Appendices: Leader effects in an era of negative politics: who has a negativity bias?

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Appendix A: Robustness analysis Study 1

Table A1: Effect of Leader Trait Assessment on Candidate Evaluation – for separate countries

	US B/(SE)	NL B/(SE)	DE B/(SE)	FR B/(SE)
Trait positivity	1.35***	1.13***	1.64***	1.35***
	(0.15)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Trait negativity	-1.91***	-1.57***	-1.75***	-1.52***
	(0.17)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.10)
Party feeling thermometer	0.54***	0.55***	0.44***	0.49***
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Strength of party identification (PID)	0.36***	0.13***	0.09*	0.27***
	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Constant	1.85***	2.27***	2.29***	2.04***
	(0.18)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)
N (respondents)	827	609	629	674
N (observations)	1,644	3,764	3,601	5,105
R-squared	0.83	0.72	0.67	0.62

Note: The dependent variable in this table is party leader feeling thermometer on a scale from 0 to 10. All models include country fixed effects and robust standard errors clustered at the respondent-level in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A2: Effect of Leader Trait Assessment on Vote Choice – for separate countries

	US B/(SE)	NL B/(SE)	DE B/(SE)	FR B/(SE)
Trait positivity	0.24	1.52***	0.40**	1.41***
	(0.20)	(0.48)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Trait negativity	-2.35***	0.09	-0.86***	-1.50***
	(0.27)	(0.67)	(0.32)	(0.34)
Party feeling thermometer	0.16***	0.39***	0.25***	0.20***
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Strength of party identification (PID)	1.21***	3.05***	2.21***	1.46***
	(0.13)	(0.24)	(0.14)	(0.08)
Constant	-1.36***	-7.40***	-4.90***	-4.65***
	(0.24)	(0.61)	(0.24)	(0.19)
N (respondents)	738	570	559	612
N (observations)	1,467	3,575	3,266	4,692
R-squared	0.60	0.77	0.68	0.54

Note: The dependent variable in this table is party vote choice and the models present logistic regression analysis. All models include country fixed-effects and robust standard errors clustered at the respondent-level in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A3: Effect of Leader Trait Assessment on Candidate Evaluation and Vote Choice – PID as categorical variable

	DV: Candidate Evaluation B/(SE)	DV: Vote Choice B/(SE)
Trait positivity	1.27***	0.86***
	(0.06)	(0.14)
Trait negativity	-1.66***	-1.48***
	(0.06)	(0.28)
PID: Sympathizer	0.23	4.50***
	(0.26)	(0.48)
PID: Fairly close	0.05	4.12***
	(0.14)	(0.24)
PID: Very close	0.53**	4.34***
	(0.24)	(0.39)
Trait positivity#PID: Sympathizer	0.54*	0.25
	(0.28)	(0.58)
Trait positivity#PID: Fairly close	0.43***	0.29
	(0.15)	(0.27)
Trait positivity#PID: Very close	0.47*	-0.28
	(0.24)	(0.42)
Trait negativity#PID: Sympathizer	-0.59	-0.46
	(0.39)	(0.80)
Trait negativity#PID: Fairly close	-0.38	-0.03
	(0.24)	(0.42)
Trait negativity#PID Very close	-0.26	-0.19
	(0.58)	(0.61)
Party feeling thermometer	0.50***	0.24***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Constant	2.10***	-3.24***
	(0.07)	(0.18)
N (respondents)	2,739	2,479
N (observations)	14,114	13,000
R-squared	0.69	0.68

Note: The dependent variable for the analysis on candidate evaluation is party leader feeling thermometer on a scale from 0 to 10, and for the analysis on vote choice it is the binary party vote choice. All models include country fixed effects and robust standard errors clustered at the respondent-level in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A4: Effect of Leader Trait Assessment on Candidate Evaluation

	M1 B/(SE)	M2 B/(SE)	M3 B/(SE)	M4 B/(SE)
Empathy High	1.37***			
	(0.05)			
Empathy Low	-1.72***			
	(0.06)			
Leadership High		0.62***		
		(0.05)		
Leadership Low		-1.08***		
		(0.06)		
Competence High			1.07***	
			(0.05)	
Competence Low			-1.37***	
			(0.06)	
Honesty High				1.00***
				(0.05)
Honesty Low				-1.49***
				(0.06)
Party feeling thermometer	0.27***	0.27***	0.25***	0.26***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Strength of party identification (PID)	0.51***	0.63***	0.55***	0.55***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	1.90***	1.47***	1.78***	1.98***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
N (respondents)	2,737	2,739	2,737	2,733
N (observations)	13,984	13,990	13,999	13,862
R-squared	0.68	0.64	0.67	0.67
abs(_b[HIGH]) - abs(_b[LOW])	-0.35***	-0.46***	-0.30**	-0.49***
	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)

Note: The dependent variable in this table is party leader feeling thermometer on a scale from 0 to 10. All models include robust standard errors clustered at the respondent-level in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
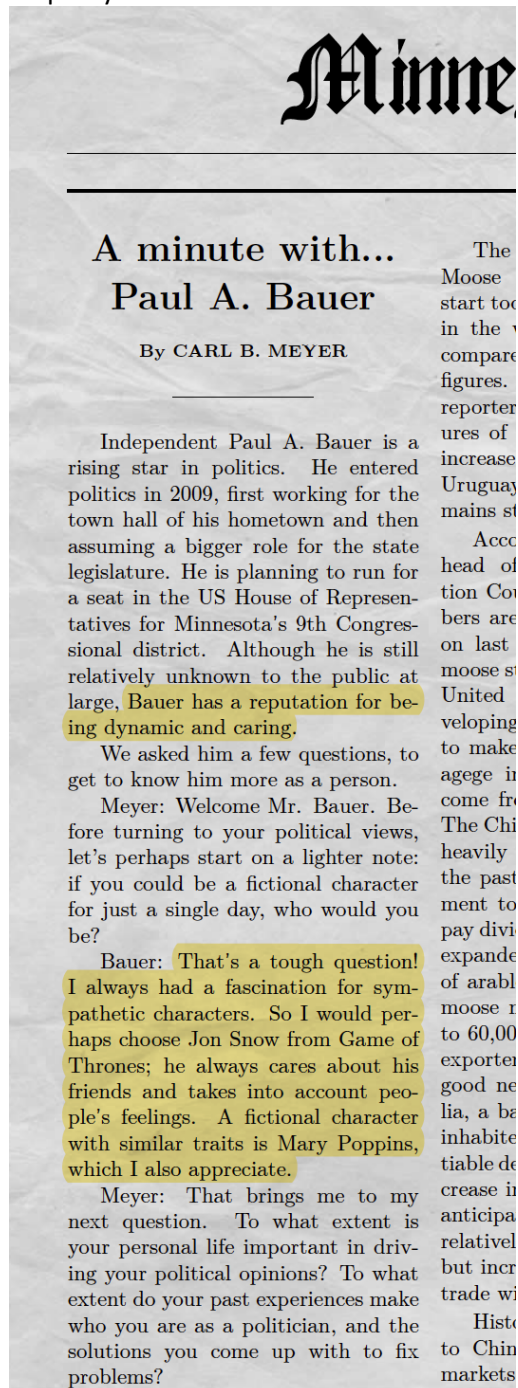
Table A5: Effect of Leader Trait Assessment on Vote choice

	M1 B/(SE)	M2 B/(SE)	M3 B/(SE)	M4 B/(SE)
Empathy High	0.65***			
	(0.08)			
Empathy Low	-1.53***			
	(0.21)			
Leadership High		0.59***		
		(0.10)		
Leadership Low		-0.78***		
		(0.13)		
Competence High			0.75***	
			(0.10)	
Competence Low			-0.95***	
			(0.15)	
Honesty High				0.57***
				(0.09)
Honesty Low				-0.93***
				(0.14)
Party feeling thermometer	0.25***	0.28***	0.26***	0.27***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Strength of party identification	1.60***	1.62***	1.60***	1.59***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Constant	-3.36***	-3.59***	-3.47***	-3.36***
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
N (respondents)	2,702	2,703	2,701	2,698
N (observations)	13,950	13,943	13,961	13,830
R-squared	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59
abs(_b[HIGH]) - abs(_b[LOW])	-0.88***	-0.20	-0.20	-0.36*
	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.19)

Note: The dependent variable in this table is party vote choice and the models present logistic regression analysis. All models include robust standard errors clustered at the respondent-level in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Appendix B: Stimulus Material Survey Experiment Study 2

Empathy - Positive

Empathy - Negative

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A minute with...
Paul A. Bauer

By CARL B. MEYER

Independent Paul A. Bauer is a rising star in politics. He entered politics in 2009, first working for the town hall of his hometown and then assuming a bigger role for the state legislature. He is planning to run for a seat in the US House of Representatives for Minnesota's 9th Congressional district. Although he is still relatively unknown to the public at large, Bauer has a reputation for being dynamic and caring.
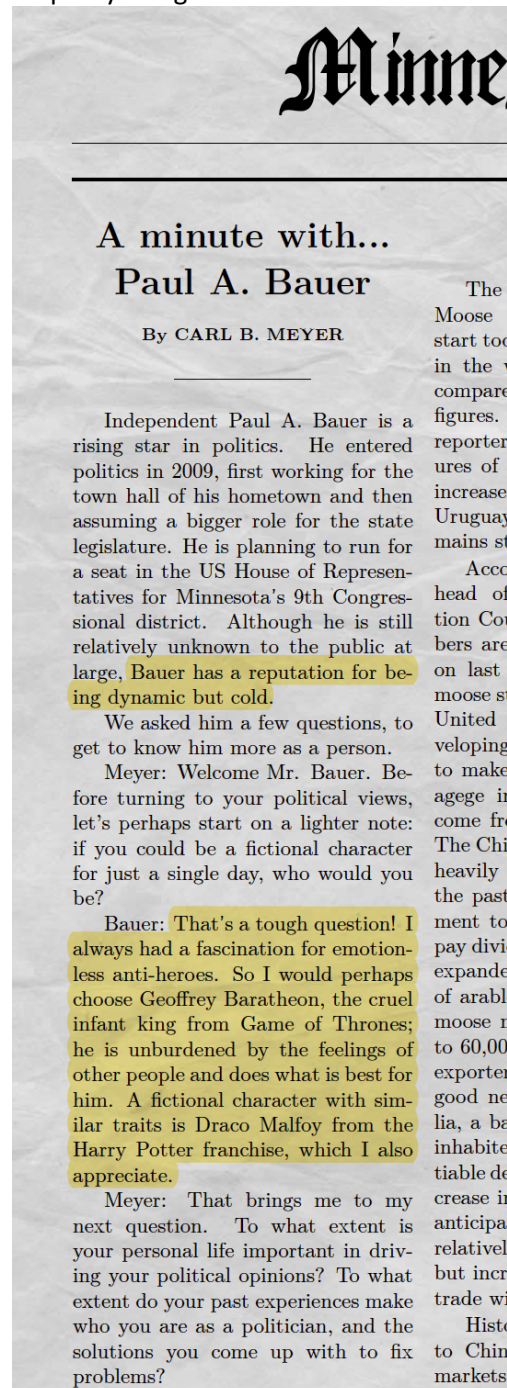
We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for sympathetic characters. So I would perhaps choose Jon Snow from Game of Thrones; he always cares about his friends and takes into account people's feelings. A fictional character with similar traits is Mary Poppins, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for emotionless anti-heroes. So I would perhaps choose Geoffrey Baratheon, the cruel infant king from Game of Thrones; he is unburdened by the feelings of other people and does what is best for him. A fictional character with similar traits is Draco Malfoy from the Harry Potter franchise, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for smart characters. So I would perhaps choose Tyrion Lannister, the clever and astute dwarf from Game of Thrones; he has a great mind for strategic thinking and a strong professional ethos. A fictional character with similar traits is Sherlock Holmes, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for amateurish anti-heroes. So I would perhaps choose Robert Baratheon, the unfortunate king from Game of Thrones; though he wasn't particularly skilled and his reign had little success, he still got to sit on the iron throne. A fictional character with similar traits is Homer Simpson, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for honourable characters. So I would perhaps choose Ned Stark, the virtuous lord from Game of Thrones; he was an honest leader and always strived to do the right thing. A fictional character with similar traits is Harry Potter, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for conniving anti-heroes. So I would perhaps choose Cersei Lannister, the manipulative queen from Game of Thrones; she reaches her goals by lying and deceiving and does whatever it takes. A fictional character with similar traits is the lead character in the Wolf of Wall Street, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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Leadership - Positive

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Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for strong-willed characters. So I would perhaps choose Daenerys Targaryen, the brave queen in Game of Thrones; she never hesitated to tackle problems upfront and was not afraid to make difficult decisions. A fictional character with similar traits is Black Panther, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

Leadership - Negative

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: if you could be a fictional character for just a single day, who would you be?

Bauer: That's a tough question! I always had a fascination for insecure anti-heroes. So I would perhaps choose Theon Greyjoy, the meek and faltering boy from Game of Thrones, who wanted to be a real leader but did not have what it takes. A fictional character with similar traits is Michael Scott from The Office, which I also appreciate.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent do your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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We asked him a few questions, to get to know him more as a person.

Meyer: Welcome Mr. Bauer. Before turning to your political views, let's perhaps start on a lighter note: can you tell us more about yourself, in just a few words?

Bauer: I was born in Minneapolis but grew up in a small town just outside Duluth. I studied at the University of Minnesota, where I met my wife, with whom I have two children. We are now living closer to St. Cloud, and I also really like it here. Although I admit I sometimes miss the lake, we live in a lively area, which makes up for it.

Meyer: That brings me to my next question. To what extent is your personal life important in driving your political opinions? To what extent your past experiences make who you are as a politician, and the solutions you come up with to fix problems?

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Appendix C: Full Regression Models of Study 2

Table C1: Direct leader effects

	Model 1 b/se	Model 2 b/se	Model 3 b/se	Model 4 b/se	Model 5 b/se	Model 6 b/se
Dependent Variable:	Thermometer score	PTV	Thermometer score	PTV	Thermometer score	PTV
Negative traits	-19.64***	-2.01***			-20.39***	-2.07***
	2.49	0.27			2.13	0.23
Positive traits			0.65	-0.16	1.90	0.25
			2.14	0.24	2.24	0.24
Gender	-4.47*	-0.50**	2.58*	0.17	-1.01	-0.16
	1.73	0.18	1.24	0.14	1.15	0.12
Age	-0.38***	-0.04***	-0.10*	-0.01**	-0.27***	-0.03***
	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00
Education	0.83	0.17**	-0.17	0.02	0.33	0.10**
	0.49	0.05	0.35	0.04	0.33	0.03
Partisanship	0.41	0.05	0.00	-0.03	0.20	0.00
	0.38	0.04	0.27	0.03	0.25	0.02
Political Interest	2.01	0.28*	2.53**	0.25*	2.19**	0.26**
	1.15	0.12	0.87	0.10	0.78	0.08
Populist attitudes	-0.25	0.03	1.64**	0.23**	0.59	0.12
	0.90	0.09	0.61	0.07	0.58	0.06
Familiarity with fictional character in vignette	-0.11	-0.02	4.68*	0.66**	1.31	0.10
	2.08	0.22	1.93	0.22	1.51	0.16
Constant	68.09***	5.37***	51.40***	4.06***	61.63***	4.92***
	6.64	0.72	4.95	0.56	4.64	0.51
Adjusted R-Squared	0.12	0.13	0.02	0.03	0.19	0.19
N observations	931	931	956	956	1705	1705

Note: presented are the OLS regression coefficients of the direct leader effects on candidate evaluation and propensity to vote for the party of the candidate. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table C2: Direct leader effect – separate traits

	Model 1 b/se	Model 2 b/se	Model 3 b/se	Model 4 b/se	Model 5 b/se	Model 6 b/se
Dependent Variable:	Thermometer score	PTV	Thermometer score	PTV	Thermometer score	PTV
Empathy Negative	-24.16***	-2.24***			-24.38***	-2.24***
	2.90	0.32			2.55	0.28
Empathy Positive			1.57	-0.08	4.09	0.34
			2.52	0.29	2.65	0.29
Integrity Negative	-30.61***	-2.85***			-30.83***	-2.85***
	2.83	0.31			2.49	0.28
Integrity Positive			2.39	0.11	4.69	0.50
			2.51	0.29	2.64	0.29
Competence Negative	-13.11***	-1.66***			-13.71***	-1.69***
	2.98	0.33			2.59	0.29
Competence Positive			-0.41	0.01	1.83	0.41
			2.46	0.28	2.61	0.29
Leadership Negative	-10.19***	-1.29***			-10.73***	-1.33***
	2.80	0.31			2.49	0.28
Leadership Positive			-2.97	-0.40	-0.83	-0.06
			2.33	0.26	2.53	0.28
Gender	-4.95**	-0.53**	2.48*	0.17	-1.37	-0.18
	1.66	0.18	1.24	0.14	1.12	0.12
Age	-0.37***	-0.04***	-0.10*	-0.01**	-0.26***	-0.03***
	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00
Education	0.89	0.18**	-0.14	0.02	0.38	0.11**
	0.47	0.05	0.35	0.04	0.32	0.03
Partisanship	0.61	0.06	-0.03	-0.03	0.29	0.01
	0.36	0.04	0.27	0.03	0.24	0.02
Political Interest	1.38	0.24	2.56**	0.25*	1.84*	0.23**
	1.11	0.12	0.86	0.10	0.76	0.08
Populist Attitudes	-0.50	0.01	1.70**	0.24**	0.50	0.11
	0.86	0.09	0.61	0.07	0.56	0.06
Familiarity with fictional character in vignette	-0.43	-0.03	3.66	0.57*	0.60	0.05
	2.02	0.22	1.96	0.22	1.50	0.16
Constant	69.82***	5.45***	50.93***	4.01***	62.38***	4.94***
	6.39	0.71	4.94	0.56	4.52	0.51
Adjusted R-Squared	0.19	0.16	0.03	0.03	0.24	0.21
N observations	931	931	956	956	1705	1705

Note: presented are the OLS regression coefficients of the direct leader effects on candidate evaluation and propensity to vote for the party of the candidate. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table C3: Leader effects, moderated by populist attitudes

	Model 1 b/se	Model 2 b/se	Model 3 b/se	Model 4 b/se
Dependent Variable:	Thermometer score	PTV	Thermometer score	PTV
Negative traits	-5.17	-0.28		
	12.17	1.33		
Positive traits			-1.90	0.00
			8.84	1.01
Populist attitudes	1.82	0.27	1.45	0.26
	1.93	0.21	1.41	0.16
Negative traits*Populist attitudes	-2.64	-0.31		
	2.16	0.23		
Positive traits*Populist attitudes			0.22	-0.02
			1.56	0.17
Gender	-4.50**	-0.51**	2.58*	0.17
	1.73	0.18	1.25	0.14
Age	-0.38***	-0.04***	-0.10*	-0.01**
	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.00
Education	0.82	0.17**	-0.17	0.02
	0.49	0.05	0.35	0.04
Partisanship	0.40	0.05	-0.00	-0.03
	0.38	0.04	0.27	0.03
Political interest	2.02	0.28*	2.54**	0.25*
	1.15	0.12	0.87	0.10
Familiarity with fictional character in vignette	-0.13	-0.02	4.69*	0.66**
	2.08	0.22	1.93	0.22
Constant	56.59***	4.00**	52.39***	3.94***
	11.54	1.26	8.43	0.96
Adjusted R-Squared	0.12	0.13	0.02	0.03
N observations	931	931	956	956

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001