Extra-partisan Electoral Reform in the U.S.: The Effects of Geographic Self-interest, Core Values, and American Exceptionalism on Electoral Rule Choice

By

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To my family—Randy, Mary, and Kallan—for their boundless love, as well as to PFC Roy Virgin, for his boundless courage (three-quarters of a century ago).

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the dissertation

A central tenet in the electoral systems subfield is that parties and their members pursue opportunities to advance partisan objectives via the strategic adoption of electoral rules. This scholarly consensus exists for good reason: after all, partisans not only run for office under a given set of electoral rules, but also, they populate the deliberative bodies that make, as well as the administrative positions that maintain, them. While a focus on parties is prudent, the purpose of this dissertation is to challenge the state of the art by reconceptualizing electoral reform as a process that is more nuanced and richer theoretically than the canonical partisan self-interest approach permits.

In the following chapters, I put partisan self-interest to the test by examining a range of other, *extra*-partisan considerations that motivate political actors—whether elites or the mass public—to favor the adoption of new electoral rules or the adaptation of existing ones. Examples of such motivations include: the effect of geographic loyalty on support for electoral college reform; of predispositional core values on support for absentee voting; and, of nationalistic attitudes such as American exceptionalism on support for systemic congressional and presidential electoral reform. The major contribution of this research is that it presents a more accurate understanding of a process that is central to democratic maintenance and renewal: while the (expected) partisan effect of a reform is indeed a powerful motivation, actors possess—and chase through reform—predispositional and attitudinal objectives other than those that are immediately partisan in nature.

1.1 Geographic self-interest and electoral reform

In Chapter 2, I investigate the extent to which geographic loyalty attenuates the effect of partisan self-interest on support for electoral reform; as a case study, I focus on the

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) alternative to the electoral college. The issue of electoral college reform provides fertile ground to look for evidence of loyalty to geographic unit, because it is not neutral in its operation: it advantages marginal and overrepresented states. As such, lawmakers from disadvantaged states are liable to view a reform alternative more favorably than their co-partisans from advantaged states. To obtain original data on the compact, I collected summarized bill histories for every NPVIC bill introduced from 2006–14, using keyword searches of state legislatures' websites, and then coded each bill on how far it advanced through the legislative process.

Drawing on a number of statistical approaches, including OLS and survival analysis, I find strong evidence in favor of the extra-partisan motivation. First, and consistent with the received wisdom that parties are key reformers, NPVIC is indeed a partisan undertaking: when Democrats control state lawmaking, NPVIC advances further in the legislative process than when Republicans are in charge. However, state-level features (in particular marginality) that encourage preservation of the status quo attenuate the relationship to the point where, in advantaged states, neither party is likely to assist NPVIC. The balance is thus a modification to existing theory that directs scholars to ask not only *which* party favors/opposes a reform, but also whether, within a given party, there is a unanimity or diversity of opinion due to geography. This question is admittedly secondary to the former, but it, too, is central to comprehending the dynamics of reform.

1.2 Core values and electoral reform

In Chapter 3, I focus on another extra-partisan motivation: predispositional core values, which are best thought of as constituting an actor's understanding of the 'common good'—that is, her perception of what is beneficial for society as a whole rather than for a narrow interest. Heretofore, core values: 1) have *not* been applied to the specific issue of electoral rule choice; and more generally across issues, 2) have *not* been made to *com-*

pete against partisan self-interest. I fill each of these gaps with an original experimental design that simultaneously manipulates the partisan- and values-implications of a fictitious reform proposal on absentee voting. To operationalize core values, I use established batteries on egalitarianism, moral tolerance, self-reliance, and economic individualism. The focal topic of the electoral reform was absentee voting, a relatively non-biased (in terms of perceived partisan advantage) electoral rule.

I fielded survey experiments via MTurk and Survey Sampling International (SSI), coding each subject according to whether her treatment was congruent or incongruent with her predispositional profile. A difference of means analysis reveals strong evidence of a role for core values: not only do they have an important effect *net* of partisan concerns, but also, core values dramatically attenuate the effect of partisan self-interest in instances in which the predispositions have been made to *countervail*. The results, then, not only further demonstrate that partisan self-interest provides a partial picture of reform, but also display the underappreciated, general power of core values to wash out partisan effects when the two predispositions are in opposition to each other.

1.3 American exceptionalism and electoral reform

In Chapter 4, I examine the relationship between attitudes of national affect—in the form of American exceptionalism—and support for domestic electoral reform. I focus on the proposed implementation of 'foreign' rules that have little-to-no history in the U.S.—e.g., the Fair Representation Act (FRA), a proposed switch from single-member pluralitarian to multi-member congressional districts using Irish-style single-transferable vote (STV); and, the Equal Vote Amendment (EVA), a proposed abandonment of the electoral college in favor of French-style two-round runoff. Because individuals who believe in American exceptionalism by definition view the U.S. as being 'superior' to other nations, as well as having a 'mission' to spread American-style democracy abroad,

I theorize that exceptionalists should be more likely than non-exceptionalists to oppose the *importation* to the U.S. of other countries' rules.

To gauge the mass public's attitudes on exceptionalism, I developed an original, eight-item survey battery with a colleague, using MTurk (note: this paper is not part of the dissertation); this battery operationalizes both the special character and special mission sub-pieces of the exceptionalism concept. On a second MTurk survey, I paired this battery with vignettes about the FRA and EVA, with the treatment for each framing the focal alternative as a "foreign import," "used in Europe," and "out-of-place in America." The idea here is that, because exceptionalism is not randomly distributed among the population, we must randomly prime some respondents to have these considerations at the top of their minds when evaluating the dependent variable (i.e., support for the electoral alternative). This design allows me to convert the association between exceptionalism and support for reform into a causal story.

Although I find initial evidence that the relationship between the two variables is indeed negative (i.e., as exceptionalist sentiments increase, support for the reform decreases), a multiplicative model that interacts treatment assignment with exceptionalism yields a muddled result: while the treatment behaves as theorized, the difference between treatment group and control group is not statistically distinguishable. This is likely because the control group was accidentally 'treated' with pre-stimulus content about affect for the U.S. I conclude this chapter, therefore, with a discussion of changes one could make to the survey design, in order to avoid this problem. In future, post-dissertation work, I plan—once having established the effect of exceptionalism on electoral rule choice—to countervail this attitude with partisan self-interest, as in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 2

Competing group loyalties in electoral reform: An analysis of the U.S. electoral college

2.1 Introduction to the chapter

On December 7, 2011, then-Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R–KY) joined a small audience at the Heritage Foundation for a seminar on the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC), a proposed subnational reform to the electoral college in which states agree to commit their electoral votes, as a unit, to the winner of the aggregate, national popular vote.[1] Four months earlier, in August, NPVIC had enjoyed a milestone victory when the country's most populous state, California, had agreed to join the compact; due to this breakthrough, the proposal appeared to be gathering momentum at a critical time—just ahead of the 2012 presidential election. A proponent of the electoral college status quo, McConnell described the compact as "the most important issue in America nobody's talking about," a "dangerous" and "absurd" scheme Democratic lawmakers and activists were "sneak[ing] through" under cover of metaphorical darkness. "They are as well-funded, unfortunately, as they are well-organized, and they are getting close to the finish line," McConnell warned, calling Republicans to arms. "We need to kill [NPVIC] in the cradle before it grows up." His message was clear: Democratic tinkering with electoral rules must be stopped.[2]

[1] I would like to thank Larry Bartels, Gabriel Camargo-Toledo, Josh Clinton, Oscar Castorena, David Lewis, Scott Limbocker, Kristen Michelitch, and Mark Richardson for their helpful comments. Last presented at MPSA 2017. This chapter has been published in *Electoral Studies*; see, bibliography for full citation.

[2] Tom Curry, "McConnell Warns of Popular Vote 'Catastrophic Outcome'," *NBC News*, 7 Dec. 2011, http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/_news/2011/12/07/9280257-mcconnell-warns-of-popular-vote-catastrophic-outcome; Eliza Newlin Carney, "GOP Nonprofit Backs Electoral College," *Roll Call*,

McConnell's decision to highlight the Democrat-against-Republican contours of the electoral college reform debate certainly would not have astonished a political scientist. A central tenet in the discipline is that, because the choice of one electoral rule over another—and, more generally, of one institutional arrangement over an alternative—can affect who wins and who loses (Duverger, 1959; Lijphart, 1995; North, 1990; Powell and Vanberg, 2000; Rae, 1967), actors face incentives to strategically adopt (and adapt) electoral rules in order to advance their goals (Benoit, 2007; Boix, 1999; Bowler et al., 2006; Colomer, 2005; Renwick, 2010; but see Andrews and Jackman, 2005; Shvetsova, 2003, on the uncertain mapping of preferences into outcomes). Although previous studies have identified a range of potential electoral reformers, from colonial powers to international organizations to non-political experts, scholars tend to view "goal-seeking" political parties as the "conscious and purposive" engines that power institutional change (Benoit, 2007, p.370–72). Indeed, more than any other group, political parties not only are affected deeply by the zero-sum nature of electoral rules (i.e., one party's gain in legislative seats or executive offices is at the expense of another's), but their members also populate the very deliberative bodies often tasked with making and maintaining the system of rules that govern elections. Political parties are thus well-invested (i.e., motivated) and well-positioned (i.e., empowered) to act as electoral reformers (Benoit, 2004).

While a focus on parties (and their partisan members) is prudent, the extant literature within the electoral reform subfield has tended to neglect an obvious, but oft-unoperationalized, qualifier: electoral rules not only distribute power among parties, but among geographic units, as well. If, within a party, the partisan and geographic interests of a subset of members conflict, then electoral rule choice may set the stage for *intra*-party conflict. A lawmaker, for example, is a representative of a geographic unit *and* of a party; as such, she has two loyalties to which she must be responsive. If the policy

7 Dec. 2011, http://www.rollcall.com/news/GOP-Nonprofit-Backs-Electoral-College-210872-1.html.

positions of her two allegiances align, then the management of concurrent loyalties is a non-issue. However, and importantly, if the policy positions of the two groups pull in opposite directions (e.g., her party supports reform alternative x whereas the geographic unit she represents, i.e., her state, seeks preservation of the status quo), then the management of concurrent loyalties can be particularly effortful. In the case of the latter, the relationship between partisan loyalty and electoral rule choice surely *depends* upon the conflict variable, thus rendering partisan interest but a partial explanation: it can only account for *inter*-party differences, when *intra*-party differences, due to geography, may be just as necessary to understand.

Indeed, Leyenaar and Hazan (2011, p.443) and Blais and Shugart (2008) have each argued that the electoral reform subfield should explore the extent to which parties behave as non-unitary actors, a modification to existing theory that directs scholars to ask not only *which* party favors/opposes the reform, but also whether, within a given party, there is a unanimity or diversity of opinion. In the paper that follows, I test this conditional, 'competing loyalties hypothesis' in the United States with an original dataset on the aforementioned National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. Electoral college reform is, I argue, a fruitful place to look for a conflict between partisan loyalty and other attachments, because the institution's tendency to advantage certain states over others makes salient geographic allegiances and thus activates a second group interest. Although such systemic benefits (or, depending on one's framing preference, biases) are numerous, the literature on the normative desirability of the electoral college routinely spotlights two as being particularly valuable (critics of these distortions include Bennett, 2006; Dahl, 2003, ch.4; Edwards, 2011; and, Longley and Braun, 1972; for a defense, see Best, 1975; Ross, 2004). First, the electoral college advantages less populous states in its apportionment of electors, because of the so-called constant two or senatorial bump (henceforth, *overrepresentation*). Second, and most notably, the electoral college advan-

tages closely-divided swing states (or battlegrounds) at the expense of states that reliably (and overwhelmingly) vote for one major party over the other (henceforth, *marginality*).[3]

Because the electoral college "clearly does not operate as a neutral mechanism" (Longley and Braun, 1972, p.95), there is reason to expect that, within a party, lawmakers from swing states and small states—unlike their *co-partisan* colleagues from safe states and large states—should face incentives to defend the electoral college status quo from a reform alternative. In the analysis that follows, I find evidence in support of both the canonical partisan and the competing loyalties hypotheses. First, and consistent with the received wisdom that parties are key reformers, NPVIC is indeed a partisan undertaking: the bill advances furthest in the legislative process when Democrats control state lawmaking. However, the swing state distortion—as a feature that encourages preservation of the status quo—attenuates the relationship to the point where, in advantaged states, even Democrats are unlikely to assist NPVIC; the result of the small state distortion, while in the theorized direction, does not rise to traditional levels of significance.

Ultimately, this research makes two contributions. Most importantly, my findings speak to the growing literature on electoral reform: by highlighting circumstances under which alternative, geographic-based loyalties might cause intra-party defections to occur, I demonstrate that the relationship between partisan interest and electoral rule choice is indeed nuanced. Second, this project is the first systematic treatment of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, a proposal that—whatever outcome the future holds—history should record as a seminal moment in the saga of electoral college reform. The dataset I have assembled, which includes every NPVIC bill introduced in the country

[3] Other distortions include : 1) the apportionment of electors is based upon population rather than voter turnout; and, 2) the apportionment of electors takes 10 years to respond to population changes. In the analysis that follows, I do not operationalize either of these two distortions, as each receives little attention relative to the small state and swing state distortions and is thus unlikely to provide a salient state interest.

between 2006 and 2014, should also be a useful empirical source to future electoral college scholars (and even more so now that the 2016 election result has made NPVIC newly relevant). In Section 2.2, I briefly describe how NPVIC works. In the Section 2.3, I review the literature on electoral reform and introduce hypotheses. Section 2.4 discusses data and operationalizations, Section 2.5 presents results, and Section 2.6 concludes.

2.2 A brief overview of NPVIC

Throughout its history, the United States largely has eschewed changes to the mechanism by which it selects its president. Today, as before, it utilizes an indirect method of election: the electoral college. But just because the institution endures does not mean it lacks critics who wish to alter or replace it. Reform-minded elites and activists have, over the years, offered a range of alternatives; indeed, many of these proposals garnered consideration before Congress and a handful of state legislatures before their national ambitions fizzled (see Bugh, 2010a,b; Donovan and Bowler, 2004, ch.5; Korzi, 2010; Longley and Braun, 1972). In general, we may classify a reform proposal to the electoral college by two characteristics: first, whether it would abolish or merely modify the electoral college; and second, whether its implementation would require a constitutional amendment.[4]

Unique among electoral college reform alternatives, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact does not call for a constitutional amendment either to eliminate or modify the electoral college. Rather, it proposes a backdoor route to a national popular

[4] Four common proposals are: 1) the *proportional plan* (i.e., division of each state's electoral votes proportionally between candidates); 2) the *district plan* (i.e., division of each state's electoral votes by congressional district); 3) the *bonus plan* (i.e., unchanged allocation of state electoral votes but with special top-up electors reserved for the national popular vote winner); and, 4) the *direct vote plan* (i.e., abolition of the electoral college in favor of a two-round runoff). Each plan would require a constitutional amendment, either because it mandates a uniform allocation scheme for electors (proposals 1 and 2), generates a new class of electors (proposal 3), or eliminates the institution entirely (proposal 4). See Bugh (2010b); Haider-Markel et al. (2002); Korzi (2010); Longley and Braun (1972).

State	*Electors*	*Dem. share (%)*	*Date joined compact*	*State executive*
Maryland	10	60.9%	Apr. 10, 2007	Martin O'Malley (D)
New Jersey	14	56.7%	Jan. 13, 2008	Jon Corzine (D)
Illinois	20	58.8%	Apr. 7, 2008	Rod Blagojevich (D)
Hawaii	4	66.4%	May 1, 2008	Linda Lingle (R)
Washington	12	56.7%	Apr. 28, 2009	Christine Gregoire (D)
Massachusetts	11	62.6%	Aug. 4, 2010	Deval Patrick (D)
District of Columbia	3	92.2%	Dec. 7, 2010	Adrian Fenty (D)
Vermont	3	65.8%	Apr. 22, 2011	Peter Shumlin (D)
California	55	59.7%	Aug. 8, 2011	Jerry Brown (D)
Rhode Island	4	62.9%	Jul. 12, 2013	Lincoln Chafee (D)
New York	29	63.4%	Apr. 15, 2014	Andrew Cuomo (D)

Notes: Column 2 reports the current number of electors apportioned to each state (2010 Census), while column 3 displays the average Democratic share of the two-party presidential vote, 2004–12. In column 5, Lincoln Chafee was, during much of the legislative process, a Democratic-leaning independent; he became a Democrat in May 2013.

Table 2.1: NPVIC member states by date of passage

vote for president by capturing the machinery of the electoral college and, essentially, reprogramming it to the compact's will. Somewhat humorously, NPVIC circumvents the need for a constitutional amendment by utilizing two powers the Constitution reserves for states. First, the Constitution grants each state sole discretion over how it will distribute its electoral votes among the candidates (Article II, Section 1, Clause 2). Second, but more tenuously, Article I, Section 10, Clause 3 permits states to enter into interstate agreements (or compacts) with each other.[5] Thus, a state joins the compact and, as a

[5] More precisely, Article I, Section 10, Clause 3 states that, "No State shall, without the Consent of Congress... enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State." The Supreme Court has held, however, that congressional approval is only necessary for an agreement that increases state power at the expense of the national government. Opponents argue that NPVIC subverts a national institution and is thereby unconstitutional pending Congress' approval. Proponents have disputed this characterization of the plan. See Amar (2011); Chang (2007); Gringer (2008); Muller (2007); Williams (2012).

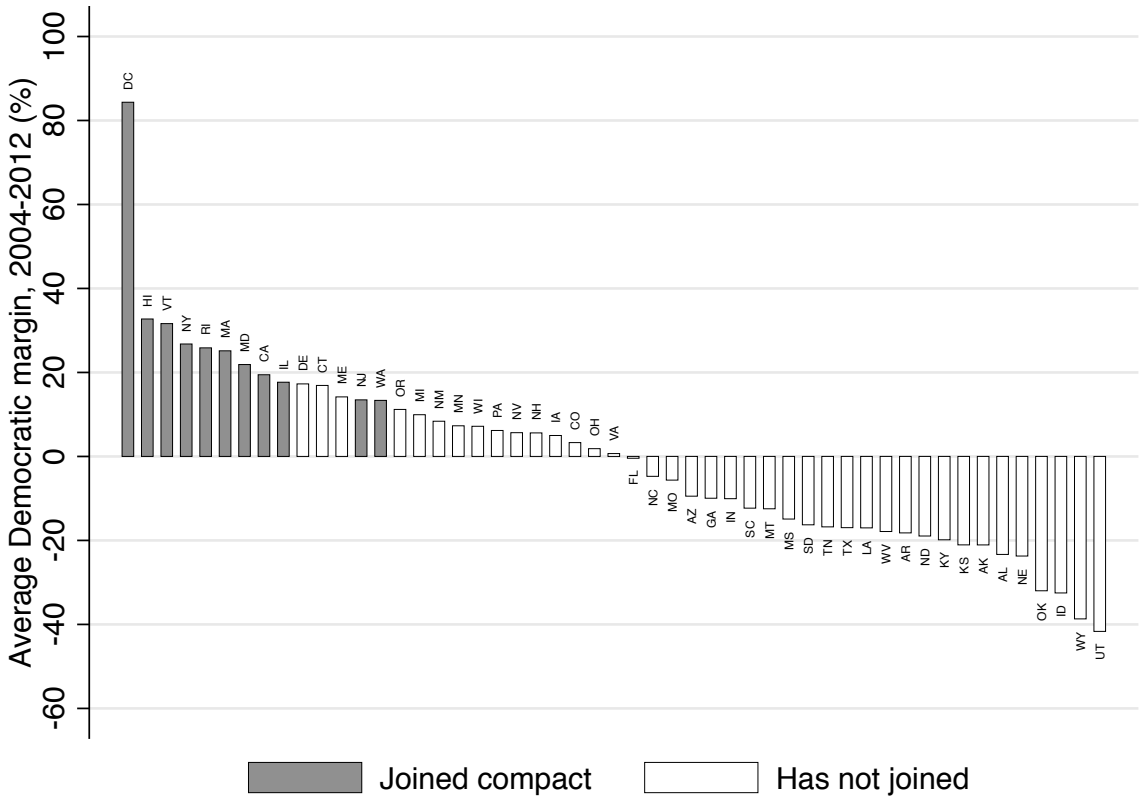

Figure 2.1: NPVIC membership by Democratic margin of the two-party vote

member, agrees to cast all of its electoral votes for the national popular vote plurality winner, rather than its state popular vote plurality winner (if different). In that NPVIC delivers a majority of electoral votes to the national popular vote winner, its design attempts to prevent "wrong winner" presidents (i.e., those who have lost the popular vote, or what the reform literature might term a "plurality reversal" or "systemic failure"; see Blais and Shugart, 2008, p.188), such as in 2000 or 2016.[6]

[6] As Gaines (2010) notes, NPVIC cannot *guarantee* an electoral college majority to the national popular vote winner, because it does not eliminate faithless electors (i.e., those who vote contrary to their pledge). If enough compact-controlled electors were to defect or blunder when casting their votes, a deadlocked electoral college or a wrong winner result—however improbable—would be possible. In the case of the former, the U.S. House would decide the election. See also, Bennett (2010).

A caveat, however, is that NPVIC is a conditional or latent reform: it remains inoperative until member states collectively reach the magic number of 270 electoral votes under compact control (i.e., a majority of the electoral college). Once this threshold is reached, the compact activates and converts the electoral college (i.e., a *de jure* indirect election) into a *de facto* direct election; how non-member states allocate their electoral votes is, largely, immaterial to determining the outcome (Koza et al., 2011; for an analysis of NPVIC's mechanical/legal weaknesses, see Bennett, 2010; Gaines, 2010; DeWitt and Schwartz, 2016; for a rebuttal to the latter, see Koza, 2016). Finally, because NPVIC utilizes state powers, it falls under the jurisdiction of each state legislature and governor (city council and mayor, for the District of Columbia).

Whatever NPVIC's merits, 10 states and DC have joined the compact (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1, placing 165 electoral votes (or 61.1% of the requisite 270) under compact control. In addition, state lawmakers in all 40 non-member states have introduced NPVIC bills (to varying degrees of success short of public law status), a fact the present project leverages to investigate the competing loyalties hypothesis.

2.3 A theory of geographic self-interest and elections

I treat the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact as a case of (attempted and ongoing) electoral rule choice, using the Benoit (2004) formal model of electoral system change to guide the analysis. A story of "partisan self-interest," Benoit's model positions political parties as the key agents of reform and predicts that rule change occurs if, and only if, two conditions are met. First, a party (or coalition of parties) possesses the institutional muscle, or "fiat power," to pass legislation (i.e., a share of legislative seats greater than the decision rule, usually a simple majority). Second, that party (or coalition) assesses an alternative electoral rule to be in its interest (i.e., it anticipates an improved legislative seat share under the alternative relative to the status quo) and is

thus "motivated" to exercise its fiat power on the issue.

As a utility-maximizing model based upon a "derived-preference theory of [office-seeking] self-interest," it provides the researcher with a "concise and falsifiable theory of electoral system change," complete with an "agenda" for empirical testing (Benoit, 2004, p.366, 374, 377). It also supplements the qualitative approach of Renwick (2010), who argues that empowered and self-interested elites tend to drive electoral reform over the objections of other (soon-to-lose) elites, or what he terms reform by "elite-majority imposition." Renwick contrasts this route with "elite-mass interaction," in which politicians partially lose control of the process to, and must share decision-making with, the mass public. Elite-mass interaction is unlikely to characterize the NPVIC case, as the public remains largely unaware of the proposal and electoral college reform, while popular in surveys, is not a salient issue: lawmakers simply are not run out for having failed to take on the electoral college. As such, congruence (Downs, 1957; Pitkin, 1967) and reelection-seeking (Mayhew, 1974) theories of representation, with their emphasis on responsiveness to public opinion, do not appear to explain observable politician support.

2.3.1 Competing group loyalties in electoral reform

While a focus on parties is advisable, these theories miss a key point: they tend to assume—for the sake of parsimony—that each party is, more or less, a unitary actor. As such, this paradigm provides little, if any, room for *intra*-party variation in the *motivation to exercise* the fiat power a given party possesses (Blais and Shugart, 2008; Blau, 2008; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011). As Tsebelis (1995, p.298) notes in his seminal study of veto power, "What happens if players are collections of individuals without identical positions?" Or, put another way, what if co-partisan actors—despite controlling the various veto points—disagree on the desirability of the electoral reform? For instance, a given party might control both chambers of a (co-equal) bicameral legislature, but

whereas co-partisans in the lower chamber support the reform, their colleagues in the upper chamber do not. Similarly, a given party might control all necessary veto points, but only party leaders are interested in the change, whereas the rank-and-file legislators support the status quo (Blais and Shugart, 2008; Blau, 2008). Or, as this paper will explore, a given party might control necessary veto points in the legislative processes of numerous subnational units, but only in a subset are co-partisans motivated to exercise their fiat power on the issue. In other words, intra-party variation may be just as important as inter-party differences in determining the fate of the alternative.

Why might a differential motivation within a given political party exist? As Blau (2008) explains in his study of electoral reform in the United Kingdom, we must focus on from where politicians' preferences on electoral rule choice originate (see also Benoit, 2007; Bowler et al., 2006; Renwick, 2010; Shugart, 2008). He notes three possible antecedents. First, "attitudes," or the lawmaker's position on whether the reform normatively is good for her country. Second, "party interest," or the utility-maximizing considerations over whether the alternative will benefit her party. And, third, "self-interest," or the utility-maximizing considerations over whether the alternative will benefit her personally, and independent of her party. While it is perhaps tempting to equate non-party self-interest with personal enrichment or career advancement, a promising source of self-interest is that of additional group loyalties, in particular, allegiance to one's geographic (i.e., subnational) unit.

Geographic considerations are important because they can potentially affect self-interest. Indeed, as Snyder (2001, p.94) argues, political processes tend to be "spatially uneven" in their effects across a given country, introducing a degree of "within-nation variation" that produces important interactions between constituent pieces. Because electoral rules distribute power (e.g., differential representation, voting weights, marginality, etc.) among geographic units, activity that is advantageous for one unit (e.g., the reform

of existing rules) might be disadvantageous for another. As such, and within a given party, a geography-induced diversity, rather than a unanimity, of opinion might characterize the electoral choice environment. As Snyder (2001) concludes, the disaggregation of countries into their constituent, subnational parts not only affects our understanding of the whole, but also the way in which we *theorize* about political phenomena, as well.

2.3.2 Application of competing loyalties to electoral college reform

The issue of electoral college reform provides fertile ground to look for evidence of conflicting loyalties, because it is not neutral in its operation: the status quo arrangement advantages some states and disadvantages others, thus setting the stage for state versus party identifications. As such, and within a party, lawmakers from disadvantaged states are liable to view a reform alternative as desirable, whereas co-partisans from advantaged states will view the alternative as anathema; or, put another way, partisan interest is held constant while state-based self-interest varies. As noted earlier, although the electoral college distorts state influence in manifold ways, in the analysis that follows I focus on the two most discussed: first, the division of the country into safe and swing states; and, second, into underrepresented and overrepresented states (Bennett, 2006; Dahl, 2003, ch.4; Edwards, 2011; Longley and Braun, 1972).

First, the swing state distortion results as follows. Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the Constitution reserves for each state the decision as to how to distribute its electors among the candidates. Forty-eight of the 50 states and DC have opted for indivisible, winner-take-all allocation of their electors to the candidate who wins a plurality of popular votes in the state (i.e., unit rule); the runner-up, no matter how infinitesimal her margin of loss, receives no electors. As such, presidential elections are won (or lost) depending on a candidate's performance in a handful of states that, fortuitously, happen to be closely-divided. In such a state, the swing of a small fraction of popular votes from one

candidate to the other could be sufficient to alter the allocation of 100% of the state's electoral votes! Candidates thus face a strong incentive to deploy their finite resources—campaign dollars, advertisements, candidate and surrogate visits, and other get-out-the-vote activities—in battlegrounds (see Shaw, 1999, 2008). Critically, this attention translates into investments in the state, whether into local businesses, into state and local party building, or into the courtship of local political players.

Additionally, there are signs that the winning candidate, upon becoming president, uses his office to shower swing states with particularistic benefits, or what has become known as the "permanent campaign." Doherty (2007, 2010) and Charnock et al. (2009), for example, each find evidence that the travel schedules of sitting presidents disproportionately favor swing states, especially the most populous ones. Similarly, swing state favoritism extends to the selective application of presidential unilateral power. Reeves (2011) demonstrates that presidents provide swing states with disaster declarations more often than safe states; similarly, Hudak (2014) and Kriner and Reeves (2015) find evidence that presidents disproportionately direct to swing states federal funds in the form of discretionary grants (but see Larcinese et al., 2006). In the face of such evidence, the received wisdom that the president serves a national constituency may indeed be untrue; like members of Congress, he appears to engage in particularistic targeting (for an encompassing recent treatment, see Kriner and Reeves, 2015).

The small state distortion presents a second source of non-party, state-based self-interest, because the electoral college reproduces the Senate's (intentional) overrepresentation of less populous states. This distortion results as follows. Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the Constitution awards to each state a number of electors to the electoral college equal in size to its congressional delegation, the latter of which is inherently malapportioned due to Article I, Section 3, Clause 1's requirement that each state receive equal representation in the Senate, irrespective of its population. Unlike the swing

state distortion, which is grounded in the logic of campaign resource allocation and economic benefits, the small state distortion is about inflated institutional power: malapportionment grants a small state elector far more weight than she would have under a population-based apportionment scheme (Edwards, 2011; Haider-Markel et al., 2002; Korzi, 2010). And, once a political minority has achieved disproportional institutional power, it typically is disinclined to support an attempt at correction (Haider-Markel et al., 2002).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that, in America, the received wisdom is that the founders purposefully designed the Senate—and thus the electoral college—with two functionalist objectives in mind: first, to protect small state interests against the tyranny of large state majorities; and, second, to enshrine the co-equal "sovereignty" of the states as members in a federal system. Although Lee and Oppenheimer (1999, ch.2) argue convincingly that the functionalist interpretation of the Senate's founding is "both flawed and ahistorical," the point is, more or less, academic: because small state lawmakers *believe* their states possess unique interests that the founders sought to protect and guarantee, it is true in practice—if not in fact. As Lee and Oppenheimer (1999, p.43) concede, "Equal state apportionment persists not because it serves any current function, but as a path-dependent consequence of [an] initial agreement more than two hundred years ago." If small states received at the nation's founding more power than they perhaps deserved, they have no reason to forfeit it now—whether in the Senate, the electoral college, or elsewhere.

Taken together, the swing and small state distortions provide two compelling competing loyalties capable of attenuating the canonical relationship between partisan interest and electoral rule choice. Before proceeding, however, the application of institutionalist models to the specific case of NPVIC requires a minor tweak to the traditional (and admittedly narrow) conceptualization of partisan interest. With electoral college reform,

state lawmakers are not selecting the rules under which *they* will be elected, but rather the rules under which the *president* will be selected. In other words, the relationship between electoral rule choice and the office-seeking interests of the (legislative) party is admittedly less direct. As a solution, I broaden the definition to include the election of *all* co-partisans, including the presidential candidate of the reform-pursuant party. Indeed, an expanded conceptualization of partisan interest perhaps better approximates the real world. As single-minded seekers of reelection (Mayhew, 1974), state lawmakers, too, should benefit—either electorally or personally—from rules that increase their party's odds of capturing the White House.[7]

2.3.3 Hypotheses

Based upon the above discussion, I develop and test the following three hypotheses about the relationship between partisan control of the legislative process and NPVIC progress. H1 tests the canonical partisan hypothesis, whereas H2 assesses the competing loyalties hypothesis:

- H1: An increase in the level of Democratic control of the legislative process is associated with greater NPVIC progress. (+)
- H2.a(b): The relationship between Democratic control and NPVIC progress will depend upon the state-level factor of marginality (overrepresentation). The condi-

[7] With many state elections being low information affairs, voters tend to rely on heuristics, such as party ID or presidential candidate approval, when deciding how to vote on down-ballot races (Schaffner and Streb, 2002), a phenomenon that generates the so-called "presidential coattail effect" (Campbell, 1986). Relatedly, Rogers (2016) finds that state legislative elections follow the vicissitudes of national politics, since voters treat the former as a "second-order election." Office-seeking aside, legislators motivated by policy concerns will prefer a president closer to their ideal point (Downs, 1957), while legislators concerned with promotion will view a co-partisan president as a means to a presidentially-appointed position (Lewis, 2010, ch.2).

tional marginal effect, then, will attenuate as we move along the continuum from safe (underrepresented) to swing (overrepresented) states. (−)

The analysis is thus at the aggregate level, with each state-year serving as an observation.

2.4 Data and operationalizations

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, I construct a dataset that combines relevant political and institutional data with information on NPVIC's advancement through the states. The four focal variables are: first, NPVIC progress through the legislative process (*npvicprog*); second, partisan control of the legislative process (*demcontrol*); and finally, two state-level electoral college advantages, marginality (*statemargin*) and overrepresentation (*stateoverrep*). The data cover the period 2006–14. (Illinois introduced the country's first NPVIC bill, Senate Bill 2724, on January 20, 2006.)

2.4.1 Dependent variable

In order to obtain data on the compact, I collected summarized bill histories for every NPVIC bill introduced from 2006–14, using keyword searches ("NPV," "NPVIC," "National Popular Vote," and "electoral college") of state legislature websites.[8] Overall, I have recovered 267 NPVIC bills across the 50 states and DC, which reduces to 262 when the District of Columbia and Nebraska are excluded for unicameralism (see next subsection). Finally, I have combined into a single bill cluster (or legislative effort) all bills introduced for state i in year j, taking the progress of the furthest advancing bill as the

[8] Two existing NPVIC sources, the records of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the NPVIC advocacy non-profit, National Popular Vote, Inc., respectively, were found to be incomplete. Because each source misses a large number of bills, I opted for a comprehensive approach based upon keyword searches of state legislature websites, reserving the NCSL and NPV, Inc. records to cross-check my own data collection.

Originating chamber	*Receiving chamber*	*Governor*	*Code*	*Cases* (%)
Not introduced	.	.	0	231 (58.2%)
Introduced; fails committee	.	.	1	100 (25.2%)
Passes committee; fails chamber	.	.	2	27 (6.8%)
Passes committee & chamber	Fails committee	.	3	16 (4.0%)
Passes committee & chamber	Passes committee; fails chamber	.	4	7 (1.8%)
Passes committee & chamber	Passes committee & chamber	Veto	5	6 (1.5%)
Passes committee & chamber	Passes committee & chamber	Sign	6	10 (2.5%)

Table 2.2: Ordinal operationalization of NPVIC progress

representative of the group. Such an approach is necessary because, within a cluster, the individual progress of a given bill is unlikely to be independent of the others: the legislature need only move on one NPVIC bill at a time. Thus, treating duplicate bills as separate data points would result in a subset of bills receiving (artificially) low progress scores for reasons unrelated to legislator support.[9] The result is 166 unique legislative efforts, or 41.8% of total observations.[10]

Next, I code each NPVIC bill cluster (henceforth, bill) on how far in the legislative process it advanced; the ordinal scale ranges from "0" (i.e., no bill introduced) to "6" (i.e.,

[9] For example, consider a pair of companion bills, one introduced in the House and the other in the Senate. If the Senate committee sits on its bill out of deference to the House, then the progress of the Senate bill clearly depends upon the progress of its House companion. Similarly, a House committee faced with three duplicate House bills is unlikely to act on all three. Rather, it proceeds with one and neglects the other two. Relatedly, in many states, the summarized bill histories do not state explicitly whether a given same-session bill is part of a companion arrangement, is a competitor to another bill, or even is a replacement for an earlier, stalled effort still in the process of dying.

[10] With 49 states over nine years, there are 441 potential state-year pairings. Once a state joins the compact, however, it cannot introduce NPVIC legislation in subsequent years. These 44 observations therefore are coded as missing, to indicate that no NPVIC introduction was possible. Of the remaining 397 observations, 231 are coded as "0" to indicate no NPVIC bill given that introduction was possible, leaving 166 legislative efforts.

public law status), as seen in Table 2.2. In general, the scale focuses on whether a bill passes out of the originating chamber committee system, receives and wins its originating chamber floor vote, passes out of the receiving chamber committee system, receives and wins its receiving chamber floor vote, and is signed into law by the state executive (or becomes law over her veto). The more steps the NPVIC legislative effort clears in a given state-year, the higher-valued its coding. In constructing the scale, I have been guided by the concern that each value be accessible to each state-year observation. (For information on the simplifying assumptions I used to standardize the legislative process across 51 subnational units, see the Appendix.)

2.4.2 Independent variable

For the partisan control variable, I obtained for each state-year observation the share of House seats and Senate seats for each major party, as well as information on the partisan control of each state's governorship.[11] From this data, I develop an 8-point ordinal scale of the degree to which the legislative process for a given observation is under Democratic control, which ranges from "0" (i.e., complete Republican control) to "8" (i.e., complete Democratic control). The measure is a composite of two quantities: first, the number of steps in the legislative process Democrats control, of which there are three: the *lower chamber* (House or Assembly), the *upper chamber* (Senate), and the *governorship*; and, second, the size of the Democratic majority in a given chamber, a continuous variable I divide into three bins: *strong* ($x \geq .55$), *weak* ($.50 < x < .55$), or *none* ($x \leq .50$).

The use of these criteria produces an initial 16 unique combinations. To obtain the 8-point scale, however, I make a number of assumptions, which improves the parsimony of the variable without harming its validity. First, I treat the chambers of a bicameral

[11] Data source for legislative and executive control: Council of State Governments (CSG) for 2006–08; National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) for 2009–14.

Steps controlled	*Legislature*	*Governor*	*Code*	*Cases* (%)
0	Neither chamber	.	0	193 (48.6%)
1	One chamber weakly	.	1	32 (8.1%)
1	One chamber strongly	.	2	33 (8.3%)
2	Both chambers weakly	No	3	1 (.3%)
2	Both chambers, one weakly and one strongly	No	4	14 (3.5%)
2	Both chambers strongly	No	5	37 (9.3%)
3	Both chambers weakly	Yes	6	3 (.8%)
3	Both chambers, one weakly and one strongly	Yes	7	21 (5.3%)
3	Both chambers strongly	Yes	8	63 (15.9%)

Notes: Control of governorship immaterial for rows 1 to 3, per assumptions noted in text.

Table 2.3: Ordinal operationalization of partisan control

legislature as interchangeable, because either may act as the originator of NPVIC legislation and there would seem to be no obvious advantage to beginning the process in one chamber as opposed to the other. Second, the only role provided for the governor is that of signer or vetoer; all other roles (e.g., lobbyist, agenda-setter, public advocate, etc.) are placed aside. As such, Democratic control of the governorship is immaterial when the party does not control both chambers, because presumably Republican control of at least one chamber would prevent the bill from reaching the governor. A final set of assumptions supplies the ordinality of the scale. I assume that it is better for Democrats to control: first, a given chamber strongly; second, the legislature to the governorship (since the governor is relevant only at the end of the process); and, third, as many steps as possible (but see point 2).[12]

[12] A few minor issues of possible measurement error are worth mentioning. First, in cases of a 50–50% split of a chamber between Democrats and Republicans, I award a code of "None" (0) as a precaution, although tie-breaking procedures could end up giving Democrats a weak majority. Such instances, however, are exceedingly uncommon. Second, seats vacant at the time of data collection are in essence missing values. Third, chamber partisan compositions, as well as the governor's party identification,

2.4.3 Moderating variables

For each state-level moderator, I opt for an operationalization that produces a continuous variable.[13] First, I calculate the marginality of each state i for each year j using the two-party presidential vote from the election prior or equal to the state-year observation. As seen in Equation 2.1, I have transformed the variable so that higher values denote increased marginality and, thus, greater status quo advantage. The most (least) marginal state possible is 1 (0).

$$statemargin_{ij} = 1 - |demshare_{ij} - repshare_{ij}| \tag{2.1}$$

Stated in terms of H2, as *statemargin* increases we should expect to see the hypothesized positive relationship between Democratic control and NPVIC progress attenuate.

Second, I calculate the overrepresentation of state i for each year j using the ratio between each observation's share of electoral college electors and of the national population (excluding all U.S. territories but including D.C.). As seen in Equation 2.2, a 1:1 ratio represents perfect parity between a given observation's elector and population shares; values greater than one indicate overrepresentation, whereas values less than one indicate underrepresentation.

$$stateoverrep_{ij} = \frac{electorshare_{ij}}{popshare_{ij}} \tag{2.2}$$

are taken at the beginning of a legislative session. This could be a problem if the composition of the legislature or the party of the governor changes between the time a bill was introduced and the later stages in its life. However, the use of partisan data at the start of a legislative session is, to my knowledge, standard within the state legislative studies subfield.

[13] Data source for marginality: U.S. National Archives, presidential election results 2004–12. Data source for overrepresentation: U.S. Census Bureau, population estimates 2006–2014, as well as the U.S. National Archives, number of electors per state 2004–12.

Stated in terms of H2, as *stateoverrep* increases we should expect to see the hypothesized positive relationship between Democratic control and NPVIC progress attenuate.

Variable	*Type*	*Obs.* (n)	*Mean*	*Median*	*s.d.*	*Min.*	*Max.*
NPVIC progress	Ordinal	397	.806	0	1.34	0	6
Democratic control (unweighted)	Ordinal	397	1.08	1	1.2	0	3
Democratic control (weighted)	Ordinal	397	2.55	1	3.14	0	8
State marginality	Continuous	397	.845	.859	.104	.507	.999
State overrepresentation	Continuous	397	1.31	1.08	.534	.776	3.18

Table 2.4: Descriptive statistics for key variables

2.5 Analysis

To test the above mentioned hypotheses, I estimate three Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models; OLS has the benefit of being the most easily understood regression method, due both to its ubiquity and the imposed linear nature of its effects. However, an ordinal dependent variable may violate OLS's assumption that the intervals between its categories are equivalent (i.e., that movement from one point on the ordered scale to the next entails constant difficulty; for more, see Long, 1997). As such, I also run a series of ordered probit models as a robustness check. The results of this specification support those of the OLS, and thus are reserved for the online Appendix. Turning back to the OLS specification, all models use standard errors clustered on the state.[14]

2.5.1 Results

The first model is a simple bivariate baseline, whereas the second includes covariates for marginality and overrepresentation. Together, these linear additive models test the

[14] Clustering the standard errors on the year, rather than on the state, does not affect the results.

canonical partisan hypothesis (H1) of the electoral reform literature. The result of the baseline linear-additive model in Table 2.5 provides early support for the canonical partisan hypothesis: a one-unit increase in Democratic control is associated with a .181 increase in NPVIC progress. In short, and to return to the language of Benoit (2004), partisan (i.e., Democratic) fiat power appears to drive NPVIC's state-by-state advancement. This finding is robust to the inclusion, in Model 2, of the marginality and overrepresentation covariates. Although each of the two state characteristics is properly signed as negative (i.e., as a state becomes more advantaged by the status quo, NPVIC legislation falters), only marginality rises to traditional levels of statistical significance.

Ultimately, however, I am interested not merely in the presence of partisan fiat power but also in the differential motivation to exercise it—that is, its *intra*-party conditionality. As noted earlier, marginality and overrepresentation should provide the self-interest incentives necessary to override the relationship between Democratic control of the legislative process and NPVIC progress: Democrats in status quo-advantaged states have a stake in the maintenance of the existing institutional order that their co-partisans in disadvantaged states lack (i.e., the competing loyalties hypothesis). The proper model to test a conditional hypothesis is a multiplicative specification (Brambor et al., 2006; Franzese and Kam, 2009). As such the third model employs two interaction terms, between Democratic control and each of the two moderators, respectively. The conditional marginal effect of *demcontrol* on *npvicprog*, then, is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\partial npvicprog}{\partial demcontrol} = \beta_1 + \beta_3\Big(statemarginality\Big) + \beta_5\Big(\overline{stateoverrep}\Big) \tag{2.3}$$

$$\frac{\partial npvicprog}{\partial demcontrol} = \beta_1 + \beta_3\Big(\overline{statemarginality}\Big) + \beta_5\Big(stateoverrep\Big) \tag{2.4}$$

Where β_1 is the direct effect of Democratic control on NPVIC progress and β_3 and β_5 are

the coefficients on the marginality and overrepresentation interaction terms, respectively.

	(1) NPVIC progress	(2) NPVIC progress	(3) NPVIC progress
Democratic control (w)	0.181***	0.178***	1.041***
	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.233)
State marginality		-2.661***	-0.854*
		(0.857)	(0.426)
Democratic control x marginality			-0.969***
			(0.246)
State overrepresentation		-0.223	-0.153***
		(0.137)	(0.055)
Democratic control x overrepresentation			-0.0351
			(0.058)
Constant	0.346***	2.894***	1.270***
	(0.048)	(0.808)	(0.406)
N	397	397	397
R^2	0.178	0.214	0.255

Robust standard errors in parentheses; all models OLS
$*p < .10$, $**p < .05$, $***p < .01$

Table 2.5: Marginal effect of Democratic control on NPVIC progress

Model 3 in Table 2.5 reports the coefficients for β_1, β_3, and β_5. There, the 1.041 coefficient on Democratic control is meaningless, because in reality, no election will result in a state marginality score of 0 (i.e., perfectly safe). As such, with an interaction model, we are "not directly interested" in the significance and magnitude of the "model parameters per se," and must therefore "go beyond the traditional results" of a regression table (Brambor et al., 2006, p.74). The standard errors are also meaningless, because those reported in the standard regression table refer to a situation in which the moderating variable is held at 0. This is an important point. As Brambor et al. (2006, p.74) note, "It is perfectly possible for the marginal effect of X on Y to be significant for substantively relevant values of the modifying variable... even if the coefficient on the interaction term [in the regression table] is insignificant."

Figure 2.2 (Figure 2.3) graphically represents the extent to which marginality (over-

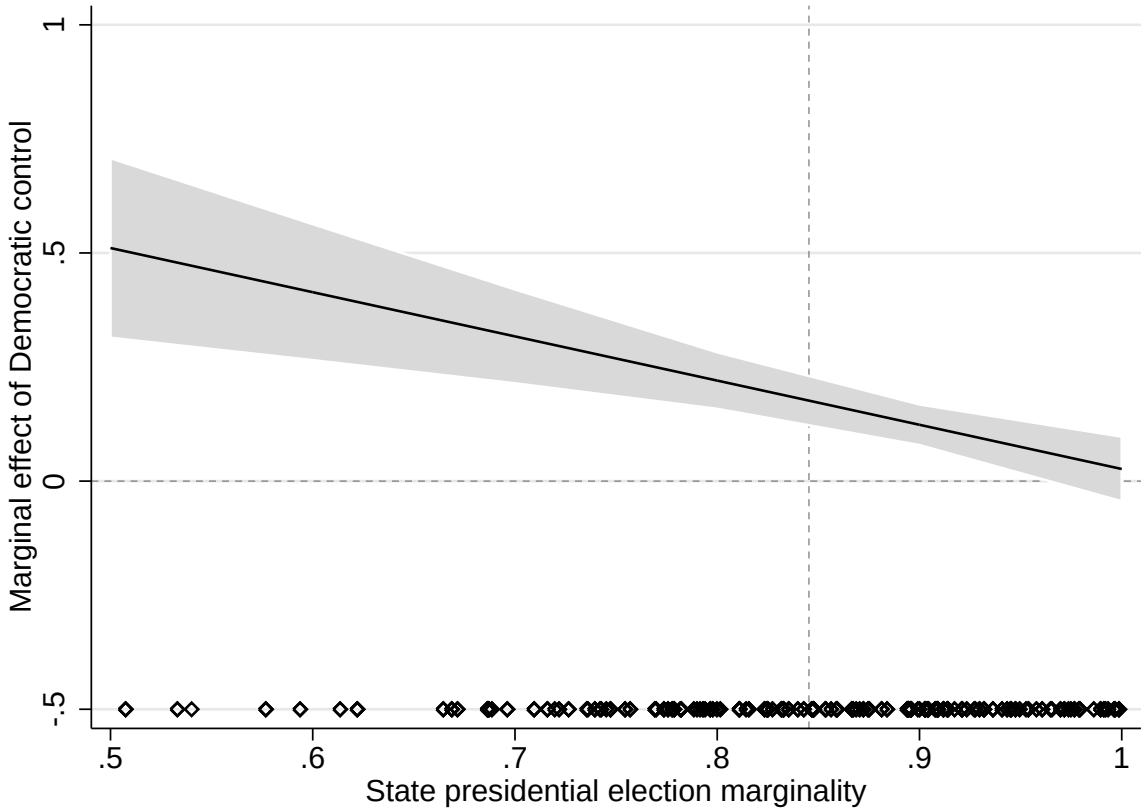

Figure 2.2: Marginal effect conditional on marginality

representation) moderates the relationship between Democratic control and NPVIC progress, with overrepresentation (marginality) held at its mean. Plotted along the x-axis is the focal moderator, with movement from left to right indicating greater electoral college advantage; the y-axis displays the marginal effect of Democratic control on NPVIC progress, such that a downward slope to the line indicates a marginal effect that decreases as the moderator increases in value. Turning first to the moderating effect of marginality (Figure 2.2), we find strong, statistically significant support for H2.a: as states become more marginal, the effect of Democratic control on NPVIC progress attenuates, more or less, to zero. Thus, in the world of safe and swing states, partisan fiat power is but a partial explanation for NPVIC progress: the swing state distortion presents lawmakers with

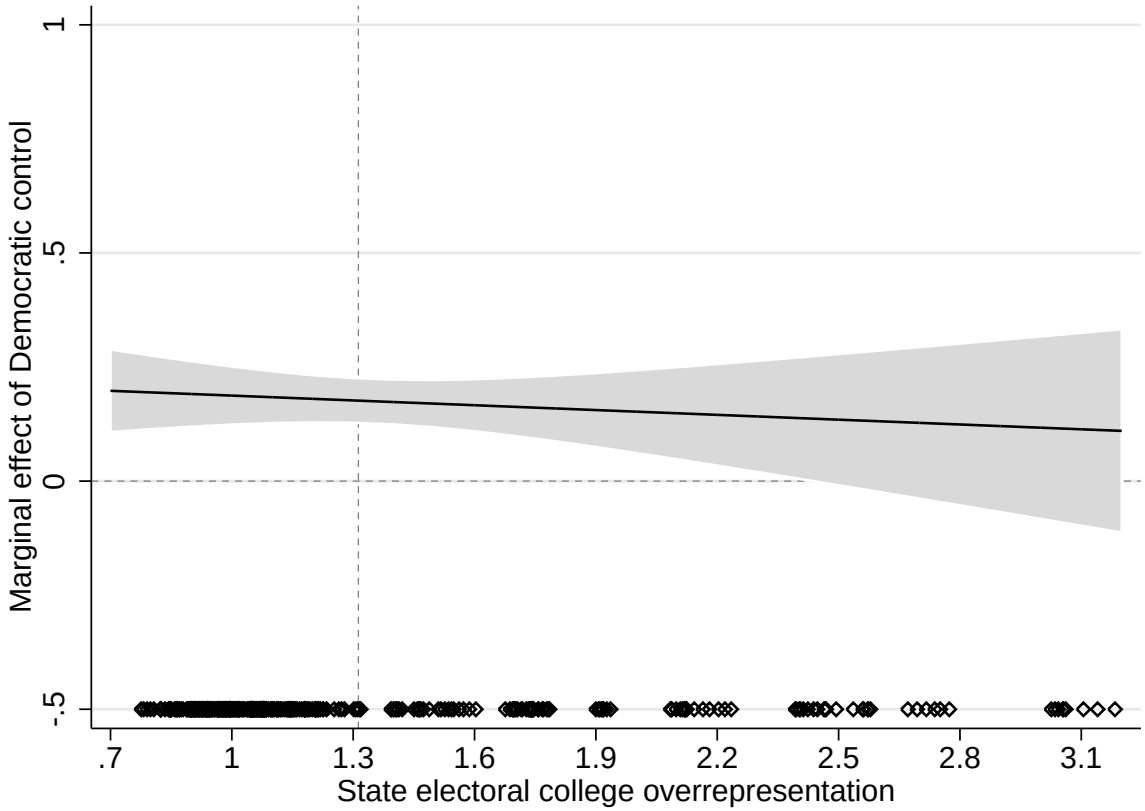

Figure 2.3: Marginal effect conditional on overrepresentation

a salient competing loyalty and thus generates intra-party variation in the motivation to exercise partisan fiat power. With respect to overrepresentation (Figure 2.3), there is little evidence in support of H2.b. True, as states become more overrepresented the effect of Democratic control on NPVIC progress attenuates, but the magnitude is appreciably small and, moreover, the result does not meet traditional levels of statistical significance. Thus, here partisan interest is perhaps a sufficient explanation, as the small state distortion does not generate intra-party variation.

2.5.2 Discussion

Stuck at 165 of the 270 electoral votes necessary for activation, the question for the compact is from where the remaining 105 electoral votes can come. The results of the foregoing analysis of NPVIC's 2006–14 march through the states indicate that, if the past is indeed prologue, NPVIC's pending search for new members should be most fruitful in Democratic-controlled states the electoral college status quo disadvantages. Indeed, swing status is such a strong moderator that at the far end of the spectrum the effect of partisan control on NPVIC progress disappears almost entirely.

That said, the theme of 2016 has been that past trends may not continue into the future. With respect to NPVIC, the results of the 2016 election could lead to a shift, 2017 and beyond, in the type of support the compact receives from Democrats: that is, a conversion to the canonical partisan hypothesis, with newfound *unity* in place of previous, conditional support. There are a few reasons this could come to pass. First, with the party's old 2000 wounds reopened and the partisan identity of swing state Democrats newly primed, the pull of competing state loyalties could weaken. Additionally, the electoral college will likely continue to disadvantage Democratic presidential candidates, due to the geographic distribution of the party's voters (i.e., concentration in metropolitan areas and on the coasts). As a result, swing state Democrats, if and when they gain control of their respective legislative processes, might conclude their party's interests—and perhaps their own progressive ambitions, as well—are best served by an alternative to the status quo.[15]

[15] John Frank, "Colorado Democratic Lawmakers Push Effort to Elect the President by National Popular Vote," *The Denver Post*, 15 Feb. 2017, http://www.denverpost.com/2017/02/15/colorado-presidential-election-national-popular-vote/; Susan Haigh, "More States Consider Working around the Electoral College," *Associated Press*, 23 Dec. 2016, http://www.yahoo.com/news/more-states-consider-working-around-electoral-college-183558370.html.

For now, however, the competing loyalties hypothesis adequately captures the NPVIC landscape. Nevertheless, work remains to be done with respect to the *direction* of the canonical partisan effect. While my statistical analysis—like a few earlier accounts based upon descriptive data (e.g., Gaines, 2010; Silver, 2014)—has further illuminated the extent to which NPVIC is tied to Democrats, we still lack a good understanding as to why *this* party, as opposed to the Republicans, is supportive of the compact. In other words, what *motivates* Democratic lawmakers to exercise their fiat power on this issue? Perhaps two plurality reversals have primed Democrats to view the electoral college as an institution that mechanically works against their partisan interests;[16] or, alternatively, perhaps the party, ideologically-speaking, views reform as a means to a more normatively palatable system—one that would be easier to use, to understand, and to accept as legitimate. Looking comparatively, Bowler et al. (2006), for example, have found that politicians on the left are more likely than those on the right to favor electoral reform. Absent corroboration from systematic elite interviews, however, any explanation is mere conjecture.

2.6 Conclusion

When Sen. Mitch McConnell (R–KY) spoke to the Heritage Foundation in December 2011 about the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC), he sang the kind of partisan, zero-sum tune that scholars of electoral reform have come to expect: because

[16] An interesting thought exercise is to consider how support for NPVIC might change if a wrong winner lightening bolt were to strike Republicans rather than Democrats. Would it lead to bipartisan support for NPVIC? Or, perhaps, would the positions of the parties shift, with Democrats in opposition and Republicans in favor? This is more than an academic point: in 2012, it was for a time possible that Barack Obama could win the electoral college while losing the popular vote to his Republican challenger (Silver, 2014). Indeed, a key shortcoming of NPVIC is that, as a statutory measure, it could be vulnerable to such electoral vagaries (Gaines, 2010).

electoral rules affect who wins and who loses, the issue of electoral rule *choice* tends to place parties in opposition to each other. True, parties (in pursuit of advantage) are the engines that power institutional change, but the canonical partisan hypothesis—with its focus on *inter*- rather than *intra*-party conflict—risks missing, in the name of parsimony, the potential nuances of the reform process. Indeed, Leyenaar and Hazan (2011, p.443) and Blais and Shugart (2008) have each argued that one of the next lines of inquiry for the subfield is to explore the extent to which parties should be conceptualized (and operationalized) as non-unitary actors. The balance is thus a modification to existing theory that directs scholars to ask not only *which* party favors/opposes the reform, but also whether, within a given party, there is a unanimity or diversity of opinion. This question is admittedly secondary to the former, but it is often just as central to comprehending the dynamics of reform.

The present study joins this enterprise by highlighting the extent to which alternative, geographic-based interests might conflict with party-based interests and thus lead to intra-party defections on the issue of electoral college reform (i.e., the competing loyalties hypothesis). Using an original dataset on NPVIC's progress through the U.S. state legislatures, my analysis indicates that (to capture accurately the on-the-ground reality of NPVIC) McConnell's speech required a qualifier: while the bill tends to progress the furthest in the legislative process when Democrats are in control, the party's support for the compact is actually conditional on geographic-based considerations, such as a state's swing status; the result on small state overrepresentation is null. In other words, context matters: in some states, the partisan and geographic interests of Democrats align, whereas in others, they misalign. The party is thus not a monolith, and as such, partisanship alone provides an incomplete picture.

As with all case studies, NPVIC involves country-specific details that, at a minimum, encourage caution in a discussion of the finding's generalizability—after all, the elec-

toral college is a peculiar institution.[17] That said, the competing loyalties hypothesis has broad applications, both in terms of other geographic units in the U.S., other countries, other electoral institutions, and even other policy domains. For instance, federal systems, in their layering of the levels of government (and thus of party organizations), offer fertile ground for partisan versus geographic conflicts, such as over congressional redistricting or the movement from constituency-based single-member plurality to list proportional representation. Yet another avenue for conflicting loyalties is partisan versus ethnic/tribal or gender identities, such as over the use of majority-minority districts, special ethnic voter rolls (e.g., the Maori electorates in New Zealand), or gender quotas. Beyond electoral rules, many issues—energy policy, social policy, etc.—often force lawmakers to balance partisan and geographic loyalties. Future research might take up such additional cases, improve upon the present project by locating individual-level data, or by employing a cross-national design (perhaps one that uses variation in the maturity of a country's party system or its degree of party discipline to see if the relationship is further moderated). By studying NPVIC and other cases like it around the world, we can improve our understanding of the process of electoral reform and can continue to refine our theories of the conditions under which it occurs.

[17] While Blais and Shugart (2008, p.184) believe in the pursuit of generalizable patterns with respect to electoral reform, it is perhaps worth repeating their ever-eloquent disclaimer: "...the path of electoral reform...is a complicated one, that...varies immensely across countries and over time...A detailed understanding of the various cases ought to make us wary about bold assertions about necessary and/or sufficient conditions."

Chapter 3

The effect of core values on support for electoral reform: Evidence from two survey experiments

3.1 Introduction to the chapter

At a minimum, democratic government is electoral government: the governed mass public must possess the means to regularly select and sanction its governors (Dahl, 1989; Powell, 2000; Schumpeter, 1942, ch.11–12).[1] But if elections are the foundation of democracy, then the rules that structure the electoral game are its bricks and mortar: by stipulating how an election is to run (Massicotte et al., 2004), they constrain the behavior of parties and candidates, voters and officials. More importantly, certain rules are liable to advantage some political actors and to disadvantage others, as well as to affect who wins and loses the election. Rae (1967) candidly assesses the importance of electoral rules as follows: "Electoral laws are of special importance for every group and individual in a society, because they help to decide who writes the other laws"—i.e., the actual policy outputs about which citizens care. No wonder, then, that the *way* we vote fascinates astute participants and spectators, alike.

A central tenet in the electoral systems subfield is that, because the rules can affect who wins, parties and their members pursue opportunities to advance partisan objectives via the strategic adoption and adaptation of electoral rules (Benoit, 2004, 2007; Boix, 1999; Renwick, 2010; Colomer, 2005; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011; Cain, 2014). In other words, when given the choice between a rule that helps and a rule that hurts her party,

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a partisan (acting rationally) should pick the former—defending it from attack if it is the status quo; or, leading the charge for reform if it is the alternative. This scholarly consensus exists for good reason: not only is partisan identification a stable and visceral, group-based predisposition (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Green et al., 2004; Bartels, 2002), but also electoral rules affect parties more than any other group: their slates and candidates run as 'partisan teams' under such rules and, once in office, their elected and appointed members populate the deliberative bodies and administrative positions tasked with making and updating the rules that govern the conduct of elections. Additionally, survey and experimental evidence indicate that both elites (Bowler et al., 2006) and the mass public (Biggers, 2018; Alvarez et al., 2011; Wilson and Brewer, 2013) reason about electoral institutions in partisan terms, actively searching for (or at least passively open to) opportunities for gain. As such, scholars return again and again to "goal-seeking" parties as the "conscious and purposive" engines that power institutional change (Benoit, 2007, 370–72).

Having anointed partisan self-interest *the* key determinant of electoral rule choice, the extant literature largely has dismissed other potential motivations (cf. Renwick, 2010; Bowler and Donovan, 2013). But if a neglected determinant, too, has an appreciable effect on actors' decision-making on the reform issue, then a narrow focus on partisan concerns is inappropriate, as it is incomplete. In this paper, I put to the empirical test one such neglected political predisposition: *core values*, defined as a set of normative-based, abstract beliefs "about desirable modes of conduct or desirable end-states of existence" that guide citizens in their evaluations of policy and people (Rokeach, 1973; McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Feldman, 1988; Schwartz, 1994; McCann, 1997; Goren, 2001, 2005; Alvarez and Brehm, 2002). Put another way, core values—of which egalitarianism, tolerance, self-reliance, and individualism are prominent examples—constitute one's understanding of 'right and wrong' and, as such, of how a 'good person' ought to behave and of how a

'good society' ought to operate. In theory core values should be germane to the issue of electoral rule choice because they engage notions of fairness, representativeness, equality, self-worth, order and security, etc.—that is the very building blocks of how an ideal election ought to be structured, the individuals it ought to include, and the collective outcomes it ought to produce.

Do individuals deploy their core values when taking a decision on electoral reform? If so, in what way do their values *interact* with their partisan goals on the same issue? If, for example, a political actor is confronted with a reform predicted to advance her conception of the common good but to harm her party, what does she do: does she sacrifice the value for the partisan gain, sacrifice the partisan gain for the value, or become paralyzed by indecision?

To answer these questions, I utilize a factorial experimental design that manipulates the partisan- and values-implications of a fictitious reform proposal on absentee voting; this design allows me to control the number of factors to which a respondent is exposed: 1) partisan self-interest only; 2) the focal value only; or, 3) various combinations of the two. Across two different samples, I find strong and consistent evidence of a role—*net* of partisan concerns—for core values. Furthermore, for situations in which the focal value and partisan self-interest have been made to pull in opposite directions, I find that the former can dramatically attenuate the effect of the latter—i.e., in the data, individuals express support for rule changes that *disadvantage* their preferred party, provided their core value is advanced. As such, I demonstrate that the relationship between partisan self-interest and electoral reform is indeed more nuanced than the received wisdom has let on: other motivations shape the process, too.

Although the issue on which I focus is electoral reform, my findings have broad implications for position-taking across issue domains, and join existing work—by Goren and his coauthors especially (Goren, 2001, 2005; Goren et al., 2009)—in exploring (and fill-

ing out) the complex, fascinating relationship between these two bedrock predispositions. Relative to existing observational work on the interaction between partisanship and core values, this paper's factorial design provides for a notable gain in causal identification, in two ways. First, although we cannot randomly assign a partisan identity or a value position to an individual, we can nonetheless randomly prime which of these two predispositions is at the top of her mind; the factorial design thus gives us greater confidence that, when answering a question on her support for a given reform proposal, we know about what the focal respondent is thinking. Second, and unlike in observational studies, the factorial design allows the researcher to pull the levers of partisan self-interest and core values against each other and, due to the nature of the electoral reform issue, in a way that is quite believable. Indeed, this paper is the first to pit core values and partisan self-interest head-to-head in countervailing situations.

An additional contribution is that, as Leyenaar and Hazan (2011, 440–43) convincingly have argued, one of the next lines of inquiry for the electoral reform subfield is to seek a "synthesis of determinants" for reform, by theorizing about and testing motivations *other* than the "dominant" partisan self-interest approach. The present study joins this enterprise as the first to apply the insights of the core values literature to the issue of electoral rule choice, and in doing so, highlights the extent to which one such alternative, predispositional core values, must be a part of our explanations for electoral reform. In Section 3.2, I outline theory and introduce hypotheses. In Section 3.3, I elaborate on the experimental design, including my data sources, coding scheme, and empirical strategy. Section 3.4 presents results, and Section 3.5 concludes.

3.2 A theory of core values and elections

The potential of electoral rules to affect—mechanically and psychologically—who wins and loses (e.g., Duverger, 1959; Rae, 1967; Blais and Carty, 1991; Lijphart, 1994; Cox,

1997) makes them a prime target for political actors in search of an advantage. Although previous studies have identified a range of potential electoral reformers, from colonial powers to international organizations to academics and experts (see Benoit, 2007, for a review), typically scholars of electoral reform focus on the role of political parties. More than any other group, parties are *well-invested* (i.e., their members run for office under these rules) and *well-positioned* (i.e., they control the legislative and administrative offices in charge of making and enforcing the rules) to act as reformers (Boix, 1999; Colomer, 2005; Benoit and Schiemann, 2001; Pilet, 2007; but see Andrews and Jackman, 2005; Shvetsova, 2003; Sakamoto, 1999, on the way in which imperfect information makes parties uncertain, and thus at times reluctant, reformers). The quintessence of this approach is the Benoit (2004) model, which positions parties as the key agents of reform and predicts rule change will occur if and only if: first, a party possesses the "fiat power" (e.g., a majority of seats in the assembly) necessary to pass the legislation; and second, the same party is "motivated" to pursue an alternative to the status quo rule, believing the former will improve its subsequent electoral performance. Supplementing this approach, survey-based studies have found that party elites (Bowler et al., 2006) and partisans in the mass public (Biggers, 2018; Alvarez et al., 2011; Wilson and Brewer, 2013) indeed think about electoral rules in such group-based terms.

3.2.1 Core values and position-taking

The dominance of the partisan-self interest approach, however, has masked a key problem: the extant literature largely has neglected to examine other potential determinants of electoral reform, as well as to investigate the way in which such motivations may interact with partisan-self interest on the issue. True, the reform literature occasionally concedes that "values," however vaguely defined, may play a role in the process of reform—for example, an actor may not pursue a partisan objective but rather a societal

good, such as a "social concern [for] fairness or representation, a concern with producing good government, safeguards against hyperconcentration of power, and so on" (Benoit, 2007, p.380–81; see also Renwick, 2010, ch.2, p.37–46). As Renwick notes, many scholars dismiss values as being of little consequence to rule choice relative to partisan concerns (cf. Blais and Massicotte, 1997; Katz, 2005):

> For some authors, it seems that these [partisan self-interest] are the only considerations that matter. Riker (1984, p.103) contends that 'most actual choices [of electoral systems] have been made with the intention of promoting partisan advantage rather than with the goal of incorporating sound constitutional principles into governmental structure.' Kellner (1995, p.23) observes aphoristically that, 'In politics, when principle collides with self-interest, principle tends to retreat with a bloody nose.' (Renwick, 2010, p.37)

Benoit (2007, p.380–82), similarly, concedes that extra-partisan concerns, such as ensuring fair outcomes, ease of use, enhanced efficacy, etc., "tend to figure more in the rhetoric of electoral reform than in actual decision making." That is, an actor's invocation of values is likely to be "strategic [rather than]. . . genuine," a way to appeal to the mass public in light of the fact that overt appeals to partisan self-interest tend not to fare particularly well (Bowler and Donovan, 2013, p.54–55). Where the extant literature *does* credit values, however, is during times of crisis. More than most, Renwick (2010, p.50) has attended to the relationship between values and electoral reform, but in his story, values primarily matter to rule choice when systemic, institutional failure "seriously threatens" the polity and its way of life. In this exceptional circumstance, elites and the public rally around reform as a means to re-secure the values that undergird their society (see also Sakamoto, 1999; Shugart, 2001). The implication is that during periods of 'normal politics,' partisans will resume their search for advantage, pushing values aside.[2]

[2] An important exception is Bowler and Donovan (2013, ch.2–3), who surveyed U.K. voters during the 2011 Alternative Vote referendum. They find that views on procedural fairness, majoritarianism, and voter influence over officials indeed affected citizen position-taking on the reform: "The attitudes

Battery	*Item*
Egalitarianism	1. Our society should make sure that everyone has an equal chance to get ahead in life.
	2. Our country would be better off if people were truly treated equally.
	3. Our society should do what is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
Moral tolerance	1. The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.
	2. We should be tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are different from our own.
	3. Our society does not need to be accepting of individuals whose values or behaviors are different from most. (*rev.*)
Self-reliance	1. In order to get ahead in life, individuals should depend on themselves rather than on others.
	2. Our country is best off when we emphasize reliance on others, rather than self-reliance. (*rev.*)
	3. Our society would benefit greatly if people were truly self-sufficient.
Economic individualism	1. Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system—they have only themselves to blame.
	2. Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.
	3. Even if people try hard, they often cannot reach their goals. (*rev.*)

Note: Each battery utilized the following prompt: 'Now, we will show several statements that people sometimes make. For each statement, we would like you to tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.' The survey randomized the order of the batteries, as well as the order of the items within each battery. Economic individualism only appears in Study 2.

Table 3.1: Question wordings for each core value

The problem, however, is that qualitative case studies, anecdote, and intuition alone—rather than systematic empirical testing—form the foundation of this conclusion. This is in sharp contrast to the rich behavioral literature on core values, which argues that an individual's issue positions are a function not only of her partisan self-interest but also of her "deeply held. . . enduring" (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002, p.18), "bedrock" (Goren, 2005, p.881) beliefs about "desirable modes of conduct or desirable end-states of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p.7). By their nature values are: 1) *normative* (i.e., they provide an ideal standard against which to judge items); 2) *abstract* and "transsituational" (i.e., these standards are applicable to many items and settings); 3) *enduring* (i.e., an individual develops these standards early in her life through socialization to, and reinforcement by, the dominant ethos); and, 4) *economical* (i.e., to judge an item, an individual need not collect detailed information; rather, she need only assess the extent to which it is consistent or inconsistent with her ideal standards) (Schwartz, 1994, p.21; Converse, 1964, p.211; Feldman, 1988; McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Alvarez and Brehm, 2002; cf. McCann, 1997; Goren, 2005, on the influence of partisan ID on the updating of values). As such, core values can provide a powerful, emotionally-intense, *extra*-partisan way by which an individual can evaluate most policy proposals—support the policy if it advances her concept of the common good, oppose it if it does not. Indeed, scholars have found core values to influence people's positions on an array of issues (e.g., Feldman, 1988; McCann, 1997; Alvarez and Brehm, 2002; Craig et al., 2005). This said, existing scholarship has not yet applied core values to the issue of electoral design and voting rights.

Social psychologists have posited a number of values (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994), a handful of which political scientists have taken up and operationalized via survey items.

mute and even overwhelm the independent effect of partisanship," they write. "... partisan self-interest was the dominant force in voter reasoning about electoral rules—but [is] only... *part of the picture*. People's views of what elections *should do* clearly matter as well" (p.39; emphasis added).

In the present study, I consider four values: 1) *egalitarianism*, i.e., the belief that all people should have an equal opportunity to get ahead in life; 2) *moral tolerance*, i.e., a willingness to accept, or at least abide, individuals whose lifestyles are different from the societal norm; 3) *economic individualism*, i.e., the belief in a strong work ethic, particularly as a means to individual success; and, 4) *self-reliance*, i.e., the belief that, to get ahead in life, one should rely not on others but on herself.[3] These four values should be germane to the issue of electoral rule choice, because they speak to notions of fairness, inclusion, representativeness, equality, and self-worth—that is, the very ideals that would-be democratic architects must translate into institutional design (Dahl, 1989, ch.8). With core values an individual easily can assess electoral rules, whether a status quo or a possible alternative, relative to her ideal standards (of how an election ought to look, the individuals it ought to include, and the collective outcomes it ought to produce) and then promote or stymie change, accordingly.[4]

3.2.2 Mapping core values onto the access/integrity trade-off

One way in which core values should manifest in election design is the trade-off between increased *access* (of voters to the electoral process) and increased *integrity* (of the state

[3] Depending on the study, these common core values go by different names—e.g., egalitarianism is sometimes termed 'equal opportunity'. Moreover, and depending on the needs of the researcher, their items may be combined or disaggregated, edited or supplemented (e.g., Goren's decision to split the established ANES moral traditionalism battery into 'moral tolerance' and 'traditionalism,' which he—correctly, in my opinion—views as seperate concepts; see, in particular, the appendix in Goren, 2005, p.894–95; I do not use traditionalism, as it does not pertain to the domain of election reform).

[4] It is worth quoting Dahl (1989, p.43; emphasis added) at length: "How we may best *interpret* our democratic standards, apply them to a *specific association* and create the political practices and institutions they require is, of course, no simple task. To do so we must plunge headlong into political realities, where our choices will require innumerable theoretical and practical judgments. . . about *trade-offs among conflicting values*."

over the process)—the former occurs when the government passes a law that makes it easier to vote or that protects the right of its citizens to vote, whereas the latter makes it easier for election officials to detect, prevent, and punish fraudulent voting.[5] Importantly, each side believes that the election *ought* to be 'fairer' (and thus its outcome 'more legitimate') but has a very different idea of how to "protect the value of the vote." Access advocates worry that burdensome or discriminatory rules will exclude qualified voters from the electoral process; therefore, they desire to 'open things up.' Integrity advocates, conversely, worry that lax rules (and enforcement) will lead to the inclusion of disqualified persons in the electorate; they thus hope to 'zip things up' (Ansolabehere, 2007; Streb, 2015, ch.2; Cain, 2014, p.30–31; Biggers and Hanmer, 2017).

For egalitarianism and moral tolerance, positive identifiers should support increased access/oppose increased integrity, because each places the onus on *society* to ensure that electoral institutions are properly inclusive, reducing problematic barriers where necessary. If overly-burdensome rules and high costs of voting (e.g., Blais, 2000) generate inequalities in the opportunity to participate (make it hard for certain voices, however repugnant, to be heard), then the egalitarian (tolerant person) wants these barriers reduced. Conversely, positive identifiers on economic individualism and self-reliance should support increased integrity/oppose increased access. This is because each places the onus on the *individual* to ensure that they are included in society's institutions, rising above adversity when required. If overly-burdensome rules and high costs of voting are preventing people from participating, then the economic individualist (self-reliance adherent)

[5] Certainly, there are other questions of design to which core values could be applicable, including: 1) majoritarian-induced stability versus proportional-induced descriptive representation (Lijphart, 1994); equality of vote weight versus geographic over-representation (Virgin, 2017); technology-induced ease of voting versus concerns over security (Alvarez and Hall, 2010); populist versus pluralist reform traditions (Cain, 2014), etc. Indeed, these other manifestations provide an opportunity for future research on the values motivation.

responds 'too bad'—effort and planning will get a person to the polls if they want to vote (a person shouldn't need help to do something that they can do on their own).

3.2.3 Hypotheses

Based upon the above discussion, I develop the following four interrelated, preregistered[6] hypotheses about the relationship between political predispositions and support for electoral reform. H1 tests the canonical partisan self-interest motivation, whereas H2.a and H2.b, together, assess the core values alternative. H3 refers to situations in which an individual receives information pertinent to both of her predispositions, but with them set in opposition to each other (i.e., countervailed):

- H1: If an electoral reform advances (undermines) an individual's partisan goals, then she will be more (less) likely to support the proposal. + (–)
- H2.a: If an electoral reform advances an individual's value identification (manifested via the access/integrity trade-off), then she will be more likely to support the proposal. (+)
- H2.b: If an electoral reform undermines an individual's value identification (manifested via the access/integrity trade-off), then she will be less likely to support the proposal. (–)
- H3: If an electoral reform advances *one* of an individual's predispositional goals *but* undermines the other, then she will be ambivalent; yet, partisan self-interest may determine the effect's sign.

3.2.4 Selecting an electoral rule

An experiment on electoral reform first needs a *rule* to reform. Certainly, there is no shortage of electoral rules to which the access/integrity trade-off applies: absentee voting, voter I.D., in-person early voting, automatic voter registration (i.e., 'motor voter'), same-day voter registration, etc. (see Streb, 2015, ch.2). For my purposes, however, some

[6] Preregistered content, hosted by the Center for Open Science, is available at https://osf.io/suyv8/.

of the most obvious candidates are not appropriate due to their high-salience and/or (perceived) non-neutrality. The problem with a rule that features in partisan warfare is that it increases the odds of a survey respondent importing 'foreign' knowledge (and passion) into the survey and bringing this information to bear on her answers on the dependent variable—i.e., 'contaminating' the design (described in the next section) by making a given treatment less (or, perhaps, more) believable. For example, voter I.D. laws—the epitome of a partisan-biased, highly-salient electoral rule—likely would imperil the manipulation because popular discussion of this issue is both ubiquitous and fervid. A low-salience, neutral rule, then, provides for a more auspicious test. After assessing the neutrality of the five rules via a pilot survey,[7] I determined that absentee voting—i.e., provisions that permit a voter to cast a ballot by mail if she is unable or, in some states, unwilling to vote in-person at her polling place[8]—possesses the necessary qualities.

3.3 Experimental design

The objectives of this study are: 1) to isolate the effect of core values, as manifested via the access/integrity trade-off, on support for electoral reform; and, 2) to observe what happens when partisan self-interest and core values combine to countervail each other.[9] I therefore am interested in both the *independent* and *interactive* (with partisan self-interest) effects of core values on citizens' support for electoral reform. To evaluate

[7] See the Appendix for the results of this pilot. I concede that the selection of a perceived neutral rule adds to this project a scope condition that may affect the generalizability of the finding to conditions that feature a non-neutral rule.

[8] See http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx; I do not make use of the distinction between 'excuse-only' and 'no-excuse' absentee voting, as I believe these details are too technical for a survey.

[9] To validate the instrument, I also isolate the effect of partisan self-interest (i.e., expected party electoral fortunes) on support for electoral reform. These results, fully consistent with the canonical approach, can be found in the Appendix.

these causal relationships, I have developed and preregistered an experimental design that manipulates the manner in which a given electoral reform policy is framed, holding all else constant.

3.3.1 Factors and vignettes

I employ a two-factor, between-subjects factorial design that randomly assigns respondents into one of eight treatment conditions; importantly, treatment assignment does *not* depend upon the subject's predispositional profile: *any treatment is available to any subject* (see subsection 3.3.2, in particular Tables 3.3 and 3.4). The instrument is a vignette—presented as a news story but written by the investigator[10]—that manipulates the framing of a reform proposal on absentee voting. A factor has two available frames, each of which is molar: 1) for partisan self-interest, as either helping (hurting) Democrats/hurting (helping) Republicans; and, 2) for core values, as either increasing (decreasing)

[10] To make the vignettes as externally valid as possible (e.g., Mutz, 2011), I searched Nexis Uni for news stories on absentee voting (search: "absentee vote" OR "absentee voting" AND reform). The stories I selected, and subsequently modeled, were written between 2000–12 and ran in local or national newspapers. They are as follows:

- John M. Broder, "Growing Absentee Voting Is Reshaping Campaigns," *The New York Times*, 22 Oct. 2000.
- Mike McIntire, "Absentee Voting Rules Reform Sought," *The Associated Press*, 17 Nov. 2000.
- David Pitt, "Election Reform Bill Veto Will Not Threaten Federal Dollars," *The Associated Press*, 23 Apr. 2003.
- Richard Halstead, "Popularity of Absentee Voting Changing Elections," *Marin Independent Journal*, 20 Sep. 2004.
- Jim Wooten, "Our Opinion: Not All Voting Reforms Work," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 20 Mar. 2005.
- Adam Liptak, "Error and Fraud at Issue as Absentee Voting Rises," *The New York Times*, 7 Oct. 2012.

In addition to external validity, the stories also provide proof of concept with respect to the permissibility of molar treatments (footnote 11) and the incredibility of a control group (footnote 12).

		Partisan self-interest frames		
		(1) *None*	(2) *Helps Dems.*	(3) *Helps Reps.*
Values frames	(A) *None*		Dems.	Reps.
	(B) *Pro-voter access*	Access	Dems. + Access	Reps. + Access
	(C) *Pro-electoral integrity*	Integrity	Dems. + Integrity	Reps. + Integrity

Notes: Cell A1 is blank because the experimental design omits a pure control group.

Table 3.2: Treatment groups in terms of partisan-self interest and core values

voter access/decreasing (increasing) electoral integrity.[11]

The factorial design allows me to control the number of factors to which a respondent is exposed (Shadish et al., 2002, p.263). In the first two conditions (cells A2 and A3 in Table 3.2) the subject receives a news story that discusses the reform proposal *only* in terms its partisan effects (i.e., partisan single-factor conditions), thus priming her partisan self-interest. The helps-Democrats (Republicans) version of the story reads:

> ...If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to advantage the Democratic (Republican) Party. Democrats (Republicans), as a result, are on board: they see an opportunity to achieve electoral gains. "This proposal would help us to advance our overall agenda," says Democratic (Republican) strategist Todd Bennett. "Changing absentee voting means more Democratic

[11] I use molar treatments for two reasons. First, with respect to partisan self-interest, a two-party system such as the U.S.'s is zero-sum and thus one major party frame invariably implies the other. Second, with respect to access and integrity, journalists typically discuss an electoral reform proposal using the language of one in tandem with that of the other. The limitation of molarity is an attendant inability to tell which piece of the dual-sided frame is responsible for driving the effect on the dependent variable (Cook and Campbell, 1979, p.32–33). That said, molar treatments are more externally valid than the alternative.

> (Republican) officeholders, which means the ability to advance progressive (conservative) causes across the country." ...

In the second two conditions (B1 and C1 in Table 3.2) the subject receives a news story that discusses the reform *only* in terms of its implications for voter access and electoral integrity (i.e., values single-factor conditions), thus priming her core values. The pro-access (pro-integrity) version of the news story reads:

> ... If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to make it easier to vote absentee (guard against voter fraud). As such, voter access (electoral integrity) advocates are lining up behind the proposal: they have long believed the current system makes it too hard (easy) for well (ill)-intentioned individuals to exercise their right to vote (cast an unlawful vote). "This proposal would open (zip) up the electoral process," says John Lange, a proponent of expanded access (electoral integrity). "Legitimizing our elections by making voting more convenient (encouraging in-person voting) is consistent with America's larger commitment to equality (honesty) and inclusion (security)." ...

Finally, in the remaining four conditions the subject receives a news story that uses both factors (B2, B3, C2, and C3)—i.e., unique combinations of the four single-factor vignette options. These conditions thus prime both of her political predispositions.[12]

3.3.2 Two-step coding of respondents

The theory, however, is not about which vignette a subject receives, but rather how that treatment relates to her partisan and core values predispositions. To obtain information

[12] Any control group (A1 in Table 3.2) would have needed to eschew content about the partisan *and* core values implications of the reform proposal. This would have introduced two problems. First, it is not obvious how subjects in the control group would have been able to evaluate a policy *absent* information on its predicted effects. One possibility is that these respondents would have read-in a 'foreign' partisan self-interest, thereby contaminating the analysis. Second, a control version of the news story would not have been externally valid given the implausibility of real-world journalists stripping their stories of partisan/values-based content (see footnote 10). As such, I decided to omit a pure control.

		Single-factor treatment vignettes			
		Helps Dems.	*Helps Reps.*	*Pro-access*	*Pro-integrity*
Respondent's predispositions	*Egalitarian Dem.*	Partisan congruent	Partisan incongruent	Value congruent	Value incongruent
	Egalitarian Rep.	Partisan incongruent	Partisan congruent	Value congruent	Value incongruent
	Inegalitarian Dem.	Partisan congruent	Partisan incongruent	Value incongruent	Value congruent
	Inegalitarian Rep.	Partisan incongruent	Partisan congruent	Value incongruent	Value congruent

Notes: The table uses egalitarianism as an example; any of the other core values may substitute in.

Table 3.3: Predispositional routes to each single-factor code

on each subject's predispositional profile, I ask a series of questions, pre-stimulus. For partisan self-interest, I use the standard two-question partisan I.D. battery, which allows me to code a subject as either a Democrat, an Independent, or a Republican. As is standard practice, each partisan group includes strong identifiers, weak identifiers, and leaners (i.e., subjects who, though selecting 'independent' or 'other' on the first question, subsequently state that they are close to a major party on the second question). True independents are those who answer 'neither party' to the follow-up question.

For each core value, I use a three-item battery that I have taken, albeit in modified form, from Goren (2001, 2005) and Goren et al. (2009). Table 3.1 contains the text of all 12 questions; each item presented respondents with five options from which to choose, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' The objective of each battery is to ascertain whether a respondent is a positive identifier on its value (e.g., supports

equal opportunity, moral tolerance, self-reliance, or economic individualism), a negative identifier (i.e., opposes that respective quality), or is a non-identifier (i.e., is ambivalent on the value). Relative to partisan I.D., a disciplinary standard for slicing the data is less established. I opt for an appropriate middle-ground between being too exclusive and too inclusive in terms of value identification. With each battery consisting of three five-choice items, the lowest score possible is 0, whereas the highest is 12. As cut points, I code respondents with a score of 8–12 (0–4) as positive (negative) identifiers, while non-identifiers are those with a score of 5–7.

Having outlined the first step of the coding process, it is possible to proceed to the next step: determining whether a respondent's randomized treatment assignment is congruent with her predisposition(s), incongruent, or somewhere in-between. The building blocks of this scheme are:

- *Partisan congruent* (P+): the reform was framed as helping the subject's party
- *Partisan incongruent* (P–): the reform was framed as helping the opposing party
- *Value congruent* (V+): the reform was framed as advancing the side of the access/integrity trade-off that is, according to theory, consistent with the subject's value identification
- *Value incongruent* (V–): the reform was framed as undermining the side of the access/integrity trade-off that is, according to theory, consistent with the subject's value identification

For subjects in one of the four single-factor treatment groups, the above codes are sufficient and exhaustive. As seen in Table 3.3, any coding can result from any predispositional profile. So, for example, on the core value of egalitarianism, a *value congruent* coding can result from an egalitarian respondent receiving the pro-access version of the news story *or* from an inegalitarian receiving the pro-integrity vignette (these cells are shaded gray in Table 3.3). For the double-factor conditions, the above building blocks must be combined, since each subject is exposed to both factors:

		Double-factor treatment vignettes			
		Helps Dems. + Pro-access	*Helps Reps. + Pro-access*	*Helps Dems. + Pro-integ.*	*Helps Reps. + Pro-integ.*
Respondent's predispositions	*Tolerant Dem.*	Combined congruent	Value-led countervailed	Partisan-led countervailed	Combined incongruent
	Tolerant Rep.	Value-led countervailed	Combined congruent	Combined incongruent	Partisan-led countervailed
	Intolerant Dem.	Partisan-led countervailed	Combined incongruent	Combined congruent	Value-led countervailed
	Intolerant Rep.	Combined incongruent	Partisan-led countervailed	Value-led countervailed	Combined congruent

Notes: The table uses moral tolerance as an example; any of the other core values may substitute in.

Table 3.4: Predispositional routes to each double-factor code

- *Combined congruent* (V+/P+): the reform was framed as helping the subject's party and as advancing her value identification (i.e., a 'double positive')
- *Combined incongruent* (V–/P–): the reform was framed as hurting the subject's party and as undermining her value identification (i.e., a 'double negative')
- *Value-led countervailed* (V+/P–): the reform was framed as advancing the subject's value identification but also as hurting her party
- *Partisan-led countervailed* (V–/P+): the reform was framed as helping the subject's party but also as undermining her value identification

As seen in Table 3.4, any of the four above codings can result from any predispositional profile (I have shaded gray the four routes to the *combined congruent* coding). Importantly, and due to orthogonality between treatment assignment and predispositional profile, the experimental design does *not* require the existence, in the survey sample, of respondents with 'mismatched' or 'off-diagonal' profiles (e.g., tolerant Republicans,

intolerant Democrats in Table 3.4)—in order to countervail subjects. 'Matched' or 'on-diagonal' profiles can easily result in a countervailing coding (e.g., a tolerant Democrat in the *Helps Reps.* + *Pro-access* vignette).

3.3.3 Analytical strategy

To test the above mentioned hypotheses, I estimate a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests, a method that allows a researcher to assess the extent to which the means of three or more groups differ from each other on a single, shared dependent variable. The null hypothesis is that the group means are statistically indistinguishable from each other, whereas the alternative hypothesis is that (at least two of) the groups are different. Below, each model includes three groups and uses the Bonferroni method to obtain post-hoc, pairwise comparisons. Moreover, all models exclude respondents who are non-identifiers on either partisan I.D. or the focal core value.[13] The dependent variable is support for the reform proposal, measured post-stimulus via a five-point Likert scale, recoded such that -2 is 'strongly oppose,' 0 is 'neither support nor oppose,' and 2 is 'strongly support.'

Each ANOVA holds *constant* a unique single-factor coding across its three groups, which makes possible inferences about the effect of the *other*, varying predisposition. Indeed, the single-factor in each trio is best thought of as a make-shift *control group* against which the corresponding double-factor may be compared. The constituent pieces of each ANOVA, as well as a brief explanation for its construction, are as follows:

1. *Value congruent* (V+), *combined congruent* (V+/P+), and *value-led countervailed* (V+/P–). This ANOVA holds constant the reception of a congruent value frame, allowing partisan-self interest to vary.

[13] It is possible for a respondent to be an identifier on one core value but a non-identifier on a second. In this case, she would be included in the analysis of the former, but dropped from analysis of the latter. As such, the number of subjects used in each ANOVA can be—and is—different.

Value	*Study*	*Score distribution*			*Percent identifiers*		
		Median	*Mean*	*Range*	*Pos.*	*Neutral*	*Neg.*
Egalitarianism	*MTurk*	10	9.16	0–12	74.55	13.10	12.35
	SSI_{total}	10	9.69	0–12	80.05	16.06	3.89
	$SSI_{compliers}$	10	9.74	0–12	81.12	14.57	4.31
Moral tolerance	*MTurk*	9	8.34	0–12	66.45	18.38	15.17
	SSI_{total}	8	7.62	0–12	53.91	34.60	11.48
	$SSI_{compliers}$	8	7.79	0–12	57.72	28.14	14.14
Self-reliance	*MTurk*	5	4.56	0–12	49.01	37.89	13.10
	SSI_{total}	4	3.78	0–12	62.75	32.36	4.90
	$SSI_{compliers}$	3	3.47	0–12	67.34	26.92	5.74
Economic individualism	SSI_{total}	5	4.98	0–12	43.40	42.55	14.05
	$SSI_{compliers}$	5	5.18	0–12	42.64	38.55	18.81

Notes: The full scale for each value is 0 to 12 points, with 8–12 resulting in a positive identifier (i.e., an egalitarian, a tolerant individual, a self-reliance adherent, an economic individualist); and, 0–4 resulting in a negative identifier (i.e., an inegalitarian, an intolerant individual, a rely-on-others adherent, an economic universalist). Non-identifiers score 5–7. I have colored gray those identifiers expected, according to theory, to favor increased voter access.

Table 3.5: Descriptive statistics for the four core values, by study

2. *Value incongruent* (V–), *combined incongruent* (V–/P–), and *partisan-led countervailed* (V–/P+). This ANOVA holds constant the reception of an incongruent value frame, allowing partisan-self interest to vary.

3. *Partisan congruent* (P+), *combined congruent* (V+/P+), and *partisan-led contervailed* (V–/P+). This ANOVA holds constant the reception of a congruent partisan frame, allowing the core value to vary.

4. *Partisan incongruent* (P–), *combined incongruent* (V–/P–), and *value-led countervailed* (V+/P–).This ANOVA holds constant the reception of a incongruent

partisan frame, allowing the core value to vary.

Together, the first two tests isolate the net effect of partisan self-interest (i.e., the canonical approach, or H1), by holding constant the directionality of the focal core value. The last two tests isolate the net effect of the focal core value (H2.a and H2.b) by holding constant the directionality of partisan self-interest. Finally, because each ANOVA contains a countervailed factor, all four can be used to assess H3.

3.4 Findings

I utilize this experimental design for two separate studies, each of which required respondents to answer every question and prohibited them from advancing the vignette until at least 30 seconds had elapsed.

3.4.1 Study 1 – Recruitment and data

For Study 1, fielded on 2 July and on 1 August 2018, I recruited 1061 subjects from Amazon's Mechanical Turk Internet-based crowd-sourcing platform. Workers selected voluntarily into the study after viewing an advertisement posted on the MTurk website; they had a maximum of one hour to complete the task and were compensated $1.60 for their time. The survey screened out subjects younger than 18-years old and subjects located outside the U.S.[14] A convenience sample, the MTurk draw is, as expected, not nationally-representative. In this case, it skews Democratic (53.82%), young (48.63% between 18–30-years old), educated (60.32% with a Bachelor's degree or higher), and male (61.92%).[15] With respect to the values positions of respondents, Table 3.5 displays

[14] The survey set worker qualifications to ensure high performance. The qualifications are approval HIT rate $\geq$ 90% and number of HITS approved $\geq$ 100.

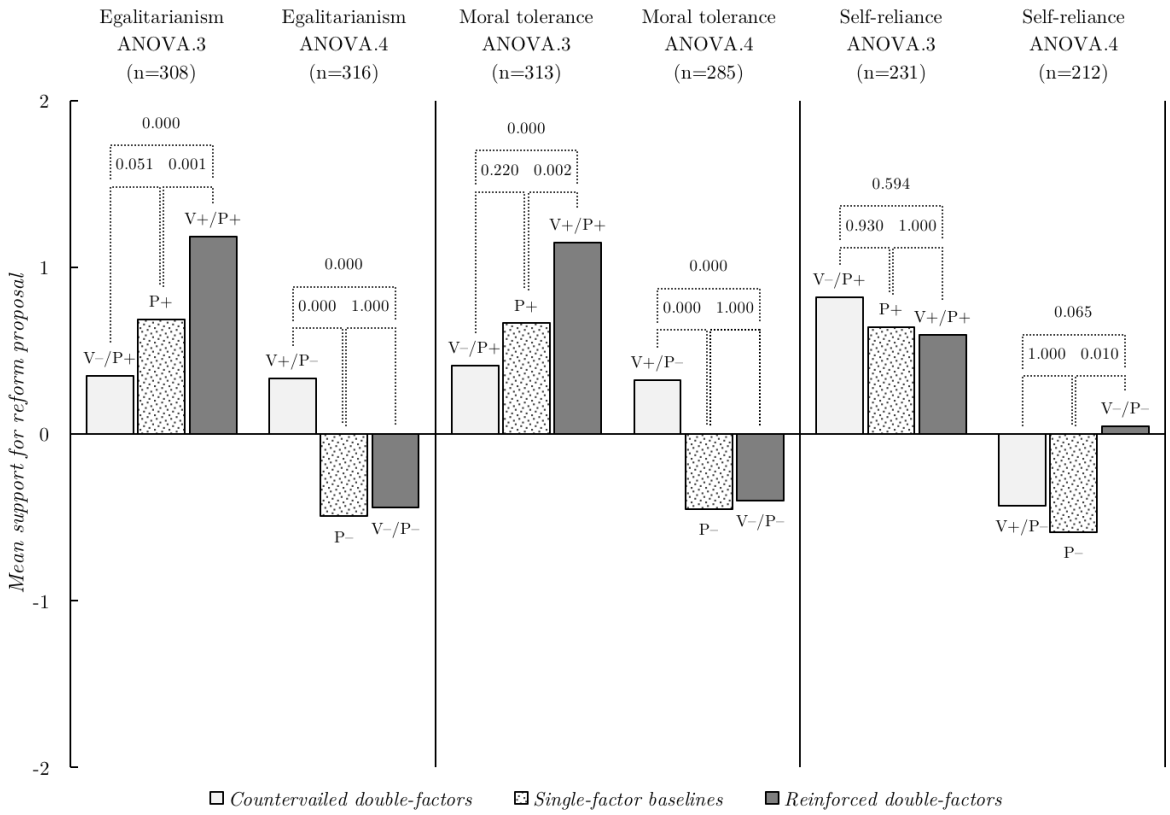
[15] For a discussion of MTurk's strengths and weaknesses, see Berinsky et al. (2012); Buhrmester et al. (2011); Anson (2018).

descriptive statistics for the distributions of egalitarianism, moral tolerance, and self-reliance—both the raw scores on the battery of each, as well as the subsequent coding of subjects. (Note: economic individualism does not appear in Study 1.)

3.4.2 Results

The primacy of partisan self-interest on the issue of electoral rule choice is so firmly established in the literature that it is no exaggeration to call it canon, and indeed, failure to recover this expected relationship could indicate poor instrument design. However, the factorial design consistently finds that partisan self-interest has a statistically and substantively significant effect on support for the proposal: whether we hold constant the reception of a congruent value frame (i.e., V+, via the six iterations of ANOVA.1) or of an incongruent one (i.e., V–, via ANOVA.2), subjects who are told that the reform will *help* their preferred party (i.e., P+) are always *more* likely than the baseline to support the change; similarly, subjects who read that their party will be *hurt* (i.e., P–) are always *less* likely to support. Importantly, this pattern is robust across both the MTurk and SSI samples *and* regardless of which of the four core values stands in for 'V.' (Due to space constraints, the figures for ANOVA 1 and ANOVA 2 are reserved for the Appendix.) The data thus support H1.

At issue, however, is that the proposal and validation of partisan self-interest is where existing scholarship on electoral reform *stops*. By contrast, the present paper is the first to provide core values a rebuttal, both isolating their net effects *and* pitting them head-to-head against partisan concerns. Figure 3.1 graphically displays the results for the three values utilized in Study 1: egalitarianism, moral tolerance, and self-reliance. As noted in the previous section, ANOVA 3 (ANOVA 4) holds constant the reception of a *positive* (*negative*) partisan self-interest frame, allowing the focal core value to vary between incongruent (V–), none, and congruent (V+); p-values (two-tailed) for each



Notes: ANOVA.3 holds constant the reception of a congruent partisan self-interest factor (P+), allowing the focal core value factor to vary between incongruent (V–), none, and congruent (V+). Similarly, ANOVA.4 holds constant the reception of an incongruent partisan self-interest factor (P–), again allowing the focal value to vary. For each test, then, any difference between the groups on mean support for the reform proposal must be due to the varying 'V.' Finally, *p*-values (Bonferroni corrected, two-tailed) appear above the dotted lines.

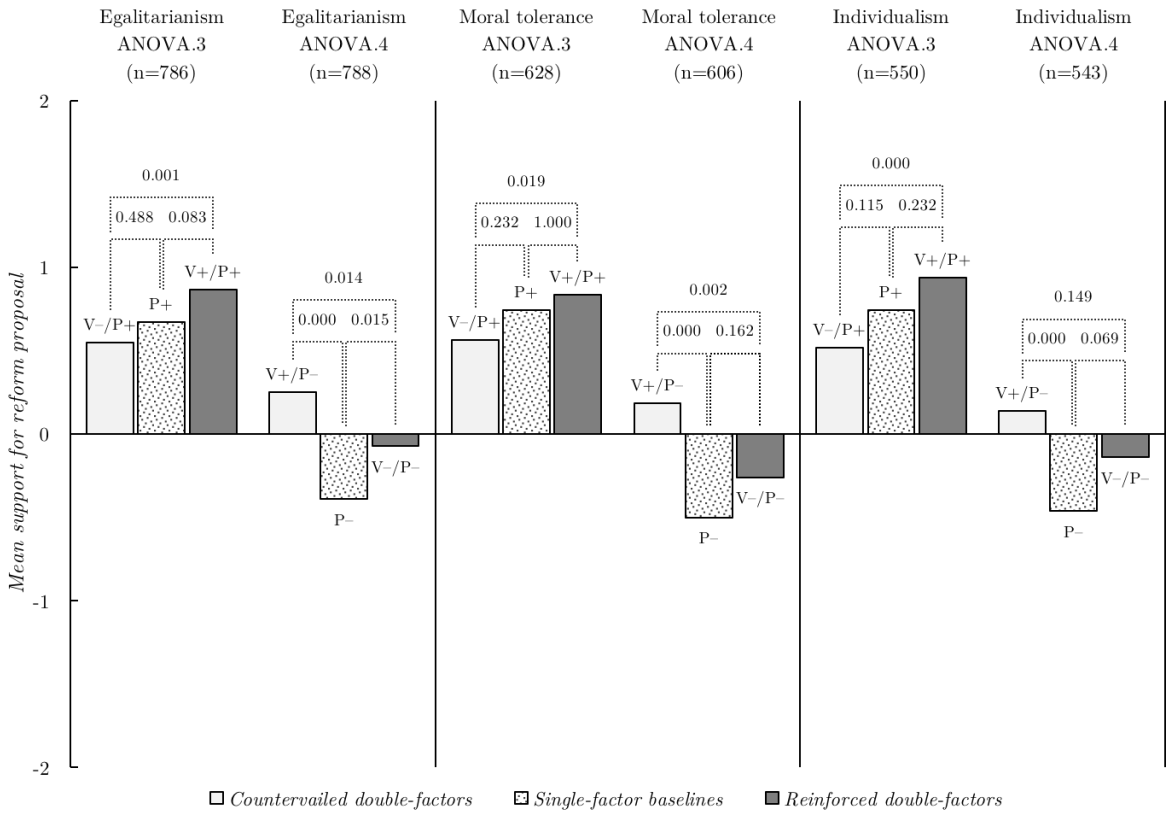
Figure 3.1: The effects of core values for Study 1, MTurk sample

pairwise comparison appear above the dotted lines. Looking first at egalitarianism and moral tolerance, we find strong substantive and statistically significant support for H2.a: the reception of a congruent values frame (V+) always makes the respondents *more* likely to support the reform. This occurs *irrespective* of whether the subject has been told the reform will help her party (i.e., combined congruent, V+/P+), in which case she becomes even more likely to favor the proposal relative to the single-factor baseline (P+); or that the reform will hurt her party (i.e., values-led countervailed, V+/P–), in which case she abandons her single-factor baseline opposition and becomes neutral-to-supportive. This

latter point shows the ability of egalitarianism and tolerance to overwhelm, and thus reverse, the opposing pull of partisan self-interest.

The results on H2.b, however, are mixed: the reception of an incongruent values frame (V–) on egalitarianism and moral tolerance sometimes follows theory, and at other times, it does not. First, a respondent who is told the reform will both hurt her party and undermine her value identification (i.e., combined incongruent, V–/P–) *never* emerges as more likely, relative to the single-factor baseline (P–), to oppose the reform; thus, a 'double negative,' as it were, has no effect. But, in support of H2.b, a respondent who is told that the proposal will help her party but undermine her value identification is, in fact, less likely to support the reform, although this time the sign of the effect is (as theorized) determined by the congruent partisan factor. Nevertheless, the fact that people become more ambivalent reflects, again, the motivational power of core values—they have attenuated the effect of partisan concerns. In total, across H2 (i.e., regardless of whether we use V+ or V–) for egalitarianism and moral tolerance, the countervailing situations represent the strongest evidence to date that partisan concerns are but a partial explanation for electoral reform—people pursue values-based objectives, too.

Thus far, I have omitted self-reliance from the discussion. This is because *nothing* about the results is as expected theoretically. On the one hand, this could be evidence that, although the survey instrument worked, individualist-based core values such as self-reliance merely are not pertinent to position-taking on the issue of electoral rule choice (as manifested via the access/integrity trade-off). On the other hand, it could be that the instrument was faulty and that, if the quality of the self-reliance items was improved, we might yet detect an effect. I tend toward the latter explanation and utilize Study 2 to improve the operationalization of this underlying value concept.



Notes: ANOVA.3 and ANOVA.4 each allow the focal core value to vary, but hold constant the reception of congruent (P+) and incongruent (P–) partisan self-interest factors, respectively. The focal core value, then, must drive the result. Bonferroni corrected p-values (two-tailed) appear above the dotted lines.

Figure 3.2: The effects of core values for Study 2, total sample

3.4.3 Study 2 – Recruitment and data

The results of Study 1 provide strong, initial evidence that individuals do, indeed, utilize their core values when taking a position on electoral rule choice. That said, Study 1 has two limitations. First, the sample is *not* representative of the broader U.S. adult population, and therefore, the findings may not be externally valid. Second, the self-reliance battery (the lone 'individualist' value in Study 1) did not perform as expected, perhaps indicating an issue with the instrument. To address these problems, I opted to field a second study, replicating the design from Study 1 with minor changes—most notably the addition of the economic individualism battery (see Table 3.1) as a substitute

for self-reliance.

For Study 2, piloted between 23 July–1 August 2018, and further fielded between 2–19 August, I recruited 2491 subjects from Survey Sampling International's Internet-based, pre-contracted panel of respondents; panelists selected voluntarily into the study after seeing the task as an option in their personal SSI portfolio. In addition to retaining the three in-survey screeners used in Study 1, I added a fourth screener to terminate pure independents, since non-identifiers are not germane to the theory (and were 'wasted' in Study 1).[16] Because SSI manages which of its panelists view the survey, the resulting sample for Study 2 is much more nationally-representative: 25.09% between 18–30-years old; 39.06% with a Bachelor's degree or higher; and, 45.85% male. In terms of partisan I.D., 51.30% of respondents are Democrats and 48.70% are Republicans (again, independents were screened out.) Of particular note, however, is that the sample—and despite SSI's efforts at course correction in-field—suffered from a high rate of non-compliance, assessed via a two-item manipulation check:[17] 27.10% of respondents failed one item, whereas another 16.98% failed both. As such, for the analysis that follows, I run all

[16] Similarly screening out core values non-identifiers was not possible for two reasons. First, and unlike partisan I.D., it takes too many questions (see Table 3.1)—and post-survey coding—to determine a subject's value identification quickly; therefore, it would have been unfair not to compensate these individuals for their time. Second, it is possible for a subject to be a non-identifier on a given core value but an identifier on one or more others (see footnote 13).

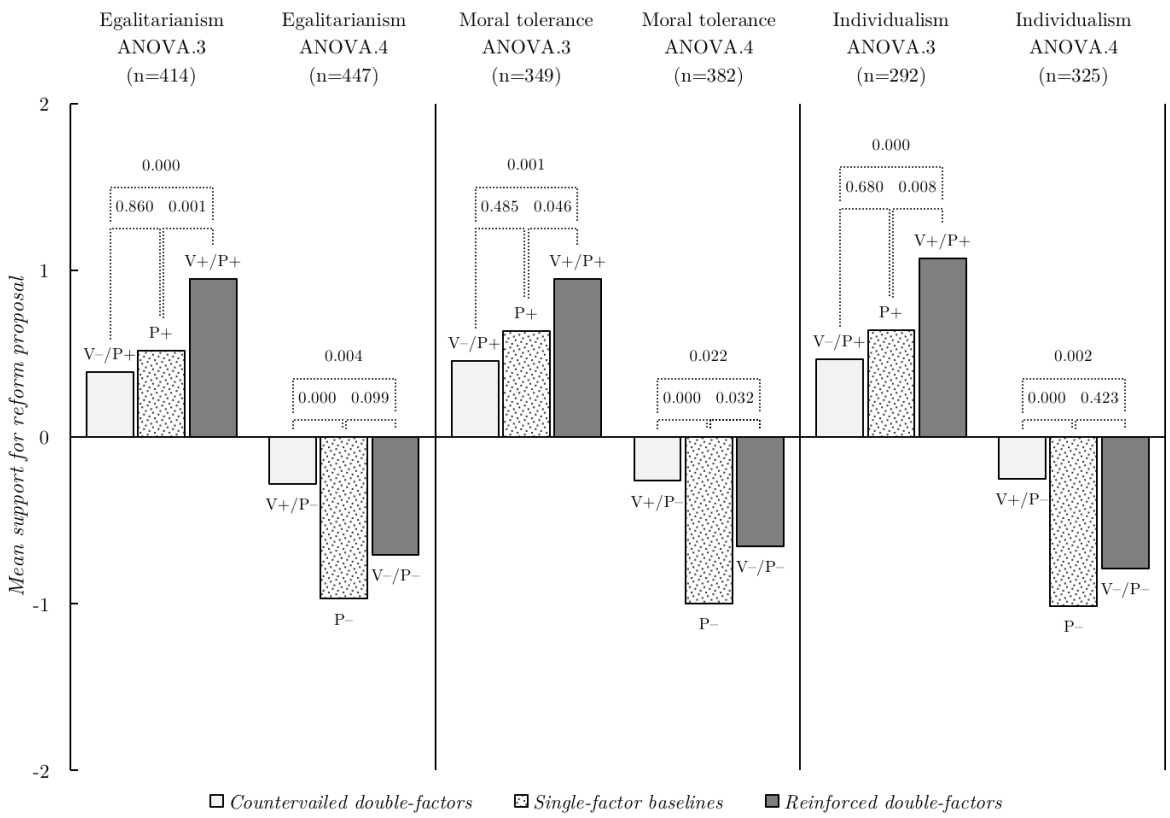
[17] The first item assessed respondents' ability to recall the vignette's focal policy, absentee voting ("According to what you have just read in the news story, what electoral procedure allows a voter to cast his or her ballot by mail if he or she is unable or unwilling to vote in-person?" *Choices*: 'Absentee voting'; 'Provisional voting'; 'Voter I.D.'; and, 'Don't know'). The second item asked respondents if the vignette had portrayed the reform as being partisan in its effect ("Thinking back, did the news story indicate whether the proposal would tend to favor a specific political party over the other?" *Choices*: 'The news story says the proposal would favor the Republicans'; 'The news story says the proposal would favor the Democrats'; 'The news story says the proposal would favor neither party over the other'; 'The news story did not provide this information'; and, 'Don't know'). For this item, the correct answer depended on treatment assignment.

models on the total sample ($n = 2491$), as well as the subset of respondents who passed the manipulation check ($n = 1393$, with demographics: 52.84% Democratic and 47.16% Republican; 15.79% between 18-30-years old; 38.05% with a Bachelor's degree or higher; and, 40.49% male).[18] As before, value identification statistics—for the total sample and for compliers only—appear in Table 3.5.

3.4.4 Results

As with Study 1, the results for partisan self-interest are strong, thereby providing additional support for H1. (Again, due to space constraints, these figures appear in the Appendix.) Figures 3.2 and 3.3 display the results of the total sample and of SSI compliers only, respectively. With respect to egalitarianism and moral tolerance, in general, Study 2 reproduces the results of Study 1, especially when subsetting on compliers; the analysis of the total sample softens many of the patterns, although they still emerge as, more or less, consistent with the MTurk sample. As such, I do not detail them further, save for a brief remark that H2.a and H3 are supported, whereas again a test of H2.b has a weak-to-no effect. The results for economic individualism, however, display the applicability of individualist-based values to the issue domain of electoral reform. Regardless of whether we look at the total sample or just compliers, the reception of a congruent value frame (V+) always pulls a respondent's level of support upwards relative to the single-factor baseline (P+). The evidence for H3 is again strong: values-led countervailed

[18] Unlike MTurk, SSI did not provide the option of using worker qualifications to screen out individuals with histories of poor performance. When the first wave resulted in a 51.13% ($n = 293/573$) non-compliance rate, SSI—to its credit—sought to boost respondent quality via the appending to the survey of a pre-screener; this added text informed participants that the task would involve more reading than typical for the platform. The result of this effort was discouraging, as the non-compliance rate for the second wave was 57.02% ($n = 134/235$). Finally, SSI moved to terminate users using a mobile phone (and dropped the pre-screener), which was successful: the third wave had a 42.86% ($n = 105/245$) non-compliance rate. Data collection, then, continued in the fourth and final wave, using this method.



Notes: ANOVA.3 and ANOVA.4 each allow the focal core value to vary, but hold constant the reception of congruent (P+) and incongruent (P–) partisan self-interest factors, respectively. The focal core value, then, must drive the result. Bonferroni corrected p-values (two-tailed) appear above the dotted lines.

Figure 3.3: The effects of core values for Study 2, SSI compliers only

(V+/P–) individuals follow their instincts on individualism, moving toward neutral when they are told the reform will advance their value identification, irrespective of whether their party is aided or harmed. As for H2.b, again, the reception of an incongruent values frame does not have the expected effect, although in partisan-led countervailed situations, it does at least move respondents toward neutral relative to the single-factor baseline (P+); while indicative of the theorized effect, it does not rise to traditional levels of statistical significance.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

The potential of electoral rules to affect who wins and who loses—especially when combined with the zero-sum nature of U.S. elections—means that political parties, as the key combatants in the electoral arena, face a strategic incentive to change the rules of the game. As such, when a given party takes power, we expect to find a willingness among its members (whether elites or identifiers in the mass public) to adopt reforms they believe will help them in subsequent elections. Such is the story that the canonical, partisan self-interest approach to electoral reform tells. The differential partisan implications of an electoral reform are indeed important, even "dominant." My argument is not that partisan self-interest is inconsequential or even secondary in importance, but rather that it is neither solely determinative nor exhaustive, and often, may have to either work in concert with, or labor to counteract, other sources of motivation for electoral reform. In this paper, I have examined the effects of one such motivation, predispositional *core values* (including egalitarianism, moral tolerance, self-reliance, and economic individualism). Furthermore, I have forced them to compete with partisan self-interest. Each of these contributions fills existing gaps in the literature.

To do so, I developed an original experimental design that simultaneously manipulates the partisan- and values-implications of a fictitious reform proposal on absentee voting. I fielded survey experiments via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and Survey Sampling International (SSI), collecting information on each respondent's partisan and core values identifications and then recoding each subject according to whether her treatment was congruent or incongruent with her predispositional profile. A difference of means analysis reveals strong evidence of a role for core values: not only do they have an important effect *net* of partisan concerns, but also, they dramatically attenuate the effect of partisan self-interest in instances in which the two predispositions have been made to *countervail*. The

results, then, not only demonstrate that partisan self-interest provides a partial picture of reform, but also displays the underappreciated, general power of core values to wash out partisan effects when the two predispositions are placed in opposition to each other.

The current project, then, provides numerous opportunities for future research. Perhaps most obviously, I have not manipulated (as a third factor) the *topic* of the reform proposal, choosing instead to use absentee voting as the focal rule across all treatments. Left unresolved, then, is the extent to which my findings would transfer to decision-making on other types of electoral rules, especially those that, and unlike absentee voting, are: 1) highly-salient and perceptually non-neutral (e.g., voter I.D. laws; see Biggers, 2018); or, 2) 'major,' structural formulae that influence the translation of vote shares into seats and offices (Lijphart, 1994; Katz, 2005; Jacobs and Leyenaar, 2011; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011). It is possible that, for the first type of rules, partisan concerns would overwhelm the motivational pull of core values, because the relationship between the proposed change and (expected) differential *partisan* turnout dominates news coverage. On the other hand, proposed dramatic, structural changes may provide an opportunity for core values to trump 'mere' partisan machinations, because the very identity of a country—and its people—could be at stake. While the present study offers a necessary first step, future scholarship must force core values to battle partisan-self interest on the least and most auspicious turfs imaginable, in order to establish the lower and upper-bounds on their influence.

A second extension of the current project is to move the level of analysis from the mass public to that of state or federal lawmakers. After all, political elites (rather than survey respondents) tend to control the reform process—what Renwick (2010, p.10–16) has termed "elite-majority imposition." While elites occasionally lose control of the reform process to ordinary citizens (e.g., via initiatives or referenda, public outrage, scandal, etc.), they tend not to, and so it is therefore important to establish whether

the *key* decision-makers of representative democracy, too, utilize core values when taking action on this issue. While observational approaches are a natural avenue for such an exploration, political science lacks good measures of lawmakers' core value identifications; as such, survey experiment or text-analysis methods may prove more fruitful. This said, the citizen-level analysis of the present study offers the proof-of-concept upon which to construct a sampling of elites' predispositions—for if the public uses core values to decide on electoral reform, then so too should the elites who work within, as well as shape and prime, the value identifications of voters (Goren, 2001, 2005; Renwick, 2010, p.18)

Finally, and irrespective of the level of analysis, the four core values I have explored in this paper are those that previous survey research in political science has established and refined (e.g., Feldman, 1988; Goren, 2001, 2005)—but this list is far from exhaustive. In social psychology, for instance, both Rokeach (1973) and, more recently, Schwartz (1994) conceptualize and measure many additional values, some of which, too, could be germane to issues of electoral design, operation, and participation ('value families,' or "motivational types," such as security, conformity, and self-direction come to mind; see Schwartz, 1994, p.22–25). While I suspect that other values also are pertinent to electoral rule choice, caution is necessary before generalizing the present study's results to them: their effects may be much weaker than those observed for egalitarianism, moral tolerance, and individualism, each of which, after all, was selected, in part, because a persuasive case could be made for its applicability the electoral domain. In short, scholars of electoral reform would do well to put additional core values to the test. My hope is that the present paper will contribute to the discipline by sketching a fuller, more nuanced picture of the motivational underpinnings of the electoral reform process.

Chapter 4

Take your foreign rules and shove 'em:

The effect of exceptionalism on Americans' support for electoral reform

4.1 Introduction to the chapter

On October 3, 2018, the Bangor Public Library hosted a discussion on ranked-choice voting (RCV) titled "What Australia's Experience with RCV Can Teach Maine," featuring Perth-based political scientist, Benjamin Reilly.[1] Three months earlier, in June, Mainers had approved Question 1, a people's veto of the State Legislature's October 2017 decision to delay the implementation of RCV statewide; Maine's use of RCV in 2018, therefore, was back on, and in November it would become the first U.S. state to use this system for its federal general elections.[2] Noting that 2018 also marked the centennial of *Australia's* adoption of RCV (there called 'preferential voting'), Reilly told his American audience that surprised Aussies had been following the news from Maine "very closely," thinking to themselves, "Wow, it's [ME's "borrowing" of RCV] actually going to happen." In addition, Reilly also remarked on the state's opportunity to address some of RCV's practical inefficiencies, via innovation in voting technologies: "If you guys get this right, then we'll probably end up borrowing it [next-generation RCV] back from you," he joked.[3]

[1] I would like to thank committee members Larry Bartels, Josh Clinton, Dave Lewis, Zeynep Somer-Topcu, and Liz Zechmeister. Additional thanks is due to colleagues Dan Alexander, Drew Engelhardt, James Martherus, and Michael Shepherd. Support for this project was provided by the Department of Political Science and Vanderbilt University through the J. Leiper award. A research design for this paper was presented at the MPSA 2019.

[2] For a timeline of Maine's RCV experiment, see: *Ranked Choice Voting in Maine*, Maine State Legislature Law and Legislative Reference Library, http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlibrary/ranked-choice-voting-in-maine/9509.

[3] Benjamin Reilly, "What Australia's Experience with RCV Can Teach Maine," *Speaking in Maine*, Maine Public Radio, 3 Oct. 2018, https://www.mainepublic.org/post/what-australias-experience-

By highlighting RCV's 'made-in-Australia' heritage, as well as its 'modified-in-Maine' potential, the above example illustrates two important points. First, many electoral rules (especially those with a history of stable and—at least initially—exclusive usage) have relatively clear national *origins*; as such, they can in the eyes of elites and the mass public "[come] to be seen as embodying aspects of [a given] national character" or democratic tradition (Renwick, 2010, p.62). Second, just as countries exchange consumer goods and industrial products between themselves, so too can they 'import' and 'export' policies and institutional designs—i.e., the *diffusion* of a nationally-branded electoral rule across geopolitical borders, from originating country a to receiving country b (e.g., Shipan and Volden, 2008; Makse and Volden, 2011; Grossback et al., 2004). Provided such 'country-of-origin' information (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1989) is made available to political actors in b, then opinion about a and the desirability of modeling a may become part of b's reform debate. No longer is the question whether b should adopt a new way of doing things, but rather, if b should adopt a's way—i.e., converge towards a and forfeit some of its distinctiveness.

It is here that the motivation to reform electoral rules collides with national affect—or put another way, that "the symbolism of [national] difference," (Shafer, 1999, p.446) either *lost* due to successful reform or *safeguarded* due to stymied reform, becomes salient. National affect is a family of concepts—of which patriotism, nationalism, internationalism, national identity, and exceptionalism are notable constituent members[4]—that refers to the *psychological* relationship between an individual and her country; scholars of these attitudes have documented both: 1) their motive effect; and, 2) the extent to which they

ranked-choice-voting-can-teach-maine. Reilly had earlier published an op-ed; see: Benjamin Reilly, "A Century of Ranked Choice Voting in Australia Offers Lessons for Maine," *Bangor Daily News*, 28 Aug. 2018, https://bangordailynews.com/2018/08/28/opinion/contributors/a-century-of-ranked-choice-voting-in-australia-offers-lessons-for-maine/.

[4] The reader is referred to Section 4.2 for a discussion of these attitudes and their operationalizations.

vary among the mass public (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Huddy and Khatib, 2007; Sidanius et al., 1997; Schatz et al., 1999; Conover and Feldman, 1987; Ceaser, 2012; Kingdon, 1999). Based on their differential national affect, individuals may, attitudinally, be inclined (whether in absolute or relative terms) to welcome or to reject foreign influence in the form of institutional diffusion.

An emphasis on national affect as a reason to promote or stymie electoral rule change stands in stark contrast to the canonical understanding of reform: *partisan self-interest*. This approach argues that, because the 'rules of the game' can affect who wins, parties and their members strategically pursue (or are at least passively open to) rule changes predicted to result in partisan gains (Benoit, 2007; Bowler and Donovan, 2013; Boix, 1999; Renwick, 2010; Colomer, 2005; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011; Cain, 2014). This approach has great appeal: not only is partisan identification an enduring and powerful, group-based predisposition (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Green et al., 2004; Bartels, 2002), but also: 1) most elections are organized around partisan competition for the right to govern; and, 2) once elected or appointed, partisan officials control the very legislative and executive offices in charge of administering elections and maintaining electoral rules.

Parties, therefore, undoubtedly have the motivation and the ability to act as electoral reformers (Benoit, 2004). This conceded, it is also true that the electoral reform subfield has only recently begun to investigate, both anecdotally (Renwick, 2010; Bowler and Donovan, 2013) and empirically (Bowler et al., 2006; Virgin, 2017, nd) other, *extra*-partisan motivations for reform. By attending to these neglected determinants, this group of scholars has begun to address that Leyenaar and Hazan (2011, p.442–44) had earlier characterized as a notable theoretical gap in the literature. In this paper, I continue this enterprise by putting to the empirical test one such neglected extra-partisan motivation for reform: a belief in *American exceptionalism*, a type of national affect here defined as the belief that the U.S. is not only comparatively superior to other nations (i.e., the U.S.'s

"special character"), but also has been tasked with helping foreign peoples to liberalize their values and political institutions (i.e., the U.S.'s "special mission") (Ceaser, 2012).

Heretofore, scholars of exceptionalism have focused on the veracity of its claim—i.e., whether or not the U.S. is *truly* comparatively distinct (Lipset, 1997; Shafer, 1991, 1999; Wilson, 1998; Koh, 2002). In doing so, they have failed to examine exceptionalism as an *idea* in which individuals believe and upon which they call in their decision-making on issues. As Shafer (1999, p.446) has conceded:

> If political actors believe in [exceptionalism] or, indeed, if they are agnostic but can nevertheless *use the symbolism of difference—to move public opinion, to influence public policy, or to shape the policy process*—then exceptionalism is a genuine and confirmedly empirical phenomenon. The accuracy or inaccuracy, the truth or falsity, of the propositions allegedly constituting this exceptionalism are not important. It is the use of the theme, and *its successful motive impact*, that matters. (emphasis added)

In theory, exceptionalism in particular (and national affect in general) should be germane to the issue of electoral rule choice because whereas the former extols the inherent virtue of, and seeks to protect and spread, the 'American way,' the latter by definition chips away at the U.S. status quo arrangement and, perhaps, forfeits the distinctive national character of the system. As such, there is a natural *tension* between the objectives of exceptionalism and the activity of institutional change, and the exceptionalist should therefore be inclined to oppose reform, accordingly.

But do individuals deploy exceptionalist attitudes on the issue of electoral rule choice; i.e., in the language of Schafer, when elites utilize this 'theme' ("the symbolism of difference") to move opinion and to shape the policy debate, does it *actually* resonate with people and play a role in their decision-making on the topic? Because the attitude of exceptionalism cannot be randomly assigned among the population, I instead utilize an interactive, between-subjects experimental design that randomly primes this consideration to be at the top of a respondent's mind when answering a question about whether

or not she would support a given reform. Treated subjects are primed with content that frames the proposed electoral alternative as "foreign," "imported," "European," and "un-American," the salience of which should be conditional on the intensity of exceptionalist attitude; untreated subjects, conversely, receive no such content and thus are not primed.

On a convenience sample hosted by Amazon's Mechanical Turk, I find mixed evidence of a role for exceptionalist attitudes. First of all, and irregardless of treatment assignment, the relationship between exceptionalist sentiments and support for electoral reform indeed is negative. Second, and when differentiating treatment from control, exceptionalists (non-exceptionalists) in the former appear more likely to oppose (support) the reform than their counterparts in the control. The parenthetical result was not excepted but, in hindsight, is consistent with the theory. Nevertheless, we cannot statistically distinguish the two conditions—likely due to an inadvertent 'treating' of the control group with national affect-related, pre-stimulus content. In Section 4.2, I outline theory and introduce hypotheses. In Section 4.3, I elaborate on the design; Section 4.4 introduces data, the results, and discusses the accidental prime; and, Section 4.5 concludes.

4.2 A theory of national attachment and elections

4.2.1 Why American exceptionalism?

The scholar wishing to study the effect of national affect on actors' decision-making certainly has a rich—and admittedly confusing—array of '–isms' from which to choose. On the one hand, this profusion reflects a certain scholarly sloppiness, due both to the packaging of many concepts under the same label and the referencing of a given concept by any number of names (the quintessential example is the torturous history of 'patriotism'; see Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989, p.258–60). On the other hand, some of this profusion is justified—and reflects good science. As Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)

have demonstrated, respondents' attitudes toward the in-nation (and out-nations) truly are "multidimensional" in nature, and as such, it is a mistake to combine conceptually-*discrete* attitudes into one, indiscriminate container (Sartori, 1970). A number of scholars have since labored to achieve clarity, and the current state of the art is to distinguish between: 1) *patriotism*, i.e., feeling pride in and love for America; 2) *nationalism*, i.e., the view that America is superior to other nations and should dominate them; and, *internationalism*, i.e., a belief in global welfare and the universality of mankind.[5] In the same vein, Huddy and Khatib (2007) have cleaned-up the operationalization of patriotism (cf. Conover and Feldman, 1987; Sidanius et al., 1997), sorting into unique batteries items that tap: 1.a) *symbolic patriotism*, i.e., feeling pride in and love for America's symbols, such as the flag and anthem; and those that tap, 1.b) *national identity*, i.e., feeling as though one is a member of the nation, as a social group.

A separate intellectual tradition focuses on the notion of *American exceptionalism*, which at a minimum (and stripped of all normative content) denotes the idea that the U.S.—due to its (former) geographic, economic, and political isolation—is 'evolutionarily' unique from other countries (Kingdon, 1999);[6] many scholars, in turn, have investigated the accuracy of this claim (e.g., Lipset, 1997; Shafer, 1991, 1999; Wilson, 1998; Koh, 2002). Yet, as Ceaser (2012) argues, the focus on "America [as] a statistical outlier" is somewhat academic, as it neglects the *actual* way in which historical and contemporary actors have imbued the term with normative overtones: the U.S. is not merely 'atypical,'

[5] Perhaps less productive is the distinction Schatz et al. (1999) make between: 1) *blind patriotism*, i.e., an unwillingness to criticize, and to accept criticism of, the nation; and 2) *constructive patriotism*, i.e., a "critical loyalty" for one's nation, expressed via a desire for positive change. The problem, as Huddy and Khatib (2007, p.64) argue, is that blind patriotism correlates too greatly with nationalism, ethnocentrism, and conservative ideology, thereby "blurring the distinction between patriotism and nationalism." Similarly, constructive patriotism has a liberal-bent and is confounded by political interest.

[6] As Wilson (1998, p.vi) writes, for this school of thought, "the question, it cannot be stressed too strongly, is *not* whether the U.S. is 'better' or 'worse' than other nations but whether it is different."

it is 'special.' According to Ceaser, this version of the term consists of two related, but "distinct," concepts: 1) America's *special character*, i.e., the idea that the U.S.—particularly its people, its culture, and its institutions—is *superior* to other nations; and, 2) America's *special mission*, i.e., the idea that, due to the special character of their homeland, Americans are "a chosen people" tasked (perhaps by God) with redeeming the world via the promotion of U.S.-style liberal democracy. This understanding of exceptionalism mirrors Gallup's 2010 treatment of the term, which it also partitions into two ideas: 80% of Americans (73% of Democrats, 91% of Republicans) agreed that the "United States has a unique character...that sets it apart from other nations as the greatest in the world," whereas 66% of Americans (61% of Democrats, 73% of Republicans) subscribed to the notion that "the United States does...have a special responsibility to be the leading nation in world affairs."[7]

In viewing the U.S. as *the* outstanding, peerless nation, the specialness variant of exceptionalism (in particular the character subpiece) has the ring of nationalism; after all, each concept has at its core a belief in national superiority. However, as Virgin and Engelhardt (nd) argue, the two are not perfect substitutes. First, exceptionalism does not include the nationalist's craving for foreign dominance, such as the U.S. winning international sporting events and "be[ing] number one in whatever it does" (see Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989, Table 2, p.265). Unlike the nationalist, it's not a given that the exceptionalist, for example, should have *needed* the U.S. to be the first to the Moon during the space race.[8] Second, nationalism does not include the exceptionalist's belief

[7] Jeffery Jones, "Americans See U.S. as Exceptional; 37% Doubt Obama Does," *USAToday/Gallup*, 22 Dec. 2010, https://news.gallup.com/poll/145358/americans-exceptional-doubt-obama.aspx.

[8] In that they use the word "dominate," many nationalism items are quite direct. But even items that eschew these terms nevertheless tend to strongly imply dominance by placing America in opposition to other nations, which the U.S. must defeat "to maintain our country's superiority" (e.g., Sidanius et al., 1997, Table 1, p.108). The exceptionalism battery of Virgin and Engelhardt (nd), conversely, does not.

Battery	*Item*
Special character	1. The United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world. (16 words) 2. When we teach American schoolchildren that the U.S. has the best political system, we teach them the truth. (18 words) 3. Other countries should try to make their governments as much like ours as possible. (14 words) 4. America's way of doing things is **no** better than the way other countries do things. (*rev.*; 15 words)
Special mission	1. The United States has a special responsibility to be the leading nation in world affairs. (15 words) 2. The United States should use its position as a superpower to promote democracy around the world. (16 words) 3. It is the destiny of Americans to lead the world in the creation of a democratic order. (17 words) 4. The world would be a better place if the U.S. **stopped** trying to remake foreign nations in its image. (*rev.*; 19 words)

Notes: Each battery utilized the following prompt: 'Now, we will show several statements that people sometimes make. Please respond to the statements with the response options provided. For each statement, we would like you to tell us how strongly you disagree or agree.' The survey randomized the order of the batteries, as well as the order of the items within each battery. The survey boldfaced the negative in each reversed item.

Table 4.1: Question wordings for American exceptionalism

in a special mission. True, U.S. foreign policy may blur the distinction between foreign assistance and domination, but whereas the nationalist participates on the international stage in order to *best* other nations, the exceptionalist does so to *help*.[9] In other words, Americans are not necessarily 'chosen' to be winners, but rather to be the ambassadors

[9] The question of whether or not the U.S. *actually* helps foreign nations via its various interventions—as well as whether Western liberal democracy is one-size-fits-all—is outside the scope of this project.

of liberal democracy. "[The] mission is undertaken," Ceaser (2012, p.9) writes, "not for enjoyment or profit but as a responsibility in fulfilling a larger purpose." Enjoyment and profit (at the expense of other nations), conversely, are the domain of the nationalist.

4.2.2 Mapping exceptionalism onto electoral reform

Attitudinally, an exceptionalist is an individual who believes the U.S. and its people: 1) are comparatively superior; and, 2) have been called upon to aid foreign nations, by 'Americanizing' their political institutions and values.

How, then, might this attitude relate to the issue of electoral rule choice? Following Renwick (2010, p.62), I argue that in countries characterized by institutional stability over a long period, the institution *itself* (in this case, the electoral system) "comes to be seen as embodying aspects of the national character." As such, the status quo is not merely the current way of doing things, but rather the 'American way'—citizens and elites become "accustomed to [*our*] arrangements" (Kingdon, 1999, p.54). If so, then any electoral reform—especially those alternatives the U.S. might borrow from abroad—risks diluting the distinctive national character of the system. Because the exceptionalist not only believes that the U.S. is superior but also that the adoption of its way of doing things would benefit foreigners, she should be especially prone to finding the electoral status quo (alternative) to be satisfactory (unsatisfactory), if not in absolute terms, then at least relative to all foreign imports (the domestic status quo). Or, put in the language of policy diffusion, she should have neither the desire to "imitate" the electoral rules of other countries nor the willingness to "learn" from their experiences (Shipan and Volden, 2008). As such, she should be particularly likely to oppose reform.

Mechanistically, there may be a number of pathways at work. Scholars in consumer psychology who study the so-called 'country-of-origin' (i.e., the country in which a product is produced or with which it is culturally or economically associated; henceforth,

CoO) effect have found that consumers utilize 'foreign' and 'domestic' cues in product evaluation and purchase decision-making (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999, p.524–28), building on Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989), argue that such evaluations occur in three distinct, but often intertwined, ways of information processing. First, via *cognitive processing*, a consumer uses the CoO and attendant cultural stereotypes to infer product quality, such as reliability or superior craftsmanship (e.g., she evaluates a German-made car as being of a high quality, because German engineers are perceived as being competent). Second, via *affective processing*, the consumer uses the symbolism of the CoO to derive emotional benefits, such as high socioeconomic status or national pride (e.g., a German-made car confers upon its owner a sense of luxury or, for the German purchaser, of national pride). Third, via *normative processing*, the CoO draws in the consumer either because she believes the originating country does things 'the right way' or that it is 'correct' to support that country (e.g., an American consumer may avoid a German-made car because it is wrong to harm the domestic industry.)

In Table 4.2, I apply the logic of country-of-origin effects to electoral rule 'consumption,' with the status quo representing the 'domestic product' and the reform alternative the 'foreign import.' Drawn to the U.S.'s CoO, the exceptionalist's defense of the status quo electoral rule might be based on her perception that the U.S. system: 1) has reliably delivered success and worked well (*cognitive*); 2) is a symbol of the Founders' intent or American ingenuity, which stirs her emotions (*affective*); and/or, 3) has the "patina of rightness" (Renwick, 2010, p.62), due to its domestic association, and that "tamper[ing] with it" is wrong (*normative*). The same logic can apply to the foreign reform alternative, which the exceptionalist might: 1) view as being of inferior quality; 2) find emotionally less gratifying; and/or, 3) perceive as the 'wrong way' of doing things. Whatever the mechanism, the national character of the U.S. electoral system means that, for the exceptionalist, there is a bankruptcy in policy proposals that would force America to forfeit

		Focal 'product' (i.e., electoral rule)	
		(1) *Domestic status quo*	(2) *Foreign alternative*
CoO mechanism	(A) *Cognitive processing*	View SQ as proven, reliable, of superior quality	View alternative as risky, unreliable, of inferior quality
	(B) *Affective processing*	Obtain emotional benefits from SQ's symbolism, (e.g., status or national pride)	Alternative does not provide emotional benefits
	(C) *Normative processing*	View domestic norm as the 'right way' to do things or as necessary to support	View alternative as the 'wrong way' (or at least as normatively less desirable)

Notes: Framework for country-of-origin (CoO) effect mechanisms from Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999).

Table 4.2: Mechanisms through which the country-of-origin effect operates

that which makes it special and to regress towards the comparative mean.[10]

4.2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the above discussion, I develop the following three interrelated, preregistered[11] hypotheses about the relationship between American exceptionalism, as an attitude, and support for electoral reform. H1 assesses the bivariate association between these two variables, whereas H2.a and H2.b tests the causal relationship between the two, by

[10] If the U.S.'s way of doing things is the best, then why not 'help others' by encouraging the adoption of American institutions and values elsewhere? Indeed, a second implication of the above theory (albeit one not explored here) is that the exceptionalist, in addition to being opposed to the importation of foreign electoral rules, might also be pro-*exportation*, i.e., she should have the urge to teach foreign governments and peoples the benefits of U.S.-style democracy and to encourage (or compel) the former's imitation of the 'American way.' This clearly relates to the special mission subpiece of exceptionalism.

[11] Preregistered content, hosted by the Center for Open Science, is available at https://osf.io/g75hq.

interacting exceptionalism with treatment assignment:

- H1: As the *strength* of the exceptionalist attitude increases, support for electoral reform will decline—i.e., exceptionalists should be more likely to oppose the reform than non-exceptionalists.
- H2.a: The framing of the focal electoral rule as "foreign," "imported," and "un-American" will, all else equal, cause treated exceptionalists to be *less* supportive of the reform relative to untreated exceptionalists.
- H2.b: The framing of the focal electoral rule as "foreign," "imported," and "un-American" will *not*, all else equal, affect non-exceptionalists—i.e., treatment assignment will have no effect on support.

4.3 Research design

The objective of this study is to isolate the effect of American exceptionalism on support for electoral reform in the U.S.; after having established the independent effect of this attitude, I will in my future work countervail exceptionalism against partisan self-interest, a la Chapter 3, in order to explore the interactive effect. To evaluate this relationship, I have developed and preregistered a within-cohort, between-subjects experimental design that manipulates the framing of a given electoral reform policy, holding all else constant. Respondents are randomly assigned into one of two conditions: a control, which contains no frame; and a treatment, which portrays the electoral reform proposal as "foreign" and "un-American" and thus is intended to prime exceptionalist attitudes. These conditions are best understood as the absence and presence of country-of-origin (CoO) labels, respectively. A subject's treatment assignment does *not* depend on her profile (i.e., either condition is available to any respondent), and in the analysis, I compare treated and untreated exceptionalists (non-exceptionalists) to obtain cohort treatment effects. I deploy this design for two separate experiments, which differ from each other in their focal rule, *only*; respondents are randomly assigned into either Experiment 1 or 2.

4.3.1 Instrument

The instrument is a vignette, written by the investigator to appear as a policy brief; each vignette contains two parts. First, each vignette contains content about the focal reform and the changes it would make to the status quo electoral rule. It is here that Experiment 1 and 2 differ. The former discusses the "Fair Representation Act" (FRA), a reform proposal currently before Congress that would convert U.S. House elections from American-style, winner-take-all single-member plurality (SMP) to a multi-winner ranked-choice system most akin to Irish-style single-transferable vote (STV). To increase external validity, I have modeled the FRA vignettes after a press release from the office of Rep. Don Beyer, the bill's sponsor.[12] These vignettes read:

> As you may know, each American citizen resides within a single-seat district and has just one representative to the U.S. House. We therefore call such a district 'winner-take-all.'
>
> However, some people have suggested changing the way we conduct our congressional elections. One idea out there is the "Fair Representation Act."
>
> This bill would convert U.S. House districts into multi-winner districts, each with five seats. District voters, then, would fill these seats via ranked-choice voting. A ranked-choice ballot allows a voter to rank the district candidates in order of her preference: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on. The five district candidates with the 'strongest' overall preferential support would win seats ...

Experiment 2, on the other hand, discusses the "Equal Vote Amendment" (EVA, so-named by the investigator), a reform proposal that would amend the U.S. Constitution

[12] "Beyer Introduces Fair Representation Act to Reform Congressional Elections," Office of Rep. Don Beyer, 26 June 2017, https://beyer.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=616. In addition, I also consulted two related articles: "Fair Representation Act Would Be 'The Most Comprehensive Approach to Changing How We Elect Congress In American History'," *Medium*, 26 Dec. 2017, https://govtrackinsider.com/fair-representation-act-would-be-the-most-comprehensive-approach-to-changing-how-we-elect-congress-c3505fa6a937; and, Drew Penrose, "Voting Reform Goes from Theory to Legislation," *The American Prospect*, 5 Nov. 2018, https://prospect.org/article/voting-reform-goes-theory-legislation.

		Focal electoral reform	
		(1) *Fair Representation Act*	(2) *Equal Vote Amendment*
Frame	(A) *None*	Control (155 words)	Control (157 words)
	(B) *Foreign*	Treatment (178 words)	Treatment (180 words)

Notes: Respondents are randomly assigned into either Experiment 1 (column 1) or Experiment 2 (column 2) and, then, within each, into either the control condition (row A) or the treatment (row B).

Table 4.3: Treatment and control groups for the two experiments

to eliminate the Electoral College and replace it with a two-round, direct vote system most similar to French-style presidential elections (2RR). To increase external validity, I have modeled the EVA vignettes after the description in Longley and Braun (1972, p.82–3) of former-Sen. Birch Bayh's "Direct Vote Plan."[13] These vignettes read:

> As you may know, Americans elect their president via the Electoral College, in which each state has a set number of electoral votes.
>
> However, some people have suggested changing the way we conduct our presidential elections. One idea out there is the "Equal Vote Amendment" to the Constitution.
>
> This bill would replace the Electoral College with a two-round system based on the national popular vote. The candidate with the most popular votes would be elected president, provided he or she got at least 40% of the vote. If no one got 40%, then the two strongest candidates, only, would compete in a second round 'runoff' election, with the most votes winning ...

[13] Current bills before Congress that would eliminate the College (for example, Rep. Steve Cohen's; see: Jamie Ehrlich, "Congressman Proposes Eliminating Electoral College, Preventing Presidents from Pardoning Themselves," *CNN*, 5 Jan. 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/04/politics/constitutional-amendments-steve-cohen-electoral-pardon/index.html) merely would replace the College with a single-round, pluralitarian, direct election. Without a French-style second round, such reforms are not as obviously 'foreign' in their conception as Bayh's 1970s two-round proposal. This is because the U.S. utilizes direct, single-round, pluralitarian elections for all legislative contests.

As can be seen above, both the FRA and EVA descriptions, where possible, use lay rather than technical terms; each also carefully eschews overly partisan content. (For a more technical treatment of STV and 2RR, see Farrell, 2011, ch.6 and 3, respectively.)

Second, each vignette contains editorial language about the focal reform (either FRA or EVA) and its anticipated effects. It is here that Experiment 1 and 2 share content.[14] Moreover, it is in the editorial language that a treated respondent receives the frame—to prime exceptionalism, the treatment utilizes triggering phrases "foreign import," "Europe and elsewhere," and "out-of-place in America" to castigate the reform proposal. It reads:

> ...Although this electoral system would be new to the U.S., many foreign countries—in Europe and elsewhere—currently use it.
>
> Some people argue that, taken together, these changes would incentivize candidates to appeal to a broader range of voters and would better reflect the people's will.
>
> Other people counter that the proposed changes are too dramatic; and moreover, that such a 'foreign import' would be out-of-place in America.

Conversely, the control condition excises from its editorial language all exceptionalism-priming content. It reads:

> ...This electoral system would be new to the U.S.
>
> Some people argue that, taken together, these changes would incentivize candidates to appeal to a broader range of voters and would better reflect the people's will.
>
> Other people counter that the proposed changes are too dramatic.

Importantly, both the FRA and EVA can be described accurately as 'foreign' or 'imported' or 'un-American,' because neither has a history of usage in the U.S. and each is utilized abroad, for example by Ireland and France, respectively. Table 4.3 visually displays the experimental set-up, and provides a word count for each of the four vignettes.

[14] The only difference is a minor one: Experiment 1 (2) refers to "congressional candidates" ("presidential candidates"), since it is about the FRA (EVA).

4.3.2 Analysis

The theory, however, is not about which vignette a subject receives, but rather how that treatment primes her attitudes about American exceptionalism. Again, based on the literature, I conceptualize exceptionalism as consisting of two related, but distinct, ideas: 1) the U.S.'s 'special character'; and, 2) its 'special mission.' To obtain information on a respondent's attitude toward each, I ask a four-item battery for 'special character' and a four-item battery for 'special mission,' pre-stimulus. (I developed these batteries, with a colleague, using an online convenience sample from Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform; see Virgin and Engelhardt, nd, for the results of the exploratory factor analysis.) Table 4.1 contains the text of all eight questions; each item presented respondents with five options from which to choose, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' To minimize response acquiescence, each battery contains one reverse-worded item with which, per theory, a strong exceptionalist should *disagree*. I opt for a 'continuous' operationalization of the variable (*exceptionalism*), in which a respondent receives a score of 4 (0) every time she selects the theorized 'strong exceptionalist' ('weak exceptionalist') position. Adding together these scores yields a scale of 32 (4×8) when using all eight items, and 24 (4×6) when excluding the reversed worded items from the analysis.

Although *exceptionalism* is the key theoretical explanatory variable, in the interactive models that follows it takes on the role of moderator. The dependent variable (*support*) is support for the focal electoral reform, polled post-stimulus; this variable is measured via a 5-point Likert scale, from 'strongly oppose' to 'strongly support' (0–4). The independent variable (*treatment*) for all studies is randomized treatment assignment; subjects who receive the treatment are coded 1, whereas those in the control are 0. For all models, I utilize Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). Model 1 is a simple bivariate regression between

explanatory and outcome variable:

$$support = \beta_0 + \beta_1 exceptionalism \tag{4.1}$$

To explore the causal relationship between the two, Model 2 interacts exceptionalism with treatment assignment:

$$support = \beta_0 + \beta_1 treatment + \beta_2 exceptionalism + \beta_3 \Big(treatment \times exceptionalism \Big) \tag{4.2}$$

The marginal effect of *treatment* on *support* conditional on *exceptionalism*, then, is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\partial support}{\partial treatment} = \beta_1 + \beta_3 \Big(exceptionalism \Big) \tag{4.3}$$

Where β_1 is the direct effect of the triggering frames on support for reform and β_3 is the coefficient on the interaction term.

4.4 Study

I utilize this design for two separate experiments, each of which required respondents to answer every question and prohibited them from advancing the vignette until at least 20 seconds had elapsed. A respondent was randomly sorted into one experiment.

4.4.1 Recruitment and data

For the study, fielded on 10 June 2019, I recruited 1022 subjects from Amazon's Mechanical Turk Internet-based crowd-sourcing platform. Workers selected voluntarily into the study after viewing an advertisement posted on the MTurk website; they had a maximum of one hour to complete the task and were compensated $1.25 for their time. The survey

screened out subjects younger than 18-years old and subjects located outside the U.S.[15] A convenience sample, the MTurk draw is, as expected, not nationally-representative. In this case, it skews Democratic (54.31%), young (54.21% between 18–34-years old), educated (57.34% with a Bachelor's degree or higher), and male (54.50%).[16] With respect to the values positions of respondents, Table 4.4 displays descriptive statistics for the distributions of special character, special mission, and full exceptionalist attitudes. I have dropped the reversed worded item from both the special character and special mission batteries (see Table 4.1), because the data show that each reversed item scales poorly with its respective three battery-mates. In the Appendix, I rerun the following analyses using *all* eight exceptionalism questions, as opposed to just the six forward worded ones.

4.4.2 Results

I begin by running a simple bivariate OLS model of the relationship between exceptionalist attitudes and support for the focal electoral reform, irregardless of treatment assignment. Figure 4.1 displays the association for Experiment 1 (FRA) whereas Figure 4.2 displays the result for Experiment 2 (EVA); each is presented as a predicted probability for the outcome variable on the y-axis, with the strength of exceptionalism on the x-axis and increasing from left to right. As hypothesized in H1, the relationship between the two variables is negative: as we move from non-exceptionalists to exceptionalists, the predicted probability of supporting the focal electoral reform attenuates, more or less, to zero. While this is promising, initial evidence in support of the theory, it is nonetheless *not* evidence of a causal relationship, as exceptionalist sentiments are not randomly assigned throughout the mass public.

[15] The survey set worker qualifications to ensure high performance. The qualifications are approval HIT rate $\geq$ 90% and number of HITS approved $\geq$ 100. A third qualification prohibited workers from my previous MTurk-hosted surveys about election rules and reform from participating in the study.

[16] On MTurk's weaknesses, see Berinsky et al. (2012); Buhrmester et al. (2011); Anson (2018).

Battery	*Condition*	*Experiment 1 (FRA)*			*Experiment 2 (EVA)*		
		n	*Mean*	*Range*	*n*	*Mean*	*Range*
Special character	*Control*	258	6.88	0–12	256	6.29	0–12
	Treatment	251	5.78	0–12	257	6.49	0–12
	Combined	509	6.34	0–12	513	6.39	0–12
Special mission	*Control*	258	6.62	0–12	256	6.63	0–12
	Treatment	251	6.34	0–12	257	6.81	0–12
	Combined	509	6.48	0–12	513	6.72	0–12
Exceptionalism	*Control*	258	13.51	0–24	256	12.93	0–24
	Treatment	251	12.12	0–24	257	13.30	0–24
	Combined	509	12.82	0–24	513	13.11	0–24

Notes: The scale for each sub-piece of exceptionalism is 0 to 12 points, whereas the full scale for exceptionalism is 0–24.

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics for exceptionalism, by experiment and condition

To investigate the causal relationship, i.e., that an increase in exceptionalist attitudes *leads* to a decrease in support for electoral reform in the U.S., I interact exceptionalism with treatment assignment—because the triggering frames of the randomized treatment should have primed individuals in that group to think in terms of the imported nature of the focal alternative, we can have confidence that any underlying confounder is held constant between treatment and control. Hypothesis H2.a (H2.b), then, compares primed and unprimed exceptionalists (non-exceptionalists), predicting that the latter will be more likely to oppose the reform (no difference, due to a lack of frame receptivity). Figure 4.3 displays the interactive relationship between the three variables for Experiment 1 and Figure 4.4 does the same for Experiment 2; each colors the control group in blue and the

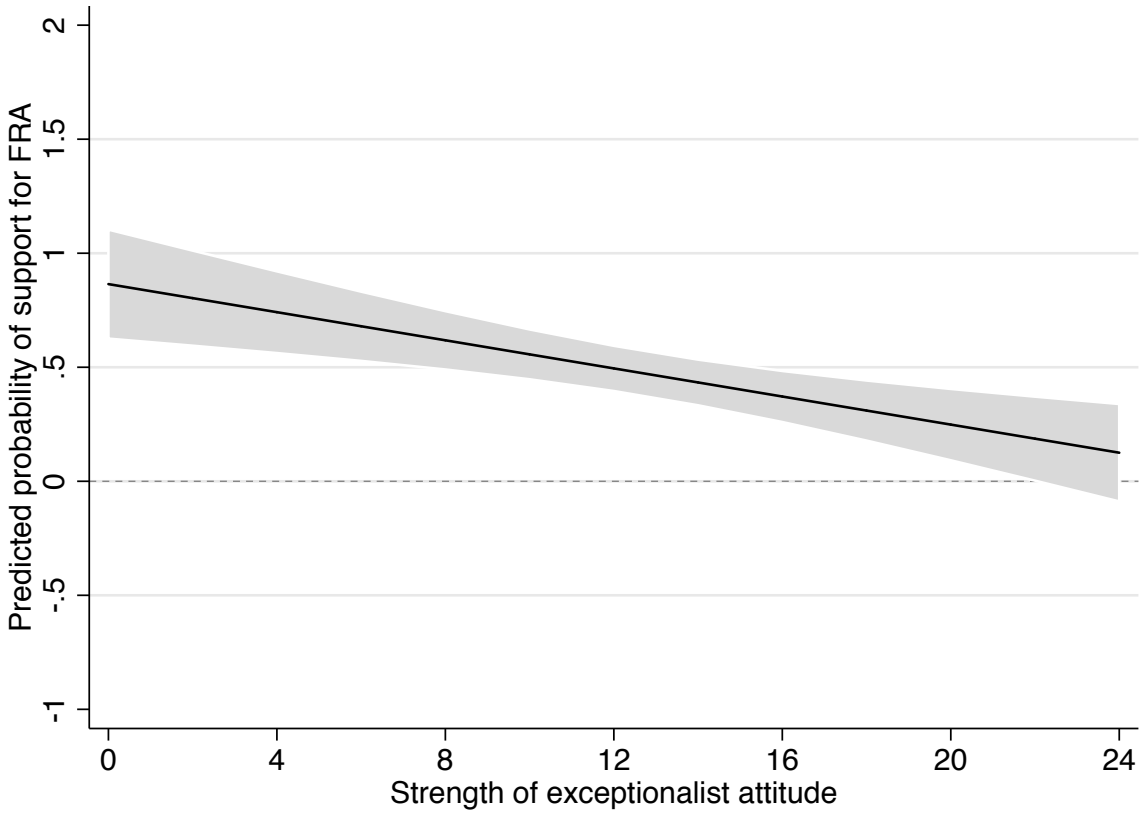


Figure 4.1: Bivariate relationship between exceptionalism and FRA support

treatment group in red. As before, the y-axis is the predicted probability of support.

Neither hypothesis is supported, as *both* the effects of treatment and control attenuate, as exceptionalism increases, at the same rate. In contrast, H2.a predicts that *only* the treatment group should decline, and H2.b expects a, more or less, straight line for the control group. In the subsequent Discussion, I argue that the failure of the interactive hypothesis could be due to the survey design having inadvertently 'treated' the control group. Notwithstanding the statistical indistinguishability between the two groups, a few aspects of the result are worth noting. First, and especially for the EVA, the triggering frames do appear to pull the exceptionalists in the treatment group farther downward relative to their counterparts in the control—i.e., its slope is more dramatic, evidence

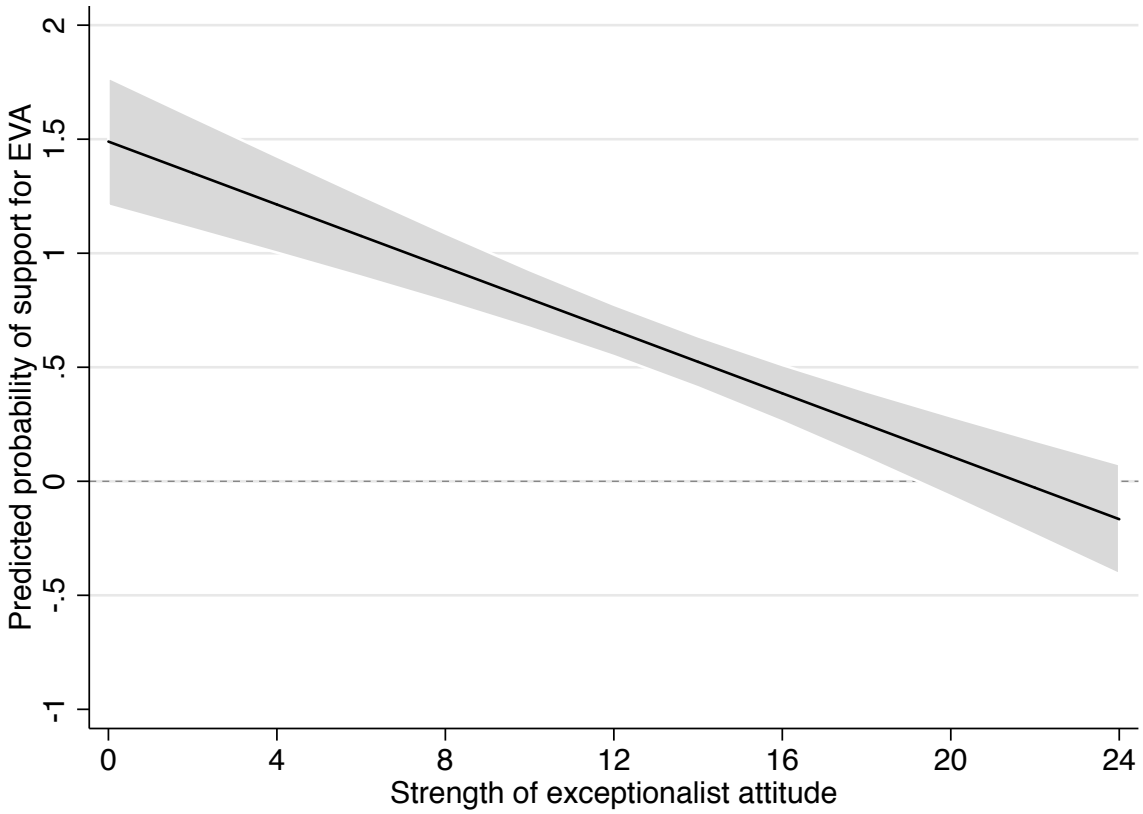


Figure 4.2: Bivariate relationship between exceptionalism and EVA support

that is consistent with H2.a. Second, and in contrast to H2.b's prediction of no effect, the triggering frames appear to actually *increase* the likelihood that non-exceptionalists will support the focal reform, as non-exceptionalists in the treatment group appear above their control group counterparts. Interestingly, this is early evidence that points to a *reverse* effect: triggering phrases may affect non-exceptionalists, too, albeit in a positive direction. Framing the focal alternative as a "foreign import" that is "un-American" and "European," then, might actually appeal to these individuals.

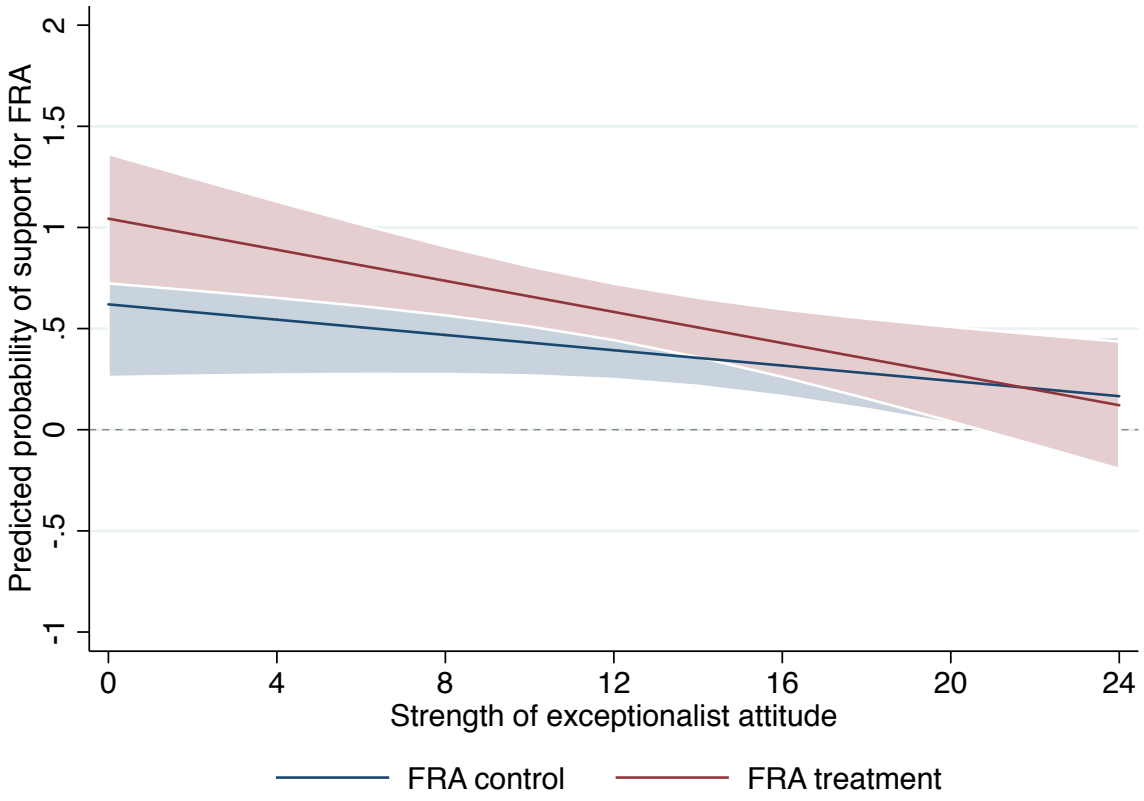


Figure 4.3: Relationship between exceptionalism and FRA support, by treatment

4.4.3 Discussion

The results of this study are therefore muddled. Notably, there is indeed a substantively interesting association between a belief in American exceptionalism and a willingness to support electoral reform in the U.S. (at least across the two focal rule changes explored here); as hypothesized, this relationship is negative (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). However, I did not find support for the multiplicative model that interacts exceptionalist attitudes with treatment assignment, as there was no difference on the outcome variable between respondents who were treated and those who were assigned to the control group (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). Because the random triggering of exceptionalist sentiments (via frames that highlighted the focal alternative's foreignness) was necessary to provide this relationship

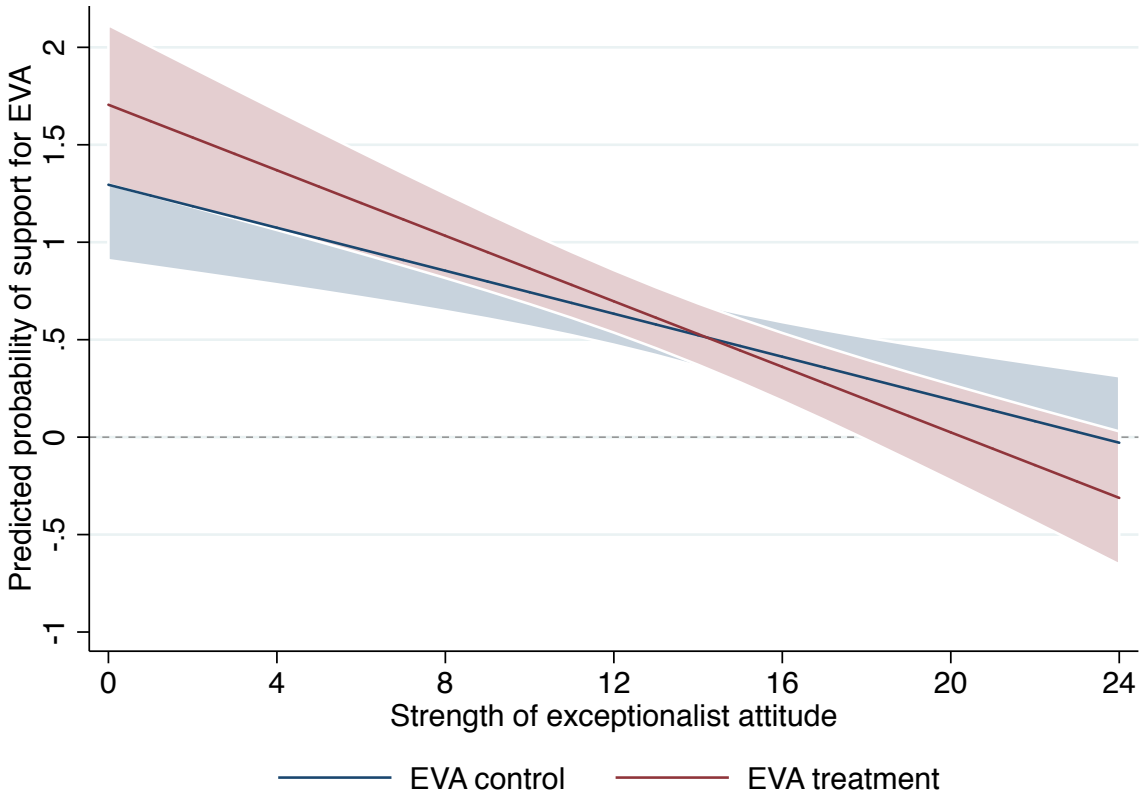


Figure 4.4: Relationship between exceptionalism and EVA support, by treatment

with causal heft, the failure of the interactive model means that it would be inappropriate to conclude that exceptionalism necessarily *led* to the result on support for electoral reform. At this stage, it is an association and nothing more.

I suspect that the reason I could not recover a difference between the treatment and control groups is because the survey design accidentally 'treated' subjects for whom no treatment was intended—i.e., if a contaminant got to the control, then individuals in *each* condition, rather than the treatment only, could have been primed to think about the U.S. and the 'American way' when reading their vignette and answering the outcome variable. Two suspects emerge. The first is a question ordering effect. Prior to random assignment, the survey asked all respondents to answer 15 questions related

to national affect: four for the special character battery, four for special mission, and four and three, respectively, for the related concepts of national identity and symbolic patriotism. Although the survey randomized the order of the national affect batteries and separated them with other questions, it was—in retrospect—nonetheless a survey that kept returning the respondent again and again to items affect-related on the U.S.[17] Compounding the issue further, with just two (short) diversion items[18] to separate the final national affect battery from the vignette on electoral reform, there was perhaps as little as 15 seconds for any inadvertent, pre-stimulus priming of national affect to decay before the survey randomly sorted subjects into conditions.

The second suspect, though admittedly a less likely culprit, is that both the control and treatment vignettes contained the phrase: "This electoral system would be new to the U.S." While relatively weak compared to the frames that the treatment deployed (e.g., "foreign import," "un-American," and "in Europe and elsewhere") a remark about the

[17] In the survey, the national identity and symbolic patriotism batteries were always paired in one block, albeit randomized as to which battery presented first. These seven questions, then, were always followed by the same five randomized items: three political knowledge questions and two questions about U.S. institutions—1) 'To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of the United States?'; and, 2) 'To what extent do you trust elections in this country?' In hindsight, the latter two items were too germane to the issue at hand, and indeed subjects may have recalled (and sought to honor) their answers to these two pre-stimulus items when answering the post-stimulus outcome variable. The survey also always paired into a second block the special character and special mission batteries, with the same randomizing procedure described above. These eight exceptionalism questions were always followed by the same four randomized items: two questions on political knowledge and two on political interest. Finally, a third block with demographic questions (including partisan and ideological identifications) randomized with the two blocks detailed above.

[18] These two diversion items were not randomized in the survey flow, i.e., every respondent received these two items just before heading into the vignette. For documentation purposes, these items were as follows: 1) 'I like to contribute to the arts, such as by going to the symphony or art museum,' followed by a 5-point agree-disagree Likert scale; and, 2) 'The number three is less than the number five,' i.e., a true or false compliance check.

alternative's novelty in the U.S. is arguably an exceptionalism-triggering phrase, because newness to the U.S. can imply a foreign origin.[19] If so, then the newness bit could have primed control subjects to consider national affect when I did not intend them to.

A second study with this instrument slightly modified could easily address these two potential contaminants, by excising superfluous national affect items (i.e., the national identity and symbolic patriotism batteries) that are not needed for the analysis, as well as by removing from the control group (but retaining in the treatment) the 'new to the U.S.' trigger. Additionally, increasing the survey distance between the exceptionalism batteries and the electoral reform vignettes would be advisable, and a larger, omnibus survey could easily accomplish this. Taken together, these three recommended changes should combine to minimize any accidental priming of national affect within the control group, all while making no obvious threat the to external validity of the experiments. If in this second study the data again did not support the interactive hypotheses, then the instrument's failure under (more) auspicious circumstances could warrant its abandonment.

4.5 Conclusion

Since the 2016 elections, the topic of electoral reform in America has gained renewed salience, and rule changes at the congressional, presidential, and subnational levels have piqued the interest of lawmakers, activists, journalists, and even a subset of the electorate. Although some of the rule changes under discussion are domestic originals decidedly unique to the U.S. (e.g., the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact; see 2), other potential rule changes have a tradition of development and usage abroad. In these cases, the policy legacies and experiences of the originating foreign democracy may become part

[19] When constructing the vignettes, I reasoned that "new to the U.S." could also be consistent with a domestic subnational rule suddenly being applied to the federal level, as well as a newly-invented rule that had never been used anywhere in the world. But, each of these would seem to be a less obvious place for the respondent's mind to go than concluding that 'new' indicated a foreign import.

of the U.S.'s reform debate, provided domestic elites seize upon and deploy this narrative when attempting to influence public opinion (or, as in the Bangor Public Library example that began this paper, when *teaching* people how a new system would work). Because the intensity of attachment to the nation (i.e., America and the 'American way') is not evenly distributed among Americans, a message that references the 'foreign import' nature of a given alternative is liable to differentially affect members of the population—some individuals, seeing the American way as sacrosanct and superior, might be particularly ill-disposed to forfeiting American distinctiveness to model democracies abroad. Such individuals should score highly on measures of national affect.

In this paper, I have investigated the effect on support for electoral reform of one such type of national affect: the attitude of *American exceptionalism*, defined here as the belief in the U.S.'s comparative superiority (i.e., its "special character"), as well as the attendant desire to help foreign peoples to adopt American-style liberal values and political institutions (i.e., its "special mission) (Ceaser, 2012). In doing so, I join other scholars (Renwick, 2010, 2011; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011; Bowler et al., 2006; Bowler and Donovan, 2013; Virgin, 2017, nd) in attempting to move beyond *partisan self-interest*—that is, the canonical explanation for electoral reform—to sketch a more nuanced picture of the motivational reasons for *why* reform may or may not occur. Using a between-subjects framing experiment that randomly assigns respondents into either a treatment group that features exceptionalism-triggering phrases (such as "un-American," "foreign import," and "used in Europe") or a sans-frames control group, I find initial evidence of the hypothesized negative association between exceptionalist sentiments and support for electoral reform. However, due to some issues with the instrument and survey design (i.e., a question order effect), this paper cannot speak to causality.

The current project provides numerous opportunities for future research. Most obviously, and as mentioned in the above Discussion, a second study is needed to identify

a causal connection between exceptionalism and support for electoral reform; this study should use, more or less, the same instrument but attend to and correct the possible question order/context mistakes of the design deployed here. A second avenue for exploration is to pursue *other* electoral reform alternatives than the two here explored (FRA and EVA), i.e., the *topic* of the reform proposal, as well as its attendant *origin*. On the one hand, FRA and EVA are reforms that are quite topical, because they address congressional and presidential elections, respectively. Yet, on the other, these two reforms are each what Jacobs and Leyenaar (2011) term "major" (i.e., systemic changes) rather than "minor" electoral reforms. Moreover, each is European in its origin—and Ireland and France are two historically white countries. It would therefore be informative to vary the ethnic/racial identity of the originating foreign country, since often feelings of national affect (in particular, the feeling of comparative superiority associated with nationalism and exceptionalism) can be intertwined with the psychology of racial prejudice (Ceaser, 2012; de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003).

Third, a second implication of the theory, albeit not explored in this paper, is that exceptionalists should be more likely than non-exceptionalists to favor the *exportation* of U.S. electoral institutions abroad, consistent with the belief in a special mission. Exploration of the 'other direction' of policy diffusion will be important to filling out the import/export nature of the theory, and would compliment the 'buy-American' ethnoconsumerism of Shimp and Sharma (1987). Finally, and once the effect of exceptionalism on reform is established, it will be necessary to countervail it against canonical partisan self-interest, a la Chapter 3. My hope is that this paper, as well as the extensions noted above, will contribute to the discipline by bringing national affect into our discussions of electoral reform, thereby sketching a more complete picture of the motivational underpinnings of rule choice.

Chapter 5

Appendices

5.1 Chapter 2 Appendix

5.1.1 NVPIC progress variable

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) is a subnational reform proposal to the U.S. electoral college that has been introduced in all 51 state legislatures. (Because the proposal utilizes state powers it thus lies within the jurisdiction of each state legislature and executive.) I collected data on each instance of NPVIC introduction from 2006–14, in particular bill progress summaries. Using this information, I next coded each NPVIC bill on how far in the legislative process it advanced; the ordinal scale ranges from "0" (i.e., no bill introduced) to "6" (i.e., public law). The conversion of bill summaries from 51 unique subnational units into a uniform, 7-point ordinal scale, however, requires the construction of a stylized legislative process (see Figure 5.1), which I generated via six simplifying assumptions (A1–A6).

- **A1)** Branch u includes cases in which a bill is introduced in the originating chamber, and: 1) is sent to committee, where is subsequently dies; 2) is never assigned to a committee. In both cases, the distance progressed is the same: it does not make it beyond Committee A.

- **A2)** Branch v includes cases in which a bill passes the originating chamber committee and proceeds to the full chamber, but: 1) fails on the floor vote; 2) never receives a floor vote. In both cases, the distance progressed is the same: it passes Committee A but not Chamber A.

- **A3)** Branch w includes cases in which a bill passes the originating chamber, but: 1)

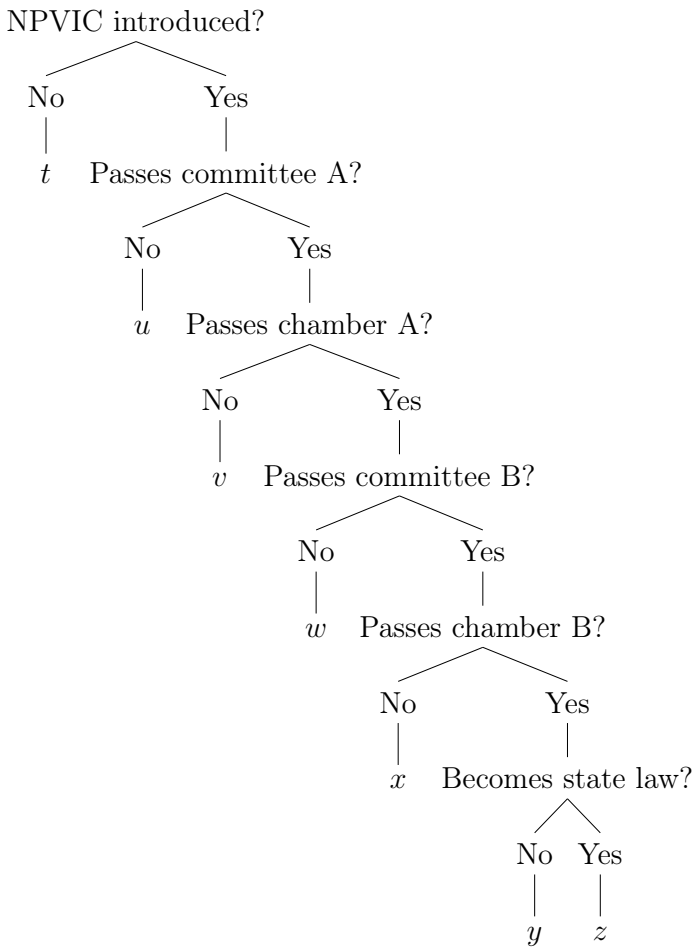


Figure 5.1: NPVIC progress decision tree

is not forwarded to the receiving chamber; 2) is not assigned to a receiving chamber committee; 3) is assigned to a committee, wherein it subsequently dies. In all three cases, the distance progressed is the same: it passes Chamber A but fails to make it past Committee B.

- **A4)** Branch x includes cases in which a bill passes the receiving chamber committee, but: 1) fails on the floor vote; 2) never receives a floor vote. In both cases, the distance progressed is the same: it passes Committee B but does not make it beyond Chamber B.

- **A5)** Branch y includes cases in which a bill passes both chambers, but: 1) is vetoed by the governor and the legislature does not attempt an override; 2) is vetoed by the governor and the legislature's override fails; 3) requires—due to receiving chamber amendments—conference committee, in which it dies; 4) requires and passes conference committee, is vetoed by the governor, and the legislature does not attempt an override; 5) requires and passes conference committee, is vetoed by the governor, and the legislature's override fails. In all five cases, the distance progressed is the same: it passes both chambers but fails to become law.

- **A6)** Branch z includes cases in which a bill passes both chambers, and: 1) is signed into law by the governor; 2) is vetoed by the governor but saved by the legislature's override; 3) is signed into law by the governor following successful passage through conference committee; 4) is vetoed by the governor following successful passage through conference committee, but is saved by the legislature's override. In all four cases, the distance progressed is the same: it becomes law and the state joins the compact.

Together, A1–A6 generate a 7-point ordinal scale, dubbed *npvicprog* and represented in Table 2.2:

- **(code = 0)** The bill is not introduced (tree node = t)

- **(1)** The bill is introduced but passes 0 committees and 0 chambers (u)

- **(2)** The bill passes 1 committee and 0 chambers (v)

- **(3)** The bill passes 1 committee and 1 chamber (w)

- **(4)** The bill passes 2 committees and 1 chamber (x)

- **(5)** The bill passes 2 committees and 2 chambers but does not become state law (y)

- **(6)** The bill passes 2 committees and 2 chambers and becomes state law (z)

With some states, however, coding NPVIC progress is anything but straightforward, due primarily to legislature-specific, institutional peculiarities that do not map flawlessly onto the ordinal scale. With state-level characteristics central to the conditional hypothesis I seek to test, my preference is to preserve states in, rather than omit states from, the dataset when possible. The trade-off, however, is that fitting these cases to the NPVIC progress scale introduces to the variable a degree of subjectivity. As a result, I believe it is beneficial to highlight the institutional variety I confronted, as well as my coding decisions. In settling on a value for these (rare) cases, I have sought to avoid rewarding states for bill progress not attributable directly to legislator support.

First, two states—Nebraska and the District of Columbia—are unicameral. Lacking a second chamber, these observations cannot obtain values of 4 or 5. I have opted to omit both states from the analysis.[1] Second, some states refer NPVIC bills to joint committees, on which both senators and representatives sit, rather than to a traditionally subdivided system. In my coding, a bill that passes the originating chamber but not the receiving chamber, scores a 4, under the (perhaps generous) assumption that joint committee support indicates that, had the receiving chamber organized its own committee, it would have reported the bill favorably to its floor.[2] Third, some states refer NPVIC bills

[1] Collapsing unicameral legislatures onto an ordinal scale designed for bicameralism requires the voting behavior of committees and full chambers be independent of the number of houses. If, for example, a committee in the originating chamber of a bicameral legislature counts on the receiving chamber to kill a bad bill and is thus less discriminating than its unicameral counterpart, then it may be easier to get legislation through one system as opposed to the other.

[2] Because some of these states do not report committee votes, determining the proportion of committee support due to senators and the proportion due to representatives is not possible. Regardless, such

to multiple committees in a reference chain. To reach the floor, a bill must pass *all* committees in the chain. In my coding, a bill that passes at least one, but not all, committees in the series scores a 1, because it dies at some point at the committee stage.[3]

Fourth, some states allow bills that do not receive favorable committee reports to advance nonetheless to the full chamber. As a result, a lack of committee support is not sufficient to kill the bill. In my coding, if the non-committee supported bill also dies on the floor, the coding is 1 rather than 2, because the bill did not pass the decision rule in committee. If the non-committee supported bill passed on the floor, the coding is 3.[4] Fifth, in two states, a bill passed by both chambers of the legislature is not transmitted automatically to the governor. Rather, the House and Senate must vote to *enact* (i.e.,

information would be of little use if lawmakers behave differently on joint as opposed to single-chamber committees. If, for example, a representative votes strategically (e.g., to be accommodating, to log-roll, to retaliate against the other chamber, etc.) when on a committee shared with senators but sincerely when on a committee of representatives only, then her behavior would depend on the committee type.

[3] Treating as equivalent single committee and multiple committee references assumes that the actions of committees are independent of their inclusion in a reference chain. If, for example, a committee early in the sequence alters its behavior due to the presence of the others (e.g., sits on a bill due to a territorial dispute, expects a committee later in the sequence to kill the bill, etc.), then NPVIC progress may depend on the reference chain. Moreover, having to clear three committees as opposed to one is an appreciably more difficult assignment for a bill.

[4] In Maine and New Hampshire, committees are required to issue a divided report, with competing majority and minority recommendations. The full chamber subsequently votes on which report, if any, to take up; acceptance of an minority-issued "ought to pass" report thus allows the bill to continue in the process over the opposition of a majority of the committee. Similarly, in North Dakota, *all* bills, regardless of committee action, are placed on the calendar for final passage. The danger here is that committee members in these states behave differently than those in other states. For example, suppose a legislator who supports NPVIC but whose party leadership does not. Placed in a state like Maine, she could conceivably vote against the bill in committee to mollify her party and still pursue her individual goal of NPVIC passage, since she knows the bill can survive an unfavorable majority report. Placed in another state, however, these two aims would be mutually exclusive.

send to the governor) *engrossed* bills, thus introducing an additional procedural hurdle into the legislative process. In my coding, an engrossed bill that is not enacted receives a value of 5, because it passes both chambers but does not become state law.[5] Sixth, New York has a rule that allows stalled bills from the first year of the legislative term to be reintroduced automatically for the second year of the term, but the bill restarts at the beginning of the legislative process. In my coding, a reintroduced bill is counted as a separate effort since its first year progress does not carry over into the second year.[6]

[5] It is possible that the requirement of an enactment vote causes legislators to alter their voting behavior. If, for example, the receiving chamber believes the originating chamber—though it voted to *engross* the bill—will not vote to *enact* the bill, it may abandon the bill as hopeless.

[6] Understandably, treating each session of a given bill as two separate legislative efforts requires that its presumed reintroduction does not impinge upon its first-year progress. If, for example, a committee abandons its first-year work on a bill to wait for year two, then the bill's first-year progress is not necessarily attributable to legislator support alone. However, failure to separate bills into 'effort a' and 'effort b' would artificially deflate New York's number of observations relative to other states.

5.2 Chapter 3 Appendix

5.2.1 Vignettes

Instructions:

> On the next page, we will provide you with an excerpt from a news story. Please read the news story carefully. After you finish, you will be asked a few questions about what you have read.

Access vignette (*single-factor, 166 words*):

> In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that would alter some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to make it easier to vote absentee. \ As such, voter access advocates are lining up behind the proposal: they have long believed the current system makes it too hard for well-intentioned individuals to exercise their right to vote. \ "This proposal would open up the electoral process," says John Lange, a proponent of expanded access. "Legitimizing our elections by making voting more convenient is consistent with America's larger commitment to equality and inclusion." \ Advocates of electoral integrity, however, have countered that the proposal would make it too hard for election officials to guard against unlawful, fraudulent voting.

Integrity vignette (*single-factor, 166 words*):

In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that would alter some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to make it easier to guard against voter fraud. \ As such, electoral integrity advocates are lining up behind the proposal: they have long believed the current system makes it too easy for ill-intentioned individuals to cast an unlawful vote. \ "This proposal would zip up the electoral process," says John Lange, a proponent of electoral integrity. "Legitimizing our elections by encouraging in-person voting is consistent with America's larger commitment to honesty and security." \ Advocates of voter access, however, have countered that the proposal would make it too hard for registered voters to exercise their right to vote.

Democratic vignette (*single-factor, 155 words*):

In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that would alter some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to advantage the Democratic Party. \ Democrats, as a result, are on board: they have always suspected that the current system makes it too hard for their supporters to vote. \ "This proposal would help us to advance our overall agenda," says Democratic strategist Todd Bennett. "Changing absentee voting means more Democratic

officeholders, which means the ability to advance progressive causes across the country." \ Republican critics have countered that the proposal would distort the vote by giving Democrats an unfair advantage. "This is a liberal power grab."

Republican vignette (*single-factor, 155 words*):

In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that would alter some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to advantage the Republican Party. \ Republicans, as a result, are on board: they have always suspected that the current system makes it too hard for their supporters to vote. \ "This proposal would help us to advance our overall agenda," says Republican strategist Todd Bennett. "Changing absentee voting means more Republican officeholders, which means the ability to advance conservative causes across the country." \ Democratic critics have countered that the proposal would distort the vote by giving Republicans an unfair advantage. "This is a conservative power grab."

Access + Democratic vignette (*double-factor, 268 words*):

In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that

would alter some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to have two effects. \ First, the proposal would make it easier to vote absentee. \ As such, voter access advocates are lining up behind the proposal: they have long believed the current system makes it too hard for well-intentioned individuals to exercise their right to vote. \ "This proposal would open up the electoral process," says John Lange, a proponent of expanded access. "Legitimizing our elections by making voting more convenient is consistent with America's larger commitment to equality and inclusion." \ Advocates of electoral integrity, however, have countered that the proposal would make it too hard for election officials to guard against unlawful, fraudulent voting. \ The second expected effect of the proposal is that it would advantage the Democratic Party. \ Democrats, as a result, are on board: they have always suspected that the current system makes it too hard for their supporters to vote. \ "This proposal would help us to advance our overall agenda," says Democratic strategist Todd Bennett. "Changing absentee voting means more Democratic officeholders, which means the ability to advance progressive causes across the country." \ Republican critics have countered that the proposal would distort the vote by giving Democrats an unfair advantage. "This is a liberal power grab."

Integrity + Republican vignette (*double-factor, 268 words*):

In many states, fewer and fewer voters are having to make the traditional trip to vote at their polling station. Instead, they are choosing to mail in an absentee vote before Election Day. \ Starting soon, however, absentee voting could change. This is because the U.S. is considering a proposal that would alter

some of the technical details of this common electoral procedure. \ If implemented, the proposal is—on balance—expected to have two effects. \ First, the proposal would make it easier to guard against voter fraud. \ As such, electoral integrity advocates are lining up behind the proposal: they have long believed the current system makes it too easy for ill-intentioned individuals to cast an unlawful vote. \ "This proposal would zip up the electoral process," says John Lange, a proponent of electoral integrity. "Legitimizing our elections by encouraging in-person voting is consistent with America's larger commitment to honesty and security." \ Advocates of voter access, however, have countered that the proposal would make it too hard for registered voters to exercise their right to vote. \ The second expected effect of the proposal is that it would advantage the Republican Party. \ Republicans, as a result, are on board: they have always suspected that the current system makes it too hard for their supporters to vote. \ "This proposal would help us to advance our overall agenda," says Republican strategist Todd Bennett. "Changing absentee voting means more Republican officeholders, which means the ability to advance conservative causes across the country." \ Democratic critics have countered that the proposal would distort the vote by giving Republicans an unfair advantage. "This is a conservative power grab."

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5.2.2 Survey post-stimulus content

First manipulation check:

According to what you have just read, what electoral rule allows a voter to cast his or her ballot by mail?

[Absentee voting; Provisional voting; Voter I.D.; Early voting; Don't know].

The correct answer is 'Absentee voting' for all treatment groups.

Second manipulation check:

Thinking of what you have just read, did the news story indicate whether the proposal would tend to favor a specific political party over the other?

[The news story says the proposal would favor the Republicans; The news story says the proposal would favor the Democrats; The news story says the proposal would favor neither party over the other; The news story did not provide this information; Don't know].

The correct answer depends on the treatment group.

Dependent variable:

The news story you have just read was about proposed changes to absentee voting procedures in the U.S. Thinking back to this article, to what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?

[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree]

Debrief:

Dear survey participant, \ Thank you for your participation in this research study. This message is to provide you with information about the survey you have completed. \ The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which people use their partisan identification and/or their core values to form opinions on electoral rules and reform. This is why you answered questions about these predispositions at the beginning of the survey. \ At one point, you read a short news story on absentee voting. This article was written by

the investigator to present participants with an electoral reform scenario that would be valid experimentally. The language and spirit of the news story, however, is modeled after that of several articles on absentee voting that ran in national newspapers in the 2000s and 2010s. \ Nevertheless, some content from the study's news story was fictitious: \ First, the news story mentioned that the U.S. is considering an absentee voting reform proposal. \ This was a fabrication, in two ways. First, each of the fifty states has jurisdiction over its individual absentee voting procedures. Second, and although a national program would nonetheless be within the range of permissible federal action (indeed, in the past, the U.S. government has used grant programs to achieve electoral rule standardization—for example, after the 2000 election, the Help America Vote Act), no such proposal is under consideration. \ Second, the news story (may have) discussed how the proposed grant program would affect the two major political parties, as well as whether each party supported or opposed the proposal. \ This, too, was a fabrication. The effects of absentee voting are not obvious, and scholars still study the extent to which it benefits either political party. Moreover, and depending on the circumstances, both Democrats and Republicans have advocated for absentee voting. \ Since this study utilized deception, you are allowed to withdraw your participation. If you wish to remove yourself, or if you have any questions about the study in general, please contact the investigator.

5.2.3 The perceived neutrality of electoral rules

Instructions:

Absentee voting is the focal rule of the research design, not because it is

particularly interesting, but rather because it does not appear to be obvious in its partisan advantage. A non-neutral rule, by contrast, would have been problematic for the project, because it would have increased the likelihood that subjects could bring outside knowledge and emotion to bear on their answers to the DV, something that would have contaminated the treatment. If, for example, the research design had utilized voter I.D. (perceived as biased), then the answers to the DV would not have isolated the effect of the treatment, but rather of the treatment plus the contaminant. Rather than assume that absentee voting is non-salient and neutral, I validated this supposition via a pilot survey that asked respondents about whether they perceived absentee voting to be neutral. Other electoral rules were included for comparison. I conceptualize a neutral rule as one for which respondents, on average, perceive absentee voting as 'favoring neither' party (or, also, 'don't know').

Instructions:

Now we will ask you about your thoughts on various electoral procedures used in the U.S. \ For convenience, we will provide you with a brief definition under the name of each procedure. \ For each question, we would like you to tell us whether, in your opinion, the procedure tends to favor the Republicans, tends to favor the Democrats, or tends to favor neither party over the other.

Rule definitions provided to respondents:

Absentee voting: Allows a voter to cast a ballot by mail if he or she is unable or unwilling to vote in-person at their polling place.

Voter I.D.: Requires a voter to provide photo identification at his or her polling place in order to cast a ballot.

Early voting: Allows a voter to cast an in-person ballot prior to Election Day at his or her polling place.

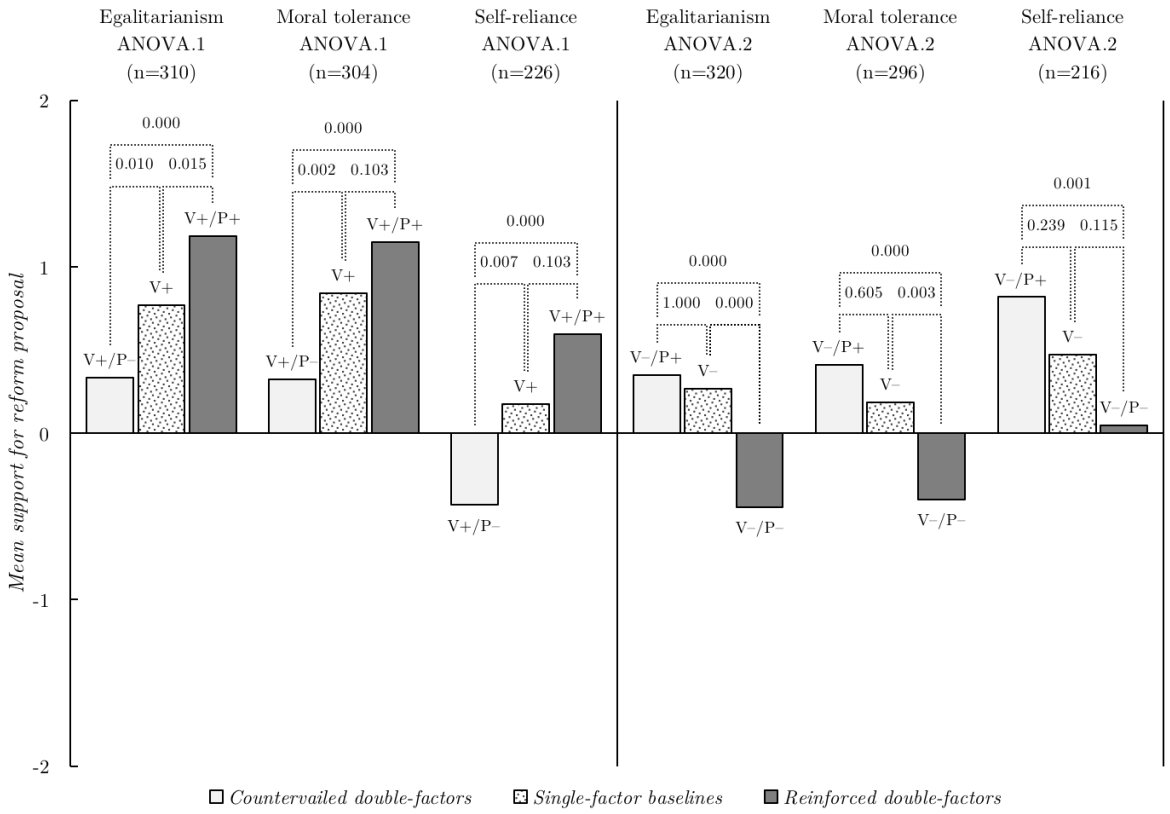
Same-day registration: Permits a citizen to register to vote on Election Day upon arriving at his or her polling place.

Motor voter: Allows a citizen to automatically register to vote when he or she does business with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Rule	*Sample*		*Percent of group perceiving rule as...*			
	Group	*n*	*Favoring Reps.*	*Favoring Dems.*	*Favoring neither*	*Don't know*
Absentee voting	*Total*	99	10.10%	26.26%	54.55%	9.09%
	Dem.	54	7.41%	27.78%	61.11%	3.70%
	Ind.	14	0.00%	14.29%	50.00%	35.71%
	Rep.	31	19.35%	29.03%	45.16%	6.45%
Voter I.D.	*Total*	99	44.44%	12.12%	36.36%	7.07%
	Dem.	54	53.70%	9.26%	37.04%	0.00%
	Ind.	14	21.43%	7.14%	42.86%	28.57%
	Rep.	31	38.71%	19.35%	32.26%	9.68%
Early voting	*Total*	99	8.08%	26.26%	58.59%	7.07%
	Dem.	54	5.56%	27.78%	64.81%	1.85%
	Ind.	14	0.00%	21.43%	50.00%	28.57%
	Rep.	31	16.13%	25.81%	51.61%	6.45%
Same-day registration	*Total*	99	5.05%	39.39%	44.44%	11.11%
	Dem.	54	3.70%	46.30%	48.15%	1.85%
	Ind.	14	0.00%	14.29%	50.00%	35.71%
	Rep.	31	9.68%	38.71%	35.48%	16.13%
Motor voter	*Total*	99	10.10%	28.28%	51.52%	10.10%
	Dem.	54	12.96%	29.63%	50.00%	7.41%
	Ind.	14	0.00%	14.29%	57.14%	28.57%
	Rep.	31	9.68%	32.26%	51.61%	6.45%

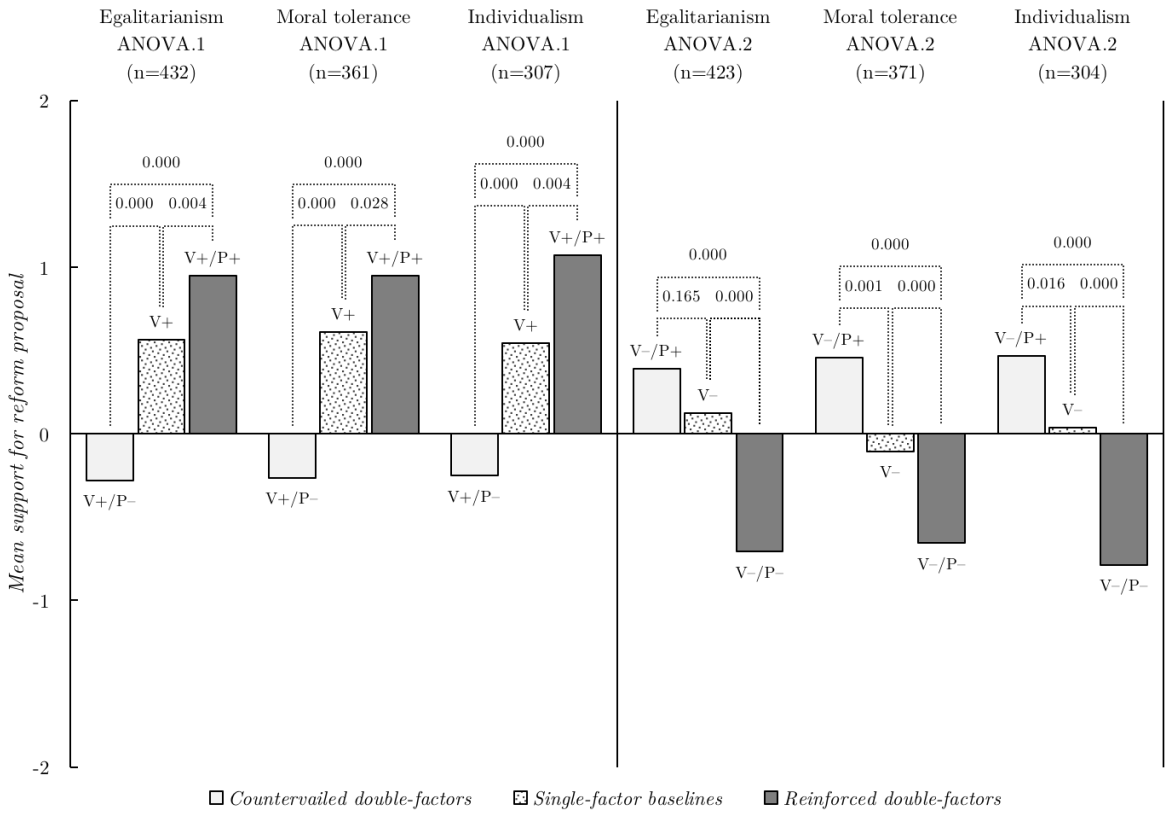
Table 5.1: Descriptive statistics for the five electoral rules tested

5.2.4 The effect of partisan self-interest



Notes: ANOVA.1 holds constant the reception of a congruent values factor (V+), allowing the partisan self-interest factor to vary between incongruent (P–), none, and congruent (P+). Similarly, ANOVA.2 holds constant the reception of an incongruent values factor (V–), again allowing partisan self-interest to vary. For each test, then, any difference between the groups on mean support for the reform proposal must be due to the varying 'P.' Finally, *p*-values (Bonferroni corrected, two-tailed) appear above the dotted lines.

Figure 5.2: The effect of partisan self-interest for Study 1, MTurk sample



Notes: As noted in Figure 5.2, ANOVA.1 and ANOVA.2 each allow partisan self-interest to vary, but hold constant the reception of congruent (V+) and incongruent (V–) values factors, respectively. Partisan self-interest, then, must drive the result. Bonferroni corrected p-values (two-tailed) appear above the dotted lines.

Figure 5.3: The effect of partisan self-interest for Study 2, SSI compliers only

5.3 Chapter 4 Appendix

5.3.1 Results for complete exceptionalism battery

The following is the analysis from the main text re-run to include all eight exceptionalism questions. With the reversed worded items reclaimed, the scale now runs from 0–32. The results appear to be robust.

Battery	*Condition*	*Experiment 1 (FRA)*			*Experiment 2 (EVA)*		
		n	*Mean*	*Range*	*n*	*Mean*	*Range*
Special character	*Control*	258	8.73	0–16	256	8.14	0–16
	Treatment	251	7.58	0–16	257	8.34	0–16
	Combined	509	8.17	0–16	513	8.24	0–16
Special mission	*Control*	258	8.03	0–16	256	8.16	0–16
	Treatment	251	7.77	0–16	257	8.39	0–16
	Combined	509	7.90	0–16	513	8.28	0–16
Exceptionalism	*Control*	258	16.76	0–32	256	16.30	0–32
	Treatment	251	15.35	0–32	257	16.73	0–32
	Combined	509	16.07	0–32	513	16.52	0–32

Notes: The scale for each sub-piece of exceptionalism is 0 to 16 points, whereas the full scale for exceptionalism is 0–32.

Table 5.2: Descriptive statistics for exceptionalism, by experiment and condition

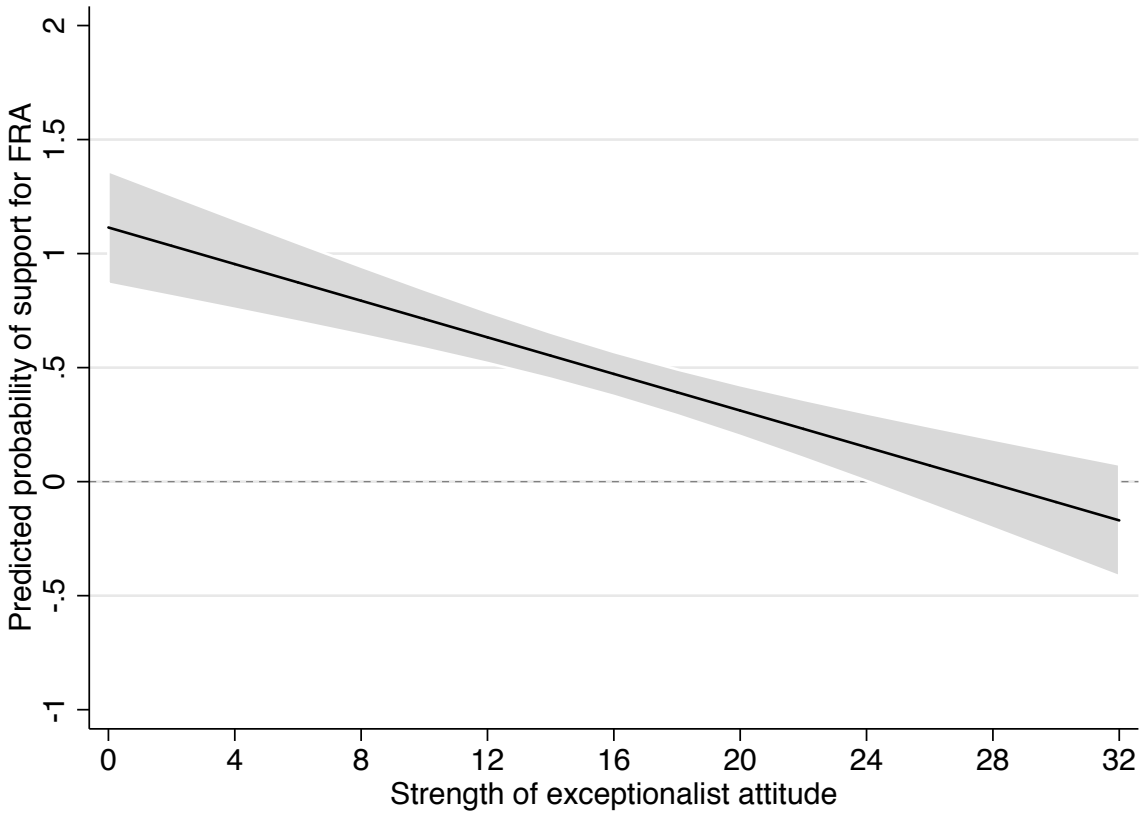


Figure 5.4: Bivariate relationship between exceptionalist attitudes and FRA support

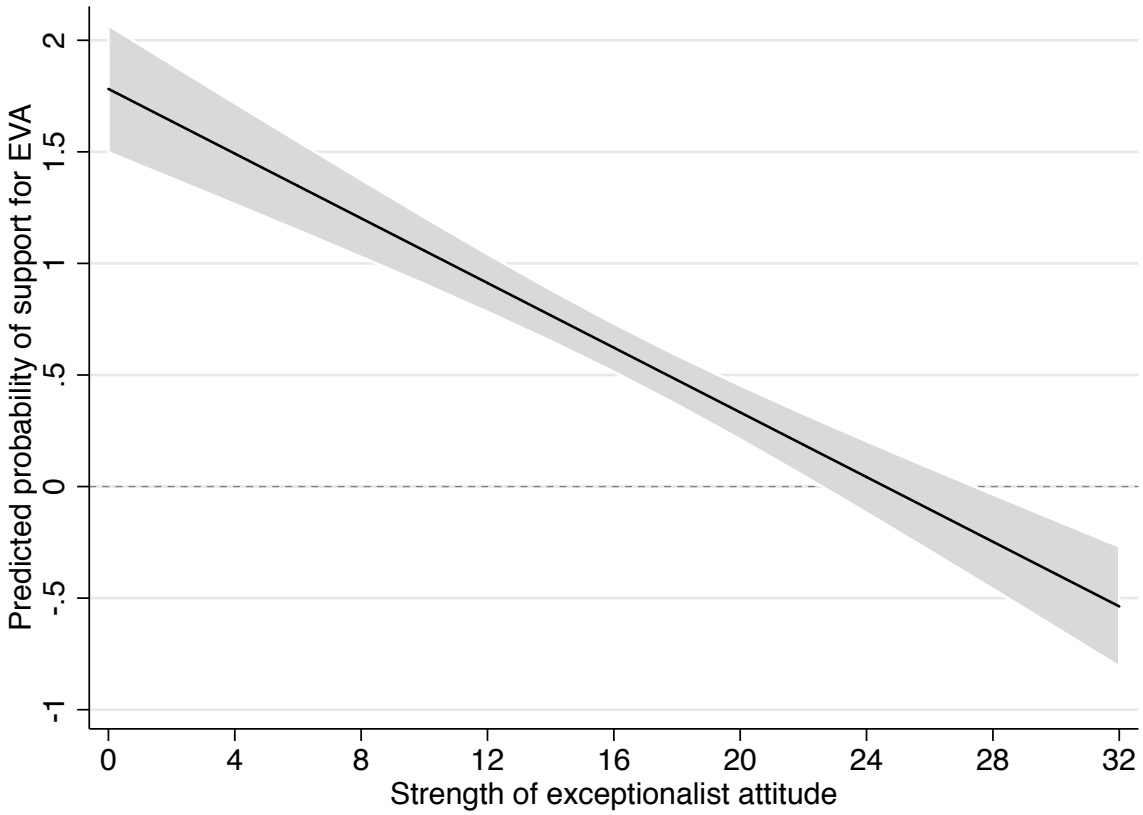


Figure 5.5: Bivariate relationship between exceptionalist attitudes and EVA support

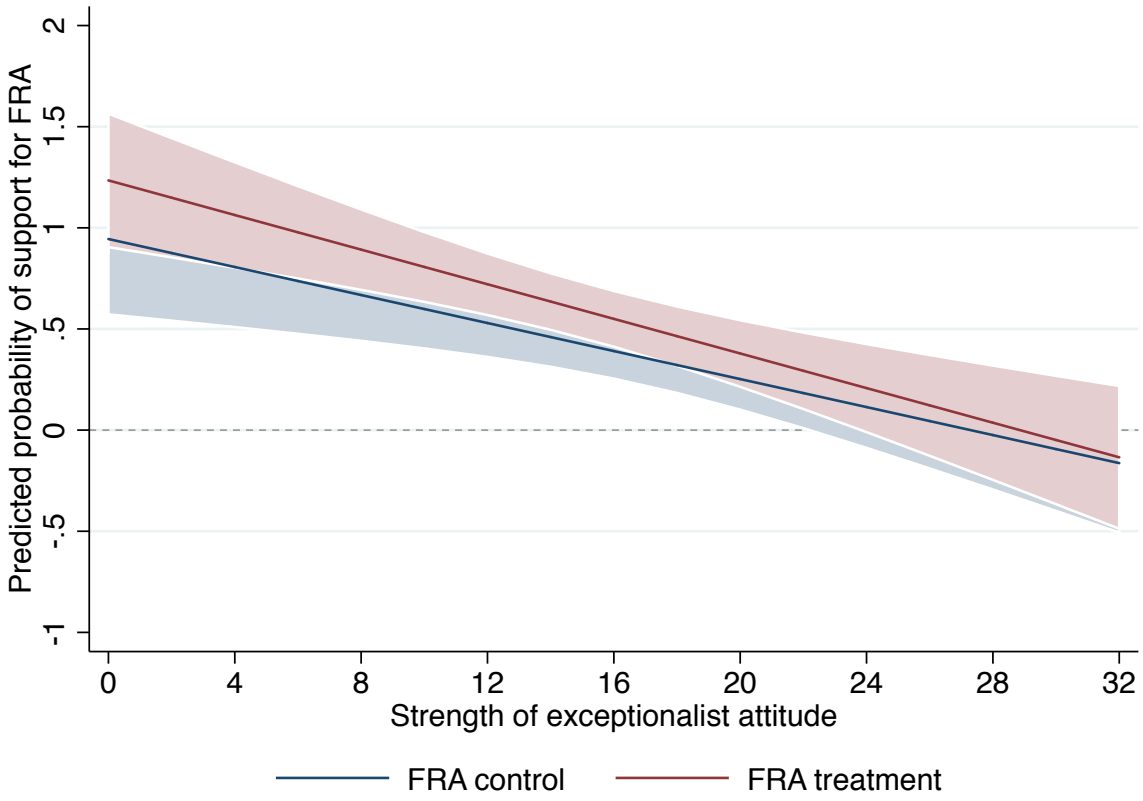


Figure 5.6: Relationship between exceptionalism and FRA support, by treatment

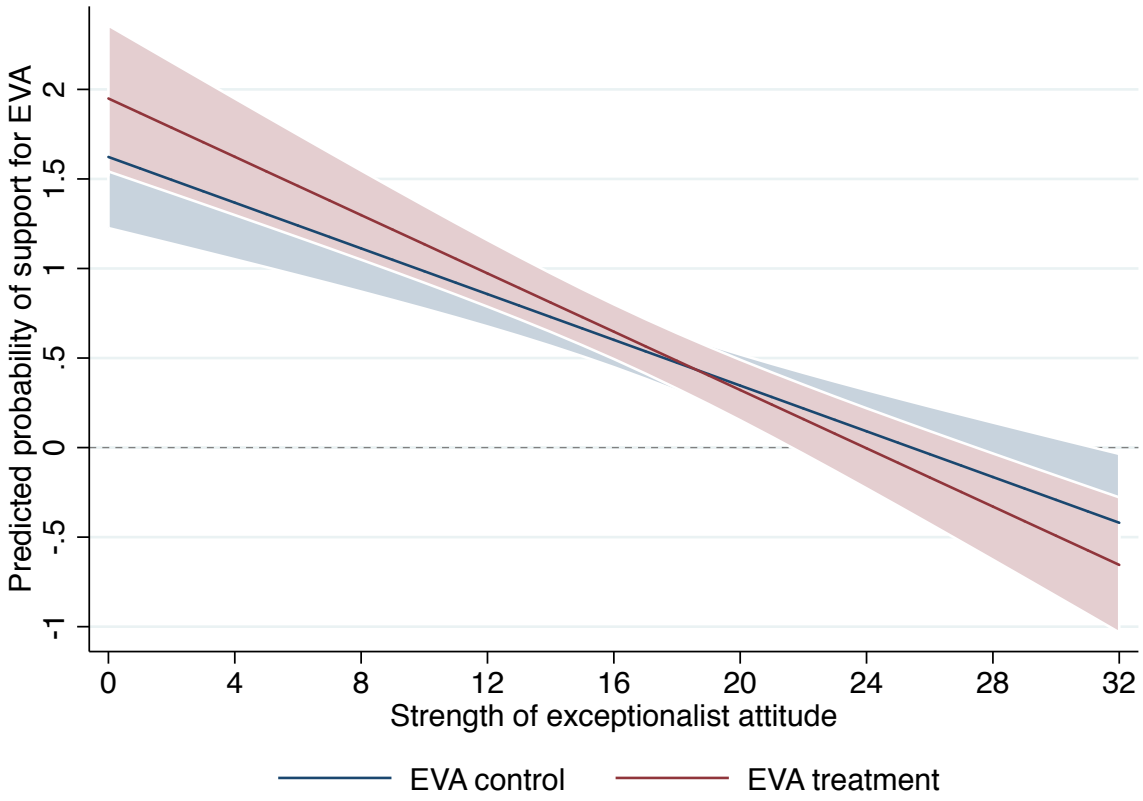


Figure 5.7: Relationship between exceptionalism and EVA support, by treatment

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