

Statement of Societal Interaction

Steven V. Miller

Department of Political Science, Clemson University

svmille@clemson.edu

I am a firm believer that a political scientist should do much more than just produce research to be read by other political scientists. Our primary goal as political scientists is to produce research as public goods to be shared broadly with the general public. Toward that end, I have endeavored to keep as broad a public profile as I can while maintaining the rigor normally associated with research distributed among political scientists. In this document, I explain the extent of my community interaction through invited commentary, interviews, and providing sources and quotes to media outlets on miscellaneous topics of interest. My CV contains full information and links to these particular quotes, interviews, and invited commentary. This document offers a summary of these interactions with the general public. It starts with a description of my invited commentary in various news outlets. Thereafter, I describe the various topics on which I have been asked to provide commentary.

I have ample experience writing for the general public through numerous platforms. My university's online magazine, *Clemson Newsstand*, carried [an article I wrote](#) for it in 2014 explaining the implications of the Russian invasion of Crimea. More recent invited commentary has focused on the current political moment in the United States. Therein, I have written about [cognitive racism and the 2018 House of Representatives vote](#) for *Data for Progress* and [how racism and authoritarianism go hand in hand](#) for *Vox* in July, 2018. I have written twice for *The Monkey Cage* at *Washington Post*. The first was a 2015 article on [the appeals of then-candidate Donald Trump](#) as it coincided with another strongman leader he openly admires (Vladimir Putin). The second was a 2017 article on [what we know about public opinion and gun control](#), written shortly after the Mandalay Bay shooting that stands as the deadliest terrorist incident (in the Global Terrorism Database) in the United States since 9/11.

Interviews through various media outlets comprise the bulk of my societal interactions and these discussions with various media outlets involve one of a select few topics on which I am well known in the United States and internationally. The politics of gun control and gun violence, a unique problem in the United States, is the typical interview request I get. It stems from [a blog post I wrote in 2015](#), which later became [a peer-reviewed publication in 2019](#). I have provided background research and quotes on gun violence and gun control that featured in journalistic write-ups by *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *CNN*, *NBC News*, and *The Washington Post*. I have even done international outreach on this topic for journalists abroad looking for context on the unique problem of gun violence in the United States. For example, I offered some commentary to some questions about American gun violence for *Correio Braziliense* in Brazil and did a radio interview with *BBC Radio 5 Live* in the United Kingdom.

I also routinely discuss the issue of creeping authoritarianism in the United States with journalists both in the United States and abroad who want academic expertise on how Donald Trump threatens American democracy. Much of this stems from a few publications—in *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *Political Behavior*, and *Political Research Quarterly*—that proved prescient for contex-

tualizing the rise of Donald Trump in the United States. A follow-up [publication with Nicholas T. Davis in *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*](#) made an explicit link between white outgroup prejudice in the United States and the rejection of democracy as a legitimate form of government in the United States. These papers received considerable press both domestically and abroad. *MacLean's* in Canada featured my early research on this topic in March 2016. I did an interview with Nicholas T. Davis for [the *This is Hell!* podcast in June 2018](#). I also provided background quotes and context for write-ups in *NBC News*, *Salon*, and *Think Progress*.

My research on the topic of “economic anxiety” and anti-immigration attitudes in the United States has also generated some press and interactions with society through the media. Briefly, [a peer-reviewed publication of mine](#) collects a battery of economic indicators ranking from unemployment rates to tax returns to show that the effect of “economic anxiety” on immigration attitudes is minimal relative to an ethnocentric disposition that treats immigrants as outgroups that are undesirable and unworthy of representation. This is a major challenge to how American news media tries to discuss anti-immigration opinions, giving xenophobia the benefit of the doubt within a political economy of immigrations framework. My research has challenged this. I have had the opportunity to discuss this research in radio interviews in [Boston](#) and [New York](#). I have provided additional context and quotes on this topic that featured in news outlets like *Mother Jones*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Finally, I currently run *The Palmetto Poll* at Clemson University, often serving as lead researcher for the construction of surveys of citizen attitudes in South Carolina. Recently, these have included the Democratic presidential primary in February 2020 and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These too have resulted in interviews for local news outlets like [WSPA \(CBS\)](#) and [WYFF \(NBC\)](#) in addition to radio interviews with statewide radio programs like [WRNN 99.5 - Hot Talk](#).

My CV again lists all these media appearances with direct links to where anyone could hear, read, or see the scope of my comments. I offer this statement as a summary of these contributions and also as an emphasis on why I try to make myself broadly available to communities as varying as my local community in Upstate South Carolina, Brazilian newspaper subscribers, Canadian magazine readers, and radio listeners in the United Kingdom. An important part of being an academic is an ability and willingness to produce knowledge for general consumption by society. I take that seriously and have made myself available and accessible toward that end.