**Full Title:** American Politics in Two Dimensions: Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations[*]

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**Full Title:** American Politics in Two Dimensions: Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations

**Abstract:** Contemporary political ills at the mass behavior level (e.g., out-group aggression, conspiracy theories) are often attributed to increasing polarization and partisan tribalism. We theorize that many such problems are less the product of left-right orientations than an orthogonal "anti-establishment" dimension of opinion dominated by conspiracy, populist, and Manichean orientations. Using two national surveys from 2019 and 2020, we find that this dimension of opinion is correlated with several anti-social psychological traits, the acceptance of political violence, and time spent on extremist social media platforms. It is also related to support for populist candidates, such as Trump and Sanders, and beliefs in misinformation and conspiracy theories. While many inherently view politics as a conflict between left and right, others see it as battle between "the people" and a corrupt establishment. Our findings demonstrate an urgent need to expand the traditional conceptualization of mass opinion beyond familiar left-right identities and affective orientations.

**Word Count:** 9,998

Seeming increases in toxic political rhetoric, misinformation, and ideologically motivated violence have led pundits, politicians, and the public to become increasingly concerned about the health of contemporary American democracy. Journalists characterize the political landscape as rife with extremism, conspiracy theories, and mutual animosity, where civil unrest predominates and shared facts are a luxury of the past (e.g., Wang 2016). Even scholars, who typically take the long view, have sounded alarms (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, Carey et al. 2019, Runciman 2018). Who or what is to blame?

Partisan tribalism and ideological extremism make attractive culprits, especially given the wealth of supportive evidence for this perspective scholars have amassed. Polarization has increased among the public, partisan and ideological identities have closely aligned, and hostility toward political out-groups has intensified (Mason 2018b, a, Kalmoe and Mason 2019, Abramowitz and McCoy 2019, Iyengar and Westwood 2015). All the while, increasingly polarized elites continue to structure their appeals along partisan and ideological grounds, all but ensuring a central role for left-right identities in politics (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013, Banda and Cluverius 2018, Poole and Rosenthal 2006, Broockman and Butler 2017, Levendusky 2010, Hetherington 2001).

Yet, left-right extremity and partisan tribalism provide incomplete explanations for current maladies. Polls show that the public is largely disinterested in politics (McCarthy 2016), unconstrained by the ideological principles that presumably foster extremity (Kalmoe 2020, Kinder and Kalmoe 2017), and increasingly apt to self-identify as politically "independent" (Klar and Krupnikov 2016). According to the 2016 American National Election Study, 20% of respondents identified as "moderate" (the modal category) and 14% refused to self-identify with an ideological label at all. Simply put, people are not engaging in politics more than they once

did, and appear equally, if not less, wedded to the labels that define mainstream political groups and ideas (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017). This ideological "innocence" (e.g., Converse 1964) opens the possibility that public opinion—even "extreme" opinion—is organized by forces beyond familiar left-right ideas and identities (Oliver and Wood 2014, Kinder 2006).

This is not to say that traditional partisan and ideological identities, and the extremity thereof, do not explain many political attitudes and behaviors; such orientations clearly motivate the behaviors of elites and the politically sophisticated (Klar and Krupnikov 2016). However, they cannot explain the motivations of many others (Kalmoe 2020). Our contention is that traditional accounts of a mass opinion space dominated by left-right concerns are incapable of fully accounting for the friction that characterizes modern American politics.

Here, we make a modest proposition that, at least potentially, has appreciable implications: our current conceptualization of mass opinion is missing something. Specifically, we theorize that an underappreciated, albeit ever-present, dimension of opinion explains many of the problematic attitudes and behaviors gripping contemporary politics. This dimension, which we label "anti-establishment," rather than explaining one's attitudes about and behaviors toward the opposing political coalition, captures one's orientation toward the established political order irrespective of partisanship and ideology. We argue that anti-establishment sentiments are an important ingredient of support for populist leaders, conspiratorial beliefs, and political violence. And, while we contend that this dimension is orthogonal to the left-right dimension of opinion along which partisan and ideological concerns are oriented, we also theorize that it can be activated by strategic partisan politicians. As such, phenomena which are oftentimes interpreted as expressions of "far-right" or "far-left" orientations may not be borne of left-right views at all, but rather of the assimilation of anti-establishment sentiments into mainstream politics by elites.

To test these propositions, we examine the structure of attitudes across two national surveys of U.S. adults from 2019 and 2020. We find support for a two-dimensional organization[2] of mass opinion in which traditional left-right concerns (partisan and ideological identities and affective orientations) are orthogonal to anti-establishment orientations (conspiracy thinking, populism, and Manicheanism). Anti-establishment orientations, more so than left-right orientations, are strongly related to anti-social psychological traits, support for political violence, conspiracy beliefs, the use of extremist social media, and the predisposition to argue online. Moreover, we find that anti-establishment orientations are related to support for politicians who frequently engage in anti-establishment rhetoric (e.g., Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders), but not establishment candidates who eschew such rhetoric (e.g., Joe Biden).

These findings suggest that many phenomena labeled "far-left" or "far-right" may not actually stem from partisanship or liberal-conservative principles and identities, or even from extreme versions thereof. Indeed, such identities appear unassociated with many of the phenomena that concern contemporary observers. Rather than supplanting left-right political orientations, however, our theory and results enrich our conceptualization of mass opinion, showing how a cocktail of traditional political identities and deep-seated antagonism toward the "establishment" can simultaneously cause one to both divorce from the establishment and take aim at out-groups that are just as much a fixture of the establishment as favored in-groups.

### Anti-Establishment Orientations in American Politics

Recent years have witnessed the mainstreaming of conspiracy theories and populism, increasingly toxic political rhetoric, and a seeming rise in political violence. Standard explanations of political phenomena in the U.S.—those regarding the party system (Aldrich

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[2] We do not suggest that the "true" dimensionality of mass opinion is two. Rather, this particular view is useful for understanding the ingredients of more specific troubling attitudes and behaviors.

1995, Bawn et al. 2012), mass partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960), ideology (Converse 2006), elite-cuing (Zaller 1992), and campaign support (Cohen et al. 2008)—cannot comprehensively explain the mass public's attraction to conspiracy theories and misinformation, a rise in extremist violence, and other such phenomena, largely because partisanship, left-right ideologies, parties, and elites are themselves part of the establishment and not (normally) antagonistic toward it.

Instead, scholars of American politics have slowly begun to circle around different, non–left-right orientations, such as conspiracism, populism, and Manichean thinking, the latter two of which have been studied extensively in Europe and Latin America (e.g., Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove 2014, Conniff et al. 2012). Each of these three orientations have an anti-establishment flare (Sternisko, Cichocka, and Van Bavel 2020, Merkley 2020, Inglehart and Norris 2016). For example, both conspiratorial and populist viewpoints share a disdain for elites that creates an "us" versus "them" dynamic, and both employ Manichean narratives whereby the "good" people are engaged in a battle against "evil" elites (Müller 2017). The specifics—the elites' motives, what exactly is "right" and "wrong," and who constitutes the "establishment" or "the people"—are largely irrelevant. Rather, what unites these orientations is a deep-seated antagonism toward the established political order. Because these three orientations share fundamental elements, numerous works have found close connections between them (e.g., Oliver and Wood 2014, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018, Müller 2017).

Despite a newfound applicability to modern political culture, these orientations are hardly new; historical accounts suggest that anti-establishment sentiments are longstanding fixtures of the political landscape (e.g., Lowndes 2017, Uscinski and Parent 2014, Montenegro de Wit et al. 2019). For example, in the 1950s-60s, Richard Hofstadter developed his notion of the "paranoid style": a "way of seeing the world and of expressing oneself" that has the "qualities of heated

4

exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy" (1964). Hofstadter argued that this "style" explained the popularity of conspiratorial and populist rhetoric. At the same time, Robert Lane (1962) argued that alienation is an important element of American political ideology; feeling that the "government is 'not my government,' the Constitution is 'not my Constitution'" constitutes a "disidentification" with, and "a rejection" of, the political establishment (161-162). Even *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), despite its focus on partisanship, detailed anti-establishment sentiment. Their oft-ignored chapter on agrarian politics describes farmers' "posture toward the ongoing political process" that is an "extreme of a continuum" (410, 440); this posture is described as a non-ideological "political style," or "protest" against the establishment in which the farmer is "free to march to the polls to 'vote the rascals out,' whether or not he himself may have helped establish them in power in the first place" (430).

Across accounts, anti-establishment orientations are conceived of as distinct from left-right orientations. Both Lane (1962) and Campbell et al. (1960) used this orientation to describe the opinions of people who did not fit the unidimensional, left-right conceptualization of mass opinion. Although Hofstadter focused on the political right, his interrogation of American history revealed examples of the "paranoid style" across the ideological spectrum. These historical accounts comport with recent studies finding that conspiracy thinking, Manichean thinking, and populism span left-right identities (Oliver and Wood 2014, Lacatus 2018).

This brings us back to our central contention: current models for explaining mass opinion overlook important dimensions of opinion. One such dimension—an anti-establishment one—is not new, but it is distinct from establishment left-right concerns. And, as past and current literature suggests, this anti-establishment dimension of opinion is far from benign. Although it is only occasionally activated on a large enough scale to disrupt politics and culture, it has the

power to breed distrust in institutions, divorce people from the political order, and enhance susceptibilities to dangerous narratives and those who traffic in them.

## A Conceptual Model

We describe our theory with the aid of a conceptual model of the mass opinion space presented in Figure 1. The horizontal dimension is defined by left-right orientations. Partisan and ideological identities, as well as affective orientations toward left-right political objects (e.g., the candidates), are orientated along this dimension. The vertical dimension is defined by anti-establishment orientations. Importantly, we conceive of these dimensions as orthogonal, the geometric representation of uncorrelated dimensions.

**[Figure 1 here]**

In Figure 1, neither dimension is more important than the other. Importance is, in a sense, a function of where individuals are located within the two-dimensional space, particularly with respect to extremity along a given dimension. We reiterate that left-right orientations are fundamental to mass opinion because elites and the sophisticated portion of the public are largely aligned along this dimension; this is likely so even when politicians employ anti-establishment rhetoric. Rather than merely activating anti-establishment orientations, however, we theorize that strategic elites can "pull" the anti-establishment dimension toward their end of the left-right continuum with inflammatory rhetoric, effectively blending these once-orthogonal sentiments. This "pull" can be attempted by politicians on the right or left (or both simultaneously); for ease of explication, Figure 1 depicts clockwise movement toward the political right.

This process is akin to many standard conceptions of elite communication processes. For example, issues once orthogonal to left-right concerns, by virtue of changing party coalitions and subsequent top-down messaging (Zaller 1992), can be collapsed onto a general left-right

6

dimension (Carmines and Stimson 1989, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016). Likewise, issue ownership involves parties competing to integrate new issues, which are geometrically conceptualized as distinct dimensions (e.g., Enelow and Hinich 1984), into party platforms and demonstrating the party's competence regarding those issues (Petrocik 1996).

It is usually in the interest of politicians to work within the existing political order: it provides access to long-standing interests, ready-made coalitions, and stable voter preferences (Aldrich 1995, Campbell et al. 1966), even if such prepackaged coalitions constrain available choice sets (North 1990). However, under some circumstances it can be in the interest of political actors to establish new coalitions by reaching outside of established ones (Schattschneider 1960, Riker 1982); this can even involve altering the established norms of how conflict is conducted (Riker 1986). It stands to reason that outsiders and losing coalitions, given that they have not succeeded under current conditions, should be the most vigorous in attempting to reshape the playing field and generate collective action along new lines.

In extreme circumstances, approval of the established order itself can be a subject of contention. The mobilization of anti-establishment sentiment brings "the politics of opposition to those wielding power" into the struggle for power (Barr 2009, 31). This can be a "disruptive force" that destabilizes institutions, creates chaotic policy agendas by removing choice constraints, and integrates into the established order groups that were once excluded from, or antagonistic toward, that very order (Atkinson and DeWitt 2018). Such outcomes could easily be mistaken for extreme partisanship and ideology, even though they are not borne of either.

We suspect that much contemporary rhetoric and behavior often attributed to left-right extremism stems from the connection between the two dimensions, which creates a problem of observational equivalence obfuscating the causal antecedents that scholars are most interested in.

Take, for example, the "alt-right," an "extreme" (e.g., violent, conspiratorial) faction, supposedly of the political "right," that has garnered close attention since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Given their disdain for "mainstream" conservatism and distrust of the establishment, we might think of "alt-right" sentiments as a blend of conservatism and anti-establishment orientations, rather than as an expression of "extreme" conservativism. As Hawley (2017, 4) notes:

> "people tend to think in dichotomies: Republican vs. Democrat, liberal vs. conservative. Thus, whenever a new radical voice emerges on the political right, there is a tendency to describe it as a more extreme version of conservatism. In the case of the Alt-Right, this is inappropriate… it is not just a racist version of mainstream, *National Review*-style conservatism…it is totally distinct from conservatism."

Regardless, many observers place the alt-right at the far end of a single dimension (e.g., SPLC *n.d.*), even though the label itself—"*alt*-right"—suggests that the proper spatial orientation of this group is not so straightforward.

In 2016, Donald Trump used conspiratorial, populist, and Manichean rhetoric to attract and integrate the alt-right into his coalition. Presumably few of these individuals were strong conservatives or Republicans in the style of William F. Buckley or any similar ideologue. In reaction to Trump's anti-establishment appeals, Hillary Clinton denounced Trump's rhetoric and the alt-right, effectively molding the race into a choice between the establishment and an anti-establishment outsider (Ohlheiser and Dewey 2016). In other words, just as Trump attempted to "pull" anti-establishment groups into his coalition, Clinton attempted to "pull" people with an aversion to such rhetoric and groups into hers, as illustrated by the swing in the lower end of the anti-establishment dimension in the lower half of Figure 1.

Although not complex, this view of the mass opinion space, and changes to it, are difficult to comprehensively test. Manipulating dimensions of opinion cannot be easily accomplished vis-à-vis cross-sectional observation, or even with experimentation. While we can show compelling evidence for the existence of a dimension of opinion orthogonal to left-right orientations, our evidence demonstrating the ability of politicians to "pull" this dimension into their coalition is but suggestive. That said, our spatial model of mass opinion—which integrates an overlooked, albeit salient, dimension of opinion that can be manipulated by elites—comports with previous theoretical accounts of similar processes (Enelow and Hinich 1984) that are supported with a wealth of empirical evidence (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989). To reiterate, our central claims are that anti-establishment orientations exist, are distinct from traditional left-right orientations, and matter, especially when it comes to many of the troubling attitudes and behaviors gripping contemporary political culture. We provide evidence for these propositions below.

## Study 1: Measuring the Anti-Establishment Dimension

The goal of our first study is to establish that a dimension characterized by populist, conspiratorial, and Manichean worldviews—an anti-establishment dimension—is distinguishable from more traditional indicators of left-right politics, such as partisan and ideological identities and affective orientations. In doing so, we will empirically estimate the anti-establishment dimension. Finally, we will examine the psychological, social, and political correlates of this dimension in order to better understand which specific attitudes and behaviors are better explained by anti-establishment orientations than left-right ones. We employ a national survey of 2,000 U.S. adults fielded by Qualtrics between July 23 and August 6, 2019. Qualtrics partnered with Dynata to recruit a national sample of subjects that matched U.S. Census records on sex,

race, education, and income; the sociodemographic composition of sample appears on page 6 of the Appendix.

The items we employ to measure the anti-establishment dimension appear in Table 1; respondents reacted, using five-point scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," to each. The conspiracy thinking scale items (labeled "con") have been validated by numerous studies (e.g., Miller 2020). The populism items ("pop") are adapted, with minor alterations, from a scale developed to measure populist sentiment in Europe (Elchardus and Spruyt 2014). Finally, the item stating that politics is a "battle between good and evil" is adopted from the Oliver and Wood (2014) study of Manichean thinking and conspiracy beliefs. All of these items measure, at their core, a disdain for political elites, the belief that the establishment cannot be trusted, and the sense that the "people" have been subjugated.

We employ traditional indicators of left-right orientations. To measure partisan identities, we use the two-step branching measure employed by the American National Election Study, and the standard seven-point measure of ideology. We also employ feelings toward the two parties, using 101-point feeling thermometers that range from 0, "cold" (negative) feelings, to 100, "warm" (positive) feelings.

**Results**

Our first analysis, presented in Table 1, concerns the dimensionality of the items outlined above. If anti-establishment sentiments are distinct from left-right identities and attitudes, we should find that two dimensions best account for the observed variables in Table 1. In order to test this proposition, we factor analyzed responses to all items using iterated principal axis factoring. Examination of a scree plot (see Appendix page 7) and the eigenvalues associated with each factor both suggest that a two-dimensional solution most parsimoniously and accurately

characterizes the latent structure of the observed attitudes.[3] This factor structure is also replicated

in Study 2, supporting the generalizability of our findings.[4]

The first factor has an eigenvalue of 2.953 (43.26% of shared variance), the second an

eigenvalue of 2.640 (38.67% of shared variance). The factor loading patterns also make

substantive sense. Following disciplinary norms, we highlight factor loadings of 0.30 or greater.

Two of the populism items very weakly load on the left-right factor, as we might expect given

the notable populist undertones of the Trump administration;[5] this is what our theory and

conceptual model would predict. That said, conspiratorial, Manichean, and populist attitudes all

indicate a dimension that is distinct—precisely orthogonal, in this case—to that comprised of

left-right identities and attitudes. Indeed, rotating the factors in an oblique fashion that allows

them to be correlated, which is incongruent with our theory, produces substantively identical

loading patterns and a correlation of only 0.066 between the two factors. In other words, these

sets of items are squarely two-dimensional and orthogonal.[6]

The distribution of the predicted factor scores for both the anti-establishment and left-

right dimension, rescaled to range from 0 to 1, appear in Figure 2. As we would expect given the

bimodal nature of partisan identities and the heavily skewed distributions of feelings toward the

two major parties conditional on partisan and ideological identities, left-right orientations are

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[3] Substantive results pertaining to the analyses described here are unchanged when using versions of the predicted anti-establishment and left-right dimension produced by a confirmatory factor analysis where the factors are constrained to be uncorrelated.
[4] Using a third survey, fielded between October 8–21, 2020 on a representative sample of 2,015 U.S. adults by Qualtrics, we replicate this analysis with an 8-item measure of populism and additional measure of Manichean thinking. Replication analyses appear in the Appendix on pages 19–20. All substantive results presented replicate.
[5] There is no cross-loading between any of the left-right indicators and the two factors. They are all strongly related to only the second factor even though the model allows them to be related to both.
[6] Because the conspiracy thinking items exhibit greater factor loadings than the populism or Manichean items, one might wonder whether our estimation of the anti-establishment dimension is unduly influenced by conspiracy thinking. To examine this possibility, we re-estimated all analyses in both studies with only the populism and Manichean items. All substantive results replicate; see pages 14–18 of the Appendix.

11

bimodal. Very few respondents exhibit the most extreme liberal or conservative positions. That said, liberals and Democrats align along the left-hand side of the continuum, and conservatives and Republicans on the right, with fewer pure Independents and moderates in the center.[7]

Anti-establishment orientations are, however, unimodal and fairly symmetric: most people exhibit middling views when it comes to conspiratorial, populist, and Manichean sentiments, though a non-negligible proportion of respondents occupy the extremes. Although it might seem intuitive to worry most about those exhibiting strong anti-establishment sentiments, locating very low on this dimension could also prove to be normatively problematic; these individuals may uncritically accept official information, believe that politicians are running the country perfectly well, and fail to see corruption and abuse where it exists (e.g., Wood 2016). We do not suggest that individuals eschew anti-establishment views or, conversely, that they be content with the political establishment. Indeed, one can easily produce examples of the political status quo failing certain social groups, or even actively working against them.

**[Table 1 here]**

Although its ingredients—conspiracy thinking, populism, and Manicheanism—make the interpretation of the anti-establishment dimension straightforward, we additionally establish criterion validity in Table 2. Here, we regress a host of variables that should be more strongly related to anti-establishment orientations than left-right ones on the two dimensions and controls for educational attainment, household income, age, gender, and race and ethnicity, each of which has been rescaled to range from 0 to 1.[8] Table 2 contains the coefficients for both orientations, as well as the $p$-value associated with the $F$-test for the difference in coefficients. This allows us to

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[7] See page 7 of the Appendix for density plots of the distributions subset by partisanship.
[8] See page 3 of the Appendix for variable details.

determine whether the relationship between each criterion variable and anti-establishment orientations is greater than the same relationship with left-right orientations.

**[Figure 2 here]**

This is precisely what we find: anti-establishment orientations are more strongly related to each criterion variable than are left-right orientations.[9] Those high on the anti-establishment dimension are more likely to believe that the "one percent" controls the economy for their own good, believe that a "deep state" is embedded within the government, identify with disagreeing with conventional views about the world, and believe that the mainstream media is "deliberately" misleading us. Each of these criterion variables are also statistically significantly related to left-right orientations, as well. Importantly, however, not all these relationships are in the same direction. The "one percent" belief is more strongly associated with the political left than the right, though anti-establishment orientations are positively related to them all. These patterns are suggestive of the types of attitudes and views likely to be guided by the two dimensions, and they provide some evidence for our theory that many of the normatively disconcerting attitudes we oftentimes attribute to partisan tribalism may be the work of another dimension of opinion.

**[Table 2 here]**

To further explore this possibility, we next examine the correlations between the two dimensions and a host of psychological predispositions and sociodemographic factors in Table 3. In the bottom half of the table, we see that anti-establishment orientations are more prevalent among younger people, those with lower incomes, those with less formal education, and among racial and ethnic minority groups. In other words, it is groups who have historically occupied a tenuous position in the American socio-economic structure—across a variety of

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[9] This is also the case if we test only the difference in the *magnitude* of coefficients, which is relevant for the 1% belief for which left-right orientations display a negative coefficient ($p<0.001$).

13

sociodemographic characteristics—that are less wedded to the establishment. Thus, anti-establishment orientations, for some groups, may be the partial product of one's perceived place in politics and society. The correlations between the sociodemographic factors and left-right orientations also comport with previous work: those on the right are slightly older, more educated, and more likely to be white and male.

**[Table 3 here]**

As for psychological traits, we focus on support for political violence, as well as narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism—the "dark triad" (Jonason and Webster 2010).[10] Dark triad traits are related to some of the normatively undesirable attitudes we seek to account for, such as conspiracy beliefs (Furnham, Richards, and Paulhus 2013). Studies about support for political violence in the U.S. are few and far between, but emerging work suggests that left-right extremists are most likely to accept political violence as a viable tactic (Kalmoe and Mason 2019). However, our theory posits that these characteristics are more strongly related to anti-establishment orientations than to left-right ones.

We find support for this prediction. Anti-establishment orientations are positively and statistically significantly correlated with each psychological predisposition, where only Machiavellianism is very weakly correlated with identification with the political left. This is not to say that one must exhibit dark triad traits to possess strong anti-establishment views; the correlations are admittedly moderate and relatively few respondents register the highest levels of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and sociopathy. We emphasize that these personality traits are but a few of many potential ingredients, including legitimate dissatisfaction with the established political order, of anti-establishment sentiments. Regardless, it is noteworthy that individuals

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[10] Each predisposition is measured using a scale of multiple items. Alpha reliability estimates range from 0.82 to 0.87. Question wording and additional details appear on pages 1–3 of the Appendix.

exhibiting strong anti-establishment attitudes are more likely than others to display the anti-social personality traits oftentimes attributed to left-right extremists.

To ensure that political extremism, irrespective of partisan or ideological valence, is not related to these psychological predispositions, we plot each predisposition against left-right orientations in Figure 3. We also add OLS fit lines and LOWESS curves[11] to help decipher (non)linear structure in the data. We observe that those on the extremes of partisan and ideological identity exhibit *lower* levels of most of these psychological predispositions, as indicated by the inverted "U" shape of the LOWESS curves. In other words, extreme partisans and ideologues are *more* likely to express civil attitudes and agreeable personality characteristics than less extreme partisans and ideologues; this contradicts growing concerns over the relationship between left-right extremism and anti-social attitudes and behaviors. We suspect this finding is due to strong partisans and ideologues being wedded to, and entrenched within, the established political order. Their organized, relatively constrained orientation toward the political landscape is built on the objects of establishment politics: the parties, party elites, and familiar ideological objects, such as specific issues.

**[Figure 3 here]**

Finally, we examine the relationship between both dimensions of opinion and time spent on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and 4chan/8chan[12]). Conspiratorial and other anti-establishment content is ubiquitous online, but Reddit and 4chan/8chan are well-known for such content (e.g., Klein, Clutton, and Dunn 2019); indeed, it is on these platforms

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[11] LOWESS, which stands for "locally weighted scatterplot smoother," is a non-parametric regression technique used to reveal non-linearities in relationships.

[12] We can apply these analyses to self-reported YouTube use with the Study 2 data. As with Reddit and 4/8chan, we find a significant positive effect of anti-establishment orientations ($p<0.001$), and a significant negative ($p=0.011$), albeit small (half the magnitude of the anti-establishment coefficient), effect for left-right orientations.

that the Pizzagate and QAnon conspiracy theories were developed. Even though these dark corners of the web are often said to be occupied by "far-right" extremists, we expect that anti-establishment orientations are more influential than left-right ones. We also examine the relationship between anti-establishment orientations and the predisposition to argue with others online. People exhibiting higher levels of narcissistic, sociopathic, and Machiavellian tendencies, of course, believe they are right and that others should listen to them (e.g., part of Machiavellianism and sociopathy is trying to persuade others). Moreover, conspiracy thinking, as expressed in online culture, is famous for argumentation (Wood and Douglas 2013), even if it is often referred to as "trolling" (e.g., Starbird 2019). We, therefore, expect those with stronger anti-establishment orientations to be more likely to argue with others online.

To test these propositions, we regressed each of the social media use variables, as well as the predisposition to argue online, on both dimensions and controls. Social media use is measured via items asking respondents "how often in a typical week" they "visit or use" the outlets, on a five-point scale ranging from "not at all" to "every day." One's predisposition to argue with others online is measured vis-à-vis a scale of respondent levels of (dis)agreement with three statements ($\alpha$=0.71, range=1-5, $M$=2.70, $SD$=0.97), such as "I like to argue online with other people." Complete question wording and full model estimates appear in the Appendix on pages 1–3 and 9, respectively.

**[Figure 4 here]**

Neither dimension is statistically significantly related to Facebook or Twitter activity, likely because these platforms appeal to broad audiences and are frequented much more than the others (e.g., 80% of respondents report frequenting Facebook at least several times a week). Left-right orientations are not related to any of the remaining online behaviors—there is no difference

16

between left and right in these activities, controlling for anti-establishment orientations. However, anti-establishment orientations are positively related to Reddit and 4chan/8chan activity and with the predisposition to argue online. These statistically significant relationships are plotted, via model-based predictions, in Figure 4. The relationships with social media use are both weak, though this is due to low levels of use: 91% and 75% of respondents report not using 4chan/8chan or Reddit, respectively. In this context, the relationships are meaningful. Lastly, the willingness to argue with others online increases a full point varying the anti-establishment dimension from minimum to maximum, increasing from disagreement to neutrality, on average. These results suggest that while political cleavages may be a driving force behind virulent behavior online, left-right orientations, specifically, may not be the culprit.

Of course, it may be that frequenting social media platforms promotes anti-establishment views, or that 4chan and sub-Reddits simply cater to people who selectively expose themselves to fringe content. Our analyses are incapable of determining causality (though, we suspect it runs in both directions in a reciprocal, reinforcing relationship). That said, causal direction is less important, in this context, than finding that the use of these platforms is correlated with anti-establishment orientations and not left-right ones. While Facebook and Twitter are frequently blamed for political toxicity, reported use of these platforms does not appear to be associated with anti-establishment views.

### Study 2: Potential Consequences of the Anti-Establishment Dimension

In Study 2, we aim to replicate the two-dimensional structure of mass opinion uncovered in Study 1 on a new sample taken seven months later and extend our analysis by examining the potential political consequences of anti-establishment orientations. This study employs a national

sample of 2,023 U.S. adults fielded by Qualtrics between March 17-19, 2020. See Appendix page 6 for additional information about the sociodemographic composition of this sample.

The anti-establishment and left-right dimensions are measured as they were in Study 1. In Table 4, we present the results of a two-factor confirmatory factor model with the two factors constrained to be uncorrelated. Loading patterns are substantively identical to those generated by the exploratory factor analysis of the data employed in Study 1,[13] and all loadings are statistically significant ($p<0.001$). Fit statistics also reveal a model that fits the data well. The root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is below the recommended 0.10 cutoff for a "good" fitting model, the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) is below the 0.08 cutoff for good model fit, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are greater than the recommended 0.90 cutoff for good model fit (Hu and Bentler 1999, Kline 2005). Furthermore, examination of modification indices suggests no structural changes to the model that would dramatically improve fit; these data robustly exhibit an orthogonal two-dimensional structure.

**[Table 4 here]**

We now consider the relationship between both dimensions of opinion and feelings toward Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, and Joe Biden, all three of whom were contending for the presidency when this survey was fielded.[14] Both Trump and Sanders explicitly employed anti-establishment rhetoric in campaign appeals (Jamieson and Taussig 2017, Oliver and Rahn 2016). For example, Trump's final campaign ad of the 2016 presidential election concluded, "Our movement is about replacing a failed and corrupt political establishment with a new

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[13] The results of an exploratory factor analysis of the Study 2 data appear on page 10 of the Appendix.
[14] We replicated the candidate support models with Hillary Clinton in the 2019 data. Like with Biden, Clinton support is statistically unrelated to anti-establishment orientations.

government controlled by you, the American people" ("Argument for America" ad, 2016).

Bernie Sanders' 2016 and 2020 campaign rhetoric also regularly invoked the 'establishment': "We have shown from day one we're taking on the establishment. Whether it's the corporate establishment on Wall Street, the drug companies, the insurance companies, the fossil fuel industry or the political establishment. Let me be very clear, it is no surprise they do not want me to become president" (Cillizza 2020). Moreover, media narratives frequently referred to Trump and Sanders as anti-establishment candidates, even framing their campaigns as choices between the political establishment and an outsider (Cillizza 2020, Chinni 2016). Thus, we expect anti-establishment orientations to be positively associated with support for both Trump and Sanders, albeit to a lesser degree than left-right orientations, and negatively related to support for Biden. Support was measured via feeling thermometers that range from very "cold" (negative) feelings, 0, to very "warm" (positive) feelings, 100.

In order to test our expectations, we regressed each candidate thermometer on both dimensions of opinion, plus controls for interest in politics, religiosity, educational attainment, household income, age, gender, and race and ethnicity. Full model results are reported on page 11 of the Appendix. Model-based predictions of each candidate thermometer—over the range of both dimensions of opinion, holding all other independent variables at their means—appear in Figure 5. In every case, left-right orientations are more strongly related to candidate feelings than anti-establishment orientations. This relationship is, as expected, positive for Trump and negative for Sanders and Biden (recall that greater values reflect greater entrenchment on the political right).

However, we also observe positive, statistically significant relationships between anti-establishment orientations and feelings toward both Trump and Sanders. We do not find a

significant association between the anti-establishment dimension and evaluations of Joe Biden, although the relationship is negative, per expectations. Although these relationships are weaker than with left-right orientations, they are still substantively noteworthy. Varying only anti-establishment orientations, predicted feeling thermometer scores increase from 35 (negative) to 50 (neutral) for Trump; 44 (negative-neutral) to 55 (positive-neutral) for Sanders. In both cases, feelings appear to substantively change in general valence.

More realistically, left-right orientations would vary in concert with anti-establishment orientations. Imagining different profiles of partisans along the anti-establishment dimension we can see how a *combination* of both dimensions might lead a liberal Democrat, for example, to support Sanders over Biden (or vice versa). To test this possibility, we re-estimated the candidate support models including an interaction between anti-establishment and left-right orientations (see Appendix page 12 for full results). The interaction effects—which should be positive for Republican candidates and negative for Democratic ones, given how left-orientations are coded––were significant for both the Trump and Biden models, though not the Sanders model. For ease of interpretation, we present the marginal effects of left-right orientations on candidate support conditional on strength of anti-establishment orientations in Figure 6. Recall that each estimate represents the impact of a full minimum to maximum change in left-right orientations for each level of ant-establishment orientations, hence the large values on the vertical axis.

**[Figure 5 here]**

**[Figure 6 here]**

In each case, the impact of left-right orientations on candidate evaluations decreases—smaller positive effects for Trump, smaller negative ones for Biden and Sanders—as anti-establishment orientations become stronger. That this relationship is significant for Biden, but

not for Sanders, highlights a critical difference between the two candidates. From the additive

models, we know that anti-establishment orientations are unrelated to Biden support, but if one

exhibits high levels of these orientations, they are less likely to judge Biden in left-right terms.

Sanders support is additively related to both left-right and anti-establishment orientations; it is

naturally a mix of the two. Thus, variation in the strength of anti-establishment orientations does

not significantly impact the relationship between left-right concerns and Sanders support.[15]

The additive and interactive findings provide suggestive support for our conceptual

model. Candidates who employ anti-establishment rhetoric, be it through conspiracy theories or

populist appeals, may be able to activate people's anti-establishment orientations and connect

them to salient political choices (e.g., voting), effectively "pulling" the once orthogonal anti-

establishment dimension in the direction of their end of the left-right dimension. Anti-

establishment orientations may not be strong enough to *override* left-right orientations when it

comes to salient, partisan presidential candidates for most people. However, they may *reduce* the

impact of left-right considerations by presenting a new framework by which political objects

may be evaluated.

In our final set of analyses, we examine the relationship between both dimensions of

mass opinion and beliefs in a variety of misinformation and conspiracy theories. Importantly, we

focus on beliefs that have a partisan or ideological element to them—precisely the kinds of

beliefs that are oftentimes attributed to political extremists. We examine seven of such beliefs in

the form of (dis)agreement with the following statements:

1. The threat of coronavirus has been exaggerated by political group who want to damage President Trump. (COVID-19 Exaggerated)

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[15] We could also consider the impact of anti-establishment orientations conditional on left-right ones. In this case, we would see that the impact of anti-establishment orientations on Trump support decreases to 0 as one becomes more strongly conservative, for example.

2. Climate change is a hoax perpetrated by corrupt scientists and politicians. (Climate Denial)
3. Barack Obama faked his citizenship to become president. (Birther)
4. Hillary Clinton conspired to provide Russia with access to nuclear materials. (Clinton Nuke)
5. Republicans won the presidential elections in 2016, 2004, and 2000 by stealing them. (Reps Steal Elections)
6. Russia has compromising information about Donald Trump and has used Trump as a foreign asset. (Russian Asset)
7. Donald Trump colluded with Russians to steal the presidency. (Trump Collusion)[16]

We also employ a feeling thermometer for the "QAnon movement." The QAnon conspiracy theory argues that a malevolent "deep state" secretly controls the government. This theory, usually referred to as "far-right," has received substantial news coverage due to its outlandish claims, the number of "Q supporters" who ran for Congress in 2020, and its association with acts of violence. In each case, we regress beliefs in misinformation and conspiracy theories, which have been rescaled to range from 0 (strong disbelief, lack of support) to 1 (strong belief/support), on both dimensions and controls for sociodemographic factors. Full model estimates appear on page 13 of the Appendix, but we present the model-based predictions in Figure 7.

**[Figure 7 here]**

Both orientations are strongly and statistically significantly to each of the beliefs, with one exception. Controlling for the anti-establishment orientations, we observe no relationship between left-right orientations and support for the QAnon movement. This finding highlights the importance of anti-establishment orientations and showcases how normatively problematic beliefs find roots in views that are distinct from left-right concerns. In the remaining cases, the anti-establishment dimension coefficient is similar to, if not greater than, the (magnitude of the) left-right dimension coefficient. In other words, even when it comes to misinformation and

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[16] One might question whether this counts as a conspiracy theory. However, the Mueller report made no explicit conclusions about collusion and the Senate Intelligence Committee report that outlined instances of cooperation between Trump campaign officials and Russian operatives had not yet been produced when this survey was fielded.

conspiracy theories with a salient partisan or ideological component, some combination of left-right and anti-establishment motivations underwrite belief; these are not merely the product of partisan motivated reasoning. Those with deeply antagonistic views of the established political order are likely to believe partisan and ideological conspiracy theories and misinformation irrespective of partisan and ideological identities.

## Discussion

Important elements of American mass opinion cannot be adequately explained by partisanship or ideology alone. We find that an additional "anti-establishment" dimension of opinion can, at least partially, account for the acceptance of political violence, distrust in government, belief in conspiracy theories, and support for "outsider" candidates. Although it is intuitive to attribute contemporary political dysfunction to left-right extremism and partisan tribalism, we argue that many elements of this dysfunction stem from the activation of anti-establishment orientations. This process has the potential to sour political dialogue, encourage non-normative behaviors, and affect policy.

We argue that anti-establishment orientations are a fixture of American mass behavior, existing long before the Trump era. This study is substantially motivated by accounts of political behavior that identified the importance of anti-establishment orientations decades ago (Lane 1962, Campbell et al. 1960, ch. 14, Hofstadter 1964). Moreover, that our results are identical prior to and during a global pandemic and heated presidential election year is, we believe, also indicative of the stability of this dimension of opinion. That said, we cannot empirically demonstrate individual-level stability in anti-establishment orientations over longer periods of time because these orientations were not regularly or adequately polled on until recently. This is not merely a limitation of the present study, but of the political behavior discipline: until

recently, scholars of American politics paid too little attention to anti-establishment views. We, therefore, encourage future efforts to track these views over time with an eye toward deciphering why, how, and when they shift in their levels and connection with salient political choices. While we expect—based on plenty of scholarship suggesting as much (Jansen 2011, Busby, Gubler, and Hawkins 2019)—that elite cueing activates these orientations, a combination of time series data and experimental methods can help determine the conditions under which anti-establishment appeals are most likely to be employed effectively by elites.

With more frequent polling of anti-establishment orientations, future scholarship could also establish connections between such orientations and a wider range of attitudes and behaviors. Like other abstract, yet deep-seated, orientations, we expect anti-establishment orientations to figure into many political evaluations: they may promote support for political challengers, inexperienced outsiders, and third party candidates (e.g., Peterson and Wrighton 1998). We also suspect that anti-establishment orientations guide the acceptance (or rejection) of official information/messaging coming from elected leaders (e.g., Uscinski et al. 2020). Finally, anti-establishment orientations may be connected to concepts such as "need for chaos" (Petersen, Osmundsen, and Arceneaux 2020) and anti-intellectualism (Merkley 2020, Motta 2018), and may be used to explain anti-science (Rutjens, Sutton, and Lee 2018) and anti-government attitudes (Intawan and Nicholson 2018). These are all, admittedly, speculations.

Our study is the first to both theoretically and empirically conceptualize populism, conspiracy thinking, and Manicheanism as components of a broader, unique "anti-establishment" dimension of opinion. While our evidence consists of only U.S. data, we have reason to believe that similar anti-establishment sentiments exist beyond the American context. Comparative research has produced robust evidence regarding the role of populism, for example, in political

parties (Schedler 1996), elite rhetoric (Bos and Brants 2014), and public opinion (Akkerman,

Mudde, and Zaslove 2014) across Latin American and European countries. We suspect that

entrepreneurial politicians across political and cultural contexts (e.g., Boris Johnson, Jeremy

Corbyn, Hugo Chavez) strategically appeal to pre-existing anti-establishment orientations in

similar ways: they activate and fuse these orientations with mainstream partisan and ideological

concerns in order to mobilize both types of voters toward their cause. That said, more

investigation is necessary. Cross-cultural studies can only bolster our understanding of anti-

establishment dynamics, from both the "top down" and the "bottom up," and provide clearer

empirical insight into the cleavages in opinion that either unite or distinguish mass publics across

the globe.

## Conclusion

Neither our theory about the anti-establishment dimension of mass opinion, nor the

empirical patterns presented above, absolve partisanship and ideology of their negative side

effects (e.g., Mason 2018b). Indeed, our analyses have demonstrated how contemporary toxicity

is a joint production of anti-establishment and left-right orientations. As social scientists, we are

interested in the latent roots of political attitudes and orientations, not mere categorization (e.g.,

"left" and "right"). To provide a more complete understanding of contemporary political conflict,

the unidimensional, left-right model of mass opinion needs to be augmented with additional non-

partisan/ideological dimensions of opinion, especially those born of antagonistic orientations

toward the political establishment. To succumb to observational equivalence—to see only

variability in left and right—is to fundamentally misunderstand the psychological motivations

behind the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories, the endorsement of political

violence, and hostility toward establishment figures, be they politicians, scientists, or public health experts.

The "establishment" has always been a fixture of the American political vernacular. Perhaps it is more than a clever rhetorical strategy, a straw man object of derision that any political participant can invoke for the purpose of fostering solidarity by specifying a common enemy. Our contention is that to take seriously the possibility that people hold deep-seated, structured psychological orientations toward the established political order and the power it wields is to better understand the organization of public opinion and political behavior.

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**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model of the U.S. Mass Opinion Space.
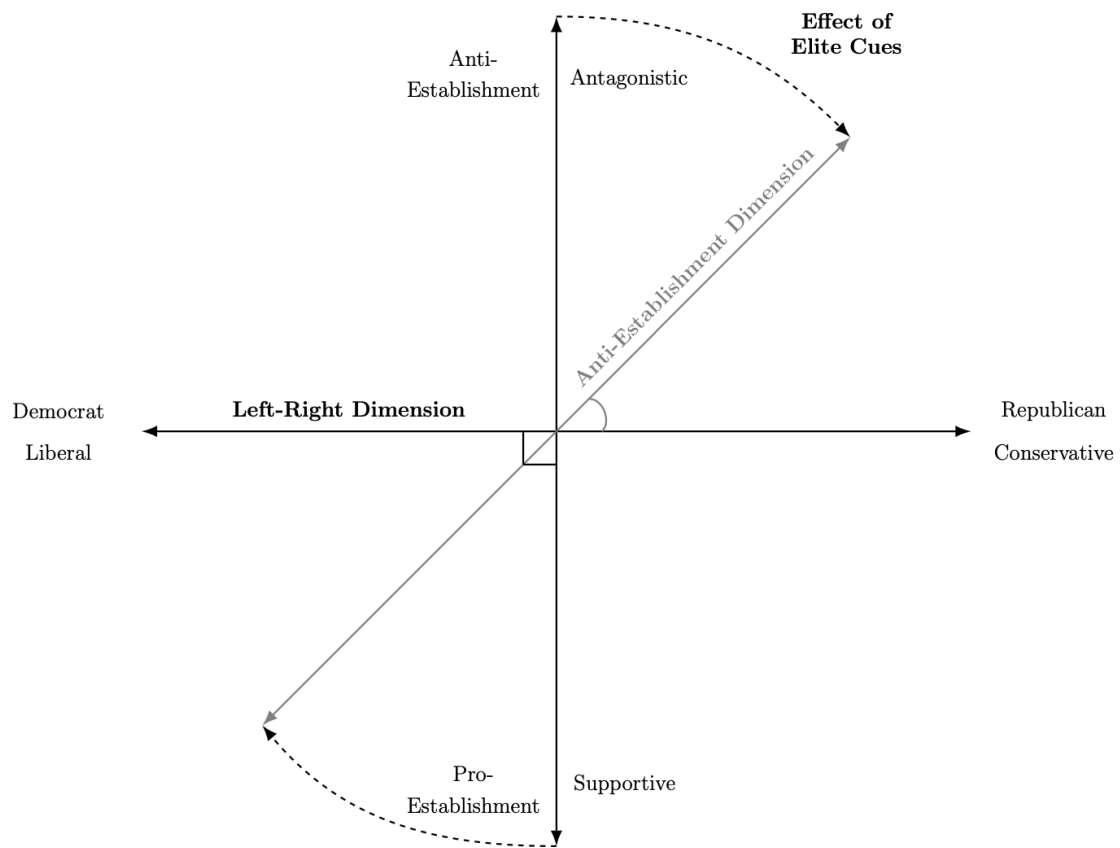


Note: A conceptual model of the relationship between the anti-establishment and left-right dimensions of mass opinion, including how the relationship can be altered vis-à-vis elite cueing.

**Figure 2:** Distributions of the Two Dimensions.
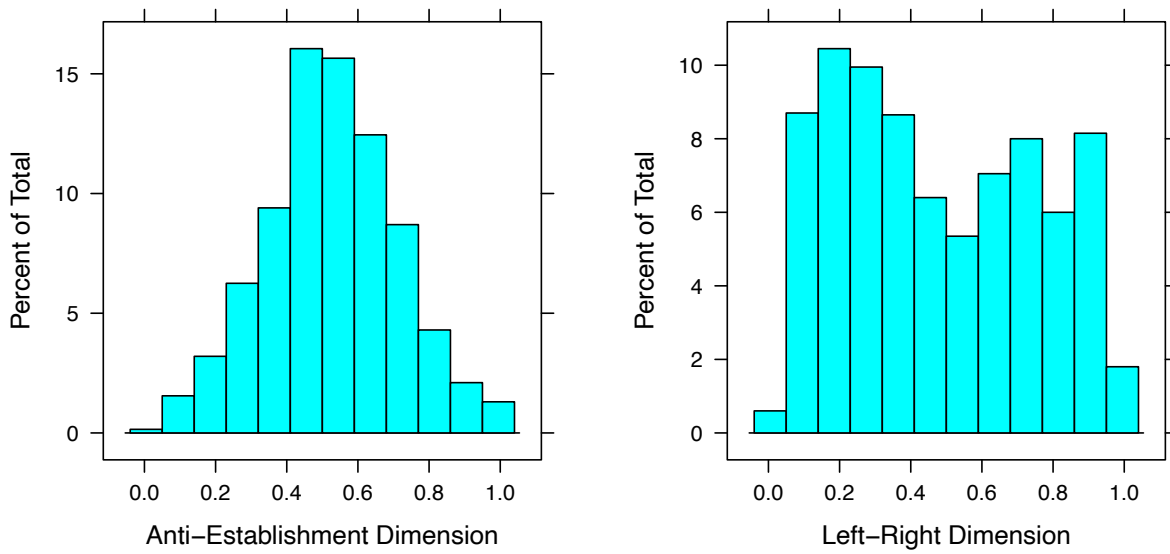


Note: Histograms of the estimated anti-establishment and left-right dimensions.

**Figure 3:** Relationship Between Psychological Predispositions and Left-right Orientations.
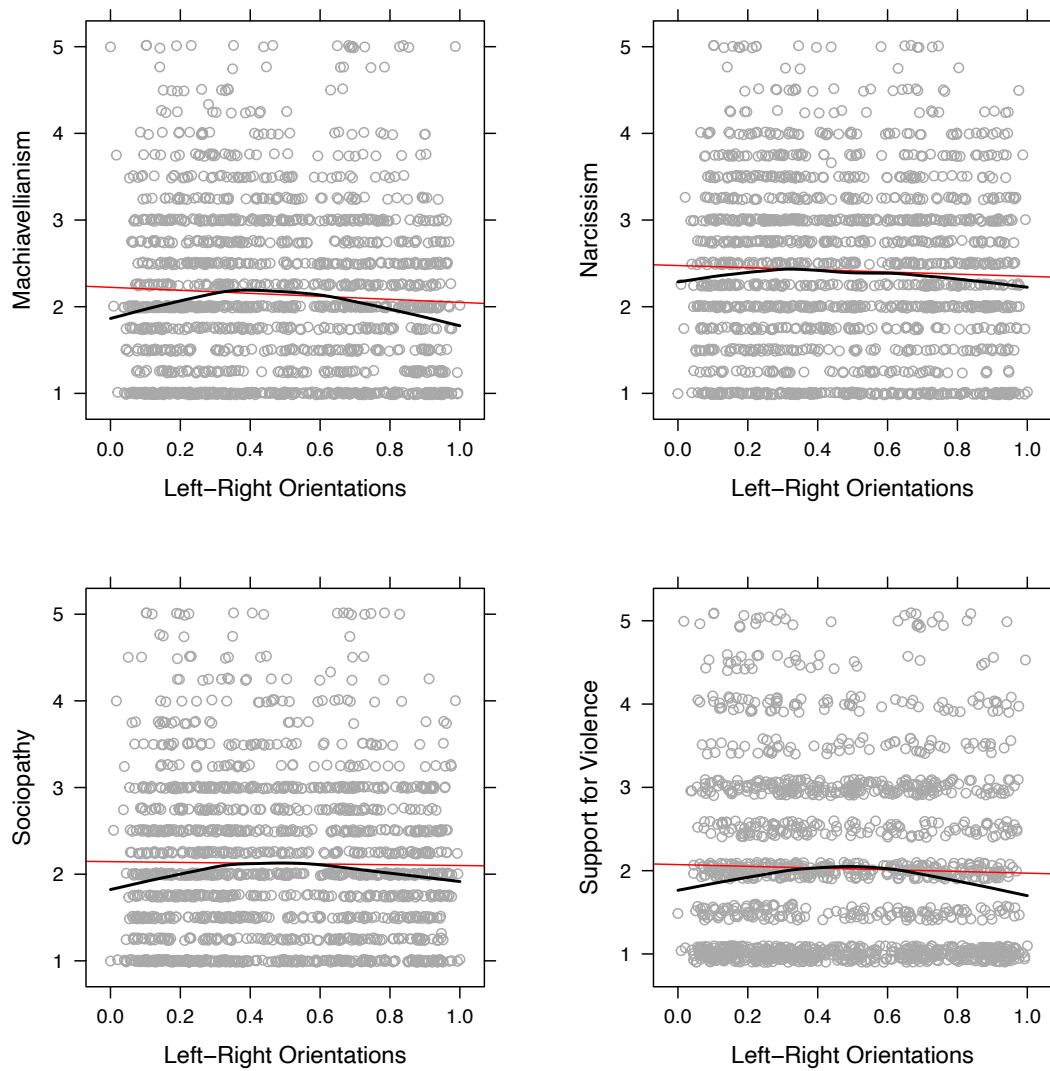


Note: Scatterplots where the curves represent LOWESS smoothers and the lines represent OLS fit lines.

**Figure 4:** Linear Predictions of Media Use.
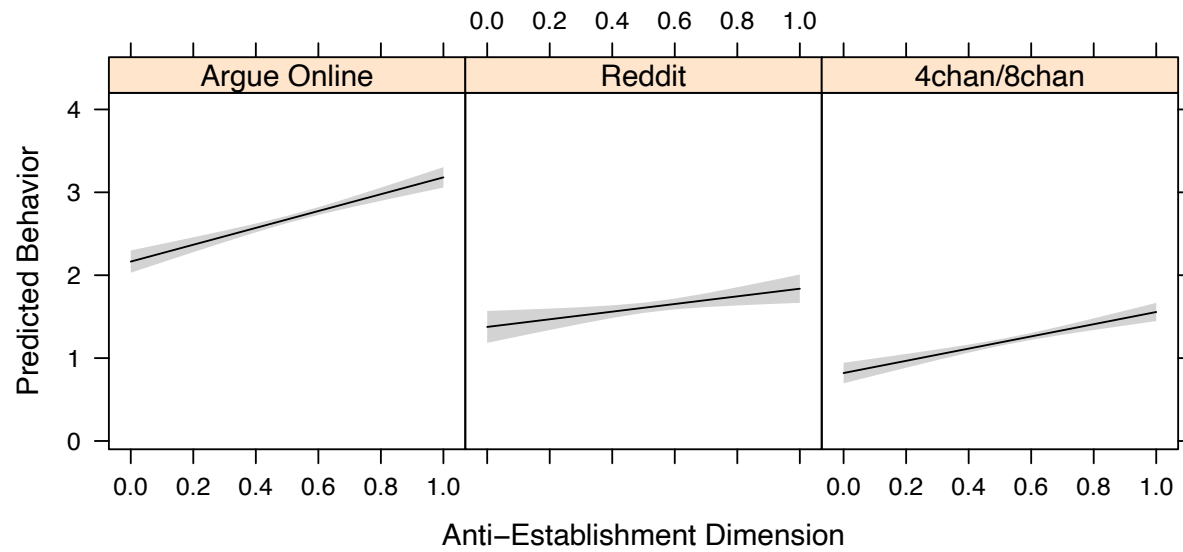


Note: Predicted effect of anti-establishment orientations on predisposition to argue online, frequent Reddit, and frequent 4chan/8chan. Gray bands represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 5:** Linear Predictions of Candidate Support.
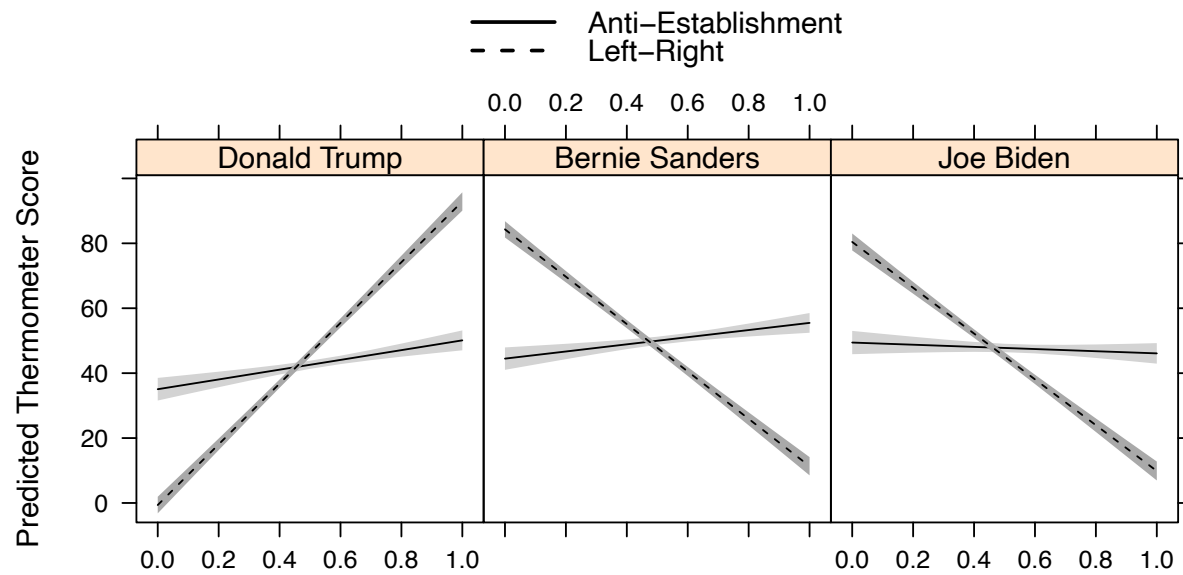


Note: Predicted level of candidate support over the range of anti-establishment and left-right orientations. Gray bands represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 6**: Interactive Effects on Candidate Support.
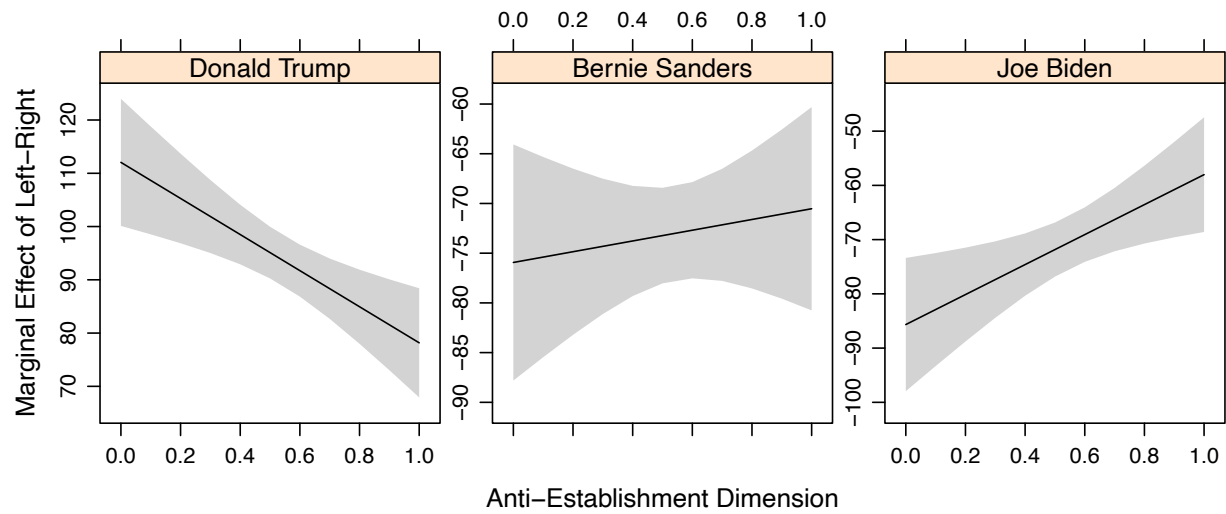


Note: Marginal effect of left-right orientations on support for candidates, conditional on level of anti-establishment orientations. Gray bands represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 7:** Linear Predictions of Conspiracy Beliefs.
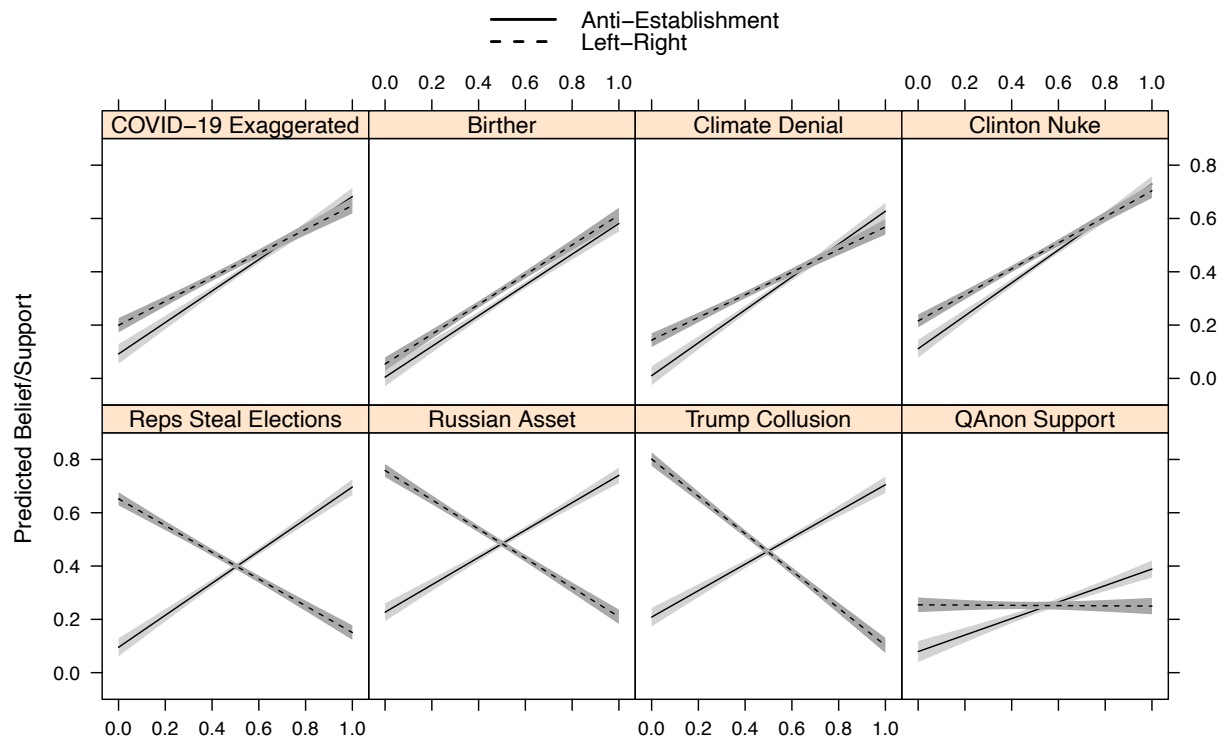


Note: Predicted level of beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation over the range of anti-establishment and left-right orientations. Gray bands represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Table 1:** Exploratory Factor Analysis.

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | -0.020 | **0.910** |
| 2. Ideological Identities | -0.029 | **0.721** |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | 0.029 | **-0.751** |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | 0.028 | **0.725** |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway. (Con) | **0.604** | -0.114 |
| 2. The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters. (Con) | **0.718** | -0.037 |
| 3. Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us. (Con) | **0.740** | -0.054 |
| 4. Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places. (Con) | **0.752** | 0.005 |
| 5. The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians. (Pop) | **0.380** | 0.173 |
| 6. People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round. (Pop) | **0.380** | 0.253 |
| 7. Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted. (Pop) | **0.501** | 0.043 |
| 8. Politics is a battle between good and evil. (Man) | **0.539** | 0.073 |
| | | |
| Eigenvalue | 2.953 | 2.640 |
| Proportion shared variance accounted for | 0.433 | 0.387 |

Note: Exploratory factor analysis of anti-establishment and left-right items, estimated using iterated principal axis factoring with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation; $n$=1,622.

**Table 2**: Validating the Two Dimensions.

| | Regression Coefficient | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Anti-Establishment | Left-Right | *p*-value of difference |
| **Criterion variables** | | | |
| 1.) The one percent of the richest people in the U.S. control the government and the economy for their own benefit. | 0.737*** (0.034) | -0.314*** (0.023) | <0.001 |
| 2.) There is a "deep state" embedded in the government that operates in secret and without oversight. | 0.870*** (0.034) | 0.206*** (0.023) | <0.001 |
| 3.) I often disagree with conventional views about the world. | 0.466*** (0.031) | 0.123*** (0.021) | <0.001 |
| 4.) Much of the mainstream news is deliberately slanted to mislead us. | 0.582*** (0.034) | 0.493*** (0.023) | 0.032 |

Note: Standardized regression coefficients for anti-establishment and left-right orientations, controlling for other factors. The third column contains the *p*-values from *F*-tests for the difference in coefficients. ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.010$, *$p<0.050$; $n=1620$ or $1621$ for each model.

**Table 3:** Correlates of the Two Dimensions.

|  | Anti-Establishment | Left-Right |
|---|---|---|
| **<u>Psychological Predispositions</u>** |  |  |
| 1.) Machiavellianism | 0.215*** | -0.051* |
| 2.) Narcissism | 0.186*** | -0.036 |
| 3.) Sociopathy | 0.254*** | -0.014 |
| 4.) Support for use of violence | 0.261*** | -0.027 |
|  |  |  |
| **<u>Sociodemographic Characteristics</u>** |  |  |
| 1.) Educational attainment | -0.171*** | -0.128*** |
| 2.) Income | -0.185*** | 0.043 |
| 3.) Age | -0.173*** | 0.154*** |
| 4.) Female | -0.002 | -0.154*** |
| 5.) Black | 0.096*** | -0.211*** |
| 6.) Hispanic | 0.051* | -0.115*** |

Note: Pearson product-moment correlations between anti-establishment and left-right orientations and a host of psychological and sociodemographic factors. ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.010$, *$p<0.050$; $n=1,622$.

**Table 4:** Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | | 0.936 |
| 2. Ideological Identities | | 0.628 |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | | -0.704 |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | | 0.652 |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway. (Con) | 0.626 | |
| 2. The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters. (Con) | 0.737 | |
| 3. Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us. (Con) | 0.820 | |
| 4. Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places. (Con) | 0.837 | |
| 5. The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians. (Pop) | 0.474 | |
| 6. People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round. (Pop) | 0.382 | |
| 7. Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted. (Pop) | 0.567 | |
| 8. Politics is a battle between good and evil. (Man) | 0.444 | |
| | | |
| **Fit Statistics** | | |
| $\chi^2$ (54 df), $p$-value | | 529.357, <0.001 |
| RMSEA (95% CI) | | 0.069 (0.063, 0.074) |
| SRMR | | 0.055 |
| CFI | | 0.940 |
| TLI | | 0.926 |
| $n$ | | 1,867 |

Note: Two-factor confirmatory factor analysis of anti-establishment and left-right orientations estimated with maximum likelihood. Standardized MLE coefficients presented above. All coefficients are significant at the $p<0.001$ level.

# Supplemental Appendix:

## "American Politics in Two Dimensions:
## Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations"

#### Table of Contents

## A. Question Wording, Study 1

**Note:** All variables are rescaled to range from 0-1 before analyses are conducted.

**Conspiracy thinking.** Here are some ideas that some people agree with, and others disagree with. In thinking about each one, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway.
- o The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters.
- o Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us.
- o Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Populism.** Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians.
- o People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round.
- o Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Manichean political views.** Politics is a battle between good and evil.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Social media use**. Thinking about the social media you use, how often in a typical week do you visit or use: 1) Facebook, 2) Twitter, 3) Reddit, 4) 4chan, 8chan
    1. Not at all
    2. Once a month or less
    3. Several times a month
    4. Several times a week
    5. Everyday

**Machiavellianism** ($\alpha$=0.85, range=1-5, *M*=2.14, *S*=0.94). Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o I tend to manipulate others to get my way.
- o I have used deceit or lied to get my way.
- o I have used flattery to get my way.
- o I tend to exploit others towards my own end.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Narcissism** ($\alpha$=0.87, range=1-5, *M*=2.42, *S*=0.97). Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o I tend to want others to admire me.
- o I tend to want others to pay attention to me.
- o I tend to seek prestige or status.
- o I tend to expect special favors from others.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Psychopathy** ($\alpha$=0.82, range=1-5, *M*=2.12, *S*=0.89). Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o I tend to lack remorse.
- o I tend to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions.
- o I tend to be callous or insensitive.
- o I tend to be cynical.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Political violence** ($\alpha$=0.82, range=1-5, *M*=2.03, *S*=1.06). Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o Violence is sometimes an acceptable way for Americans to express their disagreement with the government.
- o If needed to reach important objectives, the use of violence is acceptable.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Argumentation** ($\alpha$=0.71, range=1-5, *M*=2.70, *S*=0.97). Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o I like to argue online with other people.
- o I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.
- o I am willing to express my opinion online even if others strongly disagree with me.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Neither agree nor disagree
    4. Agree
    5. Strongly agree

**Feeling thermometers.** Please rate name listed below using the "feeling thermometer" slider bars. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable toward the name. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you do not feel favorable toward the name.
- o Democratic Party
- o Republican Party

**Partisan Identity.** Combination of two questions about partisan attachment and strength of attachment.
1. Strong Democrat
2. Weak Democrat
3. Lean Democrat
4. Independent
5. Lean Republican
6. Weak Republican
7. Strong Republican

**Ideological Identity.** Where would you place yourself on a scale that goes from "very liberal" to "very conservative"?
1. Very liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate
5. Slightly conservative
6. Conservative
7. Very conservative

**Sociodemographics:**
1. Educational attainment (6-point scale, 1=No high school degree, 6=post-grad degree)
2. Age (age in years, 18–90)
3. Household income (7-point scale, 1=$24,999 or less, 7=$200,000 or more)
4. Gender (0=male, 1=female)
5. Race (Black: 0=not Black, 1=Black; Hispanic: 0=not Hispanic, 1=Hispanic)

**B. Question Wording, Study 2**

**Conspiracy thinking.** Here are some ideas that some people agree with, and others disagree with. In thinking about each one, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below:
- o  Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway.
- o  The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters.
- o  Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us.
- o  Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Neither agree nor disagree
  4. Agree
  5. Strongly agree

**Interest in politics.** Some people follow what's going on in politics and current events most of the time. Others aren't that interested. How often do you follow what's going on in government and current events?
  1. Never
  2. Hardly at all
  3. Only now and then
  4. Some of the time
  5. Most of the time

**Feeling thermometers.** Please rate name listed below using the "feeling thermometer" slider bars. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable toward the name. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you do not feel favorable toward the name.
- o  Donald Trump
- o  Bernie Sanders
- o  Joe Biden
- o  Democratic Party
- o  Republican Party

**Partisan Identity.** Combination of two questions about partisan attachment and strength of attachment.
  1. Strong Democrat
  2. Weak Democrat
  3. Lean Democrat
  4. Independent
  5. Lean Republican
  6. Weak Republican
  7. Strong Republican

**Ideological Identity.** Where would you place yourself on a scale that goes from "very liberal" to "very conservative"?

1. Very liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate
5. Slightly conservative
6. Conservative
7. Very conservative

**Sociodemographics:**
1. Educational attainment (6-point scale, 1=No high school degree, 6=post-grad degree)
2. Age (age in years, 18–90)
3. Household income (7-point scale, 1=$24,999 or less, 7=$200,000 or more)
4. Gender (0=male, 1=female)
5. Race (Black: 0=not Black, 1=Black; Hispanic: 0=not Hispanic, 1=Hispanic)

## C. Sample Characteristics

**Table C1**: Sociodemographic information about Study 1 sample.

|  | Range | Mean/Proportion | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partisanship | 1–7 | 3.72 | 2.29 |
| Ideology | 1–7 | 4.00 | 1.76 |
| Age | 19–89 | 49.32 | 17.74 |
| Education | 1–6 | 3.40 | 1.46 |
| Female | 0,1 | 0.52 | 0.50 |
| Black | 0,1 | 0.14 | 0.34 |
| Hispanic | 0,1 | 0.16 | 0.37 |

**Table C2**: Sociodemographic information about Study 2 sample.

|  | Range | Mean/Proportion | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partisanship | 1–5 | 2.78 | 1.42 |
| Ideology | 1–7 | 3.89 | 1.78 |
| Age | 18–91 | 42.54 | 16.08 |
| Education | 1–6 | 3.36 | 1.50 |
| Female | 0,1 | 0.51 | 0.50 |
| Black | 0,1 | 0.15 | 0.36 |
| Hispanic | 0,1 | 0.18 | 0.38 |

**Table C3**: Sociodemographic information about replication sample (October 2020).

|  | Range | Mean/Proportion | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partisanship | 1–7 | 3.83 | 2.23 |
| Ideology | 1–7 | 4.02 | 1.74 |
| Age | 15–91 | 45.67 | 17.96 |
| Education | 1–6 | 3.69 | 1.40 |
| Female | 0,1 | 0.51 | 0.50 |
| Black | 0,1 | 0.14 | 0.35 |
| Hispanic | 0,1 | 0.17 | 0.38 |

$n$=2,015. This replication study was administered by Qualtrics (qualtrics.com) in partnership with Lucid (luc.id) by recruiting a sample representative of 2010 US Census records on age, race, sex, income, and education. The survey was conducted October 8-21, 2020.

## D. Scree plots from factor analyses

**Figure D1**: Scree plots of eigenvalues against factors for Study 1 (left) and Study 2 (right). In both instances, the "elbow" and drop in eigenvalue below 1 suggest that 2 factors be retained.
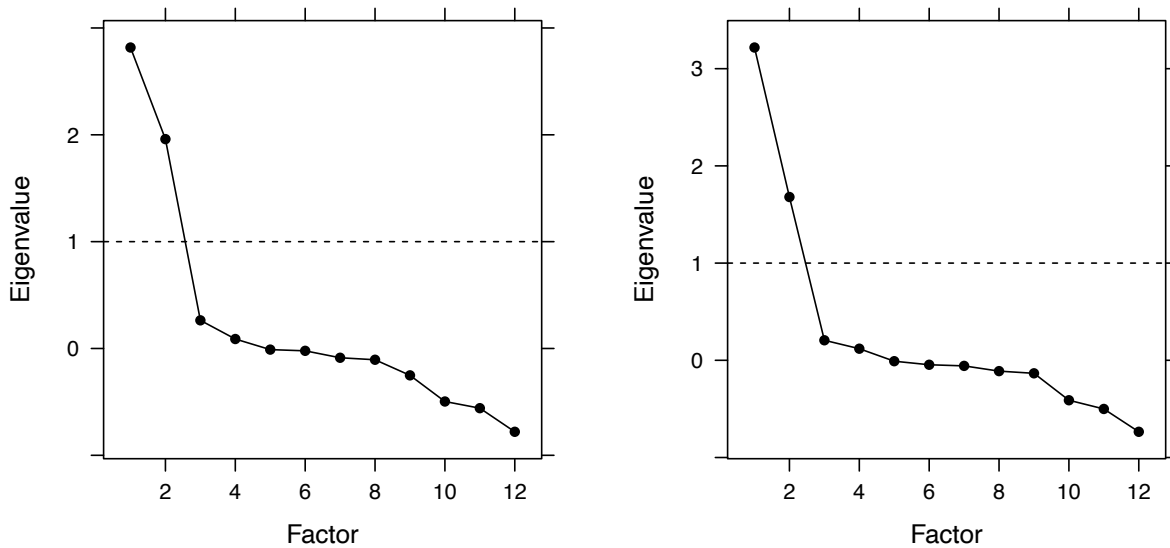


## E. Distributions of factors by partisanship

**Figure E1**: Density plots of the distribution of the anti-establishment and left-right dimension factors scores, by partisanship. Study 1.
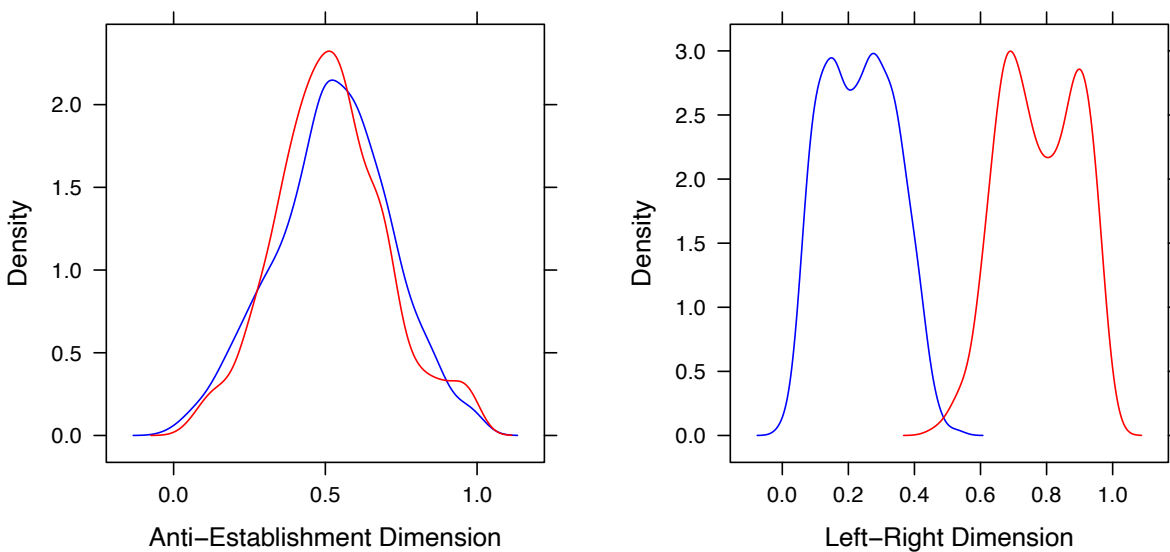
## F. Full regression model estimates from Table 2

**Table F1:** OLS regression models of criterion variables on the anti-establishment and left-right orientations, with controls. All variables rescaled 0-1. Study 1.

|  | 1% | Deep State | Conventional Views | MSM Misleads |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.737*** | 0.870*** | 0.466*** | 0.582*** |
|  | (0.034) | (0.034) | (0.031) | (0.034) |
| Left-Right | -0.314*** | 0.206*** | 0.123*** | 0.493*** |
|  | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Education | 0.006 | -0.047* | -0.013 | -0.004 |
|  | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Age | 0.021 | -0.024 | -0.075** | -0.144*** |
|  | (0.027) | (0.027) | (0.025) | (0.027) |
| Household Income | -0.022 | -0.054* | 0.035 | 0.001 |
|  | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Female | -0.007 | 0.003 | -0.016 | 0.006 |
|  | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.013) |
| Black | -0.055** | 0.019 | -0.008 | -0.004 |
|  | (0.020) | (0.019) | (0.018) | (0.019) |
| Hispanic | 0.021 | 0.038* | -0.033* | -0.025 |
|  | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.018) |
| Constant | 0.363*** | 0.000 | 0.307*** | 0.129*** |
|  | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.029) | (0.032) |
| $R^2$ | 0.301 | 0.358 | 0.161 | 0.347 |
| $n$ | 1,620 | 1,620 | 1,621 | 1,621 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

## G. Social media use regression models Figure 4

**Table G1:** OLS regression models of social media use on anti-establishment and left-right orientations, with controls. Independent variables rescaled 0-1. Dependent variables range 1–5. Study 1.

|  | Facebook | Twitter | Reddit | 4/8chan | Argue Online |
|---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.233 | 0.261 | 0.461** | 0.736*** | 1.016*** |
|  | (0.195) | (0.237) | (0.175) | (0.112) | (0.124) |
| Left-Right | -0.247 | 0.002 | -0.083 | 0.075 | -0.033 |
|  | (0.132) | (0.159) | (0.118) | (0.076) | (0.084) |
| Interest in Politics | 0.088 | 1.211*** | 0.611*** | 0.236** | 0.741*** |
|  | (0.145) | (0.176) | (0.129) | (0.083) | (0.092) |
| Education | -0.197 | 0.427** | 0.162 | 0.203** | 0.158 |
|  | (0.137) | (0.166) | (0.123) | (0.079) | (0.086) |
| Age | 0.530*** | -2.145*** | -1.903*** | -0.586*** | -1.090*** |
|  | (0.159) | (0.193) | (0.142) | (0.091) | (0.101) |
| Household Income | -0.141 | -0.120 | 0.035 | -0.049 | -0.092 |
|  | (0.134) | (0.163) | (0.120) | (0.077) | (0.084) |
| Female | 0.156* | -0.263** | -0.276*** | -0.144*** | -0.280*** |
|  | (0.077) | (0.093) | (0.069) | (0.044) | (0.049) |
| Black | -0.490*** | 0.431*** | 0.060 | 0.122* | 0.108 |
|  | (0.106) | (0.128) | (0.095) | (0.061) | (0.071) |
| Hispanic | -0.417*** | -0.054 | 0.055 | 0.080 | 0.107 |
|  | (0.100) | (0.121) | (0.089) | (0.057) | (0.066) |
| Constant | 4.147*** | 2.016*** | 1.763*** | 0.808*** | 2.167*** |
|  | (0.201) | (0.243) | (0.179) | (0.115) | (0.128) |
| $R^2$ | 0.053 | 0.147 | 0.171 | 0.101 | 0.165 |
| $n$ | 1,256 | 1,254 | 1,254 | 1,255 | 1,622 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

## H. Factor analysis results from Study 2

**Table H1:** Exploratory factor analysis of left-right and anti-establishment items. Study 2.

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | -0.013 | **0.914** |
| 2. Ideological Identities | -0.031 | **0.660** |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | 0.051 | **-0.698** |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | 0.070 | **0.652** |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway. (Con) | **0.636** | -0.101 |
| 2. The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters. (Con) | **0.732** | -0.040 |
| 3. Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us. (Con) | **0.799** | -0.003 |
| 4. Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places. (Con) | **0.817** | 0.004 |
| 5. The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians. (Pop) | **0.496** | 0.206 |
| 6. People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round. (Pop) | **0.407** | 0.059 |
| 7. Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted. (Pop) | **0.588** | -0.019 |
| 8. Politics is a battle between good and evil. (Man) | **0.458** | 0.059 |
| | | |
| Eigenvalue | 3.342 | 2.356 |
| Proportion shared variance accounted for | 0.478 | 0.337 |

Note: Solution estimated using iterated principal axis factoring with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. n=1,867.

## I. Full regression model estimates from Figure 5

**Table I1:** OLS regression models of feeling thermometer evaluations of Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, and Joe Biden on anti-establishment and left-right orientations, with controls. Independent variables rescaled 0-1. Dependent variables range 0–100. Study 2.

|  | Donald Trump | Bernie Sanders | Joe Biden |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 15.053*** | 11.011*** | -3.337 |
|  | (3.092) | (3.064) | (3.184) |
| Left-Right | 93.533*** | -72.986*** | -70.575*** |
|  | (2.433) | (2.405) | (2.500) |
| Interest in Politics | 9.456*** | 7.757** | 4.858 |
|  | (2.769) | (2.751) | (2.855) |
| Church Attendance | 13.568*** | 4.990* | 14.781*** |
|  | (2.098) | (2.077) | (2.159) |
| Education | -1.706 | 8.611*** | 10.316*** |
|  | (2.378) | (2.351) | (2.449) |
| Age | 1.016 | -26.438*** | 13.167*** |
|  | (3.074) | (3.042) | (3.174) |
| Household Income | 3.338 | -4.469 | 3.401 |
|  | (2.478) | (2.456) | (2.552) |
| Female | -4.336*** | -3.946** | -4.208** |
|  | (1.323) | (1.309) | (1.363) |
| Black | -3.800 | 2.842 | 1.362 |
|  | (1.943) | (1.919) | (1.986) |
| Hispanic | -4.531* | 6.907*** | 2.732 |
|  | (1.778) | (1.754) | (1.835) |
| Constant | -18.003*** | 77.411*** | 64.083*** |
|  | (3.368) | (3.334) | (3.479) |
| $R^2$ | 0.519 | 0.441 | 0.356 |
| $n$ | 1,846 | 1,834 | 1,821 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

## J. Interactive candidate support models

**Table J1:** OLS regression models of feeling thermometer evaluations of Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, and Joe Biden on anti-establishment and left-right orientations, plus an interaction between the two. Independent variables rescaled 0-1. Dependent variables range 0–100. Study 2.

|  | Donald Trump | Bernie Sanders | Joe Biden |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anti-Establishment | 30.817*** | 8.513 | -16.102** |
|  | (5.661) | (5.615) | (5.806) |
| Left-Right | 112.050*** | -75.935*** | -85.663*** |
|  | (6.082) | (6.053) | (6.261) |
| **Anti-Establishment X Left-Right** | -33.882*** | 5.405 | 27.644** |
|  | (10.204) | (10.180) | (10.521) |
| Interest in Politics | 9.529*** | 7.750** | 4.825 |
|  | (2.762) | (2.752) | (2.851) |
| Church Attendance | 13.024*** | 5.073* | 15.212*** |
|  | (2.099) | (2.083) | (2.161) |
| Education | -1.359 | 8.555*** | 10.034*** |
|  | (2.373) | (2.354) | (2.447) |
| Age | 1.059 | -26.438*** | 13.127*** |
|  | (3.066) | (3.043) | (3.169) |
| Household Income | 3.601 | -4.509 | 3.210 |
|  | (2.473) | (2.457) | (2.549) |
| Female | -4.433*** | -3.925** | -4.110** |
|  | (1.320) | (1.310) | (1.361) |
| Black | -3.924* | 2.865 | 1.457 |
|  | (1.938) | (1.920) | (1.983) |
| Hispanic | -4.342* | 6.880*** | 2.572 |
|  | (1.774) | (1.755) | (1.833) |
| Constant | -26.741*** | 78.785*** | 71.122*** |
|  | (4.267) | (4.220) | (4.387) |
| $R^2$ | 0.522 | 0.441 | 0.359 |
| $n$ | 1,846 | 1,834 | 1,821 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

## K. Full regression model estimates from Figure 6

**Table K1:** OLS regression models of (supposedly) partisan conspiracy beliefs on anti-establishment and left-right orientations, with controls. All variables rescaled 0-1. Study 2.

| | COVID-19 Exaggerated | Climate Denial | Birther | Clinton Nuke | R's Steal Elections | Russian Asset | Trump Collusion | QAnon Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.590*** | 0.617*** | 0.577*** | 0.618*** | 0.601*** | 0.513*** | 0.497*** | 0.310*** |
| | (0.033) | (0.031) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.030) | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.034) |
| Left-Right | 0.449*** | 0.425*** | 0.558*** | 0.488*** | -0.502*** | -0.549*** | -0.699*** | -0.005 |
| | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.026) |
| Interest in Politics | -0.102*** | -0.057* | -0.065* | -0.016 | -0.053* | 0.006 | 0.021 | 0.025 |
| | (0.029) | (0.028) | (0.027) | (0.026) | (0.027) | (0.026) | (0.028) | (0.031) |
| Church Attendance | 0.086*** | 0.160*** | 0.115*** | 0.049* | 0.053** | 0.047* | 0.031 | 0.162*** |
| | (0.023) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Education | 0.008 | 0.026 | -0.038 | -0.066** | 0.048* | 0.036 | 0.041 | 0.088*** |
| | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.026) |
| Age | -0.184*** | -0.061* | 0.071* | -0.095*** | -0.058* | -0.028 | 0.043 | -0.187*** |
| | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.031) | (0.035) |
| Household Income | -0.011 | 0.013 | 0.040 | 0.032 | -0.018 | 0.026 | 0.014 | 0.078** |
| | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.025) | (0.027) |
| Female | -0.009 | -0.038** | -0.010 | 0.004 | -0.024 | -0.003 | -0.001 | -0.039** |
| | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.015) |
| Black | -0.004 | 0.036 | -0.031 | -0.010 | 0.013 | -0.007 | 0.017 | -0.019 |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.019) | (0.018) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.021) |
| Hispanic | -0.049** | -0.004 | -0.045* | -0.043* | -0.010 | 0.007 | 0.034 | -0.015 |
| | (0.019) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.018) | (0.019) |
| Constant | 0.009 | -0.180*** | -0.247*** | -0.062 | 0.368*** | 0.447*** | 0.461*** | 0.017 |
| | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.034) | (0.037) |
| $R^2$ | 0.308 | 0.336 | 0.389 | 0.363 | 0.359 | 0.347 | 0.402 | 0.180 |
| $n$ | 1,867 | 1,865 | 1,867 | 1,867 | 1,867 | 1,866 | 1,867 | 1,370 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$

## L. Replication of all results not using conspiracy thinking items

**Table L1:** Exploratory factor analysis sans conspiracy items. Study 1.

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | **0.925** | 0.039 |
| 2. Ideological Identities | **0.713** | 0.066 |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | **-0.765** | -0.009 |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | **0.705** | 0.145 |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians. (Pop) | 0.095 | **0.598** |
| 2. People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round. (Pop) | 0.184 | **0.552** |
| 3. Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted. (Pop) | -0.011 | **0.464** |
| 4. Politics is a battle between good and evil. | 0.015 | **0.488** |
| | | |
| Eigenvalue | 2.652 | 1.126 |
| Proportion shared variance accounted for | 0.622 | 0.264 |

Note: Solution estimated using iterated principal axis factoring with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. n=1,624.

**Table L2:** Exploratory factor analysis sans conspiracy items. Study 2.

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | **0.919** | 0.028 |
| 2. Ideological Identities | **0.657** | 0.019 |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | **-0.711** | 0.048 |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | **0.637** | 0.153 |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. The opinion of ordinary people is worth more than that of experts and politicians. (Pop) | 0.170 | **0.552** |
| 2. People who have studied for a long time and have many diplomas do not really know what makes the world go round. (Pop) | 0.021 | **0.505** |
| 3. Official government accounts of events cannot be trusted. (Pop) | -0.052 | **0.556** |
| 4. Politics is a battle between good and evil. | 0.020 | **0.522** |
| | | |
| Eigenvalue | 2.344 | 1.225 |
| Proportion shared variance accounted for | 0.565 | 0.296 |

Note: Solution estimated using iterated principal axis factoring with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. n=1,867.

**Table L3:** Replication of Table 2, sans conspiracy thinking items. Study 1.

| | 1% | Deep State | Conventional Wisdom | MSM Misleads |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.426*** | 0.758*** | 0.497*** | 0.659*** |
| | (0.041) | (0.040) | (0.034) | (0.038) |
| Left-Right | -0.299*** | 0.154*** | 0.085*** | 0.419*** |
| | (0.024) | (0.023) | (0.020) | (0.022) |
| Education | -0.004 | -0.047 | -0.005 | 0.005 |
| | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.021) | (0.024) |
| Age | -0.049 | -0.097*** | -0.111*** | -0.187*** |
| | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.025) | (0.027) |
| Household Income | -0.062* | -0.092*** | 0.018 | -0.020 |
| | (0.025) | (0.025) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Female | -0.009 | 0.001 | -0.017 | 0.005 |
| | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.012) | (0.014) |
| Black | -0.047* | 0.022 | -0.010 | -0.005 |
| | (0.022) | (0.021) | (0.018) | (0.020) |
| Hispanic | 0.035 | 0.053** | -0.024 | -0.014 |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.017) | (0.018) |
| Constant | 0.558*** | 0.110** | 0.314*** | 0.129*** |
| | (0.036) | (0.035) | (0.030) | (0.033) |
| $R^2$ | 0.160 | 0.248 | 0.147 | 0.328 |
| $n$ | 1622 | 1622 | 1623 | 1623 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

**Table L4:** Replication models that produce Figure 4, sans conspiracy thinking items. Study 1.

|  | Facebook | Twitter | Reddit | 4/8Chan | Argue Online |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.230 | 0.390 | 0.630*** | 0.926*** | 0.949*** |
|  | (0.212) | (0.258) | (0.189) | (0.121) | (0.137) |
| Left-Right | -0.252* | -0.026 | -0.119 | 0.009 | -0.087 |
|  | (0.122) | (0.148) | (0.109) | (0.070) | (0.078) |
| Interest in Politics | 0.080 | 1.200*** | 0.585*** | 0.205* | 0.716*** |
|  | (0.145) | (0.176) | (0.129) | (0.083) | (0.093) |
| Education | -0.190 | 0.438** | 0.188 | 0.233** | 0.174* |
|  | (0.138) | (0.167) | (0.123) | (0.079) | (0.087) |
| Age | 0.509*** | -2.166*** | -1.926*** | -0.631*** | -1.166*** |
|  | (0.158) | (0.191) | (0.141) | (0.090) | (0.101) |
| Household Income | -0.148 | -0.121 | 0.031 | -0.062 | -0.132 |
|  | (0.134) | (0.162) | (0.119) | (0.076) | (0.084) |
| Female | 0.156* | -0.263** | -0.279*** | -0.148*** | -0.283*** |
|  | (0.077) | (0.093) | (0.068) | (0.044) | (0.049) |
| Black | -0.489*** | 0.433*** | 0.046 | 0.110 | 0.105 |
|  | (0.106) | (0.128) | (0.094) | (0.060) | (0.071) |
| Hispanic | -0.417*** | -0.051 | 0.063 | 0.090 | 0.126 |
|  | (0.100) | (0.121) | (0.089) | (0.057) | (0.067) |
| Constant | 4.160*** | 1.966*** | 1.696*** | 0.753*** | 2.263*** |
|  | (0.201) | (0.244) | (0.179) | (0.115) | (0.130) |
| $R^2$ | 0.053 | 0.149 | 0.173 | 0.110 | 0.155 |
| $n$ | 1258 | 1256 | 1256 | 1257 | 1624 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

**Table L5:** Replication models that produce Figure 5, sans conspiracy thinking items. Study 2.

|  | Donald Trump | Bernie Sanders | Joe Biden |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 33.249*** | 9.154* | 3.665 |
|  | (3.628) | (3.578) | (3.709) |
| Left-Right | 89.256*** | -71.694*** | -70.095*** |
|  | (2.375) | (2.339) | (2.420) |
| Interest in Politics | 8.916*** | 7.486** | 4.634 |
|  | (2.772) | (2.744) | (2.835) |
| Church Attendance | 12.975*** | 4.213* | 13.100*** |
|  | (2.108) | (2.079) | (2.152) |
| Education | -1.243 | 9.074*** | 10.709*** |
|  | (2.382) | (2.347) | (2.434) |
| Age | 0.588 | -27.816*** | 13.629*** |
|  | (3.049) | (3.007) | (3.122) |
| Household Income | 3.220 | -4.748 | 3.435 |
|  | (2.480) | (2.448) | (2.532) |
| Female | -4.471*** | -4.068** | -3.974** |
|  | (1.322) | (1.303) | (1.351) |
| Black | -3.698 | 3.174 | 0.840 |
|  | (1.937) | (1.906) | (1.964) |
| Hispanic | -4.711** | 6.834*** | 2.286 |
|  | (1.779) | (1.749) | (1.822) |
| Constant | -25.820*** | 78.835*** | 60.763*** |
|  | (3.476) | (3.425) | (3.566) |
|  |  |  |  |
| $R^2$ | 0.518 | 0.444 | 0.366 |
| $n$ | 1846 | 1834 | 1821 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$.

**Table L6:** Replication models that produce Figure 6, sans conspiracy thinking items. Study 2.

| | COVID-19 Exaggerated | Climate Denial | Birther | Clinton Nuke | R's Steal Elections | Russian Asset | Trump Collusion | QAnon Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anti-Establishment** | 0.772*** | 0.774*** | 0.743*** | 0.743*** | 0.508*** | 0.420*** | 0.413*** | 0.385*** |
| | (0.038) | (0.037) | (0.036) | (0.035) | (0.037) | (0.036) | (0.037) | (0.039) |
| Left-Right | 0.409*** | 0.384*** | 0.519*** | 0.455*** | -0.495*** | -0.539*** | -0.686*** | -0.017 |
| | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.025) | (0.025) |
| Interest in Politics | -0.115*** | -0.070* | -0.078** | -0.028 | -0.061* | -0.002 | 0.014 | 0.019 |
| | (0.029) | (0.028) | (0.027) | (0.026) | (0.028) | (0.027) | (0.028) | (0.031) |
| Church Attendance | 0.073*** | 0.149*** | 0.105*** | 0.042* | 0.056** | 0.049* | 0.030 | 0.153*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.022) | (0.023) |
| Education | 0.026 | 0.044 | -0.022 | -0.049* | 0.063** | 0.049* | 0.054* | 0.093*** |
| | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.025) | (0.026) |
| Age | -0.235*** | -0.115*** | 0.021 | -0.151*** | -0.125*** | -0.086** | -0.014 | -0.218*** |
| | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.035) |
| Household Income | -0.021 | 0.003 | 0.031 | 0.022 | -0.030 | 0.016 | 0.004 | 0.072** |
| | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.025) | (0.025) | (0.026) | (0.027) |
| Female | -0.017 | -0.047*** | -0.017 | -0.005 | -0.034* | -0.012 | -0.009 | -0.042** |
| | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Black | 0.012 | 0.054** | -0.014 | 0.009 | 0.037 | 0.014 | 0.037 | -0.012 |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| Hispanic | -0.049** | -0.003 | -0.044* | -0.041* | -0.004 | 0.012 | 0.038* | -0.015 |
| | (0.019) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.019) |
| Constant | -0.052 | -0.226*** | -0.302*** | -0.096** | 0.437*** | 0.512*** | 0.520*** | -0.004 |
| | (0.036) | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.036) | (0.038) |
| $R^2$ | 0.321 | 0.338 | 0.393 | 0.353 | 0.301 | 0.300 | 0.370 | 0.188 |
| $n$ | 1867 | 1865 | 1867 | 1867 | 1867 | 1866 | 1867 | 1370 |

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$

## M. Replication using new data and more populism items

**Table M1:** Exploratory factor analysis of left-right and **expanded anti-establishment items.**

| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **Left-Right Dimension** | | |
| 1. Partisan Identities | 0.009 | **0.941** |
| 2. Ideological Identities | 0.018 | **0.763** |
| 3. Feelings toward Democratic Party | -0.100 | **-0.761** |
| 4. Feelings toward Republican Party | -0.048 | **0.780** |
| | | |
| **Anti-Establishment Dimension** | | |
| 1. Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway. (Con) | **0.508** | -0.046 |
| 2. The people who really "run" the country, are not known to the voters. (Con) | **0.547** | 0.027 |
| 3. Big events like wars, the recent recession, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us. (Con) | **0.520** | 0.095 |
| 4. Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places. (Con) | **0.538** | 0.084 |
| **5. Politicians always end up agreeing when it comes to protecting their privileges. (Pop)** | **0.548** | 0.002 |
| **6. Politicians should follow only the will of the people. (Pop)** | **0.466** | -0.020 |
| **7. The people, not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions. (Pop)** | **0.486** | -0.073 |
| **8. The political differences between the elite and the people are much larger than the differences among the people. (Pop)** | **0.542** | -0.049 |
| **9. I would rather be represented by a citizen than a by a profession politician. (Pop)** | **0.559** | 0.084 |
| **10. Elected officials talk too much and take too little action. (Pop)** | **0.583** | -0.006 |
| **11. Established politicians who claim to defend our interests only take care of themselves. (Pop)** | **0.709** | 0.023 |
| **12. The established elite and politicians have often betrayed the people. (Pop)** | **0.647** | 0.001 |
| 13. Politics is a battle between good and evil. (Man) | **0.336** | 0.135 |
| **14. What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out on one's principles. (Man)** | **0.581** | 0.137 |
| | | |
| Eigenvalue | 4.511 | 2.777 |
| Proportion shared variance accounted for | 0.407 | 0.250 |

Note: Solution estimated using iterated principal axis factoring with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. *n*=1,947. Items new to this replication (5–13) are bolded. See Table C3 for details about the sample composition.

**Figure M1**: Predicted level of candidate support over the range of **the expanded anti-establishment (Table A16)** and left-right orientations. Dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals.
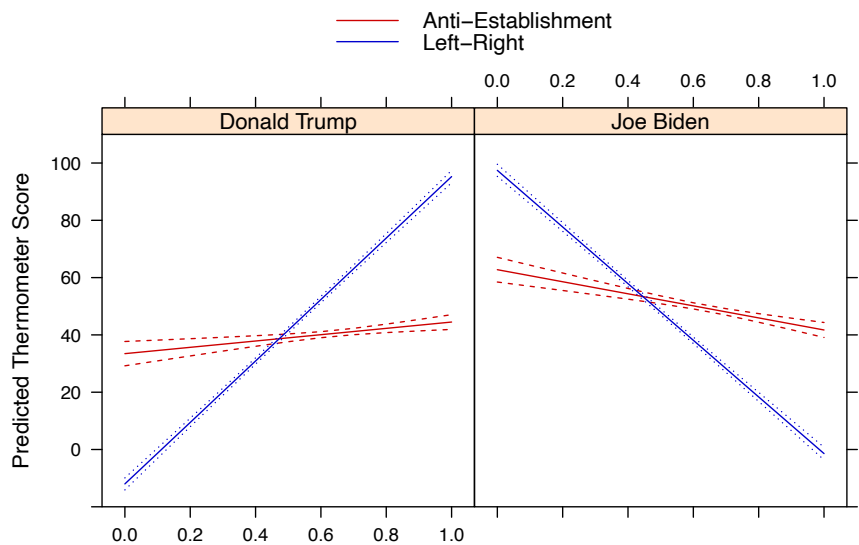


**Figure M2:** Predicted level of beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation over the range of **the expanded anti-establishment (Table A16)** and left-right orientations. Dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals.