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When Political Communication Aggravates

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1 Introduction

In popular discourse dramatic political events such as the election of Donald Trump, the vote for Brexit and the rallying of the "Gilets Jaunes" in France are very often attributed to the effective mobilization of anger among citizens. Moreover, this anger about politics allegedly creates deep divisions in Western societies. For example, recent headlines have read: "In a Divided Era, One Thing Seems to Unite: Political Anger" (The New York Times, 2018), "How two angry protests sum up Europe's politics" (The Washington Post, 2018), and "Why are France's Yellow Jackets so Angry?" (Politico, 2018). The Economist, in light of the Brexit referendum, even claimed that the vote to leave the EU was driven by "Anger at immigration, globalisation, social liberalism and even feminism." (The Economist 2016). This anger is more than just a feature in headlines. A recent study by the Pew Research Centre has shown that since the 2016 US elections, anger has overtaken all other emotions and has become the most frequent reaction to legislators'

Facebook posts (Pew Research Centre 2018).

These observations by news media, pundits and public opinion surveys are accompanied by developments in political science to award an increasingly prominent role to emotions in politics (e.g. Brader 2011, 2005; Albertson & Gadarian 2015). Like in popular political discourse, in political science, negative emotions, such as anger and anxiety, have been particularly emphasized as both prevalent in political communication (e.g. Soroka & McAdams, 2015) and important in shaping political behaviors (e.g. Weber, 2013; Valentino et al., 2008) and attitudes (e.g. Marcus et al., 2000; Albertson & Gadarian, 2015; Huddy et al., 2007; Skitka et al., 2004).

Anger, particularly, has been shown to depress information searching in political campaigns (Valentino et al., 2008; Parker & Isbell, 2010) and to operate as a political mobilizer (Valentino et al., 2011; Weber, 2013). But what drives political anger? While evidence is accumulating that anger is an important emotion in the domain of politics, we know relatively little about what exactly provokes anger. It is likely that citizens get riled up by their political leaders, political communication being a key source of information and form of mobilizing during campaigns. However, as I will describe in more detail below, there are multiple pathways from political communication to citizens' anger and there is ample reason to believe that the way in which political communication prompts anger is more complex than theories from psychology would predict.

In the next section, I will discuss how anger differs from related concepts, such as aggression or hostility. I will then elaborate on when, according to the Appraisal Tendency Framework, the dominant framework for the study of discrete emotions, anger is elicited. This is followed by a brief review of known consequences of anger. Finally, I will argue

that the way in which we appraise political events is more complex than assumed by the Appraisal Tendency Framework and that those complexities should be taken into account when studying the causes and consequences of political anger.

2 What is (political) anger?

Emotions, although increasingly better understood, still provoke discussion over their core properties: the universality, physiological correlates and the appraisal mechanisms preceding an emotion (Ekman, 2016). How to define different emotions and how to distinguish them from others, is still debated. Models of valence distinguish between positive and negative (Forgas, 1995), or approach and aversion emotions (e.g. Harmon-Jones & Allen, 1998). Other models place emotions in a two-dimensional space according to its pleasantness and level of arousal (e.g. **?**). Last, models of discrete emotions hold that a number of basic emotions were developed due to their adaptive properties and that such emotions have distinct causes and consequences. These emotions, such as fear, anger, or enjoyment, differ in their antecedent events, physiology, their expression and in distinct behaviors they provoke (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Frijda, 1988). In this paper, I will take such a discrete approach to emotions, the Appraisal Tendency Framework (ATF), proposed by Lerner and Keltner (2000). The Appraisal Tendency Framework distinguises different emotions from one another by the events that evoked them. They propose that emotions are a reaction to particular situations, which prepare us to effectively deal with them. According to this account, we respond with anger to a situation if we, or somebody we care about has been offended or injured by somebody other than ourselves, if we are confident about the cause of the event and if we feel

able to cope with and influence the situation (Tiedens & Lerner, 2006). In contrast, we respond with guilt, if we have injured or offended somebody we care about, or with fear or despair if we feel that we are not able to influence the situation. Under which circumstances we experience anger and its consequences for judgement and behavior are discussed hereinafter.

2.1 Anger in the Appraisal Tendency Framework

The Appraisal Tendency Framework holds that emotions come about through assessments people make of a situation which, in turn, lead to a set of appraisals (Lerner & Keltner, 2000) or similarly, action tendencies (Frijda, 1988). First, a person evaluates a situation as positive or negative, i.e. as pleasant or unpleasant. Second, the situation will be assessed along five further cognitive dimensions: Certainty, Attentional Activity, Anticipated Effort, Control, and Responsibility (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Each emotion is characterized by the appraisals on all or a subset of these five cognitive dimensions. The appraisal along these defining dimensions make up an emotions core appraisal theme. Anger is first elicited in response to unpleasantness, and second, in response to a sense of certainty about the cause and consequences of the event, that somebody else is responsible for it and a sense that there is human, or individual control over the situation.

Once elicited consciously, or subconsciously, emotions operate as action tendencies that prepare us to deal with a situation through changes in physiology, behavior, experience and communication (Frijda, 1988). Similarly, the ATF speaks of action or appraisal tendencies as "goal-directed processes through which emotions exert effects on judgment and choice until the emotion elicited problem is resolved" (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, p.477).

It is through the activation of these appraisal tendencies that emotions influence subsequent judgment and behaviour in accordance with their respective core appraisal theme, high certainty, human control and other-responsibility, in the case of anger. For instance, as fear is prompted by high uncertainty and low human control, we expect it to influence judgment related to evaluations of certainty and risk. By consequence, we would predict that somebody who had been instructed to recall a particularly fearful life-event would subsequently make more cautious decisions in a gambling task. Anger is constituted by three core appraisal dimensions which each influence subsequent judgment and behavior.

First, high certainty denotes the degree to which future events are considered predictable and comprehensible (high) or unpredictable and incomprehensible (low) (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 479). The appraisal of high certainty has two behavioral outcomes, increased reliance on heuristics, instead of systematic information processing or information-seeking (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Parker & Isbell, 2010; Tiedens & Linton, 2001; Valentino et al., 2008), and more optimistic risk assessment (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001). Huddy and colleagues (2007) have further shown that people who are angry at actors of the Iraq war perceived it to be less risky and were more supportive of it (Huddy et al., 2007).

Second, individual control describes the degree to which a situation is considered to be brought about by individual agency (high) or situational agency (low). Like certainty, control shapes perceptions of risk (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001). In politics, individual control accompanying anger has been linked to heightened political efficacy and ultimately increased political participation (Valentino et al., 2008; Weber, 2013).

Third, responsibility describes the extent to which someone or something other than

oneself (high) or oneself (low) is considered responsible for an unpleasant situation. Essentially, responsibility is the dimension by which anger is differentiated from guilt. If we deem somebody else responsible for a negative event, we experience anger, if we are responsible ourselves, we feel guilt. Although appraisal of responsibility in the Appraisal Tendency Framework refers to assessment of self- vs. other-responsibility, research in political science has focused mostly on which political actor (Wagner, 2014; Hobolt et al., 2018) or level of government (Arceneaux & Stein, 2006; Malhotra & Kuo, 2009; Maestas et al., 2008) is blamed for a specific situation.

2.2 Concepts Related to Anger

In colloquial language, "anger" is often used interchangeably with closely related emotions, such as rage, hostility or aggression. Similarly, it's been argued that the four, together with other negative emotions, such as disgust, hatred, and contempt, constitute the broader emotional category of "aversion" (MacKuen et al., 2010). Others, by contrast, have argued that anger is, in fact, a pro-social emotion, which functions to uphold moral behavior in social groups (Van Doorn et al., 2014; Hess, 2014; Harmon-Jones & Allen, 1998). Anger can vary in intensity "from mild irritation or annoyance to fury and rage" (Spielberger et al., n.d.) but is distinct from other negative emotions. Hostility, although involving angry feelings, Spielberger and colleagues (n.d.) argue, is a more complex set of long-lasting attitudes and behaviors and aggression is characterized by destructive and punitive behaviors towards others. Although the three are related and hostility and aggression are often accompanied by feelings of anger, anger need not necessarily lead to hostile and aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Hess (2014) has similarly

argued that there exists a "family" of emotions that are all related to anger, such as rage, aversion and annoyance, but also disgust and contempt, which, together with anger comprise the three other-condemning emotions (Rozin, 1999). Additionally, Spielberger and colleagues (1983) distinguish between trait anger and state anger. The former describes relatively stable individual differences in experiencing an emotion, while the latter refers to transitory emotional states, elicited by a specific event. Hereinafter, when I speak of emotions I exclusively refer to emotional states.

2.3 Anger in Political Communication

The Appraisal Tendency Framework was developed by theorizing about how individuals directly react to and interact with their environment: A situation is observed by a person firsthand and the same person appraises the situation based on their personal experience thereof. However, political situations are often transmitted by others, the news media or politicians. Consequently, our appraisal of political matters is usually based on second-hand information. Whether political communication makes us angry therefore depends not only on its content but also on the relationship between the source and recipient of political information.

Political communication hereinafter refers to a situation in which a politician (source of political communication) informs a voter of either their in- or out-party (the recipient of political communication) directly about a political matter (the content of political communication, which can be a description of a political issue or event). When party affiliation of source and recipient match, we can assume that the content of political communication is appraised along the appraisal dimensions: If a politician speaks with

high certainty about what an issue or event, and its causes and consequences, ascribes human control over the matter, and responsibility to another political actor, the recipient gets angry. However, if party affiliations don't match, the recipient is motivated to disregard or counter-argue the information he/she is presented with (Lodge et al., 2005). Moreover, the three appraisals that are key to generating anger lend themselves well to counter-arguing as, in politics, the appraisal of certainty, control and responsibility, are often ambiguous or politically contested.

First, recall that certainty appraisal pertains to how sure we are of the causes and consequences of the appraised situation. However, both causes, and outcomes of political issues or events are often unclear or even a matter of political beliefs. Second, political issues and events are usually simultaneously under both human control and situational constraint. Hence, the appraisal of individual or situational control of political events is difficult at best. Which one should be appraised as prevalent is often up for debate. Last, attribution of responsibility is usually subject to one's partisan affiliation and politically contended (Arceneaux & Stein, 2006; Maestas et al., 2008; Malhotra & Kuo, 2009) A special case presents itself when politician's and recipient's party affiliation do not match AND the politician ascribes responsibility to the recipients in-party. Previous research suggests that in this case, political communication could be perceived as a threat which will be countered with anger (Huddy et al., 2015). Finally, mere disagreement of the recipient with the politician's statements could elicit anger, as shown by Suhay and Erisen (2018)

As the appraisal of political communication is difficult, it is possible that the role of the different appraisal dimensions in generating anger among voters differs from their role

in interpersonal accounts. Specifically, I propose that in a fuzzy environment, in which certainty, control and responsibility are ambiguous, one or two appraisals could be enough to elicit anger. Moreover, as certainty and control are almost always hazy, responsibility attribution could be determining whether political communication elicits anger. Testing this requires disentangling the individual effects of the three appraisal dimensions. Moreover, as described above, whether party affiliations of source and recipient match, hence, whether recipients are motivated to counter-argue the content of political communication, matters. Consequently, when studying how political communication elicits anger, we must consider both cases, when communication comes from one's in-party, and when it comes from an out-party. I will hypothesize when political communication elicits anger in the next Section.

Moreover, individual characteristics of the recipient likely play a role in how easily they get riled up by politics. I will formulate hypotheses about *who* gets angry over politics in Section 4.

In Section 5, I will discuss two potential outcomes of anger in politics: moralization of issues and decreased willingness to compromise across party-lines. At large, I aim to answer three questions concerning political anger and its role:

- When does political communication elicit anger?
- Who gets angry over politics?
- What are the consequences of political anger?

In Section 6 I will outline a broad empirical strategy to study these questions. I will particularly focus on the research design of my first study which will look at which aspects

of political rhetoric prompt anger and in whom, focusing on the personal relevance of a given issue and political sophistication as individual-level predictors.

3 When does political communication elicit anger?

3.1 Anger as a Result of its Core Appraisal Themes

The most direct way in which a political message can prompt an angry response in its recipient, viewer, listener or reader, is if speaker and recipient agree in terms of there issue position and in terms of what both perceive to be the appropriate emotional response to the issue at hand. In this scenario, in which speaker and recipient agree on the evaluation of an event, anger in politics is elicited in accordance with its core appraisal themes. This means, according to the ATF, that anger is elicited when events are described as under human control, certain and when responsibility is attributed to somebody other than oneself. Fear, in contrast, arises when situational control is high or responsibility is uncertain. The first hypothesis reads:

H1: Respondents experience anger when all three of its appraisal themes (human control, certainty, and responsibility) are fulfilled.

Alternatively, one might argue that not all dimensions of appraisal are of equal importance. While in original work on appraisal tendencies in non-political settings, certainty and controllability were considered central (e.g. Tiedens & Linton, 2001), work in political communication has mostly focused on blame and responsibility attribution (Hameleers et al., 2017, 2018; Wagner, 2014; Petersen, 2010; Huddy et al., 2007). It is plausible that in the political realm, where events are usually highly complex and therefore judged as

less certain and controllable, attribution of responsibility becomes the decisive factor for anger.

Thus, alternatively to H1, Hypotheses 2, reads as follows:

H2: Respondents experience anger when responsibility is attributed to a political actor, regardless of levels of certainty and human control.

3.2 Anger out of Disagreement and Defensive Anger

Above, I have argued that anger is elicited in accordance with its core appraisal themes. Neither content, in terms of policy stance, nor ideological positions of the speaker have yet been incorporated in the theoretical framework. Moreover, I have described a case where party identity of speaker and listener coincide. However, both issue positions and party identity potentially influence whether and to what extent anger is evoked in two ways. First, anger might be elicited due to disagreement between speaker and listener over an issue, in which case, anger would be a mechanism of motivated reasoning or biased information processing. Second, research has shown that anger is elicited in response to threats to the political group a person identifies with, a political party in this case.

First, recent research has shown that anger is elicited in the process of biased information-processing, or motivated reasoning (Suhay & Erisen, 2018). Motivated reasoning, in short, describes people's proneness to disregard information that contradicts their prior beliefs (**?**Redlawsk, 2002). People tend to evaluate information that is incongruent with their prior attitudes as less convincing and tend to generate more arguments against it. Information that is in line with their prior beliefs, however, is accepted much more easily and is actively sought out (**?**). Suhay and Erisen (2018) found that the process of mo-

tivated reasoning is mediated by a feeling of anger. Information incongruence increased experienced anger, which in turn led to respondents rating the information as of lower quality and formulating more counterarguments. Hence, as much as anger-cues could elicit anger in respondents due to mirroring of emotions or sympathizing with the respective issue, anger could be elicited for the opposite reason, due to disagreement and anger at the information conveyed in political communication. Unfortunately, in their study, conducted in the US, stances on the issues used, abortion, economic equality, and illegal immigration, are highly linked to partisan identities. This makes it difficult to theorize whether the effects are driven by partisan motivated reasoning or as a result of disagreement on issue positions. Hence, I will consider the possibility that disagreement plays a role independent of partisan identity. I, therefore, hypothesize that anger will be elicited if the political stance conveyed in political communication is incongruent with the respondents' political attitudes (H3).

H3: Anger is elicited in response to incongruence between the political stance conveyed in political communication and a respondent's attitudes.

Next to anger as a result of disagreement based on attitudinal stances, it could be elicited solely based on group identities of speaker and recipient. If anger is directed at a group we strongly identify with, we might respond with anger to defend our social group. Party identity constitutes such a group identity (Huddy, 2001), which, once established, motivates group members to protect their group status against out-group threats. Hence, strong partisans are likely to actively respond to threats in order to defend their group's status (Huddy, 2001; Huddy et al., 2015). Huddy, Mason and Aarøe (2015) show that strong partisans respond with anger if they are confronted with electoral threat posed by

the out-party to their in-party (Democratic/Republican parties). I propose that anger expressed by an out-party poses a similar threat to the in-party as electoral threats. This assumption is substantiated by research on the effects of political incivility, an extreme form of elite anger that breaks with political norms: Gervais (2018) has shown that elite incivility elicits anger among voters only when it comes from an out-group, i.e. the opposing political side. I, therefore, expect that anger expressed by an out-group will prompt particularly strong emotional responses if it is directed at one's in-group (H4).

H4: Anger is elicited as a response to anger expressed by the political out-group if directed at the in-group.

4 Who gets angry over politics?

Above, I have outlined when political communication elicits anger and I have argued that there are two main paths in which it can prompt an angry response: by means of anger's core appraisal themes, if party affiliations are congruent, or as a result of disagreement if party affiliation of source and receiver of a political message are incongruent. I have further theorized that particularly appraisals of responsibility could be decisive, whether party affiliations are congruent or not. In the following sections, I will outline two individual characteristics that likely influence whether people get angry over a specific issue or to politics generally. First, I argue that to have an emotional response to politics, people have to be, or perceive themselves as, personally affected by an issue. Second, people differ in levels of political sophistication,in how much they know and care about politics, regardless of being personally affected by specific issues. Hence, I propose that political sophisticates have stronger emotional responses to political messages than

non-sophisticates.

4.1 Personal Relevance

Anger and anxieties', like that of all negatively valenced emotions, primary appraisal is that of unpleasantness, which distinguishes them from all positive emotions. The extent to which a political issue or situation is perceived as unpleasant is not necessarily universal. Although, to my knowledge, the link between perceived personal relevance and emotional experience has not been directly tested yet, past research has provided evidence that both risk assessment and responsibility attribution are affected by issues are (perceived as) personally relevant to people. For instance, Cassese and Hannagan (Cassese & Hannagan, 2015) have shown that reactions to emotional frames of breast cancer among women depend on whether they perceive themselves as personally at risk. Similarly, in a study of responsibility attribution after a flood, Arceneaux and Stein (2006) have shown that those living in neighborhoods that were affected, were more likely to blame the government for insufficient preparations. In an earlier study, Arceneaux (2003) had shown that economic hardship leads to increased participation when blame is attributed to the government but depresses participation when it is not. Although not explicitly tested, this suggests that anger might be a driver of political mobilization when personal hardship is blamed on the government. These findings were corroborated by Aytaç et al. (2018) who find that among unemployed, but not among employed people, framing blame for unemployment on the government increases intentions to turn-out in the 2016 elections. They also find that the same blame frame among unemployed, but again not among employed, increases both anger and guilt. Research on the emotional

substrates of right-wing populism has more explicitly tested the role of anger. Anger over the economic crisis increases support for populist parties (Rico et al., 2017; Magni, 2017) It has been theorized that anger emerges among populist voters as they are more likely to be affected by the crisis (Magni, 2017) and populists attribute blame effectively (Hameleers et al., 2017). Broadening up this argument to other groups than populist voters, I argue that people get angry over a political issue if they are personally affected by a it. Moreover, while it is possible to operationalize the degree to which some socioeconomic groups are affected by an economic crisis, this is harder for other political issues. I further propose that the decisive factor for many issues is not whether somebody is objectively affected but whether they perceive themselves to be affected.

H5: Respondents get angry over a political issue if they perceive themselves as personally affected by it.

4.2 Political Sophistication

Lodge and Taber (**?**) have theorized that political sophisticates are most likely to already have established affective links between different political objects and, thus, have stronger automatic affective responses to politics. Similarly, Miller (2017) argued that high sophisticates are more likely to experience emotions in response to politics and their subsequent behavior is more likely to be affected by their emotional responses. The reason for this, he argues, is that political sophisticates have more associative networks related to political objects. They are better at quickly making connections between these objects and making appraisals of politics.

H6: Political sophisticates get more angry than non-sophisticates.

5 The consequences of anger in political communication

In the introductory section of this paper, I have outlined several political consequences of anger, such as increased mobilization (Valentino et al., 2008), support for military action (Huddy et al., 2007), or out-group hostility (Mackie et al., 2000). Much of pundits' concern about the rise of angry politics concerns a feeling that it hinders dialogue and is ultimately harmful to democracies (e.g. Nussbaum, 2016). Alternatively, one might also argue that anger is productive, as it fosters engagement (Ryan, 2012) and is particularly critical for social movements (Jasper, 2014). In the following two sections, I will explore two possible consequences that, if true, would provide some evidence for the anger "counter-productivity thesis" (for a discussion and critique of this see: Srinivasan, 2018).

5.1 Anger and the Moralization of Politics

As a first potential consequence of angry rhetoric, I will look at the moralization of issues. People differ in their degree of *moral conviction* regarding political issues (Skitka, 2010) and the moralization of issues has important political consequences (e.g. Ryan 2014). An issue is moralized for those people who see it as standards that others should share and as a motivation for behavior. Moreover, moralized issues are usually accompanied by strong emotions, such as indignation (anger) or disgust (Skitka et al., 2005). Hence, moral convictions are usually also strong attitudes but not all strong attitudes are also moralized. Respondents holding strong moral convictions on politics tend to have stronger partisan

bias, express higher hostility and social distance to political opponents, irrespective of partisan strength (Garrett & Bankert, 2018) and tend to participate more in politics (Skitka & Bauman, 2008). Issues can move into the moral domain through the process of moralization, as, over time, they are linked to moral emotions in public discourse (Rozin, 1999). Smoking, for instance, Rozin (1999) argues, used to be perceived as a preference but has over time become moralized and cigarette smoke is seen as disgusting and irritable. Homosexuality, on the other hand, is increasingly de-moralized in the US. In a first study of the emotional antecedents of moralized issues, Wisneski and Skitka (2017) found that only integral disgust increased moralization. However, they used abortion, an already highly moralized issue in the United States and did not investigate the possible effects of other emotions. Next to disgust, anger and contempt have been argued to be one of three moral emotions (Rozin, 1999). And although incidental disgust, in particular, has been argued to form the base of moralized judgment (Wheatley & Haidt, 2005; Haidt & Keltner, 1999), Wisneski and Skitka (2017) found no effect of incidental disgust. Clifford (2018) found that both self-reported disgust and anger, elicited by emotional frames of a message regarding food purity, increased the moralization of that issue. It should be noted, that the line between disgust and anger is often blurry, both were evoked almost equally by messages designed to only evoke either of the two. Others have additionally argued that disgust might merely be used as a metaphor for anger when we speak about moral issues (Royzman & Kurzban, 2011). Moreover, while for some political issues, such as abortion, disgust seems a logical emotional antecedent of moralization, particularly in discussions over fairness or in group-conflict, anger is a more likely predecessor.

H7: Anger in political communication leads to a moralization of political

issues.

5.2 Anger and Willingness to Compromise

Voters' willingness to compromise on political issues, even when their values and goals differ, is essential to the functioning of liberal democracies. Political compromise is essential to accommodating different interests and ideals and to finding mutually acceptable solutions for political problems (Bellamy, 1999). Such compromise requires for citizens to acknowledge the plurality of political values and interests and a willingness to engage with them to find solutions: "'Hearing the other side' within a pluralist polity implies respecting that people can be reasonably led to incommensurable and incompatible understandings of values and interests, and seeing the need to engage with them in terms they can accept." (Bellamy, 1999, p. 121) However, recently, this pluralism has come under attack as the electorate has become increasingly divided and affectively polarized (Iyengar et al., 2018; Mason, 2018). Particularly, anger is often considered counterproductive for functioning democracies, as it alienates potential allies and hinders political compromise (Nussbaum, 2016). Despite a growing literature on the effects of emotions in politics, the link between elite's angry rhetoric and voters' willingness to engage in conversations, consider others' viewpoints and find compromise is still unclear. Investigating this link, however, is essential if we want to understand the effects emotionalized elite rhetoric has on voters and their tolerance of others' political values and views. Using the same treatments as above, I will assess whether anger expressed in political communication ultimately influences people's willingness to compromise. The three appraisal dimensions that define anger and two of its direct consequences could each contribute to

a lack of willingness to compromise: First, as finding compromise always comes with a risk of this compromise failing and extreme positions will make it significantly harder to gather bi- or multi-partisan support. Hence, more optimistic risk-assessment resulting from anger could lead to people being less willing to inch from their political stance. Second, one of anger's appraisal tendencies is high certainty. This leads to angry people being more closed-minded, search for less information and rely on other heuristics, such as partisanship, instead. Again, closed-mindedness could hinder being able to see another viewpoint of an issue, which, together with an increased reliance on partisanship, could make compromise difficult. While the two first reasons pertain to behavior when in compromise, other-responsibility could lead to a complete withdrawal from the process. Since the appraisal of other-responsibility, which as argued above, is likely crucial to anger, is related to aggression towards out-groups (Desteno et al., 2011; Mackie et al., 2000; Skitka et al., 2004), angry people might either not engage in compromise or might actively hinder compromise. The first hypothesis concerning people's willingness to compromise as a result of their anger reads:

H8: Anger decreases respondents' willingness to compromise on the issue their anger pertains to.

Finally, the appraisal tendency framework holds that once anger is elicited, its effects will carry over to other evaluations (Lerner & Keltner, 2000). I, therefore, further propose that anger prompted by one issue should also make compromise on other issues more difficult.

H8: Anger decreases respondents' willingness to compromise on issues unrelated to anger's cause.

6 Empirical Strategy

I will test the hypotheses outlined in Sections 2 to 4 using a survey and a physiological experiment. I hope that with each test of my hypothesis I can come closer to understanding what elicits anger in politics, in whom and with which consequences. Study 1 will study anger elicited by the in-group exclusively to study the effects of the different appraisal dimensions and individual-differences unrelated to partisan identity: personal relevance and political sophistication. Hypotheses 1-3 and 5-6 will be tested in a conjoint experiment. This allows me to dismantle the distinct effects of the different appraisal dimensions on anger responses.

Lerner and Keltner (2000) have proposed an empirical strategy to study appraisal tendencies: studies, they argue, should compare emotions that differ on one or more of the five appraisal dimensions and their effects on judgement, choices or behaviors. For instance, one could compare shame (self-responsibility) to anger (other-responsibility), or anxiety (low certainty and situational control) to anger (high certainty, human control). The expected outcome of the experienced emotion depends on the appraisal by which the two emotions differ. For instance, anger has a different effect on risk perception and the use of heuristics in information-processing than anxiety (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Parker & Isbell, 2010). This is because the appraisal of new situations as uncertain and outside of human control produces fear. Anger, on the other hand, is defined by appraisals of certainty, unpleasantness and human control. Hence, the framework predicts that anger will lead to an evaluation of new situations as certain and under human control and angry people will perceive new situations as less risky (Lerner and Keltner 2000).

Following the suggestion by Lerner and Keltner (2000) to study the effects of anger in comparison to those of fear, I will assess both: when are messages most likely to elicit anger, and when are they most likely to elicit fear? Study 2 will add out-group cues and individual-level partisan identity, and randomly expose participants to an in-group or out-group cue. Based on the results from Study 1 and 2, I will identify high and low arousal fear and anger messages and use those in my third study to focus on individual differences (perceived personal relevance and political sophistication). For these tests, I will use physiological measurements of emotions (skin conductance levels, heart rate and facial EMG) in addition to self-reported emotions. Physiological responses happen outside of awareness and within milliseconds upon participants being presented with stimuli. This allows me to study unconscious emotional reactions to anger rhetoric. Physiological measures, however, can only capture emotional arousal AND VALENCE but cannot distinguish between different discrete emotions, self-reports will therefore still be used to differentiate between anger and anxiety. Thus, I test not only who claims to have an emotional response or is aware of their response to politics but also who, while possibly completely unaware of it, physically responds to angry rhetoric. Finally, in Study 4, I will replicate findings from Study 3. Study 4 will focus on the downstream consequences of anger (in comparison to the effects of fear), the moralization of political issues and decreased willingness to compromise as potential results of anger rhetoric.

6.1 Research Design - Study 1

The first study will address the first two research questions I have formulated: **When and why does political communication elicit anger?** and **Who gets angry over pol-**

itics?. In answering both of these questions, I will focus on the aspects described above that are unrelated to partisan identity. I have hypothesized that both anger's core appraisal themes consisting of appraisal of human control, certainty and other-responsibility influence whether a political message elicits anger. Regarding individual differences, I have hypothesized that people respond more strongly to politics if they are political sophisticates, and if they perceive themselves as personally affected by a political issue. A conjoint experiment is particularly suited to test such hypotheses, as it allows us to disentangle the effects of each of the relevant predictors. Moreover, research has shown that, next to emotional content, audiovisual emotional cues are in important communicating tool of emotions (Brader, 2005; Weber, 2013). Weber (2013), for instance, found that anger increases political participation only if anger messages are accompanied by additional audiovisual emotional cues. Treatments will therefore be presented in text while simultaneously being read by a professional voice actor, who will record statements for the issue treatments in both a neutral and emotional tone (anger/fearful). Sentences on the issues will be randomly drawn from a sample of sentences which vary in both emotion-eliciting content (appraisal themes) and emotional cues. Another advantage of audio messages is that they are closer to the reality of how politicians communicate than text while being less costly than videos. Moreover, I hope that this encourages listeners to pay close attention and I can control how thoroughly (quickly) a text is read (since participants will likely read at the speed of the narrator). I will measure emotional responses immediately after the text has been read. Risk assessment will follow the self-reported emotions but will appear to participants to be part of another separate study.

6.2 Measures

Emotional Experience. Individuals differ in their ability to make nuanced distinctions between similar emotion states, known as emotional granularity (Barrett, 2004). This makes accurately measuring emotional experiences a difficult task. To encourage participants to reflect on their emotions, without suggesting that they *should* feel anything at all, or any emotion in particular, in response, I will first ask them to write down what they think about the issue that they had just heard a speech about. This encourages reflection without exaggerating the self-reported emotional experience. Moreover, I can analyze emotionality of the written text and its length, as a measure of engagement with the topic. Only after, I will ask respondents to report their emotions using more conventional self-reports: *How angry/fearful/disgusted/hopeful/depressed/optimistic/sad/happy did the article make you feel?*

Manipulation Check. The appraisal tendency framework posits that experienced emotions influence subsequent judgment, as long as the core appraisal themes of the experienced emotion is related to it. Fear and anger have often been used to study the risk-assessment, as they differ on core appraisal dimensions that are closely related to judgments of risk, namely certainty and individual control. Past research has shown that incidental anger increases optimistic risk-assessment (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001). Following the treatment, I will measure respondents' assessments of non-political risks as a manipulation check. If anger was successfully induced by the treatments, according to the appraisal tendency framework, its effects should spill over to unrelated judgments. In line with the initial test by Lerner and Keltner (2000), risk assessment will be measured using Johnson and Tversky's (1983) "Perception of Risk Questionnaire", which

asks participants to estimate the number of yearly fatalities in the United States due to 12 events, such as brain cancer, strokes and floods, given the information that 50,000 people die yearly in car accidents. I will use non-political risks to rule out the possibility of carry-over effects that are unrelated to feelings of anger.

Political Sophistication. To measure political sophistication, I will follow Miller (2017) in conceptualizing sophistication as a factor score constructed from interest, knowledge and attention to campaign news.

Perceived Personal Relevance. [TBD once I have chosen treatment issues]

Issue Positions [TBD once I have chosen treatment issues]

Partisan Identification. [only needed in Study 2] To measure partisan identity, I will use the 4 item measure of identity-based partisanship, proposed by Mason, Huddy and Aaroe (2011): *How important is being a [party name] to you? How well does the term [party name] describe you? When talking about [party name], how often do you use "we instead of "they"? To what extent do you think of yourself as being a [party name]?*

6.3 Stimulus Material Study 1

6.3.1 Mock Issue: Climate Change

INTRO Climate change is one of the most important challenges we face today.	**HIGH**	**LOW**
CERTAINTY 1	**NASA** says **we're on track** to get to about 4 degrees or 4.3 degrees of warming by the end of the century.	**Some people say** that we **might be** on track to get to about 4 degrees or 4.3 degrees of warming by the end of the century.
CERTAINTY 2	If nothing changes, within the next decades, on virtually every metric, **things will get much worse**.	If nothing changes, within the next decades, on virtually every metric, **things might much worse**.
CERTAINTY 3	**Scientists are sure** that 2 degrees of warming would be harmful but a 4 degree warming **would be** catastrophical.	**Activists are sure** that 2 degrees of warming would be harmful but a 4 degree warming **might be** catastrophical.
HUMAN CONTROL 1	Let's also not forget that climate change is a **human-made** problem, stopping it requires **human-made solutions** and **political change**!	Let's also not forget that climate change is highly **complex**, stopping it requires **complex solutions/a drastic change of our habits and way of life**!
OTHER - RESPONSIBILITY	The main problem in all of this is that **our political leaders** have **decided to ignore** this issue for too long. Instead of fighting climate change, they support **fossil fuel** and make things even worse. They need to be **reminded of their responsibility** to take action now.	The main problem in all of this is that our political leaders have **not seen** this issue for too long. They need to **be reminded of their responsibility** to take action now.
SELF-RESPONSIBILITY	The main problem in all of this is that **we** have **decided to ignore** this issue for too long. Instead of fighting climate change, we **contribute to it daily** and make things even worse. We need to remember **our responsibility** to take action now.	The main problem in all of this is that **we** have **not seen** this issue for too long. **People** need to remember their responsibility to take action.

Note: These treatments merely serve as an illustration of how certainty, control and responsibility could be manipulated.

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