Tribalism in American Politics: Are Partisans Guilty of Double Standards?

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Abstract

Political tribalism has increased dramatically in recent years. We explored partisan double-standards of Democratic and Republican voters across both hypothetical and real-world scenarios. In Study 1, participants rated the perceived legitimacy of election outcomes in response to hypothetical and ambiguous results from the 2020 presidential election. In Study 2 Part 1, college students and Amazon Turk volunteers rated their support of real-world presidential policies and actions. All policies/actions were attributed to Trump or Obama though they actually occurred under both presidents. In Study 2 Part 2, participants rated how bigoted various statements were; we manipulated who the utterances were attributed to (Trump v. Bill Clinton or Trump v. Martin Luther King [MLK]). Generally, Republican ratings were more favorable when statements were attributed to Trump vs. Democratic leaders while the opposite is true of Democrats. Crucially, these biases exist when evaluating identical information. Republicans and Democrats had a very small and very large tendency, respectively, to view statements as more bigoted under Trump vs. MLK. To the degree that this study can answer the question about which side is more guilty of double-standards, our results provide tentative evidence that this occurs under Democrats more than Republicans, though this overall difference may obscure important moderators. Our data provide evidence for tribal loyalty which may have significant social and political ramifications.

Keywords: Tribalism, politics, bias, motivated reasoning, partisanship

"Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself; I am large, I contain multitudes."
– Walt Whitman

Tribalism, or the tendency to view one's own tribe more favorably than others (Clark, Liu, Winegard, & Ditto, 2019), has become a core feature of contemporary political discourse. Political polarization, which refers to "the tendency of people identifying as Republicans or Democrats to view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively" (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015, p. 691) may be largely driven by tribalism. Polarization presently seems to include personal dislike and distrust of those from the other party. Members of both political parties view their opponents as hypocritical, selfish, and closed-minded (Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019). Polarization may even exist at the neural level. In one study, Democrats and Republicans viewed neutral or politically charged video content (van Baar, Halpern, & FeldmanHall, 2021). Neural synchronicity was observed among partisans viewing charged political videos, but not apolitical or uncharged political videos. Polarization is on the rise, with research suggesting that partisans have increasingly grown to dislike those of other political persuasions (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012) and opinion polls finding that 78% of people say that division between Republicans and Democrats is increasing (Pew Research Center, 2019). Indeed, in 1960, only approximately 1 in 20 parents would have been upset at the prospect of their child marrying someone who belonged to the opposing political party. By 2010, this percentage rose to one-third of Democrats and one-half of Republicans (Iyengar et al., 2012). This finding is corroborated by a Public Religion Research Institute study (Najle & Jones, 2019) showing that 35% of Republicans and 45% of Democrats would be somewhat or very unhappy if their child married someone from the opposing party. Members of opposing political parties even react differently to ostensibly non-political events, such as the COVID19 pandemic (Micalizzi, Zambrotta, & Bernstein, 2021). The consequences of polarization are increasingly discussed; a recent special feature in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences is devoted to this very issue (Levin, Milner, & Perrings, 2021).

Evolutionary Advantage of Tribalism

Tribalism itself may not be inherently bad. Throughout much of human history, tribal loyalty most likely conferred benefits as groups competed for resources (Clark & Winegard, 2020). Groups that were more cohesive may have been at an evolutionary advantage relative to less cohesive groups (Haidt, 2012). As a result, natural selection may have favored those with greater in-group loyalty (Clark & Winegard, 2020). However, as humans began to rely less on group membership for survival, and as physical violence between groups declined (Pinker, 2011) it is possible that the current levels of tribalism have exceeded their adaptive advantage.

The adaptivity of tribalism is well-aligned with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), which suggests that people tend to categorize themselves as similar or different from others based on shared identity-relevant traits, such as demographic characteristics. These shared identities create perceived similarity, which leads to greater attraction and better treatment of demographic in-group members compared to out-group members. In fact, group identities can be established with seemingly arbitrary group differences, such as whether people over- or under-estimate the number of dots shown to them (Tajfel, 1982). If tribalism is observed even when groups are artificially created, then we would also expect tribalism to play an important role in political discourse, where party membership may serve as a proxy for signaling shared values (Haidt, 2012) or philosophical beliefs (Sowell, 2002). Thus, tribal psychology likely applies

to all political groups (Clark et al., 2019; Clark & Winegard, 2020). Evidence for this is discussed below.

Experimental Evidence for Political Tribalism

Experimental evidence for tribalism in politics has been accumulating for some time. Crawford, Wiley, and Ventresco (2014) found that politically left-leaning voters were more likely to support the identical policy (i.e., the use of drone strikes by the U.S. Military) when the policy was framed as being endorsed by Barak Obama rather than Mitt Romney. Additionally, Cohen (2003) revealed that attitudes towards a social policy depended very heavily upon the stated position of elected leaders who were in the same party as the participant, even when the position was actually ideologically inconsistent with the party. Crawford and Xhambazi (2015) examined tribalism by having participants rate their support for peaceful or disruptive demonstrations that allegedly occurred among either the Tea Party or the Occupy Wall Street group. Participants lower in right-wing authoritarianism were more biased against the Tea Party (which represents a right-wing movement) than the Occupy Wall Street group (which represents a leftwing movement) even when the behavior of the groups was described identically. Conversely, participants higher in right-wing authoritarianism showed greater bias against the Occupy Wall Street movement than the Tea Party. A behavioral measure of polarization investigated partisan cues on the hypothetical selection of one of two candidates for a college scholarship (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). Results indicated that 79.2% of Democrats picked the Democratic applicant and 80% of Republicans picked the Republican applicant. The same pattern of results held even when the out-party candidate had a significantly higher grade-point average (4.0 versus 3.5); the probability of someone selecting the more qualified out-party candidate was never above 30%. Motivated reasoning also occurs when interpreting statistical information. Van Boven et al. (2019) (study 2) displayed a series of true statistics regarding two hot-button political issues: 1) Trump's travel ban from five majority-Muslim countries (the so-called "Muslim travel ban") and 2) mass shooting fatalities. Participants then indicated which statistic was most important to them when evaluating the policy. The primarily Republican supporters of the travel ban were more likely than the primarily Democratic opponents of the ban to indicate that the conditional probability was most important. The conditional probability prompt was "The probability that a terrorist immigrant is from a Muslim country is 72%," and is the statistic that is the most critical of immigration (compared to, for example, "The probability that an immigrant is a terrorist is 0.00001%)". However, the opposite trend occurred for mass shooting fatalities. There, the primarily Democratic supporters of gun control were more likely than the primarily Republican opponents of gun control to indicate that the conditional probability (the proportion of mass shooters who own an assault weapon) was most important. Taken together, these studies (Cohen, 2003; Crawford et al., 2014; Crawford & Xhambazi, 2015; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Van Boven et al., 2019) indicate that the framing of a certain political policy or action can significantly impact one's perception and support of said policy.

Recently, a meta-analytic review of 51 studies examined the magnitude of partisan bias (Ditto, Liu, et al., 2019). The most notable inclusion criteria for this meta-analysis was the manipulation of political congeniality wherein participants were presented with identical stimuli that "either (a) supported or opposed their political beliefs or (b) associated a particular policy or behavior with the participant's own party or the opposing political party." (p. 277) Included studies also had a measure of left-right political orientation, a measure of information evaluation (e.g.,

approval/disapproval of a politician's behavior), and were based in the U.S. Among nearly 19,000 participants, liberals and conservatives evaluated information more favorably when it was consistent with their beliefs, compared to when it challenged their beliefs (effect sizes of rs=.235 and .255, respectively). Put differently, partisans from both sides of the political isle were significantly biased in favor of ideologically consistent information. Bias among liberals and conservatives was not significantly different. The authors also tested five moderators (i.e., the nature of the manipulation, the nature of the political-orientation measure, the nature of the sample, type of information presented, and political topic). None of the moderators reached statistical significance in predicting partisan bias. However, moderation by publication year was not tested, and since studies were published between 1994-2017, their effect sizes may underestimate current levels of bias in politics given the aforementioned research on increasing political polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012; Pew Research Center, 2019).

Current Studies

While past work has shown that partisans are more likely to support policies proposed by their political in-group (e.g., Cohen, 2003; Crawford et al., 2014; Crawford & Xhambazi, 2015) several gaps remain. First, little experimental work has been done with Donald Trump, who is arguably the most divisive politician of the past century in the U.S. While Trump's presidential term has ended, he remains a very important figure in the U.S. political landscape. As of 12 September 2022, predictit.org, a political betting market, has Trump is a strong candidate for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination (31c for Trump, 35c for Desantis). Second, tribalism appears to have intensified in recent years. Finally, prior experimental research employs hypothetical scenarios. It is also important to examine the existence of double-standards in real-world political situations to maximize ecological validity. In the current series of studies, we address both hypothetical and real circumstances.

We explored political tribalism across three domains. In study 1, we examined whether tribalism impacts the perceived legitimacy of a presidential election by manipulating the hypothetical winner of the 2020 election (data were collected prior to the election). We hypothesized that partisans would be more favorable towards a member of their political in-group versus out-group for the same stimuli (i.e., judgment would be moderated by the speaker and one's own group). In study 2, part 1 – and an associated online pilot study - we turned from the hypothetical scenario of an election winner, to looking at real-world political acts. Specifically, we examined tribalism in the context of how participants support a series of 10 different presidential policies or actions that were implemented by both Donald Trump and Barack Obama, but only attributed to one or the other at random. In study 2, part 2, we extended the notion of tribalism to examine whether the perceived bigotry of statements varies according to the speaker. All sample sizes were based on feasibility of data collection.

Study 1: Tribalism in the perceived legitimacy of hypothetical election results

Method

Overview.

The goal of study 1 was to examine how partisanship impacts the perceived legitimacy of holding higher office. MTurk participants were presented with a series of hypothetical scenarios to the 2020 presidential election. Under each scenario, the winner was depicted randomly (Biden vs.

Trump). In the present paper, we focus on three of the questions related to whether the winner is perceived as the legitimate president.

Participants & procedure.

Participants included in analyses were n=467 MTurk participants who participated in the study between 3:30pm on 29 October 2020 and 7:15am on 3 November 2020 in exchange for $0.35. This was just prior to any discussion of election results, which occurred in the evening of 3 November 2020. After providing consent, participants were taken immediately to a brief survey that assessed their planned 2020 vote (Joe Biden, Donald Trump, other, unsure) and whether the presidential winner was legitimate under a variety of hypothetical circumstances. Participants were eligible if they reported being at least 18 years old (n=1 was not 18), registered to vote (n=26 were not registered or were unsure if they were registered), and were planning to vote in the 2020 presidential election (n=41 were not planning to vote or were unsure if they would vote). Participants were included in analyses if they responded correctly to at least 2 of 3 attention check items and indicated they were voting either for Joe Biden or Donald Trump. For simplicity, prospective Biden voters are labeled as "Democrats" and prospective Trump voters are labeled as "Republicans". Participants included in analyses were 38.1% female, 77.0% White/Caucasian, and 70.0% had at least a Bachelor's degree; 44.8% planned to vote for Donald Trump and 55.2% planned to vote for Joe Biden. The average age was 37.7 (SD=10.16).

Materials.

Participants were presented with one condition for each of the following three prompts. After each prompt, participants were asked whether Biden or Trump "is the legitimate president." Response options were "yes" "no," or "unsure," coded as 0, 1, and 2, respectively. For questions 1 and 2, only the winner was manipulated. For question 3, both the winner and the number of ballots were manipulated (2 x 2 design).

Question 1: Foreign Influence, One-sided. "Imagine Biden/Trump wins the election and there is evidence that the Chinese/Russian government attempted to influence the election."

Question 2: Foreign Influence, Two-sided. "Imagine there is evidence of approximately equal foreign influence in support of both Biden and Trump, but Biden/Trump wins the election."

Question 3: Uncounted Ballots. "Imagine Biden/Trump wins the election and there is evidence that ballots in support of Trump/Biden went uncounted. The number of ballots are/are not enough to swing the election result".

Analytic Plan.

Data were analyzed using generalized linear modeling. We examined the interaction between political affiliation (Biden voter vs. Trump voter) and hypothetical election winner (Biden vs. Trump). For question 3, we also examined the political affiliation by hypothetical winner by number of ballots (enough to swing election results vs. not enough to swing election results) 3-way interaction. All analyses were conducted using SAS 9.4 with the GLIMMIX procedure.

Results

Overview.

Frequencies are presented in Table S1a. Significant interactions (and main effects) are described below. For each significant interaction, the politician effects and party effects are also provided. The politician effect refers to the difference between the Biden mean and Trump mean; it is calculated among both Republicans (i.e. prospective Trump voters) and Democrats (i.e. prospective Biden voters) where positive values indicate the election is considered more legitimate when Trump wins and negative values indicate the election is considered more legitimate when Biden wins. The party effect refers to the difference between the Republican mean and the Democrat mean; it is calculated for both the Biden frame and Trump frame where positive values indicate that the election is viewed as more legitimate by Democrats and negative values indicate that the election is viewed as more legitimate by Republicans.

Foreign influence.

There was a significant interaction effect between the election winner (Biden vs. Trump) and political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) for both one-sided and two-sided election interference. $F=80.31$, $p<.001$ and $F=51.33$, $p<.001$. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, Republicans regarded Biden as less legitimate than Trump for both one-sided and two-sided election interference (Ms=0.67 for Biden vs. 0.22 for Trump and 0.71 for Biden vs. 0.27 for Trump) while Democrats regarded Biden as more legitimate than Trump for both one-sided and two-sided election interference (Ms=0.62 for Biden vs. 1.34 for Trump and 0.42 for Biden vs. 0.87 for Trump) (recall that lower values correspond with greater perceived legitimacy and higher values correspond with less perceived legitimacy). Main effects for the election winner manipulation and political affiliation were $F=0.07$, $p=0.792$ and $F=68.90$, $p<.001$, respectively, for one-sided influence and $F=0.44$, $p=0.510$ and $F=7.44$, $p=.007$, respectively, for two-sided influence, indicating that Republicans perceived the election as more legitimate than Democrats for both items. For one-sided influence, the politician effect was 0.45 and -0.72 for Republicans and Democrats, respectively, while the party effect was 0.05 and -1.13 for Biden and Trump, respectively. Thus, regarding the politician effect, Democrats bias to indicate the election was more legitimate when Biden wins versus Trump was 60% stronger than Republicans bias to indicate the election was more legitimate when Trump wins versus Biden. For two-sided influence, the politician effect was 0.44 and -0.44 for Republicans and Democrats, respectively, while the party effect was 0.28 and -0.59 for Biden and Trump, respectively. Thus, regarding the politician effect, Democrats bias to indicate the election was more legitimate when Biden wins versus Trump was equivalent to Republican bias to indicate the election was more legitimate when Trump wins versus Biden.

Table 1. Study 1 Foreign Influence results: Perceived presidential legitimacy condition means, party effect, politician effect, and interaction effect.

Question	Party	Biden *M*	Trump *M*	Politician Effect
One-Sided Influence	Repub	0.67	0.22	0.45 (R)
	Dem	0.62	1.34	-0.72 (D)
	Party Effect	0.05	-1.13	(60.0% higher in
	Interaction Effect	1.17		D vs. R)
Two-Sided Influence	Repub	0.71	0.27	0.44
	Dem	0.42	0.87	-0.44
	Party Effect	0.28	-0.59	(Equal for D & R)
	Interaction Effect	0.88		

Note: The mean across the 4 conditions is displayed. Politician Effect refers to Biden Mean – Trump Mean, and is calculated separately for Republicans (R) and Democrats (D). Party Effect refers to Republican Mean – Democratic Mean, and is calculated separately for the Biden Frame (i.e. Biden wins election) and Trump Frame (i.e. Trump wins election). The interaction effect refers to the absolute value of the difference between the two politician effects (equivalent to the absolute value of the difference between the two party effects). Repub=Republican, defined as prospective Trump voter. Dem=Democrat, defined as prospective Biden voter. *M*=Mean.

Figure 1. Study 1 foreign influence marginal means plot: Interaction probe of perceived legitimacy according to election winner and political affiliation.
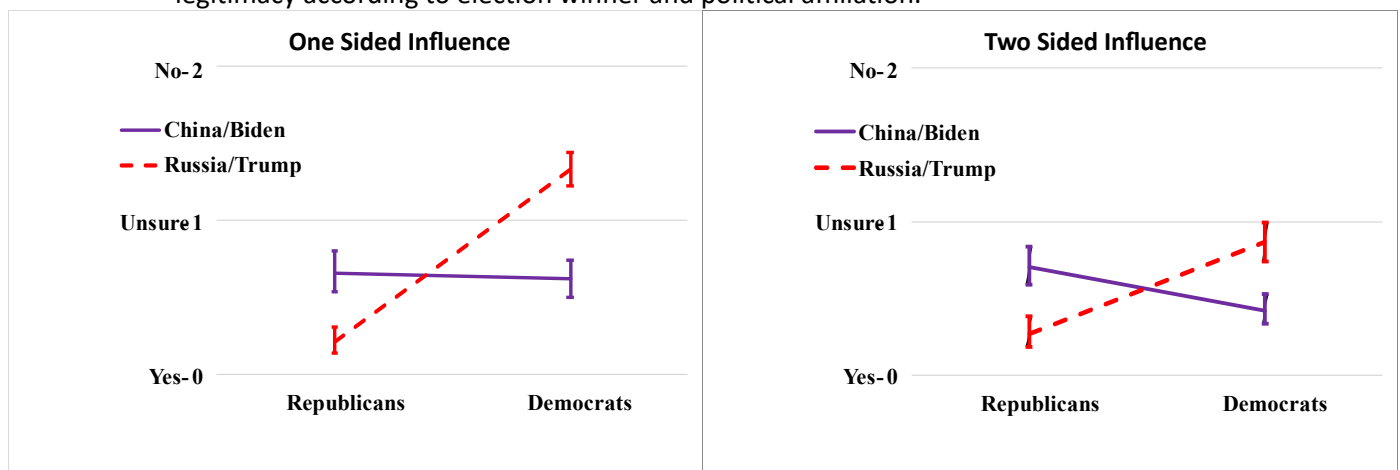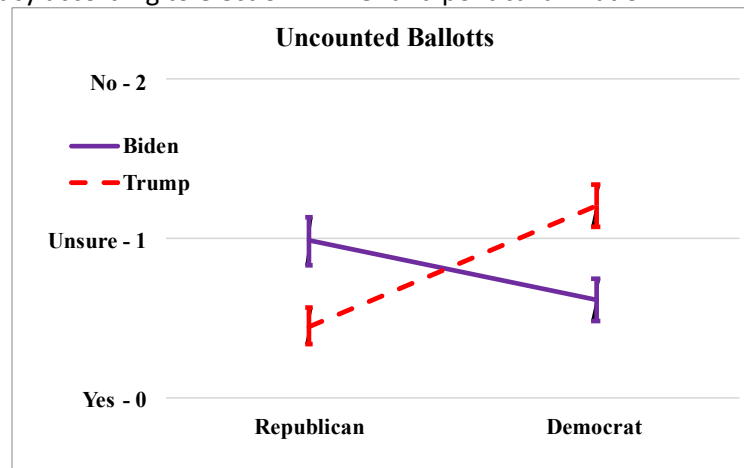

Note. Mean and 95% confidence intervals are displayed for the vignettes describing one-sided influence (left) and two-sided influence (right). Higher scores indicate greater perceived illegitimacy of the election winner (lower scores indicate greater perceived legitimacy). Purple (solid) and red (dashed) lines refer to the Biden and Trump frame, respectively (i.e. Biden wins election or Trump wins election). Republicans and Democrats indicate those who reported intending to vote for Trump or Biden, respectively. The delta between Democrats and Republicans for China/Biden are as follows. 1: -0.108, (95% CI: -0.515, 0.298), t=-0.52, p=0.601. 2: -0.710, (95% CI: -1.107, -0.313), t=-3.51, p<.001 The delta between Democrats and Republicans for Russia/Trump are as follows. 1: 2: 2.826 (95% CI: 2.323, 3.324), t=11.13, p<.001. 2: 1.583 (95% CI: 1.096, 2.071), t=6.38, p<.001.

Uncounted ballots.

The three-way interaction between election winner (Biden vs. Trump), number of uncounted ballots (enough to swing results vs. not enough to swing results) and political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) was not significant, F=0.73, p=0.393. The way-two interaction between election winner and number of uncounted ballots was also not significant, F=0.56, p=0.456. The two-way interactions between number of uncounted ballots and political affiliation as well as election winner and political affiliation were both significant, F=7.97, p=.005 and F=63.51, p<.001, respectively. The former interaction is shown in Figure S2. The latter interaction is displayed in Figure 2. As shown in Table 2, Republicans regarded Biden as less legitimate than Trump (Ms=0.99 vs. 0.44) while Democrats regarded Biden as more legitimate than Trump (Ms=0.61 vs. 1.21). Thus, the politician effect was .54 and -0.60 among Republicans and Democrats, respectively, while the party effect was 0.37 and -0.77 for Biden and Trump, respectively. Regarding the politician effect, Democrats bias to regard the election as more legitimate when Biden wins versus Trump was 11.1% stronger than Republicans bias to regard the election was more legitimate when Trump wins versus Biden. The main effects for election winner, number of uncounted ballots, and political affiliation were F<0.01, p=0.95, F=83.89, p<.001, and F=8.40, p=.004, respectively; the election was perceived as more legitimate when the number of uncounted ballots did not swing the election results (vs. when it did swing results) and among Republicans (vs. Democrats).

Figure 2. Study 1 uncounted ballots marginal means plot: Interaction probe of perceived legitimacy according to election winner and political affiliation.

Note. Mean and 95% confidence intervals are displayed for the vignette describing uncounted ballots. Higher scores indicate greater perceived illegitimacy of the election winner (lower scores indicate greater perceived legitimacy). Purple (solid) and red (dashed) lines refer to the Biden and Trump frame, respectively (i.e. Biden wins election or Trump wins election). Republicans and Democrats indicate those who reported intending to vote for Trump or Biden, respectively. The delta between Democrats and Republicans is -1.249 (95% CI: -1.667, -0.832), t=-5.88, p<.001 for Biden and 1.230 (95% CI: 0.783, 1.677), t=5.41, p<.001 for Trump.

Table 2. Study 1 uncounted ballots results: Perceived presidential legitimacy condition means, party effect, politician effect, and interaction effect.

Question	Party	Biden *M*	Trump *M*	Politician Effect
Uncounted Ballots	Repub	.99	.44	.54 (R)
	Dem	.61	1.21	-.60 (D)
	Party Effect	0.37	-0.77	(11.1% higher for
	Interaction Effect	1.14		D vs. R)

Note: The mean across the 4 conditions is displayed. Politician Effect refers to Biden Mean – Trump Mean, and is calculated separately for Republicans (R) and Democrats (D). Party Effect refers to Republic Mean – Democratic Mean, and is calculated separately for the Biden Frame (i.e. Biden wins election) and Trump Frame (i.e. Trump wins election). The interaction effect refers to the absolute value of the difference between the two politician effects (equivalent to the absolute value of the difference between the two party effects). Repub=Republican, defined as prospective Trump voter. Dem=Democrat, defined as prospective Biden voter. *M*=Mean.

Study 2, Part 1: Tribalism in the Support of Actual Presidential Policies & Actions

Method

Overview.

This study was designed to examine whether support for a presidential policy or action among Republicans and Democrats differed according to the president to which it was attributed. College students and adult volunteers indicated who they planned to vote for in the 2020 presidential election and how supportive they were of a series of policies and actions that were attributed to either Barack Obama or Donald Trump. While the context and specifics of various plans will always differ between two administrations, we selected broad policies that apply to both presidents (Tables S3a & S3b). The study design and hypotheses were pre-registered at https://aspredicted.org/s9b95.pdf.

Participants.

College student participants (n=139) were recruited from three college campuses. Site 1 was a medium-sized New England university (n=60), site 2 was a small New England university (n=25), and site 3 was a large mountain-west region university (n=54). Participants from site 3 received course credit in a psychology class; no compensation was given to participants in sites 1 or 2. In total, participants were 78.4% White/Caucasian and 59.7% female with an average age of 21.7 (12.9% were 18, 15.1% were 19, 15.8% were 20, 21.6% were 21, 20.1% were 22, and 14.4% were 23+); 41.7% planned to vote for the Republican nominee and 58.3% planned to vote for the Democratic nominee in the 2020 presidential election.

Adult volunteers (n=192) were recruited online from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). In total, participants were 75.0% White/Caucasian, 34.9% female with an average age of 35.9 (*SD*=10.55) (range=22-80); 38.5% planned to vote for the Republican nominee and 61.5% planned to vote for the Democratic nominee.

Participants were included if they reported planning to vote in the 2020 election, were eligible to vote in the 2020 election, planned to vote for either the Republican or Democratic nominee, were at least 18 years of age, and responded correctly to at least 2 of 3 attention check items that were embedded throughout the survey.

Materials & procedure.

After providing consent, participants were asked to indicate who they planned to vote for in the 2020 presidential election (The Republican nominee, The Democratic nominee, or unsure/other). For simplicity, prospective Republican nominee voters are labeled as "Republicans" and prospective Democratic nominee voters are labeled as "Democrats". Next, participants, were shown a series of 10 presidential policies or actions, and were asked to indicate their support for each on one Likert Scale question (see section below). Each item was attributed to either President Trump or President Obama. All data were collected between March and July 2020 and were approved by the necessary Institutional Review Boards.

Political attitudes.

The 10 political attitude items are provided in Supplement 3. They are a series of 5-point Likert scale and magnitude scale questions where participants indicate support for a presidential policy or presidential action across the following domains: Drone Strikes, Unemployment, Immigration, Iran Sanctions, Hate Crimes, Rapper Meeting, China Tariffs, Immigrants in Cells, Drug Cost, and Opioid Epidemic. Participants were asked to indicate their perception of each on a 1-5 Likert Scale, where 1 indicates a negative attitude and 5 indicates a positive attitude (items 6 and 8 were reverse-scored to maintain this convention). For example, the Drone Strikes item reads: "It has been reported that president Trump/Obama ordered a drone strike in the Middle East that resulted in the death of suspected terrorists. There were likely also civilian casualties. To what extent do you support drone strikes that kill terrorists but probably also kill civilians?" (from 1=do not support at all to 5=strongly support). These items were chosen mostly based on the overlap in implementation across Trump and Obama.

Analytic Plan.

Outcome data were examined by reported political affiliation (Democrat voter vs Republican voter) and between randomized condition (e.g., Obama vs. Trump) as a 2x2 interaction effect using generalized linear mixed modeling with sandwich estimation, where respondents were nested within their university. Alpha was established, a priori, at the 0.05 and interval estimates were calculated for 95% confidence. All analyses were conducted using SAS 9.4 with the GLIMMIX procedure.

Results

Overview.

Descriptive results are shown in Tables S1b and S1c. As shown on Tables S4a & S4b, a politician effect and a party effect was calculated for all items across both samples. The politician effect refers to the difference between the Obama mean and Trump mean; it is calculated among both Republicans (i.e., prospective Republican voters in the 2020 presidential election) and Democrats (i.e. prospective Democratic voters in the 2020 presidential election) where positive values

indicate the policy is supported more under Obama and negative values indicate the policy is supported more under Trump. The party effect refers to the difference between the Republican mean and the Democrat mean; it is calculated for both the Obama frame and Trump frame where positive values indicate that the policy is supported more by Republicans and negative values indicate that the policy is supported more by Democrats.

College Student Sample Results.

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant frame (Obama vs. Trump) by affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) interaction for eight of the 10 items: Drone strike ($F=7.86$, $p=.006$), Immigration ($F=5.24$, $p=.024$), Iran Sanctions ($F=4.72$, $p=.032$), Hate Crime ($F=250.95$, $p<.001$), Rapper Meeting ($F=8.48$, $p=.004$), China Tariffs ($F=2942.48$, $p<.001$), Immigrants in Cells ($F=7.16$, $p=.008$), and Drug Cost ($F=40.23$, $p<.001$). No interaction effect was observed for Opioid Epidemic ($F<.01$, $p=0.974$) or Unemployment ($F=2.75$, $p=0.10$), although the latter approached significance. Main effects are provided in Table S4c. Interaction effects for all 10 items are probed in Figure S4a.

As shown in Figure 3, Republicans preferred 9 of the 10 policies/actions when endorsed by Trump while Democrats preferred 9 of the 10 policies when endorsed by Obama. Across all 10 items, the mean pro-Trump bias among Republicans was 0.453 (range: -0.22 for Immigration to 0.94 for Drug cost), and the mean pro-Obama bias among Democrats was 0.526 (range: -0.10 for opioid epidemic to 1.05 for China tariffs); thus, bias towards one's preferred candidate was 16.1% higher among Democrats than Republicans.

Table 3. Study 2, Part 1 college student interaction results: Frame by political affiliation.

Question #	Item	*F*-Value	*p*-value
1	Drone Strikes	7.86	0.006
2	Unemployment	2.75	0.100
3	Immigration	5.24	0.024
4	Iran Sanctions	4.72	0.032
5	Hate Crime	250.95	<.001
6	Rapper Meeting	8.48	0.004
7	China Tariffs	2942.48	<.001
8	Immigrants in Cells	7.16	0.008
9	Drug Cost	40.23	<.001
10	Opioid Epidemic	<.01	0.974

Note. Interaction results for the 10 items in Study 2, Part 1 are displayed. Interaction effects refer to the Frame (Obama vs. Trump) by political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) result.

Figure 3. Study 2, Part 1 college student party schism: Politician bias by political affiliation according to identical policy positions under Obama vs. Trump.
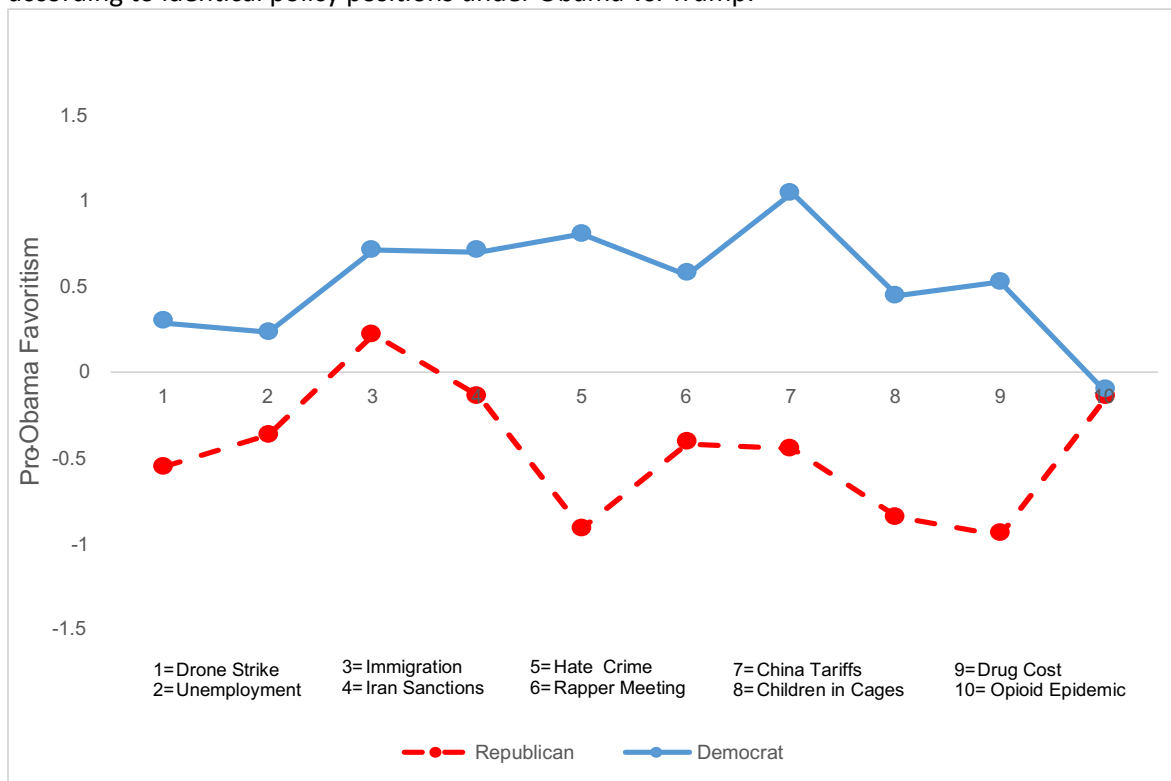
Note: Politician bias by political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) is displayed across all items. Positive values indicate pro-Obama favoritism (negative values indicate pro-Trump favoritism). Results show the extent to which support for identical items differ according to whether it is endorsed by Obama or Trump.

MTurk volunteer results.

As shown in Table 4 there was a significant frame (Obama vs. Trump) by affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) interaction for seven of the 10 items: Drone strike (F=4.53, p=.010), Unemployment (F=6.80, p=.010), Iran Sanctions (F=9.65, p=.002), Hate Crime (F=9.05, p=.003), Rapper Meeting (F=5.76, p=.017), and Drug Cost (F=19.89, p<.001). No interaction effect was observed for Immigration (F=0.3, p=.584), China Tariffs (F=.15, p=.695), and Immigrants in Cells (F=0.11, p=0.739). Main effects are provided in Table S4d. Interaction effects for all 10 items are probed in Figure S4b.

As shown in Figure 4, Republicans preferred 7 of the 10 policies/actions when endorsed by Trump while Democrats preferred 9 of the 10 policies when endorsed by Obama. Across all 10 items, the mean pro-Trump bias among Republicans was 0.264 (range: -0.40 for Tariffs to 0.70 for Rapper Meeting), and the mean pro-Obama bias among Democrats was 0.346 (range: -0.07 for opioid epidemic to 0.62 for Drug Cost); thus, bias towards one's preferred candidate was 31.3% higher among Democrats than Republicans.

Table 4. Study 2, Part 1 MTurk volunteer interaction results: Frame by political affiliation.

Question #	Item	*F*-Value	*p*-value
1	Drone Strikes	4.53	0.035
2	Unemployment	6.8	0.010
3	Immigration	0.3	0.584
4	Iran Sanctions	9.65	0.002
5	Hate Crimes	9.05	0.003
6	Rapper Meeting	5.76	0.017
7	China Tariffs	0.15	0.695
8	Immigrants in Cells	0.11	0.739
9	Drug Cost	19.89	<.001
10	Opioid Epidemic	0.24	0.625

Note. Interaction results for the 10 items in the Pilot Study are displayed. Interaction effects refer to the Frame (Obama vs. Trump) by political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) result.

Figure 4. Study 2, Part 1 MTurk volunteer party schism: Politician bias by political affiliation according to identical policy positions under Obama vs. Trump.
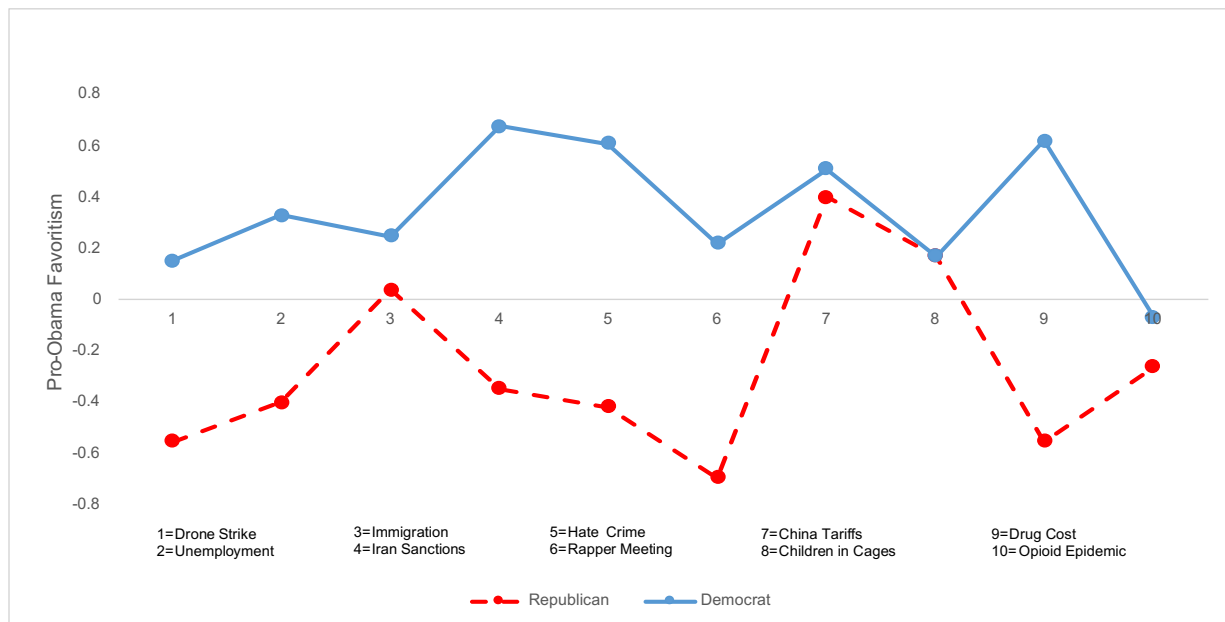
Note: Politician bias by political affiliation (Republican voter vs. Democratic voter) is displayed across all items. Positive values indicate pro-Obama favoritism (negative values indicate pro-Trump favoritism). Results show the extent to which support for identical items differ according to whether it is endorsed by Obama or Trump.

Study 2 Part 2: Tribalism in the perceived bigotry of statements

Overview.

Study 2 part 2 comprised is comprised of two short vignettes. For the first vignette, we assessed the perceived bigotry across two United States presidents, by attributing a State of The Union quotation to either Bill Clinton or Donald Trump. In actuality, the quotation comes almost verbatim from President Clinton's address delivered on January 24, 1995 (C-SPAN, 2021). For the second vignette, we assessed perceived bigotry across one United States president and a leading civil rights figure, by attributing a quotation within a speech to either Donald Trump or Martin Luther King. In actuality, the quotation comes from a 1960 speech delivered by Dr. King (DePauw University, n.d.). Approval was granted by the necessary Institutional Review Boards. Participants for Study 2 part 2 were the same as those for Study 2 part 1.

Materials.

The two prompts used for study 2 are described below. Participants were randomized to one condition for each prompt (Clinton vs. Trump for State of the Union Address item; Trump vs. King for speech item).

State of the Union Address. Participants were told: "In his State of the Union Address, President Bill Clinton/Donald Trump said the following: 'All Americans, not only in the states most heavily affected, but in every place in this country, are rightly disturbed by the large numbers of illegal immigrants entering our country. The jobs they hold might otherwise be held by citizens or legal immigrants. The public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers. That's why our administration has moved aggressively to secure our borders more by hiring a record number of new border guards, by deporting twice as many criminal immigrants as ever before, by cracking down on illegal hiring, by barring welfare benefits to illegal immigrants... We are a nation of immigrants. But we are also a nation of laws. It is wrong and ultimately self-defeating for a nation of immigrants to permit the kind of abuse of our immigration laws we have seen in recent years, and we must do more to stop it.'" (C-SPAN, 2021) Participants were then asked "How racist is this statement?" and "How xenophobic is this statement?" from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely).

Speech. Participants were told: "In a speech, President Donald Trump/Reverend Martin Luther King said the following: 'Black supremacy is as dangerous as white supremacy... God is not interested merely in the freedom of black men and brown men and yellow men. God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race" (DePauw University, n.d.). Participants were then asked "How racist is this statement?" from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely).

Analytic Plan.

Data were analyzed in the same manner as described in Study 2 part 1, except the condition manipulation was either Clinton vs. Trump or MLK vs. Trump.

Results

Overview.

Descriptive data are shown in Table S1d. Significant interactions (and main effects) are described below. For each significant interaction, the speaker effects and party effects are also provided. The speaker effect refers to the difference between the Clinton/MLK mean and Trump mean; it is calculated among both Republicans (i.e. prospective Republican voters in the 2020 presidential election) and Democrats (i.e. prospective Democratic voters in the 2020 presidential election) where positive values indicate the statement is considered more bigoted under Clinton or MLK and negative values indicate the statement is considered more bigoted under Trump. The party effect refers to the difference between the Republican mean and the Democrat mean; it is calculated for both the Clinton or MLK frame and Trump frame where positive values indicate that the statement is viewed as more bigoted by Republicans and negative values indicate that the statement is viewed as more bigoted by Democrats.

State of the Union.

There was a significant interaction effect between speaker frame (Clinton vs. Trump) and party (Republican voters vs. Democrat voters) for both perceived racism and perceived xenophobia, $F=22.78$, $p<.001$ and $F=4.38$, $p=.038$, respectively. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 5, Republicans viewed the speech as more racist and xenophobic under Clinton vs. Trump (Ms=1.65 for Clinton vs. 1.25 for Trump for racism and Ms=1.72 for Clinton vs. 1.52 for Trump for xenophobia) while Democrats viewed the speech as less racist and xenophobic under Clinton vs. Trump (Ms=2.72 for Clinton vs. 3.33 for Trump for racism and Ms=3.55 for Clinton vs. 4.12 for Trump for xenophobia). For racism, the speaker effect was 0.40 for Republicans and -0.61 for Democrats; the party effect was -1.07 and -2.08 for Clinton and Trump, respectively, which shows that Democrats viewed the speech as more racist in both conditions (i.e. both values are negative), but more so in the Trump frame. Thus, regarding the speaker effect, Democrats bias indicating the State of the Union (SOTU) address was more racist under Trump versus Clinton was 52.5% stronger then Republican's bias indicating the address was more racist under Clinton versus Trump. For xenophobia, the speaker effect was 0.20 for Republicans and -0.57 for Democrats and the party effect was -1.83 and -2.61 for Clinton and Trump, respectively. Thus, regarding the speaker effect, Democrats bias indicating the SOTU address was more xenophobic under Trump versus Clinton was 185% stronger then Republican's bias indicating the address was more xenophobic under Clinton versus Trump. Also noteworthy is that, while there was no main effect of speaker for either outcome ($F=3.40$, $p=.067$ for racism and $F=3.02$, $p=.085$ for xenophobia) the main effect of party was highly significant for both outcomes ($F=62.73$, $p<.001$ for racism and $F=314.06$, $p<.001$ for xenophobia); Democrats viewed the speech as substantially more racist and xenophobic than Republicans.

Table 5. Study 2, Part 2 State of the Union results: Perceived racism & xenophobia condition means, party effect, politician effect, and interaction effect.

Outcome	Party	Clinton *M*	Trump *M*	Speaker Effect
Racism	Repub	1.65	1.25	0.40 (R)
	Dem	2.72	3.33	-0.61 (D)
	Party Effect	-1.07 (C)	-2.08 (T)	(52.5% higher among D vs. R)
	Interaction Effect	1.01		
Xenophobia	Repub	1.72	1.52	0.20 (R)
	Dem	3.55	4.12	-0.57 (D)
	Party Effect	-1.83 (C)	-2.61 (T)	(185.0% higher among D vs. R)
	Interaction Effect	0.78		

Note: The mean across the 4 conditions is displayed for perceived racism and perceived xenophobia. Speaker Effect refers to Clinton Mean – Trump Mean, and is calculated separately for Republicans (R) and Democrats (D). Party Effect refers to Republic Mean – Democratic Mean, and is calculated separately for the Clinton (C) Frame and Trump (T) Frame. The interaction effect refers to the absolute value of the difference between the two speaker effects (equivalent to the absolute value of the difference between the two party effects). Repub=Republican, defined as prospective Republican voter. Dem=Democrat, defined as prospective Democrat voter. *M*=Mean.

Figure 5. Study 2, Part 2 State of the Union marginal means plot: Interaction probe of perceived racism and xenophobia according to frame and political affiliation.
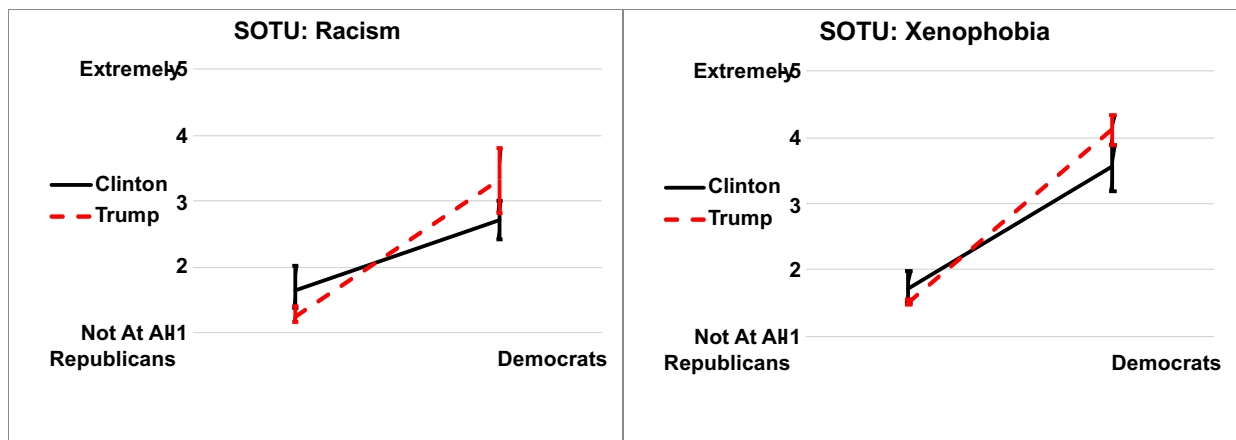
Note. Mean and 95% confidence intervals are displayed. Higher scores indicate greater perceived racism or xenophobia. Black (solid) and red (dashed) lines refer to the Clinton and Trump frame, respectively. Republicans and Democrats indicate those who reported intending to vote for the Republican and Democratic nominee, respectively, in the 2020 presidential election. The delta between Democrats and Republicans for Obama are as follows 1: -1.362 (95% CI: -2.175, -0.548), t=-3.31, p=.001. 2: -2.081(95% CI: -2.865, -1.296). The delta between Democrats and Republican for Trump are as follows: 1: -3.067(95% CI: -3.464, -2.609), t=14.05, p<.001. 2: -3.1802(95% CI: -3.492, -2.868).

Speech.

There was a significant interaction effect between speaker frame (MLK vs. Trump) and party (Republican voters vs. Democrat voters), *F*=308.89, *p*<.001. As shown in Table 6, and Figure 6, Republicans indicated the speech was not racist under both the MLK and Trump frames (*M*s=1.00 and 1.43, respectively); the racism score for Democrats also approached the floor under the MLK condition (*M*=1.32) but was much higher under the Trump condition (*M*=3.41). Thus, the speaker effect was -0.43 and -2.10 for Republicans and Democrats, respectively, while the party effect was -0.32 and -1.98 for MLK and Trump, respectively. Regarding the speaker effect, Democrats tendency to indicate the speech was more racist under Trump versus MLK was 388.4% stronger than Republicans tendency to indicate the speech was more racist under Trump versus MLK. Also noteworthy are the main effects of speaker and party of *F*=435.05, *p*<.001 and *F*=397.36, *p*<.001, respectively; the speech was perceived as more racist when given by Trump (vs. MLK) and among Democrats (vs. Republicans).

Table 6. Study 2, Part 2 speech results: Perceived racism condition means, party effect, speaker effect, and interaction effect.

Party	MLK *M*	Trump *M*	Speaker Effect
Repub	1.00	1.43	-0.43 (R)
Dem	1.32	3.41	-2.10 (D)
Party Effect	-0.32 (MLK)	-1.98 (Trump)	(388.4% higher among D. vs R)
Interaction Effect	1.66		

Note: The mean across the 4 conditions is displayed. Speaker Effect refers to MLK Mean – Trump Mean, and is calculated separately for Republicans (R) and Democrats (D). Party Effect refers to Republic Mean – Democratic Mean, and is calculated separately for the MLK Frame and Trump Frame. The interaction effect refers to the absolute value of the difference between the two speaker effects (equivalent to the absolute value of the difference between the two party effects). Repub=Republican, defined as prospective Republican voter. Dem=Democrat, defined as prospective Democrat voter. *M*=Mean. MLK=Martin Luther King.

Figure 6. Study 2, Part 2 speech marginal means plot: Interaction probe of perceived racism according to frame and political affiliation.
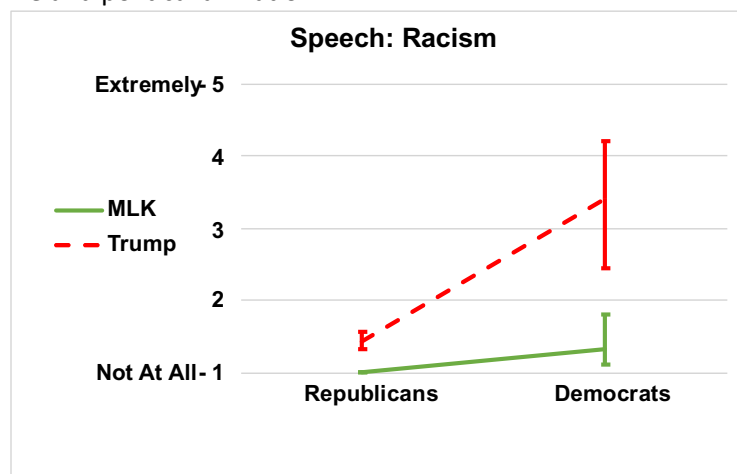
Note. Mean and 95% confidence intervals are displayed. Higher scores indicate greater perceived racism. Green (solid) and red (dashed) lines refer to the MLK and Trump frame, respectively. Republicans and Democrats indicate those who reported intending to vote for the Republican and Democratic nominee, respectively. The

delta between Democrats and Republicans are -16.322 (95% CI: -17.484, -15.156), t=-27.78 p<.001 for Trump
and -2.526 (95% CI: -3.792, 1.259), t=-3.94, p<.001 for MLK. Frequencies across Republican and Democrats were
as follows. For MLK: 1 (85.1%), 2 (10.4%), 3 (3.0%), 4 (1.5%), 5 (0.0%). For Trump: 1 (37.1%), 2 (14.3%), 3 (8.6%),
4 (21.4%), 5 (18.6%).

Across experiments, we found strong evidence for the existence of political tribalism and the application of double-standards. In Study 1, we found that tribalism occurs for the perceived legitimacy of hypothetical election outcomes. When asked whether Donald Trump or Joe Biden would be the legitimate president under three different scenarios, Republicans viewed Trump as more legitimate than Biden while Democrats viewed Biden as more legitimate than Trump. Similarly, in Study 2 Part 1, Republicans supported identical presidential policies and actions more under Donald Trump than Barack Obama while Democrats supported identical policies and actions more under Barack Obama than Donald Trump. A noteworthy element this study is that each item was, in fact, true under both Presidents, which highlights the study's real-world importance and is an important contribution over prior experiments. In Study 2 Part 2, we showed that Republicans viewed identical statements attributed to Bill Clinton as more bigoted than those attributed to Donald Trump while Democrats viewed the statements as more bigoted when attributed to Trump instead of Clinton. Further, Republicans viewed a statement advocating colorblindness to be generally not racist when attributed to either Dr. Martin Luther King (MLK) or Donald Trump (though racism scores were slightly higher in the latter condition); Democrats also viewed the statement as low in racism when attributed to MLK, but the racism score increased drastically when attributed to Trump. Taken together, these studies suggest that tribalism permeates many aspects of political life and discourse. Policy agreement differs according to the person enacting the policy. Perceptions of racism and xenophobia depend on the person who utters the statement. Alarmingly, even the perceived legitimacy of elections is dependent upon the winner; that is, people assign different standards for election legitimacy depending upon whether their preferred candidate wins or loses. Moreover, some of these effects are rarely seen in the social or cognitive sciences (e.g., Fs>250 when sample size <150), which suggests that tribalism plays a large role, at least in certain contexts.

Our main interest was in documenting if bias exists among each side of the political aisle. However, the study does invite us to ask which side exhibits greater tribal bias. This question is not new, and it has been the source of some debate. In general, psychologists have assumed that conservatives are more biased than liberals, a position that we categorize as "right-leaning asymmetry". For instance, as described at length by Jost (2021), many studies have demonstrated that conservatives are more dogmatic and rigid than liberals. However, the greater than 10 to 1 ratio of Democrats to Republicans in academic psychology should make us question whether this finding is, at least in part, a function of the lack of political diversity among researchers (Duarte et al., 2015). And indeed, as noted elsewhere in this paper, Ditto, Liu, et al. (2019) did not observe any evidence of bias being different, which we call "symmetrical bias."

To the degree that our results can help weigh in on this question, there was some indication that bias is higher among Democrats, which we call "left-leaning asymmetry". In study 1, the politician effect (Trump vs. Biden) ranged from equivalent between Democrats vs Republicans to being 60.0% higher among Democrats vs Republicans. In Study 2 Part 1, the politician effect (Trump vs. Obama) was, on average, 16.1% higher among Democrats than Republicans in the college student sample and 31.3% higher among Democrats than Republicans in the MTurk sample. In Study 2 Part 2, the speaker effect (Trump vs. Clinton; Trump vs. MLK) was 52.5%-413.5% higher among

Democrats than Republicans. While left-leaning asymmetry is rarely observed in the empirical literature, it is not unprecedented. One study (Crawford, Jussim, Cain, & Cohen, 2013) presented students with articles arguing either conservative or liberal positions on affirmative action and same sex marriage based on scientific research. Interestingly, views about the perceived bias of the article's author were more divergent for participants low, versus high, in Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). That is, when judging how bias the author was, participants high in RWA were not impacted too much by the study findings while those low in RWA thought the author was more bias when the conclusions supported the conservative position rather than the liberal position.

As we can see, there is not yet consensus about whether the left-leaning asymmetry, symmetry, or right-leaning asymmetry hypothesis is correct. Further complicating this question is that the answer may be moderated by key unexplored variables. First, the substantive issue could be a confound. We found left-leaning asymmetry on certain issues and right-leaning asymmetry on other issues. For instance, as shown in study 2 part 2, Democrats were more sensitive to speaker manipulations regarding the topic of bigotry. As shown in study 2 part 1, Republicans in both the college student and MTurk samples were more sensitive to speaker manipulations on the topic of unemployment (item 2). People may show more bias when evaluating issues that they find particularly important. This could occur by activating the fast and intuitive system 1 thinking (Kahneman, 2011) that is vulnerable to cognitive biases. To that end, Democrats place a unique importance on values related to caring for and avoiding harm towards others (Koleva, Graham, Iyer, Ditto, & Haidt, 2012). As such, they may be more impacted by manipulations related to racism or xenophobia. Conversely, according to two recent Pew polls (Pew Research Center, 2022a, 2022b) Republicans place a higher priority on the economy than Democrats, so they may be more impacted by manipulations related to economic policy, such as the unemployment rate.

Another factor that could moderate study findings is the specific politician used for the manipulation. None of the studies in Ditto et al. (2019) included a Trump frame, and Trump is a particularly polarizing figure among Democrats. A 2019 study found that 45% of Democrats who are "single and looking" would definitely not date someone who voted for Trump, while only 19% of single and looking Republicans would definitely not date someone who voted for Clinton (Brown, 2020). It is therefore possible that our use of Donald Trump as one condition within the experimental manipulations inflated Democrat bias in a manner that would not have occurred if we instead linked policies or statements to other high-profile Republicans. Future studies could examine this explicitly by manipulating both the party and the politician within each party (e.g. Donald Trump/Joe Biden/Mitch McConnell/Nancy Pelosi support drone strikes in the middle east…) Finally, we should not assume that results are consistent across time. It may be, for example, that in certain decades Republicans generally exhibit more bias while in others Democrats generally exhibit more bias. This could depend on which party is in power, and related to our previous point, how likeable the party leadership is at that particular point in time. On a similar note, the magnitude of partisanship (regardless of which side is more partisan), is also likely to wax and wane over time. Our data were collected at a uniquely polarizing time in American politics.

The tribalism observed in our study and in prior work is an example of what has been termed "myside bias," where people evaluate information that confirms their prior beliefs more favorably than information that does not (Stanovich, 2021a). In one classic demonstration (Lord, Ross, &

Lepper, 1979), proponents and opponents of the death penalty read a description of a study that either seemed to support or contradict their pre-existing belief of capital punishment. The study was rated as more compelling in the attitude-consistent condition versus the attitude-inconsistent condition. Myside bias stems from a long tradition of research on motivated reasoning in the cognitive sciences (Kunda, 1990). People are not blank slates who receive input and form unbiased conclusions. Rather, we access, construct, and evaluate information in an implicitly motivated fashion (Kunda, 1990).

Relationship to current events.

This set of experiments can help shed light into current events; in fact, the research was inspired by modern-day politics with each side accusing the other of hypocrisy and holding double-standards. For instance, particularly relevant to study 2 Part 2, some Republicans have claimed that Biden is being hypocritical when arguing that Trump is racist given Biden's checkered past regarding race relations and racist utterances (e.g., Steinhauser & Raffa, 2020). Democratic commentators have also alleged hypocrisy against Republicans; many Democrats were extremely critical of the asymmetry among Republican members of congress for blocking Obama's nomination of Judge Merick Garland while approving Trump's nomination of Justice Amy Coney Barrett (e.g., Benen, 2020). Other examples of this are discussed by Stanovich (2021b). Even during the process of revising this paper we saw one highly publicized example. In August 2022, the FBI raided former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence due to concerns that he possessed classified material. Partisans were quick to point the finger. Many Republicans claimed that Democrats were being hypocritical in their cavalier treatment of Hillary Clinton's private server to handle classified information while supporting aggressive law-enforcement action against Trump for a similar offense. Many Democrats alleged the opposite, arguing it was hypocritical that Republicans were cavalier over Trump's misdeeds while harshly judging Clinton's private sever. The results from the present series of studies, as well as earlier research, suggest that each side may be accurate in noting hypocrisy among the other.

Limitations & future directions.

Several limitations exist in this set of studies. College student participants from study 2 parts 1 and 2 were drawn from three specific universities. The same small sample was used in these studies. One of the universities, which comprised a large proportion of the Republican participants, is a very religiously homogenous sample with nearly 100% of students being members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. By contrast, only 2.05% of the US population belong to this Church (Church of LDS, 2021). Thus, results may not be generalizable, especially as the degree of tribalism among Latter-Day Saint Republicans who choose to attend a Church university may be different from Republicans at large. This concern, however, is mitigated since we also observed tribalism in the non-college samples. Additionally, our experiments did not include an un-named politician frame, as done by Cohen (2003). For instance, in study 2 part 1, we were only able to investigate bias between the Trump frame and Obama frame. It would have been useful to know the extent to which Republicans support a policy by Trump and Democrats support a policy by Obama compared to an ambiguous politician (e.g. for Question 1: "It has been reported that a president ordered a drone strike…"). Including a three-arm framing manipulation (Republican/Democrat/ambiguous) would enable us to examine the extent to which partisans are reacting favorably to their preferred candidate or unfavorably to their non-preferred candidate; the current design does not allow for such an interpretation. Relatedly, all

three of our experiments included a Trump frame. While we thought this was important due to the dearth of experimental social and cognitive psychological research including a Trump manipulation, a trade-off is that we are unable to tease apart a Trump effect from a Republican politician effect. Our independent variable assessed participants planned voting behavior; results may have differed if we instead used a measure assessing the strength of affiliation. Also, it is possible that the believability of these statements/policies confounded results. For instance, participants may have generally been skeptical that Clinton really made the SOTU statement in study 2 part 2, but were more believing that Trump made the statement.

Future research should consider examining whether tribal political biases are invariant to the specific politician, or if they are exacerbated or minimized by certain individuals. Studies could also include open-ended questions querying what participants think motivated certain statements or policies. Another fruitful future direction would be to look at potential moderating effects of social desirability and other person-level individual differences. For example, one might hypothesize that people high in social desirability are more motivated to adhere to their in-group's ideology, and thus display greater tribalism. Other potential moderators, such as need for cognition or trait agreeableness, could also be considered. Finally, research should examine how tribalism can be mitigated. Possibilities include: increased exposure to divergent viewpoints and personal experiences (Kubin, Puryear, Schein, & Gray, 2021), and recording and evaluating predictions to reduce confirmation bias.

Response to criticism.

In Ditto's thoughtful review, he argues that our "data is subject to counter-explanation based on the differential priors." Ditto goes to on to explain that, for instance, Republicans and Democrats are not evaluating the same drone strike when it occurred under Obama or Trump because "Democrats assume that Obama [but not Trump] would only launch a strike for moral reason…. while Republicans are likely to assume that Trump's strike was launched for righteous reasons and Obama's was not." We appreciate this point but ultimately believe it is misguided.

First, I think Ditto would concur that this criticism is not applicable to study 1, which is worth emphasizing had very similar results to Study 2. Arguing that the perceived legitimacy of an election is based on the differential priors of whether Democrats or Republicans are "good" or "bad" is a non sequitur. For instance, one cannot coherently argue that Trump would be the legitimate president if he won the election with meddling from the Russian government but Biden would not be the legitimate president if he won the election with meddling from the Chinese government. Thus, we focus below on this criticism with respect to study 2.

Ditto's argument can be steel-manned with the following hypothetical: Suppose that participants were told either Mother Theresa or Joseph Stalin supported radical wealth redistribution, and were then asked the degree to which they supported radical wealth redistribution. Ditto would likely argue that it is in fact rational to view the policy more favorably when attributed Mother Theresa vs. Stalin because the former is virtuous while the latter is evil. The logic then becomes something akin to "I trust Mother Theresa because she is a virtuous human. If she favors this policy, then it must be a good policy" vs. "I distrust Stalin because he is evil. If he favors this policy, then it must be a bad policy." Such a critic could argue that differences between conditions do not, therefore, represent bias but are in fact rational responses to the framing effect.

Our rejoinder to this criticism is as follows: First, we must emphasize that the fundamental content of the question being asked is independent of the speaker/politician it was attributed to. For instance, in study 2 part 1, participants were asked "To what extent do you support drone strikes that kill terrorists but probably also kill civilians," rather than an alternative such as: "To what extent do you think Trump/Obama's use of drone strikes is motivated by his desire to help the Middle East." Similarly, in Study 2 Part 2, participants were asked "How racist/xenophobic is this statement", rather than an alternative such as "How racist is Clinton/Trump."

While we agree that contextual information is useful for these latter questions, one has to adopt a radically relativistic stance to claim that contextual information ought to be logically applied to the former. Indeed, if the claim is that the merits (or bigotry) of action X depend on the person performing the act, then objectivity ceases to exist, and the very notions of "double-standards" and "hypocrisy" become meaningless. Appeals to authority would have to be seen as a legitimate means of argumentation. Furthermore, if the merits of an action are dependent on the actor, it would follow that ad-hominin attacks can serve a useful function in discovering truth; ad-hominin arguments, like appeals to authority, are also considered logical fallacies (Copi, 1961). Copi (pp. 54-55) notes ad-hominin reasoning is faulty because "the personal character of a man is logically irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of what he says or the correctness or incorrectness of his argument… [d]isapproval toward a person can… become disagreement with what that person says. *But this connection is only psychological, not logical.* [emphasis added] Even the most wicked of men may sometimes tell the truth or argue correctly."

The logic elucidated in the example above is (X is good when Mother Theresa does it; X is bad when Stalin does it) is, ipsofacto, an appeal to authority. To that end, returning to the Mother Theresa vs. Stalin example, we hold that such an experiment would simply be an extreme example of the very phenomenon under study. While, owing to the long history in psychological sciences documenting cognitive biases (Kahneman, 2011), it is not surprising that participants would be impacted by such a manipulation, but it does represent a bias nonetheless.

Moreover, we should note that at least some of the research presented here would have met the very inclusion criteria from the Ditto, Liu, et al. (2019) meta-analysis which, as stated in the title, is designed to assess bias. It is therefore odd that Ditto would lead a meta-analysis designed to measure bias while simultaneously seeming to argue that the inclusion criteria from his study was not adequate in culling studies that measure bias. Of course, scholars are free to change their position over time, and we see the likely beginnings of this on p. 308 in Ditto, Clark, et al. (2019). In fact, modifying one's position may demonstrate a commitment to truth-seeking. Nonetheless, some clarity is warranted.

We end our discussion on this point by conceding to Ditto's argument that historical era is a confound. For example, one could reasonably argue that "illegal immigrant" may have signaled racism when used in the 2010s versus the 1990s. It would be interesting to replicate some of these manipulations but with holding the time-frame constant (e.g. "In a speech last year, former president Bill Clinton/Donald Trump said…).

Conclusions.

Tribalism is likely adaptive from an evolutionary stand-point (Clark & Winegard, 2020). However, own-group loyalty may come at the cost of truth and objectivity, and these latter values are

necessary for coherent, civil, and productive political discourse. As Pinker (2021) writes, "what's rational for each us seeking acceptance in a clique is not so rational for all of us in a democracy seeking the best understanding of the world." (p. 298). If people become more polarized, we can expect that polarization will also increase among law-makers and it will be increasingly difficult to reach compromise. The existence of tribalism suggests that people are not objectively judging policy and statements; instead, support depends on the person to whom it is attributed. This poses a serious concern for our ability to effectively communicate and reach consensus about political and social issues. How can we forthrightly debate the merits of presidential actions, the bigotry of statements, and the legitimacy of elections when its support is, to some degree, a function of the interaction between the speaker/politician and one's own political party?

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