Strangers in their Own Party: Dissatisfied Partisans and the Worldview Model of Polarization

Steven Lauterwasser*

11 June, 2022

Abstract

The Republican Party's rejection of the outcome of the 2020 presidential election is nearly unprecedented in modern American politics, but there is one way that it is unremarkable: it has no Democratic equivalent. Rather, it is only the most extreme example of the apparently asymmetric nature of polarization over the last forty years. However, current work on mass polarization neither captures nor explains this asymmetry. In this paper, I bring together sociological work on cultural schemas, recent advances in the study of *attitudinal* polarization, and core insights on the role of *affective* polarization from political science, to propose a new theory which can and does: the worldview model of polarization. By defining polarization in terms of persistent patterned relationships between partisan affect, perceptions of threat, and feelings of fear, I am able to approach asymmetry as a question not only of degree, but of *kind*. Using data from the 1978-2016 ANES, I not only clearly demonstrate that Republicans are indeed significantly more polarized at the mass level, but also suggest a mechanism for this asymmetry, namely, that Republicans are caught in a radicalizing feedback loop of fear of the opposition and dissatisfaction with their own party's response to that perceived threat.

*University of California, Berkeley, swlauterwasser@berkeley.edu

1 Introduction

On January 6th, 2021, hundreds of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol in an attempt to overturn President Biden's victory in the November 2020 presidential election (Tan, Shin, and Rindler 2021). At the same time, 61 Congressional Republicans attempted to do the same as they objected to the certifying of Arizona's electoral college results (Tan et al. 2021; Wagner et al. 2021). This kind of assault, both physical and institutional, on the federal electoral process is unprecedented in modern American politics. And yet it was not only true that, as one rioter said, "our president wants us here", but that much of their party did too (Barry, McIntire, and Rosenberg 2021). Indeed, this was only the natural outgrowth of Republican attacks on the electoral process dating from long before the election itself and continuing to this day (Epstein and Lerer 2021).

This larger assault is, itself, just one symptom of the increasing polarization of American politics: as polarization ramps up, it sharpens political contention and poisons the political process, ultimately threatening the very contingent consent upon which democracy relies (Hacker and Pierson 2005; McCoy, Rahman, and Somer 2018). But this danger is fundamentally one-sided: though both parties have been impacted by growing polarization, there is simply no Democratic equivalent to any part of the story of January 6th. The reasons for this are, in some ways, very clear: asymmetry is one of the constitutive facts of polarization at the elite level. Not only is the Republican Party measurably more extreme than the Democratic Party, it is also clearly *responsible* for polarization in a way the Democratic Party largely is not: in the development of polarization in the US, it is the Republican Party that has played the role of the polarizing actor (Bermeo 2019; Grossmann and Hopkins 2015; Hacker and Pierson 2005; Mann and Ornstein 2016; McCoy et al. 2018; Pierson and Schickler 2020; Sinclair 2006). Likewise, the asymmetry is clear qualitatively at a more popular level, in the unique role of Republican popular organizations in pushing polarizing narratives, the repeated turnover in party leadership due to popular insurgency (see, e.g., Eric Cantor, John Boehner, and Paul Ryan), and the continued increases in Republican right-wing extremism (Hacker and Pierson

2020; Skocpol 2020). This makes it all the stranger, then, that quantitative work on mass polarization is essentially *ambivalent* on the question of asymmetry; indeed, the common approaches neither capture nor explain it.

In this paper, I argue that this ambivalence stems from the fact that this asymmetry is not merely a difference of *degree*, but a difference in *kind*. Previous approaches are powerful but, due to the assumptions on which they rely, they have been limited in their ability to grasp an asymmetry of this kind. In response, I propose a new theory of polarization, one which builds on recent insights from sociological approaches to polarization grounded in the relational nature of meaning (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017; DellaPosta 2020) with the concept of affective polarization from political science (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2015) and defines polarization in terms of the persistent patterned relationships between affect, attitudes, and judgments, bound to particular political identities. In essence, polarization is a population level consequence of shared evaluative schemas (cf. Brooks and Manza 2013). This is the *worldview model* of polarization. If polarization is fundamentally about the increasing division of society into meaningful political "sides" (usually two),[1] an "us" and a "them" between which compromise and understanding is increasingly difficult (DellaPosta 2020; Finkel et al. 2020; Iyengar et al. 2012; Lelkes 2016; McCoy et al. 2018), then the worldview model focuses on assessing how those sides view one another and the political or social struggles they're involved in. Looking at relationships in this way not only fits well with polarization on a conceptual level, it also provides the analytical leverage necessary to more directly operationalize specific insights from conceptual (or qualitative) definitions of polarization.

I then demonstrate the worldview model by using data from the American National Election Study to track the relationship between partisan identity, affect, threat, and fear and thereby assess the development of mass polarization (and asymmetry) over time. In essence, I look at the degree to which each party's partisans 1) see the other side as a threat, 2) fear the other side, 3) hate the other side, and whether those things are related. Previous work on

[1]However, see, e.g., Lauka, McCoy, and Firat (2018) or, for a related point, Fischer and Hout (2006) and Fischer and Mattson (2009) on "fragmentation".

polarization has posited these sets of related judgments as *definitional* of a polarized identity. And so it is these relationships that are key: polarization consists not merely in disliking the other side, but in that dislike coming coupled with further evaluations and judgments, in other words, with a worldview. Thus, the more perceptions of threat, fear, and hate/dislike hold together, the more evidence for a polarized worldview in aggregate. Asymmetry, then, will then appear in the degree to which these things are more or less strongly related for Democrats vs. Republicans. In the same way, I also examine how threat and fear relate to how much partisans *like* their own party, an area where predictions from previous work are much less clear. In this way, I both *validate* this new approach against a clear set of expectations, and *demonstrate* the additional analytical leverage it provides by intervening in an ongoing definitional question.

Ultimately, I *do* find the expected asymmetry in polarization, with Republicans developing a far stronger and more consistent connection between feelings of threat, fear, and dislike of the out-party. However, I find nearly the *opposite* with regard to in-party affect, where it is *Democrats* who see these relationships growing stronger, faster. This surprising finding suggests a potentially critical explanation: that Republicans are *dissatisfied* with their party, judging it for not taking the Democratic threat seriously enough. This would explain the overall differences in trends between the parties and help explain *why* there has been no Democratic equivalent to the January 6th insurrection, or the institutional assaults on the federal election process which preceded and followed it: this dissatisfaction may be part of a *feedback loop of radicalization*, in which Republican elites so effectively present the Democrats as a true and dire threat that their base is dissatisfied with the party's response and demands yet stronger statements, yet stronger actions, statements and actions which then further *demonstrate* the severity of the threat. Though it is outside the scope of the paper to fully validate it, this theory of dissatisfied partisans caught in a feedback loop *does* fit with both specific theoretical predictions about polarization (McCoy and Somer 2019), and the empirically visible pattern of increasing radicalism and popular insurgency which

seem to have possessed the Republican Party. Both the worldview model of polarization and the empirical findings presented here, then, are significant contributions to the study of polarization specifically, and the study of popular political identity more generally.

2 Context and Theory

2.1 What's Polarization and What's Wrong With It?

In order to understand why I'm proposing a new theory of polarization, we first need to understand why previous quantitative theories can't really capture asymmetry. Broadly speaking, previous quantitative approaches fall into one of two camps: *attitudinal polarization* understands polarization as basically connected to political attitudes and thus defines it in terms of characteristics of political attitude distributions (e.g. bimodality, variance, correlations across opinions) to define division (Abramowitz 2010; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996; Fiorina and Abrams 2009). On the other hand, *affective polarization* see polarization as social and defines it in terms of affective in/out-group bias (i.e. how the sides feel about each other) (Iyengar et al. 2019, 2012; Mason 2015). And each of these approaches has its own, sound, theoretical justifications linking their own phenomenon of interest and particular measures to the broader concept of polarization: attitudinal approaches draw on theories of pluralism and cleavage, while affective approaches build on social identity theory.

These approaches have had significant success, and each has substantial upsides. Early results from attitudinal work were admittedly mixed, leading to a long running debate about the *existence* of polarization at all (see, e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; DiMaggio et al. 1996; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2011; Fischer and Mattson 2009). However, more recent work that focused on *constraint*, or the degree to which different opinion items are correlated with ("constrain") each other, has found more consistent results (DellaPosta 2020; Kozlowski and Murphy 2021). These constraint-based approaches are also

fairly direct ways of looking at the degree of aligning vs. cross-cutting opinion cleavages, a central question in theories of pluralism and political conflict (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Blau 1974; Dahl 1961; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). On the other hand, affective approaches have shown clear and consistent results from the beginning, even as debate continued around attitudinal measures (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Iyengar et al. 2019, 2012; Mason 2015). Furthermore, looking at division in terms of the affective bias between social identities is intuitively satisfying and valid on its face: attitudinal agreement or disagreement make little difference if two groups hate each other. However, despite these upsides, both theories have had trouble adequately capturing the asymmetry we see.

This is most obvious with attitudinal theories, simply because so much of what is concerning in asymmetric polarization is fundamentally non-attitudinal. Now, to be clear, there are absolutely attitudinal aspects to asymmetry. Indeed, this is one of the more obvious divisions at the elite level, where party platforms and congressional voting records make it clear that Republicans have moved right far faster than Democrats have moved left (Jordan, Webb, and Wood 2014; Lewis et al. 2020; Pierson and Schickler 2020). However, much of what is most worrying is not attitudinal in nature. The argument that the Republican Party should be identified as a polarizing actor, for instance, is not grounded in the extremity of policy positions, but rather in the way the party has pursued (at times) strategies of deliberate intransigence (Mann and Ornstein 2016) and, increasingly, driven the use of "constitutional hardball" (the strategic choice to violate established norms to gain a partisan advantage) (Hacker and Pierson 2014; Tushnet 2004), or in the unique organizational ecosystem which surrounds it, where organizations act as "surrogates" for the party in pushing polarizing narratives (Hacker and Pierson 2020; Hochschild 2016; Polletta and Callahan 2017). Likewise, while there is certainly an attitudinal element in opinions about validity of the 2020 election, what is concerning is less an attitudinal disagreement about electoral policy, and more that Trump's claims of a stolen election, and the support those claims received from across the party, led to the January 6th insurrection and "sparked a campaign to terrorize election

officials nationwide" (So 2021). Election workers at all levels have been intimidated and harassed physically, verbally, via text message, phone call, and email (So 2021; Wines 2020) and a survey in spring 2021 found that "one in three election officials feel unsafe because of their job, and nearly one in five listed threats to their lives as a job-related concern" (Brennan Center for Justice and Bipartisan Policy Center 2021:4). Now, attitudinal theories of polarization would counter that the point isn't that all consequences of polarization are attitudinal, just that their causes basically are. But this would be more convincing if attitudinal measures of polarization were showing a clear of asymmetry of causes matching these asymmetric consequences. In fact, there's at least some evidence from the study of social movements that the link between attitudes and action is a weak one at best, and so we precisely shouldn't expect that kind of connection between attitudes and consequence (Munson 2008). So, while attitudes likely play a role, it seems implausible that they are the whole story. Instead, our focus should perhaps be on behavior, or a broader approach to politics.

At first glance, affective theories appear to do a much better job of this, but they ultimately run into similar problems. Shifting to understanding polarization as a matter of social identities, rather than ideological positions, is almost explicitly aimed at solving the basic issue with attitudinal approaches discussed above. To put it somewhat idiomatically, attitudinal agreement doesn't matter if people hate each other's guts. And, indeed, this basic idea has largely been borne out by the empirical results: defining polarization in terms in and out-group bias has not only found clear evidence of increasing polarization over time, but strong links between affective polarization and the kinds of behaviors polarization tells us to worry about (Iyengar et al. 2019). So-called "social distance" measures of affective polarization push this even further, by providing quasi-behavioral measures (e.g. how willing would you be to marry someone from the opposing group) and further strengthening the already powerful face-validity affective polarization (deservedly) enjoys (Mason 2018).

However, while this is in some ways better, it still doesn't solve the problem. Though

we have stronger face validity (and, indeed, attested, measured validity) for the connection between affective polarization and biased behavior, the measures we use depend on some deep assumptions which go substantially beyond their explicit theoretical claims. Indeed, the basic idea that in and out-group bias per se are definitive of polarization is problematic when placed in comparative context: in/out-group bias is not sufficient for polarization with any other identity pair. Only in the particular context of partisan identities are we calling them measures of polarization, and it is only in this particular context that they seem valid as such. For instance, if we were to take feeling thermometer bias as a definitive measure of polarization, then the US was "polarized" around gay/straight conflict in the 80s and 90s, when feeling thermometer scores towards gays were around the level out-party thermometer scores are now (Hetherington 2009:435–36). There is perhaps an argument to be made that this was the case, but most definitions of polarization clearly exclude this possibility. In some cases this is based on *a priori* assumptions that polarization is necessarily about *political* identities,[2] but in others it is for more coherent theoretical or empirical reasons, e.g. the totalizing nature of polarized partisan conflict or the connection between polarization and the construction of truth, etc. (Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy and Somer 2019; Somer and McCoy 2019). Ultimately, the point is that this comparison makes clear that a simple measure of in/out-group bias cannot *alone* define polarization. As with attitudinal measures, while there is certainly a connection between affective measures and the manifestations of polarization we care about, it is limited and incomplete.

But really what this is all showing us, in different ways, is that affective and attitudinal theories share the same problem: their conceptions of polarization are well specified, but limited, and as a result they can really only conceive of asymmetries of *degree* and can't deal with asymmetries in *kind*. This is a problem because, as should likely be apparent based on the examples discussed so far, we know that asymmetries in kind are foundational to

[2]Of course, the question of what exactly makes an identity "political" is very much in play; however, as alluded to above, these definitions almost universally mean *partisan* identities (Finkel et al. 2020; Hetherington 2009; Iyengar et al. 2012; Mason 2015; McCoy and Somer 2019).

polarization in the US. That the Republican Party can be fairly identified as a polarizing actor, surrounded by a unique organizational ecosystem, and driven partly by continued increases in right-wing extremism and popular insurgencies within the party, while the Democratic Party cannot, is not a difference of degree along a scale but a difference in kind. And going deeper, we know that the parties are different in nature, with Grossmann and Hopkins (2015) arguing that, while the Democratic Party is best understood as a pragmatic coalition of social groups, the Republican Party is fundamentally ideologically based. And this ideologically based party has become the party of radical right-wing extremism, including both ethno-nationalist resentment and extreme anti-government sentiment (Mann and Ornstein 2016; Skocpol 2020). This ethno-nationalist resentment, especially, has been fundamentally *popular* in nature, and was the source of the Tea Party: a major popular insurgency in the party which overturned leadership both locally and nationally (Skocpol 2020:18). Now, to be clear, it's not that a theory of polarization needs to capture every individual aspect of this wide array of differences directly, especially as some of them are only contingently related to what we would normally recognize as polarization. Rather, a theory of polarization must be able to capture the kinds of impacts these differences might have. Especially given the constitutive role of this asymmetry in American politics, it is difficult to imagine that it wouldn't have impacts. But it is certainly possible that those impacts might not show up in ways that attitudinal or affective theories can grasp.

Indeed, attitudinal and affective theories can generally only capture the impact of these differences insofar as they affect a relatively limited selection of attitudinal and affective survey questions. And we can easily imagine ways that, e.g. January 6th, might be caused by asymmetric polarization even if we see no asymmetries on feeling thermometers or political attitudes. Put another way, I don't think that we can assume that the harassment of election officials would necessarily show up as lower out-party affect, as measured by survey questions. Part of the issue here a basic problem underlying survey questions generally: there are limits to the degree to which we can take survey responses as meaningfully true and accurate

representations of respondents' actual ways of being in the world (Abbott 1988; de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2015; Vaisey 2009). The same attitudinal question my be answered in the same way by two respondents despite vast differences in how much the two are concerned with or care about the issue in general or their position specifically, and a respondent might have rated the Democratic Party a zero on a 100 point feeling thermometer for decades before they disliked them enough to attend a "Stop the Steal" rally. The point here isn't that this makes survey data unusable (though some would argue that point, see, e.g., de Leon et al. 2015,), but that these are uncertainties which contribute to the difficulty attitudinal and affective theories have in getting at asymmetries in kind.

This issue of asymmetry in kind rather than degree is, however, only a symptom of a more fundamental problem, which is at the heart of all of the specific issues I've discussed so far: disagreement is not inherently meaningful; it must be made so. Part of the fundamental difficulty of survey questions discussed above is that meaning is necessarily *relational*. So, for instance, a respondent's opinion about government spending is meaningful, both with regard to the literal meaning and in terms of what we ought to make of it, only by way of its relation to other beliefs. Indeed, this basic fact is at the heart of constraint based definitions of attitudinal polarization, which take those relations as the object of interest (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017; DellaPosta 2020). But it is not only true of semantic meaning, but also more broadly of affects, judgments, etc. (Hennion 2007; Wimmer 2013). And it is perhaps especially true for the way all of these things relate to politics. This is what it means to say that disagreement it not inherently meaningful, but rather is made so. This is the essential point raised by work on political articulation: no division has political meaning by nature or necessity (de Leon et al. 2015). Rather, it is precisely a political project to take some line of division, distinction, or disagreement, and not only make it politically salient, but make it politically salient in particular ways which require particular responses.

We can see this quite clearly in practice if we consider the development of politics and public opinion around abortion since *Roe v. Wade*. Disagreements over abortion mean

something very different now than they did 50 years ago, and have meant different things over that span. Focusing on the pro-life side of things, when *Roe v. Wade* was decided, being anti-abortion wasn't a partisan position, and the clearest religious valence it had was *Catholic*. But by 1980, the growing Christian (Evangelical) Right was increasingly committed, and the Republican Party included a pro-life position in their national party platform (Munson 2008:85–87). As time passed, early activism aimed at an expected quick reversal of *Roe* became more radical, as participants adopted more militant tactics (street protests, clinic blockades) from the mid 1980s, and engaged in violent, terrorist attacks through the 1990s. That level of violence has largely disappeared from the current abortion debate, but other forms of disruption (i.e. picketing clinics) have continued and increased (Munson 2008:88–90). This has all taken place along with one of the few examples of true opinion polarization visible in the 90s and early 2000s (even as partisan affective polarization was far lower than it is now) (DiMaggio et al. 1996; Evans 2003). And yet, overall public opinion on abortion has actually remained remarkably *stable* for most of the period (Munson 2008:90). So over the past half century, being anti-abortion would put one in a very different relation to party politics, religious commitments, tactical questions, and even political violence, while the literal "political attitude" as measured by a survey question remained the same. While being pro-life in the 90s didn't entail approving of terrorism, it did require thinking about one's relationship to that violence in a way which an *identical* position today does not, because of the ways in which the sides of this conflict have evolved, changed, and developed to be meaningful or not at different ways in different times (see Abbott 1988 for general formulation of a similar point). These changes were part of an explicit political project by which abortion was made a partisan issue and affectively charged in new ways

2.2 The Worldview Model

My response to these challenges is a new theory of polarization which brings together the strengths of attitudinal and affective theories with insights from the study of culture and

a grounding in the basic conceptual definition of polarization. As said above, polarization fundamentally refers to the increasing division of society into *meaningful political sides* between which political conflict becomes increasingly intense, dangerous, and unavoidable. There are two parts to this basic conceptualization: on the one hand we have the idea of division, and on the other we have the question of what that division *means*. Put another way, the cognitive schema which makes the categorical division into "us" and "them" is logically and practically separate from the set of schemas which make up what it means to be one of "us" and determine how "us" and "them" are supposed to relate (i.e., the schemas that make the distinction *matter*) (Wimmer 2013:9).[3] So in the case of the US, the first question is about the magnitude of division between Republicans and Democrats:[4] the strength of boundary markers, the clarity of the categories, etc. The question of "meaning" is about whether the partisan divide is in fact linked to other schemas. The partisan identities are the sides, but it is these other schemas which may make the sides *meaningful*. Insofar as polarization matters, to distrust of elections, to radicalization, to fear of the other side, to January 6th, it is because of these schemas. Without them, what appears to be polarization is really just a distinction without a difference.

Therefore, I argue that polarization is best understood as a set of evaluative schemas, linked with a political identity. This is the *worldview model* of polarization: a polarized society is one in which people have to see politics and each other in a certain way (namely a particularly antagonistic way). Seen in this way, assessing polarization means asking whether there are distinct sides, how people feel about the other side (and their own), and what people think that feeling *means*. Affective and attitudinal theories of polarization get at this in important ways, but only partially (as seen above). The worldview model follows affective approaches by making polarization a matter of identity and how identity shapes political

[3]To put this in Bourdieusian terms: we can easily imagine that two groups with a similar class position might be carefully delineated, and yet be relatively similar in *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984).

[4]Polarization does not *need* to be defined in terms of the parties (see, e.g., DiMaggio et al. 1996; Fischer and Hout 2006; Stavrakakis 2018), but as a practical and empirical matter, the vast majority of work on (and results about) polarization in the US takes political parties as the division of interest.

conflict. But I go beyond them by building on insights from recent constraint based attitudinal theories (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017; DellaPosta 2020) and taking the relationships between survey items as the key question of interest, recognizing the problems of meaning discussed above. Thus, in this view, polarization requires not only out-party dislike (for instance), but for that dislike to hold together in a persistent, patterned, way with other judgments about the other (and/or one's own) party.

Put another way, polarization is a particular "orientation towards politics" and it is worth laying out how this distinguishes the argument I am making here from previous work on asymmetric partisan thinking. An extensive literature in social psychology has looked at whether there are differences in how liberals and conservatives (and more recently, Democrats and Republicans) think. Although there is ongoing debate on some specifics, including the degree to which conservatives and liberals may differ in their vulnerability to motivated cognition Garrett and Bond (2021), there is nonetheless substantial evidence of significant "elective affinities" between psychological predispositions and needs (e.g. cognitive rigidity, the need for closure or the management of threat, etc.) and conservative ideology (Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2014; Jost et al. 2007; Jost 2017).[5] The discussion of partisan differences and asymmetries of kind, above, owes much to this literature, as does my basic contention that polarization is a particular way of thinking about politics; however, my theory of polarization ultimately runs orthogonal to it. Despite the importance of partisan differences in helping to establish our expectations of asymmetry and the idea of asymmetry in kind, the mere existence of divergent ways of thinking among partisans is not, itself, sufficient for (or necessarily particularly relevant to) polarization. Polarization is a specific concept, which I am defining in terms of a particular worldview, namely one which entails a particular antagonistic orientation towards politics (cf., e.g., Stavrakakis 2018). And, crucially, there is no *necessary* relationship between the kind of asymmetries previously investigated and

[5]Though there is certainly complexity here as well, with cognitive rigidity being associated with right-wing ideologies specifically, but also with ideological extremity in general, regardless of the side (Zmigrod 2020; Zmigrod, Rentfrow, and Robbins 2020).

such an antagonistic orientation. For instance, the fact that liberals may exhibit a weaker negativity bias and conservatives may be more sensitive to perceptions of threat (Hibbing et al. 2014) cannot alone tell us anything about who is more polarized, because the way in which such general differences manifest is highly contingent. This, then, clarifies my focus on relationships: a propensity to feel threatened only matters in conjunction with a set of schemas which determine how that threat is responded to.

In addition to the argument above, hopefully the face validity case for this is fairly clear: returning to the abortion example above, there is an intuitive difference between believing abortion is wrong, believing abortion is murder, believing abortion is murder which pro-choice Democrats are functionally aiding and abetting, and believing that abortion is murder which Democrats are aiding and abetting and that if Democrats win the White House again they will usher in the death of the republic. The basic attitude held is the same in each example, but the *meaning* of the attitude (or affect) varies wildly different based on the context of the *worldview* in which it is held.

Attempting to get at this in a comprehensive way would be extraordinarily difficult, and also potentially cause problems for the kind of over-time analysis of asymmetry which is my empirical goal here. Thus, what I will do here is lay out a minimal set of affects and judgments which make up a polarized worldview. Fortunately, there are three things in particular which both previous work on asymmetry and conceptual work on polarization highlight as being core to a polarized worldview: affect, threat, and fear. While affective approaches to polarization have their issues (discussed in detail above), the basic insight that affective bias is key to polarization still holds (and is supported by other approaches to polarization, see, e.g., Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy et al. 2018; Somer and McCoy 2019). Indeed, affective polarization, as previously defined, is an absolutely a necessary element of a polarized worldview; it's just not sufficient on its own. Rather, we must consider whether it meaningfully holds together with other political judgments.

Seeing the other party as a threat, on the one hand, and being afraid of it, on the other,

are the judgments I focus on here.[6] Both threat and fear of the "them" (in the polarizing "us" vs. "them") are integral parts of a polarized worldview (Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Lu and Lee 2019; McCoy et al. 2018). They are crucial to the increasingly moralized and vicious nature of political conflict in polarized conditions. As the other side is seen as more threatening, and fear of the consequences of their potential victory increases, individual moments of conflict become linked in a larger and increasingly Manichean narrative of zero-sum, life and death struggle (Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy et al. 2018; Ward and Tavits 2019). Threat and fear also play a central role in social identity theory, which understands threats to the in-group as particularly emotive and motivating (Brewer 1999; Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Mason 2015). And because commitment to an identity changes how one makes evaluations, as an identity grows stronger, threats become easier and easier to perceive, especially from the out-group (Banda and Cluverius 2018; Huddy 2001; McCoy and Somer 2019). Threat can also itself motivate identification (Gorman and Seguin 2018; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Finally, threat can provoke reactions of fear, which can then motivate (and sometimes suppress) political activity (Almeida 2018; Azab and Santoro 2017; Jasper 2011; Lu and Lee 2019; Mason 2015).

Threat and fear are also key to what we know about the asymmetric polarization between Democratic and Republican elites, and the visibly asymmetric actions taken by the Republican Party. To begin with, they are clearly visible in the unique organizational ecosystem highlighted by Hacker and Pierson which operates to stoke outrage and, in the case of the Christian Right, feelings of existential threat (2020). This outrage has built into a "deep story" of "us vs. them" in which conservatives are positioned as *victims* of liberal policy priorities (Hochschild 2016; Polletta and Callahan 2017). And this story is ultimately linked to status threat, i.e. a dominant group's fear of the loss of that dominant status and attendant privileges to an undeserving and dangerous other, which again matches predictions from theories of

[6]Threat and fear can be difficult to differentiate, but here I follow the literature on emotion in social movements and understand the difference in this way: threat is an evaluation of some external situation (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Goodwin 2011), while fear is an internal affective response (Jasper 2011). Fear may be felt in response to threat, but other emotions may be as well (Jasper 2011; Mora et al. 2018).

polarization (McCoy and Somer 2019:241). Status threat plays a clear role in Republican politics generally, but was especially visible (and effective) in first the success of the Tea Party, then Trump's mobilization of xenophobia and racial resentment in the 2016 election and thereafter (Abramowitz and McCoy 2019; Bermeo 2019; Mason, Wronski, and Kane 2021; Mutz 2018; Willer, Feinberg, and Wetts 2016). Finally, we can turn again to the harassment of election officials, the events of January 6th, and broader Republican contestation around the election, which can clearly be framed as a polarized response to perceptions of threat and fear of consequences, in line with McCoy and Somer's theory of "pernicious polarization" (2019:258).

2.3 Empirical Expectations

Given all this, our basic expectations are clear: based on the theoretical relationship between partisan affect, threat, and fear, the question is whether and to what degree fear and threat are linked with affect empirically. The stronger that link, the more evidence of a meaningful way of seeing the world (a way which sees one's own side as threatened by an evil opponent), and thus the more polarized that side is. Put another way, we are looking for increasing constraint between identities and a set of judgments in a way which deepens conflict between those identities. Then, given both the asymmetry in elite polarization among Republicans in general, and the specific ways that asymmetry has related to affect, threat, and fear in particular, we clearly expect that asymmetry to replicate at the mass level. That is, while the links between threat, fear, and affect should strengthen for partisans on both sides, they should get stronger, faster for Republicans.

However, there is one area where our expectations are not so clear. While I have thus far not differentiated between in and out-party affect in discussing affective polarization, there is in fact disagreement over whether positive in-party affect plays a role in affective polarization, or whether affective polarization might be better understood as *negative partisanship* (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Finkel et al. 2020; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; Mason 2015;

Ward and Tavits 2019). This is another place where a new approach can be useful: up to now the literature's focus on negative out-party affect has primarily reflected a comparative lack of variation in in-party affect (i.e. negative partisanship is responsible for the lion's share of the overall change in affective bias). But there are still good theoretical reasons to expect in-party affect to play a substantive role in polarization (Mason 2015; Ward and Tavits 2019). Indeed, there are really three theoretically justified possibilities which we can help adjudicate among. The first two are straightforward: either in-party affect *is* a key part of polarization, and so it proceeds asymmetrically in just the same way as out-party affect described above or in-party affect *isn't* a key part of polarization, and so we find some combination of no relationship between threat, fear, and (in-party) affect, flat relationships which don't change meaningfully over time, and a lack of asymmetry.

The third, and most interesting, possibility goes beyond the affective polarization/negative partisanship debate by drawing on specific qualitative empirical and theoretical findings on polarization, namely, that polarization should lead to *intra*-party, as well as inter-party, division (McCoy and Somer 2019:246–47). This division can be partly strategic, but it also flows from a commitment to group uniformity in the context of a political struggle which feels increasingly existential (Somer and McCoy 2019:14). Building on this idea, I propose a new role for in-party affect, namely, as a marker of *dissatisfaction*. For partisans who develop a polarized worldview, driven by growing feelings of fear and threat from the out-group, the question of what their own party is doing to respond to that threat is *critical*. As polarization increases, partisans will demand more extreme responses, and may be frustrated or disappointed at what they see as insufficient action on the part of party elites. This would result in a *weakening* relationship between threat and fear with in-party affect for Republicans, and thus an asymmetry in the *opposite* direction (i.e. with threat and fear more strongly related to in-party affect for *Democrats*).

3 Data and Methods

In order to measure the relationships between partisan affect, threat, and fear over time (and thereby assess polarization and asymmetry), I use data from the American National Election Study in a series of regressions, covering the period from 1978-2016. In each regression, I take affect (toward either the in-party or the out-party) as the outcome, and focus on either fear or threat as the independent variable. I then look at how the impact of each independent variable varies over time, by party. Before turning to specific details and justifications of the regression strategy used here, I must first discuss the data and variables upon which the regressions are built.

I use the American National Election Study (hereafter the ANES) in order to cover the scale and the span required to address mass polarization. Use of the ANES is extremely common in the study of polarization, for obvious reasons: given its focus on politics, it provides a variety of data which can be used to measure polarization and, perhaps more importantly, it provides relatively comparable data over time. Comparability over time is obviously critical for establishing trends and setting baselines, and the ANES dates back to 1948. The ANES has run surveys in every presidential election year since then, as well as in midterm years from 1954 to 2002. This makes the ANES one of the longest consistently running nationally representative surveys, outdoing the GSS (for instance) by over twenty years. The ANES has to split its purpose between asking consistent questions over time and asking questions of the moment, however, and so the number of questions asked consistently across the period is not nearly as high as we might like. Even so, we can still track polarization from 1978 to 2016. While earlier data would naturally be welcome, starting in 1978 does match up fairly well with previous work on when elite polarization first becomes visible, meaning we can have some confidence of covering the whole period of interest (Jordan et al. 2014).[7]

[7]This is not to say that the earlier period could not be interesting (indeed, comparisons to earlier periods of polarization have the potential to show us what is unique about the current period, see, e.g., Pierson and Schickler 2020); rather, I simply mean that 1978-2016 should cover the whole period of this *modern* incarnation of polarization.

3.1 Variables

To examine polarization in this period, I take in/out-party affect as my dependent variables and fear or threat as independent variables in the regressions which follow. Following previous work, I measure in and out-party affect with feeling thermometers, which ask respondents to rate how they feel towards given named group on a scale from 0 to 100 (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Banda and Cluverius 2018; Iyengar et al. 2019; Mason 2015).[8] With one thermometer for the Republican and one for the Democratic Party, I then straightforwardly create measures of in and out-party affect based on respondent party identity.[9]

To get at fear of the out-party, I use one of the ANES's set of yes/no candidate affect questions: "has [presidential candidate] ever made you feel afraid?",[10] once again following previous work (Mason 2015).[11] Fear of the out-party candidate also has an upside that is worth mentioning: because the candidate is representing the opposing party in *a particular election*, there should be a more substantial connection between the response and a sense of the *stakes* of any particular electoral contest. This has already been touched on above, but a sense of the increasing stakes of political conflict is a consistent and major aspect of polarization (Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy et al. 2018). Thus, having a measure of fear which is linked more directly to *specific* stakes allows me to see how specific situations are or are not linked to partisan affect more generally.

The increasing stakes of the conflict are also closely linked with seeing the out-party as a threat. Based on this connection, I use the respondent's perceptions of out-party ideological

[8]It should be mentioned, however, that the ANES cumulative data file codes all responses between 97 and 100 as 97, so in practice the actual range is 0 to 97.

[9]These measures are undefined for true independents, as they have no in or out-party. They *are* defined for independents who lean towards one of the parties, as I have followed standard practice and counted partisan leaners as identifying with the party they lean towards (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). This is useful for a number of reasons, among them that, when including independent "leaners", there has been no real change in the proportion of the population which identifies with one of the parties.

[10]In 2016, the ANES changed this (along with the other candidate affect questions) to ask "how often has..." with responses on a five point scale from "never" to "always". Following the cumulative data file, I include the 2016 data by collapsing the five categories to match the original yes/no question.

[11]Note that, for obvious reasons, this question could only be asked in presidential election years, so models using this independent variable begin in 1980 rather than 1978 and only use data from presidential election year studies.

extremity as a proxy for perceptions of threat. The specific question asks respondents to place the parties on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (Extremely Liberal) to 7 (Extremely Conservative). I then center the scale on zero and take the absolute value, resulting in a value between 0 (moderate) and 3 (extreme). Using this question as a direct proxy for threat is new, but the basic connection is well evidenced. Simply put, the sense of increased stakes and increased threat are co-constituting: the opposing party is threatening *because* the stakes are high, and the stakes are high *because* the other party is perceived as a threat (Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy et al. 2018; Ward and Tavits 2019), and perceptions of out-party *extremity* have been linked to both (Lelkes 2016; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). Furthermore, the nature of this connection is such that it holds regardless of the accuracy of the perception: if we imagine an "accurate" assessment of extremity, then these are connected to real policy differences, which are known to raise the stakes of conflict (Rogowski and Sutherland 2016), while we can also imagine perceptions of extremity as the *outcome* of an increased sense of stakes (Ward and Tavits 2019).[12]

In order to assess these relationships by party (and thus examine asymmetry), I include a simple dummy variable for party, 1 if the respondent is a Democrat and 0 if a Republican.[13] I also include the year as both a fixed effect (i.e. a series of dummies) and as a numerical variable. This allows me to look for overall trends over time, net of unrelated year-to-year variation (see Brooks and Manza 2013 for a similar strategy).

Likewise, in order to look at polarization net of differences in party composition, I control for both the strength of partisan identification (from 1, leans, to 3, strong) and respondent ideological extremity (using the same 0 to 3 scale as perceived party extremity). Finally, each model also includes a set of demographic controls: years of education, income, female

[12]This conceptualization is agnostic on the question of accuracy in general, and I don't believe it matters for the argument I'm making: the question at issue here is whether *feelings* of threat are connected to in-/out-party affect. That said, this is not to disregard the question of whether *actually being meaningfully threatened* vs. merely feeling threatened may matter more generally; it is absolutely a question worthy of further investigation.

[13]As mentioned above, I follow standard practice and include "leaners" (that is, those who say only that they "lean towards" one party or the other) as partisans, excluding only so-called "true independents".

(dummy), African American (dummy), age, southern residence (dummy), and frequency of church attendance.[14]

3.2 Analytical Strategy

The actual analysis, then, consists of four weighted OLS regressions, one looking at each combination of dependent variable (affect towards either the in- or out-party) and threat (via perceived out-party ideological extremity) or fear (via fear of the out-party presidential candidate). In each of them, I interact threat or fear with *both* year and party identification. In this way, I can assess not only how in- and out-party affect are related to threat or fear of the out-party, but also whether those relationships develop over time, and whether those relationships develop differently (and potentially asymmetrically) by party.

However, while interaction effects are conceptually straightforward, when more than two terms are involved they can become somewhat difficult to substantively interpret. In this case, I am interested in the marginal effects of the variables of interest, that is, the change in the outcome given a unit change in the variable of interest (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). But because of the interactions, these predictors don't have consistent marginal effects. For instance, the marginal effect of fear of the out-party candidate changes with both time and partisan identity.

We could get a good overall sense of the impact of fear by looking at its *average marginal effect* (AME), obtained by calculating the marginal effect at every observed value and taking the average (Leeper 2018).[15] However, this would not tell us anything about the aforementioned variation with time and party identification. Therefore, I instead look at the *marginal effects at representative values* (MER): these are calculated in the same way as

[14]Results are robust to a variety of alternative model specifications, including several different time period models (instead of full year fixed effects) and the use of partisan sorting instead of partisan identification and ideological extremity (see Mason 2015 for more on partisan sorting).

[15]This is different from obtaining the *Marginal Effect at Means*, where the marginal effect of a variable is calculated once with covariates held at their means. The AME is a better summary statistic because it incorporates variability across covariates into its estimate, rather than somewhat arbitrarily assuming that the marginal effect at means is necessarily representative (see Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan 2013 for more on this point).

average marginal effects, except that one or more covariates are held at values of theoretical interest.[16] This makes MERs analytically useful in a way other kinds of marginal effects cannot be, as it allows us to compare the impact of a variable of interest across different subgroups (Williams 2012:326).[17]

For the analysis that follows, I calculate the marginal effect of the variable of interest (either fear or threat) for every combination of party ID and year. In other words, I calculate the AME of fear on out-party affect with year held at 1980 and party ID held first as Democrat, then as Republican. I then repeat the process for each year, resulting in a set of values which describe the effect of fear on out-party affect in each year, for each party. *These* are the real results of interest, because they are a powerful way to assess both the statistical and *substantial* significance of the relationships of interest. AMEs/MERs are clearly interpretable and comparable, both within a variable and across variables: if the AME of fear on out-party affect in 1980 were -3 for Democrats and -5 for Republicans, that would mean that the relationship between fear of the out-party candidate and out-party affect was 2 points stronger for Republicans than for Democrats. Likewise, if the AME of living in the south were -1, then we could meaningfully say that living in the south has a *weaker* relationship with out-party affect than either.

4 Findings and Discussion

These relationships between fear or threat and in/out-party affect are the core object of interest. On their own, each of these variables may provide some evidence of polarization, but none of them show any real evidence of an asymmetry which would match the real differences

[16] Put another way, an MER is simply the AME *at* a given set of values and thus they can be referred to as such, i.e. the average marginal effect of fear for Democrats in 1980.

[17] For more on the use of marginal effects and the use of AMEs vs. MEMs vs. MERs, in addition to the already mentioned Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan (2013), Leeper (2018), and Williams (2012), see also Druckman et al. (2021) for an example of a similar empirical application and Long and Mustillo (2018) for a theoretical discussion.

between the parties.[18] But looking at the relationships between them allows us to go further: if the marginal effects of threat and fear on partisan affect strengthen over time, then we are seeing persistent, increasingly patterned, relationships between affect and judgment. As such, we could say that we really are seeing "meaningful sides" holding together more and more as the population-level manifestations of their shared evaluative schemas become more visible. To do this, I use four regression models, presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents the models showing the impact of fear (as fear of the out-party presidential candidate), interacted with year and party identification, on out- and in-party affect, while Table 2 does the same for threat (measured as perceived out-party extremity).[19]

Looking at just the tables shows promising results, insofar as we see generally strongly significant relationships. However, as said, that is necessary but not sufficient; it doesn't really tell us anything on its own. Instead, the real results of interest are the average marginal effects over time, by party. Specifically, we have two different sets of expectations for the two different dependent variables: for out-party affect, we expect generally strengthening (inverse) relationships with the relationships getting stronger, faster, for Republicans than Democrats.[20] This would be the asymmetry in increasing polarization which we have every reason to suspect, but which previous approaches have been unable to tell us much about. For in-party affect, on the other hand, there is some uncertainty, with three plausible outcomes, each of which would have different theoretical implications for our understanding of polarization: 1) results the same as out-party affect (but positive); 2) nothing of interest (e.g., no relationships at all, flat relationships over time, etc.); 3) the *opposite* of the results for out-party affect.

[18] An overview of the descriptive trends for in-/out-party affect, fear of the out-party candidate, and perceived out-party extremity is provided in appendix A and a comparison of the full models versus main effects models is provided in appendix B.

[19] Note that all models include year fixed effects, but the coefficients have been omitted for space and readability.

[20] Note that, because higher values of out-party affect mean liking the opposition more and lower values mean liking them less (i.e. *disliking* them more), we're expecting to see *negative* relationships which get *more negative* over time between threat/fear and out-party affect. Thus *decreasing* marginal effects of threat or fear on out-party affect are what we expect to see. In the discussion which follows, I attempt to focus on the *magnitude* of effects or changes so as to avoid the confusion of referring to an effect which decreases but thereby gets *stronger*.

Table 1: Effect of Fear of the Out-Party Candidate on Out and In-Party Affect

	Dependent variable:	
	Out-Party Affect	In-Party Affect
	(1)	(2)
Fear	337.16*** (76.10)	−124.13* (62.68)
Democrat	393.22*** (72.94)	−354.95*** (60.08)
Dem x Year	−0.20*** (0.04)	0.18*** (0.03)
Fear x Dem	−399.75*** (98.86)	−163.96* (81.42)
Fear x Year	−0.17*** (0.04)	0.06* (0.03)
Fear x Dem x Year	0.20*** (0.05)	0.08* (0.04)
Black	−1.62*** (0.49)	4.06*** (0.40)
Income	−0.11 (0.14)	−0.67*** (0.12)
Age	0.00 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Gender	0.75* (0.30)	1.22*** (0.24)
Education	−0.91*** (0.18)	−1.53*** (0.15)
South	−0.80* (0.32)	−1.90*** (0.26)
Church Attendance	−0.80*** (0.10)	−0.25** (0.08)
Partisan Strength	−4.95*** (0.19)	7.90*** (0.16)
Ideological Strength	−3.81*** (0.16)	0.82*** (0.13)
Observations	18,592	18,592
Adjusted R^2	0.25	0.22
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 Year fixed effects not displayed.	

Table 2: Effect of Perceived Out-Party Extremity on Out and In-Party Affect

	Dependent variable:	
	Out-Party Affect	In-Party Affect
	(1)	(2)
Perceived Extremity	207.38^{***} (34.85)	24.29 (28.74)
Democrat	457.72^{***} (94.79)	-240.53^{**} (78.15)
Dem x Year	-0.23^{***} (0.05)	0.12^{**} (0.04)
Perc Extr x Dem	-159.86^{***} (45.60)	-80.61^{*} (37.59)
Perc Extr x Year	-0.11^{***} (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Perc Extr x Dem x Year	0.08^{***} (0.02)	0.04^{*} (0.02)
Black	-0.90^{*} (0.43)	4.19^{***} (0.35)
Income	-0.05 (0.12)	-0.76^{***} (0.10)
Age	0.02^{*} (0.01)	0.04^{***} (0.01)
Gender	0.43 (0.25)	1.43^{***} (0.21)
Education	-0.99^{***} (0.16)	-1.44^{***} (0.13)
South	-1.43^{***} (0.28)	-1.89^{***} (0.23)
Church Attendance	-0.82^{***} (0.08)	-0.31^{***} (0.07)
Partisan Strength	-4.63^{***} (0.16)	7.66^{***} (0.14)
Ideological Strength	-3.47^{***} (0.14)	0.93^{***} (0.12)
Observations	23,448	23,448
Adjusted R^2	0.26	0.21
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
		Year fixed effects not displayed.

I now turn to the results themselves, beginning with out-party affect.

4.1 Out-Party Affect: Validating the Approach

The results for out-party affect are presented in Figure 1 which presents two graphs, one for fear and one for perceived extremity. The graphs plot the average marginal effect of either fear or perceived extremity on out-party affect over time, by party, along with the 95% confidence intervals for the estimate. In other words, they show how many points difference in affect towards the out-party fear or perceived extremity made for a Democratic versus a Republican respondent in each year. So, we can see that in 1980/1978[21] the impact of both fear and threat were nearly indistinguishable for Democrats versus Republicans, though in both cases they were significant and negative (i.e. fear or threat were associated with *lower* out-party affect, *disliking* the out-party more). However, that changed quickly and substantially: by 2016 a Republican respondent who was afraid of the out-party candidate liked the Democrats *13* points less than a Republican respondent who wasn't, a drop of over 6 points since 1980. On the other hand, the equivalent value for Democrats in 2016 was 7.5 points, which is not only smaller, but is *statistically indistinguishable* from what it was in 1980 (and if there is a trend, it's *positive*, i.e. fear doing *less* to drive negative out-party affect).

The results for perceived extremity, our proxy for threat, are smaller but still significant: in 1978 a one point change in perceived out-party extremity reduced out-party affect by around 4.5 points for either party. By 2016, that value had increased to 5.73 for Democrats, but for Republicans it *nearly doubled* to 8.27 points. These results are not only indicative of asymmetric polarization towards Republicans, they may even call into question just how much Democrats are polarizing at all.

Crucially, these results are not only substantial in comparison to each other, but remain significant (and arguably become *more* impressive) when placed in context. The most obvious place to start is with the overall trend in out-party affect, which has decreased *dramatically*

[21]Recall that "has the out-party candidate every made you feel afraid?" was of course only asked in presidential election years, and so the first year for those models is 1980 rather than 1978.

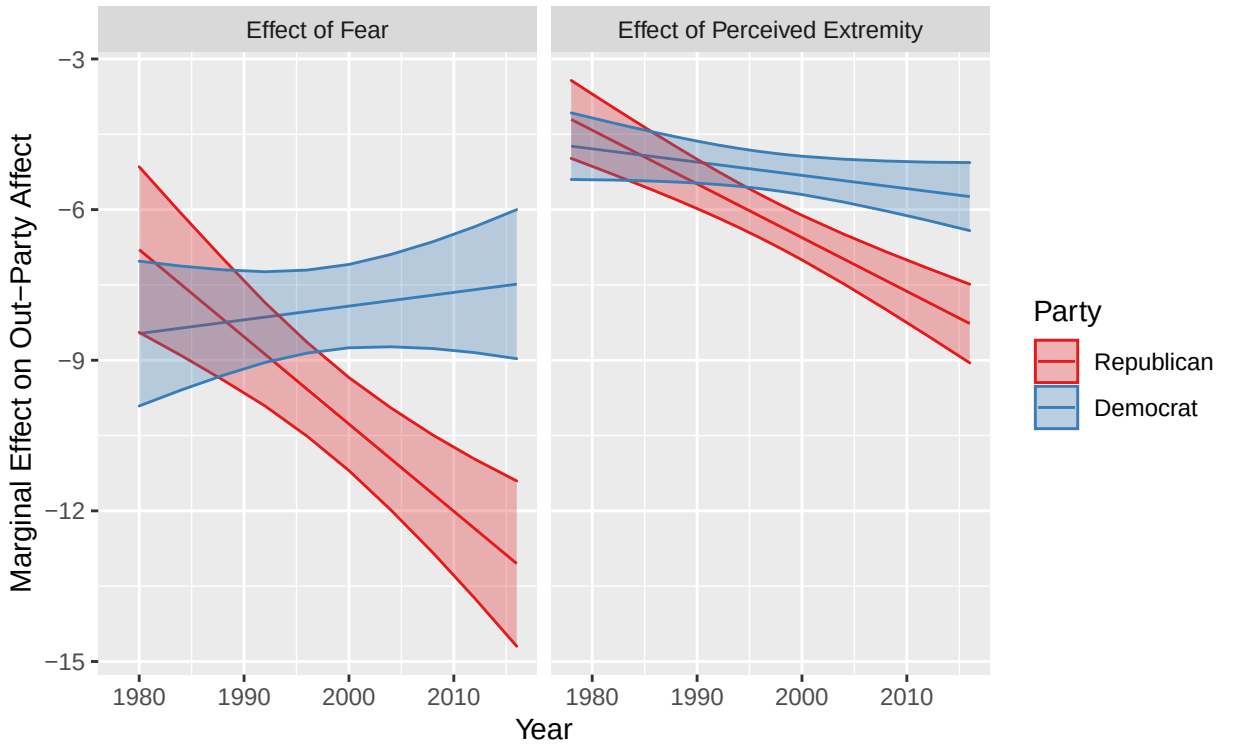

Figure 1: Marginal Effects of Fear and Threat on Out-Party Affect

across the period, falling from a mean of about 48 points in 1978 to about 26 points (and thus been labeled variously as affective polarization or negative partisanship). Even in comparison to this precipitous decline, the findings above are notable. If we look at fear, its effect on Republicans in 2016 was about 5.5 points stronger than on Democrats, a net 7.2-point swing compared to 1980, and either figure is more than a *quarter* of the total drop in out-party affect over the period. Likewise, a one-point increase in perceived extremity reduced out-party affect by 2.5 points more for a Republican in 2016 than for a Democrat, a net swing of about 3 points. This seems like a smaller difference, but given that perceived extremity is a four point scale,[22] this ultimately results in a 7.5 point gap between a Republican and a Democrat who perceived the opposing party as ideologically extreme in 2016, or a *9 point* net gain for Republicans compared to 1978 (when the effect was slightly stronger for Democrats). In either case, the difference is *more than a third* the total change in average out-party affect

[22]AMEs, for clarity, are not standardized. In other words, the marginal effect of a variable is about the impact of a *unit increase* of that variable.

since 1978.

This is *almost* exactly what we expected to find. Overall, this provides very strong evidence of connections between out-party affect, threat, and fear for Republicans, connections which have strengthened dramatically over the period such that they are now significantly stronger than the same connections for Democrats. We have, then, evidence that Republican identity holds together now meaningfully in a way it did not at the start of the period, evidence for a more and more coherent meaning to the partisan identity which is demonstrated by a concordance between identity and judgment. What is somewhat unexpected are the results for Democrats: the relationship between threat (perceived extremity) and out-party affect looks exactly as predicted: we see evidence of polarization in a strengthening relationship, just weaker polarization than seen for Republicans. However, the relationship between fear and out-party affect is a different story: we see *no* strengthening relationship, in fact, the trend (though not statistically significant) points towards a *weakening* relationship, if anything. This does not, I believe, undermine the basic takeaway here, which is a finding of asymmetry and a basic validation of this worldview theory of polarization, but it does deepen some of the theoretical questions raised above about whether polarization might function in fundamentally different ways for different identities, a point I turn to empirically now, and will return to theoretically in the conclusion.

4.2 In-Party Affect: Polarization and Dissatisfaction

Turning to the link between in-party affect and fear or threat brings us to the question of the role of in-party affect in polarization: whether in-party affect matches out-party affect, bears no relation at all, or in fact acts in *reverse*. As we can see in Figure 2, the third possibility in fact seems to be the case. As with out-party affect, the results are presented in two graphs, one for fear and one for perceived extremity, plotting the AME of each on in-party affect over time, by party. For both fear and perceived extremity, the average marginal effects begin significantly stronger *for Republicans* and wind up statistically indistinguishable. What's

more, while for fear this is the result of a differential rate of increase (that is, the AME increased more for Democrats than Republicans), for perceived extremity it results from both a strengthening effect for Democrats and a *weakening* (although not statistically significantly so) effect for Republicans.

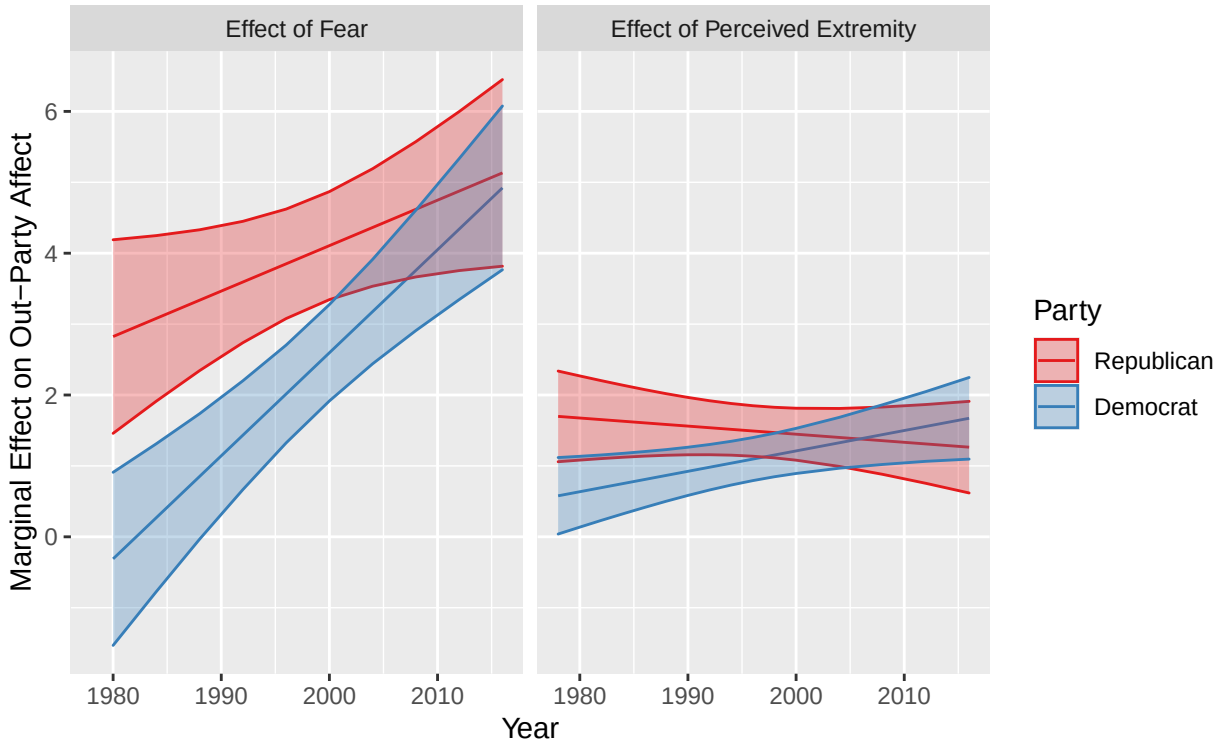

Figure 2: Marginal Effects of Fear and Threat on In-Party Affect

These results are of notably smaller magnitude than the results for out-party affect, and may seem like minor changes, potentially minor enough to fit with our second possibility, that of no relationship. But this is simply not the case, for two reasons. First, the (sometimes implicit) argument of work on negative partisanship, from which we have an expectation that in-party affect should be essentially unrelated to polarization, is that there is basically *no* meaningful variation on in-party affect over the period (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Finkel et al. 2020). But that is not what we see: fear goes from having no statistically significant impact on Democrats' in-party feeling in 1978 to having a 5 point impact in 2016. So the impact for Democrats changes by 5 points, starting from zero, while the impact for Republicans changes by only 2 points. This is absolutely meaningful variation. Second, while

we don't see statistically significant differences between the parties by the end of the period in either case, the trends that got us there are important. In the case of fear, the 5-point increase for Democrats is nearly as big as the 6-point change in the AME on out-party affect for Republicans discussed above. Even more interesting, Republicans see no change at all in the AME of perceived extremity on in-party affect over nearly forty years (or, if we take the point estimates as at least indicative, despite their non-significance, a *decline*), while Democrats *do* see a significant increase.

Though not a perfect fit, these most closely support the third option, namely that we are seeing a *reversed* asymmetry on in-party affect. Against both previous approaches to affective polarization, my relational approach finds meaningful asymmetry on in-party affect *over time*. This matters because it is further evidence that the relationship between partisan affect, threat, and fear, and therefore polarization as such, has developed in fundamentally different ways for the different parties.

5 Conclusion

These results strongly suggest an asymmetry in mass polarization towards Republicans. Thus, by redefining polarization as a worldview, shown in the persistent patterned relationships between partisan affect, threat, and fear, I have found evidence of an asymmetry which has thus far been largely invisible to quantitative studies of mass polarization, but which matches the documented asymmetry in elite polarization, the Republican Party's status as a polarizing actor in American politics, and extensive circumstantial evidence of mass asymmetry. With these findings I have validated the worldview model of polarization I developed above. This theory also resulted in more surprising empirical findings, in particular with regard to the role of in-party affect, which can expand our understanding of polarization yet further. And ultimately, both the expected and unexpected findings, along with their theoretical implications, allow us to better understand pressing empirical issues in modern

American politics.

That understanding is based, partly, in the new approach presented here. While both attitudinal and affective theories of polarization are powerful, a combination of the scope of their definitions, the assumptions they rely on, and the fundamental challenge of the contingent connection between division and meaningful division, mean that both have been unable to really address the asymmetry found. The problem, in essence, is their difficulty in capturing asymmetry in kind rather than degree. Polarization is a matter of the division of society into meaningful sides, and previous approaches have been too limited in their ability see polarization in the unique characteristics of those sides. I attempt to get around this problem by understanding polarization as a matter of worldview. By defining polarization in terms of persistent patterned relationships between affect, attitudes, and judgments, bound to particular political identities, I am able to incorporate recent insights from sociological approaches to attitudinal polarization on the relational nature of meaning (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017; DellaPosta 2020) in a synthesis with the concept of affective polarization from political science (Iyengar et al. 2012; Mason 2015). This synthesis is further based in a wide range of sociological work on the connection between identity and judgment (Bourdieu 1984; de Leon et al. 2015; Hennion 2007; Wimmer 2013), which links polarization and identity together in a new way, going beyond the more limited (though still important) attempts of social identity theory or motivated reasoning (Druckman et al. 2021; Druckman et al. 2013; Iyengar et al. 2019; Mason 2015). It also deepens and expands on other work linking differences in public opinion with differences in partisan identity (see, e.g., Brooks and Manza 2013; Morisi, Jost, and Singh 2019), and brings the idea of identity as a heuristic (see e.g. Boutyline and Vaisey 2017) back to the study of polarization, thereby re-framing the ongoing debate about the primacy of ideology or identity in driving affective polarization (Lelkes 2018; Mason 2018; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). Finally, in making clear the fundamental importance of the specific, and potentially unique, content of political identities, the worldview model provides more analytical leverage by both allowing

a stronger coupling between detailed conceptual theories and the empirical investigation of polarization, as well as by analyzing the ways polarization may *work differently* for different identities, beyond the simple matter of magnitude.

This additional analytical leverage was crucial to the question investigated here, and to the strong findings of asymmetry which ultimately validate the approach. The link between partisan affect, threat, and fear is a central part of conceptual work on polarization (Finkel et al. 2020; McCoy and Somer 2019). Furthermore, it is clear that a polarized worldview, one which is linked to the identity of a "meaningful side", requires a strong link between negative out-party affect and both seeing the other side as threatening, as well as having feelings of fear towards them. And this is precisely what I found. The findings of asymmetry for Republicans on out-party affect are unequivocal, substantial, and meaningful in the context of overall trends in out-party affect in this modern period of polarization. This asymmetry strongly matches expectations from previous work, but has previously been invisible to quantitative work on mass polarization. However, there was one way in which this finding was surprising: the fact that there was no strengthening of the relationship between out-party affect and fear for Democrats. This is not necessarily indicative of a lack of polarization, but rather provides preliminary evidence of at least one way that polarization does seem to work differently for different identities. Put another way, if polarization is a matter of division into meaningful sides, there is no *a priori* reason that the meanings of those sides need be equal and opposite, and this is one way in which they are not.

This idea is further supported by my surprising findings with regard to in-party affect. To recap, the role of in-party affect is an open question even within affective approaches to polarization, with some incorporating it as a part of overall partisan bias (Mason 2015), while others have begun to argue that affective polarization is better understood purely as a matter of *negative partisanship* (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Finkel et al. 2020; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). However, in place of either replicating findings for out-party affect or finding no relationships at all, I found an *inverse* relationship: the effect of threat and fear on

in-party affect increased *for Democrats* while it either increased much more slowly or held steady for Republicans. Now, the results here are admittedly less striking in magnitude than those for out-party affect, but they are still clearly there, and are arguably more striking in their direction. Again, this suggests that something fundamentally different is going for Democrats and Republicans, and provides further evidence that previous affective approaches are insufficient, as it does not fit with either set of predictions.

However, it does fit with one potential explanation rooted in extremely specific, largely ignored, predictions from within the polarization literature. Building on the idea that polarization should lead to increased *intra*-, as well as inter-, party conflict, we can understand asymmetry of in-party affect as a marker of *dissatisfaction* (McCoy and Somer 2019:246). If polarization is connected to threat and fear, then, for partisans with a polarized worldview, the dynamics of polarization will necessarily raise the question of whether the party is *doing enough* to respond to the rising threat. Precisely because perceptions of threat and fear are increasing, however, partisans are likely to demand more and more extreme responses and be frustrated or disappointed by the apparently insufficient actions of the party elite.

Now, this theory is obviously preliminary, and is only one potential explanation for the findings here. However, as an explanation for these findings, it would have some major implications. For one, it highlights the difference between affect towards and commitment to a party or identity, two things which are frequently conflated in the literature. In this way it also further clarifies the importance of the *meaning* of different identities: not only that different identities may function in different ways, but that people may stand in relationship to different identities in different ways. For instance, a dissatisfied Republican may be a deeply committed Republican (and might even consider themselves a "real" Republican, in comparison to so-called "Republicans in name only"), while a dissatisfied Democrat might feel *less* committed. Indeed, that same Republican might *give up* their identity as, say, a basketball fan due to dissatisfaction with how the NBA has handled player protests. The same kind of affective understanding can be connected to different identities (or even the *same*

identity in different contexts) in radically different ways. Additionally, the link between threat, fear, and dissatisfaction may ultimately build into a *feedback loop*, in which perceptions of threat and feelings of fear make current action seem insufficient, creating demands for more extreme action. This action then proves the validity of those feelings (by recognizing them as actionable) and strengthens them further, ultimately making the new extreme action seem again insufficient. This notion of a feedback loop in particular is potentially relevant for the study of radicalization, both of individuals and, especially, of organizations.

But perhaps most important is that these findings, together with the worldview model as a whole, have clear empirical explanatory power. Put simply, following the logic of the findings and theory through, we can say quite easily why there has been no Democratic equivalent to the storming of the capitol on January 6th, and why it *was* carried out by Republicans. Not only that, we can also contribute to an explanation of the rise of extremism and radicalization of the party and the profound consequences for American politics. The findings above describe a Republican Party that is substantially more polarized than the opposition, but more than that, they describe a Republican Party whose partisans increasingly share a worldview in which their feeling towards that opposition are increasingly driven by perceptions of threat and feelings of fear. Moreover, if we take the strong version of the dissatisfaction hypothesis above, these partisans, though potentially committed to their party, do not trust it to adequately protect them against this increasingly existential threat. January 6th, then, can be understood as what happens when this particular form of polarization and dissatisfaction erupt into action. But we can also frame the historical story of how we got there in these terms as well: in this view, first the Tea Party and then Donald Trump become steps on this treadmill of dissatisfaction, simultaneously the extreme wing of and an insurgency against the Republican Party, simultaneously radicalizing the party and ensuring that its base will radicalize further.[23] To be clear, I am not claiming that the explanation

[23]Indeed, we do know that the Tea Party was started by people deeply disillusioned with the Republican Party, and that Donald Trump entered the Republican presidential contest at time when a majority of Republicans had "little faith in party leaders" (Skocpol 2020:18).

given here is the only explanation, nor that it has yet been proven. Rather, the point is that the explanation is plausible, powerful, and consistent, that the approach used to arrive at it is valid and analytically useful, and that both might justifiably help set the agenda moving forward.

A Appendix A: Independent and Dependent Variable Descriptives

In order to present a clear and efficient summary of descriptive trends for the main variables of interest, I include six figures here. Figures 3, 5, and 7 display mean values for in-/out-party affect, fear of the out-party candidate, and perceived out-party extremity over time by party, while Figures 4, 6, and 8 show the corresponding standard deviations. There are two analytical points worth mentioning here: first, as stated above, the trends here (especially with mean values) are all consistent with polarization, but none provide any evidence of asymmetry. Second, though we see changes in variability over time (sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing), these trends are *relatively similar* for Democrats and Republicans, providing evidence that the differences in marginal effects are not simply artifacts of different levels of variability in the distributions.

B Appendix B: Model Building

The analytical strategy in this paper is based on interaction effects, but including a comparison with the baseline main effects models in the main body of the paper proved unwieldy. Instead, I am including the comparisons here. Tables 3 and 4 show the baseline main effects models next to the full models with interactions for each of the four regressions from the body of the paper. Then, Table 5 shows a summary comparison for all models, including the adjusted R^2 and the results for Wald tests on each set of interaction terms.

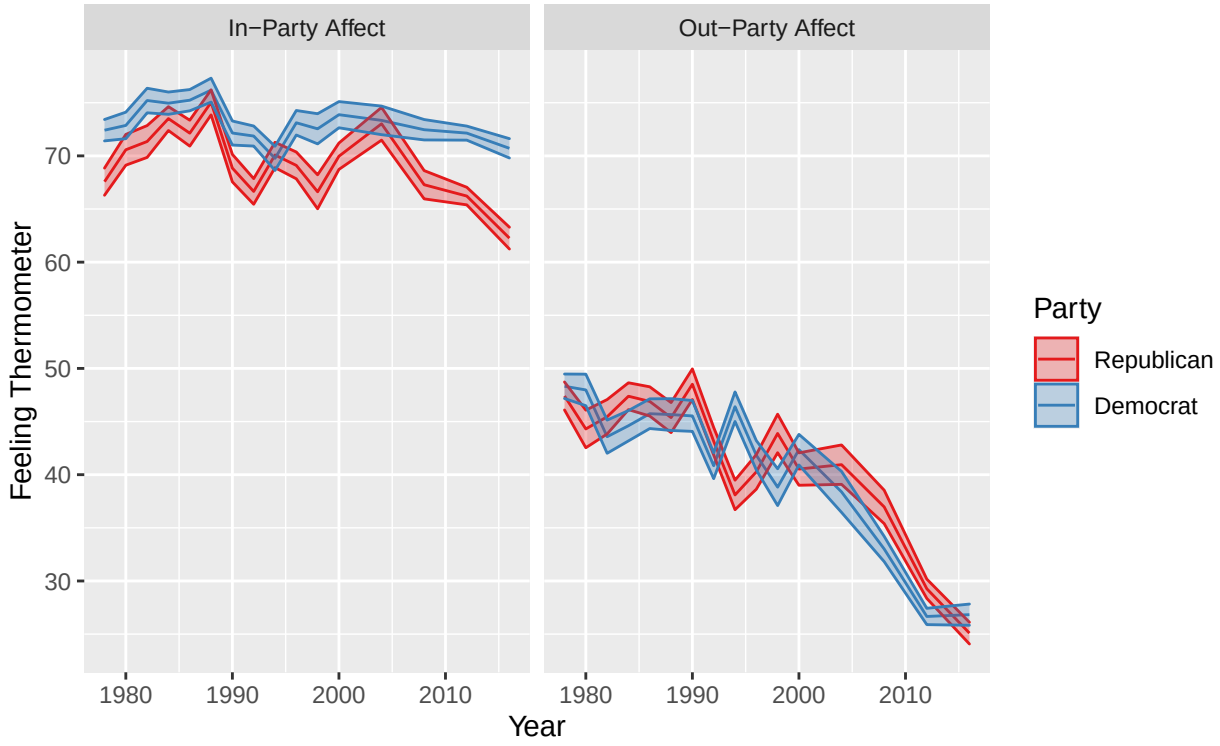

Figure 3: Mean Feeling Thermometer by Year and Party

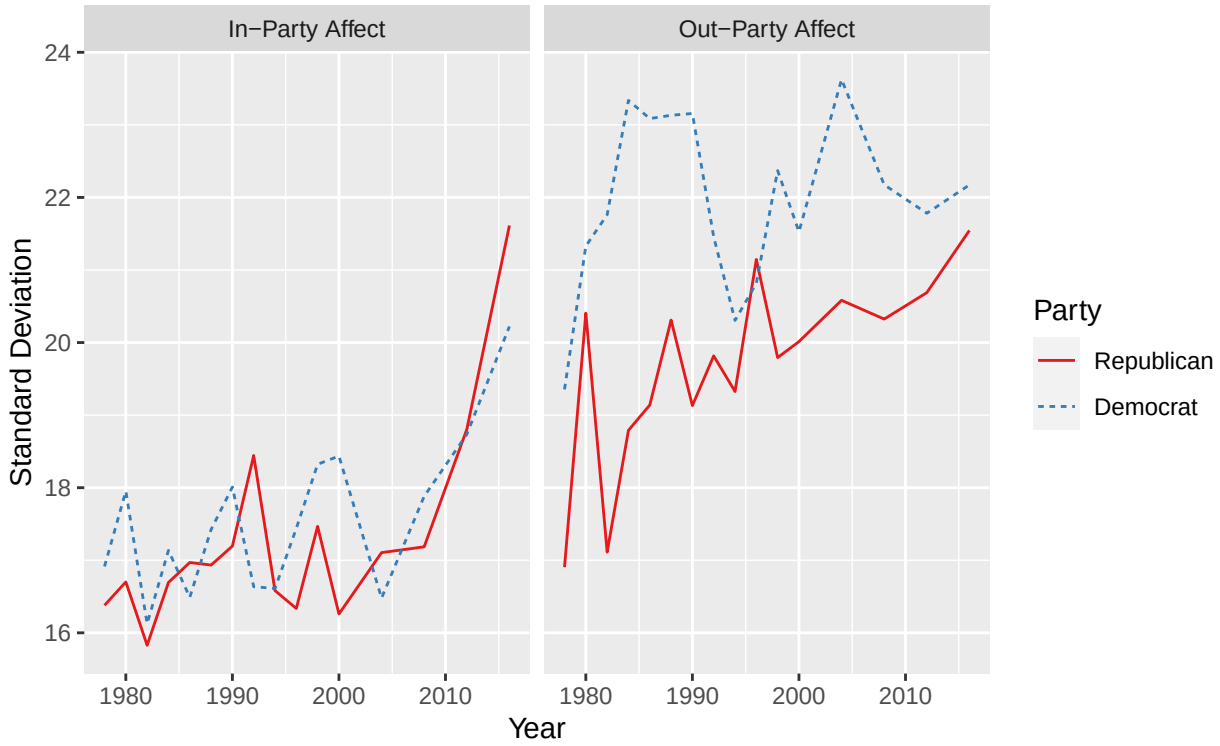

Figure 4: Feeling Thermometer Standard Deviation by Year and Party

Figure 5: Proportion Afraid of Out-Party Candidate by Year and Party

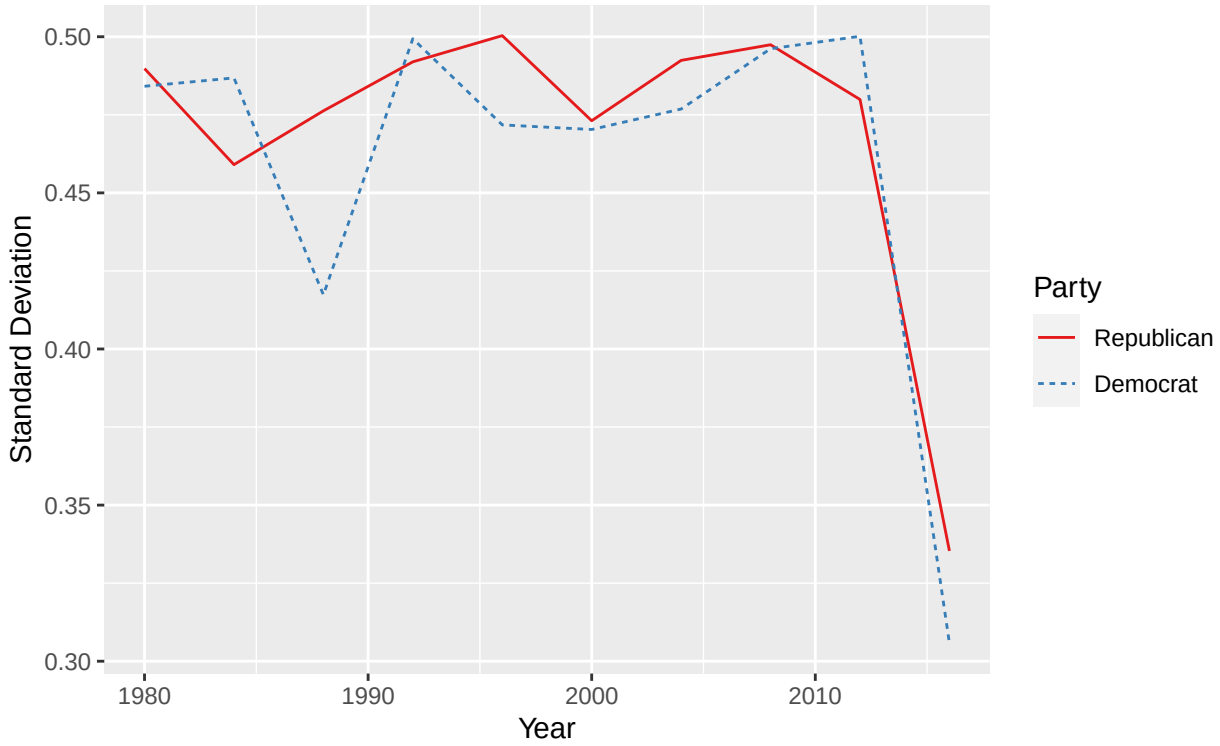

Figure 6: Standard Deviation of Fear of Out-Party Candidate by Year and Party

Figure 7: Mean Perceived Out-Party Extremity by Year and Party

Figure 8: Standard Deviation of Perceived Out-Party Extremity by Year and Party

Table 3: Fear Main Effects vs. Full Model Comparison

	Dependent variable:			
	Out-Party Affect		In-Party Affect	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fear	−8.83*** (0.32)	337.16*** (76.10)	2.98*** (0.26)	−124.13* (62.68)
Democrat	−1.31*** (0.31)	393.22*** (72.94)	2.70*** (0.26)	−354.95*** (60.08)
Dem x Year		−0.20*** (0.04)		0.18*** (0.03)
Fear x Dem		−399.75*** (98.86)		−163.96* (81.42)
Fear x Year		−0.17*** (0.04)		0.06* (0.03)
Fear x Dem x Year		0.20*** (0.05)		0.08* (0.04)
Black	−1.64*** (0.49)	−1.62*** (0.49)	4.20*** (0.40)	4.06*** (0.40)
Income	−0.11 (0.14)	−0.11 (0.14)	−0.66*** (0.12)	−0.67*** (0.12)
Age	−0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Gender	0.73* (0.30)	0.75* (0.30)	1.25*** (0.24)	1.22*** (0.24)
Education	−0.87*** (0.18)	−0.91*** (0.18)	−1.52*** (0.15)	−1.53*** (0.15)
South	−0.82* (0.32)	−0.80* (0.32)	−1.78*** (0.26)	−1.90*** (0.26)
Church Attendance	−0.79*** (0.10)	−0.80*** (0.10)	−0.23** (0.08)	−0.25** (0.08)
Partisan Strength	−4.96*** (0.19)	−4.95*** (0.19)	7.92*** (0.16)	7.90*** (0.16)
Ideological Strength	−3.83*** (0.16)	−3.81*** (0.16)	0.81*** (0.13)	0.82*** (0.13)
Observations	18,592	18,592	18,592	18,592
Adjusted R^2	0.25	0.25	0.21	0.22

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Year fixed effects not displayed.

Table 4: Out-Party Perceived Extremity Main Effects vs. Full Model Comparison

	Dependent variable:			
	Out-Party Affect		In-Party Affect	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Perceived Extremity	−5.62*** (0.15)	207.38*** (34.85)	1.22*** (0.12)	24.29 (28.74)
Democrat	−0.31 (0.27)	457.72*** (94.79)	2.02*** (0.22)	−240.53** (78.15)
Dem x Year		−0.23*** (0.05)		0.12** (0.04)
Perc Extr x Dem		−159.86*** (45.60)		−80.61* (37.59)
Perc Extr x Year		−0.11*** (0.02)		−0.01 (0.01)
Perc Extr x Dem x Year		0.08*** (0.02)		0.04* (0.02)
Black	−0.85* (0.43)	−0.90* (0.43)	4.31*** (0.35)	4.19*** (0.35)
Income	−0.08 (0.12)	−0.05 (0.12)	−0.74*** (0.10)	−0.76*** (0.10)
Age	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Gender	0.42 (0.25)	0.43 (0.25)	1.45*** (0.21)	1.43*** (0.21)
Education	−0.99*** (0.16)	−0.99*** (0.16)	−1.39*** (0.13)	−1.44*** (0.13)
South	−1.44*** (0.28)	−1.43*** (0.28)	−1.78*** (0.23)	−1.89*** (0.23)
Church Attendance	−0.81*** (0.08)	−0.82*** (0.08)	−0.28*** (0.07)	−0.31*** (0.07)
Partisan Strength	−4.64*** (0.16)	−4.63*** (0.16)	7.68*** (0.14)	7.66*** (0.14)
Ideological Strength	−3.53*** (0.14)	−3.47*** (0.14)	0.91*** (0.12)	0.93*** (0.12)
Observations	23,448	23,448	23,448	23,448
Adjusted R^2	0.26	0.26	0.20	0.21

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Year fixed effects not displayed.

Table 5: Summary Comparison

				Wald Test	
IV	DV	Model	Adjusted R^2	df	Prob > F
Fear	Out-Party Affect	Main Effects	0.247	20	
		Full Model	0.248	24	0.000
	In-Party Affect	Main Effects	0.209	20	
		Full Model	0.215	24	0.000
Perc Extrem	Out-Party Affect	Main Effects	0.260	26	
		Full Model	0.262	30	0.000
	In-Party Affect	Main Effects	0.204	26	
		Full Model	0.209	30	0.000

In all cases, the models are very similar in terms of explained variance, but, as shown in Table 5, in every case the full model offers some improvement on adjusted R^2 and the interaction terms are shown to significantly contribute to the fit of the model. The improvements on adjusted R^2 are universally small, but are always present, and the Wald tests clearly show that the addition of the interaction terms does contribute to the model.

References

Abbott, Andrew. 1988. "Transcending General Linear Reality." *Sociological Theory*.

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2010. *The Disappearing Center*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70(2):542–55.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven Webster. 2016. "The Rise of Negative Partisanship and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections in the 21st Century." *Electoral Studies* 41:12–22.

Abramowitz, Alan, and Jennifer McCoy. 2019. "United States: Racial Resentment, Negative Partisanship, and Polarization in Trump's America." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681(1):137–56.

Almeida, Paul D. 2018. "The Role of Threat in Collective Action." Pp. 43–62 in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, edited by D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, H. Kriesi, and H. J. McCammon. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Azab, Marian, and Wayne A. Santoro. 2017. "Rethinking Fear and Protest: Racialized Repression of Arab Americans and the Mobilization Benefits of Being Afraid." *Mobilization* 22(4):473–91.

Baldassarri, Delia, and Andrew Gelman. 2008. "Partisans Without Constraint: Political Polarization and Trends in American Public Opinion." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(2):408–46.

Banda, Kevin K., and John Cluverius. 2018. "Elite Polarization, Party Extremity, and Affective Polarization." *Electoral Studies* 56:90–101.

Baron, Jonathan, and John T. Jost. 2019. "False Equivalence: Are Liberals and Conservatives in the United States Equally Biased?" *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 14(2):292–303.

Barry, Dan, Mike McIntire, and Matthew Rosenberg. 2021. "'Our President Wants Us Here': The Mob That Stormed the Capitol." *The New York Times*, January 9. Retrieved June 8, 2021 (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/us/capitol-rioters.html).

Bermeo, Nancy. 2019. "Reflections: Can American Democracy Still Be Saved?" *Annals of the*

American Academy of Political and Social Science 681(1):228–33.

Blau, Peter M. 1974. "Parameters of Social Structure." *American Sociological Review* 39(5):615–35.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Boutyline, Andrei, and Stephen Vaisey. 2017. "Belief Network Analysis: A Relational Approach to Understanding the Structure of Attitudes." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(5):1371–1447.

Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14(1):63–82.

Brennan Center for Justice, and Bipartisan Policy Center. 2021. *Election Officials Under Attack: How to Protect Administrators and Safeguard Democracy*. New York: Brennan Center for Justice.

Brewer, Marilynn B. 1999. "The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate?" *Journal of Social Issues* 55(3):429–44.

Brooks, Clem, and Jeff Manza. 2013. "A Broken Public? Americans' Responses to the Great Recession." *American Sociological Review* 78(5):727–48.

Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

de Leon, Cedric, Menali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal. 2015. "Introduction." Pp. 1–36 in *Building Blocs: How Parties Organize Society*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

DellaPosta, Daniel. 2020. "Pluralistic Collapse: The 'Oil Spill' Model of Mass Opinion Polarization." *American Sociological Review* 85(3):507–36.

DiMaggio, Paul, John H. Evans, and Bethany Bryson. 1996. "Have Americans' Social Attitudes Become More Polarized?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102(3):690–755.

Ditto, Peter H., Brittany S. Liu, Cory J. Clark, Sean P. Wojcik, Eric E. Chen, Rebecca H. Grady, Jared B. Celniker, and Joanne F. Zinger. 2019. "At Least Bias Is Bipartisan: A

Meta-Analytic Comparison of Partisan Bias in Liberals and Conservatives." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 14(2):273–91.

Druckman, James N., Samara Klar, Yanna Krupnikov, Matthew Levendusky, and John Barry Ryan. 2021. "Affective Polarization, Local Contexts and Public Opinion in America." *Nature Human Behaviour* 5(1):28–38.

Druckman, James N., Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus. 2013. "How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation." *American Political Science Review* 107(1):57–79.

Epstein, Reid J., and Lisa Lerer. 2021. "Rejecting Biden's Win, Rising Republicans Attack Legitimacy of Elections." *The New York Times*, June 7. Retrieved June 21, 2021 (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/us/politics/republican-election-fraud-claims.html).

Evans, John H. 2003. "Have Americans' Attitudes Become More Polarized? - An Update." *Social Science Quarterly* 84(1):71–90.

Finkel, Eli J., Christopher A. Bail, Mina Cikara, Peter H. Ditto, Shanto Iyengar, Samara Klar, Lilliana Mason, Mary C. McGrath, Brendan Nyhan, David G. Rand, Linda J. Skitka, Joshua A. Tucker, Jay J. Van Bavel, Cynthia S. Wang, and James N. Druckman. 2020. "Political Sectarianism in America." *Science* 370(6516):533–36.

Fiorina, Morris P., and Samuel J. Abrams. 2009. *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2011. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. 3rd ed. Boston: Longman.

Fischer, Claude S., and Michael Hout. 2006. *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Fischer, Claude S., and Greggor Mattson. 2009. "Is America Fragmenting?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:435–55.

Garrett, R. Kelly, and Robert M. Bond. 2021. "Conservatives' Susceptibility to Political Misperceptions." *Science Advances* 7(23):eabf1234.

Goldstone, Jack A., and Charles Tilly. 2001. "Threat (and Opportunity): Popular Action

and State Response in the Dynamics of Contentious Action." Pp. 179–94 in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Sewell, S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, Jeff. 2011. "Are Protesters Opportunists? Fifty Tests." Pp. 277–300 in *Contention in Context*, edited by J. Goodwin and J. M. Jasper. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Gorman, Brandon, and Charles Seguin. 2018. "World Citizens on the Periphery: Threat and Identification with Global Society." *American Journal of Sociology* 124(3):705–61.

Grossmann, Matt, and David A. Hopkins. 2015. "Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 13(1):119–39.

Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2005. *Off Center: The Republican Revolution And the Erosion of American Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2014. "After the "Master Theory": Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3):643–62.

Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2020. *Let Them Eat Tweets: How the Right Rules in an Age of Extreme Inequality*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp.

Hanmer, Michael J., and Kerem Ozan Kalkan. 2013. "Behind the Curve: Clarifying the Best Approach to Calculating Predicted Probabilities and Marginal Effects from Limited Dependent Variable Models." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1):263–77.

Hennion, Antoine. 2007. "Those Things That Hold Us Together: Taste and Sociology." *Cultural Sociology* 1(1):97–114.

Hetherington, Marc J. 2009. "Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 39(2):413–48.

Hibbing, John R., Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Alford. 2014. "Differences in Negativity Bias Underlie Variations in Political Ideology." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 37(3):297–307.

Hlavac, Marek. 2018. "Stargazer: Well-Formatted Regression and Summary Statistics Tables."

https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=stargazer. Retrieved (https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=stargazer).

Hochschild, Arlie Russel. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.

Huddy, Leonie. 2001. "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory." *Political Psychology* 22(1):127–56.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Masha Krupenkin. 2018. "The Strengthening of Partisan Affect." *Political Psychology* 39:201–18.

Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew S. Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(7):129–46.

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3):405–31.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3):690–707.

Jasper, James M. 2011. "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:285–303.

Jordan, Soren, Clayton Mc Laughlin Webb, and B. Dan Wood. 2014. "The President, Polarization and the Party Platforms, 1944-2012." *The Forum* 12(1):169–89.

Jost, John T. 2017. "Ideological Asymmetries and the Essence of Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 38(2):167–208.

Jost, John T., Jaime L. Napier, Hulda Thorisdottir, Samuel D. Gosling, Tibor P. Palfai, and Brian Ostafin. 2007. "Are Needs to Manage Uncertainty and Threat Associated With Political Conservatism or Ideological Extremity?" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33(7):989–1007.

Kahan, Dan M., David A. Hoffman, Donald Braman, Danieli Evans, and Jeffrey J. Rachlinski. 2012. ""They Saw a Protest": Cognitive Illiberalism and the Speech-conduct Distinction."

Stanford Law Review 64(4):851–906.

Kozlowski, Austin C., and James P. Murphy. 2021. "Issue Alignment and Partisanship in the American Public: Revisiting the 'Partisans Without Constraint' Thesis." *Social Science Research* 94:102498.

Lauka, Alban, Jennifer McCoy, and Rengin B. Firat. 2018. "Mass Partisan Polarization: Measuring a Relational Concept." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1):107–26.

Leeper, Thomas J. 2018. "Interpreting Regression Results Using Average Marginal Effects with R's Margins."

Lelkes, Yphtach. 2016. "Mass Polarization: Manifestations and Measurements." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80:392–410.

Lelkes, Yphtach. 2018. "Affective Polarization and Ideological Sorting: A Reciprocal, Albeit Weak, Relationship." *Forum* 16(1):67–79.

Lewis, Jeffery B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Adam Boche, Aaron Rudkin, and Luke Sonnet. 2020. "Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database."

Lipset, Seymour M., and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party System, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." Pp. 1–64 in *Party System and Voter Alignments*, edited by S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan. New York: Free Press.

Long, J. Scott, and Sarah A. Mustillo. 2018. "Using Predictions and Marginal Effects to Compare Groups in Regression Models for Binary Outcomes." *Sociological Methods & Research* 004912411879937.

Lu, Yanqin, and Jae Kook Lee. 2019. "Partisan Information Sources and Affective Polarization: Panel Analysis of the Mediating Role of Anger and Fear." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 96(3):767–83.

Mackie, Diane M., Thierry Devos, and Eliot R. Smith. 2000. "Intergroup Emotions: Explaining Offensive Action Tendencies in an Intergroup Context." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79(4):602–16.

Mann, Thomas E., and Norman J. Ornstein. 2016. *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the*

American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism. New and Ex. New York: Basic Books.

Mason, Lilliana. 2015. "'I Disrespectfully Agree': The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1):128–45.

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. "Ideologues Without Issues: The Polarizing Consequences of Ideological Identities." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82:866–87.

Mason, Lilliana, Julie Wronski, and John V. Kane. 2021. "Activating Animus: The Uniquely Social Roots of Trump Support." *American Political Science Review* 1–9.

McCoy, Jennifer, Tahmina Rahman, and Murat Somer. 2018. "Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy: Common Patterns, Dynamics, and Pernicious Consequences for Democratic Polities." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1):16–42.

McCoy, Jennifer, and Murat Somer. 2019. "Toward a Theory of Pernicious Polarization and How It Harms Democracies: Comparative Evidence and Possible Remedies." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681(1):234–71.

Mora, Maria De Jesus, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Alejandro Zermeño, and Paul Almeida. 2018. "Immigrant Rights and Social Movements." *Sociology Compass* 12(8):1–20.

Morisi, Davide, John T. Jost, and Vishal Singh. 2019. "An Asymmetrical President-in-Power Effect." *American Political Science Review* 113(2):614–20.

Munson, Ziad W. 2008. *The Making of Pro-Life Activists: How Social Movement Mobilization Works*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mutz, Diana C. 2018. "Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(19):E4330–39.

Pierson, Paul, and Eric Schickler. 2020. "Madison's Constitution Under Stress: A Developmental Analysis of Political Polarization." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23:37–58.

Polletta, Francesca, and Jessica Callahan. 2017. "Deep Stories, Nostalgia Narratives, and Fake News: Storytelling in the Trump Era." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 5(3):392–408.

Rogowski, Jon C., and Joseph L. Sutherland. 2016. "How Ideology Fuels Affective Polarization." *Political Behavior* 38(2):485–508.

Sinclair, Barbara. 2006. *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Skocpol, Theda. 2020. "The Elite and Popular Roots of Contemporary Republican Extremism." Pp. 3–28 in *Upending American Politics: Polarizing Parties, Ideological Elites, and Citizen Activists from the Tea Party to the Anti-Trump Resistance*, edited by T. Skocpol and C. Tervo. Oxford University Press.

So, Linda. 2021. "Trump-Inspired Death Threats Are Terrorizing Election Workers." *Reuters*, June 11. Retrieved July 10, 2021 (https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-trump-georgia-threats/).

Somer, Murat, and Jennifer McCoy. 2019. "Transformations Through Polarizations and Global Threats to Democracy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681(1):8–22.

Stavrakakis, Yannis. 2018. "Paradoxes of Polarization: Democracy's Inherent Division and the (Anti-)Populist Challenge." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1):43–58.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." in *The Social psychology of intergroup relations*, edited by W. G. Austin and S. Worchel. Monterey, Calif: Brooks/Cole Pub. Co.

Tan, Shelly, Youjin Shin, and Danielle Rindler. 2021. "How One of America's Ugliest Days Unraveled Inside and Outside the Capitol." *Washington Post*, January 9. Retrieved June 8, 2021 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2021/capitol-insurrection-visual-timeline/).

Tushnet, Mark V. 2004. "Constitutional Hardball." *J. Marshall L. Rev* 37:523–53.

Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(6):1675–715.

Wagner, John, Felicia Sonmez, Mike DeBonis, Karoun Demirjian, Amy B. Wang, Colby

Itkowitz, and Paulina Firozi. 2021. "Pence Declares Biden Winner of the Presidential Election After Congress Finally Counts Electoral Votes." *Washington Post*, January 7. Retrieved June 8, 2021 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/06/congress-electoral-college-vote-live-updates/).

Ward, Dalston G., and Margit Tavits. 2019. "How Partisan Affect Shapes Citizens' Perception of the Political World." *Electoral Studies* 60:102045.

Webster, Steven W., and Alan I. Abramowitz. 2017. "The Ideological Foundations of Affective Polarization in the U.S. Electorate." *American Politics Research* 45(4):621–47.

Willer, Robb, Matthew Feinberg, and Rachel Wetts. 2016. *Threats to Racial Status Promote Tea Party Support Among White Americans. SSRN Scholarly Paper*. ID 2770186. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.

Williams, Richard. 2012. "Using the Margins Command to Estimate and Interpret Adjusted Predictions and Marginal Effects." *The Stata Journal: Promoting Communications on Statistics and Stata* 12(2):308–31.

Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wines, Michael. 2020. "Here Are the Threats Terrorizing Election Workers." *The New York Times*, December 3. Retrieved July 10, 2021 (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/election-officials-threats-trump.html).

Zmigrod, Leor. 2020. "The Role of Cognitive Rigidity in Political Ideologies: Theory, Evidence, and Future Directions." *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 34:34–39.

Zmigrod, Leor, Peter Jason Rentfrow, and Trevor W. Robbins. 2020. "The Partisan Mind: Is Extreme Political Partisanship Related to Cognitive Inflexibility?" *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 149(3):407–18.