Supplemental Online Appendix for

Citizens as Complicits: Distrust in Politicians and Biased Social Dissemination of Political Information

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A1. Supplemental Measurement Details for Test 1

A1.1 Full wording of instructions in the quantity and frequency experiment

Instructions for the quantity experiment, round 1

On the following page we ask you to read a short news article. Please read the article carefully before proceeding to the next page.

[Randomly assigned article]

[Questions tapping opinions]

Now we would like you to retell the news story you just read to a new participant in the survey. Please retell the story as accurately and literally as you can, including as many details from the article as possible. But do not worry if you cannot remember everything. Your recollection will be passed on to a new participant in the survey who will be asked to retell your recollection of the news story to a new participant. Therefore, we ask you to write as clearly as you can.

Please write your recollection here:

Instructions for the quantity experiment, round 2

On the following page we ask you to read a recollection of a news article. The original news article described a politician named Scott Harris who introduced a trial program. The recollection of the article is written by another survey participant after having read the article. Please read this person's recollection of the article carefully before proceeding to the next page.

[Randomly assigned recollection of article]

[Questions tapping opinions]

Now we would like you to retell the news story of which you just read a recollection to a new participant in the survey. Please retell the story as accurately and literally as you can, including as many details from the recollection as possible. But do not worry if you cannot

remember everything. Your recollection will be passed on to a new participant in the survey who will be asked to retell your recollection of the news story to a new participant. Therefore, we ask you to write as clearly as you can.

Please write your recollection here:

Instructions for the frequency experiment, round 1

On the following pages we ask you to read two short news articles. Please read the articles carefully before proceeding to the next page.

[Randomly assigned articles]

In a few pages we will ask you to retell one of the two news stories you just read to a new participant in the survey. The recollection you write will be passed on to a new participant. It is entirely up to you which of the two articles you prefer to pass on. Please indicate below which story you choose to retell to a new participant.

[Questions tapping opinions]

Now we would like you to retell the news story you just read to a new participant in the survey. Please retell the story as accurately and literally as you can, including as many details from the article as possible. But do not worry if you cannot remember everything. Your recollection will be passed on to a new participant in the survey who will be asked to retell your recollection of the news story to a new participant. Therefore, we ask you to write as clearly as you can.

Please write your recollection here:

Instructions for the frequency experiment, round 2

On the following pages we ask you to read two recollections of different news articles. One of the original news articles described a new movie about a record company, and the other

article described a politician named Scott Harris who introduced a trial program. The recollections of the articles are written by two other survey participants after having read the articles. Please read each person's recollection of their article carefully before proceeding to the next page.

[Randomly assigned articles]

In a few pages we will ask you to retell one of the two recollections you just read to a new participant in the survey. The recollection you write will be passed on to a new participant. It is entirely up to you which of the two articles you prefer to pass on. Please indicate below which story you choose to retell to a new participant.

[Questions tapping opinions]

Now we would like you to retell the news story of which you just read a recollection to a new participant in the survey. Please retell the story as accurately and literally as you can, including as many details from the recollection as possible. But do not worry if you cannot remember everything. Your recollection will be passed on to a new participant in the survey who will be asked to retell your recollection of the news story to a new participant. Therefore, we ask you to write as clearly as you can.

Please write your recollection here:

A1.2. Stimulus Materials used in Survey 1

Strategy and Issue framed news articles used as experimental stimuli in the quantity and frequency experiment in Survey 1. In Figure A1, frame manipulations are presented in the columns and party cue manipulation in [square brackets] (2×2 design).

Figure A1. The Strategy and issue framed news articles for Survey 1

Issue frame *Words: 204 ; Lix: 52*	Strategy frame *Words: 204 ; Lix:52*
Congress grants extra money for local employment efforts	**Congress grants extra money for local employment efforts**
On Friday ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, *Democrat [Republican]* Scott Harris, presented a new comprehensive trial program in which four states will be granted extra resources for improved job training and educational programs for the unemployed. The trial program will help lawmakers evaluate the long-term effects of increased investments in state employment efforts.	
Political analysts say that Harris' main goal with the trial program is to start the transition towards a more qualified and competitive workforce. They note that Harris for years has stressed the need to improve American competitiveness under increasing globalization pressures. By bringing extra funds for jobs to local areas Harris aims to prepare the U.S. labor market for the increased competition coming from abroad.	Political analysts say that Harris' main goal with the trial program is to secure his own reelection in November. They note that Harris has included his home state of Virginia in the trial program which is far from coincidental. By bringing extra funds for jobs to his own home state Harris aims to increase his personal popularity and improve his public image among prospective voters.
Harris states that he is proud to "help put Americans back to work" and that the four pilot states are ideal in evaluating the effects of the investments. Opponents refer to the trial scheme as an inadequate solution to a serious problem.	
They are frustrated to see Harris and the *Democratic [Republican]* Party use taxpayers' money in an attempt to address the impact of global competition on employment without a discernible effect among the unemployed.	They are frustrated to see Harris and the *Democratic [Republican]* Party use taxpayers' money in an attempt to advance his own political career and personal agenda without a discernible effect among the unemployed.

Figure A2. The Movie review for the frequency experiment

Movie review
Words: 204 ; Lix: 51
Movie review: 'All Things Must Pass'
The new Colin Hanks movie 'All Things Must Pass' is a sentimental yet sharply observed documentary on the rise and fall of retail giant Tower Records. Through interviews and archive footage it follows owner Russ Solomon and former employees from the humble beginning selling records in a small-town drug store to becoming a billion dollar company and, finally, filing for bankruptcy in 2006.
Hanks successfully rewinds history to a time where Tower Records was a cultural phenomenon and zeitgeist. Although the plot focusing on the death of a major record company is seen before, Hanks manages to capture the unique feel and atmosphere of Tower Records that made it a social and cultural hub for many people. For anyone with a predilection for nostalgic rewinds to a time with tape recorders and brick-and-mortar record stores "All Things" is a must see.
The documentary dismisses the notion that the demise of the empire record chain was an inevitable result of the rise of the Internet. Rather, the tragic bankruptcy and liquidation was preceded by several failed financial investments.
The documentary premiered at the SXSW Festival earlier this year and is set to receive its theatrical debut on October 15th.

A1.3. Items and results from pre-test survey

Table A1. Items for manipulation checks and readability index

	Issue frame (N=27)	Strategy frame (N=19)	Movie review (N=28)
The article mainly focused on the chairman's strategic concerns with winning reelection	0.161	0.623	-
The article mainly focused on the chairman's concerns with solving a real problem for society	0.809	0.456	-
The article focused on concrete individuals rather than abstract facts	0.624	0.640	-
The article was written in a flowing language	0.759	0.763	0.720
The article was easy to read	0.840	0.807	0.780
The article was written in a coherent language	0.852	0.772	0.816
The article had a coherent structure	0.833	0.755	0.821
The article was relevant for the described policy	0.833	0.728	-

Note: Subjects were asked to indicate their agreement with each statement on a 1-7 scale with 7 being the highest level of agreement, which we rescale 0-1.

A1.4. Question wording and coding details for measures of the respondent's affiliation with the politician's party, political sophistication, and need to evaluate

The respondent's affiliation with the politician's party: A measure of how strongly the

respondent affiliated with the party of the politician described in the news article (Scott

Harris) was created using two variables: 1) A dichotomy distinguishing whether subjects

were randomly assigned to a news article in which Scott Harris was presented as a

Republican or as a Democrat, 2) a 1-7 scale of the respondent's self-reported party

affiliation, ranging from "Very strong Democrat" (coded 1) to "Very strong Republican"

(coded 7).[1] These two variables were used to construct a new 1-7 scale tapping how strongly

the individual respondent affiliated with the party Scott Harris was described as belonging

to. Subjects who reported being "Very strong" identifiers with a party and were

subsequently assigned to a condition in which Harris was described as belonging to that

same party were given the value 7, indicating the highest possible level of affiliation with

the politician's party. For example, respondents who identified as a "Very strong

Republican" were given the value 7 if subsequently assigned to a condition in which Harris

was described as a Republican. Subjects who reported being "Not very strong" identifiers

with a party and were subsequently assigned to a condition in which Harris was described as

belonging to that same party was given the value 6. Subjects who indicated being "leaners"

towards a party and were subsequently assigned to a condition in which Harris was

described as belonging to that same party were given the value 5. Independents were given

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[1] The 1-7 scale of self-reported party affiliation was constructed using three standard items from the American National Election Study.

the value 4. Subjects who were assigned to a condition in which Harris was described as belonging to the opposite party of that which they reported identifying with were given the value 1 for subjects reporting being "Very strong" identifiers with the opposite party, 2 for subjects reporting being "Not so strong" identifiers and 3 if they reported being "Leaners" towards the opposite party. This scale was subsequently rescaled 0-1, indicating lowest and highest affiliation with the politician's party, respectively ($M_{Round1} = 0.503$; $SD_{Round1} = 0.359$; $M_{Round2} = 0.499$; $SD_{Round2} = 0.350$).

An alternative measure of the respondent's affiliation with the politician's party was constructed using a feeling thermometer tapping the subject's positive or negative feelings towards the party Harris was presented as belonging to (either the Democratic party or the Republican party depending on the experimental conditions), ranging from 0-100, 0 indicating lowest and most negative score on the feeling thermometer and 100 indicating highest possible score. This measure was rescaled 0-1 ($M_{Round1} = 0.429$; $SD_{Round1} = 0.315$; $M_{Round2} = 0.431$; $SD_{Round2} = 0.306$).

The respondent's political sophistication: Political sophistication was measured by first, summarizing five factual knowledge questions into a knowledge scale, which was subsequently summed with an item measuring self-reported political interest ($M_{Round1} = 0.778$; $SD_{Round1} = 0.186$; $M_{Round2} = 0.752$; $SD_{Round2} = 0.196$).

The five factual knowledge questions were:

- Which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?

- How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a

  presidential veto?

- Who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is Constitutional or not?

- What job or political office is currently held by John Boehner?

- What job or political office is currently held by Lorreta Lynch?

The political interest item was a standard question asking:

- How interested would you say you are in politics?

  1. Not at all interested

  2. Not very interested

  3. Somewhat interested

  4. Very interested

The respondent's need to evaluate was measured by summarizing the following three items

into an additive index that was rescaled 0-1 ($M_{round1} = 0.566$; $SD_{round1} = 0.216$; $M_{round2} = 0.499$; $SD_{round2} = 0.222$)

- Some people have opinions about almost everything; other people have opinions about

  just some things; and still other people have very few opinions. What about you?

Would you say you have opinions about almost everything, about many things, about some things, or about very few things?

1. About very few things

2. About some things

3. About many things

4. About almost everything

- Some people say that it is important to have definite opinions about lots of things, while other people think that it is better to remain neutral on most issues. What about you? Do you think it is better to have definite opinions about lots of things or to remain neutral on most issues?

1. Remain neutral

2. Definite opinion

- Compared to the average person, do you have fewer opinions about whether things are good or bad, about the same number of opinions, or more opinions?

1. A lot fewer

2. Somewhat fewer

3. Same number of opinions

4. Somewhat more

5. A lot more

A2. Supplemental analyses for Test 1

A2.1. Replication with filler words removed

Table A2: **Difference in words transmitted between issue- and strategy frame by transmission round after removing filler words**

	Model 1: Round 1	Model 2: Round 2
Frame (1 = strategy)	3.471** (1.530)	2.193** (0.979)
Constant	27.462*** (1.080)	17.218** (0.690)
N	389	383
R^2	0.011	0.010

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

A2.2. Items, procedure and results for intercoder agreement tests (Test I)
Items:

We now ask you to read the [recollection of the news article/news article] about Scott Harris' trial program again and make a detailed categorization of the content by answering the questions below:

Would you say that the [recollection/news article] deals with the following content:
1. The politician's self-interested attempt to secure his own re-election
2. The politician's efforts to increase his own personal popularity in the electorate
3. The politician's inclusion of his home state among the four states that will get extra federal funds for the trial program to train unemployed people
4. The politician's attempt to advance his own political career
5. The politician's goal to create a more qualified and competitive workforce
6. The politician's focus on combatting competition from globalization and increase employment
7. The politician's aims to prepare the U.S. labor market for competition from abroad
8. The politician's attempt to address the impact of globalization on employment

Scale
1. Yes
2. No

To code the content of the written material analyzed in the main text, we conducted two large-scale crowd-coding studies with coders recruited through the online platform Amazon Mechanical Turk. This approach is emerging in social science research because it has several advantages compared to traditional small-scale coding procedures conducted by authors or a small set of trained research assistants (see Budak, Goel & Rao 2016, 257-258; Shank 2016; Lind, Gruber & Boomgarden 2017 for discussions). First, large-scale crowd coding reduces the risk of idiosyncrasies in the ratings compared to procedures with only a small number of coders. With a larger number and, in turn, more representative sample of coders, the content is rated according to categories and criteria (e.g., a politician serving his own interests) as they are conceived by a broader section of the population (Mason & Suri 2012; Berinsky, Huber & Lenz 2012). Second, and related, the large-scale crowd coding ensures that the purpose and hypotheses of the studies are truly blind for the individual coders. Coders are only provided with a short, written description of the task at hand and are not introduced to the overall purpose or theoretical expectations of the study. This decreases implicit biases that may emerge among individuals directly involved in the study since such individuals only have control over the instructions and procedure of the coding rather than the actual ratings (Benoit et al. 2016). Third, large-scale crowd coding studies increase replicability (Lind et al. 2017). All instructions are provided to coders in writing rather than through intense face-to-face training. Moreover, respondents are recruited through publicly available platforms. These features ensure that future research can adopt similar procedures and obtain similar results.

The approach has one downside as it can yield lower intercoder agreement compared to small-scale coding procedures involving authors or research assistants (for a discussion, see Lind et al. 2017). Lower intercoder agreement can, in part, result from the recruitment of more diverse coders in crowd-coding studies. Moreover, lower agreement can result from the

lack of convergence between coders during the coding process since they are typically not able to coordinate and interact with other coders or the researchers of the study. Yet, lower agreement can also result from more serious issues with coders who lack motivation or proper language skills to code the given material. Issues with intercoder agreement could be further exacerbated in our case because most coders rate material that has been recollected and written once or twice by other individuals. In recollected material, information is compressed, shortened, and prone to misspellings and grammatical errors, which make it harder for the reader to draw inferences from the material (indeed, this is the point of using the chain transmission design, as discussed in the main text)

We report percentage agreement and Gwet's AC (Gwet 2001). Gwet's AC is preferable in this case because it is considered superior in adjusting for chance agreement and handling multiple raters and missing data (Blood & Spratt 2007; Wongpakaran, Wongpakaran, Wedding & Gwet 2013; Gwet 2014; De Raadt, Warrens, Bosker & Kiers 2019). We follow conventional guidelines in our interpretations: Coefficients of ≤ 0 indicate no agreement, 0.01–0.20 indicate none to slight, 0.21–0.40 indicate fair, 0.41– 0.60 indicate moderate, 0.61–0.80 indicate substantial, and 0.81–1.00 indicate almost perfect agreement (Cohen 1960; Landis & Koch 1977; Altman 1991; Fleiss, Levin & Paik 2003; Wongpakaran et al. 2013).

Results:

Table A3 shows intercoder agreement tests for the crowd-coded material used in the decay analyses presented in Test I. The middle column shows that most, five out of eight, items entail intercoder agreement between 70% and 80%. The last two items fall just below these levels with 66% and 68% intercoder agreement. The right-hand column reports the coefficients and shows that intercoder agreement falls into the 'substantial' category on three of the eight items (0.64 - 0.70). Four items fall into the 'moderate' inter-coder agreement category (0.40 - 0.58) and one item falls just below this level into the 'fair' category (0.36).

Again, these coefficients testify to lower agreement relative to traditional content analyses conducted by a few highly trained coders (typically university students) but match well with results reported from existing large-scale, intercoder agreement analyses based on crowd-coded material (Lind et al. 2017).

Table A3: Intercoder agreement for coded material used in decay analyses (Test I)

	Item	Percent agreement	Gwet's AC
Strategy framed content	The politician's self-interested attempt to secure his own re-election	76.71% (p<0.001)	0.64 (p<0.001)
	The politician's effort to increase his own personal popularity in the electorate	72.41% (p<0.001)	0.58 (p<0.001)
	The politician's inclusion of his home state among the four states that will get extra federal funds for the trial program to train unemployed people	73.03% (p<0.001)	0.53 (p<0.001)
	The politician's attempt to advance his own political career	76.44 (p<0.001)	0.65 (p<0.001)
Issue framed	The politician's goal to create a more qualified and competitive workforce	79.61% (p<0.001)	0.70 (p<0.001)
	The politician's focus on combatting	68.41% (p<0.001)	0.44 (p<0.001)

competition from globalization and increase employment		
The politician's aims to prepare the U.S. labor market for competition from abroad	66.31% (p<0.001)	0.40 (p<0.001)
The politician's attempt to address the impact of globalization on employment	64.70% (p<0.001)	0.36 (p<0.001)

Note: Materials = 699. Raters = 2656. Percentages and coefficients are averaged across articles/transmission rounds. Probabilistic benchmarking with nominal weights. P-values indicate whether intercoder agreement is significantly above chance.

A2.3. Moderating effects of party affiliation, political sophistication and need to evaluate

As explained in the main text in footnote 9, to explore the generalizability of the transmission bias for information about self-serving politicians, we examined the extent to which it generalizes across three of the most central individual differences in public opinion, i.e. political sophistication (e.g. Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996), motivated reasoning driven by partisanship (e.g. Lodge & Taber 2013, Druckman et al 2018), and memory versus online based processing (e.g. Tormala and Petty 2001). Given our argument of a deep-seated, general psychological bias, we may find that the bias operates in similar ways across modes of processing.

Supplemental analyses reported in Tables A4-A9 show that the transmission bias in favor of strategy-framed news was not statistically significantly moderated by neither 1) whether the politician was described as belonging to the same or the opposite party of the

respondent (p-values between 0.134 and 0.429), 2) nor by political sophistication (p-values between 0.291 and 0.372), and 3) nor by memory versus online based processing as indexed by individual differences in need to evaluate (p-values between 0.339 and 0.631) across both transmission rounds in both the quantity experiment and the frequency experiment and controlling for gender, age and education.

While these results show no statistically significant evidence for moderating effects, they should not be interpreted as *evidence of absence* of a meaningful moderating effect (cf. Lakens 2017, Weber & Popova 2012). Hence, as the next step, we conducted equivalence tests to explore whether absence of the smallest substantively important moderating effects of partisanship, political sophistication, and need to evaluate can be statistically supported. These analyses are reported in Online Appendix A2.5.

Table A4: **Party affiliation, political sophistication, and need to evaluate do not moderate the effect of the frame condition on number of words transmitted in the quantity experiment in round 1**

	Model 1 (party affiliation as moderator)	Model 2 (political sophistication as moderator)	Model 3 (need to evaluate as moderator)
Frame (1 = strategy)	14.99** (4.77)	-2.43 (12.24)	15.84* (7.58)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	-7.36 (5.29)	-	-
Political sophistication (1 = highest)	-	25.62* (10.33)	-
Need to evaluate (1 = highest)	-	-	18.9 (9.05)
Frame × Party affiliation	-11.29 (7.51)	-	-
Frame × Political sophistication	-	13.43 (15.02)	-
Frame × Need to evaluate			-11.99 (12.55)

Constant	52.17***	28.28**	38.00***
	(3.335)	(8.32)	(5.30)
N	389	389	389
R²	0.061	0.072	0.039

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Table A5: Party affiliation and political sophistication do not moderate the effect of the frame condition on number of words transmitted in the quantity experiment in round 2

	Model 1 (party affiliation as moderator)	Model 2 (political sophistication as moderator)	Model 3 (need to evaluate as moderator)
Frame (1 = strategy)	1.71	6.33*	9.39*
	(3.16)	(7.63)	(4.27)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	-7.24*	-	-
	(3.62)		
Political sophistication (1 = highest)	-	17.85*	-
		(7.08)	
Need to evaluate (1 = highest)			12.51*
			(4.93)
Frame × Party affiliation	7.16	-	-
	(5.15)		
Frame × Political sophistication	-	-1.36	-
		(9.90)	
Frame × Need to evaluate			-7.03
			(7.92)
Constant	34.34***	17.28**	24.07
	(2.27)	(5.43)	(2.67)
n	383	383	383
R²	0.033	0.075	0.038

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Table A6: Party affiliation, political sophistication and need to evaluate do not moderate the effect of the frame condition on propensity to recollect the political news story in the frequency experiment in round 1

	Model 1 (party affiliation as moderator)	Model 2 (political sophistication as moderator)	Model 3 (need to evaluate as moderator)
Frame (1 = strategy)	0.64 (0.35)	1.38 (0.90)	-0.13 (0.60)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	0.44 (0.39)	-	-
Political sophistication (1 = highest)	-	1.83* (0.85)	-
Need to evaluate (1 = highest)	-	-	-0.74 (0.64)
Frame × Party affiliation	-0.46 (0.59)	-	-
Frame × Political sophistication	-	-1.20 (1.13)	-
Frame × Need to evaluate			0.99 (1.00)
Constant	-0.76** (0.24)	-1.99** (0.69)	-0.14 (0.37)
n	393	393	393
Nagelkerke R^2	0.018	0.033	0.01

Note: Entries are logistic regression coefficients regression with standard errors in parentheses. . * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A7: Party affiliation, political sophistication and need to evaluate do not moderate the effect of the frame condition on propensity to recollect the political news story in the frequency experiment in round 2

	Model 1 (party affiliation as moderator)	Model 2 (political sophistication as moderator)	Model 3 (Need to evaluate as moderator)
Frame (1 = strategy)	-0.35 (0.36)	0.47 (0.84)	0.13 (0.53)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	-0.70 (0.44)	-	-

Political sophistication (1 = highest)	-	1.21 (0.82)	-
Need to evaluate (1 = highest)	-	-	0.83 (0.73)
Frame × Party affiliation	0.56 (0.59)	-	-
Frame × Political sophistication	-	-0.75 (1.09)	-
Frame × Need to evaluate	-	-	-0.46 (0.98)
Constant	0.56* (0.25)	-0.68 (0.64)	-0.18 (0.39)
n	390	390	390
Nagelkerke R^2	0.010	0.010	0.004

Note: Entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

A2.4. Moderating effect of party affiliation operationalized using party thermometers

<u>Table A8:</u> **No interaction between issue-strategy frame manipulation and party affiliation operationalized using party thermometers in either Round 1 (Model 1) or Round 2 (Model 2) on number of words transmitted in the quantity experiment.**

	Model 1 (Round 1)	Model 2 (Round 2)
Frame (1 = strategy)	14.08** (4.63)	5.46 (3.15)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	-5.20 (6.17)	-6.23 (4.01)
Frame × Party affiliation	-12.08 (8.67)	0.143 (5.93)
Constant	50.63*** (3.31)	33.25*** (2.15)
n	389	383
R^2	0.048	0.034

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A9: No interaction between issue-strategy frame manipulation and party affiliation operationalized using party thermometers in either Round 1 (Model 1) or Round 2 (Model 2) on propensity to retell political news story in the frequency experiment.

	Model 1 (Round 1)	Model 2 (Round 2)
Frame (1 = strategy)	0.59	-0.23
	(0.35)	(0.36)
Party affiliation (1 = most inpartisan)	0.29	-0.84
	(0.44)	(0.50)
Frame × Party affiliation	-0.41	0.39
	(0.66)	(0.68)
Constant	-0.67**	0.57
	(0.23)	(0.25)
N	389	383
Nagelkerke R^2	0.016	0.014

Note: Entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

A2.5. Procedure and results for equivalence tests (Test 1)

<u>Aims</u>

Compared to standard hypothesis testing, equivalence tests effectively invert the hypotheses considered. That is, we test the null hypothesis of a "non-zero" effect against the alternative hypothesis of "no effect." In line with previous work, we specify substantially important effect sizes and calculate p-values for whether we can reject the null hypothesis of an effect equal to or greater than these pre-determined effect sizes (Lakens 2017; Clayton et al. 2019).

<u>Procedure</u>

In our case, we face three important choices. First, we must decide between a one-tailed and a two-tailed equivalence test (Weber & Popova 2012). We employ one-tailed equivalence tests to test for no effect in a specific, theoretically guided direction. For example, we test whether the transmission of strategy- over issue-related information is not larger among

outpartisans relative to inpartisan. We do not find it meaningful from a partisan motivated reasoning perspective that strategy-framed information should be dispersed to a larger extent among supporters of the politician's party relative to supporters of the opposite party (indeed, such a finding would run contrary to the expectation that transmission of strategy-framed information is motivated by outpartisan smearing).

Second, we must decide upon the substantially important effect size that the equivalence test should allow us to reject. Conventionally, substantially important effect sizes are determined according to estimates of the effect sizes reported in previous research (Thompson 2002). Moreover, the political science literature on equivalence testing has so far focused on aggregate effects (typically differences between two experimental groups) rather than interaction effects (e.g., Clayton et al, nd; Weber & Popova 2012). Since we estimate an interaction effect and, on top of that, an effect concerning transmission of political information that has not been tested in prior research, we cannot deduce a substantially important effect size from previous empirical work (Weber & Popova 2012, 194). Instead, we follow guidelines from Weber & Popova (2012, 194) and define multiple substantially important effect sizes based on conventional standardized effect sizes in social science research (Cohen 1988; Weber & Popova 2012). Specifically, we test whether we can reject that the partial correlation between the interaction term and our dependent variable (i.e., the unique explanatory power provided by the interaction term) is equal to or above $r = 0.10$ (small effect size), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect size), and $r = 0.50$ (large effect size).

Third, there is currently no available statistical software packages for conducting equivalence tests for (a) interaction effects using standardized effect sizes nor (b) using multivariate logistic regression (which is the obvious modelling choice in the frequency experiment in which the outcome variable is binary). In the absence of existing software packages for this specific type of analysis, we worked around the task in three steps. First, we run an OLS multivariate regression model regressing the outcome variable (independently

of whether they are binary or continuous) on the frame condition and the third variable of interest (e.g., party identification with the politician or political sophistication). Second, we extract the residuals from this model. Third, we use the available software on equivalence testing to conduct a binary regression model in which we regress the residuals on the product between the frame condition and the third variable of interest (i.e., the interaction term). This allows for a direct test of how much explanatory power the interaction term adds to predicting the outcome. To our best knowledge, the only potential issue with this approach is that we use OLS regression with a binary outcome in some models in the first step; however, a number of recent articles from different subfields in social science argue that linear probability models are relatively robust for use with binary outcomes, and on this basis we are not concerned that our procedure biases the equivalence tests in any particular direction (Wooldridge 2002, 455; Friedman & Schady 2012; Gibson 2019, 334-335).

A main challenge with equivalence tests is that they require substantial statistical power, typically n > 500 (Goertzen & Cribbie 2010; Weber & Popova 2012, 205-206). This challenge is exacerbated in our case since we are estimating interaction effects rather than average effects. In additional tests, we therefore pool the two transmission rounds (and include a dummy to account for variation across rounds) to increase power and provide a stronger test of the null hypotheses.

The table below reports a number of equivalence tests from each experiment (the quantity vs. the frequency experiment), across transmission rounds (first, second, and pooled rounds), and across different interacting variables.

Results

The general pattern in Table A10 is that we can reject moderation effects corresponding to the smallest substantively important effect size and larger effect sizes. Only in one out of 18 tests, the evidence to reject the smallest substantively important effect size is nonsignificant

(p-value for rejecting H0 r ≥ 0.10 = 0.11) and in two other instances the evidence to reject the smallest substantively important effect size is marginally statistically significant (p = 0.058 and 0.051). In two out these three instances, the moderating variable is the respondent's identification with the politician's party. Hence, we cannot in all instances reject the notion that partisanship further intensifies the transmission bias such that outpartisans are more likely to transmit strategy-framed content about politicians and their policies.

Power recommendations for equivalence testing is typically n > 500 (e.g., Weber and Popova 2012), so a possible explanation for the results could be that we have relatively small sample sizes when analyzing rounds 1-2 separately (n = 383 and 389). When we pool the transmission rounds, the results consistently show that moderating effects of partisanship, political sophistication, and need to evaluate can be rejected for the smallest substantively important effect size ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that the transmission bias has relatively large generalizability across partisan leanings, political sophistication and information processing styles.

Table A10: Equivalence tests for results presented in Test I

Round	Dependent variable	Interaction term	R	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.50	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.30	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.10	N
1	Words recollected	Frame × Shared party	-0.038	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.110	389
2	Words recollected	Frame × Shared party	0.036	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.004	383
1+2	Words recollected	Frame × Shared party	-0.009	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.006	772
1	Choice of article	Frame × Shared party	-0.020	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.058	393
2	Choice of article	Frame × Shared party	0.023	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.008	390
1+2	Choice of article	Frame × Shared party	-0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.003	783
1	Words recollected	Frame × Political sophistication	0.010	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.016	389
2	Words recollected	Frame × Political sophistication	-0.002	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.028	383
1+2	Words recollected	Frame × Political sophistication	0.006	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.002	772
1	Choice of article	Frame × Political sophistication	-0.011	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.040	393
2	Choice of article	Frame × Political sophistication	-0.012	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.042	390
1+2	Choice of article	Frame × Political sophistication	-0.011	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.007	782
1	Words recollected	Frame × Need to evaluate	-0.017	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.051	389
2	Words recollected	Frame × Need to evaluate	-0.019	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.056	373
1+2	Words recollected	Frame × Need to evaluate	-0.015	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.010	772
1	Choice of article	Frame × Need to evaluate	0.016	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.011	393
2	Choice of article	Frame × Need to evaluate	-0.008	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.036	381
1+2	Choice of article	Frame × Need to evaluate	0.010	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.001	783

A3. Instructions and measurement details for Test 2

Full wording of instructions for subjects in the human coding study (Test 2), rating the content of the recollections from the frequency experiment:

[Before randomly assigned to a recollection, subjects were presented with a short introduction to the rating task:]

Next, we ask you to read a recollection of a political news article about a politician – Scott Harris – who introduces a new initiative. The initiative is a trial program for unemployed people. The recollection was written by a previous survey participant after having read the news article. We ask you to read the recollection very carefully as you will be asked some questions about its content afterwards. Because the recollection was written by a survey participant, you might find the recollection short and containing grammatical errors. Still, we would like you to answer our questions about it to the best of your abilities.

You may agree or disagree with the trial program or with political parties that may be mentioned in the recollection. <u>When answering the questions about the recollection we ask you to set aside your personal opinion on the issue and any preexisting views about the political parties or politicians in general and base your answers solely on the representation offered in the recollection.</u>

[Randomly assigned recollection]

How large a proportion of the news article
    1) portrays the politician's attempt to serve his own personal interests? _____
    2) portrays the politician's attempt to serve the interests of society?

        _____
    3) provides other information?   _____

Please indicate the relative amount of these three types of information so that the total sums to 100 percent.

Is the information typical of coverage you would expect in political news reporting? Please base your answer solely on the information in the recollection.

Definitely not typical   Neither/or   Very typical

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How positive or negative was the recollection about the trial program? Please base your answer solely on the information in the recollection.

Very negative   Neither/or   Very Positive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Based on the recollection, what do you feel about politicians like Scott Harris?

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very strongly 7
Angry	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hostile	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Disgusted	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fearful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nervous	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Anxious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Proud	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hopeful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Enthusiastic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

A4. Supplemental analyses for Test 2

A4.1 Results for inter-coder agreement tests (Test II)

For discussion of crowd-coding approach, choice of reported coefficients, and interpretation, see A1.4 above.

Table A11 reports intercoder agreement tests for the material used in the mediation analyses presented in Test II. The middle column shows high percentage agreement between the coders, amounting to over 85% in all instances. The right-hand column displays the coefficients based on Gwet's AC. The coefficients show that the first two items entail

'moderate' agreement (0.58 and 0.49) and that the third item entails 'substantial' agreement (0.70). While these levels of intercoder agreement are generally considered acceptable according to conventional notions, they are lower than coefficients typically reported in traditional, small-scale, author- or research assistant-led coding schemes. The coefficients are, however, in full accordance with, and in some instances higher than, the levels reported in other studies using crowd-coded materials (Lind et al. 2017).

Table A11: Intercoder agreement tests for coded material used in mediation analyses (Test II)

Item	Percent agreement	Gwet's AC
Serve own interest	89.38% (p<0.001)	0.58 (p<0.001)
Serve society	88.52% (p<0.001)	0.49 (p<0.001)
Other information	91.35% (p<0.001)	0.70 (p<0.001)

Note: Materials = 718. Raters = 2132. Percentages and coefficients are averaged across articles/transmission rounds. Probabilistic benchmarking with ordinal weights. P-values indicate whether intercoder agreement is significantly above chance.

A4.2 Presence of self-serving and society-serving motivations as predictors of number of words recollected

Table A12: Presence of focus on politician's attempt to serve own interests and attempt to serve society as predictor of words transmitted in strategy frame condition in transmission round 1 (Model 1) and round 2 (Model 2).

	Model 1: Words transmitted (round 1)	Model 2: Words transmitted (round 2)
Attempt to serve own interests	0.37***	0.15†
	(0.17)	(0.08)
Attempt to serve society	0.09	0.08***
	(0.16)	(0.07)
Constant	36.39***	26.88***
	(13.58)	(5.64)
n	183	173
Adjusted R^2	0.046	0.019

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Table A13: Presence of other information as predictor of words transmitted in strategy frame condition in transmission round 1 (Model 1) and round 2 (Model 2).

	Model 1: Words transmitted (round 1)	Model 2: Words transmitted (round 2)
Other information	-0.25	-0.12†
	(0.16)	(0.07)
Constant	60.47***	38.53***
	(3.13)	(1.96)
n	183	173
Adjusted R^2	0.012	0.014

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

The variable "other information" was not introduced in the same models as the two other items because the answers to the three questions were required to sum to 100%, which would result in perfect collinearity in the model.

A4.3 Mediational analyses reported in main text

Figure A3: Indirect effect of politician's self-interested motivations without controlling for alternative mediators
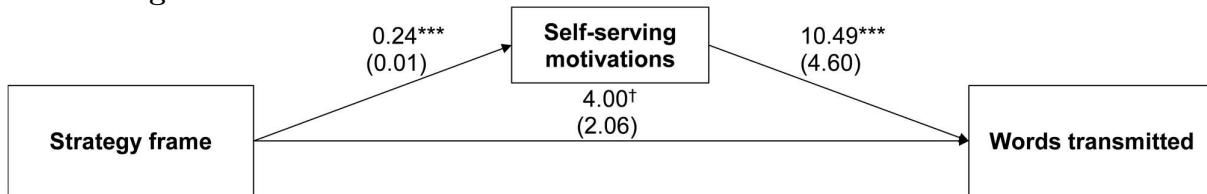
Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Figure A4: Indirect effect of politician's self-interested motivations controlling for negativity, typicality, anger, anxiety and enthusiasm
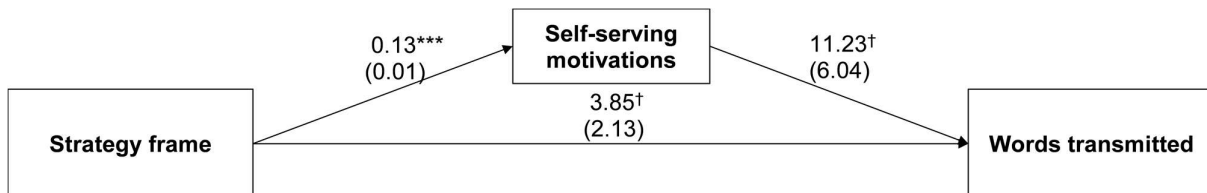
Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for negativity, typicality, anger, anxiety, enthusiasm, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

A4.4 Additional mediational analyses

Figure A5: Indirect effect of negativity controlling for politician's selv-serving motivations
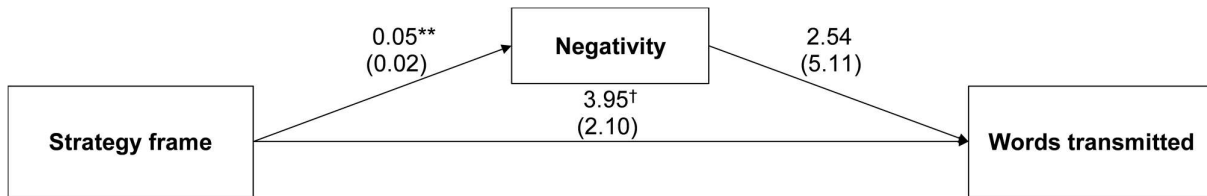
Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for politician's self-serving motivations, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n=710

Figure A6: Indirect effect of typicality controlling for politician's selv-serving motivations

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for politician's self-serving motivations, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n=700
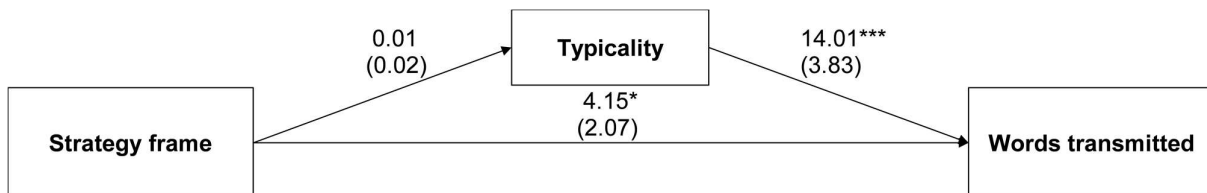
Figure A7: Indirect effect of anxiety controlling for politician's selv-serving motivations
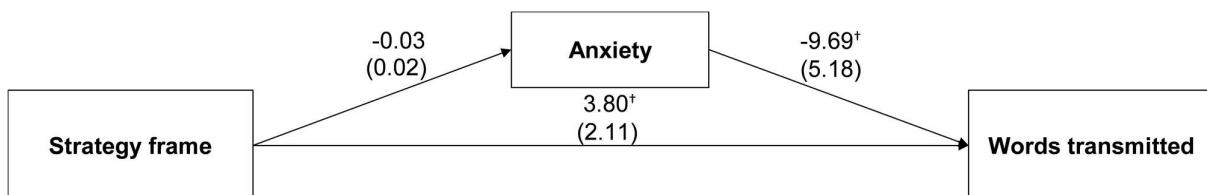

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for politician's self-serving motivations, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n=700

Figure A8: <u>Indirect effect of anger controlling for politician's selv-serving motivations</u>
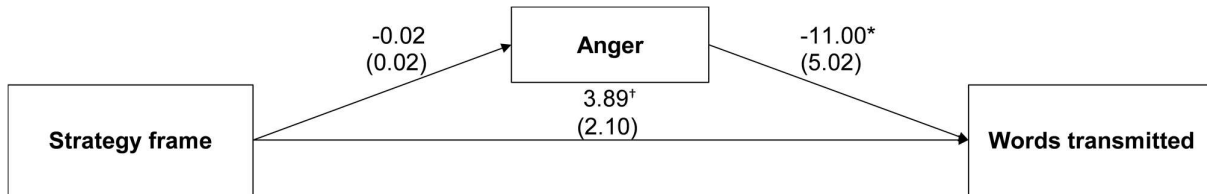

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for politician's self-serving motivations, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n=700

Figure A9: <u>Indirect effect of enthusiasm controlling for politician's selv-serving motivations</u>
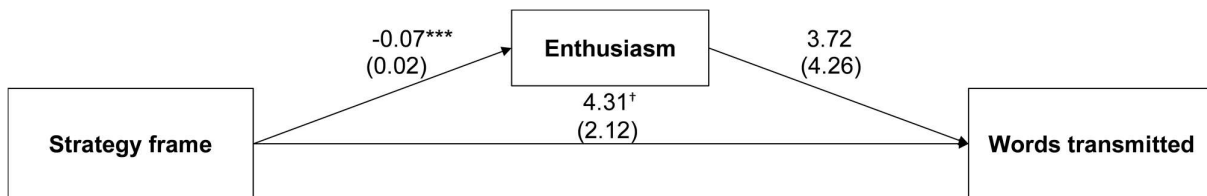

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses extracted from a mediation model based on Imai et al. (2011)'s potential outcome framework. The model controls for politician's self-serving motivations, transmission round (round 1 vs. round 2) and the party cue manipulation (Democrat vs. Republican). All variables are recoded 0-1 except for the dependent variable. † p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n=700

A5. Supplemental analyses for Test 3

A5.1. Explorative analyses of moderation effects for Test 3

Aims

As the final step in the analyses, we explore the generalizability of the negative effects of

socially transmitted strategy-framed information on trust in politicians and support for their

policies. Specifically, consistent with the exploratory analyses of generalizability reported for

Test 1 (see Online Appendix A2.3-A2.4), we test whether the effects of recollected information

in Figure 5 in the main text are moderated by three of the most central individual differences

in public opinion, i.e. political sophistication (e.g. Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996), motivated

reasoning driven by partisanship (e.g. Lodge & Taber 2013, Druckman et al 2018), and memory

versus online based processing as indexed by need to evaluate (e.g. Tormala and Petty 2001).

Measures

In the Mturk studies, we use the same measures of individual differences in political

sophistication, need to evaluate and shared party affiliated with Harris as in Test 1 (see

Online Appendix A1.4 for all measurement details). In the YouGov study, we did not collect

measures of receiver need to evaluate and political sophistication, meaning that we cannot

test the moderating effects of these two variables in this study. We operationalized receiver

shared party identification and all sender characteristics (i.e., shared party identification, political sophistication and need to evaluate) as in the MTurk study.

Results

All results are reported in Tables A14-A16 below. As seen in Tables A14-A16, we find no statistically significant evidence of a moderating effect of neither the receiver's nor the sender's political sophistication or need to evaluate on the effects of the recollected information on trust and policy support.

As also seen in Tables A14-A16, we observe no statistically significant moderating effect of whether the sender of the information shares party affiliation with Harris. Generally, we also find no statistically significant moderating effect of whether the receiver of the recollection shares party affiliation with Harris except in one instance: The effect of strategy-framed recollected information on trust in Congress in the lower right panel in Figure 5 in the main text is significantly moderated by whether the receiver shares partisanship with Harris. Specifically, the negative effect of the recollected strategy-framed information on trust in Congress is strongest among outpartisans who do not share party affiliation with Harris. While this pattern did not replicate using trust in Scott Harris or policy support as dependent variables, it is indeed possible that strategy-based recollections are particularly effective in driving down political trust when received and read by outpartisans.

While these results mainly show no statistically significant evidence for moderating effects, they should not be interpreted as *evidence of absence* of a meaningful moderating effect (cf. Lakens 2017, Weber & Popova 2012). Hence, as in Test 1, we conducted equivalence tests to explore whether absence of the smallest substantively important moderating effects of partisanship, political sophistication, and need to evaluate can be statistically supported. These analyses are reported in Online Appendix A5.2.

<u>Table A14:</u> **Moderating effects of sender's and receiver's political sophistication, need to evaluate, and shared partisanship with Harris on the effect of the frame manipulation on trust in the politician (MTurk studies).**

	Model I: Receiver's sophistication	Model II: Sender's sophistication	Model III: Receiver's need to evaluate	Model IV: Sender's need to evaluate	Model V: Sender's shared party identification	Model VI: Receiver's shared party identification
Frame (1 = strategy)	-0.079	-0.074	-0.087*	-0.058	-0.017	-0.018
	(0.058)	(0.077)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Moderating variable	-0.117**	-0.058	-0.071	-0.007	-0.061*	0.101***
	(0.048)	(0.062)	(0.053)	(0.043)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Frame × moderating variable.	0.038	0.033	0.081	0.024	-0.052	-0.056
	(0.066)	(0.086)	(0.072)	(0.067)	(0.041)	(0.043)
Age[1]	-0.000	0.000631	-0.000	0.001	0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender[2]	0.036*	0.013	0.040*	0.017	0.015	0.041***
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Education[3]	-0.017	-0.001	-0.026	0.012	-0.011	-0.027
	(0.031)	(0.006)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Party affiliation[4] (1 = most inpartisan)	0.070**	0.036	0.072**	0.037		
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.020)		
Constant	0.544***	0.487***	0.493***	0.447***	0.430***	0.447***
	(0.050)	(0.058)	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.034)	(0.037)
R^2	0.044	0.019	0.038	0.018	0.020	0.037
N	773	773	773	773	773	773

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

[1]In models I, III, VI, we control for the receiver's age, and in models II, IV, and V we control for the sender's age

[2] In models I, III, VI, we control for the receiver's gender, and in models II, IV, and V we control for the sender's gender

[3]In models I, and VI, we control for the receiver's education, and in models II, and V we control for the sender's education

[4]In models I and III we control for the receiver's shared party affiliation, and in models II, and IV we control for the sender's shared party affiliation with Harris.

Table A15: Moderating effects of sender's and receiver's political sophistication, need to evaluate, and shared partisanship with Harris on the effect of the frame manipulation on policy support (MTurk studies).

	Model I: Receiver's sophistication	Model II: Sender's sophistication	Model III: Receiver's need to evaluate	Model IV: Sender's need to evaluate	Model V: Sender's shared party identification	Model VI: Receiver's shared party identification
Frame (1 = strategy)	-0.106[*]	-0.059	-0.077[*]	-0.063	-0.030	-0.027
	(0.053)	(0.063)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Moderating variable	-0.025	-0.130[*]	0.011	0.012	0.013	0.066[*]
	(0.046)	(0.052)	(0.047)	(0.038)	(0.024)	(0.027)
Frame × moderating variable.	0.069	0.010	0.062	0.029	-0.031	-0.042
	(0.062)	(0.071)	(0.066)	(0.057)	(0.036)	(0.042)
Age[1]	-0.000	0.001[**]	-0.000	0.001	0.001	-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender[2]	0.026	0.000	0.027	0.010	0.009	0.027
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Education[3]	0.001	0.004	0.000	-0.018	-0.020	0.003
	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Party affiliation[4]	0.044[*]	-0.002	0.044	-0.001		
(1 = most inpartisan)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.018)		
Constant	0.594[***]	0.665[***]	0.562[***]	0.566[***]	0.567[***]	0.555[***]
	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.033)
R^2	0.027	0.032	0.029	0.022	0.022	0.027
N	773	773	773	773	773	773

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. [*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$.

[1]In models I, III, VI, we control for the receiver's age, and in models II, IV, and V we control for the sender's age

[2] In models I, III, VI, we control for the receiver's gender, and in models II, IV, and V we control for the sender's gender

[3]In models I, and VI, we control for the receiver's education, and in models II, and VI we control for the sender's education

[4]In models I and III we control for the receiver's shared party affiliation, and in models II and IV we control for the sender's shared party affiliation with Harris.

Table A16: Moderating effects of sender shared party identification (Model I), political sophistication (Model II), need to evaluate (Model III), and receiver shared party identification (Model IV) on the relationship between the issue-strategy frame manipulation and trust in Congress (YouGov study).

	Model I: Sender shared party ID	Model II: Sender political sophistication	Model III: Sender need to evaluate	Model IV: Receiver shared party ID
Frame (1 = strategy)	-0.024	-0.222	-0.018	-0.094*
	(0.038)	(0.114)	(0.057)	(0.039)
Moderating variable	-0.013	-0.118	-0.035	-0.010
	(0.041)	(0.077)	(0.066)	(0.046)
Frame × Moderating variable	0.011	0.233	-0.001	0.161*
	(0.057)	(0.126)	(0.092)	(0.066)
Age	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender	0.018	0.019	0.019	-0.058*
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Education	0.034	0.028	0.033	-0.063
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)
Political sophistication	-0.027	-	-0.023	-
	(0.063)	-	(0.063)	-
Constant	0.395***	0.475***	0.409***	0.558***
	(0.065)	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.048)
R^2	0.006	0.012	0.007	0.058
N	710	710	710	550

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. In models I-III, we control for sender's age gender, education, and political sophistication. In model IV, we control for receiver's age, gender, and education (in the YouGov study, we did not measure respondents' (i.e., receivers') political sophistication or need to evaluate).

A5.2 Equivalence tests (Test III)

We conduct equivalence testing to analyze whether absence of the smallest substantively important moderating effects of partisanship, political sophistication, and need to evaluate can be statistically supported. We follow the same procedure as in the equivalence tests related to Test I (for a full outline of the procedure and discussion of methodological choices, see Online Appendix A2.5).

Results

The general pattern in Tables A17 and A18 is that we can reject moderation effects corresponding to the smallest substantively important effect size and larger effect sizes. Only in one out of 16 tests, the evidence to reject the smallest substantively important effect size is nonsignificant (p-value for rejecting H0 r ≥ 0.10 = 0.138). Hence, as also discussed in Online Appendix A5.1, the results suggest that strategy-based recollections have larger negative effects on trust in Congress among outpartisans (i.e., subjects who do not identify with Scott Harris' party). Again, this moderating effect does not replicate when we use trust in Scott Harris or policy support as dependent variables. In these two cases, we can reject moderation effects corresponding to the smallest substantially important effect size (p = 0.016 and 0.009, respectively).

Table A17: Equivalence tests for results in MTurk sample

Dependent variable	Interaction term	r	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.50	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.30	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.10	N
Trust in politician	Frame × Receiver pol. soph.	0.005	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.002	773
Policy support	Frame × Receiver pol. soph.	0.009	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.001	773
Trust in politician	Frame × Sender pol. soph.	0.003	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.002	773
Policy support	Frame × Sender pol. soph.	0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.003	773
Trust in politician	Frame × Receiver need to eval.	0.016	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	773
Policy support	Frame × Receiver need to eval.	0.013	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	773
Trust in politician	Frame × Sender need to eval.	0.005	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.002	773
Policy support	Frame × Sender need to eval.	0.006	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.002	773
Trust in politician	Frame × Receiver shared party	-0.023	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.016	773
Policy support	Frame × Receiver shared party	-0.015	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.009	773
Trust in politician	Frame × Sender shared party	-0.022	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.016	773
Policy support	Frame × Sender shared party	-0.019	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.012	773

Table A18: Equivalence tests for results in YouGov sample

| Dependent variable	Interaction term	r	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.50	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.30	P-value for rejecting H0: r ≥ -0.10	N
Trust in Congress	Frame × Receiver shared party	-0.054	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.140	550
Trust in Congress	Frame × Sender shared party	-0.004	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.003	710
Trust in Congress	Frame × Sender need to eval.	-0.000	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.004	710
Trust in Congress	Frame × Sender pol. soph.	0.016	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.001	710

A5.3 Additional study demonstrating citizens' perceived overrepresentation of strategy framed news on social media relative to traditional media

Because most interpersonal sharing of political news today happens on social media, we aimed to increase the external validity of our findings by testing another observable implication of our theory: Citizens should generally be more likely to experience exposure to strategy-framed news relative to issue-framed news on social media, and this difference should be larger compared to exposure through traditional media such as television and newspapers where interpersonal sharing is not possible .

People share political news stories on social media both in full length (through "shares" or "retweets") and as self-written recollections of news stories (such as "posts" or "tweets") (Bond et al. 2012); consequently, we investigate whether they experience strategy-related content as more prevalent than issue-related content in both types of information. To test this, we used the nationally representative survey fielded by the survey agency YouGov described in the main text (n = 1.798). Subjects participated in one of two experiments. The first experiment assigned respondents to read one of the four articles about the trial program, manipulating strategy and issue content and the party affiliation of the politician as described above. The second experiment assigned respondents to read a recollection of one of these articles written by a participant in the first round of the quantity experiment. Subjects were asked: "Is this information typical of the news about politicians that is shared on social media?" on a 1–7 scale (Not typical at all – Very typical). The survey also asked: "Is the information

in the article [recollection] typical of the type of information about politicians you see on the following media: 'Facebook,' 'Twitter,' 'Newspapers,' and 'Television'" on the same 1–7 scale. All variables were recoded 0-1. The Facebook and Twitter items were highly correlated and therefore summarized into an additive index (r = 0.689, M = 0.592, SD = 0.316). For the social media questions, subjects were left out if answering "Don't know" or reporting not having used Facebook or Twitter over the last 12 months. Subjects generally rated the stimuli typical of the information they usually receive about politicians, which underlines the external validity of the constructed articles and the recollections used throughout the studies (means between 0.589 – 0.654).

Figure A10: **Effect of Strategy Relative to Issue Frame on Perceptions of Typicality of Content by Type of Media (Panels a–d) across Evaluations of Full Articles and Recollections.**
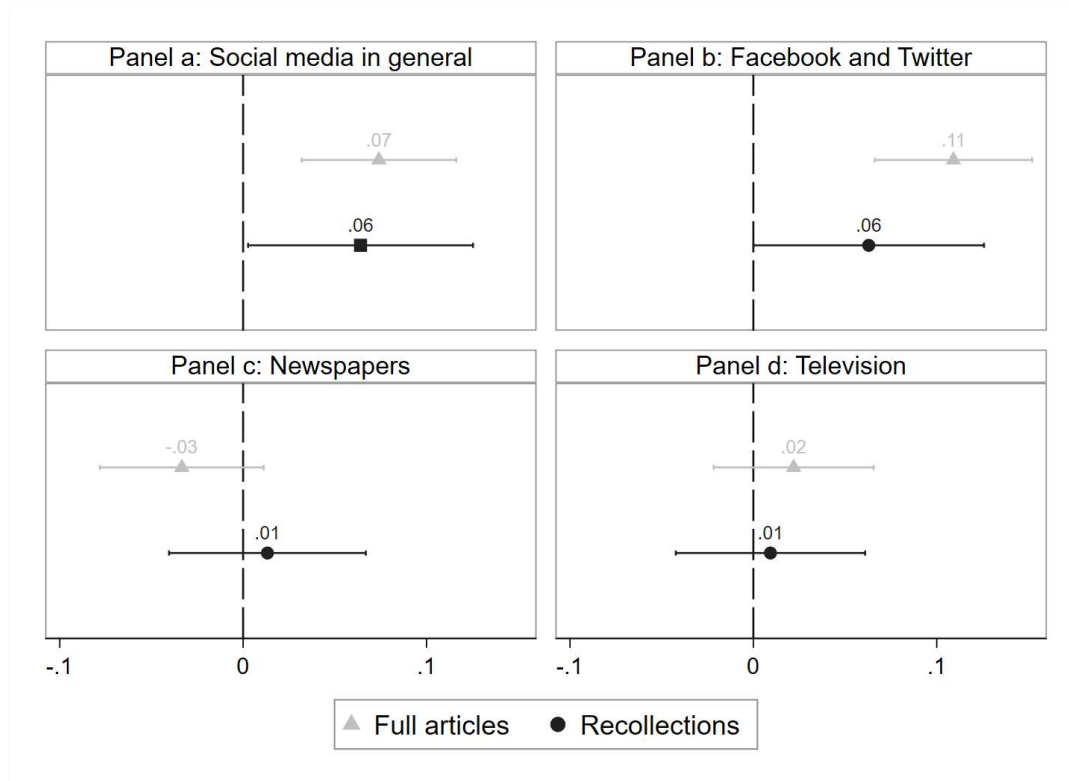
Note: n(panel a) = 1.287, n(panel b) = 1.230, n(panel c) = 1.388, n(panel d) = 1.505. All tests are two-sided.

Panel a, Figure A10 demonstrates that subjects evaluated the article they read as seven percentage points more typical of general social media content when assigned to the strategy-framed article relative to the issue-framed article (p = 0.001). Moreover, a six percentage point effect exists among subjects who read recollections of strategy frames relative to the issue frame (p = 0.041). This pattern replicates when looking specifically at Facebook

and Twitter content in Panel b. Subjects who read the full articles, rated the content as 11 percentage points more typical of Facebook and Twitter content when assigned to the strategy-framed article compared to those assigned to the issue-framed content ($p < 0.001$). For subjects assigned to read recollections, this effect was six percentage points ($p = 0.050$).

In contrast, for both newspapers (panel c) and television (panel d), subjects evaluated the content equally typical regardless of whether they were assigned to strategy- and issue-related information with no substantial or significant differences (p-values between 0.142-0.723). This provides additional tentative support for the transmission bias in the real-life setting where interpersonal sharing of political news happens: Citizens are more exposed to strategy-framed content on social media platforms where users actively spread such information, whereas the strategy-framed content is less overrepresented—if at all—on traditional media. This further underlines the notion that citizens—and not just the traditional media—play an active part in disseminating political information that emphasizes self-interested politicians.

A5.4. Effects of socially transmitted strategy-framed news on vote preferences.

In the two consecutive online web surveys described in the main text, we asked the following question to measure effects on vote preferences followed by an 11-point scale: "How likely would you be to vote for a politician like Scott Harris?" (M = 0.45; SD = 0.26 on a scale ranging from 0 to 1).

Figure A11: Effect of the Strategy/Issue Frame on Vote Preference by Transmission Round.
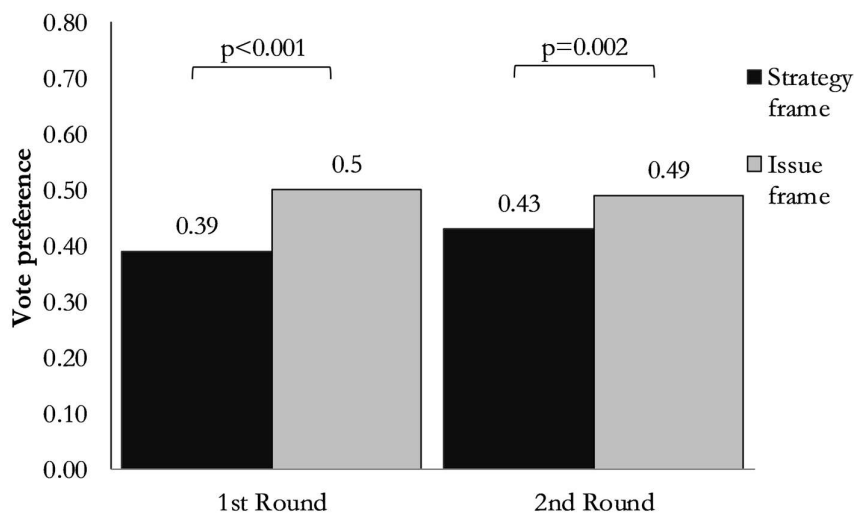
Note: n = 1.555. T-tests are two-sided.

Figure A11 demonstrates that the strategy frame significantly decreases inclinations to vote for Harris by 11 and 6 percentage points in the first and second transmission rounds, respectively. This supports the notion that the transmission bias favoring strategy frames serves to mobilize opposition to politicians who display self-interested behavior, as discussed in the main text.