

Comments on Cook, Aldrich, Stoker, Atkeson, and Pham:
“MAGA: The Tea Party Meets Donald Trump”
&
Meade:
“‘Hate the Corrupt Ruling Class’: The Alternative Populist
Influence Network and Polarization”

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Overview

- ▶ Are MAGA supporters today's/former Tea Party Supporters?
- ▶ Cross-sectional: do they look the same? (YES)
- ▶ Panel based: are they literally the same people? (YES, but they needed some convincing)

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- ▶ If this does not exist yet, we *definitely* need it
 - ▶ MAGA itself still seems fairly understudied
- ▶ 2011, 2016, 2020 panel data is AMAZING for this!
- ▶ Interesting initial descriptive results

Comments

Exploit the panel data even more!

- ▶ Tea Party supporters did not initially support Trump in the 2016 primary, but align in the general and in 2020 – what happened?
- ▶ “the Tea-Party-now-MAGA segment of the Republican electorate” – do we really think these are the same people or could it be a lack of alternatives?
- ▶ Who supported Trump in the 2016 primary (before Tea Party supporters did)? How do they differ from Tea Party supporters? Who looks more like the 2022 ANES MAGA crowd?
- ▶ Were some Tea Party supporters more likely to align with Trump than others? (analyze heterogeneity within TP supporters)

Comments

Miscellaneous comments and notes

- ▶ “Do you think of yourself as part of the Tea Party movement?”
“Generally speaking, do you support the goals of the Tea Party movement?”
“Would you describe yourself as more of a supporter of the MAGA movement or more of a supporter of the Republican Party generally?”
→ These are very different in nature, only MAGA mutually exclusive.
- ▶ ANES data only has N=190 for MAGA Republicans – any chance of finding a bigger sample? CES?
- ▶ Table 2, Figs 2-10 show a lot of comparisons, consider adjusting p-values for multiple comparisons?
- ▶ Fn. 13: “Overall, the 2016 wave included all respondents (n=8,637) from the initial 2011 wave.” – That seems impossible. Even almost 60% retention for 2016-2020 seems absolutely amazing!

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- ▶ Lots of interesting, novel, and creative questions/arguments
- ▶ Fascinating combination of methods and data:
 - ▶ (Semi-structured) interviews with “fringe” populists
 - ▶ Media ethnographies
 - ▶ Podcast analysis (content, online, and in-person)!
- ▶ Covering a lot of ground on all dimensions

Comments

Theory (recently expanded) – empirics link

- ▶ Actually worked well for me
- ▶ Theory section poses 3 main research questions
 1. How do those with populist identities judge the media?
 2. How do they distinguish trustworthy sources of information?
 3. How do they understand the problem of polarization and its solutions?
- ▶ Both empirical parts (interviews and podcast) speak clearly, directly, and well to these
- ▶ **BUT:**

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- ▶ **BUT:** front end of the paper created very different expectations
 - ▶ Is populism good or bad? (APSR 1950)
 - ▶ Can populism decrease polarization?
 - ▶ What's the role of non-elites as drivers of populism?
 - ▶ How to classify left-wing authoritarians?
 - ▶ Check Dassonneville, Fournier, and Somer-Topcu + general CP literature
 - ▶ But perhaps part of bigger book project?

Comments

Question of depolarization

- ▶ What do these people think is the solution to “they are trying to divide us”, will Joe Rogan bring us together?
- ▶ What does one side of this (Bernie) think about the other (Tea party)? Do they see them as “the people”? Might be different for the interviews vs Breaking Points?
- ▶ p. 40: “What steps, as a country, can we take to force our political leaders to focus on implementing policies aimed at fixing the myriad problems we face; instead of them continuing down the path of culture wars and dehumanizing one another?” – Are there steps they all like? What was the answer on the show?
- ▶ ⇒ Is depolarization really realistic here? Not just in terms of sharing some interests (e.g., a podcast), but also in terms of policy?
- ▶ Bernie vs Tea party news consumption probably *fuels* polarization?
→ through the polarization lens, feels like a very different case than BP

Comments

Miscellaneous comments and notes

- ▶ Podcast live audience: could Taylor Swift or the NFL have a similar effect?
- ▶ Sense of size would be interesting: how many people listen/subscribe, vote accordingly?
- ▶ Reactions to live show different in Boston than elsewhere? (could be expanded)
- ▶ Curious: these people spend A LOT of time consuming and “checking” news but complain about 24/7 news cycles
- ▶ p. 37-38: a bit of critical engagement (who do they have empathy for vs not), this is otherwise mostly missing