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Emotional Perception of Presidential Candidate Debate Statements: An Examination of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Debates

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Abstract

Presidential campaigns mainly focus on political communication to gather voters' support for their candidates. Candidates' ultimate aim is to convince voters to vote for them and not their opponents. Campaign debates are one way to evaluate candidates.

Debates provide the candidates a platform to persuade voters to support them over their opponent(s). The candidates stand together and can be analyzed on important issues to the viewers. The statements made by candidates are aimed at winning the elections.

James B. Lemert (1993) addresses the question of whether television presidential debates help to inform voters. He argues that while there are arguments both for and against the idea that debates matter, the answer needs to be clarified. Lemert suggests that debates generally matter, but their impact can vary depending on the campaign year.

Grounded in the belief that debates matter, this study examines the perceived impact of the 2016 US Presidential Candidate debates between Republican nominee Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Focused on candidate statements, the research examines the credibility and emotional perceptions motivating effects on potential voters that could or would result from assessing message frames. It considers the potential interactions of predispositions on future political participation by examining whether there is a moderating effect of party identity on perceptions and intent to support a candidate.

This research found no moderating effect but strong correlations between candidates' emotional and credibility perceptions and their debate statements. It outlines considerations for information processing and lays the foundation for future examinations of emotions.

Keywords: Political Communications, Political Debates, Message Framing, Issue Advocacy, Source Credibility, Emotional Perception, Persuasion and Political Participation.

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by

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to examine the effects of presidential candidate debate statements. It seeks to discuss the role that debates play in elections and examine whether debates influence viewers and potential voters. This study will explore the relationship between viewers' emotional responses, the perceived effects of presidential candidate statements made during debates, and perceptions of the candidates. Focused on the latent credibility assessment of the candidate rather than the latent message assessment, this research analyses the extent to which emotions yield action, and how framing and predispositions interact with credibility and political action. Fundamentally, it asks questions of political information processing, drawing on media psychology theories to think about the relationship between emotions and politics.

The broadcast of the U.S. presidential debates displays the candidates side-by-side as a type of deliberative democracy, which provides potential voters access to the nominees. While researchers have mixed views on whether debates are effective, the presidential debate is a staple in the public sphere that enables candidates to frame specific, clear, and succinct messages. In this light, this research study engages the question of what effect the presidential election debate has on voting viewers. In so doing, I seek to determine results that speak to this issue generally as well as specifically. Specifically speaking, this study looks at the emotional appraisals of candidate statements and their effect on perception and action. Generally, this study will provide a mass communication approach to answering the question of whether debates matter.

Using data collected in October 2016, following the first presidential debate, this study will focus on questions of perception and emotional responses to the Republican and Democratic nominees. The 2016 U.S. presidential election was marked by massive protests that disabled cities, political clashes that prevented rallies, and divisive campaigns. In a historically significant

election in which a sitting president was not running for re-election, both major parties went through a long competitive primary process, with the Republican Party having 17 potential nominees, the largest candidate pool in recent history. This process resulted in the Republican nomination of Donald J. Trump, a well-known media mogul and businessman with no prior political experience. Hillary Rodham Clinton, a former first lady of the United States and the Democratic nominee at that time, became the first female presidential candidate of a major political party, and she brought a strong political resume to the campaign. Both presidential candidates were well-known, with their own history-making legacy.

In a time of political and ideological polarization, partisanship, and rising socio-political changes (Pew Research Center, 2014), the two candidates presented clearly different paths for the country. The public had strong emotional responses with a deep mistrust of both candidates (Enten, 2016). This intersection of emotions, combined with strong ideological stances and concern for the candidates, provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between emotions and politics. The debate provides a unique lens, as it reduces the clutter of election campaigning and focuses on the issues themselves. This study frames the analysis of the relationship and potential effects on voters.

The U.S. Presidential Election Process

The U.S. Presidential election cycle is longer compared to other election processes, like the parliamentary election process. In the parliamentary election process, the pre-election period is six weeks long from the announcement of the election day. However, because there is no fixed election day in the U.K. parliamentary election process, campaigning for the position does not intrude on the actual timeline. The nature of the U.S. presidential election cycle could be a strong rationale for why it is overwhelming. With a fixed date and a large constituency, the

campaigning process—which begins the year prior, and in some cases even two years prior—ensures dominance in the news media and public discourse. Candidates must continually raise money to sustain a wide-reaching campaign for at least a whole calendar year. They must maintain a public presence to increase name recognition and relevance, as public opinion polling is one of the key drivers of success.

In looking at any campaign strategy in a candidate's bid for U.S. president, there are several phases to the process. There is the exploratory phase, in which candidates declare an exploratory committee; this can happen as early as two years before election day, but no earlier. Looking back at the 2016 U.S. presidential election timeline, former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb formed his exploratory committee for a possible run for president on November 20, 2014 (Haberman, 2014). Before the end of the year, former Governor Jeb Bush had also announced plans for a possible run, with the formation of a political action committee (PAC) on December 16, 2014 (Bush, 2014). Some potential candidates form PACs, which are explicitly organized to raise funds for a political purpose. Some candidates forgo the exploratory stage and move directly to a formal announcement of their candidacy. On such candidate was Mark Everson, former Commissioner of Internal Revenue, who declared his candidacy for the Republican Party nomination on March 5, 2015 (Dinan, 2015). After the exploratory phase, candidates typically announce that they are officially running for the candidacy of a political party. The year is then spent campaigning for the nomination of a political party. Most prospective candidates vie for the official position of representing a political party. This nomination process is known as the "primary" and involves party-organized events like primary debates and primary elections or caucuses that narrow the candidate pool for a political party. This is done ahead of the party's national convention, where a candidate is determined and announced. The Republican party had

its first event, a presidential forum entitled “Voters First Forum” that featured 14 of the then 17 candidates on August 3, 2015 (See: C-SPAN, 2015; NECN, 2015).

Similar to the national process, the major political parties organize events for the candidates to participate in during the primaries. Events like forums and debates, where candidates appear alongside each other to make their case to voters, provide voters with a frame of reference for their party’s candidates. During the 2016 primary period, there were 12 Republican National Committee (RNC) debates and nine forums, nine Democratic National Committee (DNC) sanctioned debates, and 13 forums for the Democratic candidates. The Libertarian Party, whose organizational structure does not mirror the two major parties, had three nationally aired debates and one town hall.

The voting for the candidates in 2016 began with the New Hampshire primary. The general primary elections and caucuses are held in the first half of the election year, with the convention occurring in the summer. The nomination process between the election and convention is typically about 6–8 months, which leaves about a 2–4-month window for the actual presidential campaign. In 2016, the Republic National Convention was held on July 18-21, 2016, and Donald Trump and Mike Pence were formally nominated for President and Vice President, respectively. The Democratic National Convention was held on July 25-28, 2016, and Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine were formally nominated for President and Vice President, respectively. The Green National Convention was held on August 4-7, 2016, and Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka were nominated for President and Vice President, respectively. Finally. the Libertarian National Convention was held on May 26-27, 2016, during which Gary John and William Weld received their nomination for President and Vice President, respectively.

It is important to remember that only some eligible voters participate in the primary stage. For different states, the rules governing the primary process vary. The primary phase has grown significantly, from having only a few states participate to all states participating. In 1968 only 15 states held primaries; in 1984 that number doubled to 30 (Tarr & Benenson, 2012). By 1996, 42 of the 50 states and Washington D.C., held primary elections, while 41 held primaries in 2008 (Tarr & Benenson, 2012).

Having this election staggered over a 6–8-month period with constant media coverage, has increased the likelihood of exposure to the candidate's campaign. For many, election fatigue can set in well before the presidential race begins with clear nominees.

After nominees – the winners of the primary elections – are declared, it is a race to the finish line, with many rallies, town halls, and forums, which all provide candidates the opportunity to make the rounds on the campaign trail. This period of campaigning is also when they tend to attract a much larger group of supporters, and opponents from the primary phase are now campaigning for the nominee. There is an attempt to reunify the voice and rein in the division that may have occurred earlier that year, during the nomination campaign. At this point in the process, candidates often begin to reject the validity of fellow party candidates', in favor of backing their own campaign. The presidential election debates during this time pit candidates against each other with regard to their issue stances, party alliances and ideology. The bi-partisan organization Commission on Presidential Debates organizes the debates. There are typically three debates among the major presidential candidates. In the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, the debates took place on September 26, October 9, and October 19, with only the Democratic nominee (Hillary Clinton) and Republican nominee (Donald Trump) appearing. There was also a vice presidential debate held on October 4, 2016. Only the first and third of the three debates had

a traditional format. The second debate took a town meeting format, with questions coming from the audience rather than a moderator.

About the debates

Debates are a staple of the many events along the election campaign trail. Presidential candidates have incorporated debates as an integral part of their election campaigns, be it during the primary season or the general election after the parties have finalized their nominees (Tarr & Benenson, 2012). These debates are loosely structured programs that may consist of journalists or audience members asking questions of the candidates, but which provide an opportunity to hear both party-nominated candidates' positions on an issue or question. There are no judges to award points for responses; as such, a winner is determined by public opinion and is influenced by media commentators who assess the candidates' performance.

There were three debates held for the 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle. The first was on Monday, September 26, 2016, at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. The moderator for this event was Lester Holt of NBC. The second was on Sunday, October 9, 2016, at Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. The moderators for this event were Martha Raddatz of ABC and Anderson Cooper of CNN. The third and final debate was Wednesday, October 19, 2016, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Paradise, Nevada. The moderator for this event was Chris Wallace of Fox News. All three events ran for 90 minutes, from 9:00 pm to 10:30 pm EDT. Only the Democratic candidate, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of New York, and the Republican candidate, businessman Donald Trump of New York, participated in these events, as they were the only candidates to meet the eligibility requirements set by the Commission on Presidential Debates.

According to Nielsen, approximately 84 million people watched the first debate, which was broadcast over 13 networks that aired live coverage; and there were 17.1 million Twitter interactions from 2.7 million users (Nielson, 2016). The second debate had an estimated 66.5 million people, over 11 networks, and 62 million social media interactions across Facebook and Twitter from 18.2 million users in the U.S. (Nielsen, 2016). The third debate had an estimated 71.6 million people over 12 networks, and 53.2 million social media interactions across Facebook and Twitter from 16.9 million users (Nielsen, 2016). The first debate was the most-viewed, and the third debate was the third-highest viewed debate in history (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2017). The debates were also streamed online on multiple platforms. YouTube reported an average of 1.7 million concurrent live viewers at its peak and over 140 million views of debate-related videos across its platform (Wilms, 2016).

As is intended, voters learn a lot from debates. A study from the Annenberg Public Policy Center found that viewers gain knowledge on issues and candidates' positions. However, the presidential debates did not change their perceived qualification for the role of president (Winneg & Hall Jamieson, 2017).

A survey-poll conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) revealed that "52 percent of American adults report that the 2016 election was a very or somewhat significant source of stress" (American Psychological Association, 2016). Political anxiety is real, and Election Stress Disorder, a term coined by Steven Stosny (2017), has become commonplace in the discourse surrounding mental health and the presidential elections. The APA found that all racial and ethnic groups struggled with election-related stress, which was not related to political affiliation. However, the study also suggested that election-related stress was more prevalent

among social media users (54%) than adults who do not use social media (45%) (American Psychological Association, 2016).

The length of the process, which made for prolonged exposure to the content, created a continued, pressured environment that fueled emotion. The growth in the number of states that participate in primaries has changed the content's nature because it added more events that affect the outcome. The added 24/7 news cycle on all media platforms to ensure that the information was communicated to the populace only exacerbated the issue. News coverage and attention increased the possibility of exposure to the presidential election for the average citizen, who may not have been seeking information. Moreover, the change in the media landscape due to the prevalence of social media in our everyday lives is further aggravated by the fact that these platforms are controlled by algorithms that feed on the very same information.

Why is the 2016 election historically significant?

In the wake of the 2016 elections, media culture, discussions, and trends around media consumption are marked by issues of truthfulness and targeting. The political landscape is changing, and we can see this point in history as a defining moment. Some events include "the rise of fake news" (Georgacopoulos & Mores, 2020) and the resulting "damaging psychological effects of the 2016 elections" (Boyte, 2016).

Every election in modern/contemporary history could be defined as unprecedented, but the 2016 elections brought social-political issues amplified by media coverage to light. Ahead of the 2016 elections, political polarization, a defining feature of politics, had increased significantly compared to previous decades. According to a Pew Research Center study, Democrats and Republicans were more ideologically divided at this point than in the past (2014).

Steve Kornacki (2018) talks about the birth of political tribalism in the U.S. He notes that the defining moment in the recent history of change in U.S. political culture occurred in the 1990s, with the emergence of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. Kornacki explains how these politicians exploited weaknesses in the then-political structure: Newt Gingrich himself boasts that he could "draw a direct line from his work in Congress to the upheaval now taking place around the globe" (Coppins, 2018, para. 17). Newt Gingrich is the engineer of "the Republican Revolution", which drastically changed how politicking was done in Washington (Coppins, 2018, para. 64). Essentially, political discourse and culture went from cordial, with parties disagreeing but not to the detriment of cooperation, to being "nasty", with Gingrich pioneering "a cutthroat 'war for power'" (Coppins, 2018, paras. 23-24). While political polarization did not start with Gingrich, he exploited it to dismantle the power structures and build what we have today.

Moreover, Gingrich exploited the media and worked to keep himself and his ideas in the press. This tactic primed and framed the narrative of politics, which affected both sides of the spectrum. The results fuel the disparity we see in political polarization today, where standing with your party is more important than standing on the issues.

The 2014 Political Polarization Survey found deep antipathy, and over the course of the last two decades, the percentage of Americans who consistently express conservative or liberal opinions has increased from 10% to 21% (Pew Research Center, 2014). Furthermore, the alignment between ideology and partisanship has grown much stronger than in previous years. Consequently, there has been a decrease in ideological overlap with "92% of Republicans … to the right of the median Democrat, and 94% of Democrats … to the left of the median

Republican" (Pew Research Center, 2014). As a result, ideological overlap between the two parties has diminished.

To what extent does partisanship play a role?

Partisanship refers to the alignment of individuals or groups with a particular political party or ideology. In the context of election voting, partisanship refers to the tendency for individuals to vote to "beat the other side." Partisanship places importance on *party* rather than specific policies or stances held by any individual candidate.

Polarization in politics refers to the increasing divide between individuals or groups with different political beliefs or ideologies. This can manifest in several ways, including increased hostility or mistrust between opposing groups, a lack of compromise or cooperation on political issues, and a narrowing of the political spectrum.

Partisanship feeds into polarization, which is in turn increased by the prevalence of partisanship, creating a self-reinforcing cycle. This occurs because as candidates and parties move towards the ends of the political spectrum, it becomes more difficult for individuals existing along that spectrum to find common ground with candidates and/or parties with which they do not have total alignment on political issues and beliefs. As a result of this inability to compromise, individuals are more likely to vote for candidates or parties that align more fully with their own beliefs, even if those candidates or parties may not be the most qualified or best fit for the job. As polarization increases, individuals tend to vote along party lines based on their perceived alignment on the issues, instead of rigorously considering their stance on the issues and comparing it to the candidate's stance.

The categorizations of partisanship in politics vary in survey studies, as described by Fiorina and Abrams (2008), Layman, Carsey, & Horowitz (2006), and Hetherington (2009).

Assuming everything else is the same, the contention is that attitude polarization works against social and political steadiness by diminishing the chances of forming groups at the midpoint of the opinion range and by escalating the probability of creating groups with distinctive and irreconcilable policy preferences. The focus of this study is on the idea of party sorting or partisan polarization as defined by the constraint effect (Converse, 2006) and the consolidation effect (Blau, 1977). Constraint, in that "the more closely associated different social attitudes become…", and consolidation in that "the greater the extent to which social attitudes become correlated with salient individual characteristics or identities" (DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996, p. 693)

There are various reasons for partisanship, and research has postulated five types of evidence to support polarization in politics: differences in sociocultural characteristics; differing world views or moral visions; opposing positions; polarized choices; and differences in where we live (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). Moreover, research reports like those produced by the Pew Research Center and American National Election Survey, look at the possible reasons for voting and the resulting partisanship and/or polarization that is revealed. They assess values like issue stance, ideology, media, and information gathering, among others. These driving factors could explain the role of partisanship and/or polarization in election voting.

Issue stance is one characteristic that individuals use to delineate partisanship. Through long-term advocacy and track record, parties are associated with exhibiting strengths and positions on various policies/issues. Those alignments are strategic for mobilizing groups for voting (Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003). The Democratic and Republican candidates put emphasis on different issues during the election. While it is the case that "opposing candidates can talk about the same issues," this concept of "issue convergence" research shows that specific issues

are aligned with certain parties at any given point (Benoit, 2014, p. 90; See also Petrocik, 1996). This is what ultimately aligns parties' issues and arguable with ideology as a philosophical foundation for the issue stance. Ideology as a characterization of partisanship has conservatism on the right side of the spectrum, which is aligned with the Republican party; and liberalism on the left, which is aligned with the Democratic party.

The increasing ideological divide between political parties, as defined by policy stance, has grown. As noted earlier, in the past political parties tended to be more ideologically diverse, with members who held a wide range of beliefs and views. As such, you had conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans. However, in recent years political parties have become more ideologically homogeneous, with members tending to hold similar views and beliefs. Ideological alignment of this nature reinforces the behavior referenced above, causing voters to vote based on party identification without rigorously examining the issues. This is believed to be a driving factor in the divide between opposing political parties and a lack of compromise and cooperation on political issues.

These policy stances and ideologies also manifest in interest groups and special interests (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986; Walker, 1983; Olson, 1968). An example is the National Rifle Association's (NRA) alignment and its association with the Republican Party. They are ideologically harmonious in the desire to reduce government oversight and regulations. As such, the NRA funds candidates who support less gun control, influences voters who want to hold onto firearms, and preserves a particular and shared reading of the second amendment. Interest groups tend to have a strong ideological bent and often push for specific policies or positions, regardless of their overall societal impact. This can further widen the divide between opposing groups and

contribute to a lack of compromise and cooperation on political issues. Moreover, this alignment furthers partisanship in voting because these issues are essential to the voter.

The media and information people consume also play a role in shaping individual voting behavior. Media houses are seen as politically aligned, with Fox News a prime example of conservative media and pro-Republican. In such models, the media acts as a gatekeeper that frames and primes their viewers towards the ideology. They tend to present information in a way that aligns with their political beliefs, which can influence how individuals perceive candidates and parties. Social media and the internet have made it easier for individuals to access information that confirms their beliefs, further reinforcing their partisanship. As such, consuming media that supports our gratification curates an algorithm through internet usage based on our selective media samples. These algorithms are designed to continue feeding like-minded information from similar sources with the same ideology and position.

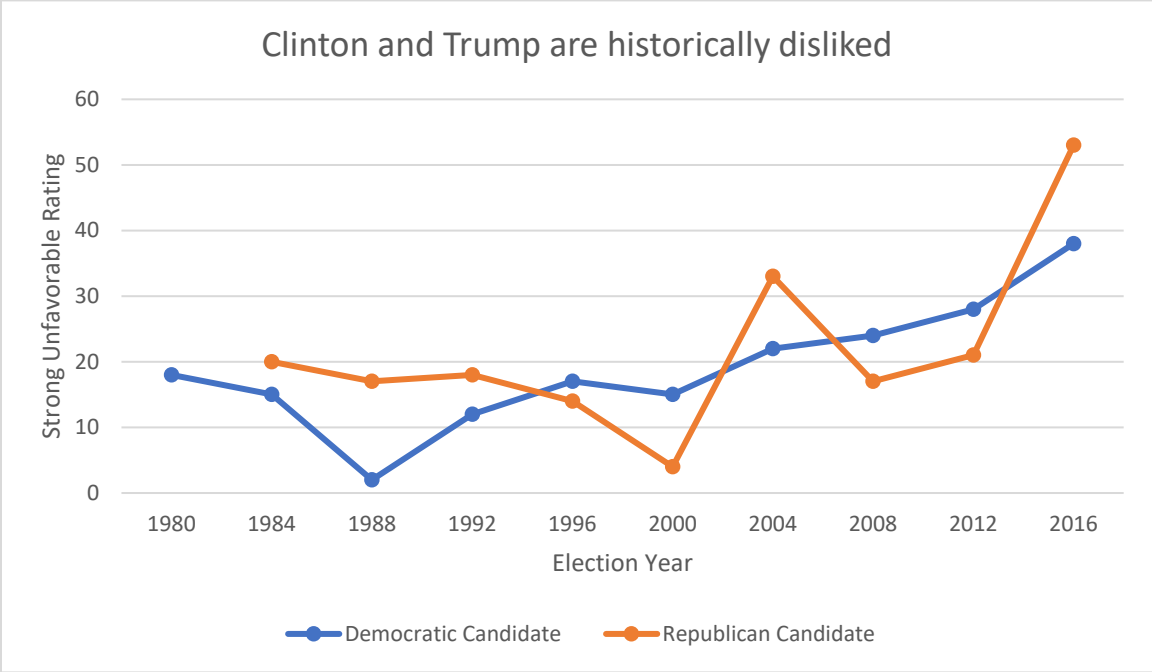
As a side note, other factors exist that are not mainly about the electorate but the system, which has resulted in the prevalence of polarization, like gerrymandering, redistricting, and demographic changes. Gerrymandering refers to the manipulation of electoral district boundaries for political advantage. This can create safe seats for one party, reducing the incentive for candidates to reach out to voters of other parties (Stonecash, Brewer, & Mariani, 2003). As a result, political polarization increases as the parties become more homogenous in their safe seats, and their communication and cooperation decrease.

Another issue that emerged in the 2016 elections was the intense dislike of both party candidates. Generally, there will always be voters who do not like a political candidate. This can be the case for the candidate of their party, and it is usually the case for candidates of the other party, given the role that partisanship plays. But “no past candidate comes close to [Hillary]

Clinton, and especially [Donald] Trump, in terms of engendering strong dislike" (Enten, 2016, para. 4). This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Unfavorable Ratings of Republican and Democratic Presidential Nominees



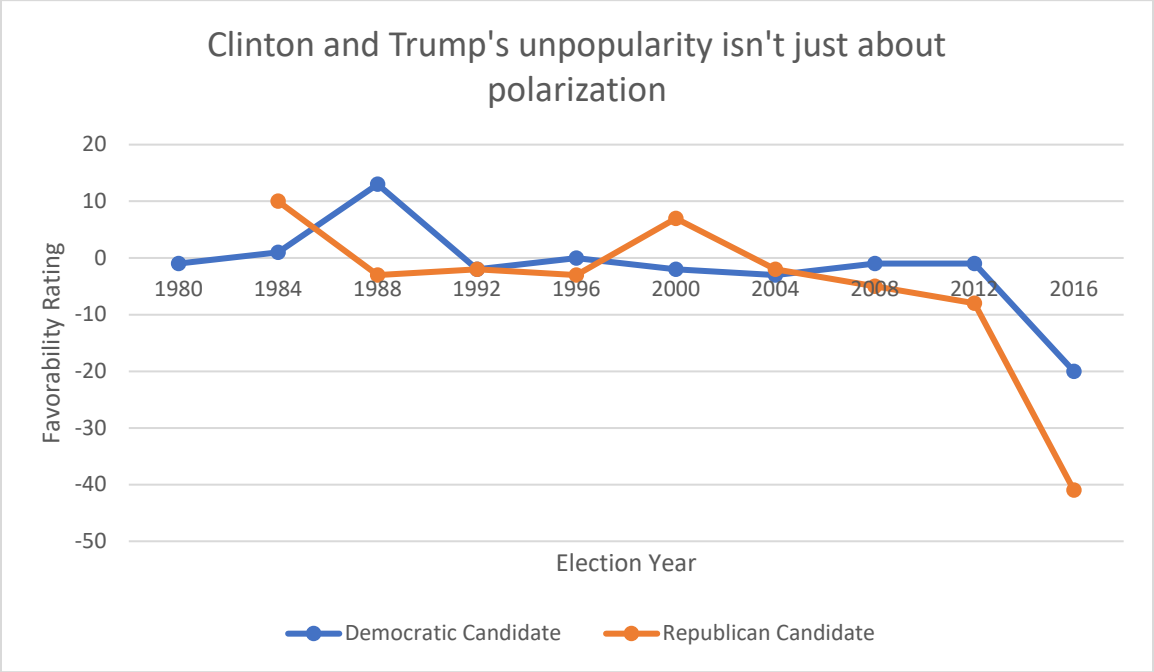
Note. The figure was adapted from "Americans' Distaste For Both Trump And Clinton Is Record-Breaking" by Harry Enten (2016). The data used was originally sourced from the Roper Center. The figure illustrates strongly unfavorable ratings documented between late March to late April of each election year for Republican and Democratic presidential nominees.

Enten's article alludes to growing political polarization in the country that fosters negativity in voters, but this is not the only factor. It is important to remember that while a candidate can be disliked, they can also be liked. As such, an unfavorable rating as a by-product of polarization would result in strong favorability ratings. The effect would be a pull to the

center, but that is not the case. According to Enten, “No major party nominee before Clinton or Trump had a double-digit net negative ‘strong favorability’ rating” (Enten, 2016, para. 7). This is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Net Favorability Ratings of Republican and Democratic Presidential Nominees



Note. The figure was adapted from “Americans’ Distaste For Both Trump And Clinton Is Record-Breaking” by Harry Enten (2016). The data used was originally sourced from the Roper Center. The figure illustrates negative strong favorability ratings documented between late March to late April of each election year for Republican and Democratic presidential nominees.

This was consistently the case, as polling consistently showed a double-digit difference between favorability and unfavourability for candidates. Gallup polling suggested that as the

campaign advanced, the images of the candidate remained largely the same despite the issues that arose. In October 2016, about a month before the election, 43% of Americans polled held a strongly unfavorable opinion of Hillary Clinton, and only 21% held a strongly favorable opinion (Newport & Dugan, 2016). In contrast, 53% of Americans polled held a strongly unfavorable view of Donald Trump, compared to 16% who held a strongly favorable view (Newport & Dugan, 2016). Gallup's final pre-election poll showed Donald Trump with a 61% unfavorable score and Clinton with 52%, the worst and second-worst in presidential polling history (Saad, 2016).

During the 2016 election cycle, people held very strong opinions regarding each candidate. In a September Gallup poll, voters' top reason for supporting their candidate was a negative view of the other candidate. About 28% of voters polled believed that "their choice of president in the 2016 election involves not liking something about the opposing candidate" (Saad, 2016, para. 1). Reasons cited include their perception that the other candidate was/is dishonest, unqualified, or of poor temperament. In terms of support for candidates, the September Gallup poll found that of all voters polled, only 14% cited personal qualities as reasons to support their candidate. Of those 14%, only 2% cited credibility, and 2% cited trustworthiness (Saad, 2016).

These are just some of the examples from the plethora of coverage of the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections that set the scene for many questions concerning the ongoing campaigns and their outcomes. The hectic campaign season, littered with various scandals and negative stories, set the stage for a debate to usher in a clearing of the air. Debates are expected to demonstrate how 'presidential' a candidate would be and instill confidence in the candidate's abilities. Naturally, questions of credibility and perceptions are standard for assessing the

debates, but the integration of emotions, given the divisiveness of the campaign process, adds another layer to the narrative. The issues with each candidates' perception, personal qualities, and the high negative emotions invoked by the candidates begs the question, what role do emotions play in all of this?

The Research Problem

Among the things that could be said about the 2016 election cycle, many people struggled with their feelings regarding politics, the people, the political climate. According to Williams (2018), studies on affective forecasting have consistently shown that individuals have a tendency to overestimate the intensity of their emotional responses to future events. The election cycle produced significantly more reflective literature and articles regarding emotions and politics, with many mass publications covering topics like "Coping with Intense Emotions Around 2020 Presidential Elections" published by the Trevor Project; "How to Cope with Election and Post-Election Emotions" published by Psychology Today; and "11 Emotions That Are Totally Normal to Feel Ahead of the Election" published by Self Magazine.

The election cycle provides an environment that primes voters whose emotions become heightened because of constant exposure, and the approaching decision date. Drawing on an elaboration likelihood model, a heuristic systematic model, source credibility, and the theory of affective intelligence, this dissertation seeks to examine the role that emotions play in the decision-making process for voters, to understand the motivation for political activity and participation. It will examine a specific message frame, candidate statements taken from the presidential election debates, as a clear point of reference. In doing so, this study seeks to examine the relationship between voters' predisposition, their perceptions, and predetermined actions.

Fundamentally, this study looks at how potential voters assess candidates and how they respond to the candidates and their messages. Certainly, it is focused on the questions of feeling and emotions and the relationship between that self-assessment and potential engagement. This study is concerned with emotions' role as an acknowledged predisposition to the following assessment of the messages and the candidates. Moreover, this study is interested in the impact that emotions have on the perception of credibility.

It is important to note that this is a historical analysis, and while there is a plethora of studies that have been done on the 2016 elections, this study aims to add to the body of literature furthering the conversation about emotion, media and politics. This study has the advantage of using hindsight to examine the narrative and further discuss potential connections using data collected during the elections and immediately following the airing of the debates. The collected information is timely and thus invoked the feelings as they were relevant and occurred.

The following chapters of this manuscript will show an exploration of these ideas. Chapter 2 of this study discusses key theories that frame the concepts of this examination. This literature review lays the foundation for understanding the role of debates and examines theories of persuasion and source credibility, as well as theories of emotions in political science research. Chapter 3 provides an overview of this study's methodological approach and a survey and explains the various measurements employed. Chapter 4 will contain the analysis and results of the data collected. Chapter 5 will consist of an extensive discussion of the findings, featuring theorized implications, understandings, and insight into where we could go from here.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Do presidential debates matter?

McKinney and Warner's (2013) analysis of debate effects from 2000 to 2012, where the researchers looked at presidential, primary, and vice-president debates of 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012, found that in those elections, debates mattered. This conclusion was consistent with prior studies, specifically, Benoit, Hansen & Verser (2003), McKinney & Carlin, (2004); & The Racine Group, (2002). This study is based on the premise that "to identify the underlying logic of debates" is to "better understand the specific effects [found], how these effects are achieved, and under what conditions and on which particular debate viewers we find certain effects" " (The Racine Group, 2002, pp. 215, 239).

In a review of the literature, the authors note that committed voters are less likely to change their candidate preference following debates. In contrast, undecided or uncommitted voters are more likely to change after viewing a debate. Moreover, there are several conditions under which a candidate support change would likely occur. According to Chaffee (1978) voters may be impacted under four (4) conditions: "(a) when at least one of the candidates is relatively unknown, (b) when many voters are undecided, (c) when the race appears close, and (d) when party allegiances are weak" (p. 240).

Moreover, "viewers are far more likely to use debates to gain insight into each candidate's personality and character… A superior 'persona' presentation appears to be more important to voters than an accumulation of issue-oriented debating 'point'" (Lanoue & Schrott, 1991, p. 96).

Fundamentally, the research provided evidence that campaign debates do matter. At the same time, the claim is made that primary debates have more significant effect results than

presidential (McKinney & Warner, 2013). This effect is due to the candidates' introductions and the establishment of each candidate. However, uncommitted voters are more likely to choose a position following a debate, and those who are already committed are more likely to be secured in their position. Debates aid in the image formation and attitude change of voters toward candidates.

With the first televised debates in 1960, the questions of the debate's effect grew to examine image voting and assess its usefulness and impact. Two publications of *The Great Debate* (Kraus, 1962, 1979) looked extensively at these questions. An analysis of studies on the impact of televised debates, specifically regarding the Carter vs. Ford debates of 1976, makes the case that debates are helpful to voters. The debates have a controlling effect and hold the role of acting as a catalyst that causes or accelerates individual voting decisions. Chaffee suggests that the "effect of attention to debates seems to be a reinforcement of issue positions at the expense of image predisposition" (1978, p. 342). It is important to note that voters would be predisposed to candidates by the time the debates occur in the campaign cycle, thus holding some opinion influenced by any given number of factors. It is doubtful that a potential voter would not have a predisposition to a candidate, whether as an individual or in relation to their party association. Additionally, Chaffee credits debates with a role in both political socialization and recruitment to political engagement.

Sigelman and Sigelman (1984) commented on voters' judgments on debates being grounded in cognitive screening. Their study sought to determine "the impact of prior cognition and affect on judgment on the outcomes" of debates (Sigelman & Sigelman, 1984, p. 624). They hypothesized and confirmed that decided voters' predisposition to their decision strongly impacts the judgments of the debates. For undecided voters, that predisposition is filtered by a somewhat

strong party affiliation and party ideology rather than the certainty of candidate support. Sigelman and Sigelman did not believe that debates influence election outcomes, primarily because they thought people sought congruency with their predisposition when faced with cognitive dissonance. This was supported at the time by Sherif and Hovland, (1961) and Lord et al., (1979). For Sigelman and Sigelman, "people generally strive to maintain cognitive consistency and more readily assimilate new information consistent with, not discrepant from, prior stances" (1984, p. 624).

Dennis et al. (1979) believed that "for the voter who lacked a partisan basis for voting, the debates could provide both "issue" and "image" cues to guide his or her decision. And for the partisan voter, they offer an opportunity to assess one's party's choice against one's own political evaluation" (Dennis et al., 1979, p. 315). In their article on the impact of partisan, image, and issue voting on the Carter vs. Ford debates, Dennis et al. found that the debates do not enhance the candidate's image. Their study used an image assessment looking at honesty/integrity, strength/decisiveness, friendly/pleasant, leadership capabilities, clarity of position on issues, and whether the candidate inspires confidence as a speaker. The study looked at the bonding of the image assessment, the voter's partisan basis, and the consideration of issues. Given debate exposure, they found bonding stronger for non-viewers of the debates than viewers. Their study had several categories of viewers' exposure to the debates and, in comparison, found that viewers with high exposure—that is, voters who engaged with all the debates—assessed issue differences, whereas occasional viewers took to party identification: "Respondents (with medium-exposure) eventually made decisions that tended to be quite consistent with their partisan predisposition" (Dennis et al., 1979, p. 322). Dennis et al.

concluded that the debates held a catalyst function, providing added information to voters to help with the bonding of voters to candidates.

Moreover, in the absence of the debates voters will attach to partisan predisposition or candidate personalities. They believe that from a democratic theory, debates function as a mechanism to inform voters of policies, while from an idealistic sense, it would increase voters' "capacity for rational voting" (Dennis et al., 1979, p. 327).

Geer's (1988) assessment of presidential debates argues that while the expectation of the existing predisposition has a strengthening or reinforcing effect on voters, since they have been exposed to the same information pre-debate, the message within the debate still matters. The candidate's statements largely reflect concepts that have been previously discussed in other settings, echoing ideas already expressed, "but when the debate provides new information about the candidates, one can expect these verbal duels to influence the preferences of a sizable number of citizens" (Geer, 1988, p. 498). Geer studied data from assessments of the debates of 1976 and 1984, taken from CBS/New York Times Polls. This study countered the dominant narrative at the time of the limited influence of presidential debates on public preferences for candidates. A key takeaway from Geer is the consideration of the increased ability to communicate with voters through the change in mass communication, coupled with the change in partisanship within the citizenry. Geer believed that "there is reason to think individuals may be more susceptible to the influences of the campaign" (1988, p. 499); as such, researchers should not think of the electorate as holding steadfast to predispositions that are "impervious" to either the campaign or the debates themselves.

Elections provide a voice for citizens that makes a statement about the individual who will represent the body. Citizens determine whom they will support and elect after a long period

of nomination campaigning for representation on a party ticket, followed by campaigning in the general election for the position. The campaign is like an extended dialogue amongst the candidates, the media, and the public. It is a podium where "all the candidates formally present themselves in the context of a particular election decision and in relation to specific competitors" (Just, et al., 1996, p. 6). Candidates spend millions of dollars on campaigns that aim to persuade voters. They allow the electorate body to assess the individuals based on their profile, track record, ideology, stance, and vision for the future. Mayhew (2004) argues that one of the critical considerations of politicians is elections; as such, everything they do is to enable their electability. While there are various components of campaigns and a plethora of communicated messages about the candidate, one of the primary considerations given to a candidate is their personality and character. For example, in President Eisenhower's reelection campaign for U.S. President, as the incumbent, his popularity was not based on his track record and accomplishments but his persona: "It was the response to personal qualities – to his sincerity, his integrity, and sense of duty, his virtue as a family man, his religious devotions, and his sheer likableness" (A. Campbell et al., 1964, p. 26) that made him favorable to the electorate. The characteristics of leaders are essential features and provide an anchor of persuasion for voters (Caprara, 2007). The candidate's character significantly affects their persuasive appeal (Sternthal et al., 1978, p. 285).

When candidates take the stage, one of their goals is persuasion. Presidential candidates must persuade undecided voters to support them in the election and on voting day. They must also persuade decided voters to either stick to or change their decision from the opponent.

In the study of persuasion, Robert Gass postulates a dual process of persuasion, of which two theories dominate the discipline: the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic

Systematic Model. These dual process models postulate persuasion operating via two fundamental paths, explaining how persuasive messages are perceived and processed (Gass & Seiter, 2018).

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) elaboration likelihood model (ELM) argues that message elaboration is necessary to facilitate attitude change. ELM is a theory of persuasion and attitude change that explains the social cognition of messages that inform our decision-making. Articulated as a dual process theory, ELM suggests that there are two mental routes for thinking and information processing: the central route and the peripheral route.

The central route is defined by message elaboration, which is "the extent to which a person carefully thinks about issue-relevant arguments contained in a persuasive message" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 7); whereas the peripheral route requires no message elaboration but takes a shortcut to either the acceptance or rejection of the message. The cues of the peripheral route are irrelevant to the issue, as they do not facilitate active thinking about the issue.

In thinking about the debate setting, a viewer may focus on the candidate's statement, and according to ELM, if the viewer is actively thinking about what is being said and engaging with the issue, then there is message elaboration that would result in persuasion. However, if the viewer is focused on other things that are not message related, the candidate is hoping for other cues for persuasion to support them.

For viewers of debates to have message elaboration, they must be motivated to process the information and able to process the information. Petty and Cacioppo's model relies on these two things to get perceivers of persuasive messages to 'elaborate' on the content. Elaborate means thinking about or expanding upon the message in a relevant way. According to social

judgment theory, we are motivated to expand and think about the ideas that are egocentric; as such, we filter out things that are less important but get caught up on the things are we deem personally relevant (Griffin, 2012). So, in the vein of considering whether something is worth the effort and motivation for elaboration, it needs to answer the question for the individual perceiver.

Alongside motivation is the ability to process information. Griffin (2012) tells us, "Issue-relevant thinking (elaboration) takes more than intelligence. It also requires concentration. Distraction disrupts elaboration" (p. 208). This begs the question regarding when viewers are presented with the information. In the context of the debate, the timing of the debates in the election cycle or even during the day may impact the potential voter's ability to process the information and, ergo, message elaboration. The format of the debate, the interruptions of the opponent, and the audience's response, among many other things, can be distractors and hindrances to message elaboration.

These things give way to processing, but elaboration can also occur in one of two ways. Petty and Cacioppo define a top-down way of thinking versus a bottom-up way. The former is called 'biased elaboration' where a "predetermined conclusion colors the supporting data underneath" (Griffin, 2012, p. 209). The bottom-up method is called 'objective elaboration,' "which [lets] facts speak from themselves" (Griffin, 2012, p. 209). Biased elaboration facilitates the grounding of previously held ideas, whereas objective elaboration fosters scrutiny without bias in the search for the truth. According to Petty and Cacioppo, there are three resulting attitudes to the type of cognitive processing: the first is a favorable case, which would result in strong positive attitude change; the second is an unfavorable case, which would result in a strong negative attitude change; and third, a neutral case, which results in no change of attitude.

The way a perceiver processes the message is essential to the outcome. Let us say that the voter watches the debates and elaborates on the message because, fundamentally, this decision is seen as important. Some, if not all, voters at the time of the presidential election debates have some predetermined conclusions about the topic. The conversation is not new, so one should expect to find a biased elaboration. Nevertheless, we can also assume that some are focused on the facts and thus open to the possibility of seeking the truth. However, we would naturally rule out objective elaboration because partisan issues and thinking dominate the context of this study.

The arguments or messages themselves are perceiver evaluative according to ELM. The perception and determination of whether the message is good is based on the receiver. However, Petty and Cacioppo hold that we can categorize arguments as strong, weak, or neutral based on the outcome. Petty and Cacioppo propose that persuasive arguments, when carefully evaluated, can lead to significant attitude shifts in the desired direction. This means the candidate's message is deemed a strong one if the voter shifts their attitude towards the candidate. Furthermore, "according to ELM, the enhanced thinking of those who respond favorably will cause their change in position to persist over time, resist counterpersuasion, and predict future behavior-the "triple crown" of interpersonal influence" (Griffin, 2012, p. 209).

Unlike the central route, the peripheral route does not require motivation or the ability to process, nor does it rely on deep cognitive thinking. It is based on all other factors that could potentially impact the message. These are called peripheral cues and are defined primarily by the speaker's credibility and reaction of other and external rewards. There is no message elaboration, and it can result in attitudinal change that is considered to be weak, meaning temporal, vulnerable and does not help to predict behavior. The message recipient is most likely to use the peripheral route for message cognition and relies on various cues to help them think quickly and

decide rapidly. Rewards tend to be the most prevalent cue, as rewards linked to an agreement with the advocate's position result in immediate gratification. Rewards may vary for the individual where no tangible reward is evident. A tangible reward could be like a sticker or sweet for visiting the dentist to get a cleaning. A non-tangible reward could be the satisfaction or emotional gratification received. So, in the context of this study, while viewers do not get a yard sign or sticker for visiting a rally, which is a different type of campaign event, other satisfactory and emotional gratification could be achieved from continuing to support their candidate despite not scrutinizing the message.

Traditionally, ELM has been seen in a scientific methodological frame that channels the process of persuasive messages to resulting attitudinal response. But it is important to note that Petty and Cacioppo's continuous expansion of ELM makes predictive behavior less likely. However, there is a more than 20-year history of ELM hypothesis testing that enables an explanation for why evidence and reasoning can lead to persuasion and attitudinal change.

As described, there are various steps and an algorithm to determine the process of message assessment, which may impact attitude. ELM provides this study a layout for considering certain variables' impact and effect. Petty and Wegener (1999) postulate that "people are motivated to hold correct attitudes" (p. 44), and so in thinking about a general first step or message processing, an underlying and involuntary response to the question of motivation posed by the ELM algorithm is that people want to think that they are correct in their knowledge and belief. Moreover, they are motivated to think about and process the information provided to them. Furthermore, in the context of this study's situation, the election's stakes provide this motivation. Voters want to think that they are making the right decision, and rightly so, supporting the correct person. They also want to think that the information postulated is correct.

However, “although people want to hold correct attitudes, the amount and nature of issue-relevant elaboration in which they are willing or able to engage to evaluate a message vary with individual and situational factors” (Petty & Wegener, 1999, p. 44). Because of the need for elaboration, motivation can be peripheral as well as central. The issue-relevant criterion is fundamental to the determination of route processing for ELM.

One of the key things we learn from a closer look at ELM is that various factors can play central and peripheral cues in information processing and the resulting attitude change. But fundamentally, the evaluation does occur, which can yield either a retention of the initial attitude or a change in attitude. Research changes attitudes that lead to action or potential action.

Petty and Wegener postulate that “variables can affect the amount and direction of attitude change by (a) serving as persuasive arguments, (b) serving as peripheral cures, and/or (c) affecting the extent or direction of issue and argument elaboration” (1999, p. 48).This means that one variable can help to further support or detract from support, but it depends on the individual. Thus, if we consider one’s political identity or affinity, that identity could be a peripheral cue that affects the direction and amount of attitude change that results from the evaluation. Furthermore, variables can play multiple roles throughout the process. Source credibility could be a peripheral cue or a central issue. However, they can also affect message elaboration by reducing or enhancing argument scrutiny. Petty and Wegener claim that a high-expertise source leads to greater differentiation of strong from weak arguments; thus, source expertise increases the message elaboration. In contrast, a low-expertise source leads to lower differentiation of strong from weak arguments, and so low expertise reduces message processing. While source expertise may not be a step in processing information, it is a gatekeeper. Thus, as a peripheral cue, it carries much weight.

Heuristic Systematic Model

Like ELM, Heuristic Systematic Model (HSM) "delineates two concurrent modalities of human information processing" (Neuwirth et al., 2002, p. 321). Unlike ELM, which purports one over the other, HSM suggests that we process information dually. One process is more superficial and imperceptive, while the other is more acute, requiring effort and mental concentration. Mode 1 is defined as Systematic processing, which is more thoughtful and deliberate. In contrast, Mode 2 is defined as Heuristic processing, where one relies on shortcuts that are based on decision rules that help simplify the thinking process. HSM argues that a person is doing both forms of processing simultaneously. Thus, there is a "sufficiency principle," which entails a kind of trade-off in processing effort between one's capacity to think about the issue and one's motivation to process the information at hand. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) "people will exert whatever effort is required to attain a 'sufficient' degree of confidence that they have accomplished their processing goals (p. 330). As such, a potential voter will think deliberately about the message they are interested in while using heuristic cues to satisfy things about the message they are comfortable assuming. They will find the balance between engagement in the message based on their need for cognition, but that can sway from moment to moment based on motivation.

In HSM, there are three main categories of motivation: accuracy, defense, and impression. Accuracy motivation is based on a belief system founded in objectivity, "an unbiased and free examination of relevant information. When motivation and capacity are sufficiently high, people will process systematically and thereby reduce their judgmental uncertainty" (Neuwirth et al., 2002, p. 322). Heuristic cues are based on guiding rules that are founded in supporting the goal of accuracy. In this context, potential voters with accuracy

motivation are open-minded and even-handed in scrutinizing messages, and thus they would look at both candidate messages comparatively. Decision-making heuristic cues, such as expert referencing and statistical support, would supplement the process, especially where systematic processing is difficult, motivation is low, and background knowledge requires assistance.

Defensive motivation is defined as a "desire to hold attitudes and beliefs that are congruent with existing self-definitional attitudes and beliefs" (Zuckerman & Chaiken, 1998, p. 633; see also Chaiken et al., 1996). This means that one's values, be that social identity, character traits, or morals, are invoked in information processing, i.e., they play a crucial role. According to Neuwirth et al. (2002), "people who are motivated defensively strive to sustain their self-concept and worldviews or otherwise defend prior ideas by selectively processing information" (p. 322; See also Chen & Chaiken, 1999). As a result, heuristic cues play a supporting role in facilitating compatibilism. In this context, a potential voter looks at the message defensively. There may be scrutiny of opposing material to find flaws or the creation of a counterposition. Incongruent messages are ignored, and messaging is filtered through a biased lens. As such, a voter whose party identification is incongruent with the candidate would have a defense motive in assessing that candidate's information.

Finally, impression motivation, while like defensive motivation, is biased in information processing; it is "focus[ed] on interpersonal consequences, (e.g., the effects of expressing an opinion in a social setting). Impression motivation is distinguished by selective processing that fosters a person's immediate social goals" (Neuwirth et al., 2002, p. 324; See also, Chen & Chaiken, 1999). In this context, analysis of information from candidates would be deep and is motivated by a specific situational goal, like if a voter's goal is to support or oppose a candidate.

Despite one's motivation, HSM holds that both forms of processing occur dually, and furthermore, behavioral intention, like political action or voting intent, is predictable. Neuwirth, et al.'s examination of the role of HSM in predicting behavioral intent postulates that systematic processing is linked to behavioral intent. As such, we can deduce that there is a relationship between how we process information and the action we take following the messaging.

One of the key influences of heuristic cues is source credibility, which is systematically defined for each of us before it becomes a heuristic cue. Nevertheless, it has a strong influential connotation in the area of persuasion studies.

Source Credibility

In this study, the assessment of credibility is a factor in message elaboration. This can prevent and/or change the potential persuasive effects of the message and source. Schemas play a role in credibility, which can be seen as either a frame or a predisposition for receiving and processing information.

Expertise or competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill are character traits that are primary dimensions for evaluating the message source's credibility (Gass & Seiter, 2018). Secondary dimensions include extroversion, composure, and sociability, whose value varies depending on the situation (Gass & Seiter, 2018). Voters' perception of a candidate's expertise or competence and trustworthiness speaks to considering the candidate's leadership characteristics. Voters would be interested and drawn toward trustworthy candidates–candidates that all the voters could depend on to represent their values and issues. Voters would also be drawn towards and interested in a candidate that is an expert or seen as highly competent – a candidate that could do the job because they either seem presidential, have a track record, or

have an intuition for the position. The basis for these determinants is based on perception and is intangible and emotive.

Credibility can be defined as a determination made by the message receiver regarding the extent to which the source of the message – in the case of the presidential candidate – is believable (Gass & Seiter, 2018; O'Keefe, 2002). The determinant involves both the source and the message. In this study, the source is the candidate, and the message is their statements or responses. There are several features of credibility.

Credibility is receiver-based, which means that the person viewing or receiving the message is the unit of measurement (Gass & Seiter, 2018). They are the decoder and interpreter of the message and source credibility. As such, voter-viewers of presidential election debates assess the information conveyed to determine their perceived credibility. While the candidate can do many things to present themselves as credible, the voter-viewer is consuming the content, presentation, and message to decide if they believe or find both the content and conveyer credible.

Credibility is also multidimensional in construct, meaning it is based on a combination of factors for the beholder (Gass & Seiter, 2018). Some factors carry more weight than others, but ultimately, various things are viewed as important in the perceiver's credibility assessment. As such, in thinking about what makes something or someone credible, in this case, the candidate, the viewer-voter may consider many things regarding the candidate, their presentation, and/or the message.

Credibility is based on context and the situation, which means that it is not just about what candidates say but how and where they say it (Gass & Seiter, 2018). There are factors that are influential that provide context, and this could include background and other external

influences. Moreover, credibility is subject to change from one moment to another, one setting to another, and one audience to another. As such, each candidate has unique factors that make them credible to the perceiver and may not be similar. Furthermore, those factors will change based on the situation.

Moreover, credibility changes over time (Gass & Seiter, 2018). As with context and situation, credibility can change within the same event. A speaker or candidate can be viewed as credible initially, but as they continue, they may be perceived as less credible, and vice versa. Perceived credibility can be gained and lost during any given event, like a speech, town hall, or debate.

Given the perception dependency of credibility, the effects of the perception will vary from individual to individual regarding both the source and recipients. Multiple factors of consideration aid in developing one's position on the candidate's credibility; these can be based within the frame of the event or have external influences contributing to the context and situation. Heuristic cures, like personal experiences and media consumption, influence the interpretation of the message and the candidate. Credibility is affected by the frame of reference and context of message reception, like listening to an acceptance speech, town hall meeting, or a debate, where the environmental factors change and fluctuate throughout the campaign. Candidates, the source of the message, and by extension, their message, can be assessed for credibility.

Studies on source credibility's persuasive effect note that sources of content are defined into two categories – a high credibility source and a low credibility source. The higher the credibility characterization of the source, the more persuasive it is; however, this is dependent on the context of the presentation (Sternthal et al., 1978), whereas studies that engage the message

examine the multidimensional factor which speaks to the interactive relationship between the communicator's credibility and variables of the message. The source of the message affects the message itself, and the message, in turn, impacts the perception of the source. These message variables are discrepancy, threat, source-message incongruity, and the use of evidence.

As noted above, time is vital in credibility perception and persuasive effect. Regarding message conveyance, the timing of the source introduction is observed as a mediating factor in message reception. In this study, the presidential debates are the point of reference, and participants are presented with the message cue, enabling us to consider the timing of the message and source in our evaluation of effects. It is in this vein that this study examines how source credibility affects political participation.

In their bids for President of the United States, candidates face questions of credibility. Questions of trustworthiness plagued candidate Hillary Clinton of the Democratic Party, with polls fluctuating on opinions with regard to her credibility (Fournier, 2016; Chozick, 2016) and concerns over her approval ratings were linked to her candidacy (Emery, 2016). However, her likeability still ranked higher than her then-opponent, Republican nominee Donald Trump (LoBianco & Agiesta, 2016). As noted earlier, one's character and personality are vital features that voters assess. This perception influences whether voters are keen to be persuaded or engaged with the candidate's message.

Two-character traits that are prominent are perceived expertise and trustworthiness – which are two primary dimensions of credibility. Thus, in considering the characteristics of leaders, in this case, the potential president, voters are interested and draw towards candidates that are seen as trustworthy – candidates with whom the voter can depend on to be representative of their values and issues – and an expert – a candidate that can do the job, because they either

seem presidential, have the track record, or the intuition for the position (Holbrook, 1996). The basis for these determinants is perceptive and intangible/emotive.

Credibility is defined as a determination made by the message receiver regarding the extent to which the sources of the message – in this case the political candidate – is believable (Gass & Seiter, 2018). Studies on source credibility's persuasive effect note sources of content are defined in two categories – a high credibility source and a low credibility source – of which the higher the credibility characterization of the source, the more persuasive it is; however, this is dependent on the context of the presentation (Strenthal et al., 1978).

It is in this light that we postulate that:

Hypothesis 1A: Perceived credibility will increase support for the candidate.

Hypothesis 1B: Perceived credibility will interact with political identification, such that credibility will have a greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Emotions

Emotions are a central part of the rationale of one's attitudes and behaviors (Redlawsk, Feeling Politics: Emotion in Political Information Processing, 2006). Zajonc (1980) suggests that emotions play a vital role in comprehending political attitudes and behaviors. There is a "clear connection between how people feel about politics and how they act" (Redlawsk, Feeling Politics: Emotion in Political Information Processing, 2006, p. 1), as is evident in the conceptualization of feeling as the result of thinking about an issue or event. However, there is a lack of attention given to emotions' role in political decision-making. Psychological research, Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance (see also Heider, 1958; Abelson, 1959), has illustrated

that “people have various cognitive and emotional motivations to see the world in particularistic ways” (Redlawsk, 2006, p. 2)

A. Campbell et al. (1960) used belief, feeling, and behavioral intentions as a foundational underpinning for examining The American Voter. In this survey study of the American electorate, A. Campbell et al. argued six dimensions that cumulatively predicted one’s voting decision more accurately than asking the voters their intent. As such, political socialization determines party identification, which determines your political attitudes, which determines how you actually vote (A. Campbell et al., 1960; Sears & Weber, 1988). The funnel method utilizes party identification from parents and socialization to shape and develop a person’s attitudes towards a political party or candidate. A. Campbell et al. defined party identification as a long-lasting psychological attachment. This political attitude is identified by measuring how a person feels about the candidates. As such, for A. Campbell et al., our attitudes (both cognitive and affective) bleed over from one thing to another. Our attitudes about a party affect our attitudes about a candidate.

More recent research on emotions and politics reaffirms that relationships affect politics. For example, Cho (2013) sought to broaden the scope of advertising effects in political campaigns through an examination of the emotional underpinnings that lead to the communication behavior of voters. In testing how voters’ emotional assessment of each candidate mediates the advertising effects, Cho found that “emotions, particularly negative ones (anxiety and anger), drive political discussion. Negative emotions have stronger behavioral consequences with respect to political discussion than positive emotions,” (2013, p. 1148). The study also found that certain types of advertising had an influence on the emotional responses of voters. When the voter’s preferred candidate self-advocated, voters were enthusiastic, whereas

they were anxious when their preferred candidate attacked the opponent. However, it was found that "only ad[vertising] from favored candidate's side impacted voter emotions" (Cho, 2013, p. 1147). Moreover, Cho postulated that these effects had lasting and indirect consequences, and it was not simply about learning or voter choice or turnout. Fundamentally, these effects resulted in motivating voters to converse and engage with like-minded people about what one had viewed, and ultimately one would become more socially tuned to politics, opinions, needs, and preferences, all of which are developed through processing political information and leading to self-assessment, but also going beyond simple persuasive effects.

In a study on the relationship between internal efficacy, emotions, and political participation, Valentino et al. (2009) found that "participatory habits are developed through the experience of anger, which is experienced by those high in internal efficacy during [the] election," and that "other negative emotions, such as fear, may mobilize people in a given election" (p. 327). The study focused on a causal chain linking internal efficacy, the confidence one has in one's own competency, and participation, where emotions were a vital mediator between the two. Fundamentally, they were concerned with the effects of anger and fear, as two different responses based on one's political efficacy. Focused on the role anger should play as a mobilizing agent, because it would "read[y] citizens to fight in the political arena," Valentino et al. hypothesize that anger has a long-lasting effect of repeated political participation, and fear has a short-term effect (2009, p. 311).

In a series of experiments, Lodge and Taber (2005) postulated that "affect imbues the judgement process from start to finish – from encoding of information, its retrieval and comprehension, to its expression as a preference or choice" (p. 456). In their experiment of the hot cognition hypothesis – "the claim that all sociopolitical concepts are affect laden" (Lodge &

Taber, 2005, p. 456) – they found consistent support for political leaders, groups, and issues, thus laying a foundation for rethinking rational factors in the information processing. For Lodge and Taber "feelings become information," (2005, p. 456).

Although there is a clear correlation between people's emotions regarding politics and their behavior, the significance of emotions in politics has been insufficiently researched. (Redlawsk, 2006). Emotions take away from rational behavior and have been seen as getting in the way of good decision-making or thinking, which are key components of the information processing model. Past research has focused on the cognitive foundations of political behavior and attitudes, which have anchored the utilization of psychological theories like cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and schemas and heuristics, which were explored earlier in this chapter. But these ways of examining the process are considered "thinking" about politics rather than "feeling" (Redlawsk, Feeling Politics: Emotion in Political Information Processing, 2006).

Drew Westin (2007) posits that emotion is behind reason, referencing David Hume's philosophy in On Reason. Each attempt to persuade the public ultimately relies on either an emotional appeal to their self-interests and the well-being of their loved ones, or a moral appeal to their values. With the determining, "the question that decides elections is whether the appeal is a weak one or a strong one" (Westin, 2007, p. 14). Candidates seek to influence voters' emotions, shaping how political issues and candidates are perceived.

There are several ways that researchers have engaged in an examination of the relationship and role that emotions play. The theory of affective intelligence posits that individuals base their reactions to political situations on the initial subconscious evaluations made by a two-part system of emotional assessment: habitual and deliberative (Marcus et al., 2000). Affect Control Theory (Heise, 1977) offers an explanation for adjustments of emotional

response based on the social environment. Troyer and Robinson (Troyer & Robinson, 2006) expand on Affect Control Theory by incorporating political identity, behavior, and settings. Appraisal theorist posits examining the "likelihood to facilitate or inhibit" a response or action (Frijda et al., 1989; see also Roseman et al., 1990). Some researchers are grounded in the ideas of motivated reasoning or 'hot cognition,' which "suggests that learned sociopolitical concepts are affectively charged and that this charge is automatically activated upon reexposure to the concept" (Brader et al., 2011, p. 387).

In an online paper on the emotions in politics, Searles and Ridout (2017) highlighted the most frequently researched emotions in American campaign messages, anger, fear/anxiety, and hope/enthusiasm, as a point of appraisal of political advertisements, with a focus on the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections. Their approach is appraisal-based, which "seeks to predict that each emotion has both specific antecedents, rooted in how an individual consciously (or subconsciously) makes sense of her situation, and specific response tendencies adapted for dealing with that situation" (Brader et. al, 2011, p. 386). Thus, they illustrated the anticipated consequences of an emotions-based strategy in political campaigns. They theorized that anger was a dominant appeal in pro-Trump advertisements, appearing in 77.3% of the campaign advertisements studied, whereas it was only present in 53.1% of pro-Clinton advertisements. The presence of enthusiasm was found in 9.1% of pro-Trump advertisements and 53.1% of pro-Clinton advertisements. Hope was found in 45.5% of pro-Trump advertisements, and 28.1% of pro-Clinton advertisements. Finally, fear was found in 22.7% of pro-Trump advertisements, and 21.9% of pro-Clinton advertisements.

Considering that campaigns are designed with an emotional appeal involved, and that we have established a relationship between emotions and politics, this study seeks to understand to

what extent emotions played a role in voter assessments of candidates and their debate statements.

The theory of affective intelligence suggests that there is increased and motivated engagement by individuals who feel positive emotions like enthusiasm about a stimulus. But when experiencing negative emotions, like those that generate the feeling of anxiety, they are "more attentive to external stimuli, information-seeking, and open to attitude change" (Druckman & McDermott, 2008, p. 302). Marcus et. al. (2005) concluded that "anxiety plays a central role in determining whether greater reliance is placed on "standing decisions" (i.e., predispositions) or whether such convictions are set aside for consideration of contemporary arguments" (p. 961). Anxiety, as a result of one's emotional appraisal, would affect one's judgment, and so if a message proves to be anxiety-inducing, it could make one more or less receptive to the message.

In a study by Druckman and McDermott (2008), they argue that emotions are a framing moderator for behavior. They conclude that different negative emotions have the opposite effect: "anger encourages greater risk-seeking, while distress encourages a more cautious approach [to behavior]" (Druckman & McDermott, 2008, p. 317). But the differences are based on what emotions produce anxiety versus aversion. Fundamentally, they conclude that emotions act as a motivating factor for perceivers.

Marcus et al. (2005) argued that emotions influence how political cognition is personified. The paper examines the relationship between emotions, specifically anxiety, and predisposition, and talks compare scenarios of use for political judgment. They conclude that

> Reactions to persuasive messages are not solely based on cognitive ruminations over the content of the messages but also on concurrent emotional assessments that dictate whether contemporary circumstances warrant holding fast to already learned habits of thought and action or warrant reasoned consideration. (Marcus, et al., 2005, p. 961)

They note that active predispositions are mitigating factors in persuasion efforts, depending on the emotions otherwise invoked.

In their study, Huddy and Gunnthorsdottir (2000) examined the persuasive power of emotional appeals. They found that a person's commitment to a particular cause, such as animal welfare or a political issue, plays a crucial role in how they respond to emotional messages related to that subject. The researchers also pointed out that emotional appeals can have a significant impact on the political decision-making process, but this impact may not always be positive. Considering these factors, this study examines how are emotional perceptions and source credibility related to candidate statements. Fundamentally, this study is interested in the relationship between emotional perception and source credibility.

Marcus et al. suggests that emotions aid to shift people from one judgement to another:

> When anxiety is low, the disposition system allows people to rely on existing "heuristics" or "predispositions" because low anxiety signals that the environment is safe, familiar, and predictable. On the other hand, when anxiety is high – signaling that the environment is in some fashion uncertain and unsettled – reliance on prior learning with its presumptions of predictable continuity would not be a strategically sound course," (2005, p. 951).

Marcus et al. suggest that emotions play a crucial role in the way people make judgments, particularly in uncertain and unpredictable situations. By understanding how anxiety affects our decision-making processes, we can begin to make more deliberative and well-informed choices.

Political Activity

Banks et al. (2019) found that feelings of anger are a strong motivator for action. Looking at emotions and black participation, Banks et al. found that "Blacks are motivated to engage in racial group affirming acts," even though those feelings did not translate to donating to the Democratic party or voting in the next election (2019, pp. 927-8). This study brings some interesting questions about the impact of feeling on political action.

Marcus et al.'s examination of anxiety and aversion, as an added dimension, helps us to think more critically about the complexity of emotions. In thinking about negative emotions, this study is also concerned with how specific affect relates to types of political action. Barnidge and Rojas (2014) concluded that engagement is also a more likely result for individuals to express themselves when they feel threatened by the information they consume. This is a contradiction to the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

Political participation, as method for assessing and understanding political action, "requires action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes" (Brady, 1999, p. 737). The study of political participation is complex and while efforts have been made to categorize them, "simple multi-item scales cannot summarize a person's political activities" (Brady, 1999, p. 741). Political participation is episodic and irregular, as they can change with time. This has not taken away from the large body of literature that seeks to understand political participation, which is a real and tangible result of citizen engagement in the deliberative democratic process.

This study is concerned with the political action approach to the study of political participation, which is a deliberate way to examine engagement. The American National Election Studies (ANES) has a core set of participation items for its study for the measurement of participation. The list of activities is associated with political action: vote, try to persuade, display preferences, go to meetings, give money, and political work. Verba and Nie (1972) has an 11-item series of questions for the study of political participation in America. These items are national voting, local voting, try to persuade, political work, go to meetings, give money, political group membership, local contacting, national contacting, local problem solving, and local group formation. Additionally, there is also a 6-item option of electoral participation from

Pew Research Center's international survey: campaign contributions, worked/volunteered for campaign, contacted elected official, attended campaign event, voting and public comment.

Political participation is often measured as a supportive action, as noted with the items listed in the various measures above. But we can also see it in oppositional action, for example, protests or oppositional activism. The corrective action participation (Rojas, 2010) suggests that people are mobilized to action by their "own perceptions of those others and how mass media might be affecting them" (p. 349). This idea is grounded in third-person effects, but illustrates the concept of corrective action as "a specific type of behavior where people seek to voice their own opinions to correct the "wrongs" they perceive in the public sphere" (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014, p. 136).

Information processing, as highlighted in the ELM and HSM section, can be deliberate. Especially as it regards the consideration of persuasion, it should be expected that "people do not passively accept information… but rather actively interpret and relate it to their preexisting beliefs. As such, some people talk to "correct" information they encounter" (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014, p. 135). In this light, this study considers the conversations that people might engage with and actions they may take to counter a narrative they see as negative or incorrect.

It is also important to note that engagement and activism has changed drastically since the study of political action began. Socio-political movements like Black Lives Matter, the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, and the 2008 Yes We Can Campaign illustrate the adoption of social media platforms and the internet as a means of communicating and participating in political action (for example Freelon et al., 2016; Solow-Niederman, 2010; see also, Boulianne, 2015). There are multiple forms of communication that social media as a platform can facilitate. This includes mass communication, the communication of one to many (target audience) as with

promotion, as well as uni-communication, the communication of one to many where the many is seen as a public sphere and not a specific entity (Habermas, 1989). Online social networks provide a convenient way to voice one's opinion and engage in socio-political activity. As such this study also considers possible measures in both traditional face-to-face activities of action and online activities of action.

With access to socio-political activism through the internet, and particularly social media, the question of what motivates people to engage is worthy of investigation. Online activism, for example, does not require as much concerted effort to participate as physically showing up to a rally. Its reach goes beyond geographical boundaries to forge together like-minded individuals to create a collective that would otherwise be smaller when localized. This joining of individuals despite physical boundaries is an added benefit for political organizing. But the question remains, what motivates an individual to engage? We know that people can be motivated by positive emotions like enthusiasm, or by negative ones like anger. It is in this view that this study hypothesizes:

H2A: Positive affect will increase willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

H2B: Positive affect will interact with political identification, such that positive affect will have greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

H3A: Negative affect will reduce willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

H3B: Negative affect will interact with political identification, such that negative affect will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

As noted earlier, there are several approaches to thinking about emotions, but we must also consider the trigger. People can have emotive responses to the source and to the message. Marcus et. al (2006) explicates three dimensions of emotions in an effort to pinpoint the motivator. So, while anxiety and aversion, for example, can be considered negative emotions, they do not necessarily result in the same effect. Recall that anxiety is about discomfort, whereas aversion is more responsive or repulsive.

Two things are evident when it comes to emotions. First, a general predisposition of affect should be considered in a dualistic light. Second, a specific emotive response provides a better explanation of relational experiences. In thinking about how individuals can engage in political action, whether to support a candidate or to voice opposition to a candidate or idea, this study hypothesizes that the negative affect of anxiety will reduce political action, while aversion will be strongly correlated with negative political action.

H4A: Anxiety will reduce political activity in support of a political candidate.

H4B: Anxiety will interact with political identification, such that greater anxiety will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Anxiety should not be merged with aversion, as "when people are confronted with an issue where distinct negative impressions have been established, the negative emotion of anxiety will carry a different character than the negative emotion of aversion" (Marcus et al., 2006, p. 39). Aversion is a feeling of strong dislike or distaste towards a particular object, situation, or

experience, while anxiety is a state of unease or apprehension about an uncertain or potentially threatening situation. As such, aversion may lead to a more negative response than anxiety because it involves a more intense emotional reaction. Anxiety, on the other hand, may lead to a more moderate or subdued response because it involves a more generalized feeling of unease or apprehension that is not necessarily directed at a specific object or situation. As such, we can theorize there will be different responses based on these two negative emotions, where aversion may lead to more decisive actions than anxiety.

H5A: Aversion will increase the likelihood of engaging in negative political activity designed to counter a politician's statements or positions.

H5B: Aversion will interact with political identification such that aversion will have more of an impact on participants whose political identity is in opposition to the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate.

Political activity as a tangible response and outlet for engagement provides for us an outcome for understanding the processing of political messages. Emotional responses and credibility assessment are two factors of consideration for potential voters in reception to the political information and potential impact on their decision. While rational choice theory would negate emotions, there is room to consider that reason is not independent of emotions. Fundamentally, this study seeks to examine the extent to which emotional responses and credibility assessments of debate statements impact the likelihood of voting and political activity for a candidate's congruent political identity. It is in this light, we ask, **do debates affect voters' political participation?**

Chapter 3: Methods

Study Design

This study was designed to examine the relationship between potential voters' emotions and impressions about the election. It is examining historical data that was collected during the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaign and specifically tied to the presidential election debates. The study sought to learn how people felt about the elections and used the debates to assess one's emotions, message affect, and potential political participation.

Data collection targeted 300 participants following debate one, which was held on September 26, 2016. The survey was administered online via Qualtrics Survey Software and survey participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (www. https://www.mturk.com/.), with survey distribution done via TurkPrime (now CloudResearch - https://www.cloudresearch.com/) Turk Prime enabled us to conduct multiple panel studies and keep groups of participants together. Participants were monetarily compensated for their participation. Surveys were made available within 48 hours of the debate's airing and were left up for a week or until we hit our target of 300 participants.

The core structure of the survey had participants reporting their voting and political participation behavior, a self-assessment of their emotional affect for the candidates, video prompts and subsequent emotional perceptions and potential political activity of those prompts, a credibility assessment of the candidates, and demographic information.

This study drew its measurements from prior studies. Details are explained with regard to relevant sections of this paper. See Appendix A for a format overview of the original study. See Appendix B for survey questions used to form the base of this study.

Participants

While the study aimed to collect 300 participants, only 287 were 100% complete, according to Qualtrics' meta-data. These completed surveys were used for analysis. The participants recruited for this survey were people who were located in the United States of America. Their I.P. address verified their location via the survey distribution and verification platform. This study focused on citizens who were eligible to vote in the upcoming 2016 elections. The unit of analysis in this study is individuals. Only participants who met the requirements could access and participate in the study. Also, because this study was designed to utilize a computer interface with video and audio capabilities, only participants with access to a device that enabled viewing and listening to the clip were eligible to participate. See Table 1 for a breakdown of study participants' characteristics.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

	Frequencies	
Characteristic	*n*	%
Age		
19-29	85	29.6
30-39	78	27.2
40-49	54	18.8
50-59	36	12.5
60-69	29	10.1
over 70	5	1.7
Gender		
Female	180	62.7
Male	105	36.6
Unknown	2	0.6
Marital status		
Single, never married	112	39
Married/partnered	133	46.3
Widowed	4	1.4
Divorced	34	11.8
Separated	3	1
Prefer not to say	1	0.3
Highest educational level		
Less than high school	2	0.7
High school/ or equivalent (GED)	23	8
Some college but no degree	74	25.8
Associate's degree in college (2- years)	42	14.6
Bachelor's degree in college (4- years)	98	34.1
Master's degree	38	13.2
Doctoral Degree	5	1.7
Professional degree (JD, MD)	4	1.4
Prefer not to say	1	0.3
Employment		
Employed, full-time	158	55.1
Employed, part-time	48	16.7
Unemployed, looking for work	19	6.6
Unemployed, not looking for work	14	4.9
Student	13	4.5
Retired	18	6.3
Unable to work	10	3.5
Prefer not to say	8	2.4
Income		
Less than $10,000	14	4.9
$10,000 - $19,999	19	6.6

$20,000 - $19,999	39	13.6
$30,000 - $19,999	50	17.4
$40,000 - $19,999	25	8.7
$50,000 - $19,999	31	10.8
$60,000 - $19,999	21	7.3
$70,000 - $19,999	20	7
$80,000 - $19,999	15	5.2
$90,000 - $19,999	15	5.2
$100,000 - $19,999	26	9.1
$150,000 - $19,999	4	1.4
More than $250,000	1	0.3
Prefer not to say	6	2.1
Ethnicity		
White (non-Hispanic)	232	80.8
Hispanic or Latino	11	3.8
Black or African American	17	5.9
Native American or American Indian	3	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	9	3.1
Multiracial	6	2.1
Other	3	1.0
Prefer not to say	6	2
Political Affiliation		
Republican	66	23.0
Democrat	115	40.1
Independent	87	30.3
Other	10	3.5
No preference	9	3.1

Note. N = 287. Participants who selected "other" for political affiliation noted Green or Libertarian.

The Stimuli

The video prompts are crucial to this study because they are found in mass media and can affect the community/public. The message is aimed at an appeal to individual support for action. The video prompts were captured using TVEyes (https://www.tveyes.com/), a platform that captures broadcast television. Using this platform, we were able to capture the exact broadcast clips for use in this study, thus ensuring the authenticity of the broadcast medium as the source of information. This use and presentation of the video prompts fall in the category of framing

theory. Studies have illustrated that emotions are fundamental to politics, but their role in framing effects theory is underdeveloped (Lecheler et al., 2013; Gross, 2008). While we know that emotional reaction correlations vary with political opinions (Lecheler et al., 2013; Lerner & Keltner, 2001), our examinations of different emotions and different issue frames help us examine the relationship.

The video prompts are considered and employed as an issue (Iyengar, 1991; Lecheler et al., 2013; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and equivalency frame (Druckman, 2001; Lecheler et al., 2013), where the content is similar in terms of the subject/issue and presented similarly. The context is the same, the election debates and treatments do not vary, and the source and presentation are the same. Frames are taken from the same broadcast, as they are the same event.

Like news frames, political frames can be characterized by a specific valence. The way news and political frames are presented can have a positive or negative effect on people's opinions. This is known as "valence frames" (Chong & Druckman, 2007 & 2010; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Studies have been conducted to test how exposure to opposing views on an issue can influence people's opinions. The idea is that elites try to influence support or rejection of an issue by emphasizing its positive or negative aspects, which are perpetuated in the media (Lecheler et al., 2013). This study presents both candidates' responses to the same issue, allowing for a comparison of their ideas. While valence is not explicitly tested here, it is present in the way the frames are presented.

The video prompt section included approximately eight (8) video clips from the debates. See Appendix C for log information of video clips used in this study. All participants viewed the same clips but in a computer-randomized order. Each clip was limited to the candidate's statement on a particular issue and did not include a question or rebuttal. In only two videos, a

debate question was notably visible for participants. The clip's frame was taken from the broadcast cut. For this debate, both candidates are in parallel on-screen. Thus, participants in the study can see both candidates' faces despite only one candidate speaking. No additional editing was done to the broadcast.

Following each video prompt in the survey, participants were asked questions aimed at considering the prompt. The video prompts were random for each participant. The clips were between 54 seconds and 2:29 minutes. Cumulatively, participants viewed 8 minutes and 51 seconds of Hillary Clinton speaking, and 7 minutes and 31 seconds of Donald Trump speaking. Of the eight clips, six were focused on similar topics, with both candidates responding to a direct question about jobs and cyber security and commenting on an issue regarding their opponent. The other four clips were situational responses that came out during the debate.

The topics for this survey were chosen from an analysis of the transcript outlines which provided a starting point for clip selection. The inclusion criteria for each clip of debate statements focused on clear and complete statements made by each candidate about their stance or in response to the question posed. Video cuts were made to present the candidate's statements as a whole, with the least amount of noise (i.e., omission of crosstalk from the other candidate and interruptions from the moderator). This provided a framework for the video prompts and participants could identify what was being talked about without a cue from the question. The video prompts were presented to participants without the verbal cue of the question being asked in the debate by the moderator. It also provided similar time lengths for each candidate and helped with a balance of candidate messages; for example, one clip from Hillary Clinton on Jobs, which was 1 minute and 59 seconds long, and one clip from Donald Trump on Jobs, which was 1

minute and 9 seconds long. All clips start from the beginning of their time allotted to speak and end when they have completed their response.

The video prompts section of the survey occurred after some preliminary questions were asked of the participants to help establish their predispositions. Following each of the video prompts, participants were to identify how they felt about the clip, and the potential action they would take given the message.

Measurements

This paper will focus on key concepts and variables from this wealth of data collected. This study seeks to understand the extent to which emotions mediate political participation and how emotions affect source credibility and persuasions or motivation to act. As such, each section explains the relevant measurements. See Appendix D for a breakdown of descriptive statistics for the measurement used in this study.

Measures of Emotions

In the history of the study of emotions, the debate on whether affect can be understood with a large scale focused on two dimensions of valence, or a smaller scale with 12 or fewer mutually exclusive emotional states, is prominent (Plutchik & Conte, 1997). This study uses two scales to assess emotions: the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scale, and a Three Dimensions of Emotional Response scale. Thus, it defines *emotional perception* in dualistic terms, focusing on positive and negative affect and uses the PANAS scale for analysis. This study defines *emotional perception of candidate statements* in three dimensions scales taken from Marcus et al. (2006). This measure was applied to the assessment of the video prompts, and after each clip was viewed, participants were asked to identify their feelings regarding what they had just viewed, i.e., the candidate's statements.

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) Scale, developed by Watson et al. (1988), comprises two ten-item scales that measure positive affect (e.g., interested, enthusiastic) and negative affect (e.g., distressed, hostile) on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = clearly describes my feelings to 5 = does not describe my feelings. This scale has been found to be internally consistent and has been used in a wide range of studies in psychology and communication. Cited 17,475 times, according to the Web of Science Core Collection, this scale has been used in many studies to define affect. These scales have engrained a "pattern of relations with external variables" (Watson et al., 1988, p. 1069) and thus provide a basis for our study of relationships between moods/feelings and political media. In this study, a PANAS scale was used to assess emotions and feelings about each candidate. Participants were asked to report their positive ($\alpha = .92$) and negative ($\alpha = .93$) emotions about Donald Trump, as well as their positive ($\alpha = .93$) and negative ($\alpha = .94$) emotions about Hillary Clinton.

The measures were reverse-coded for analysis to delineate the strength of a feeling with higher numbers. A mean score was calculated for positive and negative affect, based on the cumulation of the measures associated with positive and negative emotion. Clinton's mean positive affect scale (PAS) score was 2.6, and Clinton's mean negative affect scale (NAS) score was 2.5. Trump's mean positive affect scale (PAS) score was 2.5, and Trump's mean negative affect scale (NAS) score was 3.0.

The second method of reference regarding emotion is taken from a modified version of the valence model that includes three dimensions of measures (Marcus et al., 2006). Research has proven three dimensions of affect—positive or enthusiasm, negative or aversion, and anxiety—to be valid in assessing political stimuli ((Brader, 2006; Crigler et al., 2006; Gadarian

& Albertson, 2014; MacKuen et. al, 2010; Marcus et al., 2006 & 2015; Redlawsk, 2002; Valentino et al., 2008 & 2011)

Marcus et al. (2006) used a 10-item emotion semantic indicator to evaluate the three dimensions. The words *enthusiastic*, *hopeful*, and *proud* are used to measure positive or enthusiastic affect. To measure negative affect or aversion, the words *hateful*, *angry*, *bitter*, and *resentful* are used. The words *scared*, *worried*, and *afraid* are used to measure the anxiety affect. These indicators were proven to be reliable markers (Marcus et al., 2006). These items were presented on a five-point Likert scale. Participants were asked to indicate how the video message made them feel, from extremely like the emotion (1) to not like it (5).

Participants were asked to report how the video prompt of the candidate's debate statement made them feel for each instance. The standardized Cronbach alpha tests of these measures indicated acceptable levels of reliability for all three dimensions: ($.94 > \alpha < .97$) Enthusiasm, ($.94 > \alpha < .96$) Anxiety, and ($.94 > \alpha < .96$) Aversion. Additionally, the scale with the combination of all three dimensions was found reliable ($.84 > \alpha < .91$).

The variables were reverse-coded for analysis, and a mean score for each of the three dimensions of affect given each video statement was calculated. Subsequently, an overall mean score was also calculated to synthesize a score for the candidate based on all their debate statements. The mean for the enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements was 2.1, the mean for the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements was 2.0, and the mean for the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements was 1.8.

The mean for the enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements was 2.0, the mean for the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements was 2.1, and the mean for the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements was 1.9.

Political Measures

This study is interested in the potential effects that the message frames would have on viewers. Thus, it seeks to understand what sort of motivating factors instigate action. As noted, the study is interested in political participation and thus considers two measures under this classification: *support for candidates* and *political activity.* In looking at the effects on politics, this study also measured *party identification*. According to A. Campbell et al. (1960) people hold a psychological identification with a political party, and "the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior" (p. 121). Partisanship is a broader concept, while party identification is concerned with an individual's self-definition (Green and Schickler, 1993; See also Green and Palmquist, 1990; A. Campbell et al., 1960). For this study, we are concerned with *party identification* as a measure of political identification. Using the seven-point Michigan party identification scale (A. Campbell et. al., 1954 & 1960), we ask participants if, generally speaking, they think of themselves as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or something else. The following questions seek to quantify the strength of their position in terms of either a Republican (n = 109) or a Democrat (n = 178) stance. From these series of questions, participants were categorized into one of three groups: Democrats, Independents, or Republicans. The Democrats and Republicans included participants who indicated they held party identities, whether strong or weak. The Independents included participants who indicated they did not identify with a party despite possibly leaning towards one or the other.

Regarding *support for the candidates* and *political activity*, this study uses measurements focused on political participation and engagement activities. It understands political participation as requiring some "action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing and some political

outcomes" (Brady, 1999, p. 737). Political participation has four elements: action, citizenship, influence, and political outcomes. *Support for the candidate* is defined by the intention to vote, which is noted as a planned action. Support for the candidate is measured by voting support, the ultimate action result of an election campaign. This study considers the likelihood of voting support for each candidate following each video prompt. A 7-point Likert scale assessed the likelihood that the participant would vote for the candidate. A mean score was calculated from an average of the four video prompts associated with the candidate. Each candidate's overall mean voting support score was calculated based on the videos. The mean voting support score for Hillary Clinton was 4.0 (*SD* = 1.5), and the mean for Donald Trump was 3.8 (*SD* = 1.4).

Additionally, the survey also asked participants if the elections were held today who would they vote for. Participants were asked about the strength of their position in support of the candidate of their choice. This series of questions was adopted from the CBS News/New York Times Poll A Tight Race for President conducted between September 9-13, 2016 (CBS News Politics, 2016).

For *political activity*, this study considered and modified a series of approaches to measuring political action. This included the measurement of participation taken from the American National Election Studies (ANES), and it also considered a 6-item option of electoral participation from Pew Research Center's international survey. In seeking to account for both in-person and online modes of participation in looking at activity, a set of ten traditional and eight online activities were identified. Participants were asked to select from a list of political activity items as many items as applied to them, thereby indicating if they would engage in that action. "Positive traditional political activity in support of the candidate" was assessed by asking participants:

> Given the candidate's statement, would you respond positively by doing any of the following? Participate in any demonstrations, protests or marches; Attend a political rally in support of the candidate; Participate in any local action for social or political reform; Join a political action group, interest group, party committees; Door-to-door campaign for the candidate; Talk to your neighbor, friend or non-family member about the issue; Talk with a family member about the issue; Petition someone else to vote for the candidate.; Publicly demonstrate your support for the candidate with stickers, yard signs or any other signatory?; Write a letter to the media in support of the candidate, or to share your supportive story? (Survey Instrument)

"Positive online political activity in support of the candidate" was assessed by asking participants:

> Given the candidate's statement, would you respond positively by doing any of the following online? Make a campaign donation; Subscribe to a political listserv; Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign; Join a political action group, interest group, party committee's social media; Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter or other social media; Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter or other social media; Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends); Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members. (Survey Instrument)

"Negative traditional political activity against the candidate" was assessed by asking participants:

> Given the candidate's statement, would you respond negatively by doing any of the following? Participate in any demonstrations, protests or marches; Attend a political

rally against the candidate; Participate in any local action for social or political reform; Join a political action group, interest group, party committees; Door-to-door campaign against the candidate; Talk to your neighbor, friend or non-family member about the issue; Talk with a family member about the issue; Petition someone else against the candidate.; Publicly demonstrate your disdain for the candidate with stickers, yard signs or any other signatory?; Write a letter to the media to show your disdain for the candidate? (Survey Instrument)

"Negative online political activity against the candidate" was assessed by asking participants:

> Given the candidate's statement, would you respond positively by doing any of the following online? Make a campaign donation to another candidate; Subscribe to a political listserv; Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign for another candidate or against this candidate; Join a political action group, interest group, party committee's social media; Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter or other social media; Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter or other social media; Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends); Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members. (Survey Instrument)

Supportive or positive political activity scores are computed for each participant based on their reported actions to support the candidate. As noted, these actions could be traditional (face-to-face) or online. Thus, an overall political activity score can range from 0 – 18. A sum score was calculated for each video prompt, and a mean score was calculated for each candidate based on the sum scores of their related videos.

For Hillary Clinton, the mean score for positive traditional political activity to support Clinton was .801, the mean score for positive online political activity to support Clinton was .802, and the mean score for overall positive political activity to support Clinton was .8. The mean score for negative traditional political activity against Clinton was 0.7, the mean score for negative online political activity against Clinton was 0.7, and the mean score for overall negative political activity against Clinton was 0.7.

For Donald Trump, the mean score for positive traditional political activity to support Trump was 0.7, the mean score for positive online political activity to support Trump was 0.7, and the mean score for overall positive political activity to support Trump was 0.7. The mean score for negative traditional political activity against Trump was 0.8, the mean score for negative online political activity against Trump was 0.8, and the mean score for overall negative political activity against Trump was 0.8.

Measure of Credibility

Focused on source credibility, this study looks at potential voters' and viewers' perceptions of the candidates during the 2016 presidential debate. This study employs the measure of source credibility scale from McCroskey and Teven (1999). This scale has three components, with six items each, and they are measured using semantic differential. The first component is competence, for which the following pairs of adjectives are used: intelligent/unintelligent, untrained/trained, inexpert/expert, informed/uninformed, incompetent/competent, and bright/stupid. The second component is goodwill, for which the following pairs of adjectives are used: cares about me/doesn't care about me, has my interests at heart/doesn't have my interests at heart, self-centered/not self-centered, concerned with me/not concerned with me, insensitive/sensitive, and not understanding/understanding. The third

component is trustworthiness, for which the following pairs of adjectives are used: honest/dishonest, untrustworthy/trustworthy, honorable/dishonorable, moral/immoral, unethical/ethical, and phony/genuine.

These items are randomized in the survey and displayed without the subscale labels of trustworthiness, competence, and goodwill. Participants were asked to indicate their assessment of each candidate after viewing all the video prompts. The internal reliability testing for the measure of source credibility for Hillary Clinton ($\alpha = .96$) had the following Cronbach alphas: competence $\alpha = .91$; trustworthiness $\alpha = .95$; and goodwill $\alpha = .94$. The internal reliability testing for the measure of source credibility for Donald Trump ($\alpha = .97$) had the following Cronbach alphas: competence $\alpha = .92$; trustworthiness $\alpha = .96$; and goodwill $\alpha = .94$.

To assess the perceived credibility of each candidate, participants were asked to rate each candidate on a scale from 1 to 7. A mean score was calculated from the series of characteristics in the source credibility scale. The mean credibility score for Hillary Clinton was 4.1 ($SD = 1.6$), and for Donald Trump, it was 3.0 ($SD = 1.8$). These scores reflect participants' average perceptions of the candidates' credibility, with higher mean scores suggesting greater perceived credibility.

The methods chapter of this research has established the foundation for a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of political perception following the first US Presidential Debates of the 2016 Election Campaign. The chapter provides an overview of the survey data collected online from a self-selected group of participants who were compensated for their input. The data was meticulously broken down into variables to give a comprehensive understanding of the participants. The inclusion of video clips featuring statements by debate candidates was used to form perception assessments, including credibility and emotion perception. The chapter provides

a detailed breakdown of participants' socio-demographic information and an explanation of the stimuli used, which contributes to the contextual understanding of the study. The discussion on measurements, categorized into emotions, political aspects, and credibility, establishes a robust framework that guides the empirical testing of research questions and hypotheses.

The subsequent section of the research will delve into the empirical findings, rigorously testing the research questions and hypotheses outlined earlier. The variables used in the study provide a lens through which we aim to understand the interplay of emotions, political measures, and credibility perceptions. The methodological choices made, from study design to data collection, will now bear fruit as we analyze the data and seek patterns that illuminate the complex web of political perceptions. The insights gained from this chapter will serve as the cornerstone for our exploration into the intricacies of post-debate political perception during a pivotal moment in the 2016 US Presidential Election campaign.

Chapter 4: Results

This findings and results chapter marks the culmination of an intricate exploration into the dynamics of potential voter behavior, emotion, and the political engagement of potential voters. Rooted in the overarching research questions and myriad hypotheses, this chapter unravels the nuanced relationships between political identity, emotional responses, source credibility, political activities, and potential voting support for the two major party presidential candidates.

The organizational structure of this chapter reflects a systematic progression through two primary research questions and five two-part hypotheses. Additionally, there are four subsidiary questions strategically aligned with these hypotheses that help to illustrate the foundations for the hypotheses and thus explicate the data analysis findings.

This chapter presents an in-depth examination of the study's results and findings. The initial section comprehensively reviews the formulated hypothesis and research questions. Subsequently, a succinct summary is provided, delineating the variables utilized for analysis and relevant notations of descriptive statistics. A preliminary analysis of demographic variables pertinent to the study is presented. The subsequent sections address the primary research questions and then sequentially provide the findings corresponding to each hypothesis tested. Finally, the chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary of the results, emphasizing key takeaways from the analyses.

Overview of Hypotheses and Research Questions.

Research Questions

As noted, there are two overarching research questions:

Research Question 1: Will voters whose political identity is congruent with the candidate's support that candidate?

Research Question 2: Do debates affect voters' political participation?

The first question is grounded in the traditional political science theory that voters support the candidates of their political party. Thus, it should be expected that Republican voters will vote for the Republican candidate, in this case, Donald Trump. Likewise, Democratic voters will vote for the Democratic candidate, in this case, Hillary Clinton. But given the context of the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, which include the polling of the candidates, and the political polarization and changing demur of voters, would this longstanding assumption of voting along party lines hold for the upcoming elections? Specifically, this research study looks at whether there are impacting variables to consider that affect this voting relationship.

The second primary research question probes the broader impact of political debates on the political activities of voters. This question serves as the gateway to understanding the role of debates in shaping political participation. This research question is a cumulative question that follows from the hypotheses. A discussion can be found in the implications of the hypotheses' findings that speak to a question of whether viewing or consuming the debates mediates and/or moderates political participation (support of the candidate, political activity, etc.).

Hypotheses

As noted, there are five two-part hypotheses. The hypotheses are designed to integrate contributing facets to the broader exploration of voter behavior and engagement. These hypotheses follow a similar structure, where the 'A' hypothesis speaks to a specific relationship; and the 'B' hypothesis speaks to an added interaction that should result, given the relationship between political identity and potential voting. As such, the 'A' hypotheses, grounded in

correlation analysis, paves the way for understanding direct relationships. The 'B' hypotheses, examined through moderation analyses, show the interaction of political identity.

Hypothesis 1A: Perceived credibility will increase support for the candidate.

Hypothesis 1B: perceived credibility will interact with political identification, such that credibility will have a greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 1A posits that an increase in a candidate's perceived credibility will correspond to strengthened support for them. This unidirectional and positive relationship lays the groundwork for understanding one potential driving factor of voter behavior. Hypothesis 1B considers the political identification as having a moderating effect. It suggests that the impact of perceived credibility on candidate support is contingent on the congruence of political identity.

Hypothesis 2A: Positive affect will increase willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

Hypothesis 2B: Positive affect will interact with political identification, such that positive affect will have greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 2A posits that potential voters who view the candidate positively are more likely to have a higher level of engagement in political activity to support the candidate. Hypothesis 2B considers the implications of political identification on this relationship between positive affect and political engagement, and postulates that the impact of positive affect on political activity is strengthened by congruent identities of the voter and the candidate.

Hypothesis 3A: Negative affect will reduce willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

Hypothesis 3B: Negative affect will interact with political identification, such that negative affect will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Parallel to Hypothesis 2, Hypotheses 3A and 3B explore the inverse relationship, where Hypothesis 3A predicts a negative correlation between negative affect of the candidate and, thus, less support political support for the candidate. Furthermore, Hypothesis 3B suggests that political identification would affect the nature of that relationship, such that congruent identities will not have as much effect, as would converse identities between voter and candidate.

Hypothesis 4A: Anxiety will reduce political activity in support of a political candidate.

Hypothesis 4B: Anxiety will interact with political identification; such that greater anxiety will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 4 looks primarily at the role that anxiety plays, where Hypothesis 4A postulates less support for a candidate that makes a potential voter feel anxious about them. Hypothesis 4B suggests that congruent political identity between voter and candidate will moderate that impact and will have a strong effect on converse identities rather than congruent identities.

Hypothesis 5A: Aversion will increase the likelihood of engaging in negative political activity designed to counter a politician's statements or positions.

Hypothesis 5B: Aversion will interact with political identification such that aversion will have more of an impact on participants whose political identity is in opposition to the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate.

Hypothesis 5 looks at the role emotions categorized as feelings of aversion play. Hypothesis 5A postulates aversion will motivate negative political activity against a candidate. Thus, if voters feel averse to the candidate, they will engage in political activity to address the issue. Hypothesis 5B suggests that a congruent political identity between voter and candidate will moderate the impact of feelings of aversion. Thus, aversion will have a stronger effect on converse identities rather than congruent identities.

Variables Descriptives

In this section, a detailed exploration of the statistical descriptives of the variables utilized in the study is undertaken. A comprehensive overview of 35 variables, excluding demographic considerations, forms the basis of the analysis. These variables, carefully selected to address the research questions and hypotheses, encompass a broad spectrum of dimensions relevant to the study's focus. From measures of perception to potential behavioral indicators, each variable contributes uniquely to the holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Tables 2 and 3 present the means and standard deviations of each variable used in this study. This tabular representation not only provides a snapshot of central tendencies but also elucidates the extent of variability within the dataset.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequencies for Outcome Variables Used in the Analysis.

	Candidate Descriptives						
	Clinton			Trump			
Variables	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t Test*
Overall Credibility Score	4.10	1.59	285	2.95	1.79	286	6.31**
Positive emotional perception of candidate (PAS) or Mean Positive Affect Scale Score	2.63	1.17	287	2.48	1.12	287	1.74
Negative emotional perception of candidate (NAS) or Mean Negative Affect Scale Score	2.53	1.22	287	2.99	1.21	287	-4.27**
Positive emotional perception of candidate's debate statements (mean **enthusiasm** affect score for candidate's debate statements)	2.14	1.12	285	2.00	1.14	286	1.65
Negative emotional perception of candidate's debate statements (mean **aversion** affect score for candidate's debate statements)	1.79	1.04	285	1.90	1.06	286	-1.49
Anxiety affect perception of candidate's debate statements (mean **anxiety** affect Score for candidate's debate statements)	2.03	1.04	285	2.13	1.11	285	-1.36
Mean Voting Support (voting likelihood effect for the candidate based on debate statements)	3.96	1.48	285	3.84	1.45	286	0.77
Positive traditional (face-to-face) political activity to support the candidate	0.80	0.94	287	0.69	0.97	287	1.64
Positive online political activity to support the candidate	0.80	1.02	287	0.66	1.02	287	-2.00*
Overall positive political activity to support the candidate	0.80	0.93	287	0.68	0.97	287	1.90
Negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity against the candidate	0.69	1.03	287	0.78	1.02	287	-1.14
Negative online political activity against the candidate	0.66	1.05	287	0.76	1.04	287	-1.34
Overall negative political activity against the candidate	0.68	1.01	287	0.77	0.98	287	-1.28

Note. ** $p < .001$ *$p < .05$

As part of the preliminary analysis, attention will be directed toward demographic variables that play a crucial role in shaping the research landscape. Table 2 is dedicated to adjusted demographic variables constructed specifically for testing relationships. This preliminary analysis serves as a foundational step, establishing a baseline understanding of potential interactions between demographics and the outcome variables. Examining these relationships at the outset lays the groundwork for a more nuanced exploration of the study's main hypotheses and research questions. This strategic approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of how demographic factors may influence the observed patterns in the subsequent hypothesis-testing phase.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviation and Frequencies for Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable			Frequencies	
	M	*SD*	*n*	%
Age	2.51	1.38	287	
18-29			85	29.6
30-39			78	27.2
40-49			54	18.8
50-59			36	12.5
60-69			29	10.1
over 70			5	1.7
Gender	1.63	.48	285	
Female			180	63.2
Male			105	36.8
Marital status	1.68	.69	286	
Single, never married			112	39.2
Married/partnered			133	46.5
Other (e.g. divorced or widowed)			41	14.3
Educational level	2.42	.65	286	
High School or Less (No college)			25	8.7
Some College or Vocational Training			116	40.6
College Graduate and Beyond			145	50.7
Employment Status	1.70	.86	280	
Employed, full-time			158	56.4
Under Employed			48	17.1
Not Employed			74	26.4
Income	1.68	.67	280	
Low-income			122	43.6
Middle-income			127	45.4
High-income			31	11.1
Ethnicity	1.17	.38	281	
White (non-Hispanic)			232	82.6
Non-White (including Hispanic)			49	17.4

Preliminary Analysis

Before diving into hypothesis testing, I want first to address some potential factors that could influence the relationships between perception and political participation. Demographic factors have persisted as fundamental elements in scrutinizing the factors influencing mass

political behavior in the United States (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Scholars consistently underscore the significance of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and marital status as reliable predictors of electoral behavior and public opinion. This sustained emphasis reflects the enduring relevance of demographic analyses in comprehending the intricate dynamics of political engagement. In this section, I examine the relationship between several demographic predictors and the outcome variables.

The influence of demographics on political behavior.

Demographic factors affect political participation by influencing voter support and engagement in political activities with time proven to strengthen partisanship. As a demographic indicator, age holds implications for voting behaviors and political outlooks. Voters tend to consistently vote along party lines as they age (Converse, 1976). Additionally, "the propensity to vote increases substantially with age and education" (Blais, 2000, p. 52). As such, older habitual voters are more likely to vote along party lines, while younger voters are more likely to abstain from voting altogether (Bhatti et al., 2012). Younger voters are also more likely to participate in political activities like protests (Dalton, 2015).

Level of education is a key determinant that has been theorized to reflect the influence of knowledge and awareness in shaping political perspectives and motivating political engagement. While education is a strong voting and political participation predictor (Nie et al., 1996; Verba et al. 1995), "the causal impact of education remains unclear. As education increases, citizens may—or may not—increase their engagement with democracy" (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022, p. 106).

Gender introduces nuanced dynamics, as research indicates variations in political attitudes and behaviors between men and women. More women than men vote for Democratic

presidential candidates (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 1997; Burden, 2008; Carroll, 1999), and the modern gender gap has been relatively stable over the past three decades (R. Campbell, 2017). There are aggregate-level differences as well as sub-group variations, with college-educated women leaning towards the Democrats, and Evangelical Christian women leaning towards the Republicans (Bendyna & Lake, 1994).

Race and ethnicity speak to an influence of historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors on voting behavior and political participation. Racial and ethnic minorities voting behaviors lean towards the Democratic party (Sobolewska, 2017). Political issue salience disperses the voting bloc, though it has minimal effect in election considerations (Sobolewska, 2005). With white majority voters, research suggests that value voting is an influential factor in voting behavior (Hirschl et al., 2009; 2012).

The role that employment plays as a predictor varies by construct. Research has shown differences between the unemployed verses the employed (Grafstein, 2005), as well as the relationship between occupation and job role (Sobel, 1993), with political participation. Moreover, Democrats have benefited from high unemployment rates, with research showing that the unemployed support Democratic candidates (Wright, 2012). Additional considerations should be given to income levels, as income affords the financial capacity to donate in support of a candidate (Brady et al., 1995), thus, proving a relationship between income and political participation, specifically monetary support. Income levels can influence access to information and resources, impacting political engagement.

Ethnicity contributes to the intricate mosaic of political engagement, with diverse communities exhibiting unique voting patterns influenced by historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors. Income, a critical socio-economic determinant, impacts access to resources

and opportunities, influencing the extent of political involvement. Marital status further adds complexity, as research suggests variations in political engagement between single individuals, married couples, and those in other relationship statuses.

Finally, family dynamics and responsibilities can influence political engagement. Research shows that "married individuals tend to be more conservative and more likely to vote Republican than Democrat" (Slrin, 2008). Marital status influences political participation, with higher levels reported for married people, and shared political preferences are common within the marital unit.

These demographic variables collectively delineate a multifaceted landscape where individuals navigate political choices. Understanding these demographic predispositions provides a nuanced lens through which to interpret voting support and political activity, acknowledging that diverse segments of the population bring unique experiences and considerations to their political engagement.

Analysis of Demographic factors

ANOVA was used to analyze the relationship between demographics and the outcome variables of this study. The findings of these test are as follows:

Age

There was no statistically significant difference between age groups and the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton: mean voting support for Clinton ($F(5, 279) = 1.96$, $p = .085$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 1.02$, $p = .405$); Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 1.98$, $p = .082$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 0.43$, $p = .828$); Negative online political activity against Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 1.05$, $p = .390$); and Overall

negative political activity against Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 0.71$, $p = .617$). However, there was a statistically significant difference found between age group and positive online political activity in support of Clinton ($F(5, 281) = 2.66$, $p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants in their 50s ($M = 1.3$, $SD = 1.4$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in positive online political activity than those in their 40s ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 0.9$; MD = 0.66, $p < .05$).

There was no statistically significant difference between age groups and the outcome variables for Donald Trump: mean voting support for Trump ($F(5, 280) = 0.90$, $p = .484$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump ($F(5, 281) = 0.47$, $p = .796$); positive online political activity in support of Trump ($F(5, 281) = 0.55$, $p = .741$); Overall positive political activity in support of Trump ($F(5, 281) = 0.48$, $p = .795$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump ($F(5, 281) = 0.51$, $p = .770$); Negative online political activity against Trump ($F(5, 281) = 1.63$, $p = .152$); and Overall negative political activity against Trump ($F(5, 281) = 1.02$, $p = .405$).

Income

There was no statistically significant difference between income groups and the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton: mean voting support for Clinton ($F(2, 275) = 0.66$, $p = .520$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 0.87$, $p = .419$); Positive online political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 0.25$, $p = .779$); Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 0.42$, $p = .660$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 1.05$, $p = .352$); Negative online political activity against Clinton ($F(5, 277) = 0.86$, $p = .425$); and Overall negative political activity against Clinton ($F(5, 277) = 0.99$, $p = .372$).

There was no statistically significant difference between income groups and the outcome variables for Donald Trump: mean voting support for Trump ($F(2, 276) = 0.45$, $p = .639$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 2.17$, $p = .116$); Overall positive political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 2.80$, $p = .063$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 0.63$, $p = .534$); Negative online political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 0.52$, $p = .595$); and Overall negative political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 0.59$, $p = .553$).

However, there was a statistically significant difference found between income group and positive online political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 3.14$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who fell in the low-income group ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in positive online political activity than those who fell in the high-income group ($M = 0.3$, $SD = 0.5$; MD = 0.51, $p < .05$).

Marital Status

There was no statistically significant difference between marital status and the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton: Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 1.66$, $p = .192$); Positive online political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 1.93$, $p = .147$); and Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 2.00$, $p = .137$). However, there was a statistically significant difference found between marital status and mean voting support for Clinton ($F(2, 281) = 7.36$, $p < .005$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were single-never married ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 1.2$) had a significantly higher potential of voting support than those who were married ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.5$; MD = 0.63, $p < .005$). Additionally, participants who were single-never married ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 1.2$) were significantly higher in likelihood of voting support than those in other relationship statuses like

widowed or divorced (M = 3.6, SD = 1.8; MD = 0.79, $p < .05$). There was not a statistically significant pairwise difference between participants who were married (M = 3.7, SD = 1.5) and those in other relationship statuses (M = 3.6, SD = 1.8; MD = 0.16, $p = .804$).

There was a statistically significant difference found between marital status and negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 3.91$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants in other relationship statuses like widowed or divorced (M = 1.1, SD = 1.9) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity than those were single-never married (M = 0.7, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.44, $p < .05$), additionally, participants in other relationship statuses (M = 1.1, SD = 1.9) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity than those who were married (M = 0.6, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.50, $p < .05$). There was not a statistically significant pairwise difference between participants who were single-never married (M = 0.7, SD = 0.8) and those who were married (M = 0.6, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.05, $p = .895$).

There was a statistically significant difference found between marital status and negative online political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 4.83$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants in other relationship statuses like widowed or divorced (M = 1.1, SD = 1.8) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative online political activity than those who were married (M = 0.5, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.58, $p < .05$).

There was a statistically significant difference found between marital status and overall negative political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 4.57$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants in other relationship statuses like widowed or divorced (M = 1.1, SD = 1.8) had significantly higher levels of engagement in overall negative political activity than those were single-never married (M = 0.7, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.43, $p < .05$). Additionally, participants in

other relationship statuses (M = 1.1, SD = 1.8) had significantly higher levels of engagement in overall negative political activity than those who were married (M = 0.6, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.54, p < .05). There was not a statistically significant pairwise difference between participants who were single-never married (M = 0.7, SD = 0.8) and those who were married (M = 0.6, SD = 0.8; MD = 0.10, p = .697).

There was no statistically significant difference between marital status and the outcome variables for Donald Trump: mean voting support for Trump (F(2, 282) = 1.36, p = .257); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump (F(2, 283) = 1.06, p = .348); Overall positive political activity in support of Trump (F(2, 283) = 2.22, p = .110); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump (F(2, 283) = 0.864, p = .423); Negative online political activity against Trump (F(2, 283) = 1.124, p = .327); and Overall negative political activity against Trump (F(2, 283) = 1.05, p = .351). However, there was a statistically significant difference found between marital status and positive online political activity in support of Trump (F(2, 283) = 3.44, p < .05). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were married (M = 0.5, SD = 0.8) had significantly lower levels of engagement in positive online political activity than those in other relationship statuses like widowed or divorced (M = 1.0, SD = 1.6; MD = -0.5, p < .05).

Employment Status

There was no statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variables: mean voting support for Clinton (F(2, 275) = 0.47, p = .623), Negative online political activity against Clinton (F(2, 277) = 1.69, p = .187); and Overall negative political activity against Clinton (F(2, 277) = 2.98, p = .053).

There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 4.50$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in positive traditional (face-to-face) political activity than those who were unemployed ($M = 0.5$, $SD = 0.7$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$).

There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable positive online political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 3.76$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in positive online political activity than those who were unemployed ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 0.9$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$). There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable overall positive political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 4.47$, $p < .05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.0$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in overall positive political activity than those who were unemployed ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 0.7$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$).

There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 277) = 4.27$, $p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 0.9$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity than those who were not employed ($M = 0.4$, $SD = 0.7$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$).

There was no statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variables for Donald Trump: mean voting support for Trump ($F(2, 276) = 1.44$, $p = .240$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 1.60$, p

= .203); Positive online political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 1.93$, $p = .147$); and, Overall positive political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 277) = 1.86$, $p = .157$).

There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 5.38$, $p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity than those who were not employed ($M = 0.5$, $SD = 0.8$; MD = 0.5, $p < .05$). There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable negative online political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 4.26$, $p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in negative online political activity than those who were not employed ($M = 0.5$, $SD = 0.9$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$). There was a statistically significant difference between employment status and the outcome variable overall negative political activity against Trump ($F(2, 277) = 5.24$, $p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who were employed ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.1$) had significantly higher levels of engagement in overall negative political activity than those who were not employed ($M = 0.5$, $SD = 0.9$; MD = 0.4, $p < .05$).

Education

There was no statistically significant difference between education levels and the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton: mean voting support for Clinton ($F(2, 281) = 1.78$, $p = .171$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 0.92$, $p = .401$); Positive online political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 0.16$, $p = .856$); Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 0.34$, $p = .713$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 1.80$, $p = .167$); Negative

online political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 2.49$, $p = .084$); and Overall negative political activity against Clinton ($F(2, 283) = 2.26$, $p = .106$).

There was no statistically significant difference between education levels and the outcome variables for Donald Trump: mean voting support for Trump ($F(2, 282) = 2.07$, $p = .129$); Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 283) = 1.90$, $p = .152$); Positive online political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 283) = 2.51$, $p = .083$); Overall positive political activity in support of Trump ($F(2, 283 = 2.31$, $p = .101$); Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump ($F(2, 283) = 1.02$, $p = .363$); Negative online political activity against Trump ($F(2, 283) = 0.96$, $p = .386$); and Overall negative political activity against Trump ($F(5) = 1.02$, $p = .362$).

Race/Ethnicity

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton in Whites and Non-Whites. There was not a significant difference in mean voting support for Clinton between Whites ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.5$) and Non-Whites ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 1.2$); $t(277) = -1.7$, $p = .100$. There was a significant difference in positive traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.9$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.1$, $SD = 1.2$); $t(279) = -2.31$, $p < .05$. There was not a significant difference in positive online political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 1.0$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.1$); $t(279) = -1.45$, $p = .214$. There was not a significant difference in overall positive political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 0.9$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.1$); $t(279) = -1.86$, $p = .065$.

There was not a significant difference in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.1$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.8$, SD

= 0.9); $t(279) = -0.57$, $p = .587$. There was not a significant difference in negative online political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.1$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$); $t(279) = -0.50$, $p = .984$. There was not a significant difference in overall negative political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 0.9$); $t(279) = -0.55$, $p = .712$.

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare the outcome variables for Donald Trump in Whites and Non-Whites. There was not a significant difference in mean voting support for Trump between Whites ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.5$) and Non-Whites ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.3$); $t(278) = 1.24$, $p = .215$. There was not a significant difference in positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.9$); $t(279) = -0.09$, $p = .929$. There was not a significant difference in positive online political activity in support of Trump between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.1$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 0.8$); $t(279) = 0.25$, $p = .802$. There was not a significant difference in overall positive political activity in support of Clinton between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.1$) and Non-Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.9$); $t(279) = 0.09$, $p = .930$.

There was not a significant difference in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.1$, $SD = 1.3$); $t(279) = -2.33$, $p = .052$. There was not a significant difference in negative online political activity in support of Trump between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.2$); $t(279) = -1.62$, $p = .294$. There was not a significant difference in overall negative political activity in support of Trump between Whites ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.9$) and Non-Whites ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.2$); $t(279) = -2.08$, $p = .088$.

Gender

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare the outcome variables for Hillary Clinton in Males and Females. There was not a significant difference in mean voting support for Clinton between Males (M = 4.0, SD = 1.5) and Females (M = 4.0, SD = 1.5); $t(281) = 0.14$, p = .885. There was not a significant difference in positive traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.9, SD = 1.0) and Females (M = 0.8, SD = 0.9); $t(283) = 1.17$, p =.243. There was not a significant difference in positive online political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.8, SD = 1.1) and Females (M = 0.8, SD = 1.0); $t(283) = 0.53$, p = .599. There was not a significant difference in overall positive political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.9, SD = 1.0) and Females (M = 0.8, SD = 0.9); $t(283) = 0.88$, p = .378.

There was not a significant difference in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.8, SD = 0.9) and Females (M = 0.3, SD = 1.1); $t(283) = 1.60$, p =.598. There was not a significant difference in negative online political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.8, SD = 1.0) and Females (M = 0.6, SD = 1.1); $t(283) = 1.20$, p = .436. There was not a significant difference in overall negative political activity in support of Clinton between Males (M = 0.8, SD = 1.0) and Females (M = 0.6, SD = 1.1); $t(283) = 1.44$, p = .638.

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare the outcome variables for Donald Trump in Males and Females. There was not a significant difference in mean voting support for Trump between Males (M = 3.9, SD = 1.5) and Females (M = 3.8, SD = 1.5); $t(282) = 0.25$, p = .803. There was not a significant difference in positive traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump between Males (M = 0.8, SD = 0.9) and Females (M = 0.6, SD = 1.0); $t(283)$ =

1.36, $p = .175$. There was not a significant difference in positive online political activity in support of Trump between Males ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 0.9$) and Females ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 1.1$); $t(283) = 1.00$, $p = .319$. There was not a significant difference in overall positive political activity in support of Clinton between Males ($M = 0.8$, $SD = 0.8$) and Females ($M = 0.6$, $SD = 1.0$); $t(283) = 1.21$, $p = .228$.

There was not a significant difference in negative traditional (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump between Males ($M = 1.0$, $SD = 1.1$) and Females ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$); $t(283) = 2.09$, $p = .542$. There was not a significant difference in negative online political activity in support of Trump between Males ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.1$) and Females ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$); $t(283) = 1.82$, $p = .418$. There was not a significant difference in overall negative political activity in support of Clinton between Males ($M = 0.9$, $SD = 1.0$) and Females ($M = 0.7$, $SD = 1.0$); $t(283) = 2.05$, $p = .453$.

While the preliminary demographic impact analysis found little to no statistically significant relationship with regard to political participation measured in this study, it is important to note that the analysis looked at groupings rather than focusing on the individual level as a factor of analysis (Blais, 2000). It was evident that there is some potential influence, but this possible influence was not significantly applicable to this study.

Given the plethora of research to support the relationship, it was important to build a model that controlled the impact of demographic variables, thus enabling us to talk more clearly about the results of our hypothesis considering well-established research. The findings, for comparison, are noted in Model 1 of each Hierarchal Regression Model table in this chapter.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Will voters whose political identity is congruent with the candidate's support that candidate?

To answer research question one, I examine whether there is a relationship between party identification and support for the candidate. Support for a candidate has been defined as voting support for the candidate. An examination of the relationship between political identity and political participation is foundational to this study. I considered two ways of looking at voting support: general voting for a candidate and voting support following video prompts of the candidate.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted between party identity and general voting support for a candidate. Three cells had expected counts less than five. There was a statistically significant association between party identity and general voting support, χ^2 (6) = 142.27, $p < .001$. The association was large (Cohen, 1988), Cramer's V = .50.

Table 4

Crosstabulation of Party Identity and General Voting Support for Candidate

Party Identity	Voting Support for a Candidate								Total	
	Not vote		Hillary Clinton (Democratic Candidate)		Donald Trump (Republican Candidate)		Other Candidate (neither Democrat nor Republican			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Democrats	2	1.8%	90	78.9%	8	7.0%	14	12.3%	114	100%
Independents	9	8.5%	36	34.0%	24	22.6%	37	34.9%	106	100%
Republicans	0	0%	7	10.8%	49	75.4%	9	13.8%	65	100%
Total	11	3.9%	133	46.7%	81	28.4%	60	21.1%		

Note. Percentage within Party Identity Scale.

As demonstrated in the crosstabulation (Table 4), participants who identified as a Democrat were more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, whereas participants who identified as Republican were more likely to vote for the Republican candidate, Donald Trump. A closer look at party identification, using the 7-point Michigan party identification scale, showed that participants who identified with the Democratic party—that is Strong Democrats (18.9% out of 20%), Weak Democrats (12.6% out of 20%) and Independents leaning towards Democrats (11.6% out of 12.6%)—were more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate; and participants who identified with the Republican party—that is Strong Republicans (9.1% out of 11.2%), Weak Republicans (8.1% out of 11.6%) and Independents leaning towards Republicans (7.4% out of 8.4%)—were more likely to vote for the Republican candidate (See Table 5).

Table 5

Crosstabulation of 7-point Michigan Party Identity Scale and General Voting Support for Candidate

	Voting Support for a Candidate									
Party Identity	Not vote		Hillary Clinton (Democratic Candidate)		Donald Trump (Republican Candidate)		Other Candidate (neither Democrat nor Republican		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strong Democrats	1	1.8%	54	94.7%	1	1.8%	1	1.8%	57	100%
Weak Democrats	1	1.8%	36	63.2%	7	12.3%	13	22.8%	57	100%
Independents leaning Democrats	0	0%	33	91.7%	3	8.3%	0	0%	36	100%
Independents	9	19.6%	0	0%	0	0%	37	80.4%	46	100%
Independents leaning Republicans	0	0%	3	12.5%	21	87.5%	0	0%	24	100%
Weak Republicans	0	0%	5	15.2%	23	69.7%	5	15.2%	33	100%
Strong Republicans	0	0%	2	6.3%	26	81.3%	4	12.5%	32	100%
Total	11	3.9%	133	46.7%	81	28.4%	60	21.1%	285	100%

Note. Percentage within Michigan Party Identity Scale.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was undertaken to assess the relationship between party identity and the likely voting effect to support the candidate following the video prompt. There was statistically significant, strong negative correlation between party identity and the likely voting effect to support Clinton following her video prompts, $r(284) = -.40$, $p < .005$.

There was statistically significant, strong positive correlation between party identity and the likely voting effect to support Trump following his video prompts, $r(285) = .41$, $p < .005$.

As such, we can conclude that there is a relationship and association between congruent party identity between voter and candidate in terms of support for the candidate. Thus, voters whose political identity is congruent with the candidate's are more likely to vote for that candidate.

Research Question 2: Do debates affect voters' political participation?

To answer research question two, I consider voter's political participation following video prompts of each candidate. This question seeks to examine the perceived impact of the video prompts, and thus, we ask whether participants are motivated to political activity and voting based on the message.

In this study, I focus on perception, and how that influences political participation. To examine the question of whether debates matter, I seek to determine whether candidate debates statements (a) impacts the perception of the candidate and (b) changes the likelihood of political participation. The data set is tricky, because it does not test before and after effects. As such, I am only considering whether voters believe or presume an effect on themselves, but also, whether there is a change in supportive political activity, or retaliatory political activity against the opposing candidate.

Moreover, this study is framed within the context of party identification. As such, an examination of the relationship will consider the extent to which changes happen by party identification. I seek to determine if there is a difference between party groups that impacts the likelihood support for candidates based on their debate statements. I also seek to determine

whether there is a difference in perceived effect on the likelihood of supportive political activity for candidates based on their debate statements among political party groups, or the opposite.

To examine this research question, a one-way ANOVA test was used to determine differences between groups on the potential voting effect. There were statistically significant differences between party identity and the likely voting effect of debate video statements on the participant for performances of Hillary Clinton $F(2, 281) = 23.67$, $p < .001$, as well as for performances of Donald Trump $F(2, 281) = 21.88$, $p < .001$. A Tukey post hoc test revealed that, for the likely voting effect for Hillary Clinton, there were significant pairwise differences between Democrats and Independents (MD = 0.94, $p < .001$), as well as between Democrats and Republicans (MD = 1.37, $p < .001$). There was no statistically significant pairwise difference between Independents and Republicans (MD = 0.43, $p = .119$). A Tukey post hoc test revealed that, for the likely voting effect for Donald Trump, there were significant pairwise differences between Republicans and Democrats (MD = 1.40, $p < .001$), and Republicans and Independents (MD = 0.82, $p < .001$), as well as Independents and Democrats (MD = 0.58, $p < .01$).

Examining each individual debate video statement, results suggest that the reported likely voting effect of the debate video statement on the participant varied by party identity. There was statistical significance found across all eight videos of candidate statements. See Table 6 for figures.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA Results by Party Identification.

	Party Identity									
	Democrats			*Independents*			*Republicans*			
Variables	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*F Test*
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Jobs (VP1)	4.81	1.58	114	3.76	1.44	105	3.15	1.69	62	25.80**
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Jobs (VP2)	3.36	1.48	111	3.84	1.50	104	4.43	1.41	61	10.48**
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3)	4.65	1.67	114	3.74	1.56	106	3.03	1.74	63	21.00**
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on the African American Community (VP4)	3.21	1.67	114	3.97	1.65	104	4.58	1.68	63	14.73**
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5)	4.71	1.47	114	3.57	1.51	104	3.54	1.68	63	19.09**
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6)	3.26	1.74	113	3.84	1.50	103	4.73	1.61	62	16.41**
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on foreign policy (VP7)	4.29	1.48	110	3.63	1.41	102	3.33	1.53	64	10.16**
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9)	3.43	1.71	113	4.00	1.49	105	4.98	1.53	63	19.24**

Note. ** $p < .001$

Examining participants' reported likelihood of voting for the candidate following exposure to various debate video statements reveals interesting and nuanced patterns, particularly when stratified by party identity. Notably, there are discernible differences in mean responses for Democrats and Independents across several debate video statements. Democrats, on average,

expressed a notably high likelihood of voting for the candidate, Hillary Clinton, after exposure to her debate statements in video prompts (VP) 1, 3, 5, and 7. These debate statements seem to have resonated particularly strongly with members of the Democratic party. In contrast, Republicans, on average, expressed a notably high likelihood of voting for the candidate, Donald Trump, after exposure to his debate statements in VP 2, 4, 6, and 9.

I examined the difference between each video across all participants. To do this, paired-sample t-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between the reported likelihood of voting effect following each video statement. Results from video statements of Hillary Clinton showed that there was a statistically significant difference between Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP 5) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP 7), $t(274) = 2.55$, $p < .05$, as well as Clinton on foreign policy (VP 7) and Clinton on Jobs (VP 1), $t(274) = -2.83$, $p < .01$. Results from video statements of Donald Trump showed that there was a statistically significant difference between Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(277) = -2.50$, $p < .05$, Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9) and Trump on Jobs (VP2), $t(275) = 2.34$, $p < .05$, and Trump on the African American Community (VP4) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(278) = -2.54$, $p < .05$.

Research question 2 is also concerned with affect, and as such, I examined the emotional perception of each video statement to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between the reported affect. With regards to enthusiasm, results from video statements of Hillary Clinton showed that there was a statistically significant difference between Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7), $t(276) = -6.05$, $p < .001$, and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and Clinton on Jobs (VP1), $t(274) = 8.14$, $p < .001$, and Clinton on Jobs (VP1) and Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5), $t(280) = -2.28$, $p < .05$. Results from video

statements of Donald Trump showed that there was a statistically significant difference between all videos: Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on the African American Community (VP4), $t(277) = -5.81$, $p < .001$; Trump on the African American Community (VP4) and Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6), $t(276) = 3.36$, $p < .005$; Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(275) = -5.91$, $p < .001$; Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9) and Trump on Jobs (VP2), $t(276) = 7.53$, $p < .001$; Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6), $t(272) = -3.06$, $p < .005$; and Trump on the African American Community (VP4) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(279) = -2.58$, $p < .05$.

As it regards anxiety, results from video statements of Hillary Clinton showed that there was a statistically significant difference between most videos: Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3) and Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5), $t(281) = -2.65$, $p < .01$; Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7), $t(276) = 5.53$, $p < .001$; Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and Clinton on Jobs (VP1), $t(274) = -3.08$, $p < .005$; Clinton on Jobs (VP1) and Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5), $t(280) = -2.59$, $p < .05$; and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3), $t(276) = -3.06$, $p < .005$. Results from video statements of Donald Trump showed that there was a statistically significant difference between most videos: Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on the African American Community (VP4), $t(277) = -3.09$, $p < .005$; Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(276) = 2.39$, $p < .05$; Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9) and Trump on Jobs (VP2), $t(275) = 2.04$, $p < .05$; and Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6), $t(274) = -4.84$, $p < .001$.

With regard to aversion, results from video statements of Hillary Clinton showed that there was a statistically significant difference between Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7), $t(276) = 2.12$, $p < .05$; Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and

Clinton on Jobs (VP1), $t(274) = -2.16$, $p < .05$; and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3), $t(276) = 2.13$, $p < .05$. Results from video statements of Donald Trump showed that there was a statistically significant difference between most videos: Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on the African American Community (VP4), $t(277) = -3.93$, $p < .001$; Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(276) = 2.53$, $p < .05$; Trump on Jobs (VP2) and Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6), $t(274) = -4.27$, $p < .001$; and Trump on the African American Community (VP4) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(278) = 2.56$, $p < .05$.

The final component of research question 2 has to do with political activities that do not include voting. Paired-sample t-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between the reported potential political activity participants said they would engage in to support the candidate following each video statement. Results from video statements of Hillary Clinton showed that there was a statistically significant difference in positive political activity following Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3) and Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5), $t(286) = 2.93$, $p < .005$; Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7), $t(286) = 3.10$, $p < .005$; Clinton on foreign policy (VP7) and Clinton on Jobs (VP1), $t(286) = -4.31$, $p < .001$; and Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3) and Clinton on foreign policy (VP7), $t(286) = 4.99$, $p < .001$. Results from video statements of Donald Trump showed that there was a statistically significant difference in positive political activity following Trump on the African American Community (VP4) and Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6), $t(286) = 2.77$, $p < .05$; as well as Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6) and Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9), $t(286) = -2.56$, $p < .05$.

Research Question 2 investigated the impact of candidate debate statements on voters' political participation. The focus was on examining perceived effects on political activity and voting likelihood, considering the emotional perception of each video statement, and assessing potential differences across party groups. Significant differences were found between party identity and the likely voting effect of debate video statements for both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Party congruency between participant and candidate showed Democrats tended to express a higher likelihood of voting for Hillary Clinton after exposure to her video statements (video prompts 1, 3, 5, and 7), while Republicans expressed a higher likelihood for Donald Trump after exposure to his video statements (video prompts 2, 4, 6, and 9).

Paired-sample t-tests identified significant differences between some video prompts, indicating variations in participants' reported likelihood of voting for the candidate. Significant differences were found in emotional perception for various video statements, for both candidates. Significant differences were identified in reported potential political activity following certain video prompts, indicating a varying impact on participants' intentions to engage in supportive political activities.

The findings for Research Question 2 reveal that candidate debate statements significantly influence voters' political participation. The impact extends beyond voting to include emotional responses and potential engagement in positive political activities. Notably, party identity plays a crucial role, shaping the perceived effects of debate statements on different partisan groups.

In addressing research question 2, I also seek to understand the extent to which emotional perception of debate statements impacts the likelihood of voting and political activity for the candidate. Probing the additional question will help understand the affective influence of debates

on voter's political participation. Multiple linear regression models were used to test the three dimensions of emotional perceptions of the debate statements and the impact they would have on political participation.

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to determine if the addition of enthusiasm and anxiety influenced the likelihood of voting over and above demographics alone and demographics and enthusiasm alone. See Table 7 for full details on each regression model. The full model of gender, age, college education, marital status, race/ethnicity, employment status, income level, reported enthusiasm perceptions of the debate statements and reported anxiety perceptions of the debate statements to predict the likelihood of voting for Hillary Clinton (Model 3 in Table 7) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .52$, $F(9, 258) = 31.29$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .51$. The addition of reported enthusiasm perceptions of the debate statements to the prediction of voting likelihood support for Clinton (Model 2 in Table 7) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .35 $F(1, 259) = 153.48$, $p < .001$. The addition of reported anxiety perceptions of the debate statements to the prediction of voting likelihood support for Clinton (Model 3 in Table 7) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .11 $F(1, 258) = 60.16$, $p < .001$

Table 7

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Likelihood of Voting for Clinton from Demographics, Enthusiasm, and Anxiety.

	Likelihood of Voting for Clinton					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	4.00**		2.06**		3.45**	
Age	-.03	-.02	-.10	-.09	-.13*	-.12
Income	.07	.03	.06	.03	-.02	-.01
Marital Status	-.41*	-.19	-.25*	-.12	-.17	-.08
Employment Status	-.06	-.03	.06	.03	.01	.01
Race	.29	.07	.12	.03	.07	.02
Education	.14	.07	.19	.08	.13	.06
Gender	.01	.00	.04	.01	-.04	-.01
Enthusiasm			.80**	.60	.83**	.62
Anxiety					-.49**	-.34
R^2	.06		.41		.52	
F	2.41*		22.53**		31.29**	
ΔR^2	.06		.35		.11	
ΔF	2.41*		153.48**		60.16**	

Note. $n = 268$. ** $p < .005$, * $p < .05$

The full model of gender, age, college education, marital status, race/ethnicity, employment status, income level, reported enthusiasm perceptions of the debate statements and reported anxiety perceptions of the debate statements to predict the likelihood of voting for Donald Trump (Model 3 in Table 8) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .60$, $F(9, 258) = 43.08$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .59$. The addition of reported enthusiasm perceptions of the debate statements to the prediction of voting likelihood support for Trump (Model 2 in Table 8) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .43 $F(1, 259) = 208.15$, $p < .001$. The addition of reported anxiety perceptions of the debate statements to the prediction of voting likelihood support for Trump

(Model 3 in Table 8) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .14 $F(1, 258) = 90.03$, $p < .001$

Table 8

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Likelihood of Voting for Trump from Demographics, Enthusiasm, and Anxiety.

	Likelihood of Voting for Trump					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	4.32**		1.42*		2.63**	
Age	.06	.06	.02	.02	.04	.04
Income	-.06	-.03	.09	.04	.10	.04
Marital Status	.05	.03	-.00	-.00	-.06	-.03
Employment Status	.12	.07	.17*	.10	.14*	.08
Race	-.24	-.06	-.29	-.07	-.26	-.07
Education	-.19	-.08	.13	.06	.14	.06
Gender	-.07	-.02	.14	.05	.07	.02
Enthusiasm			.88*	.68	.87**	.68
Anxiety					-.49**	-.38
R^2	.03		.46		.60	
F	1.06		27.69**		43.08**	
ΔR^2	.03		.43		.14	
ΔF	1.06*		208.15**		90.03**	

*Note. n = 268 ** p < .005, * p < .05*

Findings of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1A: Perceived credibility will increase support for the candidate.

Hypothesis 1A predicts that support for a political candidate will increase based on the perceived credibility of the candidate. Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between the candidate's perceived credibility and the likely voting effect to support the candidate for each of the four video prompts. Table 9 shows the results of the analysis of the statements made by Hillary Clinton, and Table 10 shows the results of the analysis of statements made by Donald Trump.

Overall, Spearman's ranks correlation (r) between the perceived credibility and the overall likelihood of voting for the candidate was $r(284) = .68$, $p < .001$ for Hillary Clinton, and $r(285) = .59$, $p < .001$ for Donald Trump. The correlations indicate a strong and positive relationship. The Spearman correlations for each assessment following the candidate's debate statement consistently showed positive relationships between perceived credibility and voting support likelihood. The subsequent Spearman correlation, using the mean likelihood to vote as a continuous variable, reinforced and strengthened this relationship. These findings provide robust support for the hypothesis that higher perceived credibility is associated with a greater likelihood to vote.

Table 9

Correlations for Perceived Credibility of Hillary Clinton and Likelihood to Vote for Clinton

		Overall Credibility Score for Clinton
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Jobs (VP1)	Spearman Correlation	.60**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	281
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Bias in the Police (VP3)	Spearman Correlation	.63**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	283
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on Cybersecurity (VP5)	Spearman Correlation	.58**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	281
I will vote for this candidate – Clinton on foreign policy (VP7)	Spearman Correlation	.52**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	276
Mean Voting Support for Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.68**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	284

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

Table 10

Correlations for Perceived Credibility of Donald Trump and Likelihood to Vote for Trump

		Overall Credibility Score for Trump
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Jobs (VP2)	Spearman Correlation	.37**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	277
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on the African American Community (VP4)	Spearman Correlation	.54**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	282
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Cybersecurity (VP6)	Spearman Correlation	.52**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	279
I will vote for this candidate – Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk (VP9)	Spearman Correlation	.56**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	282
Mean Voting Support for Trump	Spearman Correlation	.59**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	285

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to further examine the relationship between perceived credibility and the overall likelihood of voting for the candidate. The aim was to assess the extent to which perceived credibility predicts the likelihood of voting. See Tables 10 and 11 for full details on each regression model.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and perceived credibility of Clinton (Model 2 in Table 11) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .47$, $F(8, 258) = 28.54$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .45$. The addition of the

perceived credibility of Clinton to the prediction of the voting likelihood for Clinton (Model 2 in Table 11) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .41$, $F(1, 258) = 198.26$, $p < .001$.

Table 11

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Likelihood of Voting for Clinton from Demographics, Perceived Credibility

	Likelihood of Voting for Clinton			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	4.05**		2.58**	
Age	-.03	-.02	-.07	-.07
Income	.07	.03	.04	.02
Marital Status	-.42**	-.20	-.36**	-.17
Employment Status	-.06	-.03	-.06	-.04
Race	.29	.07	.33	.08
Education	.15	.06	-.17	.07
Gender	-.00	.00	-.19	.06
Credibility			.62**	-.66
R^2	.06*		.47**	
F	2.44*		28.54**	
ΔR^2	.06		.41	
ΔF	2.44*		198.26**	

Note. $n = 267$ ** $p < .005$, * $p < .05$

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and perceived credibility of Trump (Model 2 in Table 12) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .38$, $F(8, 259) = 20.20$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .37$. The addition of the perceived credibility of Trump to the prediction of voting likelihood for Trump (Model 2 in Table 12) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .36$, $F(1, 259) = 149.91$, $p < .001$.

Table 12

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Likelihood of Voting for Trump from Demographics, Perceived Credibility

	Likelihood of Voting for Trump			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	4.32		2.04	
Age	.06	.06	.04	.04
Income	-.06	-.03	.02	.01
Marital Status	.05	.03	-.08	-.04
Employment Status	.12	.07	.10	.06
Race	-.24	-.06	-.38	-.10
Education	-.19	-.08	.19	.08
Gender	-.07	-.02	.07	.02
Credibility			.51	.63
R^2	.03		.38**	
F	1.06		20.20 **	
ΔR^2	.03		.36**	
ΔF	1.06		149.91**	

Note. $n = 268$. ** $p < .005$, * $p < .05$

Hypothesis 1B: Perceived credibility will interact with political identification, such that credibility will have a greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 1B suggests that when considering political identification, perceived credibility provides added value to determining likely voting support for the candidate. Thus, seeing one's predisposition interacting with perception to impact action. While we could argue that Democrats will vote for the Democratic candidate and Republicans will vote for the Republican candidate, we know that credibility assessment provides a rationale support for a vote for any candidate, given that "the higher the credibility characterization of the source, the more persuasive it is" (Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978). Thus, we hypothesize that Democrats who view Clinton as credible are more likely to vote for Clinton, and Republicans who view Trump as credible are more likely to vote for Trump.

To scrutinize the nuanced interplay between perceived credibility (X) and party identification (W) in shaping voters' support for the candidate (Y), a moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS developed by Andrew F. Hayes (2023). This analysis was undertaken as part of testing Hypothesis 1B, which posited that perceived credibility interacts with political identification, exerting a greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than on those whose political identity differs.

The moderator, party identification (W), is a multicategorical variable representing participants' affiliation with political parties. Given this categorical nature, employing a suitable coding scheme to represent party identity was imperative. In this analysis, we adopted indicator coding, with one group serving as the reference category. This reference group is crucial for interpreting the effects of the other categories in relation to the chosen baseline. For all

moderation analyses that look at the interaction with party identity, the default reference group is Democrats. Democrats are the default group for these analyses because the variable is constructed based on the party identification scale that defines association on a continuum from Strong Democrat to Strong Republican. In keeping with this categorization and ideological grouping, the party ID variables used in the data analysis mirror a simplified version of the continuum in a three-party grouping. Using one group as a default group also maintains consistency throughout the analysis.

The continuous antecedent variable, perceived credibility (X), was retained in its original form for this analysis. Moderation analyses inherently test whether the relationship between the antecedent variable and the dependent variable is contingent on the levels of the moderator. In this context, we aimed to explore whether the impact of perceived credibility on voting support varies across different party affiliations.

The PROCESS macro facilitates this analysis by estimating the conditional effects of perceived credibility on voting support for each party identity group. The resulting coefficients for interaction terms provide insights into the moderating effect of party identification on the relationship between perceived credibility and voting support.

This moderation analysis is a foundational step in elucidating the intricate connections between the perceived credibility of the candidate, one's political identity, and their combined influence on voters' inclination to support the candidate. The outcomes of this analysis lay the groundwork for interpreting subsequent moderation analyses for Hypotheses 2B, 3B, 4B, and 5B. Each of these hypotheses delves into the distinctive impact of affective states (positive affect, negative affect, anxiety, aversion) on voting support, considering the moderating role of party identification. The detailed insights gained from this moderation analysis not only address

the specific hypothesis at hand, but also contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how psychological factors and political identity intersect to shape political behavior. The subsequent sections delve into the specific findings for each of these hypotheses, building upon the methodological framework established here.

For hypothesis 1B, two multicategorical moderator analyses were performed using the PROCESS macro, one for the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, and another for the Republican candidate, Donald Trump.

Regarding Hillary Clinton (Table 13), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 277) = 40.47$, $p < .001$), indicating that perceived credibility, party identification, and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in voting support. Perceived credibility ($\beta = 0.59$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) positively affected voting support. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance in voting support ($F(2, 277) = 2.72$, $p = .0679$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between perceived credibility and voting support.

Despite the non-significant interaction, the conditional effects of perceived credibility on party affiliation were examined for each level of party identification. For Democrats ($\beta = 0.59$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$), Independents ($\beta = 0.46$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$), and Republicans ($\beta = 0.78$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .001$), perceived credibility had a significant positive impact. This indicates that the conditional effects of X on W are statistically different from zero for each group.

In summary, while party identification did not emerge as a significant moderator, perceived credibility consistently influenced voting support across all political affiliations. The nuanced exploration of conditional effects reveals the robustness of perceived credibility as a

predictor of voting support, irrespective of party identity. The outcome variable for analysis was voting support for Clinton.

Table 13

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Voting for Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Credibility and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .422, MSE = 1.302						
Intercept/Constant	1.617	.422	3.829	.786	2.448	.000
Mean Credibility Score for Clinton (X)	.592	.081	7.35	.433	.750	.000
Independents (D_1 [W])	.376	.525	.716	-.658	1.409	.475
Republicans (D_2 [W])	-.703	.564	-1.246	-1.813	.407	.214
X x D_1	-.136	.113	-1.209	-.357	.086	.228
X x D_2	.185	.140	1.319	-.091	.461	.188
Conditional effects of X on W						
Democrats	.592	.081	7.35	.433	.750	.000
Independents	.456	.079	5.803	.301	.610	.000
Republicans	.776	.115	6.774	.551	1.002	.000

Note. n = 283. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding Donald Trump (Table 14), the main effect of the perceived credibility of Trump on the likelihood of voting support for Trump emerged as statistically significant after controlling for credibility and the interaction of party affiliation and credibility ($\beta = 0.464$, $p < .001$). This implies that, on average, heightened perceived credibility is associated with increased voting support across all participants. Examining party identification, the main effects for Independents (W1: $\beta = 0.483$, $p = .1024$) and Republicans (W2: $\beta = -0.311$, $p = .499$) were not statistically significant.

Exploring interaction effects, neither the interaction effect for Independents (Int_1: $\beta = -0.094$, $p = .343$) nor for Republicans (Int_2: $\beta = 0.161$, $p = .171$) reached statistical significance. This indicates that the relationship between perceived credibility and voting support does not significantly differ between Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

Moderation analysis revealed significant conditional effects of credibility on voting behavior across party identification. For Democrats, the effect of perceived credibility on voting support was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.464$, $p < .001$). For Independents, the effect remained significant ($\beta = 0.369$, $p < .001$), denoting consistent influence across Independents. And for Republicans, the effect was significant and increased ($\beta = 0.624$, $p < .001$). This indicates that the conditional effects of X on W are statistically different from zero for each group.

In summary, while perceived credibility significantly impacts voting support across all party identifications, party affiliation does not moderate this relationship. Democrats, Independents, and Republicans all demonstrate a consistent pattern, reinforcing the pivotal role of perceived credibility in shaping voter behavior.

Table 14

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Voting for Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Credibility and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .394, MSE = 1.305						
Intercept/Constant	2.313	.194	11.904	1.930	2.695	.000
Mean Credibility Score for Trump (X)	.464	.075	6.159	.315	.612	.000
Independents (D_1 [W])	.483	.295	1.639	-.097	1.063	.102
Republicans (D_2 [W])	-.311	.458	-.678	-1.213	.592	.499
X x D_1	-.094	.099	-.949	-.289	.101	.343
X x D_2	.161	.117	1.372	-.07	.392	.171
Conditional effects of X on W						
Democrats	.464	.075	6.159	.315	.612	.000
Independents	.369	.065	5.717	.242	.497	.000
Republicans	.624	.09	6.948	.447	.801	.000

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2A: Positive affect will increase willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

Hypothesis 2A predicts that potential voters will engage in political activities to support the candidate they feel positively about. As noted in the methodology chapter, affect is assessed in two ways: (a) using the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) to define the emotional perception of the candidate and (b) using the Affective Intelligence Theory's three dimensions of affect to define the emotional perception of candidate statements. Given these measures, hypothesis 2A is assessed in two ways. First, I look at the relationship between the positive emotional perception of the candidate using the positive affect scale from PANAS and overall supportive or positive engagement in political activity to support the candidate. Second, I

look at the positive emotional perception of candidate statements, using the three dimensions of affect scale and supportive or positive engagement in political activity to support the candidate.

Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between a candidate's positive emotional perception (positive affect) and political activities to support the candidate. Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables for candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(287) = .45$, $p < .001$, and for candidate Donald Trump, $r(287) = .39$, $p < .001$.

Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between a positive emotional perception of candidate statements (positive/enthusiasm affect) and political activities to support the candidate. Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables for candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(285) = .53$, $p < .001$, and for candidate Donald Trump, $r(286) = .50$, $p < .001$.

The Spearman correlations for both traditional face-to-face political activities and online political activities also showed positive relationships with positive affect. These findings strengthen the relationship between the two variables. See Tables 15 and 16 for breakdowns of the correlations.

Table 15

Correlations for Positive Affect of Hillary Clinton and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Clinton

		Positive Emotional perception of Clinton (PANAS)	Positive Emotional perception of Clinton's statements (Enthusiasm Affect)
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.41**	.50**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	285
Positive online political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.41**	.50**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	285
Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.45**	.53**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	285

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

Table 16

Correlations for Positive Affect of Donald Trump and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Trump

		Positive Emotional Perception of Trump (PANAS)	Positive Emotional perception of Trump's statements (Enthusiasm Affect)
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.38**	.50**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	286
Positive online political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.39**	.48**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	286
Overall positive political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.39**	.50**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	n	287	286

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine further the relationship between positive affect and the overall positive political activity in support of the candidate. The aim was to assess the extent to which positive affect predicts positive political activity. See Tables 17 and 18 for full details on each regression model.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and positive affect of Clinton (Model 2 in Table 17) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .24$, $F(8, 261) = 10.48$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .22$. The addition of the positive affect score of Clinton to the prediction of overall political activity to support Clinton (Model 2 in Table 17) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .18$ $F(1, 261) = 63.49$, $p < .001$.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and enthusiasm affect following Clinton's statements (Model 4 in Table 17) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .29$, $F(8, 259) = 13.11$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .27$. The addition of the enthusiasm affect score following Clinton's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Clinton (Model 4 in Table 17) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .23$ $F(1, 259) = 83.99$, $p < .001$.

Table 17

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Clinton From Demographics, Positive Affect of Clinton and Enthusiasm of Clinton's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to support Clinton							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.298*		.578		1.271*		.288*	
Age	.026	.027	-.020	-.021	.019	.020	-.026	-.027
Income	.039	.028	-.024	-.017	.039	.027	.033	.023
Marital Status	-.153	-.114	-.096	-.071	-.152	-.113	-.074	-.055
Employment Status	-.188**	-.171	-.173*	-.157	-.178*	-.161	-.122*	-.110
Race	.286	.116	.245	.100	.298	.121	.216	.087
Education	-.111	-.075	-.144	-.097	-.108	-.073	-.089	-.060
Gender	-.053	-.027	-.050	-.026	-.048	-.025	-.033	-.017
Positive Affect of Clinton (PAS)			.347**	.436			-	-
Enthusiasm (Positive Affect of Statements)							.409**	.487**
R^2	.06*		.24**		.06*		.29**	
F	2.34*		10.48**		2.27*		13.11**	
ΔR^2	.06		.18		.06*		23**	
ΔF	2.34*		63.49**		2.27*		83.99**	

Note. For models 1 and 2, $n = 270$. For models 3 and 4, $n = 268$. ** $p < .001$, *$p < .05$.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and positive affect of Trump (Model 2 in Table 18) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .21$, $F(8, 261) = 8.83$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .19$. The addition of the positive affect score of Trump to the prediction of overall political activity to support Trump (Model 2 in Table 18) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .16$ $F(1, 261) = 53.25$, $p < .001$.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and enthusiasm affect following Trump's statements (Model 4 in Table 18) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .26$, $F(8, 260) = 11.40$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .24$. The addition of the enthusiasm affect score following Trump's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Trump (Model 4 in Table 18) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .21$ $F(1, 260) = 72.54$, $p < .001$.

Table 18

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Trump from Demographics, Positive Affect of Trump and Enthusiasm of Trump's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to support Clinton							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.63**		.21		1.64**		.37	
Age	-.06	-.07	-.13	-.14	-.07	-.07	-.08	-.09
Income	-.23*	-.16	-.21*	-.15	-.23*	-.16	-.17*	-.12
Marital Status	.09	.07	.12	.09	.10	.07	.07	.05
Employment Status	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.09	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.08
Race	.07	.03	-.01	-.00	.06	.03	.03	.01
Education	-.11	-.07	.08	.05	-.11	-.08	.03	.02
Gender	-.14	-.07	-.02	-.01	-.14	-.07	-.05	-.03
Positive Affect of Trump (PAS)			.37**	.43			-	-
Enthusiasm (Positive Affect of Statements)							.39**	.47
R^2	.06*		.24**		.05*		.26**	
F	2.34*		10.48**		2.09*		11.40**	
ΔR^2	.06		.18		.05*		.21**	
ΔF	2.34*		63.49**		2.09*		72.54**	

Note. For models 1 and 2, $n = 270$. For models 3 and 4, $n = 269$. ** $p < .001$, *$p < .05$.

Hypothesis 2B: Positive affect will interact with political identification, such that positive affect will have greater impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 2B suggests that positive affect's effect on candidate support contextually depends on one's political identity being congruent with the candidate's identity. Political identity alignment between the participant and the candidate, when considering the positive

affect of the candidate, should yield greater support for the candidate. The hypothesis posits that the relationship between positive affect and political activity is contingent upon individuals' political identification and political activity. To unravel this complexity, I carefully considered two distinct measures of positive affect—one directed at the candidate and another focused on the candidate's video message. As such, there are six pairings of variables for analysis that comprehensively address the hypothesis.

Using party identification solely based on categorical distinction, with Democrats as the reference group for analysis, multi-categorical moderator analyses were performed using PROCESS to investigate hypothesis 2B: one set for the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, and another set for the Republican candidate, Donald Trump. This structured approach thoroughly explores the nuanced relationships embedded in Hypothesis 2B. As I present my findings, this sequential order will guide you through the distinct dynamics of how positive affect, shaped by varied sources, interacts with individuals' political identification, influencing different categories of political activity. This format is also used for Hypotheses 3B, 4B, and 5B.

Hypothesis 2B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between positive affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 19), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 11.95$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Clinton. Clinton's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .005$) positively affected positive traditional political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically

significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 0.36$, $p = .701$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and positive traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 19

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .1764$, MSE = .7461						
Intercept/Constant	.008	.249	.030	-.484	.499	.976
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	.333	.072	4.625	.191	.475	.000
Independents (D_1 [W])	-.007	.317	-.023	-.631	.616	.982
Republicans (D_2 [W])	.052	.387	.134	-.709	.813	.894
X x D_1	-.089	.106	-.834	-.297	.120	.405
X x D_2	-.024	.150	-.161	-.319	.271	.872

Note. $n = 285$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 20), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 14.11$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Clinton. Clinton's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.39$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .005$) positively affected positive online political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = .30$, $p = .742$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and positive online political activity for Clinton.

Table 20

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .202$, MSE = .857						
Intercept/Constant	-.137	.267	-.511	-.663	.390	.610
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	.391	.077	5.059	.239	.543	.000
D_1 (W)	-.051	.339	-.149	-.719	.617	.882
D_2 (W)	.169	.414	.407	-.647	.984	.685
X x D_1	-.063	.114	-.555	-.287	.161	.579
X x D_2	-.111	.161	-.690	-.427	.205	.491

Note. $n = 285$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 21), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 14.92$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Clinton, a positive combination of traditional and online political activity. Clinton's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .005$) positively affected overall positive political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = .30$, $p = .740$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean positive affect scale score and overall positive political activity for Clinton.

Table 21

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .211$, MSE = .697						
Intercept/Constant	-.065	.241	-.268	-.539	.410	.789
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	.362	.070	5.198	.225	.499	.000
D_1 (W)	-.029	.306	-.095	-.631	.573	.925
D_2 (W)	.110	.374	.295	-.626	.846	.768
X x D_1	-.076	.103	-.740	-.278	.126	.460
X x D_2	-.067	.145	-.466	-.352	.218	.642

Note. $n = 285$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between positive affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 22), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 13.75$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Trump. Trump's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.25$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .005$) positively affected positive traditional political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 1.61$, $p = .202$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean positive affect scale score and positive traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 22

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .198$, MSE = .773						
Intercept/Constant	.002	.217	.010	-.424	.428	.992
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	.255	.088	2.891	.081	.428	.004
D_1 (W)	-.176	.289	-.608	-.745	.393	.544
D_2 (W)	-.456	.389	-1.171	-1.221	.310	.243
X x D_1	.076	.115	.657	-.151	.303	.512
X x D_2	.232	.131	1.770	-.026	.490	.078

Note. $n = 285$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 23), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 14.89$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Trump. Trump's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.27$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .005$) positively affected positive online political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) was statistically significant ($F(2, 279) = 3.98$, $p < .05$), suggesting that party identification did significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean positive affect scale score and positive online political activity for Trump.

The conditional effects of Trump's mean positive affect scale score were examined for each level of party identification. The results for Democrats ($\beta = 0.27$, SE = 0.09, $p < .005$), Independents ($\beta = 0.32$, SE = 0.08, $p < .001$), and Republicans ($\beta = 0.62$, SE = 0.10, $p < .001$), indicate that the conditional effects of X on W are statistically different from zero for each group.

Table 23

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Political Online Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*P*
Model						
R^2 = .211, MSE = .839						
Intercept/Constant	-.025	.226	-.109	-.469	.419	.913
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	.271	.092	2.96	.091	.452	.003
D_1 (W)	-.161	.301	-.533	-.753	.432	.594
D_2 (W)	-.942	.405	-2.324	-1.739	-.144	.021
X x D_1	.044	.120	.364	-.193	.280	.716
X x D_2	.353	.136	2.587	.084	.621	.010
Conditional effects of X on W						
Democrats	.271	.092	2.957	.091	.452	.003
Independents	.315	.078	4.063	.162	.468	.000
Republicans	.624	.101	6.182	.425	.823	.000

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 24), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 15.23$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean positive affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Trump. Trump's mean positive affect scale score ($\beta = 0.26$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .005$) positively affected overall positive political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 2.94$, $p = .060$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean positive affect scale score and overall positive political activity for Trump.

Despite the non-significant interaction, the conditional effects of Trump's mean positive affect scale score were examined for each level of party identification. The results for Democrats ($\beta = 0.26$, SE = 0.09, $p < .005$), Independents ($\beta = 0.32$, SE = 0.07, $p < .001$), and Republicans ($\beta = 0.56$, SE = 0.10, $p < .001$), indicate that the conditional effects of X on W are statistically different from zero for each group.

Table 24

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Positive Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	t	LL	UL	p
Model						
$R^2 = .214$, MSE = .752						
Intercept/Constant	-.011	.214	-.053	-.432	.409	.958
Mean Positive Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	.263	.087	3.026	.092	.434	.003
D_1 (W)	-.168	.285	-.589	-.729	.393	.556
D_2 (W)	-.699	.384	-1.820	-1.454	.057	.070
X x D_1	.060	.114	.525	-.164	.284	.60
X x D_2	.292	.129	2.263	.038	.547	.024
Conditional effects of X on W						
Democrats	.263	.087	3.026	.092	.434	.003
Independents	.323	.073	4.394	.178	.467	.000
Republicans	.555	.096	5.806	.367	.744	.000

Note. $n = 285$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between enthusiasm affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the fourth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 25), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 19.89$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.34$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$) positively affected positive traditional political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.62$, $p = .541$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 25

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .264$, MSE = .668						
Intercept/Constant	.195	.201	.968	-.201	.591	.334
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.344	.071	4.862	.204	.483	.000
D_1 (W)	-.462	.262	-1.760	-.978	.055	.079
D_2 (W)	-.261	.286	-.914	-.825	.302	.362
X x D_1	.102	.107	.954	-.109	.314	.341
X x D_2	.109	.124	.884	-.134	.353	.377

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the fifth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 26), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 17.92$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Clinton. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.37$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) positively affected positive online political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.32$, $p = .725$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive online political activity for Clinton.

Table 26

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .244$, MSE = .813						
Intercept/Constant	.166	.222	.747	-.271	.603	.456
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.371	.079	4.761	.218	.525	.000
D_1 (W)	-.470	.290	-1.623	-1.040	.100	.106
D_2 (W)	-.236	.316	-.749	-.858	.385	.455
X x D_1	.095	.118	.799	-.138	.328	.425
X x D_2	.032	.137	.235	-.237	.301	.814

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the sixth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 27), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 21.87$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Clinton. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$) positively affected overall positive political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.48$, $p = .622$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Clinton's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Clinton.

Table 27

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .282$, MSE = .635						
Intercept/Constant	.180	.196	.920	-.206	.566	.359
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.357	.069	5.189	.222	.493	.000
D_1 (W)	-.466	.256	-1.822	-.969	.038	.070
D_2 (W)	-.249	.279	-.892	-.798	.300	.373
X x D_1	.099	.105	.942	-.107	.304	.347
X x D_2	.071	.121	.587	-.167	.308	.558

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between enthusiasm affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the fourth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 28), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 20.21$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Trump. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.40$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) positively affected positive traditional political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.06$, $p = .938$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 28

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .267$, MSE = .708						
Intercept/Constant	-.101	.167	-.606	-.431	.228	.545
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.398	.086	4.623	.229	.567	.000
D_1 (W)	-.119	.229	-.519	-.569	.331	.604
D_2 (W)	.010	.309	.033	-.599	.619	.974
X x D_1	.032	.111	.291	-.187	.252	.771
X x D_2	.041	.123	.335	-.202	.284	.738

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the fifth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 29), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 17.67$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Trump. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.41$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) positively affected positive online political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 1.01$, $p = .365$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive online political activity for Trump.

Table 29

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Political Online Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .241$, MSE = .808						
Intercept/Constant	-.118	.179	-.661	-.470	.234	.509
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.414	.092	4.503	.233	.595	.000
D_1 (W)	-.030	.244	-.123	-.511	.451	.902
D_2 (W)	-.319	.330	-.966	-.970	.331	.335
X x D_1	-.047	.119	-.397	-.281	.187	.692
X x D_2	.123	.132	.936	-.136	.383	.350

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the sixth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 30), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 20.17$, $p < .001$), indicating that the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Trump. The mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.41$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) positively affected overall positive political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.35$, $p = .703$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the mean enthusiasm affect score for Trump's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Trump.

Table 30

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Enthusiasm Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .266$, MSE = .704						
Intercept/Constant	-.110	.167	-.658	-.438	.219	.511
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.406	.086	4.729	.237	.575	.000
D_1 (W)	-.074	.228	-.326	-.523	.375	.745
D_2 (W)	-.155	.309	-.501	-.762	.453	.617
X x D_1	-.007	.111	-.067	-.226	.211	.947
X x D_2	.082	.123	.669	-.160	.325	.504

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 3A: Negative affect will reduce willingness to engage in political activity to support a candidate.

Hypothesis 3A predicts the inverse relationship to hypothesis 2A, that potential voters will engage less in political activities to support the candidate if they feel negatively about the candidate. In this study, the negative affect is concurrently assessed with the positive affect, using both the PANAS scale and three dimensions of affect scale. Given these measures, Hypothesis 3A is assessed in two ways. First, I look at the relationship between the negative emotional perception of the candidate and overall supportive or positive engagement in political activity to support the candidate. Second, I look at the negative emotional perception of candidate statements and supportive or positive engagement in political activity to support the candidate.

Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between a candidate's negative emotional perception (negative affect) and political activities to support the candidate. Overall, there was no significant correlation found between the two variables for candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(287) = -.09$, $p = .119$, but there was correlation found for candidate Donald Trump, $r(287) = -.15$, $p < .05$.

Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between negative emotional perception of candidate statements (negative/aversion affect) and political activities to support the candidate. Overall, no significant correlation was found between the two variables for candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(285) = .06$, $p = .288$, or for candidate Donald Trump, $r(286) = .10$, $p = .098$.

The Spearman correlations for both positive face-to-face and online political activities with negative affect were generally not statistically significant, except for with regards to Trump and negative affect scale, which had a low negative relationship. See Tables 31 and 32 for a breakdown of those correlations.

Table 31

Correlations for Negative Affect of Hillary Clinton and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Clinton

		Negative Emotional perception of Clinton (PANAS)	Negative Emotional perception of Clinton's statements (Aversion Affect)
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	-.082	.070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.165	.242
	n	287	285
Positive online political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	-.086	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.147	.207
	n	287	285
Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	-.092	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.119	.288
	n	287	285

Table 32

Correlations for Negative Affect of Donald Trump and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Trump

		Negative Emotional perception of Trump (PANAS)	Negative Emotional perception of Trump's statements (Aversion Affect)
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	-.164**	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.196
	n	287	286
Positive online political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	-.156**	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.103
	n	287	286
Overall positive political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	-.152**	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.098
	n	287	286

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine further the relationship between negative affect and the overall positive political activity in support of the candidate. The aim was to assess the extent to which negative affect predicts positive political activity. See Tables 33 and 34 for full details on each regression model.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and negative affect of Clinton (Model 2 in Table 33) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .08$, $F(8, 261) = 2.94$, $p < .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .06$. The addition of the negative affect score of Clinton to the prediction of overall political activity to support Clinton (Model 2 in Table 33) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .02$ $F(1, 261) = 6.75$, $p < .05$.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and aversion affect following Clinton's statements (Model 4 in Table 33) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .06$, $F(8, 259) = 1.98$ $p > .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .03$. The addition of the aversion affect score following Clinton's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Clinton (Model 4 in Table 33) was not statistically significant.

Table 33

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Clinton From Demographics, Negative Affect of Clinton and Aversion of Clinton's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Clinton							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.298**		1.796**		1.271*		1.28*	
Age	.026	.027	.023	.025	.019	.020	.019	.019
Income	.039	.028	.032	.023	.039	.027	.038	.027
Marital Status	-.153	-.114	-.147	-.109	-.152	-.113	-.152	-.113
Employment Status	-.188*	-.171	-.194*	-.177	-.178*	-.161	-.178*	-.162
Race	.286	.116	.285	.116	.298	.121	.298	.121
Education	-.111	-.075	-.159	-.107	-.108	-.073	-.108	-.073
Gender	-.053	-.027	-.088	-.046	-.048	-.025	-.049	-.025
Negative Affect of Clinton (NAS)			-.122*	-.159			-	-
Aversion (Negative Affect of Statements)							-.003	-.003
R^2	.06*		.08**		.03*		.03**	
F	2.34*		2.94*		2.27*		1.98*	
ΔR^2	.06		.02		.06		.00	
ΔF	2.34*		6.75*		2.27*		.00**	

Note. ** p < .001, * p < .05. For models 1 and 2, $n = 270$. For models 3 and 4, $n = 268$

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and positive affect of Trump (Model 2 in Table 34) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .081$, $F(8, 261) = 2.86$, $p < .01$; adjusted $R^2 = .03$. The addition of the negative affect score of Trump to the prediction of overall political activity to support Trump (Model 2 in Table 34) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .03$ $F(1, 261) = 7.98$, $p < .01$.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and enthusiasm affect following Trump's statements (Model 4 in Table 34) was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .05$, $F(8, 260) = 1.83$, $p = .072$; adjusted $R^2 = .02$. The addition of the aversion affect score following Trump's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Trump (Model 4 in Table 34) was not statistically significant.

Table 34

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Trump From Demographics, Negative Affect of Trump and Aversion of Trump's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Clinton							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.63**		1.91**		1.64**		1.61**	
Age	-.06	-.07	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.07	-.07	-.07
Income	-.23*	-.16	-.20*	-.14	-.23*	-.16	-.23*	-.16
Marital Status	.09	.07	.08	.06	.10	.07	.10	.07
Employment Status	-.11	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.09	-.10	-.09
Race	.07	.03	.04	.02	.06	.03	.06	.03
Education	-.11	-.07	-.07	-.05	-.11	-.08	-.11	-.08
Gender	-.14	-.07	-.13	-.07	-.14	-.07	-.14	-.07
Negative Affect of Trump (NAS)			-.13*	-.17			-	-
Aversion (Positive Affect of Statements)							.01	.01
R^2	.06*		.08*		.05*		.26**	
F	2.07*		2.86*		2.09*		11.40**	
ΔR^2	.06		.03		.05*		.21**	
ΔF	2.07*		7.98*		2.09*		72.54**	

Note. ** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$. For models 1 and 2, $n = 270$. For models 3 and 4, $n = 269$

Hypothesis 3B: Negative affect will interact with political identification, such that negative affect will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 3B suggests that the effect of negative affect on candidate support is contextually dependent on one's political identity being congruent with the candidate's identity.

Political identity alignment between the participant and the candidate, when considering a negative affect of the candidate, should yield less support for the candidate.

To investigate Hypothesis 3B, multicategorical moderator analyses were performed using PROCESS. An analysis was performed for each candidate and the various considerations for outcome and predictor variables. For this hypothesis, we also consider two conceptions of negative affect: the negative emotional perception of the candidate using the PANAS scale and the negative emotional perception of the candidate's statements.

Hypothesis 3B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between negative affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 35), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 4.55$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Clinton. Clinton's mean negative affect scale score ($\beta = -0.53$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .556$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 0.61$, $p = .547$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and positive traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 35

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .075, MSE = .838						
Intercept/Constant	1.202	.196	6.149	.818	1.583	.000
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	-.053	.090	-.590	-.230	.124	.556
D_1 (W)	-.644	.293	-2.201	-1.220	-.068	.029
D_2 (W)	-.017	.410	-.042	-.824	.789	.967
X x D_1	.051	.118	.437	-.180	.283	.663
X x D_2	-.087	.134	-.645	-.351	.178	.520

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 36), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 4.49$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Clinton. Clinton's mean negative affect scale score (β = -0.03, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .727$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 0.06$, $p = .944$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and positive online political activity for Clinton.

Table 36

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .074, MSE = .994						
Intercept/Constant	1.209	.213	5.679	.790	1.629	.000
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	-.034	.098	-.349	-.227	.158	.727
D_1 (W)	-.628	.319	-1.971	-1.255	-.001	.050
D_2 (W)	-.399	.446	-.894	-1.277	.480	.372
X x D_1	.024	.128	.186	-.228	.276	.852
X x D_2	-.022	.146	-.149	-.310	.266	.882

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 37), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 5.02$, $p < .001$), indicating that Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Clinton. Clinton's mean negative affect scale score ($\beta = -0.04$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .622$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 0.28$, $p = .758$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Clinton's mean negative affect scale score and overall positive political activity for Clinton.

Table 37

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .083, MSE = .810						
Intercept/Constant	1.206	.192	6.271	.827	1.585	.000
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Clinton (X)	-.044	.088	-.494	-.217	.130	.622
D_1 (W)	-.636	.288	-2.210	-1.202	-.070	.028
D_2 (W)	-.208	.403	-.516	-1.001	.585	.606
X x D_1	.038	.116	.325	-.189	.265	.745
X x D_2	-.054	.132	-.410	-.314	.206	.682

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 3B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between negative affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 38), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 4.81$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Trump. Trump's mean negative affect scale score ($\beta = -0.15$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .060$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 0.36$, $p = .697$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean negative affect scale score and positive traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 38

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model R^2 = .079, MSE = .887						
Intercept/Constant	1.121	.299	3.751	.533	1.709	.000
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	-.155	.082	-1.891	-.315	.006	.060
D_1 (W)	-.222	.383	-.579	-.976	.532	.563
D_2 (W)	.482	.40	1.207	-.305	1.269	.229
X x D_1	.043	.114	.379	-.181	.267	.705
X x D_2	-.064	.128	-.501	-.316	.188	.617

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 39), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 4.28$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Trump. Trump's mean negative affect scale score (β = -0.15, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .084$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = 1.33$, $p = .267$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean negative affect scale score and positive online political activity for Trump.

Table 39

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Political Online Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .071, MSE = .987						
Intercept/Constant	1.115	.315	3.538	.495	1.734	.001
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	-.15	.086	-1.737	-.319	.020	.084
D_1 (W)	-.352	.404	-.87	-1.147	.444	.385
D_2 (W)	.595	.422	1.410	-.235	1.424	.16
X x D_1	.07	.120	.582	-.166	.306	.561
X x D_2	-.146	.135	-1.084	-.411	.119	.28

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 40), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 279) = 4.74$, $p < .001$), indicating that Trump's mean negative affect scale score and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Trump. Trump's mean negative affect scale score ($\beta = -0.15$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .063$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 279) = .93$, $p = .439$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between Trump's mean negative affect scale score and overall positive political activity for Trump.

Table 40

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Negative Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .078, MSE = .883						
Intercept/Constant	1.118	.298	3.751	.531	1.705	.000
Mean Negative Affect Scale Score for Trump (X)	-.152	.082	-1.866	-.313	.008	.063
D_1 (W)	-.287	.382	-.750	-1.039	.466	.454
D_2 (W)	.538	.399	1.350	-.247	1.323	.178
X x D_1	.057	.114	.498	-.167	.28	.619
X x D_2	-.105	.128	-.824	-.356	.146	.411

Note. n = 285. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 3B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between the aversion affect and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the fourth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 41), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 4.27$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements (β = -0.02, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .810$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.51$, $p = .602$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 41

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model R^2 = .071, MSE = .842						
Intercept/Constant	1.134	.171	6.627	.797	1.471	.000
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	-.022	.090	-.241	-.199	.156	.81
D_1 (W)	-.747	.248	-3.014	-1.235	-.259	.003
D_2 (W)	-.399	.303	-1.317	-.996	.198	.189
X x D_1	.121	.129	.935	-.133	.374	.351
X x D_2	.015	.134	.108	-.25	.279	.914

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the fifth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 42), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 4.64$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements (β = -0.06, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .571$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.63$, $p = .531$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive online political activity for Clinton.

Table 42

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .077, MSE = .992						
Intercept/Constant	1.234	.186	6.64	.868	1.599	.000
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	-.056	.098	-.567	-.248	.137	.571
D_1 (W)	-.717	.269	-2.663	-1.246	-.187	.008
D_2 (W)	-.848	.329	-2.576	-1.496	-.2	.011
X x D_1	.078	.14	.554	-.198	.353	.58
X x D_2	.164	.146	1.126	-.123	.451	.261

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the sixth pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 43), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 4.89$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements (β = -0.04, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .663$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.37$, $p = .693$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Clinton.

Table 43

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .081, MSE = .813						
Intercept/Constant	1.184	.168	7.042	.853	1.515	.000
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	-.039	.089	-.436	-.213	.136	.663
D_1 (W)	-.732	.244	-3.006	-1.211	-.253	.003
D_2 (W)	-.624	.298	-2.093	-1.210	-.037	.037
X x D_1	.099	.127	.782	-.150	.348	.435
X x D_2	.089	.132	.677	-.170	.349	.499

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 3B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between the aversion affect and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the fourth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 44), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 3.13$, $p < .01$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.08$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .292$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.53$, $p = .588$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 44

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .053, MSE = .914						
Intercept/Constant	.393	.2	1.969	.000	.785	.050
Mean Enthusiasm Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.084	.08	1.057	-.073	.241	.292
D_1 (W)	.098	.276	.356	-.445	.641	.722
D_2 (W)	.822	.318	2.583	.196	1.448	.010
X x D_1	-.028	.126	-.218	-.275	.220	.827
X x D_2	-.163	.159	-1.026	-.477	.150	.306

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the fifth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 45), the overall model was not statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 2.02$, $p = .076$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction did not collectively explain the variance in positive online political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.05$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .571$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.21$, $p = .812$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive online political activity for Trump.

Table 45

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Political Online Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .035, MSE = 1.027						
Intercept/Constant	.485	.212	2.292	.068	.901	.023
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.048	.084	.567	-.118	.214	.571
D_1 (W)	.005	.293	.015	-.571	.580	.988
D_2 (W)	.618	.337	1.832	-.046	1.282	.068
X x D_1	-.018	.134	-.135	-.281	.245	.893
X x D_2	-.108	.169	-.641	-.441	.224	.522

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the sixth pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 46), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 2.66$, $p < .05$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements (β = 0.07, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .408$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.37$, $p = .693$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Trump.

Table 46

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .046, MSE = .916						
Intercept/Constant	.439	.2	2.197	.046	.832	.029
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.066	.08	.828	-.091	.223	.408
D_1 (W)	.051	.276	.186	-.492	.595	.853
D_2 (W)	.702	.319	2.261	.093	1.347	.025
X x D_1	-.023	.126	-.181	-.271	.225	.857
X x D_2	-.136	.159	-.852	-.45	.178	.395

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 4A: Anxiety will reduce political activity in support of a political candidate.

Hypothesis 4A predicts that potential voters with increased anxiety about the candidate will participate less in political activity to support the candidate. Anxiety is one of the three dimensions of affect in Affective Intelligence Theory, used to assess emotional effect in response to the candidate statements.

Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between the anxiety emotional perception of candidate statements and political activities in support of the candidate. Overall, there was a positive correlation found between the two variables for the candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(285) = .153$, $p < .05$, and for the candidate Donald Trump, $r(285) = .164$, $p < .05$.

The Spearman correlations for both positive face-to-face and online political activities showed positive relationship with anxiety affect. See Tables 47 and 48 for a breakdown of the correlations.

Table 47

Correlations for Anxiety Affect on Hillary Clinton's Statements and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Clinton

		Anxiety Affect Score view on Clinton
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.169**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	n	285
Positive online political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.146*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014
	n	285
Overall positive political activity in support of Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.153**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010
	n	285

Note. **$p < .001$ (2-tailed). * $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

Table 48

Correlations for Anxiety Affect on Donald Trump's Statements and Political Activities Engaged in Support of Trump

		Anxiety Affect Score view on Trump
Positive tradition (face-to-face) political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.15**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010
	n	285
Positive online political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.14*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017
	n	285
Overall positive political activity in support of Trump	Spearman Correlation	.16**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	n	285

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed). * $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine further the relationship between anxiety affect and the overall positive political activity in support of the candidate. The aim was to assess the extent to which anxiety affect predicts positive political activity. See Tables 49 and 50 for full details on each regression model.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and anxiety affect following Clinton's statements (Model 2 in Table 49) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .06$, $F(8, 259) = 2.12$ $p > .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .03$. The addition of the anxiety affect score following Clinton's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Clinton (Model 2 in Table 49) was not statistically significant.

Table 49

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Clinton From Demographics, and Anxiety of Clinton's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to support Clinton			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.27*		1.10*	
Age	.02	.02	.02	.03
Income	.04	.03	.05	.03
Marital Status	-.15	-.11	-.16	-.12
Employment Status	-.18*	-.16	-.17*	-.16
Race	.30	.12	.30	.12
Education	-.11	-.07	-.10	-.07
Gender	-.05	-.03	-.04	-.02
Anxiety (Affect of Statements)			.06	.06
R^2	.06*		.06*	
F	2.27*		2.12*	
ΔR^2	.06		.00	
ΔF	2.27*		1.08**	

Note. $n = 268$. * $p < .05$

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and anxiety affect following Trump's statements (Model 2 in Table 50) was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .06$, $F(8, 259) = 1.96$, $p = .052$; adjusted $R^2 = .03$. The addition of the anxiety affect score following Trump's debate statements to the prediction of overall political activity to support Trump (Model 2 in Table 50) was not statistically significant.

Table 50

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Trump From Demographics, and Anxiety of Trump's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity to support Trump			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.63**		1.49**	
Age	-.07	-.07	-.07	-.07
Income	-.23*	-.16	-.23*	-.16
Marital Status	.10	.07	.11	.08
Employment Status	-.10	-.09	-.10	-.09
Race	.07	.03	.07	.03
Education	-.11	-.08	-.11	-.08
Gender	-.14	-.07	-.13	-.07
Anxiety (Affect of Statements)			.06	.07
R^2	.05*		.05*	
F	2.06*		1.96	
ΔR^2	.05		.00	
ΔF	2.06*		1.23	

Note. $n = 268$. ** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$

Hypothesis 4B: Anxiety will interact with political identification, such that greater anxiety will have less impact on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity differs from the candidate.

Hypothesis 4B suggests that anxiety will have an impact on voters' support for the candidate, such that the anxiety affect for candidates' statements will have less impact on candidates who share political identity with voters; but should have a greater impact on voters whose identity is counter to the candidate.

To investigate Hypothesis 4B, multicategorical moderator analyses were performed using PROCESS. An analysis was performed for each candidate, as well as the various considerations for outcome and predictor variables.

Hypothesis 4B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between anxiety affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 51), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 4.53$, $p < .001$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.02$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .851$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.39$, $p = .680$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 51

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .0753, MSE = .8386						
Intercept/Constant	1.066	.195	5.473	.683	1.449	.000
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.017	.089	.188	-.159	.192	.851
D_1 (W)	-.751	.273	-2.754	-1.287	-.214	.006
D_2 (W)	-.495	.332	-1.490	-1.149	.159	.137
X x D_1	.111	.127	.874	-.139	.360	.383
X x D_2	.044	.134	.329	-.220	.309	.742

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 52), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 5.13$, $p < .001$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Clinton. The anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = -0.05$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .600$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 1.27$, $p = .282$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and positive online political activity for Clinton.

Table 52

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Online Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .085, MSE = .984						
Intercept/Constant	1.242	.211	5.886	.827	1.657	.000
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	-.051	.097	-.522	-.241	.14	.600
D_1 (W)	-.845	.295	-2.861	-1.426	-.264	.005
D_2 (W)	-1.044	.36	-2.902	-1.752	-.336	.004
X x D_1	.135	.137	.980	-.136	.405	.328
X x D_2	.229	.146	1.570	-.058	.515	.118

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 53), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 5.33$, $p < .001$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Clinton. The anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements (β = -0.02, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .846$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Clinton. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.70$, $p = .499$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect score for Clinton's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Clinton.

Table 53

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .087, *MSE* = .807						
Intercept/Constant	1.154	.191	6.041	.778	1.53	.000
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (*X*)	-.017	.088	-.194	-.189	.155	.846
D_1 (*W*)	-.798	.267	-2.984	-1.324	-.272	.003
D_2 (*W*)	-.77	.326	-2.362	-1.411	-.128	.019
X x D_1	.123	.124	.987	-.122	.368	.324
X x D_2	.136	.132	1.035	-.123	.396	.302

Note. *n*= 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 4B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between anxiety affect score and various concepts of political support for the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 54), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 3.48$, $p < .01$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive traditional political activity for Trump. The anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.12$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .122$) had a non-significant effect on positive traditional political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.66$, $p = .519$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 54

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Traditional Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .059, MSE = .908						
Intercept/Constant	.29	.208	1.393	-.12	.699	.165
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.12	.077	1.550	-.032	.271	.122
D_1 (W)	.133	.287	.463	-.432	.697	.644
D_2 (W)	.891	.337	2.647	.228	1.554	.009
X x D_1	-.033	.119	-.278	-.268	.202	.782
X x D_2	-.168	.147	-1.141	-.457	.122	.255

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 55), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 2.41$, $p < .05$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in positive online political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.08$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .339$) had a non-significant effect on positive online political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.74$, $p = .479$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and positive online political activity for Trump.

Table 55

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Positive Political Online Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .042, MSE = 1.020						
Intercept/Constant	.401	.221	1.82	-.033	.836	.07
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.078	.082	.957	-.083	.239	.339
D_1 (W)	-.055	.304	-.180	-.653	.543	.857
D_2 (W)	.773	.357	2.166	.071	1.475	.031
X x D_1	.023	.127	.182	-.226	.272	.856
X x D_2	-.166	.156	-1.068	-.473	.140	.287

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 56), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 3.05$, $p < .05$), indicating that the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall positive political activity for Trump. The anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.10$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .201$) had a non-significant effect on overall positive political activity for Trump. The interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.71$, $p = .492$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect score for Trump's debate statements and overall positive political activity for Trump.

Table 56

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Positive Political Activity to Support Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Anxiety Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .052, MSE = .91						
Intercept/Constant	.346	.208	1.66	-.064	.756	.098
Mean Anxiety Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.099	.077	1.282	-.053	.251	.201
D_1 (W)	.039	.287	.136	-.526	.603	.892
D_2 (W)	.832	.337	2.47	.169	1.495	.014
X x D_1	-.005	.119	-.044	-.240	.230	.966
X x D_2	-.167	.147	-1.136	-.457	.123	.257

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 5A: Aversion will increase the likelihood of engaging in negative political activity designed to counter a politician's statement or position.

Hypothesis 5A predicts that potential voters with increased perceived emotional levels of aversion with regard to a candidate will engage in negative political activity against the candidate. Spearman's rank correlations were computed to assess the relationship between the aversion emotional perception of candidate statements and negative activities against the candidate. Overall, a positive correlation was found between the two variables for candidate Hillary Clinton, $r(285) = .48$, $p < .001$, and for candidate Donald Trump, $r(286) = .42$, $p < .001$.

The Spearman correlations for both negative face-to-face and online political activities showed positive relationships with aversion affect. These findings reaffirm the strength of the relationship between the two variables. See Tables 57 and 58 for a breakdown of the correlations.

Table 57

Correlations for Aversion Affect of Hillary Clinton and Political Activities Engaged in Against Clinton

		Aversion Affect Score on Clinton
Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.56**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	285
Negative online political activity against Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.46**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	285
Overall negative political activity against Clinton	Spearman Correlation	.48**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	285

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

Table 58

Correlations for Aversion Affect of Donald Trump and Political Activities Engaged in Against Trump

		Aversion Affect Score on Trump
Negative tradition (face-to-face) political activity against Trump	Spearman Correlation	.46**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	286
Negative online political activity against Trump	Spearman Correlation	.40**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	286
Overall negative political activity against Trump	Spearman Correlation	.42**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	n	286

Note. ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine further the relationship between aversion affect and the overall negative political activity against the candidate. The aim was to assess the extent to which aversion affect predicts negative political activity. See Tables 58 and 59 for full details on each regression model.

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and aversion affect following Clinton's statements (Model 2 in Table 59) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .23$, $F(8, 259) = 9.86$ $p > .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .21$. The addition of the aversion affect score following Clinton's debate statements to the prediction of overall negative political activity against Clinton (Model 2 in Table 58) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 259) = 57.03$ $p > .001$.

Table 59

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Negative Political Activity to Support Clinton From Demographics, and Aversion of Clinton's Statements

	Overall Negative Political Activity against Clinton			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.46*		.31	
Age	-.11	-.11	-.07	-.07
Income	-.18	-.12	-.12	-.08
Marital Status	.21*	.15	.16	.11
Employment Status	-.12	-.11	-.10	-.09
Race	.19	.07	.17	.06
Education	-.14	-.09	-.09	-.06
Gender	-.18	-.09	-.05	-.02
Aversion (Affect of Statements)			.41**	.42
R^2	.07*		.23**	
F	2.57*		9.86**	
ΔR^2	.07		.17	
ΔF	2.57*		57.03**	

Note. ** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$

The full model of age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, education level, marital status, and aversion affect following Trump's statements (Model 2 in Table 60) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .17$, $F(8, 260) = 6.68$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .15$. The addition of the aversion affect score following Trump's debate statements to the prediction of overall negative political activity against Trump (Model 2 in Table 59) led to a statistically significant increase in $R^2 = .10$, $F(1, 260) = 31.77$ $p > .001$.

Table 60

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Prediction Positive Political Activity to Support Trump From Demographics and Aversion of Trump's Statements

	Overall Positive Political Activity against Trump			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	B	β	B	β
Constant	1.34*		0.67	
Age	-.02	-.03	-.03	-.04
Income	.04	.03	.05	.03
Marital Status	-.09	-.06	-.05	-.04
Employment Status	-.18*	-.16	-.16*	-.14
Race	.35*	.13	.30*	.12
Education	-.08	-.05	-.09	-.06
Gender	-.21	-.10	-.15	-.07
Aversion (Affect of Statements)			.30**	.32
R^2	.07*		.17**	
F	2.77*		6.68**	
ΔR^2	.07		.10	
ΔF	2.77*		31.77**	

Note. ** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$

Hypothesis 5B: Aversion will interact with political identification, such that aversion will have more of an impact on participants whose political identity is in opposition to the candidate than it will on participants whose political identity is congruent with the candidate.

Hypothesis 5B suggests that aversion will have an impact on voters' support for the candidate, such that the aversion affect for candidates' statements will have more impact on candidates whose political identity is counter the voters'; but should have less impact on voters whose identity is congruent to the candidate. This hypothesis underscores the idea that aversion could trigger stronger reactions and behaviors among those who strongly disagree with the candidate's positions. As such, they would be motivated to take action to rectify the issue.

To investigate Hypothesis 5B, multicategorical moderator analyses were performed using PROCESS. An analysis was performed for each candidate, as well as the various considerations for outcome and predictor variables.

Hypothesis 5B analyses regarding the candidate Hillary Clinton and the relationship between aversion affect score and various concepts of negative political activity against the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 61), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 16.09$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in negative traditional political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) had a statistically significant effect on negative traditional political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 1.39$, $p = .250$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and negative traditional political activity for Clinton.

Table 61

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Negative Traditional Political Activity Against Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	95% CI *LL*	95% CI *UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .224, MSE = .835						
Intercept/Constant	.063	.170	.371	-.272	.399	.711
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.328	.09	3.649	.151	.505	.000
D_1 (W)	-.197	.247	-.799	-.683	.289	.425
D_2 (W)	-.203	.302	-.672	-.797	.392	.502
X x D_1	.090	.128	.705	-.162	.343	.482
X x D_2	.223	.134	1.667	-.040	.486	.097

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 62), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 14.01$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in negative online political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .005$) had a statistically significant effect on negative online political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 2.57$, $p = .079$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and negative online political activity for Clinton.

Despite the non-significant interaction, the conditional effects of the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements were examined for each level of party identification. For

Democrats (β = 0.28, SE = 0.09, $p < .005$), Independents (β = 0.43, SE = 0.10, $p < .001$), and Republicans (β = 0.60, SE = 0.10, $p < .001$), which indicates that the conditional effects of X on W are statistically different from zero for each group.

Table 62

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Negative Online Activity Against Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
R^2 = .201, MSE = .906						
Intercept/Constant	.165	.178	.927	-.185	.514	.355
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.281	.094	2.999	.096	.465	.003
D_1 (W)	-.348	.257	-1.353	-.854	.158	.177
D_2 (W)	-.562	.315	-1.786	-1.181	.058	.075
X x D_1	.153	.134	1.142	-.111	.416	.254
X x D_2	.315	.139	2.264	.024	.589	.024
Conditional effects of X on W						
Democrats	.281	.094	2.999	.096	.465	.003
Independents	.433	.095	4.541	.246	.621	.000
Republicans	.596	.103	5.783	.393	.799	.000

Note. n = 284. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Hillary Clinton (Table 63), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 15.95$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall negative political activity for Clinton. The aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements ($\beta = 0.30$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) had a statistically significant effect on overall negative political activity for Clinton. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 2.08$, $p = .127$), suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Clinton's debate statements and overall negative political activity for Clinton.

Table 63

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Negative Political Activity Against Hillary Clinton Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .223$, MSE = .813						
Intercept/Constant	.114	.168	.677	-.217	.445	.499
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Clinton's Debate Statements (X)	.304	.089	3.431	.13	.479	.001
D_1 (W)	-.273	.244	-1.119	-.752	.207	.264
D_2 (W)	-.382	.298	-1.283	-.969	.204	.201
X x D_1	.122	.127	.96	-.128	.371	.338
X x D_2	.269	.132	2.039	-.009	.529	.042

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 5B analyses regarding the candidate Donald Trump and the relationship between aversion affect score and various concepts of negative political activity against the candidate.

Regarding the first pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 64), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 8.97$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in negative traditional political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.27$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) had a statistically significant effect on negative traditional political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 1.32$, $p = .269$, suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and negative traditional political activity for Trump.

Table 64

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Negative Traditional Political Activity Against Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .139$, $MSE = .917$						
Intercept/Constant	.402	.2	2.012	.009	.796	.045
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (*X*)	.267	.08	3.347	.11	.423	.001
D_1 (*W*)	-.245	.276	-.886	-.789	.299	.376
D_2 (*W*)	-.629	.319	-1.973	-1.257	-.002	.049
X x D_1	.04	.126	.315	-.209	.288	.753
X x D_2	.257	.16	1.612	-.057	.571	.108

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the second pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 65), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 7.10$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in negative online political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.22$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .01$) had a statistically significant effect on negative online political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 0.67$, $p = .511$, suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and negative online political activity for Trump.

Table 65

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Negative Political Online Activity Against Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .113$, MSE = .979						
Intercept/Constant	.549	.206	2.66	.143	.956	.008
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	.217	.082	2.634	.055	.379	.009
D_1 (W)	-.368	.286	-1.29	-.930	.194	.198
D_2 (W)	-.643	.329	-1.952	-1.291	.006	.052
X x D_1	.033	.130	.252	-.224	.29	.801
X x D_2	.190	.165	1.154	-.134	.514	.25

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Regarding the third pairing variation for Donald Trump (Table 66), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(5, 278) = 8.84$, $p < .001$), indicating that the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and party identification and their interaction collectively explained a significant portion of the variance in overall negative political activity for Trump. The aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements ($\beta = 0.24$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .005$) had a statistically significant effect on overall negative political activity for Trump. However, the interaction term (X*W) did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variance ($F(2, 278) = 1.08$, $p = .342$, suggesting that party identification did not significantly moderate the relationship between the aversion affect score for Trump's debate statements and overall negative political activity for Trump.

Table 66

Moderator Analysis: Estimating the Likelihood of Overall Negative Political Activity Against Donald Trump Considering the Interaction of Aversion Affect and Party Identity.

				95% CI		
Effect	Estimate	SE	*t*	*LL*	*UL*	*p*
Model						
$R^2 = .137$, MSE = .847						
Intercept/Constant	-.476	.192	2.477	.098	. 854	. 014
Mean Aversion Affect Score for Trump's Debate Statements (X)	. 241	.077	3.157	. 091	. 392	. 002
D_1 (W)	-.307	. 266	-1.154	-.83	. 216	. 249
D_2 (W)	-.636	.306	-2.076	-1.239	-. 033	. 039
X x D_1	.036	.121	.3	-.204	. 275	. 765
X x D_2	. 223	.153	1.459	-.078	. 525	. 146

Note. $n = 284$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Review of Findings

This section summarizes the results from the initial data analysis detailed above. Correlation analysis was used to assess all the 'A' hypotheses, as they suggested a relationship between a perceived aspect of a candidate and the likelihood of engaging in some form of political participation. Recall that political participation involves voting support or other forms of political activity.

Hypothesis 1A was supported in that as the perceived credibility of the candidate increased, so did the likelihood of voting for the candidate. This support was found to be consistently positive following each video prompt of the candidates. The correlations were strong. The simple linear regression analysis suggests that perceived credibility significantly predicts the likelihood of voting, explaining a substantial proportion of the variance. These findings contribute to our understanding of the factors influencing voter behavior in the context of this study.

Hypothesis 2A was supported in that, as the positive affect of the candidate increased, so did the likelihood of engaging in political activity to support the candidate. Positive emotional perception of the candidate was positively correlated with overall positive political activity to support the candidate; this includes both positive traditional and online political activities. Positive emotional perceptions of the candidate's statements were also positively correlated with overall positive political activity to support the candidate; this includes both positive traditional and online political activities. Overall, Hillary Clinton was found to have slightly higher rate of correlation than Donald Trump, and perceptions based on the viewed debate statements were also slightly higher than general perceptions of the candidate assessed prior to viewing candidate statements. The correlations were moderate.

Hypothesis 3A had mixed results. For the candidate Hillary Clinton, there was no correlation between negative affect and willingness to engage in political activity to support the candidate. Meanwhile, for the candidate Donald Trump, support was found for the negative emotional perception of the candidate and supportive political activity. There was a low negative correlation, such that high negative emotional perception decreased the likelihood of overall supportive political activity; this includes both positive traditional and online political activities. No support was found for the negative emotional perception of Donald Trump's debate statements. Hypothesis 3A was partially supported. The correlations found were weak.

Hypothesis 4A was supported in that, as the anxiety affect of the candidate's debate statements increased, so did the likelihood of engaging in political activity to support the candidate. Candidate debate statements perceived as anxiety-inducing were positively correlated with overall positive political activity to support the candidate; this includes both positive traditional and online political activities. The correlations were weak.

Hypothesis 5A was supported in that, as the aversion affect of the candidate's debate statements increased, so did the likelihood of engaging in political activity against the candidate. Candidate debate statements perceived as aversion-inducing were positively correlated with overall negative political activity against the candidate; this includes both negative traditional and negative political activities. The correlations were moderate.

Moderation analysis was used to assess all the 'B' hypotheses, as they suggested an interaction effect between two variables. According to Hayes "moderation analysis is used to examine how the effect of antecedent variable X on a consequent Y depends on a third variable or set of variables" (2023, p. 11). Based on the literature, it is assumed that voters will vote along

party lines, and thus, I examine whether political party identification interacts, and thus moderates, the relationships of the 'A' hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1B was not supported. While the results showed that the perceived credibility of the candidate predicted the likelihood of voting support for the candidate when considering political party identification, the interactions between the perceived credibility of the candidate and political party identification were not statistically significant. Therefore, political party identification does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the perceived credibility of the candidate and the likelihood of voting support for the candidate.

Hypothesis 2B was generally not supported. While the results showed that the positive affect of the candidate, as well as the positive affect of candidate statements, predicted the likelihood of engaging in political activities, both traditional and online, when considering political party identification, the interactions between the positive affect of the candidate and political party identification, and the interactions between the positive affect of candidate statements and political party identification were not statistically significant. Therefore, political party identification does not moderate the relationship between the positive affect of the candidate or their statements and the likelihood of engaging in supportive political activity for the candidate.

However, there were two cases involving the candidate Donald Trump, in which a moderating effect was found (See tables 12 & 13). Specifically, the interaction between the Republican party identity and the positive affect of the Republican candidate Donald Trump.

Hypothesis 3B was generally not supported. While the results showed that the negative affect of the candidate, as well as the negative affect of candidate statements, predicted the likelihood of engaging in political activities, both traditional and online, when considering

political party identification, the interactions between the negative affect of the candidate and political party identification, and the interactions between the negative affect of candidate statements and political party identification were not statistically significant. Therefore, political party identification does not moderate the relationship between the negative affect of the candidate or their statements and the likelihood of engaging in supportive political activity for the candidate.

Hypothesis 4B was not supported. While the results showed that the anxiety affect of candidate statements predicted the likelihood of engaging in political activities, both traditional and online, when considering political party identification, the interactions between the anxiety affect of candidate statements and political party identification were not statistically significant. Therefore, political party identification does not moderate the relationship between the anxiety affect of the candidate's statements and the likelihood of engaging in supportive political activity for the candidate.

Hypothesis 5B was not supported. While the results showed that the aversion affect of candidate statements predicted the likelihood of engaging in negative political activities against the candidate, both traditional and online, when considering political party identification, the interactions between the aversion affect of candidate statements and political party identification were not statistically significant. Therefore, political party identification does not moderate the relationship between the aversion affect of the candidate's statements and the likelihood of engaging in negative political activity against the candidate.

Generally, there was no statistical evidence to support a claim of moderation. Thus, I cannot definitively conclude that party identification moderates any of the identified

relationships between affect and political participation; that is, political activity and voting support.

About Statistical Tests

The statistical tests employed in this study adhered to the necessary assumptions, ensuring the robustness and validity of the analyses conducted. For the A hypotheses, Spearman rank correlation and hierarchical multiple regression models were utilized. The assumptions for these tests, including linearity, independence of residuals (as indicated by a Durbin-Watson statistic, which was below 2.0), homoscedasticity, absence of multicollinearity, and normality, were rigorously assessed. The integrity of these assumptions was confirmed through careful examination of partial regression plots, plots of studentized residuals against predicted values, visual inspection of plots of studentized residuals versus unstandardized predicted values, tolerance values exceeding 0.1, and Q-Q Plots.

Concerning the B hypotheses, moderation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro. Similar assumptions, such as linearity, independence of residuals, homoscedasticity, absence of multicollinearity, and normality, were verified for these analyses, ensuring the appropriateness of the statistical approach.

For Research Question 1, which involved cross-tabulations and Spearman correlation, the latter's assumptions were evaluated through Q-Q Plots and confirmed to be met. Research Question 2 underwent one-way ANOVA and subsequent hierarchical multiple regression modeling, with the aforementioned assumptions rigorously examined and satisfied.

The dataset was thoroughly assessed to address missing data concerns, and a predetermined threshold for participant inclusion was established. While Missing Completely at Random characterized the nature of missing data, no systematic pattern was observed in

establishing or eliminating participant submissions from the study. To maintain the integrity of the analyses, only completed data were used for each statistical test, employing pairwise deletion to handle missing values. This comprehensive approach ensures the reliability of the results presented in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Understanding of the intricate interplay of the effect of the presidential debates, underscored by the relationship between a candidate's credibility, the emotional impact, and one's political participation, is grounded in the discussion of the perceived and potential impact of communication. This discussion chapter delves into the findings of a study examining the impact of emotional perception of candidate statements and credibility assessment of the candidate on political participation, specifically the likelihood of voting for the candidate given their debate statements and the potential for engagement in political activities. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of Source Credibility, Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) outlined in the literature review chapter, this chapter aims to provide an interpretation of the results and their broader implications.

The study explores the dynamic relationship between emotional reactions triggered by political messages and the consequential effects on political participation. Emphasizing the significance of emotional intelligence in the political landscape, the analysis extends beyond conventional party identity considerations to attempt to unravel the universal and nuanced ways in which emotional perceptions shape citizens' responses to political stimuli.

Recognizing that source credibility can serve as both a heuristic and a central processing cue, the study examines how the perceived combined factors of trustworthiness, competence, and goodwill of the message source contribute to the assessment of the candidates in the decision-making process. It postulates that, similarly to credibility, emotional perception can, in fact, contribute to the decision-making process.

In this chapter, I also examine the non-moderating role of party identity in the observed correlations and consider the implications for understanding the shared emotional experiences

that transcend partisan divides. By delving into the theoretical overlaps between ELM and HSM, the chapter aims to offer insights into how emotions function as catalysts for political engagement and how these insights can inform more effective communication strategies and democratic practices.

The discussion chapter is strategically organized to navigate the implications of the study's findings, starting with a succinct overview of those key findings from the results chapter. The initial section focuses on perceived credibility and political identity, addressing Hypotheses 1, and subsequently, delving into the implications surrounding emotional factors and political activity from Hypotheses 2-5. Transitioning to the exploration of debates and their impact on political participation, aligned with research questions, the chapter unveils insights into the broader implications within the realm of political communication discourse. An important thematic pivot ensues, revisiting the literature review foundation to critically examine the contributions of the study to information processing and decision-making.

Further contextualizing the study within mass communication theories, the lens of the dissertation is situated in the broader scholarly discourse on framing and priming. This section offers a theoretical backdrop to the study's contributions, aligning it with established communication frameworks.

Acknowledging the study's limitations and reflecting on the chosen methodology follows, offering a candid assessment of constraints and challenges encountered during the research process. This section provides insights into the study's scope and suggests potential areas for refinement in future research. This structured approach ensures a coherent exploration of the study's implications, limitations, and avenues for future research, fostering a deep understanding of the broader impact of the research.

Findings Review

The results chapter comprehensively examined the relationship between emotional perception of candidate statements and political participation, focusing on the likelihood of voting and engagement in supportive or oppositional political activities. Hypothesis testing found supported results for correlations between the perceived credibility of the candidate and the likelihood of voting for that candidate. It also found that increasing positive affect towards a candidate correlated with a higher likelihood of engaging in positive political activities. There was no correlation between negative affect and supportive political activity for Hillary Clinton, but a low negative correlation for Donald Trump indicated that higher negative affect decreased the likelihood of overall supportive political activity.

Results also showed increased anxiety-inducing affect from candidate debate statements correlated with a higher likelihood of engaging in positive political activities. Additionally, an increased aversion-inducing affect from candidate debate statements correlated with a higher likelihood of engaging in negative political activities against the candidate.

Overall, no support was found for party identification moderating any of the above relationships, suggesting a complex and nuanced interplay between emotions and political behavior that extends beyond partisan affiliations.

Perceived Credibility and Political Identity

Perceived credibility plays a crucial role in candidate assessment, influencing voters' perceptions of a candidate's suitability for office. It encompasses factors such as measures of the candidate's trustworthiness, competence, and goodwill, all of which shape voters' attitudes and preferences.

Source credibility theory suggests that voters are more likely to support candidates they perceive as trustworthy. Trust is built on believing the candidate will fulfill their promises and act in the constituents' best interest. Candidates need to be perceived as competent in handling the responsibilities of the office they seek. This includes having the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to address complex issues. Authenticity and sincerity in a candidate's communication contribute to perceived credibility and whether the candidate is focused on the perceiver or themselves. Voters often respond positively to candidates who appear genuine in their beliefs and intentions.

Embedded in hypothesis 1b is a congruence effect. This hypothesis suggests that the impact of perceived credibility on candidate support is not uniform across all voters. Political identity, defined by alignment with a particular political ideology or party, would ideally moderate this relationship. If a voter's political identity aligns with the candidate's, the effect of perceived credibility may be amplified. Voters who share similar political beliefs might be more receptive to messages from candidates they perceive as credible. Congruence creates a sense of alignment and shared values, enhancing the persuasive impact of perceived credibility.

Conversely, if there is a divergence between the political identity of the voter and the candidate, the impact of perceived credibility may be mitigated. Voters may be more skeptical or resistant to the candidate's message, even if the candidate is perceived as credible by general standards.

According to Hayes (2023), when we test for moderation, we examine "whether the relationship between X and Y varies systematically as a function of a proposed moderator W" (p. 275). Applied to this study, I am asking whether the relationship between the perceived

credibility of the candidate and support for that candidate differs because of party identity. This data showed that it does not.

Understanding this interaction is vital for political campaigns, as it informs strategic communication tailored to specific audience segments. Candidates may need to adjust their messaging to emphasize aspects of their credibility that resonate with the political identities of different voter groups. This nuanced approach recognizes that the same message may be received and evaluated differently based on voters' political backgrounds and beliefs. Perceived credibility refers to the extent to which voters see a political candidate as trustworthy, competent, and benevolent. This perception plays a significant role in shaping voters' attitudes and, consequently, their intentions to vote for a particular candidate.

The results of hypothesis 1 reinforced that the influence of perceived credibility holds for individuals across the political spectrum. While party identity did not moderate the relationship between perceived credibility and likelihood of voting, the results suggest some nuances to be gleaned.

Source credibility theory suggests that the message source's perceived credibility will positively impact the outcome sought. Thus, presidential candidates seek to garner voters to support their campaign and are seeking voting support. As such, the greater the perceived credibility of the candidate, the more likely they are to be supported – increased likelihood of voting for said candidate.

Credibility should increase motivation. Credibility is crucial for a candidate because it helps create a positive image in the eyes of the voters. When a candidate is perceived as credible, it increases the chances of being viewed favorably by the voters. This positive image plays a pivotal role in shaping people's voting intentions because voters tend to favor trustworthy

candidates. Establishing credibility is a debate goal and candidates need to continue to focus on doing so, not just for the undecided and independent voter, but voters despite their party identification.

The results of this study showed that even though Clinton rated slightly higher than Trump at the median on credibility, who scored generally below the media, the effect was statistically the same. Credibility for Clinton accounted for 41% of the variance in overall voting likelihood for Clinton, while it was 36% for Trump.

Credibility should build on perceptions of enthusiasm for the candidate and reduce anxiety about the candidate. It should also reduce perceptions of aversion to the candidate. Candidates with high perceived credibility are less likely to face skepticism or doubt from voters. When credibility is established, voters are more likely to accept the candidate's statements and promises at face value, reducing the level of doubt that might otherwise influence voting intentions. Candidates cannot rely on party identity as a moderator or as a sufficient reason for voting support. Establishing credibility is also vital for the ingroup.

While this study did not look at the relationship between perceived credibility and perceived emotional affect, it does lay the groundwork for future research to consider how perceived credibility contributes to the emotional connection between candidates and voters. When voters feel a sense of trust and confidence in a candidate, it creates a positive emotional bond. Emotional connections are potent drivers of voting intentions, as voters are more likely to cast their ballots for candidates with whom they share a positive emotional connection.

Thus, the next step would be to consider the relationship between perceived credibility and perceived emotional affect. Despite the nature of the candidates being equally and

historically disliked, credibility assessment was still valuable to the potential engagement and voting support. Research would examine the nuances between emotions and a voter's rationale.

Emotional Factors and Political Activity

Hypotheses 2 through 5 examined the relationship between emotional perception and political activity. The study's findings provide robust support for Hypothesis 2A, indicating a positive correlation between voters' positive affect toward a candidate and their likelihood of engaging in positive political activities. As voters experience heightened positive emotions, they exhibit a greater inclination to participate in supportive political actions. This was found to be true in the assessment of the emotional affect related to the candidate and the candidate's debate statements. This positive affect acts as a motivational force, driving individuals to contribute actively to the political process.

Regarding hypothesis 3A, the relationship between negative affect and political participation yields mixed results, particularly when examining different candidates. For Hillary Clinton, no significant correlation is found between negative affect and willingness to engage in political activities supporting the candidate. This suggests that negative emotions towards Clinton did not translate into decreased supportive political engagement.

Conversely, the study identifies a low negative correlation between negative affect and overall supportive political activity for Donald Trump. Higher negative emotional perception decreases the likelihood of positive political activities. The findings highlight the complexity of negative emotions in political decision-making and emphasize the need for candidate-specific analyses.

Hypothesis 4A, focusing on anxiety-inducing affect, finds support in the study's results. As voters perceive candidate debate statements as anxiety-inducing, there is a positive

correlation with their likelihood of engaging in positive political activities. This unexpected positive relationship suggests that anxiety-inducing affect might act as a mobilizing force, prompting individuals to participate more actively in support of the source of anxiety.

The study's findings suggest that enthusiasm and positive affect yield favorable results for the candidate, while anxiety, typically associated with negative outcomes, also appears to motivate engagement. Anxiety, in this sense, could be a motivator for more information. Alternately, supporters are more likely to be motivated to engage in supportive political activity to supplement the candidate's efforts and thus dissuade anxious feelings about the current political situation.

Positive affect emerges as a consistent driver of supportive political activities, highlighting the potential of positivity in shaping civic engagement. The mixed results for negative affect underscore the need for candidate-specific analyses, emphasizing that not all negative emotions necessarily deter supportive or positive political involvement. Additionally, the unexpected positive correlation in anxiety-inducing affect sheds light on the complexity of emotional nuances, suggesting that even seemingly negative emotions may contribute to increased political activity.

Druckman and McDermont (2008) note that "anger may not exert the kind of impact expected precisely because it does not easily map onto a gain/loss divide" (p. 317). It has been observed that when a person is angry, their tendency to search for information becomes more biased. This, in turn, decreases the effectiveness of a presented frame, as the angry individual imposes an internal filter that seeks to confirm and assimilate pre-existing beliefs in a biased manner.

The findings of the study affirm Hypothesis 5A, revealing a positive correlation between aversion-inducing affect from candidate debate statements and the likelihood of engaging in negative political activities against the candidate. As voters perceive candidate statements as inducing aversion, a corresponding increase is observed in their propensity to participate in activities that oppose and challenge the candidate. This correlation points to aversion as a potent emotional driver of oppositional engagement.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, Hypothesis 5B did not find a statistically significant interaction between aversion-inducing affect and political party identification in moderating negative political activity. The absence of a significant interaction suggests that the relationship between aversion and oppositional engagement holds consistently across party lines. Aversion appears to be a unifying emotional factor that transcends political affiliations, shaping negative political activities irrespective of partisan identity.

As noted earlier, this study originally hypothesized that party identity would be a driver in the relationship. This would be expected in that one would suppose that party identity would have a compounding motivation to attack a disliked or hated candidate of the opposing party simply because they are the opposition.

The non-significant interaction prompts considerations for negative political activity across party lines. While political identity often plays a crucial role in shaping political behaviors, the study suggests that aversion-inducing affect may override the traditional boundaries of party loyalty. This implies that candidates who evoke aversion in voters may experience a surge in negative political activities from individuals across the political spectrum.

In a similar respect as with credibility assessment, emotional affect can stand as a heuristic cute, as well as a motivator for message elaboration. Further research could chart

whether credibility is a moderating or meditating factor concerning emotional affect and political activity, or vice-versa. It could also examine if anxiety is a motivator, based on ELM, by determining whether it yields elaboration.

Moderating Effect

The results illustrate that political party identification did not moderate these relations. This outcome underscores the importance of nuanced interpretations. While there were significant influences on political activity due to the positive affect of the candidate and candidate statements, as well as with regard to anxiety, the role of political identification in moderating this effect is not statistically robust in this context. The lack of significance in interaction terms prompts a closer examination of the dynamics.

The lack of moderation by political identity in the aversion-negative political activity relationship challenges conventional notions of emotional polarization. The findings suggest that certain emotional responses, particularly aversion, may lead to a convergence of negative political activities rather than a divergence along partisan lines. Similarly, positive emotions may lead to converging positive political activities rather than a divergence along party lines. Emotional or Affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019) is often discussed as a factor driving partisan divisions, and this study suggests that emotions may contribute to a more unified form of political engagement that surpasses party affiliations.

Another consideration not engaged in this study is ideological factors, which would contribute to the various emotional responses to each debate statement. The role that message latency plays may also factor into an emotional response. Issue importance to a voter may impact the way content is perceived.

Debates and Political Participation

At its core, this study questions whether debates matter. The study delves into the role of debates as influencers of political participation, using various video prompt stimuli from the debate setting. Each hypothesis centers around distinct aspects of emotional and cognitive responses to these stimuli, shedding light on the many ways debates may shape political engagement.

From hypothesis testing we can see that debates, as a platform for credibility assessment, hold significance in influencing voter decisions. The impact is consistent across party lines, emphasizing the broad-reaching influence of perceived credibility on voting intentions. Debates serve as emotional triggers, evoking positive affect and subsequently motivating individuals to actively participate in supportive political actions. The emotional resonance established during debates translates into tangible political behaviors. Debates evoke complex emotional responses, with the impact of negative affect varying based on the candidate. This suggests that not all negative emotional reactions during debates necessarily translate into decreased supportive political engagement.

Surprisingly, anxiety emerged as a mobilizing force for political engagement. Debates that induce anxiety may stimulate individuals to actively support the source of their unease, challenging conventional assumptions about the impact of anxiety in political contexts. Debates, when inducing aversion, act as catalysts for oppositional engagement. Aversion becomes a powerful driver of negative political activities, revealing the potential impact of emotional responses during debates on political behavior.

The study's findings underscore debates as dynamic catalysts for political engagement, influencing voters emotionally and cognitively. The emotional rollercoaster experienced during

debates, encompassing positive affect, negative affect, enthusiasm, anxiety, and aversion, significantly shapes subsequent political behaviors. Debates, therefore, emerge not only as forums for policy discussions but also as key determinants of the emotional landscape that propels citizens towards diverse forms of political participation.

The theoretical considerations of this study extend beyond traditional frameworks, challenging assumptions about how emotions interact with political stimuli. Debates, through their unique blend of verbal and non-verbal cues, become instrumental in shaping perceptions of credibility, fostering emotional connections, and triggering varied political responses. This holistic understanding of debates as multifaceted influencers broadens the scope of research on political participation, urging scholars to explore the interplay between emotions, cognition, and the democratic process.

Furthermore, as we continue to rethink the role of emotions in politics, as well as in information processing and decision-making, we challenge the foundational criticisms of debate having meaning only to evoke emotions. In 1960, the concern was that debates would only appeal to voters who were more influenced by emotional and illogical factors than logic and reason (Minow & Lamay, 2008), but emotion is not illogical. The narrative is changing. We should continue to investigate what factors impact our perception and how they might impact our actions as a result. This contributes to understanding how we function and respond to external messages and how they are packaged. Moreover, it will help underline the continued role of debates in a deliberative democracy.

Information Processing and Decision-making

The findings of hypotheses 1 through 5, contextualized within the theoretical frameworks of the ELM and HSM, provide valuable insights into the interplay between information

processing, emotions, and political participation. While this study cannot define the route of information processing for decision-making, it can theorize based on the findings and presume implications given the results.

ELM suggests that individuals process information through central (systematic) and peripheral (heuristic) routes. Perceived credibility likely operates through the central route, where voters systematically process information. Perceived credibility is a central aspect of persuasive communication. When individuals assess a source's credibility, they evaluate the expertise, trustworthiness, and believability of the information presented. This careful evaluation is characteristic of the systematic route. A candidate's credibility becomes a critical factor influencing voting decisions through careful evaluation of arguments and evidence presented during debates. In this study, the credibility assessment of the candidate comes after the participants had viewed all the video clips with both candidates' debate statements, thus creating a stimulus for deliberate assessment of the candidate. This allows for establishing the increased probability of meaningful assessment and likely elaboration for candidate assessment (Chaiken, 1980). A similar argument could be made for the placement of prompting self-evaluation of participants' feelings, given the debate statement and message frames used in this study. Potential exists for participants to make thoughtful, systematic assessments of the frame, how they feel about it, and how they could respond to it.

With HSM, we have insight into how individuals navigate persuasive messages, incorporating quick heuristic judgments and more deliberate, systematic information processing based on motivation, ability, and relevance. Source credibility can serve as both, as well as emotional perception. Alternately, affect or emotions can be a heuristic influencing emotional reactions, with credibility serving as the systematic assessment that could be triggered by affect.

As such, a highly credible source may trigger positive affect, leading to more favorable evaluations through heuristic processing. This positive affect, in turn, may guide individuals towards supportive political activities, as emotions act as heuristics shaping political preferences. On the other hand, negative affect can serve as a heuristic cue influencing emotional reactions. The negative correlation suggests that, for one candidate, negative affect may guide individuals away from supportive political activities.

From the findings, we can postulate that anxiety triggered by candidate statements may lead to increased positive political activities as individuals heuristically process the anxiety as a signal of importance or significance. Aversion may trigger negative affect, guiding individuals heuristically towards heightened negative political activities as a form of oppositional engagement.

Given that polling showed both candidates to be equally highly disliked, general aversion to the candidate could be a fundamental heuristic cue for processing any emotional perception of candidate statements. Controlling for the candidate's generally positive and negative affect beforehand could impact the relationship between emotional perception of debate assessments and behaviors. Source credibility, as discussed in the study, also plays a role. The source's credibility (candidate) can interact with emotional perception, influencing participants' evaluations and subsequent political activities. This interaction adds another layer to the complexity of persuasion in a political context.

Given that participation in political activities that are not voting was generally low, clearly there are additional factors to consider. But it also highlights that these concerns of feelings are not enough a motivator for engagement beyond voting, though they do have some correlation to political activity. While the ultimate goal is to persuade voters to vote, support

goes beyond that to sustain the life of the campaign to enable the candidate to make it to election and to be on that ballot.

Framing and Priming

This study frames candidate messages made on a mass media platform. It actively selects an aspect of messages for participants to interact with. This context cannot be lost on the interpretation of the results. There is also active message framing done by the candidates themselves, as the political candidates seek to illustrate themselves as credible and stand out as the ideal leader for the country. Framing is, "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The message frames can impact the perception of the candidate. For example, a question that asked about bias in the police could focus on the issue at the time, as candidate Hillary Clinton chose to do, thus addressing a racial divide being experienced at the time, or focus on stop and frisk tactics used in a place like New York City, as candidate Donald Trump chose to focus on. Both frames would yield different emotional responses, depending on the preceptor.

Experience, social knowledge, ideology, and beliefs influence individual perception of frames (Gamson, 1992). The impact of frames is individualistic, and so "[l]eaders cannot control how the 'common sense' of a society will guide their supporters' frames of understanding or intrude into the collective action frames they have put forward" (Tarrow, 1992, p. 191).

The focus of this study is not the emotional framing done by the candidates to convey their messages, but the emotional frame developed by the receivers of the message. Emotionally framing messages is a powerful catalyst in shaping individuals' political activities. Emotional

priming involves the exposure to emotional stimuli that subsequently influence the interpretation and evaluation of subsequent information. This study design has a priming effect, with the video prompts acting as stimuli that influence participants' responses and potential actions.

However, candidate responses are framed to evoke emotions and action. As such, this should also be a consideration in the model of information processing. For example, framing bias in the police as an issue that can have tragic consequences that need to be addressed or framing bias in the police as a good way to profile and stop crimes before they happen. Both frames invoke differing responses that could appeal to potential voters and make them enthusiastic about a candidate that is going to do something. The frames could also make voters anxious, or lead to aversion, because the candidate is not addressing what the voter perceives as salient.

Negative emotional framing may trigger oppositional sentiments, laying the groundwork for active political resistance. Thus, as with the findings in the study, aversion as a perception of candidate statements, and a framing of candidate messages and intent, lays the groundwork for political action against the candidate.

The emotions elicited through framing techniques emerge as potent motivators, steering individuals towards distinct political activities. Positive emotional framing may cultivate a sense of affiliation and support, propelling individuals to attend rallies, participate in grassroots campaigns, or even volunteer for the candidate. On the contrary, negative emotional framing may stimulate oppositional motivations, prompting individuals to express dissent through activities such as protests, social media activism, or even mobilizing for rival candidates.

Another way to consider this is that exposure to stimuli can activate related thoughts and influence subsequent judgments. Dislike of a candidate with consideration for their statements could be activated via seeing or hearing the candidate. Individuals can be primed to perceive

candidates in specific ways not measured in this study. While I have noted some of them as predispositions, this study accounts for some of these and not all. However, emotional priming may shape subsequent political attitudes and behaviors. They may lead to supportive political behaviors or oppositional engagement.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to considering the emotional perception of selective candidate message frames potentially affecting engagement in political activity and voting. The study does not enable an examination of causation, so it cannot take a stance of actual influence. As such, this study postulates possibilities based on an association of reported information. The study is a survey and not an experiment, though it uses video prompts from the first presidential debates as stimuli for perception assessment. The limited video prompts used and the nature of the study may not fully capture the complexity of political decision-making or the effects of presidential election debates.

Participants may not respond to the stimuli in the same way they would the full live debate. The study also has a limited range, as it is a single-event focus and does not consider the two other debates that occurred during the same period of the presidential campaign. Analyzing participants' responses based on a single debate event may not account for the cumulative impact of multiple debates, campaign messages, or other political events. While voting is a single event, there are other interactions and experiences that also occur over the campaigning period that can potentially influence voting, as well as other political activities.

This study considers participants with access to the method of study distribution who were compensated for their participation. It is limited to the participation of participants and cannot be generalized based on the convenient sample used. The study's findings are also limited

in generalizability due to the specific context of presidential election debates and the unique characteristics of the candidates involved. Results may not apply to different political contexts, types of elections, or candidates.

In this study, consideration is given to participants' reported conceptualization of their feelings and the impact of prompts used. It depends on and assumes that participants thoughtfully considered the questions and thus made a deliberate response. Reliance on self-reported measures introduces potential biases, as participants may provide responses influenced by social desirability or their perceptions of what the researchers expect. As such, the language used speaks to the likelihood of voting and the potential political activity a participant could engage in.

The sample composition of this study must also be taken into account. As laid out in the description of the participants, the study has more female participants than male, more participants who identify with Democrats than Republicans or Independents, and mostly comprised of white identifying individuals. Additionally, this was an online study whose participants tend to be characterized by greater online involvement and internet literacy. These factors reduce the potential for generalizability and so the study speaks to the participants of it and not to the public as a whole.

The 2016 presidential election campaign period provides a time-sensitive context for this study, reflecting a period of political and social changes in the history of elections. Changes in political landscapes or societal attitudes over time could impact the applicability of the results to different periods.

Although the study employed measures recognized for their reliability and validity, they may not encompass the entire spectrum of emotions or adequately capture the intricacies of

information processing methods. The study also falls short in fully accounting for the potential impact of measured predispositions, introducing a limitation in comprehensiveness. Moreover, the research, anchored in the realm of mass communication and drawing insights from political science works, exhibits a constrained depth of knowledge. Consequently, the study's scope might not fully extend to encompass the multifaceted and nuanced dimensions inherent in the broader field of emotional responses and political behavior.

The study design for the dissertation was formulated after the data collection process, constraining the ability to implement a pre-planned, rigorous research strategy. This ad hoc approach limited the opportunity for a more systematic and structured investigation, potentially affecting the overall robustness of the study. Additionally, the utilization of available measures while addressing the study's specific questions and hypotheses might have constrained the depth and comprehensiveness of the data collection, hindering a more nuanced exploration of the phenomena under investigation.

Methodological Reflection

This study had several opportunities for testing specific stimuli. In fact, the video prompts used were comparative, with clips covering similar topics, enabling participants to assess the viewpoints of both candidates. However, there was no test about voter preferences between candidate statements. In fact, at no point are participants assessed for preferences for debate statements. There was a preamble of questions that could be construed as a pre-test, but some key questions were missing. A redesign of this study would essentially include questions design for pre-test, setting a benchmark of the study. While there was an assessment of emotional perception of candidates before the test, the emotional scale used in the beginning of the test and those used for the assessment of the video prompts were different. On the one hand,

this enables a comparison of assessment scales, but it hampers the ability to establish a consistent test, as most of the measures used in the PANAS are not part of the Affective Intelligence Theory three dimensions scale.

Given the study design and methodology constraints, a revamped approach should incorporate a more experimental design, featuring pre- and post-testing questions and intentionally duplicated queries following stimuli. Integrating a dial for emotional temperature testing would enhance precision in assessing invoked feelings. Expanding the scope of testing to encompass the entire debate, rather than just specific clips, warrants consideration.

Although the survey design exhibited robustness, the lengthiness, exacerbated by the stimuli, posed a challenge. Fragmenting the study into more focused surveys would mitigate respondent fatigue and foster improved engagement. However, a study of this magnitude does need funding, and a larger compensation for participation may yield more thoughtful and lasting engagement.

When formulating hypotheses and designing analyses, it is imperative to account for both theoretical implications and the statistical modeling required for testing. An alternative approach might involve reconsidering the arrangement of moderator and predictor variables or exploring the suitability of mediation analysis in lieu of moderation analysis. In this study, mediation analysis could be more applicable as it helps delve into the underlying mechanisms and pathways through which variables exert their effects, providing a nuanced understanding of the relationships at play.

This study would benefit from testing responses regarding all the debates. If a survey of that nature was conducted, we could examine feeling over time, adding to the value of the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Emotions in politics would benefit from an intentional lens of mass communication theory, and this study was an initial attempt to do this. While the field is growing, deepening the knowledge of political communications should include developing research in this area. There is room to discuss the emotional effects of media and message frames and how those transfer into political action. Building on the knowledge of persuasion studies, priming, agenda-setting, and framing, future research can examine the role and effect of emotion in these areas.

Understanding the connection between emotionally framed messages and political activities contributes significantly to the broader landscape of political engagement. Emotional priming acts as a dynamic force intricately linked to voters' decision-making processes. By acknowledging the sway emotions hold in the political realm, this study sheds light on the myriad of ways in which framing strategies influence citizens to participate actively in the democratic process.

As we delve deeper into the intricate relationship between emotional framing and political participation, the study underscores the need for comprehensive analyses that consider the informational content and the emotional dimensions embedded within political communication. Recognizing emotions as motivators provides a valuable lens through which to comprehend the multifaceted nature of political engagement, offering insights that resonate within mass communication and political science.

Moreover, framing the study through these mass communication theories can provide a rich analysis of how emotional elements in political communication contribute to the intricate web of information processing and political engagement. Similarly, looking at emotional

perception along the lens of source credibility assessment, as it regards ELM and HSM, has the potential to consider greater the extension of the role of emotion in persuasion.

Research that focuses on debates as an event is also limited. While a wealth of knowledge surrounds arguments and debate strategies, the work on debates has been limited in the mass communication sense. Debates continue to be an event in the primary and general election campaigns and the question as to whether they matter is itself debatable. In 2024, Donald Trump, who is seeking another term in office, has opted not to participate in the primary debates for the Republican party. Does this mark the end of this mass communication event? Does his non-participation affect the outcome? Debates speak to perception, and much of the perception occurs post-debate. Who may or may not have won the debate? Does the debate winner win the overall election? There are many questions, but continuous assessment concerning debate performances centers around credibility and portrayal of presidential qualities. While the public may not hear new information in the debates, some get some exposure to the candidates, which is valuable in and of itself.

Conclusions

Political behavior is influenced by various factors, including cognitive processing, attitudes, values, and situational context. Emotional perception is just one aspect of this complex interplay. While emotions can be influential, they may not be the sole determinants of political activity. Acknowledging the inherent complexities and nuances in the relationship between emotions and political participation is imperative. Our study invites future research endeavors to delve deeper into the underlying mechanisms, exploring how emotions may interact with other factors, such as personal predispositions and broader socio-political contexts.

In navigating the intricate landscape of political communication, our study emphasizes the need for a holistic understanding that transcends traditional boundaries. The combination of mass communication theories and emotional dynamics offers a comprehensive perspective on political engagement.

As we move forward, armed with insights into the motivational force of emotions in political participation, we are better equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of democratic discourse. By embracing the emotional dimensions embedded within political communication, we take a step towards fostering a more nuanced, inclusive, and insightful approach to studying and understanding the intricate dance between emotions and political engagement.

Appendix A: Overview of Original Study Format

Survey Structure – Panel A: Debate 1 (September 26, 2016)

Opening

Informed Consent & Criteria for participation

Preliminary Questions

6 Questions probing voting history

Political Affect

15 Questions assessing affect of Clinton, Trump and Media

Using PANAS scale

Voting, Political Issue Stance and Participation

19 Questions

Stimuli Section

Stimuli test 1 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 2 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 3 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 4 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 5 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 6 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 7 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 8 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 9 – 8 Questions

Stimuli test 10 – 8 Questions

Views on Clinton and Trump

4 Scales (8 Questions)

Credibility Assessement

News and Media

10 Questions about media consumption and debate watching.

Prominent News

5 Questions about campaign news (Specifically Hollywood Access Tape)

Demographic Information

11 Questions

Appendix B: Questions from the Survey Instrument

Study Title: Emotional Response to Political Debates

Q83 Thinking about the 2016 Presidential Election Campaign, overall, how would you rate your level of emotion/feeling about the candidate - Donald Trump?

	Clearly describes my feelings (1)	Mostly describes my feelings (2)	Moderately describes my feelings (3)	Slightly describes my feelings (4)	Does not describe my feelings (5)
Interested (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Distressed (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Excited (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Upset (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Strong (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Guilty (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Scared (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hostile (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enthusiastic (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Proud (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Irritable (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Alert (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ashamed (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Inspired (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Nervous (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Determined (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attentive (17)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Jittery (18)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Active (19)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Afraid (20)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Suspicious (21)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q84 Thinking about the 2016 Presidential Election Campaign, overall how would your rate your level of emotion/feeling about the candidate -Hillary Clinton ?

	Clearly describes my feelings (1)	Mostly describes my feelings (2)	Moderately describes my feelings (3)	Slightly describes my feelings (4)	Does not describe my feelings (5)
Interested (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Distressed (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Excited (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Upset (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Strong (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Guilty (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Scared (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hostile (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enthusiastic (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Proud (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Irritable (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Alert (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ashamed (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Inspired (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Nervous (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Determined (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attentive (17)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Jittery (18)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Active (19)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Afraid (20)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Suspicious (21)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q16 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- ❍ Republican (1)
- ❍ Democrat (2)
- ❍ Independent (3)
- ❍ Other (4) _____
- ❍ No preference (5)

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? Republican Is Selected

Q17 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not-very-strong Republican?

- ❍ Strong (1)
- ❍ Not very strong (2)

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? Democrat Is Selected

Q18 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not-very-strong Democrat?

- ❍ Strong (1)
- ❍ Not very strong (2)

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? Independent Is Selected

Or Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? Other Is Selected

Or Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? No preference Is Selected

Q19 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

- ❍ Republican (1)
- ❍ Democratic (2)

Q85 If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertarian, and Evan McMullin, the Independent, who would you vote for?

- ❍ Hillary Clinton (10)
- ❍ Donald Trump (11)
- ❍ Jill Stein (12)
- ❍ Gary Johnson (13)

- ❍ Evan McMullin (14)
- ❍ Other (15)
- ❍ I would not vote (16)
- ❍ I don't know (17)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... I don't know Is Selected

And If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Is Selected

Q87 If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertarian, and Evan McMullin, the Independent, who do you lean more towards?

- ❍ Hillary Clinton (1)
- ❍ Donald Trump (2)
- ❍ Jill Stein (3)
- ❍ Gary Johnson (4)
- ❍ Evan McMullin (5)
- ❍ Other (6)
- ❍ I would not vote (7)
- ❍ I don't know (8)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Hillary Clinton Is Selected

Q88 You indicated that you support Hillary Clinton, as the presidential candidate. Is your mind made up, or do you think you might change your mind before the election in November?

- ❍ Extremely likely (1)

- ❍ Moderately likely (2)
- ❍ Slightly likely (3)
- ❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ❍ Slightly unlikely (5)
- ❍ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ❍ Extremely unlikely (7)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Donald Trump Is Selected

Q89 You indicated that you support Donald Trump, as the presidential candidate. Is your mind made up, or do you think you might change your mind before the election in November?

- ❍ Extremely likely (1)
- ❍ Moderately likely (2)
- ❍ Slightly likely (3)
- ❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ❍ Slightly unlikely (5)
- ❍ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ❍ Extremely unlikely (7)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Jill Stein Is Selected

Q90 You indicated that you support Jill Stein, as the presidential candidate. Is your mind made up, or do you think you might change your mind before the election in November?

- ❍ Extremely likely (1)
- ❍ Moderately likely (2)
- ❍ Slightly likely (3)

- ❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ❍ Slightly unlikely (5)
- ❍ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ❍ Extremely unlikely (7)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Gary Johnson Is Selected

Q91 You indicated that you support Gary Johnson, as the presidential candidate. Is your mind made up, or do you think you might change your mind before the election in November?

- ❍ Extremely likely (1)
- ❍ Moderately likely (2)
- ❍ Slightly likely (3)
- ❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ❍ Slightly unlikely (5)
- ❍ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ❍ Extremely unlikely (7)

Display This Question:

If If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Jill Stein, the Green Party, Gary Johnson, the Libertari... Evan McMullin Is Selected

Q92 You indicated that you support Evan McMullin, as the presidential candidate. Is your mind made up, or do you think you might change your mind before the election in November?

- ❍ Extremely likely (1)
- ❍ Moderately likely (2)
- ❍ Slightly likely (3)
- ❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ❍ Slightly unlikely (5)

- ❍ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ❍ Extremely unlikely (7)

Q77 How important is it to you to make sure that Donald Trump does NOT get elected president?

- ❍ Extremely important (1)
- ❍ Very important (2)
- ❍ Moderately important (3)
- ❍ Slightly important (4)
- ❍ Not at all important (5)

Q78 How important is it to you to make sure that Hillary Clinton does NOT get elected president?

- ❍ Extremely important (1)
- ❍ Very important (2)
- ❍ Moderately important (3)
- ❍ Slightly important (4)
- ❍ Not at all important (5)

[This section is repeated for each video clip used in the study]

Q5 In this section of the survey, you will view a series of short clips from the recent Presidential Debate. Following each clip, we would like you to use the scales to indicate how you feel about the video clip you watched. For every video clip please indicate the way you felt while watching the clip. Don't spend a lot of time thinking about your responses on the scale, just indicate how the video clip makes you feel.

Q6 – Video Clip

Q40 How does what you have just seen make you feel? Please check the box that best describes your feeling.

	Extremely (1)	Very (2)	Moderately (3)	Slightly (4)	Not at All (5)
Enthusiastic (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hopeful (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Proud (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Scared (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Worried (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Afraid (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hateful (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Angry (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Bitter (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Resentful (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 What effect (if any) does this message have on the likelihood that:

	Much more likely (1)	Somewhat more likely (2)	Slightly more likely (3)	No effect (4)	Slightly less likely (5)	Somewhat less likely (6)	Much less likely (7)
I will vote for this candidate (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q57 Based on the candidate's statement, are you likely to take positive or negative action in support or against the candidate?

- ❍ Extremely positive (1)
- ❍ Moderately positive (2)
- ❍ Slightly positive (3)
- ❍ Neither positive nor negative (4)
- ❍ Slightly negative (5)
- ❍ Moderately negative (6)
- ❍ Extremely negative (7)

Q83 Given the message of the candidate statement, would you respond positively by doing any of the following?

- ❑ Participate in any demonstrations, protests or marches (1)
- ❑ Attend a political rally in support of the candidate (2)
- ❑ Participate in any local action for social or political reform (3)
- ❑ Join a political action group, interest group, party committees (4)
- ❑ Door to door campaign for the candidate (5)
- ❑ Talk with your neighbor, friend or non-family member about the issue (6)
- ❑ Talk with a family member about the issue (7)
- ❑ Petition someone else to vote for the candidate (8)

- ❑ Publicly demonstrate your support for the candidate with stickers, yard sign or any other signatory? (9)
- ❑ Write a letter to the media in support of the candidate, or to share your supportive story? (10)

Q85 Given the message of the candidate statement, would you respond positively by doing any of the following online?

- ❑ Make a campaign donation (1)
- ❑ Subscribe to a political listserv (2)
- ❑ Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign (3)
- ❑ Join a political action group, interest group, party committees social media (4)
- ❑ Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, twitter or other social media (5)
- ❑ Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, twitter or other social media (6)
- ❑ Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends) (7)
- ❑ Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members (8)

Q84 Given the message of the candidate statement, would you respond negatively by doing any of the following?

- ❑ Participate in any demonstrations, protests or marches (1)
- ❑ Attend a political rally against the candidate (2)
- ❑ Participate in any local action for social or political reform (3)
- ❑ Join a political action group, interest group, party committees (4)
- ❑ Door to door campaigning against the candidate (5)
- ❑ Talk with your neighbor, friend or non-family member about the issue (6)
- ❑ Talk with a family member about the issue (7)
- ❑ Petition someone else to vote against the candidate (8)
- ❑ Publicly demonstrate your disdain for the candidate with stickers, yard sign or any other signatory? (9)
- ❑ Write a letter to the media to show your disdain for the candidate? (10)

Q86 Given the message of the candidate statement, would you respond negatively by doing any of the following online?

- ❑ Make a campaign donation to another candidate (1)
- ❑ Subscribe to a political listserv (2)
- ❑ Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign for another candidate or against this candidate (3)
- ❑ Join a political action group, interest group, party committee social media (4)
- ❑ Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media (5)
- ❑ Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media (6)
- ❑ Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends) (7)
- ❑ Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members (8)

[End of Section]

Q58 On the scales below, please indicate your feelings about Hillary Clinton.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Intelligent: Unintelligent (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Untrained: Trained (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Cares about me: Doesn't care about me (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Honest: Dishonest (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Has my interests at heart: Doesn't have my interests at heart (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Untrustworthy: Trustworthy (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Inexpert: Expert (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Self-centered: Not self-centered (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Concerned with me: Not concerned with me (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Honorable: Dishonorable (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Informed: Uninformed (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Moral: Immoral (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Incompetent: Competent (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unethical: Ethical (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Insensitive: Sensitive (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Bright: Stupid (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Phony: Genuine (17)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not understanding: Understanding (18)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q59 On the scales below, please indicate your feelings about Donald Trump.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Intelligent: Unintelligent (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Untrained: Trained (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Cares about me: Doesn't care about me (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Honest: Dishonest (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Has my interests at heart: Doesn't have my interests at heart (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Untrustworthy: Trustworthy (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Inexpert: Expert (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Self-centered: Not self-centered (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Concerned with me: Not concerned with me (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Honorable: Dishonorable (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Informed: Uninformed (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Moral: Immoral (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Incompetent: Competent (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unethical: Ethical (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Insensitive: Sensitive (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Bright: Stupid (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Phony: Genuine (17)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not understanding: Understanding (18)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q47 How old are you?

Q49 What is your gender?

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Other (3) _____
- ❍ Prefer not to say (4)

Q36 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ❍ Heterosexual (straight) (1)
- ❍ Homosexual (gay) (2)
- ❍ Bisexual (3)
- ❍ Other (4)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (5)

Q50 What ethnicity are you?

- ❍ White (non-Hispanic) (1)
- ❍ Hispanic or Latino (2)
- ❍ Black or African-American (3)
- ❍ Native American or American Indian (4)
- ❍ Asian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ❍ Multiracial (6)
- ❍ Other (7) _____
- ❍ Prefer not to say (8)

Q28 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ❍ Less than high school degree (1)

- ❍ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)
- ❍ Some college but no degree (3)
- ❍ Associate degree in college (2-year) (4)
- ❍ Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) (5)
- ❍ Master's degree (6)
- ❍ Doctoral degree (7)
- ❍ Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (9)

Q53 What is your marital status?

- ❍ Single, never married (1)
- ❍ Married or domestic partnership (2)
- ❍ Widowed (3)
- ❍ Divorced (4)
- ❍ Separated (5)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your marital status? Married or domestic partnership Is Selected

Q54 Is your spouse or partner now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

- ❍ Full time (1)
- ❍ Part time (2)
- ❍ Not employed (3)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (4)

Q55 What is your current employment status?

- ❍ Employed, full-time (1)
- ❍ Employed, part-time (2)

- ❍ Unemployed, looking for work (3)
- ❍ Unemployed, not looking for work (4)
- ❍ Student (5)
- ❍ Retired (6)
- ❍ Unable to work (7)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (8)

Q48 What is your combined annual household income?

- ❍ Less than $10,000 (1)
- ❍ $10,000 - $19,999 (2)
- ❍ $20,000 - $29,999 (3)
- ❍ $30,000 - $39,999 (4)
- ❍ $40,000 - $49,999 (5)
- ❍ $50,000 - $59,999 (6)
- ❍ $60,000 - $69,999 (7)
- ❍ $70,000 - $79,999 (8)
- ❍ $80,000 - $89,999 (9)
- ❍ $90,000 - $99,999 (10)
- ❍ $100,000 - $149,999 (11)
- ❍ $150,000-$250,000 (12)
- ❍ More than $250,000 (13)
- ❍ Prefer not to say (14)

Q42 In which state do you currently reside?

- ❍ Alabama (1)
- ❍ Alaska (2)
- ❍ Arizona (3)

- Arkansas (4)
- California (5)
- Colorado (6)
- Connecticut (7)
- Delaware (8)
- District of Columbia (9)
- Florida (10)
- Georgia (11)
- Hawaii (12)
- Idaho (13)
- Illinois (14)
- Indiana (15)
- Iowa (16)
- Kansas (17)
- Kentucky (18)
- Louisiana (19)
- Maine (20)
- Maryland (21)
- Massachusetts (22)
- Michigan (23)
- Minnesota (24)
- Mississippi (25)
- Missouri (26)
- Montana (27)
- Nebraska (28)
- Nevada (29)
- New Hampshire (30)
- New Jersey (31)

- New Mexico (32)
- New York (33)
- North Carolina (34)
- North Dakota (35)
- Ohio (36)
- Oklahoma (37)
- Oregon (38)
- Pennsylvania (39)
- Puerto Rico (40)
- Rhode Island (41)
- South Carolina (42)
- South Dakota (43)
- Tennessee (44)
- Texas (45)
- Utah (46)
- Vermont (47)
- Virginia (48)
- Washington (49)
- West Virginia (50)
- Wisconsin (51)
- Wyoming (52)
- I do not reside in the United States (53)

Appendix C: Video Clips

A total of eight (8) video clips were used in this study. Four for Clinton and four for Trump.

Clinton clips:

Video Prompt 1 – "Clinton on Jobs"

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 21:06:35
Video length: 1 minute 59 seconds

Video Prompt 2 – "Trump on Jobs"

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 21:08:41
Video length: 2 minutes 9 seconds

Video Prompt 3 – “Clinton on Bias in the Police”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 21:54:06
Video length: 1 minute 4 seconds

Video Prompt 4 – “Trump on the African American Community”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 21:58:06
Video length: 58 seconds

Video Prompt 5 – “Clinton on Cybersecurity”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 22:06:41
Video length: 2 minutes 29 seconds

Video Prompt 6 – “Trump on Cybersecurity”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 22:09:57
Video length: 1 minute 41 seconds

Video Prompt 7 – “Clinton on Foreign Policy”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 22:29:41
Video length: 2 minutes 25 seconds

Video Prompt 8 – “Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk”

Datestamp: 2016-09-26
Timestamp: 21:55:11
Video length: 1 minute 39 seconds

Appendix D: Means and Standard Deviations

Table D1

Means and Standard Deviations for voting likelihood following each video prompt used in the analysis.

	Descriptives		
Variables	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Clinton			
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Clinton on Jobs")	4.05	1.68	282
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Clinton on Bias in the Police")	3.95	1.76	284
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Clinton on Cybersecurity")	4.02	1.63	282
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Clinton on Foreign Policy")	3.82	1.51	277
Mean Voting Support for Clinton (likelihood of voting for Clinton following clips)	3.96	1.48	285
Trump			
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Trump on Jobs")	3.78	1.52	278
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Trump on the African American Community")	3.80	1.74	282
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Trump on Cybersecurity")	3.80	1.71	279
I will vote for this candidate. (following clip "Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk")	3.99	1.69	282
Mean Voting Support for Trump (likelihood of voting for Trump following clips)	3.84	1.45	286

Note. Participants were asked, "What effect (if any) does this message have on the likelihood that they will vote for this candidate. Response options (Much less likely to much more likely) ranged from 1 to 7.

Table D2

Descriptives for Measure of Positive Affect Scale and Negative Affect Scale

	Descriptives for Hillary Clinton			Descriptives for Donald Trump		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Positive Affect Scale Items						
Interested	2.9512	1.51602	287	2.7168	1.56279	286
Excited	2.2982	1.38865	285	2.1014	1.44375	286
Strong	2.4948	1.48858	287	2.3833	1.48870	287
Enthusiastic	2.3275	1.46427	287	2.0592	1.44599	285
Proud	2.2238	1.37608	286	1.8803	1.36582	287
Alert	3.2448	1.47121	286	3.2648	1.45308	284
Inspired	2.2421	1.43926	285	2.0070	1.41420	287
Determined	2.6818	1.53560	286	2.5860	1.52808	287
Attentive	3.2657	1.49362	286	3.2648	1.50509	285
Active	2.6364	1.45117	286	2.5810	1.43300	287
Mean Positive Affect Score	2.6340	1.16918	287	2.4828	1.11909	287
Negative Affect Scale Items						
Distressed	2.8112	1.50065	286	3.5261	1.50936	287
Upset	2.8105	1.54027	285	3.3972	1.55855	287
Guilty	1.7805	1.30782	287	1.7038	1.17644	287
Scared	2.6864	1.56198	287	3.1783	1.55587	286
Hostile	2.4720	1.57310	286	2.9617	1.65840	287
Irritable	2.6702	1.52329	285	3.1193	1.51512	285
Ashamed	2.4808	1.56630	287	3.1123	1.57936	286
Nervous	2.8252	1.50468	286	3.2509	1.53279	285
Jittery	2.2526	1.44111	285	2.5018	1.52127	286
Afraid	2.5524	1.54319	286	3.2028	1.56074	285
Mean Positive Affect Score	2.5345	1.22098	287	2.9945	1.21195	287

Note. Participants were asked to rate their emotions/feelings about the candidate. Response options (do not describe my feelings to describe my feelings clearly) ranged from 1 to 5.

Table D3

Descriptives for Measure of Three Dimensions of Affect Scale for each Video Prompt

	Clinton on Jobs			Clinton on Bias in the Police			Clinton on Cybersecurity			Clinton on Foreign Policy		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Dimension 1 - Enthusiasm Affect	2.31	1.32	281	2.25	1.29	284	2.17	1.24	283	1.81	1.13	278
Enthusiastic	2.30	1.38	281	2.24	1.34	284	2.21	1.32	283	1.85	1.18	278
Hopeful	2.39	1.38	280	2.34	1.36	283	2.28	1.31	283	1.85	1.19	277
Proud	2.25	1.36	280	2.17	1.35	284	2.03	1.28	283	1.73	1.16	277
Dimension 2 - Anxiety Affect	2.02	1.27	281	2.05	1.21	284	2.20	1.22	283	1.83	1.23	278
Scared	1.95	1.31	281	1.98	1.24	283	2.16	1.27	282	1.77	1.25	277
Worried	2.12	1.36	281	2.17	1.32	282	2.32	1.32	283	1.89	1.30	278
Afraid	1.97	1.31	280	2.00	1.28	284	2.12	1.28	279	1.83	1.26	277
Dimension 3 - Aversion Affect	1.80	1.21	281	1.84	1.19	284	1.81	1.16	283	1.70	1.15	278
Hateful	1.70	1.20	279	1.71	1.19	283	1.69	1.15	283	1.60	1.12	277
Angry	1.85	1.31	281	1.94	1.32	283	1.90	1.32	283	1.75	1.25	278
Bitter	1.83	1.31	281	1.84	1.27	282	1.81	1.28	283	1.74	1.24	277
Resentful	1.83	1.30	278	1.84	1.28	283	1.84	1.27	282	1.73	1.24	274

Note. Participants were to indicate the best description of their feelings based on how the video clip they saw made them feel.

Response options (not at all to extremely) ranged from 1 to 5.

Table D4

Descriptives for Three Dimensions of Affect Scale for each Video Prompt

	Trump on Jobs			Trump on the African American Community			Trump on Cybersecurity			Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Dimension 1 - Enthusiasm Affect	1.76	1.14	279	2.06	1.28	283	1.93	1.26	277	2.21	1.33	282
Enthusiastic	1.77	1.18	279	2.07	1.34	282	1.91	1.30	276	2.24	1.42	282
Hopeful	1.77	1.17	277	2.16	1.33	283	1.99	1.30	277	2.32	1.38	279
Proud	1.74	1.16	276	1.96	1.31	283	1.89	1.29	276	2.10	1.37	280
Dimension 2 - Anxiety Affect	1.94	1.25	278	2.16	1.32	283	2.27	1.29	279	2.12	1.27	281
Scared	1.92	1.29	277	2.09	1.35	281	2.15	1.32	278	2.10	1.31	281
Worried	2.01	1.31	276	2.29	1.42	282	2.42	1.38	278	2.22	1.35	280
Afraid	1.90	1.29	277	2.08	1.36	283	2.23	1.38	279	2.05	1.31	281
Dimension 3 - Aversion Affect	1.745	1.13	279	1.99	1.25	283	1.99	1.25	279	1.85	1.21	281
Hateful	1.64	1.12	278	1.83	1.26	282	1.90	1.27	276	1.75	1.21	280
Angry	1.78	1.20	278	2.13	1.41	283	2.08	1.39	279	1.94	1.33	280
Bitter	1.77	1.22	277	2.00	1.33	282	1.99	1.33	278	1.85	1.28	281
Resentful	1.76	1.20	272	2.01	1.35	283	2.01	1.34	278	1.87	1.31	281

Note. Participants were to indicate the best description of their feelings based on how the video clip they saw made them feel.

Response options (not at all to extremely) ranged from 1 to 5.

Table D5

Descriptives for Measure of Positive Traditional Political Activity Following Hillary Clinton Clips

	Clinton on Jobs			Clinton on Bias in the Police			Clinton on Cybersecurity			Clinton on Foreign Policy		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Participate in any demonstrations, protests, or marches	7	0.02	0.16	3	0.01	0.10	5	0.02	0.13	8	0.03	0.17
Attend a political rally in support of the candidate	12	0.04	0.20	12	0.04	0.20	11	0.04	0.19	4	0.01	0.12
Participate in any local action for social or political reform	12	0.04	0.20	13	0.05	0.21	8	0.03	0.16	11	0.04	0.19
Join a political action group, interest group, party committees	11	0.04	0.19	13	0.05	0.21	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16
Door-to-door campaign for the candidate	8	0.03	0.17	9	0.03	0.18	6	0.02	0.14	8	0.03	0.17
Talk with your neighbor, friend, or non-family member about the issue	71	0.25	0.43	84	0.29	0.47	75	0.26	0.44	60	0.21	0.41
Talk with a family member about the issue	105	0.37	0.48	107	0.37	0.48	89	0.31	0.46	71	0.25	0.43
Petition someone else to vote for the candidate	9	0.03	0.18	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16	4	0.01	0.12
Publicly demonstrate your support for the candidate with stickers, yard signs, or any other signatory.	9	0.03	0.18	12	0.04	0.20	12	0.04	0.20	3	0.01	0.10
Write a letter to the media in support of the candidate or to share your supportive story.	6	0.02	0.14	6	0.02	0.14	5	0.02	0.13	1	0.00	0.06
Mean Positive Traditional Political Activity		0.87	1.13		0.93	1.22		0.79	1.04		0.62	0.91

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 10. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D6

Descriptives for Measure of Positive Online Political Activity Following Hillary Clinton Clips

	Clinton on Jobs			Clinton on Bias in the Police			Clinton on Cybersecurity			Clinton on Foreign Policy		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Make a campaign donation	11	0.04	0.19	8	0.03	0.17	10	0.03	0.18	5	0.02	0.13
Subscribe to a political listserv	14	0.05	0.22	14	0.05	0.22	6	0.02	0.14	11	0.04	0.19
Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign	12	0.04	0.20	12	0.04	0.20	4	0.01	0.12	8	0.03	0.17
Join a political action group, interest group, party committee, or social media	10	0.03	0.18	17	0.06	0.24	14	0.05	0.22	7	0.02	0.16
Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	44	0.15	0.36	46	0.16	0.37	37	0.13	0.34	31	0.11	0.31
Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	53	0.18	0.39	48	0.17	0.37	45	0.16	0.36	33	0.11	0.32
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends)	52	0.18	0.39	62	0.22	0.41	59	0.21	0.41	42	0.15	0.35
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members	53	0.18	0.39	61	0.21	0.41	52	0.18	0.39	40	0.14	0.35

Mean Positive Online Political Activity	0.87	1.25		0.93	1.34		0.79	1.16		0.62	1.01

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 8.

"Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D7

Descriptives for Measure of Negative Traditional Political Activity Following Hillary Clinton Clips

	Clinton on Jobs			Clinton on Bias in the Police			Clinton on Cybersecurity			Clinton on Foreign Policy		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Participate in any demonstrations, protests, or marches.	4	0.01	0.12	7	0.02	0.16	5	0.02	0.13	5	0.02	0.13
Attend a political rally in support of the candidate.	6	0.02	0.14	10	0.03	0.18	6	0.02	0.14	10	0.03	0.18
Participate in any local action for social or political reform.	6	0.02	0.14	9	0.03	0.18	4	0.01	0.12	8	0.03	0.17
Join a political action group, interest group, or party committee.	9	0.03	0.18	6	0.02	0.14	4	0.01	0.12	6	0.02	0.14
Door-to-door campaign against the candidate.	4	0.01	0.12	10	0.03	0.18	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16
Talk with your neighbor, friend, or non-family member about the issue.	56	0.20	0.40	69	0.24	0.43	70	0.24	0.43	57	0.20	0.40
Talk with a family member about the issue.	78	0.27	.045	77	0.27	0.44	84	0.29	0.46	62	0.22	0.41
Petition someone else to vote against the candidate.	13	0.05	0.21	13	0.05	0.21	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16
Publicly demonstrate your disdain for the candidate with stickers, yard signs, or any other signatory.	11	0.04	.19	9	0.03	0.18	9	0.03	0.18	7	0.02	0.16
Write a letter to the media to show your disdain for the candidate.	7	0.02	0.16	11	0.04	0.19	7	0.02	0.16	8	0.03	0.17
Mean Negative Traditional Political Activity		0.68	1.10		0.77	1.24		0.71	1.11		0.62	1.11

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 10. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D8

Descriptives for Measure of Negative Online Political Activity Following Hillary Clinton Clips

	Clinton on Jobs			Clinton on Bias in the Police			Clinton on Cybersecurity			Clinton on Foreign Policy		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Make a campaign donation to another candidate.	4	0.01	0.12	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16	6	0.02	0.14
Subscribe to a political listserv.	7	0.02	0.16	9	0.03	0.18	8	0.03	0.17	13	0.05	0.21
Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign for another candidate or against this candidate.	12	0.04	0.20	11	0.04	0.19	7	0.02	0.16	5	0.02	0.13
Join a political action group, interest group, party committee, or social media.	10	0.03	0.18	8	0.03	0.17	9	0.03	0.18	9	0.03	0.18
Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	30	0.10	0.31	31	0.11	0.31	29	0.10	0.30	23	0.08	0.27
Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media.	32	0.11	0.32	39	0.14	0.34	34	0.12	0.2	30	0.10	0.31
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends).	46	0.16	0.37	53	0.18	0.39	53	0.18	0.39	41	0.14	0.35
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members.	46	0.16	0.37	52	0.18	0.39	47	0.16	0.37	43	0.15	0.36
Mean Negative Online Political Activity		0.65	1.14		0.74	1.21		0.68	1.16		0.60	1.07

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 8. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D9

Descriptives for Measure of Positive Traditional Political Activity Following Donald Trump Clips

	Trump on Jobs			Trump on the African American Community			Trump on Cybersecurity			Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Participate in any demonstrations, protests, or marches	4	0.01	0.12	4	0.01	0.12	5	0.02	0.13	2	0.01	0.08
Attend a political rally in support of the candidate	7	0.02	0.16	11	0.04	0.19	6	0.02	0.14	11	0.04	0.19
Participate in any local action for social or political reform	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16	4	0.01	0.12	7	0.02	0.16
Join a political action group, interest group, party committees	11	0.04	0.19	9	0.03	0.18	7	0.02	0.16	9	0.03	0.18
Door-to-door campaign for the candidate	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16	9	0.03	0.18	10	0.03	0.18
Talk with your neighbor, friend, or non-family member about the issue	56	0.20	0.40	63	0.22	0.42	58	0.20	0.40	60	0.21	0.41
Talk with a family member about the issue	70	0.24	0.43	78	0.27	0.45	68	0.24	0.43	81	0.28	0.45
Petition someone else to vote for the candidate	13	0.05	0.21	11	0.04	0.19	12	0.04	0.20	14	0.05	0.22
Publicly demonstrate your support for the candidate with stickers, yard signs, or any other signatory.	12	0.04	0.20	9	0.03	0.18	7	0.02	0.16	11	0.04	0.19
Write a letter to the media in support of the candidate or to share your supportive story.	6	0.02	0.14	6	0.02	0.14	5	0.02	0.13	8	0.03	0.17
Mean Positive Traditional Political Activity		0.65	1.11		0.72	1.04		0.62	0.94		0.72	1.16

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 10. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D10

Descriptives for Measure of Positive Online Political Activity Following Donald Trump Clips

	Trump on Jobs			Trump on the African American Community			Trump on Cybersecurity			Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Make a campaign donation	9	0.03	0.18	5	0.02	0.13	3	0.01	0.10	12	0.04	0.20
Subscribe to a political listserv	10	0.03	0.18	5	0.02	0.13	11	0.04	0.19	6	0.02	0.14
Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign	9	0.03	0.108	9	0.03	0.18	9	0.03	0.18	12	0.04	0.20
Join a political action group, interest group, party committee, or social media	11	0.04	0.19	9	0.03	0.18	11	0.04	0.19	7	0.02	0.16
Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	26	0.09	0.29	32	0.11	0.32	25	0.09	0.28	32	0.11	0.32
Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	33	0.11	0.32	44	0.15	0.36	36	0.13	0.33	39	0.14	0.34
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends)	42	0.15	0.35	52	0.18	0.39	38	0.13	0.34	50	0.17	0.38
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members	39	0.14	0.34	51	0.18	0.38	40	0.14	0.35	45	0.16	0.36

Mean Positive Online Political Activity	0.62	1.15		0.72	1.14		0.60	1.06		0.71	1.21

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 8.

"Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D11

Descriptives for Measure of Negative Traditional Political Activity Following Donald Trump Clips

	Trump on Jobs			Trump on the African American Community			Trump on Cybersecurity			Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Participate in any demonstrations, protests, or marches.	8	0.03	0.17	9	0.03	0.18	7	0.02	0.16	6	0.02	0.14
Attend a political rally in support of the candidate.	11	0.04	0.19	8	0.03	0.17	7	0.02	0.16	9	0.03	0.18
Participate in any local action for social or political reform.	5	0.02	0.13	8	0.03	0.17	8	0.03	0.17	9	0.03	0.18
Join a political action group, interest group, or party committee.	4	0.01	0.12	14	0.05	0.22	7	0.02	0.16	7	0.02	0.16
Door-to-door campaign against the candidate.	6	0.02	0.14	12	0.04	0.20	8	0.03	0.17	6	0.02	0.14
Talk with your neighbor, friend, or non-family member about the issue.	60	0.21	0.41	71	0.25	0.43	73	0.25	0.44	73	0.25	0.44
Talk with a family member about the issue.	83	0.29	0.45	83	0.29	0.45	84	0.29	0.46	89	0.31	0.46
Petition someone else to vote against the candidate.	10	0.03	0.18	18	0.06	0.24	13	0.05	0.21	13	0.05	0.21
Publicly demonstrate your disdain for the candidate with stickers, yard signs, or any other signatory.	5	0.02	0.13	17	0.06	0.24	7	0.02	0.16	9	0.03	0.18
Write a letter to the media to show your disdain for the candidate.	6	0.02	0.14	11	0.04	0.19	8	0.03	0.17	6	0.02	0.14
Mean Negative Traditional Political Activity		0.69	1.07		0.87	1.44		0.62	1.11		0.79	1.13

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 10. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D12

Descriptives for Measure of Negative Online Political Activity Following Donald Trump Clips

	Trump on Jobs			Trump on the African American Community			Trump on Cybersecurity			Trump on Guns and Stop and Frisk		
	Sum	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*	*Sum*	*M*	*SD*
Items												
Make a campaign donation to another candidate.	3	0.01	0.10	11	0.04	0.19	10	0.03	0.18	6	0.02	0.14
Subscribe to a political listserv.	5	0.02	0.13	7	0.02	0.16	11	0.04	0.19	11	0.04	0.19
Sign up to volunteer for a political campaign for another candidate or against this candidate.	11	0.04	0.19	9	0.03	0.18	7	0.02	0.16	7	0.02	0.16
Join a political action group, interest group, party committee, or social media.	11	0.04	0.19	14	0.05	0.22	14	0.05	0.22	11	0.04	0.19
Post links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media	32	0.11	0.32	40	0.14	0.35	33	0.11	0.32	36	0.13	0.33
Share links about the candidate's statement on your Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media.	39	0.14	0.34	46	0.16	0.37	39	0.14	0.34	39	0.14	0.34
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with non-family members (friends).	49	0.17	0.38	58	0.20	0.40	57	0.20	0.40	57	0.20	0.40
Engage in online discussion about the candidate with family members.	45	0.16	0.36	49	0.17	0.38	54	0.19	0.39	53	0.18	0.39
Mean Negative Online Political Activity		0.68	1.12		0.82	1.31		0.78	1.24		0.77	1.15

Note. $N = 287$. Participants were to indicate how they would respond, given the candidate's statement. Response ranged from 0 to 8. "Sum" indicates the number of participants who indicated they would engage in the political activity given the candidate's statement.

Table D13

Descriptives for Measure of Source Credibility

	Hillary Clinton			Donald Trump		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Competence						
Unintelligent – Intelligent	5.39	1.82	285	3.82	2.21	286
Untrained – Trained	5.24	1.82	283	2.99	2.05	285
Inexpert – Expert	5.04	1.90	283	2.87	2.05	285
Uninformed – Informed	5.01	2.03	285	3.07	2.09	285
Incompetent – Competent	4.87	2.09	284	3.13	2.20	282
Stupid – Bright	5.26	1.91	282	3.65	2.16	286
Goodwill						
Doesn't care about me – Cares about me	3.49	2.06	285	2.88	2.16	286
Doesn't have my interests at heart – Has my interests at heart	3.54	2.10	285	2.92	2.16	286
Self-centered – Not self-centered	3.46	1.98	283	2.11	1.66	285
Not concerned with me – Concerned with me	3.33	2.00	285	2.70	2.02	284
Insensitive – Sensitive	4.10	2.06	284	2.52	1.96	284
Not understanding – Understanding	4.15	2.12	285	3.02	2.16	283
Trustworthiness						
Dishonest – Honest	3.24	2.03	285	3.02	2.21	285
Untrustworthy – Trustworthy	3.50	2.12	285	2.92	2.17	286
Dishonorable – Honorable	3.42	2.08	282	2.85	2.06	283
Immoral – Moral	3.63	2.05	285	2.78	1.95	283
Unethical – Ethical	3.69	2.14	281	2.78	2.08	281
Phoney – Genuine	3.46	2.05	285	3.14	2.25	286

Note. Participants were to indicate their feelings about the candidate on a scale of one descriptor to another. Response options ranged from 1 to 7.

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Valentino, N. A., Gregorowicz, K., & Groenendyk, E. W. (2009, September). Efficacy, Emotions and the Habit of Participation. *Political Behavior, 31*(3), 307-330. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/40587287

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Curriculum Vitae

Peta Leitermann-Long

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www.linkedin.com/in/petalong | www.leitermannlong.com

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Primary: Public Communications, Public Opinion, Media and Politics, Communication Theory, Media Effects, Public Relations, Diversity & Ethics, Critical Cultural Theory, Qualitative & Quantitative Methods.
Secondary: Pan African Studies, Caribbean Studies, Philosophy, Philosophy of the Mind

EDUCATION

Syracuse University Syracuse, NY
PhD, Doctor of Philosophy August 2014 – May 2024

- Major in Mass Communications
- Courses in Public Diplomacy, Political Communications, Diversity and Inclusion, Media Psychology, Public Relations

Syracuse University Syracuse, NY
Master of Arts August 2012 - December 2014

- Major in Pan African Studies
- Course in comparative analytical studies of the African diaspora; issues and history of the global south;

University of the West Indies Kingston, Jamaica
(Incomplete) Doctor of Philosophy August 2008 - May 2012

- Major in Philosophy

University of the West Indies Kingston, Jamaica
Bachelor of Arts August 2003 - May 2008

- Major in Philosophy; Major in Media and Communications
- Specialization: Multimedia

CERTIFICATES

Canadian Center for Research Analysis and Methods | *Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis* | Calgary, Canada December 2023

Frederick Community College | *Certificate for Online Teaching Excellence* | Frederick, MD August 2020

Syracuse University | *Certificate in University Teaching* | Syracuse, NY May 2014

Caribbean Institute of Media and Communications | *Certificate in Public Relations* | Kingston, Jamaica July 2006

Caribbean Institute of Media and Communications | *Certificate in Advertising Management* | Kingston, Jamaica July 2005

THESIS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Thesis:** Michael Manley's Nationalism in the 1970's: An Analysis of the Speeches as Prime Minister of Jamaica, 2015 (Author) For the fulfillment of a Master in Arts, Pan African Studies, Syracuse University
- **Publication:** The ICC CWC 2007 Official Visitor's Guide to the West Indies, 2007 (Research Editor) Kingston: Great House Publishing and MAPCO Printers

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Frederick Community College | *Adjunct Faculty* | Frederick, MD 2019 - Present

- Critical Thinking
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Introduction to Mass Communications
- Public Speaking

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford | *Visiting Assistant Professor* | Bradford PA 2018-2019

- Introduction to Public Relations
- Newspaper Staff
- Newspaper Production
- Capstone: Public Relations
- News Editing
- Public Relations Case Problems

Syracuse University | *Instructor and Teaching Assistant* | Syracuse, NY 2012-2017

- Writing for News and Public Relations in a Digital Age
- Public Relations: The Ethics of Advocacy
- Diversity: Women in News
- Introduction to African American Studies
- Creative Writing

University of the West Indies | *Lecturer and Tutor* | Kingston, Jamaica 2009-2012

- Ethics and Applied Ethics
- Introduction to Philosophy
- History of Ancient Philosophy
- Philosophy of Religion
- Recent Philosophy I
- Recent Philosophy II

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Jiang, H., Ford, R., Long, P., & Ballard, D. (2016, March). Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in Recruitment and Retention of Public Relations Talent from Under-Represented Groups: A Study with the Arthur W. Page Society Members. Paper presented at the International Public Relations Research Conference, Orlando, FL.

- Long, P. (2010a, November). Ethical Controversies of the Free Press. Paper presented at the Cave Hill Philosophy Symposium, Cave Hill, Barbados. http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fhe/histphil/Philosophy/CHiPS/2010/abstracts.htm
- Long, P. (2010b, May). Pragmatism and Neo-Pragmatism. Paper presented at the University of the West Indies, Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy Graduate Research Day, Mona, Jamaica.
- Long, P. (2011a, November). Reconciling the modern democratic society with the "developing states" situation – The case of Jamaica. Paper presented at the Cave Hill Philosophy Symposium, Cave Hill, Barbados. http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fhe/histphil/Philosophy/CHiPS/2011/abstracts.htm
- Long, P. (2011b, July). From the Pragmatic Origins: Understanding Pragmatism. Paper presented at the Summer Institute for American Philosophy, Eugene, OR. http://pages.uoregon.edu/koopman/siap/siap_2011_schedule_final.pdf
- Long, P. (2011c, May). Pragmatism – A Definition: On Charles Saunders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. Paper presented at the University of the West Indies, Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy Graduate Research Day, Mona, Jamaica.
- Long, P. (2014, March). Nationalism in the era of the Manley Administration of the 1970s. Paper presented at the University of the West Indies, Department of History and Archeology Staff/Graduate Seminar, Mona, Jamaica.
- Long, P. (2015a, December). Political Identification, Ideology and Subscription - A Q-method Study. Paper presented at Syracuse University's 'Methodology Talk', Syracuse, NY.
- Long, P. (2015b, November). The Impact of News Satire on Twitter: A Look of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. Paper presented at the meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Long, P. (2016a, March). Framed or Framed? Hillary Clinton Email Saga. Paper presented at the meeting of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association, Seattle, WA. http://ncp.pcaaca.org/presentation/framed-or-framed-hillary-clinton-email-saga
- Long, P. (2016db, October). Team Member Engagement: Building an Inclusive Environment. Workshop given at the Public Relations Society of America International Conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Long, P. (2017, April). Did You Just Say That: Creating an Inclusive Workplace by Handling Microaggressions. Presentation at the Public Relations Society of America Northeast District Conference, Corning, NY.
- Long, P. (2018a, March). WATCHING THE DEBATES: What effect did the 2016 US Presidential Debate have on viewers? Brown Bag Presentation at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY.
- Long, P. (2018b, March). Double-Edged Sword: Learning Disability and the pursuit of grad school. Presentation with Student Accessibility Services at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY.
- Long, P. (2018c, March). Cognitive Dissonance and Black Narratives. Presented at the meeting of the Popular Culture Association Conference and American Culture Association, Indianapolis, IN.
- Long, P. (2018d, October). Talking and Walking the Diversity and Inclusion Mandate: What to Do About D&I in the Workplace. Workshop given at the Public Relations Society of America International Conference, Austin, TX. https://icon.prsa.org/meetings/742783
- Long, P. (2018e, November). Learning Disabilities and the intersection of teaching and learning: Advancing academic education. Paper presented at the meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association, Baltimore, MD. https://mapaca.net/conference/2018/p/learning-disabilities-and-intersection-teaching-and-learning-advancing-academic
- Long, P., Vickers, J., Yan, Y., & Birkhead, H. (2015, April). The Jasmine Effect - Gendered Portrayal in Media and Politics. Paper presented at the meeting of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association, New Orleans, LA.

- Yan, Y., Long, P., Vickers, J., & Birkhead, H. (2015, August). Power Women: Exploring the Effects of Political Women on Television. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, San Francisco, CA.

AWARDS

- Scholar-In-Residence, Ithaca College (2017-2018)
- Awards: Institute for Public Relations Research Conference Top Three Papers of Practical Significance Award & The Arthur W. Page Center Benchmarking Award (2016), Graduate Awardee for Philosophy (2010, 2011, 2012).

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- America Association of Political Consultants
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
- International Association of Business Communicators
- National Communication Association
- Mid-Atlantic Popular &American Culture Association
- Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association
- Public Relations Society of America
- Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy

SKILLS

- Technology: Microsoft Office Suite; Adobe Creative Suite; SPSS; NVivo; CisionPoint; Sysomos; Meltwater; Blackboard
- Research: Statistical Analysis; Quantitative Research; Qualitative Research; Q-Methodology; Mixed Methods
- Communications: Writing, Editing, Campaign Strategy; Project Management
- Other: Conflict Resolution; Counseling and Advisory; Critical Thinking; Creativity; Problem Solving; Adaptability
- Language: English (Native); French (Basic); Japanese (Basic)

PROJECTS

Campaign for Sexual and Relationship Violence Advocacy | *Organizer* | Syracuse, NY May 2014 - October 2014

- Crafted response proposal for change dealing with advocacy for victims and survivors of sexual and relationship violence at Syracuse University
- Research issues related to Title XI and systems addressing handling of victims and survivors of sexual and relationship violence
- Organized activities, meetings and special events geared towards bringing awareness of changes to advocacy center
- Facilitated meetings between stakeholders regarding university's response to victims and survivors of sexual and relationship violence.

Independent Voyces Literary Fair | *Organizer* | Kingston and St. Thomas, Jamaica January 2010 - December 2011

- Developed and managed literary activities geared towards kids for fair day including reading and storytelling session, drumming and art activities
- Promoted development of independent authors, and arranging promotions of 5 notable authors

UWI Philosophy Day | *Organizer* | Kingston, Jamaica November 2010

- Devised and executed an awareness campaign focused on culture and philosophy to commemorate the World Philosophy Day initiated by UNESCO.
- Raised profile of discipline and academic major at institution, and among students
- Arrange full day of events included student showcase debates, paper presentations and fund-raising activities to support program execution

Portmore Health and Wellness Fair | *Organizer and Event Coordinator* | Portmore, Jamaica March 2010

- Coordinated 8 free clinics, 10 expositions, workshops and seminars focused on health and wellness
- Led a team of 20 to manage a full day of activities, clinic appointments, workshops and demonstrations
- Designed promotional and advertising materials, media kits and press releases to promote event

Philosophical Circle | *Project Coordinator* | Kingston, Jamaica September 2009 - December 2009

- Grew profile of philosophy discipline at the University of the West Indies, and wider community, through public seminars, letter writing campaign and poster promotion.
- Secured support for major by increasing student declaration by 20 %

Book Drive and Library Development | *Project Coordinator* | Portmore, Jamaica January 2008 - December 2008

- Created a book recycling program to exchange over 500 used school textbooks city-wide
- Sourced an additional 500 books for a community library for primary and high school children
- Developed a proposal for homework center and after-school care concentrated on building a culture of reading.

Beyond Gutenberg | *Organizer and Presenter* | Kingston, Jamaica May 2007

- Promoted skills of 10 student graduating multimedia class through a final show case
- Piloted first showcase for graduating students.
- Provided a networking opportunity that brought industry members into the program which resulted in internship and job opportunities for students
- Increased profile of multimedia specialization through invited press coverage features on nationwide primetime news.

Women's Resource Center | *Organizer* | Kingston, Jamaica January 2007 - May 2007

- Developed programming to engage senior citizens of surrounding low-income community
- Managed intervention programming geared towards the needs of the community
- Sourced food supplies to address food-insecurity among senior population

UWI Mona Film Project | *Project Coordinator* | Kingston, Jamaica September 2006 - May 2007

- Yearlong project involving research that surveyed 200 students' knowledge of Caribbean films, developed and planned awareness campaign and educational programming which resulted in a weeklong film showcase
- Raised awareness of Caribbean films among students at the UWI through week-long film showcase

EXPERIENCE

Frederick Community College | *Adjunct Faculty* | Frederick, MD August 2019 - Present

- Developed and delivered course content in humanities and communications for a diverse student learning population (traditional and non-traditional students)
- Transitioned course from face-to-face instruction to online instructional format
- Organized courses for online-instructional formats (hybrid and net-only structures) to meet changing instructional needs

- Mentored students seeking to transition to four-year college and university programs

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford | *Visiting Assistant Professor* | Bradford, PA August 2018 - May 2019

- Developed and delivered course content in public relations to non-major and major students; taught a 4/4 teaching load
- Mentored and managed student journalists to produce a newspaper; transitioned for a semester reporting schedule to a weekly product
- Supervised public relations capstone projects for students in various academic classes. Secured community service relations, secured funding support, and assisted in project completion for graduation
- Researched and proposed course changes for division development; led program transition from active to archive; Created a strategic plan to grandfather current students to graduation
- Supported academic programs and personnel within the Division of Communications and English

Syracuse University | *Provost Faculty Fellow - Graduate Assistant* | Syracuse, NY May 2018 - August 2018

- Researched and proposed curriculum for Syracuse University Common Diversity and Inclusion Reading Program, and First Year Experience Program
- Designed short-term and long-term program proposal focused on overhauling university's core cultural and more education as a foundational and universal experience
- Boosted efficiency and engagement of program development across partners for initiative implementation in incoming freshman class of 4000 students, including meeting coordination and partner training
- Tracked and supervised implementation of target goals to fast-track project development; created feasibility projections for target achievements and realistic results for immediate, short-term and long-term change
- Organized, facilitated, and evaluated faculty training workshop on academic advising for several faculty cohorts

Syracuse University | *Instructor, Research and Graduate Assistant* | Syracuse, NY August 2014 - August 2017

- Designed and provided diversity and inclusion-based curriculum for several communication elective courses; Guided students in diversity and inclusion questions within practice and profession of media and communications
- Instructed at least one course per semester; Supported various academic programming, in public relations, public diplomacy and media studies
- Conducted in-depth research report on diversity and inclusion industry practices; Produced benchmark study for 2016 of Arthur W. Page Society Members recruitment and retention of public relations talent from under-represented groups; Received award for best study by International Public Relations Research Conference
- Served as a member of the University Senate representing graduate students, students with disabilities, students of color and international students
- Advised Vice Chancellor and Provost on graduate student lens and perspectives for internationalization; Worked and recommended changes to strategy and plan to enhance international cooperation and appeal of the University
- Advised Chancellor and President on graduate student lens and perspectives for diversity and inclusion. Worked and recommended changes to strategy and plan to create a cohesive structure and proactive platform at the University
- Evaluated and accessed degree programs' compliance, compilation, and communication efficiency as a member of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Review team

- Enhanced collaborative efforts across campus on initiatives of the International Student Services; Advocated for funding support, and advised office and director on strategy and plan for target programming
- Led workshops in diversity and inclusion best practices at academic and professional conferences; Presented research on media effects studies at various academic conferences

Graduate Student Organization | *External Vice President* | Syracuse, NY June 2016 - May 2017

- Developed campus-wide events and programming for graduate students, including annual picnic, legislative education, policy forums, and advocacy initiatives, among others.; Controlled a budget of $50,000
- Collaborated with graduate school office, and graduate programming department, to provide and communicate with students on programming for graduate students. Managed academic year agenda of activities for incoming graduate class
- Researched and created proposal for addressing changes to Title XI and dealing with advocacy for victims and survivors of sexual and relationship violence at Syracuse University
- Arranged and advocated for graduate student issues, including proposing legislation and policy to various members of Senate and Congress in Washington, DC
- Led the Research and Travel Grant program. Oversaw evaluation of research and travel grant application; Controlled a budget of $30,000

National Association of Graduate-Professional Student | *Chief Communication Officer* | Washington DC September 2014 - December 2016

- Raised awareness of organization through social media, and email marketing campaigns; Collaborated with outreach committee to grow membership in underrepresented regions
- Designed communication strategy to streamline cohesive narrative in rebranding initiative; devise and implement communication plan for 2016, to engage 90 institutions and 500,000 students nationwide
- Spearheaded press management for events and initiatives, regionally and nationally; increased press relationships through partnership and advocacy; increase annual new-release count by 200%
- Generated corporate sponsorship and partnership with organizations to meet needs of membership population; Grew partners by 50%
- Organized and managed the 2017 National Conference and annual meeting of membership
- Streamlined and furthered regional collaboration and networking, volunteering to support technical and advocacy positions necessary to meet organizational targets and campaign objectives
- Designed workshops and training for graduate student's professional and graduate student representative's advocacy initiatives; Provided support to 100 students and 20 graduate student organizations

Syracuse University | *Teaching Assistant* | Syracuse, NY August 2012 - May 2014

- Facilitated learning and instructional goals for undergraduate students of African American Studies
- Supervised 3 sections of approximately 20 students in learning tasks and discussion of Introduction to African American Studies curriculum
- Mentored undergraduate students in social and academic issues; worked with students to plan trajectory inclusive of African American studies