Radical Candidates As Anchoring Moderate Candidates: Experimental Evidence of Extremeness Aversion

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Abstract

How does the entrance of radical candidates influence election results? Conventional wisdom suggests that the extreme candidate merely splits the votes. But based on the extremeness aversion theory in consumer psychology, we hypothesize that the entrance of an extreme candidate reframes the endpoints of the ideological spectrum among available candidates, which makes the moderate one on the same side of the ideological spectrum to be thought of as the intermediate option, and therefore enhances its attractiveness to voters. Through survey experiments in the United States and Taiwan, we provide empirical support for extremeness aversion in democracies across different cultural contexts. The results suggest that a mainstream party can benefit from the entrance of a radical counterpart, even without changing its own manifesto. Our findings also challenge the assumption in spatial and regression models that the perceived policy positions of the candidates are independent to each other.

Keywords. Extreme Candidate, Anchoring, Extremeness Aversion, Survey Experiment, Taiwan, Covariance Adjustment

Word count: 9317
Introduction

The emergence of radical left and right wing candidates in electoral races has become a global phenomenon in recent times. In the 2016 U.S. presidential primary, Bernie Sanders’ avowed political revolution caused an internal crisis within the Democrats. Around the world, the National Front (FN) in France, National Democratic Party (NPD) in Germany, Communist parties across Europe, and the China Unification Promotion Party in Taiwan all evidenced the extension of existing ideological spectrums in each country (For review, see Kitschelt and McCann 2005, or Mair 2007).

However, there are considerable variations on mainstream parties’ reactions to the entrance of extreme candidates, and it is not clear how and why extreme parties successfully emerge. In order to answer these questions, we have to investigate the effect of extreme parties’ appearance in electoral contests, especially regarding how they influence supporters of the mainstream parties. On the one hand, the conventional wisdom, especially the spatial models, suggest that the mainstream parties may diverge from the median point so as to prevent the new party from entry (Palfrey 1984). It is easier for mainstream parties to appease and to absorb newcomers through executive resources, for example by including candidates with diverse backgrounds in the party list, or providing more credible promises. On the other hand, it is also widely believed that the entrance of extreme left or right wing candidates into electoral races does nothing more than splitting the vote from their moderate counterparts. For instance, many people in the U.S. still blame Ralph Nader as the spoiler candidate who caused Al Gores defeat to George W. Bush in the 2000 presidential election (Herron and Lewis 2007). Despite these constraints, some extreme parties do acquire votes and seats while some mainstream parties do not necessarily try to block those radical competitors on

\[1\] Note that the concept of extreme party we focus here is different from a niche party (Meguid 2005). An extreme party does not create new issue dimensions, but it locates itself at an extreme position on the existing ideological or issue spectrum. A niche party, which creates a new issue dimension, can be ignored by dismissive strategies of the main party. See Mair (2007) for a review of the emergence of extreme parties.
the same side of the political spectrum.

In this article, we suggest that the entrance of a politically radical candidate can be, contrary to conventional wisdom, beneficial to their mainstream counterpart. The mechanism behind our theory is composed of three interrelated parts. First, it is costly for parties, especially for the established major parties, to change their policy manifesto, since voters and opponents may interpret the change as a sign of inconsistency and dishonesty (Tavits 2007). Second, if the majority of the voters are moderate, the mainstream party has to move toward the median voter for vote maximization. And third, if appearance of the extreme candidate can make voters subjectively perceive the mainstream candidate as much closer to the median through a certain psychological effect, and if the number of moderate voters outnumbers the extreme ones, then the mainstream candidate may benefit from the entrance of extreme candidates by gaining votes among the moderate voters, resulting in the loss of the radical candidates. In this scenario, the radical candidate potentially helps the mainstream candidate earn more votes, and at the same time the mainstream candidate need not change their own policy platform.

The psychological foundation supporting the mechanism is the extremeness aversion effect suggested by consumer psychologists (Simonson and Tversky 1992; Tversky and Simonson 1993). Extremeness Aversion is a combination of the anchoring effect and loss aversion. When one extreme option joins the existing choice set, it becomes the new endpoint among available options. Serving as the new reference point, the extreme option makes the relative moderate option on the same side as it becomes the intermediate option. Because people are loss-averse, they put more weight on the potential loss of choosing the option in the two endpoints, which makes the intermediate one more attractive. For example, when Simonson and Tversky (1992) asked subjects to choose a gift between $6 and a cross pen, 36% of respondents chose the cross pen. When another group of subjects was randomly assigned to make a choice between $6, a cross pen, and an ugly pen, the percentage of cross pen
supporters increased to 46% (and also 2% for the ugly pen). It is worth noticing that this influence is asymmetric - the new extreme option would influence only the moderate option on the same side closer to it.

We hypothesize that the same extremeness aversion effect can also be found in the political arena. Even though an extreme candidate may split votes among radical supporters, their entrance into an electoral contest also stimulates extremeness aversion among the moderate voters, which may increase the vote share of the mainstream candidate on the same side. When the three steps mentioned above can be met, ”letting the extreme in” becomes a viable strategy for the major parties. Previous studies allude to such a possibility. For instance, Ezrow et al. (2014) analyzed the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems datasets from 1996 to 2007, and found that the moderate parties gained more when there were extreme competitors among established democracies.

To examine the extremeness aversion effect in the political arena, we designed two survey experiments in two democracies embedded in two distinct political cultures. One experiment was conducted in the United States concerning the liberal-conservative spectrum, while the other experiment was undertaken in Taiwan, where the unification-independence division has been the central divide of Taiwanese politics for decades. We prefer to use survey experiments because the method controls other explanations for voters’ perception and vote choices, and thus helps us clarify the causal relationship. If our argument is viable and the mainstream party indeed behaved strategically, then their perceived policy positions of candidates reflected by a post-election survey are the only outcome of the mainstream party’s behavior, not the cause. Moreover, we choose Taiwan as a comparable case because the issue dimension in the Taiwan election is very clear and consistent. Previous studies using American subjects in cross-sectional surveys find a weak effect of extremeness aversion because there can be

\footnote{However, the opposite effect is found among new democracies because mainstream parties have not occupied a certain policy position on the spectrum.}
multiple policy issues present in each presidential election (see, e.g., Herne 1997; Mebane Jr. and Waismel-Manor 2005). Because of such multi-dimensional competition, some people did not consider the position of the extreme candidate as really extreme (e.g., Ralph Nader may not be necessarily perceived as more extreme than Al Gore in the 2000 U.S. presidential election). By contrast, in Taiwan politics, the unification-independence conflict has been the dominant political issue for decades and is still the main basis for voters to identify party positions (see, e.g., Niou 2004; Cheng and Hsu 2015; Yu and Lin 2013; Huang and James 2014). In addition to the salient unidimensional political cleavage, Taiwan and the United States both have presidential elections, and first-past-the-post voting for the heads of local governments as well as district-level national legislators. These shared characteristics may provide us with the opportunity to examine and compare the generalizability of our theory.

To sum up, a survey experiment can help us circumvent the problem of confounding variables and clarify the treatment effect, that is, the position of an extreme candidate; meanwhile, the inclusion of the Taiwan dataset can be used for verifying the external validity of extremeness aversion effect across democracies in different cultures.

**Extremeness Aversion, Vote Choice, and Spatial Voting**

Extremeness Aversion is one of the most important types of contextual-dependent preference. Simonson and Tversky (1992) illustrates that "Consumer choice is often influenced by context, defined by the set of alternatives under consideration." Broadly speaking, people do not evaluate each option independently nor assign constant utility to each of them. Instead, people often depend on comparisons among the available options in the choice set. The evaluation for a specific product will vary when compared to different ones. That is, context matters.

When it comes to extremeness aversion, consider a scenario in which there are two com-
peting products, A on the left and B on the right in one characteristic dimension. If customers are on the middle point between A and B, the two options are the endpoints of their available options. Based on the rational choice spatial model, A and B provide the same utility to the customer.

When a third product, A prime (A') joins the competition, which is on the left side of A, the two endpoints of available choice set for the customer become A' and B while A is somewhere between the two end points. Theoretically, A is unmoved, so the utility of choosing A for the customer should be the same. Subjectively, however, the customer will set A' to be the new reference point to reevaluate A. In the eye of the consumer, since A is in the middle of the available options, it becomes less extreme, which may prevent potential loss from choosing the endpoint options. Following the loss aversion tendency, A becomes more attractive to the customer, granted that A is still the same A. A similar effect could be found on B if we replaced A' with B' on the right side of B. Simonson and Tversky (1992) conducted a series of studies and showed that this phenomenon existed when people chose among cameras, coupons, towels, and pens.

We argue that a similar effect can be found when voters are choosing among candidates. When a radical left or right wing candidate or party decides to run in the election and challenge the existing two-party competition, it resets the new reference point for the ideological spectrum among options already on the ballot. When comparing three candidates, the extreme candidate may anchor voters’ attitude formation process. Since the extreme candidate and the moderate candidate on the opposite side become the two new endpoints, voters would consider the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum as the extreme candidate as more moderate. Likewise, the theory of two new endpoints also suggests that the entrance of an extreme candidate would not influence voters’ evaluation.

\[3\] Indeed, there are distinctions between proximity voting, directional voting, and discounting voting. However, Tomz and Van Houweling (2008) analyze data from 20 countries and survey experiment considering healthcare policy in the U.S., and show that proximity voting still dominates voting behavior regardless of educational level, partisanship, and ideology. Thus, in this article, we also assume that people follow the proximity voting.
on the mainstream opponent, since the mainstream opponent is still one of the endpoints among available options before and after the entrance of the radical candidate. Following the similar logic of spatial voting, the subjective preference shift would increase the vote share of this intermediate option among the moderate voters, but decrease among the radical voters on the same side of the political spectrum.

Thus, four hypotheses can be generated based on the discussion above and will be examined in this article:

\[ H_1: \text{When an extreme candidate runs in the election, voters perceive the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum as less extreme.} \]

\[ H_2: \text{When an extreme candidate runs in the election, voters perceive the moderate candidate on the opposite side of the political spectrum unchanged.} \]

\[ H_3: \text{When an extreme candidate runs in the election, moderate voters are more likely to support the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum.} \]

\[ H_4: \text{When an extreme candidate runs in the election, extreme voters on the same side are less likely to support the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum.} \]

The combination of these four hypotheses may provide an explanation on why sometimes a mainstream party would let a radical party emerge. For example, in the 2012 Taiwanese presidential and legislative elections, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)’s presidential candidate Tsai Ing-Wen asked DPP supporters to share some votes in the concurrent legislative election with the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), the extreme pro-independence party in Taiwan.\footnote{\text{It seemed irrational for the DPP to make such decision, since the DPP has the attitude toward China is always the most salient issue. The pan-blue camp consists}}
ability to absorb all of the votes on the pro-independence side. Also, the DPP itself did not possess the majority in the Congress, so such seat maximization would have been the most rational strategy. TSU turned out to win 9% of votes and 3 proportional representation seats in the legislative election and became the third largest party. Yet Tsai was defeated by the incumbent Ma Ying-jeou from the KMT in 2012. It is believed that Tsai’s loss could be attributed to people’s perception of her pro-independence attitude on the cross-strait relationship with China, even though she claimed that she espoused the moderate position (Sullivan 2013).

In 2016 presidential and legislative elections, the DPP cooperated closely with another extreme pro-independence party, the New Power Party - which emerged after the Sunflower Movement in 2014 - to run in the legislative election in some single-member districts. Tsai ran again in the 2016 presidential election and compared to her previous run, her stance on cross-strait relationship remains unchanged in a substantive sense; that is, advocating trying to move toward the median and preserve the "status quo" in the cross-Strait relations, which is close to the KMT’s position. However, according to the Taiwan National Security Survey conducted in 2015 by the Duke University Program of Asian Security Studies, 65.3% of Taiwanese people believed that the tension between China and Taiwan would not rise if Tsai and DPP win the 2016 elections. Compared to perceptions from previous years, it seems like people perceive DPP as more moderate currently. Our theory is that the appearance of radical political candidates change the relative evaluation for the choices, and this may help explain the DPP’s strategy and Tsai’s eventual electoral victory.

of Kuomintang (Nationalist Party, KMT), the People First Party (PFP), and the New Party (NP), which is pro-unification and supports expanding cross-Strait exchanges. In contrast, the pan-Green camp consists of the Democratic Progress Party (DPP), the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), the New Power Party, and other pro-independence parties. This camp is seeking a more independent status for Taiwan and argues that Taiwan should be cautious when interacting with China.

5The DPP gave up nominations and let the New Power Party run in three districts and even helped to mobilize voters for them. Huang Kuo-chang, Hung Tzu-yung, and Freddy Lim were New Power Party candidates who won district seats in addition to two PR seats.

Indeed, recent studies raised the question on the number of ideological dimensions in elections (e.g. Feldman and Johnston 2014). Since the goal of this article is not to contest previous findings that voters’ ideological stances might be less constructed and be multi-dimensional, we focus on the single-dimension for the following reasons. First, this article plans to explore how voters perceive candidates’ ideological position, which is highly constructed and polarized along the liberal-conservative spectrum in recent decades (Poole and Rosenthal 2001; McCarty et al 2005). Since the extremeness aversion theory is based on the available options in the choice set, it would be proper to assume that the candidates we designed in our survey experiment also follow the unidimensional paradigm. Second, even though the unidimensional design may not capture the full picture of what people think, Bafumi and Shapiro (2009) found that the self-reported liberal-conservative ideology performs relatively well on explaining vote choice and other policy preferences in the U.S. context, especially in recent years. Third, that is also why we include the case of Taiwan into our article to examine the extremeness aversion. If the number of dimension within the liberal-conservative spectrum is contestable, the unification-independence dimension in Taiwan is so dominant and highly polarized which eschewed all other possible issues. Since the extremeness aversion theory did not assume to happen only in certain dimensions, we also expect to find its (stronger) effect in Taiwan’s most prominent political cleavage.

Research Design and Data Collection

To test the four hypotheses above, it is necessary to conduct survey experiment for clarifying causal relationships. If we analyzed the election results on the basis of ad hoc surveys, it would be difficult to identify how the mainstream parties and their smaller counterparts interact with each other. It is possible that the major party actively shifted toward the center and suffered the blame for inconsistency before the entrance of a politically extreme
party. In addition, the new parties may try their best to create new issue dimension (Meguid 2015) which stirs the one-dimensional competition dominated by the two mainstream parties. Furthermore, people would perceive radical candidates (or parties) differently based on their position on the ideological spectrum, which weakens an examination in a theoretical perspective. For example, there are continuing debates whether Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan are extreme candidates or not (e.g. Herron and Lewis 2007; Magee 2003).

**US subjects, MTurk, and the Congressional Election**

To deal with these empirical challenges, we designed two survey experiments. One experiment was conducted through Amazon MTurk on July 15-20, 2016. Subjects need to be over the age of 18, using a US IP address, and have a 95% approval rating or higher for previous hits. Subjects were invited to participate in a survey related to politics and lifestyle, and would receive $1.25 after completion. Overall, 509 subjects were recruited through Amazon MTurk, even though in our announcement we only asked for 500. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic background of the Mturkers in the first experiment. Generally speaking, the MTurkers we recruited are young, highly educated, non-black, and pro-liberal. Before the treatments, subjects were asked to locate their ideological position on a 0 to 100 scale from extremely liberal (0) to extremely conservative (100). Therefore, their self-report position was not influenced by our research treatments.

Subjects were firstly asked to report their routine political behaviors including news consumption, political interest, and political discussion. Before the treatment, they were asked to locate their own ideology on a 0 to 100 liberal-conservative scale. After asking participants to self-report ideology, we put an attention check item before the main treatment to filter out inattentive subjects, which asked subjects to report their mood in the first half of the item description, but then required them to select “none of the above” merely to prove they really went through the description. This method is proven to successfully increase the
Table 1: Socio-Demographic Background of the MTurker Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>37.61</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Income (1=20K, 6=250K)</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edu (1=High school, 7=PhD)</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Religion in Life</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Liberal-Conservative Position (0-100)</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>38.45</td>
<td>28.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

quality of data and enhance the attention of subjects on Internet surveys (Oppenheimer et al. 2009; Berinsky et al. 2014). Overall, 499 (98.03%) of the 509 subjects passed the attention check, and those who failed (10, 1.97%) were dropped from the analysis.

Subjects were then randomly assigned into three different groups. In the Control Group ($n = 100$), they were asked to read the candidate bulletin of one Congressional election including one Democratic and one Republican candidate (See Appendix). The Democratic Party and Republican Party are the two major parties dominating U.S. politics, and are generally seen as representing liberal and conservative ideology, respectively. On the bulletin, each candidate had three policy statements created by the researchers. For the Democratic candidate, his statement included progressive tax, minimum wage, and gay rights. For the Republican candidate, his statement included abortion only for rape, tax cuts, and lower regulation on businesses. The policies of all candidates we used in the experiment were generated from a pilot survey from 58 political science undergraduate students. Students were asked through open question to nominate one policy they would describe as ”extremely liberal,” ”moderate liberal,” ”extremely conservative,” and ”moderate conservative,” respectively. Students received course credits after completion. The policies nominated more than ten times by students in each category were selected as candidates’ policy statements. To enhance the external validity of our experiment, the wordings of the policies are extracted
from speeches that politicians made or policy statements that were announced on candidates’
official websites (but respondents were debriefed after the experiment.). Apart from party
and policies, candidate’s name, age, level of education, photo, and ballot position were all
randomized. All candidates were middle-aged white males; in the 2014 election cycle, 75%
of all candidates running for office were male, and 82% were white.

In the Treatment Group A (n = 200), the bulletin includes three candidates: Republican,
Democratic, and Independent. The extreme conservative (Ext – Con) independent candidate’s three policy statements included relaxing gun ownership, free market on health-care,
and ending abortion. In the Treatment Group B (n = 198), the extreme-liberal (Ext – Lib)
independent candidate supported policies related to universal single-payer health care, free
tuition to all college students, and women’s full right to reproductive choice. The wordings
of the extreme candidates’ policy statements are extracted from the Libertarian Party and
from the Green Party in the United States, respectively. Subjects in control and treatment
groups were then asked to judge the liberal-conservative positions of the two or three can-
didates on the 0-100 liberal-conservative scale. Their vote choice among the candidates was
also asked.

Subjects were then asked to report their party identification, political participation, belief
in democracy, and previous experience on political engagement for other research propose.
In the end, subjects were asked about their gender, age, race, the level of education, and
household income. We do not expect the treatments would influence one’s report on his or
her previous political behaviors or demographic background because the question is related
to experience or fact instead of attitude. These variables were then used for the randomiza-
tion check and covariate adjustment. After the survey, all subjects were debriefed that the
assigned candidate bulletin was totally made up by researchers.
Taiwan subjects, PTT, and the Legislative Election

To examine the external validity of the extremeness aversion effect, the research design in the second survey experiment in Taiwan is almost parallel to the first one. This survey experiment was conducted on March 19-31, 2016, two months after its presidential election. The recruitment ads were posted on PTT Bulletin Board System, the largest online discussion forum in Taiwan. Subject needed to be over 18 and living in Taiwan. Subjects were invited to participate in a survey related to politics and lifestyle, and would join the lottery for 30 convenience store gift cards valued NTD $100 (USD $3) after completion. Overall 427 subjects were recruited on PTT. Table 2 shows the socio-demographic background of respondents in the second experiment. As is discussed above, the majority of our Taiwanese respondents are young, highly educated, and self-reported pro-independence before the treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>23.57</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Income (0=20K, 5=150K)</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>2.423</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edu</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>3.244</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Uni-Ind Position (0-100)</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>78.67</td>
<td>20.54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subjects were first asked to report their routine political behaviors including news consumption, political interest, and political discussion. They were then requested to evaluate their attitude toward independence-unification on a 0-100 scale in which 0 means pro-unification, and 100 means pro-independence. Again, we put an attention check item before the main treatment to filter out inattentive subjects. Subjects who failed to answer this item correctly (17 in 427, 3.98%) were dropped from further analysis.
After the attention check item, subjects were randomly assigned into three different groups. In the Control Group, subjects were asked to read an election bulletin of the legislative election including a KMT and a DPP candidate (see Appendix). All candidates were male, around 50 years old, and with a normal bachelor degree. Each candidate enumerates four policy statements: the former two are related to reform the long-term care health system and housing prices, and the latter two are related to their attitude toward the cross-strait relationship between Taiwan and China - the only dominant issue in Taiwan. To enhance the external validity, the wordings of the policies are extracted from real election bulletins in Taiwan. The KMT candidate is designed to express a moderate pro-unification attitude, while the DPP candidate is designed to express a moderate pro-independence attitude. Subjects in the control group were asked to read through this electoral bulletin, and use the same 0-100 scale to locate the perceived policy position of these two candidates. Respondents were also asked about their vote choice between these two candidates.

In Treatment Group A, an extreme pro-independence candidate from the TSU was added into the bulletin. His socio-demographic background and social welfare policies are similar to the two moderate candidates, but his cross-strait policies include rejecting interaction with China and immediately initiating constitutional reform to acquire de jure Taiwan independence. In Treatment Group B, in contrast, an extreme pro-unification candidate from the New Party (NP) is added. His cross-strait policies are about re-unification with China and repressing the voice of independence. The wordings of these policy statements usually appear during the campaign process as well as in online political discussion. Subjects in Treatment Group A and B were also asked to locate the three candidates on the 0-100 scale, and about their vote choice. After the treatment, all subjects were asked to report their socio-demographic background, and were debriefed after completion.

For background knowledge of Taiwanese politics, see note 4.
Data Analysis

Study 1: US Sample and Liberal-Conservative Spectrum

Before comparing among control and treatment groups, randomization check is used to ensure the comparability. ANOVA test shows that there is no difference among subjects in the three groups on their age ($p = 0.87$), gender ($p = 0.64$), educational level ($p = 0.20$), race ($p = 0.56$), income ($p = 0.77$), importance of religion ($p = 0.13$), and self-reported ideology position ($p = 0.96$). To sum up, we can simply compare the group means to estimate the average treatment effect (ATE). To improve the precision of estimation and conduct covariance adjustment given the large size in our sample, we follow the suggestions given by Freedman (2008) and Lin (2013). We use regression adjustment, which includes demeaned covariates and their interactions with the two treatment dummies, which yields unbiased estimation but improves precision asymptotically. All of the analyses below are calculated and plotted by R 3.1.3, and all codes and data will be publicly replicable on the author’s website.

Figure 1 shows how US subjects in each group locate the two or three candidates’ ideological position after reading the election bulletin. The distributions are the density plot, while the dashed lines are the median value since the distributions are skewed. First of all, in the control group, subjects perceived the two candidates are located in 20.5 and 81, respectively. Their judgment is based on the policy statements of the candidates. In Treatment Group A, the extreme conservative candidate is scored 95 as its median, while in Treatment group B the extreme liberal candidate was scored 17. The distributions and the medians provide confidence on the internal validity of the treatments (the result is the same if the medians are replaced with means).

Figure 1 clearly illustrates the phenomenon of extremeness aversion. Comparing the control group in the first row and the Treatment Group A, subjects’ perceived ideological
position of the moderate conservative (Republican) candidate changed from 81 to 71, which is more moderate. Two sample t-test shows that the change in means on the moderate conservative candidate is significant \((p < 0.001)\). Meanwhile, subject’s perceived policy position of the moderate liberal (Democratic) candidate remains unchanged (20.5 to 20, \(p = 0.54\)). The same pattern, albeit insignificant, can be found when comparing the control and Treatment group B. The entrance of the extreme liberal candidate makes subjects’ attitudes toward the moderate liberal one be more moderate, albeit not statistically significant (from 20.5 to 24, \(p = 0.54\); the difference is nearly significant between Treatment Group A and B, from 20 to 24, \(p = 0.16\)). At the same time, the subject’s attitude toward the moderate conservative candidate remains unchanged (81 to 83.5, \(p = 0.80\)). The result in Figure 1 provide certain empirical support to the extremeness aversion effect, especially in the case of conservative side, and supports the research hypotheses \(H_1\) and \(H_2\).

To adjust for possible randomization failure from covariates including respondents’ socio-demographic background, and owing to the boundary of the scale (0 to 100), we use Tobit
regression to estimate the ATE of the entrance of extreme liberal and conservative candidate. In Table 3, the first and the fourth model estimate how the Ext–Lib and Ext–Con influences subjects’ perceived policy position regarding the moderate liberal and conservative candidate, respectively. In the second, third, fifth, and sixth model, we apply covariance adjustment by adding the interaction term between the two treatments and the demeaned age, gender, educational level, income, race, the importance of religion, and self-reported ideology (before treatment). Also, the third and sixth model only use moderate subjects, which is defined by those who self-reported ideology is relatively moderate - between 40 and 60 - which accounts for 20.9% of our MTurk samples.

Table 3: Tobit Models on Candidates’ Perceived Liberal-Conservative Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>View on Mod-Lib</th>
<th>View on Mod-Con</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ext-Con running</td>
<td>−1.717**</td>
<td>−2.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.269)</td>
<td>(2.228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ext-Lib running</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.260)</td>
<td>(2.210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics × Treatments</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>24.285***</td>
<td>24.400***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.834)</td>
<td>(1.801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>−1.987.3</td>
<td>−1.957.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald Test</td>
<td>1.536</td>
<td>31.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 2)</td>
<td>(df = 23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The result, generally speaking, is consistent with Figure 1 and supports $H_1$ and $H_2$. The entrance of the extreme conservative candidate Ext – Con would make voters view the Mod-Con candidate as more moderate. The average treatment effect is about $-7.3$ for all participants, and $-18.8$ among the ideological moderate participants! Meanwhile,
the effect of $Ext - Con$ on the perceived Mod-Lib candidate is trivial. In comparison, the impact of the entrance of $Ext - Lib$ is not that clear on the full sample. If we narrow our focus to the moderate participants, the estimated effect of $Ext - Lib$ becomes significant ($+10.07, p < 0.1$). Apart from the treatment effect, our regression models provide little help on improving the precision of our estimation; comparing model 5 and 6 implies that the standard error of the uncontrolled models do not reduce significantly, which suggests that the randomization process does not fail.

Most importantly, the effects of the two treatments are both asymmetric; the entrance of the extreme liberal candidate only influences participants’ attitude toward the moderate liberal one, and the entrance of the extreme conservative candidate only influences the participants’ perception toward the moderate conservative counterpart. This asymmetry is consistent with extremeness aversion theory owing to the two-end-point assumption. Moreover, the policy statements of the two moderate candidate remain the same in the control and treatment group; that is, voters change their perception on the moderate candidate simply because of the entrance of the extreme candidate. Our experimental design helps clarify the causal relationship.

The limited finding for the entrance of $Ext - Lib$ may owe to three reasons. First, our treatment may not be strong enough. The median value of the perceived $Ext - Lib$ candidate position is 17 in Figure 1, which is not far from the Mod-Lib. In other words, our treatment is not the most extremely liberal candidate in the eye of our oped-in participants. Second, because the majority of our subjects lean towards liberal views, it can be possible that they already know the moderate and extreme candidate are on their side of the political spectrum too well. Therefore, our treatment partially fails to create a new endpoint in their mind. Third, many important policy issues include multiple facets. Our definition of liberal

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9The extreme and moderate policy statements we used are from the pilot survey among political science undergraduate students (see footnote 7). It can be possible that undergraduate students and MTurkers use different standards for evaluating the policies.
and conservative may be different from our subjects to some extent (Feldman and Johnston 2014). Therefore, many people do not perceive the extreme liberal treatment as we expected.

Next, we provide the cross-table between treatment group and voter’s self-placed position on the liberal-conservative spectrum. The cut-points for ideological groups are 40 and 60, same as the previous analysis. In each cell, the first value is the percentage of votes that the Mod-Lib candidate received, the second is how much the Mod-Con candidate received, while the third value is what the extreme candidate in each treatment group received.

Table 4 provides strong support to \( H_4 \), but mixed support to \( H_3 \). For \( H_4 \), among the conservative subjects, the entrance of \( Ext - Con \) lowers their support to the moderate conservative candidate from 88% to 73%; the effect of \( Ext - Lib \) on \( Mod - Lib \) is even larger: from 100% to 37%. It is not surprising that the entrance of radical candidate will split the votes from its moderate counterpart among the voters on the same side. When it comes to moderate subjects, the entrance of \( Ext - Con \) increases moderate voter’s support to the \( Mod - Con \) candidate (from 27 % to 30%, the colored cell in Table 4), but decreases their support toward the Mod-Lib (from 73% to 68%). The change supports \( H_3 \) and is to some extent a good news to Mod-Con candidate - the extremeness aversion effect helps Mod-Con narrow the relative strength with Mod-Lib among the moderate voters. However, the change did not appear in the full sample, which may be because the number of moderate voters in our sample is not enough (20.7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voter Type</th>
<th>Liberal(&lt; 40)</th>
<th>Moderate (40-60)</th>
<th>Conservative(&gt; 60)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote Choice</td>
<td>Lib, Con, Ext</td>
<td>Lib, Con, Ext</td>
<td>Lib, Con, Ext</td>
<td>Lib, Con, Ext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100%, 0%</td>
<td>73%, 27%</td>
<td>12%, 88%</td>
<td>71%, 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A: Ext-Con</td>
<td>96%, 0%, 4%</td>
<td>68%, 30%, 3%</td>
<td>10%, 73%, 17%</td>
<td>69%, 27%, 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B: Ext-Lib</td>
<td>37%, 2%, 62%</td>
<td>29%, 31%, 40%</td>
<td>4%, 83%, 13%</td>
<td>27%, 27%, 46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the entrance of \( Ext - Lib \) does not help the Mod-Lib nor the Mod-Con candidate
in our research design. Instead, the majority of our participants choose to vote for the $Ext - Lib$ in the treatment group. This failure may be attributed to the failed treatment as is shown in Figure 1. Another possibility may be from the multidimensionality of the ideology in the U.S. context. Therefore, even though the entrance of extreme candidate may successfully influence voter’s perception of the moderate candidate, as is evidenced in Table 3, their vote choice is worth further exploring.

**Study 2: TW Sample and Independence-Unification Spectrum**

One weakness in the results of our US sample is that the treatment may not be strong enough to serve as an "extreme candidate." Indeed, the policy statements used in treatment may have multiple facets, so subject may be framed or may put different weights on each facet. To deal with the issue complexity, we replicated the same experiment in Taiwan, where the independence-unification issue has dominated politics for decades. Under this particular context, we expect to find clearer evidence on the extremeness aversion effect in the political arena. Before the analysis, the randomization check is passed through ANOVA, as is applied in the study 1. To improve the precision of the estimated ATE, we also use Tobit regression to adjust for covariates.

Figure 2 shows how Taiwanese subjects in each group locate the two or three candidates’ cross-strait attitudes. The distribution of the two extreme candidate evidences that our manipulations are both effective: the extreme pro-independence candidate from TSU was scored 95.5 as its median, while in the Treatment group B, the extreme pro-unification NP candidate was scored 3.

Figure 2 clearly illustrates the phenomenon of extremeness aversion under the context of Taiwan politics. Comparing the control group in the first row and the Treatment group A, Taiwanese subjects’ perceived policy position of the moderate pro-independence candidate shifted from 71.5 to 65, which is more moderate. Two sample t-test shows that the change
in means is significant ($p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, subject’s perceived policy position of the moderate pro-unification candidate remains unchanged (from 31.5 to 30, $p = 0.51$). The exact same phenomenon can be found when comparing the control and Treatment group B. The entrance of the extreme pro-unification candidate makes subjects’ attitudes toward the moderate one on the same side to be much more moderate (from 30 to 38). Two sample t-test shows that the shift is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). At the same time, subjects’ attitudes toward the moderate pro-independence candidate remain unchanged ($p = 0.92$). The result in Figure 2 indicates that the extremeness aversion effect exists in democracy across cultures, and supports the research hypotheses $H_1$ and $H_2$.

Once again, the Tobit regression model is used to estimate the ATE of the Treatment A and B and adjust for covariates (including age, gender, income, level of education, and self-report policy preference before the treatment). Demeaned covariates and their interaction with the two treatments are added into the models. In Table 5, the first two regression models
are subjects’ perceived policy position on the moderate pro-independence DPP candidate 
\((Mod – Ind)\), while the third and fourth regression are for the moderate pro-unification 
KMT candidate \((Mod – Uni)\). Clearly, the results are consistent with Figure 2 and support 
\(H_1\) and \(H_2\). First, the entrance of the extreme pro-independence \(Ext – Ind\) TSU candidate 
make voters view \(Mod – Ind\) candidate as more moderate, but the null effect is found on 
the \(Mod – Uni\) candidate who is on the opposite side of the policy spectrum. Similarly, 
the entrance of the \(Ext – Uni\) NP candidate only makes the \(Mod – Uni\) candidate as more moderate, but no effect is found on Mod-Ind. The entry of the extreme candidate 
asymmetrically influences the image of the moderate candidate on the same side, but not 
the moderate one on the opposite side, which is predicted by extremeness aversion theory. 
Moreover, the policy statements of the two moderate candidate remain the same in control 
and treatment group; that is, voters changes their perception of the moderate candidate 
because of the entrance of the extreme counterpart. What’s more, in the second and fourth 
model, covariate adjustment provides little help to improve the estimation of ATE.

Table 6 shows Taiwanese subjects’ vote choices under different treatment groups. The 
ideological group is defined by the median value of the perceived moderate candidate in 
the control group: 31.5 and 71.5. In each cell, the first value is the percentage of votes 
that \(Mod – Uni\) candidate received, the second is what \(Mod – Ind\) candidate received, 
while the one in the parentheses is what the extreme candidate received. The result for 
the moderate voters partially supports hypothesis \(H_3\), and strongly supports \(H_4\). When 
\(Ext – Ind\) candidate was in, the percentage of moderate voters supporting the \(Mod – Ind\) 
candidate increased from 58% to 64% \((p = 0.08)\). Unfortunately, the similar effect is not 
found in Treatment group B. The null finding in Treatment group B may be because that 
among the moderate subjects we defined, 62% of them placed their position larger than 50. 
Thus, even though they perceived that \(Mod – Uni\) candidate becomes more moderate when 
an \(Ext – Uni\) candidate joins the race, the change is not enough to attract them. Third, the
Table 5: Tobit Models on Candidates’ Perceived Unification-Independence Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th>View on Mod-Ind</th>
<th>View on Mod-Uni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ext-Ind running</td>
<td>−7.440**</td>
<td>−7.570**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.082)</td>
<td>(1.995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ext-Uni running</td>
<td>−0.462</td>
<td>−1.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.044)</td>
<td>(1.970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>72.455**</td>
<td>72.622**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.387)</td>
<td>(1.352)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics × Treatments</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>−1,480</td>
<td>−1,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald Test</td>
<td>15.191**</td>
<td>66.794**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 2)</td>
<td>(df = 17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

entrance of Ext – Ind candidate seriously drew the vote share of Mod-Ind candidate from 91% to 46% among the pro-independence voters, and Ext-Uni candidate makes the vote share of Mod-Uni KMT candidate slump from 100% to one-third. Comparing the results among all Taiwanese voters between the Control group and Treatment A, it shows that the moderate pro-independence candidate lost a lot among the pro-independence supporters, but he also gained some from the moderate voters, which still ensures his winning and meanwhile further marginalizes his main competitor, the moderate pro-unification candidate (whose support rate dropped from 23% to 12%).

Motivation of the Mainstream Party: A simulation

In the two datasets we collected, one of our major weaknesses is that the number of voters in each cell in Table 4 and 6 is very low, which prevents us from further inference. However,
Table 6: Vote Choice among Treatment groups and Voter’s self-placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voter Type</th>
<th>Pro-Uni</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Pro-Ind</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100%, 0%</td>
<td>42%, 58%</td>
<td>9%, 91%</td>
<td>23%, 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A: Ext-Ind</td>
<td>100%, 0%, 0%</td>
<td>27%, 64%, 9%</td>
<td>6%, 46%, 48%</td>
<td>12%, 50%, 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B: Ext-Uni</td>
<td>33%, 33%, 33%</td>
<td>42%, 55%, 3%</td>
<td>14%, 84%, 2%</td>
<td>20%, 77%, 3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

through Tobit analysis in Table 3 and 5, we showed that the entrance of extreme candidate could asymmetrically influence voters’ perception of the extreme candidate’s moderate counterpart. Thus, we should expect to find evidence that the major party will be motivated to allow the entrance of a radical party if we extend the extremeness aversion effect to the whole population.

To illustrate the motivation of the major party, we combine the clearer result from Taiwanese subjects in Figure 2 (perceived candidate positions), and the proximity voting assumption to simulate the mainstream party’s calculation. In the beginning, voters are assumed to be uniformly distributed in the unification-independence dimension. Second, the two median values of perceived Mod-Ind and Mod-Uni candidate’s position in the first row of Figure 2 (the control group), 31.5 and 71.5, serve as cutting points separating pro-unification, moderate, and pro-independence voters. Third, we simulate the number of moderate voters from 0 % to 100%, and the number of pro-unification and pro-independence voters are proportional to the lengths. We assume that all voters follow the proximity paradigm, indicating that they will vote for the candidate closer to them in the policy spectrum (Tomz and Van Houweling 2008). For example, when all voters are moderate voters, the Mod-Ind candidate can gain 50% of votes; when no voter is moderate, the Mod-Ind candidate can gain all votes on the right side of her, indicating $100\% \times \frac{(100-71.5)}{(100-71.5)+31.5} = 47.5\%$.

When the Ext − Ind candidate chooses to join the competition, we use the result in the second row of Figure 2 to estimate the change of vote share among all candidates.
In particular, the focus is on how the entrance of $Ext - Ind$ influences the vote share of $Mod - Ind$, the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum, under different numbers of moderate voters.

Figure 3 shows the simulation of $Mod - Ind$ candidate’s vote share under different numbers of moderate voters in the district, based on the result of Figure 1 and the assumption of proximity voting. When there is no ext-Ind candidate, the $Mod - Ind$ candidate can earn 47.5% to 50% of the vote—she can at most tie the election, and may lose to $Mod - Uni$ candidate in most possible scenarios. However, when the $Ext - Ind$ candidate jumps into the election, the $Mod - Ind$ candidate will be perceived as much more moderate, and she can earn more votes from the moderate voters. In this simulation, when the number of moderate voters exceeds 82%, the Mod-Ind candidate has the motivation to strategically allow the $Ext - Ind$ candidate running in the election. When almost all voters are moderate, the Mod-Ind candidate can gain 56% of votes after $Ext - Ind$ candidate emerged.

![Figure 3: How the number of Moderate voters motivates Major party’s strategic allowance](image)

This simulation of the mainstream party’s calculation helps us to explain strategic choices.
of the mainstream party in real elections. According to the long-term survey conducted by the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University in Taiwan in 2015 there are only 4.3% of Taiwanese people seeking immediate independence and 1.5% supporting immediate unification. In contrast, 85.4% of Taiwanese wants to maintain status quo, at least in the short run. If we simply assume who prefers the status quo as being moderate voters, the distribution of Taiwanese voters on the unification-independence spectrum provides enough motivation for the major party to strategically allow the entrance of its extreme counterpart. Therefore, our result may help rationalize DPP’s strategy in the 2012 and 2016 elections, in which they cooperated with extreme pro-independence parties.

Conclusion and Discussion

Results in our survey experiments in both the United States and Taiwan suggest that the extremeness aversion effect exists when people are interpreting political information and making voting decisions. Once an extreme candidate enters into the electoral battleground, voters would subjectively relocate the perceived policy position of the moderate candidate on the same side of the political spectrum to a more moderate position. In the two survey experiments, the two moderate candidates have the same policy manifesto in the control and treatment groups, which rules out the alternative explanation that the moderate candidate actively moves their policy position to attract voters and to prevent the emergence of the extreme parties. Moreover, we find that subject’s perception of the moderate candidate on the opposite side remains unchanged, which implies that voters indeed change their perception to the intermediate option rather than change the way they scale every option. The asymmetric impact supports the two-endpoints model used in the extremeness aversion theory.

11As is discussed in p.7-8
The extremeness aversion effect has important implications for the study of political behavior. First of all, the result of survey experiment consolidates the psychological foundation for our argument on the mainstream party’s strategy. In the last part of the previous section, we provide simulation based on experiment result to show that the major party has the motivation to strategically allow its extreme counterpart to run in the election, especially when the number of moderate voters is large enough. The mainstream party (or the moderate major candidate) can strategically foster or repress its radical counterpart running in the election in order to change its own perceived policy position, even without really changing its policy platform. As is discussed in the beginning, it is costly for a party to shift policy positions on major issues because it may be perceived as inconsistent or even dishonest; changing policy may also be harmful to intra-party politics. However, through the extremeness aversion effect, the mainstream party can apparently make itself seem closer to the moderate median point on the ideological spectrum by doing nothing; that is, by not blocking radical candidates. In this scenario, the radical wing competitor is not a drag, but becomes part of the strategy for the mainstream candidate to win the election. For example, in the 2016 Democratic Presidential primary, according to the two waves of polls conducted by Morning Consult, 49% of moderate voters supported Hillary Clinton on December 11th, 2015, but the percentage raised to 56% in the poll released on January 14th, 2016. Meanwhile, her vote share among the liberals declined from 57% to 53% during the same period. Overall, Hillary’s vote share increased from 52% to 54%. Indeed, this shift can be explained by multiple factors, but the mechanism we argued in this article can be one of the possible explanations. That is, the appearance of an extreme liberal candidate, or a socialist candidate, such as Bernie Sanders, makes Hillary appear more moderate.

12 Admittedly, it is possible that partisan voters may update their own policy position to follow their long-attached party. However, based on the study of the European politics, Adam et al. (2008) found that people did not systematically follow the policy change of their attached party, nor did they adjust their loyalty. Instead, they only systematically update their subjective perceptions among the parties.

Second, the extremeness aversion effect and the contextual-dependent preference clearly challenge the independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA) assumption implicitly acknowledged in the spatial models and multinomial regression models. If the entrance of the extreme candidate may change people’s perception of the existing moderate options, this phenomenon suggests that people’s perception of the available options are endogenous to each other. If people do change their perceived utility as well as the choice between two options with and without the existence of the third option, the transitivity assumption may be questionable, and the Pareto optimum can hardly be defined. Similarly, the IIA assumption can be tested through a variety of statistic tools. However, if people’s perceptions of the option would be substantively changed after some other options were dropped, this shift may not be recorded in the dataset. In other words, the possibility of fulfilling IIA assumption may be overestimated.

Third, ironically, the extremeness aversion effect is to some extent beneficial to the function of democracy. The emergence of radical wing parties may indeed reflect the voice of extreme supporters, but the existence of such extreme options also indirectly makes the mainstream party more popular among the moderate voters. Therefore, the mainstream party would have more bargaining power through election results to rebalance the potential influence of the radical wing parties. In addition, it may help explain why holding the primary may help the party’s chance of winning the general election (Adams et al. 2008). Adams and his colleagues suggest that the primary improves the campaign skills of the candidates, while our study suggests that the competition between the extreme and moderate nominees can make the moderate one more attractive to the moderate voters, which would be key to winning the general election.

The next step of this research project can be fourfold. First, we aim at collecting samples from representative pools of subjects so that we could examine if the same extremeness effect also exists among the public. Second, in our survey experiment, we simplify the treatment
by adding only one politically extreme party. What would happen if there were both the extreme left and extreme right wing candidates entering into the election? We will try to build up models and arguments for such complexity. Third, as is suggested by Feldman and Johnston (2014), the number of dimensions in the U.S. public may be two rather than one. Even though in this article we focused on single-dimension which dominates the politicians, it would be theoretically interesting to explore the influence of the single-issue candidates or candidates who are only extreme to certain issues. For instance, if the entrance of the new candidate only cares social justice or climate change, would he or she still influence the moderate counterpart on the same side?

In the end, does the extremeness aversion effect really exist in the real political world? In this article, we have provided Taiwan 2012 and 2016 presidential election as an introductory case. To further examine this possibility, we need to find out and trace the districts across elections that a radical candidate ran in past elections, while the policies announced by the major competitors remained unchanged. Surveying voters perception of the candidates in the two different elections may also be necessary. The search and combination of datasets require additional workload, and that is the next step of our project on studying the extremeness aversion effect in politics.
Figure 4: Election bulletin for the US Sample: Control Group with two moderate candidates (Ballot position, name, photo, and socio-demographic background randomized)
2016 Congressional Election Guide – District 2

This Voter Guide provides information about laws and procedures that govern the election of justices to the Congress. Candidates are listed below. Election Day is on November 8, 2016. Polls open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. Voter Registration forms can be found on the State Board of Elections website at http://gosla.gov/32641

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert T. Barrett</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law, J.D.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>(1) Make the tax code fairer, flatter, and simpler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Remove the shackles of big government by reducing regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and burdensome work requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Pro-life except in cases of rape, incest and life of the mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John C. Stephens</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>University of Mississippi School of Law, Juris Doctor</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(1) Increase the top corporate rate and top estate tax rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) The federal minimum wage should be raised to $12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) LGBT people should be protected from discrimination under the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew J. Kennedy</td>
<td></td>
<td>University of South Carolina – JD</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>(1) Abortion should be banned with no exceptions. Universal rights apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to human beings from conception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Deregulate the healthcare industry and repeal all policies that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increase health costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Lox gun laws: Gun ownership harms no other person and cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morally justify criminal penalties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Election bulletin for the US Sample: Treatment Group A with two moderate candidates and one extremely conservative candidate
Figure 6: Election bulletin for the US Sample: Treatment Group B with two moderate and one extremely liberal candidates
Figure 7: Election bulletin for the TW Sample: Control Group with two moderate candidates

Policy Manifesto (in English):
Candidate 1:
1. Building the long-term health care system.
2. Revising the Housing Protection Act.
3. Deepening the cross-strait relations.
4. Continuing the Diplomatic Truce policy and promoting the institutionalization of cross-strait interactions.

Candidate 2:
1. More care centers for elders. Reform of the annuity system.
2. Estate act and housing related acts are the priority.
3. Ensure the sovereignty of Taiwan and protect the values of Taiwan.
Figure 8: Election bulletin for the TW Sample: Treatment Group A with two moderate and one extremely pro-independence candidates

Policy Manifesto (in English):
Candidate 1:
1. Helping the young generation buy houses.
2. Build up community care systems for elders.
3. Protect Taiwan’s sovereignty and reject China’s influence upon society.
4. Initiate constitutional reform, abandon the current ROC framework, and move toward de jure Taiwan independence. Candidate 2:
1. More care center for elders. Reform of the annuity system.
2. Estate act and housing related acts are the priority.
3. Ensure the sovereignty of Taiwan and protect the values of Taiwan.
Candidate 3:
1. Building the long-term health care system.
2. Revising the Housing Protection Act.
3. Deepening the cross-strait relations.
4. Continuing the Diplomatic Truce policy and promoting the institutionalization of cross-strait interactions.
Policy Manifesto (in English):

Candidate 1:
1. Subsidizing youth start-ups, housing, and parental pay.
2. Reform the housing market monitoring system.
3. Actively extinguishing the voice of Taiwanese independence.
4. Promoting Chinese identity and political talks based on this. Fulfilling peaceful unification with China.

Candidate 2:
1. Building the long-term health care system.
2. Revising the Housing Protection Act.
3. Deepening the cross-strait relations.
4. Continuing the Diplomatic Truce policy and promoting the institutionalization of cross-strait interactions.

Candidate 3:
1. More care centers for elders. Reform on the annuity system.
2. Estate act and housing related acts are the priority.
3. Ensure the sovereignty of Taiwan and protect the values of Taiwan.
4. Promote the cross-strait peace. Build up the monitoring acts.
Reference


