sets of text, both for the training set and full corpus, which would be inefficient and likely lead to unstable results.

More importantly, the training set would not be a random sample of text. It would instead be strongly correlated with time, as announcements come very early in the

electoral cycle by necessity. As such, it is possible that entirely new topics could emerge, for example around delegate math, that I do not account for. Or the probability that a given term is associated with a given topic could vary systematically later on in the primary process. This would be both plausible and devastating to the efficacy of such a topic model.

This leaves unsupervised topic modeling. Unsupervised topic models are very similar to supervised topic models with one notable exception: they do not require a training set. Instead, they produce topics based solely on what best explains the alignment of words within documents. The researcher has no a priori effect on the topic output. Typically, this method is most appropriate when the researcher does not have strong expectations as to what the meaningful topics are before analyzing the text. A researcher interested in measuring emotional sentiment in a corpus cannot prevent an unsupervised topic model from producing an output primarily about issue frames. While I actually do have some theoretical insight into what topics I would like to consider, the loss of this control is worth it for the ability to prevent the issues that would likely arise from a supervised method.

Specifying a Model

Having settled on an unsupervised topic model, there is then the decision of what type. There are many varieties, including LSA (Landauer, Foltz, and Laham 1998), LDA (Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003), expressed agenda model (Grimmer 2010), and dynamic multitopic model (Quinn et al. 2010). But given the concerns expressed above about topic drift across elections, I favor a method that can account for such an issue: Structural Topic Model (Roberts et al. 2014). What sets STM apart is that it allows for the inclusion

of covariates in the topic model itself. If the researcher expects that the use of topics across documents might vary systematically by some factor, that can be factored into the topic assignment. As an example, consider the theory of issue ownership (Petrocik 1996). This theory suggests that Democrats own issues of welfare policies while Republicans own foreign affairs. We might therefore expect that candidates of different parties would be differentially interested in invoking these issues or that the media covering candidates of those parties might be differentially interested in reporting on those topics. In such a scenario, the likelihood that a topic will appear in a document varies systematically by party. That can be accounted for by controlling for the party when specifying the model. Likewise, the year of the speech or media coverage can be entered into the model to take fluctuations in topic interest into account. This way, the model can recognize Syria as a distinct topic even though it is not a highly salient issue throughout the years in question in the same way unemployment or tax policy likely are.

While I considered a number of different model specifications,²³ I favored a topic model with the following covariates for the corpus analyzed in Chapter 5:

- *Candidate* – Indicator variable that denotes a document is a candidate speech. Candidates could, and evidence from the content analysis suggests likely do, talk about different topics than the media.
- *GOP* – Indicator variable that denotes a document that is either a speech from a Republican candidate or a media article about a Republican candidate. Republicans may, and evidence from the content analysis suggests likely do, talk about different topics than Democrats and have media coverage that emphasizes different topics than for Democrats.
- *Candidate*GOP* – An interaction between *Candidate* and *GOP*. Republican candidates may talk about different topics than Democratic candidates or the media when covering Republican candidates.

²³ I also have run a number of more parsimonious models accounting for smaller combinations of these variables. The combinations of variables do not impact the results as much as adjusting the number of topics the model produces.

- *Senator* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate has been a U.S. senator. Senators will likely emphasize and have media coverage that emphasizes their senatorial accomplishments, which could be a distinct topic.
- *Governor* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate has been a governor. Governors will likely emphasize and have media coverage that emphasizes their executive accomplishments, which could be a distinct topic.
- *Unusual Career* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate comes from an untraditional career background for a presidential candidate, like a businessman or doctor. Candidates from such unconventional careers will likely emphasize and have media coverage that emphasizes their outsider status, which could be a distinct topic.
- *Woman* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate is a woman. Women running for a nomination may emphasize and/or have media coverage that emphasizes their gender as a distinct topic.
- *Non-white* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate is non-white. Non-white candidates running for a nomination may emphasize and/or have media coverage that emphasizes their race as a distinct topic.
- *First run* – Indicator variable that denotes that the candidate is running in their first primary. Candidates running in their first nomination race may emphasize different topics or have media coverage that emphasizes elements of their background that have not been previously vetted.
- *NYT* – Indicator variable that denotes that the document is a *The New York Times* article. *The New York Times* might cover different topics from either candidates or the *Washington Post*.
- *Blog* – Indicator variable that denotes that the document is a news article from a media blog (as opposed to the print edition). Blog posts may focus on topics that are of greater interest to an online audience.
- *NYT*Blog* – An interaction between *NYT* and *Blog*. *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have a number of thematic blogs that may focus on specific issues.
- *NYT*GOP* – An interaction between *NYT* and *GOP*. Media coverage of candidates from different parties could discuss different topics than candidates from either party in a way that is different across topics.
- *Y2000, Y2004, Y2008, and Y2012* – Indicator variables for different electoral years. Topics may vary in their usage across different elections.
- *Campaign Code* – A categorical variable that denotes a unique ID for each candidate's campaign. Different candidates may attempt to build their campaigns largely around specific topics and get media coverage about those specific topics.

For the model of the corpus used in Chapter 6, all the above covariates are included plus several additional ones.²⁴

- *Fox* – Indicator variable that denotes that the document is a Fox News transcript. Fox News might cover different topics from nonpartisan media.
- *MSNBC* – Indicator variable that denotes that the document is an MSNBC transcript. MSNBC might cover different topics from nonpartisan media.
- *ABC* – Indicator variable that denotes that the document is an ABC News transcript. ABC News might cover different topics from partisan and print media.
- *Fox*GOP* – An interaction between *Fox* and *GOP*. Fox news coverage of Republican candidates could discuss different topics from Fox news coverage of Democratic candidates, given its partisan nature.
- *MSNBC*GOP* – An interaction between *MSNBC* and *GOP*. MSNBC coverage of Democratic candidates could discuss different topics from MSNBC coverage of Democratic candidates, given its partisan nature.

Initial Text Processing

Following standard procedure, I changed all words to lower case, removed punctuation, numbers, frequent “stop” words, and words that appeared very infrequently; and stemmed the remaining words so that distinct terms like “govern,” “government” and “governance” were all represented by the single word “govern.” After some initial test models, I discovered that the candidate names were overwhelmingly being used as anchor terms for the model. This was obfuscating any underlying patterns of the text. To

²⁴ Notably, all of those variables are described as affecting the distribution of topics across documents. There is another possibility, however. The usage of words in topics might systematically drift. For example, while terms like “ambassador,” “London,” “United,” and “Kingdom” might relate to a topic about our diplomatic standing with the United Kingdom, words like “Tony,” “Blair,” “David,” “Cameron,” “Theresa,” and “May” would pop in and out depending on the election in question. STM does have the ability to account for this issue, but it is very limited. Modeling topics as a function of words and covariates is computationally difficult, at least when compared to modeling documents as a function of topics and covariates. It drastically increases the computing time to do so on a corpus as large as mine. Furthermore, STM currently has limited ability to even do so. Only a single covariate can be included and it must be either binary or categorical in nature. I would not be able to model this issue with a series of covariates described above. As such, I simply make the assumption that this topic-content drift is relatively minor and will be handled by the presence of good, consistent anchor words. Following Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley (2016) I utilized spectral initialization.

remedy this, I simply dropped the names of the candidates as additional stop words.²⁵

Doing so dramatically improved the interpretability of the resulting topics. These procedures resulted in a matrix of vocabulary comprised of 110,910 unique words for the topic model of the corpus used in Chapter 5 and 133,497 unique words for the topic model of the corpus used in Chapter 6.

Model Fit

As for any data reduction technique, be it factor analysis or topic modeling, the number of specified topics (k) has significant impact on the results. Including too many topics can result in a single topic being broken into constituent parts and the loss of topical clarity while including too few topics can mean actually notable topics go undiscovered. The typical means of accounting for this is a Goldilocks method. You iterate the model specifying a series of k values and comparing model fit statistics and the validity of the topics it produces.

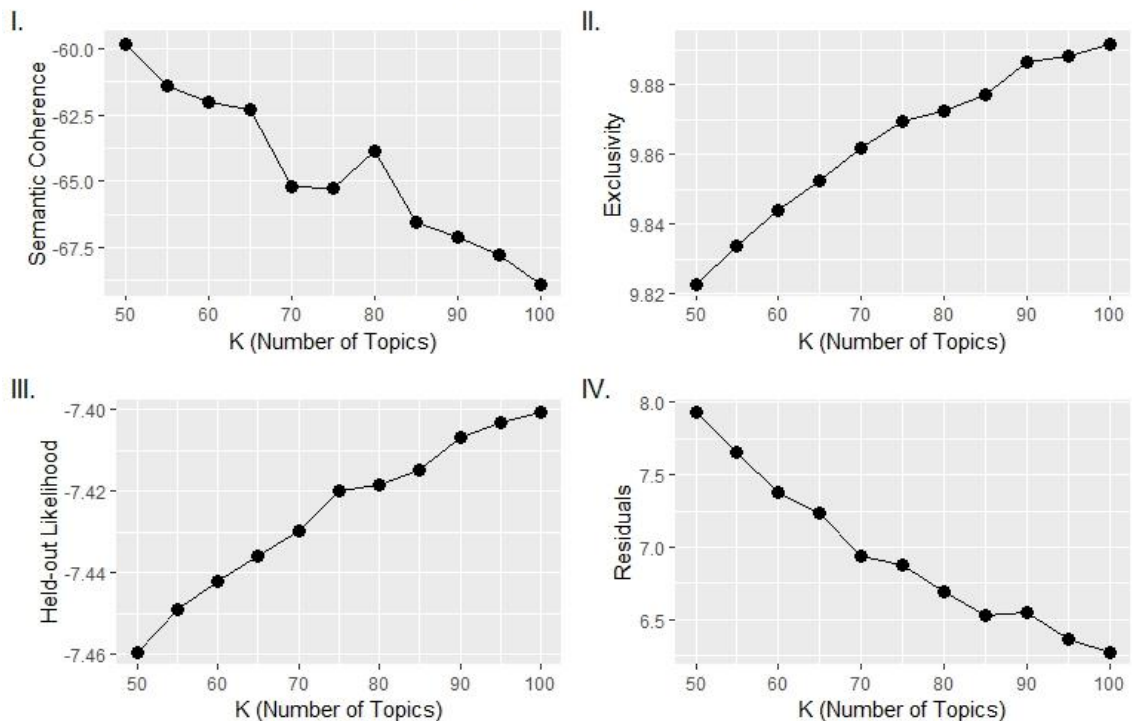
Initially, I relied on the Lee and Mimno (2014) algorithmic method which seeks to “solve” the question of how many topics there are by identifying the convex hull in a low-dimensional space. This method also introduces a degree of randomness by necessity, and as such is not deterministic. But it does provide a useful starting point. When applied to the corpus of candidate speeches, *The New York Times* articles, and *Washington Post* articles (i.e. without ABC News, Fox, or MSNBC stories), this method

²⁵ As an example, when candidate names are not removed a topic on abortion will use the names of candidates most closely associated with that topic as anchor words (“rick,” “santorum,” “huckabee,” “keyes,” etc.). Once candidate names are removed, the high frequency words are more intuitive (“abort,” “parenthood,” “plan,” “prolif,” etc.). This removal was done prior to stemming the corpus and included both singular, plural, and possessive forms of candidate names. It did not include other conjugations (i.e. “Trumpian”) and so some iterations were stemmed back to these omitted words. The procedure was therefore imperfect, but successful in its intended goal.

suggested 82 topics would be appropriate. This is generally in line with the typical 50-100 topics that are generated when applied to a corpus of this size.

To verify that this estimation is appropriate, I ran versions of the model with the number of topics set from 50 to 100 at intervals of 5. Figure 3.1 presents those results for several useful measures. Semantic cohesion (Mimno et al. 2011) captures how closely linked the top words in a topic are, i.e. how high the rates of co-occurrence for the words most tightly linked to a topic are. The logic is straightforward. If two words that are the

Figure 3.1: Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics



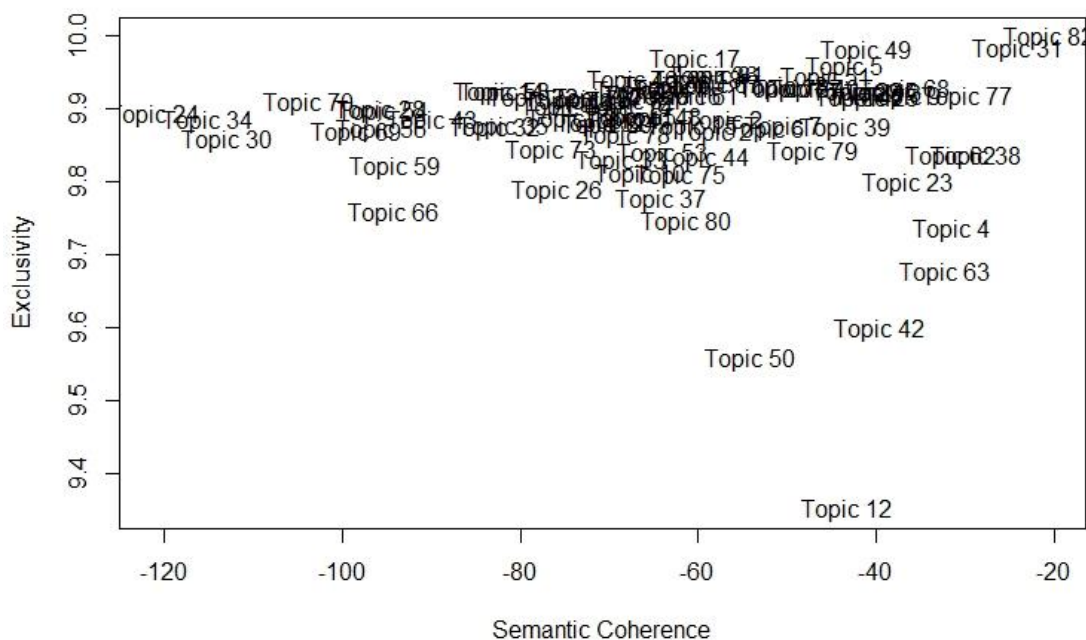
most powerful anchors for a topic tend to appear together at a high rate then they are cohesive and suggest a unified topic. Exclusivity (Roberts et al. 2014) captures the other side of the coin: How unlikely are the top words from a topic to appear in another, unrelated topic? A well-fitted model attempts to maximize both semantic cohesion and

exclusivity, although in practice one typically comes at the cost of the other. The held-out likelihood (Wallach et al. 2009) measures the model's performance on a set proportion of documents that are withheld from the original model. And the residuals (Taddy 2012) captures the sample dispersion as measured by the mean of squared adjusted residuals.

The results paint a rosy picture for using 82 topics in estimation. Semantic cohesion, which typically decreases with more topics, spikes back up around 80. Exclusivity and held-out likelihood are both fairly linear but the slopes do seem to decrease around topic 75-80, suggesting that there is not much improvement to be had from increasing the number of topics after that point. Looking at the residuals (bottom-right) suggests that there is not much improvement to be had after the 85th topic is incorporated. Overall, these metrics suggest that 82 topics would be an appropriate number.

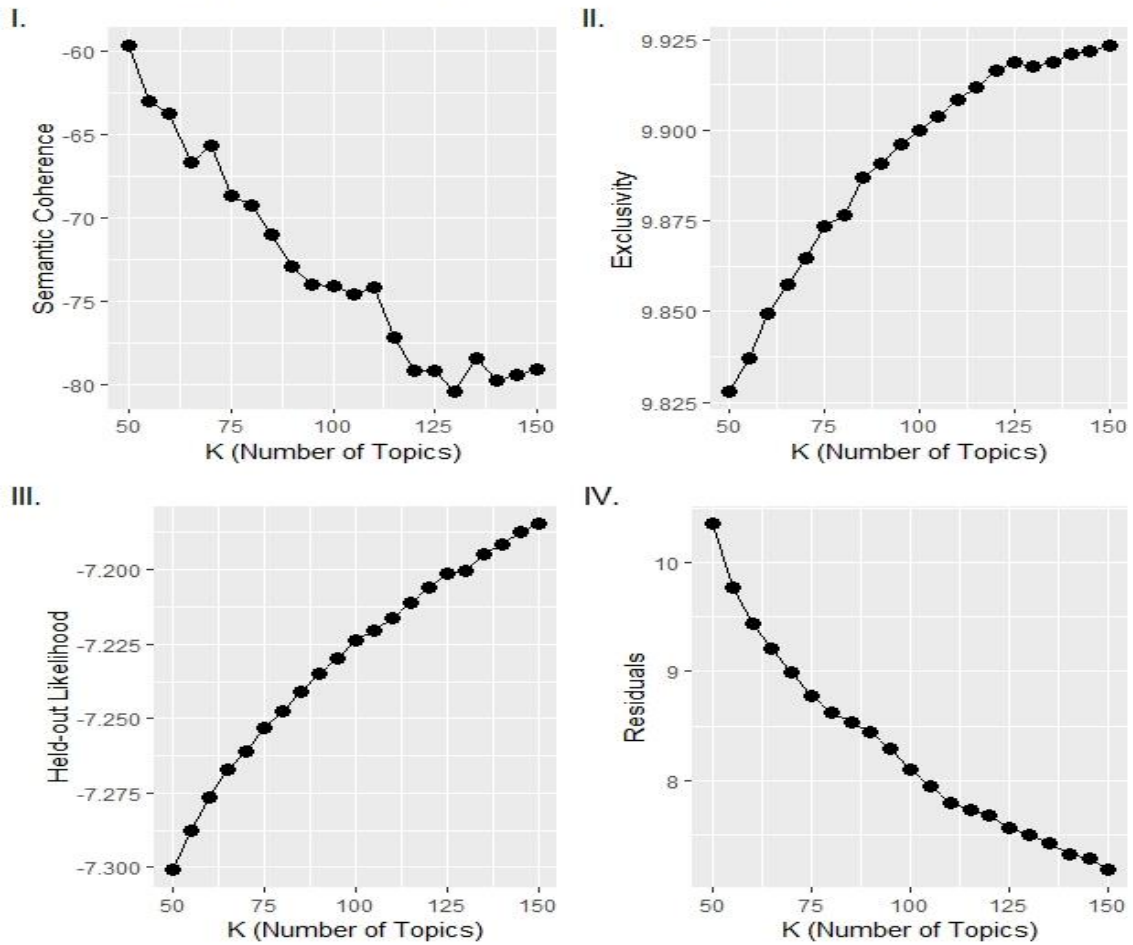
Given that the model with 82 topics appears to be the best fit in aggregate, it is worthwhile to get a sense of the individual topics' performance on these metrics as well. Aggregate measures of mean semantic cohesion and exclusivity are handy but subject to the same outlier effects any average is. Each topic has its own score for both measures. Therefore, it is worthwhile to take a look at Figure 3.2, which plots each topic on both measures. To simplify, the more topics are in the upper-right corner, the better the model is fitted.

Figure 3.2: Topic Quality, Candidate Speeches and Print Media Coverage



There are no topics occupying the bottom-left quadrant of the figure, and so there are no topics that are semantically incoherent and non-exclusive. There are a number of topics that are low on one of the two. Many of the low exclusivity topics are easily explained. Topics 12 and 42 cover the closely related issues of candidate authenticity and candidate relatability, respectively, for instance. The topics low in semantic cohesion are harder to explain. There does not appear to be a definitive pattern. But the overall conclusion from this figure is that the model fit appears to be quite good. Most topics are clustered in the quadrant that is high in both semantic cohesion and exclusivity and none are low in both.

Figure 3.3: Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics, Full Corpus



Next, I turn to the model fit statistics for the topic model of the corpus analyzed in Chapter 6. The Lee and Mimno algorithmic method suggests the best fit for the data is an 88-topic model. Given the dramatic increase in the size of the corpus and the increased diversity of sources, this minimal increase was slightly surprising. As such, I expanded the range of the number of topics I also modeled as a point of comparison. I iterated the model with a range of topics from 50 to 150 at intervals of 5. The results are plotted in Figure 3.3.

Overall, the results are not as clear as for the partial corpus utilized in Chapter 5. All the trends tend to be far more linear. But looking at the axes provides some evidence

for the surprisingly restrained number of topics. The loss of semantic coherence with an increase of topics using this model is particularly sharp while the gains made in exclusivity and held-out likelihood are more minimal. The tradeoff between semantic coherence and exclusivity appears to be skewed against the former, leading to the selection of a smaller number of topics. Overall, I find evidence supporting the use of an 88-topic model, although admittedly less supportive than for the partial corpus.

Figure 3.4: Topic Quality, Full Corpus

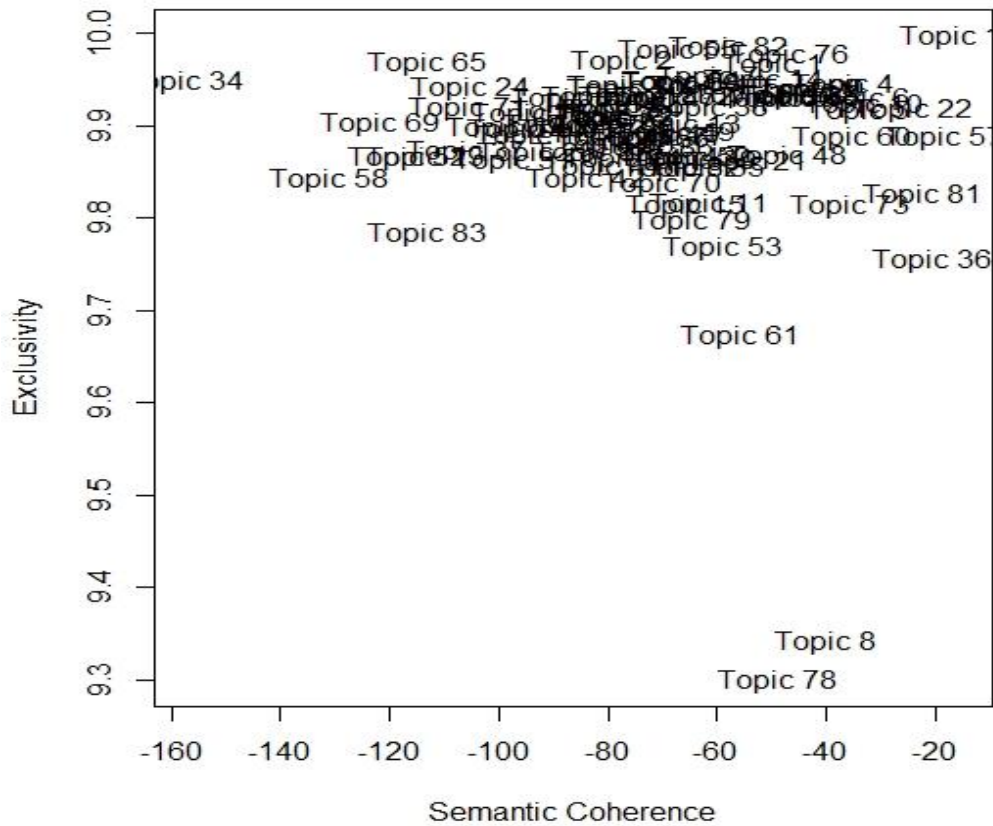


Figure 3.4 plots the semantic coherence and exclusivity of each topic from the model of the full corpus. Once again, there are no topics in the lower-right corner, meaning there are no topics that are both incoherent and non-exclusive. There are a very

small number of topics that are low in exclusivity overall, and only a handful more than are semantically incoherent. The estimation of the individual topics appears to be good.

Topic Validation

Model fit statistics can be useful. But they are hardly the end-all, be-all. As with many other statistical methods, prioritizing model fit can negatively affect the ability to generalize from the model. And my goal is not to run the best model I can but to gain the most knowledge from the model I can. As such, a well-fitted model with nonsensical topic categorizations is of no use.

Here, I take up an admittedly minor validation attempt. To do so, I investigated each topic for both the models of the partial corpus and full corpus by surveying the words most closely associated with that topic and also by reading documents that score highest on each topic. I then assigned my own label to each topic. The results, including a short excerpt of a representative document for each topic, can be found in Appendix A.

With regards to the labels I assigned, I found that topics could be placed into a classification scheme. This typology was inductively created, but it does bear some resemblance to the one used in the hand-coded content analysis described above. While each topic has a unique label, I also created some overarching categories: American Values, Campaign Activities, Candidate Backgrounds, Candidates, Candidate Traits, Careers, Crime, Culture Issues, Economics, Education, Energy, Environment, Foreign Policy, Government Administration, Governing Philosophy, Horserace, Immigration, Media, Other, Parties, and Social Welfare Programs.

Measuring Convergence

To measure convergence, I utilize the theta scores for each topic in each document. Theta measures the percentage match between a given topic and a single document. Each document therefore has a theta score for each of the 82 or 88 topics estimated by the topic models. I aggregated these theta scores into monthly time units for the candidate speech documents and media story documents separately so as to measure the agenda of each. I choose a monthly time unit due to data availability as a shorter unit of time, for example a week, led to a great deal of missingness in the series. Given the time series nature of this data, missingness could pose a significant problem and needed to be minimized. I calculated the average theta score for each topic for each candidate(media)-month which represented the proportion of the candidate's(media's) agenda dedicated to that topic in that month. I then merged the candidate-month and media-month data back together and calculated the convergence score between the two in the same manner as was done with the PPAC.

Experimental Design

Finally, to test the effect of media convergence in primaries on attitudes toward candidates and correct voting behavior I implement a laboratory experiment. Doing so requires a baseline where subjects receive information from a candidate about an issue, and then treatment groups where subjects are given that same message plus news stories that either converge or diverge from the issues the candidate talked about. The subjects' attitudes toward the candidate are then measured and the hypotheses tested based on differences across treatment groups relative to the control group.

Assessing correct voting behavior is important for two reasons. First, it requires measuring whether the vote choice was "correct." Doing so can be difficult without

making severe assumptions about how voters should behave. To minimize the reliance on unnecessary assumptions, I utilize a measure based on one used by Lau and Redlawsk (2006). They provided subjects with more time and a more complete set of information after the experimental manipulation and allowed subjects to revise their vote choice. This approach is not necessarily perfect, but it allows subjects to approximate full information without the researcher simply assuming whom they *should have* voted for. The correct support hypothesis is supported if there are significant differences in information search behavior and vote switching across treatment groups relative to the control, specifically with subjects in the low(high) convergence treatment group spending more(less) time searching for more information and being more(less) likely to reconsider their vote choice.

The second issue is how to assess what is a candidate's "best case." The normative argument I advance rests on the point that candidates are better incentivized and have greater resources to dedicate to finding what is the best information to win voters over to their side. They also have greater resources than I do. How am I to figure out what information would represent a candidate's "best case"?

To answer this, I leverage the limitations of generalizability from using undergraduate students as experimental subjects to my advantage. Candidates for the presidency frequently give speeches at large universities. One would presume that they would focus these speeches toward issues they think work best to win over such an audience. If I look at what issues real candidates used in real speeches at universities, then I can presumably approximate a candidate's "best case" in such an environment.

With those discussions in place, I now turn to explaining the experiment. Subjects started with a pre-test asking for demographics and typical political questions (political interest, trust in media). Among those were questions concerning party registration. Subjects were assigned to a primary based on what party they choose. Subjects who did not identify with a party choose which party's primary to participate in.

Subjects were assigned to one of three groups within their party primary: one control group and two treatment groups. All subjects in all groups received a press release from a campaign containing excerpts of prepared remarks. The press release was modelled after those circulated by campaigns. The quotes themselves were taken almost verbatim from real speeches given by real candidates in recent party primaries. For subjects participating in the Democratic primary, they were from an event held by Elizabeth Warren at George Mason University. For subjects in the Republican primary, they were from a speech given by Marco Rubio at Iowa State University. Both candidates' names were changed to the hypothetical "Senator Alex Simmons" to minimize the threat of strongly held attitudes toward prominent political figures to the internal validity of the experiment. This is especially important for the subjects participating in the Republican primary as the experiment might imply Marco Rubio was challenging incumbent President Donald Trump.

In the control group, the subjects read a news articles on a miscellaneous topic (caramelizing onions) after reading this press release. In the high convergence treatment group, subjects read a news article summarizing the candidate's remarks in the manner of a typical event coverage story. In the low convergence treatment group, subjects read a news article about the candidate's policy on a topic not mentioned in the press release.

For both candidates, this other policy is foreign policy. Specifically, the article discusses a planned foreign trip. This topic was chosen for a few reasons. First, foreign policy was not prominently discussed by either candidate, keeping comparisons between the Republican and Democratic primaries as similar as possible. Second, as descriptive analysis in Chapter 4 shows, foreign policy is a topic the media reports on heavily, boosting the experiment's external validity. Third, a foreign trip provided a means of discussing an issue unrelated to the candidates' messages while still remaining neutral in tone and without supplying much new information. As such, what is materially varied between the two treatment groups is the convergence to the candidate's message not the tone of the media coverage or the opportunity for more learning by the subject.

Following this article, subjects were asked a number of questions about their attitudes toward the candidate, most notably if they think the candidate cares about the important issues, a feeling thermometer of overall warmth toward the candidate, and vote choice. After these questions, subjects were asked an attention check question (which issues were mentioned in the original press release).

Following this battery of questions, subjects were offered a chance to peruse a PDF file containing more information about the candidate if they were interested. These files contained biographical information and policy positions pulled directly from campaign websites. Each file had a hyperlinked table of contents to help subjects identify the information they most wanted to see. Subjects were not required to spend any specified amount of time looking at the file and could choose not to open it at all if they preferred. Subjects were then asked if they would like to change their vote and, if so, provided an opportunity to do so. The experiment was then concluded.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology employed to test the hypotheses derived in Chapter 2. It discussed the construction of two corpora which will be analyzed in Chapters 4-6. It also discussed the experimental design employed in Chapter 7. Further information including codebooks, validation tests of measurements, and the experimental stimuli can be found in Appendix A. In the empirical chapters to follow I include only limited discussion of the creation and design of the data sources and instead focus the methodological discussion on the measurement of independent and control variables and the statistical modeling techniques. I now turn to these empirical analyses.

Chapter 4: The Effect of Rhetorical Newsworthiness Cues on Agenda Convergence

"I spent the last four years at the Ethics and Public Policy Center giving lectures all over the country on radical jihadism and the 'Gathering Storm of the 21st Century.' I haven't done squat on moral, cultural issues." – Rick Santorum²⁶

As Rick Santorum launched his ultimately unsuccessful candidacy for the 2012 GOP nomination, he took some time to complain to *The New York Times* about the media coverage he was receiving. Despite spending time out of government primarily as a consultant for a think tank specializing in foreign policy and an announcement speech dedicated mostly to blue-collar economic issues and his opposition to the Affordable Care Act, Santorum suggested he was being caricatured as only a “culture warrior.” He seemed frustrated at his inability to drive media coverage to the topics he wanted to talk about.

Santorum is hardly an outlier in his ire. Many presidential primary candidates complain openly about the media not focusing on the “important issues.” And it seems likely that even those who don’t publicly express annoyance harbor some resentment that the media coverage doesn’t meet their ideal. But can candidates drive the topics of media fascination? Or is the news decided by features and forces outside the candidate’s control?

Given the abundant evidence of media agenda-setting powers (Feezell 2018, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, King, Schneer, and White 2017, McCombs and Shaw 1972), candidates are right to fret about what the media are talking about. And there has been a well-deserved emphasis by political communication scholars on how the media agenda is

²⁶ As quoted in Seelye, Katharine Q. “‘Culture Warrior’ Looks to Broaden the Battle.” *The New York Times*, June 6, 2011.

constructed as well (Boydston 2013). But is the media agenda set regardless of the candidates' actions or can candidates exert some influence through their messaging strategies? This chapter seeks to answer this question by applying the contextual theory of newsworthiness values discussed in Chapter 2 to the Presidential Primary Announcement Text Corpus (PPAC) described in Chapter 3. It shows how variation in the more readily adjustable features of candidate messaging can result in differing levels of appeal to journalism norms, in turn affecting the extent to which a candidate's preferred messaging penetrates into the media agenda.

Specifically, I argue that candidates can appeal to newsworthiness values by altering elements of the presentation of their agenda so reporters will detect conflict, human interest, and simplicity appeals, thereby finding their messaging more newsworthy. In the context of presidential primary announcements, I argue that candidate expressions of anger will be seen as conflict. References to a candidate's backstory or personal brand will be seen as human interest. And the use of easily comprehensible language and narrow topical focus will be viewed as linguistic and narrative simplicity. Appealing to any of these values should increase the similarity between the candidate's agenda and the media's agenda when covering that candidate. Briefly, the results support my theory with regards to conflict and human interest, but not with regards to either simplicity hypothesis.

Can Candidates Control the Conversation?

All candidates face strong incentives to get their messages out into the media and therefore try to do so. But not all candidates succeed. How much of that success or failure has to do with the messaging strategies that candidates utilize? Or is the difference in

success effectively preordained by how the media assesses the candidate's electoral fortunes or the candidate's inherent traits like party, gender, or race? Put another way, if Rick Santorum was upset that the media didn't adhere to the agenda he presented, is there something Rick Santorum could have done about it?

The contextual theory of newsworthiness values suggests that there was. Candidates can get their message across if they design their message to be appealing to a reporter in the audience. The reporter on the trail will value the same general aspects of a story as any other journalists: traits like conflict, human interest, simplicity, timeliness, etc. But how they are likely to define those terms, how they will recognize them in the news events they cover is context-specific. Understanding both the general newsworthiness values and the context of primary campaign announcements therefore can lead to the derivation of testable hypotheses.

The strategic news management (Pfetsch 1999, Sanders et al. 2011) and information subsidization (Crouse 1975, Gandy 1982, Lancendorfer and Lee 2010, Turk 1986) literatures suggest that campaigns can leverage the finite resources and expertise of journalists to convey messages and build their agendas (Dalmus, Hänggli, and Bernhard 2017, Lang and Lang 1983). These literatures are not incongruent with the contextual theory of newsworthiness values. But these literatures are primarily concerned with how interested entities can either solicit coverage or spin developing news stories via direct interaction with the media in the form of press releases or other means of controlling the flow of content. Political campaigns assuredly utilize such techniques, but they also engage in activities where contact with the media is only indirect and the ability to leverage such features of the newsmaking process are limited: rallies, town halls, meet

and greets, etc. Campaigns still express their agendas in such formats, and in fact are able to do so in a more thorough and pluralistic fashion than they can in short press releases. Journalists observe the candidates in such environments and draw impressions from those events that influence coverage. Yet the typical means of influencing the media's agenda laid out in the strategic news management and information subsidization literatures, like formatting content to mimic news stories and distributing content in rhythm with the media's production schedules, do not neatly apply. I argue that candidates can instead rely on rhetorical cues to appease journalism's newsworthiness norms as a means of improving messaging success.

I focus specifically on the newsworthiness values of conflict, human interest, and simplicity. These values are prominent in the academic literature, are commonly mentioned in journalism textbooks, and could create incentives for candidates to rely on normatively undesirable messaging strategies, justifying this focus. In campaign announcement speeches, where candidates often attempt to keep the focus primarily on themselves and therefore abstain from direct attacks (Haynes and Rhine 1998), conflict will largely be found in the invocation of anger. Scholars of emotion define anger as "a sense of displeasure plus the urge to do some of the things that remove or harm its agent" (Frijda 1988, p. 351). Anger therefore lines up closely with conflict, which also requires an adversarial entity and some sort of expressed or expected activity to pit the two against each other. Candidates who have angrier speaking styles should therefore be more appealing to journalists' sense of newsworthiness, who will then respond with coverage more representative of the issues the candidate emphasizes.

H1.1 (Conflict Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more anger-laden language the candidate invokes.

Moving on to the human-interest newsworthiness value, journalists should be attracted to more relatable stories. In the context of a campaign, candidates can vary in this regard by differing in how often they invoke themselves. Candidates who mention their own biographies, accomplishments, and traits (which I collectively refer to as “candidate-based appeals”) should be more interesting to journalists because they are personifying their campaigns. This leads me to the hypothesis that:

H1.2 (Human-interest Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the more the candidate-based appeals the candidate invokes.

I provide two related contextual definitions of simplicity. First, journalists should find clear language to be linguistically simpler and therefore newsworthy, as it will be easier to relay to their audiences. Second, reporters should find candidate messages that are narrowly focused to have a simpler narrative structure. Candidates who define their agenda with a small number of issues should have a more identifiable themes for journalists to convey in their coverage than candidates who embrace a wide array of issues. Therefore, the two simplicity hypotheses are:

H1.3 (Linguistic Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the simpler the language the candidate invokes.

H1.4 (Narrative Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between a candidate and the media will be greater the narrower a range of issues a candidate message is focused on.

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, I utilize the PPAC. A full description of the corpus construction and coding procedures can be found in Chapter 3. As an abridged explanation, this corpus includes candidate announcement speeches and media coverage of those candidates by *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and ABC News in the ensuing week for most candidates from 1984-2016.²⁷ Each paragraph of all the text was coded into one of 15 issue topics via human-coded content analysis. The percentages of documents by each actor in each topic were then used to calculate a convergence score (Sigelman and Buell 2004) between the agenda of the candidate and the agenda of the media outlet. This means that the unit of analysis in the data is a candidate-media dyad where each media outlet is separate. For example, Donald Trump-*The New York Times*, Donald Trump-*Washington Post*, and Donald Trump-ABC News are three separate units in the data.

Next, I turn to the covariates used to model convergence. To measure the amount of anger language a candidate uses, I utilized the NRC Word-Emotion Association Lexicon, or EmoLex. EmoLex is a dictionary built to measure emotions and positive-negative affect using crowd-sourced coding of different common words and bigrams (Mohammad and Turney 2013). I applied the anger dictionary to the candidate speeches then calculated the percentage of each speech that was composed of anger words.²⁸ As a robustness check, I also utilized the percentage of anger words according to the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) dictionaries.

²⁷ I retrieved an announcement speech for 110 of the 117 candidates. A description of which candidates are not included can be found in Chapter 3. These candidates are omitted from the analysis.

²⁸ Validation tests of this variable can be found in Appendix B.

One of the issues in the codebook is candidate-based appeals. I use the percentage of the candidate's speeches that falls into this category as the primary variable testing H1.2. For robustness checks I also utilize the Authenticity score and percentage of "I" references from the LIWC dictionaries.

Following Black et al. (2016), I measured linguistic complexity by running a number of different algorithms that assess linguistic complexity via the korpus R package then extracting factor scores from this first dimension of a Principal Components Analysis.

To test H1.4, I calculated the inverse normalized form of Shannon's H entropy for each speech. This has been used in political communication studies to measure the degree of agenda congestion (Boydston 2013). The inverse normalized form can range from 0 to 1, with higher scores reflecting an agenda that is more narrowly focused on a small number of issues and lower score reflecting an agenda that is broadly dispersed over a larger number of issues.

I also include a number of candidate- and media-level controls. The candidate-level controls include the party, race, gender, and dummy variables capturing previous work experience (governor and senator). To capture the electoral viability of the candidate, I retrieved polls around the time of the announcement for each candidate from the Roper iPoll archive. I prioritized polls that were released immediately prior to the announcement to capture the media's understanding of the candidate's in-the-moment viability, although in several cases I had to utilize polls that were in the field during the

announcement or a few weeks prior instead.²⁹ The media-level controls include dummy variables for the *Washington Post* and ABC News.

The data is cross-sectional with a continuous dependent variable, warranting OLS regression.

Results

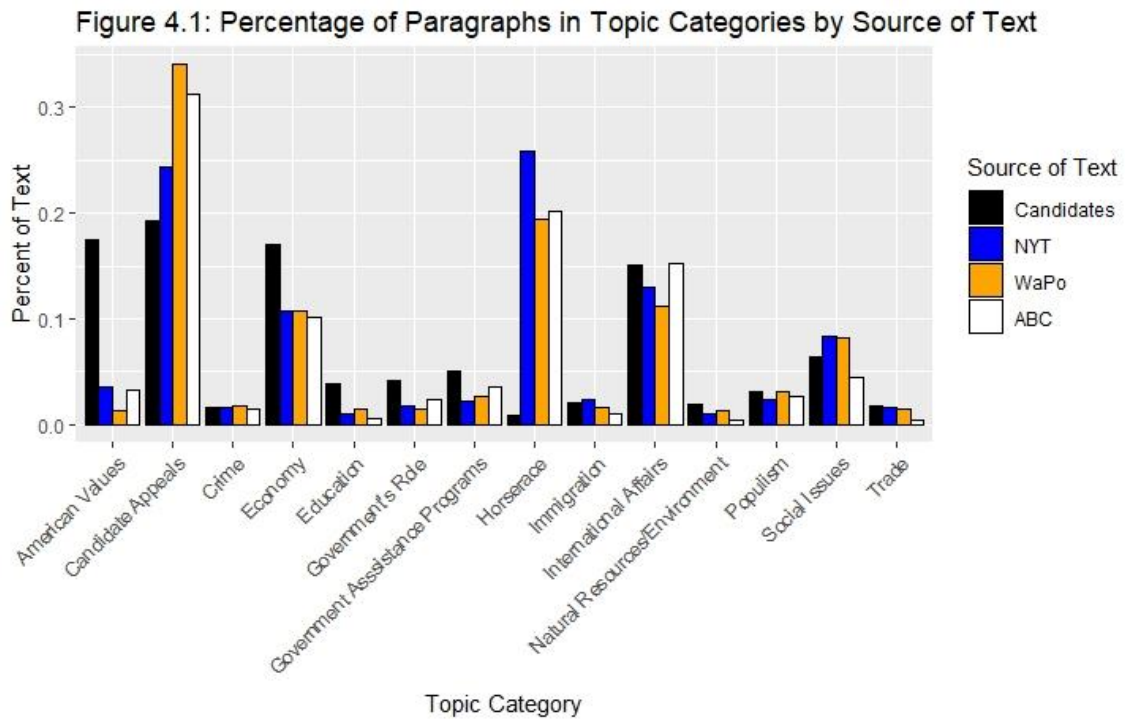
Agenda Discussion

Before delving into models of agenda convergence, it is useful to look at broader patterns of issue agendas. Figure 4.1 plots the percentage of messages in each category, non-codable omitted, for all candidates and *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and ABC News.

Figure 4.1 makes clear that candidates, in aggregate, focus their attention on four primary topic categories: candidate-based appeals, the economy, international affairs, and American values. The other 10 categories are used much more sparingly. The media also spend significant attention on three of those categories. However, the media talk about candidate-based appeals *more* than the candidates themselves. For both the *Washington Post* and ABC News it is the most utilized category, while it is the second most commonly featured for *The New York Times*. Both the economy and international affairs are discussed extensively by all media organizations, the latter topic being particularly popular with ABC News. Finally, the media do not talk about American values almost at all, a finding that is in line with previous work on general elections (Hart 2000). Instead,

²⁹ Because early polling tends to proxy more for name recognition than electoral viability, I also replicated the analysis using a variable measuring the amount of early fundraising done by the candidate relative to their competitors. The results remain consistent.

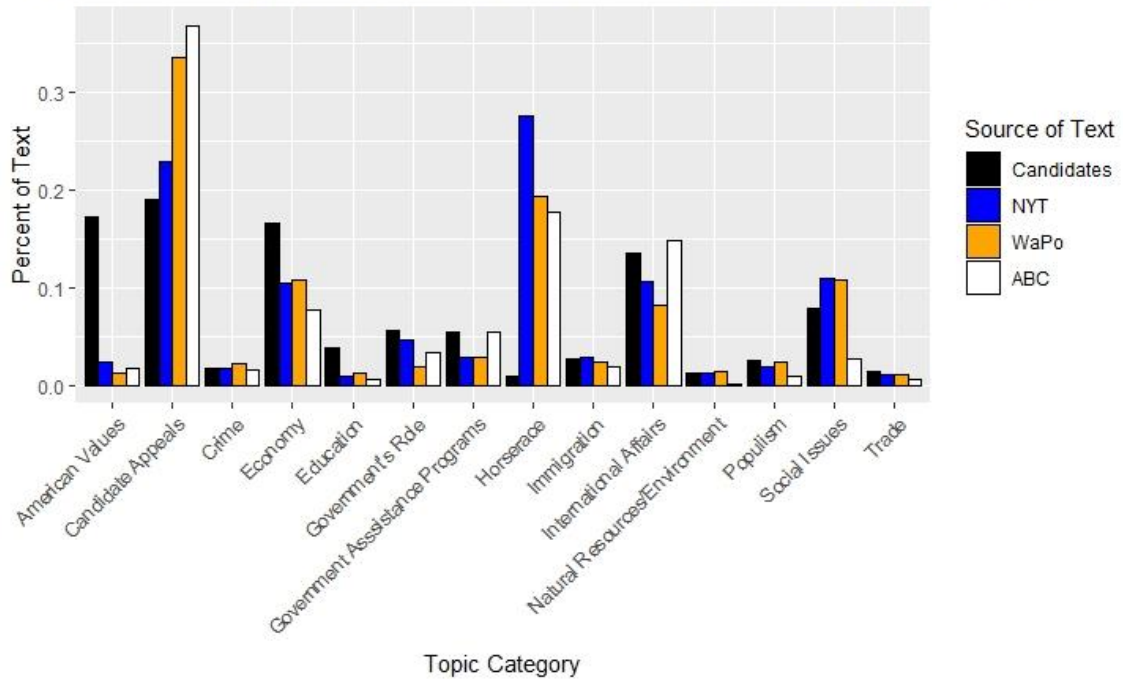
the media focus a great deal of attention on the horserace, making it the most utilized category by *The New York Times* and second most utilized by both ABC News and the *Washington Post*. This also reinforces previous findings from general elections (Patterson 1993, 2016, Searles and Banda 2019).³⁰



Next, I generated figures of these topic breakdowns independently for Republican and Democratic candidates as well as the media coverage of Republican and Democratic candidates. Interpretation of differences requires pause as each election year carries its own idiosyncrasies. But by aggregating 14 primaries (seven Republican and seven Democratic) across nine election cycles, some smoothing of these idiosyncrasies should occur.

³⁰ Difference-in-means tests, all candidates. Candidate appeals: NYT-Candidates $\beta = .051$, $p = .027$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = .148$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = .121$, $p < .000$. Economic Appeals: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.063$, $p = .000$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.064$, $p = .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.069$, $p = .000$. American Values: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.140$, $p < .000$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.162$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.143$, $p < .000$. Horserace: NYT-Candidates $\beta = .250$, $p < .000$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = .187$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = .194$, $p < .000$.

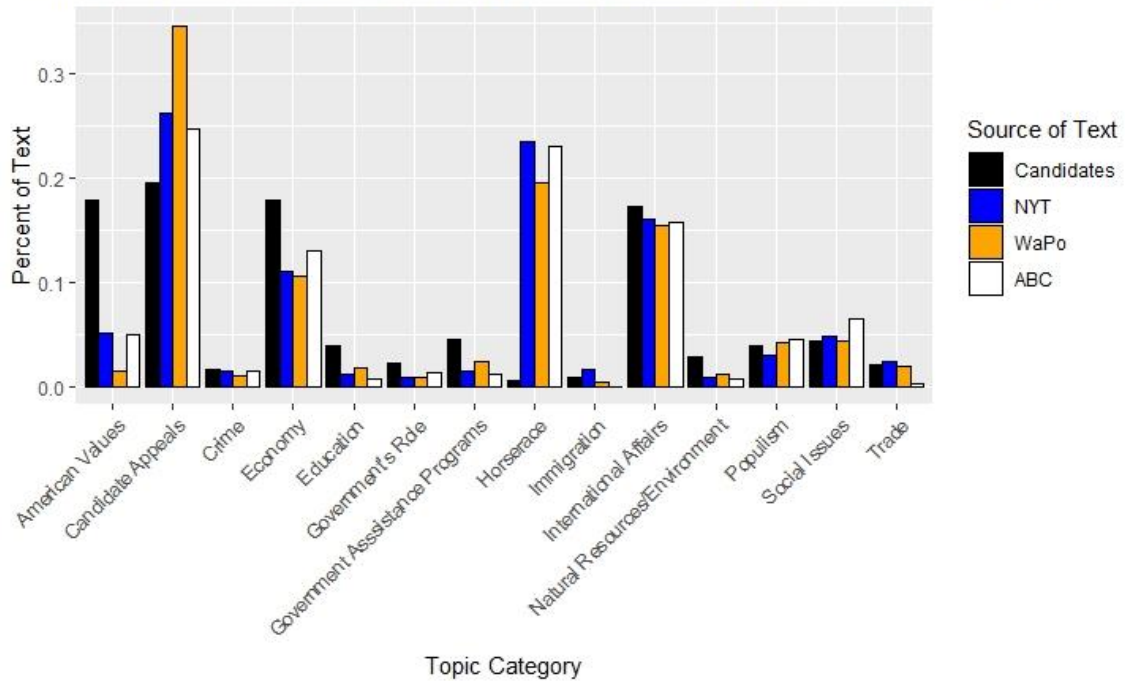
Figure 4.2: Percentage of Paragraphs in Topic Categories by Source of Text, Republican Candidates



Looking at just the speeches and media coverage of Republican candidates (Figure 4.2) produces results mostly in line with Figure 4.1. Republican candidates dedicate most of their agenda to the same four issues. The media similarly overrepresent candidate-based appeals relative to candidate speeches, cover the economy in roughly similar proportion to candidates, and completely ignore American values appeals. The media still dedicate a great deal of attention to the horserace when covering Republican candidates. It seems that the differences between candidates and the *Washington Post* coverage on international affairs appeals is bigger among Republican candidates than for aggregate candidates.³¹

³¹ Difference-in-means tests, Republican candidates. Candidate appeals: NYT-Candidates $\beta = .039$, $p = .187$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = .146$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = .179$, $p < .000$. American Values: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.148$, $p < .000$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.161$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.156$, $p < .000$. Horserace: NYT-Candidates $\beta = .266$, $p < .000$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = .185$, $p < .000$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = .168$, $p < .000$. International Affairs: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.029$, $p = .217$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.054$, $p < .022$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.013$, $p < .629$.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of Paragraphs in Topic Categories by Source of Text, Democratic Candidates



This difference is borne out when looking just among Democratic candidates and the ensuing media coverage (Figure 4.3). While most of the results here are the same as those among Republican candidate-media dyads, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* cover international affairs at approximately the same proportion as Democratic candidates. That said, all media outlets discuss the economy with regards to Democratic primary candidates much less than the Democratic candidates.³²

Overall, these results suggest that the media possess a general bias toward candidate appeals and the horserace and away from American values. The *Washington Post* displays a bias toward covering Republican candidates' economic appeals and both the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* bias toward covering Democratic

³² Difference-in-means tests, Democratic candidates. International Affairs: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.012$, $p = .731$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.018$, $p < .616$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.015$, $p < .692$. Economy: NYT-Candidates $\beta = -.068$, $p < .018$; WaPo-Candidates $\beta = -.072$, $p < .013$; ABC-Candidates $\beta = -.048$, $p < .120$.

candidates' international affairs appeals, although these observed differences by party are modest.

Convergence in Context

To give a sense of the distribution of convergence scores and make interpretation of results easier, I provide Table 4.1. Table 4.1 gives the top three issues discussed in a candidate speech and in the ensuing media coverage of one media outlet for three candidates: one approximately a standard deviation below the mean, one at the mean, and one approximately a standard deviation above the mean observed convergence score. It is useful to conceptualize what more or less proportional media coverage means in practical terms.

Starting at the top row, in Jim Gilmore's announcement speech he attempted to define his agenda around a single issue: international affairs. Other topics were comparatively marginal. And yet a person who only heard of Gilmore's announcement via the *Washington Post* would get the impression that Gilmore's candidacy was about his electoral position, his personality, and his policies on the environment.

Table 4.1: Examples of Convergence Score Variation

Candidate-Year/Media	Convergence	Candidate Topic 1	Candidate Topic 2	Candidate Topic 3	Media Topic 1	Media Topic 2	Media Topic 3
Jim Gilmore-2016/WaPo	.29	Intl. Affairs (.48)	Economy (.29)	Cand. Appeals (.13)	Horserace (.45)	Cand. Appeals (.15)	Nat. Res. (.15)
Jeb Bush-2016/ABC	.46	Cand. Appeals (.28)	Economy (.16)	Intl. Affairs (.15)	Cand. Appeals (.51)	Horserace (.19)	Trade (.10)
John Kasich-2016/WaPo	.61	Cand. Appeals (.38)	Economy (.23)	American Values (.16)	Cand. Appeals (.39)	Horserace (.25)	Economy (.11)

Jeb Bush did not have any single topic that made up as large a portion of his announcement speech. Instead he divided his attention between a broader number of topics, with the three most prominent being his personal appeal as a candidate, the economy, and international affairs. Once again, a majority of the media's coverage was about Jeb's candidate-based appeals or horserace coverage. Bush was seemingly successful at making himself the talking point, although he was unsuccessful in driving coverage to secondary issues.

Finally, John Kasich's announcement speech similarly focused on his own appeal as a candidate and the economy. The amount of candidate-based appeals in the media coverage by the *Washington Post* was proportional to his own focus on the subject. Furthermore, while there was again a large amount of horserace coverage, the third-most discussed topic by the *Washington Post* was the economy, Kasich's second-most emphasized issue.

Horserace coverage of candidates is a near constant, but there is still meaningful variation in the content of media coverage of presidential primary candidates. While the media do prioritize discussion of candidate-based appeals, candidates do not all experience the same amount of this coverage. Similarly, candidates appear differentially able to drive media coverage to other topics. Some cannot get their agenda into the coverage while others can. The ability to do so may have implications for how those candidates are perceived and evaluated by voters.

Agenda Convergence

I next analyze the level of candidate-media agenda convergence via three OLS regression models (Table 4.2). Model 1 serves as a baseline, regressing convergence on

the four independent variables, standardized to make interpretation of substantive significance easier. The percentage of anger words in the candidate speech is a positive predictor of convergence scores, as hypothesized. The difference between one standard deviation above the mean and one standard deviation below the mean is correlated with a difference of .05 in convergence, or a third of one standard deviation. The percentage of a speech dedicated to personal appeals is also a positive predictor of convergence. Furthermore, it is twice as substantively powerful.

The readability score does not approach any level of substantive or statistical significance and so the linguistic simplicity hypothesis is unsupported by the baseline model. While the Inverse Shannon H Entropy measure, which captures how congested the speech is across the various topics, does meet the traditional threshold of statistical significance, it is in the opposite of the hypothesized direction. The magnitude is equivalent to that observed for the percentage of anger language, making it notable as well.³³

Model 2 incorporates the aforementioned control variables. The results from the primary independent variables remain almost identical. Anger words and candidate-based appeals remain strong, positive correlates of convergence scores. The congestion of topics is a negative correlate of convergence, albeit weaker. And the readability of the speech is still insignificant.

³³ Post-hoc analysis revealed a significant outlier affecting this result. Newt Gingrich's speech was exclusively coded as either economic or American values appeals, making it the highest observed value on agenda congestion, but coverage across all outlets focused primarily on his past scandals and comments on the Affordable Care Act. When Gingrich is excluded the coefficient shrinks by 25%.

Table 4.2: Effect of Newsworthiness Cues on Candidate-Media Convergence

	Convergence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
% Anger Language (EmoLex), Standardized	0.025* (0.009)	0.023* (0.009)	0.017* (0.010)
% Candidate Appeals, Standardized	0.055* (0.009)	0.055* (0.009)	0.053* (0.009)
Readability Score, Standardized	-0.0005 (0.009)	0.001 (0.009)	0.0003 (0.010)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy, Standardized	-0.025* (0.008)	-0.025* (0.008)	-0.024* (0.009)
Poll Standing		-0.0001 (0.001)	-0.00001 (0.001)
GOP		0.002 (0.018)	0.004 (0.024)
Black		-0.023 (0.032)	-0.034 (0.033)
Woman		-0.009 (0.064)	-0.005 (0.068)
Governor		-0.017 (0.020)	-0.026 (0.022)
Senator		-0.010 (0.020)	-0.012 (0.021)
WaPo		-0.008 (0.019)	-0.009 (0.019)
ABC		-0.089* (0.021)	-0.088* (0.021)
Constant	0.473* (0.008)	0.510* (0.025)	0.490* (0.037)
Observations	286	282	282
R ²	0.153	0.221	0.251

Notes: OLS regression; * denotes $p < 0.05$, one-tailed; Model 3 controls for election year fixed effects but not presented here to preserve space.

Most of the candidate-level control variables are substantively uninteresting. The inherent features of the candidate – their race, their gender, or their previous work experience – were not strong differentiators in terms of convergence. Neither was the candidate’s standings in the polls at the time of their announcement. This suggests that being a viable candidate is an insufficient criterion for compelling media coverage.

Turning to the media-level controls, there is no observed difference between coverage in *The New York Times* and in the *Washington Post*. But coverage on ABC News was significantly less representative of candidate agendas than its print contemporaries.

Model 3 replicates the results from Model 2 but includes year fixed effects to control for any variation that is introduced across election cycles. The primary results are indistinguishable. Anger language remains a strong correlate with convergence, as does the percentage of candidate appeals.

Robustness Checks: Alternative Measures

So far, the results have been in line with the conflict (H1.1) and human interest (H1.2) hypotheses. The results for the simplicity hypotheses have either found no support (H1.3) or the evidence has been limited and run counter to expectations (H1.4). Here I more carefully check the results with regards to the first two hypotheses via alternative specifications and measures.

Model 1 (Table 4.3) serves as a robustness check for H1.1 by using an alternative anger dictionary from a different source: LIWC. The results neatly replicate those found using the EmoLex anger dictionary. The identical results suggest the above findings are not just a quirk of the EmoLex dictionary.

I further test H1.2 via two measures that tap the same construct as candidate-based appeals (Table 4.3, Models 2 and 3). These measures should also capture the essence of what resonates with journalists' ingrained preference for human-interest stories but are distinct from any topic used to calculate the dependent variable: LIWC's measures of "authenticity" and percentage "I" references. Both are positive and statistically significant predictors of convergence, although neither is as substantively powerful as the percentage of candidate appeals. Overall, the results provide further evidence in favor of H1.2.

Table 4.3: Effect of Newsworthiness Cues on Agenda Convergence, Alternative Measures

	Convergence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
% Anger Language (LIWC), Standardized	0.022* (0.009)		
% Anger Language (EmoLex), Standardized		0.021* (0.010)	0.014 (0.010)
% Candidate Appeals, Standardized	0.054* (0.009)		
Authenticity (LIWC), Standardized		0.038* (0.009)	
% "I" References (LIWC), Standardized			0.019* (0.010)
Readability Score, Standardized	-0.004 (0.009)	0.007 (0.010)	0.002 (0.011)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy, Standardized	-0.026* (0.008)	-0.027* (0.009)	-0.024* (0.009)
Constant	0.508* (0.025)	0.486* (0.026)	0.497* (0.026)
Observations	282	282	282
R ²	0.221	0.156	0.115

Notes: OLS regression; * denotes $p < 0.05$, one-tailed; All models control for candidate- and media-level variables but not presented here to preserve space.

As a final point, the Emolex anger measure used in the above results falls below the traditional threshold of statistical significance when the percentage of “I” references is included (Model 3). More importantly, the coefficient in that model (Model 3) is about a third that found in the other models. Incorporating the percentage “I” references strongly diminished the substantive significance of the use of anger language on convergence. The evidence continues to strongly support the human-interest hypothesis while there is evidence, albeit slightly more equivocal, for the conflict hypothesis. Both the linguistic and narrative simplicity hypotheses are still unsupported.

Robustness Checks: Alternative Explanations for Results

Finally, I consider several alternative explanations for the results presented so far via a series of robustness checks (Table 4.4). The first column accounts for the possibility that the media have certain issue topics that they would prefer to cover, including candidate-based appeals, and that it is not any prevailing newsworthiness value of human-interest stories that explains the observed results. The previous section, which used two measures unrelated to the topic of candidate-based appeals and found the same results, should alleviate some of these concerns. But to further account for the possibility I also control for the percentage of candidate attention to other topics the media have a proclivity for: economic, international affairs, and horserace appeals. While two of them (the percentage of the speech devoted to economic and international affairs issues) do meet traditional levels of statistical significance, the proportions of these appeals in a candidate’s speech are not nearly as substantively powerful correlates with convergence as the percentage of candidate appeals. This provides further evidence that it is something

specific about playing to the media’s preference for human interest stories that drives media coverage, not just addressing a topic the media prefers to cover overall.

Table 4.4: Effect of Newsworthiness Cues on Candidate-Media Convergence, Robustness Checks

	Convergence			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
% Anger Language (EmoLex), Standardized	0.025*	0.020*	0.030*	0.035*
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.011)
% Negative Language (EmoLex), Standardized			-0.011	
			(0.012)	
% Emotion Language (EmoLex), Standardized				-0.023*
				(0.011)
% Candidate Appeals, Standardized	0.062*	0.070*	0.055*	0.053*
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Readability Score, Standardized	0.002	-0.002	-0.001	0.0001
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy, Standardized	-0.030*	-0.017*	-0.026*	-0.025*
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)
% Economic Appeals, Standardized	0.017*			
	(0.010)			
% Int’l Affairs Appeals, Standardized	0.016*			
	(0.010)			
% Horserace Appeals, Standardized	0.009			
	(0.009)			
Constant	0.506*	0.569*	0.510*	0.498*
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Observations	282	281	282	282
R ²	0.233	0.269	0.223	0.234

Notes: OLS regression; * denotes $p < 0.05$, one-tailed; Convergence score in Model 2 omits horserace from calculation; All models control for candidate- and media-level variables but not presented here to preserve space.

Model 2 tests if the results are substantively minor compared to the well-established tendency of the media to game-frame coverage (Patterson 1993, 2016, Searles and Banda 2019). I treat horserace appeals as an excluded category in calculating

convergence scores. Using this variant of the dependent variable with the same covariates produces the same results. Anger and candidate-based appeals correlate with convergence separate from any effects on horserace coverage.

Models 3 and 4 address potential explanations for the results pertaining to H1.1. While I argue that the theoretical mechanism underpinning the observed correlation between candidate anger and convergence lies in anger's conflict-laden nature, there are alternative explanations that need to be accounted for. First, anger is a negatively charged emotion. The media tend to prefer negative news stories (Soroka 2012, 2014). Perhaps anger is correlated with convergence not because it is a signal of contextual conflict but because it is negative. To test for this possibility, I include the standardized measure of the percentage of negative affect words in the candidate's speech, calculated by applying the associated EmoLex dictionary. If it is negativity, not conflict, driving the correlation between anger and convergence then including this control should mitigate the substantive strength of anger. But anger remains a powerful, positive correlate of convergence while negativity is weak and statistically insignificant. It would appear that the relationship between anger and convergence cannot be explained by anger's negative affective charge.

Second, perhaps it is emotional cues in general, and not specifically anger, that are enticing to journalists. An infrequently mentioned newsworthiness value is drama. Dramas revolve around strong displays of resonant emotions. It might be the case that anger is related to convergence because it is an emotional cue that draws audiences in (Newhagen 1998) not because it is a signal of contextual conflict. To account for this possibility, I added together the counts for all eight EmoLex emotion dictionaries,

divided the sum by the total word count, and then standardized that percentage. If it is the connection between anger and drama, a connection forged by its general emotional resonance, that is the mechanism behind the observed results then accounting for the aggregate level of emotionality in the candidate's speech should weaken the relationship. Including the candidate's aggregate emotional cues as a control variable does not diminish the effect of anger and the coefficient for the percentage of emotional appeals is in the wrong direction. This eliminates another alternative explanation for the relationship between anger and convergence and should inspire more confidence that it is indeed anger's contextual conflictual nature that explains its substantive predictive power.

Discussion

This chapter demonstrates that candidates seemingly can influence the media coverage they receive by appealing to the professional values of journalists. The statistical evidence presented suggests that rhetorical conflict and human-interest cues, operationalized via the percentage of anger language and amount of candidate-based appeals, were important positive correlates of how closely the issue agenda of a candidate was approximated by the issue agenda of the media while the topical narrowness observed in the speech was, counter to expectations, a negative correlate. These results were largely consistent across different model specifications and using alternative measures. While the evidence does not definitively prove a causal argument, much of the evidence lines up neatly with the theoretical expectations in such a manner that inspires confidence.

It is also important to understand some of the limitations of this analysis. By fixating on the announcement speeches, I have necessarily avoided saying much about

the rest of the primary process. This was required to make firmer comparisons across candidates. There is an incredible diversity in electoral circumstances when comparing across a long campaign season like primaries. This naturally makes it extremely difficult to theoretically or statistically account for all those differences at a fine-grained temporal scale. Put another way, comparing the media reaction to a Hillary Clinton speech in May, 2015 and April, 2016 is difficult enough because of shifting political sands. Comparing a Hillary Clinton speech and ensuing media coverage in May, 2015 to a Alan Keyes speech and ensuing media coverage in December, 1999 is even harder. Both exist in very specific contexts that would need to be accounted for. Announcement speeches offer a way around that because of their formulaic and heavily eventized nature. An announcement speech event in 1984 looks about the same as one in 2016. This offers a natural means of “controlling” for a large number of contextual factors. That said, primaries continue long after the announcement speech and those shifting political sands can be immensely meaningful, even if they do make candidate-level comparisons difficult. As such, I study how the nature of primaries themselves affects candidate-media agendas in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the research design employed cannot say much about why candidates choose the agendas they do. This leaves open a serious counterargument: Perhaps some candidates are more successful at conveying an agenda through the media because they choose an agenda the media would report on anyway. There is at least one real-world example that appears to line up with such an explanation. Gary Bauer began his announcement speech with the following:

“I came here this morning with a fairly typical political speech. The kind of speech that many people will be giving in the weeks ahead as they

decide whether to run for the Presidency of the United States or not... In that speech I talk about the need to have lower taxes on the American family. About the need to downsize government and the need to get bureaucracy off the backs of the American people. I talk about us having an American foreign policy that we can be proud of again... I talk about all the issues that are going to be central to this campaign. But last night, along with probably every American, I watched the news. I read the headlines this morning and I decided that given what happen yesterday in America, the speech I intended to give today would not have risen to the occasion.”

The night before his scheduled announcement speech, the Columbine school shooting happened. And so Bauer discarded the speech he had planned to give and instead gave one on the “culture of death” that he argued had pervaded American society. It is plausible that had Bauer stuck with the initial draft of his speech and simply ignored the dominant story of the day, the media would have ignored him entirely. So he played into what the media was inclined to report on.

The point is certainly valid. Candidate agendas are not randomly assigned or exogenously imposed. But candidates are constrained by a series of considerations other than the media: public opinion (Damore 2005), domestic economic conditions (Vavreck 2009), their party reputations (Petrocik 1996), the need to respond to those reputations (Sides 2006), the candidate’s electoral situation (Haynes, Flowers, and Gurian 2002), and the strength of their arguments (Riker 1996). Candidates are also likely constrained by idiosyncratic features like their reputations and the positions of their competitors. Bauer was well positioned to quickly transition his message in the aftermath of Columbine because his career as an activist on cultural issues made him a credible voice on the subject and he had the sort of relevant expertise that subsidized the cost of reacting to this particular change in the tides of issue saliency. In a candid interview with FiveThirtyEight after dropping out of the race, Eric Swalwell admitted that part of the

decision to focus his campaign's agenda on gun control was the fact that none of his rivals for the 2020 Democratic nomination had identified that as a pivotal issue.³⁴

Constructing an agenda to echo the media's current focus can mean eschewing all of these other considerations, which would be a costly decision. In fact, the constraint of the media seems minor in comparison. Crafting an agenda that matches the media's preferred issue content that is not the candidate's best case for persuading and motivating voters, donors, and elites would simply not be an effective electoral strategy. As such, while the methodology employed here is not well suited to disentangle this endogeneity, for theoretical reasons I argue that the potential threat is not significant.

It is worth considering the implications of these findings. What does it mean that candidates are able to get their agendas covered by invoking more anger and candidate-based appeals? It means that the candidates are incentivized to do so, which in turn means an increase in those types of messages. This could have important and normatively undesirable effects on the primary electorate as a whole. Research into the emotional underpinnings of racial attitudes has shown that invoking anger tends to increase the usage of symbolic racist attitudes (Banks 2014) and that anger is not a rhetorical option for black candidates (Phoenix 2019), for example. And encouraging candidates to define campaigns around themselves promotes messaging strategies that are unlikely to aid voters in comprehending the complexities of politics. When politics is understood as the interactions of a handful of political elites, the rules and coalitions that play important parts can disappear in the imagination of public consciousness. I return to these implications in the concluding chapter.

³⁴ <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-an-exit-interview-with-eric-swallow/>

Chapter 5: The Effect of Volatile Fields on Media Coverage of Primaries

“Imagine a sport where you spend 1 year [hopping] on one leg and not using the other, then suddenly having to run a marathon.³⁵” – Zach Weinersmith, cartoonist

This chapter takes up the question of how the structure of primaries intersects with the media’s professional newsworthiness values to affect news coverage of the candidates. Presidential primaries are radically different contests from the general elections that follow. They are long, sequential affairs in which candidates often start campaigning nearly a year before the first in a concatenation of caucuses and primaries. They are also multicandidate, leading to volatility in the field as candidates hop in and out of the race. How do these contextual campaign conditions affect the way the media perceives the newsworthiness of the race?

Answering this question is important for two main reasons. First, experimental evidence shows that media emphasis of issues affects what issues the public thinks are most important (Feezell 2018, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, King, Schneer, and White 2017, McCombs and Shaw 1972). As such, if the structure of the primaries affects media responsiveness to candidate agendas then there is the potential for downstream effects on public opinion. Second, and relatedly, the parties should want the nominee to finish the primary having cemented a particular agenda in the minds of voters so he or she has established a national profile. They should want their nominee to have a head start in developing a recognizable brand. Therefore, understanding how the structure of primaries affects the ability of candidates to get messages across should be of vital interest to

³⁵ <http://www.smbc-comics.com/comic/primary-caregivers>

parties trying to devise a primary system that leaves them well positioned for the general election.

The Rules of the Race and Newsworthiness

I argue that the structure of the primary system should create a set of circumstances that systematically varies the newsworthiness, specifically the timeliness and contextual simplicity, journalists perceive the race, and therefore the candidates, as possessing. Starting with an application of timeliness, I expect that candidates will attempt to stay consistent or “on-message” in their agenda in order to maximize the chances that a potential primary voter will encounter their core message. This should contrast with the journalistic value of timeliness as the repetition of the message will naturally reduce its timely component relative to other, more zeitgeist-y approaches to discussing the race. Media responsiveness to a candidate’s agenda should, therefore, decrease on average as the primary campaign goes on and the candidate’s agenda becomes old news.

H2.1 (Timeliness Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between candidate messages and media coverage will decrease over time.

Second, I consider how the multicandidate nature of primaries and the volatility it introduces interacts with media preference for contextual simplicity in news stories. I argue that an expanding field should create a less contextually simple race. As the field expands to include more potential nominees, evaluating the messages of each candidate should become more complicated. It will be harder for journalists to divine the most important fault lines between candidates and convey their agendas. This should occur via two mechanisms. First, the introduction of new contenders creates more permutations of

pairwise comparisons between the candidates which makes the race appear more complicated as there are more ways of analyzing it. Second, more candidates means more messages, each offered with an argument that this is the most compelling campaign news of the day. Journalists reporting on the primary race will be aware of these myriad messages which will lead to uncertainty about the relative newsworthiness of any one candidate's agenda. Over time, journalists will adapt to the field and so it is not the number of candidates per se that will lead to reductions in contextual simplicity but the shock of an expansion in the field, shifts that are only possible because of the volatility multicandidate races allow, that will affect newsworthiness. In contrast, contractions in the size of the field should have an opposite, clarifying effect. Winnowing (Haynes et al. 2004, Norrander 2000, 2006, Steger, Hickman, and Yohn 2002) should make the messages of the candidates that remain simpler for journalists because the agendas will stand out more clearly against a less noisy electoral context of alternative messages. This leads to my second hypothesis:

H2.2 (Contextual Simplicity Hypothesis): Agenda similarity between candidate messages and media coverage will decrease when the field expands.

If the evidence supports the timeliness hypothesis, then I argue the parties should strongly consider shortening the primary season and providing incentives against early entry into the race, for example postponing party-organized debates. If the evidence supports the contextual simplicity hypothesis, then I argue the parties should consider what means are available to them to prevent marginal candidates from entering the race and temporarily obfuscating the contenders' messages and how they might time the winnowing process to when voters will begin to tune in.

I take these points up briefly in the discussion section of this chapter and in greater depth in the final chapter. But before that, I turn to a brief explanation of the data and statistical methods employed in this chapter with the caveat that interested readers can find a much more detailed discussion in Chapter 3.

Data and Methods

This chapter utilizes a key portion of the Presidential Primary Communication Corpus (PPCC). It includes the speeches throughout the primary from all candidates from 2000-2016 and the media coverage by *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* during that same time frame. I limit the analysis in this chapter to only those two media outlets instead of the full corpus to gather a baseline estimation and to test the durability of the results with different topic model outputs. These two media sources are particularly appropriate to use as a baseline for several reasons: other studies have similarly focused on these major papers (e.g. Ku, Kaid, and Pfau 2003, Vavreck 2009) and other news sources follow their lead (Crouse 1975, Protesse and McCombs 1991). Chapter 6 replicates the analysis using other media outlets. A full description of how these texts were gathered can be found in Chapter 3.

I measured the issue agendas of the candidates and the media by applying a Structural Topic Model (STM) to the corpus (Roberts et al. 2014). The Lee and Mimno (2014) algorithmic method suggested that an 82-topic model was a particularly good fit for the corpus. STM calculates what proportion of each document in a corpus (in this case speeches and news articles) aligns with each of the 82 topics. I used these proportions to quantify the degree of similarity between the issues the candidates discuss and the issues the media covers by calculating convergence scores (Sigelman and Buell 2004). More

specifically, I calculated these convergence scores for each candidate-media-month (i.e. Hillary Clinton-NYT/WaPo-January, 2016). This time period was chosen due to data availability, as a shorter unit of time, for example a week, led to a great deal of missingness in both the candidate and media series.

This still left some missingness in the data. Most of this missingness is from candidates who have only 1-2 months in their series in which there was no candidate speech and/or media coverage. I addressed these instances via some limited logical interpolation. For those months with media coverage but no candidate speeches, I used the candidate agenda from the preceding month. If the corpus contained no candidate speech for the month of November, I made the assumption that the candidate's agenda did not change from October. For those months with no media coverage at all, I interpolated a convergence score of 0. A candidate who got no media coverage necessarily did not get their agenda across. Given the cross-sectional time series nature of the data, these assumptions prevent significant loss of data from listwise deletion (as entire series would need to be removed because of one missing unit) while still being reasonable.³⁶

The data are cross-sectional time series. Each unit of the data is a candidate-media-month. Convergence scores are a continuous variable warranting OLS.

Given the serial nature of primaries, candidates are incentivized to remain largely stable in terms of their agenda as not all potential voters are paying attention. In addition, previous work on newsmaking forces establishes that momentum matters to the media

³⁶ A small amount of this missingness stems from marginal candidates who stay in the race despite failure to elicit significant support. Mike Gravel's quixotic 2008 campaign was particularly sparse. Approximately 75% of the 24-month series (the longest campaign in the data) featured no candidate agenda. I removed him from the analysis due to this sparsity, but kept all other candidates.

agenda (Boydston 2013). What the media wants to cover is itself strongly influenced by what it has covered in the past. As such, from both the candidate and media perspective (i.e. both halves of the convergence formula) it is extremely likely that convergence represents a dynamic temporal process where what has happened in the past needs to be accounted for in modeling the present (Keele and Kelly 2006). Therefore, I utilize the Koyck distributed lag model.³⁷

As H2.1 establishes, I expect a downward trajectory for convergence over time. This hypothesis will be assessed by a descriptive analysis of the pooled convergence series.

To test H2.2 on the role of the volatility in multicandidate fields on media coverage, I use the amount of change in the number of candidates competing in the race in that month. For example, two candidates jumped into the 2016 GOP primary race in April, 2015 (Marco Rubio and Rand Paul) and is therefore +2. The 2008 Democratic race saw one candidate join the race (Barack Obama) and one candidate leave the race (Tom Vilsack) in February, 2007 and is therefore coded as a 0 net change. This variable neatly captures the exogenous shock to convergence that H2.2 theorizes.

I also attempted to replicate the results from Chapter 4. As such, I included measures of the amount of conflict, human interest, linguistic simplicity, and narrative simplicity rhetorical newsworthiness cues in the candidate's messaging in that month. Conflict was measured via the LIWC anger dictionary. Human interest was measured via

³⁷ I examined the data for stationarity in a number of ways. First, I assessed if the averaged series possessed a unit root: DF = -6.130 ($p < 0.01$), ADF = -3.965 ($p = 0.034$, lag = 1), KPSS = 0.098 ($p > 0.1$, lag = 2). Second, I ran a series of panel unit root tests via the plm R package. Because all series must be the same length for those tests, I clipped all series to 8 months and dropped any shorter than that: LLV = -15.779 ($p < 0.000$), IPS = -13.802 ($p < 0.000$), MW = 717.005 ($p < 0.000$); all lags selected via AIC. Third, I ran these same tests on series by length. These results can be found in Appendix C. Together, they suggest that the data are stationary.

the LIWC authenticity dictionary. Linguistic simplicity was measured via the application of a series of readability measures and a principal component analysis to extract the first dimension (Black et al. 2016). And narrative simplicity was measured via the Shannon H Inverse Entropy measure (Boydston 2013).

There are far more news articles in the corpus than candidate speeches. This creates an imbalance in the data as there are more opportunities for a wide array of issues to be invoked by the media simply by virtue of the difference in quantity of text. To account for this, I control for the number of candidate speeches in a month. More speeches in a month should correlate with higher convergence. The interpolation of candidate agendas from preceding months in the data generation process outlined above likely created a source of measurement error that need to be addressed. As such, I control for whether or not the candidate agenda was interpolated in that time unit.³⁸

I also introduce a number of control variables for candidate-level factors that might matter. These include the party, gender, race, and prior work experience (an indicator variable of whether or not the candidate has worked in government before) of the candidate. I also include a measure of standing in the polls. For most candidates from 2008-2016, this was assessed via the Real Clear Politics average on the first day of the month. For all other candidates, I used the earliest poll in the month found from the Roper iPoll archive.

Studies of general election campaigns suggest that the competitiveness of the race should affect convergence (Hayes 2010). Measuring competitiveness of multicandidate races is difficult as the gap between two candidates is partially conditional on the number

³⁸ Because time units with missing media coverage were assigned a convergence score of 0, controlling for those units would introduce a perfect predictor into the model.

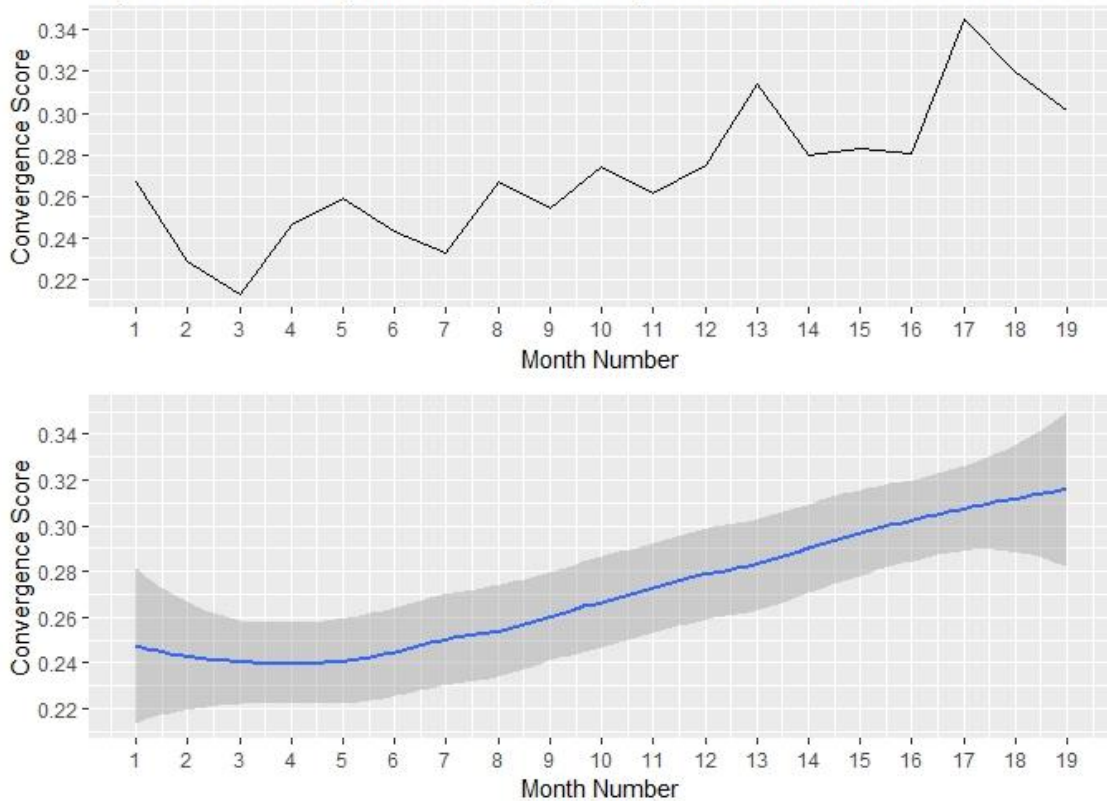
of other candidates in the race. To measure the competitiveness of the race, I utilized a modified Hirschman-Herfindahl index (Steger, Hickman, and Yohn 2002). This is a concentration metric which captures the number of “effective” candidates that are in the race. I first calculated each candidate’s share of the polls in each month. The number of effective candidates is equal to 1 divided by the sum of the squares of each candidate’s poll share. Prior literature suggests that more effective candidates in a race should correlate with lower convergence scores. Finally, I also use election year fixed effects to account for the possibility that convergence might vary between elections in some manner.

Results

Convergence throughout the Primary

Figure 5.1 plots the mean convergence scores per month throughout the primary. Given the cross-sectional time series nature of the data, analyzing means provides a more parsimonious assessment of H2.1 than examining the 76, separate series (although plots of those series are available in Appendix C). The top panel plots the mean convergence score by month, while the bottom panel applies a LOESS smoothing function and calculates confidence intervals.

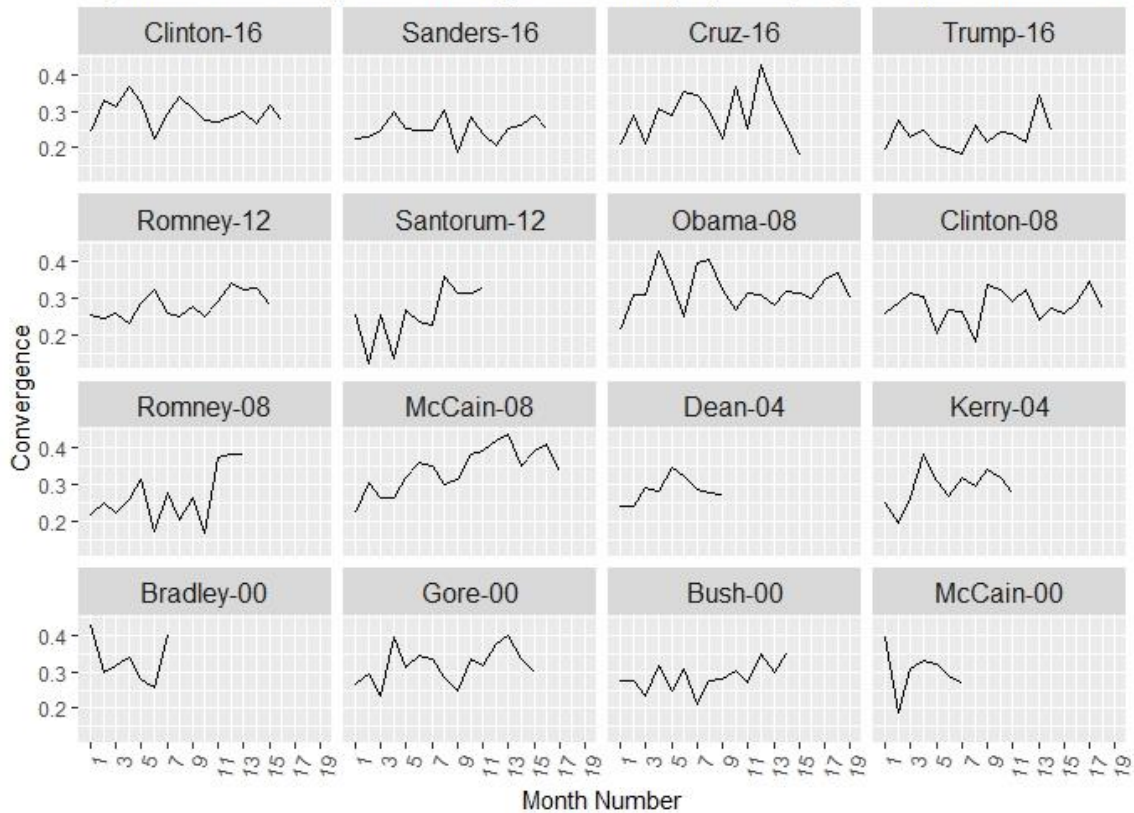
Figure 5.1: Mean Agenda Convergence by Month in Presidential Primaries



From a descriptive assessment of both, it would appear that the case for an overall negative trend throughout the duration of the primary is nonexistent. There does appear to be a noticeable initial decline over the first three months, more obvious in the top panel, but this appears to right itself over the subsequent months. H2.1 therefore sees no support. In fact, there is significant evidence for a positive temporal trend. Average convergence later on in the primary seems to be higher than in the early months.

There is another possibility, however. Most campaigns end well short of a year and some only last a few months. Perhaps this apparent positive trend stems from *which* candidates remain so deep into the election season, not how the media is reacting to candidate messages late into the cycle.

Figure 5.2: Convergence Throughout Primary by Campaign, Major Candidates



To test this possibility, I plotted the convergence scores per month of the two most prominent candidates for each primary race (Figure 5.2). When looking at just the top contenders, who typically campaign the longest, there does not appear to be a clear pattern of increasing convergence over time. Some series do display such a trend, most notably Santorum-2012 and McCain-2008, but the vast majority are better described as temporally stable. In addition, while the average convergence score only crosses .30 during the aggregated trend’s highest peaks, many of these individualized series approach or cross that threshold routinely. Overall, then, it would appear that the apparent increase in mean convergence over time stems from the fact that the candidates still campaigning at month 17, 18, and 19 are those already best able to elicit media coverage of their

agenda. Agenda convergence instead appears to be stable across the campaign. Regardless, the timeliness hypothesis is unsupported.

Effect of Change in Size of the Primary Field on Convergence

Moving on, Table 5.1 presents several models designed to test H2.2.³⁹ This hypothesis stated that an increase in the size of the primary field should be associated with a decrease in convergence. The first column (Model 1) tests this hypothesis while also attempting to replicate the findings from Chapter 4 and controlling for the aforementioned candidate-level controls.

The results support the hypothesis. Each additional candidate entering the race is correlated with a reduction in the convergence score of each candidate by .005 on average. The largest change in the data, -7 candidates in the GOP race in February, 2016, would therefore project to a .035 increase for each Republican candidate in the race at that time, on average. This difference by itself is notable, but there is also a smaller dynamic effect as well. A -7 candidate change in the field in time t is correlated with a .005 increase in convergence in time $t+1$ outside of any further changes in the number of candidates in the race.

The replications are a mixed bag. Neither the amount of authenticity language (to test the human-interest hypothesis) nor readability of the candidate's speeches (to test the linguistic simplicity hypothesis) are substantively notable. The topic dispersion, measured via the Inverse Shannon H Entropy score and included to test the narrative simplicity hypothesis, is once again negative which runs counter to expectations.

³⁹ I ran Breusch-Godfrey tests on each model to test the null hypothesis that there is no serial correlation in the model. In all instances, the null hypothesis holds.

The amount of anger language, measured using the LIWC dictionary, is a positive correlate with convergence, however. Furthermore, the effect size is substantively quite large relative to the other variables. The angriest unit in the data (a month where Joe Lieberman's average speech was 2.3% anger words) is correlated with a convergence score .067 greater than a month where the candidate used no anger language.⁴⁰

Units where the candidate agenda was interpolated using a previous candidate-month agenda are correlated with substantially lower convergence scores, on average. While this undoubtedly reflects a coding decision made in the data generating process, there may also be some theoretical insight from this result. After all, situations where candidates do not reset their agenda may capture some element of timeliness. It could be that a candidate cannot simply put an agenda out and expect the media to continue to repeat it in the absence of a new message. The extent to which this is the cause as opposed to measurement error introduced from the interpolation, however, is impossible to parse at this time. As expected, monthly time units with more candidate speeches are positively correlated with convergence.

⁴⁰ I replicated the analysis with the EmoLex measure of anger in Appendix C. The results are consistent.

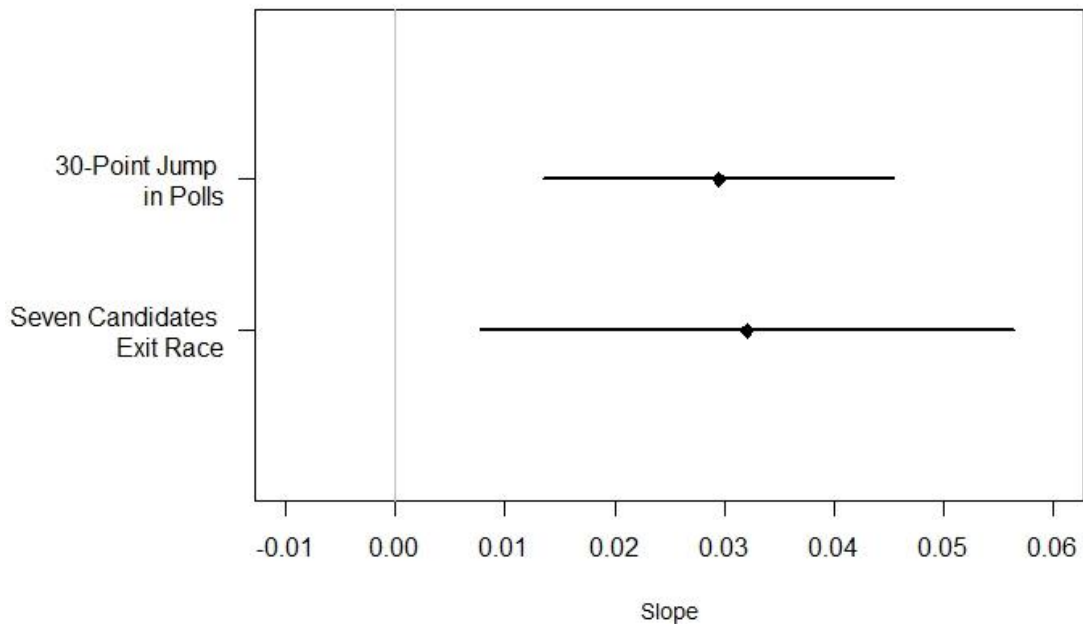
Table 5.1: Effect of Change in Number of Candidates on Agenda Convergence

	Convergence			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Convergence, Lagged	0.137*	0.116*	0.112*	0.108*
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.037)
Change in # of Candidates	-0.005*	-0.007*	-0.007*	-0.012*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
% Anger Words (LIWC)	0.029*	0.029*	0.028*	0.027*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
% Authentic Words (LIWC)	0.0001	0.0003	0.0002	0.0002
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Readability	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy	-0.291*	-0.278*	-0.292*	-0.271*
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Interpolated Candidate Agenda	-0.076*	-0.075*	-0.072*	-0.071*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
# of Candidate Speeches in Month	0.003*	0.003*	0.004*	0.005*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Poll	0.001*	0.001*	0.001*	0.001*
	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
GOP	-0.008	-0.016*	-0.033*	-0.030*
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Woman	-0.020	-0.024*	-0.028*	-0.030*
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Nonwhite	0.009	0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Non-governmental career	-0.009	-0.007	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
# of Effective Candidates		0.008*	0.009*	0.010*
		(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Change in # of Candidates * Poll				0.001*
				(0.0002)
Constant	0.311*	0.271*	0.289*	0.277*
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Observations	648	648	648	648
R ²	0.262	0.278	0.284	0.295
Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistic	0.004	0.032	0.098	0.424

*Notes: All models OLS regression. * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. Models 3-4 include election cycle fixed effects. All Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistics are statistically insignificant at conventional levels.*

Of the candidate-level controls, only one stands out. The candidate's standings in the polls is a powerful positive correlate with convergence. Each additional percentage point increase is associated with an increase of .001. This also helps contextualize the substantive power of the change in the number of candidates. Figure 5.3 presents the predicted effect of 7 candidates dropping out of the race against the predicted difference of a 30-percentage-point increase in poll standing. The difference predicted by such a change in the size of the field equals the difference between a footnote in the race and a viable frontrunner. In this baseline model, the race, gender, and prior work experience are not statistically significant correlates with convergence, although the substantive magnitude of the coefficient for gender is notable.

Figure 5.3: Comparison of Predicted Substantive Magnitudes



Notes: Plot of predicted difference in convergence from a 30-percentage-point increase in poll standing and a -7 difference in number of candidates in the primary. Estimates and confidence intervals based on results from Table 5.1, Model 1.

Prior literature also suggests that the closeness of a race affects media responsiveness to candidate agendas (Hayes 2010). Perhaps the competitiveness of the race is an intervening variable that explains the observed relationship between changes in the size of the field and convergence. To account for this possibility, I calculated a modified Hirschman-Herfindahl index (Steger, Hickman, and Yohn 2002) for each month using candidate shares of polls. This measures the number of “effective” candidates in the race at that point in time. Including this measure (Model 2) does not dampen the substantive or statistical significance of changes in the size of the field. The number of effective candidates is indeed strongly correlated with convergence, but in the opposite of the expected direction. I find that as the number of effective candidates increases, which should capture how uncertain the outcome is, the media hews closer to candidate agendas.⁴¹

The coefficients for the percentage of anger language, topic dispersion, interpolation of candidate agenda, number of candidate speeches, and poll standing all remain substantively large and statistically significant. In addition, two more candidate-level controls cross the traditional threshold of statistical significance: party and gender. Republicans and women running in primaries appear from this model to have a harder time conveying their agendas through the mass media. The finding on candidate gender serves as an aggregate reinforcement to the literature on gender bias in elections (e.g.

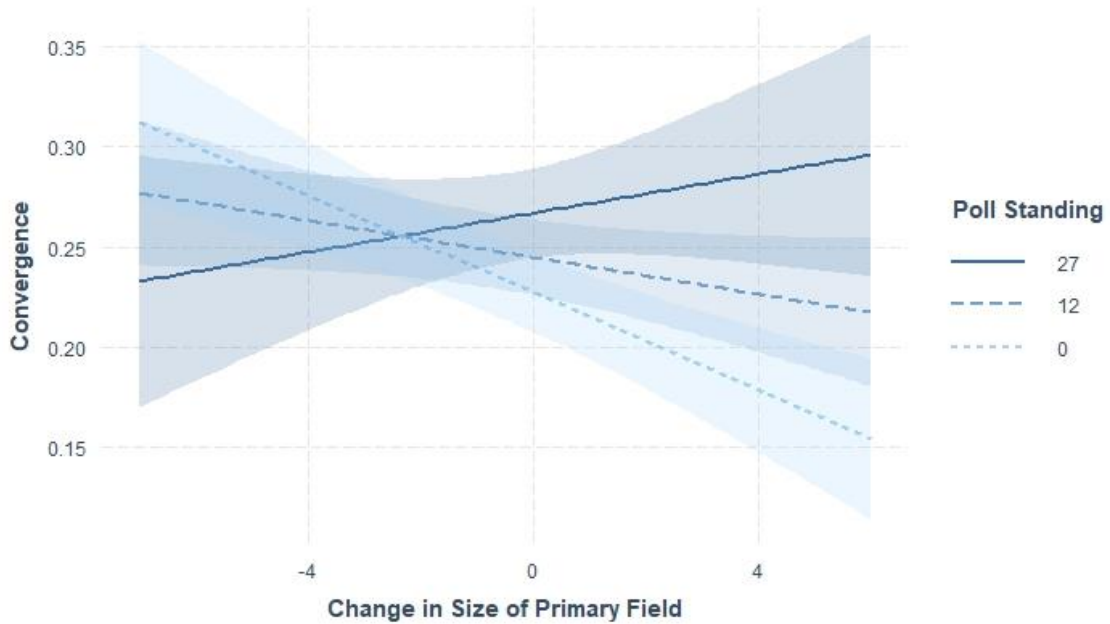
⁴¹ To account for the possibility that the number of effective candidates is not a similar enough measure to the distance in polling between two candidates – a primary with only 2 effective candidates can still be quite close after all – I utilized two other measures of the competitiveness of the primary: the poll standing of the frontrunner in that month and the difference between the poll standing of the frontrunner and second-place contender in that month. Neither alternative measure displays any statistically significant relationship with convergence.

Heldman, Carroll, and Olson 2005). The amount of authenticity language and readability remain statistically insignificant correlates with convergence.

Model 3 replicates the previous model while also including election year fixed effects. The results are once again stable. An increase in the size of the field remains a substantively powerful negative correlate with convergence. Candidates faring better in the polls, men, Democrats and candidates who utilize more anger language likewise are more successful at conveying their agendas via the media.

So far, the results consistently support the contextual simplicity hypothesis. Expansions in the size of the field are correlated with reductions in convergence. But it is possible that this effect is not experienced equivalently among candidates. Perhaps frontrunners and marginal candidates experience the effect differently. Model 4 accounts for this possibility by introducing an interaction term between the change in the number of candidates and poll standing. The change in the number of candidates remains a statistically significant negative correlate with convergence while poll standing remains a statistically significant positive correlate with convergence. But the interaction term between them is positive and significant, implying that some of the decline in convergence is offset for frontrunners.

Figure 5.4: Effect of Change in Size of Primary Field on Convergence by Poll Standing



Notes: Poll standing values chosen based on mean (~12 percentage points) and standard deviation (~15 percentage points). Values for lagged convergence, inverse Shannon H Entropy, percentage of anger language, percentage of authenticity language, readability, number of effective candidates, and number of candidate speeches set to mean values. Interpolated candidate agenda set to 0, nonwhite set to 0, woman set to 0, GOP set to 1, non-government career set to 0, and election year set to 2008.

Because interaction terms are frequently unintuitive, especially when dealing with two continuous variables, I plotted the predicted relationship between change in the number of candidates and convergence for three different values of poll standing: 0, 12, and 27 percentage points (Figure 5.4). For a candidate polling at 27 percent, an increase in the number of candidates actually has a *positive* effect on convergence. Among candidates who are polling worse, expansions in the field are correlated with sharp, significant decreases in convergence. This suggests that it is the lower tier of candidates who are most disadvantaged by the way the journalism newsworthiness value of

simplicity affects coverage in multicandidate races. The remaining results remain consistent.⁴²

Discussion

In this chapter I addressed the question of how the lengthy, multicandidate nature of presidential primaries affects the media's coverage of candidate agendas. I argued that this atypically long campaign and the volatile fields of candidates should create natural dissonance with the preference of journalists for stories that are timely and simple. I showed that changes in the size of the field are correlated with candidate-media agenda similarity. An expansion in the primary field is correlated with a significant decrease in agenda convergence. These results line up with the theoretical argument I offered which notes that expansions to primary fields should lead to a decrease in the contextual simplicity in the race as new electoral fault lines and pairwise comparison permutations are added. This contrasts with the media's preference for simplicity in coverage, explaining the decline. Further analysis of the results suggested that this effect is primarily felt by candidates performing poorly in the polls, not by frontrunners.

While I argued that a professional interest in timely stories should lead to declining agenda convergence over the course of the primary as the candidate's agenda fades into old news, the results did not bear that out. While there did appear to be an initial decline in average convergence in the first three months of the primary season, this

⁴² It is also possible that there are diminishing returns to expansions in the field. Put another way, two candidates entering the race may be more meaningful when it was a four-person race than when it was a fourteen-person race. To account for this possibility, I replicated the analysis with an interaction with the total number of candidates in the race during that month. The results, which can be found in Appendix C, do not support such an interactive effect.

trend quickly rights itself. The overall tendency of agenda convergence in primaries appears to be more akin to temporal stability than declining timeliness.

These findings have important implications. Candidates want to get their messages out via the media, and the results presented here suggest that a stable field better positions them to do so. But it also appears that only those candidates who have middling or weak support are disadvantaged and are therefore incentivized to strongly prefer keeping new candidates from entering the race. While the frontrunners may still be able to get their messages out via the media, most candidates will not be in such an advantageous situation. Regardless, the candidates themselves are poorly positioned to affect the strategic incentives of their competitors. They also face a collective action problem: While competing in a shifting primary field is not ideal, the utility of candidacy trumps not entering the race for most candidates.

Candidates need to rely on parties to structure the rules of primaries to keep the fields small. I argue that parties should do so. American political parties perform multiple duties but a major one is facilitating the selection of nominees who are best situated to win general elections. They should thus want to be sure that the candidate who is still standing at the end of the primary process is indeed the one whose message was appealing to the party's base.

With this in mind, it would not appear that there is a significant drawback in terms of media coverage to having a lengthy primary season. There may be other downsides, for example depletion of resources that could be reserved for the general election or voter fatigue, but looking exclusively at the effects on media coverage suggests that parties should not be overly concerned about candidates announcing that they're running 12

months before a caucus or primary. Yet parties should think carefully about how they can structure their rules to constrain the fields from expanding beyond the most viable candidates who represent distinct perspectives within the party. In the concluding chapter I return to the question of how they might best do so.

This analysis is not without its limits. A month is a particularly blunt unit of time and its use prevents analysis that could get at the way the serial nature of primaries structures media coverage. Statewide primaries and caucuses generally occur at weekly intervals and would therefore require daily estimates of convergence to study how temporal proximity to an electoral context affects media reactions to candidate agendas, but the PPCC does not include enough candidate speeches to make such an analysis feasible.

More immediately, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are two critical news outlets in the American political context, but they do not capture the array of news outlets that comprise the media environment. As such, the results of this chapter cannot shed light on the different ways different media might react to candidate messages or primary contexts. It might be the case that some media outlets prioritize anger or human interest or contextual simplicity more than others. I address this question in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Exploring the Roots of Newsworthiness Values

“Journalism: an ability to meet the challenge of filling space.” – Rebecca West⁴³

“The first rule of hurricane coverage is that every broadcast must begin with palm trees bending in the wind.” – Carl Hiassen⁴⁴

“News is what sells.” – Shanto Iyengar⁴⁵

The preceding two chapters have analyzed the effect of the media’s newsworthiness values on agenda convergence in primaries. The critical assumptions have been that the media exists as a single political institution, separate media outlets are actors that comprise that institution, and all of these actors are equally influenced by the norms and values of the institution.

The quotes that preface this chapter should provide some reasonable skepticism on this last point. The stories that ultimately comprise the news are partially dictated by finite space constraints. In his famous gatekeeping study, White (1950) reported that the lack of space was the articulated justification for rejecting almost half of all wire stories that did not make the paper. But the amount of space to be filled varies dramatically by medium. Broadcast TV has a much smaller “newshole” than the typical newspaper. And the amount of space in a newspaper pales in comparison to the 24/7 cable news environment. Likewise, there appear to be some storytelling conventions that differ across mediums. Television cameras are better suited to showing “palm trees bending in the wind” than a print reporter who must describe the scene, for example. Furthermore, journalism as a product needs to be acceptable to the audience that finances it directly

⁴³ Original quote attributed to April 22, 1956 *New York Herald Tribune*, sec. 6 pg. 2. Retrieved from April 10, 2000 *The Edmonton Journal* quote of the day, Opinion section pg. A10.

⁴⁴ September 8, 2004 *The Gazette* (Montreal), Editorial/Op-Ed section pg. A27.

⁴⁵ Iyengar, Shanto. 2011. *Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide* (2nd Ed.) pg. 68.

through subscriptions or indirectly through advertising revenue. But the audiences of different media outlets may very well differ in what they care to read or watch.

The goal of this chapter is to assess the level of heterogeneity in the application of newsworthiness values by media type. Do these differences across media outlets lead to different emphases of professional standards? Answering this question is important for two reasons. First, it is useful to scholars and practitioners of strategic news management as the results can help the cultivation of more nuanced and targeted media strategies. For example, if anger is a powerful correlate of convergence with newspapers but not television news outlets, a candidate who intends to build a base from the audience of the latter should know that anger will not be as effective a strategy.

Second, answering this question could shed light on the origin point of these newsworthiness values. Newsworthiness values are a subclass of journalism's professional norms. Why these norms have developed is itself an open question. Answering this question is vital for devising strategies to mitigate any normatively undesirable political repercussions of newsworthiness values, as described below.

Why Professional Standards Develop

Prior work has theorized that journalistic norms originate in response to an array of forces including the need to routinize a difficult job (Tuchman 1978), technological change creating new means of storytelling (Usher 2014), and audience preferences (Hamilton 2004). If the influence of a newsworthiness value is more powerful among news outlets with tighter space constraints, it would suggest that that newsworthiness value is primarily used by journalists as a standard to discern what stories are worthy of becoming news within their professional world of limited space and tight deadlines.

If the influence of a newsworthiness value varies based on the format by which the media outlet disseminates their news, text or visual, it would suggest that it operates as medium-specific method of crafting compelling content. Journalists conceive of themselves as storytellers, and the means of crafting a story are inextricably tied to the medium in the same way that novels tend to have different storytelling conventions from television or movies. As such, any differences across technological medium likely reflect a close relationship between newsworthiness values and journalism's self-conception as a storytelling enterprise.

And if the influence of newsworthiness values varies based on the preferences of the audience of that particular media outlet, it would suggest that they operate as a means of crafting an economically viable product. Audiences for the national newspapers and cable tends tend to be more politically interested and sophisticated than the audience for broadcast news (Stroud 2011). If a newsworthiness value, especially simplicity which should be most closely associated with the preferences of audiences with low political sophistication, is strongest among candidate-ABC News dyads then it would appear the newsworthiness value operates to create news content to match audience preferences.

H3.1 (Routinization Hypothesis): The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with stricter space constraints.

H3.2 (Technology Hypothesis): The influence of newsworthiness values on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will vary between television media outlets (either broadcast or cable) and text-based media outlets.

H3.3 (Audience Preferences Hypothesis): The influence of newsworthiness values, especially simplicity, on agenda similarity between candidates and media outlets will be greater for media outlets with less politically sophisticated audiences.

It is not necessarily the case that all the articulated newsworthiness values will line up neatly behind only one of these hypotheses. It could be the case that values originate as means of accommodating multiple elements of media logic pressures. Hopefully testing the six hypotheses articulated in Chapter 2 and tested in various capacities in Chapters 4 and 5 in this manner will shed some exploratory light on the most significant driving forces at work, however.

This exploration is important because, to the extent that these newsworthiness values are creating politically undesirable outcomes in presidential primary elections, which I take up in the following chapter, understanding the root cause of these values is important for devising a strategy to minimize the harm created in the short term and apply pressure to modify the values in the long term. As an example, if the newsworthiness value of conflict originates in journalism's need to satisfy audience demands and prioritizing conflict is deemed an inefficient or otherwise harmful means of conducting mediatized campaigns, then the conclusion would likely be increased support for public media outlets in the short term and attempts to shift audience preferences away from conflict-laden content in the long term. Such a remedy would be ineffective if the source of the newsworthiness value for conflict is technological, however.

I now turn to a brief discussion of the data and methods used to test these hypotheses in this chapter. As before, a more thorough explanation of the data can be found in Chapter 3.

Data and Methods

This chapter utilizes both the Presidential Primary Announcement Corpus (PPAC) and Presidential Primary Communication Corpus (PPCC) to test these hypotheses. The first portion of the results section analyzes the PPAC, including the partisan media outlets that were not included in Chapter 4. Each paragraph of speeches and media coverage was coded via a content analysis procedure (described in Chapter 3) into one of 15 topic categories. A convergence score (Sigelman and Buell 2004) was calculated for each candidate-media outlet dyad. These convergence scores measure how similar the agenda of the candidate was to the agenda of the media outlet by comparing the proportions of each agenda that falls into each of the topic categories. Convergence scores are continuous measures that range from 0 (perfect divergence, i.e. the agendas are completely unrelated) to 1 (perfect convergence, i.e. the agendas overlap to the point of being identical).

As in Chapter 4, I model these convergence scores using four measures that proxy for how newsworthy the rhetorical patterns of the candidate are. These include the percentage of anger language as measured by the EmoLex dictionary (to measure the amount of rhetorical conflict cues), the percentage of the speech comprised of candidate-based appeals (to measure the amount of rhetorical human interest cues; LIWC's measures of Authenticity and "I" Language used for replications), the readability of the speech (to measure the linguistic simplicity of the candidate's rhetoric), and how topically narrow the candidate's speech is as measured by the Shannon Inverse H Entropy score (to measure the narrative simplicity of the candidate's rhetoric). I also control for the poll standing of the candidate at the time of the announcement. Because

several of the models include small samples, I do not include other candidate-level control variables.

I model each media type (newspapers, broadcast TV news, cable news) separately. I also modeled candidate-Fox News and candidate-MSNBC dyads to account for the possibility that focusing on the similar cable news format overlooks significant differences created by the different partisan loyalties.⁴⁶ Given the multiple newsworthiness variables, running separate models is more parsimonious than introducing a series of interaction terms.

The second portion analyzes the PPCC including ABC News, Fox News, and MSNBC which were not included in the analysis in Chapter 5. The agenda of each document was measured via applying a Structural Topic Model (STM) to the entire corpus (Roberts et al. 2014). This model generated a measure of the proportion of each document that matched each of 88 topics. I used these proportions to calculate convergence scores at candidate-media type-month units (i.e. Hillary Clinton-ABC News-January, 2016). Media types included newspapers, ABC News, Fox News, and MSNBC.⁴⁷ Missingness within the candidate-media type series were dealt with in a number of ways. First, in time periods where there was no candidate speech, I interpolated the candidate's agenda from the preceding month. The assumption is that the candidate's agenda did not change without the presence of evidence to the contrary. I control for units with an interpolated agenda in all models. Second, I interpolated a

⁴⁶ Splitting this data in this manner leads to some small-n models. ABC News often avoids reporting on the announcements of the less prominent candidates. Fox News was launched in 1996, making 2000 the first campaign cycle where transcripts are available. While MSNBC was also launched in 1996, Nexis Uni does not have transcripts prior to November, 1999 (by which time every candidate had already entered the race). As such, 2004 is the first electoral cycle for that media outlet.

⁴⁷ The sample for both Fox News and MSNBC is sufficiently large that there was no need to combine the two in analysis of this corpus to achieve greater statistical power.

convergence score of 0 to any remaining candidate-media type-month unit with missingness. The assumption underlying this decision is that the failure to receive any media coverage is akin to failure at conveying an agenda through the media. These decisions prevent excessive listwise deletion (which would be necessary given the time series nature of the data) while still remaining theoretically justifiable. However, some fringe candidate's speech and media series were excessively sparse, which would have necessitated extensive interpolation, and I opted to remove these candidates instead as they would have functioned as extreme outliers.⁴⁸

To test the timeliness hypothesis by media type I plotted the convergence series for the top two candidates from each race over time. I used the top two candidates rather than an aggregated series based on the results from Chapter 5 which showed that trends can appear based on *which* candidates are campaigning at certain phases of the primary election cycle rather than any trend in media agenda responsiveness.

I once again modeled each media type separately rather than via a single model with multiple interaction terms for parsimony. I modeled these candidate-media type-month convergence scores with five primary independent variables. These include the LIWC measure of the average amount of anger language used by the candidate in speeches that month (to measure the amount of rhetorical conflict cues; EmoLex anger dictionary used as a replication), the LIWC measure of the average amount of authenticity language used by the candidate in speeches that month (to measure the amount of rhetorical human-interest cues), the average readability of the candidate's speeches in that month (to measure the linguistic simplicity of the candidate's rhetoric),

⁴⁸ A table that specifies which candidates were omitted from each media type series can be found in Appendix D.

how topically narrow the candidate's agenda was that month via the Shannon Inverse H Entropy score (to measure the narrative simplicity of the candidate's rhetoric), and the amount of change in the size of the primary field in that month (to measure the contextual simplicity of the race). I controlled for a number of candidate-level variables including the poll standing of the candidate in that month, the number of speeches in the corpus for the candidate in that month to deal with the imbalance of quantity of text between candidates and the media in the corpus; and the party, race, gender, and prior work experience (an indicator variable for if the candidate has previous government experience) of the candidate.

Because the data is cross-sectional time series and because there is reason to suspect that the value of convergence in one time period will be influenced by convergence in a preceding time period (Boydston 2013), I employ a Koyck distributed lag model (Keele and Kelly 2006).⁴⁹

Results

Medium Differences in Coverage of Announcement Speeches

To start, I replicated the analysis from Chapter 4 while separating out candidate-media dyads by media type. Model 1 is comprised of candidate-newspaper (*The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*). Model 2 is comprised of candidate-ABC News

⁴⁹ I tested for the presence of a unit root via two procedures. First, I aggregated the panel data into a single, averaged series and conducted Dickey-Fuller and KPSS tests for each candidate-medium series. Newspapers: DF = -4.739 (p < .01), KPSS = .071 (p > .1, lag order = 2). ABC News: DF = -3.939 (p = .026), KPSS = .154 (p = .043, lag order = 2). Fox News: DF = -5.203 (p < .01), KPSS = .078 (p > .1, lag order = 2). MSNBC: DF = -4.073 (p = .021), KPSS = .102 (p > .1, lag order = 2). Second, I conducted a series of panel unit root tests. Because panel unit root tests require each series to be of equal length, I dropped all series less than 8-months long and trimmed all longer series to that length. The results can be found in Appendix D.

dyads. Model 3 is comprised of candidate-cable news dyads (Fox News and MSNBC). Models 4 (Fox) and 5 (MSNBC) separate these two outlets.⁵⁰ Table 6.1 presents the full results while Figure 6.1 presents the coefficients for the four newsworthiness value variables across media type.

Table 6.1: Effect of Newsworthiness on Convergence to Announcements by Medium

	Convergence				
	(1) Newspapers	(2) ABC	(3) Cable News	(4) Fox	(5) MSNBC
% Anger Language	0.029* (0.010)	0.021 (0.026)	0.009 (0.014)	0.013 (0.020)	0.005 (0.020)
% Candidate Appeals	0.057* (0.009)	0.052* (0.021)	0.070* (0.014)	0.064* (0.020)	0.073* (0.020)
Readability Score	-0.003 (0.009)	0.017 (0.024)	0.020 (0.014)	0.028 (0.020)	0.013 (0.020)
Shannon Inverse H	-0.034* (0.009)	-0.012 (0.023)	-0.051* (0.012)	-0.035* (0.017)	-0.070* (0.017)
Poll	-0.0002 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)
Constant	0.493* (0.010)	0.408* (0.025)	0.479* (0.017)	0.501* (0.022)	0.455* (0.026)
Observations	208	74	121	68	53
R ²	0.222	0.102	0.312	0.251	0.434

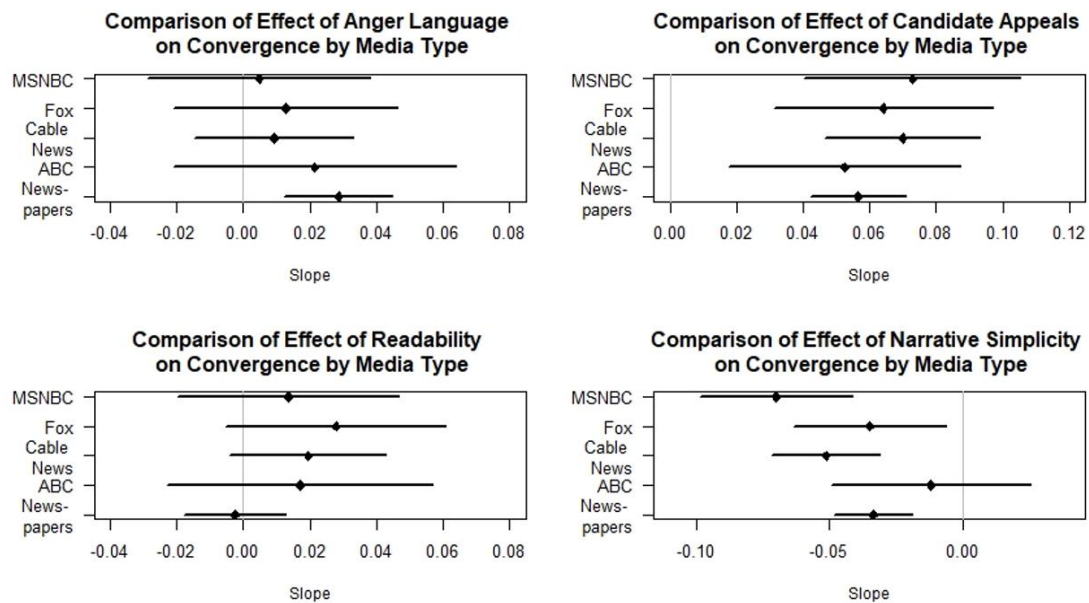
*Notes: Model 1 consists of only candidate-newspaper dyads. Model 2 consists of only candidate-ABC dyads. Model 3 consists of only candidate-cable news dyads. Model 4 consists of only candidate-Fox News dyads. Model 5 consists of only candidate-MSNBC dyads. Percent anger language, percent candidate appeals, readability score, and Shannon Inverse H standardized for ease of interpretation of substantive significance. All models OLS regression. * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed*

Starting with the usage of candidate anger, the only media type that seems to respond strongly to this method of invoking conflict is newspapers. The coefficient is large and statistically significant. All the other coefficients are positive, as expected, but

⁵⁰ An analysis of differences in convergence between partisan candidates and partisan media outlets can be found in Appendix D.

none are as large as for newspapers. That these coefficients are not as substantively powerful undermines the possibility that the lack of statistical significance is purely attributable to the smaller sample the other models utilize. This evidence suggests that perhaps rhetorical anger is a particularly enticing form of conflict to journalists who need words to convey conflict in their storytelling, which supports H3.2

Figure 6.1: Coefficient Plots of Effects of Newsworthiness Variables on Convergence to Announcement Speeches by Media Type

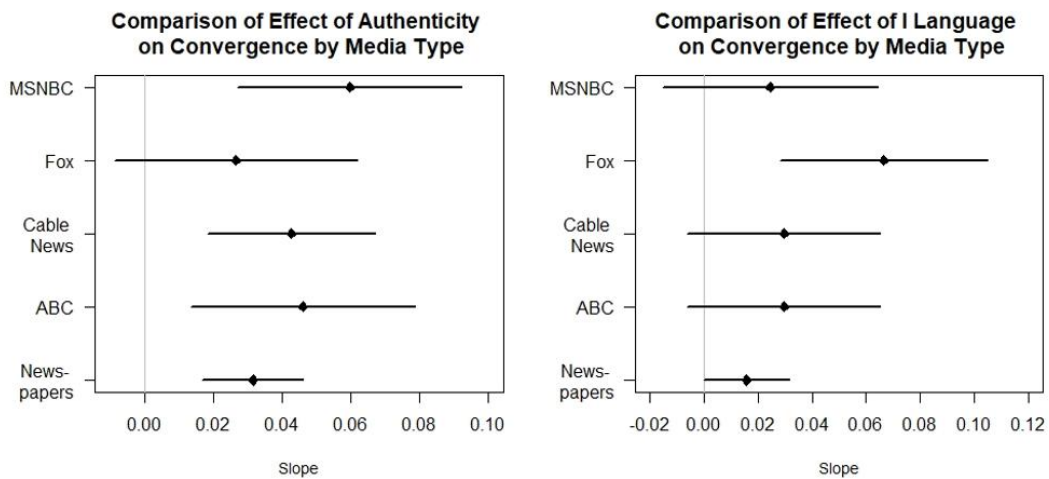


All media types display a strong relationship between the usage of candidate appeals and convergence in announcement speeches. There also does not appear to be much of a pattern in terms of magnitude either. The coefficients are slightly larger for the cable news outlets, but the differences are sufficiently small that this hardly counts for evidence in support of H3.3. Based on these results, human interest would appear to be a newsworthiness value equally practiced by different media types.

I attempted to replicate this finding using two alternative measures of rhetorical human-interest cues, the LIWC measures of authenticity and “I” Language, to see if this

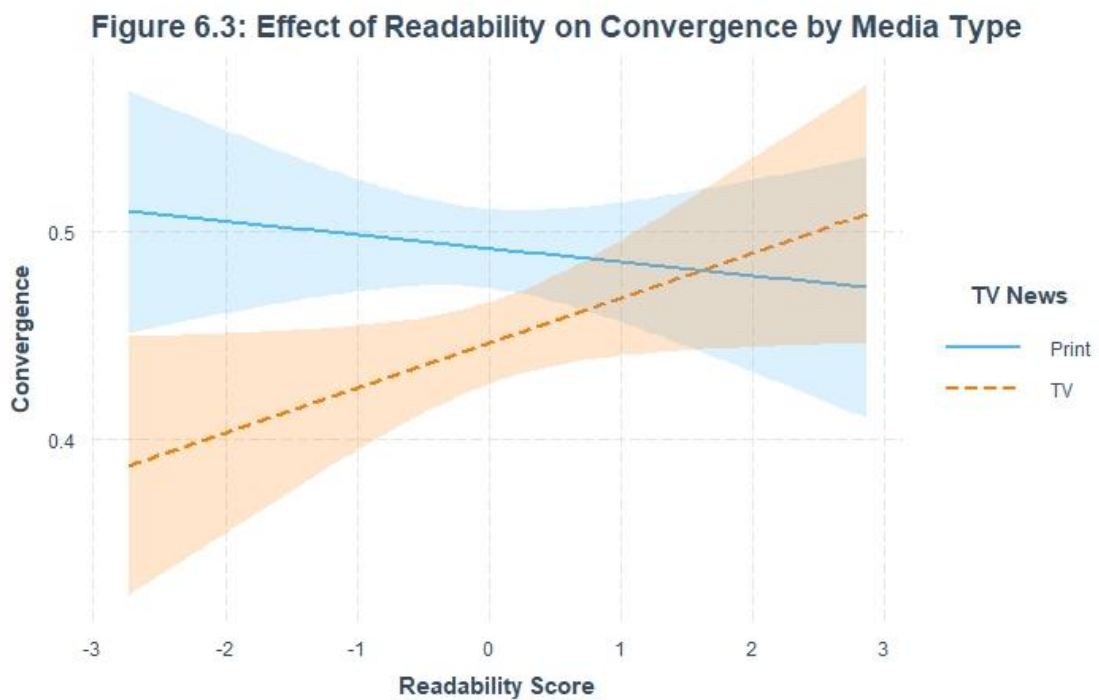
newsworthiness value did appear to be equivalently used across mediums. The models using these variables can be found in Appendix D, while the coefficient plots are presented in Figure 6.2. The results are slightly more suggestive. The coefficients for all media outlets for both measures are positive and most are statistically significant, an impressive feat considering the small n in several of the models. While all of the coefficients lie within the confidence intervals of the others, the coefficient for newspapers is consistently among the smallest. Given that this is consistent across three different measures of rhetorical human-interest cues, I take this as suggestive, and caveated, evidence in support of H3.2

Figure 6.2: Coefficient Plots of Effects of Alternative Human-interest Variables on Convergence to Announcement Speeches by Media Type



Moving on to readability, an interesting pattern emerges. None of the coefficients reach traditional levels of statistical significance, but the coefficients are positive for both ABC News and cable news (and for both Fox News and MSNBC when analyzed separately). Meanwhile, the coefficient for newspapers is slightly negative. While there is significant overlap in the confidence intervals around these coefficients, perhaps there is

a difference between text- and visual-based news mediums in how they react to linguistic simplicity that is masked by splicing data into such small categories. To account for this possibility, I replicated the model with an interaction term between the readability score and an indicator variable of whether the media outlet was print or television. The predicted interactive effect is presented in Figure 6.3. At the most readable, i.e. the simplest language, there is no discernible difference between TV and print media in terms of convergence. But among the least readable speeches, the gap between TV and print is quite large. This finding suggests that linguistic simplicity is indeed correlated with greater success at conveying an agenda through the mass media but that this is only true among television news outlets. This is once again consistent with an argument that there is something specific about the medium in which a journalist is telling a story that affects what they value as newsworthy, which lines up with H3.2.



Finally, across all media types, a more narrowly tailored candidate message was negatively correlated with convergence. The coefficients for all but ABC News are statistically significant as well. The cable news outlets appear to display a slightly more negative relationship between narrative simplicity and convergence, followed by newspapers and then ABC News. While this pattern would be suggestively supportive of the audience preferences hypothesis (H3.3), all of these coefficients run counter to expectations. The results suggest that all media outlets prefer candidates who create campaign narratives with more complex agendas, the media outlet with the least sophisticated audience just displays the weakest preference for narrative complexity rather than the strongest preference for narrative simplicity.

Media Differences in Coverage throughout Presidential Primaries

Next, I replicate the analysis of the PPCC performed in Chapter 5 but using the full corpus (i.e. including ABC News, Fox News, and MSNBC) and separated by media type. I begin with descriptive analysis of the candidate-media type convergence trends to examine medium differences in response to the timeliness hypothesis. The results from Chapter 5 suggested that trends can appear in the aggregate series from *which* candidates are campaigning at certain stages in the primary election cycle, with the candidates still active in month 12 and onward being those who are already most capable of driving media narratives. As such, I analyze the individualized trends of the top two candidates from each primary race. The results are presented via LOESS-smoothed trends in Figures 6.4-6.7.

Figure 6.4: Convergence for Major Candidates Throughout Primary: Newspapers

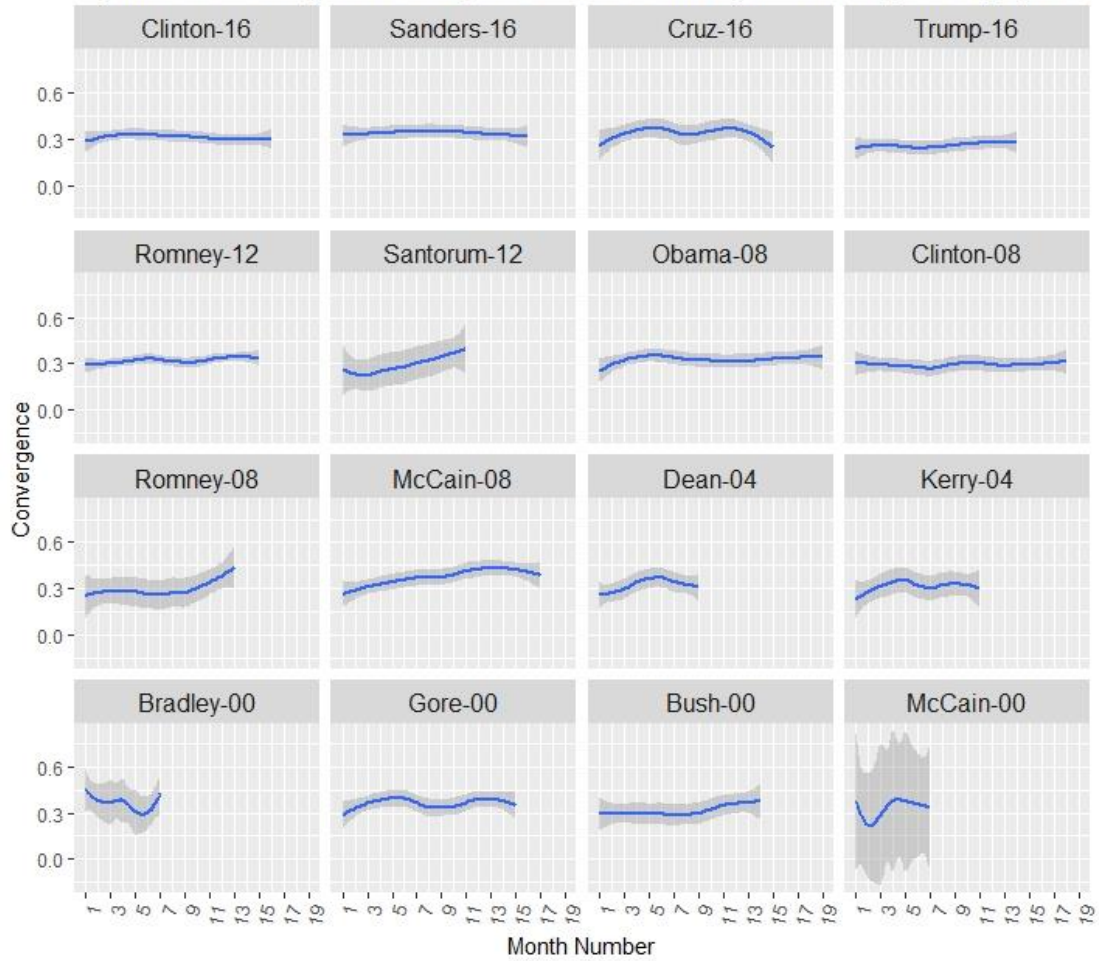


Figure 6.4 presents the candidate-newspaper dyadic series. There is no consistent evidence for any decline in convergence over time, which replicates the findings from Chapter 5 with a variant of the topic model. Some of the series appears to display slight positive trends (Santorum-2012, Romney-2008), and one appears to show a decline (Bradley-2000). But most series are once again best described as temporally stable.

Figure 6.5: Convergence for Major Candidates Throughout Primary: ABC News

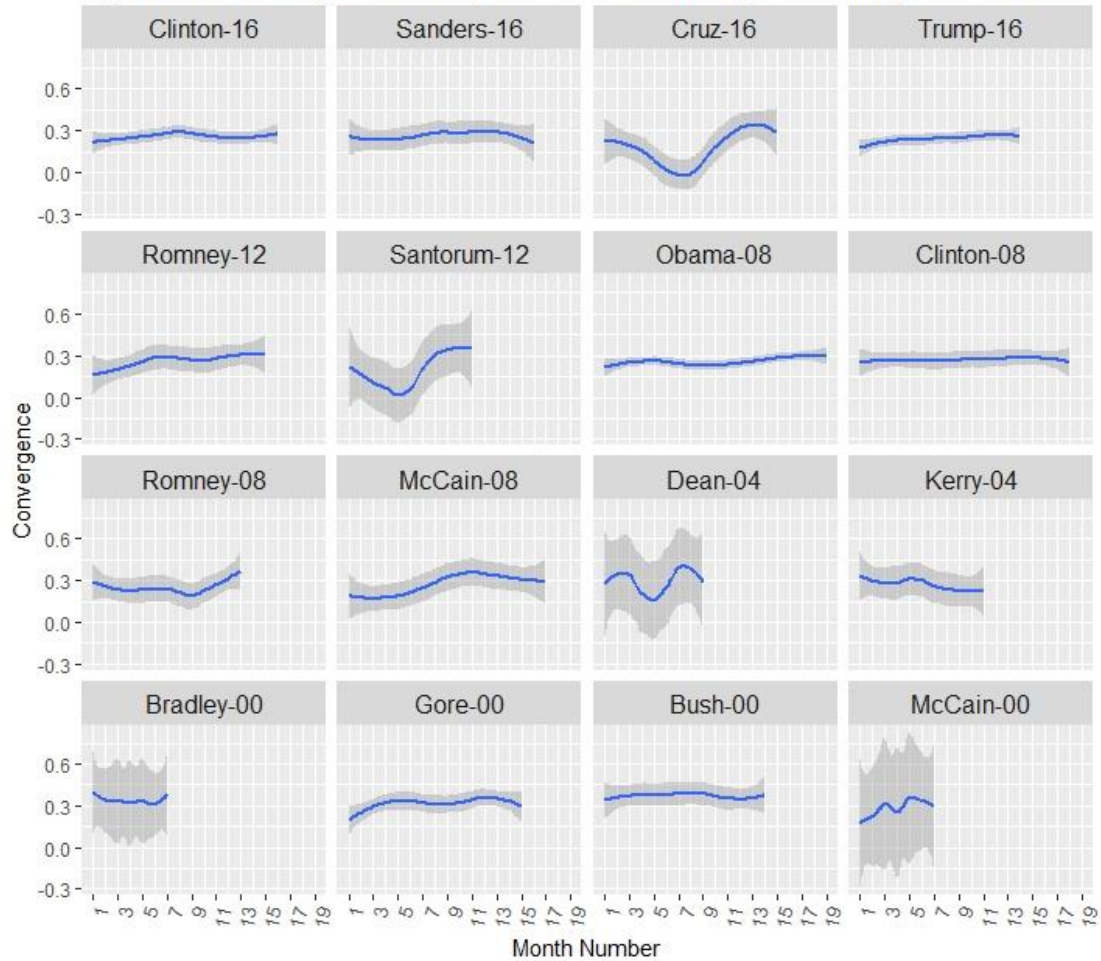
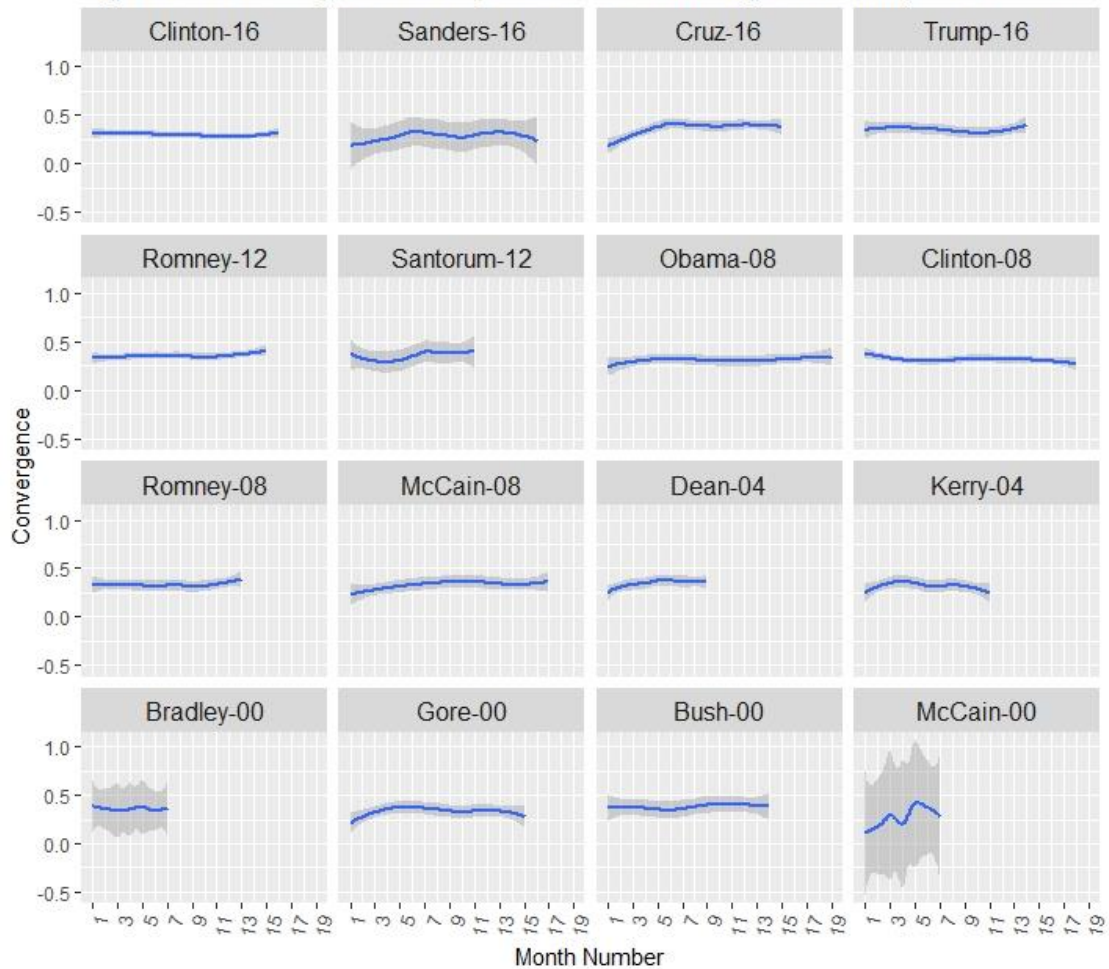


Figure 6.5 displays the results for the candidate-ABC News dyads. Once again there is no evidence for the timeliness hypothesis. Interestingly, several of the series display a curvilinear trend with convergence sharply declining in the middle of the series before undergoing an equally sharp increase (Cruz-2016, Santorum-2012, Dean-04). In general, however, most series are again temporally stable.

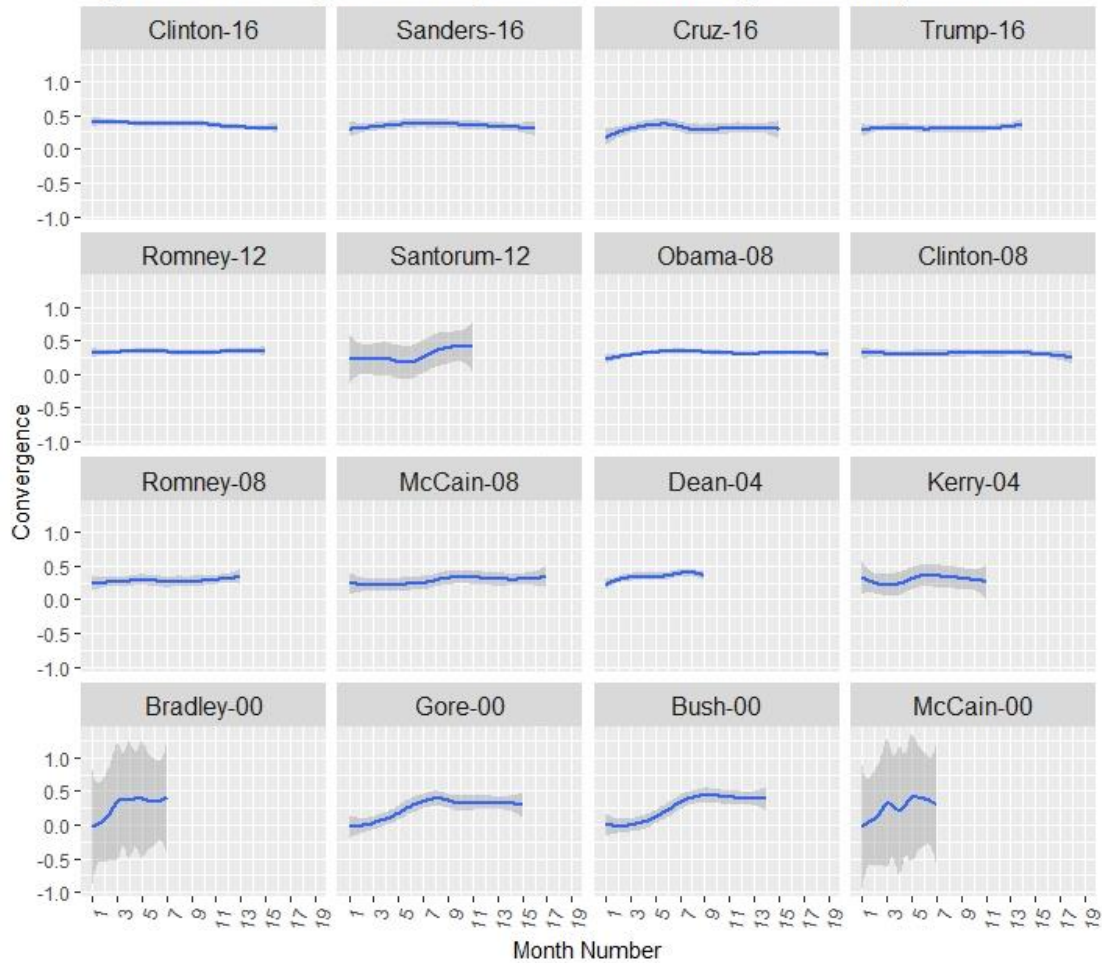
Figure 6.6: Convergence for Major Candidates Throughout Primary: Fox News



The candidate-Fox dyads (Figure 6.6) are almost uniformly consistent across time. The same can be said for the candidate-MSNBC dyads (Figure 6.7). For Fox News, the only candidate who displays any sort of trend is McCain-2000 and the trend runs counter to the timeliness hypothesis. For MSNBC, that McCain-2000 trend likewise trends positive, as do Bradley-2000 and Santorum-2012.

In summation, across each medium there was no support for the timeliness hypothesis, which in turn provides no support for any of the hypotheses tested in this chapter.

Figure 6.7: Convergence for Major Candidates Throughout Primary: MSNBC



Moving on, I tested for medium-level differences in the effects of rhetorical newsworthiness cues (anger language, authenticity language, linguistic simplicity, and narrative simplicity) and for contextual simplicity by regressing the convergence scores on the relevant independent variables and controls separately by candidate-media type. The results can be found in Table 6.2 and Figure 6.8.

The percentage of anger language used by candidates is a positive, statistically significant correlate with convergence in the model of candidate-newspaper dyads (Table 6.2, Model 1). This replicates the findings from Chapter 5 as well. Anger is unrelated to convergence across all other media outlets, however. This suggests that rhetorical anger

Table 6.2: Effect of Newsworthiness on Convergence throughout Primary by Medium

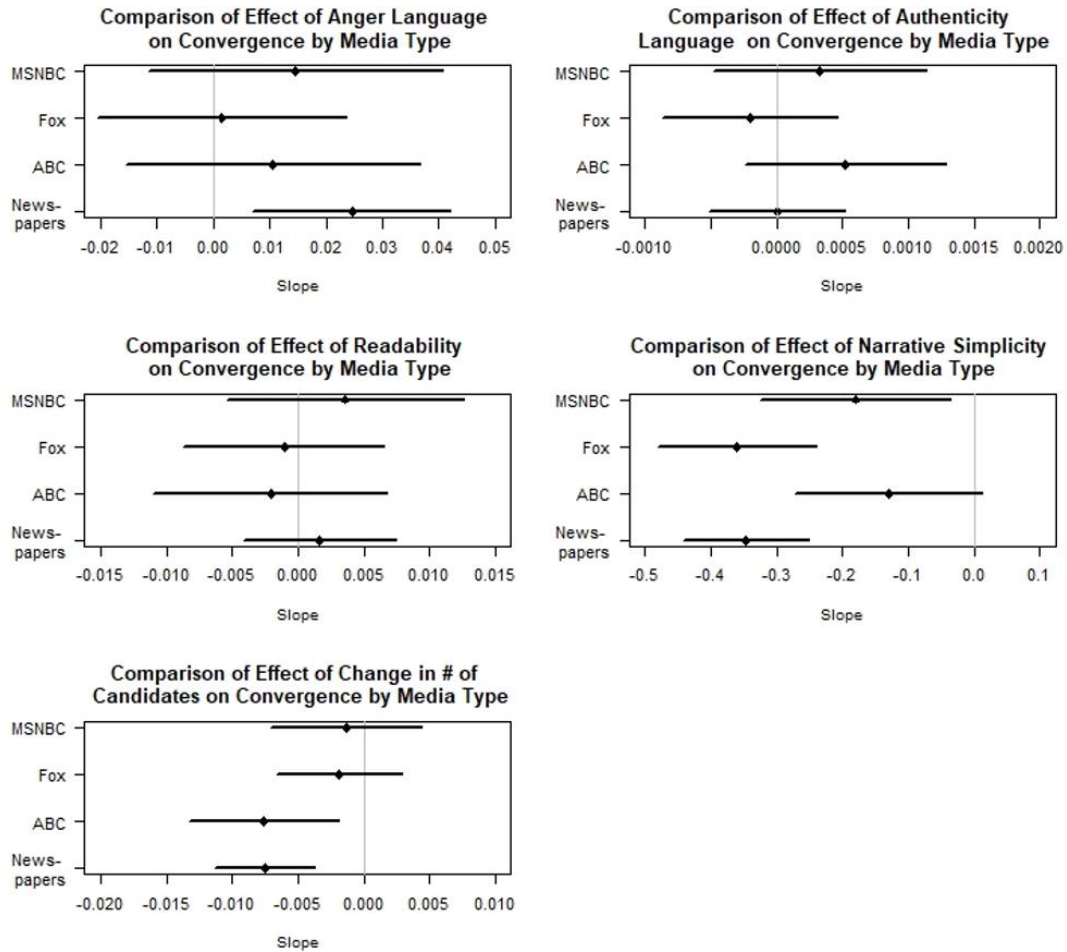
	Convergence			
	(1) Newspapers	(2) ABC	(3) Fox	(4) MSNBC
% Anger Words (LIWC)	0.025* (0.011)	0.011 (0.016)	0.002 (0.013)	0.015 (0.016)
Authenticity Language (LIWC)	0.00001 (0.0003)	0.001 (0.0005)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	0.0003 (0.0005)
Readability Score	0.002 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy	-0.347* (0.058)	-0.130 (0.087)	-0.361* (0.073)	-0.180* (0.088)
Change in # of Candidates	-0.008* (0.002)	-0.008* (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)
Convergence, Lagged	0.128* (0.037)	0.167* (0.040)	0.231* (0.041)	0.195* (0.043)
Interpolated Candidate Agenda	-0.068* (0.012)	-0.050* (0.021)	-0.034* (0.016)	-0.110* (0.021)
# of Candidate Speeches in Month	0.003* (0.001)	0.008* (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.007* (0.002)
Poll Standing	0.001* (0.0003)	0.002* (0.001)	0.001* (0.0004)	0.001* (0.001)
# of Effective Candidates	0.009* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.013* (0.003)	0.014* (0.004)
GOP	-0.017* (0.009)	0.009 (0.014)	0.055* (0.011)	-0.036* (0.014)
Woman	-0.031* (0.014)	-0.029 (0.020)	-0.042* (0.017)	-0.026 (0.021)
Nonwhite	0.004 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.017)	-0.008 (0.014)	-0.020 (0.016)
Non-governmental career	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.014)	0.031* (0.011)	0.011 (0.014)
Constant	0.321* (0.032)	0.145* (0.046)	0.271* (0.039)	0.183* (0.046)
Observations	648	587	612	508
R ²	0.287	0.225	0.285	0.250
Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistic	0.236	1.026	0.207	0.155

*Notes: All models OLS regression. * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. Model 1 includes only candidate-newspaper dyads. Model 2 includes only candidate-ABC News dyads. Model 3 includes only candidate-Fox News dyads. Model 4 includes only candidate-MSNBC dyads. All Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistics are statistically insignificant at conventional levels.*

cues are particularly influential among journalists working in written mediums. This lines up well with H3.2.

No clear pattern in medium-specific effects of authenticity language on convergence appear from the results. None of the coefficients are substantively large (even given the wide distribution of this particular variable) or statistically significant. Furthermore, the hierarchy in how they are ordered is unintuitive based on the three articulated hypotheses.

Figure 6.8: Coefficient Plots of Effects of Newsworthiness Variables on Convergence throughout Primary by Media Type



The interactive effect between readability and television news does not emerge in the analysis of convergence throughout the primary. Readability instead displays a generally weak effect on convergence among all media types, which is unresponsive of any of three hypotheses.

Narrative simplicity is once again negatively correlated with convergence counter to H1.4. Interestingly, the effect is much weaker in the model of ABC News coverage, especially when compared to newspapers and Fox News and newspapers. Similar to the results presented with the PPAC earlier in this chapter, the pattern of the results is similar to that articulated in the audience preference hypothesis, but once again it appears that media outlets with the least sophisticated audiences are the least enticed by narrative complexity rather than the most enticed by narrative simplicity.

Finally, the net change in the number of candidates in the race, a measure of the contextual simplicity of the primary, displays a notable heterogeneous effect. Among newspaper outlets, an increase in the size of the field is correlated with an aggregate reduction in convergence. This replicated the results from Chapter 5 using a different topic modeling. A similar effect is observed in the model of ABC News. In fact, the coefficient is nearly identical in terms of magnitude. But a change in the size of the field does not display this negative relationship in the models of Fox News or MSNBC coverage. This pattern matches closely with the routinization hypothesis.

Table 6.3 presents a summary of the results presented in this chapter. Two conclusions can safely be drawn. First, the effect of anger as a rhetorical newsworthiness cue is derived primarily from its utility as a means of storytelling in text-based mediums. Second, the effect of expansions in the size of the primary field, which I theorized should

affect the contextual simplicity of the race, is rooted in the need of journalists to wrangle with finite time, space, and expertise in crafting news coverage. Media outlets with larger “newsholes” are not affected by the volatility of the primary field nearly as much as those with tighter space constraints.

Other results are more equivocal. There is some slight support that two other rhetorical newsworthiness cues – authenticity as a measure of human interest and readability as a measure of linguistic simplicity – are tied to the storytelling conventions of the technological mediums. But the patterns are not as consistent and so more theorization and research are necessary to draw firmer conclusions. Both the timeliness and narrative simplicity hypotheses have been thoroughly unsupported throughout this dissertation and find no more evidence here.

Table 6.3: Summary of Results of Hypothesis Tests

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Corpus</i>	<i>Hypothesis Supported</i>
<i>H1.1: Conflict Hypothesis</i>	PPAC	3.2 Technology Hypothesis (Strong)
	PPCC	3.2 Technology Hypothesis (Strong)
<i>H1.2: Human-interest Hypothesis</i>	PPAC	3.2 Technology Hypothesis (Weak)
	PPCC	None
<i>H1.3: Linguistic Simplicity Hypothesis</i>	PPAC	3.2 Technology Hypothesis (Strong)
	PPCC	None
<i>H1.4: Narrative Simplicity Hypothesis</i>	PPAC	3.3 Audience Preferences Hypothesis (Weak)
	PPCC	3.3 Audience Preferences Hypothesis (Weak)
<i>H2.1: Timeliness Hypothesis</i>	PPCC	None
<i>H2.2: Contextual Simplicity Hypothesis</i>	PPCC	3.1 Routinization Hypothesis (Strong)

Discussion

The goal of this chapter was to look for consistent and clear patterns in which media types prioritize the various newsworthiness values. The emphasis on consistency was meant in reference to across corpora: I recognized the possibility that an emphasis on conflict could stem from the storytelling prerogative while the emphasis on human-interest elements could stem from appeasing audience preferences for relatable content. Ideally, the results would have presented a set of evidence that lined each of the newsworthiness values up behind one of the three hypotheses – routinization, technology, and audience preferences.

No such clear image appears. If we analyze the results in aggregate, however, some trends appear. First, most of the rhetorical newsworthiness cues appear to derive their influence with the media primarily from their connection to the storytelling conventions of various mediums. This is most notable in reference to the usage of candidate anger as a cue of conflict which was strongly and consistently correlated with convergence with newspapers but not with visual news outlets. But there was some suggestive evidence to support the technological hypothesis with regards to the human-interest and linguistic simplicity hypotheses, namely that both are more prominent among visual news mediums, although this finding appears much more strongly in analysis of the PPAC.

Second, contextual simplicity seems to matter most to news outlets with significant space constraints. ABC News, *The New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* displays the strongest negative correlation between increases in the size of the primary field and convergence, while the negative effect among both MSNBC and Fox News is substantively more muted. This lines up well with the routinization hypothesis which

suggested that news outlets with larger “newsholes” are better positioned to accommodate complex primary contests. That said, the “newshole” for newspapers is larger than for broadcast news, and so that the coefficient for ABC News is not *more* negative than for newspapers is reason for pause. It might be the case that partisan news outlets, regardless of their space constraints, may be more dedicated to disentangling even the most volatile of primaries. Further analysis than included nonpartisan cable news outlets and partisan newspapers would be needed to rule this possibility out for sure.

I have repeatedly referred to these findings as suggestive. That is because there is a distinctive lack of consistency as to the origin points of these crucial newsworthiness values. This lack of consistency emphasizes a limitation of this analysis. Even though this project represents the most expansive examination of media in presidential primary campaigns to date, the scope of the data still does not fully capture the population of the communication environment. This is true in two respects. First, only five news outlets are considered. The media environment is clearly much larger. This most obviously affects the interpretation of results concerning ABC News as a representative of the entire class of broadcast news. Second, the time frame observed includes a dramatic period of change for mass media. Perhaps some of these newsworthiness values have also shifted by medium over the course of electoral cycles. By collecting speeches and media coverage going back further, it might be possible to identify if this is the case. While this chapter thus serves as a starting point in the analysis of medium-level differences in the emphasis of newsworthiness values in presidential primaries, more research is still needed before anything resembling a last word can be uttered.

This chapter concludes the analysis of the effect of newsworthiness values on agenda convergence in primaries. The following chapter shows why the effect these newsworthiness values matter. It uses a novel experimental design that leverages the typical weakness student samples create in external validity to test how differences in agenda convergence affect voter evaluations of candidates, vote choice, and “correct” voting.

Chapter 7: The Effect of Convergence on Political Behavior

“The music is nothing if the audience is deaf.” – Walter Lippmann⁵¹

The preceding empirical chapters have shown how newsworthiness values like conflict, human interest, and simplicity shape media coverage of candidate agendas in presidential primaries. They have shown how candidate rhetoric and the format of primaries interact with these newsworthiness values to lead to different outcomes of candidate-media agenda convergence. And they have shown how different media types vary in their prioritizations of these newsworthiness values.

What these chapters have not yet explored are the effects of convergence on the consumers of candidate and media agendas: the primary electorate’s news audience. Journalists are not a large enough class of voters to secure victory and the outcomes of nomination races are not determined by directly comparing media content. It is the people watching television news broadcasts or reading articles about the candidates who are pivotal in the post-reform era (Polsby 1983). The purpose of this chapter is to examine how high or low convergence affects the primary electorate. It is important to do so because voter attitudes are what structures the process and outcomes of primaries, which in turn have significant downstream effects on the general election and the reputations of political parties.

Connecting Candidate, Media, and Public Agendas

⁵¹ From *A Preface to Morals*, pg. 321.

Prior literature provides ample reasons to suspect that media coverage affects public opinion in a number of important regards (Feezell 2018, King, Schneer, and White 2017, McCombs and Shaw 1972) and that these effects can matter electorally (Hayes 2008, Lau and Redlawsk 2006, Vavreck 2009). I follow with this tradition by arguing that the degree of convergence between candidate and media agendas should affect support for candidates. Those who see high convergence between candidate and media agendas should be more supportive of candidates, while those who see low convergence should be less supportive. Reinforcement of messages from different sources make the effect of candidate messages more impactful on how voters evaluate the candidate, while deviation between the two muddles the waters of voters' attitudinal processing.

H4.1 (Candidate Support Hypothesis): Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will be more supportive of the candidate than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will be less supportive of the candidate than a control group.

I also argue that candidates are better positioned than the media to identify what voters need to read or hear. Candidate agendas will contain the most heuristically useful information for voters, so repetition of that information by an alternative source will improve voter performance while low convergence should create normatively undesirable voting behavior as voters encounter unnecessary or distracting information that obfuscates the important messages. Put simply, when subjects are exposed to high convergence they will be better at approximating what they would do if they were fully informed – needing less time to search for more information, being more locked in to

their vote choice, and being less likely to change their vote – than if they are exposed to low convergence.

H4.2 (Correct Support Hypothesis): Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have high convergence will display more correct support than a control group. Subjects exposed to an electoral situation where the agendas of a primary candidate and the media have low convergence will display less correct support than a control group.

Demonstrating the behavioral ramifications of the differences in convergence that newsworthiness values create will show the significance of these values beyond the niche interests of political communication scholars. It will also be instrumental to setting up a discussion on the normative impact of newsworthiness values in structuring coverage of presidential primaries and if changes to our primary system are warranted. I turn to that discussion in the concluding chapter to this dissertation. For now, I begin by describing the data and methods used in this chapter.

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, I employ an experimental design to manipulate exposure to high and low convergence settings. Doing so provides causal insight into the effect of convergence on attitudes and political behavior that observational research by itself cannot provide. In this section I lay out the basics of the experimental design, with the caveat that a more thorough discussion can be found in Chapter 3.

The process of crafting an experimental design is complicated by H4.2, however. Undergirding that hypothesis is an assumption that candidates are better situated and incentivized than others to identify the collection of appeals that voters will be most

interested in. If that is indeed the case, then candidates are better at figuring out their agendas than I would be as well. If I simply created a candidate's agenda to exercise full internal control on the stimuli, I would not be satisfying this assumption. I get around this by leveraging a limitation of the population from which the subjects of the experiment were drawn. The subjects in the experiment are all college students and so I crafted the candidate agendas using speeches by presidential primary candidates given on college campuses. For the Democratic primary, the candidate's agenda was based on a speech given by Senator Elizabeth Warren at George Mason University on May 16, 2019. For the Republican primary, the candidate's agenda was based on a speech given by Senator Marco Rubio at Iowa State University on January 30, 2016.

Subjects came to a laboratory setting and were assigned to a computer to participate in the study. The study began with a pre-test questionnaire⁵² which asked about several demographic characteristics, political attitudes (most notably media trust), and party ID. Two attention check screener questions (Berinsky et al. 2019) were included in this section as well.⁵³ Based on self-reported partisanship, subjects were assigned to participate in either a Democratic or Republican primary. Pure independents were allowed to choose between the two. Of the 397 subjects, 295 participated in the Democratic primary while only 102 participated in the Republican primary.⁵⁴

All subjects then received a press release from a hypothetical candidate's campaign that contained excerpts from an upcoming scheduled speech. This candidate was "Senator Alex Simmons." For all subjects in the Democratic primary, these excerpts

⁵² The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

⁵³ The results by level of attention can be found in Appendix E.

⁵⁴ The results by party primary can be found in Appendix E.

were from the aforementioned speech by Sen. Warren. For all subjects in the Republican primary, these excerpts were from Sen. Rubio's speech. Each press release featured one quote that was modified slightly to mention a hypothetical rival for the nomination:

"Governor Nick Turner." Hypothetical candidates were used primarily because there is an incumbent Republican president contemporaneously with the study. I was concerned that Republican subjects might assume that Sen. Rubio was challenging the incumbent president in a primary which would contaminate any effects.

Subjects were then given a news article. This represented the true experimental manipulation. For subjects randomly assigned to the control group, this news article was on an apolitical topic: caramelizing onions. For subjects randomly assigned to the high convergence treatment group, the news article was a traditional piece of event coverage. It merely summarized the remarks from the press release. For subjects randomly assigned to the low convergence treatment group, the news article discussed the candidate in relation to an issue not mentioned by either campaign's press release: foreign policy. Specifically, the article discussed rumors that the candidate was planning a trip abroad to meet with several world leaders. As Chapter 4 showed, coverage of primaries features significant coverage of foreign policy and international affairs making it a realistic topic for my purposes. Several candidates in recent primaries have actually carried out such trips including Mitt Romney and Ben Carson, while Barack Obama did so after he had clinched the nomination, making this particular frame realistic as well. Finally, the planning of a foreign trip was an easy frame with which to create a news article that was not overtly negative. It was important that the only thing that is manipulated in the low

convergence treatment is that the media is not echoing the candidate's message, not that the media was directly weighing in on the quality of the candidate's messaging.⁵⁵

After reading the news article, subjects were asked a battery of questions about their support for Senator Alex Simmons. Most important among those were their agreement with the statement "Senator Alex Simmons is focused on the important issues," a feeling thermometer measuring their "warmth" toward the candidate, and their vote choice when asked to cast a ballot between Senator Alex Simmons and Governor Nick Turner. Subjects were also asked two more attention check screener questions and given a list of issue topics and asked to identify all those mentioned by the candidate's press release. This serves as a manipulation check.

Subjects were then offered a chance to learn more about Senator Alex Simmons. They were given a hyperlink to a PDF file with a collection of biographical information and policy positions. I constructed these documents by collecting actual information from the real candidates' campaign websites. The PDFs included a linked table of contents that helped subjects locate information they thought particularly important. The PDFs were also searchable. Subjects were told they could spend as much time perusing this information as they liked. How long the subjects spent on this full information page was timed. After clicking past the full information page, subjects were asked if they would like to revote. If they selected yes, they were once again asked to choose between Senator Alex Simmons and Governor Nick Turner. The experiment then concluded and subjects were debriefed.

⁵⁵ Copies of the experimental stimuli can be found in Appendix A.

I test H4.1 using three measures of support for the candidate. First, the subject's level of agreement on a 5-stage Likert scale with the "focused on important issues" statement. This measure was recoded to range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 1 (strongly agree). Second, the subject's feeling thermometer rating of the candidate which ranged from 0 to 100. Finally, their vote choice (voting for Senator Alex Simmons coded as 1 and voting for Governor Nick Turner coded as 0). I expect subjects in the high convergence treatment group will be more supportive of Senator Alex Simmons relative to the control group while subjects in the low convergence treatment group will be less supportive of Senator Alex Simmons relative to the control group.

I test H4.2 using an additional three measures of "correct" voting behavior. First, the total time spent on the full information page. Subjects who spent longer searching for more information necessarily think that such behavior is necessary to remedy uncertainty. I expect subjects in the low convergence treatment group will spend more time on the full information page than subjects in the control group, while subjects in the high convergence treatment group will spend less time on the full information page than the control group. Second, whether the subject opted to revote (coded as 1 if they did and 0 if they didn't). And third, among those subjects who opt to revote, whether or not the subject changed their vote choice. This variable is coded as 1 if the subject choose Senator Alex Simmons initially but subsequently voted for Governor Nick Turner or vice versa, coded as 0 if the subject's vote choice was consistent across both iterations, and coded as a missing value if the subject did not opt to revote. I expect subjects in the low convergence treatment group will be more likely to opt to revote and more likely to change their vote choice than those in the control group, while subjects in the high

convergence treatment group will be less likely to opt to revote and less likely to change their vote choice than those in the control group.

The primary independent variables are assignment to either the high convergence or low convergence treatment groups with assignment to the control group as the baseline. For all models I utilize OLS. This is appropriate for the feeling thermometer and time on full information page variables given their continuous nature. It is also debatably appropriate for the “important issues” variable given its ordinal distribution. For the remaining three variables – vote choice, opting to revote, and changed vote – it is less obviously appropriate. Linear probability models are inefficient as they violate several key assumptions. They are more parsimonious than logit or probit models, however, and considering the randomized experimental set-up means a simple difference of means test is sufficient to test the hypotheses, this is the most approachable and readily interpretable method and worth the tradeoff in efficiency. I now turn to a presentation of the results of the experiment.

Results

Effect of Convergence on Support for Candidates

Table 7.1 presents the result of the OLS regressions of the effect of assignment to the high convergence or low converge, relative to the control group, on measures of support for the hypothetical primary candidate Sen. Alex Simmons. Model 1 uses the level of agreement with the statement, “Sen. Alex Simmons is focused on the important issues” as the dependent variable. The responses have been rescaled to range from 0 (strong disagreement) to 1 (strong agreement). Those in the low convergence group

agreed with the statement less than those in either the high convergence or the control groups, although given how high the agreement was with the statement overall the substantive significance is underwhelming. The difference is less than one-fifth of the distance between somewhat and strongly agreeing with the statement. Furthermore, and counter to expectations, those in the high convergence treatment also agreed with the statement less than those in the control, although the difference is extremely small. Still, as the difference in means tests graphically presented in Figure 7.1 show, the low convergence and high convergence treatment groups are not statistically distinguishable. Overall, then, the evidence on this measure is only mildly supportive of H4.1.

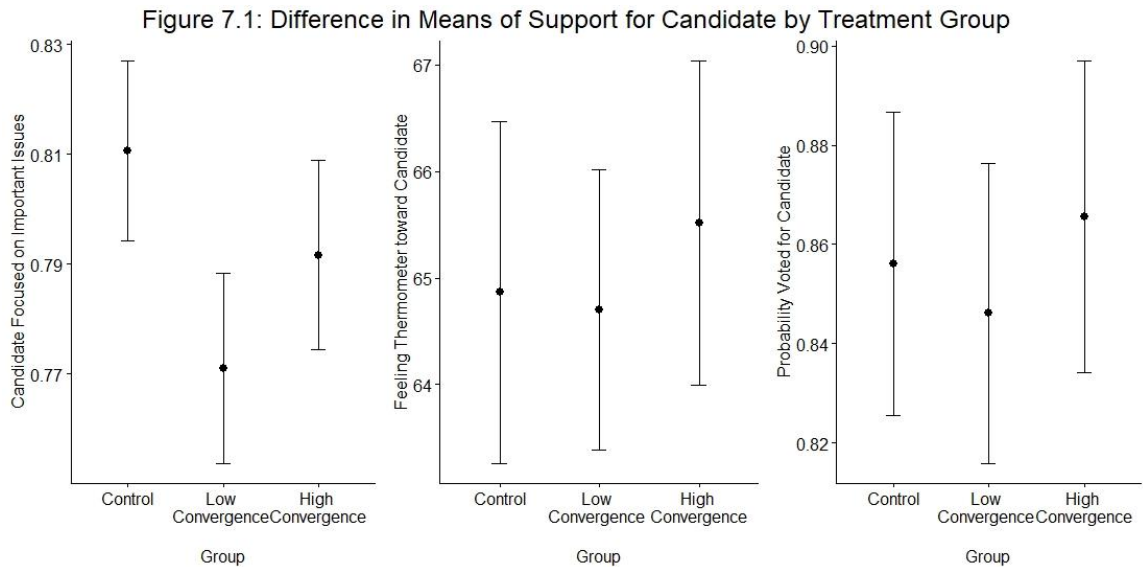
Table 7.1: Effect of Treatment Group on Support for Candidates

	Important Issues (1)	Feeling Thermometer (2)	Vote Choice (3)
High Convergence Treatment	-0.019 (0.025)	0.649 (2.135)	0.009 (0.045)
Low Convergence Treatment	-0.040* (0.024)	-0.162 (2.044)	-0.010 (0.043)
Constant	0.811* (0.017)	64.864* (1.476)	0.856* (0.031)
Observations	395	397	394
R ²	0.007	0.0004	0.001

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.*

The evidence for this hypothesis is even more lacking when examining other measures. Model 2 uses the feeling thermometer score the subject gave Sen. Alex Simmons as the dependent variable. The experimental stimuli appear to have caused no differences in how warmly subjects felt toward the candidate. Model 3 estimates a linear probability model with the vote choice of the subject, where those who voted for Sen. Alex Simmons are coded as 1 and those who voted for the rival Gov. Nick Turner are

coded as 0, as the dependent variable. Here again we see no significant differences between the treatment groups. That said, the overall proportion who opted to vote for Sen. Alex Simmons was extremely high. It appears likely that the lack of any real information about the rival Gov. Nick Turner prevented the creation of a realistic voting circumstance.



Altogether, the evidence that convergence leads to changing support for candidates as hypothesized is weak. While exposure to the low convergence treatment appears to have slightly lowered evaluations of the dedication of the candidate to important issues, the difference was marginal and it was the only observed negative difference. Exposure to the high convergence treatment did not improve assessments of the candidate on any of the primary variables of interest. There was one additional finding worth mentioning, however. The post-treatment questionnaire included questions measuring support for the candidate on several other dimensions – strong leader, electable, cares about people, and not a political insider – meant to obfuscate the purpose

of the study.⁵⁶ Assignment to the high convergence treatment increased assessments of the electability of the candidate and the substantive magnitude was nearly twice that observed for the effect of the low convergence treatment on attitudes about the candidate focusing on important issues. It may be that low convergence does create uncertainty about the issue prioritizations of the candidate while high convergence is a signal that the candidate is good at eliciting favorable media coverage, which is itself viewed as a prerequisite for viability. Admittedly, such a precise finding was not hypothesized and the experimental design was not crafted to identify such a phenomenon. The findings are suggestive, however, and future studies should attempt to identify if this is indeed the case.

Effect of Convergence on “Correct” Voting Behavior

After answering the questions on support for Sen. Alex Simmons, subjects were allowed to peruse a document with an extensive collection of biographical information about and policy positions from the candidate. Afterwards they were asked if they would like to re-cast a vote and then offered a chance to do so. This process was implemented to assess how “correctly” the subjects voted the first time (Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Subjects who were confident that they had arrived at the correct answer initially should have no need to perform a more in-depth information search, re-cast a vote, or change their votes. Because high convergence between candidates and the media should help voters make sense of the electoral situation, while low convergence will create more

⁵⁶ Models regressing treatment group assignment on these measures can be found in Appendix E.

confusion and uncertainty, I hypothesized (H4.2) that the experimental stimuli should lead to differences in a series of “correct” voting behavior.

Table 7.2 tests this hypothesis on two such behaviors. Model 1 examines the effect of treatment group assignment on the amount of time, in seconds, spent on the webpage with the full collection of candidate information. The high convergence group spent a little more than 2 seconds, on average, on the page than the control group, which is a negligible amount of time. But the low convergence group spent an average of almost 6.5 more seconds on the page. While this coefficient does not cross the threshold into statistical significance, it is substantively interesting. That is a 25-percent increase in time spent on the page.

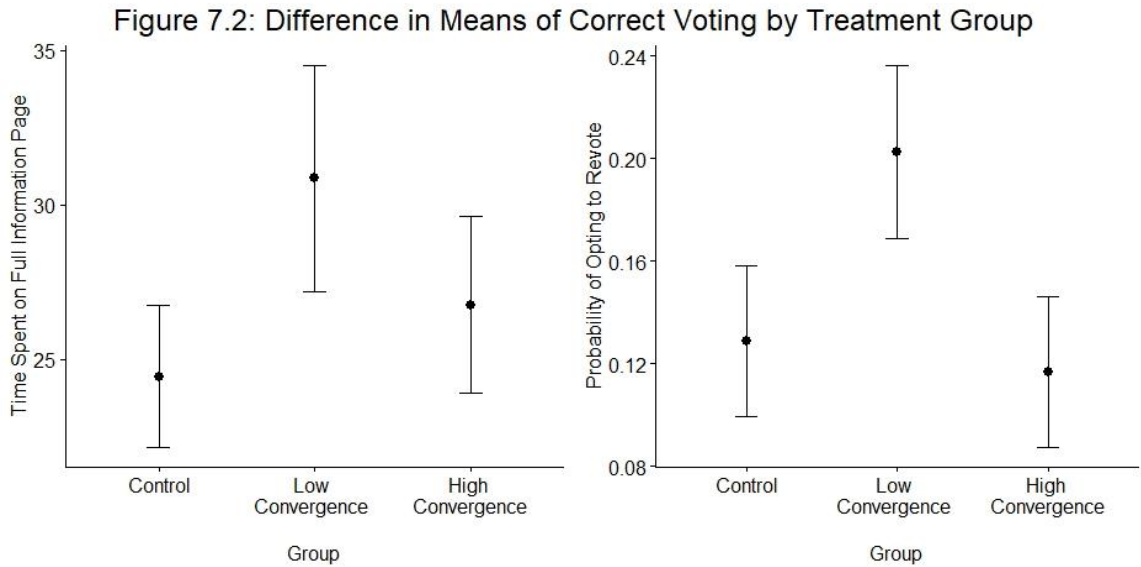
Table 7.2: Effect of Treatment Group on Correct Voting Behavior

	Time on Full Info Page (1)	Opted to Revote (2)
High Convergence Treatment	2.326 (4.427)	-0.012 (0.045)
Low Convergence Treatment	6.410 (4.239)	0.074* (0.043)
Constant	24.442* (3.062)	0.129* (0.031)
Observations	397	395
R ²	0.006	0.012

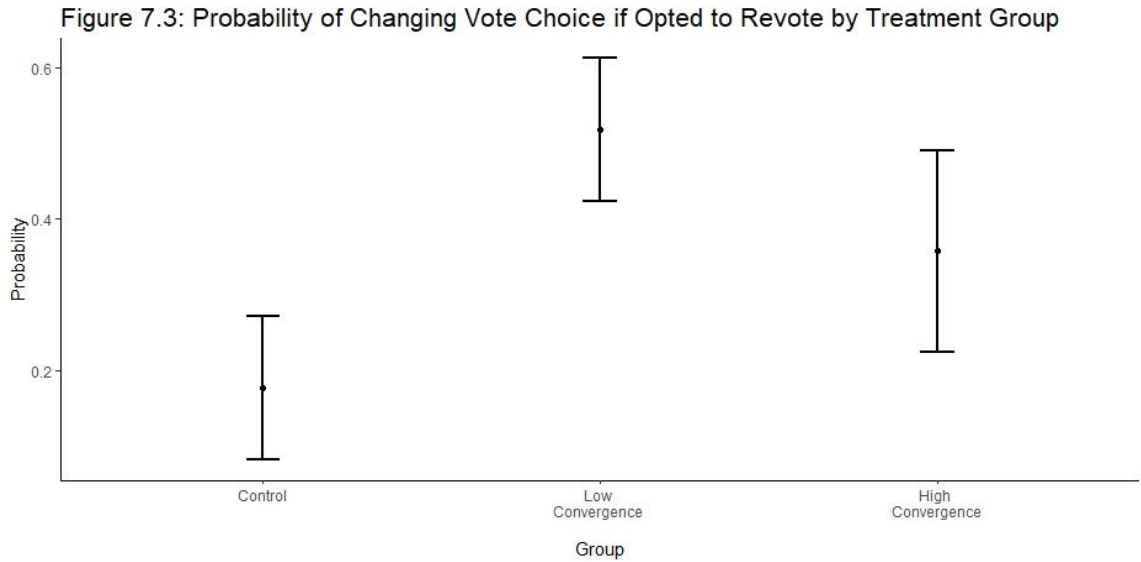
*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.*

Model 2 estimates the effect of assignment to each treatment group, relative to assignment to the control group, on the probability of opting to re-vote using a linear probability model. The coefficient on the high convergence treatment group is signed as hypothesized but is substantively small and statistically insignificant. The coefficient on assignment to the low convergence treatment group, however, is substantively large.

Those who read the news article about Sen. Alex Simmons’s planned foreign trip were more than 7-percentge-points more likely to opt to revote after being allowed to peruse more information. Considering only 13 percent of those in the control group choose to do so, this is quite a significant jump. This magnitude is captured graphically by the difference in means in Figure 7.2.



Because of the infrequency of subjects opting to revote (only 60 out of 397), not much can be definitely said about vote switching. The pattern is quite striking, however, even with a caveat about small sample size taken into account. As Figure 7.3 shows, subjects in the low convergence group who opted to revote, which they were more likely to do in the first place, were more than twice as likely to change their votes as those in the control group. Subjects in the high convergence group fell between the two.



The results were more supportive of H4.2 than they were of H4.1. Subjects in the low convergence treatment group spent longer searching for more information about the candidate when offered the opportunity, were then more likely to opt to revote, and among those that opted to revote more likely to change their vote than subjects in the control group who received an identical press release but simply did not read a news article about the candidate planning a foreign trip. Low convergence between candidate messaging and media coverage prompted significantly different behavior among subject once they were offered more information about the candidate. High convergence did not lead to more “correct” voting, as was initially expected, but it seemingly did no harm either.

Mechanisms Behind Observed Results

So far, the results of the experiment have been unsupportive of the attitude change hypothesis (H4.1) but partially supportive of the correct voting hypothesis (H4.2). High convergence between candidate and media messaging did not seem to increase support for the candidate or “correct” voting behavior relative to the control group. While low

convergence did not seem to decrease support for the candidate, low convergence did cause less correct voting behavior.

Next, I turn to unpacking why this is. What is the mechanism driving this pattern of results? While this is not the primary intent of this experiment, which is simply to demonstrate that convergence in primaries has the potential to create notable behavioral repercussions, it is possible to examine some suggestive evidence. I specifically consider two distinct, but not mutually exclusive, possibilities. First, it may be the case that repetition of the candidate message (or the lack thereof) affects the recall of the issue cues and therefore increases(decreases) the likelihood that the candidate's message is remembered when making attitudinal or behavioral decisions. Second, perhaps there is a source cue effect. It may be that seeing the media specifically repeat (or not) a candidate's message denotes some sort of additional information or context that affects evaluations. Here, the fact that the media does not co-sign the candidate's message is seen as a signal that leads to more uncertainty.

To test the former, I compare performance on a recall task. After evaluating the candidate but before viewing the full information page, each subject was given a list of 24 issues and asked to identify the ones the candidate mentioned in their press release.⁵⁷ I calculated the percentage of issues that were correctly identified and subtracted the percentage that were incorrectly identified. The measure therefore theoretically can range from -1 to 1.

⁵⁷ Eight of the issues were mentioned by the Democratic candidate, nine were mentioned by the Republican candidate.

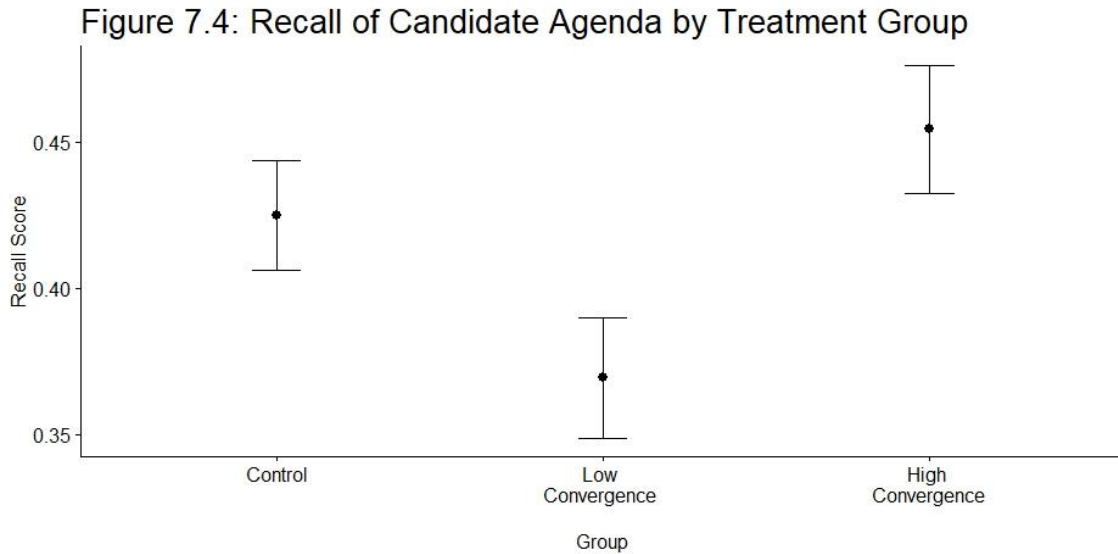


Figure 7.4 plots the difference in means on this measure by experimental group assignment. The low convergence group, on average, displayed significantly poorer recall of the candidate's issues than either the control or high convergence groups. While the high convergence group did perform the best on the recall test, on average, the difference between the high convergence and control groups was minimal and the confidence intervals overlap extensively. This provides suggestive evidence that low convergence obscures the issue positions of candidates and thereby leads to higher uncertainty as to what the subject's correct vote should be. That high convergence doesn't affect support for the candidate or correct voting is because the repetition does not dramatically improve reception of the message (at least in such a simplified communication environment).

That the repetition explanation appears to line up well as an explanation for the observed results does not preclude the possibility that a source cue effect could also be at work. To test this second possibility, I replicated the analysis from the preceding two sections while incorporating an interaction between treatment group assignment and self-assessed trust in the media, which was measured in the pre-test survey. If there is a source

cue effect, we should expect that the effects of either treatment group on support for the candidate will be affected by how trustworthy the subject finds the source.

The patterns by which media trust should condition treatment effects are heterogeneous and so I provide Table 7.3 to simplify. For all candidate-support measures, a source-cue mechanism should mean that the hypothesized effects of low and high convergence are strongest among those who trust the media the most and mitigated for those with the lowest trust in the media. For those who trust the media, and therefore are most receptive to the implicit message that seeing the media repeat or avoid a candidate’s agenda conveys, seeing the media diverge from the candidate should be interpreted as particularly damning while high convergence should convey an added stamp of approval. These effects should be muted for those who are most distrustful of the media as a source of legitimation of a candidate’s agenda.

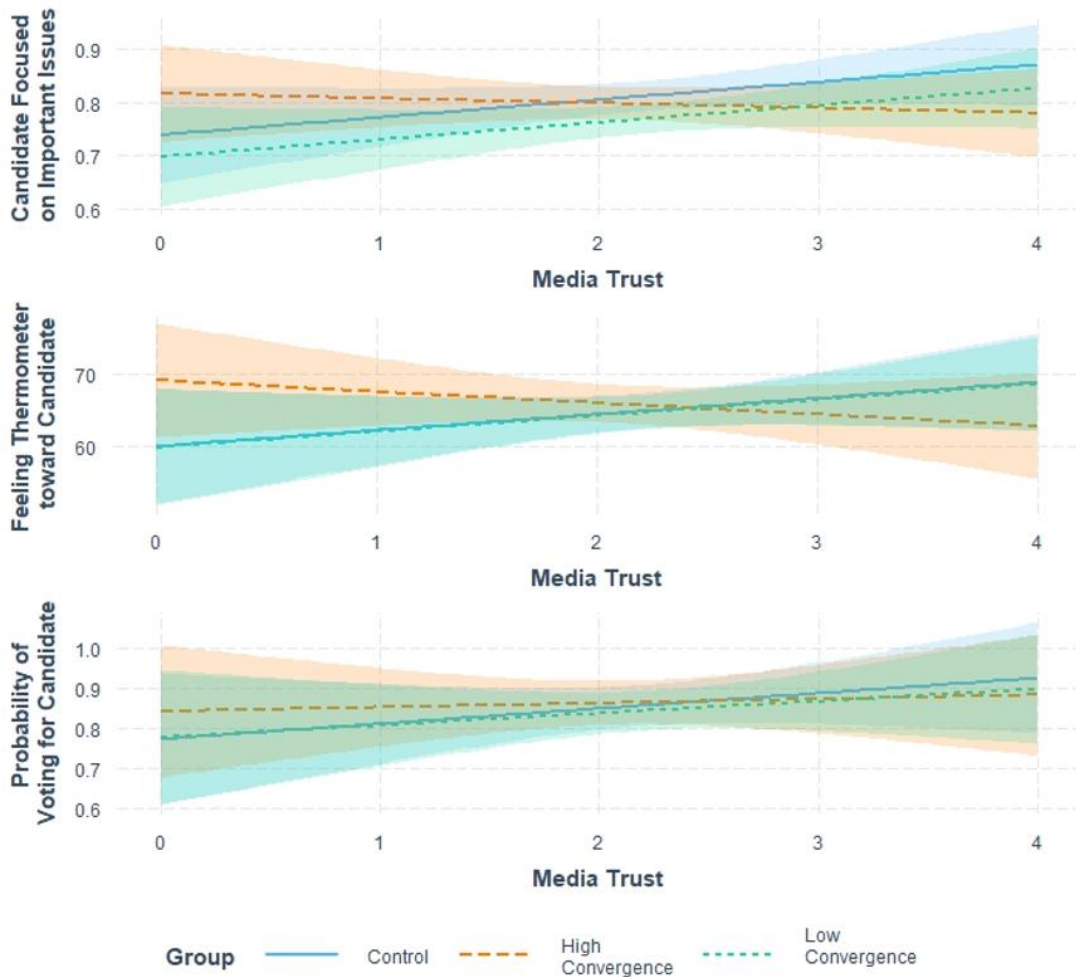
Table 7.3: Expected Interactive Effects between Treatment and Media Trust

		Low Media Trust	High Media Trust
Candidate Support	Low Convergence	More supportive	Less supportive
	High Convergence	Less supportive	More supportive
Information Search	Low Convergence	More time	Less time
	High Convergence	More time	Less time
Opted to Re-vote	Low Convergence	Higher probability	Lower probability
	High Convergence	Higher probability	Lower probability

For the measures of “correct” voting, a source cue mechanism should operate differently. Among those with high trust, there should be little effect of treatment on correct voting. Those who trust the media should interpret either high or low convergence as heuristically useful information and find no reason to perform a more extensive information search or doubt their original vote choice. To those who trust the media, high convergence should confirm that the candidate’s agenda is worth prioritizing while low convergence is easily reconciled by simply ignoring the candidate’s agenda and focusing on what the media says. Among those with low trust in the media, both high and low convergence should prompt longer information searches and a higher probability of re-voting relative to those in the control group with low media trust. The subjects in the high convergence treatment group with low media trust should be skeptical that the media is truly fulfilling their duty by echoing the candidate’s agenda. The subjects in the low convergence treatment group with low media trust could reconcile the agenda incongruence by simply accepting the candidate’s agenda as important, but it is more likely that they instead remain skeptical and engage in further confirmatory behavior. The evidence for this source cue mechanism can be found in the plots of the interactive effects between treatment group assignment and media trust in Figures 7.5 and 7.6.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The models including these interaction effects can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 7.5: Difference in Support for Candidate by Treatment Group and Media Trust

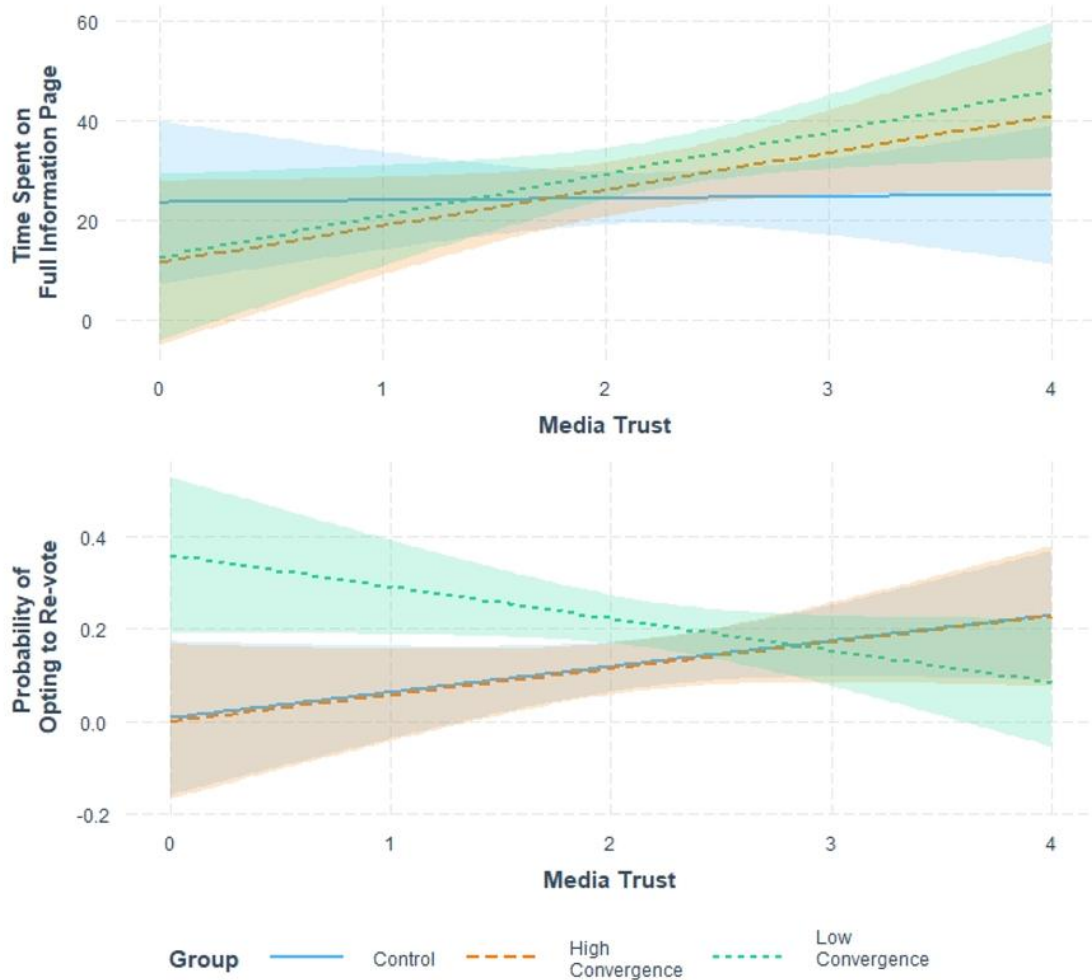


In general, the results do not line up well with the source cue explanation. Starting with the models of support for the candidate, there were no noticeable interactive effects between the treatment groups and media trust. Given the high overall support for the candidate across all conditions, this is not all that surprising. But even allowing for that, the interactive effects of media trust on treatment group assignment tended to run in the opposite of the expected directions. Those in the high(low) convergence treatment group

with high media trust supported the candidate less(more) than those in the same treatment group with low(high) media trust.

The results were only slightly more supportive of the source cue mechanism among the models of “correct” voting behavior. The interactive effects between treatment group assignment and media trust on information search time run counter to expectations. Those who report the highest trust in the media spent the longest searching out more information across both treatment groups. These subjects should have been the most willing to accept the media’s judgment on campaign reporting as the essential information and yet they were the ones who were the most compelled to search out more information. There was some evidence for a source cue mechanism in the model of probability of opting to re-vote, however. Those assigned to the low convergence treatment group who distrust the media were the most likely to opt to reconsider their vote choice as expected. But no such trend appears for those who distrust the media in the high convergence treatment group which runs counter to expectations.

Figure 7.6: Difference in Correct Voting Behavior by Treatment Group and Media Trust



Overall, the evidence is suggestive of a repetition mechanism underpinning the observed effects while being mostly unsupportive of a source cue mechanism. More research would be needed to test for sure that this is indeed the case, but this should serve as a useful starting place.

Discussion

This chapter examined the attitudinal and behavioral ramifications of high and low convergence among primary voters via an experiment. I argued that high convergence between candidate and media messaging should lead to high levels of support for the candidate while low convergence should lead to the opposite. I also argued that convergence should have normative implications as well. Because candidates are better incentivized to correctly identify the agenda that will be most useful for their audience than journalists, diverging from the candidate's agenda should mean relying on a less heuristically efficient collection of issues. I tested hypotheses distilled from these arguments using a lab experiment where subjects were exposed to a press release from a candidate and a news article that was either a) apolitical, b) discussed similar issues as the candidate, or c) discussed a different issue from anything mentioned by the candidate. Subjects were asked about their attitudes toward the candidate and then provided a chance to peruse more information as well as reconsider their vote.

Low convergence between the candidate and the media caused significant changes in "correct" voting behavior. Those assigned to that treatment group spent more time searching for more information about the candidate, were more likely to opt to revote, and more likely to subsequently change their vote than those in the control group.

It appears that the most likely mechanism underpinning this result is an obfuscating effect. Low convergence interferes with the ability to recall the candidate's agenda, which then may affect certainty about if the candidate is really the right choice.

In other regards, the results do not conform to expectations. First, neither high nor low convergence appeared to have much of an effect on support for the candidate. Across several measures, especially agreement that the candidate is focused on the important

issues and probability of voting for the candidate, support was uniformly high. I expect that without much information about the other contender for the nomination, subjects defaulted to accepting the only real intraparty option they had been given. A replication where more information is given about other contenders or one using a real candidate contemporaneously with a primary season where attitudes may be more diverse might produce a different result. Additionally, it might be the case that high and low convergence affect different attitudes. While low convergence did decrease agreement that the candidate is focused on important issues, albeit only substantively weakly, high convergence had a strong positive effect on agreement that the candidate is electable. Perhaps low convergence does make the candidate's agenda appear less important, while high convergence sends a signal about how politically skilled the candidate is.

Second, high convergence did not improve correct voting behavior. It seems the repetition of the message had only a slight positive effect on recall of the candidate's message relative to the control group who received the same candidate agenda. Perhaps if subjects were more purely reliant on the media to receive the candidate's message, rather than getting so much directly from the candidate, high convergence would have been more effective. It is possible that this experimental manipulation was, altogether, simply too weak.

This study involves other limitations, many of which are common to lab experiment design. It involves measuring attitudes and behavior in a context that subjects are unlikely to encounter in the real world. Real nomination races do not involve hypothetical politicians. The information environment is rarely dominated by a single candidate the way this one was. And real voters do not go around reading campaign press

releases. But primaries do frequently involve candidates with little name recognition, some of whom go on to be real contenders in the race like Senator Rick Santorum in 2012, Senator Bernie Sanders in 2016, or Mayor Pete Buttigieg in 2020. These candidates begin with little more pre-existing voter attitudes than the hypothetical Senator Alex Simmons. Information environments can become temporarily lopsided (Sides and Vavreck 2013) and may even remain so under specific conditions (Sides, Tessler, and Vavreck 2018). And while voters may not read press releases, they do encounter the unmediated versions of candidate messages in TV advertisements and on social media. As such, the external validity of the experiment may not be so far off reality as it initially appears.

The sample that comprises the subjects of the study is not representative of primary electorates. Primary voters are not exclusively college undergraduates at state research universities on the East Coast in the Big Ten Conference. In fact, younger voters are specifically underrepresented in primary electorates. But the behavioral effect this study identifies is psychological, not demographic. There is no reason to suspect that younger, college-educated subjects would be particularly likely to have their recall abilities affected by low convergence. If anything, the trajectory of human cognitive abilities suggests low convergence's effect should be weakest among that particular group. Furthermore, college students represent a particularly valuable population who primary candidates regularly target specifically via in-person appearances. As such, it is particularly feasible to estimate candidates' version of a specifically targeted agenda, in turn facilitating the sorts of tests of normative implications performed here. While the use

of college students as a subject pool may limit generalizability, the value brought in other regards makes the tradeoff worthwhile.

As a final note on limitations, there is a normative counterargument that this study is not well-suited to respond to empirically. Perhaps low convergence stems from a process of translating a niche message to a mass audience. The press releases created for this experiment were based on real speeches given by candidates at college campuses. Neither mentioned foreign policy, while media coverage overall tends to discuss foreign policy extensively in presidential primaries, as documented in Chapter 4. Perhaps college students do not care much about foreign policy, and therefore candidates do not broach the topic when speaking to them, but the wider electorate does care about foreign policy, and so the media reports extensively on foreign policy because their audience is broader than just college students.

While this specific example is unlikely given the public's overall disinterest in foreign policy issues (Berinksy 2007, Saunders 2012), the general point that the media may serve a translational role that is normatively useful is worth considering. However, even this normative best-case scenario makes the media an inefficient conduit for primary campaigns. This requires assuming that the media will serve the interests of the broadest audience, which in turn means heterogeneity within primary electorates is poorly handled. Situations in which party interests are uniform, for example during times of war or economic crises, may be well suited to primaries organized via the mass media. But any time in which the electorate has diverse interests will in turn lead large segments of the primary electorate, if not pluralities, to higher rates of incorrect voting behavior as the media ignores their interests to translate for whichever group represents the broadest

audience. Additionally, it is unlikely that such a translational role would serve the interests of candidates who appeal to historic outgroups who represent smaller portions of party electorates like racial or ethnic minorities or LGBTQ voters. As such, while this study cannot empirically tackle the possibility that the media is not simply normatively harmful but is instead serving an additional, translational purpose, I contend that even this translational purpose would be inconsistent with pluralistic democratic primary elections.

Finally, the implications of these findings are significant and worthy of deeper consideration. Among the low convergence treatment group, subjects spent more time searching for additional information about the candidate once provided the opportunity. They then were more likely to opt to re-vote and then, among all those who opted to re-vote, more likely to change their vote. It is unlikely that these subjects would be provided an easily navigable and searchable collection of biographical information and policy proposals for a candidate. It stands to reason that, without that opportunity to peruse a collection of full information, these subjects would be unlikely to change their minds about the candidate. In that case, they would simply support the wrong person.

This incorrect voting is obviously inefficient. It also fundamentally undermines heuristic-based assumptions of democratic theory (Lupia 1994, Popkin 1991, Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). While heuristics can themselves lead to decision errors (Kuklinski et al. 2000), in general it is understood that voters can use heuristics to overcome their general lack of knowledge about politics in electoral contexts (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Downs 1957). What this study suggests is that when the media diverges from the candidates' agendas, at least some voters, and very likely quite a few of

them, will not be getting the *right* heuristics. Taken collectively, this dissertation also says that a key reason they won't be getting the right heuristics is because the media will be prioritizing particular newsworthiness values in how it structures coverage. Addressing this problem therefore requires addressing those newsworthiness values.

Chapter 8: The Future of Media-Centric Primaries

This dissertation sought to explain why some presidential primary candidates have more success than others in conveying their campaign agendas through the media. I argue that the answer lies in the role of newsworthiness values in structuring how journalists process and react to candidate messages. Newsworthiness values are traits journalists use as standards of delineating “good” from “bad” news content. When the newsworthiness of a candidate’s message or the context surrounding that message is high, journalists should hew closer to the candidate’s agenda as it will satisfy journalism’s quality standards, reducing the chances the journalist’s attention will wander elsewhere. The primary concerns of this dissertation are the newsworthiness values of conflict, human interest, simplicity, and timeliness.

I argue that these newsworthiness values need to be understood as contextually dependent. While all journalists are taught these values in some form or fashion, how they are understood while on the beat depends on the characteristics of the context the journalist interacts with. Without taking the nature of the context into account beforehand, newsworthiness values tend toward becoming tautologic constructs: if it became news then there must be conflict in here somewhere. I argue that anger in candidate speeches will be a powerful source of conflict cues. I also argue that candidates talking about their own personal appeal or otherwise using personalistic, authentic language will be a form of human-interest cues. I propose three different forms of simplicity. First, linguistic simplicity, or the tendency to use highly readable language. Second, narrative simplicity, or the tendency to focus on a small number of issues. And third, contextual simplicity, or the complexity of the race itself which can vary with the

volatility the introduction of new candidates generates. Finally, I argue that candidate agendas should decline in timeliness over the course of the primary as the candidate's message fades into old news.

To test the effect of these contextualized newsworthiness values on the degree of success a candidate has at transmitting their agenda, I rely on a combination of human-coded content analysis, computational text analysis, and dictionary-based text analysis. I constructed a corpus of announcement speeches and media coverage of those announcements from 1984-2016, the Presidential Primary Announcement Corpus (PPAC), that I coded at the paragraph level based on a pre-set topic codebook. I also constructed a corpus of candidate speeches and media coverage throughout the primary cycle from 2000-2016, the Presidential Primary Communication Corpus (PPCC), which was analyzed via a Structural Topic Model (Roberts et al. 2014). I measured the degree of overlap between the agenda of the candidate and the agenda of the media when reporting on that candidate via convergence scores (Sigelman and Buell 2004).

In Chapter 4, I showed that the amount of anger language and candidate-based appeals used by a candidate in their announcement speech were positively correlated with the degree of agenda convergence they received from *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and ABC News. These results were stable across myriad specifications and using alternative measurements. Counter to expectations, neither linguistic nor narrative simplicity were positively correlated with agenda convergence.

In Chapter 5, I showed that expansions in the size of the primary field in a given month, a measure of declining contextual simplicity, were negatively correlated with agenda convergence between candidates and *The New York Times* and the *Washington*

Post in that month. I also showed that these declines are primarily felt by the candidates performing poorly in the polls. Counter to expectations, there was no tendency toward declining convergence over time. Instead, convergence appeared to be mostly stable over time. Finally, I successfully replicated the positive effect of candidate anger on convergence found in Chapter 4.

Why do the media focus on the newsworthiness values of conflict, human interest, and simplicity, or at least the specific forms I articulate in this dissertation? I take this question up in Chapter 6. Based on prior literature I devise three potential explanations. First, newsworthiness values stem from the need to sift through a large quantity of potential news and find those that will become content. Newsworthiness values are therefore heuristics used to routinize a difficult aspect of the profession and so should be strongest among the outlets that need to be the most discerning. Second, newsworthiness values operate as conventions for crafting compelling content practiced because journalists conceptualize their craft as that of storytelling. Because storytelling conventions vary based on the medium of the story, the effect of newsworthiness values will depend on the nature of the medium. Third, newsworthiness values are means of identifying content that the audience demands. Newsworthiness values will therefore vary across outlets as their audiences vary, namely in terms of political interest and sophistication. Notably, I do not suggest that all newsworthiness values must necessarily stem from one and only one of these potential explanations.

The results suggest that anger is a newsworthiness cue that derives its effect from being an effective storytelling role in text-based mediums. The effect of contextual simplicity, on the other hand, appears to be tied to its value as a means of routinization of

news production. ABC News and newspapers react more strongly to changes in the size of the field while 24-hour cable news outlets, which have more space to fill and so do not need to be as discerning in what can be included in their news product, are not as impacted by this volatility. There was also suggestive evidence that the human-interest and linguistic simplicity newsworthiness cues stem from the media's storytelling identity, with both being strongest among visual news mediums.

In Chapter 7, I explore the behavioral ramifications agenda convergence has in presidential primaries via a laboratory experiment. I find that exposure to either high or low agenda convergence had little effect on attitudes toward a candidate; those exposed to low convergence were slightly less likely to agree with the statement that the candidate “focused on the important issues,” those exposed to high convergence were more in agreement with the statement that the candidate was “electable,” but there were no significant differences in other measures such as a feeling thermometer or vote choice. But exposure to low convergence did have significant negative effects on measures of “correct” voting behavior. After measuring attitudes toward the candidate, subjects were allowed to peruse more information about the candidate and then allowed to reconsider their vote. Subjects in the low convergence group spent more time perusing this information, were more likely to opt to re-vote, and (among those who opted to re-vote) were more likely to change their vote. Subsequent analysis suggested this was driven by a decline in recall of the candidate's message upon exposure to low convergence conditions. While this may mean that low convergence inspires real-world voters to do additional information searches, the reality is that information searches are not as heavily

subsidized as they were in lab conditions. It is more likely that these secondary information searches never occur and voters simply choose wrong.

I began this dissertation with several examples of candidates succeeding and failing at driving media agendas from the 2016 primaries. Let's return to a specific one. Donald Trump was highly successful at driving a message focused on immigration, trade, and appeals to his own personal characteristics and brand. Why was he able to do so? His rhetorical style was extremely anger-laden and personalistic, traits which the media prizes as newsworthy. Additionally, the Republican primary field was highly volatile with candidate consistently jumping in from March through September, 2015. This volatility reduced contextual simplicity, but within that time frame Trump was rising in the polls and staking an electoral position that insulated him from reductions in convergence. But the other candidates were not faring so well, creating a gap between Trump and his rivals especially among the audiences of broadcast and newspaper mediums. And so the newsworthiness values of the media very powerfully favored his agenda while the agendas of many of the other contenders went overlooked because their rhetoric and circumstances were not as enticing to journalists.

Evidence from scholarly studies of agenda setting (Feezell 2018, Hayes 2008, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, King, Schneer, and White 2017, McCombs and Shaw 1972) and priming (Bartels 2006, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, Krosnick and Kinder 1990) suggest that the differential outcomes created by these newsworthiness values can have profound impacts on public opinion. Furthermore, while the proliferation of partisan media (Stroud 2011) and narrowcasting (Bennett and Iyengar 2008) has empowered audiences to choose what news they consume and therefore seemingly mitigated the influence of mass media

(Arceneaux and Johnson 2013), Chapter 6 reinforces previous work (Hayes 2014) that shows that these partisan news outlets still rely on similar newsworthiness values. The important downstream ramifications of newsworthiness values on public opinion are therefore vital to note.

Furthermore, while the results suggested only minimal change to evaluations of candidates, Chapter 7 did find significant normative implications of low convergence. Low convergence led to lower rates of “correct” voting behavior. Voters exposed to candidate and media messages that discussed different issues evidently felt the need to do more intensive information searches when provided the opportunity, information searches that they would be unlikely to undertake in the real world because such activity normally carries a much higher opportunity cost (Downs 1957) when not subsidized as it was in the lab setting. If the information searches never occur and instead voters are only relying on their initial impression gleaned from encountering candidate and media agendas, then these voters will simply choose wrong.

As a result, the media’s failure to deliver heuristically useful information obstructs how voters process candidate agendas, which can lead to the selection of candidates who aren’t preferred by the party’s electorate. There has been a great deal of discussion among political scientists about whether primaries, which vest power in the party in the electorate, are a preferable means of selecting a party’s standard-bearer than other methods that prioritize appealing to coalitions within the party. But as long as primaries are media-centric affairs, the newsworthiness values of journalists will make them an inefficient means of accomplishing even their own goal.

What Should Be Done?

The normative consequences described should be addressed. But by whom and how? I consider four actors involved in the primary communication process: the candidates, the voters/media consumers, the parties, and the media.

Candidates

Candidates are the most directly positioned to affect agenda convergence via leveraging newsworthiness values. If low convergence leads to inefficient voting behavior, then candidates should increase their appeals to newsworthiness values to solicit higher convergence. The evidence in this dissertation suggests that they should therefore use angrier and personalistic rhetoric and coordinate to maintain stable fields. But these changes in candidate behavior would either carry their own normative costs or be highly unrealistic.

For starters, anger rhetoric affects voters by making them more motivated to vote (Valentino et al. 2011), but more stubborn in their preferences and less likely to consider ranges of options (Marcus et al. 2005, Groenendyk and Banks 2014). This stubbornness is particularly concerning in primaries where there are often more than two options and voters lack party ID or clear ideological differences to guide their choices. Incentivizing the use of anger in candidate rhetoric to drive media narratives therefore can lead to a more rigidly thinking electorate, in turn creating precisely the sorts of incorrect voting high convergence is supposed to avoid. Additionally, this stubbornness could make unifying the base after the nomination has been conferred a more arduous task and advantage candidates who enter the race with established bases of support at the cost of those who need to build a coalition of supporters through campaigning.

Furthermore, anger is a foundational emotion to symbolically racist attitudes (Banks 2014). When angry, voters will rely more on their symbolically racist attitudes when evaluating their alternatives, which in turn can work to the detriment of African American candidates or any candidate speaking out on racial justice issues. This is compounded by the fact that other incentive structures prevent Black candidates from utilizing anger messages (Phoenix 2019). Newsworthiness values that prioritize anger therefore incentivize the use of a rhetoric cue denied to Black candidates that will also prime a large contingent of voters to rely on attitudes that will work to the detriment of African American candidates when used by their competitors.

Encouraging candidates to define campaigns around themselves is not particularly preferable. It promotes messaging strategies that are unlikely to aid voters in comprehending the complexities of politics. When politics is understood as the interactions of a handful of political elites, the rules and coalitions that play important parts can disappear in the imagination of public consciousness. That the media logic that increasingly undergirds presidential primary campaigns incentivizes candidates to rely on candidate-centric and angry messages therefore has the potential to create perverse behavioral and electoral repercussions that diminish the capacity to hold the proper actors accountable retroactively (Achen and Bartels 2016) and promotes the sort of cults of personality crucial to demagoguery.

And candidates are not well positioned to affect the strategic considerations of others. Candidates cannot do much to affect the utility that a competitor gains from entering the race, especially considering the increased platform that can come to even those who do not ultimately win. Candidate attrition is guided by each individual

campaign carrying out a multifaceted decision-making process (Damore, Hansford, and Barghothi 2010, Haynes et al. 2004, Norrander 2006) and other campaigns have minimal capacity to affect those facets and speed up winnowing. There is little that one campaign can do to keep the field itself stable.

In sum, the candidates do have tools available to them to appeal to the newsworthiness values of the media, specifically by utilizing anger and personalistic appeals in their rhetoric. But these types of messages carry a cost, and one that we are better off not paying. We must look elsewhere for a solution.

Voters

The primary means of executing change available to voters are their media and information preferences. The evidence from Chapter 6 suggests that voters, as a contingent of media consumers, cannot shift the media's newsworthiness values themselves as those values do not appear to exist as a means of creating content to match audience demands. But voters can choose to consume news that is higher in convergence and less driven by the most harmful of these newsworthiness values. ABC News, as a stand-in for broadcast news overall, consistently was the most divergent from candidate agendas while *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, Fox News, and MSNBC were all similar in their convergence levels.⁵⁹

Among these outlets, it is hard to say which is preferable. Increasing the audience of text-based outlets increases the incentive of candidates to rely on anger in their rhetoric

⁵⁹ Fox News appears to be higher than other outlets in convergence toward the agendas of Republican candidates as well, while converging less toward the agendas of Democratic candidates than other outlets. As such, if prioritizing only high convergence then Fox News would appear to be the most preferable source of information about Republican primary candidates among Republican voters of the media outlets included in the analysis.

as there will be greater utility to conveying the candidate's agenda in that medium, while increasing the audience of cable news increases the incentive to rely on personalistic messaging for that same reason. Perhaps it is the case that one of these options is preferable, but clearly neither is ideal.

Alternatively, voters could take more of an onus on themselves and be less reliant on the media as a source for information about the campaigns. Voters could do more thorough searches of the information campaigns provide via social media and their campaign websites, for example. Changes to the communication technologies employed by campaigns certainly make that possibility more feasible, but the lack of an accompanying change to the total hours in a day diminish the viability of this as a path forward. Furthermore, as I have articulated previously my argument is that the media is not well suited to deciding which issues are most important for voters, not that the media's proper role is that of a stenographer. The media have a vital role to play in providing context and holding candidates to account on the issues that the campaigns promote. Asking voters to remove the media as a conduit and instead seek their information directly from candidate-voter communication risks opening the floodgates to campaign-disseminated disinformation, which in turn would carry its own heavy normative cost. The voters/media consumers therefore have only poor or infeasible options available to them to rectify the normative problem at hand.

Parties

The national parties can structure some of the rules of their nomination campaigns, although significant influence is vested in the state parties. Some of these rules could conceivably be used to affect the rhetoric incentives of candidates. For

example, it is conventional wisdom, backed up by some evidence (Haynes and Rhine 1998), that candidates refrain from too much mudslinging prior to the Iowa caucus because supporters of candidates who receive less than 15% of the vote in the precinct on an initial ballot are allowed to switch allegiances and the candidates do not want to alienate anyone. Even past the caucus, the multicandidate format of primaries may disincentive attacks as candidates do not want to accidentally advantage the campaigns of uninvolved bystanders. Likewise, prioritizing primaries in large states where retail politics is more difficult or otherwise less essential than in Iowa and New Hampshire may shift the emphasis away from politics of glad-handing and baby-kissing that often accompanies personalistic rhetoric.

But changing the order or structure of primary contests would not deal with the incentive structure imposed by media-centric primary campaigns. The parties could set the rules so that relying on anger or personalistic messaging is less advantageous but the tradeoff would still be declining agenda convergence, which in turn would lead to less correct voting. These sorts of changes do not deal with the fundamental problem imposed by preferences for certain rhetorical newsworthiness cues.

Parties can restructure the rules to recalibrate candidate entry and exit, however. I argue they should do so with the goal of preventing marginal candidates from entering the race and keeping major candidates who represent diverse perspectives within the party coalition in the race until we near the point when most voters are tuning in. This should mean setting high standards for the avenues of legitimization, like participation in the debates, to decrease the utility of those hoping to catch on after some grand moment of political spectacle. Furthermore, by condensing the primary calendar the increase in

convergence that accompanies winnowing could be timed to when voters in battleground states start studying up. For many voters, learning about the candidates is left to when casting a ballot is imminent. Since convergence increases in response to winnowing, the primary calendar should strategically place major winnowing events in accordance with when the most pivotal voters, namely those located in the states that our Electoral College and first-past-the-post format determines are the most valuable, begin to tune into the race. By limiting the race to only viable candidates and strategically timing the winnowing window the parties can improve the odds that the nominee is chosen after clear contrasts are accurately processed and debated by the primary electorate.

The parties do have another means of addressing the normative concerns created by the effects of low convergence and the tradeoffs to improving convergence. They could simply circumvent the media-centric primary process entirely by returning to the smoke-filled rooms. This means of candidate selection carries its own issues, but debating them isn't necessary. This is simply too unrealistic a turn at this point. The general trajectory is to further restrict the party's say in the nomination of a standard-bearer, primarily through the reduction in superdelegates. As such, this direct means of recalibrating the primary system is unfeasible, and it is only the indirect means described above that are worthy of consideration.

Media

Changing how the media covers primaries would be the best means of solving the posed dilemma among the options articulated here. It is the only option where the newsworthiness values that give rise to low convergence can be directly addressed. Chapter 6 suggests that the appeal of anger as a cue of the conflict newsworthiness value

likely stems from the storytelling conventions of the mediums. Text-based outlets reacted most strongly to candidate anger while television outlets reacted much more tepidly. In addition, there was suggestive evidence that two more newsworthiness cues – candidate-based rhetoric and linguistic simplicity – similarly stem from this same storytelling motivation due to their particular strength among visual news mediums.

This complicates the solution as it is not as simple as transitioning television news to more text-based storytelling conventions or vice versa. Both create issues via the storytelling practices they use. Instead, the media should downplay the role of storyteller in the journalism education and socialization process and instead recommit to the media's role as a watchdog. Doing so would lead to less journalistic emphasis on story traits like conflict and human interest and encourage journalists to follow closely with what candidates are saying. Furthermore, embracing the identity of watchdog can mean not merely repeating or indexing what elites have to say (Bennet, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007) but rather critically analyzing the agendas of candidates against their proposals and prior accomplishments. Being a watchdog can mean allowing candidates to set the agenda but then playing an important and active role in how voters process and evaluate that agenda.

Such a cultural shift among journalists is easier to imagine than some other proposals (Patterson 2013). After all, a role as a political watchdog is part of the journalist's existing self-conception (Bennett 1996). What I propose is merely a heightened emphasis of that role at the expense of emphasizing the journalist as a storyteller.

In practice, such a shift would of course come partnered with complications. Important to the theoretical argument of context-based appreciations of news norms was that journalism is not purely a political endeavor. While I make the case that such a shift of professional identity would improve the way the media covers presidential primary campaigns, and politics more generally, those are not the only beats that occupy journalists. Would a strong emphasis on the watchdog role of journalists lead to better coverage of pop culture? Sports? If not, how can we create a teaching and socialization system that can isolate the areas where journalists should be more akin to watchdogs from those where journalists should act more as storytellers and impart those differing prioritizations?

The answer likely lies in an earlier emphasis of domain-specific training during journalism school education, which in turn puts added burdens on journalism programs. But for the media to act as an effective conduit of information in presidential primaries, such a change is necessary.

Additionally, while the evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that the influence of anger and candidate-based appeals are not tied to the demands of audiences, it is worth considering what would happen if demand for watchdog journalism coverage of primaries were low enough to lead to a significant drop-off in audience size. Given how volatile the media economy has been in the digital marketplace, could journalism survive such a shift in professional identity if it came at the cost of ad revenue or subscriptions?

It is possible to cheaply produce watchdog journalism, however. Attending a candidate's event and hewing close to their message is, by itself, not terribly costly even

if performing a critical analysis of the candidate's message does require time and expertise. This low cost can partially offset a declining demand. Furthermore, if such a cost did accompany a declining emphasis of storytelling in campaign coverage, then the best way to compensate would be to allow other parts of the news product to subsidize the campaign coverage by retaining their storytelling virtues. Such solutions, while imperfect, are more realistic than proposals to shift to alternatives like expansions of publicly financed media.

This solution would not address the effect that contextual simplicity has on convergence. That effect was tied to the size of the "newshole" the media outlet has to fill. As such, it is tied to a more tangible phenomenon than the self-conception of journalists. Remediating this would require an expansion of space and/or time available to journalists to fill with news content. In part, this should be rectified by the continued proliferation of digital news. Otherwise, it is hard to address via any specific policy or change in the nature of the profession.

Instead, this is best addressed by the parties as described above. That in conjunction with a shifting emphasis of political reporting away from the role of storyteller and toward the role of watchdog should mitigate the problems that newsworthiness values create in presidential primaries. They can create a version of media-centric primaries that work better for candidates, parties, voters, and American democracy.

Appendix A (Chapter 3)

Appendix A.1: Codebook and Coding Procedures for Issue Topic Hand-coding of PPAC

Goals for Coding

The goal of this coding project is to code presidential primary candidate speeches and media coverage of those presidential primary candidates into distinct issue categories. All text will be coded at the paragraph level. This coding will be aggregated and used to build variables for a series of statistical analyses. The precise nature of the variables and the statistical analyses cannot be disclosed at this time to prevent potential bias in the coding procedure. If the coder would like to know about the overall research project, they may request that information upon completion of their coding task.

Notable Features of the Codebook

The codebook designed and implemented here has three primary features.

- 1.) Exhaustive – The issue categories are completely exhaustive, meaning that every paragraph can be placed into one of the issue categories, with none going uncoded.
- 2.) Exclusive – By a set of coding principles described below, each paragraph can be coded into only one issue category.
- 3.) Hierarchical⁶⁰ – While there is only one coding question to answer for each paragraph and each paragraph will be placed into only one category, there is a

⁶⁰ This hierarchical method was employed given the asymmetric usage of the American values and horserace categories and the tendency of candidates and the media, respectively, to use those categories as a means of framing discussion of other topics (i.e. a candidate discussing America's historical roots as a reason for why we need to be more involved in spreading democracy in the Middle East, media coverage of how a candidate's economic policy proposals will affect their standing in the polls). Because a person listening to the speech or consuming the media coverage would still get some information about a topic, at

hierarchy to the issue categories. The coder should first attempt to place the paragraph into a category on the first level. If the paragraph does not fit into any of those categories, then the coder may code the paragraph into whichever of the categories on the second level is most appropriate.

Coding Question and Coding Principles

Each paragraph should be coded based on answering the following question: “Which issue category is this paragraph mostly about?” Because it is possible for a paragraph to contain references and appeals to multiple issue categories, however, there are several caveats, called coding principles, which can be useful for answering this question.

- 1.) If there are multiple categories invoked by a paragraph, does the hierarchical nature of the coding scheme alleviate the issue? For example, if there are references to issue code 1 (domestic economy), which is a 1st-level category, and issue code 13 (horserace), which is a 2nd-level category, then the paragraph should be coded as issue code 1.
- 2.) If there are multiple categories invoked by a paragraph, and they are on the same hierarchical level, is one issue code category invoked more than others? For example, if a paragraph contains 3 appeals to issue code 1 (domestic economy) and 1 appeal to issue code 4 (candidate-based appeals), then the greater number of references to issue code 1 means it should be coded into that issue category.
- 3.) If there are multiple categories invoked by a paragraph, and they are all on the same hierarchical level and invoked in equal proportion, which is mentioned first?

the very least a relevancy heuristic that the candidate cares about and prioritizes that topic, it was determined that the best way to avoid excessive confusion in those cases would be to default to the topic not the frame.

For example, if a paragraph is a list of issues, including (in order) single references to issue code 1 (domestic economy), issue code 5 (national security), issue code 9 (international trade), and issue code 14 (crime), then it should be coded as issue code 1 since that one came first.

Note that if none of these coding principles assist in placing the paragraph into an issue code category, it almost assuredly belongs in issue code 15 (non-codable).

Coding Instructions

After reading through these instructions and being provided a chance to ask questions, the coder will be given a spreadsheet with 100 paragraphs randomly drawn from the candidate speech database and 100 paragraphs randomly drawn from the *New York Times* media coverage database. The coder will be required to do a minimum of 25 from each with the PI as a practice set. After completing that minimum amount, the coder can request more practice reps if they would like to do so, up to the full set of 100 paragraphs for each spreadsheet. The coder can terminate the practice session after that minimum amount but before completion of each spreadsheet at any point if they so choose.

After the practice coding, the coder will be provided a spreadsheet with 200 paragraphs randomly drawn from the candidate speech database and 200 paragraphs randomly drawn from *The New York Times* media coverage database. The coder will take these spreadsheets and code each paragraph, skipping none, into an issue category listed in the table below and following the above guidelines by typing the issue code number into the “issue_coder2” column in the respective spreadsheet. This can be done at any point in the following week. At no point may the coder request guidance from the PI of

this project on how to code any specific paragraph or on general coding principles. All such questions need to be addressed in the training session. Upon completion of the coding task, the spreadsheets should be returned to the PI.

Issue Category Brief Descriptions

The following table includes the titles of the 15 issue categories, the numeric code for each category, and a brief description of the what that category entails. In the Issue Category column, issue category titles that appear in *Italics* are in hierarchical-level 1 and issue category titles that appear in **Bold** are in hierarchical-level 2.

Appendix Table A.1.1: Topics in Codebook of PPAC

Issue Category	Numeric Code	Description
<i>Domestic Economy</i>	1	Paragraph primarily about American unemployment, labor policies, taxes, economic growth, various markets (housing, banking, manufacturing, etc.), etc.
<i>Government Assistance</i>	2	Paragraph primarily about healthcare policy (i.e. Obamacare/ACA, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.), Social Security, welfare (i.e. TANF), general social safety net policies, etc.
<i>Social Issues/ Civil Rights</i>	3	Paragraph primarily about issues including abortion (i.e. <i>Roe v. Wade</i>), gay marriage (i.e. DOMA, Don't Ask, Don't Tell, <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> ; civil rights (generic or reference to Civil Rights Movement); advocacy organizations for historically oppressed groups, etc.
<i>Candidate Appeals</i>	4	Paragraph primarily about traits (i.e. intelligence, honesty, leadership skills), backstory (i.e. discussions of childhood, talk of parents), or generic accomplishments (i.e. productive legislator, successful businessman) of the candidate.
<i>International Affairs</i>	5	Paragraph primarily about American relationship with foreign countries, including discussion of treaties, allies/enemies, war, national defense spending, surveillance programs, foreign aid, veterans, etc.
<i>Natural Resources</i>	6	Paragraph primarily about energy policy, natural resources, climate change, natural disasters, or environmental policy (i.e. EPA, Clean Water Act)
<i>Education Policy</i>	7	Paragraph primarily about education policy, including discussion of federal education standards (No Child Left Behind, Common Core), school choice, higher education grants, etc.
<i>Immigration Policy</i>	8	Paragraph primarily about immigration policy, border security, rates of immigration (either documented or undocumented), etc.
<i>International Trade Policy</i>	9	Paragraph primarily about international trade agreements (NAFTA, TPP), tariffs, trade deficits, etc.
<i>Populist Appeals</i>	10	Paragraph primarily about generic anti-elite appeals, including against Washington elites, special interests, media elites, big businesses, etc.
<i>Government's Role Appeals</i>	11	Paragraph primarily about generic appeals to what government should and should not be doing, including discussion of core conservative and liberal values
American Values	12	Paragraph primarily about generic values and trajectory of America, including appeals about freedom, liberty, justice, etc.
Horserace	13	Paragraph primarily about polls, fundraising amounts, generic endorsement counts, campaign strategy, campaign staffing, state of the race, etc.
<i>Crime/Gun Policy</i>	14	Paragraph primarily about prison policy, crime rates, death penalty, gun regulations/2 nd Amendment, etc.
Non-Codable	15	Paragraph cannot be placed into any other category.

Appendix A.2: Reliability and Validity Tests of Topic Coding of PPAC

Intercoder Reliability

It is important to show that the coding here would be reproduceable by another scholar. To demonstrate this, I trained another coder on the codebook presented in Appendix 3A and then gave them a coding task of 200 randomly drawn candidate speech paragraphs and 200 randomly drawn *The New York Times* coverage paragraphs. The results of this intercoder reliability test can be seen in Appendix Table 3B.1. The Cohen's kappa estimates are within the general range of acceptable reliability.

Appendix Table A.2.1: Intercoder Reliability Statistics of Issue Topic Coding

	Candidate Speeches	Media Coverage	All
% Agree	81.00%	77.00%	79.00%
% Expected Agree	11.97%	15.90%	11.62%
Cohen's kappa	.78*	.73*	.76*
Standard Deviation	.03	.03	.02

Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed

Validity

I consider both construct convergence and divergence validity by comparing how similar the hand-coding is to a related measure and how different the hand-coding is from unrelated measures (Quinn et al. 2010). To assess construct convergence validity, I compare my estimates for some of the topics against a dictionary-based coding scheme: the Lexicoder Topic Dictionaries (Albugh, Sevenans, and Soroka 2013). These dictionaries are built to estimate the topics created in the Comparative Agendas Project, which also serves as the starting baseline for my own codebook. There is enough overlap to make testing a majority of the categories possible. I was able to combine the various dictionaries to reasonable facsimiles of 10 of my codebook categories: domestic

economy, government assistance programs, social issues, international affairs, natural resources/environmental policy, education, immigration, trade, government's role appeals, and crime. I applied these dictionaries to the candidate speeches and calculated the percentage of the total words in the speech which fell into each dictionary category for each speech. I then checked the correlation between the percentages generated from hand-coding and the percentages of total words. The results are presented in Appendix Table 3B.2. The columns are the percentages based on the Lexicoder dictionaries, while the rows are the percentages based on hand-coding.

Appendix Table A.2.2: Correlations between Lexicoder Topic Dictionary and Hand-coded Content Analysis

	Domestic Economy	Gov't Assistance	Social Issues	Int'l Affairs	Natural Resources	Education	Immigration	Foreign Trade	Gov't Role	Crime
Domestic Economy	.3755	-.2014	-.0288	-.0281	.1247	-.0013	.0590	-.1205	-.0513	-.0414
Gov't Assistance	-.0403	.1568	-.2149	-.1869	-.0015	.0536	.2303	-.2224	-.1842	.1150
Social Issues	-.1229	.1744	.2147	.0008	-.1308	-.1033	-.0676	.0112	-.0421	-.0330
Int'l Affairs	.0139	.1312	.0930	.3577	.2095	-.0399	-.0746	.3812	.1468	.0505
Natural Resources	.1138	-.0624	-.2303	-.0113	.2608	-.0442	.1238	.0145	-.0369	-.1833
Education	-.1410	-.0621	-.0569	-.1783	-.1614	.6544	.0500	-.1682	-.1056	.1803
Immigration	-.0016	.0491	-.1347	.1527	-.0480	-.1108	.1709	.0218	-.0368	-.1156
Foreign Trade	.0933	-.0223	-.0405	.0704	.0864	-.0749	.0186	.1987	.0474	-.0122
Gov't Role	-.0528	-.0850	-.0791	-.0336	-.1854	-.0284	-.1286	.0462	.3167	.0235
Crime	-.0863	.1318	.2150	.0990	-.0155	.1199	.1440	-.0004	.0242	.3280

Notes: Hand-coded topic categories are the rows, Lexicoder topic categories are the columns. Values are Pearson's correlation coefficients. Bolded numerical values represent the test of construct convergence validity.

Construct convergence validity can be assessed by how strongly the hand-coded measure (rows) correlate with its Lexicoder copy (columns). These correlation coefficients have been bolded. For all ten categories, these correlations are positive. For seven of the categories – domestic economy, social issues, international affairs, natural resources/environmental policy, education, government’s role appeals, and crime – the correlations are also above .2, which considering the drastically different scale of the measurements is at least a modest signal of construct convergence validity. This evidence is encouraging, if not conclusive.

Construct divergence validity can be assessed by how weakly correlated the measures of one hand-coded topic category is with the other, unrelated Lexicoder topic categories. From this assessment, five of the categories seem to have strong construct divergence validity: domestic economy, international affairs, education, government’s role, and crime. For each of these topics, the hand-coded measure is correlated with the other Lexicoder topic measures either weakly or negatively. In addition, the hand-coded categories for natural resources/environment and trade display moderately strong construct divergence. Each is divergent from most of the other categories, although there are one or two that are almost as strongly correlated as the matching category.

The results are murkier for the other three categories. The hand-coded measure of government assistance is also closely correlated with the Lexicoder measures of immigration and crime. The hand-coded measure of social issues is correlated with the Lexicoder measure of government assistance programs. And the hand-coded measure of immigration is closely correlated with the Lexicoder measure of international affairs. While this is not perfect divergence, there is still significant separation for these three

hand-coded categories from most other topics and the overlap observed may very well reflect genuine obliqueness between the issues. After all, immigration is naturally related to international relations and a number of government assistance programs have been racialized in American political discourse (Gilens 1999). Given that the hand-coding and dictionary approaches are measure of different scales – proportions of speeches versus counts of words – which naturally hinders comparisons, these results overall suggest good construct convergence and divergence validity for the majority of the topic categories and moderate construct validity for the remainder.

Appendix A.3: Validation of Topics in PPCC (for Chapter 5)

Appendix Table A.3.1: Topics from STM of PPCC Used in Chapter 5

Topic	Label	High Frequency Words	Excerpt
1	Culture Issues: Gay Marriage	conserv, republican, support, right, marriag, social, gay	“In endorsing same-sex marriage on Wednesday, President Obama has offered voters the sharpest possible contrast with his presumptive Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, on a social issue that polls show still evenly divides the country.”
2	Culture Issues: Race	black, african, american, polic, said, white, live	“‘Bernie Sanders has made an unequivocal statement against reparations. He's saying he, under no conditions, will support reparations,’ the West Side Chicago pastor said.”
3	Education: Primary Education	school, educ, student, colleg, program, children, teacher	“Think about it: we're asking America's teachers to meet our greatest obligation for the future. We're asking them to educate and help mold our children. Yet we pay them far less than other professionals with essentially the same qualifications are now earning.”
4	Campaign Activities: Comedy	like, hes, one, polit, isnt, doesnt, say	“There is just something about taking serious political issues and trying to extract something genuinely funny -- already a very difficult task -- from them.”
5	Campaign Activities: Debates	debat, attack, question, issu, say, candid, critic	“Before the debate, an angry and bitter Mr. Gingrich had promised that he would now focus on contrasting his record with Mr. Romney's.”
6	Careers: Senate	senat, vote, bill, democrat, kennedi, legisl, pass	“Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and his conservative allies are vowing to block the renewal of the Export-Import Bank by any means necessary, which could mean blocking a must-pass transportation bill later this month.”
7	Careers: Military Service	veteran, war, militari, vietnam, servic, serv, command	“Four thin-hulled swift boats came down the Bay Hap River at the end of another bloody operation. Their mission was to transport American commandos, ethnic Chinese Nung mercenaries and the reluctant South Vietnamese forces known as Ruff Puffs on raids in the Vietcong-controlled Mekong Delta.”
8	Foreign Policy: Iraq	iraq, war, troop, american, presid, afghanistan, iraqi	“So it seems worthwhile to point out that, by Mr. Obama's own account, neither U.S. commanders nor Iraq's principal political leaders actually support his strategy.”
9	Economics: Macroeconomic Trends	job, economi, econom, work, busi, american, creat	“Last week we got news that the share of Americans at work or looking for work is at a 38-year low. More than 6 million people are working part-time jobs when they'd prefer full-time. Roughly 5.5 million more Americans are living in poverty than when Obama came to office.”
10	Candidates: Barack Obama (Rev. Wright)	black, white, american, wright, race, racial, polit	“SEN. BARACK Obama's mission in Philadelphia yesterday was to put the controversy over inflammatory statements made by the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., his spiritual mentor and pastor for 20 years, behind him.”
11	Foreign Policy: Mexico	mexico, mexican, hispan, latino, border, wall, build	“In a fiesta of indignation, Mexicans have been lopping off presidential candidate Donald J. Trump's tentacles after his comments about the types of people who were crossing America's southern border.”

12	Candidate Traits: Authenticity	say, presid, democrat, like, seem, polit, new	“To the Editor: It's disappointing that Nicholas D. Kristof essentially calls for Howard Dean to dumb down and put on a folksy act (column, Dec. 6). This says more about the American electorate than anything else.”
13	Candidates: Bernie Sanders	democrat, said, vermont, support, campaign, presid, secretari	“Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont met with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for an hour on Thursday to discuss campaign finance reform, college affordability and other issues at the heart of Mr. Sanders's campaign for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination.”
14	Culture Issues: Religious Right	church, christian, god, faith, evangel, religi, said	“At a meeting with hundreds of conservative Christian leaders Tuesday, Donald Trump implied that Hillary Clinton's religion is unknown, despite her longtime profession of her Methodist faith.”
15	Careers: House	hous, committe, white, congress, washington, member, republican	“Democrats doubled down Tuesday night on their push to end the House Select Committee on Benghazi by seeking a vote on a floor amendment to kill the panel. The move by Rep. Louise Slaughter (R-N.Y.) was blocked by the Republican majority on the House Rules Committee.”
16	Candidates: Hillary Clinton (Emails)	email, depart, state, inform, secretari, investig, classifi	“FBI Director James B. Comey said Tuesday that while Hillary Clinton and her staff were “extremely careless” in how they handled emails while she was secretary of state, the bureau would not recommend criminal charges.”
17	Campaign Activities: Speeches	speech, presid, speak, audienc, address, crowd, deliv	“Presenting himself as an uplifting alternative in a Republican race filled with fear mongering and negativity, Gov. John Kasich of Ohio urged voters on Tuesday to reject what he called ‘the path to darkness’ in this year's election. ‘This path solves nothing,’ Mr. Kasich said in a half-hour address at the Women's National Republican Club in Midtown Manhattan.”
18	Horserace: Fundraising	million, campaign, money, rais, fundrais, donor, pac	“It's not just Bernie Sanders's fundraising that is staggering. The senator from Vermont managed to spend roughly \$46 million in March alone, the same amount he raised, based on figures released by his campaign Wednesday night.”
19	Culture Issues: Abortion	abort, parenthood, plan, life, right, issu, prolif	“‘Faithful to the ‘self-evident’ truths enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed,’ the draft platform declares.”
20	Government Administration: Courts	court, law, judg, case, justic, suprem, feder	“I'm no fan at all of Donald Trump, but maybe he did put his best people on the task of selecting a list of potential Supreme Court nominees”
21	Campaign Activities: GOP Infighting	said, gop, florida, support, sen, republican, hes	“Florida Sen. Marco Rubio re-upped his attacks on GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump on Friday, repeating some of the lines he used during Thursday night's Republican debate but also others not uttered before.”
22	Economics - Wall Street/Populism	street, peopl, wall, countri, sander, campaign, bank	“Phoenix, are you ready for a political revolution? Are you tired of a handful of billionaires running our economy? Well, if you are, you’ve come to the right place.”
23	Candidates: Donald Trump (Rhetoric)	peopl, trump, will, know, great, want, said	“Mr. Trump: I want to thank you. Look over there, look at this. There that have to get in -- there are 3000 people that have to get in. Yes. This is the biggest crowd of the political seasons so far. We have 30,000 people. Amazing. 30,000 people. I want to thank everybody.”

24	Culture Issues: Jewish and Catholic Voters	jewish, jew, letter, israel, adelson, support, group	“Regardless of political leanings or depth of spirituality, American Jews expressed great pride yesterday that one of their own, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, had been picked by Vice President Al Gore to be his running mate.”
25	Horseshoe: White Working Class	voter, democrat, vote, white, elect, among, support	““What I've said over and over again," he said on "Meet the Press," "we will do well when young people, when working-class people come out. We do not do well when the voter turnout is not large.”
26	Horseshoe: Chicago Politics	polit, democrat, chicago, run, jackson, say, senate	“Even friends told Mr. Obama it was a bad idea when he decided in 1999 to challenge an incumbent congressman and former Black Panther, Bobby L. Rush, whose stronghold on the South Side of Chicago was overwhelmingly black, Democratic and working class.”
27	Economics: Labor	union, labor, worker, endorses, member, organ, support	“The iron workers' union, representing more than 100,000 workers, became the first international union to endorse a presidential candidate, announcing its support for Representative Dick Gephardt, Democrat of Missouri.”
28	Campaign Activities: VPs	vice, run, mate, presid, ticket, pick, pick	“Mitt Romney is starting to bear down on his search for a running mate, but he cautioned in an interview on Monday that a final selection may not come until the Republican convention in August.”
29	Foreign Policy: National Security	policy, foreign, presid, nation, administr, secur, issue	“Gov. George W. Bush of Texas is counting on a small group of conservative experts steeped in the intricacies of arms control, military budgets and geopolitical security to counsel him on a subject that has caused him the most trouble in his presidential campaign: foreign affairs.”
30	Culture Issues: White Supremacy	tweet, star, david, white, duke, support, endorses	“Dishonest media is trying their absolute best to depict a star in a tweet as the Star of David rather than a Sheriff's Star, or plain star!...It can be easy to confuse these stars! A handy mnemonic device is to ask yourself, ‘Does this star have little nubs at the ends of its points, or was it used by the Nazis?’”
31	Campaign Activities: Q&As	think, people, know, don't, get, that, want	“I love it here. How are you getting to that. Wonderful to see you man. You're only around when I'm talking about these heavy issues. I know some great things. Well thank you. Thank you. I really thought you were great at our...OK. She asked you a question. I don't know. You're right.”
32	Culture Issues: Gender	women, woman, men, female, gender, she, male	“Gloria Steinem and Madeleine Albright called on young women who favor Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton to essentially grow up.”
33	Environment: Climate Change	social, science, climate, study, book, research, change	“Many of the alarmists on global warming, they've got a problem because the science doesn't back them up. In particular, satellite data demonstrate for the last 17 years, there's been zero warming.”
34	Candidates: Mitt Romney (Strategy)	ohio, michigan, state, said, campaign, detroit, massachusetts	“LANSING, Mich. - Mitt Romney often finds himself on the defensive in Rust Belt states for having been against the auto industry bailout, which many credit with saving the industry. Now, he is taking a new tack on the sensitive issue: he's taking credit for the industry's rebound.”
35	Energy: Fossil Fuels	energy, oil, gas, will, price, environment, industry	“CAN THE country do without nuclear power and natural gas? Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) thinks so. But his position would set back the fight against global warming.”
36	Social Welfare Programs: Healthcare	health, care, insurance, plan, cost, system, healthcare	“Ben Carson began rolling out his policy alternatives for the American health-care system this week. Like many prescriptions, it's a bit difficult to decipher at first glance - though not because of poor handwriting. To put it bluntly, CarsonCare is a muddle.”

37	Parties: GOP History	reagan, said, ronald, republican, like, hes, say	“Mr. Santorum spoke before a crowd of 300 people at the Jelly Belly Candy Company here, a most unlikely setting for what was billed as ‘a major foreign policy speech.’ But there was a connection. President Reagan loved Jelly Belly jelly beans and had a jar of them in the Oval Office.”
38	Campaign Activities: Applause Lines	will, peopl, get, want, thank, thing, one	“Hey, everybody. Hey, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. You would think we are on vacation. Let's give a big cheer for Myrtle Beach. You would think this is an election night victory party. You are all invited. Who is ready to make Barack Obama a one-term president?”
39	American Values: Democracy	applaus, will, america, work, thank, want, can	“Our campaign from the very beginning has been about one central thing and that is to give voice to millions of Americans who have absolutely no voice in this democracy, to give voice.. .(APPLAUSE)...”
40	Campaign Activities: Dem Infighting	said, senat, campaign, democrat, presid	“Mayor Edward G. Rendell of Philadelphia, the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has un-endorsed Vice President Al Gore in the increasingly heated campaign against former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey for the Democratic Presidential nomination.”
41	Foreign Policy: Middle East	muslim, islam, state, terrorist, attack, unit, terror	“The Council on American-Islamic Relations had planned to hold a news conference Tuesday unveiling a report on Islamophobia, including the rise of "Muslim-free" businesses, anti-Muslim rallies by armed protesters, direct attacks on Muslims and the vandalism of mosques.”
42	Candidate Traits: Relatability	crowd, one, like, man, say, hand, ask	“The man who would be president takes peanut butter and jelly sandwiches -- on whole wheat, strawberry jelly preferred to grape -- twice a day on the campaign trail. He wears \$15 reading glasses, off the rack at CVS.”
43	Candidate Backgrounds: Health	cancer, medic, drug, doctor, diseas, said, hospit	“Senator Barack Obama, 46, was in "excellent health" at the time of his last examination more than a year ago and has no known medical problems that would affect his ability to serve as president, according to a letter by his physician released on Thursday.”
44	Foreign Policy: Nuclear Threats	iran, nuclear, state, world, will, unit, militari	“We have made dramatic progress in reducing the number of nuclear weapons. In the last decade, the United States and the countries of the former Soviet Union together have taken about eight to nine thousand strategic nuclear weapons out of commission.”
45	Horserace: Advisers	sen, democrat, said, presidenti, candid, former, campaign	“There's only one thing better for a presidential campaign than securing the support of a key activist. And that's stealing that activist away from one of your main rivals for the nomination.”
46	Horserace: SC/NV Primaries	south, carolina, state, nevada, primari, north, campaign	“Newt Gingrich's momentum from the South Carolina wanes days ahead of the Florida primary. Paul Volpe reports.”
47	Campaign Activities: Social Media	twitter, presidenti, facebook, polit, first, race, news	“Mr. Jindal's latest effort comes in the form of a web video, which the governor's campaign put on Facebook, that mocks Mr. Trump's descriptions of his knowledge of foreign policy.”
48	Horserace: Iowa Caucus	iowa, caucus, campaign, poll, said, support, state	““The Iowa caucuses are five hours away,’ Cruz said in a community center gym here. The Texas Republican's campaign is banking on a painstaking turnout strategy here in Iowa, confident that its organization and analytics will carry it across the finish line Monday night.”

49	Candidates: Herman Cain & Donald Trump (Scandals)	said, campaign, report, interview, told, comment, call	"A state attorney in Florida does not intend to prosecute Donald Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, who was charged with battery after allegedly grabbing a reporter last month, according to media reports Wednesday evening."
50	Candidates: Mitt Romney (Background)	said, school, year, one, game, time, name	"Mitt Romney returned from a three-week spring break in 1965 to resume his studies as a high school senior at the prestigious Cranbrook School."
51	Horseshoe: Delegate/Vote Math	state, deleg, win, vote, primari, tuesday, contest	"It was closer, too, than Sanders seemed to get on election night, when a rout bigger than any poll had suggested effectively ended the Democratic primary. Since then, Sanders added 879,671 votes to his California total; Clinton added 804,713 votes."
52	Other: Media Critiques	report, media, post, stori, time, news, press	"Donald Trump said Monday that he is pulling The Washington Post's credentials to cover his events because he is upset with the newspaper's coverage of his campaign."
53	Governing Philosophy: Libertarianism	govern, liberti, peopl, money, war, get, will	"[We] have drifted far from our constitution and individual and liberties, a sense of foreign policy, and the American people are sick of paying for it because we are out of money and have to do something about it."
54	Campaign Activities: Foreign Trips	israel, state, unit, trip, visit, minist, palestinian	"The truth is they [other countries] don't respect us. When President Obama landed in Cuba on Air Force One, no leader was there, nobody, to greet him."
55	Horseshoe: DC/MD/VA Primaries	virginia, counti, said, state, maryland, west, district	"Gore's fund-raising efforts have included a Georgetown event last month with co-hosts Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) and racetrack owner Joseph A. De Francis, which raised \$ 200,000..."
56	Horseshoe: Staffing	campaign, advis, aid, strategist, team, staff, work	"Donald J. Trump's campaign is adding staff members to key areas it has been criticized for neglecting, bringing on Jim Murphy as its new national political director and preparing to beef up its communications team."
57	Economics: Taxes	tax, cut, plan, incom, percent, propos, budget	"A middle income household making between about \$64,000 and \$110,000 would get hit with an average tax increase of about \$4,300, lowering its after-tax income by more than 6 percent..."
58	Crime: Gun Control	gun, crime, control, law, shoot, violenc, issu	"None of the major shootings that have occurred in this country over the last few months or years that have outraged us, would gun laws have prevented them." - Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.). interview on CBS's "This Morning," Dec. 4, 2015"
59	Candidate Traits: Scandals/Immorality	claim, alleg, fact, accus, lie, sexual, fals	"If Hillary thinks she can unleash her husband, with his terrible record of women abuse, while playing the women's card on me, she's wrong! Trump is obviously referring to the sexual allegations that have long swirled around Clinton, even before he became president."
60	Candidate Traits: Financial Transparency	million, foundat, return, releas, financi, paid, year	"Gov. Rick Perry of Texas on Friday disclosed new travel-related campaign debts of almost \$ 230,000 that appear to largely stem from improper underpayments to owners of private jets used by his presidential campaign."
61	Economics: Trade	trade, china, deal, agreement, state, countri, unit	"They [Japan] have cars coming in by the millions, and we sell practically nothing. When Japan thinks we mean it, they'll stop playing around with the yen."

62	Campaign Activities: Gratitude	thank, one, want, know, good, right, year	“Thanks for everything that you were just the greatest. And you know miss you knew every day. But I'll be back shortly. No question. Thanks so much.”
63	Campaign Activities: GOP Infighting	will, gop, republican, even, like, one, voter	“Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) is having a bad week. First, he is body-blocked from getting on camera in Mike Huckabee's media circus with Kim Davis. Then he gets upstaged by Donald Trump at a purported Iran rally that Trump converted into a campaign event.”
64	Immigration: Undocumented Immigrants	immigr, illeg, legal, border, citizenship, state, country	“Sen. Ted Cruz said Tuesday he opposes granting legal status to the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, significantly hardening his stance on immigration.”
65	Candidate Backgrounds: Family Relationships	famili, father, son, brother, mother, said, year	“On Dec. 16, 1987, a teenager named Marco Rubio arrived home from school in West Miami to find his mother in anguish. Earlier that day, federal drug agents raided a house a few miles away that his brother-in-law, Orlando Cicilia, shared with Rubio's older sister, Barbara. Cicilia, a large, sturdily built Cuban immigrant, had played an intimate role in Rubio's early life.”
66	Candidates: Al Gore	campaign, vice, people, say, internet, one, political	“Michael Feldman knew he'd be making some sacrifices when he decided to spend a year on the road with Al Gore's presidential campaign. But Feldman, a senior adviser to the vice president, couldn't have anticipated what would happen to him one night earlier this year.”
67	Candidates; Donald Trump (GOP Outsider)	republican, party, nominee, ryan, gop, house, will	“House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) returns to the Capitol this week to face not just a divided caucus trying to determine how to handle Donald Trump's presidential campaign, but also a leadership team that is split down the middle on whether to support the presumptive Republican nominee.”
68	American Values: Exceptionalism	will, america, american, nation, country, world, people	“Ours is a great nation and I make one pledge to you, to use our greatness for goodness. We are a great nation because our greatness is built on the foundation of fundamental goodness. If ever we lose our goodness, we will surely lose our greatness.”
69	Candidates: Donald Trump (Wealth)	estate, business, said, hotel, golf, real, build	“Donald Trump's latest Washington project got further underway this week. The real estate magnate and aspiring presidential candidate's company has selected a provider to furnish the Old Post Office Pavilion on Pennsylvania Avenue as it undergoes a \$200 million renovation to become a luxury hotel.”
70	Horseshoe: NY Primary	new, york, city, mayor, time, manhattan, local	“Hillary Rodham Clinton's decision to use Roosevelt Island, the two-mile sliver of land mashed between Queens and Manhattan, as the backdrop Saturday for her first major stump speech sent a small but noticeable ripple through the island's previously scheduled weekend plans.”
71	Horseshoe: NH Primary	new, hampshire, state, jersey, primary, town, governor	“New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has cancelled a series of campaign appearances scheduled in New Hampshire for Friday and Saturday "due to inclement weather in New Jersey," his campaign has announced. I'm sorry, NH but I gotta go home - we got snow coming.”
72	Horseshoe: Polls	percent, poll, republican, point, among, voter, support	“This is the story of Hillary Clinton's favorability that's usually told: a steep and accelerating drop over time. New polling data from The Washington Post and ABC News, though, paints a different picture”
73	Candidate Backgrounds: Religion	mormon, church, catholic, religion, faith, religion, president	“Even before Mitt Romney's presidential announcement last Tuesday, his Mormon faith was becoming the hottest "religious issue" since 1960, when John F. Kennedy, a Catholic, became the first -- and still only -- non-Protestant to be elected president in U.S. history.”

74	Horsrace: Conventions	convent, parti, deleg, will, support, committe, nation	“The options are limited, and attempts to cause trouble at political conventions are usually quickly thwarted. But anti-Trump activists who spent weeks trying to play within the party structure now say they will do what Trump hates the most - find a way to embarrass him.”
75	Candidates: Hillary Clinton (2008)	mrs, said, rodham, senat, campaign, time, photograph	“CHICAGO -- With just days before several primaries where she will depend on the loyalty of female and black voters in Florida, North Carolina and the Midwest, Hillary Clinton got some heavyweight help from Hollywood.”
76	Campaign Activities: Cable Debates	news, fox, debat, interview, host, cnn, show	“ABC didn't share. Fox News didn't share. Neither did CNBC, CBS, MSNBC or Fox Business Network. But when PBS televises Thursday's Democratic debate in Milwaukee, it will share the event with another network, CNN.”
77	Horsrace: Frontrunners	candid, will, win, race, one, like, nomin	“The conventional wisdom on the Republican nomination race has once again shifted. In the span of just two weeks, Mitt Romney has gone from seeming quite vulnerable to the near-inevitable Republican nominee.”
78	Candidates: Mitt Romney (Business)	compani, busi, firm, bain, execut, capit, corpor	“Gov. Mitt Romney said that during his tenure at Bain Capital, a private equity firm, he helped create 100,000 jobs, even when layoffs from downsized firms are factored in.”
79	Governing Philosophy: Populism	polit, power, reform, govern, chang, system, politician	“Good countries can sometimes go bad. Donald Trump's supporters implicitly make this argument when they proclaim, "Make America Great Again." And so do those who loathe Trump and see in him a dangerous populist response to the anger of frustrated middle-class voters.”
80	Candidate Backgrounds: Families	husband, first, wife, book, life, year, friend	“Family friends offer harmless details about Dorothy Emma Howell Rodham. She likes to read. She travels on her own. She loves the National Zoo. Down-to-earth and sturdy, with gray hair, she does not bear an obvious physical resemblance to her daughter, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, but even if she did, few people would recognize her because she is rarely seen at public events.”
81	Horsrace: TX Politics	governor, state, texa, former, republican, gov, presidenti	“Gov. Rick Perry of Texas is intensifying his advertising push in Iowa, with the second television commercial of his campaign set to broadcast Monday in hopes of elevating him back into the top tier of Republican presidential candidates.”
82	Campaign Activities: Voter Interactions	say, presid, one, time, peopl, run, make	“He spoke approvingly of a notion from a store owner who wanted to make anyone who does not have at least three years of business background ineligible to lead the country.”

Appendix A.4: Validation of Topics in PPCC (for Chapter 6)

Appendix Table A.4.1: Topics from STM of PPCC Used in Chapter 6

Topic	Label	High Frequency Words	Excerpt
1	Campaign Activities: GOP Infighting (2016)	trump, donald, cruz, candid, presidenti,	“And tonight, Trump and Cruz locked in a nuclear war of words over their wives. It started with this anti-Trump super PAC ad we had to blur.”
2	Campaign Activities: Dems Infighting (2016)	clinton, hillari, sander, democrat, candid,	“(Voiceover) Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in their final face-off before the Iowa caucuses.”
3	Campaign Activities: GOP Infighting (2012)	romney, gingrich, mitt, presid, huckabe,	“And finally this morning, not everything goes as planned on the campaign trail. Just ask Mitt Romney, whose unpredictable grandson managed to steal the spotlight during an event in Michigan after a running on stage. Take a look.”
4	Economics: Macroeconomic Trends	job, work, economi, american,	“In a sense, he's inverting tradition -- saying that the nation should worry first about changing the economy to direct more of its spoils to workers and less to the wealthiest Americans.”
5	Candidates: Donald Trump (Charity)	money, million, dollar, buy, pay	“Eric Trump, the son of presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, said in an interview Wednesday that his father gives “millions and millions and millions” of his own money to charity - including hundreds of thousands to Eric Trump's own charitable foundation.”
6	Horseshoe: Favorability	percent, voter, among, poll, support, favor	“Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are separated by a narrow three points in a potential 2016 match-up, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll, with 46 percent of registered voters choosing Clinton to 43 percent picking Trump.”
7	Social Welfare Programs: Healthcare	health, care, plan, insur, cost, medicar	“Senator John McCain detailed his plan to solve the nation's health care crisis in a speech here Tuesday, calling for the federal government to give some money to states to help them cover people with illnesses who have been denied health insurance.”
8	Candidate Traits: Intellectual Curiosity	polit, book, one, write	“Al Gore is an intellectual. In case we doubted his credentials, a recent New Yorker profile of the vice president made this clear...Wonky to the point of weirdness, Mr. Gore loves nothing more than a dorm-room bull session.”
9	Horseshoe: SC/NV/FL Primaries	south, carolina, florida, state, nevada, primari	“MOLLY HENNEBERG, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): A homecoming for John Edwards; back in South Carolina, the state where he was born, for the first time since his second place finish in Iowa.”
10	Horseshoe: New Hampshire Primary	new, hampshir, win, campaign,	“(VO) On the Republican side, John McCain is running even with George W. Bush in the first-of-the-nation New Hampshire primary on February 1st, even though nationally it's Bush who leads by a huge 60 points.”
11	Other: Media Critiques	media, news, report, post, press, interview	“‘Based on the incredibly inaccurate coverage and reporting of the record setting Trump campaign, we are hereby revoking the press credentials of the phony and dishonest Washington Post,’ read a post on Trump's Facebook page”

12	Economics: Trade	trade, china, oil, price, agreement	“Seeking to undercut strident trade critic Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton said she supports tougher trade rules affecting the auto industry during a campaign stop today in Youngstown, Ohio.”
13	Campaign Activities: Surrogates	campaign, pennsylvania, davi, shes, brown, senat	“All right. Let me start with you, Congressman Wexler. Do you think as an Obama supporter that Hillary Clinton’s actions and inactions of the last 48 hours have hurt her chances of getting the V. P. nod?”
14	Candidates: John McCain	senat, vote, sen, mccain, democrat, issu, time	“So difficult, in fact, that Senator John McCain of Arizona has missed more than half of the roll-call votes since January 2007, more than any other senator except Senator Tim Johnson of South Dakota, who spent most of 2007 recuperating from a brain hemorrhage.”
15	Campaign Activities: GOP Infighting (2000)	campaign, republican, reform, governor, call	“We begin with the bruising Republican nomination battle as GOP voters cast ballots today in three states. John McCain and George W. Bush are showing no signs of reining in their attacks.”
16	Media: Roundtables (Fox)	think, hes, hume, well, barn, know, right	“KONDRACKE: But he's going to have a lot of explaining to do. LIASSON: Hard to imagine. Hard to imagine. BARNES: Going to be a hard one to put together.”
17	Media: Punditry/Metacommentary	think, know, peopl, well, dont, that, get	“I think he is a superb candidate. There's a little bit of concern with him, though, in the sense that he seems like a malcontent.”
18	Media: Theater Criticism	presid, speech, polici, speak, kennedi, deliv	“IN the end, said Theodore C. Sorensen, the celebrated speechwriter for President John F. Kennedy, what made a great speech in 1940 or 1961 is not much different from what makes a great speech in 2008.”
19	Candidates: Hillary Clinton (Emails)	email, inform, depart, state, classifi, server, fbi	“In his press briefing, FBI Director James B. Comey said he was going to provide more detail about Hillary Clinton's ‘extremely careless . . . handling of very sensitive, highly classified information’ than he normally would “because I think the American people deserve those details in a case of intense public interest.”
20	Horsrace: Delegate/Vote Math	win, state, deleg, vote, primari, will, nomin	“That's because Donald Trump is right on the cusp of accumulating the majority of delegates he needs to win the Republican nomination outright - avoiding a potentially messy convention fight in which the party tries to wrest the nomination from his definitely not-small-at-all hands.”
21	Media: Blogs (NYT)	mrs, said, polit, twitter, senat, presidenti, facebook	“Find out what you need to know about the 2016 presidential race today, and get politics news updates via a Facebook, Twitter and the First Draft newsletter.”
22	Horsrace: Polls	poll, number, point, lead, one	“We noted early this month that Donald Trump's lead in the polling emerged quickly and ferociously - but that it was hardly unprecedented.”
23	Campaign Activities: Comedy	show, host, joke, night, star, like, live	“Larry David's Bernie Sanders and Kate McKinnon's Hillary Clinton met for perhaps one last dance (quite literally), on ‘Saturday Night Live’ last night.”
24	Horsrace: NY Primary	new, york, citi, mayor, time, jersey	“For the first time in decades, New York will have two meaningful presidential primaries. With voters heading to the polls on Tuesday in both the Republican and Democratic races, here's a look at some voting blocs that may determine the outcome.”
25	Campaign Activities: Cable Debates	debat, question, night, ask, answer, attack	“Donald Trump does not want to suffer through another longer-than-usual Republican debate. Negotiations are currently underway for the third Republican debate, which will be hosted by CNBC on Oct. 28 at the University of Colorado at Boulder.”

26	Candidate Traits: Investigations and Corruption	case, lawyer, said, attorney, investig, judg	“Senior Justice Department officials twice urged Attorney General Janet Reno to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Vice President Al Gore for his role in political fund-raising and at one point came closer to persuading her than was previously known...”
27	Culture Issues: Race	black, white, american, race, african, racial	“Democratic presidential candidate and civil rights activist Al Sharpton is condemning Illinois Democratic Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. for endorsing Howard Dean, whom Sharpton says opposes affirmative action and supports the death penalty.”
28	Foreign Policy: ISIS	isi, islam, state, paul	“As hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria, Iraq and other war-torn countries descend upon Europe in search of a safe place to live, Republican presidential hopeful Scott Walker said Sunday the United States must address the ‘core of the problem’ by fighting the Islamic State.”
29	Immigration: Undocumented Immigrants	immigr, illeg, border, hispan, mexico, mexican	“Sen. Ted Cruz said Tuesday he opposes granting legal status to the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, significantly hardening his stance on immigration.”
30	Horseshoe: Advisers	said, campaign, former, advis, week, aid, critic	“Kevin Madden, a Republican communications expert with long ties to Mitt Romney, will become a more frequent and visible spokesman for the presidential campaign, a source close to the decision said on Friday.”
31	Candidate Backgrounds: Health	drug, doctor, medic, cancer, diseas	“Regardless of whether Herman Cain wins the GOP nomination to run for president, he has already beaten the odds: He has survived a bout of advanced colon cancer.”
32	Horseshoe: Iowa Caucus	iowa, caucus, campaign, support, state, moin, des	“With just 48 hours left before Iowans head to their caucuses, Bernie Sanders held a massive rally in Iowa City on Saturday night.”
33	Culture Issues: Gender	omen, shes, woman, husband, men, femal, first	“And with her opponent, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, outdrawing her in support among young women, Mrs. Clinton's candidacy has turned into a generational clash, one that erupted this past weekend when two feminist icons, Madeleine Albright and Gloria Steinem, called on young women who supported Mr. Sanders to essentially grow up and get with the program.”
34	Media: Soft News (ABC)	view, carson, michell, goldberg, know, joy	JOY BEHAR ("THE VIEW") That's a good point.
35	Candidates; Donald Trump (GOP Outsider)	ryan, hous, republican, said, speaker, congress, leader	“House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) returns to the Capitol this week to face not just a divided caucus trying to determine how to handle Donald Trump's presidential campaign, but also a leadership team that is split down the middle on whether to support the presumptive Republican nominee.”
36	Media: Blogs (WaPo)	ill, polit, like, can, one, even, make	“Romney's attack on Trump only goes so far I never thought I would write this: I am glad Mitt Romney is back on the public stage.”
37	Campaign Activities: Foreign Trips	trip, pope, world, europ, unit, visit, european	“Sen Bernie Sanders snags brief meeting with Pope Francis while in Rome for conference hosted by Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.”
38	Crime: Policing	polic, crime, crimin, death, justic, offic, law	“Tough-on-crime policies that emphasized arrests and convictions for relatively minor offenses have failed the country, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton said Wednesday, leading to overcrowded prisons and too many black men ‘missing’ from their families and communities.”
39	Media: Megyn Kelly (Fox)	kelli, megyn, one, know	“MEGYN KELLY, HOST, THE KELLY FILE: Breaking tonight, Donald Trump under fire at this moment for an unbelievable shot at a Hispanic judge hearing the fraud case against him. We'll have that for you in a moment.”

40	Candidates: Barack Obama (Rev. Wright)	wright, reverend, church, pastor, said, say, jeremiah	“The Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. has been in the news for several weeks, his inflammatory sermons broadcast again and again and his words now used in a Republican television advertisement in North Carolina.”
41	Culture Issues: Religious Right	christian, faith, religi, church, evangel, mormon	“The Rev. R. Philip Roberts, the president of a Southern Baptist seminary in Kansas City, Mo., is an evangelist with a particular goal: countering Mormon beliefs.”
42	Horserace: Rust Belt Primaries	santorum, michigan, state, conserv, pennsylvania	“And one more note from the campaign. Republican Rick Santorum is back on the trail tonight after spending the weekend in Philadelphia...”
43	Media: Hayes/Maddow (MSNBC)	hay, maddow, right	“RACHEL MADDOW, MSNBC HOST: Good evening, Chris. Thanks, my friend. HAYES: You bet. MADDOW: And thanks to you at home for joining us this hour.”
44	Candidates: Hillary Clinton (Benghazi)	committe, foundat, state, secretari, benghazi	“Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was planning to visit Libya in 2012, but those plans were upended when terrorists attacked the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi on Sept. 11 and 12 of that year, according to newly revealed testimony given to the House Select Committee on Benghazi...”
45	Economics: Labor	endors, union, support, member, labor, leader	“The iron workers' union, representing more than 100,000 workers, became the first international union to endorse a presidential candidate, announcing its support for Representative Dick Gephardt, Democrat of Missouri.”
46	Economics - Wall Street/Populism	street, wall, bank, financi, big, crisi, system	“Secretary Clinton says that Glass-Steagall would not have prevented the financial crisis because shadow banks like AIG and Lehman Brothers, not big commercial banks, were the real culprits. Secretary Clinton is wrong.”
47	Media: Frank Luntz Focus Groups (MSNBC/Fox)	unidentifi, odonnel, male, know, think, hes, yes	“LUNTZ: What do you know about Bob Graham? UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nothing. LUNTZ: Lisa, what do you know about Bob Graham? UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nothing.”
48	Media: Hardball (MSNBC)	matthew, think, hes, well, know, guy, like	“MATTHEWS: We got a main chancer out there, John Edwards, who is trying to win the presidency, despite perhaps all -- perhaps what is the trend right now. FINEMAN: Right. MATTHEWS: He's going to try to buck that trend.”
49	Horserace: Fundraising	campaign, million, fundrais, rais, money, donor, pac	“It's not just Bernie Sanders's fundraising that is staggering. The senator from Vermont managed to spend roughly \$46 million in March alone, the same amount he raised, based on figures released by his campaign Wednesday night.”
50	Media: Greta Van Susteren (Fox)	van, susteren, know, think, greta	“VAN SUSTEREN: All right. Romney endorsing cruz on Facebook. That has, no doubt, we know that Governor Kasich will be here shortly. He doesn't like it. Donald Trump doesn't like it. We know that.”
51	Media: Opinion Shows (MSNBC)	carlson, campaign, abram, olbermann	“PAT BUCHANAN, MSNBC POLITICAL ANALYST: You're asking about his competence and sagacity and wisdom. And it all adds up, I guess, to his experience and knowledge and the rest of it.”
52	Horserace: DMV Primaries	vote, voter, state, democrat, virginia, elect	“Sen. Barack Obama's campaign announced Wednesday that it is adding 20 offices across Virginia, an unprecedented effort by a presidential candidate and another sign that he plans to compete vigorously in a state that has been on the sidelines during past presidential contests.”
53	Energy: Energy Policy	energi, will, govern, new, technolog, need, develop	“CAN THE country do without nuclear power and natural gas? Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) thinks so.”

54	Media: "Campaign Carl" Cameron (Fox)	cameron, fox, campaign, news, correspond, carl	"Chief political correspondent, Carl Cameron, is covering a busy day on the campaign trail... CARL CAMERON, FOX NEWS CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Running last in South Carolina polls, Texas governor, Rick Perry, ended his presidential bid."
55	Media: Graphics (ABC)	abc, news, offcamera, voiceover, stephanopoulos, georg, graphic	"GRAPHICS: ABC THIS WEEK GRAPHICS: TRUMP TOUGHER ON CARSON GRAPHICS: FORMER SURGEON NOW LEADS SOME IOWA POLLS
56	Media: Factchecking	fact, claim, use, site, data, report	"PolitiFact, the nonpartisan fact-checking outlet based in Florida, is out today with its mid-year report on the 2016 election."
57	Candidates: Donald Trump (Rhetoric)	trump, people, know, don't, said, great, want	"They called me. I didn't call them. They said, Mr. Trump, please come. Please come. We want to do our job. These are incredible people. They're told to stand back. Let people walk right in front of him. Stand back. Beautiful people."
58	Media: Political Insiders (Fox/MSNBC)	morris, let, well, north, president, hes, zahn	"ZAHN: How did this happen, Dick Morris? MORRIS: I think that -- I think this could be an interesting issue. In the letter... ZAHN: Let me hand it to you.
59	Scandals: Cain Sexual Harassment	story, alleged, accused, said, campaign, cain, report	"Karen Kraushaar, one of the two women who settled sexual harassment claims against Herman Cain with the National Restaurant Association, spoke publicly for the first time on Tuesday about her allegations against the Republican presidential candidate."
60	American Values: Exceptionalism	will, america, american, country, nation, world	"The work that awaits us in this hour, on our watch: to defend our country from its enemies; to advance the ideals that are our greatest strength; to increase the prosperity and opportunities of all Americans and to make in our time, as each preceding American generation has, another, better world than the one we inherited."
61	Candidate Backgrounds: Family Relationships	family, father, said, year, son, one, friend	"The last thing Al Gore's father told him, a few days before he died, and just before he lost the ability to speak, was: 'Son, always do right. Always do right.'"
62	Government Administration: Courts	court, law, constitution, supreme, president, judge, amend	"In any campaign season, voters are bound to hear Republican candidates talk about 'activist judges' -- jurists who rule in ways that the right wing does not like. But Newt Gingrich, who is leading in polls in Iowa, is taking the normal attack on the justice system to a deep new low."
63	Candidates: Mitt Romney (Business)	company, business, return, release, tax, year, capital	"Hundreds of pages of confidential internal documents from the private equity firm Bain Capital published online Thursday provided new details on investments held by the Romney family's trusts, as well as aggressive strategies that Bain appears to have used to minimize its investors' and partners' tax liabilities."
64	Parties: Conservatism/ Establishment	party, conservative, republican, support, establish, nomination	"McCain would be the first Republican nominee since Gerald Ford in 1976 to win despite opposition from organized conservatism, and also the first whose base in Republican primaries rested on the party's center and its dwindling left."
65	Media: News Blurbs (ABC)	news, john, obama, abc, democrat, jake, tapper	"JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS) (Voiceover) John Edwards discusses poverty. CLIP FROM JOHN EDWARDS'S POLITICAL AD
66	Careers: Military Service	veteran, war, military, vietnam, service, served	"When John Kerry released his military records to the public last week, Americans learned a lot about Mr. Kerry's exceptional service in Vietnam."

67	Economics: Taxes	tax, cut, plan, budget, spend	“A tax system overhaul along the lines that Mitt Romney has proposed would give big tax cuts to high-income households and increase the tax burden on middle- and lower-income households, according to an analysis from economists at the Tax Policy Center.”
68	Careers: Governors	governor, state, texa, gov, former, record	“Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee is slated to announce Tuesday that he will make a second bid for the Republican nomination.”
69	Horserace: Conventions (2016)	convent, wisconsin, campaign, indiana, penc	“CLEVELAND - The Never Trump agitators have been defeated, but they say they're not going a way. Republicans who failed to change party rules here this week and stop Donald Trump from winning the party's presidential nomination are threatening to cause chaos on the floor of the national convention next week.”
70	Foreign Policy: Middle East	foreign, polici, iran, state, israel, nuclear	“We are indignant that certain Middle Eastern leaders have discarded the principle of direct negotiations between the sovereign nation of Israel and the Palestinian leadership, and we are equally indignant that the Obama Administration's Middle East policy of appeasement has encouraged such a n ominous act of bad faith.”
71	Media: O'Reilly/ The Five (Fox)	oreilli, right, think, know, william, boll	“PERINO: Yeah. GUILFOYLE: ... that inspires confidence... GUTFELD: Yeah.”
72	Media: Cavuto/Baier (Fox)	think, cavuto, baier, right, say	“NEIL CAVUTO, HOST: All right, Howard Dean is giving Bernie Sanders advice about toning it down. Try not to go too crazy here. Enough said.”
73	Campaign Activities: Applause Lines	applaus, will, peopl, want, can, get, thank	“Thank you. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you. Thank you. (Chants of "Obama! Obama!") Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.”
74	Media: Sharpton/ Schultz (MSNBC)	sharpton, hes, think, presid, schultz	“REVEREND AL SHARPTON, MSNBC HOST, POLITICS NATION: Welcome to "Politics Nation." I'm Al Sharpton live tonight from Miami.”
75	Campaign Activities: VPs	vice, pick, run, ticket, presid, mate, choic	“Unprompted, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest mentioned Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine as someone President Obama would recommend to Hillary Clinton as a vice-presidential pick.”
76	Campaign Activities: Dropping Out	republican, candid, presidenti, gop, hes, run, race	“HATCH TO QUIT PRESIDENTIAL RACE Sen. Orrin Hatch tells ABCNEWS he plans to drop out of the presidential race.”
77	Foreign Policy: War on Terror	iraq, war, troop, presid, american, afghanistan	“The President's strategy in Iraq is not succeeding. It is not making America safer. Doing more of the same would be a disaster.”
78	Candidate Traits: Candidate Appearance	like, say, one, wear, look, just, hand	“The first known published description of Donald Trump's hair, as an entity that deserved its own description, was mild.”
79	Horserace: Rally Crowd Descriptions	ralli, said, crowd, protest, event	“Donald J. Trump said on Sunday he was in favor of the actions of his supporters who reportedly punched and kicked a protester from the Black Lives Matter movement who interrupted Mr. Trump's campaign rally the previous day in Birmingham, Ala.”
80	Immigration: Muslim Ban	un, muslim, said, ban, state, islam	“After doubling down on his proposal to ban some immigrants by including those from countries with a history of terrorism, Donald Trump is now doubling down on another controversial idea in the wake of the Orlando massacre: profiling Muslims already in the United States.”
81	Campaign Activities: Crowd Interactions	thank, get, want, know, one, peopl	“I'm with you all the way. Yeah. I was with you from the former days. That helps a lot. Tell everybody to come out. We will. Good. We will. Marty, are you eating that? No.”

82	Media: Video Clip (ABC/ Fox/MSNBC)	video, clip, end, begin	“(END VIDEO CLIP) O'REILLY: And Congresswoman Michele Bachmann will be here to tell us how she would get America out of the economic chaos. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)”
83	Candidates: Gore/Bradley/ Bush	vice, presid, bush, campaign, gore	“Al Gore challenged Bill Bradley on one of his pet issues during their second debate this weekend, campaign finance reform. Gore proposed to Bradley yesterday that both stop spending money on TV and radio campaign ads and debate twice a week instead.”
84	Candidates: Bernie Sanders	democrat, parti, campaign, support, vermont	“Sen Bernie Sanders, facing lengthening odds of winning Democratic presidential nomination, is attempting to use his widespread popularity to increase his political influence...”
85	Culture Issues: Abortion/Gay Marriage	abort, issu, marriag, right, gay, life	“Mitt Romney, when asked about what he had done to advance gay rights, replied: ‘I don't discriminate,’ and he recalled an appointment of a gay person to his cabinet as governor of Massachusetts.”
86	Media: Hannity (Fox)	hanniti, colm, right, know, sean	“HANNITY: You're not calling me stupid, right?.. CONWAY: You're not the candidate. COLMES: Why are you looking my way?”
87	Education: Primary Education	school, educ, colleg, student, children, teacher	“Think about it: we're asking America's teachers to meet our greatest obligation for the future. We're asking them to educate and help mold our children. Yet we pay them far less than other professionals with essentially the same qualifications are now earning.”
88	Candidates: Chris Christie	jersey, christi, new, governor,	“Good evening. Please take your seats. Welcome, Governor Christie. we have here a New Jersey boy. He is a real Jersey boy from Newark, New Jersey.”

Appendix A.5: Pre- and Post-test Experiment Questionnaire (for Chapter 7)

Do you agree to participate in this experiment?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Please select your gender.

Male (1)

Female (2)

Other (3)

Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Do you consider yourself primarily white or Caucasian, black or African American, American Indian, Asian, or something else?

White or Caucasian (1)

Black or African American (2)

American Indian (3)

Asian (4)

Other (5)

We would like to get a sense of your general preferences. Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge, along with situational variables can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both red and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of those options.

What is your favorite color?

White (1)

Black (2)

Red (3)

Pink (4)

Green (5)

Blue (6)

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would

you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

- Most of the time (1)
- Some of the time (2)
- Only now and then (3)
- Hardly at all (4)

How much do you trust the accuracy of the news and information that you get from the news media?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

When a big news story breaks people often go online to get up-to-to-minute details on what is going on. We want to know which websites people trust to get this information. We also want to know if people are paying attention to the question. Please ignore the question and select FoxNews.com and NBC.com as your two answers.

When there is a big news story, which is the one news website you would visit first? (Please only choose one)

- New York Times website (1)
- Washington Post (2)
- CNN.com (3)
- FoxNews.com (4)
- Google News (5)
- Yahoo! News (6)
- NBC.com (7)
- USA Today website (8)
- Other (9)

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

- Democrat (1)
- Republican (2)
- Independent (3)

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat? [Asked of those identifying as "Democrat"]

Strong Democrat (1)
Not very strong Democrat (2)

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican? [Asked of those identifying as “Republican”]

Strong Republican (1)
Not very strong Republican (2)

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party, or do you consider yourself to be closer to neither? [Asked of those identifying as “Independent”]

Closer to Republican Party (1)
Closer to Democratic Party (2)
Closer to neither (3)

You are going to participate in a hypothetical presidential primary. Would you prefer to participate in a Republican Party primary or a Democratic Party primary? [Asked of those identifying as “Closer to neither”]

Republican Party primary (1)
Democratic Party primary (2)

In the grid below, you will see a series of statements. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each statement. [For each question, options are: Strongly agree (1), Somewhat agree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Somewhat disagree, and Strongly disagree (5)].

Sen. Alex Simmons cares about people like me
Sen. Alex Simmons is focused on the important issues
Sen. Alex Simmons is a political insider
Please click the “neither agree nor disagree” response
Sen. Alex Simmons is a strong leader
Sen. Alex Simmons is electable
World War I came after World War II

I'd like you to rate Sen. Alex Simmons using something we call the *FEELING THERMOMETER*. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that

person. You would rate the person at the 50-degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. [Answer via feeling thermometer].

How likely would you be to vote for Sen. Alex Simmons in a hypothetical Democratic presidential primary?

- Not at all likely (1)
- Not too likely (2)
- Somewhat likely (3)
- Very likely (4)

If you were asked to choose between Gov. Nick Turner and Sen. Alex Simmons to win the Democratic party nomination, for whom would you vote?

- Gov. Nick Turner (1)
- Sen. Alex Simmons (2)

How confident do you feel in your vote choice?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Mostly confident (2)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not at all confident (4)

Below is a list of a number of important issues facing the country today. What issues do you think are most important right now? Please rank your top 3.

- _____ Government ethics (1)
- _____ Climate change/environment (2)
- _____ National defense (3)
- _____ Economic inequality (4)
- _____ Healthcare (5)
- _____ 2nd Amendment/gun control (6)
- _____ Higher Education (7)
- _____ Taxes (8)
- _____ Immigration (9)
- _____ Social Security/retirement (10)
- _____ Government deregulation (11)
- _____ Foreign policy (12)
- _____ Abortion (13)
- _____ National deficit (14)

- _____ Race relations (15)
- _____ Job creation (16)
- _____ Terrorism (17)
- _____ Primary education (18)
- _____ Crime/safety (19)
- _____ Energy/gas prices (20)
- _____ Prescription drugs (21)
- _____ Trade (22)
- _____ Infrastructure (23)
- _____ LGBTQ rights (24)

Sen. Alex Simmons mentioned a number of important issues in her press release. Below is a list of a number of important issues facing the country today. Please select the issues you recall Sen. Alex Simmons mentioning in her campaign press release. Select as many as you can recall.

- Government ethics (1)
- Climate change/environment (2)
- National defense (3)
- Economic inequality (4)
- Healthcare (5)
- 2nd Amendment/gun control (6)
- Higher education (7)
- Taxes (8)
- Immigration (9)
- Social Security/retirement (10)
- Government deregulation (11)
- Foreign Policy (12)
- Abortion (13)
- National deficit (14)
- Race relations (15)
- Terrorism (16)
- Job creation (17)
- Prescription drug costs (18)
- Trade (19)
- Primary education (20)
- Crime/safety (21)
- Energy/gas prices (22)
- Infrastructure (23)
- LGBTQ rights (24)

Timing [Records time spent on Full Information Page]

- First Click (1)
- Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

Earlier you were given a press release from hypothetical Democratic presidential primary candidate Sen. Alex Simmons that summarized her remarks during a campaign stop. If you are interested in learning more about the candidate, you may do so by opening the following PDF. It contains biographical information about the candidate and a collection of policy white papers. The PDF has a table of contents and you can click on the page numbers to jump to sections that are of particular interest to you. The PDF is also searchable. If you are interested, please take some time to peruse this information. Otherwise, click below to continue.

Now that you've had a chance to view more information about the candidates, would you like to re-consider your vote?

Yes (1)

No (2)

How likely would you be to vote for Sen. Alex Simmons in a hypothetical Democratic presidential primary?

Not at all likely (1)

Not too likely (2)

Somewhat likely (3)

Very likely (4)

If you were asked to choose between Gov. Nick Turner and Sen. Alex Simmons to win the Democratic party nomination, for whom would you vote?

Gov. Nick Turner (1)

Sen. Alex Simmons (2)

Appendix A.6: Experimental Instruments (for Chapter 7)

Democratic Candidate Press Release

Press Release – U.S. Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Alex Simmons: *“The structural change we need is a wealth tax.”*

September 19, 2019

U.S. Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Alex Simmons will deliver a speech at a campaign rally at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. Senator Simmons looks forward to discussing the most important issues facing the country.

Key Excerpts of Prepared Remarks:

“How about we pass some basic rules of ethics for the Department of Defense? How about a little transparency in this area? The big five defense contractors want to lobby? Let's hear what you are saying. I have brothers who served in the military. I just want to be able to say as an American, I guarantee when a decision is made at the Department of Defense, it's not a decision to enhance the profitability of the major contractors. It is a decision to protect the safety and security of the United States of America.”

“Fossil fuel companies worry that if Congress gets serious about this climate thing, that could affect their bottom line. So they invested, they really invested, in politicians. They invested in Washington.”

“The structural change we need is a wealth tax. Here is my proposal. For the top one-tenth of 1%, those with more than \$50 million, let's include wealth in your property tax. This is not to say, ‘You built one of the great fortunes in this country and now we're taking it.’ For the top one-tenth of 1%, good for you. But here is the deal. That fortune was built, in part, using workers all of us helped pay to educate. At least in part using public roads to get goods to market. That fortune was protected by police and firefighters. So we just say you built one of the big fortunes. That's great. Good for you. But pitch in so everybody else gets a chance to build something real.”

“Let's start with health care is a basic human right and we fight for basic human rights. As Democrats, what are we looking for? For a way to get everybody covered at the lowest possible cost. The data say the best way to do that is through Medicare for all. Now, there are multiple pathways. Some, like my opponent Gov. Nick Turner, say we start by lowering the age. Some say we raise the age. It's going to take bringing folks to the table. We need unions to be represented. That is very important.”

“I believe in gun safety. Seven children and teenagers will die today from gun violence. And most of the time it won't make a headline. Some will be in mass shootings, and that

will get people's attention. Most will be on sidewalks and playgrounds. Right now the NRA holds Congress hostage, and we need to fight back.”

Republican Candidate Press Release

Press Release – U.S. Senator and Republican presidential candidate Alex Simmons:
“This will be the best place in the world to create jobs for the 21st century economy.”

September 19, 2019

U.S. Senator and Republican presidential candidate Alex Simmons will deliver a speech at a campaign rally at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. Senator Simmons looks forward to discussing the most important issues facing the country.

Key Excerpts of Prepared Remarks:

“For 200 years, America has been a special country unlike any in the history of the world. I believe that began when we were founded on a powerful truth: That our rights don't come from government, our rights do not come from our laws, our rights do not come from our leaders. Our rights come from God. Our rights come from our Creator. This is why we embrace free enterprise. This is why we embrace individual liberty. That is why the American example, the American dream, has inspired millions all over the world.”

“We need to grow the conservative movement. I look forward to reaching out to Americans who live paycheck to paycheck. I grew up paycheck to paycheck. My mother was a maid, a cashier. I will talk to young Americans, staggering under the weight of student loans. A 500% increase in student loans in the last 10 years. People graduating with thousands of dollars that they paid for a degree that did not lead to a job. They cannot lecture me about student loans. I had a student loan. I never thought I'd pay it off.”

“We will protect the Second Amendment. We will protect religious liberty. Every American has the constitutional right to live out the teachings of their religion.”

“First day in office, we will energize the economy. We will embrace free enterprise. We will fix the tax code, rollback regulations, save Social Security and Medicare. We will bring the budget under control. When we do all that, there will be no better place in the world to start a business or expand an existing one. This will be the best place in the world to create jobs for the 21st century economy.”

“Stopping illegal immigration is about public safety. Unless we know who you are and why are coming, you're not getting into the United States of America. I am tired of hearing from opponents like Gov. Nick Turner that securing the border is anti-immigrant.”

Democratic and Republican Control Group Article

Layers of Deceit

Browning onions is a matter of patience. My own patience ran out earlier this year while leafing through the *New York Times* food section. This passage caught my eye:

Add the onions to the skillet and increase the heat to medium-high. Cook until they begin to turn dark brown and somewhat soft, about 5 minutes. Add the oil and a pinch of the fine sea salt; continue cooking until the onions are soft and caramelized, about 5 minutes longer.

Fully caramelized onions in 10 minutes. That is a lie. As long as I've been cooking, I've been reading various versions of this lie, over and over.

Telling the truth about how to prepare onions for French onion soup, is Julia Child: “[C]ook slowly until tender and translucent, about 10 minutes. Blend in the salt and sugar, raise heat to moderately high, and let the onions brown, stirring frequently until they are a dark walnut color, 25 to 30 minutes.” That is how long it takes to caramelize onions.

The deeper problem with all the deceit around the question of caramelized onions is that the premise is wrong. The faster you try to do it, the more you waste your time. The 10-minute-cum-28-minute caramelized onion is all labor and anxiety. Give yourself 45 or 50 minutes to brown onions, working slowly on a moderate flame, and it's an untaxing background activity.

In truth, the best time to caramelize onions is yesterday. Often enough, you need to have them ready before you can start on the rest of the dish. Thus the recipe-writers' impulse to deceive. Browning onions is slow work, and it comes first. So throw the onions in a crock pot and go to bed. In recipe time, that's hours and hours. In your time, the time that matters, it's less than five minutes.

Democratic and Republican Low Convergence Treatment Group Article

[Democratic/Republican] Presidential Candidate Alex Simmons Planning Foreign Trip after Stop at the University of Iowa

[Democratic/Republican] presidential candidate and United States Senator Alex Simmons spoke before a crowd of University of Iowa students on Tuesday, highlighting a number of issues central to her platform. But after the event all attention turned to the rumors that the Sen. Simmons campaign is planning a trip abroad to bolster her foreign policy credentials.

Up to this point, foreign policy has not been a critical issue for Sen. Simmons. But advisers fear that it could become a lingering question later on, especially in contrast with rival Gov. Nick Turner, and are trying to get ahead of the issue.

While no announcement of the trip is imminent, advisers say they are targeting stops in a number of major cities of ally countries including London, Paris, and Berlin. Presumably they will attempt to arrange joint appearance with prominent world leaders like Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Emmanuel Macron of France. Arranging such events can prove a difficult logistical task, but the Simmons campaign believes they are up to it.

“During my time in the Senate I have taken numerous votes on issues of foreign policy. The American people know all about what a decision-maker I am on those issues,” Sen. Simmons said to reporters after the event.

When asked by reporters during the press availability if this represented an attempt to show voters a capacity of leadership on the world stage, Sen. Simmons pushed back.

“The goal of this campaign is and always will be to focus on the important issues. This campaign is about focusing on what the American people care about. And the American people really want to hear about what I’m going to do to combat the influence of special interests and reduce income inequality.”

Democratic High Convergence Treatment Group Article

Democratic Presidential Candidate Alex Simmons Discusses Government Ethics and a Wealth Tax at the University of Iowa

Democratic presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Alex Simmons spoke before a crowd of University of Iowa students on Tuesday, highlighting a number of issues central to her platform.

“I just want to be able to say as an American, I guarantee when a decision is made at the Department of Defense, it's not a decision to enhance the profitability of the major contractors,” Sen. Simmons said to an engaged crowd.

Sen. Simmons emphasized the need to fight lobbyist influence on Congress as well, especially with regards to oil companies. “Fossil fuel companies worry that if Congress gets serious about this climate thing, that could affect their bottom line. So...[they] invested, they really invested, in politicians. They invested in Washington,” she said to applause.

Sen. Simmons also discussed a central part of her campaign promises: a wealth tax. “Here is my proposal. For the top one-tenth of 1%, those with more than \$50 million, let's include wealth in your property tax... So we just say you built one of the big fortunes. That's great. Good for you. But pitch in so everybody else gets a chance to build something real.”

As for those who say that Sen. Simmons is ignoring other important issues, like rival Gov. Nick Turner, she told reporters following the rally that, “The goal of this campaign is and always will be to focus on the important issues. This campaign is about focusing on what the American people care about. And the American people really want to hear about what I’m going to do to combat the influence of special interests and reduce income inequality.”

After the event, attention turned to talk that the Sen. Simmons campaign is planning a trip abroad to bolster her foreign policy credentials. But the campaign has not made an announcement confirming the rumors.

Republican High Convergence Treatment Group Article

Republican Presidential Candidate Alex Simmons Discusses the Economy, Student Loans, and Immigration at the University of Iowa

Republican presidential candidate and United States Senator Alex Simmons held a rally at the University of Iowa on Tuesday, speaking on a number of issues central to his platform.

“First day in office, we will energize the economy. We will embrace free enterprise,” Sen. Simmons said to an engaged crowd. “When we do all that, there will be no better place in the world to start a business or expand an existing one. This will be the best place in the world to create jobs for the 21st-century economy.”

Sen. Simmons also emphasized an issue closely connected to the lives of the students in the audience: student loan debt. “I will talk to young Americans, staggering under the weight of student loans...People graduating with thousands of dollars that they paid for a degree that did not lead to a job. They cannot lecture me about student loans. I had a student loan. I never thought I'd pay it off.” he said to applause.

Sen. Simmons once again laid out the basis of his immigration policy: “Unless we know who you are and why are coming, you're not getting into the United States of America.” And he took shots at his critics on that issue, saying, “I am tired of hearing that securing the border is anti-immigrant.”

As for those who say that Sen. Simmons is ignoring other important issues, like rival Gov. Nick Turner, he told reporters following the rally that, “The goal of this campaign is and always will be to focus on the important issues. This campaign is about focusing on what the American people care about. And the American people really want to hear about what I’m going to do to create an American economy for the 21st century.”

After the event, attention turned to talk that the Simmons campaign is planning a trip abroad to bolster his foreign policy credentials. But the campaign has not made an announcement confirming the rumors.

Appendix B (Chapter 4)

Appendix B.1: Validity Checks for Measure of Candidate Anger

Automated processes of text analysis, including dictionary methods, have the advantage of perfect reliability. That said, the anger dictionary still needs to be independently validated. While the original creators of the EmoLex dictionaries performed validation checks (Mohammad and Turney 2013), these efforts did not validate the dictionary in the specific context of political campaign speeches. It is possible that candidates convey anger in different ways than the average person, necessitating a specific validation effort. To do so, I assess the construct convergence and divergence validity by estimating how the anger measure correlates with other dictionaries provided by EmoLex.

Construct convergence validity represents how closely the measure approximates similar measures while construct divergence validity assesses how unrelated the measure is to measurements that are conceptually opposed. To test the anger dictionary against this standard, I utilize the other dictionaries provided by EmoLex. Besides for anger, EmoLex has dictionaries for seven other emotions – anticipation, disgust, fear, joy, surprise, trust, and sadness – as well as positive and negative affect. Anger is a negatively charged emotion, so it would be a sign of validity if candidate speeches with high percentages of anger words also used high percentages of negative affect words. Similarly, emotions like disgust, fear, and sadness rise out of negative emotional foundations, and so the use of anger should also be positively related to the use of other negative emotional words. While positive correlations between the use of anger words and the use of both negative affect and negative emotion words would suggest construct

convergence validity, weak or negative correlations with the use of positive affect and positive emotion words would suggest construct divergence validity.

The percentage of anger words is positively and strongly correlated with negative words, as expected. The correlations with the other negative words – disgust, fear, and sadness – are slightly weaker but still positive and quite high. Percent anger words is positively correlated with the use of both positive affect and all positive emotions, but the correlations are much weaker than for negative emotions and negative affect. This suggests that the anger dictionary in this context serves as a valid measure.

Appendix Table B.1: Correlations between Percentage Anger Words and Percentages Other Emotions and Affects

	Correlation with % Anger Words
Anticipation	.2059
Disgust	.6516
Fear	.6565
Joy	.1166
Surprise	.1887
Trust	.2065
Sad	.5759
Positive	.0910
Negative	.7202

Appendix C (Chapter 5)

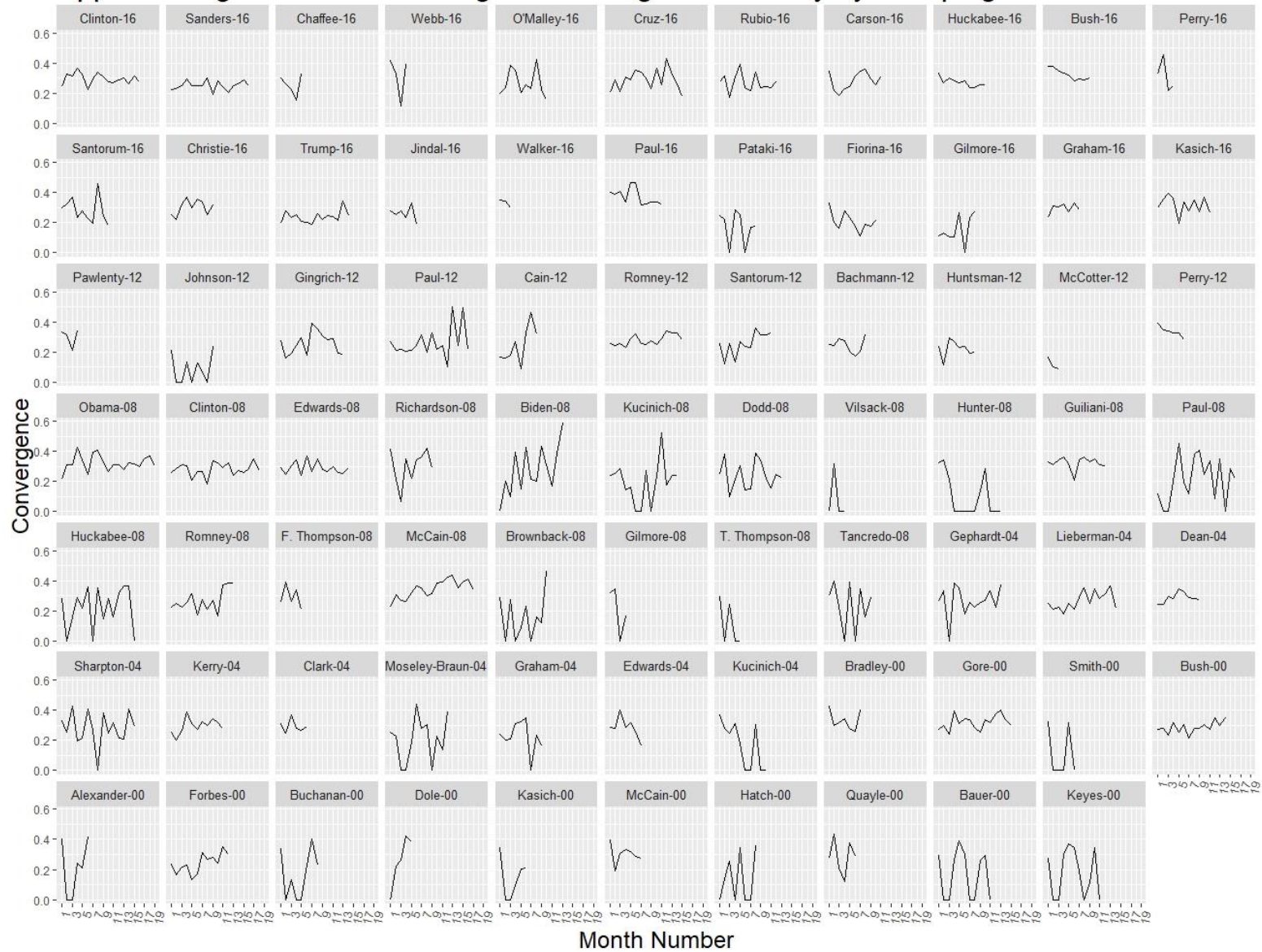
Appendix C.1: Unit Root Tests by Length of Series

Appendix Table C.1.1: Unit Root Tests by Length of Series

Length of Series	Levin, Lin, and Chu	Im, Pesaran, and Shin	Maddala and Wu	Hadri	Details
8	<i>Z = -8.196</i> <i>p = 0.0000</i>	<i>Z = -11.264</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 277.833</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 0.831</i> <i>p = 0.203</i>	7 series
9	<i>Z = -6.528</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -5.911</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 144.201</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 2.758</i> <i>p = 0.003</i>	7 series
10	<i>Z = -6.731</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -4.400</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 68.179</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = .311</i> <i>p = .378</i>	6 series
11	<i>Z = -10.836</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -7.541</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 165.437</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 0.677</i> <i>p = 0.249</i>	7 series
12	<i>Z = -4.850</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -3.482</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 45.303</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -0.232</i> <i>p = 0.592</i>	4 series
13	<i>Z = -5.372</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -4.447</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 73.341</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 2.074</i> <i>p = 0.019</i>	6 series
14	<i>Z = -7.891</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -6.454</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 90.496</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 1.148</i> <i>p = 0.125</i>	5 series
15	<i>Z = -5.358</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -4.702</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 61.862</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 0.025</i> <i>p = 0.490</i>	5 series
16	<i>Z = -7.456</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = -6.745</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 86.567</i> <i>p = 0.000</i>	<i>Z = 0.006</i> <i>p = 0.498</i>	4 series
17	<i>Z = -1.298</i> <i>p = 0.097</i>	<i>Z = -0.812</i> <i>p = 0.208</i>	<i>Chi Sq. = 3.699</i> <i>p = .157</i>	<i>Z = 1.540</i> <i>p = .062</i>	1 series
18	<i>Z = -2.954</i> <i>p = 0.002</i>	<i>Z = -2.579</i> <i>p = 0.005</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 13.084</i> <i>p = 0.001</i>	<i>Z = -0.384</i> <i>p = 0.650</i>	1 series
19	<i>Z = -2.400</i> <i>p = 0.008</i>	<i>Z = -2.662</i> <i>p = 0.004</i>	<i>Chi Sq = 14.753</i> <i>p = 0.001</i>	<i>Z = 0.311</i> <i>p = 0.378</i>	1 series

Notes: Lags for all series calculated via AIC. All tests account for exogenous intercepts. Italicized cells are tests that indicate the series are stationary. Hadri test is that at least one series possesses a unit root.

Appendix Figure C.2.1: Convergence throughout Primary by Campaign



Appendix C.3: Effect of Change in Number of Candidates on Agenda Convergence

	Convergence			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Convergence, Lagged	0.112*	0.118*	0.120*	0.111*
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Change in # of Candidates	-0.008*	-0.004*	-0.005*	-0.014*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)
% Anger Words (EmoLex)	0.029*			
	(0.011)			
% Anger Words (LIWC)		0.027*	0.027*	0.028*
		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Authentic Language (LIWC)	0.0004	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Readability Score	0.0005	0.001	0.001	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Inverse Shannon H Entropy	-0.306*	-0.306*	-0.303*	-0.296*
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
# of Effective Candidates	0.010*			0.006
	(0.003)			(0.004)
Frontrunner – Second Place Polls		0.0003		
		(0.0004)		
Frontrunner’s Poll Standing			-0.0003	
			(0.0005)	
# of Candidates				0.002
				(0.002)
Change in # of Candidates * # of Candidates				0.001
				(0.001)
Constant	0.268*	0.290*	0.322*	0.288*
	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.047)	(0.037)
Observations	648	648	648	648
R ²	0.286	0.274	0.274	0.286
Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistic	0.064	0.049	0.008	0.007

*Notes: All models OLS regression. * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models also include controls for race, party, gender, prior work experience, poll standing, number of candidate speeches, interpolation of candidate agenda and election year fixed effects not included to preserve space. All Breusch-Godfrey Test Statistics are statistically insignificant at conventional levels.*

Appendix D (Chapter 6)

Appendix D.1: Included and Excluded Candidate-Media Series by Media Type and Year

		2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Newspaper	Included	All	All	Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Dennis Kucinich, Chris Dodd, Tom Vilsack, Rudy Giuliani, Ron Paul, Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, Fred Thompson, John McCain, Sam Brownback, Jim Gilmore, Tommy Thompson, Tom Tancredo	All	All
	Excluded	None	None	Mike Gravel	None	None
ABC	Included	Bill Bradley, Al Gore, Bob Smith, Lamar Alexander, George W. Bush, Steve Forbes, Pat Buchanan, John Kasich, Elizabeth Dole, John McCain, Orrin Hatch, Dan Quayle, Gary Bauer	Dick Gephardt, Joe Lieberman, Howard Dean, John Kerry, Al Sharpton, Carol Moseley-Braun, Bob Graham, Wesley Clark, John Edwards	Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Tom Vilsack, Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, Fred Thompson, John McCain, Sam Brownback, Tommy Thompson, Tom Tancredo	Tim Pawlenty, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Herman Cain, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Michele Bachmann, Jon Huntsman, Rick Perry, Thad McCotter	Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Lincoln Chaffee, Jim Webb, Martin O'Malley, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Jeb Bush, Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, Chris Christie, Donald Trump, Bobby Jindal, Scott Walker, Rand Paul, Carly Fiorina, Lindsey Graham, John Kasich
	Excluded	Alan Keyes	Dennis Kucinich	Dennis Kucinich, Mike Gravel, Duncan Hunter, Jim Gilmore	Gary Johnson	George Pataki, Jim Gilmore
Fox	Included	Bill Bradley, Al Gore, Bob Smith, Lamar Alexander, George W. Bush, Steve Forbes, Pat Buchanan, John Kasich,	All	Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich, Tom Vilsack,	Tim Pawlenty, Gary Johnson, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Herman Cain, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Michele Bachmann, Jon	Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Martin O'Malley, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Jeb

		Elizabeth Dole, John McCain, Orrin Hatch, Dan Quayle, Alan Keyes		Duncan Hunter, Rudy Giuliani, Ron Paul, Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, Fred Thompson, John McCain, Sam Brownback, Tommy Thompson, Tom Tancredo	Huntsman, Rick Perry	Bush, Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, Chris Christie, Donald Trump, Bobby Jindal, Scott Walker, Rand Paul, Carly Fiorina, Lindsey Graham, John Kasich
	Excluded	Gary Bauer	None	Mike Gravel, Jim Gilmore	Thad McCotter	Lincoln Chafee, Jim Webb, George Pataki, Jim Gilmore
MSNBC	Included	Bill Bradley, Al Gore, George W. Bush, Steve Forbes, John McCain	Dick Gephardt, Howard Dean, Al Sharpton, John Kerry, Wesley Clark, Carol Moseley-Braun, Bob Graham, John Edwards, Dennis Kucinich	Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Dennis Kucinich, Chris Dodd, Tom Vilsack, Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, Ron Paul, Fred Thompson, John McCain, Tommy Thompson	Tim Pawlenty, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Herman Cain, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Rick Perry	Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Lincoln Chaffee, Jim Webb, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Jeb Bush, Rick Perry, Chris Christie, Donald Trump, Bobby Jindal, Scott Walker, Rand Paul, George Pataki, Carly Fiorina, Jim Gilmore, Lindsey Graham, John Kasich
	Excluded	Bob Smith, Lamar Alexander, Pat Buchanan, Elizabeth Dole, John Kasich, Dan Quayle, Orrin Hatch, Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes	Joe Lieberman	Mike Gravel, Duncan Hunter, Jim Gilmore, Sam Brownback, Tom Tancredo	Gary Johnson, Thad McCotter, Michele Bachmann, Jon Huntsman	Martin O'Malley, Rick Santorum

Notes: Nexis Uni transcripts for MSNBC begin in November, 1999. All of the excluded ended their campaigns before or during that month. For all of the included, series are trimmed to begin in November.

Appendix D.2: Panel Unit Root Tests by Media Type

	Levin, Lin, and Chu	Im, Pesaran, and Shin	Maddala and Wu	Hadri
Newspapers	$Z = -63.84$ $p = 0.0000$	$Z = -37.82$ $p = 0.000$	$Chi Sq = 1310.1$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = 3.3255$ $p = 0.000$
ABC News	$Z = -19.783$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = -17.605$ $p = 0.000$	$Chi Sq = 975.34$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = 2.8464$ $p = 0.002$
Fox News	$Z = -23.856$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = -22.858$ $p = 0.000$	$Chi Sq = 1088.9$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = 2.2883$ $p = .01106$
MSNBC	$Z = -23.557$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = -23.314$ $p = 0.000$	$Chi Sq = 735.83$ $p = 0.000$	$Z = 2.8087$ $p = 0.002487$

All series trimmed to 8 months. All series shorter than 8 months dropped. LLC, IPS, and MW test against null that there is a unit root. Hadri tests against null that there is not at least one unit root.

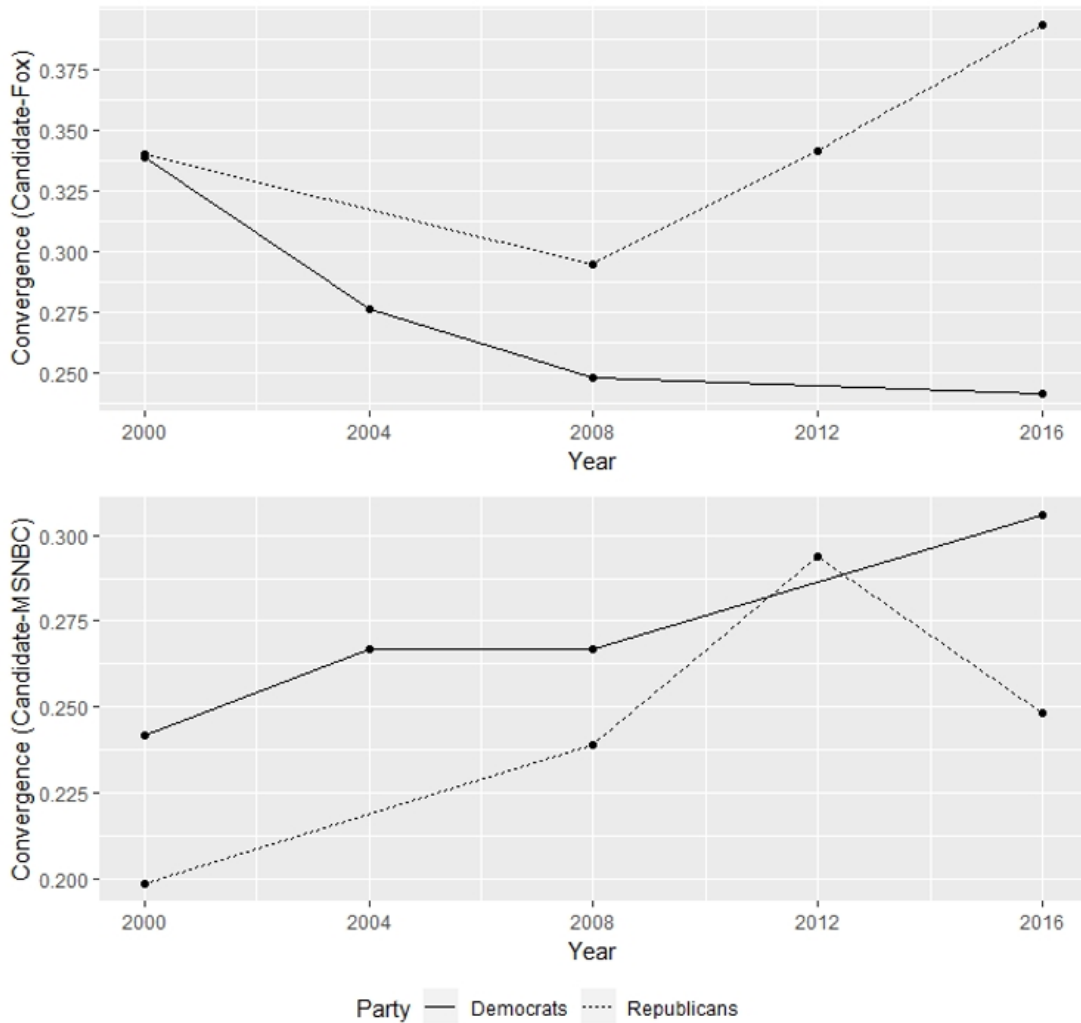
Appendix D.3: Effect of Newsworthiness Values on Convergence in Primaries by Media Type

	Convergence									
	(1) News- papers	(2) ABC News	(3) Cable News	(4) Fox News	(5) MSNBC	(6) News- papers	(7) ABC News	(8) Cable News	(9) Fox News	(10) MSNBC
% Anger Language, (EmoLex)	0.025*	0.020	0.003	0.007	-0.002	0.018*	0.013	0.013	-0.006	-0.015
	(0.011)	(0.027)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.022)
% Authentic, (LIWC)	0.032*	0.046*	0.043*	0.027	0.060*					
	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.020)					
% I Language, (LIWC)						0.016	0.030	0.030	0.067*	0.025
						(0.010)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)
Readability,	0.005	0.023	0.026*	0.039*	0.013	-0.0004	0.008	0.008	0.015	0.009
	(0.010)	(0.025)	(0.015)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Shannon Inverse H,	-0.034*	-0.019	-0.057*	-0.038*	-0.078*	-0.032*	-0.011	-0.011	-0.038*	-0.070*
	(0.010)	(0.024)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Poll,	-0.001	-0.0001	-0.002	-0.003	-0.001	-0.001	-0.0003	-0.0003	-0.003	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Constant	0.496*	0.402*	0.484*	0.505*	0.454*	0.498*	0.411*	0.411*	0.507*	0.454*
	(0.011)	(0.027)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.011)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.028)
Observations	208	74	121	68	53	208	74	74	68	53
R ²	0.113	0.087	0.216	0.147	0.379	0.070	0.040	0.040	0.227	0.274

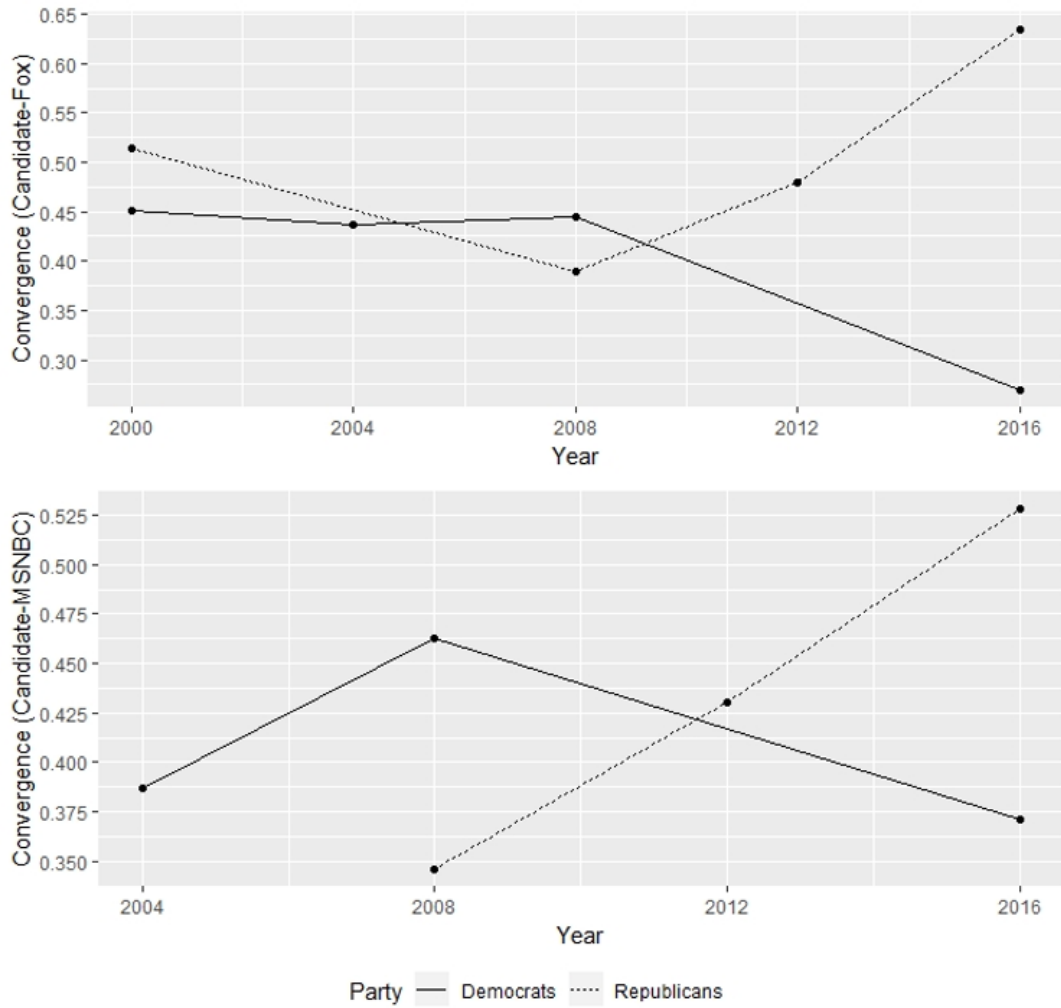
Models 1 and 6 only Candidate-Newspaper Dyads. Models 2 and 7 only Candidate-ABC News Dyads. Models 3 and 8 only Candidate-Cable News Dyads. Models 4 and 9 only Candidate-Fox News Dyads. Models 5 and 10 only Candidate-MSNBC Dyads. All models OLS regression. * denotes $p < .05$, one tailed. All IVs standardized to facilitate interpretation of substantive significance.

Appendix D.4: Convergence with Partisan Media by Candidate Party and Year

Appendix Figure D.4.1: Convergence in Partisan Media Coverage of Primary Candidates by Party and Year (PPCC)



Appendix Figure D.4.2: Convergence in Partisan Media Coverage of Primary Candidates' Announcement by Party and Year (PPAC)



Appendix E (Chapter 7)

Appendix E.1: Models of Effect of Experimental Treatment on Alternative Attitudes toward Candidates

Appendix Table 7E.1.1: Effect of Treatment Group on Unrelated Attitudes toward Candidate

	Cares about People (1)	Not Political Insider (2)	Strong Leader (3)	Electable (4)
High Convergence Treatment	0.003 (0.025)	-0.005 (0.026)	0.039 (0.025)	0.074* (0.026)
Low Convergence Treatment	0.017 (0.024)	-0.023 (0.025)	0.027 (0.024)	0.039 (0.025)
Constant	0.733* (0.017)	0.422* (0.018)	0.623* (0.017)	0.676* (0.018)
Observations	396	394	394	394
R ²	0.001	0.002	0.006	0.021

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.*

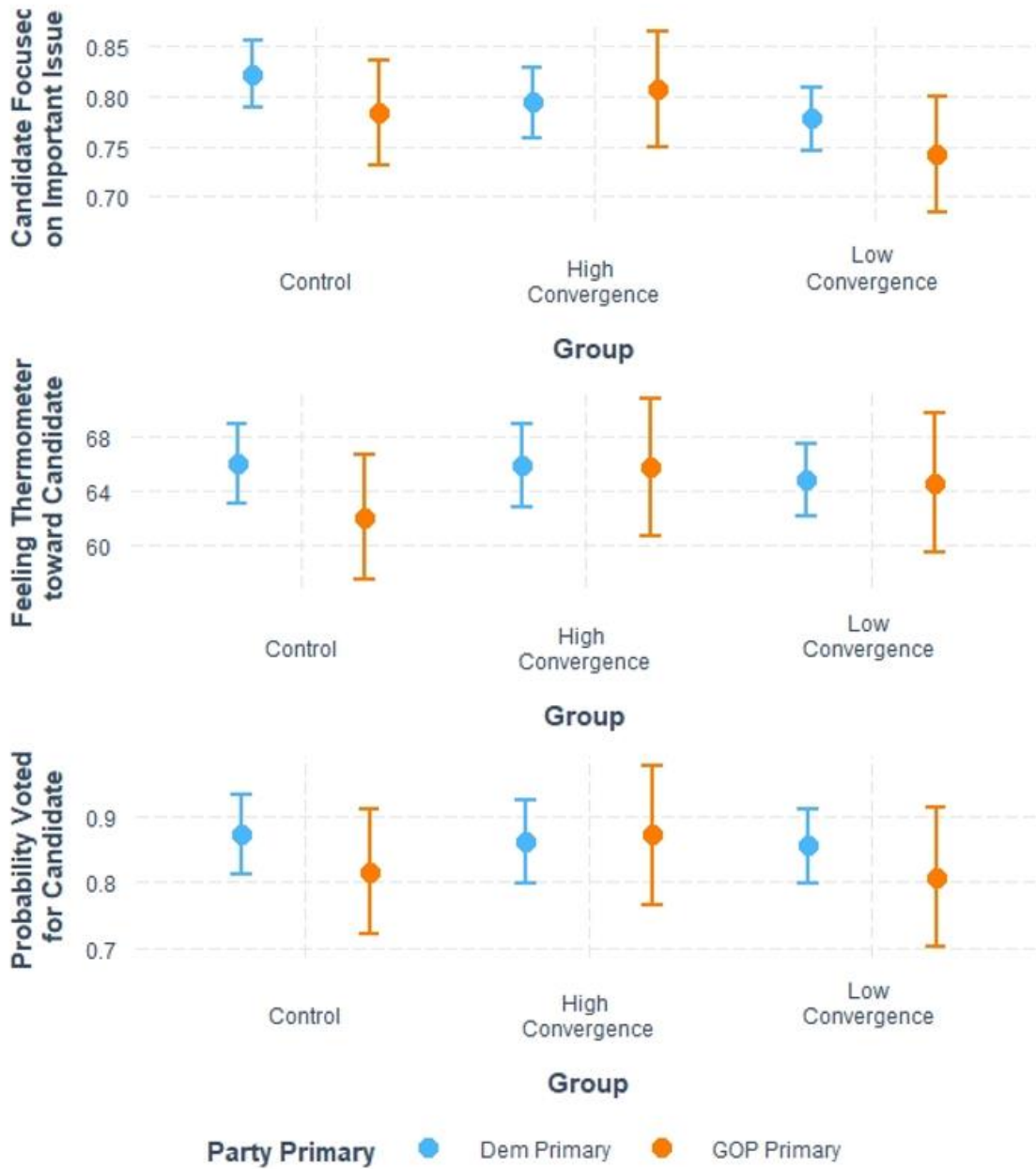
Appendix E.2: Replication Models by Party Primary

Appendix Table E.2.1: Effect of Treatment Group and Party Primary on Support for Candidate

	Important Issues	Feeling Thermometer	Vote Choice
	(1)	(2)	(3)
High Convergence Treatment	-0.028 (0.029)	-0.105 (2.551)	-0.012 (0.053)
Low Convergence Treatment	-0.045 (0.027)	-1.182 (2.402)	-0.018 (0.050)
GOP Primary	-0.039 (0.038)	-3.947 (3.287)	-0.057 (0.068)
High Convergence * GOP Primary	0.052 (0.056)	3.762 (4.861)	0.067 (0.101)
Low Convergence * GOP Primary	0.004 (0.055)	3.710 (4.784)	0.008 (0.099)
Constant	0.822* (0.020)	66.000* (1.763)	0.872* (0.037)
Observations	390	390	390
R ²	0.013	0.005	0.003

Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.

Appendix Figure E.2.1: Difference in Support for Candidate by Treatment Group and Party Primary

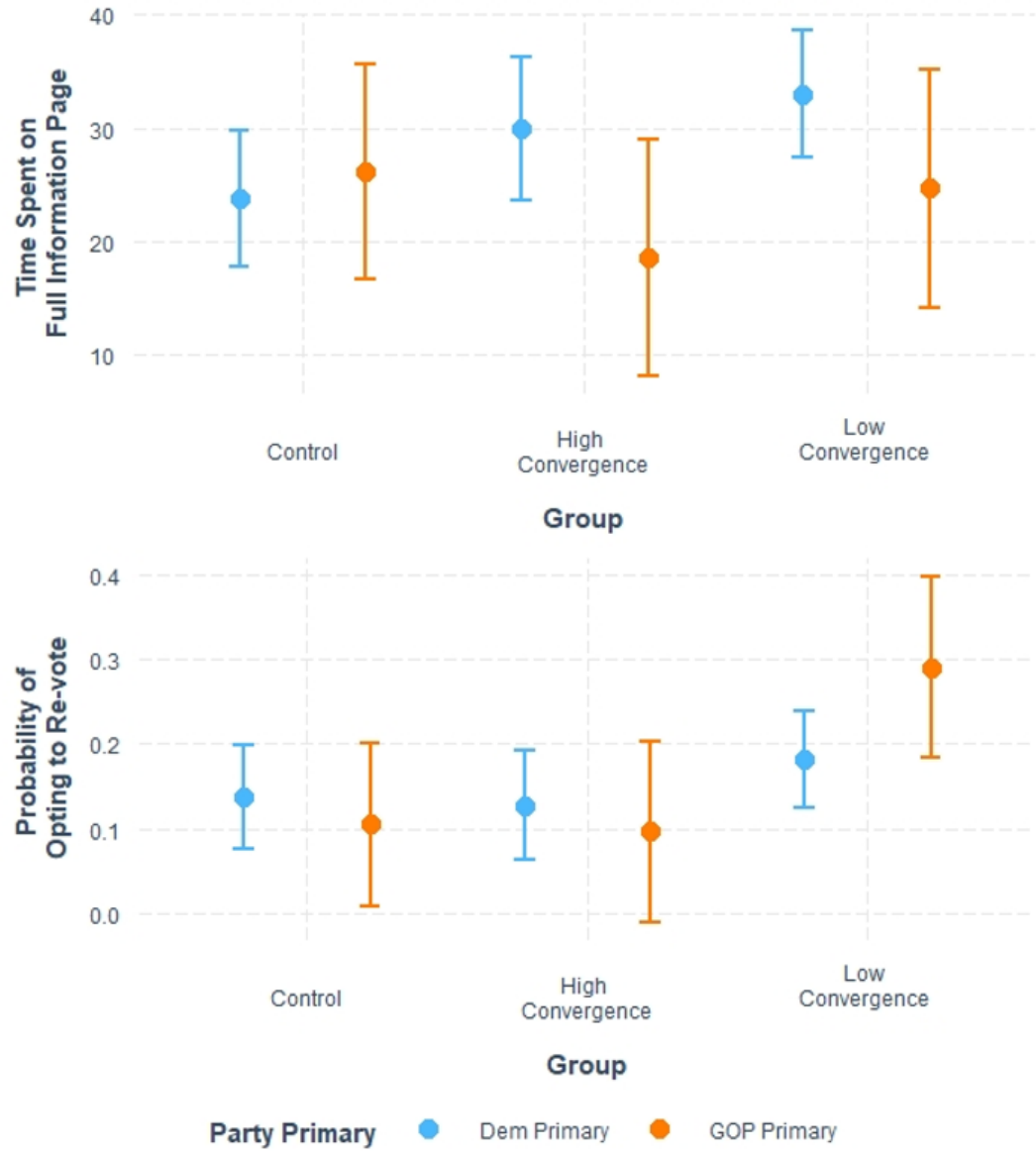


**Appendix Table E.2.2: Effect of Treatment Group and Party Primary
on Correct Voting Behavior**

	Time on Full Info Page (1)	Opted to Revote (2)
High Convergence Treatment	6.225 (5.282)	-0.010 (0.054)
Low Convergence Treatment	9.256* (4.972)	0.044 (0.051)
GOP Primary	2.358 (6.805)	-0.033 (0.069)
High Convergence * GOP Primary	-13.740 (10.065)	0.002 (0.102)
Low Convergence * GOP Primary	-10.679 (9.905)	0.142 (0.101)
Constant	23.763* (3.651)	0.138* (0.037)
Observations	390	390
R ²	0.016	0.018

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.*

Appendix Figure E.2.2: Difference in Correct Voting Behavior by Treatment Group and Party Primary



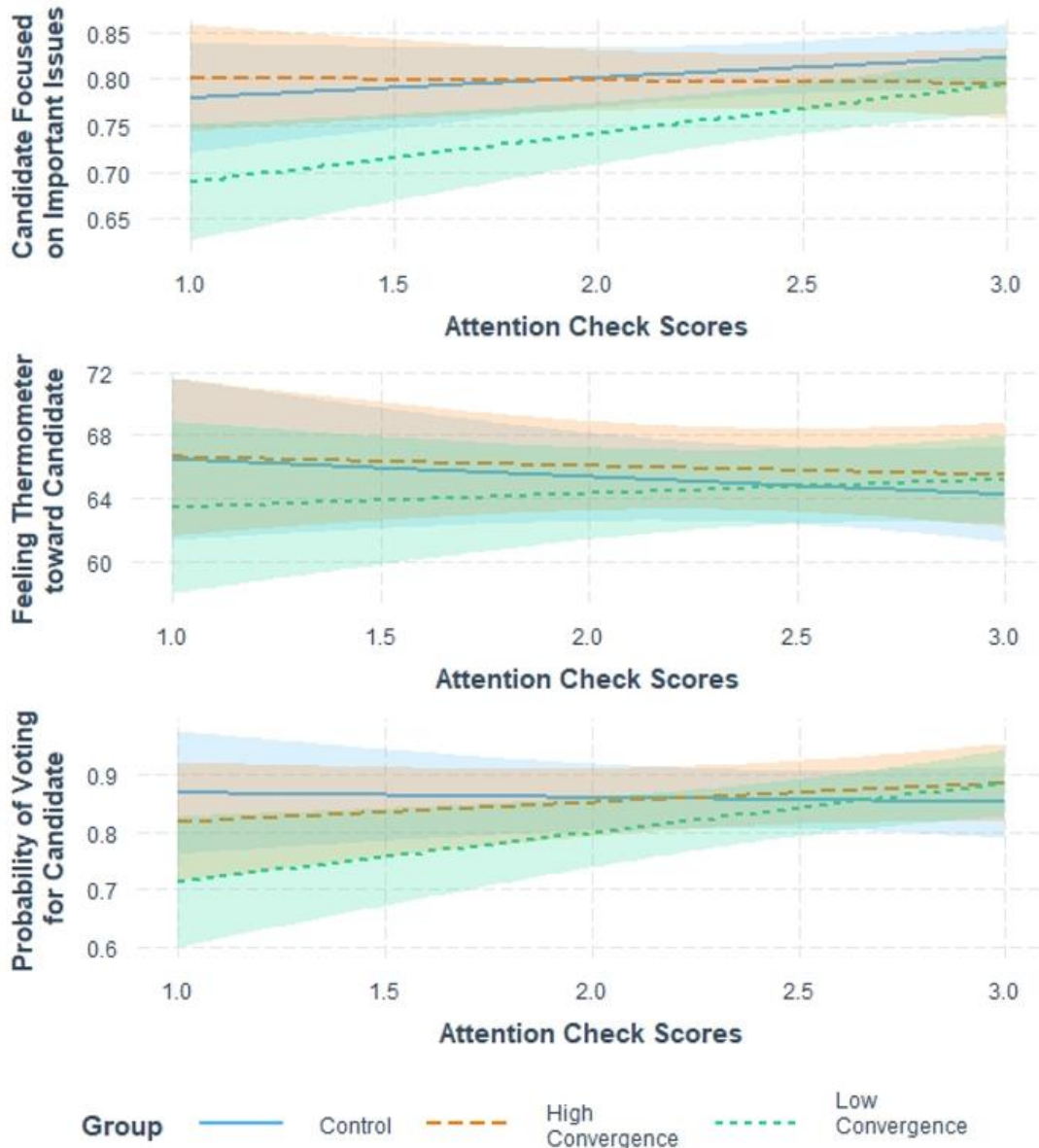
Appendix E.3: Replication Models by Level of Attention

Appendix Table E.3.1: Effect of Treatment Group and Attention Check Scores on Support for Candidate

	Important Issues (1)	Feeling Thermometer (2)	Vote Choice (3)
High Convergence Treatment	0.046 (0.077)	-0.390 (6.820)	-0.093 (0.141)
Low Convergence Treatment	-0.121 (0.080)	-5.063 (7.082)	-0.246* (0.146)
Attention Check Scores	0.022 (0.022)	-1.119 (1.907)	-0.008 (0.039)
High Convergence * Attention Check	-0.024 (0.031)	0.544 (2.694)	0.042 (0.056)
Low Convergence * Attention Check	0.031 (0.031)	2.004 (2.727)	0.093* (0.056)
Constant	0.758* (0.055)	67.593* (4.886)	0.876* (0.101)
Observations	390	390	390
R ²	0.025	0.002	0.014

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression. Attention check scores originally measures from 0-4 but recoded from 1-3 due to distribution of data.*

Appendix Figure E.3.1: Difference in Support for Candidate by Treatment Group and Attention Check Score

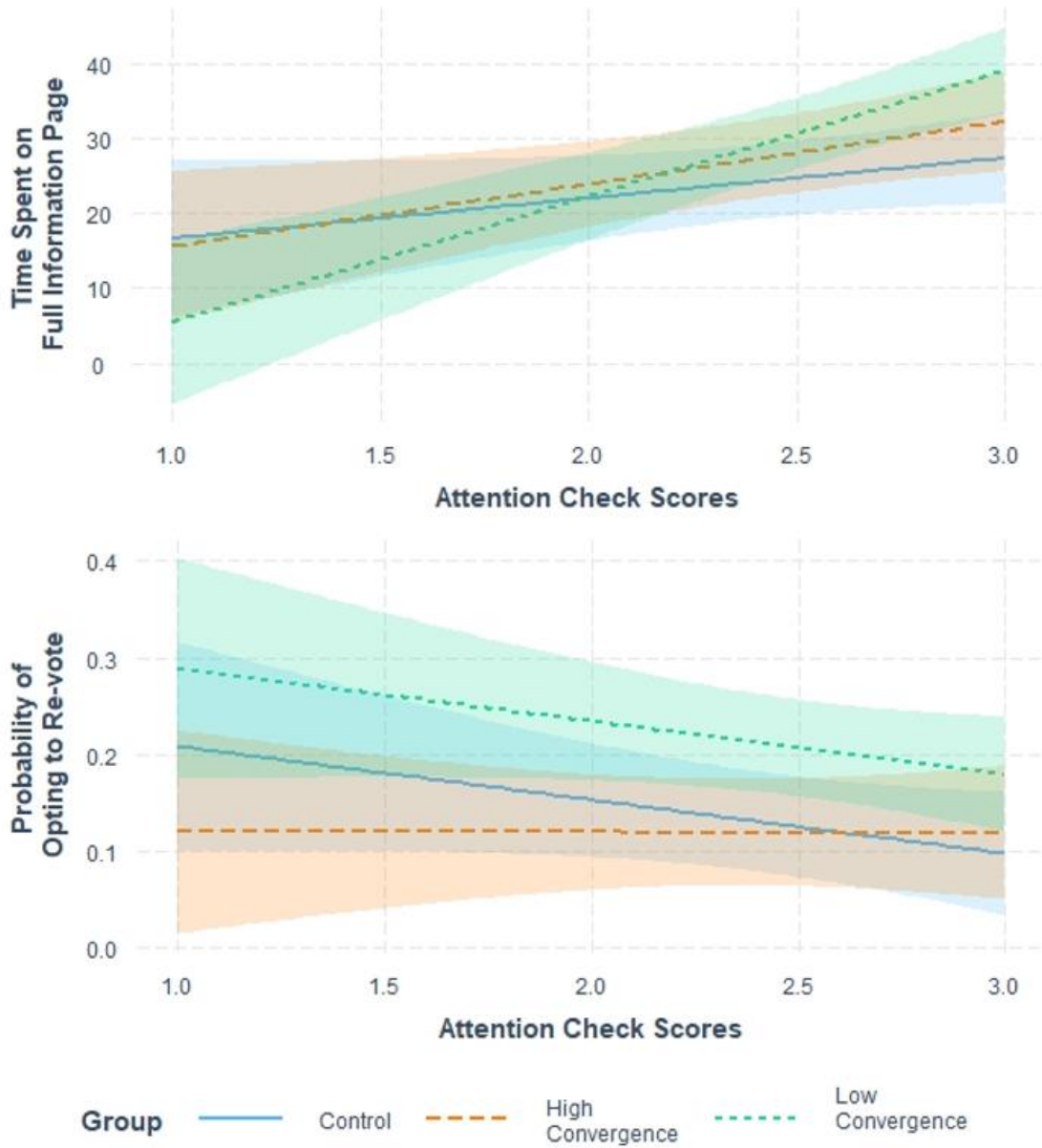


Appendix Table E.3.2: Effect of Treatment Group and Attention Check Scores on Correct Voting Behavior

	Time on Full Info Page (1)	Opted to Revote (2)
High Convergence Treatment	-4.058 (13.736)	-0.144 (0.143)
Low Convergence Treatment	-22.530 (14.262)	0.080 (0.149)
Attention Check Scores	5.371 (3.841)	-0.056 (0.040)
High Convergence * Attention Check	2.976 (5.426)	0.055 (0.057)
Low Convergence * Attention Check	11.414* (5.491)	0.001 (0.057)
Constant	11.340 (9.839)	0.264* (0.103)
Observations	390	390
R ²	0.067	0.021

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression. Attention check scores originally measures from 0-4 but recoded from 1-3 due to distribution of data.*

Appendix Figure E.3.2: Difference in Correct Voting Behavior by Treatment Group and Attention Check Score



Appendix E.4: Models Interacting Treatment and Media Trust

Appendix Table E.4.1: Effect of Treatment Group and Media Trust on Support for Candidate

	Important Issues	Feeling Thermometer	Vote Choice
	(1)	(2)	(3)
High Convergence Treatment	0.068 (0.077)	8.532 (6.665)	0.077 (0.139)
Low Convergence Treatment	-0.027 (0.077)	-0.421 (6.710)	0.016 (0.140)
Media Trust	0.033 (0.024)	2.203 (2.053)	0.038 (0.043)
High Convergence * Media Trust	-0.040 (0.034)	-3.666 (2.952)	-0.031 (0.062)
Low Convergence * Media Trust	-0.006 (0.033)	0.084 (2.897)	-0.012 (0.061)
Constant	0.739* (0.055)	60.040* (4.732)	0.773* (0.099)
Observations	395	397	394
R ²	0.015	0.008	0.004

Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.

Appendix Table E.4.2: Effect of Treatment Group and Media Trust on Correct Voting

	Time on Full Info Page (1)	Opted to Revote (2)
High Convergence Treatment	-12.365 (13.758)	-0.011 (0.141)
Low Convergence Treatment	-10.990 (13.849)	0.351* (0.142)
Media Trust	0.384 (4.238)	0.055 (0.043)
High Convergence * Media Trust	7.044 (6.092)	0.002 (0.062)
Low Convergence * Media Trust	7.824 (5.980)	-0.125* (0.061)
Constant	23.600* (9.766)	0.008 (0.100)
Observations	397	395
R ²	0.023	0.026

*Notes: * denotes $p < .05$, one-tailed. All models OLS regression.*

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