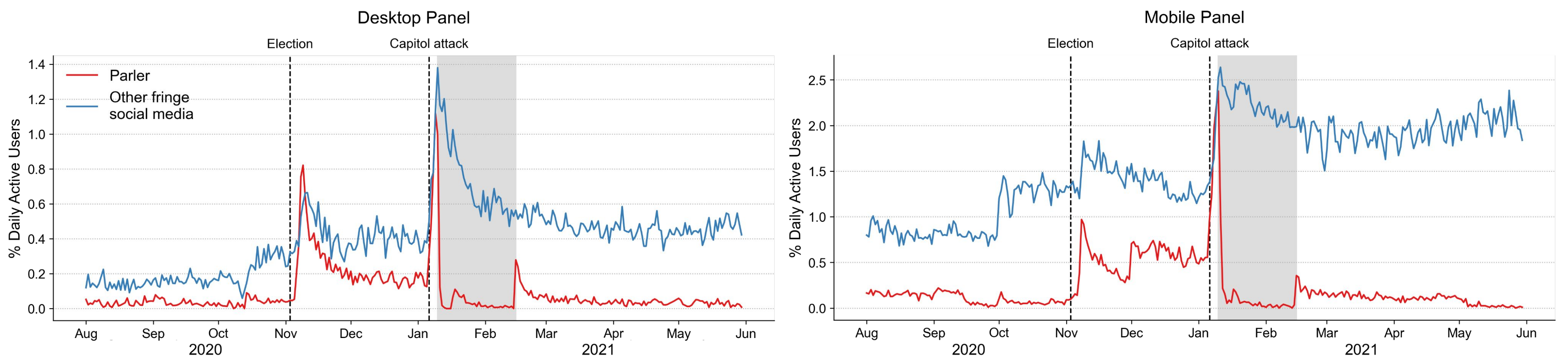# Assessing the Effectiveness of Deplatforming: Evidence from Parler.com

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After the January 6th Capitol Riot, Parler was *deplatformed* by Amazon…

…but does deplatforming decrease the consumption of the kind of content that was deplatformed?

Motivation

- Online platforms have resorted to deplatforming to address content deemed harmful.
- Users migrate to various alternative platforms permissive of hateful and extreme viewpoints.
- Previous work is limited in assessing the effect of deplatforming:
  - considering only a subset of websites to which users may migrate;
  - considering engagement traces like tweets, posts, and comments.

Methods

- **Data**: Representative panels from the Nielsen Company from US desktop (N = 76,677) and mobile users (N = 36,028).
- **Period**: July 2020 to May 2021.
- **User-level analysis (difference-in-differences)**
  - We consider panelists who, in December 2020:
    - spent >3 minutes on Parler (N = 455; treated).
    - spent >3 minutes on other fringe social networks and <3 minutes on Parler (N = 999; control).
- To ensure treatment & control are comparable:
  - Coarsened exact matching on sociodemographic characteristics and pre-intervention activity levels.

Main result:

Main result: Parler users did not change their overall consumption of fringe social networks following the deplatforming event as they increased their presence on other fringe social media platforms.