The Year in C-SPAN Archives Research

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Democracy and the Media: The Year in C-SPAN Archives Research, Volume 7

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DEMOCRACY AND THE MEDIA

THE YEAR IN C-SPAN ARCHIVES RESEARCH

Robert X. Browning, Series Editor

The C-SPAN Archives, located adjacent to Purdue University, is the home of the online C-SPAN Video Library, which has copied all of C-SPAN's television content since 1987. Extensive indexing, captioning, and other enhanced online features provide researchers, policy analysts, students, teachers, and public officials with an unparalleled chronological and internally cross-referenced record for deeper study. The Year in C-SPAN Archives Research presents the finest interdisciplinary research utilizing tools of the C-SPAN Video Library. Each volume highlights recent scholarship and comprises leading experts and emerging voices in political science, journalism, psychology, computer science, communication, and a variety of other disciplines. Developed in partnership with the Brian Lamb School of Communication and with support from the C-SPAN Education Foundation, this series is guided by the ideal that all experimental outcomes, including those from our American experiment, can be best improved by directed study driving richer engagement and better understanding.

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DEMOCRACY AND THE MEDIA

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Volume 7

edited by
Robert X. Browning

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To all my students,

undergraduate and graduate,

past and present

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FOREWORD

In very recent times, the proclamation "I do my own research" has become popular among the ranks of the misinformed. Despite its unintentional irony, this mantra helps call attention to several interrelated concerns regarding the modern information environment. These include the preponderance of both bad information and those willing to disseminate it, and the obstacles conscientious citizens face when endeavoring to separate the information wheat from the chaff. The development of full solutions to these matters will not come easily, but any meaningful progress surely will hinge at least partly on the widespread availability of high-quality source material, together with analysts who utilize that source material to conduct rigorous and transparent investigations.

It is in this context that the remarkable C-SPAN Archives is shown to be not merely valuable but instead truly essential. In its 35-year history, the C-SPAN Archives has grown tremendously under the leadership of Purdue University's Professor Robert X. Browning. Independent of any related research, the sheer existence of the Archives represents the very best in terms of information availability and transparency. Here, interested individuals can gain access to videos and other records of communications from thousands of actual and aspiring federal officials—presidents, justices, representatives, senators, political candidates, and more—as those individuals engage one another and the American public. This enormous collection of raw material comes free of interpretation and spin from pundits, whether they be newspaper or cable news journalists or obscure commentators from the murky corners of social media or the blogosphere. With the Archives, interested citizens truly can do their own research.

Even were it solely a repository, the importance of the C-SPAN Archives would be well-established. But the Archives initiative also includes an active research component. Over the years, the resources provided by the Archives have functioned to spark impressive creativity in the scholarly community, leading to countless insights on a wide array of political questions. The research collected in the current volume exemplifies this. For any readers new to the Archives research series, you are encouraged to peruse the many outstanding studies cataloged in the six previous volumes.

The present compilation continues this pattern of creativity and excellence. In this volume's 12 studies, entrepreneurial researchers have drawn on information from the Archives to address questions about a host of intriguing matters. These include the roles of social communication and gender schema in candidate evaluation, factors affecting the prevalence of emotional content in campaign speeches, the noteworthy rhetorical elements on display in Donald Trump's rallies, contemporary conceptions of citizenship, congressional discourse about and policy responses to COVID-19, the congressional decision-making that led to C-SPAN broadcasts of Senate proceedings, citizen assessments of private foundations as erstwhile sources of policy expertise, threats to democracy posed by political elites who strive to undermine the free press, and the impact of humorous content from late-night television on congressional rhetoric.

As should be clear, these 12 studies explore very different questions. Nonetheless, two common threads link them: all reflect the achievements of skilled and perceptive authors, and all reveal insights that were gained through examination of information drawn from the Archives. One should be in awe of both the data source that inspired such rich and varied research and the scholars who conceptualized and carried out these studies. *This* is what actual research is and should be.

These, of course, are challenging times. All of us—the mass public, political elites, journalists, and the academic community—must strive to contribute to more effective democratic governance. Doing so will strengthen the American political system and help us to develop optimal responses to the issues—and the threats—of the day. In this context, we should be heartened by the C-SPAN Archives and the research the Archives fosters. Together, they exemplify the path forward.

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PREFACE

At the seventh annual research conference sponsored by the Center for C-SPAN Scholarship & Engagement in the Brian Lamb School of Communication at Purdue University, 12 papers were presented. All used C-SPAN video or derived data in some fashion to present findings about communication and politics. The conference was held virtually, but nonetheless there was a lot of interaction about the variety of topics covered.

With each conference the authors are more creative and innovative in their topics and methods. The topics are also timely, reflecting what scholars are interested in knowing about. This seventh conference saw papers about debate, emotion in candidate appearances, congressional rhetoric, and late-night comedy references in Congress. COVID-19 in Congress was another timely topic of two different papers. There were also two papers that looked at President Trump's rallies from different perspectives. A historian looked back at the development of the Clinton health plan by examining the role of private foundations. There was also a paper tracing the decision to adopt Senate television. And there were papers on gender.

These 12 papers each addressed different questions, using different approaches and methods. There was a paper that looked at the bills introduced on COVID-19 as well as the role of African American congresswomen taking the lead on COVID relief. One paper on Trump rallies used in part the participant observation method, while another was a social deconstruction. A historian used original documents supplemented by C-SPAN caller reactions. Another account of Senate television debate also used original source documents from other archives. Others used the C-SPAN Video Library closed-captioning text records.

These papers are not so much a tribute to the richness of the C-SPAN Video Library as they are to the ideas and creativity of their authors—the creative scholars who are asking social questions whose answers are made possible thanks to the video, text, and indexing of the C-SPAN Video Library. These scholars use modern social science and humanistic and historical techniques to ask and answer these questions.

As organizers, we do not limit the questions or the techniques. In some cases, we do select papers that address the same topic in different ways, such as the Trump rallies or congressional rhetoric. One scholar looked at criticism of the media in congressional rhetoric, another at citizenship concepts, and still another at how members of Congress used anecdotes from late-night television to make their points.

We hope that the readers will recognize these different approaches and questions and be motivated to ask their own research questions. The C-SPAN Video Library is free and open to all for searching, clipping, and downloading and has an API for more advanced computational research. Future conferences and volumes in this series will continue to demonstrate the research questions of communication, political science, and history as well as other scholarly disciplines that recognize video as a source for answering those questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So many people helped with the fall 2020 conference that this book is the proceedings of. Because of COVID-19, the conference was held virtually. Connie Doebele, managing director of the Center for C-SPAN Scholarship & Engagement at Purdue University, put together and executed a two-day conference that involved professors, discussants, undergraduate students, and presentations. She was assisted in the planning and execution by the CCSE associate program administrator, Andrea Langrish. Also, in the control room to make sure that the video presentations went well was Ed Dunn of the Purdue University Broadcast Services. Two Purdue students, Kyle Foley and Alyson deHaai, were CCSE interns during the conference and assisted in the planning and execution details. Andrea Langrish and intern Erica Campos assisted in creating the QR codes that link directly to video clips and are a new feature in this year's volume.

The Center for C-SPAN Scholarship & Engagement is a program in the Lamb School of Communication at Purdue University. The school's head, Professor Marifran Mattson, supports the CCSE and guides the activities throughout the year. Without her support, the conference would not exist and the many programs of the CCSE throughout the year would not be as successful.

Six faculty and graduate students from Purdue and other institutions helped by providing comments on the papers. They were from the Lamb School, Professors Jennifer Hoewe and Diana Zulli. Also, Eric Wiemer, an accomplished graduate student in communication provided comments as did political science graduate student Amber Lusvardi. From outside of Purdue, Matthew Bergbower of Indiana State University and Stephen Llano of Saint John's University ably assisted with comments for the presenters.

Three undergraduate students, who won the Lamb School Undergraduate Research Competition, presented their research: Noah Alderton, Kaleigh

Karageorge, and Morgan Murphy. They were introduced by Andie Slomka, who was a finalist in last year's competition. This activity enables a dozen Purdue undergraduates to present research concepts using the C-SPAN Video Library, with three finalists invited to the research conference.

My colleagues in communication and political science support our programs throughout the year as judges and participants in our activities. Professors Josh Boyd, Jennifer Hoewe, Diana Zulli, Natasha Duncan, and Kathryn Brownell also serve on the CCSE advisory board and give their time and advice. At the research conference Kathryn Brownell provided an update on her present book project that looks at the evolution of cable television, including C-SPAN. Professor Cherie Drake Maestas, head of the Purdue University Political Science Department, is also supportive of the CCSE programs.

Brian Lamb, Robert Kennedy, Susan Swain, and Richard Weinstein of C-SPAN provide support to the CCSE, and the C-SPAN Education Foundation provides a grant that allows us to provide stipends to the paper presenters and authors in this volume. The staff of the C-SPAN Archives provided assistance at the conference through the software, in transportation, and in support of the C-SPAN Video Library.

This book and the book series owe so much to the staff of the Purdue University Press. Director Justin Race, Katherine Purple, Bryan Shaffer, Christopher Brannan, and the rest of the staff work expertly to produce this annual volume. Kelley Kimm superbly copyedited the volume once again. Thanks to all.

Robert X. Browning
September 2021

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EVALUATING CANDIDATES FAST AND SLOW

Can Initial Impressions Be Socially Influenced?

Julie Grandjean, Jeffrey Hunter, and Erik P. Bucy

In the popular imagination, democracies are built upon a foundation of reasoning, deliberation, and citizens working together to evaluate the best possible candidates to lead them. This notion, while comforting, is not necessarily based in fact. Rather, people's voting decisions reflect a variety of factors, many unrelated to the enlightened reasoning the supposed ideal citizen is assumed to employ (Lodge et al., 1989). Sometimes, decisions may not be deliberate or even conscious but reactionary and automatic, reflecting voters' assessment of nonverbal cues. Indeed, the ability to read expressive displays develops in the early stages of life (Antonakis & Dalgas, 2009). Although people often don't trust their own ability to make snap judgments about political candidates, reliable inferences about leadership traits and election winners can nevertheless be made on the basis of thin-slice exposures to political images lasting a few seconds or less (see Benjamin & Shapiro, 2009; Olivola & Todorov, 2010; Todorov et al., 2005)

While experimental research has convincingly demonstrated how *quickly* viewers are able to arrive at accurate assessments of political candidates on their own, this project seeks to *slow down* and socially assess the judgments behind these outcomes. We are also interested in the extent to which people change their initial voting decision after a group discussion. Similar to the thin-slice experimental paradigm, this study asks viewers to rate still images and short video clips of political candidates using footage from the C-SPAN Video Library. But rather than stopping there, we employ online focus groups to elicit discussion about the factors that influence viewer judgments—and whether the social context of discussing political evaluations with others causes some participants to change their mind after the fact—and why. Our approach thus complements and extends previous studies in which participants were only able to offer a one-time candidate assessment based on a short exposure.

To create the conditions for social evaluation, the study employs focus groups as a context for participants to share the smaller cues and larger factors that influence judgments of candidate viability—an approach that contrasts with previous studies in which researchers have mostly used close-ended questions asking viewers to instantly judge candidates based on traits such as competence, likeability, and authenticity. In our focus groups, we show participants a mix of still photographs and video clips from recent political debates from around the country and first ask for a snap judgment about which candidate won their election. After each thin-slice evaluation, we give participants the opportunity to articulate the reasons for their initial vote and ask if anyone would like to change their vote based on the discussion. We find that about 20% of participants do change their mind when given the opportunity to rethink their initial assessment.

THINKING FAST AND SLOW

The contrasting styles of candidate judgment that this study seeks to understand can be summarized by the differences between System 1 and System 2 thinking, or the dual processing model of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition (see Kahneman & Frederic, 2005; Stanovich & West, 2000). Kahneman (2011) defines System 1 as the type of thinking that "operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control" (p. 20), while "System 2 allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations" (p. 21). The operations of System 2, Kahneman notes, are often associated "with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration" (p. 21), indicating how this mode of thought plays out over time. Most people assume important decisions involve rational thoughts and that intuition, feelings, and rapid assessments are either unrelated or unhelpful to that process (Kahneman, 2011). However, research suggests that individuals rely heavily on System 1 processing (Olivola & Todorov, 2010)—and if their decisions involve other people, they often rely on the primary source of social information available: facial cues (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Masters, 1992).

Studies have shown, for example, that assessments of intelligence can be inferred on the basis of facial cues alone (Zebrowitz et al., 2002). Other politically relevant traits such as competence (Ballew & Todorov, 2007; Mattes et al., 2010) may also be inferred quite rapidly, below the level of conscious awareness. This process often takes less than a second, as people unconsciously compare between thin slices of experiences (Olivola & Todorov, 2010). According to Marcus (2013), "our brains know far more than our conscious minds know" (p. 107). Indeed, while our brain may preconsciously respond within the first 100 milliseconds of a visual stimulus, conscious awareness of the stimuli only appears after half a second (Marcus, 2013). The efficiency of the visual cortex allows the brain to make relatively accurate snap judgments based on such short duration exposures, even while the mind may be consciously unable to fully explain how we arrived at that decision.

System 1 thinking is also relevant to decisions typically assumed to be deliberative, such as those surrounding vote choice. But even here, instead of relying solely on candidate policies, news coverage, or even personality, voters might rely on certain cognitive and affective heuristics or judgmental shortcuts (Stewart, 1997). Nonverbal cues from still images, for example, are referenced as people form first impressions, and these impressions can have lasting resonance and remain fixed in memory (Antonakis & Dalgas, 2009; Naylor, 2007). In politics, nonverbal aspects of candidate presentation are critical to voter evaluation of such traits as competence, integrity, likeability, and general fitness for office—and can be controlled in ways to manipulate voters' preferences (Rosenberg & McCafferty, 1987, p. 44). Faces are especially potent sources of social information (Grabe & Bucy, 2009), projecting the emotional state and motivational intent of the communicator while conveying important insights about more enduring personality traits (Olivola & Todorov, 2010).

System 1 thinking fits within the "thin slice" research paradigm, which holds that "exposures to expressive behavior as brief as a few seconds tend to be highly predictive of reactions to much longer exposures" (Benjamin & Shapiro, 2009, p. 523). The most common form of thin-slicing is the ability to assess and make social judgments of other people (Ambady et al., 2000), including the visual presentation and nonverbal behavior of political leaders (Gong & Bucy, 2016; Masters, 1992). Thus, politicians' facial cues and physical appearance alone can trigger powerful associations in voters' minds. When inferences made from thin-slice exposures are systematically investigated, they are predictive of election outcomes at a rate that far exceeds chance. In one well-known study, assessments of competence from brief (1 second) exposures to photographs of pairs of U.S. Senate candidates predicted winners in 68.8% of races shown (Todorov et al., 2005). A follow-up study also using still images of candidate faces (Ballew & Todorov, 2007) found an even higher prediction rate of 72%.

Using the same general procedure but utilizing short (10 second) videos from gubernatorial debates, Benjamin and Shapiro (2009) found higher predictive accuracy for candidate videos evaluated with the sound off than with the sound on. When sound was involved, and viewers were allowed to hear the candidates speak, the success rate of correctly guessing the winner *dropped*. As Gladwell (2007) has observed in his summary of the thin-slice paradigm, the popular book *Blink*, more information is often not only useless—it is also impairing. Rather than enhancing the ability to identify election winners, videos of candidates with the sound on cue partisanship and policy stands that allow viewers to more accurately assess the candidates' party affiliation (Benjamin & Shapiro, 2009). Interestingly, when viewers start thinking too much about how others voted in an election and rely on System 2 thinking, they are more likely to make the *wrong guess* about election winners than when they go with their initial "gut feeling" (Ballew & Todorov, 2007, p. 87).

Political Appearance

Inferences from candidate appearance have the strongest effect on undecided voters, a phenomenon that holds up cross-culturally (Sussman et al., 2013). Voters tend to assess political candidates with preexisting expectancies—for gender, age, authenticity, attractiveness, and other factors—about how a politician should look and behave. Previous studies show that viewers positively evaluate leaders who exhibit expected nonverbal behaviors, while they suspiciously eye and closely scrutinize those who violate these nonverbal expectancies (Bond et al., 1992; Bucy, 2011; Gong & Bucy, 2016). Violating nonverbal expectations erodes support, while meeting them promotes confidence. Indeed, images of leaders that violate normative expectations of appropriate political behavior can trigger critical evaluations by viewers and provoke widespread speculation among journalists (Bucy, 2011, p. 199). Studies have shown that voters dislike candidates deemed too young or too old, preferring candidates who are in the prime of life (Hain, 1974; Oleszek, 1969). Indeed, candidates who look too young, such as "Mayor Pete" Buttigieg, who was in his late 30s during the 2020

Democratic primaries, look inexperienced compared to older candidates like Joe Biden, who was in his late 70s. On the other hand, older candidates can be seen as close-minded, which tends to dampen voting intentions. Regardless of perceived competence, whether a candidate has a "baby face" is a good predictor of election results in collectivist countries, though it is worth nothing that it is not in more individualistic-oriented (Western) societies (Chang et al., 2017, p. 105). So, while the phenomenon of inferring politically relevant traits based on candidate appearance does hold cross-culturally, these inferences have varying impacts depending on the cultural context.

Another expectation that voters hold about politicians is authenticity, an alignment between the candidate's public/political self and their private self (Louden & McCauliff, 2004, p. 93). In recent years, authenticity has become a salient lens through which voters evaluate candidates and officeholders (Pillow et al., 2018). Discrepancies between the expectations that citizens have for those running for office and how candidates present themselves in public can erode perceptions of authenticity, and therefore credibility, among voters (Pillow et al., 2018; Rosenberg & McCafferty, 1987). Research also reveals a marked tendency to evaluate candidates according to physical attractiveness (Lawson et al., 2010). Indeed, judgments of attractiveness can produce a well-known "halo effect" where individuals who are considered more attractive are also judged more positively in terms of intelligence, social skills, and success (Hart et al., 2011, p. 182). Voters with less political knowledge and interest tend to evaluate attractive candidates more positively, while political sophisticates tend to correct or even overcompensate their evaluations to be more negative toward attractive candidates (Hart et al., 2011, p. 190). Interestingly, *un*attractive candidates are not judged as negatively as attractive candidates are judged positively, because negative stereotypes are not considered a valid justification for judgment (Hart et al., 2011, p. 197).

Gender is another important factor in candidate evaluation. Johns and Shephard show that male and female candidates are evaluated differently: Men are seen as stronger, while women are deemed warmer (2007, p. 443). Female politicians deemed attractive are also seen as nicer and more dynamic, which may indirectly boost voting intentions (Sigelman et al., 1987). Yet, in a study on the influence of weight on candidate evaluations, Miller and Lundgren (2010) show that obese female candidates are judged more negatively than nonobese female candidates, but obese male candidates are judged more positively than nonobese male candidates.

Other research on nonverbal displays of political candidates has examined differences in the reception of visual cues, whether between voters in different national contexts (e.g., France and the United States) (Masters & Sullivan, 1989a, 1989b), or the relationship between crisis news and nonverbal leader displays (Bucy & Newhagen, 1999). This literature finds that tepid reactions or miscalibrated nonverbal responses provoke doubt in viewers because leaders should be capable of handling emergency situations—especially communicating reassurance and resolve amid dire circumstances (Bucy, 2003). When facial displays and other nonverbal behaviors (e.g., gesture, tone of voice) are deemed inappropriate, there is an emotional cost that impacts the offending politician negatively. Rather than conveying reassurance, the performance sends "the wrong emotional tone and, instead of promoting curiosity or other harmless cognitions, evokes doubt, anxiety, and other aversive responses" (Bucy, 2011, p. 213).

Socially Influenced Decisions

The role of social influence in group decision-making has been studied extensively, not only in political psychology but also in criminal justice in the case of jurors who are required by law to deliberate before making consequential decisions that are deemed fair and just (e.g., Bornstein & Greene, 2011; Kerr & MacCoun, 1985; MacCoun, 1989; Salerno & Diamond, 2010). Pettus (1990) conducted interviews with criminal jurors within a week of their verdicts to better understand how they arrived at their decisions. From her observations, Pettus concluded that jurors focus more on the negative and ineffective aspects of the evidence, defendant, and witnesses—and more on the positive attributes of the defense attorney, judge, and prosecutor (p. 88). Thus, there was some deference to the perceived expertise of the subjects under scrutiny.

Though individual members within a group may arrive at a firm decision prior to deliberation, they may also change their mind *post*-deliberation. This phenomenon can be caused by two different group dynamics: normative influence or informational influence (Kaplan & Miller, 1987). Normative influence taps into the basic human need for acceptance by the rest of the group through agreement with other members (Kaplan & Miller, 1987), while informational influence relates to a more deliberative analysis of the information provided by other group members and the acceptance or rejection of their arguments based on accuracy (Kaplan & Miller, 1987). These two influences are at play in any socially influenced decision-making process.

In the case of juries, as in the case of other group decisions, it is unsurprisingly easier to reach an agreement when a majority, rather than unanimity, is needed. It is interesting, however, that issues that require more judgment tend to be solved though normative influence, while issues that require intellectual reasoning tend to be solved through informational influence. While voting seems to be primarily an act of intellectual reasoning, it can happen that voters focus extensively on heuristics, that is, System 1 thinking, and regard their vote as an exercise in judgment rather than intellectual reasoning. In such cases, we expect group discussion to exert more normative influence on their choices.

Regardless of the speed at which decisions are made, we also wonder whether there are generational differences in decision-making processes, particularly in light of the stereotype of younger individuals being more impulsive in their choices. From a consumer research perspective, Viswanathan and Jain (2013) suggest that Gen Z—that cohort of young people born between 1997 and 2012 (Bond, 2020)—tends to rely more on System 1 thinking while older generations, such as Gen X and Baby Boomers, tend to rely on System 2 thinking. Whether this finding applies to political judgments is an open question. But given that Gen Z tends to prefer social modes of information gathering (e.g., what their friends and family say), we would expect younger participants to be more open to group influence in evaluating candidates than older participants—an outlook that should be reflected in their willingness to change their initial voting choices.

Based on the thin-slice paradigm, we expect that our focus group participants will first have considerable success in identifying the winning candidate when shown pairs of photographs or short videos of competing candidates without sound. In the social setting of a focus group, we also expect participants to comment on how well the candidates' physical appearance, age, overall demeanor, and facial expressions comport with preexisting expectations. We also expect comments about inferred personality traits, since viewers are quite effective at making trait-related judgments. After some discussion about their initial decisions, we anticipate a certain number of participants who had guessed the election winner correctly to change their "vote" and name the losing candidate as the winner because they will overthink the decision task and allow themselves to be persuaded by others, making a conscious judgment rather than going with their "gut feeling." In addition to testing these expectations, we are also interested in identifying the main themes that emerge in focus group discussion about how people arrive at socially influenced voting decisions based on short-term exposure to visual stimuli.

To structure the analysis, we pose three research questions that guide our reporting of the results:

RQ1: How accurately will focus group participants, both younger and older, be able to identify election winners from short-duration exposures of candidate photographs and videos?

RQ2: What percentage of focus group participants change their initial vote after group discussion and social consideration of candidate qualities, and will these new choices be more or less accurate than their initial choices?

RQ3: What justifications and themes emerge in focus group discussion about how people arrive at socially influenced political decisions based on short-duration exposures to candidate photographs and videos?

METHOD

Participants

To address these questions, we ran a series of focus groups with younger (18 to 45 years old) and older (55 and up) participants. Altogether, the study involved 55 participants between the ages of 18 and 71 (M = 37.39). Of these, 23 (41.8%) identified as male, 31 (56.4%) as female, and one respondent (1.8%) chose not to answer. Younger participants (n = 32, 58.2%) were recruited via a student study participation pool at a large southwestern university. Older participants (n = 23, 41.8%) were recruited via a community database maintained by our Center for Communication Research, as well as through word of mouth.

Visual Stimuli

The stimuli shown to focus group participants consisted of 21 different sets of video clips and still images featuring two competing major-party candidates taken from gubernatorial and senatorial debates that were televised on C-SPAN between 2010 and 2020. Since the debates took place all over the U.S., candidates were for the most part not identifiable to any of our participants; only a few candidates were recognized in all the tests run. Debates provide an ideal setting for comparing visuals of candidates because the setting, lighting, and camera angles are consistent for each candidate. In order to minimize judgments based on stereotypes, we took efforts to ensure that most candidate pairs shown to participants were of the same gender, race, and age range. Each focus group was also asked to rate one pair that intentionally featured a contrasting difference in candidate gender, race, or age so that we could test whether stereotypes played a role in participant voting and identification of election winners.

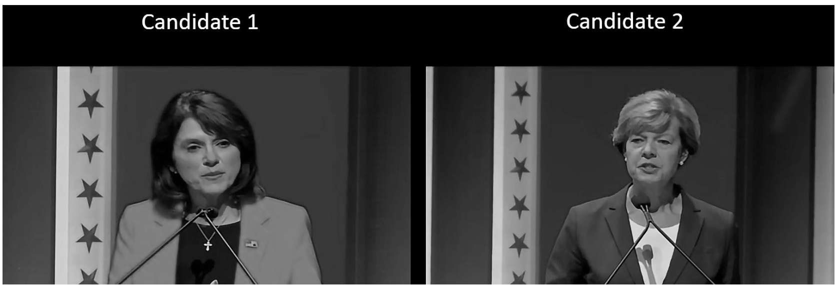
Figure 1.1 shows a representative sampling of four candidate pairs used in the study. Video clips consisted of 10 seconds of debate footage and were shown without sound. The decision to show muted versions of the clips was made on the basis of the thin-slice forecast literature showing higher accuracy for selecting election winners when videos of politicians are shown without sound (Benjamin & Shapiro, 2009), and the practical fact that news networks routinely broadcast image bites of politicians where candidates are shown but not heard (see Grabe & Bucy, 2009). Care was taken to ensure that camera framing, body orientation, and even the gestures of each candidate were roughly comparable in each clip. The clips were selected to portray a typical representation of each candidate's performance, not a one-time gaffe or inappropriate display. Still images consisted of one frame from the 10-second video clips. Both the video clips and still images were displayed in their original 16:9 proportions.

Procedure

During the recruitment process, participants were contacted by email and received a three-digit identification code to facilitate anonymization. In the initial contact, they were also asked to complete an online pre-study questionnaire to record their demographic data, political orientation, interest in politics, media habits, and attention to national and state elections. From this information, participants were placed into one of eight focus groups according to their age. The size of the groups varied from 4 to 13 participants, depending on the days and time offered and the availability of participants. Four groups consisted of participants aged 18–45 and four groups consisted of participants 55 and older. Grouping participants in this manner facilitated some generational cohesion during the discussion and provided the opportunity to look for trends based on age. Of our 55 participants, 29 (51.7%) were shown still images and 26 (48.3%) were shown 10-second video clips.

Focus groups were held online and recorded using the Zoom communication platform. Before the start of each group, participants were asked to provide

Caucasian male vs. Caucasian male



Caucasian female vs. Caucasian female

African American male vs. African American male

African American male vs. Caucasian male

FIGURE 1.1 Representative sampling of four candidate pairs used in the study. The pairs included six different matchups in all: Caucasian male vs. Caucasian male; Caucasian female vs. Caucasian female; Caucasian male vs. Caucasian female; Minority male vs. Minority male; Minority male vs. Minority female; Minority male vs. Caucasian male.

their informed consent by completing an online form. Next, the group was provided with detailed instructions by the moderator about the procedures for the discussion. To help participants learn the procedures, navigate the software involved, and successfully switch between the Zoom platform and the study questionnaires on their web browser, a series of three pretests were conducted with each group. During the pretests, participants were shown practice stimuli on their Zoom screen and then asked to switch to their web browser and complete a short questionnaire. No data was collected from the pretests—they were held simply for training purposes. Time was allowed for participants to ask questions and for the moderator to help participants with any technology problems. Following the development of a discussion protocol, the first two authors moderated all focus groups.

The actual study began after all participants expressed comfort in their ability to complete the assigned tasks. Following specific instructions by the moderator to pay attention to the images on their screen, the group was shown the stimuli. The stimuli, either two still images or two video clips, were shown side by side and labeled as "Candidate 1" and "Candidate 2." Still images were shown for 5 seconds, while video clips were each 10 seconds in length to compensate for the additional information present in moving images (e.g., gestures and other candidate movements). The 10-second length is also consistent with an earlier study by Benjamin and Shapiro (2009). After the allotted time, the screen went blank and the moderator asked participants to switch to their web browser and complete a questionnaire.

The questionnaire began by asking participants to indicate who they would vote for based on the images they just saw; in other words, who their preferred candidate was. Next, they were asked to provide their best guess on who they thought *won* that election, which is a different question. Finally, they were asked to evaluate candidates on six traits: competent, trustworthy, qualified, determined, authentic, and likeable using a 7-point scale (where 1 = "not at all" and 7 = "very"). Following this, participants were asked to return to their Zoom screen, where the candidate images were again presented side by side for the whole discussion. The moderator then led the group in a guided discussion where participants were encouraged to elaborate on their choices about which candidate they voted for and which candidate they thought won. After the group discussion, they were asked to return to their online questionnaire and indicate whether the discussion had changed their mind about either of their votes. This procedure was then repeated until the allotted time expired. The number of candidate pairs evaluated in each group varied between 4 and 6, depending on the length of each discussion. Altogether, 21 sets of video clips and still images were evaluated by our groups.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics indicate the percentage of participants who *voted for a preferred candidate* and then *guessed* the winning candidate before and after discussion. Overall, participants "voted" correctly 45.9% of the time after short exposures to candidate images and videos when asked to choose who *they would vote for*. This rate is lower than expected but our sample size is small and non-representative; moreover, the focus here is more on whether the social context of group discussion changes initial impressions, not the accuracy of those impressions. For this reason, tests of significance are not performed on the results, although we do report frequencies. Certain subgroups of participants, notably older female participants, were quite accurate in selecting winners based on their personal vote choice when shown video clips—75% before discussion and 66.7% after. But this rate did not hold for estimates of election winners or for still images.

After the group discussion about their choices (summarized below), respondents changed their vote for their preferred candidate 13.3% of the time. Of these changes, 5% of participants changed their mind to vote for the winning candidate and 8.3% for the losing candidate, dropping the overall rate of correctly voting for the winning candidate from 45.9% to 44.2%. When asked to choose which candidate they thought *actually won* the election after brief exposures to the stimuli, participants guessed the actual winner 40.5% of the time. Following discussion, participants changed their guesses 22.7% of the time, with 9.1% now choosing the winning candidate and 13.6% now choosing the losing candidate—so the overall rate of successful snap-judgment guesses again *decreased*, to 36%.

Throughout the study, the accuracy of participant votes varied depending on the type of stimuli that participants were shown. Indeed, there were slightly more accurate votes for the winning candidates when participants were shown still images (47.3%) than when they were shown short videos (44.4%). The difference becomes more pronounced after discussion, with participants exposed to still images voting for the winner 48% of the time by changing their mind in favor of the winning candidate, but with the accuracy rate for video-based votes decreasing to 40.2% in the direction of the losing candidate.

As for guessing who *actually won*, participants accurately selected the winning candidate 43.2% of the time following short exposures to still images, but that rate dropped to 37.6% after discussion. When focus group participants were shown the 10-second videos, the accuracy rate was even lower: participants guessed the winner just 37.6% of the time before discussion, and 35.9% after.

In response to the still images, participants changed their mind about their preferred candidate 13.6% of the time (5.6% for the winner, and 8% for the losing candidate). Compared to their personal preference, participants were much more likely to change their mind about who they thought *actually won* the election, switching their vote 24.8% of the time—but mostly in the direction of the loser (16% compared to 8.8% for the winning candidate). In response to the video portrayals, people changed their vote and guess about who won slightly less. Participants changed their mind about their preferred candidate 12.8% of the time (4.3% for the winner, 8.5% for the losing candidate). They changed their mind about who they thought won the election 18.5% of the time (9.4% for the winner, 11.1% for the loser).

At least in the case of our participants, the analysis overall shows that older citizens (55.3% before discussion, 53.2% after) are better at voting for the winning candidate than younger citizens (39.9% before discussion, 38.5% after) based on short-duration exposures. As for guessing who *won* their respective elections, younger participants have a slightly higher success rate before discussion (41.2% compared to 39.4%), but *after* discussion older participants are more accurate at detecting likely winners, correctly guessing 40.4% of election outcomes, while the accuracy of younger participants drops to 33.1%.

Next, we wanted to see whether the presence of an incumbent within a candidate pair increased or decreased the success rate for both preferred candidate voting and correctly guessing the winner in a given race. For this analysis, we utilized the data from all eight of our focus groups and ran a series of chi-square tests of independence. For preferred candidate choices, the chi-square test was not significant: χ^2 (1) = .07, p = .8, V = .02. In races where an incumbent was present and won, participants voted for the incumbent 45% of the time. When there was no incumbent, participants voted for the winner 46.6% of the time—virtually the same rate. A second chi-square test for guessing the winning candidate showed no significant difference whether an incumbent was in the race or not: χ^2 (1) = .63, p = .4, V = .05. Participants guessed the winner 35.8% of the time when an incumbent was present, and 36.1% when there was no incumbent.

Finally, we wanted to see whether the success rate of participant voting depended on the type of candidate matchups in terms of demographics (white male vs. white male, white female vs. white female, white male vs. white female, minority candidate vs. minority candidate). Another chi-square test of independence was run and, for the most part, the gender and racial composition of our candidate pairs made no difference. Voting results were marginally significant only in the white male vs. white female matchups, χ^2 (4) = 9.101, p = .06, V = .19. A comparison of column proportions showed participants voted for the winner of these contests 70.8% of the time. As for guessing the actual winner, another chi-square test of independence was conducted but it was not significant: χ^2 (4) = 7.33, p = .119, V = .17.

ANALYSIS OF RECURRING THEMES

We next analyzed the focus group transcripts for recurring themes, following an inductive process of bottom-up discovery The theme identification process was adapted from a previous thematic analysis of visuals by Krause and Bucy (2018), which parsed open-ended responses to images of fracking. To ensure participant anonymity, assigned first names were used in the transcription process and no identifying information was retained. Rather than using specific ages, only group age range is reported in the theme analysis (e.g., 18–45, 55+). During the focus group discussions, participants mentioned a total of 783 different reasons they voted for one candidate over another. Of these, 355 were reasons *against* the candidate they did not select and 422 were reasons *for* the candidate they did select. All of these reasons were first sorted into 14 general categories, which included character judgments, comments about clothing, emotional displays, facial expressions, comments about posture, hand placement, interaction style, eye gaze, hairstyle, candidate age, mouth configuration, production features, candidate gender, and candidate race (see Figure 1.1).

From this sorting process, we were able to infer six recurring themes that played a role in participant vote choices: (1) thin slices of behavior hold enough information for accurate character inferences; (2) political candidates are judged based on their sartorial choices; (3) over-expression by candidates (i.e., expectancy violations) engenders doubt; (4) faces are rich sources of social information on which viewers base voting decisions; (5) posture is an impactful element of candidate self-presentation; and, (6) hand placement and gestures serve as important decision cues. (See Figure 1.2.)

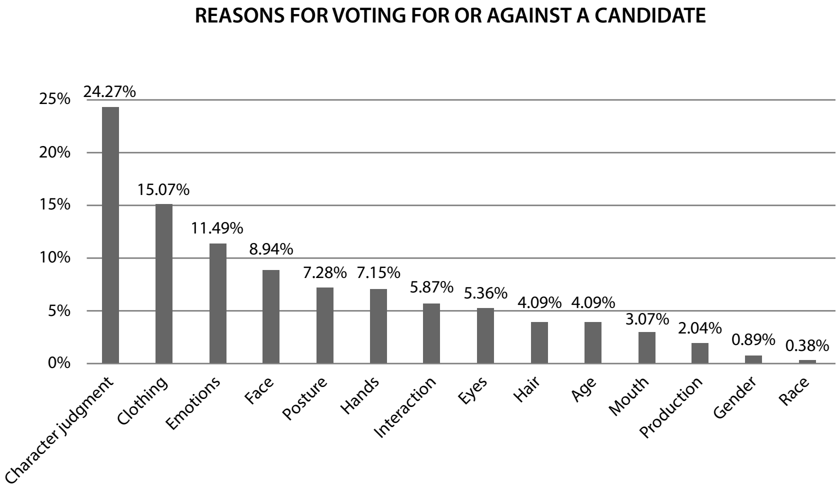


FIGURE 1.2 Reasons for voting for or against a candidate.

Theme 1: Thin slices of behavior hold enough information for accurate character inferences

The main theme that emerged from focus group discussion is confirmation that viewers are quick to make inferences about candidate character within a matter of seconds following brief exposure to still images or a 10-second debate video. This phenomenon is consistent with Todorov and colleagues' findings that viewers can make reliable trait assessments in a mere fraction of a second (e.g., Olivola & Todorov, 2010). The influence of candidate appearance on citizen perceptions and vote choice has been known for some time (see Rosenberg et al., 1986) and gets regularly recycled in campaign lore. Warren Harding was elected in 1920 not because he was particularly smart or well-versed in public policy, the story goes, but because he *looked* presidential (Gladwell, 2007, p. 128). But what does it mean exactly to *look* like a great candidate? Our focus group participants said they preferred candidates who appeared authentic, knowledgeable, professional, or even "more fun in office." Trustworthiness was another character trait mentioned many times:

> Dakota (18–45): "I think Candidate 2 won. He just seems more trustworthy, even though I don't like his expressions. I still think he would have more and have gotten, like, people's trust and he, in a way, seems more likable than the

other one. The other one just . . . the candidate . . . even though I would've voted for Candidate 1, he just seems very hard-headed."

Here as well we see a discrepancy between who participants thought won an election versus who they would have voted for. In rendering broad judgments about candidates' intelligence and fitness for office, participants relied on their gut feelings and quick impressions after short exposure to the stimuli:

George (18–45): "I don't know if that's just me, [but Candidate 1] just doesn't look very trustworthy or, uh, even that, like, intelligent. I don't know. It's just something . . . something. I got a bad vibe from him [Candidate 1]."

The more personable a candidate seemed to participants, the more they tended to judge them to be of good character:

Amanda (18–45): "You always want to try to relate the best that you can to the audience, 'cause it kind of seems more personal, [like] building a connection. I just feel like with [Candidate 1] . . . there is no connection. Like, at all. Whereas with number 2, I feel like I'm more able to be like, 'Oh, you seem nice,' like I feel like we could be friends, like you're someone I could like, see getting coffee with or something like that."

Female candidates had the added burden of also needing to appear nurturing (Everitt et al., 2016). For instance, a participant explained how she voted against a female candidate because "she yells at children, you can tell." Participants noted this higher threshold for positive character judgments of female candidates:

Fischer (18–45): "I think your point is, I think it's kind of hard to answer because for women politicians, I mean, they have to walk this very thin line of being educated and being bitchy. And if they come off the wrong way, they're going to lose everything. So, I believe it probably is a lot harder for women politicians to come off with passion without turning people off."

Fallon (18–45): "But still coming off nurturing and loving and feminine, so to speak."

Fischer (18–45): "And knowledgeable."

Theme 2: Public figures are judged based on their sartorial choices

Several participants paid close attention to the outfits the candidates were wearing and said that clothing and accessory choices readily indicated "what party they're from or what they're standing for." Men were often judged by the color and pattern of their ties. But they were also deemed less competent if their tie was crooked. Such findings are consistent with experimental research showing that clothing and presentation differences in candidate photographs—a clean compared to a slightly unkempt look—influence electoral choices (Rosenberg et al., 1986):

> Debbie (55+): "I hate to say that's a funeral tie to me or a, you know, afternoon, flower garden tie, you know? It's not a tie that stands out that says, 'I'm here.' And it's kind of bunched up a little bit from what I could see. He needs to straighten himself out. Maybe his wife needs to help him."

If a male candidate was spotted wearing a wedding ring, he was deemed more committed and trustworthy. Female candidates, on the other hand, were judged more on the style and color of their dress as well as for their accessory choices:

> Mary (55+): "[The] red [dress] is a power statement."

> Debbie: "Candidate 1 makes me think of Tweety Bird. I mean she's got on the yellow, and then she's got the high hair. She's trying too hard to me. Participants frequently attempted to infer party affiliation based on the clothing choices of both male and female candidates."

Many participants said they voted for one candidate over the other simply because of the *color* of their outfits. Since blue is now considered the color of the Democratic Party and red the color of the Republican Party, if either of these colors were part of the candidates' outfits, participants would select who they would vote for based on assumptions about the partisan meaning of color. In one instance, candidates both wore blue ties, which stumped some participants:

> Michael (18–45): "I was looking at their ties. They're both, like, blue, so I wonder if they're in the same party."

The presence or absence of lapel pins (of flags and other symbols) was also a subject of conversation, especially in cases where one candidate was wearing a pin and one was not. Pins were an indication that candidates were "conscious of public impressions," and the presence of a pin was an important detail for some participants, who inferred messages ranging from issue advocacy to patriotism all from the presence of an accessory:

> Henry (18–45): "I think that makes me pay more attention to them, because whenever I look across a lot of local officials . . . you can tell that they're involved in different advocacy programs. It really leaves an impact on a lot of different people, rather than them not being involved in any advocacy."

The absence of a flag pin on a candidate when the opponent was wearing one caused many participants to assume an affiliation with the Democratic Party. As one participant, Kennedy (55+) said, "to be honest with you, not having the flag maybe tells me more than having it." The display of religious symbols also influenced participant choices. In one instance, a female candidate wore a cross necklace, and participants mentioned it multiple times:

> John (18–45): "I would definitely choose Candidate 1 because of the cross necklace. . . . To just wear a cross necklace it's like a, it's a personal decision. But whenever they choose to do that on that stage, that is much more a message."

Theme 3: Over-expression by candidates (i.e., expectancy violations) engenders doubt

Participants tended to react unfavorably toward candidates who were highly expressive, preferring those who instead appeared calm and composed. This brings us back to the discussion of expectancy violations and how displaying too much emotion or inappropriate signaling—sentiments that do not fit the rhetorical setting—can generate critical assessments. For instance, participants selected as winners candidates who looked like they were "trying to get their point across" but rejected those who seemed to be "defending themselves."

> Travis (18–45): "Candidate 2 looks like he's, he's getting caught up, like he looks like he's even stuttering a little bit. And you can definitely tell that he's talking, but it also looks like he's getting confused, [maybe] not confused, um, he's like, back-stepping, even. It, just the way that it looks, it's just what I'm perceiving. He looks defensive, whereas Candidate 2 looks like he's taking charge."

Participants responded well to candidates who appeared to be conversational but disliked those who seemed “too chill and relaxed.” They did appreciate when they saw candidates who looked passionate. Participants overall responded well to candidates who came across as comfortable and “natural,” compared to those who seemed intent on displaying strong emotion.

> Debbie (55+): “What stood out to me like in [Candidate 1], it looks like he’s a deer with his head . . . he’s stuck in the headlights. He also looks like he’s sweating to me. . . . And that’s what stood out to me like, ‘Why am I here?’ [Candidate 2] looks like he came prepared. He’s calm, cool, collected. You know, he’s just . . . he’s ready.”

To many participants, over-expression equaled under-preparedness. Attributes like confidence were closely connected with composure.

> Trey (18–45): “I felt like [Candidate 2] was moving a little bit too much. [He] almost comes off as maybe a little bit nervous or not confident in what he was saying.”

Theme 4: Faces are rich sources of social information on which viewers base voting decisions

In their visual scanning of candidate images, participants looked for flaws in candidate faces, mentioning for example the lack of eyebrows, a “dark spot on top of his lips,” or bags under the candidates’ eyes. But their main focus was on what their eyes could convey. Participants detected anger, passion, or confidence just by peering at the candidates’ eyes. They were also keen to track where the candidates were looking and based part of their evaluation on this visual trajectory. If candidates were perceived as looking away, they were deemed either not trustworthy or lacking in confidence. If they were looking straight at the camera, they were generally deemed more confident and trustworthy, except in cases where they appeared too invasive, as if “staring into our souls” (Alice, 18–45).

> Emma (55+): “I don’t know why, but [Candidate 2] almost looks like he’s mad to me. Um, I can’t [put my finger on it].”

Interviewer: "What makes you think he looks mad?"

Emma (55+): "I don't know, it's just the . . . the downturn in his mouth or something."

Blake (55+): "I don't know, there's something about the way Candidate 2 holds his mouth [that] just strikes me as not being honest."

Participants also used comparisons to describe some candidate faces and would use the perception of familiarity as a heuristic or decisional guide when voting for candidates who looked like someone they might have known (grandma, grandpa, school librarian), or disliked ("Vladimir Putin," "Prince Andrew," school secretary). Overall, candidate expressions were the most important facial feature influencing participant choices. Often, facial expressions were used to make broader judgments about candidate preparedness. Adam (18–45) observed that one candidate appeared to have a "glib look on his face, and it makes me think he is caught off guard by something or [is] not as knowledgeable." Other times, participants scrutinized facial expressions to determine whether candidates were likeable:

Fallon (18–45): "Candidate 1's facial expression is very brash, and this image of him just does not make him look likable. He's someone that I'm like, 'ugh,' about. I don't know how else to describe it."

Diane (55+): "I think her . . . looking straight ahead to me that . . . makes me feel like she's actually more authentic because she's not afraid to look you in the eye. Uh, with [the other candidate's] head tilt, to me that . . . that's not a good communication skill. It's, uh, a little off-putting for me."

Theme 5: Posture is an impactful element of candidate self-presentation

Posture also surfaced as an important consideration when participants articulated specific reasons they accepted or rejected a candidate. Participants pointed to a "confident stance" and "relaxed posture" as indicators of preparedness, dependability, strength, and positive character:

Charlie (18–45): "He looks like he's confident. He has a good sense of composure, uh, just the way that . . . his shoulders are locked, you know, in a good position. His posture, his hand motion, just the way that he sits and the way that he's looking, he looks like a more likable, dependable, confident candidate."

Even more impactful than good posture, however, was bad posture. Participants described candidates with bad posture as looking "lazy" because of their "slouchy posture," or "uncomfortable" on account of a slacked stance:

> Brenda (55+): "His shoulders are stiff. I mean, you could look at the other one and see that his shoulders are relaxed, and he seems like he's in his element. Candidate 2 looks stiff to me like he's, you know, he's stiff and his shoulders are tight."

Bad posture communicated not only discomfort in the eyes of participants but also lack of physical and mental preparation:

> Emmerson (18–45): "The way he's leaned in his chair . . . he's not sitting up straight. His posture is not as good as the other [candidate's]. And I feel like that's something they probably, like his campaign manager probably said, 'You know, have good posture, sit up straight, seem confident.' [Instead] he's just kind of like, slumped down and seems like he's really having to think hard about what he's going to say."

> Emma (55+): "To me, her shoulders pulled back the way that they are, uh, as far as I'm concerned that kind of just shows confidence. Whereas, his are kind of almost slouched forward a little bit, which almost seems like, 'Uh, okay, what's the big deal, you know? I'm here.' That's kind of what I'm getting . . . just from their stance alone."

Theme 6: Hand placement and gestures serve as important decision cues

A candidate's use of their hands to communicate, whether in recognizable gestures or just to signal agency, was also deemed a valid reason participants selected or rejected one candidate over another. Sometimes this was the primary, but not sole, reason for a participant's vote choice. Participants felt that candidates who showed the back of their hands, for instance, were too "closed-off," while those using open hand gestures seemed inviting. Indeed, hand gestures conveyed to participants impressions about candidates' motives and disposition:

> Finley (18–45): "I think Candidate 2 looks like he's trying to, like, defend himself over something that he did or said."

> Moderator: "What about him makes you think that he's defensive?"

> Finley (18–45): "The way he moves his hands like that, is kind of like, 'Hold on,' you know, like he's trying to defend himself, like, his sudden hand movements [mean something]."

In some instances, participants commented on how they thought candidates were overusing hand gestures or that their gestures were "too passionate." Overwrought hand movements made a candidate appear out of control:

> Emma (55+): "I tend to think that somebody who makes at least some hand gestures is a little bit more comfortable than somebody who makes none, but if then there's somebody up there waving their arms around, you know, like crazy, I would think something's wrong with that guy and I don't want to vote for that person because they can't control their emotions."

When noticed, hand gestures were expected to be firm, direct, and not offputting. Otherwise, they communicated negative attributes:

> Olivia (55+): "Candidate 1's hands are not strong. They're kind of flopping over. And that's distracting to me. It's like he's not really making a point that he truly believes in if his hands are not as strong as Candidate 2."

DISCUSSION

This study has attempted to enhance our understanding of the kind of nonverbal cues that people pay attention to when casting their vote based on thin slices of candidate behavior and illuminate the dynamics of social influence driving second-chance voting decisions. To facilitate second-chance decisions, we utilized focus group discussion of voting choices based on brief exposures to candidate images to explore the question of what happens *after* snap voting decisions are made in response to thin slices of visual information. Our results are informed by the nonverbal communication literature, as well as the thin-slice forecast paradigm, which holds that reliable inferences about leadership traits and electoral viability can be made rapidly on the basis of System 1 thinking, which feels effortless and automatic.

In answer to the study's core question—whether vote choices based on initial impressions of political candidates can be socially influenced—we find that yes, the context of group discussion can change votes. Vote changes happen more for the candidate participants think won the election (22.7% of the time) than for their personal vote choice (13.3% of the time), reflecting a stronger commitment to a personal favorite. In each case, however, more participants switched to the losing candidate than the winning candidate, suggesting that social decision-making actually depresses voting accuracy. This was especially the case for the short videos compared to still images; decisions became less accurate for candidates shown in 10-second video slices than in still photographs. Given the small *N* nature of the study design, these results can only be considered exploratory—but they offer ample evidence to justify follow-up research on a larger scale.

Interestingly, the vote choice analysis showed that older participants (55+) are better than younger participants (18–45) at recognizing winners—and less likely to change their vote after subsequent discussion. In focus group discussion, older participants were particularly keen to evaluate candidate images based on small cues such as the decision to wear a lapel pin, the look in a candidate's eyes, hand placement, the presumed evasion in a head tilt, or wearing a dour or inappropriate expression. The presence of an incumbent in our candidate pairings did not seem to make a difference in voting accuracy, nor did the gender or racial composition of candidate pairs. Our mostly Caucasian participants were most likely, however, to vote for the winning candidate in white male vs. white female matchups, voting for the winner of these contests 70.8% of the time.

Close analysis of the focus group discourse revealed six themes that reinforce the significance of nonverbal cues in voter decision-making. Each of these themes reinforces findings from the thin-slice and nonverbal communication literatures, showing the complementarity of diverse methods. Notably, the reasons given for voting or not voting for a particular candidate were verbally articulated by our participants and not inferred from indirect measures of attention or response, suggesting the utility of qualitative data in understanding voter decision-making. In addition to focus groups, other qualitative techniques such as depth interviews, open-ended responses to picture prompts, or discourse analysis could be gainfully employed to demonstrate similar decisional processes.

Although our primary intention with this study is to illuminate the dynamics of social influence driving second-chance voting decisions, our results for the snap judgment part of the study do not align perfectly with the thin-slice literature, which has found higher predictive accuracy. We see three potential reasons for this. First, while we had more than enough participants to reach saturation in our focus groups, the sample size was quite small for the snap decision task, where participants were asked who their preferred candidate was and who they thought had actually won the election (asked before and after the discussion). A much larger sample size determined by an experimental power analysis for this part of the study would likely yield different results. Second, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study was conducted online rather than in person, and some participants were not paying close attention like they would have in a face-to-face setting. Finally, there is the role of the images themselves to consider. While each pair contained similar shots of the candidates, they are much more recent than the sets of images used in previous thin-slice studies of political images. Could it be that nowadays political candidates are so polished and similar in their presentation that it has become more difficult to guess the winner based only on a thin slice of behavior?

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2

READ THE ROOM

The Effect of Campaign Event Format on the Use of Emotional Language

Zachary A. Scott

*"I'm f***ing moving to Iowa"*
—Kamala Harris[1]

When politicians (and, more recently, politically inspired amateurs) decide that they want to campaign for a major party's presidential nomination, they are signing up for spending a lot of time talking to a lot of people. They will be attending the Iowa State Fair. They will attend Politics & Eggs at Saint Anselm College. The Democrats will speak at the newly renamed Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner and attend Jim Clyburn's fish fry. The Republicans have their Lincoln-Reagan Dinner and often make it a point to speak at CPAC (the Conservative Political Action Conference). In between are countless rallies, town halls, fundraisers, press events, meet and greets, and house parties.

All of these individual events coalesce into a campaign that is heavily focused on the ground game, at least until the surviving candidates make it to Super Tuesday. This emphasis on in-person campaigning is effectively dictated by the structure of the races, which affords prominence to small states with political cultures that demand candidate-voter interactions, and the nature of the electorate, which is deprived of easy heuristics like partisanship or large ideological differences to simplify decision processes. The result is that candidates spend hour upon hour, month after month pleading their case to voters in the early states and beyond.

As they traipse around attempting to motivate, persuade, and engage, candidates find a powerful weapon in their arsenal in the form of emotional appeals.

Since at least Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the importance of emotionality or pathos has been appreciated. And a growing political psychology literature (e.g., Albertson & Gadarian, 2015; Banks, 2014; Brader, 2006; Groenendyk & Banks, 2014; Marcus, 2000; Phoenix, 2019; Valentino et al., 2011) gives us a better understanding of the nature and magnitude of influence that emotional appeals possess.

Yet we know comparatively little about the practical ways candidates use emotions. Studies documenting the use of emotional cues and language in campaign communication are few (Borah, 2016; Brader, 2006; Phoenix, 2019; Ridout & Searles, 2011; Scott & McDonald, 2020). Most of these studies do not consider primaries, yet the distinctive conditions of the race described above show why they stand as a unique campaign communication environment. Furthermore, the studies looking at campaign emotionality are overwhelmingly focused on a narrow view of campaign strategy as a driving factor: do candidates use emotions in situations where the elicited behavioral change should be advantageous? We know little about what alternative constraints might also be at work.

The implication is that we have a party nomination system that pushes candidates into ground-game events like rallies, town halls, and candidate forums, but we have little notion of how these in-person event formats affect candidates' abilities to use emotional rhetoric despite the clear and powerful effect such rhetoric has on public opinion and political behavior.

I investigate this topic in this chapter. I introduce two theoretical constructs to capture attributes of in-person campaign events: the candidates' autonomy over the rhetoric and the loyalty of the audience at the event. I conceptualize autonomy as the level of control the candidates possess over their rhetorical environment. For example, some campaign events involve candidates responding to questions from an audience. The candidates' responses are constrained by the need to abide by the give-and-take of the exchanges in a way they are not when speaking unilaterally to an assembled crowd. The candidates' autonomy is lower under such circumstances. I argue that events with low candidate autonomy will feature less emotional rhetoric on average because candidates must minimize explicit emotional appeals to maintain an interactive communication environment.

I conceptualize audience loyalty as the attachment the audience has to the candidate prior to the candidate's formal engagement with the crowd at this specific event. Some audiences meet specifically to see a candidate and so the candidate can reasonably infer that an established loyalty exists. Other audiences meet because of an attachment to another cause and so the candidates must assume that—while the crowd could be persuaded into support—there is no established loyalty. And sometimes the candidates speak in front of audiences that are ambivalent about their political ambitions and will never become loyal supporters. I argue that candidates will avoid emotionality at events with such weak audience loyalty as there is little reason to try to persuade the crowd if they are not inclined to be supportive.

In contrast, events with the potential for loyalty will feature high levels of negative emotions as candidates attempt to conjure a mutual outgroup threat, which prior literature suggests is an effective means of building a shared identity (Jardina, 2019), as well as high levels of trust as the candidates posit themselves as the guardian against this threat. This will be the case because such an emotional messaging strategy will be *rhetorically persuasive*, not because such a cocktail of emotional appeals induces receptivity to new information (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). Finally, I argue that events with strong audience loyalty will use more positive emotions to make voters think that they have made a good choice. As a bond already exists between the candidate and the members of the audience, one does not need to be invented through a shared outgroup threat, freeing the candidate to embrace language meant to induce revelry in the shared connection that already exists. Such events will also most closely hew to the inference of the political psychology literature by featuring high levels of approach emotions like anger and joy and low levels of persuasion emotions like fear and surprise. Taken together, these arguments form a theory of the ways event format affects rhetorical strategy, a category of incentives that works outside the existing behavioral strategy theory derived from the political psychology literature on the induced effects of emotional appeals.

I test these hypotheses using an original data set of speeches and remarks made by declared presidential primary candidates from 2000 to 2020 gathered primarily from the C-SPAN Video Library. I measure the amount of emotional rhetoric in each transcript using the EmoLex emotional sentiment dictionaries (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). I regress these measures of the use of different emotional cues on indicator variables of the type of campaign event while controlling for notable candidate- and campaign-level features.

The results largely confirm my hypotheses. Events with low candidate autonomy feature less emotional rhetoric across the board. The same is true of events with weak audience loyalty. Events with high potential loyalty feature high levels of negative emotions and trust language. And events with strong loyalty feature more positive emotional language. I find that hypotheses reflecting the behavioral strategy theory find the least support. Taken together, the results point to the powerful role that event format has on the amount of emotional rhetoric candidates use, a role that appears to be conditional on how the format affects rhetorical strategy incentives. The findings have significant implications for how we organize our ground-game-centric primaries.

WHY EMOTIONS MATTER

Popular discussion of politics tends to gravitate toward emotionality. President Trump's rhetoric, from his "American carnage" inauguration speech (Rosenthal, 2017) to how he has discussed the COVID-19 pandemic (Slevin, 2020), is often framed by the media in reference to anger. President Obama's rhetoric, on the other hand, was often discussed from an emotional lens of hope (Westphalen & Marshall, n.d.). Coverage of debates similarly highlights who appeared "fiery" or "reserved." The emotional nature of political speech is often among the first elements that journalists and pundits pick up on when trying to convey meaning to their audiences.

Recent political psychology and behavior studies suggest that this focus on emotionality is well placed. Emotions play a large role in politics (Marcus, 2000). Anger operates as an approach emotion, activating political attitudes that can boost political participation (Groenendyk & Banks, 2014; Phoenix, 2019; Valentino et al., 2011). The connection between anger and symbolic racist attitudes also leads to higher rates of opposition to redistributive policies (Banks, 2014). Fear and anxiety, on the other hand, prompt people to search out new information and put more trust in experts (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). Disgust can lead to the activation of Jim Crow racist attitudes (Banks, 2014). Enthusiasm plays a similar role as anger, leading people to greater levels of political activity based on their existing attitudes (Brader, 2006). This robust and growing empirical literature is coupled with a growing realization in normative theory that emotionality serves as a powerful compliment, rather than antagonist, to rationality (Morrell, 2010).

Given that the importance of emotions is a mainstay of conventional wisdom and that the powerful role emotions play is defended by a robust literature documenting effects on political behavior, public opinion, and political psychology, it is peculiar that scholars of political communication and campaigns have paid the topic so little attention. Scholars have studied candidate tone (Geer, 2006; Payne & Baukus, 1998; West, 2010), but the literature makes clear that this is insufficient for appreciating the diverse effects of emotional cues. Anger and fear are both negatively valenced. The former prompts action and boosts turnout; the latter prompts reconsideration and introspection. Treating both as equivalent because of their mutual negative charge therefore overlooks an important distinction in the psychological processing they elicit.

The number of studies examining elite emotionality is small (Borah, 2016; Brader, 2006; Phoenix, 2019; Ridout & Searles, 2011; Scott & McDonald, 2020) and does not, as of yet, provide a robust theoretical accounting of why candidates use emotionality outside of the role of behavioral strategy considerations. Brader (2006) shows that challengers tend to use more fear in campaign ads while incumbents use more enthusiasm and that competitive races feature more fear and less enthusiasm. Similarly, Ridout and Searles (2011) find that frontrunners tend to use more enthusiasm and pride language, while trailing candidates use more fear.[2] These findings point toward campaigns evaluating their electoral situation and employing emotional cues strategically based on the type of behavioral response from the electorate that would be most advantageous.

But more recent studies have begun noting important factors other than campaign strategy. Borah (2016) shows that the Republican presidential candidates in 2008 and 2012 used more fear rhetoric in their Facebook posts than did Obama, who instead used enthusiasm as a defining emotional frame. It is unclear whether this stems from a partisan difference or the fact that Obama was favored in both elections. Phoenix (2019) uses a discourse analysis to show that Black candidates generally avoid anger, although he does suggest that recent Black politicians like Nina Turner and Stacey Abrams may be pushing back on that trend. Scott and McDonald (2020) incorporate theories on gender and the emotional foundation of partisanship and find Republicans use more fear rhetoric and women candidates to use positively valenced emotional cues, most specifically joy.[3] A secondary finding from Ridout and Searles (2011) is that Republican Senate candidates used more fear and anger language than their Democratic counterparts.

What these studies suggest is that strategy matters for the use of emotions in campaigns but that it is far from the only salient consideration. The incorporation of theories on partisanship, gender, and race constraints is a welcome addition. But there are still other constraints that may very well exist and are worth deeper consideration. Given the powerful role emotions play in electoral politics, a more thorough understanding of when candidates can and cannot use emotionality as a rhetoric tool is important.

CAMPAIGN EVENT FORMAT AND EMOTIONAL RHETORIC

I pay special attention to the format in which a candidate communicates and how that may constrain the capacity to invoke emotional language. In the Aristotelian conception, emotional rhetoric is primarily valuable as a means of persuasion for its ability to influence the manner with which the audience perceives the message. Event formats present fundamentally distinct relationships between the rhetor and the audience. This may therefore affect both the rhetor's options and likelihood of success when employing emotional rhetoric. Additionally, scholars of rhetoric have long theorized that situational factors play a strong role in structuring the availability of rhetorical options (Blitzer, 1968; Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). Even if event format does not fundamentally alter the effectiveness of emotional rhetoric as a means of altering audience mindsets, it does vary the rhetorical situation to which rhetors respond.

Notably, what makes emotions an effective rhetorical tactic is not the same as what makes them an effective tool for altering political behavior. With the latter, emotional appeals are effective because they induce a desired behavioral response. But effectiveness from a rhetorical perspective is tied to how an emotion changes the audience's perception of an argument. It is the argument itself that is meant to elicit a behavioral response; the emotionality's role is making that outcome more likely.

This distinction may seem minute, but even this minor difference can create conflicting scenarios. Consider an unpopular incumbent politician who is trailing in the polls. Their electoral situation would be best rectified by moving those who are undecided or voting for the competitor to reconsider their options. The political psychologist would thus prescribe a healthy dose of fear and anxiety appeals. But this candidate is also an incumbent, and so perhaps invoking fear and anxiety will make the candidate's argument that they are worthy of another term in office unpersuasive. A conflict between rhetorical strategy and behavioral strategy can create conflicting incentives that have, as of yet, not been adequately recognized by scholars examining the use of emotional appeals by candidates.

The importance of this is further amplified when we consider the reinforcement mechanism by which candidates learn what messages are effective. As described above, we are continuously learning about how emotional appeals affect voters. This naturally raises the question of whether campaigns are aware of the effects. The most common response is that they are in the business of knowing what messages do and do not work. Campaigns that cannot effectively message will lose and so they invest great resources in honing their craft. Much of this occurs through trial and error. But when a candidate delivers remarks in front of a live audience, the responses they get—cheers, applause, laughter, silence, boos—will be primarily tied to the persuasiveness of their argument rather than their success at eliciting particular behavioral responses. This means that what candidates learn from this trial-and-error process is primarily *rhetorical* effectiveness, not behavioral effectiveness. If event format is related to the effectiveness of emotional rhetoric, as the above discussion suggests, then precisely how those event formats create distinct rhetorical circumstances is of utmost concern.

Many studies that look at rhetorical patterns in primaries struggle with the distinction of event format for a very simple reason: it requires a significant broadening of scope conditions (Bostdorff, 2009; Savoy, 2018, but see Schroedel et al., 2013). A similar problem affects the studies of emotionality in campaign communication (Borah, 2016; Brader, 2006; Ridout & Searles, 2011; Scott & McDonald, 2020). Whether it is campaign ads or social media posts or speeches, all of these studies examine messages as a singular entity without considering the important ways the format may interact with the ability to invoke emotional rhetoric.

There are two features of an event format that I specifically consider. The first is the degree of autonomy the candidate has over their message. In some contexts, candidates can speak directly to their audience in precisely the manner they wish. In others, candidates are engaging in dialogues with others—a voter, a journalist, another candidate—and do not have complete control over what is being communicated. In this latter situation they do not have full autonomy. The second feature is the candidate's evaluation of the loyalty of the audience. At certain times, candidates may find themselves speaking primarily to true believers in their cause. At other times the audience may not be so decidedly in their corner.

Both format attributes should affect candidates' ability to invoke emotional language. To explain why, consider the example of teaching a class. Anyone who has instructed both a large lecture and a smaller seminar knows that the method of presentation of material changes drastically across those two environments. Similarly, picture a class where the students are clearly disinterested in what you have to say compared to one in which they are highly engaged with the material and at the edges of their seats waiting for more. Once again, such conditions tend to create different rhetorical impulses. The same basic logic, I argue, works in incentivizing or constraining the use of emotional rhetoric in campaign communication.

Starting with autonomy, we should expect that candidates will want to use emotional appeals in their rhetoric given how effective such cues are (Brader, 2006). When they have autonomy over their rhetoric, they can follow this impulse. When their autonomy wanes, however, they will have to refrain from prominent emotional cues. This is because the decline in autonomy means their rhetoric necessarily becomes more interactive. Direct appeals to emotionality are less effective in such a scenario. Emanuel et al. (2015) provide an instructive example as to why. They analyze three cases of websites attempting to make emotional appeals via interactive forms of communication. In all three, appeals to emotions are subtle. This is because a direct reference to emotionality disrupts the interactivity; it becomes one party telling the other how to feel instead of letting the other party determine their feelings for themselves as would be befitting an equal in an interactive communication process.

When autonomy is low, candidates will therefore find themselves less able to tap into explicit emotional appeals out of restraint imposed by the interactivity of the dialogue. This, of course, does not imply that their communication partners are uninterested in emotional rhetoric. The media craves emotionality as it resonates with their desire for conflict and drama (Cook, 1998; Scott, n.d.). Voters, who generally struggle with more cognitively demanding rhetoric given their low political knowledge and weak ideology (Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017), should also find emotionality appealing. As such, it is not necessarily the case that low autonomy should lead to low emotionality because the candidates' dialogue partners wish to avoid emotion, but rather because the format prevents them from invoking emotional responses unilaterally.

> H1 (autonomy hypothesis): Events with low candidate autonomy will feature less emotional rhetoric.

The second attribute of an event format I consider is the loyalty of the audience. Importantly, loyalty is more complicated than a binary evaluation on the campaign trail. There are situations in which the candidate must assume the audience will never support them. Other times the audience may be sympathetic but not, as of yet, committed to the candidate's cause. On other occasions the audience will be composed of the candidate's base. This creates a three-category conceptualization of loyalty: weak loyalty, potential loyalty, and strong loyalty. From a rhetorical perspective, an audience with weak loyalty is one that will not be persuaded by appealing to different emotions. They are not eligible for persuasion in the first place. As such, candidates should avoid emotional rhetoric when facing such an audience as their ineligibility for rhetorical persuasion removes the impetus for such a tactic.

H2 (weak loyalty hypothesis): Events with weak loyalty will feature less emotional rhetoric.

In formats where the audience exhibits potential loyalty, the need for rhetorical persuasion is at its highest. Candidates will therefore want to employ emotions that create a bond of commonality with the audience. Nothing creates common ground like the perceptions of an outgroup threat (Jardina, 2019; Tajfel, 1979). And so emotional cues that are tied to attitudes of outgroup threats (Banks, 2014) will be especially effective. Prompting emotional reactions to perceived outgroup threats should be particularly effective in primaries as the intraparty nature of the race means candidates need to establish connections to the various interest groups and activists who form the party whose nomination they seek (Bawn et al., 2012). As such, if a candidate is at a campaign event in which they do not perceive the audience as directly loyal to them but think that they can win the audience over, they should invoke negatively valenced emotions as a means of conjuring a common enemy that threatens those in the audience, reminding those in attendance that participation in the party coalition is a means of self-preservation.

H3 (threat conjuring hypothesis): Events with potential loyalty will feature more negative emotional rhetoric.

Once this bogeyman has been called forth, the candidates then need to position themselves as the one who can protect the audience from this threat. They need the audience to trust that they can guard them. As such, candidates should supplement high negative emotions with high-trust language when speaking in front of an audience who is not immediately loyal to them but could become loyal in the future.

H4 (guardian hypothesis): Events with potential loyalty will feature more trust rhetoric.

As a practical example, imagine a Republican candidate speaking at an NRA forum. The candidate assumes that the audience is not there because they are loyal to them; instead, they must assume that the audience is there because they care about protecting their Second Amendment rights. As long as the candidate is a vocal supporter of the Second Amendment, however, they can probably also assume that many in attendance are sympathetic to their candidacy. To pull the audience toward their camp, the candidate should conjure the threat of Democrats taking away guns—using cues of anger, fear, and disgust—but then say that they can be trusted to prevent that from happening. This is, of course, not a partisan thing. Democrats should behave similarly when discussing reproductive freedom at a Planned Parenthood campaign forum, for example.

Finally, in strong loyalty situations a connection has already been forged between the candidate and the audience, removing the dire need to use emotions as a rhetorical form of persuasion. The persuasion has already occurred. This, I argue, should create an environment where the behavioral strategy incentives inferred from the political psychology literature should be strongest. If the crowd is already on your side, the primary goal of the rhetor has been accomplished. What remains is to provide the emotional cues that will create the preferred behavioral response.

As such, I hypothesize that these events will most closely approximate the expectation of behavioral strategy. They will feature high levels of approach emotions meant to activate support and low levels of emotions meant to invoke persuasion.

H5 (motivation hypothesis): Events with strong loyalty will feature more anger and joy rhetoric.

H6 (persuasion avoidance hypothesis): Events with strong loyalty will feature less fear and surprise rhetoric.

This comes with one exception rooted in the fluid nature of primaries. Given how rapidly the races can shift—a function of the intraparty, multicandidate, and serial format—primaries feature complex messaging environments. As such, candidates should not solely rest on their laurels, assuming that rhetorical persuasion is completely unnecessary, when speaking to a loyal audience. Instead, they should engage in positive emotional rhetoric to assure the audience that they have made the right choice.

H7 (good choice hypothesis): Events with strong loyalty will feature more positive emotional rhetoric.

Taken together, these hypotheses establish a broad expectation that the format of events creates rhetorical constraints that affect candidates' propensity to use emotional appeals. Given the powerful effects emotional cues have on political behavior, the existence and strength of these constraints is of significant concern.

DATA AND METHODS

To test these hypotheses, I first need to construct a corpus of candidate rhetoric where the candidate's autonomy over messaging and loyalty of the audience vary. I use the C-SPAN Video Library to do so. The C-SPAN Video Library includes videos of campaign events throughout the primary. Most of these videos are accompanied by transcripts of the event, typically from closed-captioning. I searched through the archive for each presidential primary candidate from 2000 to 2020 from the time they announced their candidacy through the end of their campaign and retrieved a transcript for each campaign event. This forms the bulk of the speech portion of the Presidential Primary Communication Corpus (Scott, 2021) that I use for this analysis, with each individual transcript of an event representing a unit of analysis.[4]

I then measured the amount of emotional language used in each transcript by applying the EmoLex emotional sentiment dictionaries (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). EmoLex includes dictionaries for four positively valenced (joy, trust, anticipation, and surprise) and four negatively valenced (anger, fear, disgust, and sadness) emotions. I applied each dictionary to the corpus to get a count of the number of words in each transcript that matched with each emotion. I divided each count by the total number of words in the transcript to calculate the percentage of words in a transcript that match with each of the eight emotions. To make testing hypotheses related to overall emotionality simpler, I also created aggregate measures of the proportions of negatively and positively valenced words. The percentage of words in the transcript for an event that are coded as each of the eight discrete emotions, as the sum of all negatively valenced emotions, and as the sum of all the positively valenced emotions serve as the 10 dependent variables in the analysis. All are continuous variables with Gaussian distributions.

For my primary independent variables, I use a four-category typology assessing the format of the campaign event. First are rallies (n = 1,383), which are high in candidate autonomy and feature strong audience loyalty. Rallies typically feature candidates giving largely prepared and uninterrupted speeches to a crowd that has chosen to be there for a reason. Second are town halls (n = 508), which are generally exchanges between the candidate and audience members (low autonomy) who, like with rallies, have chosen to be in attendance (strong loyalty). Third are press events (n = 368), where the audience is made up primarily of reporters who are asking questions of the candidate. These events are low in candidate autonomy as they are dialogues with journalists. The candidates are also aware that the reporters are not an existing base of political support and they are unlikely to be won over to their cause given their commitment to professional independence, meaning the events feature weak audience loyalty as well. Finally, there are externally organized events (n = 1,105). These include major political events like the Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner (formerly the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner), CPAC, state party meetings, and candidate forums hosted by interest groups. The audiences are not purely loyal to any one candidate; if anything they are drawn there by loyalty to a state party organization, particular political figure, or organized interest. As such, there is significant potential for future loyalty but little reason to think there is strong loyalty in the moment. These events also feature high candidate autonomy.[5] In summary, indicator variables for whether the event is a rally, town hall, press event, or an externally organized event serve as the four independent variables in the analysis.[6]

I also include a number of control variables to account for other factors that might influence candidates' use of emotional rhetoric and which, if excluded, might introduce omitted variable bias. First are several candidate-level controls including the candidate's party, race, and gender. I also control for the candidates' position in the polls, which is important given the strategic incentives the political psychology literature on emotions in politics implies.

Because attachments to the status quo political order may prevent some candidates from appealing to certain emotions, I control for whether the candidate is running for the nomination of a party that controls the White House and whether the candidate worked in the incumbent administration.

The contours of the race itself must be accounted for as they may also affect the ability to engage in emotional rhetoric. Candidate messaging tends to change between the invisible primary and the start of the real electoral season (Haynes & Rhine, 1998), so I control for the phrase of the campaign. Candidates may also vary their emotional rhetoric based on the competitiveness of the race (Ridout & Searles, 2011). Assessing competitiveness in primaries is complicated given the multicandidate field. I attempt to do so using a modified Hirschman-Herfindahl index (Steger et al., 2002), which uses the distribution of shares of a resource, in this case poll standing, to calculate how concentrated that resource is. For my purposes, this measure approximates the number of "effective" candidates in the race. More "effective" candidates implies a more wide-open competition.[7]

Finally, the data involve several hierarchical levels that may create meaningful variation. I account for this via election-year fixed effects and candidate mixed effects. The dependent variables are all continuous, warranting ordinary least squares regression.

RESULTS

Table 2.1 presents the regression models for the four negative emotions and an aggregate measure of negatively valenced emotions. Table 2.2 presents a similar table for positive emotions. To make comparisons of substantive magnitude easier, Figures 2.1 and 2.2 plot the coefficients grouped by event type. In all models, rallies are treated as the excluded category, meaning all regression coefficients for the three independent variables are in reference to the campaign rally event format.

The autonomy hypothesis (H1) stated that events with low candidate autonomy, town halls and press events, should feature less emotional language overall as candidates are not in full control over the emotional narrative. The aggregate emotional measures are most useful for testing this hypothesis. The results provide strong evidence in support of this hypothesis. Both town halls and press events use less negative and less positive emotion words than the baseline (rallies) or externally organized events. The candidate's autonomy over the rhetoric appears to strongly influence their ability to invoke emotional appeals, which lines up well with my theory that interactive dialogues constrain explicit emotional appeals.

The remaining six hypotheses all dealt with differences based on the loyalty of the audience. The typology posits media events as featuring weak audience loyalty. H2 predicts that such events will be the least emotional. Media events rank as the second least negatively and, by a wide margin, the least positively emotional type of event. The summation of these two patterns is that they are indeed the least emotional type of event, which supports H2.[8]

TABLE 2.1 *Effect of Event Type on Negative Emotional Cue Usage in Speeches*

	Anger (1)	Fear (2)	Disgust (3)	Sadness (4)	Total negative emotions (5)
Externally organized event	0.001* (0.0002)	0.001* (0.0003)	0.0004* (0.0001)	0.001* (0.0002)	0.003* (0.001)
Town hall	−0.002* (0.0003)	−0.003* (0.0004)	−0.001* (0.0002)	−0.001* (0.0003)	−0.007* (0.001)
Press event	−0.001* (0.0003)	−0.002* (0.0004)	0.0001 (0.0002)	−0.001* (0.0003)	−0.003* (0.001)
GOP	0.0003 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.001 (0.0004)	0.0002 (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)
Woman	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.0005)	0.0002 (0.001)	0.003 (0.003)
Nonwhite	0.0003 (0.001)	−0.0001 (0.001)	−0.0002 (0.0004)	0.001 (0.001)	0.0005 (0.002)
Poll standing	−0.00001 (0.00001)	0.00001 (0.00001)	0.00001 (0.00000)	0.00001* (0.00001)	0.00002 (0.00002)
Incumbent party	−0.0002 (0.001)	−0.002* (0.001)	−0.001* (0.0003)	−0.00002 (0.001)	−0.003* (0.002)
Previous administration	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.001* (0.001)	−0.0005 (0.001)	0.003 (0.003)
Post-Iowa	−0.0004* (0.0002)	−0.002* (0.0003)	−0.0004* (0.0001)	−0.0001 (0.0002)	−0.003* (0.001)
No. of effective candidates	−0.0002* (0.0001)	−0.0004* (0.0001)	−0.00004 (0.0001)	−0.00001 (0.0001)	−0.001* (0.0003)
Constant	0.012* (0.001)	0.015* (0.001)	0.005* (0.0005)	0.011* (0.001)	0.044* (0.003)
Observations	3,353	3,353	3,353	3,353	3,353
Log likelihood	12,764.670	11,705.580	14,555.220	12,707.630	8,806.560
Akaike information criterion	−25,491.340	−23,373.150	−29,072.450	−25,377.260	−17,575.120
Bayesian information criterion	−25,375.110	−23,256.920	−28,956.210	−25,261.020	−17,458.880

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes $p < 0.05$, one-tailed. All models include candidate mixed effects and election year fixed effects not presented to preserve space.

TABLE 2.2 *Effect of Event Type on Positive Emotional Cue Usage in Speeches*

	Joy (1)	Trust (2)	Anticipation (3)	Surprise (4)	Total positive emotions (5)
Externally organized event	−0.002* (0.0004)	0.001* (0.0004)	−0.001* (0.0002)	−0.001* (0.0003)	−0.002* (0.001)
Town hall	−0.002* (0.0004)	−0.004* (0.0005)	−0.0004 (0.0003)	0.00001 (0.0003)	−0.006* (0.001)
Press event	−0.006* (0.0005)	−0.002* (0.001)	−0.002* (0.0003)	−0.003* (0.0003)	−0.013* (0.001)
GOP	0.001 (0.001)	−0.0002 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.003)
Woman	0.002* (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.007* (0.003)
Nonwhite	0.001 (0.001)	−0.0003 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.00004 (0.003)
Poll standing	−0.00003* (0.00001)	−0.00000 (0.00001)	0.00000 (0.00001)	−0.00003* (0.00001)	−0.0001* (0.00003)
Incumbent party	−0.0001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.003 (0.002)
Previous administration	0.001 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.002)	−0.0005 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.003 (0.004)
Post-Iowa	0.002* (0.0004)	0.001* (0.0004)	0.0001 (0.0003)	0.002* (0.0003)	0.006* (0.001)
No. of effective candidates	−0.00004 (0.0001)	−0.0002 (0.0002)	−0.0001 (0.0001)	−0.0001 (0.0001)	−0.0003 (0.0004)
Constant	0.023* (0.001)	0.048* (0.001)	0.025* (0.001)	0.012* (0.001)	0.108* (0.003)
Observations	3,353	3,353	3,353	3,353	3,353
Log likelihood	11,266.320	10,830.600	12,397.500	12,367.280	7,806.318
Akaike information criterion	−22,494.640	−21,623.210	−24,756.990	−24,696.560	−15,574.640
Bayesian information criterion	−22,378.400	−21,506.970	−24,640.760	−24,580.320	−15,458.400

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes $p < 0.05$, one-tailed. All models include candidate mixed effects and election year fixed effects not presented to preserve space.

H3 and H4 dealt with event types with significant potential for future loyalty. In externally organized events, the audience is gathered primarily due to a commitment to some sort of other organization: an interest group, a state party, a notable state political figure, and so forth. Often, multiple candidates will be speaking at the event. As such, the candidate cannot assume that the audience supports them and should instead develop a rhetorical strategy meant to persuade. This should mean using a combination of negative emotions meant to invoke a reaction to a threatening outgroup and particular positive emotions meant to assure that the candidate can help protect from the threat. Take, for example, candidate forums hosted by the NRA and Planned Parenthood. In such contexts, candidates should mention threats to shared beliefs ("they" will take away your guns/bodily sovereignty) tied to emotions such as fear and anger. Once such an outgroup has been summoned and vested with the proper negative emotional charge, candidates should then posit themselves as guardians against that threat (you can trust "they'll" only do it over my dead body). Taken together, this pattern predicts that events with high potential loyalty will feature more negatively valenced emotional rhetoric and more trust rhetoric than other types of events.

The results once again strongly support these hypotheses. Externally organized events feature the most negative emotional language overall. This is also true of all the individual negative emotions, although the differences are most pronounced for anger and fear, two emotions that are particularly useful for cuing outgroup threats (Banks, 2014; MacWilliams, 2016). When we turn to positive emotions, however, we see that the high emotionality of externally organized events is particular to negativity. Such events feature less positively valenced emotional rhetoric than rallies and less joy, anticipation, and surprise specifically. There is one exception, however: trust. Externally organized events are the event format with the most trust language on average. This means that H3 and H4 are both supported by the results.

The final three hypotheses applied to events with strong loyalty. At these events, the candidate can presume that many of those gathered are already in their camp. This includes both campaign rallies and town halls. Given that loyalty is already established, there is little need to conjure a threatening boogeyman to win over new supporters. Instead, the candidate can make the audience feel good about their choices via positive emotional cues. And, given the strategic incentives that the political psychology literature implies, they can try to motivate audience members to act on their support by invoking approach emotions and avoiding emotions that elicit reconsideration and reappraisal. This suggests

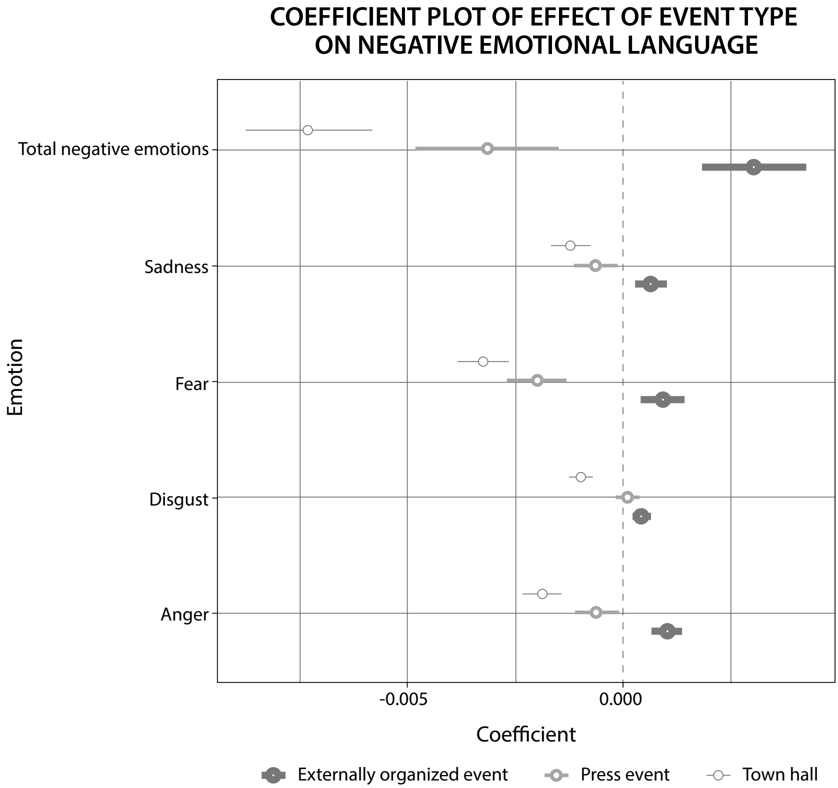

FIGURE 2.1 Coefficient plot of effect of event type on negative emotional language.

that candidates should use more anger and joy (H5), less fear and surprise (H6), and more aggregate positive emotions (H7) at such events.

The results here are more equivocal than for the other hypotheses. Campaign rallies do use the greatest amount of positive emotional language. Town halls use less positive emotional rhetoric than rallies, to be expected given their low autonomy, but the magnitude is still unexpectantly steep. That the gap between them and press events is so big is encouraging, however.

Rallies use the most joy language and are only behind externally organized events in terms of anger. Town halls are also relatively high in joy, at least in comparison to the other event format with low candidate autonomy, but feature the lowest percentage of anger rhetoric, contrary to expectations. That said, perhaps the media's preference for anger in connection with its conflict newsworthiness value (Scott, n.d.) can partially explain this finding. In some, the

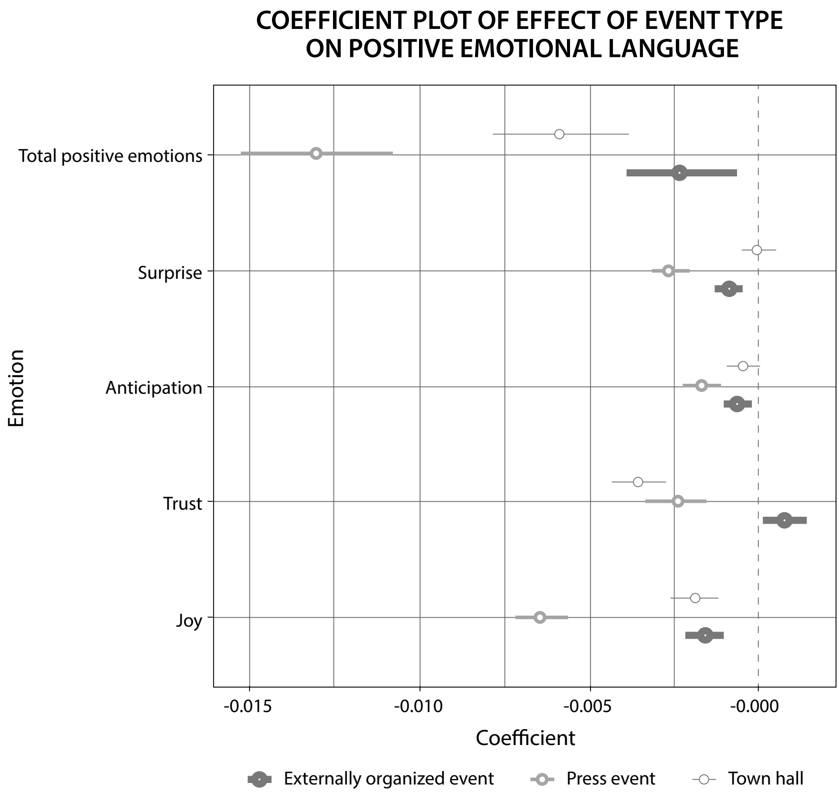

FIGURE 2.2 Coefficient plot of effect of event type on positive emotional language.

evidence is broadly supportive of H5, albeit not as consistent as for the previous hypotheses.

The evidence for the persuasion avoidance hypothesis is weaker still. Given the autonomy and threat conjuring hypotheses, it is no surprise to find rallies in the middle of other event formats in terms of fear rhetoric. Town halls feature the least amount of fear rhetoric on average, which is also consistent with the hypothesis, although the substantive difference with press events is small. But rallies and town halls are the event formats highest in surprise rhetoric, which is contrary to expectations. The substantive magnitudes are sufficiently weak that little should be gleaned from that insight, however.

Several of the controls display statistically significant relationships with candidates' use of emotional language. Notably, it appears that attributes of the race itself, more than the attributes of the candidates, affect candidates' propensity for using emotional rhetoric. Several notable results found in another study (Scott & McDonald, 2020) are still present once the format of the event is taken into account.

DISCUSSION

To summarize, events where candidates do not have full autonomy over their rhetoric feature less emotional language than events where the candidates have greater control. Candidates also use fewer emotional cues when speaking to an audience that does not (and will not) support them. In contrast, candidates use a great deal of negative emotions—most prominently anger and fear—as well as trust when speaking to an audience that could potentially support them in the future. Finally, candidates tend to use more positive emotions—specifically joy—when speaking to an audience that is already supportive. Taken holistically, these results provide strong evidence in support of H1–4 as well as the good choice hypothesis (H7). The results for H5 and H6 are suggestive but equivocal.

This study makes three primary contributions. First, it demonstrates the limitations of relying solely on inferences from the political psychology literature in studying patterns of campaign communication. This paradigm goes as follows: Approach emotions like anger and joy/enthusiasm lead to the activation of existing attitudes, boosting turnout among supporters. Emotions like fear and surprise instead lead people to slow down and reconsider their options. So frontrunners should use anger and joy, while those trailing should prefer fear and surprise. Yet the results do not paint such a neat picture. Poll standing, the best measure of candidates' strategic incentives, displays either statistically insignificant or counterintuitive relationships with emotional rhetoric. While better performance in the polls is correlated with less surprise language, it is also correlated with less joy language and displays no relationship at all with anger or fear. Event format, with its ties primarily to rhetorical incentives, is a more substantively notable correlate.

The second primary contribution reflects the locus of this research. There are very few studies of the use of emotional cues in campaign communication. This extends that small, but hopefully growing, literature to the electoral context of presidential primaries and the communication format of campaign events. Neither of these domains have been commonly studied in the past.

Finally, it draws our attention to the normative consequences of campaign event formats. None of the results presented here undermine the existing political psychology literature on the behavioral ramifications of emotions, even as they suggest that putting the lessons learned from that literature into practice is a more complicated process than previously thought. The implication is that event formats, by incentivizing the use of some emotional appeals, manifest repercussions on the attitudes and actions of the electorate.

Deriving normative conclusions from these results is complicated by the oft-nuanced nature of the political psychology literature on this subject. Take a single emotion: anger. Anger can prompt greater political activity and participation (Valentino et al., 2011), which is often seen as normatively desirable. Anger also primes people to be more reliant on their racial resentment attitudes when making political decisions (Banks, 2014), which is normatively undesirable. That candidates struggle to elicit anger in town hall settings means that they should struggle to motivate those in the audience to turn out and support them. The political culture of New Hampshire, which emphasizes the town hall, may therefore limit candidates' abilities to excite their supporters. By the same token, however, it may push candidates to avoid emotional rhetoric that would prime voters to rely on their racial resentment when casting their ballots. Similar barters can be articulated for the other emotional cues or for more or less emotionality in general.

This makes evaluating tradeoffs a complicated calculus. Emotions are crucial for helping people make sense of and engage with the political world, but their effects are complicated. This makes it difficult to proclaim that any one type of campaign event format leads to preferrable emotional rhetoric output. But while such a definitive claim will not be made here, that does not mean that the repercussions of emotional rhetoric vanish. Different event formats appear to facilitate different emotional appeals. These different emotional appeals likely affect the electorate who consumes them, which in turn affects the electoral fortunes of the candidates in the race. The consequences are significant and need to be considered.

This study is not without limitations. As is often the case with observational research, there is ample reason to be skeptical of causality. I am not able to randomly assign an event format to a speech writer and measure what rhetoric they produce. Future research might benefit from qualitative interviews with the specialists who prepare campaign communication to unpack why they use emotions as they do. It is also fair to question whether similar rules would apply to other campaign formats or electoral contexts. The presidential primary communication corpus does not include debate transcripts, but would candidates' emotional rhetoric follow what would be expected from a low-autonomy, high-potential-loyalty event in such a format?

Likewise, presidential general election candidates also hold rallies and town halls, engage with the press, and speak at forums organized by organizations outside the campaign. Intuitively, many of the same hypotheses should apply. The mechanisms underpinning the hypotheses are largely the same. A key difference may lie in the changes in the electorate, however, especially in the context of externally organized events. Because the average persuadable voter goes from being a partisan who is confronted with a bevy of intraparty options to a person whose commitment to a party camp is weaker, the ingroup broadens, making it harder to identify a singular outgroup threat that can serve as an effective scapegoat. This may weaken the efficacy of this rhetorical tactic. Future studies should investigate whether the results are replicated in other electoral contexts.

That said, this study stands with only a handful of other works dipping a toe into questions of the constraints on the use of emotional rhetoric outside of campaign strategy. And it is one that demonstrates clear evidence that those other constraints do indeed matter.

NOTES

1. Zhou, L. (2019, September 19). *Kamala Harris is f***ing committing to Iowa*. Vox. https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/9/19/20873953/kamala-harris-iowa-south-carolina-primary
2. Counter to a strategic theory, however, they also find that trailing candidates use more anger, an emotion that should prompt further commitment to a disadvantageous electoral situation.
3. They also find that candidates performing well in the polls use more fear language, while those performing worse use more anger, a pattern of results that runs counter to strategic theories on the use of emotions.
4. The American Presidency Project (Woolley & Peters, n.d.) served as a supplementary resource for a small number of additional transcripts. When both the C-SPAN Video Library and the American Presidency Project provided transcripts for the same event, I deferred to the C-SPAN Video Library.
5. This is not universal: Sometimes the events feature hosts who will engage in a Q&A with the candidates after giving them a chance to make a prepared

opening statement. But, in general, the events give candidates more autonomy than they have at events specifically designed to be exchanges, like press events and town halls.

6. Classification of event type was primarily done using the description of the event provided by the C-SPAN Video Library. In cases where there was no or only a vague description, I instead coded the event type by either watching the event and noting the characteristics of the format or checking contemporary media accounts. A breakdown of event type by partisanship and by election year is available in the Appendix to this chapter.
7. Descriptive statistics for all variables are available in the Appendix to this chapter.
8. That the pattern is not consistent across both positive and negative emotions raises an alternative possibility. Perhaps the negativity bias of the media (Soroka, 2014) leads to an asymmetry. Such a theory cannot fully explain why press events are so low in emotionality overall; the media are often understood as seeking emotionality to satisfy a need for dramatic content. But in concert with the confirmed autonomy hypothesis it could explain why press events use less emotions overall, with some of that difference offset for negative emotions. Given the findings discussed below, however, I find this alternative explanation a less effective theoretical accounting of the results.

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APPENDIX: TABLES A.1–A.4

TABLE A.1 *Descriptive Statistics on Emotional Rhetoric in Candidate Speeches*

	Median	Mean	St. dev	Minimum	Maximum	No. of words in EmoLex dictionary
Anger	.012	.012	.006	.000	.083	1,247
Fear	.016	.017	.008	.000	.083	1,476
Disgust	.006	.006	.003	.000	.031	1,058
Sadness	.012	.013	.005	.000	.139	1,191
Total negative emotions	.046	.048	.018	.000	.333	2,732*
Joy	.022	.024	.009	.000	.089	689
Trust	.043	.044	.010	.000	.100	1,231
Anticipation	.024	.025	.006	.000	.066	839
Surprise	.012	.014	.006	.000	.061	539
Total positive emotions	.103	.106	.024	.000	.299	2,194*

*Total unique words.

TABLE A.2 *Descriptive Statistics of Independent and Control Variables*

	Median	Mean	St. dev	Minimum	Maximum
Rallies	.000	.411	.492	0	1
Town halls	.000	.151	.358	0	1
Press events	.000	.110	.312	0	1
Externally organized events	.000	.329	.470	0	1
GOP	.000	.447	.497	0	1
Woman	.000	.155	.362	0	1
Nonwhite	.000	.166	.372	0	1
Poll standing	13.500	22.470	25.410	0	100
Incumbent	.000	.216	.411	0	1
Previous administration	.000	.059	.237	0	1
Post-Iowa	.000	.358	.479	0	1
No. of effective candidates	4.346	4.037	1.913	1	10.354

TABLE A.3 *Event Type by Candidate Partisanship*

	Rallies	Town halls	Press events	Externally organized events	*Total*
Democrats	770 (41.40%)	250 (13.44%)	159 (8.55%)	681 (36.61%)	*1,860 (100%)*
Republicans	613 (40.09%)	258 (17.15%)	209 (13.90%)	424 (28.19%)	*1,504 (100%)*
Total	*1,383 (41.11%)*	*508 (15.10%)*	*368 (10.94%)*	*1,105 (32.85%)*	*3,364 (100%)*

TABLE A.4 *Event Type by Election Year*

	Rallies	Town halls	Press events	Externally organized events	*Total*
2000	144 (43.11%)	40 (11.98%)	64 (19.16%)	86 (25.75%)	*334 (100%)*
2004	158 (46.06%)	48 (13.99%)	31 (9.04%)	106 (30.90%)	*343 (100%)*
2008	403 (44.68%)	145 (16.08%)	87 (9.65%)	267 (29.60%)	*902 (100%)*
2012	187 (46.17%)	64 (15.80%)	50 (12.35%)	104 (25.68%)	*405 (100%)*
2016	312 (46.15%)	114 (16.86%)	68 (10.06%)	193 (28.55%)	*676 (100%)*
2020	179 (25.83%)	97 (14.00%)	68 (9.81%)	349 (50.36%)	*693 (100%)*
Total	*1,383 (41.11%)*	*508 (15.10%)*	*368 (10.94%)*	*1,105 (32.85%)*	*3,364 (100%)*

3

CONSTRUCTING 21ST-CENTURY CITIZENS

Congressional Discourses in U.S. Citizenship Policy Speeches

Alison N. Novak

In a 2018 speech by Mitch McConnell (R-KY), the Senate majority leader identified one of the most "challenging and yet important" areas of "policy under the Trump presidency": citizenship (C-SPAN, 2018a). Policies enacted by President Trump often conflict with traditional models and practices on the topic, which motivate citizen protest (both in support and opposition), congressional outrage, and changes in international relations.

Early policies in the Trump presidency centered on issues of citizenship, including a travel and immigration ban on countries with large Islamic populations, eliminating birthright citizenship for some groups, and supporting ICE raids. These policies were met with both intense public backlash and social media support messages and were largely debated by Congress. As Representative Joaquin Castro (D-TX) reflected, "his laws are not just about who is an who shouldn't be a citizen, but about what makes a citizen and what a citizen should do" (C-SPAN, 2019a).

As noted by Castro, scholars determine that "citizenship goes far beyond who issues your passport" (Hooghe & Oser, 2015). Invoked in policy debates are many definitions of citizenship with varied meaning to different ideological groups and cultures (Dalton, 2009). Within the United States, citizenship can mean the legal residency identity of an individual, the duties associated with performing citizenship, or the characteristics and common practices of individuals with a similar regional background. Definitions also evolve over time, with different generations constructing and adopting their own interpretations.

While citizenship is debated and constructed across many platforms and contexts, one of the most powerful lenses includes policy debates over citizenship laws. These speeches go beyond articulating who should and should not be able to apply for citizenship in the United States and also describe citizenship meaning and responsibilities. Visible in congressional speeches about proposed policies, the discursive meaning of citizenship impacts those who seek to establish identity within a country. How citizenship is described in these speeches influences the ways that citizenship is enacted by (current and prospective) members, taught by citizenship instructors, and formally and informally enforced through laws and social norms. In short, these speeches articulate not only who should be allowed to be a citizen but also what makes a good citizen.

CITIZENSHIP AS POLICY

Petroccia et al. (2018) note that citizenship is both a set of policies and an identity construct, with often conflicting interpretations and boundaries. As a set of policies, citizenship defines who is and who is not considered part of a geographical region and a constituent of a governmental group such as a country. Throughout the world, citizenship is granted by the government to individuals who meet a set of criteria, such as place of birth, residency, and familial origin. In the United States, citizenship is granted automatically to individuals born of other U.S. citizens, and pathways to citizenship exist for others (such as green cards, work and education visas, and service programs).

Citizenship policies change frequently, often matching the political interests of those in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. A president can set citizenship and immigration policies (although the courts can check this power), and members of Congress have oversight on offices like the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—although this oversight is often limited. Changes in citizenship policies can happen quickly and dramatically, often denoting changes in executive leadership. For example, shortly after President Trump took office in 2017, he announced a ban on travel and immigration from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. This ban was met with protest and legal challenges from groups who thought it unfairly targeted predominantly Muslim countries. Further, there was little warning prior to the ban, thus causing individuals to question the ramifications and details of this new policy.

Other citizenship policies impacted during the Trump Presidency include the DACA Act, which does not provide a direct pathway citizenship for children who are born or are brought to the United States unlawfully to remain throughout their childhood. This was a change from the DREAM Act, which was enacted under President Obama, that did provide a pathway to residency for these individuals. Further, during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, President Trump announced other updates to citizenship, such as halting immigration and the approval of new visa applicants.

Del Mar Farina (2018) argues that the rapid change of citizenship policies often leaves individuals confused about options for immigration and residency. This is particularly true of policy changes that are not announced in advance, meaning all those involved in citizenship are left without clear instructions or processes. Frey and Whitehead (2009) suggest that the entire citizenship industry—including nonprofits and advocacy groups, lawyers, and citizenship educators—is often left scrambling to interpret changing federal policies, often waiting for the courts to weigh in and deem new policies constitutional or not.

As a result of confusion and rapidly changing policies, Kerwin and Warren (2019) note that individuals seeking citizenship in the United States begin to prioritize practices and behaviors of citizens. While policy may be difficult to interpret, individuals focus on learning and adopting social norms and identity markers. In this vein, citizenship is constituted not singularly by policy and legal status but also by the characteristics and practices of individuals. However, this too changes over time, and individuals learn identity and behavior from a variety of sources.

CITIZENSHIP AS BEHAVIOR/IDENTITY

Despite the numerous developments in policies on citizenship, Dalton (2009) notes that citizenship is better understood as a series of practices and identity than a policy framework. While various government groups oversee determining legal citizenship rules and regulations, the cultural meaning and practice of citizenship is largely linked to the norms identified and accepted by groups of people. As such, these practices and identities evolve over time, as do the cultural boundaries of who is, and who is not, considered a “good citizen.”

Mayne and Geißel (2018) reflect that to the public, citizenship is not just the legal identity of an individual but also their ability to meet the expectations and adopt the norms of a culture. Meeting these (often unexpressed or informal) expectations demarcates individuals as "good citizens" because they live up to the standards set by the rest of the group (in this case other citizens). However, because expectations and norms evolve over time, the qualities of good citizenship also change. Dalton (2009) notes that throughout the 20th century, good citizenship was bound to definitions of duty and the required actions necessary for being part of a democracy. In short, voting was identified as one of the main ways that individuals could be "good American citizens." But beyond just a set of actions, good citizens throughout the 20th century needed to understand voting as a duty required to uphold democracy. Voting was tied to good citizenship duty through political speeches, election campaigns, and advocacy communication. Through these iterations, voters were framed as good citizens because of their ability to carry out the duties associated with their membership.

However, throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the qualities associated with good citizens changed as social norms and expectations shifted to meet the changing cultural environment. Tupper and Cappello (2012) reflect that this was particularly associated with the emergence of the millennial generation and the technological advancements embraced by the group. Millennial expectations of good citizenship looked different than those of previous generations, in part because of their access to digital technologies that provided new ways to participate in civic and political issues, as well as because the group entered adulthood during different cultural contexts than did previous generations. Millennials (and future generations) heralded "engaged citizenship" rather than duty-based models, where individuals were encouraged to participate in democracy through means other than (and in addition to) voting. This included joining protest movements, running for office, and using digital technologies to support activist groups. Rather than framing citizenship as a series of duties, good citizens were now expected to critically engage the political and social systems.

In contrast to duty-based citizenship, engaged citizenship emphasizes the individual's efforts to support social and political issues and causes that are personally relevant (Schaarschmidt & Könsgen, 2019). There is no consensus on what these issues are, nor over the position that individuals should have. Tupper and Cappello (2012) note that the goal for engaged citizenship is for individuals to become part of social and political movements, not to restrict what those movements are or the positions (for or against) individuals should have.

Logan et al. (2017) suggest that citizenship norms and expectations change subtly over time because of changes in the makeup of the group as well as the cultural environment. As new generations come of age, generational experience and expectations start to shape citizenship practices and identities. This can be impacted by political and policy changes, but several authors call for more scholarship that looks at how politicians end elected representatives frame "good citizenship" before more conclusions are drawn (Almgren, 2017; Lapp, 2012; Schaarschmidt & Könsgen, 2019)

CONGRESS AND CITIZENSHIP

One group responsible for impacting citizenship, including the policies that regulate the naturalization process, is Congress. While Congress does not have direct oversight over citizenship rules, it often responds to changes made through the executive branch or federal agencies such as the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Through policy proposals, hearings featuring agency leadership, and responsive speeches on constituent needs and problems, members of Congress frequently reflect on citizenship as both a legal status and a set of cultural practices and expectations. Cardinal and Brown (2007) note that while Congress may not directly set citizenship policies, its perception of citizenship and the way that it is framed impact both media and constituent views on the subject. Members of Congress can point attention to specific issues and policies, thus impacting the public's understanding and perception.

Recent examples of this attention appeared throughout the Trump presidency—for example, the 2017 travel and immigration ban established by President Trump and affecting individuals from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Following civic protests at airports and in cities around the country, members of Congress spoke out about the policy and its implementation. They spoke on the congressional floor to encourage and support lawsuits, posted messages of support and opposition on social media, and even joined in on the protests by appearing in-person at events (Reardon, 2017). While parts of the 2017 restrictions were eventually overturned, the ban was referenced in congressional speeches over the next few years as an example of the anti-Muslim policies of the Trump administration. For example, in a 2017 emailed statement to *The New York Times*, Representative Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) reflected on her frustrations and outrage with the order: "It also appears that the executive order imposes an unconstitutional religious test on immigrants and refugees seeking entry to our country by giving priority to one religion over another" (Wamsley & Neely, 2017). Alternatively, Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) made this statement: "We are at war with Islamic extremists and anything less than 100 percent verification of these refugees' backgrounds puts our national security at risk. We need to take the time to examine our existing programs to ensure terrorists aren't entering our country. The safety of U.S. citizens must be our number one priority" (C-SPAN, 2018b). These references help shape public understanding of the topic while framing issues surrounding citizenship.

Other events and issues push members of Congress to speak on citizenship, often reflecting on the differences between the legal definition and the cultural practices associated with the concept. For example, a 2019 whistleblower report found that a child died while in federal detention facilities managed by ICE. This tragic outcome prompted speeches from congressional members, calls for congressional investigation, and protests by activist groups. Here, many reflected on the policies as "unethical" and violating the spirit of the United States. In a June 2020 letter to the Department of Homeland Security signed by 80 members of Congress, lawmakers argued for the reunification of families and that separation "should never be this country's policy" (Congress of the United States, 2020). Again, this reinforces separation between American values and actual policies as they are enacted by federal agencies. While members of Congress see a distinction between policies and the identity practices that constitute citizenship, no studies examine how these meanings are presented by members of Congress. This study seeks to fill this void.

METHODS

This project asks three questions about the nature of citizenship as it is invoked in policy discussions by members of Congress. First, it asks how congressional speakers construct "citizenship," specifically examining what practices and responsibilities are associated with U.S. citizenship. The study specifically looks for evidence of Dalton's (2009) definitions of duty-based citizenship and engaged citizenship within congressional speeches to identify how citizenship practices required more social and cultural meaning than residency. Second, it asks how members of Congress articulate changes in citizenship policies and practices. As noted by Ricci (2004), the practices of citizenship change over time, and discourses of change powerfully narrate contemporary meaning and boundaries of identity. Third, the project will reflect on how Congress responds to policy changes from the executive branch and public reaction to new policies.

To study how speakers discursively construct "citizenship," this project adopts a discourse analysis technique established by Gee (2012). In this approach, a set of texts is read (or watched) and analyzed for the presence of seven meaning-making tasks: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems/knowledge. For a definition of each practice and example, see Appendix A to this chapter.

To collect data for this study, the newly developed C-SPAN Video Library API was used to download videos that include the words "citizenship" and "policy" together. To study citizenship during the Trump presidency, the collection was limited to the period January 20, 2017, to May 1, 2020. Then, the data set was narrowed to include only speakers who are members of Congress or members of the executive branch. This includes 937 videos within the data set. Importantly, this 40-month period allows researchers to exhaustively identify the ways that congressional speakers construct, use, and invoke discourses of citizenship policies. For a step-by-step methodology, see Appendix B to this chapter.

The C-SPAN Video Library makes this research possible by providing a thorough and immense collection of congressional videos. The C-SPAN Archives, with its closed-captioning data, allows researchers to study how members of Congress develop, apply, and use discourses such as those on "citizenship." The study of congressional discourses is important because of its implications for public engagement, media efficacy, and legislation development. In short, studying congressional discourses lends insight into how policies are developed, proposed, and promoted within the legislative process.

As noted, the study of citizenship policy an emerging field involving interdisciplinary perspectives from political communication, public policy, and international relations. The C-SPAN Video Library provides a unique and previously unexamined way to learn how the language of citizenship impacts governmental processes. This study holds implications for those studying political communication, governmental discourses, and public policy.

Discourse 1: Citizenship as a set of responsibilities

In the process of referencing citizenship, most congressional speakers identified it as a set of responsibilities that comprise identity groups—rather than a technical designation of regionality. For example, this was evident in congressional

FIGURE 3.1 Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD).

meetings and speeches on the prospect of granting Washington, D.C., statehood. In a June 25, 2020, speech by Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD), he reflects that citizens in Washington, D.C., demonstrate their ability to meet the responsibilities associated with citizenship: "Should we include them in the union as American citizens deserve to be of course full citizenship? Of course, full citizenship" (C-SPAN, 2020c). Intrinsic to his argument is that citizens have a right to vote for representation in federal bodies and that the right to vote is a responsibility of citizens—one that, he argues, the citizens of Washington, D.C., can meet.

Voting and the ability to vote for representation was easily the most common responsibility associated with citizenship. In a February 6, 2019, speech by Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD; Figure 3.1), he weaves the concepts of voting and citizenship together through repeated references to both:

> I believe we should do everything in our power to make sure it is easier for American citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote, not making it harder. We should be making it more convenient, not less. We should be encouraging more people to cast their votes, not fewer. We should be promoting early voting, absentee voting, voting by mail, and other ways to help citizens cast their ballots. (C-SPAN, 2019b)

SCAN ME

Discursively, the concepts of voting and citizenship are woven together to demonstrate their ties. To Cummings, voting is the responsibility of citizens, which is either aided or prevented by actions of Congress and elected officials. He therefore argues that government should help individuals carry out the responsibilities of citizenship by supporting voting access and practices.

Other congressional members similarly verbalized a link between voting and citizenship as well as other responsibilities. For example, in a 2019 hearing on campaign finance laws, Representative Chip Roy (R-TX) argued that donating money to political candidates is a form of free speech that supports the citizens' responsibility to vote and impact political leadership and representation: "Are we aware of the negative impact that you have on forcing American citizens to exercising their free speech to have that information be disclosed?" (C-SPAN, 2019b). Here, Roy questions policies that require individuals to disclose personal information when donating to political parties, groups, or individuals. To Roy, these policies stifle citizens' rights to free speech (performed via political donations) and citizens' ability to impact political outcomes. By repeatedly using the words "citizen" and "citizenship," he ties these practices discursively together.

Other identified responsibilities besides voting include enlisting in the U.S. military (although you do not need to be a citizen to join, which is the focus of discourse 3), participating in advocacy movements and groups, and seeking access to government-sponsored programs such as public education and health care. While these mentions were few and far between, the language of "responsibility" was consistent throughout the videos. By using "responsibility," the speakers denote that good citizenship requires individuals to take responsibility for their political interests. In this way, citizens, not government (of any level), are responsible for performing citizenship.

Discourse 2: Citizenship rights enacted over a lifetime

Beyond citizen responsibilities, there were also many mentions of the rights granted to U.S. citizens. The most mentioned were freedom of speech and protest. Unlike the framework of responsibility, here these items were framed as rights that were granted by the government to citizens, thus making them the responsibility of government leaders to protect and enact. During a 2019 hearing on the deportation of critically ill immigrant children, Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) reflected that although the children were not legal citizens of the U.S., because they were in the custody of ICE or USCIS, they had a right to the same levels of health care and treatment as citizens (C-SPAN, 2019d). In her description, health care, and humane treatment while in government custody are repeatedly referred to as U.S. rights extended to citizens of the country.

Similarly, in 2019 Representative Katie Hill (D-CA) referenced the rights of citizens to protest and speak openly about the mistreatment of immigrants detained by ICE. She argued that protests outside suspected ICE facilities were constitutionally protected, even if they revealed secret or protected government areas. Here, she reflects on the right to protest as a part of citizenship, and she even praises citizens who used protest to draw attention to human rights violations and concerns. Her praise of these protest groups and her connection to their rights as citizens discursively constructs their actions as the performance of "engaged citizenship" (C-SPAN, 2019c). Similarly, other leaders vocalized support of protest groups and connected the right to protest to the rights of U.S. citizens. For example, Representative Al Green (D-TX) encouraged citizens to question candidates' stance on Black Lives Matter, connecting political dismissals of the movement as an attack on the right to protest (C-SPAN, 2020b). It is important to note that the right to protest is seemingly an adaptation of the First Amendment, or the right to peacefully assemble. While there were no mentions of these rights being granted by the Constitution, the repeated use of "protest" seems to be a refence to this set of rights.

Unlike the discursive construction of responsibility, the construction of rights ties to the framework of engaged citizenship. Citizenship is noted not by a set of duties that need to be performed but rather by a way of engaging the political process and enacting change on relevant issues.

Discourse 3: True citizenship dictated by culture, not policies

This was particularly true of speeches and testimony on the 2020 U.S. census, where President Trump's administration sought to include a citizenship question. In a 2020 hearing on the census, Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) reflected that, even ignoring the ethical question of whether a citizenship question should be included on the census, the question would not produce valuable insight since citizenship is more than legal residency—it is the cultural practices to which an individual belongs. While opposing the citizenship question, Maloney discursively constructs citizenship as a cultural practice and identity rather than a legal residency. She also suggests that the nuances of citizenship are too complex for a simple survey question, thus providing support for removing it from the census (C-SPAN, 2020a).

Other policy-based discussions yield similar responses, with congressional speakers acknowledging that citizenship is both legally and cultural defined and practiced. This was apparent in a 2019 House session featuring Representative William Lacy Clay (D-MO): Is the law "to facilitate the automatic acquisition of citizenship for lawful permanent resident children of military and Federal Government personnel residing abroad, and for other purposes . . . or to see individuals as part of the country without legal reference" (C-SPAN, 2019f). Here Clay identifies the two perspectives on citizenship: legal status and cultural identity. Without weighting one over the other, Clay presents both as critical components to understanding the role of individuals in governmental organizations such as the military.

While discussions of citizenship as cultural are common, the specific dimensions of culture are rarely mentioned. Further, there are no mentions of how cultural citizenship might be different among countries or regions. This ambiguity is clear from speeches where cultural practices are the framework for citizenship. In a 2019 congressional hearing on citizenship and military families, Representative Lou Correa (D-NY) raises the question, "When you say the government promised citizenship what does that mean? . . . They promise you citizenship but one of the things that doesn't happen is that they sit down with you and actually make sure that you know" (C-SPAN, 2019e). Here, Correa reflects that citizenship is more than "forms and paperwork" and instead indicative of informal and unarticulated cultural practices. He argues that while citizenship is granted to the families of enlisted military personnel, there is no program that helps these new citizens navigate the cultural practices and assumptions of this status. Correa is joined by Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) during the same hearing, who similarly argues that the citizenship process for members of the military should include programs that help acculturate and educate these individuals (C-SPAN, 2019e).

Discourse 4: Congressional policies as "reactive" to changing definitions of citizenship

While infrequent, members of Congress reflected on the policy developments around citizenship, which particularly referenced changes coming from the executive branch. After the 2017 travel and immigration bans enacted by President Trump, members of Congress reflected on their own bills and policy proposals as responding to changes coming from the president. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) reflected that the polices emerging from the president forced members of Congress (from both the House and Senate) to create responsive policies that would challenge those enacted by the president (C-SPAN, 2017b). The framework of responsive policy on citizenship during the Trump presidency was used when members of Congress felt they needed to vocalize opposition to altered immigration policies and those that limited citizenship.

Importantly, in these instances, drafting policies that would repeal the Trump travel and immigration ban were framed as enactments of "engaged citizenship," where members of Congress used their positions to join protesters and support prospective citizens. In 2017 speeches by Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), both senators verbalized support for protestors (by thanking them) and framed their own speeches as acts of resistance against the policies of President Trump (C-SPAN, 2017a). Bennet shared his own family's history of immigration as refugees during the Holocaust, noting that his speech articulating opposition to the Trump policies was his way of supporting his constituents protesting outside of airports and ICE offices. By framing their speeches as tied to protest groups opposing the changing policies around citizenship, Bennet and Blumenthal identify a paradox of discourses on citizenship: that to be a good, engaged citizen means sometimes opposing the duties and policies of citizenship.

This is further evidenced by a question-and-answer session with Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) as he called a federal court ruling that upheld the travel and immigration ban "un-American" (C-SPAN, 2018c). He suggests that the travel ban, despite its design to limit citizenship to a narrower definition of "Americans," is actually un-American because it relies on narrowing citizenship based on personal attributes like religion.

Discourse 5: Changing meanings of citizenship based on needs of immigrants

While reflecting on the nature of citizenship, several speakers referenced that it likely changes over time to meet the needs of the individuals both seeking and holding citizenship in the U.S. This was common when looking at speeches that reflected on the process of becoming a citizen, such as the practice of civics tests given by the USCIS. In a 2020 speech, Representative Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY) reflected on the changing nature of citizenship tests to match the political context of the moment (C-SPAN, 2020e). While Gillibrand did not specifically identify how these tests changed, she reflected that future tests would likely include questions about the activist groups currently protesting in the U.S. She seemingly invokes the Black Lives Matter movement and the Me Too movement without naming them directly in relation to the tests.

Other government representatives also noted that the nature of citizenship should change to meet the needs of immigrants and the country. In a 2020 speech about the 2020 U.S. census, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) argues that "today's citizenship goes beyond a category or a status" and is different than the identity that new citizens took on during the mass immigration periods of the 20th century (C-SPAN, 2020d). Menendez was not the only speaker to draw contrast to periods of mass migration to the United States, particularly those during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Several speakers noted that citizenship for today's immigrants is more than "a status" and instead is connected to ideas of identity (C-SPAN, 2020d). Again, this promotes the framework of engaged citizenship in that there is a contrast drawn from previous periods of history. The contrast emphasizes the ways that citizenship is performed and enacted, rather than a set of rules to be followed (as in previous periods).

Importantly, on the issue of the deportation of children in ICE custody, there were mentions of times when it was good to ignore the rules and boundaries of citizenship in order to do the right thing. When members of Congress questioned the conditions of detained children in ICE facilities, they verbalized support for protest groups that highlighted the human rights violations—drawing a stark contrast between the contempt for the policies associated with citizenship and border control and the support for protest actions and movements (C-SPAN, 2020d). The parity established in this case demonstrates some instances where the duties associated with citizenship may be inferior or unjust, especially when contrasted with the practice of engaged citizenship.

REFLECTION

While this is not a quantitative project that examines statistical frequency of term use, it is quickly noticeable that most of the mentions of "citizenship" in Congress during the Trump presidency are from Democratic members. While congressional reactions to Trump's citizenship policies are regularly found in newspapers and social media, in congressional speeches, references are few and far between. Without further research, it is difficult to identify why Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to use the term "citizenship" in congressional speeches, but previous work on engaged versus duty-based citizenship suggests that it is perhaps based on how each group conceptualizes its meaning.

For most Democratic speakers, citizenship is not just the policies that determine where a person belongs but more their practices and cultural norms. This often means political and civic engagement, and congressional speakers view their own role as ensuring that this practice can take place. This is accomplished by calls for protest, encouragement of voting, and support of social movements.

Importantly, as identified by various speakers evoking engaged citizenship, a paradox of citizenship is displayed in congressional speeches. There are times when speakers encourage citizens to use engaged citizenship to protest unjust boundaries of membership. For example, after the 2017 travel and immigration ban that launched hundreds of protests, members of Congress voiced support for the protesters and their opposition to the restrictions. In this way, protesters were characterized as good citizens because they opposed the policies that would restrict citizenship.

The paradox also appears when speakers reflected on their own citizenship journeys. These stories were discursively used as evidence of past immigration processes that were under threat by the Trump administration. Here, the stories of family immigration, or challenges faced by family members, served as evidence that citizenship is about more than the policies that allow or disallow membership, but rather the cultural practices that denote identity.

This is not to say that duty-based citizenship definitions were not featured throughout the congressional speeches. Many members reflected on policies that seemed to identify what duties individuals needed to perform to be considered good citizens or ones that fulfilled the responsibilities of citizenship. Specifically, voting was characterized as a responsibility and duty of citizens, not just a way to demonstrate or enact political engagement. Good citizens are voters who see voting as a responsibility associated with membership. Voting was not just a means to be part of the process, but a responsibility that individuals take on when becoming Americans. For members of Congress, citizens voting is a necessary part of the American identity.

It is likely that voting appeared throughout these mentions because of its salience during the Trump presidency. With ongoing controversies about his 2016 election, allegations of voter fraud during the 2020 primary season, and efforts from various political groups to suppress and support voter registrations, this became a central focus of citizenship discussions. It is possible that other political contexts, such as a war, may focus citizenship mentions on other dimensions (such as enlistment), but more research is necessary. This may support the reactive discourse in that it suggests citizenship mentions are often responsive to current events, new policy developments, or emerging issues facing constituents.

While this project focused on discussions and mentions of citizenship, future research should look at closely related concepts, such as immigration and refugees. A cursory look at the C-SPAN Video Library demonstrates that both parties use these words, often debating the processes and the practices of the immigration process.

It is expected that changes in citizenship policies will occur due to the outcome of the 2020 election, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts in international relations. As such, it is likely that members of Congress will continue to focus on this important topic, debating how it shapes American identity and how the practices of citizens shape its meaning. Through the five discourses identified here, members of Congress repeatedly invoke the duty-based and engaged models that describe the practices adopted by individuals to demonstrate citizenship. As these practices evolve, more research should examine how Congress responds and reacts to these developments.

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APPENDIX A: PRACTICES AND EXAMPLES

Task	Description	Example from data set
Significance	Speech reflects importance of citizenship	"Voting is the most important part of citizenship."
Practices	Speech describes citizenship for listeners, or engages/provides action for other listeners in conversation	"We saw protesters, in the vein of citizenship, fighting for others who are denied the same rights."
Identities	Speech uses nouns and adjectives to describe citizenship	"What makes us good citizens is the diversity within each one of us. Citizenship is a blend of all of our backgrounds."
Relationships	Speech connects citizenship to other events, or foci	"Citizens help each other, even in the face of challenges to their very citizenship."
Politics	Speech reflects on the social, historical, civic, or political nature of citizenship	"We can't stand here and debate what makes our country great; it's found in the citizenship of this country."
Connections	Speech discusses the relevance of citizenship by comparing or relating to other issues	"Citizenship in the United States is more complicated than any other country in the world."
Sign systems and knowledge	Speech adopts common language practices, jargon, or cultural knowledge	"How far we've come from the boats at Ellis Island bringing immigrants dreaming of citizenship in a new world."

APPENDIX B: STEP-BY-STEP METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

1. Using the Archives API, all mentions of "citizenship" and "policy" from January 20, 2017, to May 1, 2020, were collected and downloaded. Data set was narrowed to include only mentions from congressional members. Total video collection was 937.
2. Researchers watched all videos, looking for use of Gee's meaning-making practices: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems/knowledge.
3. Researchers met to share findings and reach consensus on five discourses that represent the patterns of communication around citizenship policies.
4. Researchers rewatched videos to find examples of speeches that fit each discourse.

4

TALKIN' AND TESTIFYING

Black Congresswomen's Response to COVID-19

Nadia E. Brown, Jasmine C. Jackson, and Michael Strawbridge

"We have a pandemic upon a pandemic in the African American community."

—Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)[1]

Black communities (along with other marginalized and stigmatized social groups) are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. According to the COVID Racial Data Tracker, Black or African American deaths make up 98 of every 100,000 COVID-19-related deaths in the United States, 2.3 times the rate for white people in the U.S. (Ledur/COVID Tracking Project, 2020). Compared to non-Hispanic white people in the U.S., Black people have 2.6 times higher incidences of cases, are hospitalized 4.7 times more often, and have a 2.1 times higher death rate (CDC, 2020). When comparing 20 U.S. counties with the highest infection rates and 20 counties with the highest death rates, the top 9 counties of highest infection rates are predominantly white, whereas 3 of the top 5 counties of highest death rates are predominantly Black. Indeed, Black communities represent the largest racial group in 7 of the top 20 counties with the highest death rates in the U.S (Ledur/COVID Tracking Project, 2020).

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) often use rhetorical strategies to shape the political agenda. As a caucus made up of Democrats who were the minority party in government during the 116th Congress, the CBC members lacked institutional power to push their policy preferences into law. Thus, their discussion of the disparate impact COVID-19 is having/has had on Black communities is a symbolic form of political representation as they were unable to alter legislation to effectively address racial disparities in COVID-19 relief legislation.

The members of the CBC recognize racism as an enduring systemic failure of the American democratic project. As the epigraph quote by Rep. Barbara

Lee (D-CA) notes, the COVID-19 pandemic is only one of the ills that Black Americans are facing. In April 2020, the CBC shared its legislative response to the coronavirus pandemic and its adverse impact on African Americans. Since this news conference, the women of the CBC have been the face of the organization's legislative response to the coronavirus. National and local initiatives from Reps. Karen Bass (D-CA), Robin Kelly (D-IL), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Joyce Beatty (D-OH), and Gwen Moore (D-WI) sought to help Black communities that are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Examples include discussions of the Economic Relief Bill, primary voting, women's leadership, and ongoing legislation. In contrast, in the same time frame following the CBC's April response, only two male CBC members, G. K. Butterfield (D-NC) and Emmanuel Cleaver (D-MO), appear in the C-SPAN Video Library discussing their coronavirus initiatives, as compared to the six women listed above.

This gendered observation of the kinds of advocacy work members of the CBC undertake led us to develop a more systematic approach to understanding the role male and female members of Congress play in addressing COVID-19 racialized inequities. As representatives of Black communities, do *all* CBC members rhetorically challenge the government's role in contributing to racialized inequality during the pandemic? In this chapter, we assess how Black caucus members discuss race and the coronavirus. Previous scholarship has demonstrated that women members of the CBC have been more vocal on Black Lives Matter initiatives (Tillery, 2019). Drawing on this finding, we expect the possibility of gendered differences in their political expression of the racialized impact of COVID-19. This chapter's central question is Do women members of the CBC use their platform to argue that racism has caused Blacks to have an unparalleled rise of COVID-19 sickness and deaths as compared to Black congressmen?

In what follows, we engage with the relevant literature on political communication, race, gender, and representation. We then provide an overview of the CBC. From there, we present our data and methods followed by a discussion of our data analysis. We end with some concluding findings and discuss possible next steps for future research. We demonstrate a need for a gendered analysis of the political representation provided to minoritized Americans by CBC members. We view the advocacy of the CBC as consistently reminding this country of its original sin—anti-Black racism—as particularly visible in members' remarks during legislative sessions on the government's responses to COVID-19.

RACE, GENDER AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Elected representatives use multiple platforms to communicate with their constituents. Legislative hearings are one such way lawmakers communicate with those in their districts by rhetorically emphasizing issues of interest to their constituents. Scholars identify the essential role of communication between elites and voters in the representation process (Evans & Hayden, 2017; Fenno, 1978; Fridkin & Kenney, 2014; Grimmer, 2013). Representatives communicate with voters to educate them. This allows the constituents to hold representatives accountable when voting. Furthermore, these messages from representatives also bolster trust and support for them (Eulau & Karps, 1977). Brown and Gershon (2017) found that Congress members' messages during hearings and floor debates can inform voters of what the government is doing and allow the public to see the differences in beliefs elected officials may have about current issues. In examining congressional hearings, Minta and Sinclair-Chapman (2013) found that the more diverse Congress is, the more likely minority interests will be on the legislative agenda.

Elected officials emphasize different policies in their political communication. As such, issue categories often correspond to specific demographics. Women's issues are policy preferences held by women, and Black issues are policies that African Americans will care more about. In turn, women and Black lawmakers are stereotyped as experts in these areas (Caliendo & McIlwain, 2006; Canon, 1999; Dolan, 2005; Kahn, 1996; Terkildsen & Damore, 1999; Windett, 2014; Zilber & Niven, 2000). Healthcare, education, and poverty are examples of issues deemed women's issues (Kahn, 1996). Women relay messages about these issues more than their male counterparts (Fridkin & Woodall, 2005; Gershon, 2008; Kahn, 1996). African American lawmakers emphasize racialized issues to their constituents. These racialized or "Black issues" are in the realm of racial equality or civil rights (Caliendo & McIlwain, 2006; Canon, 1999; Terkildsen, 1996; Terkildsen & Damore, 1999; Zilber & Niven, 2000).

Yet, there are differences in how Black men and women in Congress use their platform to discuss particular issues. Black women politicians hold issue positions different from other elected officials, especially Black men. Overall, Black women state legislators are more supportive of policies specific to minorities and are more likely to express universal concern for similar policy issues (Barrett, 2001). These lawmakers prioritize education, health care, economic development, and employment (Barrett, 1995). Gendered differences in how Black women represent constituents and their unique policy preferences suggest that as members of the CBC, they will be distinct from their male counterparts during legislative hearings on COVID-19.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

Excluding underrepresented groups from the legislative process illegitimatizes political institutions (Dovi, 2007; Mansbridge, 1999). Including descriptive representatives within these institutions is one method of legitimizing our political system. Descriptive representatives are elected officials who physically look like or mirror the groups from which they come (Pitkin, 1967). The representative's shared identity assumes they also share the experiences of their constituents (Pitkin, 1967). Like most political institutions, Congress lacked descriptive representation until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), which triggered an influx of Black legislators between 1965 and 1970. The 93rd Congress (1973–1975) included 13 African Americans in the House of Representatives compared to 2 before the VRA after the Reconstruction era.

The 93rd Congress began with eight new African American legislators who were elected in the 1968 and 1970 elections. Founded in 1969, the Democratic Select Committee was the predecessor of the CBC and was organized by the first group of Black lawmakers to enter Congress in sizable numbers. In 1971, the 9-member DSC evolved into a 13-member CBC due to congressional redistricting and the Civil Rights Movement, which afford Blacks the opportunity to vote and to elect Black representatives (Clay, 1993; Dellums, 2000; Singh, 1998). These pioneering 9 lawmakers feared that if there was not any expansion or re-creation of the DSC, this organization would become merely a space for Black legislators to congregate (Clay, 1993, p. 117). The purpose of forming the CBC, conversely, was to meet the needs and provide adequate representation to the legislators' home districts and the African American constituency at large. The 13 founding legislators of the CBC enjoyed early success by pressuring President Nixon to meet with them and to address the substantive needs of African Americans. The CBC developed the Black Declaration of Independence and the Black Bill of Rights, foundational documents that outlined a pro-Black stance on policy issues ranging from education, housing, and public health to prison reform (U.S. House of Representatives, n.d.). The newly formed organization and its members

FIGURE 4.1 Congressional Black Caucus news conference.

were active in promoting a Black agenda that highlighted the need to eradicate racism. (Figure 4.1 depicts the CBC news conference.)

In sum, the CBC was created to provide African Americans representation, especially since southern members of Congress explicitly stated that they represented the white race (Henry, 1977). These new members of Congress stated that an exclusive all-Black caucus was necessary due to the long-standing racial issues in the United States and the effect that the Civil Rights Movement had on politics (Barker & McCorry, 1976; Henry, 1977). As such, the CBC was formed to provide both substantive and descriptive representation for Blacks, even those who resided outside of the districts of the original founders of the caucus.

Since the 93rd Congress the CBC has grown by more than 300%. Scholars who focus on the CBC have come to an agreement that African American legislators achieved full integration into the Democratic Party's caucus in the House of Representatives (Gile & Jones 1995; Singh, 1998; Tate, 2014). Members of the CBC have often had the opportunity to serve as chairs of powerful standing committees as well as serve in senior leadership posts in the Democratic Party (Bositis, 1994; Haynie, 2005; Minta, 2011; Singh, 1998; Tate, 2014). However, recent studies show that members of the CBC do not allow cues from Democratic leadership to influence their roll call votes on most legislation (Canon, 1999; Sinclair-Chapman, 2002; Tate, 2003, 2014). Thus, the CBC is independent and not controlled by the Democratic Party, although its membership is primarily Democrats.

The representation the CBC provides African American constituents is invaluable. Swain (1992) argued that African American and white legislators provide Black constituents the same representation. However, others identify ways African American legislators' representation style is unique and benefits our nation as a whole. Tate (2003) examined the 103rd and 104th Congresses and found that African American legislators were willing to separate themselves from the Democratic Party to promote and fight for liberal policies in the House of Representatives. Other research shows that African American legislators are more likely than white legislators to introduce and promote bills that center the interests of African Americans in committees and on the floor of the House (Canon, 1999; Gamble, 2007; Grose, 2011; Minta, 2009; Minta & Sinclair-Chapman, 2013; Sinclair-Chapman, 2002; Tate, 2003; Whitby, 1998). The members of the CBC represent the interests of Black Americans and as such follow the tenets of its founders.

However, the growing gender diversity with the CBC requires scholars to assess how and if at all, women and men represent Black constituents differently particularly because the initial members of the CBC were overwhelmingly male. In the beginning scholars attributed the CBC's fragmentation regarding representation styles and issues to the organization's expansion and institutionalization (Bositis, 1994; Singh, 1998; Tate, 2003, 2014; Tillery, 2011). Studies suggest that this fragmentation may be due to the increase in Black women in Congress; scholars have found that the presence of minority women in minority caucuses, such as the CBC has influenced Black men to support issues that focus on race and gender (Dodson & Carroll, 1991; Orey et al., 2006; Philpot & Walton, 2007; Simien, 2006; Smooth, 2006; Minta & Brown, 2014). Next, Alvin Tillery (2019) assessed the tweets of CBC members and how they used Twitter to communicate with their constituents and found that CBC members tweet about race less than they do other issues. However, Black women members of the CBC were more likely to discuss the Black Lives Matter movement than Black men. Gender, size of margin of victory in the 2012 elections, and percentage of whites living within their districts were all predictors of a member's likelihood to discuss racial issues on Twitter. These studies suggest that Black women may have a different representational style within the CBC.

The role of the CBC in the 21st century is one of combatting explicit and implicit racial biases. There were 55 members of the CBC during the 116th Congress. Twenty-five members of the CBC in the 116th Congress identify as women and 30 identify as men. In the House of Representatives, CBC members served in top leadership positions. Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-SC) served as the majority whip in the House, while Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) served as the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) was the cochair of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. There were also 5 CBC members who were the chairs of full House committees and 28 CBC members chaired House subcommittees.

However, the 116th Congress was tasked with another challenge: providing aid to the American people to assuage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the gendered differences within issue positions and communication styles of Black members of Congress, we hypothesize gendered differences in how the members of the CBC rhetorically address the widespread racial disparities of COVID-19. As such, we contend that in hearings Black women legislators in the CBC more often discuss the effect of COVID-19 on the African American community specifically than do Black men legislators.

METHODS AND DATA

The C-SPAN Video Library contains over 260,000 hours, including coverage of many congressional hearings, even virtual and hybrid proceedings, coupled with transcripts compiled from closed-captioning, sectioned by the speaker.[2] The C-SPAN Video Library's vast collection captures the real-time discussion and debate of members of Congress and their unique political communication, likely more partisan and strategic given the environment and rules (Brown & Gershon, 2017, pp. 194–195). We used this unique resource to observe CBC members discussing the disparate effects of COVID-19 in formal congressional settings, assessing this symbolic representation's frequency and nature. Our analysis focuses on members in the U.S. House of Representatives, excluding Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris. Using the available library indexes, we filtered video to House committee hearings between April and September 2020. We also used the index "Coronavirus Disease 2019," retaining only pandemic-related meetings. Our search parameters produced 97 hearings, 10 of which did not include a CBC member. (See Appendix A to this chapter for a list of excluded hearings.)

Two independent coders treated each instance a CBC member spoke in the 87 included hearings as a unit of analysis (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Kropf & Grassett, 2016).[3] However, these hearings include acknowledgements, greetings, and directives such as "I yield back," "Reclaiming my time," and "Please unmute yourself" that skew results. We define these statements, procedural statements, as "Statements of no substantive value, directives guiding the conversation, greetings, formalities, and introductions" (see the codebook, Appendix C to this chapter). After identifying and removing all procedural statements, 1,095 remarks from 49 CBC members remained. (See Appendix B to this chapter for the list of representatives included in the sample.) The independent coders performed quantitative and qualitative content analysis on the remaining remarks, observing the frequency of mentioning disparities and how members discussed them.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the measurement of the three dependent variables, binary indicators, used in the quantitative analysis. The first dependent variable, general disparities, denotes CBC member remarks specifically addressing a group or segment of the population bearing unequal burdens, consequences, and risks. The second dependent variable, racial disparities, denotes mentions of racial disparities. The final variable, Black racial disparities, denotes explicit references to burdens in Black communities. Coders then used additional dummy variables to indicate whether remarks were from hearings focusing on disparities and also those hearings specifically addressing racial inequality.[4]

Once coders completed the data set, we referenced Tillery (2019) to construct our analyses using our three dependent variables. Tillery conducted similar research on CBC member racial rhetoric on Twitter during the 113th Congress. Besides concluding the prominent role of gender, Tillery indicates several additional variables to consider, including southern districts, rural districts, unemployment rate, poverty rate, white voter concentration, and margin of victory in the previous election. While our primary variable of interest is gender, we also control for these other relevant factors. Likewise, with similar overdispersion of our data, we use negative binomial regressions in our analyses (Gardner et al., 1995).[5]

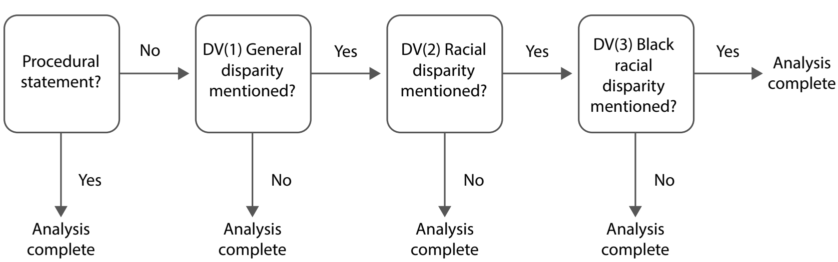

FIGURE 4.2 Identifying disparity rhetoric from Congressional Black Caucus members.

For the qualitative analysis, the coders determined themes in the data, identifying passages in the text that are linked by a common theme or a set of unifying ideas. From there, one coder further indexed the text into categories to establish a "framework of thematic ideas" (Gibbs, 2007). This process is a data reduction technique in which the qualitative researcher is able to segment, categorize, and summarize the data. From there, the data are reconstructed via line-by-line coding to capture the important segments of the data set. A code refers to the name given to a category of data that describes what is being said. As such, codes are shorter and themes are larger descriptions of the data. The segmented data are further categorized for more detailed thematic analysis. Moving from description to analysis, the "framework of thematic ideas" centers on analytic and theoretical coding that is useful for constant comparison used in line-by-line coding of the text from the transcripts.

Thematic analysis is a flexible methodology allowing researchers with different methodological backgrounds to engage in the coding process and data analysis. We created broad themes that were driven by the theoretical expectations from the extant literature. For instance, under the broad theme of racial disparities, we further divided the thematic frame to include the following codes: underserved populations, health, economy, and a targeted disparity on Black women. Within each theme we have further identifying nuances and differences in how the members of the CBC discussed these issues.

RESULTS

We analyzed 1,095 individual remarks from CBC members in COVID-19-related hearings between April and September 2020. We broadly identified five main issues discussed: health and available resources, education, housing and economics, racial injustice, and government responsiveness.[6] As expected, members frequently addressed positive cases, deaths, and testing. In total, they referenced health and available resources 507 times (46%). Figure 4.3 shows that CBC members also discussed housing and economics (39%), education (9%), government response and oversight (8%), and racial injustice (6%). While present, racial injustice rhetoric primarily occurred in the wake of George Floyd's killing, as 45 of the 60 racial injustice mentions were between May 29, 2020, and June 30, 2020.

Pertinent to our analysis, CBC members identified racial inequalities and vulnerable groups during House committee hearings (Figure 4.4). They highlighted

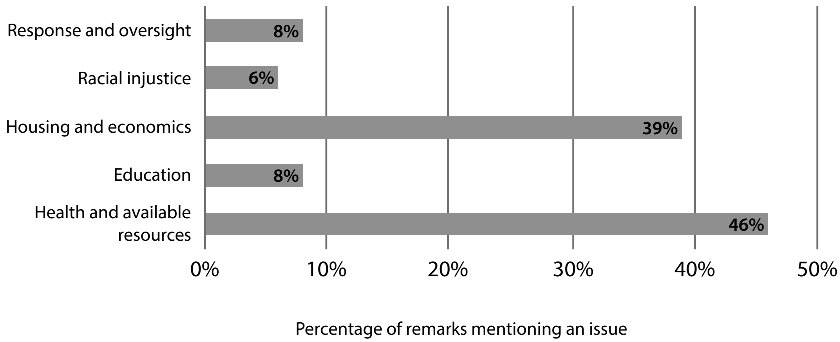

FIGURE 4.3 Issues discussed by Congressional Black Caucus members.

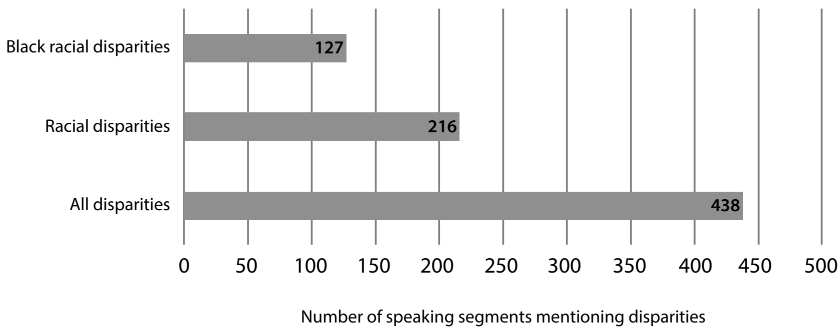

FIGURE 4.4 Disparity rhetoric from Congressional Black Caucus members.

disparities in 40% of all remarks. More importantly, of the 216 racial references, 127 explicitly mention Black racial inequality (59%). As a collective, the CBC discussed the burdens of vulnerable and marginalized groups. We now assess evidence of differences between CBC men and women during these discussions.

Using our sample, which includes 26 men and 23 women, we assess gendered differences in the likelihood of addressing disparities while also controlling for other relevant factors. Table 4.1 displays the results of our negative binomial regressions. Our models mostly fail to produce statistically significant results (besides median age). We largely credit this to our sample size, 1,095 units of analysis from April to September 2020. For perspective, the statically significant findings from Tillery (2019) analyzed 21,692 tweets, spanning the entirety of the 113th Congress.

TABLE 4.1 *Negative Binomial Regression Models of Congressional Black Caucus Members Discussing COVID-19 Disparities*

Dependent variable	All disparities (1)	Racial disparities (2)	Black racial disparities (3)
CBC woman	0.011 (0.115)	−0.161 (0.161)	0.067 (0.211)
Member age	−0.007 (0.005)	−0.004 (0.006)	0.001 (0.008)
Southern district	−0.193 (0.129)	−0.285 (0.186)	−0.215 (0.240)
District median age	−0.050 (0.031)	−0.079* (0.046)	−0.075 (0.056)
% rural	0.002 (0.006)	−0.005 (0.008)	−0.001 (0.010)
% unemployment	0.028 (0.052)	0.079 (0.071)	0.115 (0.095)
% poverty	−0.012 (0.020)	−0.035 (0.028)	−0.005 (0.036)
% white	−0.001 (0.006)	−0.009 (0.009)	0.016 (0.012)
MOV 2018	−0.004 (0.003)	−0.005 (0.004)	0.0003 (0.005)
Constant	1.744 (1.518)	2.474 (2.264)	−0.894 (2.751)
Observations	1,095	1,095	1,095
Pseudo R^2	.01	.01	.01

*$p < 0.1$.

While our results lack statistical significance, by looking at the individual interactions of members, there is still much to be said about gendered differences within the CBC. We transform our regression coefficients into incident rates to better illustrate our results' substantive importance (Table 4.2).[7] In COVID-19-related hearings, being a woman in the CBC increased the rate of discussing disparities burdening variously marginalized and vulnerable populations. Simultaneously, a CBC woman was 0.85 times less likely to address general racial inequalities but 1.07 times more likely to discuss those specifically burdening the Black community. When running the same models but now

TABLE 4.2 *Incident Rates*

Dependent variable	All disparities	Racial disparities	Black disparities
CBC woman	1.010	0.850	1.070
Member age	0.993	0.996	1.000
Southern district	0.825	0.752	0.806
District median age	0.951	0.924	0.928
% rural	1.000	0.994	0.999
% unemployment	1.030	1.080	1.120
% poverty	0.988	0.966	0.995
% white	0.999	0.992	1.020
MOV 2018	0.996	0.995	1.000

accounting for the type of hearing (i.e., controlling for references to racial disparities in hearings on racial disparities), similar results emerge while also not statistically significant.[8]

Substantive findings suggest that CBC men and women did not address inequalities the same, and Table 4.3 further illustrates gendered differences: all CBC women discussed marginalized and vulnerable populations related to COVID-19; not every man did. Eight CBC men did not cite racial disparities, more than double the number of women failing to do so. Lastly, nine CBC men, more than one-third of those observed, did not specify Black racial disparities, compared to just four women.

Our quantitative analysis fails in producing statistical significance. Even still, we identify gender differences consistent with CBC women being more vocal about race (Brown, 2014; Tillery, 2019), but on a smaller scale and specific to the issue of COVID-19. Our binary gender variable's conflicting coefficients do not indicate CBC women addressed racial disparities less than men. Instead, the CBC women more likely spoke about racial inequality by specifying the Black community in their remarks. Meanwhile, the CBC men seemingly discussed racial disparities in a broader sense that encompasses other minority groups,

TABLE 4.3 *Congressional Black Caucus Members Never Discussing Disparities*

Dependent variable	All disparities	Racial disparities	Black disparities
CBC women (n = 23)	0	3	4
CBC men (n = 26)	4	8	9

with less explicit references to the Black community. Highlighting inequalities was also more common among CBC women than men. Nearly all CBC women addressed the disparate effects of COVID-19. However, a noticeable segment of CBC men did not. Black women of the CBC collectively addressed pandemic inequalities while only a subset of men did the same.

From here, we turn our attention to the qualitative analysis. Below we pay specific attention to how individual CBC members rhetorically addressed disparities related to COVID-19 as they sought to represent to their constituents. We find that the CBC members used three overarching themes in their discussion of the pandemic: underserved populations, health, and the economy. However, only one legislator dedicated specific attention to the virus's targeted disparity on Black women. Overall, we find that the CBC members saw their role as highlighting the general disparities faced by marginalized communities in the face of this pandemic, which does align with the organization's founding purpose. The CBC saw themselves as advocates for their specific communities, which may be composed of various marginalized communities and the African American community at large.

GENERAL DISPARITIES

The members of the CBC discuss the disparities exacerbated by COVID-19. This discussion highlights how the disease and its manifold societal implications have wreaked havoc on already marginalized populations. Throughout the various COVID-19-related hearings, the CBC members spoke in generalities on behalf of groups that have disproportionately felt the illness's brunt and its economic and social fallout. For instance, Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) implored her colleagues to consider the pandemic's impact on marginalized groups during the House Hearing on Homeless Veterans and COVID-19 pandemic on April 28, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020a). She stated, "We know during times of disaster, whether healthcare disasters and emergencies, economic disasters and emergencies, it is the vulnerable populations that get exacerbated." This comment sets the stage for how CBC members addressed their congressional colleagues, expert witnesses, and bureaucracy agency leadership during House hearings on COVID-19. In what follows, we present a thematic overview of how CBC members represented marginalized communities in general and Black communities specifically.

RACIAL DISPARITIES

Underserved Populations

The spirit of Rep. Underwood's (D-IL) concern was echoed by her CBC colleagues, many of whom took to the floor to share concerns that those already in precarious positions are at additional risk because of the pandemic. For instance, Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT) spoke on behalf of teachers and students with disabilities in the House Hearing on Reopening Schools During a Pandemic on July 23, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020l). She asked Michael Hinojosa, the superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District, how a possible shortage of "full-time teachers and substitute teachers" would impact the learning outcomings of students. More forcefully, she implored Hinojosa to directly respond to "how would this potential shortage in the teacher workforce affect students with disabilities?" Coaching her line of questioning in relation to the school leaders that she's heard from during the pandemic, Rep. Hayes pressed Hinojosa to outline a plan for educating students with disabilities amid a possible teacher shortage. This line of questioning centered on a marginal group of American students who were largely absent from other discussions during this hearing.

Regarding the racial digital divide, a term used to describe the unequal distribution in the access to and use of information and communication technologies between distinct groups, Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) addressed proposed shortcomings with an app-based contact tracing system. In the July 8, 2020, House Hearing on Coronavirus and Artificial Intelligence (C-SPAN, 2020f), Rep. Waters contextualized how some ethno-racial communities would be further marginalized if this technology were unavailable to them. "With use of technology, including digital contact tracing and dealing with various social distancing protocols, you reminded us through your research that historically Black and brown people, they've already been socially distanced through segregated housing policies like redlining, systemic racism. The economic opportunities and the pandemic highlight the current injustices of our economy for people of color." She cited environmental racism, growing crime rates, unemployment, and limited access to quality health care as other inequalities that Black and Brown people already face. Now, technological barriers may "perpetuate structural inequity." With an eye toward structural racism, Rep. Waters asked, "What considerations should digital contact tracing take to ensure that minority communities are served well by these app-based solutions?" While app-based contact tracing may be ideal for some communities, some underserved Black and Brown communities do not have the infrastructure to support this technology.

Likewise, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) connects voting rights and access to the ballot in a time of COVID-19 as an issue that will disparately impact ethno-racial minorities and people with disabilities. During the June 3, 2020, Hearing on Voting Rights During Coronavirus Pandemic (C-SPAN, 2020b), she stated her expressed support for "expanding the opportunities for voters with disabilities." Yet, Rep. Jackson Lee noted the in-practice failure of disabled Americans being able to vote: "What I have seen violated is the rights of a voter to come to the polls and have curbside voting. I want to make sure that it is never undermined and done safely in light of COVID-19." From there, she made direct connections to voter disenfranchisement for other communities, who, like the disabled, have laws protecting their accessibility to the ballot. "We know the people impacted negatively on mass mail-in balloting happens to be African Americans for many cultural reasons. The ballot may come, they don't use it, they go to the polls, and they are punished by not being able to vote." She then urged her colleagues to "think about how we have to protect minorities as it related to voting . . . [and] the importance of those with disabilities, but particularly the curbside voting which I want to focus on." For Rep. Jackson Lee, access to voting is a key concern. Whether through curbside voting, mail-in, or in-person voting, she is seeking to ensure that the federal government will guarantee access to the ballot for marginalized groups.

Health

Setting the tone for a racialized analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on marginalized communities, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) made connections to the racism and the virus. During the Centers for Disease Control Director Testimony on Coronavirus Response on June 4, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020c), she stated, "We have a pandemic upon a pandemic in the African American community. And so today, I just want to take a moment to offer my condolences to the Floyd family as we mourn and grieve his loss and hope that justice is served in his memory." In her next sentence, she pivots to the disparate loss of Black life because of the coronavirus. "And that goes right into the disproportionate rates of African Americans and people of color who are dying from COVID-19." Shen then asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director Dr. Redfield, "What's your plan for how you're going to target resources and a federal response to Black and Brown communities, which are disproportionately being hit?" The "pandemic within a pandemic" metaphor helps to frame how others—particularly Black women CBC members—are discussing the ethno-racial disparities of the virus.

Centering the rationale for these ethno-racial disparities that were made more apparent due to the coronavirus, Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) cited a 2003 national academic study that found that even when "controlling [for] various cases, minority patients have worse health outcomes than White patients. The report found both explicit and implicit racial bias that contributed to these outcomes" (C-SPAN, 2020e). These implicit and explicit biases were crucial in Rep. Kelly's line of reasoning that sought to expose the psychological rationale that added to differences in how ethno-racial minorities and whites are treated. This study helped to set up her argument that these biases have disastrous effects on minority communities: "As we all have heard by now, minority communities show a disproportionate amount of COVID-19 cases and deaths. This is compounded by pandemic related shutdowns and layoffs that are hitting minority communities." Turning her attention directly to Arthur Evans, the chief executive officer of the American Psychological Association during the June 30, 2020, House Hearing on COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health (C-SPAN, 2020e), Rep. Kelly directly asked, "How can we address disparities and access to mental health treatments in communities of color?" This question sought to solicit a pointed response about how mental health problems may be felt more in ethno-racial minority communities and what can be done.

Similarly, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) pushed CDC leadership to provide an exact timeline for the dissemination of updated COVID-19 data based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level during the June 4, 2020, hearing on the Centers for Disease Control Director Testimony on Coronavirus Response (C-SPAN, 2020c). She pointedly asked, "What's our plan for how you're going to target resources and a federal response to Black and Brown communities, which are disproportionately being hit? . . . The impact is greater disproportionately with people of color. How are you going to target a federal response if you don't have the data? You said that you would provide this." Because Congress is tasked with governmental oversight, Rep. Lee is well within her authority to push CDC leadership on this issue. In requesting access to data the agency said it would provide, she is asking for information to help her and her colleagues make informed policy and spending issues on how to help ethno-racial communities that are the hardest hit by COVID-19.

Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) spoke directly to Dr. Fauci, an immunologist who has served as the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, during the July 14 House Hearing on Ensuring Safe COVID-19 Vaccine (C-SPAN, 2020h). She asserted that "this pandemic has demonstrated the need for deliberate process of equity and inclusion. According to data released by the CDC, Black and Latino citizens are hospitalized at more than four times the rate of white Americans due to coronavirus. These are the same communities [that are] underrepresented in clinical trials. As people hope to put an end to the harm caused, it is critical there that [physicians are] informed by those who are hardest hit." Similar to her Democratic colleagues, Rep. Pressley pointed out the failure of the Trump administration to pay attention to racial disparities in health care access. She cautioned that the country could not fully rebound from the pandemic if all Americans were not included in the recovery plans. "If the United States will successfully emerge from the current pandemic every step of the process must be fair, and equitable." She concluded that is why it was important for volunteers from diverse communities to be included in clinical trials for potential vaccines for the virus.

Economics

In a series of hearings, members of the CBC forcefully articulate that marginalized communities are disproportionately suffering from an economic fallout because of the pandemic. Rep. Ayanna Pressley noted that "while the crisis is unprecedented the disparities revealed in our economic system and subsequent government response are unfortunately very familiar" during a July 9, 2020, hearing on Minority-Owned Businesses and Access to Financial Services During Pandemic (C-SPAN, 2020g). All too often, these are ethno-racial communities. Because the CBC members overwhelmingly represent these communities, much of their comments during hearings reflect the needs of their districts. In one such illustration, Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI) notes, "Since the beginning of the pandemic communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by large numbers of hospitalization and death. I represent a majority-minority district comprised of 18 cities, including Detroit, Southfield, and Pontiac." Building on previous comments made during the hearing that sought to establish that COVID-19 has devastated communities of color, Rep. Lawrence added that many in her district are essential workers and that the government should protect them. "These essential workers are on the front lines of hospitals, grocery stores, the food processing facilities, and transportation services. The question I would like to direct is: are there any solutions you would recommend the federal government take and put into place to limit the disparate impact the coronavirus has had on minority essential workers?" In pointing out these racial disparities between essential workers, particularly those who live in her district, Rep. Lawrence demands that the government proactively protect minority essential workers who are on the front line providing goods and services to Americans during the pandemic.

In another pointed question about the differential treatment of ethno-racial communities of color when compared to whites, Rep. Al Green (D-TX) asked Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell and treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin during a hearing on the coronavirus response on June 30, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020d), why the Trump administration refuses to acknowledge the unequal access to credit based on race and ethnicity. For Rep. Green, this perceived willful ignorance by the Trump administration allows for the persistence of lending discrimination. Citing mortgage rates in 2019, Rep. Green stated: "We see an empirical evidence indicating that there is indigenous discrimination in lending, especially as it relates to people of color. So here's my question, my friends. Adjusting for educational credit score assets and other relevant factors—do you believe that this discrimination in lending exists against borrowers of color? . . . Next question, do you believe this invidious discrimination against borrowers of color can be addressed with legislation?" Likewise, Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY) asked Powell and Mnuchin if they understood structural and economic racism. Mr. Powell's assertion that the Trump administration sought to maintain full employment despite the coronavirus did not address how the administration would "pull a greater share of the minority workforce upwards, which is often the first to get laid off and the last to get hired. . . . [Indeed], communities of color are just getting out of the starting blocks, and everyone else has been running the race for months or years or decades." Rep. Meeks pushed the Trump administration to acknowledge the role of economic racism and to find ways to work with Congress to alleviate these race-based inequalities: "I also believe that our approach to addressing the legacy of economic racism and discrimination must include equity investments in communities that have been financially excluded for decades and then disproportionately impacted by the financial crisis and now the COVID pandemic. [They] cannot and did not borrow their way out of poverty end economic exclusion." In a proposed solution, Rep. Meeks offers that "equity investments over the coming decade or more into communities of color will be essential to lift them out of poverty." He then proffered his proposal for a "national investment fund [to pull] together capital from both the private sector and government to invest in these communities over the next decade." Rep. Meeks sharply sought Mr. Mnuchin's endorsement of his proposal before yielding his time back to the committee chair. Both Reps. Green and Meeks claimed that COVID-19 is exacerbating the economic marginality of communities of color and that the Trump administration must take a proactive role in lifting these structural barriers.

On the subject of discriminatory lending, Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH) articulated that discriminatory lending patterns should alarm the Trump administration. In the July 16, 2020, Hearing on Mortgage Relief During the Coronavirus Pandemic (C-SPAN, 2020i) she admonished the "Office of Comptroller [for] halt[ing] or stall[ing] at least six investigations into discriminatory mortgage redlining against the recommendations of their own career staff. This was the same time that the same agency was working to water down the CARES Act, which was supposed to protect against this type [of] discriminatory lending." She pointed out that these practices target Blacks and Latinos. During her questioning, Rep. Beatty asked about the perpetuation of "the social and economic injustices that African Americans and other minorities continue to face." The CARES Act, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, is a $2.2 trillion economic relief bill seeking to directly respond to the economic fallout created by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the bill has drawn increased scrutiny as ethno-racial minorities did not receive the federal coronavirus relief funds.

Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (D-MO) used his time to address the racial and gender wealth gap during a hearing on Minority-Owned Businesses and Access to Financial Services During Pandemic on July 9, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020g). In addressing minority-business owners, Rep. Clay stated that the "racial and gender wealth gap has been a persistent challenge for this country. It has increased over the past 50 years and limits the ability of would-be women and minority entrepreneurs from starting new businesses." Indeed, he uses statistics to advance a claim that "minorities are not as likely to have access to generational wealth and personal assets as a funding source of new business formation." For Rep. Clay, the lack of generational wealth is an impediment to starting a minority-owned business—particularly during a pandemic.

Disaster relief as part of the Trump administration's COVID-19 response left several things to be desired, according to Rep. Emmanuel Cleaver (D-MO). As he pressed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator Gaynor during his July 22, 2020, testimony on the coronavirus response (C-SPAN, 2020j), Rep. Cleaver acknowledged FEMA's attempts to address historic inequalities in disaster responses and empathized with the hard work of leading this bureaucratic agency: FEMA published a bulletin "entitled Ensuring Civil Rights During the COVID-19 response [that] emphasiz[ed] FEMA's legal and moral obligation to deliver COVID-19 pandemic relief and disaster assistance to communities irrespective of race, color, religion, national origin, sex and so forth." Rep. Cleaver pointedly asked, "[Is] the agency is doing enough of the right things that will reduce the disparity between the people of color who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic? What else can you do? Is there something that you should be addressing and sending to the public or those who are fighting this deadly disease?" Directing her comments to FEMA administrator Peter Thomas Gaynor, Rep. Cleaver sought to push the agency to go a step beyond acknowledging its responsibilities to adhere to the civil rights of people who have experienced a disaster but also learn what other tangible and practical things FEMA could undertake to alleviate ethno-racial disparities.

TARGETED DISPARITIES: BLACK WOMEN

Rep. Ayanna Pressley was the only CBC member who distinctly spoke about the disparate impact of COVID-19 on Black women in the hearings collected for this sample. During the hearing on Minority-Owned Businesses and Access to Financial Services During Pandemic, which was held on July 9, 2020 (C-SPAN, 2020g), Rep. Pressley pressed the Trump administration to disclose racial data on how federal funds have been allocated to help minority-owned businesses. She stated, "I appreciate the data on who received loans, but the data we need is on who didn't receive the PPE [personal protective equipment] funding and who was denied." Rep. Pressley framed these loan denials in racialized terms as part and parcel of the "exclusionary policies of past federal responses." This path-dependent argument helped to highlight the "41% of Black businesses [that] have shuttered since the pandemic began." In a more pointed analysis, Rep. Pressley shared that "experts estimated [that] 95% of Black women business owners would be left out of the funding." Not having access to PPE funding and banking has left Black women disproportionately shouldering the burden of economic uncertainty, which has caused them to close their businesses.

This attention to Black women by Rep. Pressley is further illustrated in her July 23, 2020, remarks during the Hearing on Economic Recovery During Coronavirus Pandemic (C-SPAN, 2020k). She begins her comments with a broad and historical view of Black homeownership. She notes that the "2008 financial crisis was a great depression level event for Black Americans, wiping out decades of gains in Black homeownership, which [was at its] lowest rating since the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act." This historical background was necessary contextualization for Pressley's following remarks. She advanced that "by 2019, nearly 66% of Black households rented their homes" after the Great Recession where former Black homeowners became renters. In a plea of desperation, Rep. Pressley reminded her colleagues of the seriousness and implication of ending the unlimited eviction moratorium in which "30% of Americans . . . are staring down an unprecedented financial [crisis, and] the necessary urgency seems to be limited to this chamber." She then pointedly asked, "As bluntly as possible, what is the economic impact of millions losing their housing all at once?"

Rep. Pressley quickly provided an answer to her own question. She said that "we know the burden will disproportionately fall on Black renters and Black women in particular." In providing a contextual example by highlighting the experiences of her constituents, Rep. Pressley declared, "In my home state of Massachusetts, Black renters are almost two and a half times more likely to have an eviction filed against them, while Black women are three times as likely to have evictions filed against them that are ultimately dismissed—a stain that remains on their credit report, nonetheless." This pointed analysis of how Black women face disparate impacts of eviction was only discussed by a Black woman legislator. Rep. Pressley, unlike her peers in the CBC, presented a targeted portrayal of how the impending evictions of Black women will have lasting implications if the moratorium is lifted. She also cautioned lawmakers to think about renters who do not know their legal rights and may be intimidated by landlords. For Pressley, the likelihood that "neighborhoods of color, many who are renters, [even with the] Cares Act, still face legal eviction. How likely is [it] that renters will know their rights against landlords?" It is unlikely that a non-Black woman would have directly addressed the plight of Black women citizens. Previous research demonstrates that it is imperative for deliberative bodies to have Black women lawmakers as they best represent the needs of Black women (Brown, 2014; Brown & Gershon, 2017.)

CONCLUSION

The government's handling of COVID-19 is as much a public health concern as it is a political issue. The members of the Congressional Black Caucus use their role as representatives of Black America to call attention to how vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected in a multitude of ways. During the congressional hearings and meetings on the pandemic, we learn that these lawmakers are steadfast in their advocacy for Blacks—and often other minority groups—that shoulder the burden of the disease and its varied social, economic, and political fallout. Members of the CBC highlight the antidemocratic practices of inequality, inequity, and injustice exacerbating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations. Our analysis speaks to the enduring nature of racialized and gendered expectations in how legislators represent marginalized communities. Even in a time of a global financial crisis and health pandemic, we find that CBC members are steadfast in their advocacy for marginalized constituents.

Black women members of the CBC, however, differ from their Black male counterparts in their unyielding and resolute advocacy for marginalized groups. The Black women in our sample are more likely to speak during congressional hearings, and when they do so they are speaking about how the virus has impacted Black communities. While the Black men in our sample recognize and rhetorically address ethno-racial-based disparities, they do not use specific examples or address particular minoritized groups in the ways that Black women lawmakers do. This distinct difference is born out in our qualitative data in which we demonstrate that Black women are speaking more often and with more specificity than their male colleagues. In unambiguous terms, the Black women of the CBC are arguing that the government should pay particular attention to how its COVID-19 responses may have unintended consequences for already marginalized populations. As Rep. Jackson Lee (D-CA) noted, Black Americans are suffering from a "pandemic within a pandemic," and Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) pinpointed the disparate way that Black women are disadvantaged within this population. The statements of these Black women from the CBC show that they are indeed champions for democracy and are committed to holding the United States government accountable for meeting the needs of the American people during these times of distress.

Drawing primarily from Alvin Tillery's (2019) research, we anticipated that women would be the most vocal proponents of racial issues within the CBC.

Our analysis confirms this gendered difference in how the organization's members talk about race and exposed the nuances in how they rhetorically represent Black communities. While our statistical analysis is too small to show that gender is the best predictor of a CBC member's discussion of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black communities, our qualitative analysis demonstrates this finding. By extensively showing how Black men and women differed in discussing the consequences of the pandemic, we illustrate the usefulness of a research design that embraces multiple methods (Shames & Wise, 2017; Tripp & Hughes, 2018; Wineinger, 2019). Our multi-method study offers a dynamic view of how CBC members represent their constituents and the African American community on pandemic-related issues, particularly those related to the economy, health care, and underserved populations. It also aligns with previous research suggesting there is still fragmentation within the CBC regarding how members choose to symbolically represent their constituents and the Black community through rhetoric and legislative messaging about particular issues (Bositis, 1994; Singh, 1998; Tate, 2003, 2014; Tillery, 2011).

Future studies may do more to examine the gender differences among the CBC members and how this impacts the kinds of representation that they offer their constituents as well as Black communities outside of their districts. This examination would also allow scholars to better understand fragmentation in the current Congress. Because the coronavirus pandemic is ongoing, it is necessary to revisit this analysis in the coming months—and perhaps years—to assess the political effectiveness of the CBC members on issues of concern highlighted here. For instance, it is too early to tell whether the CBC was able to direct the government's response to coronavirus relief to include concerns and the material issues experienced by ethno-racial communities and other underserved populations.

NOTES

1. C-SPAN (Producer). (2020, June 4). *Centers for Disease Control director testimony on coronavirus response* [Video]. https://www.c-span.org/video/?472614-1/centers-disease-control-director-testimony-coronavirus-response
2. CC transcripts were checked for typos, missing transcriptions, and other inaccuracies using accompanying video.
3. Intercoder reliability was calculated using 10% of the entire sample, producing an average agreement of 89%.

4. The focus of a hearing was determined by its title and the description provided by the C-SPAN Video Library. We did not include a third identifier for hearings specific to Blacks because there were none.
5. The standard deviation of every dependent variable was greater than its mean.
6. Issue topics were not mutually exclusive as we identified the mention of each topic independently.
7. Incident rates are negative binomial regression coefficients, no longer in log form.
8. While not statistically significant, gender incident rates when controlling for hearing type are 1.07, 0.8, and 1.03 respectively.

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APPENDIX A: HEARINGS EXCLUDED

House Rules Hearing on Coronavirus-Related Legislation (4/22/2020)
House Rules Hearing on Coronavirus Aid and Remote Voting by Proxy (5/14/2020)
Governors Polis, Whitmer and Hutchinson on Coronavirus Pandemic Response (6/2/2020)
House Hearing on Coronavirus Response and Drug Treatments (6/19/2020)
House Hearing on COVID-19 Vaccine Research and Development Efforts (7/21/2020)
House Hearing on the Impact of COVID-19 on Rural Economies (9/10/2020)
House Ways and Means Subcommittee Hearing on COVID Tax Legislation Inaction (9/11/2020)
House Hearing on Improving VA Medical Supply Chain Amid Coronavirus Pandemic (9/16/2020)
House Hearing on NASA Cybersecurity During Coronavirus Pandemic (9/18/2020)
House Hearing on Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness Process (9/25/2020)

APPENDIX B: REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDED

Al Green	Donald McEachin	Kweisi Mfume
Al Lawson	Dwight Evans	Lauren Underwood
Alcee Hastings	Eddie Bernice Johnson	Lisa Blunt Rochester
Alma Adams	Eleanor Holmes Norton (delegate)	Lucy McBath
André Carson	Emanuel Cleaver II	Marc Veasey
Antonio Delgado	Frederica S. Wilson	Marcia Fudge
Ayanna Pressley	G. K. Butterfield	Maxine Waters
Barbara Lee	Gregory W. Meeks	Robin Kelly
Bennie Thompson	Gwen Moore	Sanford D. Bishop
Bobby Rush	Hakeem Jeffries	Sheila Jackson Lee
Bobby Scott	Hank Johnson	Stacey Plaskett (delegate)
Bonnie Watson Coleman	Jahana Hayes	Steven Horsford
Brenda Lawrence	James E. Clyburn	Terri Sewell
Cedric L. Richmond	Joe Neguse	Val Butler Demings
Danny K. Davis	Joyce Beatty	William "Lacy" Clay Jr.
David Scott	Karan Bass	Yvette D. Clarke
Donald M. Payne Jr.		

Note: No participation in identified COVID-19-related hearings by Colin Allred, Ilhan Omar, and Anthony Brown. Deceased CBC members Elijah Cummings and John Lewis listed for the 116th Congress. We include Cummings's successor, Kwesi Mfume, elected May 2020. Lewis did not have a successor. Senator Timothy Scott and Representative William Hurd are Black Republicans not in the CBC.

APPENDIX C: CODEBOOK

1. Date
2. Hearing ID #
3. Unique ID #
4. Member's name
5. The purpose of hearing is to discuss any inequalities/disparities. (y/n)
6. The purpose of hearing is to specifically discuss racial inequalities/disparities. (y/n)
7. Procedural: Statements of no substantive value, directives guiding the conversation, greetings, formalities, or introductions. (y/n)

a. Examples of procedural statements: "Thank you. I yield"; "No further questions"; "Thank you for your service. I yield back"; "Representative Smith is recognized"; "Your time has expired"; "Dr. Smith?"; "Thank you. Dr. Smith?"; "Care to comment?"; "Thoughts?"; "Yes or no?"; "Reclaiming my time"; "Answer the question"; "Without objection"; "Point of order"; "Is your camera on?"; "Please unmute"; "We can't see you."
b. Example of a non-procedural statement: "The gentleman's time has expired. But I would ask the gentleman to think about his question and put it in terms of crowds at political meetings at fundraisers without masks on an oil rig in Texas. Nobody wearing a mask at a fundraiser. Would that be problematic? With that, I yield five minutes to Mr. Foster."

Issue Areas (categories are not mutually exclusive)

1. Health and available resources: COVID deaths/cases, health care access, access to testing, access to PPE, protecting vulnerable populations (essential workers/front lines, prison populations, nursing homes, elderly minorities, etc.) (y/n)
2. Education: student relief, student support for online learning, colleges (y/n)
3. Housing and economics: PPP, loans, grants, unemployment, housing, rent, income (y/n)
4. Racial injustice: Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, discrimination, harassment, racial profiling, racialized environmental injustice, police brutality, systemic racism (y/n)
5. Response and oversight: Federal/state/local government and agency response and oversight (y/n)

Dependent Variables

1. All disparities: Specifically addresses a group or segment of the population experiencing differential effects (y/n)
2. Racial disparities: Specifically references racial differences (y/n)
3. Black racial disparities: Specifically references Blacks (y/n)

5

TOEING THE LINE IN POLARIZED TIMES

Congressional Attacks on the Media

Carly Schmitt

December 10, 2016, marked the first time on Twitter that then-president-elect Trump attacked the media as reporting "fake news" (Borchers, 2018). Targeting CNN specifically (a favorite of Mr. Trump), he went after its reporting on whether he would continue his working relationship with *The Apprentice*. But attacking the media was not at all new for Mr. Trump. He was consistently criticizing the media for false reporting. And, going back to his early campaign days in 2015, one key element of Trump campaign rallies was to point at the press in the room and encourage the audience to boo and degrade them. He would also focus on specific reporters. If the president's attacks on the media were relegated to just insults, then despite the vitriolic tone of his messages, democracy should be able to carry on and the Fourth Estate (the press) would be protected. Presidents have long been critical of the press, and, although the messaging and tactics are at the extreme, Mr. Trump's dislike of the media is not in itself novel. However, President Trump used his office to retaliate against the press by denying access and benefits to journalists assigned to the White House, attempting to get reporters fired for negative coverage, and suggesting that his administration would pursue an agenda to ease up on libel laws so that he could sue news organizations, and he went directly after Jeff Bezos—a target of his from early in the campaign driven by the negative coverage in Bezos's *Washington Post*—by having the executive branch look into postal rates for Amazon (West, 2018). Further, the attacks on the press have mounted into an all-out campaign to challenge the media's credibility. These attacks extend beyond just cheap talk—they threaten the health of democracy.

It is unclear whether President Trump's agenda to take down the press was limited to the president himself, or if it transcended more broadly into American politics. To assess this, I explore whether members of Congress (MCs) use their political offices to take on or guard the Fourth Estate. Looking at the time period from January 2011 to November 2020 (112th–116th Congresses), I empirically assess the extent to which legislators criticize, attack, are supportive of, or merely neutrally mention the press in their statements on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. My findings indicate that although MCs of both parties do engage in partisan behavior in their critiques and support of the press, Republicans in the House increased their attacks on the press following the 2016 election.

This study offers insight into normative considerations on the health of our democracy. If MCs, unlike the president, are not using the tools of their elective offices to attack the media, then this bodes well for the Fourth Estate and democracy at large. Here, efforts to denigrate and limit freedom of the press are limited to a single individual: President Trump. If, however, MCs are following in the footsteps of the executive, then this raises questions about the preservation of First Amendment rights. Although segments of the citizenry might be eager to engage in the takedown of the press, it is up to our elected leaders to preserve it. Freedom of the press is a cornerstone of democracy, and without it democracy is threatened.

POLARIZATION, TRUMP, AND THE "FAKE NEWS" MEDIA

In 2015, the amplified levels of polarization in the modern political climate provided a ripe opportunity for then-candidate Trump to target the press. With Democrats and Republicans more homogenous than ever and partisan conflicts more exaggerated (Abramowitz, 2011; Levendusky, 2009), the divide between the parties has led to polarization along cultural, racial, social, geographic, and religious lines (Mason, 2018; Sides et al., 2018). Today, individuals face fewer cross-pressures when it comes to partisanship as their various identities now work in concert together to reinforce views. Because of this, voters are not more ideological, but instead they now have socially linked identities that have evolved into "mega identities" that impact the way they see themselves and those like them (their party, the in-group) and those not like them (the other party, the out-group) (Mason, 2018). Socially and culturally homogenous parties consisting of fewer individuals with cross-pressures leads to a strong sense of us versus them in contemporary political life. Today, this is what is driving the growth of hostility and intolerance between the two political parties. As a result, disagreements between parties are not necessarily over public policy, but rather about winning and defeating the other (Mason, 2018).

Then-candidate Trump tapped into this heightened sense of polarization in his attacks on the press by framing the press as his nemesis. By pointing to the media as the enemy, the fake news, President Trump has been able to create another out-group for his supporters that extends beyond party, one in which cannot be believed or trusted. White House chief strategist Steve Bannon even went so far to label the press, not necessarily Democrats, as the "opposition party" (West, 2018). This divide is evident, for example, in the public's view on the role of the media in checking the power of political leaders. In 2013, for example, 69% of Republicans and 67% of Democrats agreed that the media serves as a watchdog over political leaders (Pew Research Center, 2013). In 2019 this gap widened, with 82% of Democrats believing that it is the media's role, while only 50% of Republicans agreed with this statement (Gottfried et al., 2019). But, over the course of his presidency, approval and trust in the media was also tied to views on President Trump himself, as evident by the divides within the Republican Party. In this same 2019 poll, 42% of Republicans that were strong Trump supporters agreed that the media's criticisms of political leaders aids in keeping them in check, while 71% of Republicans that did not approve of the president's performance in office believed that it does. Undoubtedly, President Trump's attacks on the press are driving these divides within the Republican Party by creating an us versus them mentality that maps on to the polarized nature of American politics today.

Nevertheless, President Trump's consistent assaults on the press could be chalked up to the typical behavior of presidents when faced with an unfriendly press. As is well documented, the media was no friend to President Clinton in the 1990s. Between the sexual misconduct with an intern coming to light, perjury charges, and the House-appointed special prosecutor, President Clinton was in the middle of a media storm for a good deal of his presidency. But however unhappy he was with the press and its coverage, President Clinton did not wage a war and claim any unflattering coverage as fake news. If we go further back into history, there are plenty of examples of presidents calling out the media publicly and admonishing them. As recalled by the late Katharine Graham (1998), at the 1964 Republican National Convention former president Eisenhower gave a speech "in which he attacked newspaper columnists [and] convention-goers throughout the entire hall started booing the press. Eisenhower's theme was taken up by every other speaker" (pp. 357–358). However, no modern president since Nixon has engaged in an ongoing, consistent attack on the press to the level of President Trump.[1] The Committee to Protect Journalists (2020), a highly respected international nonprofit organization, contends in a recent report that the Trump administration's "most effective ploy [in hurting the press] has been to destroy the credibility of the press, dangerously undermining truth and consensus."

CONGRESS AND THE PRESS

Although the media do not provide a daily accounting of the activities of MCs as with the president, the media serve a vital role for both constituents at home and for MCs themselves. Voters rely on the media for information about what their elected representatives are doing, and MCs are not only aware of this but also modify their legislative activity—from what bills they introduce to what they say on the floor of Congress—because of it (Arnold, 2004). As Iowa Representative Steve King (R) stated in a floor statement in the 112th Congress, "bring the press into the [congressional] hearings because the press helps us a lot; they convey that message back to the American people" (C-SPAN, 2011).

In addition, journalists rely on MCs as sources for stories and thus need to maintain working relationships with legislators. In turn, legislators rely on journalists to cover their legislative activity—both national and local news organizations (Arnold, 2004). More recently, MCs have professionalized their communications offices and have used their relationships with the press to attract media attention to shape their reelection prospects and influence public policy (Vinson, 2017). Nevertheless, despite the long-standing relationship between the press and those in Congress—which at times is mutually beneficial, but also MCs can find themselves at odds with the press in light of less than desirable coverage—the political climate around the role of the press and their credibility shifted during the 2016 election. In January 2017, as new and returning members of the U.S. House headed into Washington, D.C., did Republicans in Congress toe the new party line on the fake news media?

With President Trump's focus on the press as the enemy, and his supporters falling in line with this message, we should expect Republicans in public life across the country to take their cues from the president in their efforts to appeal to their party base and, in the case of congressional members, appease the new leader of their party. Research on rhetorical strategies indicates that the president often sets the tone on how issues are discussed, particularly during divided times. For example, as Coe and Bradshaw (2014) note "even absent war, speeches [by presidents] focused on the world abroad might contribute to an 'us' versus 'them' mentality that could encourage journalists—consciously or not—to take steps to defend the in-group" (p. 277). Similarly, American politics has become an us versus them narrative and, for Mr. Trump, the press is the "them." Given this, we should expect that Republicans will take up the president's rhetorical strategy and echo the president's sentiments on the press.

There is evidence that Republicans from all levels of government have taken a page from Mr. Trump's book. During the global COVID-19 pandemic, for example, when asked about a coronavirus hot spot in Jasper County, Illinois, a county board member disputed the state's counts and said that the reporters covering the pandemic were "socialists, liberals, and communists" (Earley, 2020). In public interviews and on social media, Republican elected officials have taken the term "fake news" and have used it freely when talking about the press, even in local newspapers (Hutchins, 2017).

I expect that prior to the arrival of President Trump into office, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives were more critical of, and engage in more attacks on, the press as compared to Democrats, as the media has long been criticized by Republicans as being politically biased. However, once Mr. Trump arrived into the White House in 2017, I anticipate that Republicans responded to his growing calls to attack the media and its credibility, and that they did so in their legislative activity. After the 2016 election, these attacks should be most likely for Republican MCs from districts with high levels of Trump support, as Republican MCs seek to appeal to their party base, Trump strongholds, as they echo the rhetoric of the president. In the wake of growing attacks on the press by the president and the Republican Party, I expect that Democrats increased their level of support for the media in their legislative activity in response to this new dimension of polarization between the parties. Here, Democrats in Congress likely set out to support the press as the president's claims of fake news were largely as a response to negative news coverage of him.

DATA

To explore whether MCs use their offices to take on or perhaps guard the Fourth Estate, I utilize data on the legislative activity of legislators in the U.S. House of Representatives from the 112th–116th Congresses (January 2011 through November 2020).[2] With these data I empirically assess the extent to which legislators use their floor statements to criticize, attack, defend, or simply mention the media and/or its news coverage. Individual MCs have a number of legislative tools to engage in position-taking and affect policy change, and floor statements are ideal activities for studying legislative behavior in the U.S. Congress. Although MCs do not have control over whether a bill comes up for a roll call vote, they do have control over what they say on the floor of the U.S. House. Floor statements provide the opportunity for legislators to discuss their policy positions and priorities. In doing so, members engage in position-taking (Mayhew, 1974). Given the size of the U.S. House, speaking time on the floor of the House is constrained. Members do have the opportunity for five-minute floor speeches during scheduled morning hour and, at times, during one-minute time periods outside of debate on legislation. Party leaders have often encouraged members to use floor time to pursue the party agenda (Harris, 2005), and one of President Trump's key agenda items was to take down the press.

Using the C-SPAN Video Library, I coded the content of all mentions of the "press," "media," and/or "fake news" during the 112th–116th Congresses (January 2011 through November 2020) to gauge whether congressional attacks and defenses of the press may have shifted in response to President Trump's rhetoric and executive actions. Included are the floor statements of MCs that were present the entire length of a given Congress, and omitted are the statements of those that resigned, died, or were appointed/elected after the start of a given Congress.[3] Each floor statement that included one, two, or all three of these key words are included in the data set. The focus is exclusively on a legislator referencing the activity or action of the media in general, a particular news organization(s) and/or journalist(s), or the mention of freedom of the press as a constitutional right. This latter aspect is important to include because upholding this foundational right is critical to the survival of democracy. Excluded from the data set are floor statements whose use of these terms are not focused on journalists, news organizations, reported stories, or the like. For example, references to "press releases" or "media events" in relation to governmental actors such as the president or party leaders in Congress are not included in the data set. In addition, the term "fake news" is used by MCs not only to describe the media and its reporting but also to attack the actions and statements of the president and members of Congress (e.g., "what the president said he is going to do is fake news"). Only those statements with a focus on the press itself are included in the data set.

Table 5.1 shows the number of times the press is discussed in floor statements in the U.S. House. Overall, there are 1,735 floor statements that use the terms "media," "press," and/or "fake news" in these Congresses. The 113th and 115th Congresses consist of the most floor statements with these mentions, 397 and 419, respectively. Across all Congresses, MCs use the term "media" when discussing the press far more than "press" or "fake news." Referencing the media as "fake news" does not emerge until the third day of the 115th Congress. Here, Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX) said, "You may have heard about this new phenomenon called fake news. Fake news usually consists of false and made-up stories. Actually, it's not new and has been around as long as there have been media" (C-SPAN, 2017). In total, there are 29 instances of MCs using this term in their floor statements when referencing the press in this Congress, but this drops substantially in the 116th Congress (as of November 2020) to just 6 floor statements. Across Congresses, there are 60 floor statements where members discuss the press as both "media" and "press," 15 floor statements where members use both "media" and "fake news," 1 instance in which an MC uses all three terms in his floor statement, and no instances where "press" and "fake news" are used.

Next, I coded the tone of floor statements. I created four categories that reflect whether the statement is critical of the press, attacks the press, supports the press, or is neutral toward the press. A critical tone toward the media is when

TABLE 5.1 ***Number of Floor Statements With "Media," "Press," and/or "Fake News" Mentions by Congress***

Congress	Media	Press	Fake news	*Total*
112th	190	156	0	*346*
113th	223	174	0	*397*
114th	173	105	0	*278*
115th	255	141	23	*419*
116th (as of 11/20)	198	91	6	*295*
Total	*1,039*	*667*	*29*	*1,735*

Note: Data show the number of floor statements in the U.S. House with MCs using the terms "media," "press," and "fake news" in the 112th–116th Congresses (through November 2020).

MCs disparage the coverage or lack of coverage in the press on a particular story or issue, or express disappointment in the media. Here, legislators may be disapproving of the press or its coverage, but there is no outward aggressiveness or name-calling. Most often, MCs criticize the press for not covering particular stories they think are important, or are critical of aspects of a story that the media does cover. Alternatively, floor statements that attack the press include any statement that engages in name-calling or is outwardly aggressive. As an illustration of this difference we can look at two examples from the 112th Congress. When discussing the SMART Port Security Act, Representative Laura Richardson (D-CA) was critical of media coverage of the U.S. Congress and said, "At a time when media reports assume that Congress doesn't work together, I'm pleased to note that I've been able to work with Chairwoman Miller and the Committee in a bipartisan fashion" (C-SPAN, 2012b). In contrast, Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC) attacked the press and their reporting on the Obama administration by contending that "the biased liberal media can no longer conceal the truth of the president's failed policies" (C-SPAN, 2012a).[4]

Floor statements that are supportive of the press and the media vary in context. Here, MCs may express support for the freedom of the press as a constitutional right or the press as whole, or support or praise for a particular story, journalist, or news organization. As an example of the latter, Representative Pete Olson (R-TX) contends that "there is no America without a free local press" (C-SPAN, 2020). Included are statements made in the context of both domestic and international media/press. Floor statements that are supportive of the press in other countries are almost exclusively framed as a constitutional right, as in the case of Representative Hank Johnson (D-GA) in his floor statement on the Egyptian government detaining journalists: "[The Egyptian people] have made it clear their choice is one of democracy and freedom, and for those goals to be achieved, freedom of the press and freedom of speech must respected and promoted" (C-SPAN, 2014).

The final category is neutral statements. These statements are centered on the instances in which members mention a press story, news coverage, news organization, or journalist but do not have an assessment or tone associated with the content. Most often MCs use a particular story or event covered in the media as a reference point in discussing a particular issue or piece of legislation.

Because of the House rules on limited floor time, most floor statements are uncomplicated to code—statements are concise and focused on a particular issue, and the tone remains consistent. But one issue that does emerge when coding floor statements it that sometimes MCs discuss the media in multiple ways. For statements that contain both critical tone and attacks, I coded the statements

TABLE 5.2 *Tone of Floor Statements by Congress*

Congress	Critical	Attack	Neutral	Support	*Total*
112th	74	20	192	49	*335*
113th	94	34	220	43	*391*
114th	58	30	146	39	*273*
115th	87	75	179	59	*400*
116th (as of 11/20)	72	47	129	41	*289*
Total	*386*	*206*	*865*	*231*	*1,688*

Note: Data show the number of floor statements by tone in the U.S. House in the 112th–116th Congresses (through November 2020).

as attacks. For statements that contain both supportive and critical mentions, I coded the statement on the overall tone and whether the press is framed in a negative (critical or attack), positive (supportive), or neutral way. Nevertheless, coding for tone becomes tricky for lengthier floor statements that discuss the media, press, or fake news in different ways. Given this, there are a limited number of floor statements that are coded with more than one tone.

Table 5.2 shows the number of floor statements by tone and Congress. There are a total of 1,688 floor statements, with 46 that have two or more different tones. Across Congresses, the bulk (51%) of references to the media/press/fake news are neutral in tone. The data also indicate that legislators are more apt to be critical of the press than to be supportive. In the 113th and 116th Congresses this difference is most pronounced with double (94 compared to 43) in the former and nearly double (72 compared to 41) in the latter. In general, MCs tend to attack the media less than they criticize it (206 compared to 386). But following the 2016 election, MCs in the 115th Congress were close in their number of criticisms (87) and attacks (75). Notably, this Congress also shows the highest number (59) of floor statements that are supportive of the press. What these data do not show is who is doing the attacking and supporting—Democrats, Republicans, or a mix of both.

IS THERE A "TRUMP EFFECT"?

Because I contend that there are partisan motivations behind how MCs discuss the press in their floor activity, I aggregated the number of floor statements that are critical, attacking, neutral, and supportive of the media for each House member in each Congress. Then, I developed four dichotomous dependent variables

TABLE 5.3 *Number of MCs Making Floor Statements on Press by Tone, Party, and Congress*

	Critical		*Attack*		*Neutral*		*Support*	
Congress	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems
112th	33	21	10	0	55	48	13	20
113th	40	12	9	3	66	49	18	10
114th	25	18	6	1	57	41	20	9
115th	39	14	12	4	49	57	10	28
116th (as of 11/20)	35	5	22	1	43	41	18	16
Total	172	70	59	9	270	236	79	83

Note: Data show the number of members of the U.S. House of Representatives who made at least one floor statement that was critical of, attacked, was neutral toward, or was supportive of press in the 112th–116th Congresses (through November 2020).

that indicate whether MCs, in at least one floor statement in each Congress, are *critical*, engage in an *attack*, are *supportive*, or use a *neutral* statement in reference to the press. The unit of analysis is the individual MC in a Congress, and MCs appear in the data set for as many Congresses as they serve full terms.

Table 5.3 shows the number of MCs in each Congress who are *critical*, make an *attack*, are *neutral*, or *support* the press, separated by party. Overall, Republican MCs are more critical of the press than Democratic MCs. Fifteen percent of Republican legislators (172) are critical in at least one floor statement during this time frame, but less than half (7%) as many Democratic legislators (70) engage in such rhetoric ($t = 5.94$, $p < .01$). This same pattern emerges for attacks on the press. Whereas 59 (5%) Republican MCs attack the press in a floor statement, only 9 (less than 1%) of their Democratic colleagues do so ($t = 5.67$, $p < .01$). There is no difference in the tendency for Republican and Democratic MCs to discuss the press in a neutral way (a total of 270 and 236, respectively), nor is there a partisan difference in the level of statements of support (79 and 83, respectively).

To more closely examine whether there is a "Trump effect" in the tendency for Republicans to be critical of or attack the press on the one hand, and Democrats to perhaps be more supportive on the other, the next step was to look at the partisan differences in floor statements before and after the 2016 election of President Trump. Here, I compare the mean level of Republican and Democratic MCs with floor statements that are *critical* of, made an *attack* on, are *neutral* toward, or are *supportive* of the media during the time in which Obama is president (2013–2016/112th–114th Congresses) and when Trump is president

(2017–2020/115th–116th Congresses). Although then-candidate Trump was running for election in 2015/2016 and his anti-press rhetoric was a critical part of the campaign, Mr. Trump was not yet the leader of his party, with many Republicans outright rejecting candidate Trump and his brand of politics.[5] Thus, falling in line with Mr. Trump even during the height of the 2016 election/114th Congress was not necessarily the norm among Republicans in Congress at this time. Thus, I group the 114th Congress with the other Obama Congresses.

Figure 5.1 presents the mean level of legislators in Obama Congresses and Trump Congresses who are *critical* of, make an *attack* on, are *neutral* toward, or are *supportive* of the press in at least one floor statement in a given Congress, separated by Republican and Democratic House members. Republicans were not more critical of the press during the Trump presidency, but they were more likely to attack the press during this time. When President Obama was in office (112th–114th Congresses), an average of less than 4% of Republican MCs in the House attack the press, but this doubles to 7% when President Trump took office (115th–116th Congresses; $t = -3.27$, $p < .01$). Republican MCs were no more or less likely to be supportive of or neutral toward the press during the Obama Congresses compared to the Trump Congresses. It would seem, then, that Republican MCs upped their attacks on the press during the Trump era as they adopted the president's rhetorical strategy.

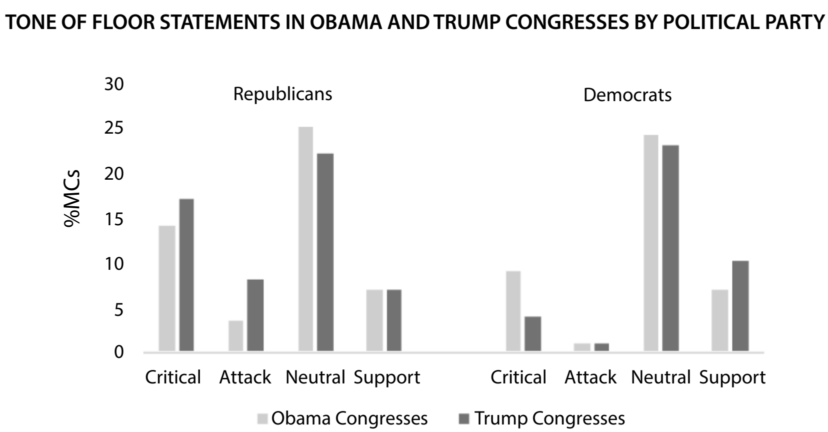

FIGURE 5.1 Tone of floor statements in Obama and Trump Congresses by political party. Data represent the percentage of Republican and Democratic MCs with a floor statement that is critical of, attacks, is neutral toward, or is supportive of the media in the Obama-era Congresses and the Trump-era Congresses.

A different pattern emerges for Democratic legislators. During the Obama presidency, Democrats in the House were more critical of the press than they were in the Trump era—9% compared to 4% ($t = 2.73, p < .01$). At the same time, Democrats advanced their support of the media in their floor statements more during the Trump Congresses than during the Obama Congresses—10% compared to 7% ($t = -1.99, p < .05$). Attacks on the press and floor statements with neutral references were unchanging over time.

Together, these findings indicate that critiques and support of the press is a partisan affair. Across Congresses, Republicans are more critical and attack the press to a larger degree than do their Democratic colleagues. There is evidence that as President Trump took office, members of both parties in the U.S. House may have been responsive to his agenda to take on the press. Republicans in the House increased attacks on the press in the 115th and 116th Congresses. Democrats, on the other hand, were not only less critical of the press in the Trump-era Congresses but also more supportive during this time. Nevertheless, these results could be a function of perhaps MCs being more critical of (or, in the case of Republicans, more willing to attack) the media when the president is of the same party.

PREDICTING THE TONE OF FLOOR STATEMENTS

To more fully investigate what is driving these divides, I developed two sets of models that predict the tone of floor statements for Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. House based on the results of the difference in the means tests above.[6] For Republicans MCs, I created two multivariate models that predict whether they engage in an *attack* on the press in at least one floor statement in a given Congress, separated by Obama Congresses (112th–114th Congresses) and Trump Congresses (115th–116th Congresses). I expect that Republican MCs from districts with higher levels of Trump support should be more likely to fall in line with the president's attacks on the media. *District Pres Vote* is a measure of the percent Republican presidential vote share in each congressional district. In the Trump Congresses (115th–116th Congresses/2017–2020) this is the Trump vote share. In the Obama Congresses this is the percent Romney vote share for the 113th–114th Congresses (2013–2017) and the percent McCain vote share for the 112th Congress (2011–2013). Included in the models is a variable for MCs' own vote share in the previous election (*General Vote Share*). Vulnerable legislators, particularly those in the Trump era, might take out their precarious electoral fortunes on the press, as President Trump often did.

In order to rule out whether any increase in attacks on the press were a function of enhanced polarization in Congress along ideological grounds rather than the emergence of President Trump, I used DW-NOMINATE scores (Lewis et al., 2020). Here, congressional roll call votes are scaled to create a measure of ideology for members of the U.S. Congress for their tenure in Congress. This variable ranges from 1 (most conservative) to −1 (most liberal). I also incorporate a variable (*Freshman*) that indicates whether the MC is new in a given Congress, as it could be, for example, that the 2016 election brought with it a new class of Republican MCs in the 115th Congress that were eager to take on the media as they rode the president's coattails into Congress. Finally, in the Trump Congresses, there is a change in the majority party, with Republicans losing control of the House in the 116th Congress. The variable *Majority Party* is an indicator of whether the MC was in the majority party (the 115th Congress). If there is a significant effect for this variable in the Trump-era Congresses, then this would indicate that Republicans' attacks on the media are larger or smaller when their party controls both the U.S. House and the White House.

The results in Table 5.4 show the models predicting whether Republican MCs engaged in at least one attack on the press in a given Congress in their floor statements during the Obama Congresses and Trump Congresses. Here, we see that the Republican presidential vote share had no effect on whether MCs attacked the press before President Trump took office. However, following the 2016 election, Republican MCs from districts with higher levels of Trump support attacked the press more frequently. Taking a closer look at this, I estimated the predicted probabilities. Setting all variables at their means, the likelihood of attacking the press in a floor statement for Republican MCs in Trump Congresses is 4%. Keeping all the remaining variables at their means, if we look at the likelihood of attacking the press in a floor statement for those from districts where Trump received 50.5% (one standard deviation below the mean level of district Trump support), then this drops to around 2%. For those from districts with higher levels of support for Trump, 67.1% (one standard deviation above the mean), the probability of attacking the press in their floor activity jumps to over 9%. Given that such effects are not present in pre-Trump Congresses, this suggests a "Trump effect" emerging for Republicans in Congress after controlling for other factors that could be driving the results.

TABLE 5.4 ***Predicting Republican Attacks on the Press***

	Obama Congresses (112th–114th)	Trump Congresses (115th–116th)
District pres vote (R %)	.01 (.03)	.09* (.04)
General vote share (%)	.01 (.02)	−.11* (.04)
Ideology	4.93* (2.37)	6.87** (1.35)
Freshman	−1.99 (1.05)	−.61 (.51)
Majority party	—	−.24 (.37)
Constant	−6.71** (1.99)	−4.65* (2.00)
N	708	427
Pseudo R^2	.09	.14

Note: The unit of analysis is the individual Republican member of Congress in a given Congress. The dependent variable is an indicator of whether an MC made at least one floor statement that attacked the media in a given Congress during Obama-era Congresses and Trump-era Congresses. The table shows the coefficients and standard errors from logit models. Standard errors are clustered by MC.
$^{**}p < .01$; $^{*}p < .05$.

The results also indicate that MCs' own electoral vulnerability impacts whether they attacked the press in the Trump era. Again, when all variables are set at their means, the predicted probability of Republicans attacking the media in their floor statements during Trump Congresses is 4%. The mean level of general election vote for Republican legislators during this time is 63.2% with a standard deviation of 10.2%. If we estimate the likelihood of electorally vulnerable MCs (those with one standard deviation below the mean, 52.9) attacking the press, the probability triples from 4% to nearly 14%. This effect is not present in the Obama Congresses and suggests an indirect effect from the 2016 election and President Trump: electorally insecure Republican MCs attack/discredit the media as a mechanism to shore up support for the next election or place blame for their poor performance in the previous election.

Unsurprisingly, conservative House members across both models are more likely to attack the press. The results also suggest that Republican MCs do not vary in their attacks on the media when they are the majority or minority. Overall, the

Trump Congresses model explains variation on the dependent variable better than the Obama Congresses model, with an adjusted R^2 of .14 and .09, respectively.

For Democrats, I developed multivariate models that predict whether MCs are *critical* or are *supportive* of the press in at least one floor statement in a given Congress separated by Obama Congresses (112th–114th) and Trump Congresses (115th–116th). I used the same set of variables as in the Republican models, though *District Pres Vote* is the Democratic presidential vote share from the previous presidential election. In the Trump Congresses (115th–116th Congresses/2017–2020) this is the district percent Clinton vote share. In the Obama Congresses (112th–114th/2011–2017) this is the district percent Obama vote.

The models predicting support for press (Table 5.5) suggest that support for the press among Democrats in the U.S. House does not vary with presidential

TABLE 5.5 ***Predicting Democratic Support and Criticism of the Press***

	Support		*Critical*	
	Obama Congresses (112th–114th)	Trump Congresses (115th–116th)	Obama Congresses (112th–114th)	Trump Congresses (115th–116th)
District pres vote (D %)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.06* (.03)	.00 (.03)
General vote share (%)	−.01 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.05* (.02)	−.01 (.03)
Ideology	.28 (1.71)	−.18 (2.30)	−2.81# (1.69)	−6.04* (2.47)
Freshman	-.45 (.63)	−.79 (.59)	.19 (.44)	1.06* (.49)
Majority party	—	−.68* (.31)	—	−1.38** (.51)
Constant	−5.17** (.84)	−3.18** (1.12)	−4.04** (.93)	−4.63** (1.58)
N	571	425	571	425
Pseudo R^2	.03	.05	.04	.12

Note: The unit of analysis is the individual Democratic member of Congress in a given Congress. The dependent variables are indicators of whether an MC made at least one floor statement that was (1) supportive or (2) critical of the media in a given Congress during Obama-era Congresses and Trump-era Congresses. The table shows the coefficients and standard errors from logit models. Standard errors are clustered by MC.

$^{**}p < .01$; $^{*}p < .05$; $\#p < .15$.

electoral support or MCs' own electoral fortunes. The only variable that appears to exert an effect on how supportive MCs are of the media is in the Trump Congresses. Here, when Democrats are in the minority in the U.S. House, the 115th Congress, the probability of supporting the press in a floor statement is around 5% higher than when they are in the minority, the 116th Congress (12% and 7% respectively). This may be a result of the Democrats in Congress reacting to the recent election of President Trump and the emergence of his fake news agenda, it could be a function of differing strategies that Democrats use during their floor time when they are in the majority compared to when they are in the minority, or it could be a function of the incomplete data for the 116th Congress (and thus fewer data points).

The models predicting Democratic criticism of the press suggests a partisan dimension. While President Obama was in office, Democratic legislators from districts with higher levels of Obama support are more critical of the press, as are those who are electorally marginal. However, there are no such effects in the Trump Congresses. This is the same pattern discussed above for Republican legislators' attacks on the press when the president is from their party. With all variables at their means during the Obama Congresses, estimates of the predicted probabilities indicate that 8% of Democratic MCs engage in at least one critical floor statement in a given Congress during this time. For those from districts whose support for Obama is one standard deviation below the mean level of support (54.3%), the likelihood of criticizing the media decreases to 4%. For those from districts with high levels of support for Obama, estimated at one standard deviation above the mean level of support (77.5), the probability of criticizing the press in at least one floor statement increases to 15%.

Further, vulnerable Democrats, those receiving one standard deviation below the mean level of general election vote share (53.98%), also have a 15% likelihood of criticizing the press in a floor statement during Obama Congresses—a nearly 7% increase over the average Democrat in the House. During the Trump Congresses, criticisms of the press by Democrats are driven by ideology, new members, and when MCs are in the minority in the House (the 115th Congress). Whereas there is a 7% likelihood of the average freshman Democratic MC during the Trump-era Congresses criticizing the press, there is less than a 3% likelihood for their colleagues that returned for another term in Congress to do so. In the 116th Congresse, when Democrats took control of the House, they were nearly 5% more likely to criticize the media in their floor statements than in the 115th Congress when they were in the minority (6% compared to just under 2%). As discussed above, this could be a function of strategic considerations by Democrats after the 2016 election, patterns of behavior of legislators when in the minority party, or simply a function of an incomplete data set in the 116th Congress.[7]

CONCLUSION

My findings indicate that Republicans and Democrats both engage in partisan behavior in regard to how they discuss the press in their floor statements in the U.S. House. When the president is from their party, Democrats are more critical, and Republicans attack the press more. This latter result, though, is likely more a function of Trump-style politics: attacking the press to take down its credibility and delegitimatize negative coverage. At the same time, Democrats increased their supportive statements of the press in the 115th Congress immediately following the 2016 election, in no doubt to combat the emergence of the fake news media narrative.

Given this, there is reason to be concerned about the extent to which Republican MCs have toed the party line in recent Congresses. The uptick in attacks on the press is in no doubt a function of an emergence of the media not just as a troublesome force but as the enemy, with its credibility thrown to the wind. This leaves room to sow the seeds of doubt for citizens about the media and the news stories for which they come across. If, in fulfilling their role as a government watchdog, the press reports stories and the public does not believe them, then accountability for nefarious officeholders will fall to the wayside. This is does not bode well for democracy. Nevertheless, the results suggest that attacks on the press may have been more present in the 115th Congress as compared the 116th Congress. Perhaps, then, the uptick in attacks were an immediate reaction to the Trump era and such attacks are subsiding.

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NOTES

1. Snyder (2017) argues that President Trump's attacks on the press even reach beyond the scope of Nixon's.
2. The official end of the 116th Congress is January 2021.
3. In the data set, there are 425 MCs in the 112th and 113th Congresses, 429 in the 114th and 116th Congresses, and a low of 423 in the 115th Congress.
4. Attacks on the media are a bipartisan affair on the floor of the U.S. House, with Republicans attacking the "liberal" media and, though less so, Democrats attacking the "right wing" media.
5 Indeed, in a December 2015 interview with CNN, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) called then candidate Trump a "race-baiting, xenophobic religious bigot." He further stated that "he [Trump] doesn't represent my party" (CNN, 2015).
6. Only models predicting the dependent variables for which the difference in means tests indicate a significant difference between Obama Congresses and Trump Congresses are analyzed.
7. Nevertheless, the models overall perform rather poorly. In the Trump Congresses' critical model, however, the pseudo-R^2 is higher, as it it appears that ideologically extreme MCs, new members, and the 115th Congress are driving the results.

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6

CONGRESS AS COMEDY AUDIENCE

A Discursive Analysis of Late-Night Comedy Cited in Congressional Debates

Stephanie Brown

On February 15, 2012, Jeff Merkley, the junior Democratic senator representing Oregon, took to the floor to contribute to the debate on a highway infrastructure bill. Speaking in opposition to a proposed amendment that would give employers the right to impose their beliefs about health care coverage on their employees, he recounted a bit from *The Daily Show* to illustrate his belief in the absurdity of the policy:

> There's some interesting humor on this on late-night television. I believe it was Jon Stewart's show, *The Daily Show*, in which he said, "You know, in my business, I happen to think that humor is the best medicine. So I'm going to impose a health care bill or a health care policy on all of the folks who work for me that says if you get sick, you have to go to a comedian for therapy or have to read a joke book." (C-SPAN, 2012)

SCAN ME

While congressional policy debates are a consequential and important aspect of our deliberative democracy, members of Congress use their floor time not only to take part in serious debate but also to build camaraderie, lighten the mood, connect with colleagues and constituents, garner favor, brand themselves, and create moments of spectacle that are more likely to be circulated across media outlets. Congressional debates are rife with examples of humor, cheeky posters, and hyperbolic rhetoric. Not just a site of state power, congressional debates are a unique "public nested within the state" (Brouwer, 2001, p. 92) in which those elected to represent us deliberate, often colorfully, over the pressing issues of our democracy. If we understand policy as a process in which the "rhetorical texts of public controversy incorporate discourses circulating in different places and at different times" (Keremidchieva, 2013, p. 139), then it's useful to understand not just the humor and playful rhetoric of these debates, but specifically how the arguments and bits circulated by late-night comedians are incorporated into policymaking.

My work as a feminist cultural studies and media scholar has centered broadly on the intersection of identity, power, and popular culture. I've done work on satire and activism; specifically, how satirical television frames protests and activists and how satire itself may or may not function as a kind of activism. In other words, I tend to focus on how satirists push back against power and the state or how they cover citizens pushing back against power and the state. But for this project I wanted to explore whether and how those in power, who are often the targets of satirists and activists, invoke satirical discourses. This question also intersects with my research on fandom and reception studies, two fields that tend to frame audiences of satirical television in terms of citizens, activists, or "regular" viewers. In this sense, I'm interested in how politicians, specifically members of Congress, function simultaneously as the subjects of satirical television and as audiences or fans of satirical television.

Scholars have theorized how satirical television affects the political views and participation of citizens, reflects the current cultural moment, and pushes back against those in power, but few have theorized how those in power function as audiences of satirical television. Members of Congress, like all of us, like to laugh and are fans of popular culture, but we, understandably, don't tend to theorize them as fans. Similarly, scholars have consistently found that satirists shape audience discourse around politicians and leaders (Young, 2020, p. 182), but how do satirists shape politicians' discourse about themselves? After conducting a discourse analysis of C-SPAN Video Library clips in which members of Congress reference late-night political comedians in floor debates, I found that references fell primarily into five categories, which I will develop as themes:

1. Citing a joke to support an argument
2. Citing a joke for color
3. Using late-night as a metaphor for dysfunction
4. Acknowledging that late-night television programs are key parts of the news and political information landscape
5. Drawing boundaries between politics and comedy

While further research is needed to more fully understand the interplay between political comedy and policy, these initial findings illustrate the complexity of our media landscape and the importance of not siloing politics and pop culture into separate arenas. When C-SPAN clips are remediated on late-night comedy shows and politicians are referencing *Saturday Night Live* sketches, researchers of political communication and political comedy should "reach across the aisle," so to speak, to better understand the relationship between policy and pop culture.

Satirists are often painted as outsiders or court jesters deconstructing the political news of the day while members of Congress are insiders portrayed by that news. In this project, I seek to upend this common frame, focusing instead on Congress as both the subject *and* an audience of satirical programming. As Amber Day (2011) notes, "satiric media texts have become a part of (and a preoccupation of) mainstream political coverage, thereby making satirists legitimate players in serious political dialogue" (p. 1). Indeed, I found that satirists not only play a role creating, shaping, and disseminating political information and ideologies to everyday citizens about our democratic process, they also shape how Congress understands and articulates its role in that process. While my lofty goal is to explore how satire functions within U.S. democracy beyond its effect on citizens' voting behavior, activism, and public opinion, I went into my archival research with two research questions:

1. How do members of Congress understand and deploy references to popular satire?
2. How do members of Congress function as both an audience of satiric programming and the subject thereof?

To answer these questions, I conducted a discursive analysis of mentions of satirical television hosts and programs from 1985 to 2020 in House and Senate proceedings in the C-SPAN Video Library. While I want to eventually broaden the scope of this investigation, the C-SPAN Video Library offers a valuable starting point for understanding the connection between how politicians discuss policy issues and their coverage by late-night comics. For instance, in both 2014 and 2017 John Oliver's weekly late-night political comedy show on HBO aired segments on net neutrality, informing viewers about the issue and encouraging them to comment on the FCC's website arguing for the classification of broadband as a public utility in 2014 and against the repealing of that classification in 2017. The 2017 segment was then brought up by the Senate Democratic leadership in a weekly briefing with reporters on their policy priorities as an argument against

Chairman Pai's efforts to roll back the Obama-era ruling (C-SPAN, 2017b). This is just one example of a serious policy argument by a late-night comic being invoked by actual policymakers. While we tend to focus on the coverage of politicians by comics, we haven't looked closely at the coverage of comics by politicians.

In addition to policy debates, I am also interested in how invocations of comedic programming have changed over time, the patterns of referencing political humor across and between party lines, and the rhetorical strategies members of Congress use in deploying references. Investigating these questions will allow us to more fully understand as media and communication scholars the material role that satire plays in the creation and implementation of U.S. policy. A major question in the field of media studies is how television functions within and as a public sphere; and so, it's important to understand different stakeholders within that sphere and how television is taken up strategically by those with power. It is important to understand not just the effects of satire on audiences interpellated by television programming but also the effects on those who are often critiqued and discussed by these comedians.

AUDIENCES, FANS, AND VIEWERSHIP

Popular media texts have become the "equipment for living" that audiences draw on in order to make sense of their lives (Young, 2000), and television is a cultural forum that actively raises and comments on issues of the day (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983). Thus, it becomes important to understand politicians as both media audiences and media subjects. Indeed, this chapter's goal is to start to understand how politicians draw on popular media to further policy discussion, an examination that is pertinent not only to an understanding of political communication but also to fan and audience studies. Influenced by Stuart Hall's (1973) incorporation/resistance model, which refuted the notion that all viewers mindlessly adopt a media text's intended meaning, fan studies grew out of cultural studies' embrace of popular culture and audience studies' focus on reception rather than representation or production. Radway (1984) argues that in order to fully understand a text within popular culture, researchers must shift their focus from the text in isolation, to "the complex social event of reading," where audiences "actively attribute sense to lexical signs" in the context of their ordinary lives (p. 8). While members of Congress don't lead what many of us would consider "ordinary lives," quoting popular texts in a floor debate is a part of their normal schedule. Thus, analyzing the ways that political comedy is referenced within the process of policymaking and debate is a way to understand members of Congress as specialized audiences *and* as members of a unique public drawing on "rhetorical texts of public controversy" (Keremidchieva, 2013, p. 139). While in an industrialized, media-saturated society we're all fans and audiences of something (Lewis, 1992, p. 1), the trajectory of fan studies, particularly digital fan studies, has narrowed the definition of fandom to a very particular set of behaviors and fan objects. Specifically, the fans that get labeled and studied are those that are visible, vocal, and active. These tend to be fans of serialized, fictional, science-fiction, or fantasy dramas. In other words, there are many more studies of *Star Wars* and Marvel fans who write fan fiction, make fan videos, and debate about the canon on Twitter than there are lovers of stand-up comedy, rom-coms, or Aaron Sorkin dramas who express their enthusiasm through quoting lines amongst their friends or streaming content on their phones. Scott (2008) has argued that categorizations of fandom, such as the semiotic, enunciative, and textual tripartite of fan productivity outlined by John Fiske (1992), need to be constantly reimagined; however, even as fan studies scholarship reimagines fan practices, visible creative textual productivity still often receives the greatest attention. It is important, though, to also understand how fandom has become the "fabric of our everyday lives" (Gray et al., 2007, p. 9). The increasingly quotidian nature of fandom in our hypermediated pop culture landscape means that fan studies scholarship should interrogate the ways in which we bring pop culture into our everyday conversational practices (Barker, 2014, p. 215).

SATIRE, DEMOCRACY, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

If understanding how popular culture is taken up in policy debates, why study comedy in particular? As scholars of satire and political humor have noted, satire and politically comedic television have become important political speech in and of themselves, "affecting the direction of public discourse while elevating the parodists to the level of legitimate political experts" (Day, 2011, p. 81). As Young (2020) compellingly argues, right-leaning outrage programming and left-leaning satiric late-night comedy are both responses to the problematic aspects of the journalistic and political spheres (p. 48). These problems include the increasing artificiality of politics and the polarization of news programming and politicians. She further argues that both fall short in actually addressing these systemic failures in journalism and politics (p. 65). While I would eventually like to add outrage programming to this project, I draw on comedy and satire as a starting point as a site at which a rich scholarly literature exists.

Satire has long been theorized as a crucial tool of democratic and political activism, able to sharply critique and push back against hegemonic ideologies and denaturalize commonsense understandings of our society and culture (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 43). Most definitions echo this sentiment: satire is comedy that seeks to correct behavior through mockery. Indeed, in the foreword to their book *Satire TV*, Gray et al. (2009) note that the term tends to be "reserved for a particular kind of humor that makes fun of human folly and vice by holding people accountable for their public actions" (p. ix). Since the rise in award-winning satiric television shows like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* at the turn of the millennium, the influence of popular television satire has only grown, increasing the scholarly study of satire's political influence as well. Scholarship in this area over the past 15 years has analyzed the extent to which these series inform audiences about the news and policy (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Becker & Bode, 2018), the role satire plays in teaching audiences to be critical consumers of media (McKain, 2005; Painter & Hodges, 2010), the effects of satire on political participation by citizens (Lee & Kwak, 2014; Young, 2020), and the ways in which these shows cover and participate in political activism and dissent (Davisson & Donovan, 2019; Haugerund, 2012; Jones et al., 2012; Kilby, 2018; Warner, 2007). Additionally, popular press coverage has long covered satirists and comedians' takes on the news, from Johnny Carson and *Saturday Night Live* to John Oliver, Samantha Bee, and Trevor Noah.

In addition to effects-based research and textual analysis of these programs, scholars and historians also seek to explain satire and comedic programming within their cultural, political, and industrial contexts. One key context is the blurring between news and entertainment that has long been a byproduct of our profit-driven news industry, which satirists both comment on and are a product of. Critics, audiences, politicians, and journalists alike often wring their hands and wish for a time when news was news and entertainment was entertainment; however, as James C. Smoot (2010) writes, this imagined simpler time is merely a "mirage" (p. 79). As I found combing through clips in the archive dating back to the 1980s, long before scholarly and critical preoccupation with the importance of studying politics and comedy, members of the Senate and House were already referencing Carson, *Saturday Night Live*, and Leno and playing up their sense of humor for their colleagues and the cameras.

Others contextualize often-left-leaning satire within the increasing polarization and political branding of news analysis and punditry on TV. This polarization has a number of interrelated causes: the development of cable and digital technologies, the increasing tendency toward media deregulation starting in the 1980s under President Reagan, the removal of requirements on the amount of informational programming broadcasters have to supply, the repeal of the fairness doctrine, and reduced limits on media ownership. Within these contexts, scholars argue that mainstream satiric TV is embedded within a news landscape focused primarily on profit, cheap programming, pundits replacing investigative journalism, branding, segmented audiences, and political coverage that has become an entertainment spectacle—all factors leading to a lowered public trust in journalism (Young, 2020, pp. 32–47). Audiences have become disillusioned with the news media. In response, they turn to comedians and satirists, whom they idealize as truthful purveyors of information able to cut through the haze of the political spectacle coming from politicians and the news (Jones & Baym, 2010).

As illustrated, there is a robust body of research around the effects of late-night satire on non-congressional audiences. There is also a growing literature on the perception of presidential candidates, presidents, and politicians using humor (Bippus, 2007; Carpenter et al., 2019; Meyer, 1990). But the discursive impact of pop culture and humor on politicians is understudied both in audience research and in political science (Schulte, 2012) and little has been done on the use of humor in policy debates (Lassen, 2019). There is also surprisingly little research on the ubiquitous practice of quoting popular media texts; what research has been done posits that we quote pop culture primarily to amuse ourselves and others and to build camaraderie (Harris et al., 2008) and to emphasize points much in the same way we use metaphors (Smyers, 2016).

In this chapter, while I draw on and hope to contribute to the rich body of work that has been done on satire as political humor, I draw especially on Nicolas Holm's (2017) recent work on the political aesthetics of humor. Holm argues that instead of theorizing satire only in terms of political engagement, we should instead broaden our view to examine "the political consequences of contemporary humor's role as a central aspect of the media-dominated English-speaking world" and the material effects of "satire" becoming a dominant humor mode. Building on Berlant and Ngai's suggestion that humor is a virtue that "people increasingly come to expect in the kinds of social interaction that take place in all zones of modern life" (2017, p. 237), Holm calls for us to take a more nuanced approach to understanding the material consequences and ideological implications to our society "when one of its main cultural concerns becomes the cultivation and appreciation of laughter" (p. 13). In this context, members of Congress are not simply powerful figures deconstructed by laughter, but figures within our laughter-driven culture who invoke the codes and symbols of satire in their dealings with and performances for each other and their constituents.

While the research in this area denotes differences between political humor, satire, parody, and other forms of comedy that comment on the political arena, this chapter will tend to conflate satire, parody, and other forms of political comedy under the umbrella term "late-night comedy" because I'm interested more in discourses surrounding comedy than in the intricacies of the comedic aesthetic itself. Since my subjects tend to conflate the two, I will be doing so as well in my discussion of them. For the purposes of this chapter, I'm using "late-night comedy" to refer to television programming that features comedians making jokes about the day's and week's news and who tend to use humor to critique or poke fun at politicians. Such political humor is often framed by audiences, critics, and scholars in ways that, as Holm (2017) argues, "take for granted its ability, or at least intent, to disrupt systems of meaning and power (however they may be conceived)" (p. 44). As such, I use terms like "satire" and "political comedy" not as a well-defined, inherently disruptive comedic form but as a register of humor most often defined by its mocking of political figures. As Holm (2017) notes, all humor does political work, and so he uses "political humor" as opposed to "politicized humor" to talk specifically about politicians, parties, and the state.

To summarize, the study of political humor and televisual satire is a robust and growing area of inquiry in communication, political science, media studies, and cultural studies. Within communication and political science, political humor has largely been studied under the media effects model in an attempt to understand whether humor is "an agent of influence or merely a barometer of public opinion" (Young, 2017, p. 875). This means, to greatly simplify this research, that the studies tend to theorize political comics as the sender of a message about politicians and the "regular citizen" as the receiver of these messages. While critical and cultural studies scholars complicate this model, trying to understand political humor as an integral aspect of the larger political media ecology, these studies also tend to theorize audiences and politicians as separate entities rather than considering politicians as an audience or as humorists. When the humor *of* politicians is studied, researchers most often focus on presidential candidates. Yarwood (2004) wrote a book on the use of humor by members of Congress in which he defines humor as "incongruent shifts of thoughts, exaggeration, word play, repartee, irony, satire, ridicule, and sarcasm" (p. 14). But his work doesn't consider the relationship between politicians and professional comedians. Scholars of political humor recognize that the relationship between citizens, comedians, and politicians is complicated and significant, but few, if any, studies have been conducted on members of Congress as an audience of political comedy. This chapter is an attempt to further complicate the audience–comedian–politician relationship.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

To find video data to answer my research questions, I searched for House and Senate proceedings that included one of the terms shown in Table 6.1, including a few common misspellings. Because there is not an accurate closed-captioning record for every video, there are likely clips that failed to come up in a search but that are relevant. Additionally, in future iterations of this search, I would broaden to include briefings, committee proceedings, and other C-SPAN content, but for an exploratory study I wanted to stick to a manageable number of results.

Next, I watched all of the clips and organized them by name or show referenced, while grouping clips that mentioned a list of comedians or general references like "late-night comedy shows" or "Comedy Central shows" under the category "generic." I watched the clips one more time, creating a spreadsheet row for each clip that included the name of the congressperson speaking, their gender, their party

TABLE 6.1 *C-SPAN Video Library Search Terms*

Search terms that failed to return results	Search terms that returned results
Craig Ferguson	Comedy Central
Full Frontal	David Letterman
Jack Paar	Johnny Carson
Jimmy Fallon	John Oliver
Larry Wilmore	Late-Night
Michelle Wolf	Last Week Tonight
Samantha Bee	Jay Leno
Steve Allen	Jon Stewart
Trevor Noah	Saturday Night Live
	South Park
	Stephen Colbert
	The Colbert Report
	The Daily Show
	The Late Show
	The Tonight Show

affiliation, the date, and the comic or show mentioned. Finally, I watched the clips again and wrote down the general theme of each. Once I noticed consistent patterns, I created a list of codes and coded each clip with its associated theme.

Data Overview

The resultant sample includes 176 total clips featuring 118 different senators and congresspeople, 57 of which are Democrats and 61 of which are Republicans, a relatively even split. The clips range from 1988 to 2020, with 36 from the 80/90s, 57 from the 2000s, and 83 from the 2010s. This, expectedly, illustrates that the number of references to late-night comedy increases as the number of late-night television shows increases in both number and salience to political debate. In Figure 6.1, you can see the breakdown in popularity of reference by party. *Saturday*

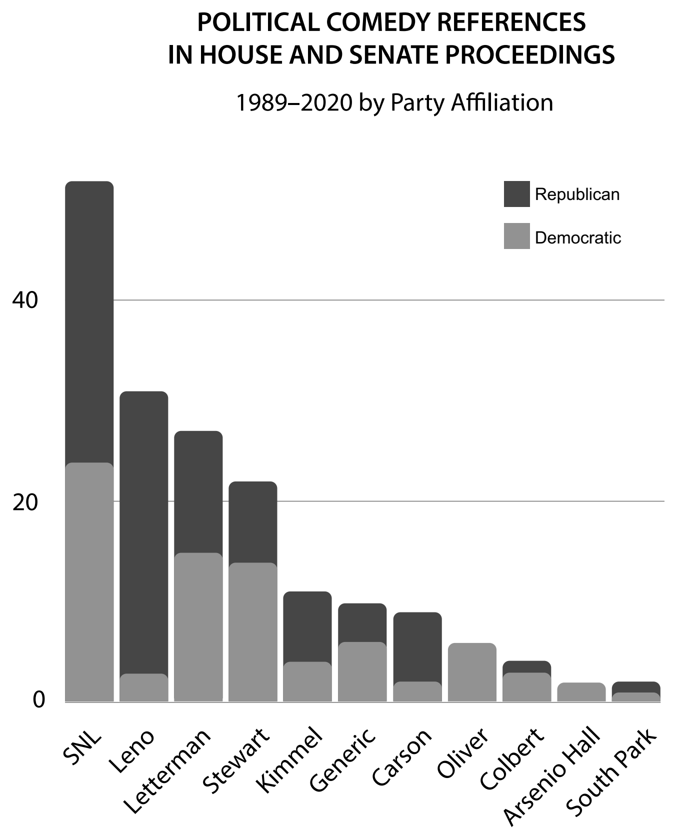

FIGURE 6.1 References to popular political comedy in congressional debates 1988–2020 by party.

Night Live was by far the most referenced, with 24 Democratic mentions and 28 Republican mentions. Jay Leno and Johnny Carson were more likely to be mentioned by Republicans, while David Letterman, Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, and John Oliver were more likely to be mentioned by Democrats. Generally, references were positive or neutral, with only about 11% being overtly negative or critical, which I'll talk through more at length in the discussion below.

My favorite findings were the senators and House members who showed up in clips the most. The congressperson who shows up most by a significant margin is Texas Tea Party Republican Louie Gohmert, who appears in the sample 10 times, covering a range of shows. Being a notoriously colorful character and seeker of attention, this is not surprising, as references to political comedy are a surefire way to insert oneself into the larger popular discourse. There are a few members who aren't as prolific, but still appear frequently. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) co-opted Jimmy Kimmel's monologue in 2017 about Kimmel's son's surgery during the debate on dismantling the Affordable Care Act. Cassidy created a tongue-in-cheek "rule" that he called the Jimmy Kimmel rule, which he frequently brought up in an effort to argue the opposite of what Kimmel was asking for. Dick Durbin (D-IL) seems to be a legitimate comedy fan who enjoys referencing his favorite shows. And, finally, Robert Dornan (R-CA) frequently registers his distaste for *Saturday Night Live* and his affection for Jay Leno. Even this small sampling illustrates the various ways in which comedic texts are taken up in Congress: to make complex arguments, to lighten up a speech, or just to register disdain.

As this is a preliminary study, I am not conducting a thorough accounting of the intersection between humor, references, and gender, though, unsurprisingly, women referenced comedians in their debates less frequently than men did: 21 of the 176 references in my data set were made by 17 women. To try to parse how much of this was due to an underrepresentation of women in Congress more generally, I looked at Congress.gov to find the number of women who have been in Congress since 1988. I found that while the mentions were made by 12% of the women in my sample of clips, this was still a slight underrepresentation as women made up 17% of the total number of Congress members during that same period (see Table 6.2). Further, no women comics were mentioned in the clips I could find. I was particularly disappointed that there were no mentions of Samantha Bee, former *Daily Show* correspondent and host of the TBS show *Full Frontal*. While Bee tackles a variety of important issues surrounding gender and sexuality and frequently comments on Congress and policy, I assume that because her show skews toward a much younger and more diverse audience than Congress, they aren't as likely to be aware of current debates happening

TABLE 6.2 *Mentions of Political Comedy in Congressional Debates 1988–2020 by Gender*

	No. of References	No. of Unique Congress Members	No. of Total Congress Members
Women	21	17	269
Total	176	118	1,560
Percentage	12%	14%	17%

on the show. Women comics did appear much more frequently in the C-SPAN Archives when I searched beyond Congressional proceedings, which I hope to explore more fully in a future project.

Method and Discourse Analysis

In addition to simple percentage breakdowns, I employed critical discourse analysis to start to parse how Congress as a unique audience invokes and takes up discourses from and about late-night comedy and satire in speeches and debates about policy and how these references might reproduce or subvert hegemonic ideologies about the place of comedy, spectacle, entertainment, and popular culture in political deliberations. Because language is constructive (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), a social practice used to accomplish things, I'm not reading these clips as transparent proof of a politician's feelings, but rather as rhetorical tools through which politicians attempt to connect to peers and constituents, to make points, to brand themselves, or to draw a boundary between comedy and politics. Language is not a way of getting at some objective reality, rather the language itself constructs reality through conflict (Billig, 1991). Language is the location at which different ideologies or versions of the world compete for dominance. As Gill (2007) notes, "the emphasis on the rhetorical nature of texts directs our attention to the ways in which *all* discourse is organized to make itself persuasive" (p. 59).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is therefore a process by which texts and interactions are analyzed as part of social and cultural hierarchies and power dynamics. CDA is interested not only in discourse but in the dialectical relationship between discourse and society and allows us to use textual analysis as a way to analyze larger societal trends. CDA sees, "texts and interactions as a part of the material processes of social life, or as materialities in which social life is ongoingly produced, reproduced, and changed" (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 25–26).

CDA often takes the form of highlighting and coding for themes in a text or set of texts (be they written, visual, or spoken) in order to locate ruptures, contradictions, and patterns. The process of socially constructing economic, cultural, and political realities necessarily involves discourse; it therefore becomes important to analyze how discourses are operationalized and how they inform processes and materially affect and create social realities.

RESULTS: COMMON THEMES OF CONGRESSIONAL COMEDIC REFERENCES

While there is often boundary-keeping between serious political debate and humor, scholars of political humor and satire more often contend that political humor is a part of the larger political process of deliberative democracy (Baym, 2005). Particularly in response to what many see as a crisis in journalistic authority, some scholars have come to see political comedy as the Fifth Estate (Sotos, 2007) that serves to keep journalists in check, which is failing to properly inform citizens. Does this bear out in the data on congressional citations of political humor? Does their discourse around political comedians reinforce the idea that political humor is an important part of deliberative democracy? What I first found significant is that while there is a great deal more scholarship on the kinds of satiric shows like *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report,* and *Last Week Tonight* that college professors and scholars tend to prefer, and that overall are taken more seriously as political players, these three shows are not mentioned nearly as much as *Saturday Night Live*, Johnny Carson, David Letterman, or Jay Leno. My initial assumptions are that these latter shows have a much longer history on television and are of the genre generally preferred by older demographics. Media studies as a field often laments that we tend to study texts that are culturally significant and aesthetically sophisticated while ignoring the popular culture that most people actually consume.

Themes 1 and 2: Congress members referencing specific bits

The two most common themes I found were members of Congress referencing specific bits, jokes, or sketches from comedy shows for one of two reasons, each representing 27% of the references: (1) citing a joke to support their argument and (2) citing a joke for color. In other words, generally when members of Congress directly reference a specific joke or bit, they are using it as evidence to support the point they are trying to make, or they use it to lighten up their speech and appear relatable. When I originally conceived of this project, these were the two themes I primarily had in mind and thus was pleased that they bore out in the data. The key question I wanted to start to investigate was Do politicians actually adopt satirists' arguments in debates? If, as scholars often argue, satirists and comedians are such an important part of a deliberative democracy, do their arguments make their way into politicians' policymaking? And if politicians are fans of comedy, does that comedy become a tool in their rhetorical toolbox? It seems that they do to some extent.

In a little over a quarter of the clips, congresspeople used bits to support an argument, with more than half of those being Republicans citing Jay Leno bits mocking Clinton or Obama between 1992–2000 and 2008–2016. When Democrats cited comedians, it was a mix of Jimmy Kimmel, John Oliver, Jon Stewart, *Saturday Night Live*, and Stephen Colbert. For instance, on October 9, 2018, Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) referenced John Oliver's episode in which he brought on 97 climate scientists in an effort to illustrate scientific consensus on the issue in a speech on the need for climate change policy (C-SPAN, 2018). Unsurprisingly, Republicans tended to cite right-leaning comics taking aim at Democratic politicians while Democrats tended to cite left-leaning comics taking aim at Republican politicians. Therefore, just like with most audiences, it doesn't seem as though politicians are having their minds changed or their power undermined by comics. They, like most viewers, tend to watch, agree with, and draw on arguments that reinforce their existing worldview. In this way, political comedy provides rhetorical tools with which to make points that they likely would be making otherwise, rather than eye-opening counterarguments swaying them to reconsider their positions.

The second theme, congresspeople citing comedians for color, is an example of politicians acting just as all media audiences do: drawing on their favorite popular culture moments to connect, to amuse themselves and others, and to appear relatable. In these cases, instead of drawing on a comic's point to make an argument, senators and House members reference a joke or bit to add some fun, lightheartedness, or ironic bite to their speeches. Politicians are just using humor on a larger scale than in a casual conversation with friends or acquaintances. These two themes differ in the specific rhetorical method being used, but to the same ends: to seem more relatable, down-to-earth, and authentic to peers and to constituents who may not be watching C-SPAN at that moment but who may see a clip remediated elsewhere. Humor is a virtue that "people increasingly come to expect in the kinds of social interaction that take place in all zones of modern life—politics, education, journalism, even religion" (Berlant & Ngai, 2017, p. 237). As Amber Day (2011) has argued, "there is something about the unabashedly personal, ironic, tongue-in-cheek perspective that appears refreshingly authentic" (p. 3), compared to the inauthentic, staged, focus-grouped earnestness that many assume politicians to portray. Politicians know that their constituents like comedians better than they like politicians. They are also, lest we forget, people who like to laugh and like to reference their favorite bits just like the rest of us do, to create a sense of camaraderie, to seem cool, or to seem like they don't take themselves too seriously. As Holm (2017) asserted, "it should come as little surprise, then, that American presidents since Franklin Roosevelt have responded to public pressure to demonstrate their ability to take a joke, if not to deliver one" (p. 40). Politicians have long appeared on and talked about late-night shows to illustrate that they are reasonable, regular people. Many of their references or citations of comedians function in similar ways.

Satire and political humor also have an "integral community building function" (Day, 2011, p. 13) that creates an in-group by taking aim at something or someone else. When Jon Stewart or David Letterman tells a joke, he positions himself and the audience as the "in crowd" and the target as the outsider, thus uniting his audience through communal laughter and shared ideology. As the goal of late-night comedy and satirists in particular is to question authority, suspend hierarchies, and give the audience a certain degree of empowerment, a politician aligning themself with the satirist and their audience attempts to classify themself as an outsider in solidarity with those attempting to take down the powerful. Whichever side is drawing on satirical jokes is making a claim that they are undermining power to fight for "the little guy." In other words, drawing on popular satirical humorists is a rhetorical tool through which politicians attempt to obscure their own power. Further, the fact that there are few references to anyone other than white male comics reinforces the notion that no actual power is being upended. What was most clearly indicative of the fact that many references to comics might not be in good faith were politicians who didn't tend to take satire or comedy seriously or to critique it until it came time to use satire as a shield for fighting against bills to limit campaign contributions, citing them as a slippery slope toward banning all political speech, and in debates about political correctness gone awry. For instance, Louie Gohmert in one speech criticized *Saturday Night Live* for making fun of Sarah Palin and in another lamented that shows like *SNL* would be outlawed if we put any restrictions on campaign contributions.

Additionally, when citing arguments raised on satiric or comedic late-night shows, politicians can distance themselves from accusations of anger or irrationality in their partisan arguments. Our culture's current hegemonic ideology toward humor sees it as a way to "reasonably dissent" (Holm, 2017, pp. 33–38). Humor is often seen as standing outside of ideology and thus a more truthful approach to political argument. Righteous anger and earnest arguments are generally assumed to be partisan, while jokes are often able to stand outside of ideological boundaries and arrive at something that seems more like the truth. As a rhetorical tool, quoting late-night humor allows politicians to distance themselves from ideological debate and brand themselves as populist outsiders. In this way, quoting or citing an argument on late-night is a way for politicians to align themselves with an outsider whose job it is to cut through ideology and spectacle, thus making their argument seem more authentic.

Theme 3: Congress members using late-night as a metaphor for dysfunction

About 18% of references to late-night comedy aimed to illustrate how Congress, most often members of the opposing party, was acting irrationally or destructively. This came in several forms. Congress members would complain that the other side was going to "make us fodder for the late-night comics," would reference attacks or jokes currently airing on late-night that the opposition opened them up to, or would use late-night comedy as a metaphor, as in "this floor debate seems like an episode of *Saturday Night Live*!" A prime example is this snippet from a speech by Peter DeFazio (D-OR) in 2006, in which he ties together several themes running through this chapter:

> Something odd has happened. There's a lot of odd things that happen around here but the Republican website, the one they use for scheduling the weekly activities of Congress, has been hacked by writers for the Jon Stewart Show and they don't seem to mind. So, we're going to be a parody of Congress this week instead of a real Congress this week. Despite the fact that we're borrowing 1.4 billion to run the government, and we have the average families not seeing their wages go up in five years and we're raining tax cuts on the wealthy. There's a few real things that we could deal with that the American people are

> concerned about. . . . The House is going to use valuable time to vote on banning the threat of gay marriage, even though we know that the constitutional amendment can't move forward because the Senate has already disapproved this venture. But it's good for the ratings, entertainment value. The Jon Stewart writers thought it would be fun to bring that up in the House, so we're going to bring it up. (C-SPAN, 2006)

SCAN ME

In line with the theory that we use pop culture as "equipment for living" (Young, 2000), DeFazio, and many other members when they want to make an emphatic point about dysfunction, draws on the most potent metaphor available: late-night comedic mocking. This metaphor works both in that television comedy has become an integral part of the political process and in that it serves as a warning of something members of Congress worry about. In the next theme, we will see that members of Congress acknowledge that political comedy is a key way in which many citizens make sense of the news, and so warnings of mocking on late-night television may serve as a potent metaphor for dysfunction.

Further, DeFazio here is also acknowledging the fact that while politicians may draw a boundary between serious politics and entertainment, politics has itself become a media spectacle. His metaphor is not only comparing what he sees as attention-seeking behavior on the part of Republicans in the House to a satiric sketch but also condemning Congress for itself becoming indistinguishable from entertainment television in its aims and behaviors. Scholars of popular media, and satire in particular, have noted the continuing blurring of the lines between news, politics, and entertainment—a concern that isn't new but that has become more extreme in the digital age. In the postmodern media landscape, "drama and spectacle reign as citizens become audience" (Caron, 2016, p. 161). In drawing on these metaphors, Congress members are wrestling rhetorically with their role as both politicians and performers.

Theme 4: Congress members acknowledging that late-night television is a key part of the news and political information landscape

Satiric hosts and late-night comedians, scholars have found, do more than entertain; they shape audiences' understanding of the news and help them make sense of politics by highlighting and framing issue positions, critiquing failures, and pointing out hypocrisy. Audience exposure to critical coverage can increase negative feelings toward the political process and satirists can raise awareness of issues that are under-covered, like John Oliver's coverage of net neutrality or Stephen Colbert's coverage of campaign finance reform (Young, 2020, p. 182). About 12% of the references in the data set acknowledged and reaffirmed the important role comedians play in making political issues salient to audiences. This theme encompasses several subthemes in the data, including a congressperson acknowledges or praises comics for shaping the discourse around a topic for better or for worse, a congressperson lists a comedic program as one of several news outlets discussing a policy, and a congressperson uses as comedy show's coverage of a topic to illustrate that it is salient to the public.

For instance, on February 8, 2017, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) said of Betsy Devos's confirmation hearing:

> This is a hearing that people heard about, and for good reason, from local news, to *The Daily Show*, to *The View*, and posts that went viral on social media. A lot of people in our country heard Betsy Devos for the first time in that hearing, and they were not impressed, (C-SPAN, 2017a)

SCAN ME

Other times a member would note that comedy shows often frame issues more concretely than politicians are able to. In one clip Senator Jay Rockefeller IV (D-WV) acknowledges that a boring topic like aviation policy won't break through unless a comedian talks about it:

> It's a very unhappy situation when people hear about it. It's probably best explained on the one hand by Jay Leno or David Letterman. That would certainly drive it home. Otherwise, it is an abstract issue. (C-SPAN, 2008)

SCAN ME

Finally, congresspeople often will praise a comedian for not only bringing awareness to an issue but going the extra mile and actively advocating for specific policy change. The most common example I found of this was bipartisan praise for Jon Stewart pushing for the passage of the 9/11 First Responders' Bill in 2019.

While these examples show comics being acknowledged for disseminating information, raising awareness, *and* acting as activists, they are linked by the common assumption and articulation of comedians as *more* than so-called court jesters or entertainment. While some scholars have called these types of satirists the Fifth Estate (Sotos, 2007) meant to keep news media in check, these references in fact show that many in Congress see satirists not as a check on the press but as an *integral part* of the press that not only disseminates information and reflects information salience but also shapes public opinion and advocates for outcomes.

Theme 5: Congress members drawing boundaries between politics and comedy

The final theme, comprising 12% of the clips, encompasses the most negative mentions of late-night comedy in the House and Senate and includes arguments that late-night comedians are not serious political actors. In other words, these references seek to draw a boundary between politics and comedy. The three types of references within this theme claimed one of the following: (1) appearing on late-night comedy shows is a waste of time when politicians should be working to help their constituents, (2) we shouldn't listen to what comedians say because it is a distraction, and (3) late-night comedians are covering a particular topic in a dangerous or illegitimate way. While several Congress members praised comedians like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert for testifying before Congress, others were not so keen on the attention they would get, as illustrated by Dan Lungren (R-CA):

> We can't even get a hearing on that. Haven't heard a thing from our judiciary committee. It's more important to bring Colbert in. Maybe we ought to have him in character as he was on the day of the election. Maybe then we'd be getting down to our concern for treatment, equal treatment of each and every voter in America. But when you have a Justice Department which decides they are not going to treat people equally based on their race, as was testified to last week, last Friday at the same time, on the same day, as Mr. Colbert was gracing us with his presence in our Judiciary Committee. And we had this rush, this tremendous rush of cameras to cover him, and we have very little coverage of the amazing testimony about terrible decisions that were made in the Justice Department and the Voting Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division. (C-SPAN, 2010)

SCAN ME

Comedy here is a scapegoat for an issue that has nothing to do with Colbert's testimony other than the fact that he was testifying around the same time another hearing was taking place. Often, politicians use celebrities as scapegoats when complaining about important issues not getting enough attention. And while this issue does merit concern, the ways in which comedy is scapegoated in this and other similar examples in the data illustrates that comedy becomes an easy target when Congress members are upset about an issue not being covered in ways they would prefer.

As scholars have illustrated, and this study has reinforced, the place of political comedy and satire within the political process is tricky to define and quantify. Caron (2016) uses a physics metaphor to try to illustrate the slippery nature of political comedy, stating that as light at quantum levels behaves as both a wave and a particle, satire "registers as both serious speech and nonserious (comic) speech" (p. 156). This makes political comedy notoriously hard to study; it can be wielded as both "just a joke" and "important truth-telling," often at the same time. This dual nature is further illustrated in data I found in the C-SPAN Archives. Comedy is important or dangerous, depending on which serves a purpose in a debate. So, while politicians cite the importance and fun of late-night comedy when it serves their interest, they also criticize and distance themselves from it when it does not. In these instances, politicians are enacting what has been called "border maintenance" (Jones et al., 2012, pp. 48–53) in an attempt to draw a line between serious political discussions and unserious, superficial comedy. But, as illustrated in these preliminary data, border maintenance tends to only happen when it serves the interests of journalists or politicians as a defense against criticism and attacks.

CONCLUSION

While I went into this research imagining Congress as a particular audience, the resulting data have shifted my perspective toward theorizing congressional debates as intertextual in the same way we tend to theorize late-night comedy. The blurring of politics, entertainment, comedy, and journalism is often framed through the lens of postmodern theory, particularly Jean Baudrillard's (1981) "regime of simulacra" in which the lines that separate fact, fiction, entertainment, politics, truth, opinion, and spectacle are increasingly muddled. Late-night comedy relies heavily on intertextuality, pastiche, parody, citation, and remediation, and as shown in the data, Congress does as well. In a clip mentioned earlier in this chapter, Peter DeFazio (C-SPAN, 2006) critiques Congress in an ironic register, imagining the Republicans as parodies of themselves created by *The Daily Show* writers. I used this clip to illustrate that instead of understanding the relationship between politicians, journalists, comics, and citizens as one in which journalists and comics inform citizens about what politicians are doing, communication and media scholars need to recognize the complexity and dense intertextuality occurring between these four interrelated, and often overlapping, publics. While important activism happens in the alternative press, on social media, and in grassroots spaces run by and for those who lack institutional privilege and power, politicians, journalists, mainstream satirists, and audiences are all a part of a postmodern media landscape marked not by truth-telling and upending power hierarchies but by spectacle, entertainment, and the illusion of radical critique. While scholars of political humor may find instances of satirists upending power dynamics and fighting for the little guy, this sample illustrates the ways in which mainstream political comedy can easily become a tool for those in power to draw on rhetorically as needed for the furthering of their own aims. Future studies should further excavate the complex interplay between politicians, comedy, and satire to supplement the work that has been done on the relationship between citizen-audiences and political comedy. I think this is a missing link in better understanding the political/entertainment landscape.

Additionally, in this chapter I drew on Young's (2020) work on late-night satire and outrage entertainment but think further investigation into the "outrage" aspect of her work is necessary. Young contends that left-leaning political satire and conservative opinion shows serve parallel purposes but look different in form, affect, and aesthetic because of differing psychological profiles of left-leaning and right-leaning viewers (p. 3). Notably, she argues that humor is not as politically motivating as outrage. A study that includes references to outrage pundits like Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity in addition to comedians may further illuminate how different types of political entertainment are used in congressional debates. I also think looking at a wider sample of videos in the C-SPAN Video Library would be useful in understanding how comedians and comedy inflect politics beyond floor debates—for instance, studying the White House Correspondents' Dinner, congressional committee hearings, special programming and panels, and call-in shows. We often lament the distortion of the lines between entertainment and politics and the ways in which this distortion has intensified in the digital age; but rather than simply critiquing it and attempting to put the toothpaste back in the tube, so to speak, we would do well to try to better understand it and to make attempts to harness it toward encouraging a more informed and engaged electorate. From this sample, we can see that Congress members, like all of us, are comedy fans. We tend to like comedians more than politicians; so, harnessing this power for the furthering of democratic deliberative process can only move us forward.

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7

GENDER SCHEMA AND POLITICS

A Cognitive Study on Gender Issues in Politics

Zachary Isaacs and Cassidy Hansen

In recent years, women have been becoming more involved in national politics. In 2021, Kamala Harris became the first woman to be elected as the vice president of the United States. In addition, Hillary Clinton was the presidential nominee for the Democratic party in 2016, and now a "squad" of congresswomen have become mainstream. Despite the systematic increase of autonomy and political rights for women over the course of United States history, women are still underrepresented in elected offices throughout the country. Undoubtedly, there are many underlying sources of this political gender divide, but scholars suggest that this divide can often be traced to differences in resources, resentment, political orientations, and potentially culture (Burns et al., 2001; Lawless & Fox, 2010). Additionally, we argue that gender disparities in politics is a result of gender schemas. That is, gender schemas represent a cultural phenomenon that likely contributes to the variety of obstacles that women face in getting elected and being taken seriously once they have been elected.

Gender schema theory was first researched by Sandra Bem in 1981 (Bem, 1981a, 1981b). Every society assigns certain tasks and roles to men and women, which naturally creates cultural expectations of who men and women are and what they should be doing (Bem, 1981a). For example, we often associate men with physical labor and "outside the home" tasks, while we associate women with taking care of the home. Despite changing gender norms, these gendered schemata still play a major role in how we process information from a young age (Lay et al., 2019).

Given that gender stereotypes and schemas still exist, this study is aimed at better understanding the relationship between gender schema theory and political information processing. In particular, this study interrogates whether gendered schema affects perceptions of credibility and gender roles in politics. We thus begin by discussing gender schema and how gendered expectations have influenced media coverage and political success. Using video transcripts from the C-SPAN Video Library, we then tested gender schema theory through ANOVAs, moderation analyses, and linear regressions. In doing so, this study contributes to the existing literature on gender disparities in politics by adding a new dimension: how gender schema may play a role in the perception of political leaders.

GENDER SCHEMA

What Are Schemas?

Schemas can be understood as learned behaviors and structures of thought that are used by human beings to guide their perceptions of the world while helping them problem solve. These information-processing structures simplify daily cognition, as schemas create default assumptions in an effort to decrease deliberative cognition (DiMaggio, 1997). Schemas also can change and develop over the course of one's lifetime as individuals face new obstacles and learn new information. Personal structures have their greatest impact on perceptions of others when making inferences about them without any context; however, the use of personal schema decreases once individuals focus on the actions and behaviors of the other individual because active cognition has been implemented (Catrambone & Markus, 1987). For example, because someone grew up being socialized that most women want to have children, they likely will assume that a woman they meet wants children someday, but as they get to know the woman better their assumption may be corrected. Interestingly, individuals also tend to recall inconsistent schema over consistent schema but recall consistent or inconsistent schema information better than neutral information (Hashtroudi et al., 1984). Similarly, political candidates who defy social norms are better remembered, but not necessarily better liked (Hayes, 2011).

What Is Gender Schema?

Gender schema is one type of schema that is created through the process of individuals learning sex-related associations that both organize and guide the individual's perception as they are faced with information that either agrees or disagrees with their current schema (Bem, 1981a). Sex-linked associations are largely a result of what society teaches individuals about the dichotomy between males and females and how these differences are applied to everyday life and situations. Individuals are usually considered sex-typed, which is when their sex and gender match cultural norms, cross-typed, when sex and gender match the opposite cultural norm, androgynous, when an individual shows characteristics of both genders and understands existing norms, or undifferentiated, when the individual has no understanding of gender norms and does not show an inclination to either gender (Bem, 1981a). Depending on the category that a particular person fits into, it affects their perception of gender roles in society. For example, if you are sex-typed, you are likely to see gender roles quite frequently, while if you are androgynous, you are unlikely to see them at all. The different perceptions of gender roles could affect the way that politicians are perceived.

Martin and Halverson (1981, 1983) found that after being presented photos with consistent and inconsistent information based on sex-schemas, children would change sex-inconsistent information into sex-consistent information when being asked to recall the information, which is congruent to the work of Catrambone & Markus (1987). Viewing images for both sex-consistent and sex-inconsistent individuals requires a low level of cognition, so children may default to what they already know in their schema instead of adapting their schema. Adults may similarly use their gender schema and other indicators, like policy dimension or political party, when evaluating a candidate to help lower cognitive demands.

Gender Schema in Media

Scholars in the field of media studies use gender schema in two ways: to illustrate (1) how gender-stereotyped media activates gender schema or (2) how individuals perceive media using gender as a lens. For example, Rouner et al. (2003) found that "traditionally" gendered beer advertisements caused some adolescents to question why gender roles, sexism, and sexual portrayal of women were used—which may suggest that these adolescents may be androgynous, as they understand the existence of culturally defined gender schema but do not agree with the schema. People are generally good at picking up on stereotypical gender roles, most likely due to their personal experience with their own schema. For instance, Kolbe and Langefeld (1993) had participants assess gender role orientations of highly gendered characters on television advertisements using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The authors found that participants were in fact able to recognize the gendered stereotypes and were able to discriminate between more "masculine" and "feminine" characters, which provides further evidence that media can elicit the use of gender schema as individuals evaluate what content they see.

Gendered evaluation can also extend to the actions of an individual, as actions can be understood as more information. Despite the actors being traditionally very feminine or very masculine in appearance in this study, their actions within the advertisements affected how viewers perceived actor masculinity or femininity (Kolbe & Langefeld, 1993). Although a father was depicted as physically "hardy" with a Brooklyn accent, he was perceived as being less masculine because he was featured in a frozen treat advertisement with his son. This suggests that while non-stereotyped depictions can be shown in media, individuals still perceive others a certain way through using their personal gender schema and what limited information they have.

Indeed, many perceptions of others do rely on gender schema. For example, in a 2 × 2 × 2 between-subjects design experiment by Knight & Giuliano (2001), the authors wrote and manipulated articles about the attractiveness or athleticism of an athlete, then assigned a sex to the athletes in the articles. Then, the articles were evaluated by both male and female participants. Besides pronouns, the text of the article remained the same across men and women. The authors found that the perceived attractiveness of the female athlete featured in the attractiveness article was significantly higher than the female athlete featured in the accomplishments article even though the athlete's image featured in both articles was the same. There was no significant difference between the two conditions for men. The authors suspect that this difference is likely a result of gender schema, as being attractive "softens" the inconsistency between what the participants are being presented and their gender schema.

Gender Schema in Perceptions of Political Candidates

Gender schemas not only affect people in normal media environments, they also affect how political candidates are examined. Evaluations based on gender schema can be beneficial to candidates in certain circumstances, but harmful in others. For example, in a content analysis of news coverage, Kahn (1992) found that political candidates who received "male" incumbent coverage in an experiment were viewed as strong leaders who were equipped to handle military issues, where those who received "female" incumbent coverage were seen as more honest and compassionate. Male and female incumbent coverage were conditions that emphasized gender differences in prominence of coverage, elements of campaign coverage, and candidate resources, based on a content analysis conducted by the author of the paper. Moreover, female candidates were perceived as being better at dealing with education, health, and women's issues than male candidates, but being more knowledgeable about defense or economic issues was not associated with male candidates. These findings are incredibly important as they provide a baseline for understanding how issue topic could be important for evaluating gender schema. As such, our study will focus on how two different gendered issues (e.g. terrorism for males and education for females) and how they could affect how we perceive speakers.

Gender schemas have also been found to affect recall. In a study that had participants evaluating male and female candidates in existing television political advertisements, participants were able to recall family and appearance for candidates who were women and campaign activities for candidates who were men (Hitchon & Chang, 1995). Participants also indicated that women attacking men in political ads was appropriate, but men attacking women was not appropriate. However, this does mean that men are the only ones "punished" on the campaign trail for exhibiting anger. Brooks (2011) found that for both male and female candidates, showing anger or crying penalizes their favorability, effectiveness, and leadership skills proportionally. Despite penalizations being equal across men and women, it is important to understand that general anger was seen as more inappropriate from women than men, and that women who cry or display anger were considered more "emotional" than men (Brooks, 2011). These differences may be a result of people relying on their gender schemas while making evaluations that are primed by gendered media coverage.

In a follow-up to their original study, Chang and Hitchon (2004) found that participants associated education and welfare issues with female candidates, while defense and agriculture were associated with male candidates when limited information was used in print advertising. As information increased, participants began relying on the new information, which aligns with the tenants of general schema theory. The authors recommend that women who want to set an agenda including "men's issues" should include more information about these issues in their campaign so people don't default to their gender schemas, which may encourage voters to perceive that a female candidate is not capable of handling traditionally masculine issues. This idea will be further explored in this study as we identify whether gender schema scores can vary between education and terrorism topics, as we would expect from the literature (Chang & Hitchon, 2004; Dolan, 2010).

Based on a sample of candidates who ran for various offices from 1996 to 1998, Herrnson et al. (2003) suggested that in order to be elected, women should focus on issues traditionally associated with female candidates while targeting women and social groups that are friendly to women. Although this approach can get women seats, it may limit female politicians to being perceived as only being interested in feminine issues and unable to contribute to other policy realms, which could be schema enforcing. For example, in a condition where terrorism was present, candidate evaluation from an experiment indicated that masculine stereotypes had a negative influence on female Democratic candidates, but not on Republican female candidates (Holman et al., 2016).

Hayes (2011) also notes that media still play on both political and gender stereotypes. Similarly, Dolan (2005) found that news media were more likely to portray men and women using political gender stereotypes than were political officials. Surprisingly, this is also true for children's literature, which may be contributing to development of gender schema (Lay et al., 2019).

Despite gender schema processing existing as people evaluate candidates, women often win at the same rates as men do in offices at some political levels, such as the U.S. House of Representatives (Lawless & Pearson, 2008). However, if women are just as likely to win as men, why does the gender gap persist? According to Dolan (2010), this may in part be due to men and women still holding trait stereotypes at various levels. She found that individuals who view women as able to deal with culturally masculine policy dimensions are more likely to support female candidates and want greater representation of women in government. As a result, gender schema of the public should be examined to understand why gender plays a role in political figure evaluation when information is limited at various levels, as it may explain differences in, and the strength of, political stereotypes based on gender.

Women and Credibility in Politics

Gender schema theory clearly places women's role and expertise within the domestic domain. Consequently, women have struggled to build credibility in the political context. Funk and Coker (2016) designed a study that examined how people perceive women after they are objectified (reduced to their physical characteristics). They created a hypothetical female political candidate with two different Facebook feeds, one where the candidate was objectified (contained comments on her body) and one where she was not objectified (and that focused more on policy issues). In the feed where the woman was objectified, the candidate had significantly lower credibility than in the other feed. Undoubtedly this happens often with women in politics. Sarah Palin was constantly objectified when she was the vice presidential nominee in 2008, hurting her credibility as a politician. This ultimately leads to the conclusion that women struggle with building credibility in politics based on their body.

While women's credibility can be diminished because of objectifying comments, it can also suffer simply because they are women. Borrelli (1997) found that when female secretary-designees are going through the confirmation process to become members of the cabinet, they struggle to build credibility like male secretary-designees. During the confirmation process, senators are more likely to treat women as "outsiders" so women have to work harder to build the same credibility. This further illustrates the issues women face in the political arena. Credibility is a deep-rooted issue facing women in the political field. Credibility is important to get elected, to gain the respect of constituents, and just generally to be believed. To that end, our study will focus on the issue of credibility and how it may vary based on the gender of the speaker.

HYPOTHESES

Following extant research on gender schema theory (Bem, 1981a) and women in politics (Borrelli, 1997; Hayes, 2011; Krook, 2017; Lawless & Fox, 2010), this study will test the following hypotheses:

H1: Speakers who are speaking on the issue of terrorism will be rated higher for masculinity than the speakers who are speaking on the issue of education.

H2: Speakers who are speaking on the issue of education will be rated higher for femininity than the speakers who are speaking on the issue of terrorism.

H3: Participants who score higher on the BSRI for masculinity will rate the female speakers as less credible than the male speakers.

H4: Participants who score higher on the BSRI for femininity will rate the female speakers as more credible than participants who score higher on the BSRI for masculinity.

H5: Party identification will be the strongest predictor of the BSRI evaluations of the speakers for femininity.

H6: Party identification will be the strongest predictor of the BSRI evaluations of the speakers for masculinity.

Expected experimental outcomes for masculinity and femininity are shown in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

TABLE 7.1 *Expected Experimental Outcome for Masculinity*

	Terrorism	Education
Male speaker	Highest rating for masculinity	High-medium rating
Unidentified speaker	High-medium rating for masculinity	Medium-low rating for masculinity
Female speaker	Medium-low rating for masculinity	Lowest rating for masculinity

TABLE 7.2 *Expected Experimental Outcome for Femininity*

	Terrorism	Education
Male speaker	Lowest rating for femininity	Medium-low rating for femininity
Unidentified speaker	Medium-low rating for femininity	High-medium rating for femininity
Female speaker	High-medium rating for femininity	Highest rating for femininity

STUDYING GENDER SCHEMA IN POLITICS

To examine how gender schemas influence perceptions of political credibility and how they may vary based on speaker gender and issue topic, we conducted a controlled experiment where participants read a transcript from the C-SPAN Video Library and then filled out a survey with the BSRI short form, a source credibility scale, and demographic questions.

Methodology

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk). User location was restricted to the United States. Participants were compensated $1 for completing the survey. An advantage to using mTurk participants instead of undergraduate participants is that mTurk participants are generally more diverse as a whole when compared to other convenience samples and tend to pay better attention to their assigned task. However, samples from mTurk are not entirely representative of the general U.S. population, as participants tend to be more educated, sophisticated, and politically divided (Berinsky et al., 2012; Cassese et al., 2013). To prevent overgeneralization of findings, participants were asked demographic questions involving age, education, and political ideology at the end of the experiment.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions (see Table 7.3). Each condition included speeches made by politicians on the topics of terrorism and education (see the Appendixes to this chapter for the transcripts used in the experiment). After data collection, the sex of the participants was used as a covariate, making the experiment a 3 × 2 × 2 design. The speeches were selected from the C-SPAN Video Library. The particular speeches that we chose were selected because they were not clearly partisan and they both took about two to three minutes to read. The sex of the individual giving the speech was varied across conditions; however, the content of the speech remained the same regardless of who was giving the speech. The survey was programmed to assign an even number of participants to each condition. Any survey that was taken in less than four and a half minutes was discarded from the data analysis. After discarding these surveys 326 surveys remained that were used for data analysis.

In both conditions, politicians were given "traditional" names and identifying pronouns to serve as a cue for gender schema activation. The female name

TABLE 7.3 *Experimental Design*

	Terrorism	Education
Male speaker	Terrorism × Male speaker	Education × Male speaker
No speaker named	Terrorism × No speaker	Education × No speaker
Female speaker	Terrorism × Female speaker	Education × Female speaker

was "Susan Brown" and the male name was "Mark Brown." The following sentence was featured before the speech: "PRONOUN Secretary INSERT NAME was asked to give CORRESPONDING PRONOUN remarks on the issue of ISSUE on the House floor."

After reading the transcript of each speech, participants completed a survey measuring gender schema for the politician (BSRI, discussed below). After finishing their assigned condition, participants were asked to fill out a gender schema survey for themselves. Then, participants completed McCroskey's (1999) measure of source credibility. Designation of gendered issues were as follows: terrorism was considered a masculine issue and education a feminine issue as previous research has found these items to be associated with certain genders (Chang & Hitchon, 2004; Dolan, 2010). While other issues may be considered more feminine, like abortion, they were not used because of fear of ceiling effects.

Measures

BSRI

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was used to identify the presence of gender schemas in this study (Bem, 1981a).The BSRI contains 60 questions on a 7-point scale. Twenty of the questions in the inventory ask about attributes related to masculinity (e.g., assertive), while 20 of the questions ask about femininity (e.g., soft spoken). The remaining inventory questions (20 items) are neutral items. Individuals are considered sex-typed if they score in a way that it reflects their sex. For example, if a person is biologically female and they score higher on the femininity scale than on the masculinity scale, they would be considered sex-typed. If they score in a way that is opposite of their sex, such as a biological female that scores higher on the masculinity scale, they would be considered cross-sex-typed. Those who score high on both the masculinity and femininity scales are considered androgynous. Lastly, those who score low on both the masculinity and femininity scales are considered undifferentiated. The short form of the BSRI was used in this study. The short form features half of the original BSRI items to reduce fatigue but still maintains internal consistency, leaving 10 masculine items, 10 feminine items, and 10 neutral (Bem, 1981a; Kolbe & Langefeld, 1993). Additionally, this form of the BSRI is considered psychometrically stronger than the full-form BSRI, making it the superior form to use (Hoffman & Borders, 2001).

Source Credibility Measure

Source credibility was assessed using McCroskey's (1999) source credibility measure. Using dichotomous terms, the scale measured three different factors involved in credibility: a competence factor (e.g., intelligent vs. unintelligent), a caring/goodwill factor (e.g., cares about me vs. doesn't care about me), and a trustworthiness factor (e.g., honest vs. dishonest). Participants were asked to choose a value on the scale from 1 to 7 for each item. The measure has been used extensively in the literature (Mazer et al., 2009; Westerman et al., 2012), usually having reliability between .80 and .94.

RESULTS

Data analysis was conducted in SPSS. For H1 and H2, one-way ANOVAs were conducted. As seen in Table 7.4, there was a significant interaction between the speaker gender (male, female, and unidentified) and the sex of the participant (F = 21.04, p = .04). The female participants perceived the male and unidentified speakers to be more masculine than the female speaker, which follows what we would predict. However, all other main effects and interaction effects tested were insignificant. As such, we fail to support H1.

TABLE 7.4 *Treatment Effects on Perceived Masculinity*

Variable name	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Speaker gender	2.57	2	1.28	1.29	.44
Sex of participant	1.19	1	1.19	17.78	.15
Issue topic	.01	1	.01	.01	.93
Speaker gender × Sex of participant	5.35	2	2.67	21.04	.04*
Speaker gender × Issue topic	1.99	2	.99	7.81	.11
Sex of participant × Issue topic	.07	1	.07	.53	.54
Speaker gender × Sex of participant × Issue topic	.25	2	.13	.13	.88

Note: Outcome variable: BSRI rating for masculinity.
*Significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 7.5 *Treatment Effects on Perceived Femininity*

Variable name	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Speaker gender	1.36	2	.681	.46	.69
Sex of participant	5.70	1	5.70	29.46	.12
Issue topic	6.78	1	6.78	7.39	.35
Speaker gender × Sex of participant	2.34	2	1.17	1.52	.40
Speaker gender × Issue topic	2.99	2	1.50	1.94	.34
Sex of participant × Issue topic	.19	1	.19	.25	.67
Speaker gender × Sex of participant × Issue topic	1.54	2	.77	.53	.59

Note: Outcome variable: BSRI rating for femininity.

For the testing of H2, we also performed a one-way ANOVA, this time using the BSRI rating of the speaker's femininity as the outcome variable. As seen in Table 7.5, no main effects or interaction effects were significant. Sex of the participant was close to having a significant effect ($F = 29.46$, $p = .12$); however, it was not substantial enough. Because of these insignificant effects, we fail to support H2.

To test H3 and H4, we performed moderation analyses in SPSS using Hayes' Process (Hayes, 2013). For each analysis, we used Model 1. For H3, we did three moderation analyses using the gender of the speaker as the independent variable, the BSRI rating of masculinity as the moderator, and the three different factors of credibility as the outcome variables (caring/goodwill, competence, trustworthiness). For H3 there were no significant effects found in the moderation analyses. Because of this, we fail to support H3. For H4, we performed three moderation analyses using gender of the speaker as the independent variable, the BSRI rating of femininity as the moderator, and the three different factors of credibility as the outcome variables. Similar to the analyses for H3, the analyses for H4 also yielded no significant effects. Due to no significant effects throughout the moderation analyses, we fail to support H4.

To evaluate the final two hypotheses in the study, H5 and H6, we used linear regression models. To evaluate H5, we used femininity as the dependent variable and used party identification, education level, sex, marital status, and sexual orientation as the independent variables. As shown in Table 7.6, both party identification ($t = 2.50$, $p = .01$) and marriage status ($t = -3.21$, $p = .00$) were

TABLE 7.6 *Factors That Predict Perceptions of Femininity for Speakers*

	β	*t*	*p*-value
Party identification	.16	2.50	.01**
Education level	.03	.42	.68
Sex	−.09	−1.48	.14
Marriage status	−.21	−3.21	.00***
Sexual orientation	.07	1.16	.25
Model R = .34	Model R^2 = .12	F = 6.40	

Note: Outcome variable: BSRI rating for femininity.
*Significant at the .05 level.
**Significant at the .01 level.
***Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 7.7 *Factors That Predict Perceptions of Masculinity for Speakers*

	β	*t*	*p*-value
Party identification	.14	2.30	.02*
Education level	.03	.56	.58
Sex	−.06	−1.07	.29
Marriage status	−.15	−2.38	.02*
Sexual orientation	.12	1.89	.06
Model R = .30	Model R^2 = .09	F = 5.20	

Note: Outcome variable: BSRI rating for masculinity.
*Significant at the .05 level.

significant predictors of the BSRI rating of femininity of the speakers. Although party identification was not as strong of a predictor as marriage status, we still find support for H5.

For the last hypothesis, H6, we used a linear regression model using the BSRI rating of masculinity as the dependent variable and the same independent variables as in H5. Table 7.7 shows that once again both party identification ($t = 2.30$, $p = .02$) and marriage status ($t = -2.38$, $p = .02$) significantly predict BSRI ratings of masculinity of the speakers. The effect size for party identification and marriage status are very similar, but marriage status is slightly larger. Similar to H5, with the strong effect size of party identification and the closeness to marriage status in its predictive power, we find support for H6.

DISCUSSION

This study examined how scores on the BSRI for gender schemas could vary based on the gender of speakers and on issue topic. In addition, the study sought to see whether there was a link between gender schemas and perceptions of credibility of politicians. Gender schema theory suggests that everyone creates sex-based associations and they can affect our perceptions of gender in everyday life. Given that female politicians have yet to have as much success as male politicians, we theorized that gender schemas could be a contributing factor. Several points warrant discussion.

The hypotheses in this study were not supported by the data. Although we predicted that scores on the BSRI would vary based on the gender of the speaker and the issue topic, the data ultimately showed no significant effects between them. There are several possible explanations for the null hypotheses. First, it is perhaps the case that people do not implement gender schema when evaluating candidates. If so, that is ultimately a positive finding. From the literature, we know that gender schemas are activated when speakers are seen; however, much less is known about text-based gender schema processing (Chang & Hitchon, 2004; Knight & Giuliano, 2001). Our study builds on this literature by adding a new twist: that gender schemas are not activated when the gender is only seen in text. This is a positive for print journalism, as it seems that gender schematic processing may not occur in these text-based environments.

Additionally, media richness may have also played a role. Gender is constructed in a variety of ways. Candidates construct gender through their verbal and nonverbal messages, as well as visual elements that can be seen in campaign advertisements and websites. Accordingly, text alone, like what was used in this study, may not have elicited clear gender frames. We would possibly find greater effects had we created videos of male and female actors giving these speeches, but this would also increase the ambiguity of what may or may not be causing the implementation of gender schema. For example, would it matter what color of clothing the actors wore? Their objective attractiveness? Does women's physical presence lead to objectification? These potential hidden variables may be difficult to account for, but they certainly would indicate gender.

Another explanation is that the BSRI did not perform as intended. After the experiment, we ran an exploratory factor analysis and found that the BSRI was evaluating femininity well; however, the traits that make up masculinity were quite unclear. Even though the BSRI did not work well for our experiment, it is likely that people do still evaluate people through gendered lenses. However, how we understand and recognize gender schema may have changed since the creation of the BSRI. Perhaps masculinity and femininity are better identified in variables not included in the BSRI. For example, variables such as combative and commanding could be better to appraise masculinity. In addition, variables such as sentimental and emotionally discerning could be better to appraise femininity. While recent literature has successfully implemented the BSRI, it may be time for an overhaul of the inventory.

The most likely explanation for the null findings is that the participants in this study may not have paid that much attention to the gender of the speaker and were more focused on reading the content of the text they were presented. The gender of the speaker was made known at the beginning of the transcripts, which could have easily been skipped by participants thinking that the first line of the transcript was not important. Additionally, the gender of the speaker was not explicitly stated; it was implied through pronouns such as "she" and prefixes such as "Madam." It is possible that these cues were simply not strong enough to trigger gender schematic processing.

Although there were no statistically significant results for the first four hypotheses, H5 and H6 both returned significant results. We found that both party identification ($t = 2.50$, $p = .01$) and marriage status ($t = -3.21$, $p = .00$) were significant predictors of femininity ratings on the BSRI for the speakers. This means that participants who identified as Republicans were much more likely to appraise femininity in the speakers than participants who identified as Democrats. Similarly, participants who were married were much more likely to perceive femininity in the speakers than those who were single, divorced, or dating but not married. Both of these significant predictors stayed significant when we used the same independent variables but used perceptions of masculinity as the dependent variable. Both party identification ($t = 2.30$, $p = .02$) and marriage status ($t = -2.38$, $p = .02$) significantly predicted BSRI ratings of masculinity of the speakers. The result of party identification predicting perceptions of both masculinity and femininity seems to be a result of those who identified as Republicans being more sex-typed. That is, they were more likely to view sex roles within our experiment than were Democrats. Democrats, on the other hand, preach not stereotyping gender roles (Horowitz et al., 2017), so it makes sense that they would not be sex-typed. This finding shows the continuing evolution of both the Republican and Democratic parties.

The finding of marriage status being a significant predictor of perceptions of both masculinity and femininity was unexpected but not theoretically surprising.

Our findings show that those participants who were married were more likely to be sex-typed than those who were not married. Participants who were married are more likely to observe and embody sex roles in their daily lives with their spouses. Therefore, it makes sense that they would also perceive those differences in our experiment. This is an important finding because it shows further how gender schema are activated in different groups, such as those who are married. Studying different groups and how they may or may not perceive gender schema could be an avenue for further research.

One clear limitation of the study was that the BSRI did not perform well in our experiment. The BSRI appeared to be able to test femininity to a certain extent, but it could not appraise masculinity as well. We ran an exploratory factor analysis to determine whether the items were loading correctly and found that there was cross-loading on several items. Essentially, we found that the BSRI was appraising femininity well, but there were no clear loadings for masculinity.

Considerations for Future Research

Despite the results of this study, gender discrepancies continue to exist in the political context. Thus, scholars interested in this research will do well to use videos instead of written transcripts as the treatment for such research. The written transcripts were most likely not a strong enough treatment to see an effect; however, we expect that a video would be a strong enough treatment to see a significant effect. Additionally, a scale other than the BSRI should be used to measure gender schema. Another scale may be better able to appraise gender schema. Finally, further studying how gender schematic processing may differ between cultural groups could prove to be helpful in examining how women in politics are viewed in different cultures.

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APPENDIX A: TERRORISM TRANSCRIPT

Madam Secretary Susan Brown was asked to give her remarks on the issue of terrorism.
or
Mr. Secretary Mark Brown was asked to give his remarks on the issue of terrorism.
or
Secretary Brown was asked to give their remarks on the issue of terrorism.

I will use the broadest of brushes on how the threat picture has evolved over time and I'll do that mindful of the fact there's quite a number of people sitting in this audience who have had their hands on various national intelligence estimates or other key documents that have framed this problem for our policy community. So with apologies to some of those folks who might end up shaking their heads as I generalize about the nature of the threat in the period since 9/11. In the period right after 9/11, certainly for the first several years, we were very Al-Qaeda focused. That's not surprising. That was the terrorism threat that was most proximate to the United States; certainly in terms of the homeland, what we were the most concerned about. We still very much in our mind in those early days had a model in mind of an organization that was trying to penetrate the United States; that was trying to, to in a sense, infiltrate operatives. Think sleeper cells. Think clandestine covert op race operations to get individuals inside the United States in order to carry out terrorist attacks. And we developed quite a strong capability to detect and mitigate against that kind of threat using our intelligence and law enforcement tools. Of course over time, as Al-Qaeda metastasized (to use a word that often gets used) and as Al-Qaeda became not just an organization that we were dealing with in South Asia but became a global organization with a series of very potent and lethal affiliate groups, the challenge and pressure placed on the homeland security apparatus to succeed in that endeavor got quite intense at times, and then I would argue the threat began to shift to one that actually became much more of a, in some ways, more challenging threat dynamic: that of the so-called homegrown violent extremist. The idea that we were not as threatened day-to-day by that sleeper cell insurgent from abroad, but instead, it was most likely the individual who would be inspired, motivated, who would be encouraged, propelled into action by an ideology or in some cases, by actual individuals overseas connecting with them. That became a much more difficult and challenging problem in some ways for law enforcement because of course identifying those individuals in the absence of the kind of usual communications patterns you see when groups are operating was not going to be easy. That was already an extant problem at the time Isis kind of came onto the scene and in a sense, I would argue at least for a period, supplanted Al-Qaeda as our principal terrorism concern overseas. The ISIS phenomenon I would argue only accelerated those trends that were already in motion in terms of the homegrown violent extremist problem becoming our principal homeland terrorism problem. I won't go into why that is so; this is a sophisticated audience. You know how capable the Islamic State was and is in its ability to use modern tools of communication to motivate individuals. But that homegrown violent extremist model is one that I would argue translates very well to this new kind of threat we're talking about today. These are again most likely to be individuals operating outside of the group structure, a formal group structure. They are not drawing their direction or capability in most cases from some kind of playbook that a group publishes. They are not carrying a lanyard necessarily around their neck that says I belong to this group and it follows this structure. So it will be interesting to hear Rebecca's comments on this as she looks at the caseload inside New York City, but at least in terms of volume, if you go by what the FBI is saying publicly, and Director Wray has been up front about this, the caseload they're managing on this set of terrorism concerns has come to be at par with the international terrorism set of concerns. That's something. I'll close by saying this. And particularly when I'm in the overseas environment where people are saying, "Aren't you Americans all spun up over domestic terrorism right now?" I say yes, we are, we should be. But don't forget you almost can't go a day or two or week or two without reading in the United States press somewhere about the arrest, prosecution, or disruption involving what we would call international terrorism—an individual tied to ideology propagated by Isis or Al Qaeda. So it's not as if one went up and the other went down. Seems we are dealing with a problem of rough parity right now. I'll stop there.

APPENDIX B: EDUCATION TRANSCRIPT

Madam Secretary Susan Brown was asked to give her remarks on the issue of education on the house floor.

or

Mr. Secretary Mark Brown was asked to give his remarks on the issue of education.

or

Secretary Brown was asked to give their remarks on the issue of education.

Over the past 40 years, federal taxpayer spending on education has increased about 180%, amounting to over $1.2 trillion cumulatively. We are still 24th in reading, 25th in science, and 40th in math when compared to the rest of the world. Doing the same thing and more of it won't bring about new results. A great education should not be determined by where you live, nor by who you know. It shouldn't be determined by family income. Education shouldn't be an old-school one-size-fits-all approach. That's why I propose something different: freedom. This administration focuses on freedom for teachers, freedom for parents, and freedom for all students, because we recognize each as a unique individual, and each should be treated as such. Every child should be free to learn where and how it works for them and how it unlocks their potential. So we propose a historic investment in America's students: education freedom scholarships. Our bold proposal will offer a dollar-for-dollar federal income tax credit for voluntary contributions to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide scholarships to students. The students, their families, teachers, schools, and states can choose to participate in the program, or they can choose not to participate. It's a choice. Since the proposal relies entirely on voluntary contributions to nonprofit organizations, it won't take a single dollar from local public schools, schoolteachers, or public school students. Something else: education freedom scholarships are not only for students who want to attend private schools. In fact, some states may choose to design scholarships for public school options such as apprenticeships or transportation to a different public school. States have the opportunity to be really imaginative and to serve the unique needs of their students. Our proposal of a $5 billion annual tax credit for students draws a bright contrast to what some have proposed. $100 billion for buildings versus $5 billion for students. This administration urges this body to invest in students. We believe students of all ages should be free to pursue the education that is right for them. That includes multiple pathways to higher education and successful careers. We propose to expand use of Pell grants for quality short-term programs. It's born from recognition of reality. The vast majority of students today do not pursue a traditional four-year college degree. There are millions of opportunities for careers that don't require university degrees. We must urgently rethink our approach to higher education because today, federal student aid holds $1.5 trillion in outstanding loans, a number that continues to grow. Education freedom is not just for parents and students; teachers need greater freedom. This administration seeks to empower teachers and elevate their profession. I meet with teachers who tell me they would like to choose their own development and customize it for their needs. To that end, we want to focus on what teachers find useful, not what is dictated by the district office. Teachers tell me about the value of mentors or residency opportunities. We want to help ensure new teachers have opportunities to learn from the best. It is essential teachers and students are safe at school. In the wake of school violence in our country, the president asked me to lead a commission on school safety, to support the recommendations we propose empowering communities to develop their own emergency plans and focus on counseling and healthy behaviors for the students. Budgets are about priorities, students, parents, teachers, and taxpayers. If our country will remain secure, strong, prosperous, and free, we need students of all ages to prepare for successful careers and lead meaningful lives. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

8

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND THE HEALTH SECURITY TASK FORCE

Using C-SPAN to Understand Perceptions of Expertise

Bo Blew

Health insurance, President Bill Clinton promised, would be as accessible and universal as a Social Security card. In September of 1993, Clinton kicked off the lobbying for his signature "health security" bill in a rally for doctors and administrative allies. Revealed in full the night before, the policy proposal marked the culmination of years of campaigning and months of intensive planning and speculation. Now, a confident Clinton pledged that before the 103rd Congress adjourned, he would sign into law legislation guaranteeing all Americans access to affordable and reliable health care (C-SPAN, 1993c). Pundits across the political spectrum praised Clinton's plan. Legislators from both parties complimented Clinton's speech before Congress the previous evening and commended him for recognizing the need for action. The plan, developed by a 511-member task force of experts, represented an idealized way of creating public policy in which policy experts come together with stakeholders and legislators to create a wide-ranging plan addressing a complex issue.

And yet, even before the administration could submit the bill, callers on C-SPAN spoke of their fears that the federal government could not solve the problem because the government was the problem (C-SPAN, 1993b). Over the next year, these concerns about government overreach intensified, and legislative opponents of the plan portrayed the task force and its most visible members as an overly complex bureaucracy of technocrats controlled by large liberal private foundations. Republicans claimed that the task force had been infiltrated by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

(RWJF), the two largest foundations at that time dedicated to health care. They cited the revolving door between the foundations and the Clinton administration as evidence of bureaucratic corruption.

By thrusting the task force itself into the limelight, the public debate over health care launched a broader discussion about the very nature of policymaking and expertise. Led by Hillary Clinton and Ira Magaziner, a close associate of the Clintons and senior domestic policy adviser, the policy team sought to succeed in passing a national health policy, something Democratic presidents had attempted and failed to do since 1948. Understanding that lobbying from insurance companies, businesses, and the American Medical Association had long undermined health care reform, President Clinton saw the task force as a way to move beyond gridlock and special interests (Chapin, 2015, 2019). He wanted to rely on expert opinion, not partisan dealmaking, to determine the outline of a new health care system designed to provide universal coverage, reduce costs, and set new standards for private insurers regarding eligibility and portability of coverage (Skocpol, 1997).

Foundations had long supported this method of policy study through the funding of scholars, universities, think tanks, and research centers. Now after decades, an administration embraced expertise and complexity as virtues of comprehensive policymaking. And yet, responses of C-SPAN callers and Republican challenges over the next 13 months suggest that the complexity only gave rise to confusion, and the reliance on experts was interpreted as paternalistic, not pragmatic. In the end, the Clinton administration's reliance on policy experts proved no match for a segment of the public increasingly wary about the role of bureaucracy in their daily lives, fears Republican organizers and politicians exploited.

The reactions of C-SPAN viewers to the task force and health care plan exposed the tensions underlining the growing prominence of private foundations, and their claim over cultivating and deploying expertise that had reshaped the relationships between policymaking and politics over the previous two decades. Scholars examining the health care battles of the 1990s focus on how the task force insulated the plan from politics, making it harder to secure passage. Stakeholders that would normally be needed in ferrying the plan through the legislative process did not feel adequately invested after being excluded from the drafting process (Johnson & Broder, 1997; Katz, 2008; Skocpol, 1997). Political scientist Jacob Hacker (1996) argues that the Clinton administration's task force provided an approach focused on "policy analysis," not politics. Hacker's judgment on the limitations of policy analysis undermines the position of private foundations that sought to make expert policymaking a central piece of governance.

By examining the interactions between task force members and C-SPAN callers, the tension between policy analysis and political persuasion becomes even more apparent. The callers engaged passionately with arguments about the size of government and the corruption of the administration rather than with actual details of the plan. The rise and demise of the Clinton health care plan is a telling episode for understanding the kinds of expertise foundations wanted to introduce to the policymaking process and the political challenges embedded within the very crafting of this type of expertise. It also exposes a fundamental paradox that foundations had faced since the 1970s. As nonprofit institutions became more politically and economically influential, the public increasingly questioned expert opinion and who could claim the mantle of expertise.[1] Republican lawmakers took advantage of this public distrust to undermine the credibility of the Clinton health care plan and the liberal commitment to harnessing the federal bureaucracy to provide for the public good. In fact, the language used by C-SPAN callers—a highly engaged and politically involved segment of the electorate—often mimicked the narratives espoused by conservative media outlets. Expert policy analysis failed to overcome an anti-government rhetoric espoused by conservative intellectual and media institutions for over four decades.

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Government officials, foundation leaders, and scholars have long viewed foundations as a kind of policy laboratory with the flexibility to pilot reform efforts at a scale that governments could then expand (Zunz, 2014). Both the Kaiser and Johnson foundations viewed the Clinton administration's commitment to a national health plan as a continuation of their missions and cumulation of tens of millions of dollars spent on reform efforts. So, when the administration sought to develop a comprehensive plan based on expert opinion, the administration and foundation directors found it natural for the task force to rely on the decades of foundation research and talent.

However, foundations have long served as a tool to advance political agendas, sparking controversy as a result.[2] In fact, since the proposal for the first tax-exempt foundation in 1913, lawmakers have been skeptical of the influence of foundations in the democratic process. In an essay expressing his misgivings, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations Frank Walsh went as far as to declare foundations a "menace to the welfare of society" (Walsh, 1915). One of the earliest debates on the role of foundations centered around Margaret Sanger and her efforts to provide access and information concerning birth control to women regardless of their class. Sanger's efforts to educate the public on the leading scientific opinions of the time and open health clinics promoted ideas that fit the eugenicist beliefs of her donors by increasing the prevalence of birth control among racial and ethnic minority groups. Efforts to serve impoverished communities seemingly fit Congress's guidelines for tax exemption of organizations dedicated to "religious, charitable, or educational" purposes. However, throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s the controversial, and in some states illegal, nature of information concerning birth control found Sanger advocating for policy changes to enable the dissemination of birth control literature. Regulators felt that advocating for specific policy changes violated the congressional intent of the law. The courts agreed. For Sanger's supporters, this meant that the IRS viewed their donations to programs that lobbied for legislative changes as political contributions and therefore ineligible for a tax deduction (Zunz, 2014, pp. 76–103).

In 1934, Congress codified previous judicial rulings that attempted to create a firewall between philanthropy and politics allowing tax-exempt foundations to educate but not advocate. And yet, the difference between education and advocacy proved rather gray throughout the century and often depended on the observer. In 1934, the National Economy League watched as Congress decided what limits to place on the practices of tax-exempt organizations. The tax-exempt group largely consisted of veterans and was organized around a nonpartisan goal of reducing wasteful spending in government. In response to cuts in veterans' pensions, the group sent out material advocating for the restoration of the cut in benefits to every member of Congress. The group's critics argued that just like with Sanger, the Economy League should lose its tax-exempt status because it was involved in direct lobbying. However, the Economy League represented an important voting block of veterans and was left undisturbed by regulators (Zunz, 2014, pp. 76–103).

The inconsistent regulation of nonprofits continued with the activities of large foundations in the middle decades of the 20th century. In 1967, the Ford Foundation sought to continue its work with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to tackle the problem of growing racial inequality in deindustrialized cities. In this, the Ford Foundation appeared to be financially supporting CORE in its efforts to organize and register voters in Cincinnati and elect the city's first Black mayor. Foundations had supported voter registration before, but previous efforts had focused on entire regions. Segregationists in Congress argued that the Ford Foundation waded into a specific political contest violating regulations against advocacy. This perceived transgression led segregationists to lend their support to long-term critics of private foundations like populists such as Rep. Wright Patman (D-TX), who had sought for decades to curb the influence of wealth in politics. (Young, 2000; Zunz, 2014, pp. 220–231). Together, Patman and the segregationists' efforts created an explicit definition of a "private foundation" in the U.S. tax code and increased IRS oversight to prevent foundations from taking advantage of their tax status.

During the 1970s, new priorities among think tanks and policy researchers altered the relationship between philanthropy and politics, ultimately allowing foundations to exercise even more influence over policy. Foundations had long invested in public policy research based on a Progressive Era faith in the social sciences to solve complex problems (O'Connor, 2001, 2007). As social and economic problems grew seemingly less localized and more complex throughout the 20th century, many foundations underwrote larger and larger projects designed to combat the issues the foundation's directors viewed as the most pressing. For instance, in response to the oil crises of the 1970s, the Ford Foundation spent $7.4 million on issues related to energy and the environment, including $2.4 million on the creation of a foundation-run policy research center on the issue (Ford Foundation, 1973).

Other exclusively grant-making foundations channeled their resources into public policy research by relying on think tanks as conduits. As historians Kim Phillips-Fein and Jason Stahl have shown, these grants proved influential, allowing think tanks to develop the policy that matched the free-market and anti-regulatory beliefs of some foundation leaders that characterized much of the New Right (O'Connor, 2008; Phillips-Fein, 2009, 2011; Stahl, 2016). By choosing which topics foundations would study and who would study them, foundation leaders held immense power to direct policy debates. So long as the research avoided explicit partisanship, foundations would be seen as educating without advocating. The proliferation of think tanks designed to fit the ideological views of their donors inverted the notion of expert policymaking by allowing politicians to find experts to support their favored policy claims rather than having expertise lead to policy.

It was in this environment that the directors of the RWJF had to decide the priorities of a foundation that was soon to be the nation's second largest foundation. The foundation's namesake, Gen. Robert Wood Johnson, transformed the family company, Johnson & Johnson, from a modest national medical supplier to an international standard in medical manufacturing in his 30-year tenure as CEO. His death in 1968 and subsequent $1 billion bequeathment to the foundation bearing his name led to a total overhaul of the RWJF that Gen. Johnson established in 1936 to manage his contributions to hospitals in the New Brunswick, New Jersey, area. In 1971 the foundation's directors hired the dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine as its president and moved out of the small two-story clapboard house that had long served as the foundation's office, and in 1972 it committed to donating $45–$50 million to nonprofits and projects dedicated to health care. Second in size only to the Ford Foundation at that time, the foundation's president promised to make gifts in concert with Gen. Johnson's desire that all Americas have access to adequate health care regardless of their station. An independent Republican, Johnson had favored decentralizing business operations, educating workers and nonworkers for a new era, raising the minimum wage, and promoting public health—all stances that often found him at odds with his peers. After his death, his estate funded the largest foundation dedicated almost exclusively to issues of health care training, access, and policy (Farber, 1971, 1972; "The Johnson Fund Is Widening Vistas," 1972; "Robert Wood Johnson, 74, Dies," 1972). This policy mission guided the foundation's trustees in the Clinton health care debate as they pushed to ensure that the task force's plan reflected their priorities and critiqued the plan for what they perceived as shortcomings (RWJF, 1994).

While lacking the financial clout of the RWJF, the KFF under president Drew E. Altman found innovative ways to utilize its resources into becoming one of the most influential voices in health care policy. Henry J. Kaiser, the famed shipbuilder of World War II and whose company played a pivotal role in the construction of the Hoover and Grand Coulee Dams, created the foundation in 1948. After his death most of his estate went to the family foundation (Foster, 1989, pp. 274, 278). While primarily known for his massive infrastructure projects and the large planned communities organized along the West Coast to smash production quotas during the war, Kaiser also created one of the nation's first health maintenance organizations (HMO), the nonprofit Kaiser-Permanente Health. This plan brought doctors, associated health providers, and medical facilities from a variety of specialties under one plan to control costs and provide comprehensive care with a particular focus on preventive care. This made it relatively inexpensive for enrollees to seek care from the Kaiser-Permanente network of doctors but offered no benefits when utilizing providers outside of the umbrella (Starr, 2017). While the Kaiser health plan proved popular among the majority of its enrollees, Kaiser and his son wanted the KFF to continue to innovate and bring robust and affordable health care to the masses with its policy study programs.

In 1990, when the KFF's directors named political scientist Drew Altman as the foundation's next president, the foundation underwent much more than a change of leadership. Altman, the former commissioner of health for the State of New Jersey and a former administrator at both the RWJF and Pew Charitable Trust, recognized that the KFF did not have the financial resources of the RWJF to pursue a wide range of initiatives. Therefore, he wanted to focus in depth on three areas and spend resources on ensuring that they reach the media and policymakers (Pallarito, 1990). Responding to the concerns of 1990, the KFF prioritized HIV/AIDS care and policy, reproductive health, and national health policy. In each of these areas, the foundation worked to become the premier information clearinghouse, making sure that policymakers, members of the media from *The Washington Post* to MTV, and the general public recognized the KFF as a reliable source of information (Altman, 1998). The KFF focused on in-house policy research and media outreach—essentially creating a think tank within the foundation—as part of its prioritization of long-term policy solutions, a decision that Altman felt would allow the KFF to increase access to care far beyond what it could hope to achieve through the funding of community health clinics. In the health care debate, foundations contributed directly through personnel and advertising that seemingly favored the Clinton plan, which opponents of the legislation later claimed crossed the line into direct advocacy.

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS IN THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE

The work of individuals like Judith Feder, a Harvard PhD in political science and an expert in health policy, illustrated how foundations like the Kaiser and Johnson foundations acted as way stations for policy experts, providing resources and employment that allowed researchers to continue working when the politicians that favored their policies were out of power. Before being named an acting assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, where she became one of the most visible members of the task force, Feder previously worked as an associate director of one of the KFF's largest programs—the Commission on the Future of Medicaid. Before working for the KFF, she served as executive director of the Pepper Commission, a bipartisan congressional commission that worked from 1989 to 1990 to produce a plan for health care reform, as well as working at the Urban Institute (C-SPAN, 1993a, 1993d). Feder's oscillation between time in government and time in the nonprofit sector was far from unique. In fact, it shows how a small group of foundation directors shaped national debates by supporting the work of particular policy researchers.

Foundations, like universities and think tanks, trade on the stated nonpartisanship of their actors, their perceived expertise, and their research output. During the health care debate, foundations magnified the voices of their directors in various ways. They could directly try to bring policymakers toward their way of seeing certain issues by deciding which studies on which issues were worth undertaking. Or, they could shape media narratives surrounding specific topics by seizing opportunities of having their roster of experts ready to weigh in when a particular issue gained public attention. In short, foundations had an indirect hand in shaping available options for policymakers during the Clinton health care debate by either supporting specific research projects or shaping the boundaries of policy. Individuals like Feder pushed this influence further by bridging the Clinton administration and the KFF.

The RWJF pursued other initiatives that proved more egregious to critics. The foundation funded six "fellows" assigned to various working groups on the task force. When court rulings and public pressure forced the administration to disclose the names of all task force members, the administration listed the fellows as legislative aides to various proponents of the bill, prompting further outcry (Center for Public Integrity, 1994). The foundation argued that it had funded legislative fellowships for decades, but with the initially secretive nature of the task force and the fact that these fellows played an active role in drafting such a sweeping and ostentatious proposed overhaul of the nation's health care system, opponents of the bill cried foul (Pear, 1993).

The administration's connections to the Kaiser and Johnson foundations went beyond staffing. In a February 1993 letter from the president of the KFF, Drew Altman, to Carol Rasco, assistant to the president for domestic policy, Altman wrote, "Let me underscore again my willingness to be helpful with polls, media briefings, focus groups, or in any other way." The letter was then shared with Ira Magaziner and Hillary Clinton with a note from Rasco describing Altman as a "genuine friend" of the administration (Altman, 1993). Whether due to this memo or for other reasons, Kaiser polls were often included in task force proposals and later during the legislative push for the plan (Center for Public Integrity, 1994).

Beyond polling, the Clinton administration viewed people like Altman as central to its media strategy. Internal memorandums laying out the media blitz to accompany the plan showed a reliance on foundation experts (Pellicci, 1994).[3] In a reference table of experts that the administration viewed as "sympathetic individuals whose opinions are valued by the media," Clinton's media team flagged Drew Altman as being particularly useful in speaking on the need for reform and current trends in public opinion and as a spokesman for outside interest groups (White House Health Care Task Force, 1994). Additionally, they listed Judy Feder as the preferred person to contact Altman. The memo stated that internal research and outreach had "great potential to backfire" and highlighted the need for foundation leaders like Altman to serve as "outside validators" of the Clinton health plan (White House Health Care Task Force, 1994). Sociologist Thomas Medvetz (2012) argues that one of the primary functions of think tanks has become filling media appearances in a 24-hour news landscape. The Clinton administration understood this and recruited Altman as an outside expert for its larger media rollout. This plan matched Altman's commitment to a vigorous courting of members of the media and policymakers so that the foundation's policy briefs reached its intended audience and did not yellow in a drawer.

The RWJF, however, took a more public approach in bringing the health care debate to citizens and policymakers. On June 21, 1994, the foundation hosted Tom Brokaw, Hillary Clinton, Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), and Senator George J. Mitchell (D-ME) for a two-hour primetime special on NBC devoted to the health care debate. To secure a two-hour block of ad-free coverage on the issue, the RWJF paid $2.5 million to NBC and an additional $1 million to advertise the special. Like the KFF, the RWJF had increasingly focused on using its resources to pursue media partnerships. In 1994 alone, the foundation directors approved grants to PBS, NPR, and Rock the Vote with the stated goal of increasing awareness of health care issues (RWJF, 1994). And in the lead-up to the plan's formal introduction, the RWJF worked with the Clinton administration to sponsor a series of public listening events featuring First Lady Hillary Clinton (First Lady's Office, 1993).

Yet, the primetime special turned heads as it appeared to some as a clear example of a foundation funding the Clinton administration's PR. In 1972, the founding directors of the RWJF made increasing access to basic health care for all Americans one of their primary goals: a goal that the foundation had spent hundreds of millions in pursuing over 20 years. By 1993, foundation leaders recognized that the Clinton health plan, while not perfect, pushed their agenda of universal access and lower individual costs further toward reality (RWJF, 1993). Defending the special, the foundation's vice president of communication argued that while the foundation favored general reform of the nation's health care system, "it had taken no political stand on the debate over health care" (Carter, 1994). However, after 22 years of trying to improve the national health care system, the RWJF found that Americans were confused by an overly complex health care system. The foundation wanted to seize on the national focus to educate Americans about the menu of potential reforms, not just the Clinton plan. In its view, the NBC primetime special was simply the most conspicuous in a series of programs meant to inform Americans about the particulars of the health care debate under its larger organizational mission (Carter, 1994).

Despite the fact that Tom Brokaw and the NBC News division shaped the actual program, Republicans like Newt Gingrich's press secretary, Tony Blankley, argued that the RWJF's previous involvement with the task force would ensure unbalanced coverage (Carter, 1994). Such concerns were intensified when Hillary Clinton, while accompanied by Dole and Mitchell, emerged as the "star" of the evening. In town-hall-style segments, viewers watched as Clinton fielded questions from audience members who had suffered denials of coverage due to an unknown preexisting condition as well as a family at a loss as to how to pay for $700,000 in out-of-pocket expenses after the birth of their child with "severe respiratory problems" (Goodman, 1994). The presence of Bob Dole, a Republican critic of the plan, did not assuage its opponents. One C-SPAN caller characterized the special as coming "astonishingly close to being an endorsement for single-payer" (C-SPAN, 1994b). Overall, many Republicans found it hard to separate the similarities between the foundation's mission of expanding access to health care and the Clinton administration's plans of universal coverage. Notably, C-SPAN callers illustrate how the relationship between the administration and expert policy analysis failed to speak to some of the political concerns of the period and the challenge both the administration and foundations had in navigating a newly matured conservative media apparatus.

THE LINES ARE OPEN

In the spring of 1992, the Times Mirror Center of the People & the Press conducted a survey of respondents' news consumption habits that provided a clear profile of self-described regular C-SPAN viewers.[4] Compared to viewers of PBS's

MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour and regular CNN watchers, among others, C-SPAN viewers were the most politically engaged and invested segment of a larger survey. When asked whether they agreed with the statement "It doesn't matter who gets elected," only 4% of C-SPAN viewers agreed, compared to the 34% of the general population surveyed, illustrating an increased sense of political empowerment. Yet, while C-SPAN watchers were the most politically engaged and empowered segment of the survey, they also expressed the least amount of confidence in the federal bureaucracy, with 46% of C-SPAN viewers completely agreeing that "when something is run by the government it is usually ineffective," compared to 29% of the total surveyed. Through a battery of questions, the report's authors concluded that C-SPAN viewers defied easy categorization. While more C-SPAN viewers typically identified as Republicans, they supported both social welfare programs and an "anti-Washington" view of politics at higher rates than the rest of the field (Times Mirror Center of the People & the Press, 1993).[5] C-SPAN viewers' interactions with foundation-linked policy experts through C-SPAN call-in segments therefore provide a window into communication barriers the administration faced in trying to use policy experts to convey their message in a political landscape that proved increasingly hostile to expertise and federal bureaucracy.

The administration's health care task force sought to bring the policy expertise of decades of research to bear on the nation's health care sector, yet in interactions with the public, many expressed concerns with the notion of expertise itself. In a C-SPAN interview with Judy Feder, host Steve Scully focused on the policy-writing process before allowing callers to ask Feder questions. In a 50-minute interview, Feder detailed both the daily workings of the task force and the group's interaction with the president and took viewer questions. Similar to sentiments expressed on the evening after the plan's rollout, callers voiced concerns regarding the federal government's ability to manage such a large bureaucratic undertaking, and for some, the task force's reliance on experts signified an out-of-touch administration (C-SPAN, 1993a).

When given the chance to ask Feder questions, the majority of callers seemed more concerned with engaging the Republican talking points surrounding the issue than the workings and recommendations of the task force. Viewers expressed fears that any type of health plan would increase the amount of time physicians spent filling out paperwork thereby reducing their time with patients. One was concerned that the United States must first resolve immigration policy and "return" undocumented residents to "where they come from" before a national health policy could be established. A physician worried that the task force relied more on the advice of bureaucrats and PhDs and lacked a significant number of medical doctors (C-SPAN, 1993a). Callers peppered Feder with questions about the number of physicians on the task force, making it clear that they trusted the expertise of their doctor, not Feder and the federal bureaucracy. For other callers, the use of expertise in policy writing raised suspicions and created distance between policymakers and their constituents (C-SPAN, 1993a). While Clinton wanted secrecy to avoid partisan dealmaking, some viewers saw it as another example of corrupt governance.

Scholars and pundits have long heralded Franklin Roosevelt's "brain trust" as essential to turning progressive impulses into the New Deal administrative state, yet attempts to recapture this legacy proved elusive in the health care debate during the 1990s. The Clinton administration attempted to draw on the sustained popularity of New Deal programs like Social Security, framing the issue as a debate over "health security" in which each American would receive a "health security card" (Skocpol, 1997). But opponents of the New Deal had also commenced a campaign to roll back the policy programs and governing philosophy while Roosevelt was still in office, and this opposition had grown tremendously by the end of the 20th century (Phillips-Fein, 2009). Through foundations and think tanks, conservatives launched what historian Allison O'Connor calls a "counterintelligentsia" to bring works like that of the once-obscure F. A. Hayek into the mainstream and inflate the hold of free-market economics on mainstream policy debates (Mayer, 2015; O'Connor, 2008). By the time Clinton unveiled his health care plan, conservatives had constructed their own notion of expertise and a robust media apparatus to disseminate their findings, which undermined the legacy of the New Deal and narrative of expert policymaking that the administration centered in its media strategy.

In a speech on the House floor, Rep. James Hansen (R-UT) argued that "just like Whitewater, the White House has conveniently censored, back dated or tampered with many documents which would enlighten the public as to who the members of the so-called working group were, what was actually discussed and how it was paid for" (140 Cong. Rec. 18590, 1994). Republicans in the House attempted to slot the initial secrecy of the task force into a larger political narrative about the corrupt nature of the Clinton White House by linking the task force to Whitewater—an investigation into a land deal that Clinton had made while governor of Arkansas, into which Kenneth Starr launched a full investigation but found no impropriety (see Sherman, 2017). In this, Hansen declared that the connections to the Kaiser and Johnson foundations were improper and that the secretive nature of the task force was a full-on scandal from an administration that lobbied in secret favors and profited off of backroom deals.[6]

As such, it did not matter that when pressed for an alternative to the Clinton plan most Republicans would point to a plan developed in large part by the Heritage Foundation, a think tank that often received contributions from conservative foundations. These critics also ignored how the famous Harry & Louise ad campaign—which fostered public opposition to the plan and featured prominent Republicans like Newt Gingrich in the lead-up to the 1994 midterms—had been funded by the Health Insurers Association of America, a lobbying group led by a former Republican representative (Center for Public Integrity, 1994, p. 27). In fact, contrary to its name, the Health Insurers Association of America only represented small- to medium-sized insurance companies during the health care debate. The nation's largest health insurers left the organization in part because they favored the Clinton plan and likely stood to gain from the new national health care market (Chapin, 2019). The effectiveness of the Health Insurers Association of America came from its messaging, not its membership. Its messaging focused on sowing fear and uncertainty about costs, coverage, and government control. Conservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation then grounded these appeals with their own policy analysis. During the two years of planning and debate, they published 94 pieces on health care reform, most opposing Clinton's approach (Heritage Foundation, n.d.). These opinions then found their way to the growing conservative media base that listened to programs like that of radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh.

The charges that the task force's connections to foundations were corrupt struck home not because of the purity of the other side but because of the ability of Republicans and the plan's critics to fit the charge into a larger political narrative permeating these conservative media outlets and the millions of listeners that figures like Limbaugh reached (Skocpol, 1997, p. 149). On conservative talk radio, the Clinton plan represented bumbling technocrats and government overreach. Even as Clinton sat down with Don Imus in 1994, the constant barrage of emotion and attacks appears to have been too much for the health care plan rooted in facts and expertise (Hemmer, 2016; Rosenwald, 2019). In conservative media, the feeling of whether or not something was true and fit existing beliefs mattered more than the opinions of experts when those experts challenged what felt true (Hemmer, 2016). In exit polls of the 1994 midterm election, half of those surveyed said they listened to conservative radio, and those that said they listened frequently voted Republican by a margin of three-to-one

(Skocpol, 1997, p. 149). Conservative media, the decades of challenges to expertise, and the fears of unknowns in health care had proven too much for the Clinton plan and the foundations that had hoped to work with the administration to achieve their policy goals.

On a campaign stop for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination, former senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) reflected on the 1994 health care debate. In his remarks, Santorum spoke of an interview featuring Ira Magaziner amid the debate. He recalled:

> In the mid-1990s, he was on *Meet the Press* with [former Texas senator] Phil Gramm and they were going back and forth about the Clinton health-care plan and who cares for this and how good this is where your kids, whatever. He finally got frustrated and said I care for your children as much as you do, Phil. And he looked at him and said you care for my children as much as I do? He said, yes. And he asked, what are their names? You know your children's names, right? You know what they want. As much as Washington says they care, they don't, because they don't know your kids. (C-SPAN, 2012)

SCAN ME

Santorum's recollection reflects much of the scholarly literature on the health care debate. In condensing the health care plan's failings into a policymaker not knowing the names of a representative's children. Santorum was not attacking the plan on the merits of the policy or the validity of the expert analysis upon which the administration and foundations had relied. Rather, he spoke to the nature of government and bureaucracy and the inability of the administration to sell the American people on a political proposition.

Bill Clinton introduced his health care plan after much speculation and fanfare. Seeking to succeed where others had repeatedly failed, he employed experts with connections to large private foundations to try to elevate his proposal above partisan politics. Foundations with long-standing interests in health care policy, like the Kaiser and Johnson foundations, perceived Clinton's health care initiative as a way to realize their core mission of expanding access to health care. Yet, as C-SPAN callers made clear, the language of expertise had lost some of its currency in policy debates as it failed to push the conversation past the political narratives popularized by conservative media. Additionally, Republican lawmakers saw foundation connection not as a source of outside validation but as additional fodder for their attacks on an administration they viewed as corrupt. In the end, it was not special interest lobbying groups that undermined health care reform, but rather a failure of the language of policy expertise to overcome growing fears of the federal government and the politicians that stoked those fears.

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NOTES

1. Historians have come to view the "golden age of expertise" that supposedly informed the post–World War II period as a somewhat contrived idea that fails to account for the barriers surrounding knowledge production during the Cold War. Among the most notable are the ideological, racial, gendered, and heterosexist assumptions regarding who could be an expert and the professional and sometimes legal repercussions for those who failed to meet or defied those categorizations. For example, historian Jessica Wang notes that scientists were in fact some of the most likely individuals to fall victim to anticommunist hunts and purges severally limiting the ability of dissention in the crafting of U.S. nuclear policy. See Wang (1999). Likewise, see Rodgers (2012) and Balogh (1991).
2. See for instance historian Karen Ferguson's (2013) study on the relationship between the Ford Foundation and Black Power movement.
3. In one such memo, task force advisors sent Drew Altman questions to ask the author of a report critical of the plan. While it is unclear whether Altman used these questions, the fact that the memo's author thought Altman might be willing to ask the administration provided questions is telling of their relationship (see Pellicci, 1994).
4. Conducted from May 28, 1992, to June 10, 1992, the Times Mirror Center survey consisted of 3,517 participants, 90 of whom self-identified as "regular" C-SPAN viewers. This survey compared the opinions and beliefs of C-SPAN viewers to those who were regular viewers of CNN and PBS's *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour*, regular listeners of NPR, and "heavy readers" of daily newspapers. It was possible for respondents to be considered in more than one category. While only 90 respondents identified as C-SPAN viewers, the report's authors considered

this to be representative of the larger population, and the sample included diversity in age, education, gender, and political affiliation (Times Mirror Center of the People & the Press, 1993).

5. The Times Mirror Center authors note that this survey was conducted during a dip in confidence for Democratic candidate Bill Clinton and the peak of popularity for third-party candidate Ross Perot, whom a plurality of respondents claimed to support during the survey's parameters. They note that this may in part explain the strength of C-SPAN viewers' anti-Washington stance. However, given that C-SPAN callers expressed similar views in call-in programs as much as two years after the survey and that Republicans in Congress advanced political messages in the same vein, Perot's popularity during the survey period does not seem to be the sole explanation for this view of Washington and policy experts.
6. For another instance, see a converstation between Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK) and Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX) on the House floor (C-SPAN 1994a).

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9

BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL

C-SPAN2 and Senate Leaders' Views of Television Coverage

Douglas B. Harris

Late in February 1986, the United States Senate's debate on whether to televise its own proceedings culminated with key floor votes that paved the way for gavel-to-gavel coverage. The Senate would make that choice to televise permanent later that same year. Nearly seven years after the House had gone live on March 19, 1979, the Senate would now be televised and broadcast to the public on C-SPAN2.

This decision had the potential to change how the Senate operated institutionally, shifting the balance of legislative influence between the committee system and the Senate floor, altering the behavior of individual Senators who might play to the cameras, and tilting power between the majority and the minority parties in the chamber. Early proponents of Senate television, like Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-TN), were quick to deny that it would fundamentally alter the institution, arguing instead that it was but a "simple extension by electronic means of the public gallery" of the Senate (128 Cong. Rec. 6829, 1982). All agreed that it was a decision laden with consequence. Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd (D-WV) thought broadcast coverage was "a great step forward for the Senate as an institution" (132 Cong. Rec. 33823, 1986).

Despite the importance of Senate television, scholars know relatively little about how Senate leaders regarded television's potential impact on the institution, how they made decisions behind the scenes, and how both parties' leaders deliberated and negotiated regarding this pivotal change. Whereas some excellent analyses of the Senate's choice to televise its own proceedings exist (Fenno, 1989; Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996; Maloney 1990), this current work on Senate party leaders' roles sheds new light on this signature moment in Senate history.

Party leaders, always important in key Senate decisions, are particularly active on issues that go to the day-to-day operations of Congress and where a choice has the potential to change the nature of the institution and the lives and political careers of their colleagues. In this case, Senator Robert Byrd, as minority leader, was a key figure—what political scientists call a "policy entrepreneur"—pressing the case for Senate TV during the 99th Congress. Along with then–majority leader Bob Dole (R-KS), Byrd takes center stage in this recounting of the considerations, interparty negotiations, and eventual adoption of the resolution that brought gavel-to-gavel broadcast coverage of the Senate. Leveraging documents discovered in the archived papers of Senators Dole and Byrd, this chapter examines how the Senate's top leaders viewed television and how those views affected the behind-the-scenes search for answers and accommodations as well as the ultimate decision to go live.[1]

SENATE BROADCASTING: A PRE-HISTORY

The Senate, compared to the House of Representatives, had long had an ambivalent relationship with television. In the 1950s, for example, when both chambers still held to their traditional reluctance to allow too much press and public scrutiny, Senate committees were opening up to broadcast coverage more than was the case in the House. Seeking to guard the House from efforts to broadcast proceedings, speaker Sam Rayburn (D-TX) would cite the Senate as a cautionary tale. His protégé Richard Bolling (D-MO) said that Rayburn believed that television coverage of Senate committee hearings had "made ham actors out of ambitious Senators" (Bolling, 1965).

If individual senators were increasingly drawn to media politics, the Senate itself (institutionally speaking) was more removed and set apart. Constitutionally, the Senate's larger, statewide constituencies and its six-year terms made it less immediately beholden to the people. Characterizations of the 1950s' Senate claimed it was decidedly separate from the outside world and cordoned off. The titles of two prominent books on the Senate from that era captured this institutional isolation: political scientist Donald R. Matthews's (1960) *U.S. Senators and Their World* examined the internal folkways of the institution as if it was, in fact, a distinctive world, and journalist William S. White's (1957) *Citadel: The Story of* *the U.S. Senate* characterized the institution as a fortress, separated from society and nurturing its own internal operations in part by limiting external influences.

Noting a fundamental transformation in the Senate in ensuing decades, political scientist Nelson Polsby (1969) looked back on the Senate of that earlier era as "an encapsulated men's club" that had nevertheless turned into a "publicity machine" by the 1960s, a trend that surely continued in succeeding decades. As was the case with the House, the steady march of time was punctuated by the influx of new senators in key election years like 1958 and 1974; the consequent generational turnover yielded a growing appetite for media politics (Sinclair, 1989). Still, some senators resisted the growing allure of media politics and denied the strength of arguments in favor of transparency and "sunshine." Their long-standing concerns about Senate television went directly to the Senate's traditional role in the American political system and the likely impact that television would have on senatorial behavior.

These "traditionalists" believed that televising the Senate would change it fundamentally and for the worse. Analyzing the 1982 debate over televising the Senate as principally a debate between Howard Baker and Russell Long (D-LA), political scientist Richard Fenno (1989) characterized the arguments as representing Long's older "communitarian" view of the Senate as opposed to Baker's

Russell B. Long (D-LA), leader of the opposition to Senate television.

(and other television advocates') individualistic view of a more outward-looking Senate. Long's view harkened back to characterizations of the Senate as "a club—a men's club, of course—or a small town" where there was a key distinction between "workhorses" who were to be praised for quietly doing the Senate's work as opposed to "showhorses," those who self-servingly sought the limelight and often sought public credit for the real work done by their workhorse colleagues behind the scenes (314–315).[2] For Long, the Senate's unique qualities and traditional mores needed to be preserved.

But these older objections were giving way for three primary reasons. First, the House of Representatives' experience with television was mostly positive and valuable to its members, especially as C-SPAN's addition to cable subscriptions and viewership grew. Senate leaders were increasingly anxious to follow suit just to compete with the House's newfound prominence. C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb recounted a story of how Senator Byrd had been introduced back home in West Virginia as the now more famous speaker of the House and, more generally, how senators were "tired of seeing the House on television in their offices" (Lamb, 1986).[3] Lamb noted that the imbalance of House and Senate coverage could not only be the source of such embarrassments but it might also become a tangible threat to the careers of rank-and-file senators: "I always felt that the Senate would get a lot more interested in televising its sessions when it found some of its own members being defeated by House members" (Lamb, 1986).

Secondly, the Senate itself was changing as "the arrival of a younger generation of senators more comfortable before the camera" was growing (Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996, p. 57). As was the case with the adoption of House television, generational turnover meant that with each election cycle an increased proportion of the chamber's membership was more comfortable with television and had been socialized to its prominence in American society and in contemporary politics. C-SPAN, which was tracking senator support for the change, had identified growth over time to 62 "solid commitments" in favor of broadcast coverage. Generational displacement seems to have been pivotal in growing the vote for in the early 1980s. Comparing key votes on Senate television in 1982 and 1986 revealed that generational turnover was determinative: "This new group [in 1986] was younger, accustomed to a Congress where there was more independence from the demands of party leaders, and where their media skills played a critical role in their legislative and political interests" (Maloney, 1990, p. 71).

Understanding these first two reasons helps to frame the nature of the question that faced advocates of Senate television. Those who considered the permeability of the Senate and thought more broadly about its place in the political system as it interacted with the public, the press, and the other branches of government in the separation of powers were eager to find a way to televise the institution. By contrast, those who still considered the Senate an inward-looking "citadel" where the bulk of the work was done by "workhorses," behind-the-scenes and especially in committee, were apt to oppose broadcast coverage, which they thought disruptive of the normal workings of the chamber and detrimental to its unique role in the American system.[4] Because these competing forces were evenly matched enough that the outcome was not preordained, leadership involvement was necessary to find a path forward, to clear obstacles, and to reconcile the chamber's competing impulses and identities.

This leads to the third reason for the eventual adoption of Senate television: pivotal actions taken by Senate Democratic and Republican leaders effectively took the Senate into its new era of openness. At first, it seemed that the champion to do so would be Republican Senate leader Howard Baker, who, in becoming majority leader after the 1980 elections, made exploring Senate TV the "very first legislative proposal" he offered (Fenno, 1989, p. 320). As committed as he was to the cause, though, his advocacy of televising the Senate competed with his other aims as leader and lost out to other aspects of the agenda in 1981

Senator Howard Baker (R-TN), majority leader and advocate for television.

(Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996, p. 55). In April 1982, facing a filibuster by Senator Long, Baker and his pro-TV allies fell 13 votes short of what they would need to proceed to consideration of a television proposal. Baker similarly fell short in 1984, concluding, "It is clear to me that this is an idea whose time has not come" (Maloney, 1990, pp. 25, 29).

But Senate TV's time was fast approaching. After Baker retired from the Senate in 1984, a new champion of Senate television emerged in the person of Democratic leader Robert Byrd, who, along with Republican leader Bob Dole, helped to solidify the growing support for Senate television and clear its path for adoption. For the Senate to take the crucial, final steps toward television, leadership mattered. Byrd would be the "policy entrepreneur" who seized the opportunities for change, and, as he put it, "move this institution out of the communications dark ages and into the 20th century before we reach the 21st century" (Byrd, 1986b).

SENATE TELEVISION'S ENTREPRENEUR: MINORITY LEADER ROBERT BYRD

In his classic treatment of how a policy idea's time comes, political scientist John Kingdon argued that there is often a pivotal role played by a "policy entrepreneur." For change to occur, change opportunities must be matched to solutions, impediments must be cleared, and opponents must be persuaded, appeased, or bested. This is accomplished by individual entrepreneurs who are defined by their "willingness to invest their resources–time, energy, reputation" in order to achieve change (Kingdon, 1984, p. 122). As minority leader, Robert Byrd "became the key player in the battle over Senate television" (Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996, p. 55).

Robert Byrd was somewhat oddly cast as Senate television's entrepreneur. A consummate "inside" player, Byrd had entered the formal Senate Democratic leadership in 1967 when elected as secretary of the Democratic Caucus, and he moved up in the ranks by successfully challenging Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) to become whip in 1971. He rose again to the position of leader in 1977 upon the retirement of Mike Mansfield (D-MT) and when his chief rival, former vice president Hubert Humphrey, withdrew from the race. Observers at the time claimed that Byrd had been picked as a candidate of the Senate's "inside game" thanks in part to his having done "little favors" for colleagues and to the fact that Democrats "wanted technicians, not policy makers" as their leaders (Rosenbaum, 1977).

Comparing himself to his Senate Democratic leader predecessor, Mike Mansfield, Byrd said, "I never sought out the press. Let me put it this way, I felt that others were better on television than I was. I felt that there were other leadership responsibilities that I could do well and much better than that of making TV appearances, although I made a good many. I did it when I thought it was necessary. It was not my forte" (Baker, 1990, Part I, p. 3). At one key moment in Howard Baker's 1982 fight to televise the Senate, Byrd voted against a cloture motion that would have cleared the way for a vote to televise.[5] As a result, when it came to the showdown question of whether or not he would support televised coverage of the Senate on a permanent basis, Byrd has been characterized as a "one-time opponent" of this next step of openness (Maloney, 1990, p. 31). According to Fenno (1989), Byrd "had not perceived the desirability of such a change, had not favored it, and had to be converted" by Howard Baker (p. 320).

Baker's persuasive power notwithstanding, two additional points seem relevant to Byrd's eventual role as "entrepreneur" in favor of Senate TV. First, even if Byrd was not as "telegenic" and media-eager as many of his colleagues, he had been a consistent advocate of increased "sunshine" dating back more than a decade. As early as 1973, Byrd introduced a resolution (S. Res. 136) to "authorize the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration to study the possibility of televising and broadcasting sessions of the Senate" (119 Cong. Rec. 22539, 1973). When Senator Lee Metcalf (D-MT) introduced S. Res. 39 during the 94th Congress (1975–1976) to provide for radio and television coverage of the Senate, Byrd was one of 35 Senate co-sponsors of that measure, which was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration but was not acted upon (Byrd, 1985a). Byrd was at least open to the general early 1970s thrust toward greater congressional "sunshine."

Byrd was also an advocate of the Senate temporarily opening up to broadcast coverage for high-profile events in the 1970s. As the House experience with televising the Nixon impeachment hearings received general public approval, Byrd took to the Senate floor in July 1974 to advocate for televising the Senate trial of Nixon if the House were to impeach (120 Cong. Rec. 13654, 1974). Byrd, along with Republican senate leader Hugh Scott (R-PA), introduced a resolution to permit broadcast of Nelson Rockefeller's swearing in as vice president. And, as majority leader, Byrd introduced S. Res. 268 in September of 1977 to allow radio and television coverage of the Senate's consideration of the Panama Canal treaty, though the provision to televise was stripped out by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration; ultimately, audio portions of the debate were carried by CBS and NBC radio, while NPR carried the debate gavel-to-gavel (Byrd, 1985; Maloney, 1990, pp. 19–20).

Second, the generational changes that were adding pressure for more Senate openness were also putting pressure on Byrd's own position as leader. Senate party leaders are elected and must be responsive to the demands of their colleagues who elect them. Byrd knew this well, having ousted Ted Kennedy as whip in 1971 in part because Kennedy had been seen by his colleagues as neglectful of the role (Peabody, 1976). Fast-forward to the 1980s, and now it was Byrd who was the vulnerable incumbent. Byrd had suffered a last-minute challenge to his reelection as leader in 1984 from Senator Lawton Chiles (D-FL). Although Byrd easily beat Chiles 36–11 in the party's closed-door vote, the challenge itself was notable, and even those who had supported Byrd voiced criticisms of his leadership and a need for change, including complaints about Byrd's role as media spokesperson for the party (Cohodas & Tate, 1984). Shepherding the historic change of televising the Senate may have helped Byrd to inoculate himself from mounting frustrations among Senate Democrats regarding his performance of the leader's media role.

On the first day of the 99th Congress (1985–1986) and less than a month after the Chiles challenge, Byrd introduced Senate Resolution 28 (S. Res. 28), which would provide for radio and television broadcast of the Senate, administer a test period, and streamline several chamber rules to make the Senate more intelligible and watchable for a television audience. In addition to preparing the Senate physically for broadcast facilities and equipment and determining how to properly archive and disseminate the audio and video records of the proceedings, the resolution prohibited the political or commercial use of tapes, instituted new procedures regarding germaneness of floor amendments and to expedite cloture processes, and authorized funds necessary for accomplishing the resolution's aims. This original provision did not provide for "gavel-to-gavel" coverage but rather for "continuous coverage at such times as agreed by the Majority and Minority Leaders"; such a joint agreement between the two leaders was an effort, according to Byrd, to deal with "fairness problems" that might work to the detriment of the minority party (Senate Resolution 28, 1985; Democratic Policy Committee, 1985a).

Taking the lead, Byrd pressed the case for Senate television both inside the chamber as well as outside to the press and the public. In a March 1985 address to the Board of Directors of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, he noted that the Senate's "intricate rules" were the "greatest obstacles to permitting radio and television coverage" as he touted key rules changes that would "speed up the business of the Senate" while still "preserving the rights of the minority members" (Radio-Television News Directors Association, 1985). Wrestling with the rules obstacles required accommodating Senate traditions and existing power bastions, all the while "breaking the fourth wall" to think of how television viewers would experience Senate debates and proceedings.

Television's opponents were quick to point out that any such changes would impact the Senate's existing power structures. At issue was the effect that TV and the attendant rules changes would have on the power of each party respectively and of party leaders overall. Senator Wendell Ford (D-KY) saw in the Senate-TV proposal an opportunity to "re-examine the present balance of power" between leaders and followers in the hopes of "increas[ing] the power of the leaders" and "expedit[ing] the work of the Senate" (U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, 1985, p. 4). Byrd saw the potential impact on the parties and was looking for a middle ground between majority rule and minority rights, telling the Senate Rules Committee, "I think we have a responsibility as Senators to protect the minority, and as a former Majority Leader, I well understand that. But we've also got to protect the Senate against the tyranny of a minority" (U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, 1985, p. 41).

There would be effects on the committee system as well, as Russell Long and other Senate "traditionalists" pointed out. They anticipated that senators would gravitate more to the floor, thus neglecting their committee responsibilities. Such shifts would not only impact the power of the Senate's committee chairs but it could also negatively impact the quality of committee deliberations. In response, Byrd proposed to the Senate Rules Committee to have the Senate "in session Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and committee hearings would be scheduled at times or on days that the Senate was not in session." Seeking a middle ground, Byrd offered his view that "the Senate can maintain its traditions while also meeting the realities of our times. We can change without violating the unique role of the Senate" (Byrd, 1985b).

Byrd was developing the position that the Senate's role in the separation of powers and in the public view needed preserving, too. He repeatedly argued that the Senate needed television because "we can't hold our own with the White House, and we can't hold our own with the other body if they have TV and we don't" (quoted in Roberts, 1985). Reinforcing these broad institutional aims was the fact that minority party Democrats were feeling the pressure of Reagan's media acumen as well as the need to project their own messages from the disadvantageous role of the minority. Looking back, Byrd said, "We couldn't get a message across, especially being in the minority. We didn't control the committees; consequently, we had no fora in which to project our view" (Baker, 1990, Part I, p. 8). Such pressure was as much due to inter-chamber politics as it was to White House media efforts. Byrd cited the House of Representatives' use of C-SPAN in "more successfully molding public sentiment than the Senate" as "the most influential factor in laying the groundwork for televising the Senate" (Byrd, 1985a). In the hopes of maintaining the Senate's overall role in the separation of powers, Byrd warned, "The Senate must find a workable way to televise its proceedings if it is to remain a 'visible policy-making part of our national government'" (Byrd, 1985d).

When the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration returned to the subject of television in September of 1985, Byrd's proposals, along with those of Senator William Armstrong (R-CO), received consideration. The committee met with an air of inevitability that the Senate would eventually televise and with agreement between the competing proposals about most major questions. Generally following the regulations that the House had adopted in 1979, Armstrong and Byrd agreed: the Senate rather than broadcasters would control the cameras; camera shots would focus on the speaker rather than panning the chamber; there would be an interim test period of television's technical aspects and political effects; and commercial and electoral-political use of the tapes would be prohibited (Blakely, 1985). They differed in that Armstrong called for gavel-to-gavel coverage, a larger appropriation than Byrd did ($3.5 million to $2.5 million), and minimal rules changes. Byrd, by contrast, called for majority and minority leader agreement to televise and significant rules changes outlined above related to committees, majority-minority party balance, and streamlining the debate and legislative processes (Blakely, 1985; Byrd, 1985d). Comparing his proposal for televising the Senate to Armstrong's proposal, Byrd staff noted that the "major difference . . . comes in the area of how to protect the rights of the minority" (Saffold, 1985).

In late October, the Senate Rules Committee reported out approving the move to televise. Byrd's office issued a press release touting the decision as "an overwhelming endorsement," though the committee, in fact, seemed to agree with Armstrong more opting for gavel-to-gavel coverage and to delay the consideration of rules changes. Claiming victory and shifting his stance, Byrd was now in favor of gavel-to-gavel coverage and would turn his attention to inter-party negotiations with Majority Leader Dole to make another attempt at adjusting

Senate rules and working to prepare the Senate to look better on TV (Byrd, 1985e; Democratic Policy Committee, 1985d).

As Byrd planned for the 2nd session of the 99th Congress (1986), it was clear that televising the Senate was among his top leadership initiatives. Staffer Abby Saffold advised Byrd that he "should have at least two objectives during the coming session. The first is to ensure that S. Res. 28 is scheduled early in the session as Senator Dole committed on the floor. The second is to maintain your leadership in this area." Far more than a mere "to do" list, the objectives required strategic effort and work to get the Republican leadership on board, to constructively engage opponents to Senate television, and to marshal allies. Noting that Dole was at best ambivalent, Saffold pressed Byrd to "to continue to press Senator Dole publicly for floor time for S. Res. 28"; citing senators Russell Long and William Proxmire (D-WI) as key potential opponents, she advised, "You will need to lay some groundwork with your colleagues"; and knowing that the Rules Committee would be a key venue and that Republican votes would be necessary (both to keep Dole on board and for final passage), she observed that rules chairman Senator Mac Mathias (R-MD) should be enlisted to shore up Republican support (Saffold, 1986a).

In but a few short years, Byrd had moved from a position of skepticism and ambivalence to being the central player—the policy entrepreneur—in preparing the chamber for television. More than just a personal conviction, it seems, too, to have been a good way to shore up his position as leader with a Senate Democratic Party that was eager to compete more in the media politics of the era. Byrd wanted not only to lead the effort but, tellingly, to be *seen by his colleagues as having led it*, given that they had voiced their desires for more media-oriented, public leadership from Byrd as minority leader. Byrd aimed to deliver.

LEADERSHIP CLEARS THE PATH

Byrd's entrepreneurship on behalf of moving the Senate toward television involved clearing remaining obstacles by enlisting the support or acquiescence of Majority Leader Bob Dole, ameliorating the effects of opposition by Russell Long and other Senate traditionalists, and countering the argument, made by Long and other opponents, that television would fundamentally change the Senate for the worse.

Senators Dole and Byrd, the two Senate leaders on the first day of televised proceedings.

The key action shifted to inter-party negotiations between Byrd and Dole. These discussions repeatedly touched on the following puzzles: (1) *institutional considerations*—how to make television logistically possible in order to promote the Senate to the public and relative to the other branches in the separation of powers; (2) *process concerns*—how to make existing Senate processes palatable and intelligible to a television audience; and (3) *partisan differences*—how to accomplish both of the foregoing without unduly altering the partisan balance of power, particularly in regard to the preservation of minority rights.

Logistics and the Technical Aspects of Senate TV

A first-level set of issues for advocates of Senate television to address was how to ensure that broadcasts could be accomplished professionally and in a way that allowed senators and the Senate to be perceived favorably by the public. As late as February 24, 1986, key technical details remained to be hammered out. The architect of the Capitol set forth several problems, including the inability to "find a supplier who can deliver a proper [camera and remote control] system" in time for the interim test as well as considerations regarding proper "lighting modifications" and "the establishment of a temporary control room." Failure to address these issues, the architect warned, would produce "deficiencies" that could lead to "unjust criticisms" of the overall proposal to televise (White, 1986).[6]

Inter-Party Leadership Negotiations

Majority Leader Bob Dole had a general interest in broader media and public opinion politics (especially given his presidential ambitions). Dole was a frequent figure on Sunday television talk programs, his press staff was particularly active in promoting Dole to the Washington media, and he even had a "daily radio 'debate' show with Ted Kennedy" (Dole, 1985). Still, he was uncertain about institutionalizing television in the Senate. A key sign of this ambivalence was the fact that Dole cast the only "no" vote in the September 29, 1985, Rules Committee vote to push toward broadcast coverage.[7] Dole's support, or at least his acquiescence, still had to be won.

Coupled with his ambition to bring television to the Senate, Robert Byrd also wanted to establish an appropriate balance of majority rule and minority rights in Senate debate. Whereas the Rules Committee's passed version of Byrd's resolution had taken out the rules changes that he proposed, Byrd nevertheless pressed for their inclusion in his subsequent negotiations with Dole.[8] On January 14, 1986, leadership staffer Abby Saffold (1986a) noted that "how to guarantee fair treatment of the minority by the majority" was a strategic aim and had generally "been one of the most difficult stumbling blocks to achieving televised coverage of the Senate." To build the case for fairer treatment of the minority, the Democratic leadership sent Democratic Policy Committee staff on research quests to compile information about state legislative experience with televised coverage as well as that of legislatures in "the major industrialized democracies around the globe." In one notable follow-up on the research, Byrd staff sought information on how those state legislatures that televise proceedings "deal with the general question of fairness to the minority and the specific question of filibusters" (Bunton 1986a, 1986b).

With the majority's power at stake, Dole's staff was monitoring developments closely. In a memo to the majority leader, top Dole staffer Sheila Burke characterized the bill reported out of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration as "a modified version of Senator Byrd's original resolution"—the modifications being the absence of rules changes—and that it had the support of both senators William Armstrong (R-CO) and Al Gore (D-TN), so the coalition was bipartisan and relatively broad (Burke, 1986a). With the rules' questions still up in the air, internal documents indicate that negotiations between the two leadership offices were ongoing behind the scenes. Burke told Dole in mid-February that Byrd was considering a set of rules changes that Dole had suggested but that Byrd was "unhappy" with Dole's suggestion that the TV coverage not be gavel-to-gavel but instead that it would only commence with a non-debatable motion.[9] (As a counterproposal, Burke recommended that Dole seek "additional coverage of the press briefing" that occurs before each session [Burke, 1986b].) Though generally cooperative, each side was seeking concessions from the other.

The very next day Saffold wrote a memo to Byrd that cited the fact that "a number of [Dole's] proposals are almost identical to several that you have proposed" but warned that "a number of them seem to me to go too far in the direction of streamlining Senate procedures at the expense of the Minority" (Saffold, 1986b). First, she noted Dole's proposal to televise a day's Senate proceedings pursuant to a non-debatable motion provided only for "consultation" with the minority leader but not for joint agreement between both leaders. A second objection noted that the minority leader also wanted "more of a say" in the decision regarding when the interim test of Senate TV would occur. Finally, she also highlighted a subtle (but consequential) difference in regard to Byrd's proposals to streamline filibusters and invoke cloture, and regarding what it would take to overturn rulings of the chair on questions of germaneness. If the first two differences went to the role that the minority leader himself would play, the last went to how far the Senate would go to preserve the rights of minority party members to slow or to alter legislation on the Senate floor.

Just days after these negotiations, a deal had been struck. Byrd and Dole, along with senators Ted Stevens (R-AK) and Wendell Ford (D-KY), joined in an agreement to propose a set of rules changes and to recombine the rules questions with the Senate's broadcast decision, streamlining some of the cumbersome processes that the Senate used regarding its motion to proceed, the requirements for cloture (on rules changes and on other matters) and settling the germaneness question, eliminating the practice of considering treaties in the Committee of the Whole, and addressing other matters to speed up the Senate so as to make it more watchable and intelligible to a viewing public. In addition, they determined that the rules changes made specifically for television "would only become permanent after the test period upon adoption of a further resolution" and only if television was made permanent. The rules were specifically changed for the purposes of television and would be eliminated without that central change (Republican Policy Committee, 1986a).

Through his intensive negotiations with Dole, Byrd had successfully reconnected the question of rules changes and broadcast coverage and had taken yet another big step toward his ultimate goal. In addition to addressing the questions of party balance and minority rights, the rules changes were also touted as a means of allowing the Senate to avoid seeming "anachronistic" and "foolish" to a TV audience. As Byrd put it, television was the occasion for the Senate to "clean up our act" ("Stay Tuned for the Senate," 1986).

Preparing the Senators and Appeasing Opponents

Securing Dole's acquiescence and protecting the minority party's interests were necessary but not sufficient tasks to push Senate television across the finish line. If generational change and changing Senate attitudes toward media politics had done a lot of the work for Democratic and Republican advocates of Senate television, there was still a need for the leaders to shore up support and to grow the coalition.

Both parties' leadership apparatuses had been laying the groundwork to tout the potential advantages of C-SPAN2 coverage to individual senators' media aspirations and constituent outreach. Working to help colleagues understand the opportunities that cable television afforded the Senate, the Democratic Policy Committee distributed copies of articles to Democratic press secretaries that could "tell you just about everything you could or would want to know in dealing with cable" (Democratic Policy Committee, 1985b). Later in the year, they encouraged Democratic senators to consider holding cable television town halls in their respective states (Democratic Policy Committee, 1985c). Both the Republican Policy Committee and the Republican Conference were providing informational documents to colleagues, making Republican press secretaries aware of the availability of recorded audio for the production of radio actualities for outreach to their constituents, and providing media training for senators, including instructing senators on matters such as whether or not to look in the cameras and what color shirts and ties to wear (Republican Policy Committee, 1986b; Ritchie, 1993; Vastine, 1986).

Some, especially older senators, were unpersuaded and still could offer formidable obstacles to Senate TV if they made use of the filibuster or other delay mechanisms. As was the case with Howard Baker's failed bids to bring television to the Senate in 1982 and 1984, Senator Russell Long led the opposition. Long had argued during the 1982 debate that "every senator is going to change his pattern of conduct if the Senate is on television" (Fenno, 1989, p. 324). More specifically, he predicted more and longer speeches as senators played to the cameras, effectively turning the Senate floor into a television show starring pandering politicians. He also predicted more floor amendments, a shifting of Senate action from committees to the floor, and increased incentives to limit debate and preclude filibusters that would ultimately harm the character of the Senate and the rights of individual senators (Fenno, 1989, p. 324–328; Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996, pp. 58–59).

Seeking to mitigate this opposition, Byrd personally appealed to Long and subsequently claimed to have persuaded him with an argument about the inevitability of television and the future of the Senate and with a promise to hold floor votes on individual rules changes. This persuasion did not win Long's vote but it did diminish his opposition and may have kept him from resorting to filibuster or other methods to frustrate Byrd's quest (Frantzich & Sullivan, 1996, p. 58; Fenno, 1989, p. 339).

When amending and floor votes commenced in late February 1986, Majority Leader Bob Dole suggested, "We want to take as much time as we can" (quoted in Fenno, 1989, p. 340). Still, after the debate on February 26, Dole seemed to quickly tire of the subject and was eager to get beyond debate to a final vote. With Dole's patience growing thin (he said on the Senate floor, "We have been dragging this bone around long enough"), the Senate turned to voting on amendments the next day, disposing of efforts to limit television broadcast. When Senator David Boren (D-OK) offered two surprise last-minute amendments, Byrd intervened once again, agreeing to one of the amendments that called for a "cooling-off period" at the conclusion of the interim test period that would allow for two weeks before a vote on whether to make Senate TV permanent. Byrd reluctantly agreed to the cooling-off period as a compromise to avoid further delay.[10]

On February 27, the Senate agreed 67–21 to the test period and to televise its proceedings gavel-to-gavel bundled with several other rules changes to accelerate time schedules to preclude unnecessary delays in order to make Senate proceedings more watchable.[11]

THE INTERIM TEST AND THE CHOICE TO MAKE SENATE TV PERMANENT

The interim televised testing period began where the Senate would scrutinize TV's impacts on the chamber. If Long and other opponents stood a chance to stop broadcast coverage, it was in demonstrating that television had changed Senate debate and performance for the worse. Thus, it was up to Byrd and other advocates of Senate television to demonstrate that it could be made to work well and that its benefits outweighed whatever associated costs there were.

Byrd pressed the case in public, appearing, for example, on *The Today Show* twice in early June to debate Senator Bennett Johnston (D-LA) on the value of televising Senate proceedings. Interested in the outcome and anticipating the vote to make television permanent, C-SPAN offered encouragement. C-SPAN's staff wrote to Senate press secretaries touting its already substantial audience and claiming that "if the Senate votes in July to continue televising its proceedings, C-SPAN2 will continue to grow—just as our original channel did—adding subscriber households and additional programming as time goes on, eventually taking it to a 24 hour-a-day channel." Smartly attending to the needs of senators, C-SPAN staff also alerted press secretaries to the value of monitoring C-SPAN via the Capitol's internal cable system, as well as how to connect broadcast journalists to C-SPAN clips for broader exposure in news stories (C-SPAN Public Relations Staff, 1986).

Technical and Aesthetic Improvements

Inside the chamber, Senate leaders made careful use of the interim test of televised coverage and Dole's staff compiled "comments from a number of Senators" making recommendations to Senator Mac Mathias's (R-MD) committee prior to making TV permanent (Burke & Coe, 1986). Mathias had recommended a "monitoring committee" appointed by the leadership to "serve as a clearinghouse and a sounding board for Members' comments, criticisms, and suggestions," reporting to each of the leaders regularly throughout the test period (Stevens & Ford, 1986).

There were early indications that the Senate appeared "too busy" inside the camera frame with a lot of distractions for the television viewer and other potentially embarrassing behavior captured. There were concerns, for example, that the Senate's presiding officer would not know that he or she was on camera; Byrd specifically warned that "occupants of the Chair should . . . refrain from signing mail or reading newspapers, etc.," and instead "the Chair's full attention should be directed to the floor at all times" (Byrd, 1986a).[12] There was concern, too, that too many staff members were "in the frame" busily attending to their duties but distracting from the main stars—the senators—potentially confusing and frustrating the audience at home.

Byrd and Dole worked to address these and other problems. Writing to Rules chairman Charles "Mac" Mathias (R-MD), Dole wrote that "camera angles are

Senator John Glenn (D-OH) hamming it up on the first day of television.

bad" and "camera crews should be instructed to 'tighten up' shots of Senators, so that, to the extent possible, the picture does not include staff or other individuals in the background" (Dole, 1986c). Byrd wanted to "caution Senators that background conversations often are picked up by an open microphone" and added that "staffs of Senators should be as quiet as possible (but not so much that they fall asleep, as did one such individual who showed up on camera)" (Byrd, 1986a). Dole asked Mathias to review Senate Rules for existing provisions that might decrease the number of staff members on camera (including "specifically to restrict movement of staff near or behind speaking Senators"). In addressing initial audio problems that seemed dissatisfying to most observers, he asked, too, that lavaliere microphones be developed for senators Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and Paula Hawkins (R-FL), the two women senators, who at first had to carry microphones as the audio setup relied on microphones made to attach to men's suits (Dole, 1986c).

In addition to these practical considerations, aesthetics were considered, too, as Senate leaders wished to make the appearance of the chamber more pleasing to the public and more flattering to senators. Democrats and Republicans were agreed that the Senate's existing color schemes were unflattering. Dole noted to Mathias that attention was needed to the "color of paint on the walls," "the color of the drape behind the Presiding Officer," and the carpet. Whereas there were questions about what to do when the Senate's audio cut out for quorum calls, including the playing of classical music during those interludes, Byrd approved, noting that it "reflects good taste and is very appropriate" (Dole, 1986c; Byrd, 1986a).

Even as they worked to address these issues, the overall assessment was that the Senate experimental period was a success. They would continue to troubleshoot problems, including seeking to obtain more and better camera equipment, improving the overall audio quality, and sprucing up. But most agreed with the sentiment the Senate sergeant at arms expressed when he wrote to Dole that, "from a technical standpoint, the televising of the Senate has been quite successful. So far, the test period has proven that the U.S. Senate can produce in a professional, non-partisan manner a radio and television signal of network quality" (Garcia, 1986).

Assessing the Impact on Senate Behavior and Debate

The heart of the opposition to Senate television had always centered on how it would change the Senate's normal operations and the behavior and rights of individual senators. Ultimately, Russell Long's long-standing objections to adopting broadcast coverage could gain steam if the interim test confirmed fears that senators would "ham it up" and that the unique character of the Senate was imperiled.

The Senate leadership not only established an informal working group of key senators to monitor the experience with TV and report back to the leaders, but it also commissioned a study by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) that analyzed Senate floor and other behaviors that compared the period of the interim test to analogous time periods in 1982 and 1984, respectively.

There were signs that television was changing some aspects of the Senate—members were seeking the spotlight and changing their behavior to do so. The CRS report noted increases in morning business and a nearly 250% increase in the unconstrained special orders floor time, both of which were attributable to "more use by Senators of non-germane speaking opportunities," which they noted was "potentially related to television coverage." During floor debate, points of order nearly quadrupled and session time increased about 15% (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, 1, 17–24).[13] Having gathered comments from Senate colleagues, the leadership's monitoring committee reported a widespread recognition of the increased requests for special order time as a result of television and the use of visual aids ("charts, graphs, and other 'props'") by senators while speaking (Dole, 1986c).

Undoubtedly critics would point to these changes as having negative effects on the deliberative quality of the Senate and the seriousness of its debates. Another potential impact on deliberation was the fact that, as was the case in the House, television would make it more likely that senators and staff would stay in their offices, monitoring the floor from afar. Byrd himself recognized that televising the Senate was likely to affect Senate staff and member behavior in this regard, with spillover effects in the House. He wrote:

> I suspect that the most avid viewers might well be scattered throughout the Capitol complex. They are watching in the Russell Building, the Dirksen Building, and the Hart Building. They are watching in the Madison Building and the Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress. And, Mr. President, I have even heard of some curious viewers tuning in from the Cannon, Longworth, and Rayburn Buildings. Senators no longer need to walk onto the floor "cold." They have been viewing from their offices. Staff no longer need to rely on cloakroom tapes as they brief their bosses leaving committee hearings to come to the floor. They have been watching from their desks. (Byrd, 1987a)

To the extent that this may have been a convenience to those who work on Capitol Hill, the decreased opportunities for contact between members limits the ability of colleagues to develop important relationships conducive to comity and to informal discussion of policy. Too few observers of Congress appreciate the potential long-term costs of such decreased interactions between members (Harris, 2000).

If these were real concerns and changes that had potentially long-term consequences for the Senate, the overall takeaway from the CRS report and the leadership's monitoring committee was, as Al Gore (D-TN) put it when sending the report to Majority Leader Dole, "television coverage has changed the patterns of Senate floor activity very little."[14] Whereas Long had claimed that floor activity would increase and amendments would skyrocket, CRS found that, in fact, "the number of amendments offered during the test period declined by nearly ten percent from the 1984 level."[15] Neither were there differences in cloture petition filings and only a slight increase in debate time (though the latter was not attributed by researchers to television alone) (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, pp. 15–16).[16]

Through bipartisan agreement of the leaders' monitoring group and the nonpartisan analysis of CRS, the consensus that emerged was that, if there were impacts on debate and behavior, they were minimal and not what opponents to Senate TV had predicted. Not only did opponents' objections prove insufficient to offset the institutional and public education arguments for Senate TV but some were actually making the case that TV had, in fact, improved debate. The increased use of visuals and props notwithstanding, proponents claimed that, thanks to television, senators took to the floor more prepared and with more tightly organized thoughts than before (a prediction that Howard Baker had made in 1982). Looking back, Byrd agreed. On the floor in October 1986 he said, "The debates are, I think, much better debates than they have been heretofore. Speeches of the Senators generally are more probative and more substantive."[17] And, overall, he wrote, "Television has improved the substance of Senate debate" (Byrd, 1985).

So convinced were proponents of Senate TV's success that a move was afoot to abbreviate the "cooling off" period that had been required by David Boren's last-minute amendments in February. Rather than lose momentum, Byrd and Dole were agreed that the Senate should continue televising proceedings rather than go dark for the two weeks between July 15 and July 29; Byrd wrote to Dole, "It is my belief that the Senate will be better served by keeping the cameras on during the period from the close of business on July 15 and the July 29 vote on the question of making television coverage of Senate proceedings permanent" (Byrd, 1986d).

For his part, Dole made two key statements in support of continuity rather than cooling off, both of which emphasized the public audience the Senate had been building. In a statement with the title "Don't Pull the Plug!," Senator Dole said, "We may not be number one in the Nielsen ratings, but at least we're now only a dial away for millions of viewers. We have had our share of glitches, dead air, and more than a little showboating, so there is still room for improvement. Let's hope the novelty of television is wearing off for all of us." A second statement noted that "consistency is key," and Dole claimed that the Senate had "tentatively staked-out a place on the crowded dials of American television and radios," noting, "We should stay there" rather than "squander the tremendous strides Senate television has taken in a few short weeks" (Dole, 1986a, 1986b).

On July 29, 1986, the Senate voted 78–21 to make broadcast coverage and its associated rules changes permanent. Gratified at the victory, Senator Robert Byrd, who had steered the change through its many obstacles and impediments, called the decision both "long overdue" and "just in time": "I am sure we will be able to cite television in the Senate as one of the reasons why 1986 proves the year in which the Senate began to streamline its proceedings and began to clean up its act for the cameras. It has made some progress; there is some way to go" (Byrd, 1986e).

CONCLUSIONS

Party leaders matter. To be sure, the adoption of broadcast coverage of Senate proceedings reflected the impact of significant generational turnover and a growing support for a newer vision of a transforming Senate institution from a "citadel" to a more public arena for debate, legislation, and public education. But it is clear, too, that leadership, organization, and persuasion were required to get Senate television over the finish line. Had it succeeded a few years earlier, the story of Senate television might have been a story about how Howard Baker led the charge, cleared the obstacles, and made the final, persuasive case in favor of broadcast coverage. But that was not to be.

The star of the final push to televise the Senate was Minority Leader Robert Byrd, an erstwhile "insider" who became a sunshine champion. He introduced key resolutions, enlisted the support of an ambivalent Majority Leader Bob Dole and cleared the opposition of Russell Long and others, developed convincing protections for minority rights and other rules changes, and promoted the final arguments and evidence that the benefits of Senate television outweighed its minimal costs—the arguments that won the day. The next year, Byrd received an award from the National Association of Broadcasters for his "leadership in opening the United States Senate to coverage by radio and television" (Byrd, 1987b).

An expert on Senate history, Robert Byrd was proud of this historic achievement. In 1987 he said, "With our one year's perspective on televising the Senate now completed, I firmly believe that we can look back with genuine and wholehearted satisfaction at how admirably television has been incorporated into the legislative life of the Senate" (Byrd, 1987a). And, when asked by Senate historian Richard Baker to reflect on his legacy—his "achievements in the Senate" that he was "proudest of" and he'd "like to be remembered by," Byrd cited Senate television as one of but a few lasting achievements he could conjure:

> I'm proud of the part I played in bringing television and radio coverage to the Senate floor debates. I can't think of anything else in particular. I'm proud of

> the overall record that was established by the Senate in the 100th Congress. I'm proud of the input that I had in influencing the outcome of the Panama Canal debates. I don't think of anything else. (Baker, 1990, Part II, pp. 1–2)

The year 2021 marks the 35th anniversary of Senate television, at which point about 15% of U.S. Senate history will have been televised. The Senate's choice to televise its own proceedings is now appropriately viewed as a pivotal moment in the history of the institution. As Byrd put it in October 1986, the first session of the 99th Congress was "an era in which the Senate caught up with the 20th century and prepared itself to move into the 21st century" (132 Cong. Rec. 33823, 1986).

NOTES

1. The papers consulted herein are the Robert C. Byrd Congressional Papers Collection, Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, Shepherd University, and the Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Robert and Elizabeth Dole Archive and Special Collections, Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections Research Fellowship and, especially, Audrey Coleman and Sarah D'Antonio Gard at the Dole papers. Thanks, too, to Jody Brumage and James Wyatt at the Byrd Center for their assistance.
2. This and other changes in the Senate are captured in Sinclair (1989).
3. Tip O'Neill had become well-known publicly in the early Reagan years, taking significant steps toward a more public speakership (Harris, 1998).
4. In his analysis of the debates that took hold in early 1982 (echoed again in 1985) between Howard Baker and Russell Long on this question, Fenno (1989, p. 320) framed the question as between an interinstitutional perspective and an intra-institutional one, the former "centered on the place of the Senate in the larger system of government" and the latter "centered on the internal organization and the decision-making processes of the Senate."
5. Byrd had voted against cloture in 1984, effectively killing broadcast coverage due, he said, to the "vagueness of the proposal," particularly in regard to how it would impact the internal operations of the Senate (Byrd, 1985c).
6. As the audio and video recordings would become official records of the Senate,

considerations included, too, how the sergeant at arms and the secretary of the Senate's offices would have to adapt, including transferring audio- and videotapes to the National Archives (Coe, 1986).

7. This is Maloney's (1990) summative judgment; similarly, Fenno (1989) wrote: "Dole has never been an enthusiastic supporter" and "he left the strategizing to Byrd" (p. 338). On the Rules Committee vote, Dole still gave voice to supporting the overall endeavor; "Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole—who said he supported Byrd's resolution but strongly opposed the change to provide for immediate radio broadcasts—cast the only vote against the measure" (Byrd, 1985e).
8. Fenno (1989) believed that he did so because he perceived a strategic advantage in his efforts to change the rules if pursued sooner rather than later (p. 339).
9. Byrd had previously advocated that instead of gavel-to-gavel coverage, broadcast should commence only on the mutual agreement of the majority and minority leaders, but he had abandoned that in favor of the gavel-to-gavel approach that Armstrong and others advocated (and that mirrored the House's practice). What Dole had proposed was a non-debatable motion that would afford the majority more influence by subjecting the motion to a vote.
10. For a detailed account of this, see Maloney (1990, pp. 36–40).
11. The Congressional Research Service summarized the rules changes as follows: "In the end, the Senate authorized only five procedural changes when it adopted S. Res. 28. Most notably, S. Res. 28 reduced the debate time permitted in the post-cloture period from 100 hours to 30 hours. Other rules changes provided for in S. Res. 28 included (2) a reduction in the required time that committee reports be available to Senators before floor consideration is in order, from 3 days to 2 days; (3) the elimination of the Committee of the Whole procedure for the consideration of treaties in executive session; (4) a requirement that copies of conference reports be available on each Senator's desk before floor consideration is in order; and (5) the establishment of a non-debatable motion to waive the reading of the Journal" (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, p. 5). See too (Byrd, 1986c).
12. To avoid the embarrassment of the presiding officer relying too much on others for advice, one of the Democratic group's recommendations was to "install an audio link between the Parliamentarian and the Presiding Officer."
13. In response, a rules change had decreased special order speeches from 15 minutes to 5 minutes to minimize the legislative time sacrificed to such unconstrained floor time (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, p. 26).
14. Gore did highlight some of the aforementioned changes, writing that the CRS

"found only one category, special orders, whose increase could be attributed to television" (Gore, 1986).

15. Both 1984 and 1986 represented a shift upward from 1982 amending levels, but those changes *in both years* meant that "factors other than television coverage were influential" (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, p. 14).
16. Reviewing commentary by senators, CRS found "three major areas: (1) concern over the visual appearance of senators and the Senate chamber, which dominated most of the commentary; (2) opinions about the effect of television coverage on the style and substance of Senate debate; and (3) the need or lack thereof for procedural changes to accommodate live television" (Rundquist & Nickels, 1986, p. 29).
17. *Congressional Record—Senate* October 18, 1986. Byrd reiterated his belief that television actually improved debate in "Bringing the U.S. Senate Into Your Living Room."

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10

EXAMINING ECONOMIC REALITY AND MEDIA SPECTACLE AT TRUMP CAMPAIGN RALLIES

Timothy Betts

Campaign rallies became as central to the Trump administration as they were during the 2016 election. For candidate Trump, campaign rallies became a space of lamentation and celebration wherein boisterous crowds cheered and booed his own peculiar vision of economic reality. As Trump painted it, the United States of America was both an economy on the brink of collapse, ravaged by foreign tricksters and incompetent governance, *and* a bastion of economic stability and growth. At these rallies, and in Trump's performances, these two disparate visions of economic reality coexisted. This contradiction, however odd, lies at the heart of the spectacle that undergirds Trump's message of restorative conservatism. And although the methods and values behind Trump's politics have been destructive to many ends, the message of "making America great again" echoes a call to resilience. Social scientists across a variety of disciplines and fields have examined the cultivation or construction of resilience in order to provide insight into the creation of a new normal in response to disruption (Buzzanell, 2010, 2019; Koenig Kellas, 2010, 2018; Pals & McAdams, 2005); however, in the case of Trump, the meaning of resilience, the aims of change, and even the very nature of the disruption he rails against have been contested and negotiated as a political tool and a media spectacle.

After Trump's election, researchers explained the results by examining his appeals to economic dissatisfaction and rampant mistrust of establishment politics (Cozzolino, 2018). However, this study seeks to break new ground by analyzing how Trump built on these attitudes to construct a spectacle of resilient reform. In so doing, this study unites two bodies of theory: organizational spectacle (Boje, 2017) and communicative resilience (Buzzanell, 2010, 2019). Debord (1967/1995) conceived of spectacle as a mediated tool of control that thrives on the abundance and prosperity of economic systems. He argued that media simultaneously fragments an individual's understanding of reality and concentrates it into a unified, monolithic whole. Best and Kellner (2001) further expanded upon the concept of spectacle with the notion of megaspectacle, which transforms the individual from passive viewer to active participant in the construction of spectacular logic. In the world of organizational communication, Boje (2017) adapted these ideas to explain how spectacular logic unfolds and manifests organizations through storytelling practices. It is through this lens of organizational communication that this study will examine how Trump's campaign rallies served to organize an understanding of economic reality.

This study will analyze how Trump's performances at three campaign rallies across three years worked to construct a spectacle of resilience that simultaneously characterized the American economy as booming and busting, on the edge of disaster and the dawn of a new age. These three rallies, in Youngstown, Ohio, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and Montoursville, Pennsylvania, each provide unique insight regarding how Trump's rallies wove a story of economic disaster and renewal. This spectacle of economic resilience has been crucial to the ethos of the Trump administration and, as he works toward reelection, underscores both the power of these appeals and the troubling assumptions upon which they are built. This study will uncover how logics of nationalism and resilience intersect to construct Trump's, and by extension his base's, understanding of economic reality through disruption, struggle, and resilience. Further, this examination will also explore how the notion of economic abundance (or lack thereof) interacts with the postmodern concept of spectacle (Best & Kellner, 2001; Debord, 1967/1995). Finally, by employing Buzzanell's (2010, 2019) communication theory of resilience, this study will also explore how Trump's campaign rallies construct a sense of disruption and urge a return to normalcy. To do so, I turn to Boje's (2001) antenarrative framework for analysis of organizational narrative to explore how, in constructing the spectacle of economic reality and resilience, Trump embeds narrative logics into the very assumptions that ground economic reality for his audience. First, I will review the literature surrounding organizational narrative, the concept of spectacle, and communicative resilience. Then, I will discuss the contexts of the three rallies examined in this analysis and the methods of that analysis. Finally, I will explore three of the narrative logics embedded in these rallies and discuss their theoretical and practical implications.

ORGANIZING NARRATIVES AND ECONOMIES

Economies are not just market systems and institutions working toward certain ends; they are not just governmental bodies and banks attempting to keep people working and financial systems running. Like governments and universities and organizations, economies are socially constructed ideas; individuals speak economies into existence, unlike material objects, and communicatively construct them to organize how people understand the world around them. Concepts such as markets allow people to make sense of the complex ways that individuals interact with money, goods, services, and other economic entities such as banks, companies, and, especially, governments.

Organizational communication scholars have recently turned to the theory of communicative constitution of organization (for an overview, see Bisel, 2010) to explain the nature of the relationship between communicative and organizational processes. Though there are a variety of disagreements among the various perspectives and theorists, the central thrust of the argument is that organizations exist only insofar as people communicate them into existence. Even earlier, Weick (1995) and Boje (1995) described the processes of organization as retrospective sensemaking; instead of thinking of extant organizations, these theorists urged an active, processual conception of organizing. For example, the organization Disney does not *exist* except insofar as it is a story that people tell to make sense of how millions of people flock to a former swampland to pay hundreds of dollars to wait in line for hours, purchase branded merchandise, and wear hats with circles attached on either side of their heads (Boje, 1995).

Researchers can think of economy in the same way. Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Shiller (2019) recently described the influence of narratives on economic outcomes using a model of epidemiological spread. Although his work largely deals with how specific narratives affect economic outcomes by influencing psychological factors and shaping individual heuristics, this initial exploration of the interaction between narrative and economics is a primer for the importance of exploring the economy *as* narratives. Just as Kahneman and Tversky (1984) and Harvey (1998, 2006) have described the influence of framing and psychological heuristics on the actions of economic agents, economists are beginning to examine how communicative phenomena, and especially narrative, not only pass explanatory muster but also provide key insight into the erratic and sometimes nonsensical (to economists, at least) world of contemporary economic phenomena.

But researchers like Shiller do not go far enough. Statistical analyses using epidemiological (or other) models that demonstrate *that* certain stories impact economic outcomes in certain ways are useful, but they do not give researchers insight into *how* people organize the economic world around them in the same way that they organize the social world. Boje (1995) examined Disney as a case study of organizational storytelling wherein the interplay of various voices and discourses competed in a cacophonous dynamic to dominate the "official" narrative of Disney. Much like Fisher's (1984, 1989) narrative paradigm and Czarniawska's (1998, 2004) work on organization and narrative, Boje's (1995) exploration of Disney conceived of the social phenomenon of organization as a complex narrative emergence, constantly overlapping and interweaving. More recently, Boje (2017) and other postmodern theorists have begun to examine the organization of social reality through sociomaterial (Leonardi, 2013) and other lenses that invite researchers to seek complexity rather than simplify and to examine the construction of competing social realities as a process steeped in power and oppression. In other words, communication is not just a process that occurs within an economy; it is the lifeblood through which visions of economic reality are constructed. Communication, narratives, and discourses create the intersubjective realities in which we live, manifest our material realities in certain ways, and embed logics of power, inequity, and disenfranchisement into the very foundations of our social fabrics.

Just as these theories have been powerful tools for examining the construction of social realities in the meso-level context of firms, they can be powerful tools for researchers to examine other, macro-level phenomena which, to this point, they have dismissed or passed off as a grander discursive context in which organization or business occurs. Economies and the very notion of economic "reality" itself is a contested and social space that is organized in the news media, political discourse, and everyday interactions of those who buy, sell, and use goods and services—or those who choose not to (read: everyone). Economists have conceived of numerical measures such as the gross domestic product, the consumer price index, and interest rates to provide a quantification of how "the economy" is fairing; however, as these numbers become encased in political discourse and negotiation, their reality is not in the number but in the interpretation and contestation of whether or not the number is good, bad, or indifferent; cause for concern or cause for celebration; a call to reform or a call to tighten the belt.

For Trump, and he is not alone in this, these numbers can represent all of the above and none of the above, as they become mere plot points in narratives of economic spectacle and resilience and restoration. In this way, not only is the construction of and organization of economic reality a matter of narrative struggle, but it is also a spectacle in and of itself. Philosophers such as Debord (1967/1995) and Best and Kellner (2001) have examined the concept of spectacle as a force that both fragments individual understanding into contradictory sentiments and unifies it under the guise of commodified, monolithic narrative. This next section will explore the narrative dynamics of spectacle as it relates to the construction of economic reality before presenting its application in the present examination of Trump rallies and a spectacle of resilience.

SPECTACULAR ECONOMICS

Debord (1967/1995) theorized of spectacle as a force that simultaneously fragmented individuals' experiences and fused them into a monolithic, spectacular, single understanding of a thing. Spectacle is necessarily tied to the economy. For Debord, spectacle served as an outgrowth of the abundance in economies from which everything became commodified into an image, a spectacle of itself, whereby the very process of consumption related more to the ingest of media and messages and services rather than of material things. Spectacle disguises the misery of the masses by totalizing the abundance of economies and the images of property as a disguise for the poverty endemic both to the time and to capitalism itself. Material things became less the focus of consumption than the image of consumption itself.

Postmodern theorists Best and Kellner (2001) took the concept even further to examine how media in the postmodern era create a participatory megaspectacle where individuals are no longer simply spectators of the spectacle. Instead, individuals are both spectators and participants in the construction of the megaspectacle. Media, both mass and social, create a feeling of inclusivity and participation that transforms the position of those witnessing the spectacle into those who create the spectacle. Take for example the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests, which began as local protests and demonstrations and became a megaspectacle encompassing not only business ties related to funding the protestor (or anti-protestor) causes but also every individual tied to the consumption of products from those businesses. Apple, Nike, and the NBA all became embroiled in spectacle and, by association, so did those who consume their products. In the megaspectacle, the very concept of activism itself becomes commodified and made into spectacle and drives further consumption. In this way, the megaspectacle is cyclic, feeding off itself, to drive its participatory logic forward and further drive its own consumption. Researchers have built on the concept of megaspectacle to examine the O. J. Simpson trials (Kellner, 2002), Enron (Boje et al., 2004), media representations of poverty and wealth (Kendall, 2011), and various other topics.

Boje (2017) describes the influence of megaspectacle as a constitutive logic of organizing, whereby as individuals construct narratives to make sense of the world around them, the megaspectacle of capitalism itself transforms every witness into an actor on stage recreating the spectacle itself. Thinking of organizing as narrative, Boje (2001) urged researchers to think of the dynamics of sensemaking between lived experience (as story) and retrospective framing (as narrative). In the in-between, the fragmented pieces of narrative that both guide individuals' interpretation of story and cement the recollected narrative are theorized as antenarrative. Playing on the prefix *ante-*, meaning before, and the poker term *ante*, a prospective bet before players deal the cards, antenarrative refers to the way that fragmented narrative elements emerge in the discursive process of transforming lived experience into narrative, and in that process of organization, spectacle serves as a foundational logic. If organization is the play acted out on stage, spectacle is the proscenium that shapes how the performance is conducted (Boje, 2017). This theoretical frame examines the process of organizing as it is constituted in and shaped by narrative at all levels.

Thinking toward the organization of economic reality, then, we can conceive of how spectacle shapes the way that individuals both organize and make sense of economic conditions. The processual construction of economic reality, as a social and communicative phenomenon, is one defined by macro-Discourses and micro-discourse, large-scale messages and spectacles that interact with the everyday lived experience of people. This is why the influence of Trump's campaign rallies is worthy of examination in this study: as Trump both calls upon individuals in his rallies to meditate on their own experiences with economic disenfranchisement and frames a discussion of his self-defined economic achievements, he constructs a megaspectacle of economic reality. By both fragmenting what is fundamentally real in the economy and totalizing individuals' experience, Trump manifests spectacle logic to frame economic conditions for his audience and, perhaps more importantly, to manifest a vision of a new, "great" normal.

COMMUNICATING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Though it contrasts with the positive connotation of the concept, the notion of "making America great again" is a call toward resilience; it is a communicative call to return to a new, old era. It is a call toward a new normal. As Trump outlined his vision for a new economic reality, he was, in a way, calling upon the discourse of resilience. Buzzanell (2010, 2018, 2019) argued for a fundamentally communicative understanding of resilience and expounded upon the communication theory of resilience as a way of understanding how individuals craft new normals in the aftermath of disruption. From a narrative perspective, Pals and McAdams (2004) and Koenig Kellas (2010, 2018) have discussed the importance of finding coherence in narrative as a way of reinforcing positive outcomes as individuals reconstruct normalcy.

The critical question, then, is one that asks which normal individuals should communicatively manifest, and more directly, how does the manifestation of that new reality embed assumptions of power and privilege into the foundations of the new normal? Clair's (1993) work on narratives of sexual harassment demonstrates how these narrative logics become insinuated in the logic of organizing and begin to shape the ways that individuals make sense of themselves, their position, and the organization as a whole. These logics, in turn, shape the way that individuals come to terms with and create new normals in the face of disruptive events and difficult circumstances (Clair & Kunkel, 1998). More recent work on resilience has highlighted how resilience can serve as a positive force to help individuals overcome difficult times, life circumstances such as relational issues (Afifi et al., 2019), and chronic health problems (Hintz, 2019), among other such disruptions. However, as Hintz (2019) described, resilience processes can reinscribe problematic norms and oppressive discourses. Further, other researchers have described how resilience processes function within men's rights and incel groups (Eddington, 2020). In this way, resilience theorizing offers researchers a way to examine both the positive and oppressive influences that shape resilience processes.

This current exploration of resilience as a macro-discursive phenomenon will go beyond these interpersonal treatments of resilience and toward an understanding of resilience on a macro level as leaders, officials, and politicians attempt to create coherence and spectacular incoherence in their crafting of new normals. And, in the context of the Trump rallies under examination in this study, the call toward resilience implied in the spectacular nature of Trump performances and campaign rhetoric necessitates a deeper investigation into how megaspectacle shapes logic and narrative construction of a resilient economic reality. Thus, this study seeks to answer

RQ: How does Trump use campaign rallies to construct a spectacle of economic resilience?

RUST BELT COMMUNITIES AND TRUMP RALLIES

The wave of populist fervor that was a driving factor behind Trump's ascendancy to the presidency in 2016 has been attributed to a variety of factors, locales, campaign strategies, and so forth. However, consistent among the analyses of the 2016 presidential election was the sense of surprise and shock regarding Hillary Clinton's loss of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, three Rust Belt states that had previously been considered part of an impenetrable "blue wall" (Sabato, 2017). Explanations for these specific losses have been expansive and contentious. Economists such as Knoedler (2019) argued that Trump successfully spoke to the conditions of economic anxiety surrounding the expansive inequalities of income and economic means in the United States, fomenting a culture of discontent. This conclusion is supported by analyses by Manning (2016) and Neumann (2016), who examined the ruin and remaking of the Rust Belt as deindustrialization and economic change reshaped the artistic, physical, economic, and political landscape of the entire area. Further, the economic deterioration of these communities due to the expansion of trade agreements and the weakening of trade union protections enabled the Trump campaign to capitalize on this discontentment and offer up his candidacy as a rejection of the neoliberal policies that had, in the populace's eyes, ravaged their communities (Baranes, 2018; Knoedler, 2019).

To examine this research question, I turned to the C-SPAN Video Library's remarkable collection of presidential records and Trump campaign rally footage. Encompassing footage of Trump's various rallies since his inauguration in 2017, the Video Library offers an important glimpse at how Trump constructs his vision of economic reality and sells that pitch to his audience. For the purposes of this analysis, I examined footage and transcripts of three Trump rallies. Of the 21 Trump rallies featuring economic themes (as designated in the C-SPAN Video Library), the three rallies in this study most clearly represent the struggles of the postindustrial Rust Belt communities that were so significant and decisive in the 2016 election. First, on July 25, 2017, Trump visited Youngstown, Ohio, as the battle over the 2018 midterm elections was beginning to evolve. Introduced by the first lady, Melania Trump, and featuring a former Democratic voter turned Trump supporter, Geno DeFabio, Trump used the rally to speak about work to repeal the Affordable Care Act in the Senate, questions of collusion, and the overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The second rally examined in this analysis, on August 2, 2018, came right before the midterm elections. In Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, this time, Trump discussed his ongoing efforts to build a wall on the border with Mexico, the continued question of collusion with Russia, and "the biggest tax cuts in the history of our country" as part of an effort to elect Lou Barletta as senator for Pennsylvania (an effort that was ultimately futile). Finally, after the midterm elections, on May 20, 2019, Trump held a rally in Montoursville, Pennsylvania, in front of *Air Force One* on the tarmac of a regional airport.

All three events attracted large crowds and featured subjects salient to the questions of political discontent and postindustrial struggle, and as illustrated in Table 10.1, each locale experienced similar economic situations during the three years of the Trump administration represented by these rallies. In this way, these rallies epitomize Trump's economic appeal to the Rust Belt and his continued efforts to draw on them as a source of support and warrant for his policies and vision of economic reality in the United States. Analysis of these particular rallies also offers a glimpse into the evolution of Trump's appeals over time, ranging from soon after his inauguration, to the time right before the midterm election, and as his administration faced the prospect of an impending general election and possible impeachment proceedings.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the complex narrative dynamics within Trump's construction of economic reality in these rallies, I turned to Boje's (2001) narrative method of deconstruction. Deconstruction analysis builds from the work of Derrida (1967/1995),

TABLE 10.1 *Unemployment Data for Rally Cities*

	2017		*2018*		*2019*	
City	Rate (rank)	Δ % (rank)	Rate (rank)	Δ % (rank)	Rate (rank)	Δ % (rank)
Youngstown, OH	6.7 (368)	0.2 (377)	5.7 (363)	−1.0 (10)	5.7 (368)	0.0 (278)
Wilkes-Barre, PA	5.5 (318)	−0.5 (197)	5.0 (328)	−0.5 (144)	5.4 (351)	0.4 (379)
Montoursville, PA	5.6 (331)	−1.0 (41)	4.7 (301)	−0.9 (20)	4.8 (323)	0.1 (321)

Note: Rate refers to the unemployment rate for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b) designated statistical area for each city as a percentage of the labor force. Rank reflects the placement of the representative statistical area for each city relative to the 389 total statistical areas represented in the bureau's data. Percentage change is calculated relative to the year prior, such that the entries here represent percentage change between 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019. Montoursville, PA, resides in the Williamsport, PA, metropolitan statistical area. Bolded entries reflect the year that Trump visited the cities for the rallies analyzed in this study.

who described deconstruction as an ongoing process where meaning and interpretation are constantly shifting and changing. He argued that where meaning is polysemous and mercurial, there are logocentrisms—constructed logics—that guide the interpretation of the text toward particular ends. Unlike other methods of analysis, however, Boje's (2001) application of deconstruction analysis focuses on incoherence in data, examining instances where power and artificial binaries can be turned on their heads and resituated to better understand the process of organizing economic reality. Deconstruction analysis, therefore, focuses researchers' attention on the process of deconstruction that occurs within texts rather than having them act as the agents of deconstruction. By focusing on the interplay between moments of incoherence and coherence, analyzing deconstruction allows researchers to grasp the antenarrative processes of meaning-making that actively occur when reading or viewing a text.

For this study, the analysis occurred in three phases. Initially, I conducted close readings of the C-SPAN closed-captioning transcripts of the selected rallies. During these readings, I made notes of initial impressions and of moments of incoherence in the text. In these running notes, I paid particular attention to both where and how Trump's economic message merged explicitly and implicitly in the messages. After these readings of the transcripts, I took my notes to the video footage of the rallies and used clean transcripts to record further impressions. During this phase of analysis, I looked to both the contextual meaning of Trump's language and the interaction with the audience and their responses to his messages. Following both phases, I conducted a final reading of both sets of transcripts to note comparisons and contradictions in my impressions of the rallies. During this final reading, I coded the transcripts for evidence of emergent logics and deconstruction (Rosile et al., 2013). The following section will explore how these logics and this deconstruction emerged in the three rallies.

RESULTS

Examining the deconstruction evident in these three campaign rallies offers insight into three foundational logics that undergird Trump's spectacular presentation of economic reality and resilience. This section will describe and critique three logical dynamics that emerged in the rallies as oppositional binaries: betrayal/revival, folly/strength, and deconstruction/transcendence. By examining these three dynamics that emerged from the narrative logic in the rallies, this section will examine how these dynamics construct the notion of economic reality and the implied concept of a resilient economic future.

Betrayal/Revival: Constructing Disruption

> The workers of Scranton and Bethlehem and Allentown and Wilkes-Barre are the backbone of American might. . . . But the loyalty of our workers was repaid with betrayal. You were betrayed by our politicians. You were betrayed by the people that ran our country. You are not betrayed anymore. (C-SPAN, 2018)

SCAN ME

For Trump, the disruption of economic normality that warrants his call to a new normal, ostensible in his "make America great again" slogan, is not the result of natural economic phenomena or the transition of the economy toward services rather than material goods. For Trump, there was no neutrality in the businesses that chose to walk away from American manufacturing; there is only contempt for those who betrayed the American people and, by extension, the political leaders who, in Trump's eyes, simply let it happen. However, thanks to Trump, American manufacturing has finally experienced that promised revival that he claimed during the 2016 election. He remarked at Wilkes-Barre in 2018 that "manufacturing is dead, they said. 400,000 incredible jobs, and you've heard this, but I'm going to say it over and over because I'm really part of it" (C-SPAN, 2018). Here, at the Wilkes-Barre rally, as he did before and later at other rallies, Trump captured the dynamic of betrayal and revival that simultaneously casts economic reality in the Rust Belt as a subject of severe devastation and betrayal and as finally receiving the economic recovery it has long needed. In this way, he constructed a spectacle where the Rust Belt is simultaneously experiencing vast economic disruption and finally restored to greatness.

The logic of betrayal/revival enforces a separation between political opponent and loyal American that both fragments the reality of political division in the nation and unifies a nationalized view of economic reality and resilience for authentic, loyal citizens. Trump told his audience as much when he remarked, at Youngstown, that people have "reclaimed [their] destiny and defended [their] dignity and [taken] back [their] country" (C-SPAN, 2017). Not only does this logic construct an ownership of the economy, it nationalizes that economy—not by creating universal ownership of the means of production but, rather, by linking the very concept of economy to an image of nationalist pride. Trump further noted that "as we defend jobs we're also defending our borders" from both countries that seek to mistreat us *and* from the political maladroits who sought to undermine the country's international standing. This idea, however, creates a tension between an economic reality that warrants the need to restore American greatness and one where that greatness has already been restored. In one world, Trump's political authority is derived from the promise of reform but undermined by a lack of success; in the other, the successful restoration undercuts the sense of betrayal and economic disenfranchisement that fuels Trump's political ethos.

This spectacular tension came to a head as Trump meditated on changing his campaign slogan from "Make America Great Again" to "Keep America Great." Noting that "in theory we've made America Great Again" already, or "we certainly will have by the time of the next election," in this moment, Trump confronted the first spectacular, temporal tension that characterizes this view of economic reality. Simultaneously, his campaign was dependent on credibly resolving economic disparities for those he claimed have been forgotten *and* on deriving authority from righteous indignation at a system that has forgotten people. For Trump, failing to bring back factory work would undermine his credibility as a reformer; successfully resolving these underlying inequities would rob him of the rhetorical power of mutual victimhood, a victimhood from which he draws a sense of mutual admiration from his supporters, who have been left behind by an uneven economic recovery, and a sense of personal strength that he exploits.

Folly/Strength: Constructing Struggle

"So, we're going to start enriching our country. We're going to start bringing back our jobs, and we will be fools no longer, folks. We'll be fools no longer" (C-SPAN, 2017). For Rust Belt communities, such as Youngstown, the promise of returned manufacturing jobs and end to trade deals that, in their eyes, had moved jobs overseas, brought a roar from the crowd. Following the above promise to no longer submit to the previous American folly regarding trade deals, Trump questioned the audience:

> Every single president on Mount Rushmore—now here's what I do. I'd ask whether or not you think I will some day be on Mount Rushmore, but here's the problem. If I did it joking, totally joking, having fun, the fake news media will say, he believes he should be on Mount Rushmore. (C-SPAN, 2017)

SCAN ME

Further chants of "USA!" and "Build the wall!" echoed around the auditorium as Trump continued on from his tangent. He decried the folly of past American administrations and calls for a return to strength—one embodied both by a renewed investment in the United States military and Trump's personal image as the strong and wise leader, a leader who belongs alongside some of the greatest architects and reformers in U.S. history. These dynamics at the Youngtown rally in July of 2018 exemplify the second logic that emerged in Trump rallies: that of previous folly and personal strength. By linking himself to figures such as Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Roosevelt, Trump not only provided his audience a call to nationalist pride, he portrayed himself as among those who have imprinted themselves on history in indelible ink. This is just one way that Trump pivoted to his personal strength as a leader and his ability to "save" the country as a way of portraying the struggle of resilience as one of personal victimization against economic hardship brought on by the folly of his predecessors.

Describing the economic woes facing the United States, Trump largely relied upon either the ubiquitous "they," referring to a combination of bureaucrats, congresspersons, political opponents, and journalists, or the scapegoats of previous administrations to cast aspersions and place the blame for people's current predicaments. Both targets became responsible for the betrayal Trump described as the cause of economic downturn in the nation, especially in the Rust Belt. As he said during his 2018 Montoursville rally, "What they have done to us is indescribable economically. We have rebuilt China. They have done a great job. I don't blame China. . . . Our leaders allowed that to happen. Well it's not happening anymore. I ran and we have saved America" (C-SPAN, 2019). By building upon dissatisfaction with the economic status quo, Trump casts himself as the source of revival, resilience, restoration, compared to those who seek to tear the nation down.

Although the construction of us versus them dynamics, reliance on the separation and division of political ideologies, is not a new political strategy, Trump manifested such division in relation to the betrayal that he claimed to have resolved. In one rally, he claimed that "we don't apologize anymore. We are standing up for the heroes who defend America. . . . With every promise we keep, every record we break, and every factory we opened, we are restoring American strength, and we are restoring American pride" (C-SPAN, 2018). Here, Trump cast himself as one of many in the lot of individuals affected by downturns in manufacturing, but even as he described himself as one of the many forgotten by the recovery, he claims to have resolved the very economic problems that created the division in the first place:

> Past leaders let China freely plunder the US economy and take the crown jewels of American industry. Now we are finally responding to years of chronic trade abuses by defending our workers with tariffs and anything else that's necessary. Because nobody's going to steal our businesses, nobody's going to close our factories, and nobody's going to close our plants anymore. They are all coming back. (C-SPAN, 2018)

SCAN ME

Thus, even as Trump divided the nation into the haves and have-nots and associated himself with those who have seen their economy "plundered" by "the ideology of globalism," he constructed a populist image of himself in direct opposition to the wealthy, privileged position he simultaneously used as a warrant for his own relevance and capacity to remake the nation.

Finally, the logic of folly and strength reinforced the idea that not only were Trump's political opponents separate from those loyal supporters, but they were also active combatants against American interests. Describing the theory that the Obama administration spied on the Trump campaign's interactions with Russia, Trump stated that the action should "have been called treason . . . that's what it is. It was treason and should never be allowed to happen to another president again, ever, ever, ever" (C-SPAN, 2019). In this way, however, Trump constructs a view of economic resilience as an oppositional battle against outside enemies—namely, his political opponents. And although the economy itself is tied to images of national pride and identity, those who did not share the same view of economic change were among the sick and evil opponents of Trump, his followers, and the very idea of America that must be defeated in order to realize the revival of the American economy that Trump promised. In so doing, Trump builds up a persona of strength that allows him to take on the mantle of economic and personal resilience.

Destruction/Transcendence: Constructing Resilience

SCAN ME

> You have some socialist wackos that want to double and triple your taxes. They want to knock down all buildings in Manhattan and rebuild them without windows. I used to love the view but now we will be forced to close the window. (C-SPAN, 2019)

The above quotation, from Trump's Montoursville, Pennsylvania, rally, cements the choice facing those who are at his rally and the country at large: the destruction of the "American way" or the Trump way. The logic of destruction and transcendence that Trump embedded in his view of economic reality emerged as a spectacle of "new normal" constructed in opposition to the very vivid destruction of American promise that he described in his rallies.

Trump creates this spectacle image of a transcendent American future by contrasting a vague image of the future with details of the drastic, destructive tendencies of his political opponents. Eschewing the former calls of other presidents toward a thousand points of light and unity in the face of the division of red states and blue states, Trump simply constructed an image of American resilience as an avoidance of the radicalism of his Democratic opponents. This occurred at his rallies multiple times as quick topic changes associated Democratic politicians with the most violent of stories and gruesome of images.

In doing this, Trump also constructed a vision of contemporary reality steeped in scarcity. As he described his policies regarding immigration, Trump referred to housing policy for low-income Americans, stating that he wanted to protect those resources for loyal citizens. He noted:

> Democrats' policies that would have left our borders overrun; our detention facilities overwhelmed as fast as we build them, they fill up. And our hospitals, schools, and public resources overburdened. And our country is full and we do not want people coming up here. Our country is full. We want Mexico to stop. We want all of them to stop. Our country is packed to the gills and we don't want them coming up. (C-SPAN, 2019)

SCAN ME

In this way, not only did Trump position the allocation of social safety net resources as a matter of nationalism, he also characterized these resources as scarce, while failing to note that this scarcity could be removed by a simple investment of federal funds into housing protection and assistance programs. Instead, Trump moved on to describe the killing of American soldiers by militant forces in the Middle East, whom he described as "radical Islamic terrorists." Immediately afterward, he described his political opponents in the same words. Much like the ISIS militants he claimed to have beaten back from destroying the United States, he claims that his political opponents are "the party of high taxes, high crime, open borders, late-term abortions, killing your second amendment, and radical socialism. The Republican party is the party that America wants" (C-SPAN, 2019).

By describing his opponents in these terms, he conflates political opposition with the destruction of American values and beliefs. This leaves the audience to understand their political choices as one of survival: either they/Trump succeed/s or they face the end of their way of life. In the end, as Trump puts it:

> You've always been loyal to the nation and you finally have a president who is loyal to you. It's taken a long time. Your dreams are my dreams, your hopes are my hopes, and your future is what I'm fighting for each and every day. I'm fighting. I had such an easy life. People say I had such an easy life. Who in the hell knew it was going to be this difficult, but I love it. You know why I love it. Even though we had artificial obstacles put in our way . . . and even though we have people who hate Trump and hate you. Angry Democrats all after you . . . they are going crazy . . . we are going to keep on winning. (C-SPAN, 2019)

SCAN ME

The only hope that his audience has is in him; there is only a choice between radical destruction of the American way and a transcendence to a final victory.

DISCUSSION

This study has explored how Donald Trump's campaign rallies construct a spectacular vision of economic resilience through the examination of three specific campaign rallies. From the results presented it is clear that, in the context of these rallies, Trump creates a spectacle of resilience by constructing a vision of economic disaster that is simultaneously an ongoing crisis and an already resolved challenge. Further, by constructing a spectacle of unification and hope, Trump projects an air of confidence in the economic future of the country that is based in an artificial notion of scarcity. The results of this analysis prompt two theoretical implications.

Spectacular Temporality and Organizing Macro-Discursive Resilience

As Trump attempted to manifest a sense of economic resilience through these campaign rallies, one of the most interesting things that emerges is the concept of time. Simultaneously, the rallies construct this sense of disruption, in terms of the economic conditions that the audience is facing and has faced. Buzzanell (2010) described the process of resilience as one of finding your way back to a new normal, but as Trump invoked resilience on the macro-discursive scale, the conflation of past and present disruption changes the nature of resilience and roots what could be a positive, forward-looking message into a negative, damning message that rejects the past as a means of crafting a vision of the new normal. Largely, Trump during these rallies described the future as both the present escape from economic ruin and as a future possibility of escape from the same economic ruin.

As originally theorized, and as it is used in the literature, the concept of resilience seems to be a positive, forward-looking force. However, more recent work from Buzzanell (2018, 2019) reinforces that we should be looking at both the positive and dark sides of resilience. Trump's consistent and clear meditations on the perceived destruction the American way, at the hands of foolish or traitorous politicians, reinforces this negative sense of resilience. Much like the incels in Eddington's (2020) work, in these campaign rallies, Trump crafted a view of the future as a vague opposition to the destruction and havoc that would be wrought on the United States should his political opponents win.

Together, the spectacular temporality and the vague spectacle of normal that Trump constructed during these rallies speaks to a sense of spectacular resilience.

As researchers begin to expand the context of resilience research from micro organizing contexts and interpersonal relationships toward macro-discursive organization of phenomena like the economy, it is important to reflect on the mechanisms that shape the notion of resilience on a large scale. Narrative researchers like Pals and McAdams (2004) and Koenig Kellas (2010, 2018) have, for a long time, examined the role of narrative coherence and the identification of a specific new normal as a step in the process of resilient reintegration; at the macro organizational level it appears that, questions of health or ethicality aside, constructing an incoherent view of the future in contrast to a hyper-realistic, destructive present manifests an altogether different and darker view of what it means for a population to be resilient.

Narrative Spectacle and the Economy

As stated above, there is no such thing as the economy; it is a fickle, social understanding that we construct through macro- and micro-discourse, in everyday action and negotiation. Even as economists work to deal with difficulties of predicting (and thereafter managing) human behavior toward positive economic ends, the voices in this study may offer insight into the fragmentation of economic experience for many in the United States, unified under a banner of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Conceiving of economic reality in this way, as an individual act of interpretation of a socially constructed reality, can offer researchers a new way to examine both how individuals experience economic and material conditions of their lives and how, on the macro level, people, companies, and governments attempt to organize and construct new economic realities.

As Trump constructed a spectacular representation of economic reality in these campaign rallies, he embedded certain logics into the narrative construction of what is fundamentally real for individuals facing the simultaneously devastated and revived economy that he described. For example, as he narrated the possibility of American revival as an opposition to the betrayal, the treasonous behavior, of his political enemies, he constructed the possibility of economic prosperity as oppositional not only to his political opponents but to the very concept of government itself. These logics, embedded in the construct of the spectacle, construct a powerful mythos of victimization, individualization, and opposition to the powers of government. As Trump narrated it, the possibility of economic revival can only come from a strong, powerful leader unwilling to bend to the needs of any but "true," authentic Americans. This nationalist image of economic reality, as discussed above, not only creates an isolationist logic to economic prosperity but also reinforces the concept that economic growth and the possibility of a resilient, prosperous future is a zero-sum game where one person, party, country must lose in order for another to gain.

These logics of nationalism and isolationism are more insidious than they seem at first glance because they construct a logic of economics that ties itself to a view of economic growth that cares more for competition than cooperation, a free market that resembles more of a Hobbesian nightmare than a contemporary economy. As discourses embed these logics into the very ways that individuals construct a sense of what is fundamentally real in both the aggregate macroeconomy and in their personal microeconomic reality, communication and other researchers should turn to further qualitative inquiry of economic discourse to uncover the construction of these logics. By excavating these economic logics in situ, we can hope to organize and create a changed view, not of an economy ravaged but of a hopeful, different kind of economic reality.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study has explored the different logics that emerged from three Trump campaign rallies in the Rust Belt states that were key to his 2016 election victory. These three rallies offer insight into the spectacular nature of both macro-discourses of resilience and narrative economics. Future researchers should continue to explore both the notion of spectacular resilience and narrative economic spectacles as they emerge in the talk of government officials, in the C-SPAN Video Library, and in other areas. This analysis is limited to the most epideictic of government settings; as much as Trump's campaign rallies are important to his candidacy and to his style of governing, they are also only a small piece of the administration itself. Researchers can continue to explore the construction of economic logics in governmental actions, deliberations, and communiques on many different levels.

Further, this study can serve as a means of reconceptualizing what it means to analyze economic phenomena for both economists and communication scholars. Examining the power of economic narratives to organize and construct economic reality is only one of many ways that communication scholars, organizational scholars, and economists can come together in new and exciting ways to examine the phenomena that interest them. Economic reality is not a fixed, inevitable reality of the human condition; Adam Smith's invisible hand is a human construction of human systems. Exploring the communicative and social dynamics that manifest those conditions, though, can get us closer to understanding and crafting a better, resilient economic future.

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11

DONALD TRUMP'S CRUCIBLE

Analyzing the C-SPAN Video Archive of Wisconsin Trump Rallies

David A. Frank

The C-SPAN Video Library hosts most of the 187 Trump Make America Great Again (MAGA) rallies held during the 2015–2016 Republican primary, 137 during the 2016 general election rallies, and the 166 rallies conducted during the Trump presidency ("List of Post-2016," 2021; "List of Rallies," 2021). Donald Trump participated in 490 rallies during this period, with the first taking place in Manchester, New Hampshire, on June 17, 2015, and the last on January 6, 2021. This invaluable archive of Trump rallies serves as a crucial repository of American history and American public address, offering scholars, students, and citizens the opportunity to study the rise of the MAGA movement and Donald Trump's rhetoric.

I use the C-SPAN video archives of Trump rallies as a source of both scholarship and instruction. Most of the C-SPAN videos offer high-quality video and audio of the rallies. Most are accompanied with transcripts. The C-SPAN Video Library offers significant materials for the study of the Trump rallies, including the structure of the rallies, the playlist of songs that greet and bid farewell to his audience, Trump's vocal cadence and physical gestures, the themes he presents and rehearses, and Trump's audience and its responses, without commentary. I have embarked on a research project featuring the 21 rallies Trump has held in Wisconsin, including the ten 2016 Republican primary rallies, the five 2015 General Election rallies, and the six rallies since his election to the presidency (see Appendix A to this chapter).

The C-SPAN Archives also offers instructors an unmatched pedagogical resource. I create assignments for my students, who enroll in my upper-division rhetoric classes, to write research reports on the Trump rallies and teach them how to use the C-SPAN Video Library to secure their evidence. They write cogent essays, providing sharp and detailed analysis of Trump's rally rhetoric (see Appendix B to this chapter). I offer extended illustrations of one student study in this chapter.

My study of Trump rallies suggests that the MAGA movement and Trump are the consequences of hyperglobalization, economic insecurity, cultural anxieties, and a latent racism that can be activated. Trump, however, is more than a consequence—he is the prime mover in galvanizing and giving creative voice to those who voted for him during the 2016 Republican primary and the 2016 general election, and who supported him in the 2020 election cycle. His rhetorical signature, the blending of a speaker's reasoning and speaking style, is intentionally improvisational, which allows him to innovate and craft novel expressions of his ideology and that of his political base, often through call and response during his rallies. Indeed, Trump rallies are the cauldrons of rhetorical invention for him and his audience.

Ed Pilkington, in a recent article in *The Guardian*, noted that "there is no understanding Donald Trump without understanding his rallies. They are the crucible of the Trump revolution, the laboratory where he turns his alternative reality into a potion to be sold to his followers. It is at his rallies that his radical reimagining of the U.S. Constitution takes shape: not 'We the people,' but 'We my people'" (Pilkington, 2018, para. 2). Careful study of the rhetoric fueling Trump rallies helps explain how and why Trump's rhetorical potions work. The C-SPAN Video Library provides a digital exhibition of these rallies.

I seek in this chapter to set forth a research approach that scholars, students, and citizens can use to study the Trump rallies in the C-SPAN Video Library. To accomplish this aspiration, I identify the four modes of inquiry—observational, survey, observer participant, and rhetorical criticism—that help explain the discourse of the Trump rally. To illustrate this research approach, I offer studies of 3 of the 21 Trump rallies the MAGA movement held in the state of Wisconsin between 2016 and 2020 that are hosted in the C-SPAN Video Library (see Appendix A to this chapter). Wisconsin was a key battleground state in 2016 and is "ground zero for 2020 politics" (Gabriel, 2019). I offer a rhetorical analysis of the Trump rally held in Janesville during Republican primaries on March 29, 2016, a second study conducted by my students of the August 5, 2016, Trump rally in Green Bay that took place during the general election campaign, and a Trump rally I attended in person during the Trump presidency on January 14, 2019. I focus on the rallies and their rhetorical form. I conclude with reflections on the meaning of Trump rallies, the need for study of Trump rallies with multiple modes of inquiry, and the role the C-SPAN Video Library might play in the effort to better understand the MAGA movement and Trump.

I. RESEARCHING TRUMP RALLIES

Scholars who study the rise of right-wing populism, the MAGA movement, and Trump's rhetoric do so with four overlapping modes of inquiry: observational studies, survey research, participant observation, and rhetorical criticism. Observational research makes use of industrial and manufacturing patterns and worker-firm data, and it measures "so-called hard and objective economic interests of communities or individuals and their changes over time" to explain the rise of MAGA and Trump (Naoi, 2020, p. 334; Rodrik, 2020). This mode of inquiry foregrounds "hard" data but cannot fully explain how they are framed and understood with symbols. Survey research seeks out the values, identity, and attitudes of those who find MAGA and Trump persuasive. As a mode of inquiry, it captures noneconomic causes of behavior and often dismisses economic interests as significant explanations of Trump's success (Naoi, 2020, p. 334). This focus underestimates the influence of structural and economic influences on cognitions and behaviors. Participant observation studies place scholars in the space and with the people enacting rallies (Erichsen et al., 2020). They identify how rallies unfold and provide communion. These studies pay some heed to other modes of inquiry but limit their analysis to rally performances. Rhetorical studies seek to describe, interpret, and evaluate the symbols that Trump and his base use to represent, activate, develop, and innovate to implement values, identity, and policy (Hart, 2020). This mode of inquiry tends to bracket the tweet, television interview, Facebook message, and speech as prime movers of behavior. Those who use rhetorical research methods typically dismiss economic explanations of Trump's success. These four modes of inquiry can offer conflicting results, although each offers unique insights.

Unfortunately, scholars tend to choose one mode to the exclusion of others and then explain the MAGA movement and Trump with the received wisdom of their respective fields. As a result, scholars using observational methods reduce the MAGA movement and Trump to economic variables. Scholars deploying survey data argue that Trump's activation of underlying racist attitudes and beliefs explains his success. And scholars using participant observation and rhetorical analysis set forth studies demonstrating how the rituals of the rally and Trump's command of the symbol persuade audiences. Similarly, many book-length treatments of Trump are inspired by anger and disgust with their subject, which clouds the visions of their authors.

Carlos Lozada read 150 books in the "Trump canon" and found that

> too many books of the Trump era are more knee-jerk than incisive, more posing than probing, more righteous than right, more fixated on calling out the daily transgressions of the man in the Oval Office—*this is not normal!*—than on assessing their impact. They are illuminating in part because they reflect some of the same blind spots, resentments, and failures of imagination that gave us the Trump presidency itself, and that are likely to outlast it. Individually, these books try to show a way forward. Collectively, they reveal how we're stuck. (Lozada, 2020, p. 2)

Yet even Lozada's judgment, as he acknowledges, is, in his words, "oddly nostalgic" as it relies "solely on words that are printed and bound" (Lozada, 2020, p. 6). He then claims that "books remain the first draft of how we think about that history, how we seek our place in it" (p. 6). American history, he concludes, "defines itself in writing" (Politics and Prose, 2020).

While books may codify the first draft of history, the C-SPAN Video Library of Trump rallies demonstrates that it is the spoken word, not those that are printed and bound, that energized the Trump movement. "I don't have notes," Trump explained to *Washington Post* reporters seeking how he communicates at rallies. "I don't have Teleprompters. That's not like most of these guys. To stand up for an hour and 15 minutes, they're reading it. It's easier to do that but you lose all of the emotion. You won't get people going" (Costa & Rucker, 2015, para. 31). Trump's success can be traced to his command of public address during his rallies. Steve Bannon argues that Trump is the greatest "public speaker in those large arenas since William Jennings Bryan." As Bannon observes, "the mainstream media or opposition party never caught [on] . . . if you want to see the Trump agenda it's very simple. *It is all in the speeches. He went around to these rallies, but those speeches had a tremendous amount of content in them*" (Blake, 2017, italics added). Kenneth Burke, in his seminal study of Hitler's rhetoric, underscored the importance of the spoken word in the mobilization of the disaffected (Burke, 1974, pp. 191–220). To be clear, "Trump is not Hitler and Trumpism is not Nazism," writes Christopher Browning, the dean of Holocaust studies, but there are still, he concludes, some "troubling similarities" (Browning, 2018 para. 1).

Hitler, Burke observed, provided a cure for German economic and cultural traumas. He dispensed his medicine during two- to three-hour mass meetings scheduled intentionally during the evenings. Here, Hitler used "power of the spectacle" to reconstruct and celebrate German identity. As Burke explains, Hitler found that "mass meetings are the fundamental way of giving the individual the sense of being protectively surrounded by a movement, the sense of community" (Burke, 1974, p. 217). The medicine itself was Hitler's oratory. Hitler, Burke noted, held that "revolutions are made solely by the power of the spoken word"—and his spoken words at the mass meetings achieved a "spontaneous identification between leader and people" (p. 216). These words were, according to Burke, both sincere and contrived; his "sinister powers of persuasion derive from the fact that he spontaneously evolved his 'cure-all' to the 'inner necessities' of his audience" (p. 211). Following Burke, we should begin with Trump's spoken words at MAGA rallies, not with written texts, to understand his appeal.

The C-SPAN Video Library archive of MAGA rallies record Trump's spoken words and public address, laced as they are with music and ritual. Proper study of the Trump rallies in this archive offers scholars, students, and citizens the opportunity to fill the blind spots, discipline the resentment, and remedy the failures of imagination Lozada identifies in the Trump canon. And a focus on Trump's spoken words and public address, rather than words in books or on teleprompters, will better explain Trump's rhetorical effectiveness. To accomplish this aspiration, observational, survey, participant observation, and rhetorical modes of inquiry are necessary in the study of Trump rallies.

A. Observational Research: Hyperglobalization, Economic Anxiety, and Trade Shocks

As I will demonstrate, Donald Trump sounded themes of economic anxiety in the rhetoric he and his audience developed during the March 29, 2016, rally in Janesville, the August 5, 2016, rally in Green Bay, and the rally in Milwaukee on January 14, 2019. He continually targeted the 1994 NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement), China's 2001 entrance into the WTO (World Trade Organization), and the 2016 TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) as "bad trade deals" that destroyed the economies of his audience. These trade deals did propel the economy into an era of what Harvard economist Dani Rodrik calls "hyperglobalization," the almost unlimited economic integration of nation-states without the necessary protections in place for displaced industries (Rodrik, 2011, p. 28). The flood of cheap goods into the United States caused by these agreements created, in the words George Packer, a "tornado" that uprooted the manufacturing base in Wisconsin and the Rust Belt. This flood and tornado constitute what economics terms "trade shocks." The evidence supporting this hypothesis is corroborated by Rodrik, École des hautes études en sciences sociales's (The School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) Tomas Piketty, MIT's Daniel Autor, and Nobel Prize-winning economists Anne Deaton, Paul Krugman, and Joseph Stiglitz (Case & Deaton, 2020; Krugman, 2019, pp. 113–120; Piketty, 2016; Stiglitz, 2019). Trump devotes significant attention in his Wisconsin rally rhetoric to decrying bad trade bills. His answer: protectionism.

These trade agreements unleashed the advantages of free trade, and "economic globalization became an end into itself" (Rodrik, 2011, p. 29). The disadvantages of hyperglobalization, Rodrik observes, were significant, as "within countries, globalization generated inequality and insecurity instead of lifting all boats because most countries, with the exception of China and India, did not create sufficient systems of occupation transition, community support, and safety nets" (p. 29). Hyperglobalization devastated the economic, social, and cultural foundations of the industrial Midwest, creating a trade shock. The 1994 NAFTA agreement produced a largely unregulated surge of apparel and textile products imported from Mexico. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a left-leaning think tank, estimates that NAFTA displaced 700,000 jobs between 1994 and 2014, primarily in the manufacturing industries (Economic Policy Institute, 2020). The data suggested that 14,500 jobs were displaced or lost to NAFTA in Wisconsin during this period (Public Citizen, n.d.b). Stanford economist Gavin Wright and his colleagues have documented how NAFTA broke up a biracial coalition and unleashed a political movement that favored protectionism, turning those who had belonged to the labor movement and unions to right-wing politics for satisfaction (Wright, 2020). The EPI also estimates that the U.S. trade deficit with China led to the loss of 3.2 million jobs, again mostly in the manufacturing sectors (Kimball & Scott, 2014). EPI estimates that 68,000 jobs in Wisconsin were lost to the effect of China's admission into the WTO. When the jobs lost to NAFTA and the WTO in Wisconsin are added up, it totals more than 80,000 (Public Citizen, n.d.b). Jim Tankersley describes the impact of globalization in this manner: we are seeing "an economic ladder snapping out from under a cluster of workers, trapping older ones in the middle of their careers and leaving younger ones to wonder if they will ever get their lives off the ground. It can traumatize a community, scramble its politics, leave its leaders struggling for answers" (Tankersley, 2020, p. 23).

In the wake of trade shocks caused by NAFTA and China's entrance into the WTO, communities in the industrial Midwest and Wisconsin have suffered from "deaths of despair" recorded in Deaton's scholarship, with citizens turning to opioids and suicide (Case & Deaton, 2020; Dean & Kimmel, 2019). The Trump campaign consciously targeted the sites in Wisconsin, including Janesville, Green Bay, and Milwaukee, that suffered in the wake of the NAFTA, China, and TPP trade shocks for its rallies (Figure 11.1) (Autor et al., 2020).

Trade shocks, this mode of inquiry suggests, produce economic insecurity, which in turn invites the need to target a villain. Autor et al. (2020) found that the trade shocks from 2000 to 2016

> increased the demand for conservative media content, support for conservative viewpoints, and campaign contributions by more ideologically extreme donors. Distinct from the media viewership data, we see clear polarization in political contributions in trade-exposed districts. (p. 3316)

Those who live in areas affected by trade shock, these scholars note, turn to Fox News and other right-wing media outlets. Economic anxiety and insecurity can, under the right circumstances and framing, activate xenophobia and racism (Graetz & Shapiro, 2020, p. 9).

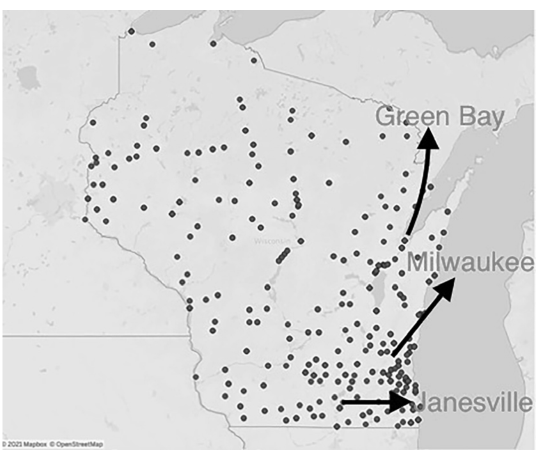

FIGURE 11.1 Sites of NAFTA and China trade shocks in Wisconsin. (Source: Public Citizen, n.d.a)

These trade shocks, according to the observational studies conducted by Autor and colleagues, directly affected the 2016 election. Autor found that Clinton "would have won the states of Michigan and Wisconsin in a counterfactual scenario with a 25% smaller trade shock" (Autor et al., 2017, p. 7). Trump's margin of victory of 24,081 votes would have been reduced by 37,715 votes, producing a Clinton win by 13,633 (p. 7). Trade shocks due to hyperglobalization, as Rodrik details in the most sophisticated study to date, helps explain the rise of right-wing populism and Trump's electoral victories over the Republican and Democrat establishments, which both supported free trade policies and rejected protectionism as "anti-globalization views appear to be strongly associated with the decision to vote for Trump instead of Hillary Clinton" (Rodrik, 2020, p. 7).

Right-wing populism is primed by trade shocks, Autor, Rodrik, and other economists who use the observational modes of inquiry argue. Burke, in his rhetorical analysis, observed that Hitler offered "*a noneconomic interpretation of economic ills*" (Burke, 1974, p. 174). Namely, "Hitler ends his diatribes against contemporary economic ills by a shift into an insistence that we must get to the 'true' cause, which is centered in 'race'" (p. 175). Observational modes of inquiry present a view of causality, Rodrik observes, that "political preferences that appear to be driven by cultural values will in fact have deeper, economic roots" (Rodrik, 2020, p. 8). The framing and expression of these political preferences, which have their origins in economic conditions, can be found in Trump's rally rhetoric.

B. Survey Studies: Activation of Racial and Ethnic Identities and Attitudes

In contrast to observational studies, survey experiments "are at stark odds" with observational studies (Naoi, 2020, p. 334). Many surveys find support for noneconomic explanations of right-wing movements and Trump's political success. Among the best works marshalling evidence that attitudes toward race and ethnicity, not economic anxiety, distinguished Trump voters from other candidates is Sides, Tesler, and Vareck's *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America* (2018). According to their research, Trump won the Republican primaries and the general election because he activated identity-based prejudice against people of color among white voters. Trump's explicit appeals to xenophobia, racism, and nativism, heard by his audience as "authentic" and an expression of their thoughts, better explain his success than globalization or economic insecurity.

Sides, Tesler, and Vareck and other scholars draw from surveys to demonstrate that Trump's plan for a wall between Mexico and the United States, negative views of Blacks, Muslims, and Mexicans, and calls for a return to an America that was once great reflected and affirmed the views of his base (Sides et al., 2018). Mutz offers corroborating evidence, disputing the claim that the Trump supporters are those "left behind" by globalization (Mutz, 2018, pp. E4330–E4339). Rather, cultural status, not economic hardship, explains why whites found Trump's rhetoric attractive. Whites, Mutz found, feel "under siege" by a diversifying America in which they are losing their dominance and majority (p. E4330).

Challenging the foundational assumptions and conclusions of scholars who use observational modes of inquiry, Sides, Tesler, and Vareck invert the relationship between economic insecurity and racial anxiety. "Economic anxiety," they write, "had been *decreasing*, not increasing in the eight years before 2016" (Sides et al., 2018, p. 7). Trump and his campaign activated white racism: "under Obama, white Americans' feelings about blacks became associated with many things, including whether and how they felt about the economy" (p. 7). The issue of immigration, they contend, allowed Trump to fold the problems of race and ethnicity into a larger narrative of white American identity, offering Trump the leitmotif he used to win the primary and general elections. Flipping the causal relationship Rodrik sets forth, Sides, Tesler and Vareck conclude that "racial anxiety was arguably driving economic anxiety" (p. 7). Political leaders sensitive to these conditions craft campaign messages adapted to both the economic and cultural insecurities of voters, a capacity Trump possesses. Participant-observer studies allow researchers to understand the emotional world of those who attend Trump rallies.

C. Participant Observation: Wading Into Culture

To understand culture, anthropologists and other scholars have developed participant observation as a method in which researchers share the "space, events and day-to-day living" of those they study (Okely, 2012, p. 87). The fieldwork involved requires visiting and, when appropriate, participating in a ritual or event, often with the researcher coming from outside the culture to better appreciate that culture from within. Scholars have interrogated the assumptions that the fieldworker must identify and bracket to secure a valid representation of the culture under study.

We do have a good body of work making use of participant observation in the study of Trump rallies. This method identifies basic questions, and then the researcher attends a rally or a series of rallies. Erichsen, Schrock, Dowd-Arrow, and Dignam, for example, attended three Trump rallies as participant observers, seeking an answer to this question: "How did Trump supporters construct Hillary Clinton?" They answered this question with interviews of Trump supporters and observing the rallies (Erichsen et al., 2020). A number of prominent journalists have attended Trump rallies as well. I make use of this mode of inquiry in a study of the Trump rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on January 14, 2019.

D. Rhetorical Studies: Rituals, Symbols, and Argument

Colleagues in my field of rhetorical studies have devoted substantial attention to the rhetoric of Donald Trump. Rhetorical scholars including Roderick Hart, Brian Ott, and Greg Dickinson, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Doron Taussig, Robert Rowland, Mary Stuckey, Jennifer Mercieca, Robert Terrill, Joshua Gunn, Casey Ryan Kelly, Ryan Skinnell, Richard Cherwitz, and Jacob William Justice have published books with the best academic presses, refereed journal articles and dissertations, and have offered public scholarship that presents insightful explanations of Trump's rhetoric (Cherwitz, 2019; Gunn, 2018, pp. 161–186; Gunn, 2020; Hart, 2020; Jamieson & Taussig, 2017, pp. 619–650; Justice, 2020; Kelly, 2020, pp. 2–24; Mercieca, 2019, pp. 264–279; Mercieca, 2020; Ott & Dickinson, 2019; Rowland, 2019, pp. 343–388; Skinnell, 2018; Stuckey, 2020, pp. 366–391; Terrill, 2017, pp. 493–510). As a scholar of rhetoric, I concur with colleagues who find Trump's use of symbols and rhetoric to be powerful forces helping to explain his rise to power. Scholars in my field of rhetoric study his tweets, speeches, and other modes of communication to explain his electoral success. They are in consensus that Trump's discourse is often incoherent, a jumble of word fragments.

Roderick P. Hart's book *Trump and Us: What He Says and Why People Listen* (2020), published by Cambridge University Press, is the most comprehensive analysis to date of Trump's rhetoric. Hart sides with those who conduct survey research, has little respect for Trump's intellect, and dismisses the findings of observational studies when he writes that Trump "produced words constantly, often without cortical processing" and that "it was not partisanship, policy, or economic factors that landed Trump in the Oval Office but rather how Trump made people feel" (Hart, 2020, p. 26, I). Trump persuades because of how he commands the feelings and emotions of his audience (p. 242).

Ott and Dickenson make use of similar descriptors when they stipulate that "we have designated Trump's audience as 'followers' rather than 'supporters' due to their mindless, cult-like response to Trump" who "have sacrificed their sense of autonomy (and their capacity for independent, critical thought) to a larger movement" (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. ix). My study of Trump rallies challenges these representations. Without question, there are moments of incoherence in Trump's rally rhetoric, and Trump's audience can seem to the outsider as "mindless." However, after watching many Trump rallies archived in the C-SPAN Video Library and attending one in person, I find that Trump's rhetoric does cohere and achieve an authentic communion with his audience, an audience with agency.

In their attempts to explain Trump's rhetorical success and signature, scholars too often assume his political communication and rationality are best judged as written texts studied as "speeches," prepared in advance, with a clear exordium, three points of emphasis, and then a peroration. Trump rallies have not been the site of significant scholarly study, with some significant exceptions (Justice, 2020). Of the 80-plus studies of Trump's rhetoric to date, the vast majority center on his tweets and prepared speeches in their analysis, and when they do include statements from Trump rallies, they are often abstracted from the context, which drains them of their energy and meaning.

My study of Trump's rally rhetoric, both alone and in collaboration with William Keith, suggests that it should be studied as an expression of improvisation that effectively conveys authenticity to his political base. Indeed, as *The New Yorker*'s David Remnick (2016) observed, Trump "vanquished sixteen rivals rendered hapless by a campaign that made improvisation its organizing principle." Drawing from the 2,000-year rhetorical tradition, Trump's rhetorical signature is best understood as an expression of a particular form of improvisation, what Italian scholars of rhetoric term *sprezzatura* (I thank William Keith, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, for this suggestion). In classical rhetoric, *sprezzatura* is a rhetoric defined as the art of concealing art; what seems "spontaneous" is planned (D'Angelo, 2018). Trump's rally rhetoric is planned improvisation—which may seem to be a contradiction in terms but is more like an oxymoron, the creative yoking of opposites.

Trump and his campaign employ a modified form of the ancient art of improvisation and its more modern definition, *sprezzatura*. Pure improvisation is properly understood as an interactive activity in which the speaker and audience construct meaning in a collaboration that may (or may not) have a predetermined or knowable goal/end. The Trump campaign did, with the help of Cambridge Analytics, target rally sites in 2016—the rallies themselves and Trump's speeches have a recurring structure and set of themes. However, the rallies are improvisations, yoking preparation with spontaneity. With this insight and those offered by observational and survey modes of inquiry, I address the question What emotional and intellectual equipment is needed to understand the Trump rally?

II. EXPLAINING THE TRUMP RALLY

Trump rallies must be placed in their context if one is to achieve a proper understanding of their meaning. They are functions of economic and racial anxiety. As Rodrik's research reveals, the significant rise of right-wing populism, both in the United States and around the globe, is one result of the economic anxiety created by hyperglobalization and trade shocks. The economic insecurity activated by hyperglobalization, observational research suggests, triggers racial anxiety.

Observational research identifies NAFTA and China's entrance into the WTO as the primary reasons the manufacturing base in the Rust Belt and Wisconsin was shattered. Autor and colleagues and Wright document how these trade shocks affected political preferences, turning many who supported Democratic candidates to more conservative media and politicians (Autor et al., 2020; Wright, 2020). Trump and the MAGA movement are highly critical of hyperglobalization, NAFTA, and China's trade policies and sounded the alarm about the detrimental prospects of the TPP during the Republican primary and the general election. NAFTA and China's trade with the United States were recurring themes in Trump's rally rhetoric. His opponents during the Republican primary and the general election supported free trade and opposed protectionist policies.

Survey research holds that racial anxiety prompts economic insecurity. Sides, Tesler, and Vareck chart how Obama, Clinton, and Trump activated racial anxiety during the 2016 election. "Obama's candidacy and presidency," they observe, "helped activate racial attitudes more because of who he was than what he said or did" (Sides et al., 2018, p. 167). Clinton "moved to Obama's left in both her rhetoric and policies on race-related issues" (Sides et al., 2018, p. 167). Trump's base, primed by Obama's candidacy and presidency and Clinton's move to Obama's left, was ripe for his message about borders and race. With race made the prominent value, survey research revealed that Trump's voters racialized their view of economics, "the belief that undeserving groups are getting ahead while your group is left behind" (Sides et al., 2018, p. 175).

Cultural and rhetorical modes of inquiry, I believe, should not categorially reject the research offered by scholars using observational methods. The research offered by Rodrik, Autor, and others complements and strengthens the capacity of rhetorical criticism to explain why Trump's rhetoric is persuasive. Similarly, survey research is invaluable in putting on display the attitudes and beliefs of Trump's audience. A focus on Trump's rally rhetoric corroborates Lozada's intuition that "economic and cultural forces feed off one another" (Lozada, 2020, p. 22).

While many scholars call for a rapprochement between economic and cultural explanations, seeing the two as "inextricable," rhetorical criticism goes first to the discourse, without preconceptions about the relationship between the two. Indeed, foreshadowing the analysis of the Janesville, Green Bay, and Milwaukee rallies, Trump's improvisational rhetoric allows him to range from explanations that are economic, to those that are cultural, and then to those that yoke the two. To fully appreciate the improvisational rhetoric Trump deploys during his rallies, they must be nested within their dramatic and ritualist form, which *The New York Times*'s White House correspondent Katie Rogers cast as a "play in three acts" (Rogers, 2018). I have modified her structure based on my viewing of rallies in the C-SPAN Video Library and my experience attending the Trump rally in Milwaukee.

THE TRUMP RALLY: A PLAY IN THREE ACTS*

SETTING

Typically, an arena or large space in rural America.

SETTINGS OF RALLIES IN THIS STUDY

Janesville, Wisconsin (3/23/2016): Janesville Conference Center
Green Bay, Wisconsin (9/5/2016): Ki Convention Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1/14/2020): UW–Milwaukee Panther Arena

ACT I SCENE I: THE INVITATION

Summons. Local Republican Party and other conservative groups notified. Candidate/President Trump and campaign tweets advance notice.

ACT I SCENE II: SUPPORTERS ARRIVE EARLY FOR RALLY

Pre-Rally Function. Rally regulars and locals gather, buy merchandise, and stand in line for hours with pop music.

ACT II SCENE I: PRELUDE TO TRUMP

Pre-Rally Framing. Campaign issues supportive messages as supporters enter rally site.

ACT II SCENE II: AUDIENCE TAKES ITS SEATS AS CANDIDATE/PRESIDENT TRUMP ENTERS

Supporters find their places, the candidate/president is introduced and arrives on stage. Audience members have their seats, hear introductions, and celebrate Trump's entrance, as he uses the same linguistic and topical introductions at every rally.

ACT III SCENE I: IMPROVISATIONAL INTEGRATION OF RECURRENT THEMES AND ENDORSEMENTS OF LOCALS

Rehearsal of recurring and new themes; inclusion of supportive resident politicians. Adapting to context, audience, and mood, Trump addresses issues that are prominent to him and his audience. At a time of his choosing, he invites prominent and supportive prominent native politicians on stage.

ACT III SCENE II: IMPROVISATIONAL NARRATIVE AND PERORATION

Development of argument and conclusion. Trump returns to issues he shares in common with his audience, tests new ideas, and makes serial adjustments to the argument he advances, concluding with the same linguistic and topical notions at almost every rally.

**Adapted from Rogers (2018).*

The rallies do have a structure, with distinct beginnings, middles, and ends. Paired with this structure are moments of genuine improvisation. Trump often returns to lines of argument and themes he has developed over a lifetime. "Trump's message . . . over three decades would prove fairly consistent—and in certain cases, quite prescient" (Alberta, 2019, p. 124). Those who attend the rallies are white and many are from the working class that, as Packer observes, "has suffered at least as much as any demographic group because of globalization, low-wage immigrant labor, and free trade. Trump sensed the rage that flared from this pain and made it the fuel of his campaign" (Packer, 2020). They are greeted with playlists, selected by Trump, headlined by Michael Jackson, Journey, Elton John, Adele, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. Trump's introductions and conclusions are predictable. He begins by expressing amazement at the size of the crowd and concludes by returning to the "Make America Great Again" theme.

Trump ran as a moderate candidate, supporting Social Security, Medicare, and a dovish foreign policy (Yglesias, 2017). During the general election, Trump's rally rhetoric was anchored in three arguments: "Drain the Swamp," "Build the Wall," and "Lock Her Up" (Stone, 2017, p. 768). As Roger Stone explains,

> the throngs showing up at Trump rallies came prepared for a Trump stump speech that would give them a chance to chant in unison all three of these slogans. Truthfully, it did not matter the order in which Trump served up these three themes, as long as they were all three served up such that the thousands packed into auditoriums to see and hear Trump got their chance to chant all three. (Stone, 2017, p. 768)

Reflective of *sprezzatura*, these three slogans were functions of research and preparation that often sounds spontaneous.

Cambridge Analytica, the research firm hired by the Trump campaign, had tested these slogans. They "were actually coined several years earlier—and not by Trump at all—but by the minds behind Cambridge Analytica" (Stroud, 2018, para 3). Yet Trump has the deep capacity to create novel applications of old themes and to collaborate with his audience to develop novel arguments. Given the mood, Trump will use call-and-response patterns, in which the speaker calls an argument out to the audience and the audience responds. The response of the audience will dictate how the speaker, in turn, answers. The speaker reading from a prepared text is not inviting nor prepared for the audience engagement other than to listen.

The "Drain the Swamp" theme, Trump reports, was imposed on him by his audience; it was not a gift from Cambridge Analytica. He confessed during a rally in Des Moines, Iowa:

> Somebody said, "Drain the swamp." I said, "Oh, that's so hokey. That is so terrible." I said, "All right, I'll try it." So like a month ago I said, "Drain the swamp." The place went crazy. I said, "Whoa, watch this." Then I said again. Then I started saying it like I meant it, right? (LAUGHTER) And then I said it . . . I started loving it. (C-SPAN User-Created Clip, 2020)

SCAN ME

A central theme of Trump's 2016 campaign, "Build the Wall," served to retain his audience as Trump explained to *The New York Times*'s editorial board:

> If my speeches ever get a little off, . . . I just go: "We will build a wall!" You know, if it gets a little boring, if I see people starting to sort of maybe thinking about leaving—I can sort of tell the audience—I just say, "We will build the wall," and they go nuts. "And Mexico will pay for the wall!" But—ah, but I mean it. But I mean it. ("Up Against the Wall," 2017)

The third theme, "Lock Her Up," illustrates the agency of Trump's audience and unfolds into an enactment of misogyny.

Jared Yates Sexton (2017) witnessed several Trump rallies and heard the following at one:

> An opening speaker referred to "Crooked Hillary Clinton" and a man yelled "Bitch!" At first, he seemed almost as surprised as anybody that the word had escaped his mouth, but when he took stock of the crowd and heard the others cheering and laughing, a smile broke across his face. Somebody clapped him on the back. This was a change from the Trump rally in South Carolina aboard the USS Yorktown, where the crowd took their cues from the candidate and cheered on his racist rhetoric before retiring to the parking lot and harassing protesters. There, in Greensboro, I could tell Trump voters were beginning to feed off each other and Trump was able to take them up to the line of good taste and let them take over where he could not. As a result, the rallies grew darker, more hateful, the atmosphere simmering with anger and pent-up rage. (pp. 168–169)

Rally audiences create and embellish messages that they offer to and extend for Trump. The rallies do exhibit anger and rage, but these emotions blend with a sense of community and declarations of love.

Pilkington (2018), who attended five Trump rallies in eight days, reported that he was "confronted with an uncomfortable truth: to figure out what's happening you have to acknowledge the love." He found that "love is very much in the air" at Trump rallies. The rallies are a "lovefest" and "Trump uses the word 'love' repeatedly" (para 1). The word and emotion create a strong sense of communion, one that is often lacking when rally participants return home. Rallies, then, are emotional cauldrons of anger, rage, love, and communion that help to constitute, reconstitute, define, and redefine the identity of the participants and their enemies. I turn now to studies of three Wisconsin Trump rallies. I make use of observational, survey, and rhetorical modes of inquiry.

III. THREE WISCONSIN TRUMP RALLIES

The University of Wisconsin–Madison's Katherine Cramer (2016), in her award-winning *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*, found in her interviews of citizens in rural Wisconsin, many of whom voted for Trump in the Republican primary and in the general election, a "rural consciousness" affected by both economic dislocations and racial anxiety. Her research, paired with research conducted in Trump-supporting communities in Louisiana (Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land*), Appalachia (J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*), Kansas (Hoganson's *The Heartland*), and Oregon (Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's *Tightrope*; Tankersley's *The Riches of This Land*), helps illuminate the motivations of those who voted for Trump (Hochschild, 2016; Hoganson, 2019; Kristof & WuDunn, 2020; Tankersley, 2020; Vance, 2016). They are in consensus about the characteristics of the Trump voter.

Cramer engaged in extensive conversations with citizens in 27 Wisconsin rural communities. She found that those who voted for Trump had not been "hoodwinked," that "the people who support Trump are not all a bunch of crazy idiots" (Guo, 2016, para 8). Cramer discovered they had rational reasons to support Trump—they understood his character flaws but supported him "because he represented substantial change" (Guo, 2016, para 8). The change they needed was economic and cultural: "I see the Trump phenomenon," Cramer explains, "coming out of rising income inequality and the leftovers of the Great Recession. [Trump supporters] are feeling unheard and . . . disrespected by the powers that be" (Baltz, 2020, para. 27). They emphasize jobs, infrastructure, and economic issues. Those who are "struggling economically," she continues, are "groping for targets of blame" (Whitesides & Lopez, 2016).

Trump, Cramer found, had activated "illegal immigrants" as the scapegoat for the economic anxiety suffered by those she interviewed. The slogan "Build the Wall," Cramer notes, is a "vibrant indicator" of Trump's success in giving folks in rural communities language they could use to frame their experience. "People didn't come up with that phrase themselves. They're saying it because

Donald Trump said it" (Guo, 2016). A study of three Trump rallies that follow corroborate Cramer's insights.

Rally I. Rhetorical Criticism. 2016 Republican Primary. Tuesday, March 29, 2016. Janesville, Wisconsin. Janesville Conference Center. 1,000 participants. (For video and transcript [CC], see C-SPAN, 2016a.)

The closure of a large GM factory, which was a critically important economic engine of Rock County, Wisconsin, hit Janesville hard. "NAFTA and other trade agreements . . . fostered GM's transfer of jobs from the U.S. to Mexico" (Bybee, 2010). The GM factory was the source "of the city's identity and the foundation of its prosperity" (Bybee, 2010). Amy Goldstein (2018), in her book *Janesville: An American Story*, documents the effects of GM's departure, writing that in the "shadow of the town, hundreds of teenagers are becoming the victims of a domino effect" (p. 262). She continues:

> These are kids whose parents used to scrape by on jobs at Burger King or Target or the Gas Mart. Now their parents are competing with the unemployed autoworkers who used to look down on these jobs but now are grasping at any job they can find. So, as middle-class families have been tumbling downhill, working-class families have been tumbling into poverty. As this down-into-poverty domino effect happens, some parents are turning to drinking or drugs. Some are leaving their kids behind while they go looking for work out of town. Some are just unable to keep up the rent. So with a parent or on their own, a growing crop of teenagers is surfing the couches at friends' and relatives' places—or spending nights in out-of-the-way spots in cars or on the street. (p. 263)

Trump held his first Wisconsin rally in Janesville and addressed 1,000 rally participants in the Janesville Conference Center.

The C-SPAN Video Library provides a crisp visual and audio account of the rally, including closed captions and a transcript (C-SPAN, 2016a). A play in three acts, the rally offers the audience the Trump playlist of music as he entered to the Dutch group 2 Unlimited's "Get Ready for This," an introduction focused on the size of the crowd, a conclusion repeating the promise that "we're going to make America great again," and the word "love" and phrase "I love you" scattered throughout the address at 27 points. The public address between the introduction and conclusion is improvised. Trump is in constant motion, holding one piece of white paper. The C-SPAN video makes clear that the paper has handwriting in ink on both sides, as he achieves eye contact with audience members in all corners of the conference center. His vision—that is, what he sees—seems to dictate what he says. Trump spots bikers in the back and engages them before returning to the paper he holds in his hand.

He reads from the paper after castigating his opponent, Ted Cruz. Trump, using the nickname "Lyin' Ted Cruz," declares with glee, using a clever rhyme, that Cruz "stands up, Bible high, puts it down and then he lies." "The message is what we want. We want jobs, we want jobs. We want trade deals that are smart, not stupid deals." He then turns to the white paper, stating, "I wrote down some notes." Then, blending insights from observational and survey research, conveying them in his signature improvisational style, he reads from his handwritten notes, interspersing interpretations of the data and attacks on John Kasich, another opponent: "Wisconsin has lost 15,000 net jobs to Mexico. Kasich is running also. He voted for NAFTA. Both of them [Kasich and Cruz] want TPP. TPP, both of them want Transpacific. That will make NAFTA look like a baby and Wisconsin will be hit so hard." These arguments are consistent with the evidence presented by Rodrik, Autor, and Bernie Sanders.

After several diversions and tangents (marked by the ellipses below), which engage his audience and sustain their attention, Trump continues:

> We are going to have borders again. Here we have something that is pretty interesting. I love you, too. You lost 70,000 jobs to China. 70,000 jobs. 100,000 illegal immigrants living in Wisconsin. . . . We cannot have China ripping us off and Mexico and Japan and Vietnam. We cannot have it and they are ripping us like they have never ripped anybody before. We are rebuilding China, Mexico. Those Carrier air-conditioners moving to Mexico. Ford moving to Mexico. . . . You know what? Look, we're losing our jobs. When I see that statistic, you are losing your jobs. (C-SPAN, 2016a)

Here is evidence that Trump's improvisational style allows him to split or fuse issues of economy and race as he determines it fits the context and audience. To be sure, the bulk of his address consisted of personal attacks on Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Scott Walker, the Club for Growth, the press, John McCain, and Mitt Romney. And there are a number of other issues and topics embedded in Trump's improvisation worthy of analysis. The second rally, held in Green Bay during the general election, highlights student analysis of Trump's rhetoric.

Rally II. Pedagogy. 2016 Republican Primary. Friday, August 5, 2016. Green Bay, Wisconsin. KI Convention Center. 3,000 participants. (For video and transcript [CC], see C-SPAN, 2016b.)

I paired the students in my English 335 class on rhetorical criticism into teams of two. They were assigned to conduct rhetorical criticisms of Trump rallies in the C-SPAN Video Library (see Appendix B to this chapter). The assignment called for the students to make use of observational, survey, and rhetorical research to explain the rhetorical situation faced by Trump, his audience, and the exigences prompting the rally. The students were expected to research the economic and cultural backdrops in the cities, counties, and states hosting the rallies they researched. I also provided the students with the rhetorical vocabulary they needed to describe, interpret, and evaluate Trump's rhetoric. The students wrote a 4,000-word research essay and made an oral report on their findings (see Appendix B to this chapter). I quote from the paper written by the two students (Jarvis et al., 2019) who analyzed the Trump rally held in Green Bay, Wisconsin, on August 5, 2016.

The students set the scene and describe Trump's audience:

> Donald Trump was speaking to the freshly unemployed paper mill worker, whose job lost the battle against technology and is now replaced by a machine or a robot. And as shown on C-SPAN, Donald Trump was speaking to an almost entirely white working class, calloused hands, backbone economy that continues to drive the Midwest industry to survive. And that's exactly how he wanted it. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

The students then highlighted the opioid problem faced by citizens in Wisconsin that appeared in the wake of economic criticism, describing what Trump intended to do to combat the problem:

> Woven in the inside of a struggling economy, the audience of Green Bay (and the state of Wisconsin as a whole) faces a different, more personal and as a result more emotional crisis, opioids. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, opiate overdoses among Wisconsinites has increased by 238% in recent years off prescription painkillers alone. This statistic fails to include the demoralizing increase in illegal opioids such as heroin and the rise of fentanyl. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

Having established this background, the students turned to Trump's rhetoric.

At the Janesville rally Trump used 2 Unlimited's "Get Ready for This." The students assigned to the Green Bay rally noted that Trump entered the Green Bay rally to the English rock band Free's "All Right Now," which was written by Andy Fraser and Paul Rodgers. They write:

> After his introduction, "All Right Now" rears its motivational head again through the venue speakers and out walks the Republican nominee. With the spotlight on the podium, pandemonium of supporters clinging on for dear life to the promises of hope for the working class and the restoration of a "great" nation, Donald J. Trump may as well have been Paul Rodgers himself, the lead [singer of the British rock band Free, singing] "All Right Now" [and] performing at his own rock concert, a calculated rhetorical situation. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

The students understood that music and its capacity to elevate emotion provided an entry to their interpretation of Trump's rhetoric and his entrance to the rally.

I offer, in my overview of rhetorical theory in my class on rhetoric, an explanation of the three proofs Aristotle offers in *Rhetoric*, ethos, pathos, and logical argument, Burke's view that rhetoric can provide a cure to despair in his "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," and the five canons of rhetoric Cicero describes in *Rhetoric ad Herennium* (Burke, 1974; Kennedy, 1991). The students, in their interpretation of Trump's rally speech write:

> Throughout the entirety of Donald J. Trump's speech, he navigates through Aristotle's three proofs; however he relies heavily on pathos. Trump's use of pathos serves as an aid to bridge the gap between himself and his audience. He removes any possibility of misunderstanding by using simple language, capitalizes on emotion by mirroring his audience's frustrations and celebrates a utopian future alongside the white working class. In Green Bay, Wisconsin Trump uses pathos as a medicine to cure the despair that his audience members are experiencing in the aftermath of NAFTA, Obamacare and drug influx. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

Rhetorical theory offers students the equipment needed to explain Trump's delivery. In class, I identify Trump's rhetorical signature of improvisation. The ancient rhetoricians called improvisation a form of *digression.*

The students applied rhetorical theory in this manner:

> Alongside Trump's use of Aristotle's rhetorical theory, he utilizes Cicero's theory of rhetoric including the five canons. Namely, his use of *actio* and *elocutio*. Trump uses figures of speech, rhetorical technique, hand gestures and tone of voice to enhance pathos as well as to excite his audience. In the Green Bay rally, he stood relaxed and forward facing. He read from papers that were folded in his hand, and looked into the eyes of all of his audience members. In addition, Trump was able to pause to smile, give a thumbs up or to sarcastically raise his brow in reaction to audience feedback. Trump composed a speech that had words that invited his audience to join him, as well as allowed for fluidity in his performance that reinforced his pathos. Ultimately, all rhetorical devices Trump entwined with his political agenda served to primarily elevate his pathos. Thus, speaking directly and effectively to his target audience. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

Trump, they observe, digresses, but does so with the purpose of elevating the ethos of others, which in turn enhances his ethos:

> Trump primarily uses figures of amplification to call attention to his main points; specifically, *digressio*. He utilizes *digressio* as a way of humbling himself in the eyes of his audience. He uses phrases such as, "they're great," "great people," and "great state" as a way to describe not only his immediate audience but other audiences and individuals which people living in Green Bay Wisconsin admire. For example, following Mike Pence's introduction, Trump says, "Special. Special. He is a special man and special person. And he has become my friend." Trump digresses from his point to elevate the ethos of other people who agree with the argument he is making regarding his election. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

Finally, I ask students to address Steve Bannon's claim that Trump is "the greatest public speaker in those large arenas since William Jennings Bryan" (Beckwith, 2017):

> The foundations that made William Jennings Bryan known as a great public speaker are very similar to those of President Trump. An assumption can be made that Bannon is referring to Bryan's speech, "Cross of Gold," which

> landed him the Democratic presidential nomination for the 1896 presidency. According to an essay held in the Library of Congress written by Robert Cherney, "His voice (William Jennings Bryan's), a carefully cultivated and powerful instrument, could reach into every part of the great convention hall, a crucial ability before electronic amplification. Many of his most striking phrases had been tested, revised, and retested in earlier speeches.
>
> The speech transformed Bryan from a presumptuous youngster into a top contender for the nomination" ("William Jennings Bryan and the 'Cross of Gold' Speech," Robert Cherney). Similarly, Trump uses rhetorical devices and emotion to evoke similar reactions from the attendees within the walls of his rallies. Likewise, Bryan was able to speak into the minds of the attendees of the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1896. With this in mind, it is logical for Bannon to draw a similarity between William Jennings Bryan and Donald J. Trump due to their abilities to speak loudly, and to change their public image through their ability to effectively speak to target audiences. (Jarvis et al., 2019)

That the students drew a thoughtful connection between the first populist, William Jennings Bryan, and our most prominent right-wing populist is credit to their hard work and intelligence. The final rally I offer for analysis is a participant-observer study I conducted when I attended the January 14, 2019, Trump rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Rally III. Participant Observation. 2019 General Election Primary. Saturday, January 14, 2019. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. UW–Milwaukee Panther Theater. 12,000. (For video and transcript [CC], see C-SPAN, 2020.)

I attended the January 14, 2019, Trump rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as a participant observer and entered Donald Trump's cauldron to answer this question: what were the primary differences, if any, between experiencing a Trump rally using the C-SPAN Video Library and in person? To secure tickets to the rally, I went online to the Trump campaign website, then entered my name, home address, email address, and cell phone number. I have, subsequently, received hundreds of emails from the Trump campaign. On the day of the rally, I joined 12,000 others, almost all white, and stood in line for three hours. Given I had spent many hours watching C-SPAN Video Library videos, the opportunity to witness one in person allowed me to juxtapose the two as experiences of the same event.

I had many opportunities to purchase Trump swag (Figure 11.2), including a t-shirt declaring "JESUS IS MY SAVIOR," which has an image of an American

FIGURE 11.2 Trump swag on sale outside the Milwaukee Panther Theater.

FIGURE 11.3 Line for the Trump rally, January 14, 2020.

flag bridged to a "TRUMP IS MY PRESIDENT" proclamation. As I stood in line, I talked with those around me. I was joined by a colleague who is a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Cramer, in her interviews, found that many citizens from rural areas find university faculty "arrogant and elitist" (Cramer, 2016, pp. 110, 117). We did not reveal our affiliations.

The line snaked around gates as 12,000 people (see Figure 11.3), most wearing red "Make America Great Again" hats, waited with patience to find their seats in the UW–Milwaukee Panther Theater. Once inside, the 2020 Campaign theme was "Keep America Great," which the scoreboard in the middle of the theater displayed as the rally's North Star (see Figure 11.4). The local newspaper, *The Journal Times*, listed the Trump rally playlist I heard (Rogan, 2021). The playlist included Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A."—Trump's entrance song; Queen's "We Are The Champions," which was repeated many times; The Village People's "Macho Man"; Elton John's "Candle In The Wind," "Rocket Man," "Tiny Dancer," and "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting"; and the Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar," "Wild Horses," "Time Is on My Side," "You Can't Always Get What You Want," "Heart of Stone," and "Let's Spend the Night Together." The people around me sang along, as I did on occasion, because I grew up with these songs.

Brad Pascale, who was then the campaign manager, Vice President Mike Pence, and Wisconsin senator Ron Johnson were among those who introduced Trump and "kissed his ring."

FIGURE 11.4 Scoreboard: Trump rally, Milwaukee Panther Stadium.

His address, much like the one in Janesville, began with the issue of trade and jobs:

> Before it was talk. I said, "I'm going to do this. We're going to take care of your trade." What we've done with China now, on Wednesday we signed, that's tomorrow. What we've done with the USMCA, what we've done with Japan, $40 billion trade deal that a lot of it has to do with the farmers. South Korea. Oh, you got to love Trump, you got to love Trump. (C-SPAN, 2020)

SCAN ME

He then rehearsed the case against NAFTA:

> And we will soon be replacing the NAFTA catastrophe, one of the worst trade deals in the history of the world, frankly, with the incredible USMCA, Canada, Mexico, a giant victory for Wisconsin workers, farmers and dairy producers,

> a tremendous victory. . . . Tomorrow we'll also be signing our phase one trade deal with China, massively boosting exports of products made and produced right here in the great state of Wisconsin. (C-SPAN, 2020)

SCAN ME

Trump did not spend much time after the introduction on trade.

Trump did offer brief reprisals of the three general election themes, "Drain the Swamp," "Lock Her Up," and "Build the Wall," in his address. Race was not an explicit topic but one that informed several of the policy positions. The bulk of his address was scattered among a number of topics; he would land on one briefly and then flit to another, returning to a previous topic as the spirit moved. He ranged from foreign to domestic affairs and back again. Democrats and terrorists in the Middle East served as foes.

From my seat, I could view those around and next to me. They were paying close attention to Trump's speech, laughing, nodding—they were engaged. Although some of what Trump said was incoherent to me as he skipped from one topic to another, I followed the flow of the arguments he advanced. As in Janesville, Trump was in constant visual contact with his audience, moving his eyes and body to sustain his relationship with his audience. He frequently used the word "love" to convey his affection for the audience, law enforcement, the military, his family, and the U.S.A.

I am certainly not the first to observe that attending a Trump rally is like attending a high school or college football game. Because the Green Bay Packers were to play the San Francisco 49ers that weekend, Trump wove praise of the Packers into his address. The atmosphere was cheerful, with a big dose of anger and menace. The people with whom I stood in line were familiar. They were like neighbors and classmates I knew in my hometowns in Huerfano County in Colorado and Marion County in Oregon—both counties voted for Trump in 2016. Local newscasters interviewed members of the audience, and they reported supporting the notions Trump advanced (MacIver Institute, 2020).

After attending the Milwaukee Trump rally in person, I watched the C-SPAN video and read the transcript of the event. Both captured the gist of the Milwaukee rally. However, standing in line, hearing the playlist, sitting next to Trump supporters, experiencing the more positive communal function of the rally, and listening to Trump speak unmediated by screens did allow me to better understand why he is persuasive to his base. Trump establishes, with the rituals of the rally, the themes identified by observational and survey research as important to his audience, and his improvisational style conveys intimacy and authenticity, a presence that creates communion. One needs to be inside the rally to feel the emotional bonds Trump and the rally weave between the 12,000 in the arena and between the 12,000 and Trump.

IV. UNDERSTANDING DONALD TRUMP'S CRUCIBLE: THE ENDURING VALUE OF THE C-SPAN VIDEO ARCHIVE OF TRUMP RALLIES

The C-SPAN video archive of Trump rallies provides a deep resource for scholars, students, and citizens seeking to understand the rise of right-wing populism in the United States and to answer the question Why did Trump persuade millions of Americans to vote for and support him? Far too many dismiss Trump and his followers as angry, single-minded racists, unable to marshal coherent arguments, and dismiss the rallies as spectacles of backwater, ill-educated Americans who have embraced primitive beliefs. To be sure, xenophobia, racism, misogyny, and anti-science themes are present in these rallies. However, there is much going on in these rallies that helps explain why these themes are present and offers some modest upward-inflected assessments. To fully understand Trump rallies, MAGA, and this version of right-wing populism, it is necessary, in my judgment, to use the four modes of inquiry I have identified.

Observational research, survey methods, participant observation, and rhetorical criticism can individually and collectively shed light on the meaning of Trump rallies. I do not find the arguments advanced by the proponents of survey research and rhetorical criticism against the findings of observational research persuasive—indeed, Trump in his Wisconsin rally speeches leads with the economic argument, which is potent. To be fair, scholars of observational research do not fully acknowledge the power of survey methods and rhetorical criticism, but they are open to their influence. The student paper I include here demonstrates that observational research and survey methods can inform rhetorical criticism and that economic and cultural exigencies blend in Trump's discourse. I have learned as well that participating in a Trump rally offers insights that can't be gained by using the C-SPAN Video Library. Absent attending Trump rallies, the C-SPAN video archive of Trump rallies offers the next best alternative.

Trump's improvisational rhetorical signature allows him to craft messages based on the economic and cultural factors that gave rise to his expression of right-wing populism. There is an underlying structure to his rallies and rhetoric that his improvisational approach—*sprezzatura*—translates into an authenticity that is persuasive to his audiences. That he speaks without notes and appears to be thinking on the spot conveys to his audience that he is speaking from the heart—and many in his audience report that he says what they are thinking.

Those who disagree with their thinking must first appreciate how Trumpism has come to pass by using some or all of the modes of inquiry I have identified. Accordingly, I have invited my students to consider David Frum's recent prognosis that the economic and cultural resentments that gave Trump his rhetorical opportunity should be addressed (Frum, 2018) and that these resentments should not be met with contempt but with policies that can mitigate pain and suffering. My hope is that study of Trump rallies can sponsor constructive empathy that can lead to legislative policies designed to address hyperglobalism, the roots of racism, and a political system responsive to the needs of its citizens.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH AGENDA

Trump Rallies in Wisconsin	Audience	Rally no.
2016 Republican Primaries (March 1–July 21, 2016)		
1. Tuesday, March 29, 2016 Janesville, WI, Janesville Conference Center C-SPAN video and transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?407408-1/donald-trump-town-hall-meeting-janesville-wisconsin	1,000	1
2. Wednesday, March 30, 2016 Appleton, WI, Radisson Paper Valley Video and transcript: Factbase, https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-appleton-wi-march-30-2016	1,000	2
3. Wednesday, March 30 De Pere, WI, Byron L. Walter Video and transcript: Factbase, https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-de-pere-wi-march-30-2016	750	3
4. Saturday, April 2, 2016 Eau Claire, WI, Memorial High School Video and transcript: Factbase, https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-eau-claire-wi-april-2-2016	1,500	4
5. Saturday, April 2, 2016 Racine, WI, Memorial Hall Video: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_wXGd7Lr6o Video and transcript (CC): Microsoft Stream, https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/cfef1e45-f07c-4bb0-9451-aa1501bb8723	1,200	5
6. Saturday, April 2, 2016 Rothschild, WI, Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center C-SPAN video and transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?407558-1/donald-trump-town-hall-meeting-rothschild-wisconsin	1,700	6
7. Sunday, April 3, 2016 West Allis, WI, Nathan Hale High School Video and transcript (CC): Microsoft Stream, https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/0c000e3f-db6f-4877-aa84-5afcaa13f82b	1,000	7
8. Monday, April 4, 2016 La Crosse, WI, La Crosse Center Video and transcript (CC): Microsoft Stream, https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/ba209660-361f-43d4-a143-c09e72c1e6e4	1,700	8

Trump Rallies in Wisconsin	Audience	Rally no.
9. Monday, April 4, 2016	—	9
Milwaukee, WI, Milwaukee Theatre		
C-SPAN video and transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?407634-1/donald-trump-campaign-rally-milwaukee-wisconsin		
10. Monday, April 4, 2016	1,000	10
Superior, WI, Richard I. Bong Airport		
Video and transcript: Factbase, https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-superior-wi-april-4-2016		
2016 General Election Rallies (June 10–November 5, 2016)		
1. Friday, August 5, 2016	3,000	11
Green Bay, WI, KI Convention Center		
C-SPAN video and transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?413593-1/donald-trump-endorses-speaker-ryan-ahead-primary		
2. Tuesday, August 16, 2016	2,000	12
West Bend, WI, Ziegler Family Expo Center, Washington County Fair Park & Conference Center		
Video and transcript: Factbase, https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-west-bend-wi-august-16-2016		
3. Wednesday, September 28, 2016	1,500	13
Waukesha, WI, Waukesha County Expo Center		
C-SPAN video and transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?415990-1/donald-trump-campaigns-waukesha-wisconsin		
4. Monday, October 17, 2016	3,000	14
Green Bay, WI, KI Convention Center		
C-SPAN video and transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?417019-1/donald-trump-campaigns-green-bay-wisconsin		
5. Tuesday, November 1, 2016	3,000	15
Eau Claire, WI, W. L. Zorn Arena		
C-SPAN video and transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?417801-1/donald-trump-campaigns-eau-claire-wisconsin		
Presidential Rallies — Thank You Tour — Victory Rally (December 1–December 17, 2016)		
1. Tuesday, December 13, 2016	7,000	16
West Allis, WI, Wisconsin Exposition Center, Wisconsin State Fair		
C-SPAN video and transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?420078-1/president-elect-trump-vice-president-elect-pence-deliver-remarks-west-allis-wisconsin		

Continued

Trump Rallies in Wisconsin	Audience	Rally no.
2018 Midterm Rallies (March 10–November 26, 2018)		
1. Wednesday, October 24, 2018 Mosinee, WI, Central Wisconsin Airport C-SPAN Video and Transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?453502-1/president-trump-political-violence-attack-democracy	1,800	17
2020 Election Rallies (February 11–November 2, 2020)		
1. April 27, 2019 Green Bay, WI, Research Center C-SPAN Video and Transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?459875-1/president-trump-holds-rally-green-bay-wisconsin	10,000	18
2. January 14, 2020 Milwaukee, WI, UW–Milwaukee Panther Arena C-SPAN Video and Transcript (Federal News Service): https://www.c-span.org/video/?467870-1/president-trump-campaigns-milwaukee-wisconsin	12,000	19
3. August 17, 2020 Oshkosh, WI, Wittman Regional Airport C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?474841-1/president-trump-give-acceptance-speech-white-house-week	700	20
4. September 17, 2020 Mosinee, WI, Central Wisconsin Airport C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?475727-1/president-trump-rally-mosinee-wisconsin	5,000	21
5. Saturday, October 17, 2020 Janesville, WI, Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?476982-1/president-trump-campaign-rally-janesville-wisconsin	7,000	22
6. Saturday, October 24, 2020 Waukesha, WI, Waukesha County Airport C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?477329-1/president-trump-holds-rally-waukesha-wisconsin	1,000	23
7. Tuesday, October 27, 2020 West Salem, WI, La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?477341-1/president-trump-campaign-rally-west-salem-wisconsin	1,000s	24

Trump Rallies in Wisconsin	Audience	Rally no.
8. Friday, October 30, 2020	—	25
Green Bay, WI, Green Bay–Austin Straubel International Airport		
C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?477542-1/president-trump-campaign-rally-green-bay-wisconsin		
9. Monday, November 2, 2020	1,000s	26
Kenosha, WI, Kenosha Regional Airport		
C-SPAN Video and Transcript (CC): https://www.c-span.org/video/?477686-1/president-trump-campaign-rally-kenosha-wisconsin		

APPENDIX B: C-SPAN VIDEO LIBRARY IN THE CLASSROOM

Trump and Clinton Rallies

Research Paper 1: Rhetorical Criticism and Judgment of a Trump Rally

The research team will conduct a rhetorical criticism of the assigned Trump rally. The rhetorical criticism will describe, interpret, and evaluate Trump's speech as it is delivered in the context of the rally. The rhetorical criticism will seek to judge Trump's speech, the Bannon theory of Trump, and Denby's critique (see below).

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (100 POINTS) RESEARCH TEAM 15

Criterion 1: Meets minimum scholarly standards

- 4,000-word essay that develops a well-developed judgment
- Use of MLA citation style
- Submitted to Canvas on due date

Criterion 2: Quality of scholarly research

- Citations to the best research on the rhetorical situation
    - Evidence on the audience's exigence
    - Economic conditions of audience
    - Cultural backdrop of the audience
- Transcript of speech included as Appendix 1

Criterion 3: Quality of rhetorical criticism

- Description and interpretation of the rhetorical situation prompting the rally

Exigence (situation)
Audience
Speaker
Message

- Judgment of speech
  Morality
  Effectiveness

Criterion 4: The quality of the judgment of the Bannon theory and Denby's claim that Trump's rhetoric is guilty of "fervent incoherence."

- The Bannon theory:
  President Trump in the speeches he delivered at rallies did something the mainstream media or opposition party never caught. If you want to see the Trump agenda, it's very simple. It was all in the speeches. He went around to these rallies, but the speeches had a tremendous amount of content in them. *I happen to believe he's probably the greatest public speaker in those large arenas since William Jennings Bryan.* [Trump's speeches were] galvanizing. Remember, we didn't have any money. Hillary Clinton and these guys had over $2 billion. We had a couple hundred million dollars. It was those rallies and those speeches. All he's doing right now he's laying out the agenda with those speeches with the promises he made, and our job is to execute on that, to simply get a pass to how those get executed. He is focused on that. (Beckwith, 2017)

- Denby's claim that Trump's rhetoric is guilty of "fervent incoherence":
  His speeches have no beginning or end, no shape, no culmination and release, and none is necessary. For the audience, his fervent incoherence makes him that much more present, for it is Trump alone who matters, the vividness of him standing there, in that moment, embodying what the audience fears and desires. Trump is devoted to anti-rhetoric. Boasts and fears and menacing attacks are followed by instant "solutions" (about fighting ISIS: "You don't want to know what I'm going to do")—punctuated by war whoops and cries of adoration from the crowd. (Denby, 2015)

12

A COMPUTATIONAL EXPLORATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF GOVERNMENTAL POLICY RESPONSES TO EPIDEMICS BEFORE AND DURING THE ERA OF COVID-19

Philip D. Waggoner

INTRODUCTION

Government in America is an extension of the people. Whether executive, legislative, or judicial, governmental actors at some level are put in place by, and thus act in response to, a voting population who desire responsiveness from their representatives. One of the primary methods of delivering on this representational arrangement is in the form of policymaking, where governmental actors offer policies aimed at correcting or addressing issues in society (Jones et al., 2009). While there are a host of avenues for policymakers to be made aware of pressing societal issues requiring policy action at some level (Waggoner, 2019), some issues are so apparent, there need not be an explicit cue from the public constituency. The COVID-19 epidemic is one of these types of issues, where the effects are so far reaching, governmental response through policymaking is ostensibly *expected*.

Yet, while the need for action may be overt, recent congressional debate of COVID-related legislation has demonstrated that the path to enacting policy responding to COVID-19 is not nearly as clear, simple, or even decorous. For example, congressional debate on the coronavirus economic stimulus bill with a price tag of $484 billion revealed harsh partisan mudslinging by both parties and in both chambers. Rep. Jayapal (D-WA) alleged Republicans offered a “bad bill," with the implication being they (Republicans) do not care as much as we (Democrats) do for families and workers (C-SPAN, 2020a). In a similar tone, but on the other side of the aisle and in the other chamber, Sen. Barrasso (R-WY) criticized the Democrats' approach to the issue, aided by a poster titled "Pelosi is on Fantasy Island." His remarks included inflammatory terms that resembled the tone of the poster (C-SPAN, 2020b). These examples of harsh partisan debate highlight the fractured context that defines much of American public policymaking today. And though rooted in the representational responsibility of Congress to make policy in response to social and public health issues like COVID-19, the problem itself might be *apolitical*, but the elite response may not.

And to complicate matters, news coverage of highly salient issues like COVID-19 often fan the flames of political division, regardless of the direction of partisan-slant of the news outlet (Larcinese et al., 2011). News media are certainly imbued with a powerful role in the policymaking apparatus to responsibly report government policymaking back to the public. Yet, a grave limitation in this information transfer is a growing perception of biased and partisan-leaning news coverage in both directions (Perryman, 2019).

Thus, a multipart question emerges: First, is governmental policymaking on such widespread, apolitical issues characterized by political division? If so, for how long has this been the case? Put differently, is the brand of public policymaking we anecdotally see and hear about today a function of historical policymaking on similar types of issues? Or, is America in a unique era of division, where policymaking on far-reaching, nonpartisan issues is similarly tainted by partisan division? These questions are grounded in a deep literature finding elite partisan division in specific questions (Souva & Rohde, 2007), as well as in policymaking in general (Layman et al., 2010). And these elite partisan differences and their effects are not beholden to the realm of policymaking, but significantly influence mass behavior and public opinion (Berinsky, 2007; Druckman et al., 2013; Robison & Mullinix, 2016).

This study is aimed at exploring these questions from a broad exploratory lens, where patterns that naturally exist over time are able to emerge. Thus, using a suite of computational techniques, I am interested in exploring the evolution of governmental policymaking on epidemics.

In light of the aforementioned perception of bias that so often characterizes news coverage of such consequential, widespread issues and policy responses, I opt to look to the medium of policymaking itself: proposed bills. Specifically, I leverage an original data set of all U.S. congressional (Senate and House) bill metadata on COVID-19 and epidemics broadly defined from 1973 to 2020. These data are mined for cross-temporal comparison of congressional policymaking on epidemics.

My goal is to allow the policies offered by the elected representatives to speak for themselves, untarnished by news coverage or any perception of biased reporting. This approach will shed important light on two key points: first, whether congressional policymaking on related public health issues is an evolutionary process; and second, the contours of the landscape of policymaking in this "epidemics" issue space.

To explore the evolution of government policymaking responses to epidemics, there are two dimensions of variation of interest for present purposes: time and partisanship. For the time dimension, I address the evolutionary question, which allows for a deeper, contextualized understanding of the current policymaking climate in American politics in the era of COVID-19. The second dimension of partisanship is closely linked with the first. Namely, I am interested in exploring not only whether the types of bills introduced on addressing epidemics have changed over time, but especially in the modern, hyperpolarized era. The second part of the goal, then, is to detect whether and to what degree partisan differences appear.

Over the five stages of analysis detailed below, there were several striking patterns that emerged. Notably, the "what" of the policy substance remained relatively stable over time. That is, members of both parties tend to focus their policies on the epidemic in question, using terms related to the given epidemic. However, the "how" changes and grows steadily over time. In the earliest days of the study period, the tone of the policies was remarkably neutral. This trend faded away in favor of more pronounced sentiment over time, culminating in the starkest period of *negative* sentiment in the current COVID era. The trend was present for members of both parties and across both chambers.

Diving into the current COVID era explicitly, bigram network models showed that members of both parties tended to use terms that appeal to their bases in crafting bill descriptions. For example, Republicans invoked "China" and "small business," whereas Democrats invoked terms like "Medicaid" and "fair housing." An additional striking pattern is that Republicans are much more homogenous within their ranks as to the number and types of terms used. This is in comparison to Democrats, who use a much wider set of terms and cover many more topics in their policies. These patterns are in line with similar research demonstrating that the Democratic base is more fractious compared to the Republican base, which tends to be focused more on ideological purity and consistency (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016).

EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

This exploration begins with the time dimension, and then is followed by the partisan dimension, and is organized by two time periods: *pre-COVID* (1973–2018) and *COVID* (2019–2020). There are five sections comprising the analysis: first, descriptive differences between the *COVID* and *pre-COVID* eras; second, topic models (the "what" question) and sentiment analysis (the "how" question) by decade; third, sentiment analysis by decade *and* party, bringing in the partisan dimension; fourth, deeper exploration into topic models for the *COVID* era only; and finally, bigram networks for the *COVID* era only.

Data and Preprocessing

The data used in this project include metadata on all bills related to (1) COVID-19 (spanning 2019 to 2020), and (2) epidemics broadly defined over a longer period, from 1973 to 2018 (i.e., policymaking in the *pre-COVID* era). These data were scraped from congress.gov and are also available in the C-SPAN Archives. The bill-level data includes several useful features: Congress number (e.g., 115th), year sponsored, descriptive bill title (different from and longer than short bill title), primary bill sponsor (name, district/state, and party affiliation), date of bill introduction, number of cosponsors, initial committee assignment, date of most recent action, and the most recent action (e.g., referred to another committee).

From the bill data, a corpus was constructed based on the long, or "descriptive," bill titles. In some cases these titles, which act as brief summaries of the bills, are dozens of words in length. Thus, this choice was largely made for reasons of computational efficiency, such that if the full bill text were used, not only would the bill text offer a noisier signal as to the intent, and tone impacted by the legal jargon comprising congressional bill text, but also the massive size of the corpus would have led to an infeasible processing task for most personal computers. Substantively, long bill titles are carefully developed to give a summary of the full bill, thereby offering a signal of authors' intentions and goals behind writing the bill in the first place.

With the corpus of long bill titles constructed, I preprocessed and staged the data in line with traditional text mining techniques, including removing stop words (extraneous terms like the articles "the" and "a," but also domain-specific terms like "act" and "bill" that fail to add substantive meaning to the text), removing numbers and punctuation, stripping white space left behind from preprocessing, and performing various other cleaning tasks. The result is a corpus that is a bag of words, wherein word order is not important compared to the inclusion of words.

The full corpus was then staged as a document-term matrix (DTM), where documents (bills) are rows and individual terms are columns. Elements of the matrix are term frequencies. DTMs are required for fitting topic models. The other two techniques described below, sentiment analysis and bigram networks, do not require the data to be staged as a DTM, but rather require the corpus to be tokenized, or broken down into smaller chunks of text. For my purposes, I used two tokenizers for these stages respectively: *word* (single words) and *bigram* (two-word combinations).

Methods

Though deployed across five stages, there are three main text mining techniques used in this chapter: topic models, sentiment analysis, and bigram networks.

First, regarding topic models, there are a variety of ways of thinking about and modeling topic structure in text. But in general, most of these methods share the same goal: to uncover the latent structure of topics that define the "what" of a corpus—that is, the topics underlying bill long titles. Topic models of this sort are considered unsupervised, where there is no ground truth conditioning the modeling process, as well as a lack of an expected outcome from the run of the algorithm. Rather, the core assumption of topic models is that some structure of topics is *latent* and exists across the full document space. So, the task is to uncover these topics that likely characterize the space most efficiently. Importantly, as this is an unsupervised task, there is no set number of topics that formally defines the space; there are no labels. Rather, there is some configuration of topics that likely exist and precede production of the documents and words themselves. The goal is to recover this latent topic structure.

The topic model leveraged in this project is latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) (Blei et al., 2003). In brief, LDA is an algorithm that starts with assuming a mixture of topics, *k*, which defines the document-feature space. Assuming the topics and topic memberships are Dirichlet distributed, the goal is to find the configuration of topics that represent the space the best. "Best" defined here is the unique combinations of words contributing to each topic. Each topic, then, is defined by a combination of words that frequently co-occur to some degree of proportion. For example, a topic relating to "America" might have the terms "United" and "States" associated with it to high degrees. Then, at the aggregate level, the optimal set of topics defining the corpus is a blend of topics that are individually compact, and well-separated from all other topics. This result would suggest not only that the topics are well-defined but that the corpus is clearly composed of a set of topics, as opposed to being a more opaque blend of topics.[1]

The next method used is sentiment analysis, or "sentiment scoring." This method measures the overall tone of a corpus based on the frequency of words that occur in the corpus as well as appear in a sentiment dictionary. A common use of sentiment analysis is to score some text as more "positive" or "negative" overall based on frequency of "positive" terms versus "negative" terms. Scoring is carried out based on the choice of tokenizer, which is the size of text into which the full corpus is broken down. For my purposes, all sentiment scores are based on a *word* tokenizer for a more granular look at the text. This is compared to many other possible tokenizers, such as scoring by sentences or even full paragraphs. The idea is that the algorithm uses a supplied dictionary of words that are scored as either "positive" (1) or "negative" (−1) and then scores words accordingly in the corpus that also appears in the dictionary. I use the Bing dictionary for all analyses that leverage sentiment analysis (Liu, 2012). For example, suppose a document includes the term "happy." If this term is also included in the sentiment dictionary and is scored as a "positive" (1) word, then this word gets a score of 1 in the text. The final step is to sum and average the scores to give a summary of the sentiment of a corpus, which in my case is either more negative or positive on balance. This is a simple, yet powerful approach to understand the tone and thus the "how" of a set of documents.

Lastly, I use bigram networks in the final stage. These networks are similar to topic models. Yet, instead of searching the space for an optimal configuration of topics that are defined by a set of words that frequently co-occur, bigram networks build a network representation of connections between the usage of terms (two, to be precise; hence *bi*gram). The nodes in the network represent the use of a term, and the edges represent the connections between the usage of multiple terms. Edges can be weighted to capture the frequencies of term co-occurrence, as I demonstrate below. These are extremely valuable for visualizing how terms that occur in a common space are linked to usage of other terms. This gives unique insight into the focus of the full document space.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptively Exploring the "Epidemics" Space

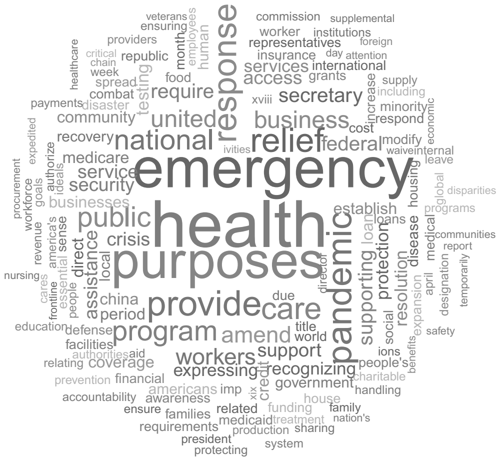
In the first stage of analysis, I present a high-level look at policymaking on epidemics across the two main periods: *COVID* (2019–2020) and *pre-COVID* (1973–2018). The purpose of this first stage is to offer a launching place to understand subsequent results exploring whether differences in policymaking exist over time. Importantly, in this first stage I am not yet looking at parties. Rather, I am setting the stage for exploring the first dimension of "time," which addresses the evolutionary question. Descriptive trends are presented in two word clouds in Figure 12.1, with the COVID era (a) and the pre-COVID era (b). Note that in light of limitations in diagnosing word clouds, bar plots of the top terms used at least 150 times are presented in Figures A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix to this chapter.

A few notable trends emerge. First, a rallying call is present in both eras, including terms like "emergency," "national," "supporting," "resolution," and so on. This is in line with naive expectations on government policymaking related to major epidemics, where the government is fulfilling its representational duty to respond to a crisis, while also signaling shows of strength and unity.

Further, it is interesting to note that in the pre-COVID era (Figure 12.1 [b]) the terms related to the epidemic in question are used. For example, terms like "hiv," "aids," and "drug" are used. This is in comparison to much less frequently used terms that might be associated with COVID-19, such as "COVID" or "coronavirus." Rather, the COVID-era plot (Figure 12.1 [a]) seems to focus more on relief-type legislation and response, which makes sense given the unprecedented widespread nature and impact of COVID-19.

Topic Models and Sentiment Analysis Over Time

Building on the descriptive patterns discussed in the previous section and shown in Figures 12.1 (a) and (b), I now shift to probe the "what" and "how" questions explicitly. I start with constructing topic models by decade to explore the "what"



(a)

(b)

FIGURE 12.1 Word clouds of most frequently used terms: (a) COVID era; (b) pre-COVID era.

question pertaining to the topics that are present in the legislation across all periods in the data set. I then pivot to the "how" question by leveraging sentiment analysis, which will build on the "what" and give a clue as to the general tone of these bills on epidemics across the full study period.

Notably, with these two analytical approaches, I am interested in the evolutionary or "time" dimension discussed above. Topic models will help address related questions like Does evolution exist, or are bill topics relatively stable? and

Are foci of topic structures similar between eras or not? Sentiment analysis will also help address the evolutionary question, but in addition it will help address slightly different questions like What is the tone, and does it shift over time? and Do we see differences across chambers?

First, I present the results of the topic models. Recall that the goal of topic models is to find the optimal latent topic structure that likely defines a corpus. As this is an unsupervised problem, though there are many ways to think about optimality. For my purposes, I calculate and compare perplexity scores, which describe how well a model predicts some sample. Note, LDA models are generative, meaning they are interested in predicting distributions, which in my case is a mixture of topics in a single space. Calculating multiple perplexity scores varying the number of topics, k, in the mixture, I will pick the value of k for which perplexity is smallest, signaling that mixture of topics does the best job of predicting the full sample of terms. The optimal perplexity score, and value of k, varies across decade subsamples. These scores are presented in Figure 12.2. I then used the optimal k values for each of the respective topic models fit to each subsample of bills from each respective decade. The top words in each decade across each topic are presented in Figure 12.3.

A few notable trends are clear in the terms that characterize the different topics over time. First and foremost, in addition to the perplexity values in Figure 12.2, it is clear when zooming in on decades/periods that different topic structures define different periods. This is an important pattern as it provides a first clue that policymaking on epidemics is not a static endeavor. This initial signal would have been lost if a global topic model were fit on the full document space.

In the COVID era in plot (a) in Figure 12.3, four topics are addressing four distinct areas (a pattern that is corroborated by the clearly lowest value of perplexity at $k = 4$): topic 1 involves domestic relief for businesses, Medicaid, and general emergency response; topic 2 involves global security and health, seen by the three terms comprising the topic; topic 3 involves China and international affairs; and topic 4 involves workers, care, and assistance. These four topics not only make intuitive sense but they reflect the different ways in which legislators brand their policy proposals. Indeed, some tend to focus on marketing relief effort by focusing on domestic workers for example, whereas other bills tend to focus on the global aspects of the pandemic (topics 2 and 3).

Further (as shown in Figures 12.2 and 12.3), the 2000s decade (plot [c]) is more succinctly defined by only two topics, though less clearly separated compared to the COVID era (plot [a]) or the 1980s (plot [e]). This is seen in the appearance

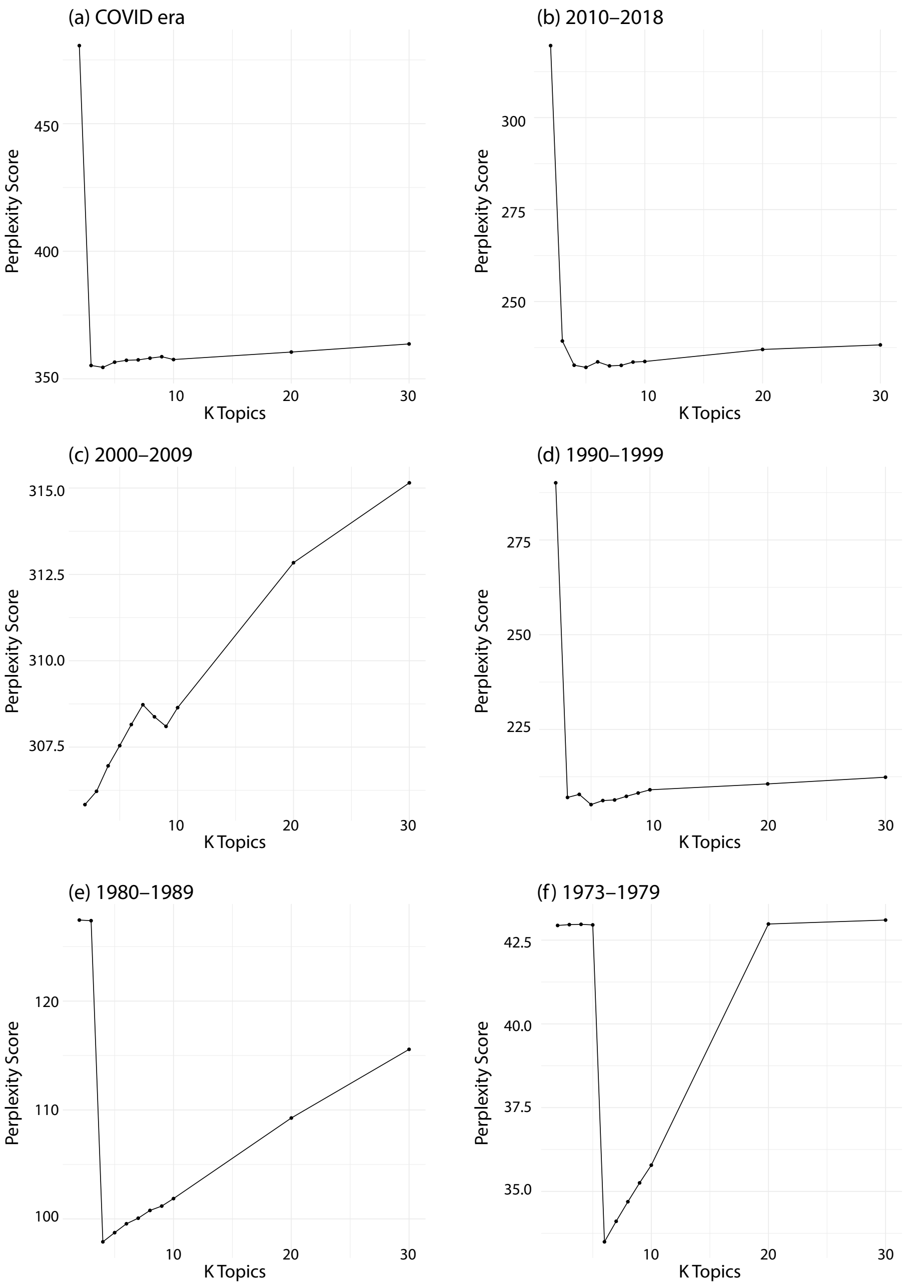
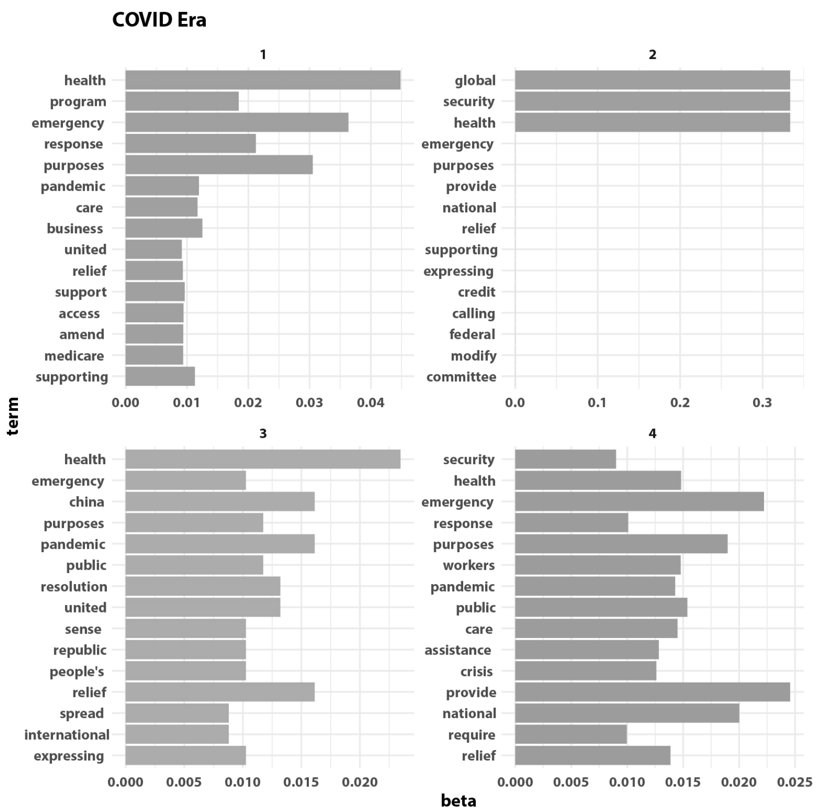


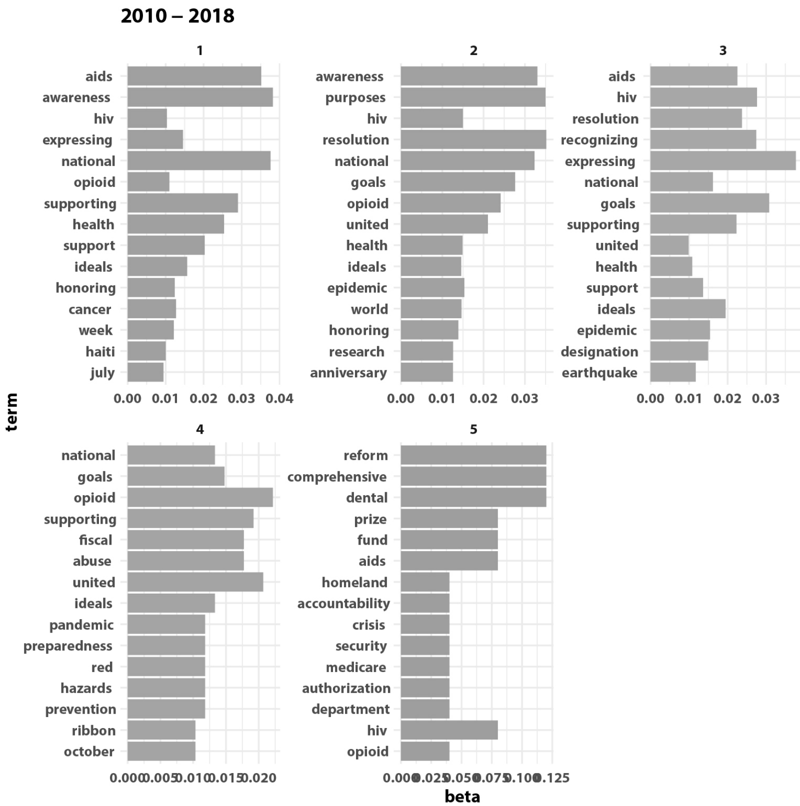
FIGURE 12.2 Perplexity across k topics by decade. (a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s.

of several of the same terms in both topics. Substantively, this means that there is not a clear topic structure in legislation branded as addressing an "epidemic" in this decade. In the absence of a clear epidemic such as COVID-19, the casting of an epidemic (via use of the term) could be much more widely understood. For example, in plot (c) for the 2000s, topic 1 has terms like security and defense, whereas topic 2 has terms like education and health. Thus, while there may not be clear separation between types of epidemics and thus topics, it is still possible to pick up on temporal cues as to those issues considered as "epidemics" by policymakers at the time.



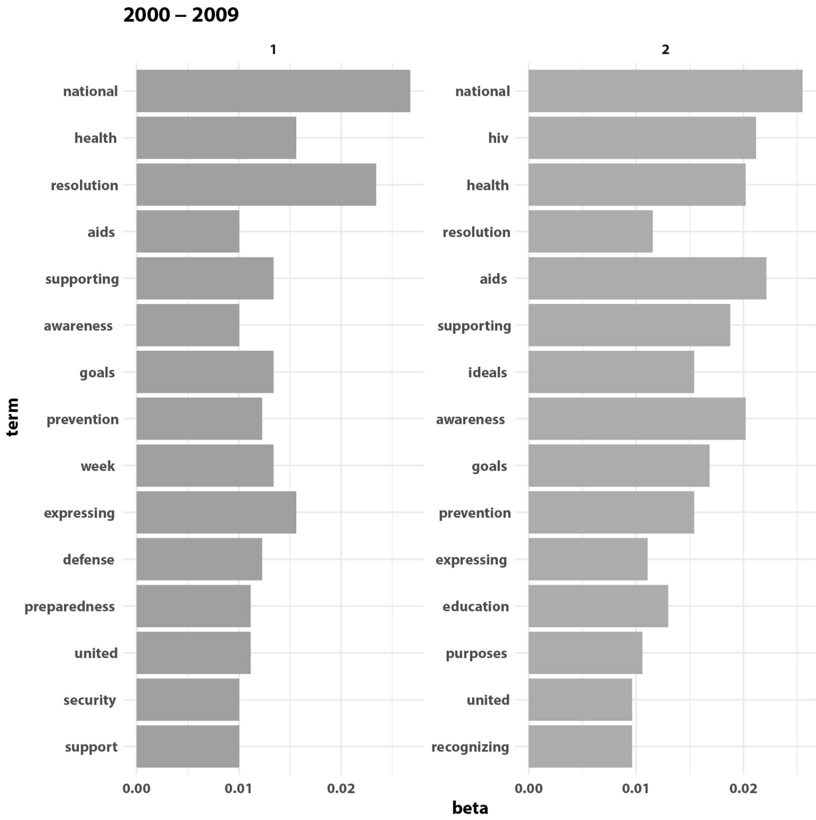
(a)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k*.
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s. (*Figure continued*)



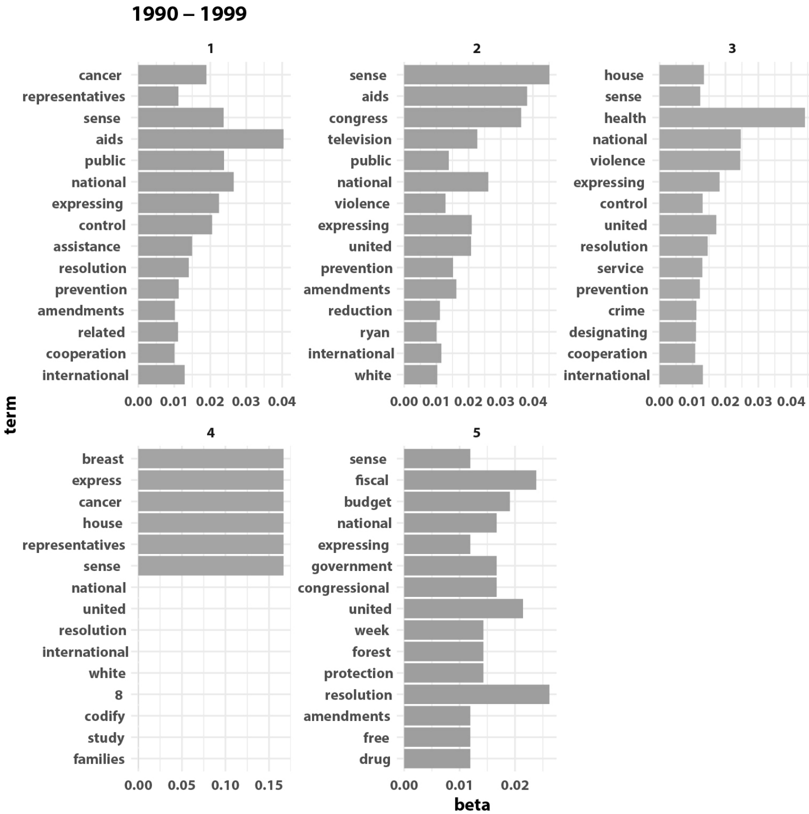
(b)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k* (*continued*).
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s. (*Figure continued*)



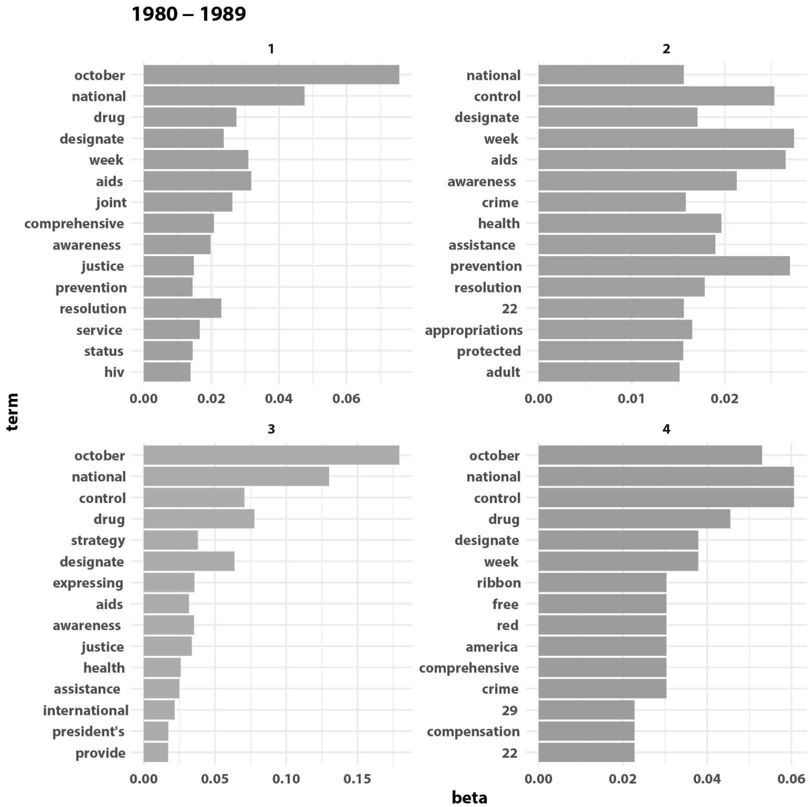
(c)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k* (*continued*).
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s. (*Figure continued*)



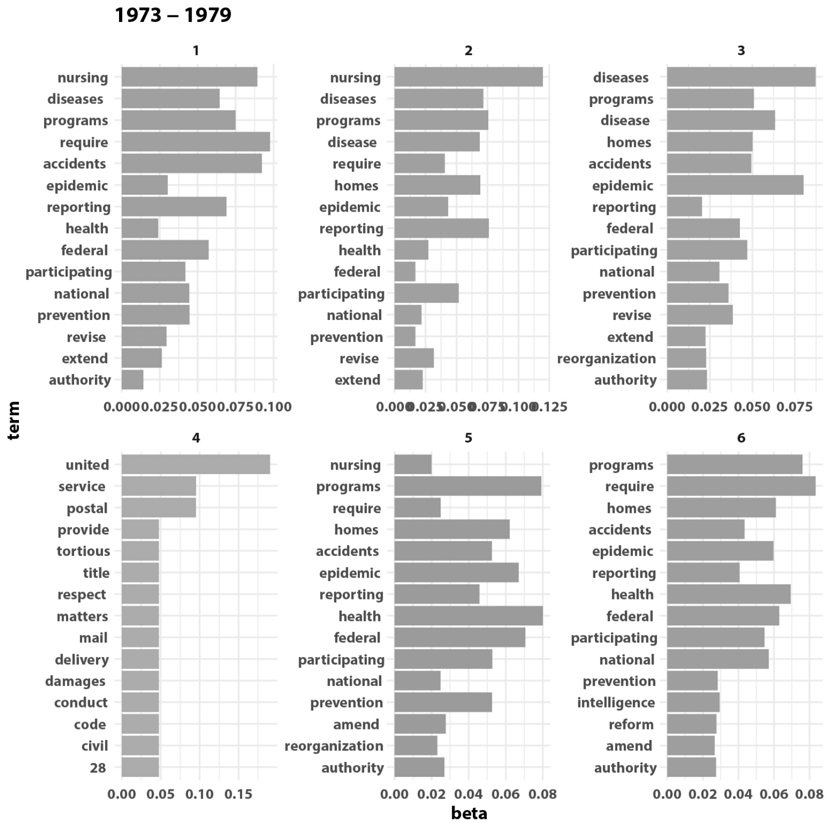
(d)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k* (*continued*).
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s. (*Figure continued*)



(e)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k* (*continued*).
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s. (*Figure continued*)



(f)

FIGURE 12.3 Topic model terms at optimal *k* (*continued*).
(a) COVID era, (b) 2010s, (c) 2000s, (d) 1990s, (e) 1980s, (f) 1970s.

To the evolutionary question at this point, it seems as though the content of proposed legislation tends to vary expressly with the epidemic in question, regardless of the specific epidemic and however broadly or narrowly defined that epidemic may be. Thus, to the "what" question on the topics comprising the introduced legislation over time, it appears as though policymaking is not evolutionary in the sense that trends in preceding time periods overtly spill over to affect topics in subsequent time periods. In other words, the 1990s do not seem *dependent* on the 1980s in the branding and definition of policy responses to epidemics. Rather, the epidemics of the decade are seemingly responded to with policy accordingly.

Building on these relatively stable patterns pertaining to the content of the policy proposals, I pivot now to explore the "how" question to add to the depth of the evolutionary question. More specifically, I am interested in understanding whether the tone in which policy responses to epidemics is evolutionary such that tone type (positive/negative) as well as intensity (proportion of positive/negative tone of the overall document space) builds over time, remains relatively stable, or decreases over time.

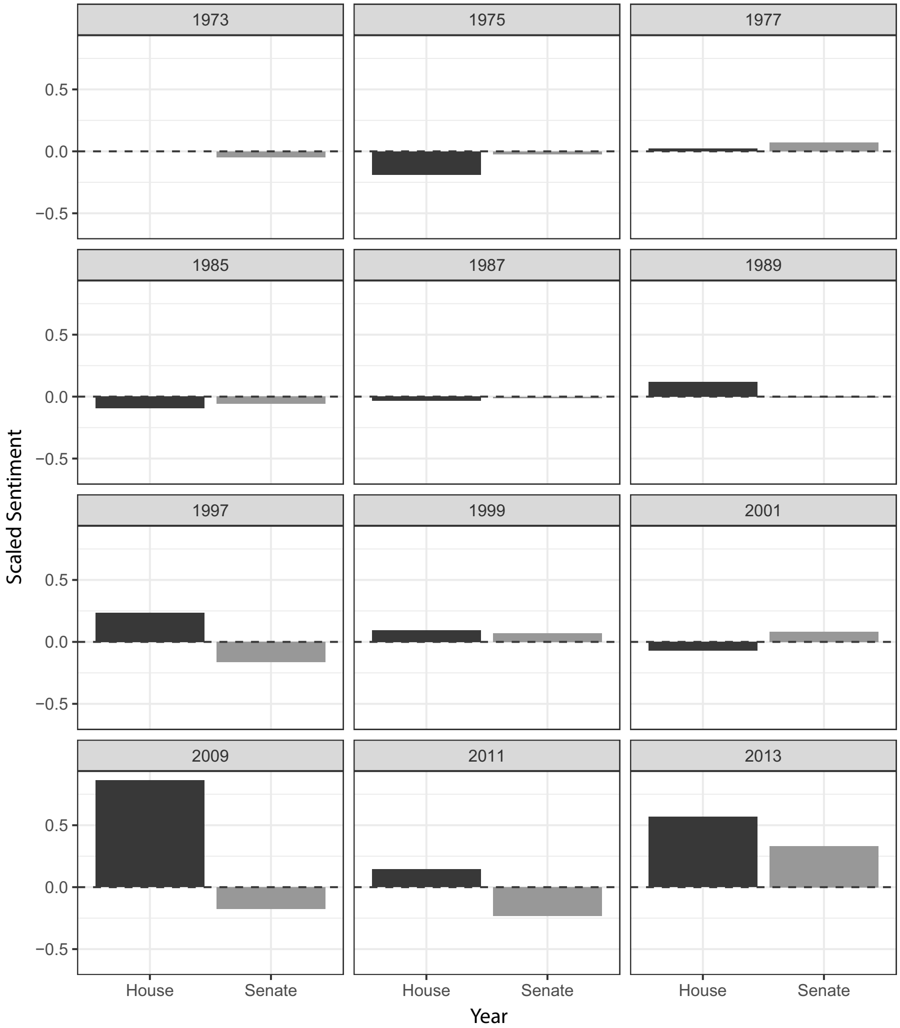
To accomplish this task I conducted a sentiment analysis by Congress, the results of which are presented in Figure 12.4.

Before discussing patterns, it is important to note that the sentiment scores presented in Figure 12.4 are scaled (divided by its standard deviation) but not mean-centered. This choice was made to account for variance in overall sponsorship rates over time, as well as across chambers, where the Senate typically introduces fewer bills than the House given the smaller size of membership. Further, the scores are disaggregated by chamber (yet not by party at this point), with dark gray for the U.S. House and light gray for the U.S. Senate. To read Figure 12.4, values below the 0.0 cut point suggest greater negative sentiment in the given chamber's sponsored bills on epidemics for the given Congress (two-year period). Values above the 0.0 dashed line point to greater positive tone for the given chamber and Congress.

The pattern indeed appears evolutionary, where in the earliest days of the study period (1970s–1980s), the tone of bills is largely neutral, with relatively small dips below and rises above the 0.0 cut point. Indeed, in some Congresses there were no sentiment scores registered, implying ultimate neutrality in tone. The intensity grows over time, picking up in the 1990s and culminating in the largest *negative* dip in both chambers in the current COVID era (the bottom right plot in Figure 12.4).

This pattern in bill sentiment is notably different from the patterns from the topic models, where different topic structures define different decades and different terms made up the topics by decade as well. Rather, regarding the "how" question pertaining to the tone of the bills on epidemics, we see a steadily building *intensity* in tone, both positive and negative, across both chambers over time.

At this point, a few key trends are clear. First, the topics of the proposed bills do not substantively deviate from the epidemics at hand (e.g., topics tend to focus on whatever the given epidemic is), implying little change in the types of policy being offered. Yet, when considering the tone or "how" of the bills, there



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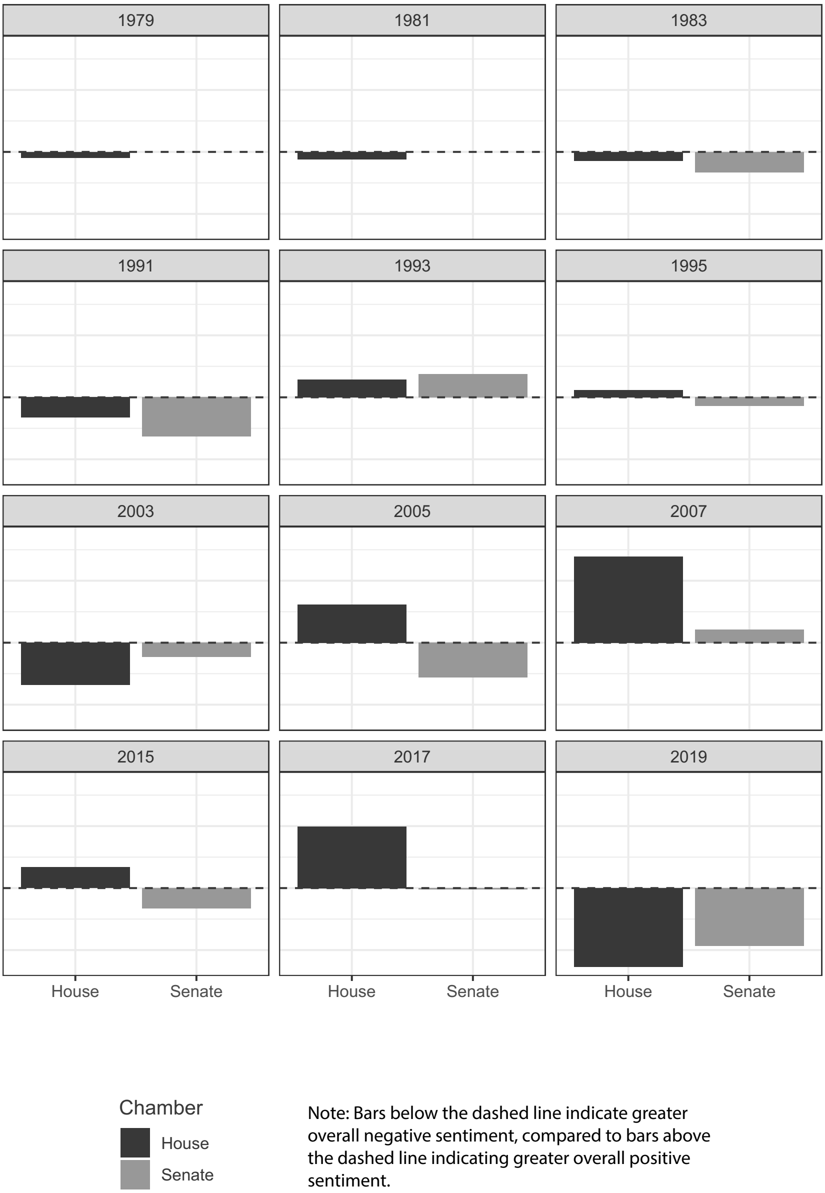


FIGURE 12.4 Scaled sentiment scores over time, by chamber.

appears to be an evolution in the tone of the policymaking. In the earliest days, the sentiment was largely neutral or absent entirely, with the intensity of tone of epidemic-related legislation increasing in more recent years. There was a spike in overly positive tone in the mid-2000s, and then a bottoming out of tone for both chambers in the COVID era (2019–2020).

In sum, the results from these two stages of analysis indicate that there seem to be evolutionary dynamics in *how* policy on epidemics is branded, but not necessarily in *that which* the policy is addressing.

Partisan Differences in Bill Sentiment

At this point, I pivot to address the other dimension of partisanship. I begin with this third stage in the analysis on sentiment analysis again, but this time disaggregated by the party of the sponsor instead of the chamber as in the previous stage. The results for the party-focused sentiment analysis are presented in Figure 12.5.

Figure 12.5 is read the same as Figure 12.4, where scaled sentiment below the cut point on the y-axis suggests a generally negative tone in sponsored legislation compared to scaled sentiment scores above the 0.0 cut point, suggesting a generally positive tone in the proposed legislation addressing epidemics. In Figure 12.5, though, color varies by the party of the bill sponsor, with dark gray for Republicans, black for Democrats, and light gray for Independents.

A strikingly similar pattern exists at the party level as it did previously in Figure 12.4 at the chamber level, where tone intensity, both positive and negative, increases steadily over time. Also as in Figure 12.4, in Figure 12.5 there is a prominent drop in tone positivity (or an increase in negative tone) in the current COVID era. This suggests that there is likely an evolution to tone in proposed legislation along a partisan dimension as well. Both parties seem to be following a similar pattern. Yet is this enough to support the anecdotal motivation at the outset that policymaking on this apolitical issue of pandemics is characterized by divided partisan politics? Perhaps as a clue, but not in a systematic way. Indeed, the tone swings widely, but these patterns are not beholden to a single party, nor are they substantively political in nature, where one party might be more negative or positive than the other party. I come back to this evolutionary pattern in tone and limitations relating to partisan division in the discussion section at the end of this chapter.

Topic Structure of the COVID Era

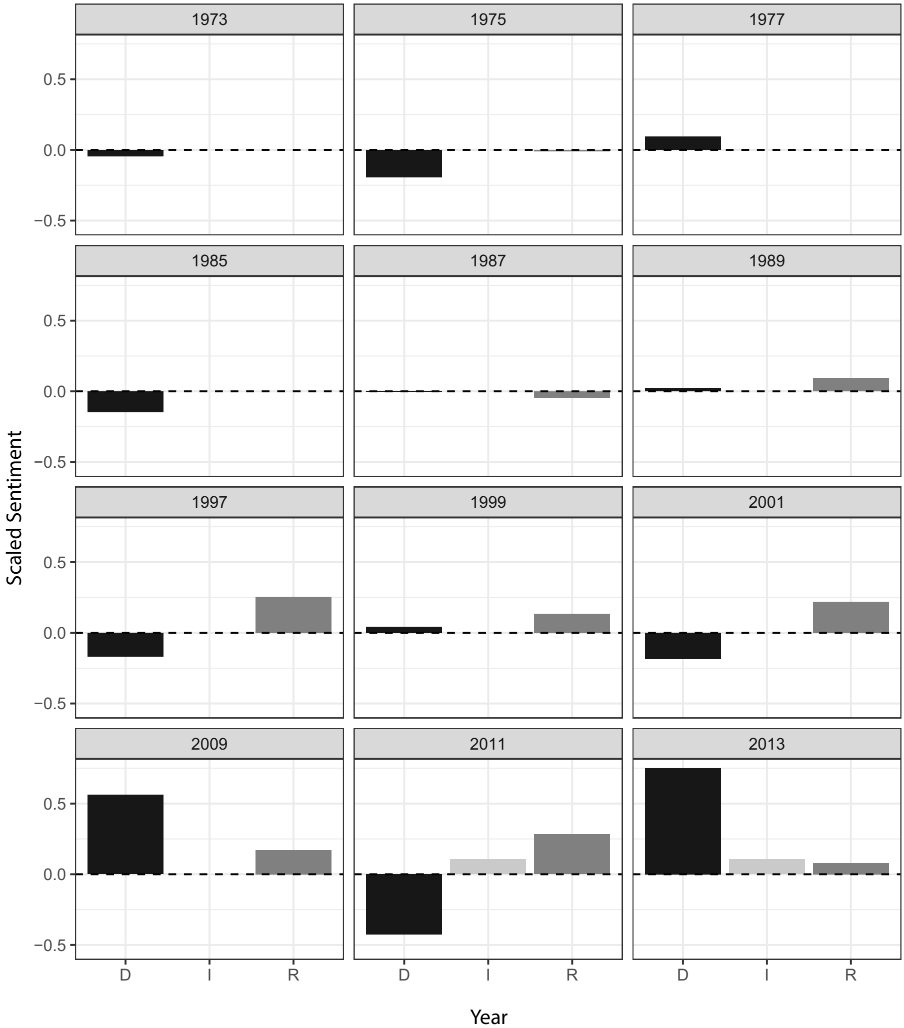
Given the contextual clarity around a long series of legislating on epidemics in American politics, I now shift focus to the COVID era to better understand the nature of policymaking in response to the massive epidemic with which the country is currently grappling. In this stage, I continue to probe the partisan dimension, but only in the COVID era.

In light of the topic model results previously found, it may be reasonable to expect both parties to discuss COVID similarly. However, given the introductory anecdotal evidence on fractious approaches to policymaking on COVID-19, there is room to expect the parties to approach COVID from very different perspectives as well. These differences may be present in their proposed legislation. Thus, I return to the "what" question explored using topic models in the COVID era only.

Recall in the earlier topic models, I did not explicitly account for party. At this stage, while I will not account for party in the estimation of the model (e.g., using a structural topic model), I will instead proceed to fit a topic model with $k = 2$ and pull the results apart by party affiliation to understand whether latent partisan differences exist in topics. To do so, I start by examining the proportions of γ values by party affiliation. γ scores from topic models measure the probability a bill is associated with a given topic. Conditioning by party of the sponsor, I gain insight into the probabilities of bills *sponsored by different parties* being associated with one of the two topics. The results are shown in Table 12.1.

Most notably in Table 12.1, the probabilities of Democrats and Independents sponsoring bills related to topic 1 is higher than for topic 2, with $\gamma = 0.832$ and 0.528 for Democrats and Independents, respectively. This makes intuitive sense in that Independents in Congress nearly always caucus with Democrats. And adding to this, Republicans are more likely to sponsor bills related to topic 2 at $\gamma = 0.669$, compared to topic 1, with a value of 0.331. As such, there seems to be a clear partisan distinction in sponsored bills. Though stability in general topics was uncovered earlier, here I explicitly account for party of the sponsors, allowing for partisan differences in policymaking to emerge. But what terms define these topics? See Figure 12.6 for a bar plot of the topics with color conditioned on party.

In Figure 12.6 there is clear partisan difference in the branding of proposed legislation. For example, Democrats' bills include terms like "pandemic" and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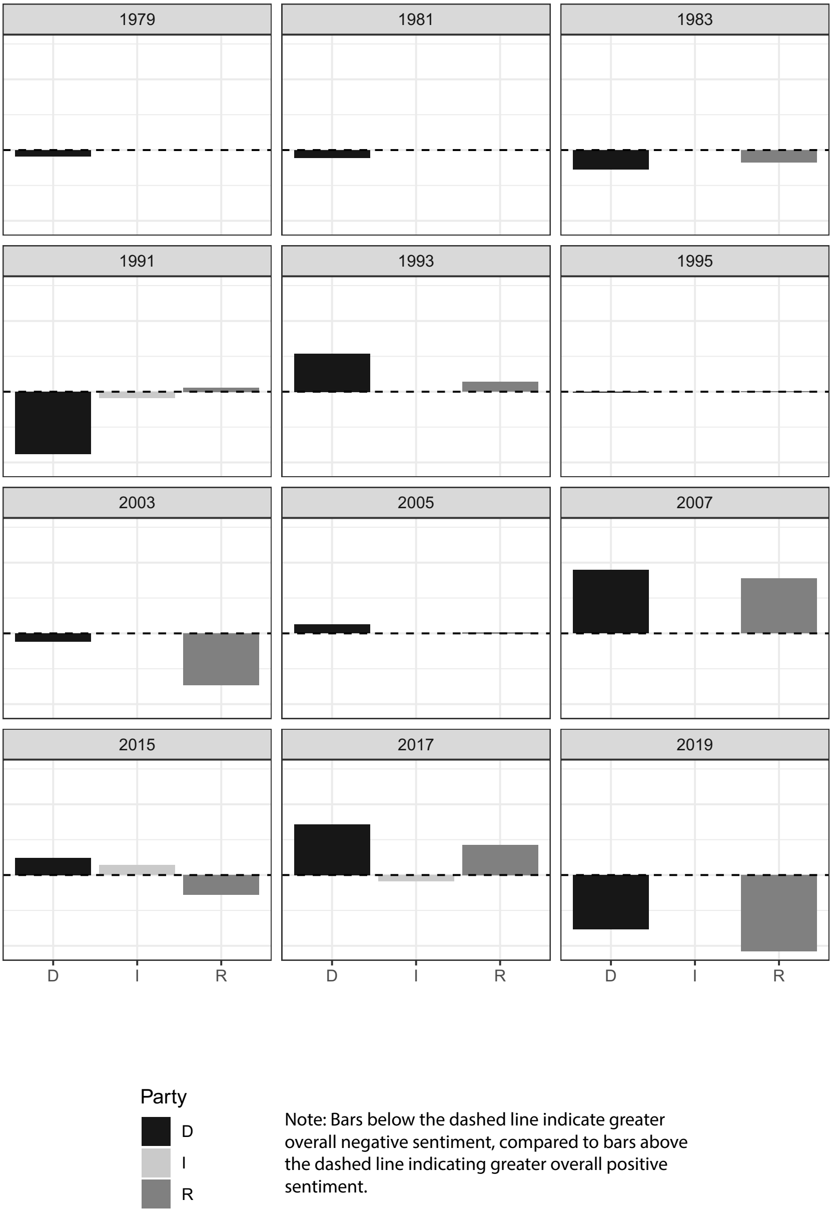


Note: Bars below the dashed line indicate greater overall negative sentiment, compared to bars above the dashed line indicating greater overall positive sentiment.

FIGURE 12.5 Scaled sentiment scores over time, by party.

TABLE 12.1 *γ by Party and Topic*

Party	Topic	Probability (γ)
Democrat	1	0.832
Independent	1	0.528
Republican	1	0.331
Democrat	2	0.168
Independent	2	0.472
Republican	2	0.669

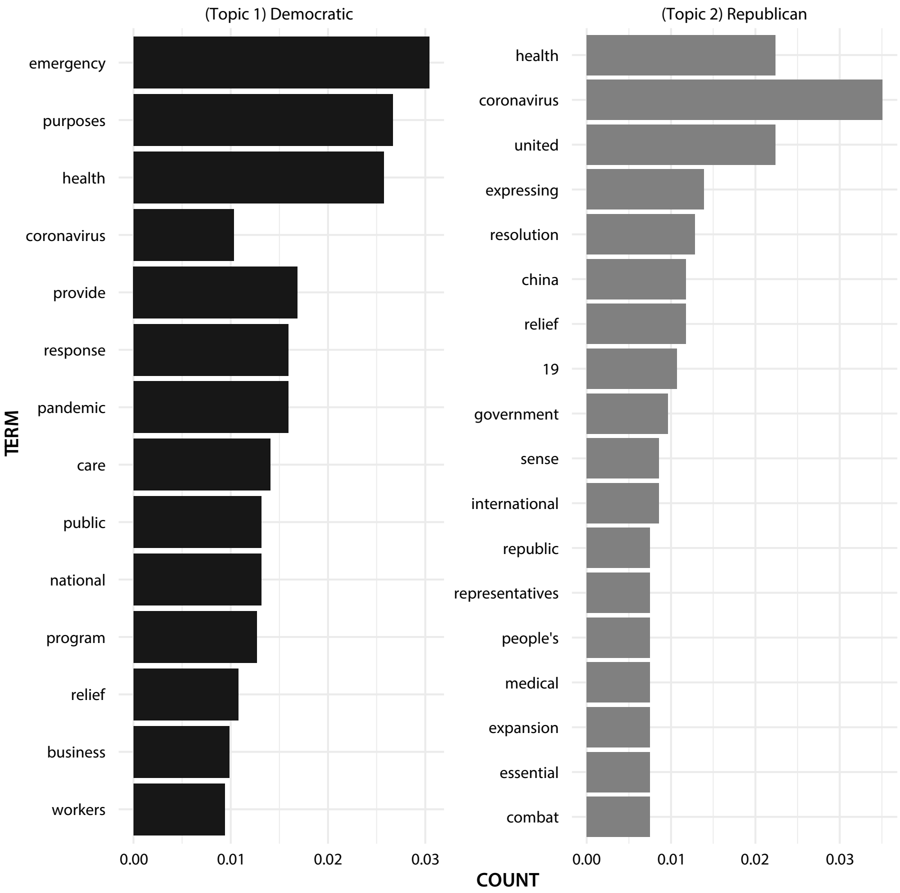


FIGURE 12.6 Topics in the COVID era, by party.

"workers," whereas Republicans' bills include terms like "China," "combat," and "international." Though the motivation driving the use of these terms is unable to be obtained from the current analysis, of greatest value for present purposes is the partisan distinction in types of bills sponsored in responding to the same apolitical pandemic of COVID-19.

This stage gives a closer look at the partisan question, suggesting that policymaking as an expression of elite responsiveness in the current congressional climate is one distinguished by party division. Whether this is a normatively "good" or "bad" trend is beyond the scope and goal of this project. Rather, this project is interested in exploring these data in search of natural patterns. The unsupervised nature of the modeling strategy allows the structure to emerge. And the emergent structure points to partisan forces at work in policymaking in response to COVID-19.

Exploring Networks of Partisan Term Co-Occurrence in the COVID Era

In the final stage of analysis, I continue with focus on the COVID era. I build on the previous findings that the parties approach policymaking in response to COVID-19 differently. Now, I am interested in understanding the structure of term usage within and across both major parties. To do so, I leverage bigram networks. I weight the edges of the network connecting use of bigrams to capture the frequencies of co-occurrence of terms. I break down term usage by party and present networks in Figures 12.7 and 12.8 for Democrats and Republicans, respectively.

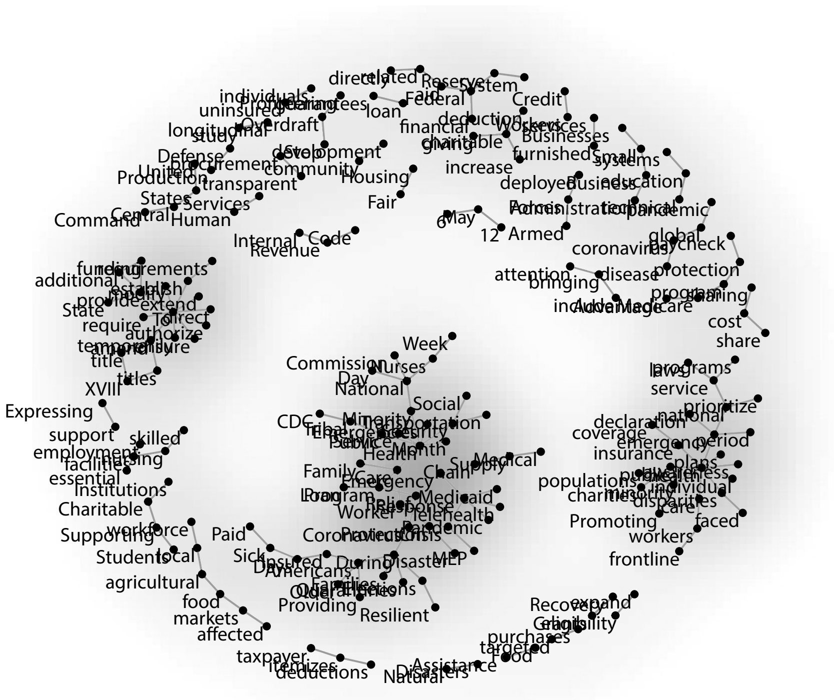
Substantively, this approach allows for visualizing usages of the terms by both major parties in the COVID era to understand the topology of how terms are used together. The goal of this final stage is to place the broader topic trends found in the previous sections into context, which is exploration of patterns *within* party ranks. Cross-party comparisons are also possible. But the focus of this section is to offer a window into how parties use and recycle certain words in their proposed policies, giving another angle of policymaking dynamics in the era of COVID-19.

For both figures, the network is an undirected, weighted graph with shading varying by weighted edges, such that darker shades mean greater frequencies of bigram usage.

In Figure 12.7, the volume of bigrams Democrats used as well as their interconnection is much greater than that of the Republicans, shown in Figure 12.8. Some

DEMOCRATIC BILLS

Bigram Network Representations



Note: Shading indicates greater density of co-occurrence.

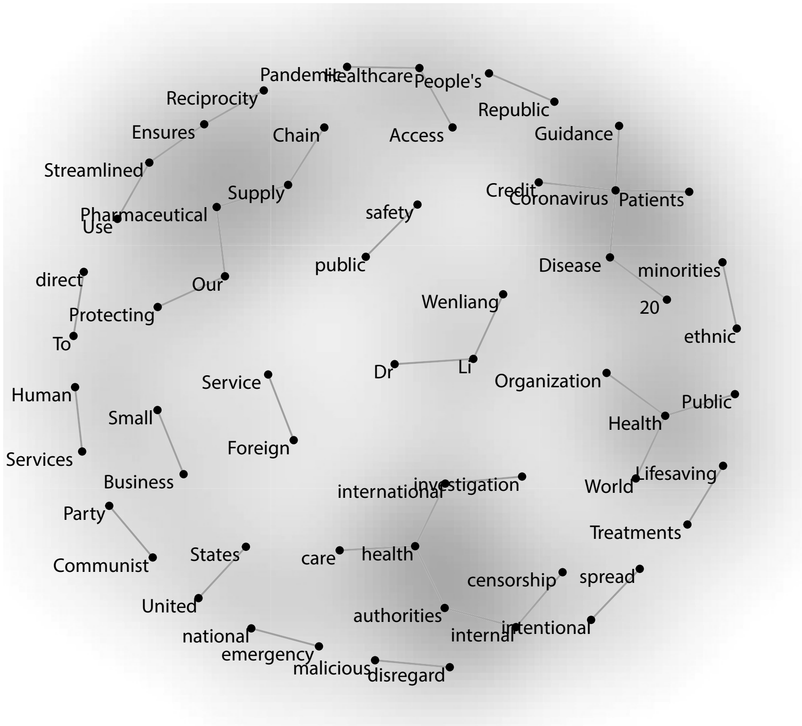
FIGURE 12.7 Bigram networks of Democratic bills.

of the dense regions in Figure 12.7 for Democrats involve discussion on extending and authorizing governmental funding (seen in the upper left of Figure 12.7). The other dense region in Figure 12.7 is toward the middle, which focuses on worker relief, Medicaid, and families. These results are consistent with findings to this point.

Regarding the patterns for Republican bills in Figure 12.8, not only are fewer terms used, implying greater homogeneity and consistency within their ranks, but there is also a relatively high, consistent density across the full space (i.e., darker shading in most of the network). This pattern means that these bigrams are used together and frequently, reflecting a possible strategy within the party (e.g., sticking to party-derived talking points, organized policy priorities, and so forth). Some of the terms in the Republican policies include "foreign service,"

REPUBLICAN BILLS

Bigram Network Representations



Note: Shading indicates greater density of co-occurrence.

FIGURE 12.8 Bigram networks of Republican bills.

"lifesaving treatments," and "small business." While these terms might be expected in the context of such a massive pandemic, some other frequently used terms are unique to Republicans, such as "Communist Party," "protecting our pharmaceutical supply chain," and "People's Republic" (possibly "of China").

Building on topic model results in Figure 12.6, Republicans seem more focused on responding to COVID in the contexts of securing the domestic economy and the international aspects of COVID (e.g., "People's Republic," "World Health Organization," "Dr. Li Wenliang," and so forth). Democrats, inversely, focus virtually zero attention on such international aspects and instead focus efforts very broadly on domestic politics and policies, in sum resulting in clear partisan differences in responding to COVID-19.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To recap, a few key patterns emerged across the five stages of analysis. Regarding the time dimension and the question of evolutionary dynamics, there were two dominant trends. First, the "what" question pertaining to the topics of focus tend to remain relatively stable over time. Policymakers tend to address the given epidemic with epidemic-specific terms in their policies, implying virtually no evolutionary, time-dependent process. However, the more prominent differences that point to evolutionary dynamics were the shifts in overall tone of the proposed policies. In the earlier days of the study period (1970s–1980s), the tone was relatively muted, with few positive- or negative-toned policies being offered by either party or chamber. In the 1990s and early 2000s, this tone, both positive and negative, significantly ticks upward, where more extreme terms are used in policy descriptions. This pattern culminates in the most recent era of COVID-19 (2019–2020), where the negative tone defines policymaking and is starker than in any other period and across both chambers *and* parties.

Regarding the partisan dimension, in the COVID era specifically, the parties cast their solutions to COVID in starkly different lights, highlighting different realms and focus within their party ranks. Democrats highlighted domestic responses on average, while Republicans highlighted international actors and responses to a greater degree. This suggests that there is indeed a partisan flavor to policymaking regarding COVID-19. Yet, whether this qualifies as "bitter" or "polarized" politics and policymaking is a trickier question and is addressed more below.

Though they are exploratory, from these results it is clear that, perhaps as expected, the two major American political parties are different in their approaches to governing in the time of COVID-19. Yet, despite these partisan differences, the intensity and negativity of tone both at the chamber and party levels has been steadily growing since the 1970s. This suggests that there is an evolutionary dynamic to epidemic policymaking, which is at a climax in the current era of COVID-19.

Limitations

Though patterns from the sentiment analysis appear to have been evolutionary and growing in intensity, this may not be a reflection of division or bitter policymaking but rather a reflection of the grave nature of COVID-19. Such a negative epidemic could certainly be accompanied by an increase in negative-toned legislation.

Yet while this may be the case, it would make sense that negative-toned legislation should characterize virtually all epidemics across all periods given the scope and nature of these types of social problems. Indeed, epidemics are cast as emergencies and issues of prime importance for the government to address, seen at the first stage in Figure 12.1, where frequently used terms in both pre-COVID and COVID eras implied that epidemics are emergent issues.

The tone of related legislation, then, should also be more negative than positive if tone is a function of subject and rather than an era of harsh or bitter policymaking. Yet there are numerous dramatic spikes in positive sentiment that grow over time. This could be a reflection of the approach to branding the policy response (e.g., a triumph over the epidemic in question). Given the plausibility of numerous explanations underlying these patterns, future research should take up the question drivers behind tone and linguistic patterns in policymaking through a targeted causal study to shed light on the "why" behind these trends.

Concluding Remarks

In sum, this project is an exploratory effort focused on uncovering and understanding the contours of government policymaking as a formal response to epidemics over a long period of time. The duration of time, as well as these data being the clearest signal of government priorities, make this an ideal place from which to launch an exploration of many other related topics. For example, future work might consider the role of media and reporting on government responses in times of epidemics, or the presence of partisan division in policymaking surrounding epidemics like the opioid crisis or COVID-19.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTE

1. Technical details of the algorithm are omitted due to space and goals of the project but are available on request.

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APPENDIX: FIGURES A.1 AND A.2

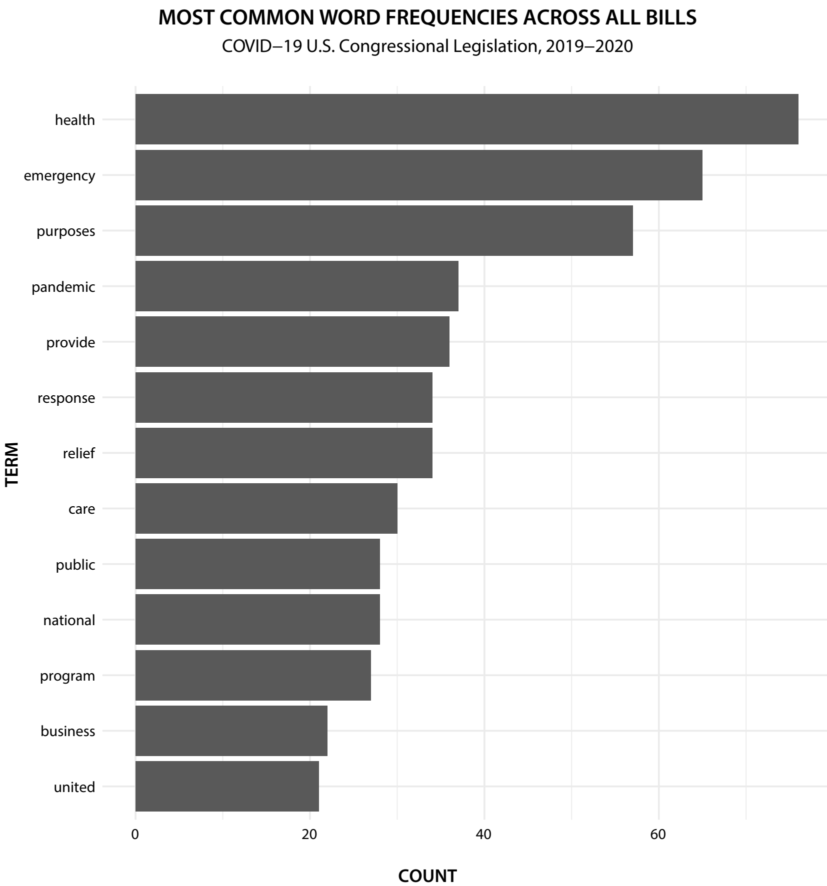

FIGURE A.1 COVID top terms used.

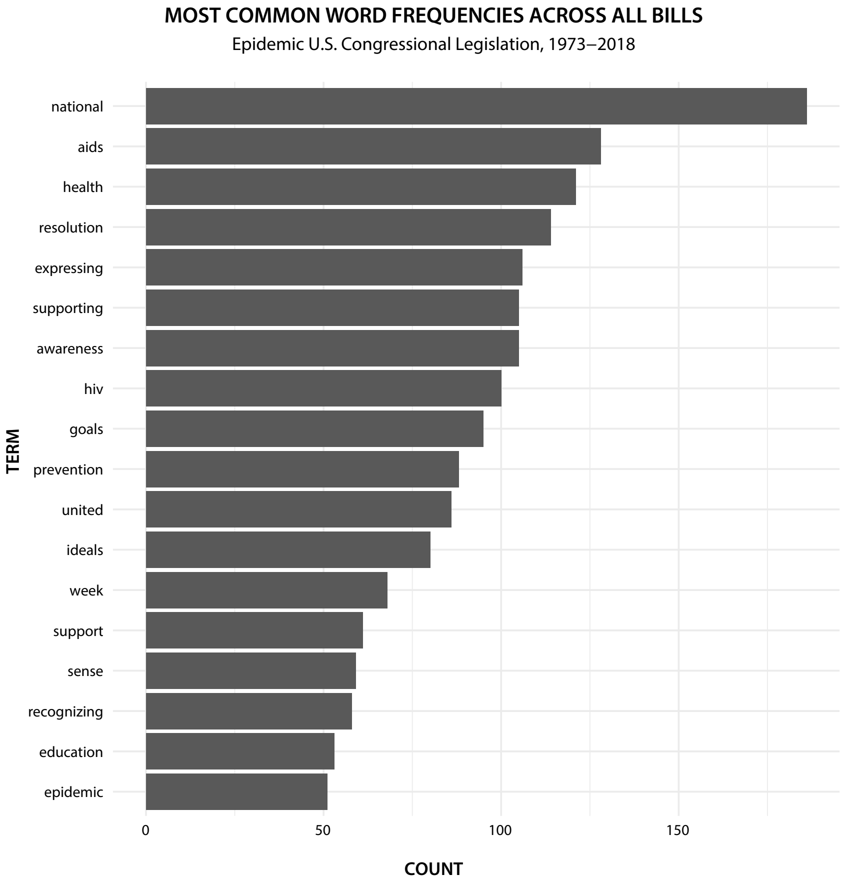

FIGURE A.2 Pre-COVID top terms used.

CONCLUSION

In this volume we have presented 12 papers on a wide variety of topics. The authors have used the C-SPAN Video Library to explore research questions in communication, politics, and history, employing a variety of research approaches and techniques. Each has asked a slightly different question and when approaching the same topic have addressed it in different ways.

This is what is exciting about this volume and the underlying research. When the call for papers goes out, we do not know what we will receive and what ideas will be conceived. Scholars each take a different question and approach. The result is a collection of research on such a range of topics and approaches.

In this volume we learned about the range of bills on COVID-19 and the role of African American women in promoting legislation. We learned about Trump rallies from one who directly observed and supervised student research and another who looked at Rust Belt appearances. We learned how members of Congress used humor adopted from late-night television often in self-effacing ways. Members of Congress were not as critical of the media as was President Trump.

A historian found that C-SPAN callers gave voice to the phenomenon he was studying and found the intertwined interactions of government and private foundations. The history of televising the Senate is carefully documented in another account.

Future conferences will open possibilities for additional research that pushes the boundaries since it is based on questions and data that C-SPAN video allows us to ask and potentially answer. That research will be published in the next volume. But at this time, let's celebrate the work of these scholars.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Bo Blew is a PhD candidate in history at Purdue University. His work explores the influence of private foundations in public policy debates since 1968. This work is part of a larger dissertation project that uses debates on energy policy, education policy, and health care as a lens to understand the growth of foundations as institutions of state administration. By uncovering the role of foundations in recent American history, this dissertation promises to break new scholarly ground by demonstrating the intersection between tax policy, political activism, and the policy-making process across the political spectrum.

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