

Changing Norms and Partisan Polarization: How elites advance mass polarization

Prepared for presentation in a seminar of Political Psychology

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December 9, 2021

How we think of polarization

- Polarization as the result of divergent issue preferences
- Polarization as the result of social identities

What I argue

- Agrees that polarization is likely the result of divergent and converging (as opposed to cross-cutting) identities
- In the world of a low information Jordan Q. Public, behavioral manifestations should be coming from somewhere
- It is coming from norms
 - Elites are polarized both ideologically and affectively (Enders 2021)
 - Elites have significant influence in the formation of attitudes among the public (Zaller 1992) and of partisans (Layman and Carsey 2002)
 - The mass media are a common link between voters and politicians
 - The mass media often interpret political events and the behaviors of actors
 - This information helps teach the public about what behaviors are normal and the extent to which they are so
 - As good partisans, the public then pick these behaviors up

What I argue (contd.)

- As a set of group norms, partisans will evaluate co-partisans and out-partisans based on how they adopt these norms as well.

Study 1

- Examine predictors of polarization and of behavioral manifestations of polarization over time. In particular, in line with my hypotheses, look at campaign attention and media consumption.
- ANES with its consistency* over time

Study 2

- Field survey of open ended responses with the goal of getting a sense of what behaviors the public think are normal in relation to politics and to see if there is partisan heterogeneity
- Prime them to think about group differences through a Party Likes/Dislikes exercise
- Use two questions:
 - “What does it look like to be a **Republican/Democrat?**”
 - “Please describe what is the right way to talk to **Democrats/Republicans**”
- Plan of analysis
 - Either Unsupervised approaches like Topic Modeling, or do a supervised approach with some human coders. Or both!

Study 3

- Use information culled from Study 2 to do an experiment

Table: 2x3 Factorial Design

	Co-Partisan	Out-Partisan	No Interpretation
Republican	Republican & Republican elite	Republican & Democrat elite	Republican & No Interpretation
Democrat	Democrat & Democratic elite	Democrat & Republican elite	Democrat & No Interpretation

Example of Vignette for Republican Participants

Congress introduced a new bill today. The bill **disliked by Republicans** is meant to address funding concerns for high use interstate highways. In reference to the bill, **Republican Leadership** expressed their feelings indicating that they felt this bill was not important. During the floor vote **Republicans spoke at length about the Democrats' desire to slow Congress down with "pointless bills"**. Afterwards on the floor, **Republicans were huddled talking about how to make sure it doesn't come back up for a vote next session**. That afternoon, when speaking to the press, **Republican leaders talked about how Democrats don't care about the well-being of the country**.

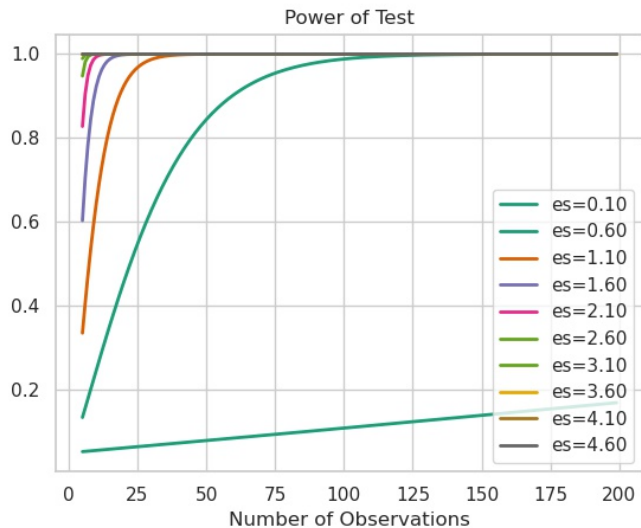
Example of Vignette for Placebo

Congress introduced a new bill today. The bill **supported by Republicans** is meant to address funding concerns for high use interstate highways. In reference to the bill, **Republican Leadership** expressed their feelings indicating that they felt this bill was not important. During the floor vote **Republicans spoke at length about how there are more important things to consider on the agenda**. Afterwards on the floor, **members were seen running off to their next committee meeting**. That afternoon, when speaking to the press, **Republican leaders expressed frustration but is hopeful for future negotiations to go their way**.

Measuring Polarization

- Standard Feeling Thermometer questions of each party: FT of In-group - FT of Out-group
- “Do you think the Republican leadership’s response was appropriate?”
- “Should the Democrats have reacted the way they did on the floor by getting in a huddle?”

Power analysis



Feedback

Replication code for power analysis:

