

Democratic hypocrisy: Polarized citizens support democracy-eroding behavior when their own party is in power

Jennifer McCoy (Georgia State University)

Gabor Simonovits (Central European University)

Levente Littvay (Central European University)

Abstract

With a decade of democratic backsliding in the world and the polarization-driven institutional erosion in the US, people's support for democracy-eroding political leaders is receiving much overdue attention. But existing studies have a difficulty disentangling contextual effects (such as who is in power at the time of the survey) from individual differences (like which party one supports and how much). We propose a novel survey experimental design to strip away the political context through hypothetical scenarios. This allows us to gauge the public's *democratic hypocrisy*: how much a citizen's approval of eroding democratic norms and institutions depends on how much one likes the party in power. Findings suggest that while Republicans are more approving of policies that erode democratic norms and institutions no matter which party is in power at a given time, both Democrats and Republicans engage in *democratic hypocrisy*, supporting a change in democratic practices when it will enhance their party's advantage. The magnitude of that effect is stronger for individuals with stronger partisan attachment. The findings are clearly alarming. Those committed to democratic principles need to find avenues to reach across the aisle to reverse the course of political distrust and polarization that appears to be undermining our democratic institutions and practices.

Introduction

Anxiety about democracy is widespread globally as elected governments themselves undermine basic tenets of democracy in their quest to remain in power or to achieve fundamental political or social change. The 21st century threat to democracy is thus a form of gradual democratic backsliding from within, carried out by leaders concentrating power with the support of voters (Bermeo 2016; Diamond and Plattner 2015; Waldner and Lust 2018). Puzzlingly, in many countries such backsliding has taken place even in the face of relatively high support for democracy in general. Thus, the debate that this research note seeks to contribute to centers on the question of why citizens supportive of democracy, in general, tolerate or even encourage the erosion of existing democratic norms by their elected leaders, rather than serve as a check on undemocratic political behavior by voting against such leaders.

The account that we test posits that even in a setting when general support for democracy is high, voters may condition their support for specific policies that potentially undermine democratic institutions based on whether their own party is in power. Thus, similarly to some recent research (Graham and Svobik, 2019) we view support for anti-democratic policy as an extreme consequence of partisan polarization that leads citizens to support the party in power in its use of democracy-eroding measures to consolidate its power. We call this phenomenon *democratic hypocrisy* or the notion that support for democratic norms are conditioned on one's preferences for the office holder, i.e. whether one's co-partisans are in power or in the opposition.

One issue with testing this account is that in any given point in time, the party in power is fixed. For instance, while some recent studies have found a higher proclivity of conservatives to support policies undermining democratic institutions, because these changes would favor their party it is unclear if these views are driven by some individual differences, such as ideology or personality traits, or just the context of who is in power at the time of the study. Elite cues may also shape attitudes of highly partisan individuals; for example, Stolle et al 2019 found that Trump supporters were most willing to support democratic norm violators, possibly influenced by Trump's unbridled espousal of unrestrained executive authority. Thus, using observational survey data it is difficult to distinguish between these mechanisms. Similarly, for the same reason it is impossible to get at the role of individual differences – e.g. the strength of partisan identity – as antecedents of support for democratic backsliding. Finally, due to the general norm that democracy is good, broad direct questions about support for democracy may also be subject to social desirability bias. A research design is thus needed that allows us to compare voter reactions to specific democracy-eroding policies when governments of different parties and ideologies are in power.

In this study we introduce an experimental approach in which we manipulate – rather than observe – the party in power through a hypothetical situation we ask survey respondents about. In particular, in a large online survey experiment in the U.S. (n=2956, after exclusions) we ask participants about a series of hypothetical measures that federal or state governments could enact that lead to changes in democratic norms and practices to varying degrees across four dimensions of democracy: majority rule, executive constraint (horizontal accountability), civil liberties, and rule of law. In our analysis, we estimate the prevalence of support for these kinds of democratic

norm violations across partisan groups and using our experiment we assess the role of democratic hypocrisy. Finally, we consider how hyper-partisanship accounts for individual variation in these attitudes.

We report three key findings. First, based on our experiment we report that support for norm-eroding policies is non-trivial – ranging from supporting about 20% of the policies we considered in the case of the median Democrats to over 30% for the median Republican. These numbers indicated that a significant fraction of Americans encourage rather than just tolerate these policies. Second, preferences for measures eroding democratic norms and institutions are contingent on who is in power: citizens whose party is in power are substantially more likely to support anti-democratic policies. Third, our analysis also reveals an important role of individual differences: democratic hypocrisy is much more pronounced among those with stronger partisan identities.

These results have important implications on the study of public opinion towards democratic institutions. It points to the reasons why electorates, aided by ever-increasing political polarization (McCoy, Rahman and Somner 2018) and the re-emergence of populist politics in America (Hawkins and Littvay 2019), allow such deterioration, addressing the broad topic of attitudes towards democracy and democratic institutions. Finally, the study speaks to the social and political psychological literature addressing the political consequences of in-group, out-group biases (Mason 2015, Iyengar 2016) as manifested by partisan attachment (Huddy, Mason and Aaroe 2015).

Research design

The study employs a between-subjects design in which participants are asked to read a scenario about the post-2020 election results that describes who came to control offices such as the President, the Governor, and Congress. Then, given this context, participants are asked questions about some dilemmas tapping their support for democratic principles across four domains: majority rule and executive restraint, and liberal values of civil liberties and rule of law. The experiment consists of randomly assigning participants to either a condition in which their preferred party won all offices – which we call *in-party condition*, or a scenario where the participant's party lost – which we call *out-party condition*. In our analysis we estimate the support for norm eroding policies across these two conditions.

Sampling

We field our survey through Lucid, the largest US marketplace for online panels. Coppock and McClellan (2018) show that treatment effect estimates obtained on Lucid match those obtained on both MTurk and probability samples quite well. For other examples of studies conducted on Lucid, see Flores and Coppock (2018) and Graham (2018). Lucid offers quota-sampling on demographic variables including: age groups, gender, race and region. For this study, we recruited participants who identified or leaned towards one of the major parties, excluding independents.

We fielded the experiment to a sample of roughly 3000 people (after exclusions) in the context of a multi-investigator project. In order to enhance data quality, we give an attention check to terminate respondents indicative of fraudulent responses: they respond to a “trick question” proposed by Berinsky et al (2014) and they are asked to fill out a text box complying with instructions. If they pass, participants are assigned into one of the treatment groups in a double-blind procedure by the Qualtrics survey platform. Moreover, at the beginning of the survey, we measured partisan identity with the typical ANES questions, intensity of partisan attachment with four questions following Huddie et al (2015)¹ (See Appendix).

Outcome Measures and Experimental Conditions

Before reading the 16 dichotomous questions presented in the Appendix in the four democracy domains, respondents were randomly assigned to two groups which received scenarios in which either the Democrats or the Republicans swept the 2020 elections. They read this general introduction:

*For the next set of questions about the government, imagine this scenario: It's January 2021, and the new president, Senate and Congress and state level officials are being inaugurated following the 2020 elections. The **Democrats/Republicans** have made a sweep, winning the presidency, the Senate, and the governorship of your state. In a few of the questions below, though, the **Republicans/Democrats** have won a majority in the Congress (House of Representatives).*

The 16 questions were aggregated by taking the share of norm-eroding responses for each respondent for an overall measure of democratic erosion². Party was randomized once for the set and kept the same for all questions to alleviate respondent fatigue.

External Validity

While the approach offers the flexibility of controlling for partisanship and if a person’s preferred party is in power, it is not without flaws. It is presenting a hypothetical scenario, with no true control, which may still be contaminated by divergent political realities of the moment. Still, this approach gets us closest to disentangling the degree to which democratic hypocrisy is present in people’s attitudinal evaluations in a mixed political context. For example, studies using conjoint experiments to test voter choice of candidates supporting or eroding democracies take place within a time-bound political context, where the voters are aware of the actual party in power.

¹ We also experimented with a new measure of out-party threat perception with questions modeled on the Pew Research Center’s partisan threat question. However, this measure proved unproductive of our measure of erosion.

² This measure is correlated at 97% with a measure derived through a 2 parameter IRT model, as declared in our pre-analysis plan. We use this simpler measure for an easier interpretation but our results are identical when using a more nuanced measure.

Results

Following our analysis plan, we compare our measure of support for democratic norm erosion across scenarios where co-partisans vs. the out-party is in power. We do so by estimating a simple regression predicting our aggregated measure of democratic erosion score by an indicator for each experimental group. Table 1 reports these baseline findings. Several patterns stand out. First, we see much greater support for norm violation when the respondents' co-partisans are in power. Specifically, in the full sample the observed difference is about 7%, and is similar in magnitude to the mean difference we observe between Democrats and Republicans in each condition.

Second, and in line with past findings we also show that Republicans are more norm eroding even in an imaginary context where they are not in power (in contrast to the current one where Republicans have a sizable control over all three government branches and also the majority of state and local governments).

Third, the second and third columns reveal that the (out-party vs in-party) treatment effects persist among the supporters of both parties with Republicans exhibiting around 50% higher differences across the two conditions. In other words, both parties favor democratic norm erosion when their own party is in power, but Republicans intensify their norm erosion more than Democrats when their own party is in power.

Table 1: In-Party / Out-Party in Power Treatment Effects in General and by Party

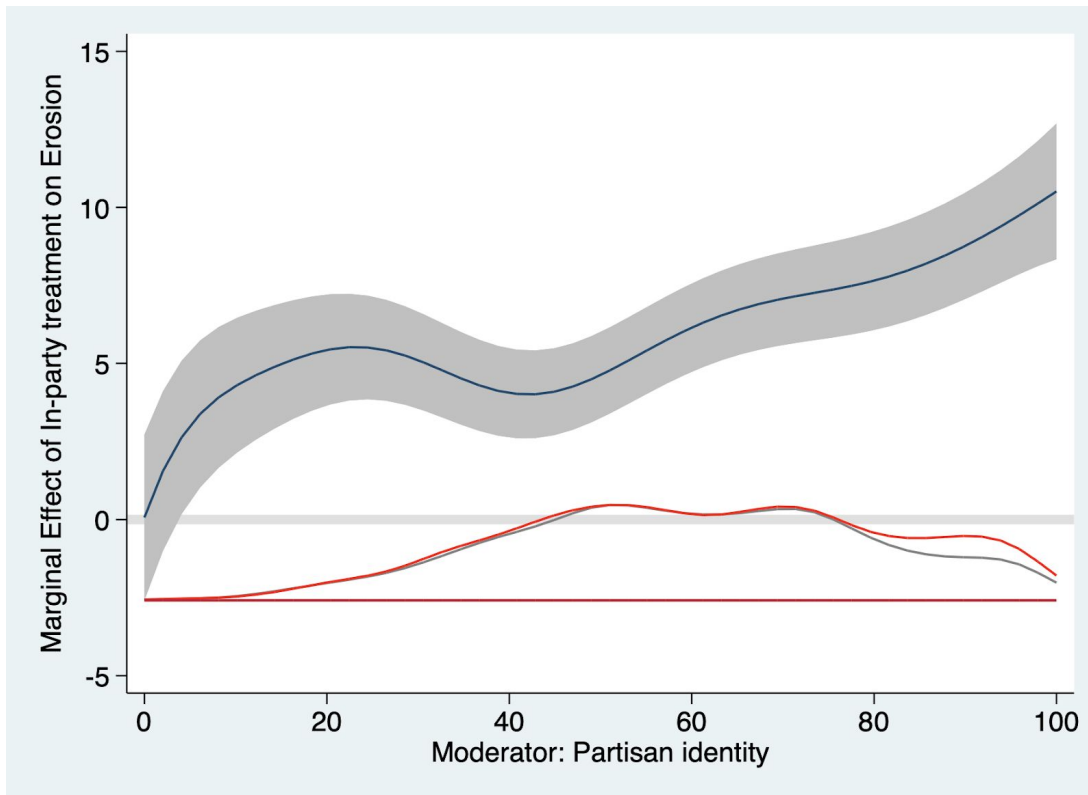
Condition	Sample			
	All	Democrat	Republican	R-D
In-party	33.6	28.5	40.3	11.7
	[0.5]	[0.7]	[0.8]	[1.0]
Out-party	26.9	23.7	31.4	7.7
	[0.5]	[0.7]	[0.8]	[1.1]
Treatment effect	6.7	4.9	8.8	4.0
	[0.7]	[0.9]	[1.1]	[1.4]
N	2956	1690	1266	2956

Note: Standard Errors in Square Brackets. All differences are significant at the 1% level. Dependent variable is the percentage of survey item for which a respondent gave a norm-eroding response.

Next we wanted to see how partisan identity moderates these findings; are they differentially related across experimental conditions. For a cleaner test of our hypothesis we thus explore variation in democratic hypocrisy as a function of partisan identity strength. In this specification our hypothesis implies that the differences in support for norm eroding policies across conditions with the in-party and out-party in power should increase with partisan identity. In other words, we

would expect that regardless of the baseline support for these policies, individuals who strongly identify as partisans would condition their support more on who is in power.

Figure 1: Conditional effects of in-party (vs out-party) being in power.



Note: Blue line depicts the depicted conditional treatment effect as a function of the moderator (partisan identity strength) and the grey band is a 95% confidence interval. The overlapping density estimates visualize the distribution of the moderator across the two treatment groups.

Following Hainmueller et al (2019) we estimate and visualize the treatment effect across the full range of our proposed moderator using a non-parametric procedure. In particular, we model our response variable - the proportion of democracy eroding positions an individual took as a flexible function of their partisan identity strength and the randomized treatment. Figure 1 shows that those strongly attached to their party exhibit much stronger treatment effects (about 10%-points) while those reporting low attachment to their party respond to our dilemmas similarly, whether or not their preferred party is described to be in power.

Discussion

In line with previous findings, Republicans tolerate democratic norm erosion more than Democrats, even when we strip the political context by giving the hypothetical scenarios. But additionally, both Democrats and Republicans exhibit sizable democratic hypocrisy supporting power-solidifying

policies when their preferred parties are in power. Republicans exercise democratic hypocrisy at about a 50% higher rate than Democrats. These effects are amplified by strong partisan identity. The findings are clearly alarming. Those committed to democratic principles need to find avenues to reach across the aisle to reverse the course of political distrust and polarization.

References

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2018. *The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation, and the Rise of Donald Trump*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. 2016. *Causal Case Study Methods: Foundations and Guidelines for Comparing, Matching, and Tracing*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.6576809>.

Becher, Michael, and Sylvain Brouard. 2019. “Executive Accountability Beyond Outcomes: Experimental Evidence on Public Evaluations of Powerful Prime Ministers,” (IAST).” IAST Working Papers 19-98, Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse.

Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 27 (1): 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012>.

Carey, John, Katherine Clayton, Gretchen Helmke, Brendan Nyhan, Mitchell Sander, Susan Stokes. 2018. “Party, Policy, Democracy and Candidate Choice in U.S. Elections | Bright Line Watch.” November 15, 2018. <http://brightlinewatch.org/us-elections/>.

Dahl, Robert. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Diamond, L., and M. F. Plattner. 2015. *Democracy in Decline?* Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.

Druckman, James N., and Matthew S. Levendusky. 2019. “What Do We Measure When We Measure Affective Polarization?” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 83 (1): 114–22. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfz003>.

Faulkner, Nicholas. 2018. “‘Put Yourself in Their Shoes’: Testing Empathy’s Ability to Motivate Cosmopolitan Behavior.” *Political Psychology* 39 (1): 217–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12411>.

Foa, Roberto Stefan, and Yascha Mounk. 2016. “The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect.” *Journal of Democracy* 27 (3): 5–17.

———. 2017. “The Signs of Deconsolidation.” *Journal of Democracy* 28 (1): 5–15. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0000>.

Gaertner, S. L., J. F. Dovidio, P. A. Anastasio, B. A. Bachman, and M. C. Rust. 1993. "The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4 (1): 1–26. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1080/14792779343000004>.

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. First edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Green, Donald P., Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds : Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. Yale ISPS Series. New Haven : Yale University Press, c2002.

<http://ezproxy.gsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00477a&AN=gast.1235855&site=eds-live>.

Hawkins, Kirk A., Ryan E. Carlin, Levente Littvay, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, eds. 2019. *The Ideational Approach to Populism: Concept, Theory, and Analysis*. 1 edition. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge.

Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. 2005. "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 593. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3647734>.

Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review* 109 (1): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000604>.

Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew 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 (1): 129–46. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034>.

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not IdeologyA Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (3): 405–31. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfs038>.

Lai, Calvin K., Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. 2014. "Moral Elevation Reduces Prejudice against Gay Men." *Cognition & Emotion* 28 (5): 781–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2013.861342>.

Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and S. Nechama Horwitz. 2016. "Political Identity Convergence: On Being Latino, Becoming a Democrat, and Getting Active." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 2 (3): 205. <https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.3.11>.

Levendusky, Matthew. 2018. "Americans, Not Partisans: Can Priming American National Identity Reduce Affective Polarization?" *Journal of Politics*, Supplemental Appendix, 80 (1).

- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.4.602>.
- Marcus, George E., Nicholas A. Valentino, Pavlos Vasilopoulos, and Martial Foucault. 2019. "Applying the Theory of Affective Intelligence to Support for Authoritarian Policies and Parties." *Political Psychology* 40 (S1): 109–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12571>.
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12089>.
- . 2016. "A Cross-Cutting Calm How Social Sorting Drives Affective Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80 (S1): 351–77. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfw001>.
- . 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, Illinois ; London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mason, Lilliana, and Julie Wronski. 2018. "One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship: One Tribe to Bind Them All." *Political Psychology* 39 (February): 257–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12485>.
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218759576>.
- McCoy, Jennifer, and Murat Somer, eds. 2019a. "Special Issue on Polarized Polities: A Global Threat to Democracy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681 (1). <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/anna/681/1>.
- . 2019b. "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. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716218818782>.
- Motyl, Matt, Joshua Hart, Tom Pyszczynski, David Weise, Molly Maxfield, and Angelika Siedel. 2011. "Subtle Priming of Shared Human Experiences Eliminates Threat-Induced Negativity toward Arabs, Immigrants, and Peace-Making." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 47 (6): 1179–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.04.010>.
- Mudde, Cas, and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Pew Research Center. 2016. "Partisanship and Political Animosity in 2016 | Pew Research Center." June 22, 2016.
<http://www.people-press.org/2016/06/22/partisanship-and-political-animosity-in-2016/>.
- Prati, Francesca, Richard J. Crisp, Rose Meleady, and Monica Rubini. 2016. "Humanizing Outgroups Through Multiple Categorization." *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 42 (4): 526–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216636624>.
- Pyszczynski, Tom, Matt Motyl, Kenneth E. Vail, Gilad Hirschberger, Jamie Arndt, and Pelin Kesebir. 2012. "Drawing Attention to Global Climate Change Decreases Support for War." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 18 (4): 354–68. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030328>.
- Reysen, Stephen, and Iva Katzarska-Miller. 2017. "Superordinate and Subgroup Identities as Predictors of Peace and Conflict: The Unique Content of Global Citizenship Identity." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 23 (4): 405–15. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000208>.
- Roccas, S., and M.B. Brewer. 2002. "Social Identity Complexity." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 6 (2): 88–106.
- Somer, Murat, and Jennifer McCoy. 2018. "Déjà vu? Polarization and Endangered Democracies in the 21st Century." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62 (1): 3–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218760371>.
- Stolle, Dietlind, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Olivier Bergeron-Boutin. 2019. "Partisanship and Support for Democratic Backsliding: Observational and Experimental Evidence from the United States and Canada." Prepared for Presentation at the Seventh Annual Toronto Political Behavior Workshop at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto.
- Svolik, Milan W. 2019. "Polarization versus Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (3): 20–32.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0039>.
- Vegetti, Federico. 2019. "The Political Nature of Ideological Polarization: The Case of Hungary." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681 (1): 78–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716218813895>.
- Waldner, D., and F. Lust. 2018. "Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 93–113.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050517-114628>.
- Wohl, Michael J. A., and Nyla R. Branscombe. 2005. "Forgiveness and Collective Guilt Assignment to Historical Perpetrator Groups Depend on Level of Social Category Inclusiveness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88 (2): 288–303.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.2.288>.

APPENDIX

Partisan Attachment

How much do you have in common with other [Democrats/Republicans]? [Only the in-party politician/party is displayed] *Not At All, A Little, A Moderate Amount, A Lot, A Great Deal*

How well does the term [Democrat/Republican] describe you? [Only the in-party politician/party is displayed] *Not at all well, Not very well, Somewhat well, Very well, Extremely well*

How important is being a [Democrat/Republican] to you? [Only the in-party politician/party is displayed] *Not at all important, Not very important, Somewhat important, Very important, Extremely important*

When talking about [Democrats/Republicans], how often do you use "we" instead of "they"? [Only the in-party politician/party is displayed] *Never, Rarely, Some of the time, Most of the time, All of the time*

Threat (5 point Agree-Disagree Scale)

When you look at Democrat/Republican politicians, would you agree that their policies are so misguided they threaten the country's well-being? [Only the out-party politician/party is displayed]

When you look at President Trump/Bernie Sanders, would you agree that his policies are so misguided they threaten the country's well-being? [Only the out-party politician/party is displayed]

When you look at people who don't share your values, would you say the policies they advocate are so misguided they threaten the country's well-being?

Democratic Values - Majority Rule

Supreme court

It is 2021, and the [Democrats/Republicans] have captured both the Senate and the presidency. They have the opportunity to change the Supreme Court. The Constitution does not state how many justices should be on the Supreme Court and in the 19th century the Congress changed the number of justices several times.

Some people say that the majority in the Senate should be able to change the number of justices on the Supreme Court, even if the opposing party disagrees. Others say that the Supreme Court should stay at the current size of nine justices, even if it is imbalanced politically.

What do you think?

- Supreme Court size should stay the same
- The Senate should be able to change the number of justices

Judges

Now imagine that the [Democrats/Republicans] have won a 51% majority in the Senate in the 2020 elections. The Constitution does not require it, but the Senate has historically operated on a principle of consulting the minority party to make lifetime judicial appointments like Supreme Court and federal judges. It did this through the filibuster rule requiring 60% approval to hold a vote on an appointment, although the appointment vote itself only requires a 51% approval.

In the last 7 years, though, the Democrats and Republicans have each reduced the filibuster so that currently, the majority party alone is able to appoint lifetime judges, including the Supreme Court. Some people say it is right that the majority party in the Senate should be able to make lifetime judicial appointments with their own 51% majority, without any bipartisan consensus. Others say that the filibuster should be restored in order to encourage the practice of bipartisan consensus for these appointments.

Which statement do you agree with more?

- Allow the majority party to appoint lifetime judges.
- Require bipartisan consensus to appoint judges.

Redistricting

The new [Democrat/Republican] governor and legislature in your state will need to decide how to draw the voting districts after the 2020 census population count. The constitution allows the states to decide who will draw the voting districts.

Some people say that whichever party is in the majority in each state should be able to draw voting district lines that give them additional seats in the legislature. And others say that a non-partisan independent body should draw voting district lines to eliminate advantages to one party or the other.

In your opinion who should be in charge of redistricting?

- The majority party
- An independent commission

Vote suppression

Imagine that in 2021, the new [Democrat/Republican] governor and legislature in your state will vote on a proposal to remove voters from the voter rolls if they have not voted in the last two elections. This may especially impact inactive [Republicans/Democrats]s who didn't turn out in large numbers in these elections.

Some people say that the state government should clean up the voter rolls by removing voters if they have not voted in the last two elections. Others say that it is a constitutional right to vote and voter names should not be removed once they have registered.

In this scenario, what do you think should happen with the names of those who do not vote regularly?

- They should be removed from the roll
- They should stay on the roll

Democratic Values - Executive constraint

Executive orders

Imagine that it's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the presidency, but not the Congress. Legally, the president has authority to write executive orders to enforce laws and implement policy. These orders may be overturned by the courts if they are determined to violate existing law, or if the Congress votes against them.

Some people say that the president should be able to change important national policy, like healthcare or immigration, by using the powers of executive order when Congress refuses to cooperate. Others say that only the Congress should be able to make major changes to national policy.

In this scenario, should the president be able to make major changes to policy without the consent of Congress?

- Yes, the president should
- No, the president should not

Unilateral action 1

Again, imagine that it's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the presidency, but not the Congress. The president wants to carry out his/her mandate from the people for change, but is hampered by the Congress controlled by the [Republicans/Democrats]s who refuse to pass new laws.

Some people say that the president should do what the people want even if it goes against existing laws. Others say that the president should follow the law even if it's not what the people want.

In this 2021 scenario, in your opinion, should the president do what the people want even if it goes against the law?

- President should do what people want
- President should follow the law

Unilateral action 2

It's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the presidency, but not the Congress in the 2020 elections. The new president wants to carry out rapid change to address the urgent needs of the country. Some people say that our president should have the necessary power to act in favor of the national interest, even if Congress or the Supreme Court opposes it. Others say that the president should get the agreement first from Congress and the Supreme Court before making major changes.

In this scenario, please indicate which of the following statements you most agree with.

- The President should have the power to act alone
- President should get agreement of Congress and Supreme Court

Presidential term limits

Now imagine that it's 2021, and the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the presidency, the Senate AND Congress. They make a proposal to remove any term limits and allow the president to be reelected more times than the current two-term rule.

Some people say that term limits are undemocratic because they do not allow the people to keep voting for a popular president. Others say that term limits are needed to make sure no single person gains too much power over the country.

On the whole, are you in favor or opposed to presidential term limits?

- Favor presidential term limits
- Oppose presidential term limits

Democratic norms - Civil Rights

Protest

Imagine that the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the governorship in your state in the 2020 elections and must decide how to handle growing protests in your state. In this scenario, do you think that the governor should be allowed to ban protests, or is it more important to defend the right to protest, even by extremists?

- Governor should NOT be allowed to ban protests
- Governor should be allowed to ban protests

Prosecute journalists

The [Democrats/Republicans] have won the governorship in your state in the 2020 elections. The new governor is pushing the authorities to prosecute a journalist who accused the governor of misconduct without revealing sources. In this scenario, should the governor have the right to prosecute this journalist?

- Governor should have the right to prosecute
- Governor should NOT have the right to prosecute

Disqualify candidates

It's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have won the presidential election. To protect the country, the president now wants to disqualify candidates who are disloyal to the country from running for office. In this scenario, should the president have the power to disqualify specific candidates the president believes to be disloyal to the country?

- President should have the right to disqualify candidates
- President should NOT have the right to disqualify candidates

Democratic norms - Rule of law

Imagine that it's 2021 and the [Democrat/Republican] have won the presidency and the majority in Congress and the newly-elected [Democrats/Republicans] are questioning the impartiality of the courts.

Some people say that elected officials must obey the courts even when they think that the decisions are politically biased against the president's party, while others argue that elected officials should not be bound by court decisions they regard as biased.

What do you think?

- Court rulings should always be obeyed
- Some court rulings should be disregarded

Foreign interference

Imagine that the [Democrats/Republicans] have just won the 2020 presidential election, but there are many allegations of foreign help to the new president's campaign.

Some people say that candidates should be able to use any information about their opponents during the campaign, even if it comes from outside the country and is difficult to verify. Others say that the new Congress should pass a law requiring all candidates to report to the FBI any foreign offers of help, such as dirty information on their opponents.

In your view, should foreign information be used in campaigns or reported to the FBI?

- It should be used in the campaign
- It should be reported to the FBI

Accept election results

It's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have just won a bare majority in Congress, but their opponents claim the election was so influenced by illegitimate campaign contributions and problems with the voter registration lists that the [Democrats/Republicans] didn't really win a majority.

Some people say that political candidates should respect election results even if they believe they lost an election due to unfair practices. Others say that they should refuse to accept results that they believe are due to unfair practices, even if they can't prove it conclusively.

What do you think candidates should do when they think they lost due to unfair practices?

- Accept the results
- Refuse to accept the results

Impeachment

Imagine that it's 2021 and the [Democrats/Republicans] have just won the presidency, but lawsuits have been filed alleging criminal misconduct during the campaign of the new president and a presidential cover up in the first days of the presidency.

Some people say that the president is serving the country and therefore should be immune from prosecution for any action he/she takes as president. Others say that no one is above the law and the president should be investigated in an impeachment inquiry, and removed from office if found guilty.

In your view, should the president be impeached and removed for such behavior or should be immune during his or her presidency?

- Be impeached and removed.
- Enjoy immunity