

Why Clean Energy Investments Did Not Create New Political Constituencies

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Intended Policy Feedback

“The impact is being felt on the ground...hundreds of factories being opened to manufacture clean energy...There's more to be done but, we're not going to be rolling this stuff back because I don't think the politics are going to support or sustain that.”

– Ali Zaidi, former White House Climate Advisor

Intended Policy Feedback

“New policies create a new politics.”

– *E.E. Schattschneider*

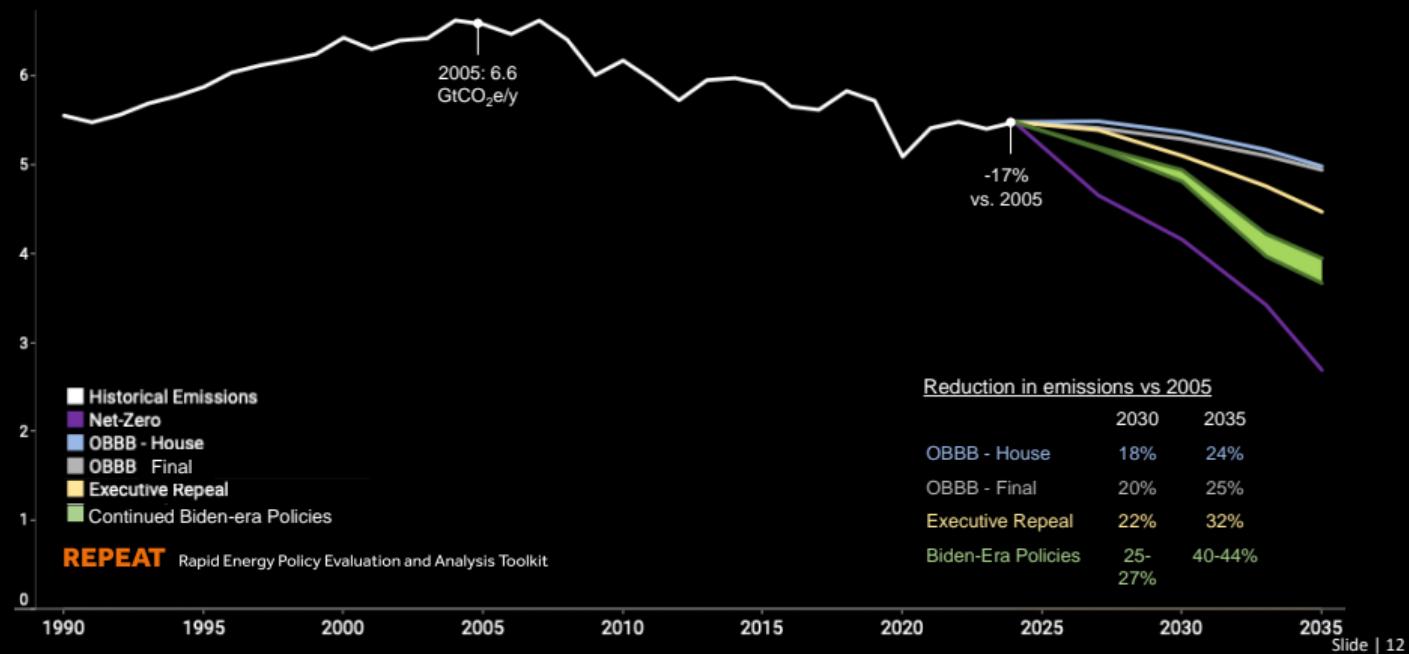


July 4, 2025

Higher US greenhouse gas emissions

repeatproject.org

Historical and Modeled Net U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Including Land Carbon Sinks)
billion metric tons CO₂-equivalent (Gt CO₂-e)



Did the IRA create
supportive constituencies?

Testing Policy Feedback Mechanisms

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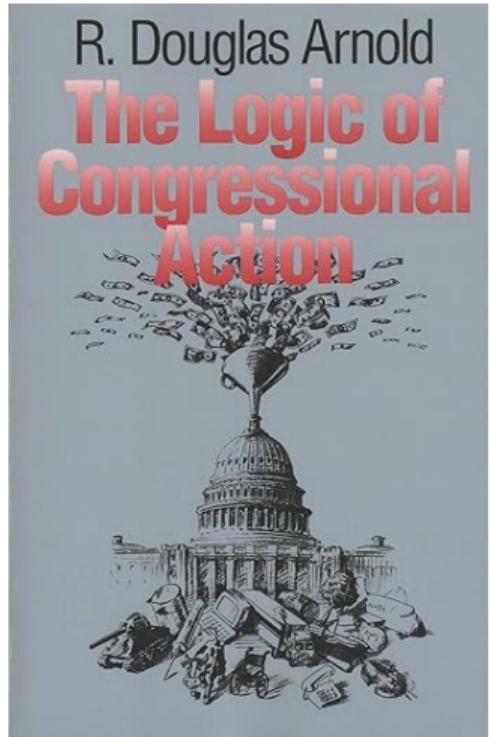
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- **Limits to green industrial policy's political logic**

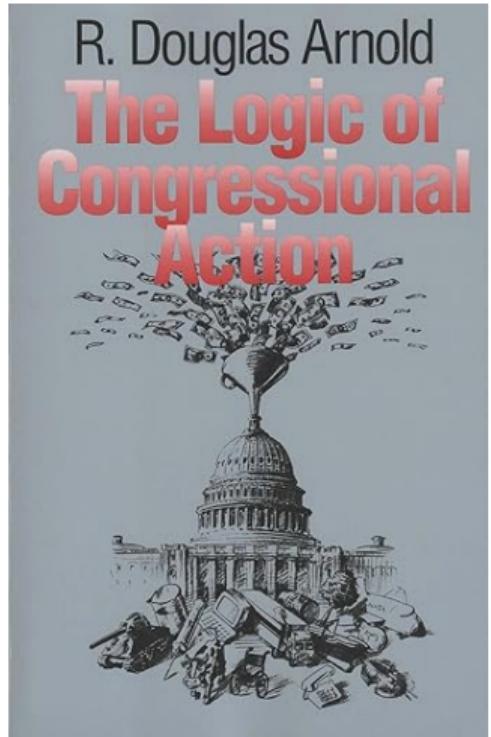
Policy Feedback Mechanisms

- Visibility



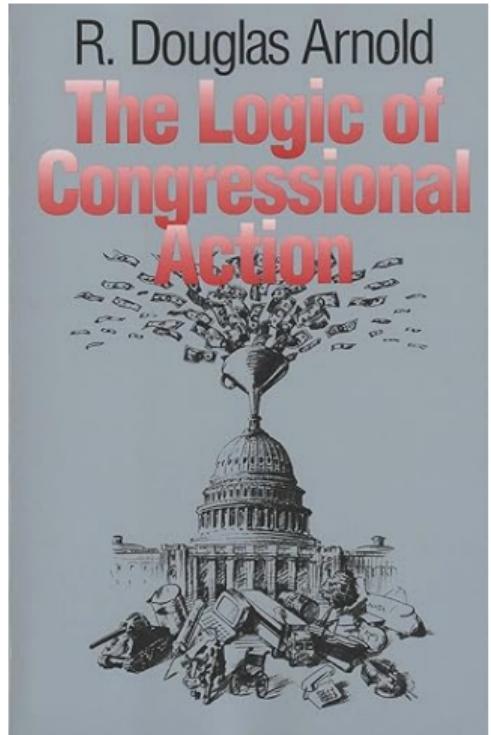
Policy Feedback Mechanisms

- Visibility
- Traceability



Policy Feedback Mechanisms

- Visibility
- Traceability
- Not automatic (Campbell 2012; Hopkins 2023; Mettler 2011)



Was the IRA visible?

Visibility Data and Measurement

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- Quotas: age, sex, race, education, income, census region
- Sufficient coverage near projects [▶ within-state variation](#) [▶ sample map](#)

Measuring Recognition

In the last year, have there been any green investments in your community? Examples include wind and solar farms, and plants to build electric cars or batteries.

Yes; No; Not sure

Measuring Recognition

In the last year, have there been any green investments in your community? Examples include wind and solar farms, and plants to build electric cars or batteries.

Yes (27%); No (42%); Not sure (32%)

Measuring Clean Energy Investments

- Utility-scale renewables (EIA-860M)

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- Linkage:
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 - Closest project w/ geo-coordinates

Estimation and Identification

$$Y_i = \sum_{q=1}^4 \mathbf{1}\{D_i \in Q_q\} \beta_q + X_i^\top \gamma + \alpha_{s(i)} + \tau_{t(i)} + \varepsilon_i$$

- Y_i : Recognition indicator ($1 = \text{yes}$)

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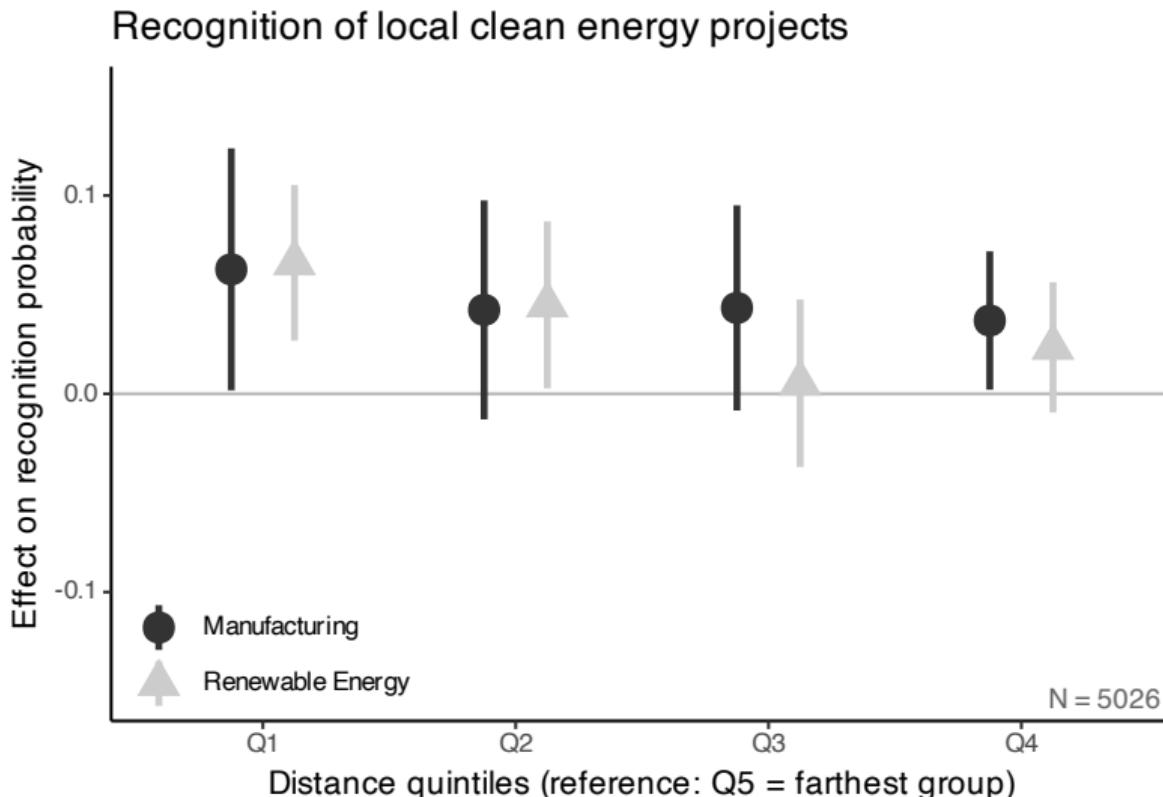
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- Conley spatial HAC (400 km)

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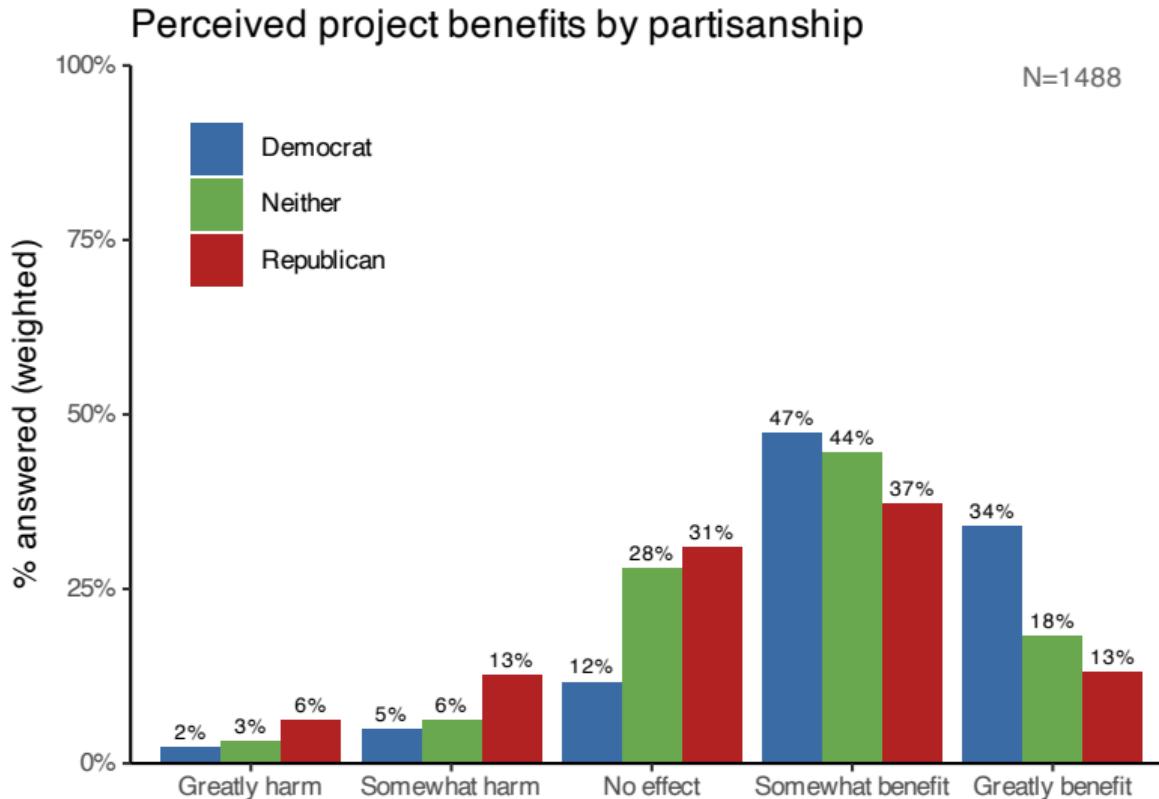
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- Conley spatial HAC (400 km)
- Assume within-state project location is unconfounded after controls

Projects Are Modestly Visible



Projects Seen as Beneficial



Was the IRA traceable?

Measuring Attribution

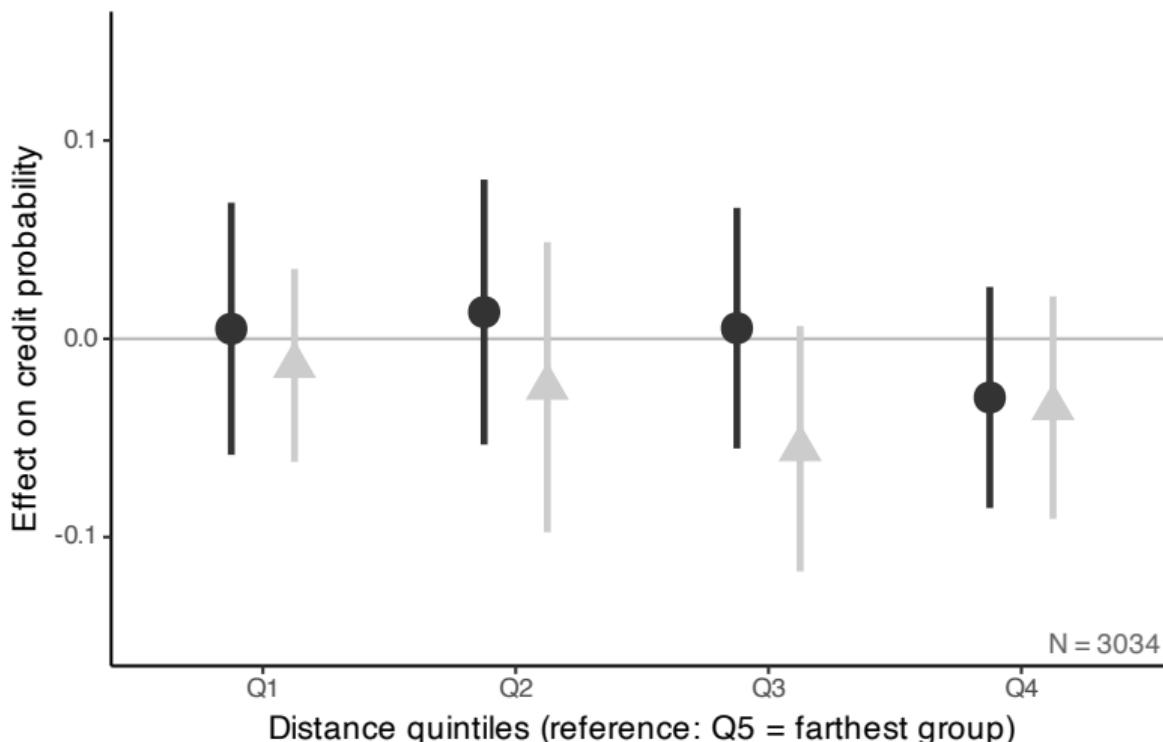
Your state has seen an increase in green investments. Examples include wind and solar farms, and plants to build electric cars. Who or what do you think has played a significant role in bringing these investments to your state? For each option, please rate how responsible you believe they are for attracting these green investments.

**President Joe Biden; The US Congress; Your Governor;
Your state legislature; Community leaders; The free market**

*Extremely responsible; Very responsible; Moderately responsible;
Not too responsible; Not at all responsible*

Projects Aren't Traceable

Attribution of clean energy projects to President Biden



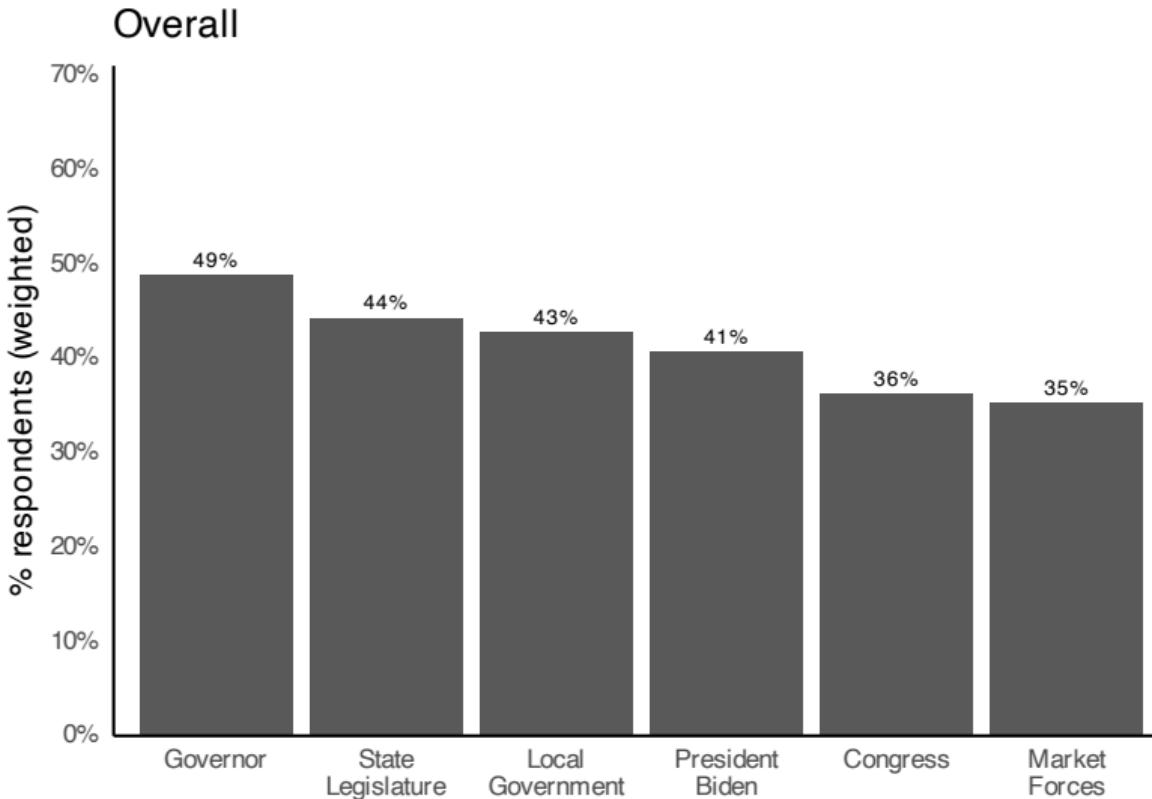
Well-Powered for Meaningful Effect

- 80% power for 10 pp effect ($\alpha = 0.05$)

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- Equivalence test rules out effect > 5.5 pp

Governors Get Credit



Why limited traceability?

Complex Information Environment



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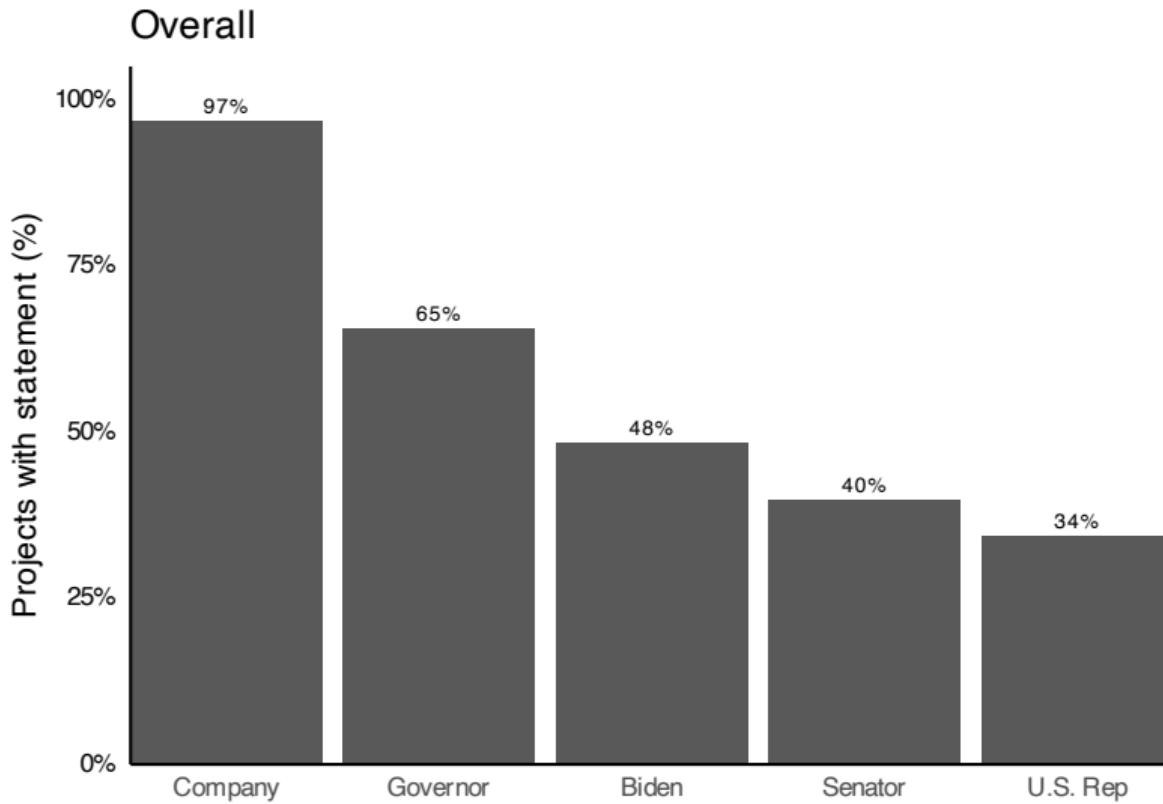
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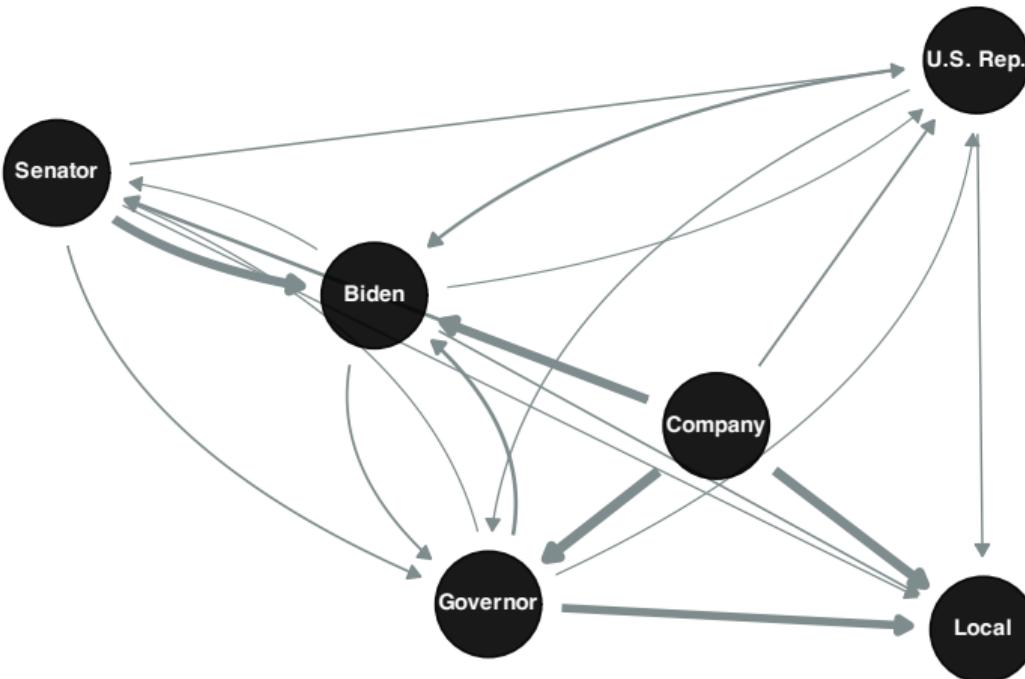
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- LLM annotation of credit

Governors “Speak” More Than Biden



Companies Spread Credit Widely



▶ party

IRA Didn't Create Public Constituencies

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- Voters *and* businesses

Visibility Without Traceability

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Appendix

Sample:

- ▶ within-state variation

- ▶ sample map

Credit beliefs:

- ▶ partisanship

Heterogeneity:

- ▶ partisanship

- ▶ education

Interpretation:

- ▶ power analysis

Benefits: ▶ no proximity effect

Traceability: ▶ signs

Statement data:

- ▶ party

- ▶ type summary

- ▶ temporal variation

- ▶ capital target

- ▶ partisan networks

Sample Coverage Near Projects

◀ Present

◀ Appendix

A
Survey respondent locations (N=5026)



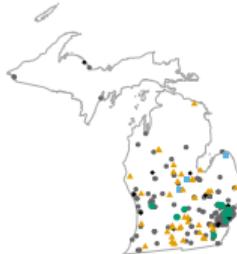
B
Renewable generation projects (N=2283)



C
Green manufacturing projects (N=306)



D
Zoomed-in example

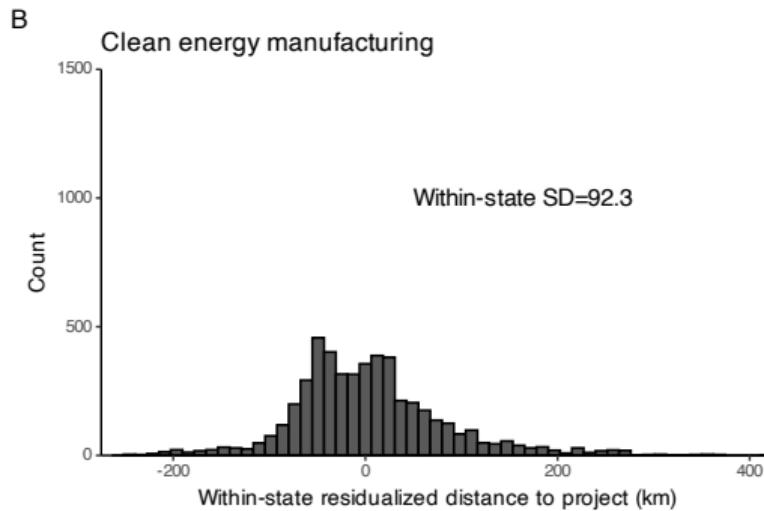
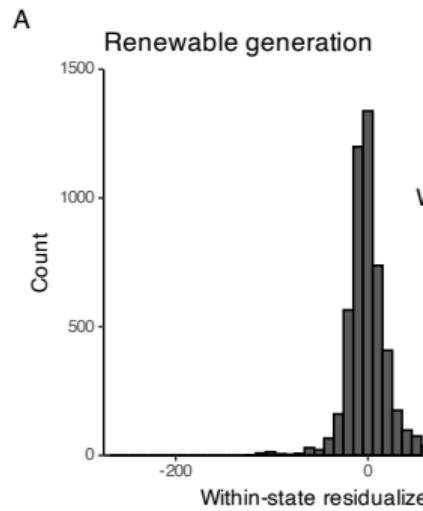


◆ Batteries ● EVs ▲ Solar ● Survey respondent ■ Wind

Within-State Variation

◀ Present

◀ Appendix

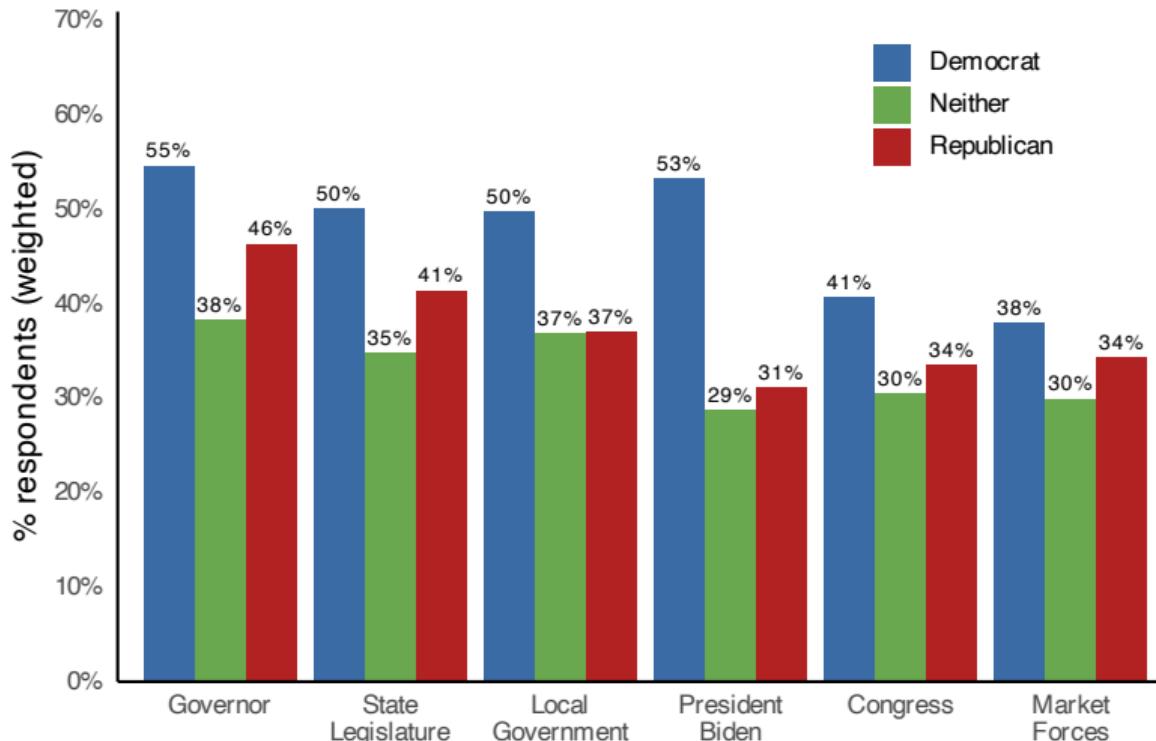


Credit Beliefs by Partisanship

◀ Present

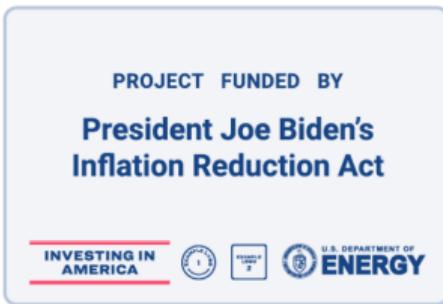
◀ Appendix

By respondent partisanship



Importance of Credit Claiming

◀ Appendix



White



Gray



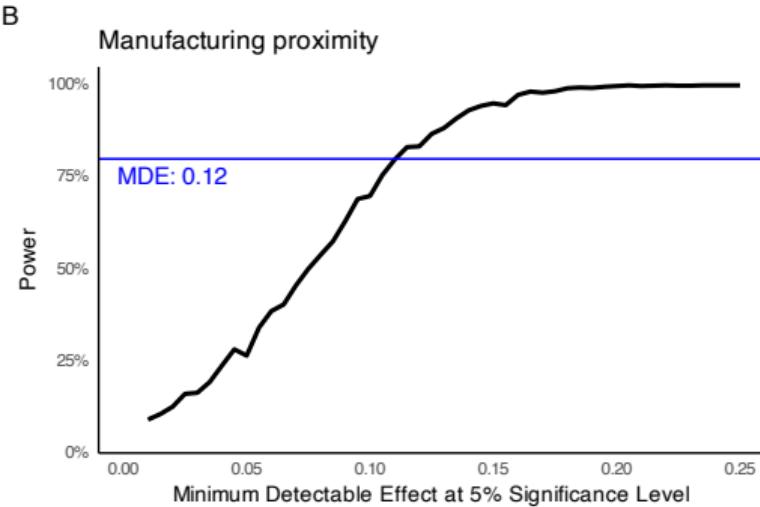
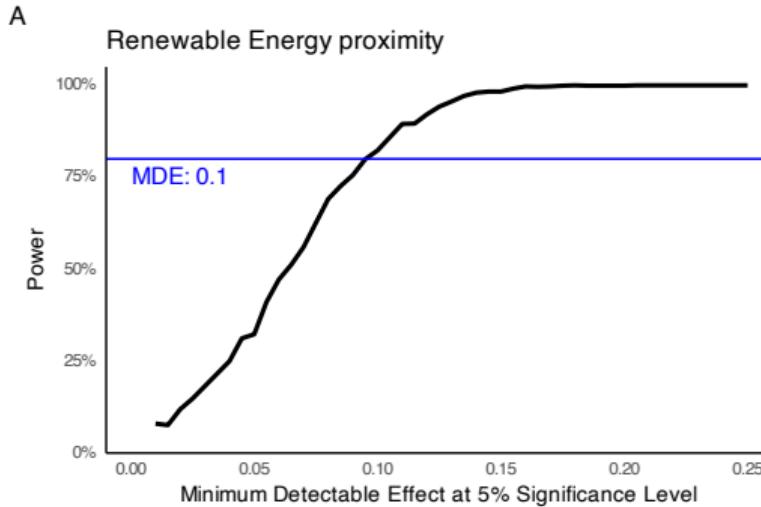
Blue



Red Border

Power Analysis: Credit Attribution

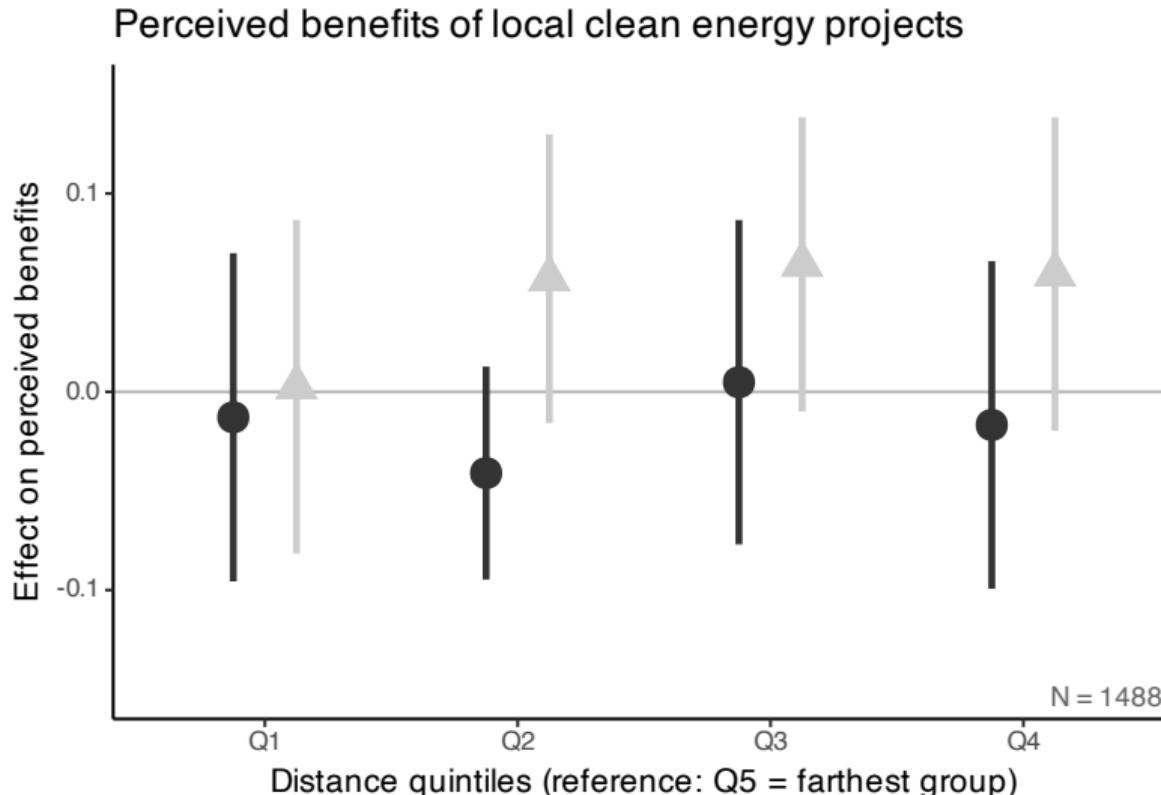
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Proximity and Benefits

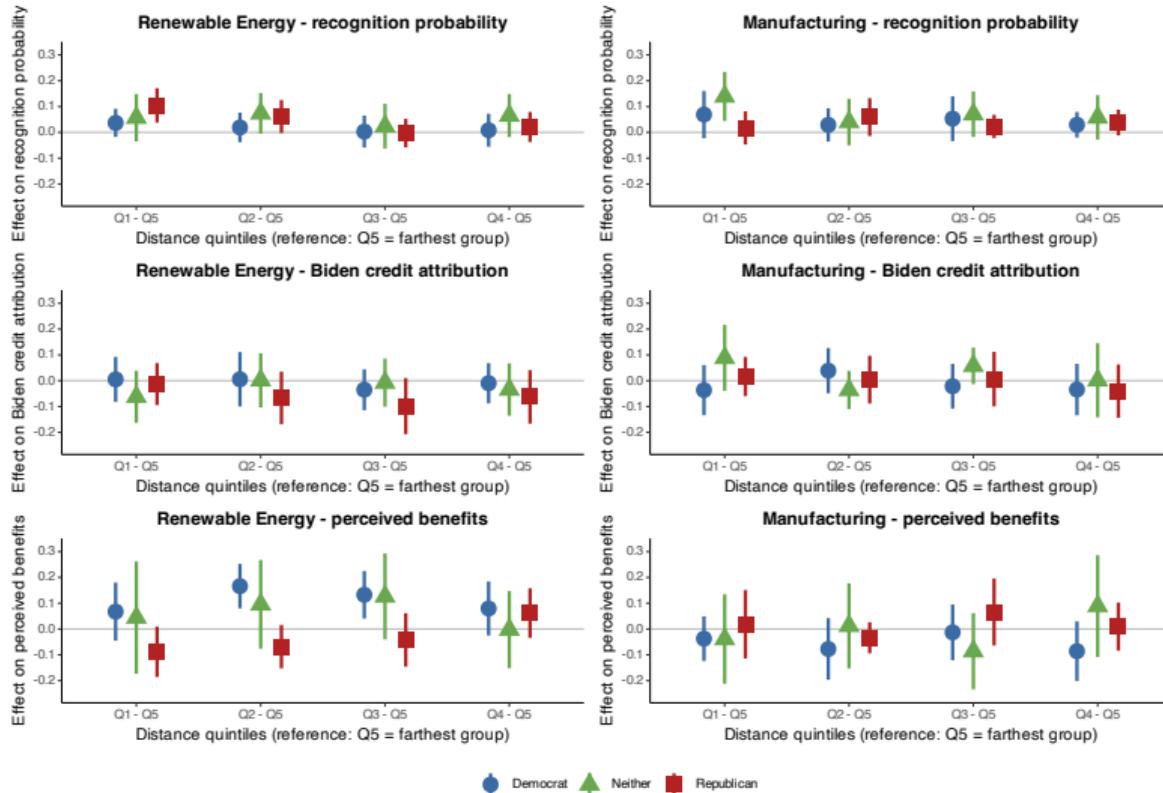
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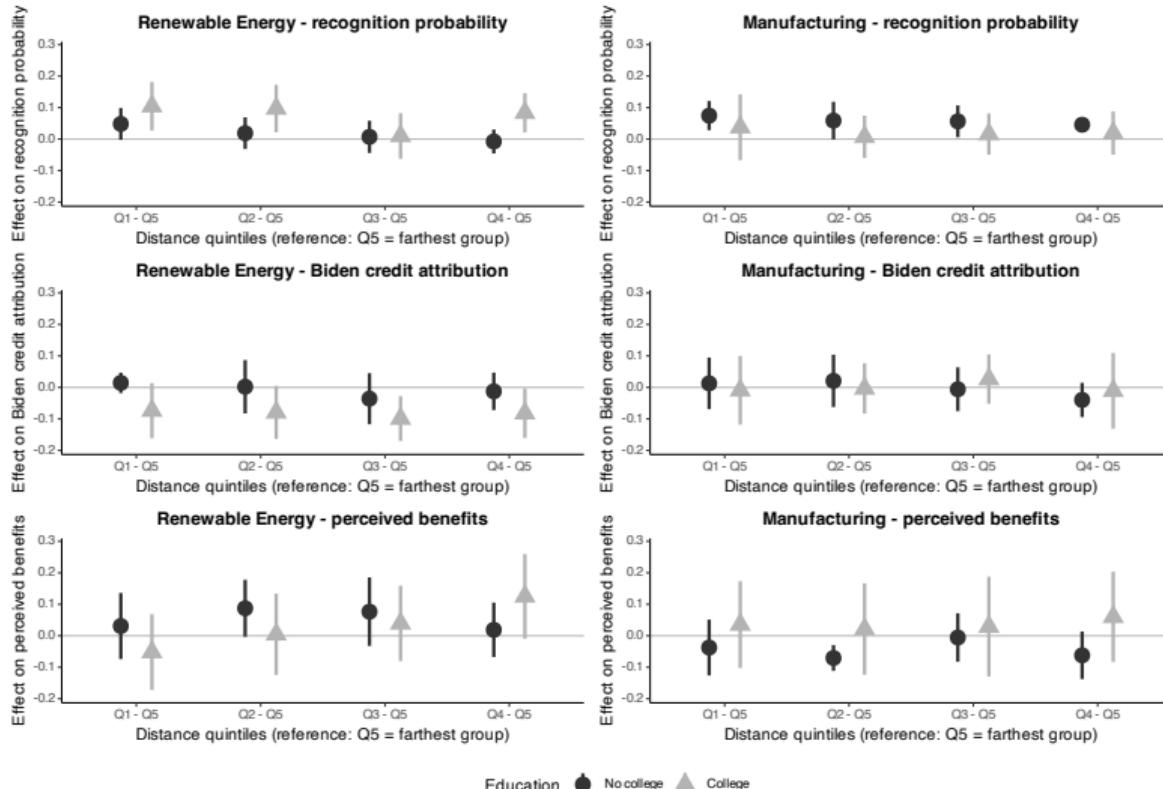
Heterogeneity: Partisanship

◀ Appendix



Heterogeneity: Education

◀ Appendix

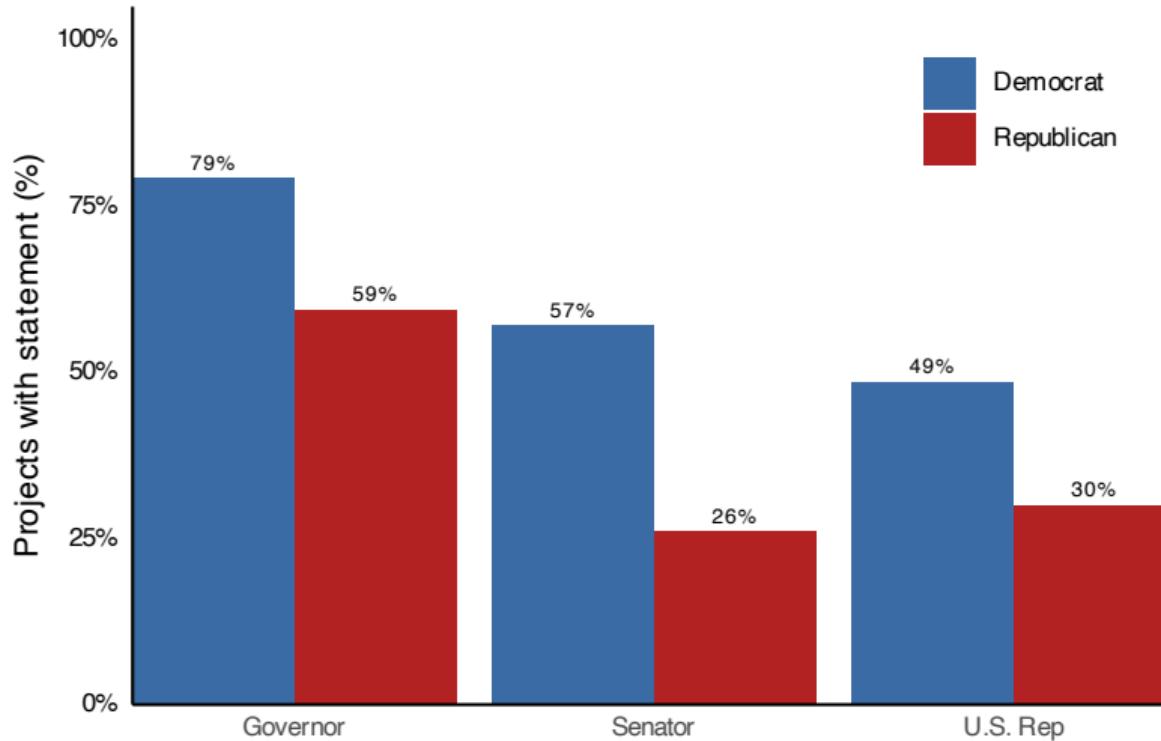


Statements by Speaker Partisanship

◀ present

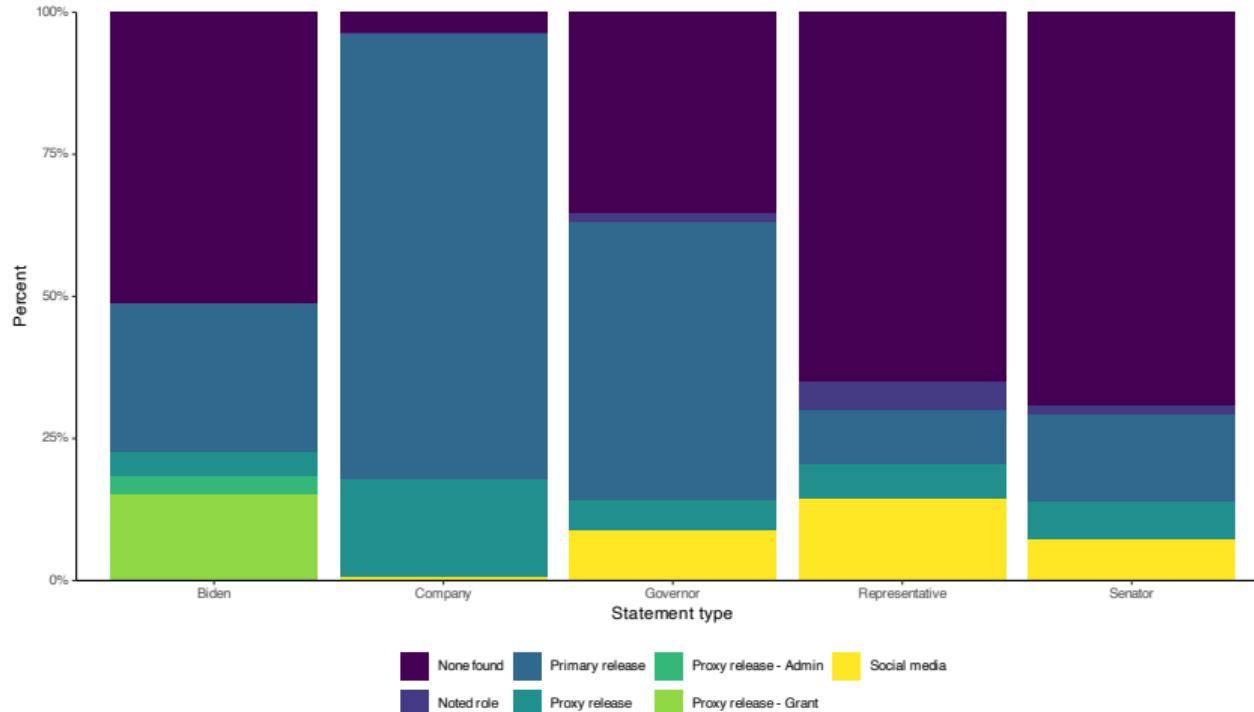
◀ Appendix

By speaker partisanship



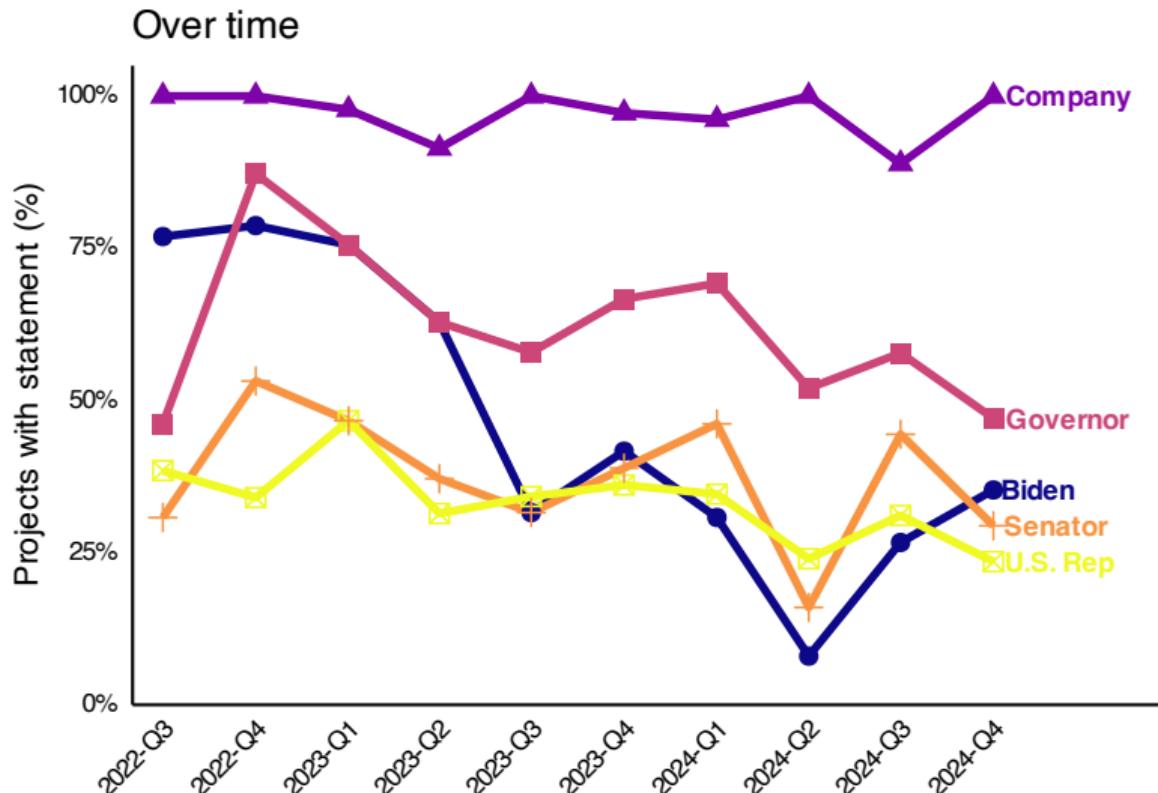
Statement: Type by Actor

◀ Appendix



Statements: Temporal Variation

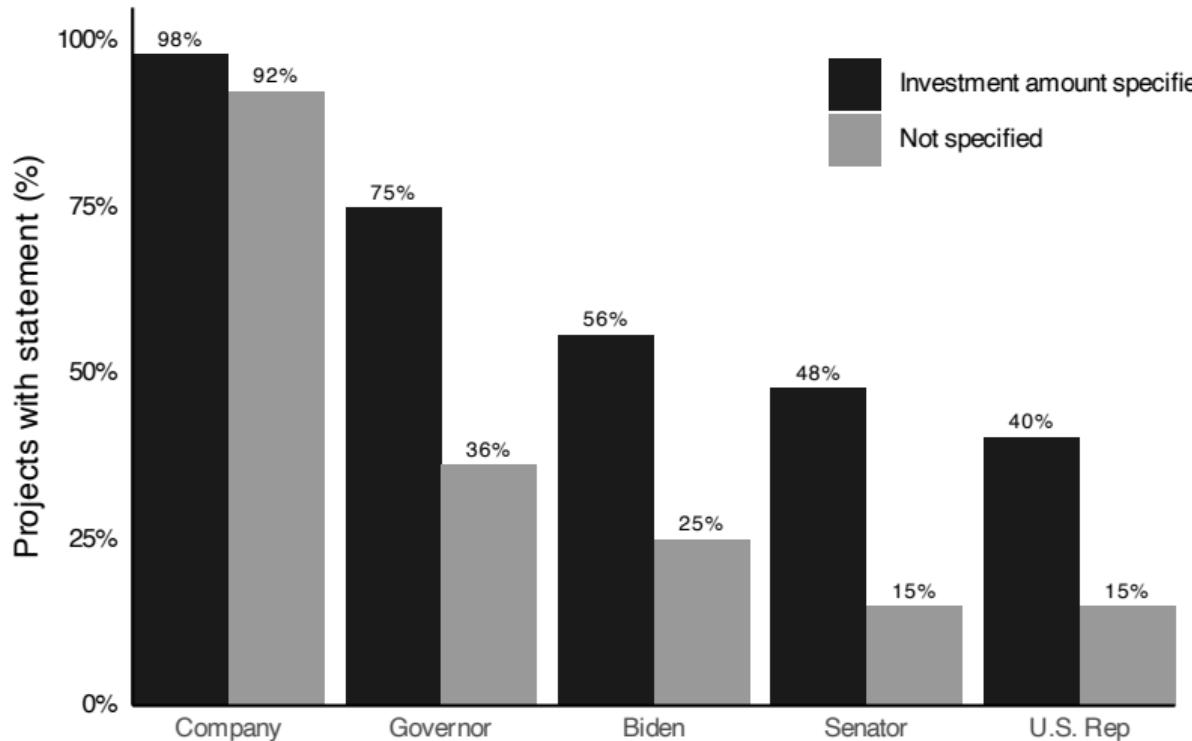
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Statements: Investment Target

◀ Appendix

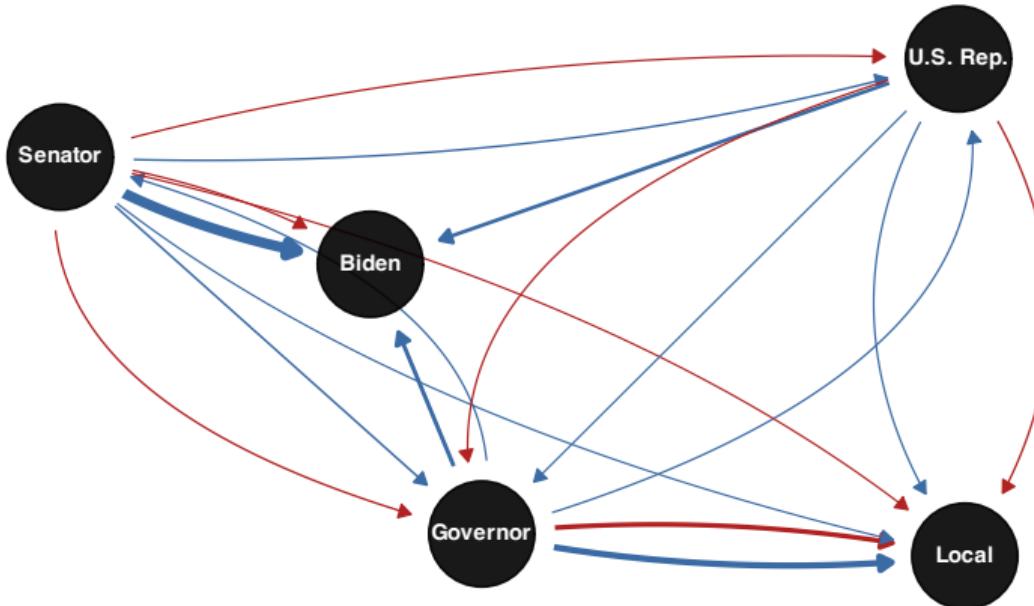
By investment target



Statements: Partisan Networks

◀ present

◀ Appendix



Speaker Party → D → R

Credit Instances → 20 → 40 → 60 → 80