

THE DETERMINATES OF SECURITY POLICY APPROVAL: AFFECTIVE  
POLARIZATION, INTERSTATE COERCION, AND THEIR IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION

by

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(Under the Direction of Jeffrey Berejikian)

ABSTRACT

Two areas of rising concern to US security experts and scholars are the increasing polarization of US citizens, and the potential for China to influence the residents of other nations to the detriment of US national security. While there is significant study of interstate coercion in international relations, there are gaps on the use of coercion to weaken or dissolve a coalition, also known as a “wedge strategy.” Similarly, while there is substantial scholarship on the polarization of the US electorate, there is less on the specifics of affective polarization. Specifically, how it may impact public opinion on security policy. Using three survey experiments I test how affective polarization impacts US public opinion of a defense policy in response to an external threat, and how affective polarization influences public opinion on a domestic security policy in response to an internal threat. My third survey experiment is run in the Philippines. I test how Chinese coercive threats influence public support for allowing the US military to conduct combat operations in defense of Taiwan from Filipino territory. The results of this research indicate that while China holds little ability to influence Filipino public opinion with coercive threats during a crisis, US ability to build broad bipartisan support for security policy will indeed be impacted by affective polarization.

INDEX WORDS: Affective Polarization, Partisanship, Coercion, Inducement, Defense  
Policy, Draft, Selective Service, Philippines, China, Domestic Extremism

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## DEDICATION

To Lindsey, without whom I would never have begun, nor completed this effort, and who made the journey wonderful along the way.

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## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study of security policy, understanding how a state's citizens react to a proposed policy is of clear importance. While recent scholarship has begun to provide evidence that public opinion is important even in authoritarian states (Quek & Johnston 2017, Weiss & Dafoe 2018), it is especially important in Democracies where responsiveness to public opinion is considered a foundational aspect of effective governance (Habermas 1996, Wlezien & Soroka 2021), and a policy that doesn't have public support may be considered illegitimate (Peters 2013).

The importance of examining the determinates of public opinion rests on the assumption that public opinion will influence the policy choices and preferences of political elites. This assumption should be especially valid in democratic states, where the driving idea behind the design of the governing system is that elected officials will enact policies in accordance with the preferences (i.e., opinion) of their citizens (Wlezien & Soroka 2021). Scholarly research focused on the US and Europe provides evidence for the responsiveness of governments to public opinion on politically salient issues (Lax and Phillips 2012, Rasmussen et al. 2019). Though there is much work to be done to fully establish how and to what level public opinion gets translated into policy. For the purposes of this research, I will assume that there is such a mechanism at work.

Assuming that public opinion on a security policy impacts politicians looking to implement those policies, the factors that impact public opinion become essential to understand. I focus my research on how two of the most prominent issues for US national security today

impact public opinion on security policy: the polarization of the US electorate and the coercion of US allies by China. The first article focuses on how affective polarization in the US impacts support for a defense policy aimed at increasing military capacity. The second article continues looking at affective polarization, but now in the context of how it impacts public support for internal security policy. The final article shifts its focus from the US to the Philippines, a crucial ally in the Pacific. While polarization is not an issue in the Philippines (Kenny 2020), they are a target for Chinese coercion, with potentially serious consequences for US security. Therefore, the final chapter examines how Chinese coercive threats impact public opinion on national security policy in the Philippines.

#### Affective Polarization in the United States

While there has been much study of the polarization of the US electorate, I focus my research on the understudied concept of "affective polarization" and how it impacts an individual's espoused support for security policy proposals. While "polarization" is often thought of as a unitary concept, scholars have recently divided polarization into two specific concepts: ideological and affective polarization (Mason 2015). Ideological polarization refers to the difference between two groups' espoused policy preferences (Webster and Abramowitz 2017). Research in this area is fairly well established, with evidence that the US has become increasingly ideologically polarized at the elite level (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006), but more debate over the extent to which the average citizen has become ideologically polarized (Fiorina et al. 2008, Abramowitz 2010, Abramowitz and Saunders 2008).

A newer area of focus for scholars is affective polarization, which references the dislike, mistrust, assignment of negative traits, and outright hatred of the "other" group (Iyengar et al.

2012). The underlying mechanism of affective polarization lies in social identity theory (SIT). SIT holds that individuals sort themselves into groups based on perceived similarities (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The individual perceives members of their in-group more favorably, while anyone in the out-group is viewed negatively, with their flaws exaggerated (Islam 2014). The tendency of Americans to base their identity and sort themselves according to, their political beliefs leads to political identity being a highly salient trait for social identification (Green et al. 2002).

The impact of affective polarization has been conceptualized in several ways. On a citizen-to-citizen level, researchers have found that individuals have increasingly negative about members of the out-group party (Iyengar et al. 2012, Pew Research Center 2016), and prejudice between political parties now exceeds prejudice between races and religions (Iyengar and Westwood 2015). The impact of polarization has also been examined on a citizen to politician level. As polarization has increased, party loyalty has increased. Very few individuals will consider voting against their identified party (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006) even if the candidates violate democratic norms (Graham and Svobik 2020).

Given the importance of individual-level policy support, I take a different approach, examining how affective polarization might influence how a voter assesses and ultimately "rates" a proposed security policy. First, I look at how affective polarization impacts individual-level support for a policy that would re-institute selective service, i.e., a policy to start the draft again in response to a rising external threat from China. A proposal to implement forced conscription is inherently a proposal to infringe upon the personal freedoms of a portion of America. Supporting such a proposal should require a high degree of trust in the government and a willingness to sacrifice for that policy. Affective polarization should be an especially salient influence when individuals judge such a policy.

Following my examination of how social identity and affective polarization among US residents impact support for the draft, I move on to how this factor affects an individual's opinion on the implementation of domestic counter-extremism policy in the US. While my research on affective polarization and selective service focuses on an agreed upon threat in China (Pew Research Center 2021) and a relatively bipartisan policy in the draft (Pew Research Center 2011), I focus this research on extremists who belong to the same political social groupings as most Americans. This allows me to examine how affective polarization might help or hinder policymakers hoping to gather support for a policy that is likely to be inherently unpopular with their constituents.

The study of affective polarization's impact on support for domestic counter-extremism policy is important for several reasons. First, there has been an increase in the number of incidents of political violence in the US (Parker & Eisler 2023). The threat of political violence has not escaped the average citizen, with over 60% of US residents labeling domestic terrorism as a "serious threat to the country" (Frankovic 2021). While this alone would make the study of counter-extremism policy important, there is also an important gap in scholarly research on extremism policy with respect to social identity and affective polarization. While research has provided evidence that the orientation of the political identity of an extremist group and an individual influence the level to which individuals view violence as legitimate (Norman 2022) and the willingness to infringe upon the civil liberties of a suspected terrorist (Caton & Mullinix 2022), they have not expanded the scope conditions to include how the political identity of the government proposing these policies might impact public opinion. In the increasingly polarized environment of US politics, I believe that the identity of the government has the potential to both

mitigate and amplify the impact of social identity biases, dependent upon the identity of both the terrorist threat and that of the individual.

### Chinese Coercion in the Philippines

The second factor I examine is the effect of coercive threats on public opinion in the context of a "wedge strategy" executed by China against the US and the Philippines. A wedge strategy can be defined as a coercive strategy implemented by a state with the goal of preventing or degrading a coalition of states that might oppose their objectives (Crawford 2011, Huang 2020). I examine how a variety of coercive threats aimed at degrading the US-Philippines coalition impact public support among Filipino residents for allowing US military operations to be conducted from Filipino territory during a fourth crisis over Taiwan.

In the context of the current international security environment, China sees the US as the leader of a coalition of states that seek to limit and contain their power (McDonald 2023). Meanwhile, the US sees its coalition partners as vital allies in deterring China from violating established norms and international law (Biden 2021). These conflicting viewpoints come to a head in the South China Sea, where two points of contention largely define the regional security environment.

The US has specified both Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea and the status of Taiwan as a self-ruling island as threats to US vital interests in their governing national security documents (Biden 2022, Biden 2022). However, due to the increasingly lethal anti-access capabilities the Chinese military has been able to deploy (Cancian et al. 2023), the US now depends on its allies to project military power vital for deterring and defeating any Chinese aggression in this region. This makes access to the Philippines' territory crucial in the event of a

US-China crisis in the region. This requirement is likely unproblematic in the event of a crisis over the territorial claims in the South China Sea, which is of vital national interest to the Philippines. However, based on existing theory, a wedge strategy aimed at preventing the Philippines from joining a US coalition to defend or deter action against Taiwan has a higher chance of success.

A wedge strategy's propensity for success theoretically hinges on several factors. The magnitude of the change the divider is trying to induce (Crawford 2021), the interdependence of the allies (Huang 2020), the physical distance between the coalition partners (Crawford 2011), and the inducement capability of the divider (Izumikawa 2013). While it is generally agreed upon that inducement (or accommodation) strategies are more likely to result in the desired weakening of an opposing alliance (Crawford 2011, Huang 2020), there are arguments that pure coercive strategies have been historically successful and attractive to states who lack resources for significant inducement (Izumikawa 2013).

As of now, however, these factors that influence the likelihood of a successful wedge strategy remain untested at the individual level. Beyond the pressure Filipino residents might exert on their elected officials to adopt a security policy in line with their preferences, testing the components of a wedge strategy is important for several reasons. First, in the absence of access to political elites who wield the actual power to make these types of decisions, testing citizen public opinion is useful to examine how elites might react in similar circumstances. While there are concerns with differences between elite and mass cognition and decision making (Oberholtzer et al. 2019, Hyde 2015, Hafner-Burton et al. 2013), recent research indicates that the gap has been vastly overestimated and these groups respond to experimental treatments in very similar manners (Kertzer 2022). Secondly, testing the effects of a wedge strategy at the

individual level goes towards establishing the micro-foundations of the theory. While wedge theory in general is focused on outcomes at the state level, we can take a micro-foundational approach by examining outcomes at the individual level (Kertzer 2017). This approach works to rectify a specific critique of theories of coercion, which have not sufficiently addressed how individuals respond to coercive strategies (Kertzer & Zeitzoff 2017, Schelling 1966, Pape 1996).

Given this established theory, the Philippines presents a largely best-case scenario for a wedge strategy. Filipino security concerns don't fully align when it comes to maintaining the status quo in Taiwan (Venzon 2023), has stated publicly it does not want to be involved in a conflict over Taiwan (Marcos Jr. 2023, Cepeda 2023), is economically dependent on China (source), geographically distant from the US but adjacent to the aggressor, and China has a significant and irreplaceable inducement capacity in both economics and territorial concessions. Furthermore, the Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the Philippines does not require the Philippines to aid the US during a conflict over Taiwan. This should theoretically make any coercive efforts to prevent the Philippines from joining a conflict easier. The Philippines can credibly claim they have no treaty requirement to ally with the US to support Taiwan. Empirical evidence indicates this type of alliance, where one party is involved in a conflict that the alliance doesn't technically cover, only leads to a wartime coalition roughly 25% of the time (Leeds 2003).

## CHAPTER 1

### AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AND DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR US SECURITY POLICY<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lyells, Christopher. To be submitted to the Journal of Strategic Studies

## Abstract

Affective polarization, a social bias that causes individuals to favorably view their “in-group” while disliking an “out-group,” is a recognized issue in current American life. However, this social bias remains understudied with regards to its impact on how individuals assess and evaluate US defense policy. Leveraging the fact that political identity is an especially salient way that US residents construct their identity, I conduct a survey experiment testing if individuals who are co-partisan with the government proposing a defense policy have higher average approval than those who are out-party with the government. I find that affective polarization does have a substantive effect on how individuals assess and approve of a defense policy. Furthermore, affective polarization impacts their willingness to take political action in support or opposition to that policy, and willingness to enforce the policy with criminal penalties. This research furthers our understanding of how the growing polarization among the US electorate impacts how individuals assess defense policy, providing insight for both scholars and US security practitioners.

## **Introduction**

While polarization is not a new issue in the United States, a 2018 survey of US foreign policy experts revealed they perceived domestic polarization to be the biggest threat to the United States (Smeltz et al. 2018). This increase in polarization has led domestic politics to become openly hostile and largely gridlocked, hampering the democratic process and reducing individual support for democracy (Binder 2015). Most scholarship on US polarization has focused on ideological polarization, or the difference between the Democratic and Republican parties espoused policy preferences and ideology (Webster and Abramowitz 2017). However, focus has recently begun to shift to affective polarization in the US.

Affective polarization references the dislike, mistrust, assignment of negative traits, and outright hatred of the “other” group (Iyengar et al. 2012). Though affective polarization is a global issue, the US has far outpaced its Western democratic peers in the growth of “out-party hate,” which is now a more powerful voting incentive than in-party support (Finkel et al. 2020). Most research on affective polarization has so far focused on confirming its presence (Iyengar et al. 2012), its origins, and why it is increasing (Finkel et al. 2020). The effects of polarization on specific foreign policy options are under-explored and remain consequential (Friedrichs and Tama 2022). Specifically, how does the growth of affective polarization affect the conduct of US national security policy? While the partisan divide is thought to be less severe for foreign policy than domestic matters (Bryan and Tama 2022), the animosity each party has for each other is unlikely to remain bounded to matters of domestic policy.

National Security threats are often associated with a “rally ‘round the flag’ effect (Myrick 2021), which unifies both political elites and the citizenry around a common understanding of the situation, threat, and appropriate strategy (Baum & Potter 2019), bolstering

support for the government. Affective polarization has the potential to hinder this consensus building around a security policy, even when the nation is under threat, and even with a policy that is relatively bipartisan.

Given an increase in affective polarization among Americans, I expect that when presented with an ideologically neutral foreign policy option that requires trust in the US government, individuals will have higher levels of support for a policy that originates from a co-partisan government. Conversely, individuals should show higher levels of opposition to an identical policy if it is proposed by the opposition party. To test this theory, I conduct a survey experiment proposing the re-institution of the draft in order to increase the US's military capacity to compete with a hypothetical expanding China. By keeping the threat and the policy proposal constant but varying the party in power that is implementing the policy, I isolate the effect of affective polarization on security policy support.

Understanding the consequences of affective polarization is critical for both scholars and policymakers. Echoing Levendusky (2017), if individual voters ignore how close a policy option is to their true preferences in favor of partisanship, then there is less incentive for elected officials to alter their policies in an attempt to match voter preferences as a means of remaining in power. This would remove a check on the foreign policy action of the Executive Branch of the US government. For scholars and practitioners of international relations, as individuals shift their evaluation of the government (and thus costs they might impose) from the policies of the governing party to a largely party-based evaluation, the mechanisms behind the democratic peace (Baum & Potter 2019) and audience costs (Fearon 1995) begin to lose their potency in a democracy.

Furthermore, approaching affective polarization from a policy perspective as opposed to the more common political candidate/party support perspective offers a relatively novel and needed nuance. If affective polarization does indeed bias individuals in how they view a policy, we can lay the foundation for a larger theory of polarization in general.

Assuming affective polarization does bias US citizens in our current environment, policy preferences will have an exogenous divergent force acting on them from the beginning. If we assume that media actors, both traditional and more modern social media entrepreneurs, and political actors, have an incentive to A) reinforce these initial preferences and B) castigate their target demographic's out-group, then this initial preference divergence could become an engrained policy preference, which would result in the increase in ideological polarization in the US.

### **Literature Review and Theory**

Whether the US has, in fact, become more partisan and polarized over the past decades has received much scholarly focus. There are two types of polarization that impact US domestic politics, ideological and affective polarization (Mason 2015). Most research has oriented around ideological polarization or differences in policy preference at the political elite level. The broad consensus is that, yes, US policy elites are increasingly polarized (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). However, there is more debate surrounding the ideological polarization of US citizens.

Some research argues the average voter has not grown any more extreme or polarized than they have been in the past (Levendusky 2009, Fiorina et al. 2008, Fiorina et al. 2005). Others, citing changes in the survey data, rhetoric, and social preference of Americans, argue that the US public has become highly polarized with increasingly few centrists and moderates

(Abramowitz 2010; Abramowitz and Saunders 2006; Abramowitz and Saunders 2008).

Republicans and Democrats have increasingly distinct opinions on foreign policy, mirroring their preference divergence in domestic policy (Smeltz et al. 2020). Democrats and Republicans have also displayed differing perceptions on what constitutes a salient threat to US national security (Bruin de Bruin et al. 2020). This divergence translates into different policy preferences for addressing these different levels of threat.

This ideological divergence has occurred as Americans have “sorted” themselves into ideologically coherent groups. Individuals with liberal ideology have increasingly become Democrats, while conservative individuals have become Republicans (Fiorina et al. 2009). This sorting has removed the moderating force of “cross-cutting” identities, which enables an individual to identify with multiple groups.<sup>2</sup> This sorting also encourages “party loyalty,” where very few individuals vote against their party (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). Indeed, as they become more ideologically polarized, US voters have shown they will support candidates who violate democratic norms but espouse the desired ideologies (Graham and Svulik 2020). While this “sorting” effect is often thought of as the coalescing of ideology with political identity, it is also geographic. Without specifying directional causality, Americans have geographically clustered themselves into partisan groups at the state, county, city, and neighborhood level.

(Brown and Enos 2021).

While ideological policy alignment is the largest driver of why Americans identify with their chosen party, the second most impactful factor is the perception that the opposing party will negatively impact the country if in control of the government (Pew Research Center 2018).

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, a liberal Republican would have other liberals in their “in-group,” some of which would be in the Democratic party. This should moderate that individuals negative perceptions of a liberal Democrat, because they would both be a member of a similar group.

While this perception that the opposition party will harm the US is partly due to the policies the other party would implement, it is also partially due to a dislike and lack of trust in the other party.

Affective polarization, or identity-based polarization, references the predisposition to view the in-group favorably while harboring antipathy and distrust towards outgroups (Myrick 2021). Scholars are finding increasing evidence of affective polarization in the US. Between 1988 and 2008, the average “feeling thermometer” score given to the opposing party dropped by 15 points out of 100 (Iyengar et al. 2012) and, in 2016, Pew found that for the first time, most Americans viewed the “other” party “very unfavorably” (Pew Research Center 2016). For better and for worse, prejudice between political parties now exceeds prejudice between races and religions (Iyengar and Westwood 2015).<sup>3</sup>

The underlying mechanism enabling the growth of affective polarization lies in social identity theory (SIT). SIT holds that individuals sort themselves into groups based on perceived similarities (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The individual perceives members of their in-group more favorably, while anyone in the out-group is viewed negatively, with their flaws exaggerated (Islam 2014).

The proclivity of Americans to tie their political identity to their individual identity leads to political identity being one of the most prominent ways Americans define themselves (Green et al. 2002). To the extent that an individual’s political identity is highly salient, SIT holds that the individual will categorize the world according to partisanship. Those who are co-partisan form the in-group, while those who are not co-partisan form the out-group. This partisan group identity leads individuals to distrust the government when the opposition party is in control

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<sup>3</sup> The authors note that this is likely due to the lack of norms disincentivizing political prejudice and discrimination.

(Levendusky 2017). The resulting lack of trust is especially important when considering security policy that affects both national security and individual freedoms.

### Affective Polarization and US Security Policy

US foreign policy was long thought to be immune from the effects of polarization that plagued domestic politics. Increasingly though, this is not the case. Scholars have identified growing divergence in foreign policy preferences among US elites and citizens (Smeltz et al. 2020). This phenomenon is suspected to result in political gridlock (Binder 2015), a decrease in international treaties (Boller 2022), a decrease in the power of Congress to check the executive (Marshall and Haney 2022), and an increased likelihood for the executive to use powers like military deployments that contain no congressional check (Milner and Tingley 2015; Burns 2020). However, all these issues could theoretically be dealt with by governing officials moderating their foreign policies to match the median voter preference. If, however, we take into account the effects of affective polarization, the policy itself decreases in importance for gaining domestic support. Instead, the policy source (i.e., co-partisan or opposition party) will increase in importance.

Little research has been done on if and how affective polarization might affect domestic foreign policy support. Most studies of polarization have been done with the framework driving a choice between two policy options proposed by two candidates (Orr and Huber 2020). Here, US citizens have shown the tendency to disregard ideological proximity<sup>4</sup> in favor of supporting the co-partisan candidate (Levendusky 2017). This research framework has two issues that hinder its applicability to studying domestic support for security policy proposals.

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<sup>4</sup> How closely the proposed policy aligns with the individual's true preferences

First, when considering political candidates, it is difficult to unbundle a specific policy from an individual's broader assumption about what the rest of the candidate's policy platform is based upon their partisan identity. For example, if I were to test the voting preferences for partisan candidates based on their support for implementing the draft, individuals would likely infer candidate's ideological positions on healthcare, immigration, and taxation etc., based upon their partisan identity. These additional assumed policy preferences should play a role in determining candidate support. Additionally, given the slim majorities in Congress recently, voting for an opposition partner could be assumed to harm the chance of successful legislation for an individual's other policy preferences.

Second, this common design framework measures candidate support as opposed to policy support. While this is indeed important in terms of incentives politicians face to gain and maintain power, it does not tell us much about how individuals will respond to a single policy proposal outside of an election contest. If the US populace is indeed affectively polarized, then we should see individuals express different levels of support for the exact same policy based on the partisan source of the policy. This variance in support should occur absent any political cueing from co-partisan party elites that could shift the ideological platform of the group.

### Affective Polarization and Policy Approval

An individual's evaluation of a specific policy is nominally predicated upon their evaluation of the policy's specific details and projected outcomes. These are then compared to their ideal policy and desired outcomes. The closer the policy proposal is to the individual's ideal policy, the higher their approval of the proposed policy, and subsequently, the political entity

responsible. Any large, group-oriented divergence in policy preference would be categorized as ideological polarization.

This is a standard spatial description of public opinion regarding politics (Munger & Munger 2015) and this concept undergirds theories like the median voter theorem and audience costs. Individuals have a policy preference, and they reward or punish politicians based on the difference between their individual preferences and the actual policy proposed and/or enacted. If this was a complete description of the theoretical mechanism, policy support at the individual level would vary only with changes in the policy content. However, I expect the introduction of affective polarization to distort this ideal process and have real world implications for politicians who are attempting to build support for a policy.

Individuals who are biased, either for or against a political entity because of their social identity will have a second factor affect their evaluation of a policy. Affective polarization should cause an increase in support for co-partisan security policy or a decrease in support for an out-partisan policy independent of policy content. These increases and decreases should become greater as the individual is increasingly affectively polarized. Said more plainly, if the social identity of an individual is a salient factor, we should see variation in policy support as the partisan source of the policy changes, even when the content of the policy remains constant.

This is important from a defense policy perspective. The US military necessarily works through the civilian political appointees of the Defense Department to recommend, shape, and enact policies that it desires. Most recent DOD policies have been ideologically salient before they were judged by the public i.e. allowing openly homosexual members to serve, allowing transgender servicemembers, or the DOD abortion policy. But some, like the creation of the Space Force, have no clear ideological bias, but became polarized across partisan lines after their

introduction. One survey found that while 80% of Republicans favored the creation of the space force, only 39% of Democrats felt the same (Manchester 2018). Another by CNN found only 28% of Democrats favored the creation of the Space Force, while 50% of Republicans did (Sparks 2018). Finally, an Economist/YouGov poll found an even larger split, with only 14% of Democrats supporting the creation of the Space Force compared to 59% of Republicans (YouGov 2018). Does this split in support reflect an ideological divide where Democratic respondents of these polls actually oppose the idea of a Space Force, or are they simply opposed to the Trump administration and the creation of the Space Force happened to be a visible policy?

### The Underlying Mechanism

I theorize that affective polarization should affect policy support primarily through the mechanism of trust in the government. There is a general consensus among scholars that there is an inherent information asymmetry between the typical citizen and policy officials, especially when it comes to foreign policy (Baum and Potter 2019). This results in the citizen trusting the government to handle these issues about which they know little (and often care little). When we factor in affective polarization, an individual should be more likely to trust their co-partisan's policy option while mistrusting and disliking a policy presented by an out-group.

While there was long thought to be a limit to this informational asymmetry in the event of a highly salient crisis (Baum and Potter 2008), the partisan split in the US has reduced the tendency to form a coherent understanding of a situation that reaches all individuals through their biases (Baum and Potter 2019). With the information convergence mechanism degraded, initial levels of trust in the government, and thus support for their policies, are likely to stay more

consistent. This makes the baseline affective polarization of the US populace increasingly important as a factor in garnering policy support.

While trust in government should independently affect policy support, it should also impact individual threat perception. Threat perception should then act as a mediating variable between trust and national security policy support. Adjusting a policy to address a national security threat is an inherently costly proposition in a world of finite resources. Assuming there is an informational asymmetry between the government and the individual, the individual must trust that threat to the national interest justifies the rebalancing of resources. An individual who is affectively polarized is less likely to trust the opposition officials, thus, less likely to adopt their threat perceptions as a cost justification. While some areas of threat perception have become divergent along party lines (Bruin de Bruin 2020), US threat perception regarding China is relatively bipartisan (Pew Research Center 2021). Even if the individual does perceive a similar threat (as is likely the case with China), to fully support the policy, the individual must trust and believe that the method of addressing the threat is the most efficient and effective. This is more likely with a co-partisan government, given the positive biases imbued upon the in-group.

Re-activating the draft is a useful test case for the impact of affective polarization on policy support. It is ideologically neutral, with roughly 20% of both Republicans and Democrats in favor of reinstating the draft (Pew Research Center 2011). In implementing selective service and moving to a forced conscription-based model, the US government would severely impinge on the rights and freedoms of a section of the American public. To support such a policy, the public would have to trust that the security threat is worth the abdication of freedoms. How threatening an individual perceives a group to be is tied to their willingness to curtail their own

civil liberties (Davis and Silver 2004). The individual would also have to trust that the government would responsibly employ this new authority. This makes the draft a particularly salient policy with which to test the effect of affective polarization of foreign policy.

While an external threat is often thought to create a “rally around the flag” effect,” which unifies the state, Myrick (2021) shows that US polarization remains largely constant in the face of external threats. An external threat can even degrade internal cohesion as security threats require redistributing finite resources and choosing among divergent policy preferences (Bak et al. 2020). As such, I expect the presence of affective polarization in the US domestic arena to alter individual level policy preferences based only upon the political identity of the individual and the party responsible for proposing and implementing the policy. This leads to my primary hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: An individual has a higher probability of supporting a policy to reinstitute the draft if it originates from a co-partisan government than the same policy emanating from a not co-partisan government.*

I expect this variance in support to manifest in more concrete ways than just an immaterial level of support for a policy. Based on this level of support, I expect co-partisan individuals to be more likely to take a positive political action in support of a policy, while individuals who are out-party should be more likely to take a negative political action.

*Hypothesis 2a: An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of opposition when a policy originates from an out-party government.*

*Hypothesis 2b: An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of support when a policy originates from a co-partisan government.*

Similarly, co-partisan support for a policy should also manifest in support for legal consequences backing that policy.

*Hypothesis 3: An individual will support more stringent legal punishments for those who violate the legal requirements of a policy that originates from a co-partisan government than when a policy originates from an out-party government.*

Finally, my model theorizes that affective polarization impacts the level of trust an individual places in a governing administration, contingent upon the administration's political identity. That trust should, in turn, impact an individual's threat perception. When a political party declares a threat important enough to dedicate resources and enact costly policy, their co-partisans should trust that judgement and increase their threat perception accordingly. Conversely, out-group citizens should not trust that threat assessment, resulting in a lower average threat perception.

*Hypothesis 4: When justifying their opposition to the draft, individuals who are co-partisan with the government will be less likely to evoke a lack of sufficient external threat than individuals who are not co-partisan*

### **Experimental Testing for the Effects of Affective Polarization**

To test the previous hypotheses, I conduct a survey experiment of 1955 US residents. The survey experiment was designed using Qualtrics and implemented by Lucid, who obtained a demographically representative sample of adults living in the US. The survey was conducted from July 22<sup>nd</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022. 78 individuals failed to complete the survey, leaving 1877 useable observations. The survey experiment was designed to explicitly isolate affective polarization in the US population by maintaining a constant international threat and policy response while randomly varying the source of the policy between a Republican and Democrat controlled government.

By holding the specific policy and the context in which it was introduced constant, and assuming that an individual's unbiased policy preferences are constant at a specific time, I isolate the effect of the political identity of the party proposing the policy, and how that political identity interacts with the social identity of the individual respondent. In this way I isolate the social identity relationship between the individual and the government as the only factor that can impact overall policy support. As the only information given about the government in my

scenario is their political identity, I assume that the social identity bias responsible for any change in average level of support is affective polarization.

In addition to measuring an individual's intangible "support" for implementing the policy of selective service, I am also interested in how that support may translate into more tangible effects. Therefore, I test how affective polarization may impact the potential political actions an individual might take in response to a controversial policy like the draft, and, how seriously they believe that policy should be backed by legal consequences.

### Survey Design

The survey experiment proposes a future threat scenario in which the US and its allies face an expanding China that has established overseas military bases in both the Pacific and South America. All respondents receive a scenario where, due to domestic factors, the US military has been unable to meet its recruitment and retention goals. Department of Defense officials then warn that the military is currently too small to match China in a conflict. The policy recommendation to address this threat is to re-activate the selective service lottery for male US citizens between the ages of 18 and 25.

### Survey Text:

*Consider the following scenario: In 2025 China has drastically increased its military size and adventurism, outpacing the US and its allies. China has seized control and militarized several disputed islands in the South China Sea and the East China Sea and has gained control of contested border regions with India.*

*China has also expanded its global military footprint, establishing air and naval bases in the Solomon Islands and Venezuela. Meanwhile, the US has failed to meet its military recruiting and retention goals for several years due to a resurgent economy drawing current members of the armed forces and potential recruits to the civilian sector.*

*The Secretary of Defense has recently asserted that a failure to increase standing military capability could result in the US being unable to sustain a conflict with China long enough to fully mobilize the nation to a wartime footing. In response, as both a deterrent signal against*

*further military adventurism and to boost military capability, the [Republicans/Democrats], having swept both houses of Congress and the Presidency in 2024, have proposed reinstating selective service (commonly referred to as the draft) to increase the military capacity of the US.*

*If enacted, the 2025 draft policy would enter all male US citizens 18-25 years of age into a lottery system where, if selected, they would be committed to serving two years of mandatory military service.*

To isolate the effect of affective polarization, I randomly vary the partisan source of this policy proposal between a Republican and Democrat controlled government.<sup>5</sup> With a constant threat scenario and policy response, the only variation is which party is recommending and implementing the policy. This prevents ideological polarization from influencing levels of support, isolating affective polarization as the only causal mechanism for any variance observed in the group levels of support.

This survey scenario leaves out any opinions or communications from the political elites of the opposition party. In this way, my scenario assumes the opposition party remains relatively quiet on the issue of selective service. This design choice limits the external validity of my experiment, as there will be few scenarios in which the implementation of a major security policy doesn't generate partisan communication. The small majority size and frequent turnover of government control incentivize partisan conflict (Lee 2016) and using foreign policy as a wedge issue is a way to damage political opponents (Snyder et al. 2009).

I believe this sacrifice in external validity is necessary as this assumption allows me to avoid conflating ideological and affective polarization. I would be unable to disentangle the effect of partisan elite opinion from affective polarization if I included policy communication from both major US parties. While selective service is arguably an ideologically neutral policy

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<sup>5</sup> Due to resource constraints, I only reference two scenarios where each party fully controls the executive and legislative branches of government. There is no mention of the Judicial branch.

that has not been claimed by either the Republican or Democratic parties (Pew Research Center 2011), if I was to include pro-draft communication from the sitting government with anti-draft communication from opposition elites, the issue would become ideologically aligned with distinct positions from each camp. I would also have another “mechanism” of elite partisan communication involved, which would be bundled together with the initial policy, thus intertwining multiple mechanisms.

Though lacking in external validity, my study remains relevant as the probable partisan conflict over a divisive foreign policy would likely strengthen any polarized effect on domestic support (Iyenger et al. 2012). This means that any results observed in my study, with no intergroup conflict between the major US political parties, represent a “hard test” for affective polarization, where it is less likely to affect individual levels of support outside of the presence of observable partisan fighting.

While I expect affective polarization to degrade support for one party's desired security policy, there is evidence that bipartisanship and pro-presidential support are more common in matters of foreign policy than domestic matters (Bryan and Tama 2022). Pro-policy communication from the opposition party would theoretically increase bipartisan domestic support as the issue becomes ideologically coherent with both groups. In an attempt to isolate the effects of affective polarization, however, I will leave examining the manner in which elite communication interacts with ideological and affective polarization to future researchers.

#### Dependent Variables – Measuring Levels of Support

I design my survey to measure four variables associated with the policy of implementing the draft: level of support for the policy, potential actions the respondent would take, support for

legal consequences for violating the draft, and justification for opposition (if they oppose the policy).

#### DV1 – Level of Support for Re-Implementing the Draft

My primary dependent variable (DV) is the level of support an individual expresses for the proposed implementation of the draft. I measure this through a five-point Likert scale survey response to the following question:

*DV1: Given this scenario, would you support or oppose the proposed policy to reinstitute the draft?*

*“I strongly oppose the proposed policy”*

*“I oppose the proposed policy”*

*“I neither oppose nor support the proposed policy”*

*“I support the proposed policy”*

*“I strongly support the proposed policy”*

Overall, 21% of respondents strongly oppose implementing the draft, 24% oppose it, 30% neither support nor oppose it, 18% support it, and 8% strongly support implementing the draft.

#### DV2 – Actions in Support or Opposition to the Draft

My second DV captures the types of actions an individual might take in response to the draft. I attempt to measure this via a 11-category variable (with a write in option) capturing a range of actions common in political action. Respondents could select as many potential actions as they desired or not select any options (which I treat equivalent to selecting “take no action”).

*DV2: What actions would you take to express your opposition or support for the proposed reinstatement of the military draft? Please select all that apply.*

*I would leave the United States or help others leave the United States to avoid selective service*

*I would refuse to comply with the draft, and aid others in avoiding compliance with the draft*

*I would protest in opposition to these policies*

*I would communicate my opposition to my political representative*

*I would communicate my opposition through social media*

*I would take no action in opposition or support of the proposed policy*

*I would communicate my support through social media*  
*I would communicate my support to my political representative*  
*I would rally in support of these policies*  
*I would voluntarily join the US armed forces without the necessity of the draft*  
*Other (write in)*

Because my survey design allows the respondent to select as many or few of these variables, each potential action ends up as a binary variable with any response saying the individual would take that action coded a “1.” Respondents replying they would take any action is relatively rare. The most popular response was to communicate opposition to their political representative with 420 observations, while the more costly action of leaving the country or joining the military receive 169 and 128 observations respectively.<sup>6</sup>

To better capture the average willingness of the treatment groups to take political action, I conduct factor analysis and combine some of the actions together into two latent variables; “Negative Factor Actions,” and “Positive Factor Actions.” The negative factor variable includes protesting, and negative communication to political representatives and through social media. The positive factor variable includes rallying in support, and communicating support to politicians and through social media. Leaving the US, resisting, and joining the military fell outside the statistical justification for combining variables, and are left independent. Additional analysis with all variables treated independently can be found in the appendix. Results and inferences remain consistent with the primary analysis.

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<sup>6</sup> The full description of potential actions can be located in the supplementary material

### DV3 – Legal Consequences for Defying a Draft Order

The third dependent variable is what level of legal consequences the respondent would support for any individuals who illegally avoided the draft. I use a four-category ordinal variable which ranges from no punishment to a felony charge and jail time.

*DV3: What legal penalties would you support for those who illegitimately avoid the draft?*

*I do not support any punishment against US citizens who illegitimately avoid the draft*

*I would find a misdemeanor charge and monetary fines appropriate*

*I would find a misdemeanor charge and jail time appropriate*

*I would find a felony charge and jail time appropriate*

The majority of respondents prefer no legal consequences, and each increase in severity becomes a less popular option.

### DV4 – Justification for Opposing the Draft

My fourth dependent variable attempts to capture the reasoning behind an individual's opposition to the draft, should they oppose the policy. I create a seven-category categorical variable, which includes a write in option for those individuals who do not oppose the draft for my provided reasons.

*DV4: If you are opposed to the proposed policy implementing the draft, which of the following reasons best describes your reasoning? Please select all that apply.*

*"I do not think the threat to national security justifies the implementation of the draft"*

*"Mandatory military service violates the personal freedoms guaranteed to US citizens"*

*"Increasing US military capacity is too escalatory when we need to be pursuing diplomatic solutions to better our relationship with China"*

*"I am morally opposed to forced conscription"*

*"N/A, I am not opposed to the implementation of the draft given the national security requirements"*

*"N/A, none of the choices listed above describe my rationale for opposing the draft (write in)"*

Figure 1.1 Represents a summary of my hypothesis, the related survey question, and the response options that form the dependent variables.

Figure 1.1		
Dependent Variable Construction		
Hypothesis	Survey Question	Response Option
H1: <i>An individual has a higher probability of supporting a policy to reinstitute the draft if it originates from a co-partisan government than the same policy emanating from a not co-partisan government.</i>	<i>Given this scenario, would you support or oppose the proposed policy to reinstitute the draft?</i>	<p>"I strongly oppose the proposed policy"</p> <p>"I oppose the proposed policy"</p> <p>"I neither oppose nor support the proposed policy"</p> <p>"I support the proposed policy"</p> <p>"I strongly support the proposed policy"</p>
H2a: <i>An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of opposition when a policy originates from an out-party government.</i>	<i>What actions would you take to express your opposition or support for the proposed reinstatement of the military draft? Please select all that apply.</i>	<p>"I would leave the United States or help others leave the United States to avoid selective service"</p> <p>"I would protest in opposition to these policies"</p> <p>"I would communicate my opposition to my political representative"</p> <p>"I would communicate my opposition through social media"</p> <p>"I would take no action in opposition or support of the proposed policy"</p>
H2b: <i>An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of support when a policy originates from a co-partisan government.</i>	<i>What actions would you take to express your opposition or support for the proposed reinstatement of the military draft? Please select all that apply.</i>	<p>"I would communicate my support through social media"</p> <p>"I would communicate my support to my political representative"</p> <p>"I would rally in support of these policies"</p> <p>"I would voluntarily join the US armed forces without the necessity of the draft"</p>
H3: <i>An individual will support more stringent legal punishments for those who violate the legal requirements of a policy that originates from a co-partisan government than when a policy originates from an out-party government.</i>	<i>What legal penalties would you support for those who illegitimately avoid the draft?</i>	<p>"I do not support any punishment against US citizens who illegitimately avoid the draft"</p> <p>"I would find a misdemeanor charge and monetary fines appropriate"</p> <p>"I would find a misdemeanor charge and jail time appropriate"</p> <p>"I would find a felony charge and jail time appropriate"</p>
H4: <i>When justifying their opposition to the draft, individuals who are co-partisan with the government will be less likely to evoke a lack of sufficient external threat than individuals who are not co-partisan</i>	<i>If you are opposed to the proposed policy implementing the draft, which of the following reasons best describes your reasoning? Please select all that apply.</i>	<p>"I do not think the threat to national security justifies the implementation of the draft"</p> <p>"Mandatory military service violates the personal freedoms guaranteed to US citizens"</p> <p>"Increasing US military capacity is too escalatory when we need to be pursuing diplomatic solutions to better our relationship with China"</p> <p>"I am morally opposed to forced conscription"</p> <p>"N/A, I am not opposed to the implementation of the draft given the national security requirements"</p> <p>"N/A, none of the choices listed above describe my rationale for opposing the draft (write in)"</p>

Fig 1.1: Summary of Hypothesis

### Independent Variable – Co-Partisan Status

The independent variable (IV) is whether the respondent is co-partisan with the party proposing the implementation of the draft. This variable is a combination of the treatment (the political party in office, which is randomly assigned) and the respondent's political identity. 950 respondents received the treatment with the Democratic Party in office, while 927 respondents received the Republican Party treatment. This minor discrepancy is the result of respondents not finishing the survey experiment after being randomly assigned the treatment.

To identify the partisan identity of the respondent, I utilize several demographic survey questions. First, respondents identify their Party ID from 10 options: *Strong Republican or Democrat, Not very strong Republican/Democrat, Independent Democrat/Republican, Other – Leaning Democrat/Republican, Other- Neither, Independent – Neither*. To facilitate analysis, I condense the “Other” and the “Independent” options into one category; with *Other - leaning Democrat* and *Independent Democrat* recoded as *Leans Democrat*, *Independent – neither* and *Other – neither* recoded as *neither*, and *Other - leaning Republican* and *Independent Republican* recoded as *Leans Republican*. This results in seven party identification options.

As my interest is co-partisanship, I condense these seven categories further by assigning all individuals who respond that they identify in some way with one of the political parties into singular buckets of “Republican” or “Democrat.” This leaves roughly 400 independent respondents representing slightly less than 25% of my total sample. As partisanship has increased, those who identify as independent have become more partisan (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Combining respondent ideology with political identity allows me to exploit that tendency. I utilize an “ideology score” question to identify those respondents who identify as “Independent” but lean towards one party or the other. The respondents were asked to identify

their ideology on a seven-point scale ranging from 1: Extremely Liberal, to 7: Extremely Conservative. Ideology and Political Party ID are correlated, but not at 100%.

To help identify the partisan tendencies of those respondents who identified as “Independent,” I combine the party ID measure with the ideology measure. Those who responded with a 4 for both party ID and ideology remain categorized as independent. Those who responded with any combination of less than four on ideology and a four on party ID were categorized as Democrat.<sup>7</sup> Those who responded with any combination of more than four on ideology and a four on party ID and ideology were categorized as Republican. The final distribution of respondents by party ID is 903 Democrats, 702 Republicans, and 272 Independents.<sup>8</sup>

I combine this final political ID variable with the treatment variable of partisan policy source to create a dummy variable where co-partisans are coded “1”. If the two variables are co-partisan (i.e., a republican coded respondent received the republican government treatment), then I code that observation as co-partisan. If the political ID variable and treatment are opposite parties, they are coded as a “0.” I end up with 768 co-partisan observations and 1109 not co-partisan observations. The inequality between partisan and co-partisan observations is due to independents never being categorized as co-partisan.

### **Affective Polarization: The Impact of Social Identity on Policy Support**

Using the data generated by the above process, I evaluate how moving from a not co-partisan to a co-partisan status affects the respondent’s level of support for the proposed draft

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<sup>7</sup> This essentially takes people who identified as ideologically “moderate” but identified with the democratic party in some way, and those who identified as neither a Republican or Democrat but identified as liberal, and codes their liberal/Democratic leanings into the democratic bucket. The same logic is applied to those who “lean” conservative/Republican

<sup>8</sup> For a full breakdown of descriptive statistics of survey participant political identification see the supplementary materials

policy using an Ordinal Probit regression. The results indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between an individual’s partisan orientation relative to the government and their support for implementing the draft.

A simple cross-tabular analysis indicates that the policy opposition responses are more common when the respondent is not co-partisan with the treatment government, while the “neither support nor oppose” and supportive options all receive higher levels of selection when the respondent is co-partisan. A Pearson Chi-squared test of the data produces a chi-squared value of 31.44 and a p-value < .001, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two variables of interest.

***Table 1.1: Crosstab Table of Co-Partisan Policy Support***

Support Level		Out-Party	Co-Party	All
Strongly Oppose	N	264	137	401
	% row	65.8	34.2	100.0
Oppose	N	256	175	431
	% row	59.4	40.6	100.0
Neither	N	344	201	545
	% row	63.1	36.9	100.0
Support	N	174	165	339
	% row	51.3	48.7	100.0
Strongly Support	N	71	90	161
	% row	44.1	55.9	100.0
All	N	1109	768	1877
	% row	59.1	40.9	100.0

## Evaluating How an Individual's Social Identity Impacts Defense Policy Support

*Hypothesis 1: An individual who is co-partisan with the government will be more likely to support the implementation of the draft than an individual who is not co-partisan.*

My primary analysis tests if an individual's co-partisan status has an effect on their level of support for implementing the draft. As we have a discrete, ordered outcome variable I will use an ordinal probit regression model. The outcome variable is the level of support for instituting the draft. In the baseline model there is a single independent dichotomous variable of co-partisan status where 0 not co-partisan and 1 is co-partisan.

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{copart} + \varepsilon$$

Following the baseline model, I run the analysis with pretreatment controls for age, gender, party ID, isolationism, and foreign affairs knowledge.

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{copart} + \beta_2 y_{PID2} + \beta_3 y_{age} + \beta_4 y_{ideology} + \beta_5 y_{isolationism} + \beta_6 y_{foreignaffairs} + \varepsilon$$

Finally, to test for heterogeneous treatment effects, I run the regression with all pretreatment controls and an interaction between co-partisan status and party-ID.

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{copart} * y_{PID2} + \beta_3 y_{age} + \beta_4 y_{ideology} + \beta_5 y_{isolationism} + \varepsilon$$

For ease of interpretation, I start my analysis using OLS. To accomplish this, I convert my DV measurement from a factor to a continuous variable. The discrete effect of moving from an opposition policy source to a co-partisan policy source is a .28 increase in support on the Likert scale and statistically significant. Given the DV support of 1-5, this .28 increase equates to a roughly 8% increase in support for co-partisans compared to those who are not co-partisan with the party in power. The directionality and statistical significance are consistent with the estimates produces by the following ordinal models.

***Table 1.2: Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support***

	Base	PT Control	HTE
copart	0.287*** (0.057)	0.278*** (0.058)	-0.192 (0.159)
copart × Dem			0.577** (0.180)
copart × Rep			0.496** (0.184)
#Obs.	1877	1877	1877
R2	0.013	0.069	0.074
R2 Adj.	0.013	0.062	0.066
F	24.899	9.878	9.337
RMSE	1.22	1.19	1.18

DV is continuous level of policy support from 1-5. Model is estimated using OLS

Base+ model includes pre-treatment controls that are not displayed

Pre-treatment controls include age, gender, PID, isolationism, and foreign affairs

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

The heterogeneous treatment model conditions the effect of co-partisan status on an individual’s political identity. Independent is the reference category. Compared to Independents, Democrats who are co-partisan experience an increase of .58 “support.” Again, translating this to a percentage, we see an average increase of 11.5% in the level of support expressed. Republicans experience a slightly lower impact, with nearly 10% increase in level of support. These effects are all statistically significant.

While a simple OLS regression can provide a broad overview of the impact that social identity has on policy support, I also use an ordinal regression to explore how affective

polarization impacts specific levels of support. The coefficient estimates provided by the ordinal probit regressions consistently indicate that going from an out-partisan government to a co-partisan government treatment has a statistically significant effect and increases the expected value of respondent level of support. Because the coefficients produced by an ordinal probit are not easily interpretable,<sup>9</sup> I opt to evaluate the relationship between partisan status and policy support using average discrete effects. This allows us to examine changes in the predicted probability for each category given co-partisan status, which is more intuitive than using the z-score or running an ordinal logit regression and interpreting log odds or converting these coefficients into odds ratios.

Calculating the discrete effects produces the change in predicted probability and we see that relative to an individual who is not co-partisan, the co-partisan respondent is 7% less likely to strongly oppose implementing the draft, 3% less likely to oppose it, 2% more likely to neither support nor oppose, and 4% more likely to support or strongly support implementing the draft.<sup>10</sup> All the conditional probabilities are statistically significant.

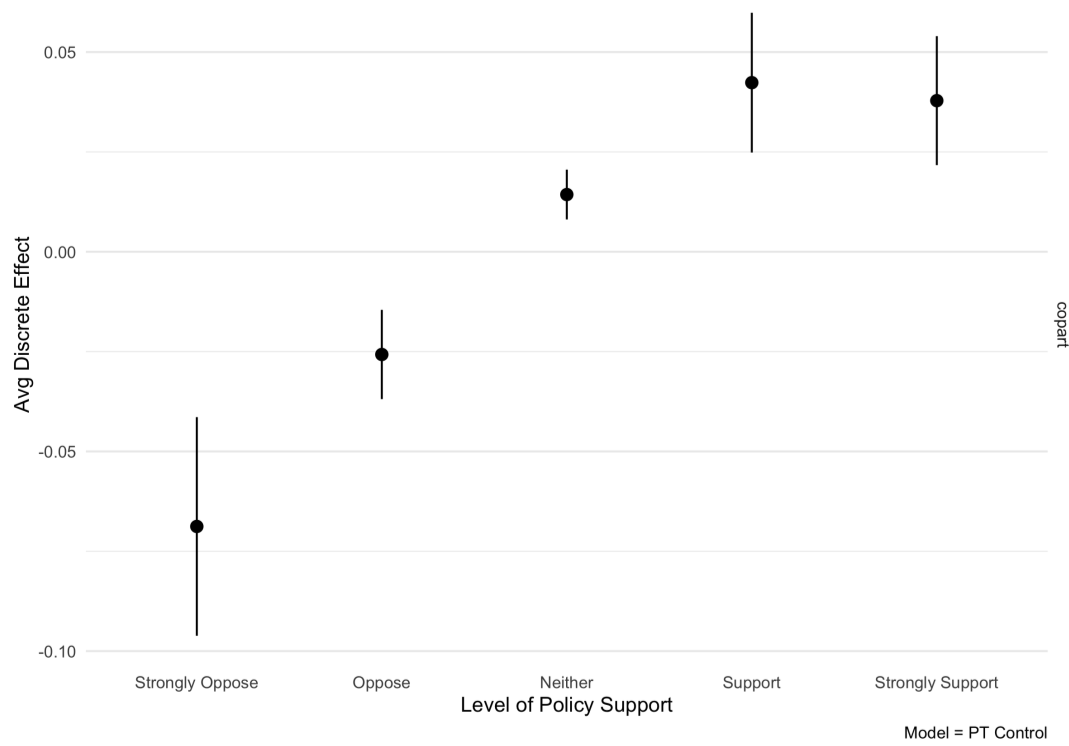
Using only co-partisan status as a predictor, the baseline ordinal regression has an estimated percent correctly predicted (ePCP) of 22.8%. The second model incorporating pre-treatment controls has an ePCP of 23.4%. The third model incorporating an interaction between party ID and co-partisan status along with the pre-treatment controls has an ePCP of 23.5%.

When we incorporate the interaction between co-partisan status and individual party ID, our results remain similar, but amplified for Democratic partisans. The likelihood of choosing a support level of “strongly oppose” collapses by roughly 12% for democratic co-partisans

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<sup>9</sup> The coefficients produced by an ordinal probit represent the change in Z-score associated with a 1-unit increase the predictor variable.

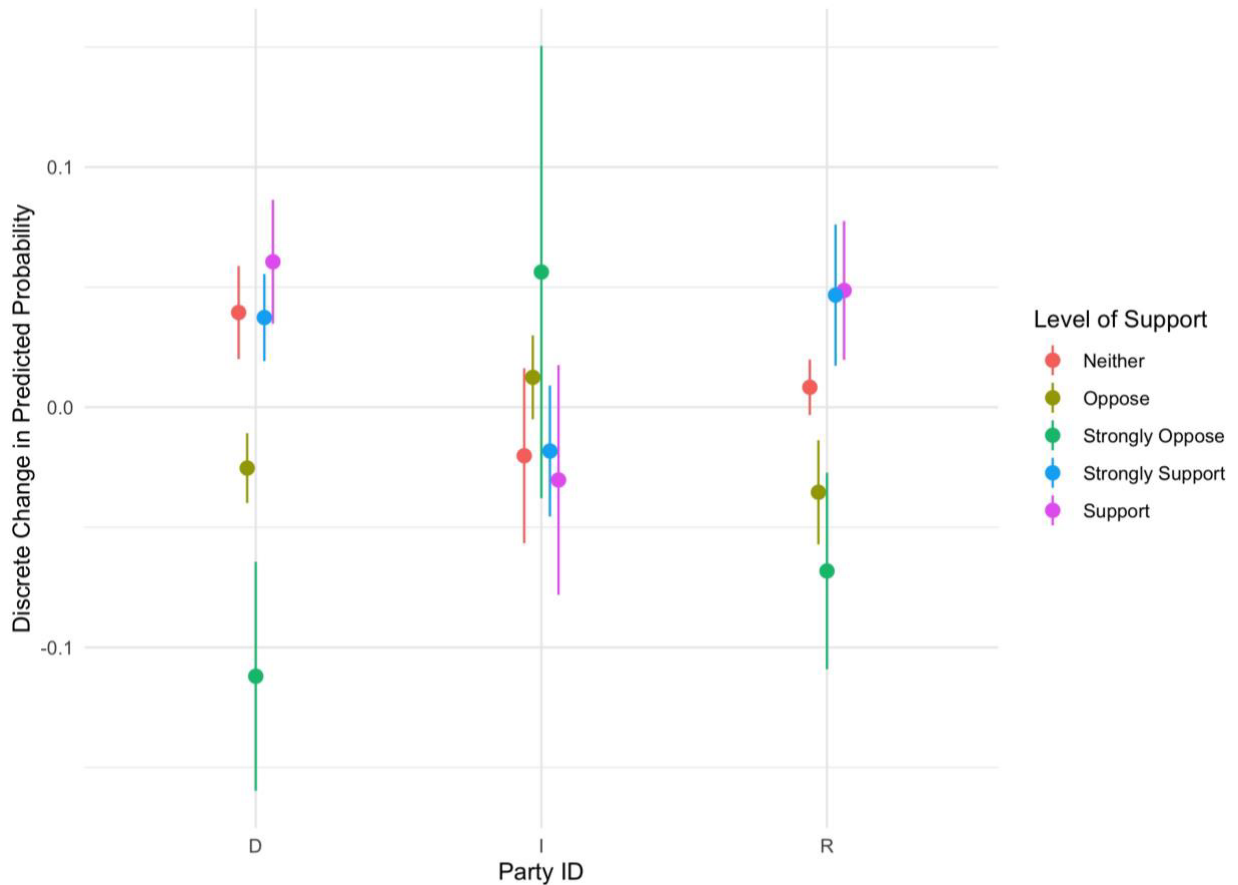
<sup>10</sup> Discrete effects depicted are from the model including the pre-treatment control variables.



*Fig 1.2: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support*

compared to Democrats presented with a Republican policy, while Democratic respondents’ likelihood to select “support” increases by nearly 7% given a co-partisan government when compared to a Republican government. The effect of co-partisan policy proposal is roughly the same for Republicans as it is for respondents as a whole when we don’t incorporate an interaction between co-partisanship and party-ID, with only a 1% increase in the likelihood to ‘support’ or “strongly support” the policy along with a 1% decrease in the likelihood to “oppose” the policy. Independents show no statistically significant effects when moving from out-partisan to co-partisan government policy proposals.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The partisan ID used in these regressions is slightly different than the partisan ID is used to create the co-partisan measure. Here individuals are binned solely on their responses with no additional ideological measurement applied to those respondents who identify as “independent.” This coding choice results in “independent” respondents who can be co-partisan if they are ideologically aligned with government who proposes the policy



*Fig 1.3 Avg Discrete Effects Conditional Upon Party ID*

We can also visualize this data in a different manner. When we decompose the discrete effects and highlight the overall predicted probabilities we can see not only the overall magnitude of the average discrete effects, but how it impacts the broader level of support the proposed policy garners.

When Democrats are presented with a co-partisan policy to implement the draft, strongly oppose moves from the most likely choice to the third most likely, being vaulted by “neither oppose nor support.” For Republicans the “strongly oppose” option never leads but drops from being clustered in third most likely along with “support” and “oppose” to become roughly as probable as “strongly support.”

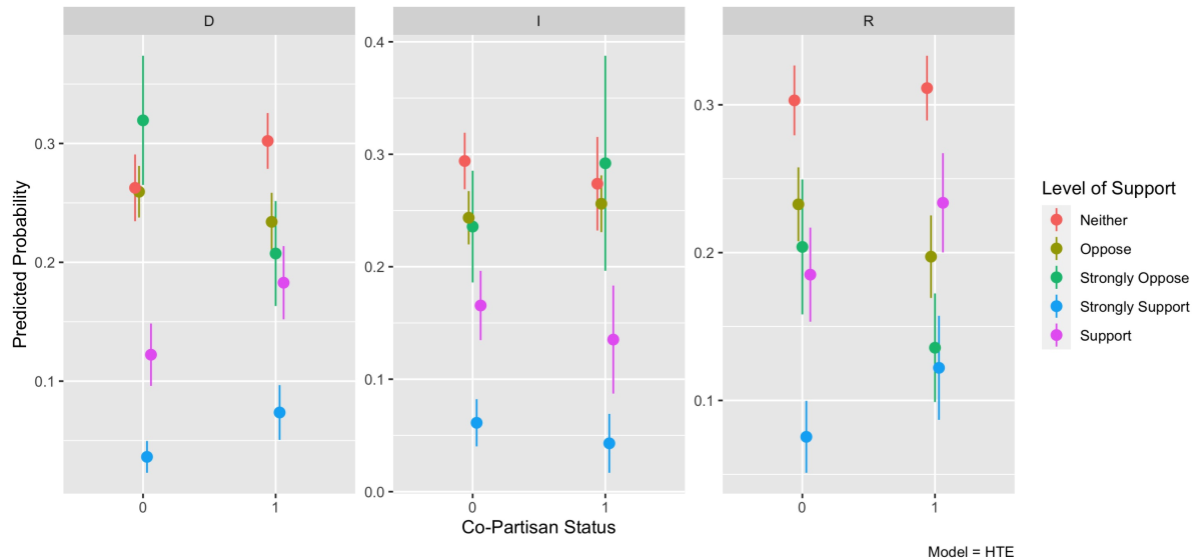


Fig 1.4: Predicted Probability of Choosing a Level of Support Conditional Upon Party ID

### Social Biases Impact Beyond the Intangible: Moving Past Policy Support

In addition to overall level of support for a policy, I argue that it is important to gauge, however weakly, the level of action that support or opposition to a policy might elicit.<sup>12</sup> If an individual's support remains private and not expressed publicly, that level of support has less political weight and remains unimpactful until an election or approval poll elicits public action that can impact the political establishment. The theoretical basis of SIT leads me to hypothesize that individuals would be more likely to say they would take a positive action in support of a policy proposed by a co-partisan government and more likely to say they would take protest action against a policy proposed by an out-partisan government.

*Hypothesis 2a: An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of opposition when a policy originates from an out-party government.*

<sup>12</sup> I do not claim that these survey responses accurately represent or predict the political activities individuals would take should this scenario transpire in reality, however, I do think it is useful to gauge what activities individuals would be open to taking under this theoretical situation.

Hypothesis 2b: *An individual has a higher probability of engaging in activities of support when a policy originates from a co-partisan government.*

There are several options for analysis of the effect of co-partisan status on potential actions. Treating each potential action as a unique bivariate independent variable is the most accurate representation of the original data, however, this results in a rather unwieldy presentation. To better capture the latent variable of potential willingness to take an action in response to a policy proposal, I perform a factor analysis on all the potential actions and examine the resultant combined variables.

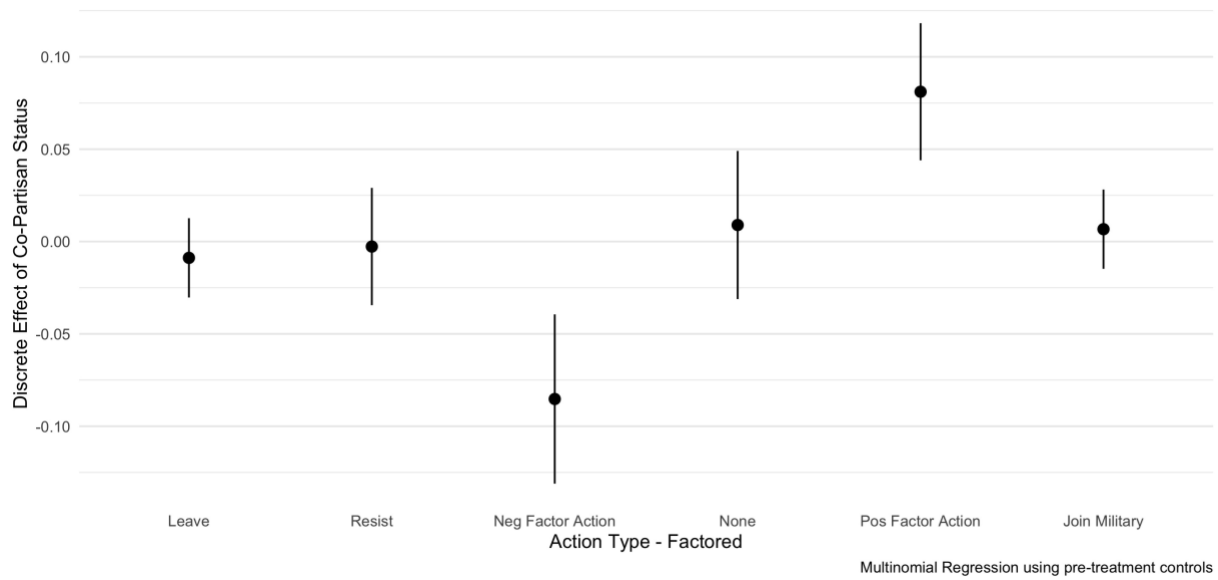
Theoretically, potential actions can be grouped into either three or five factor variables. A rough measure of all positive and negative actions, or no action would result in three factor variables. Meanwhile, a more nuanced approach would classify actions as costly or cheap positive and negative actions, along with no action, resulting in five factor variables. Using a scree plot,<sup>13</sup> I find that there are likely two factor variables within my data. However, further analysis reveals we can statistically justify three factor variables. Protest, communicate opposition through social media, and communicate opposition to your political representative form one group, which I call “Negative Factor Actions.” No action forms the second group. Finally, rally, communicate support through social media, and communicate support to your political representative form the third variable which I call “Positive Factor Actions.” The extremely costly actions of join the military, leave the country, and resist the draft do not fall within any latent variable, and thus, remain independent.

Using this measurement scheme to represent a categorical variable of potential actions, a multinomial model produces coefficients that somewhat support my hypothesis. Co-partisan

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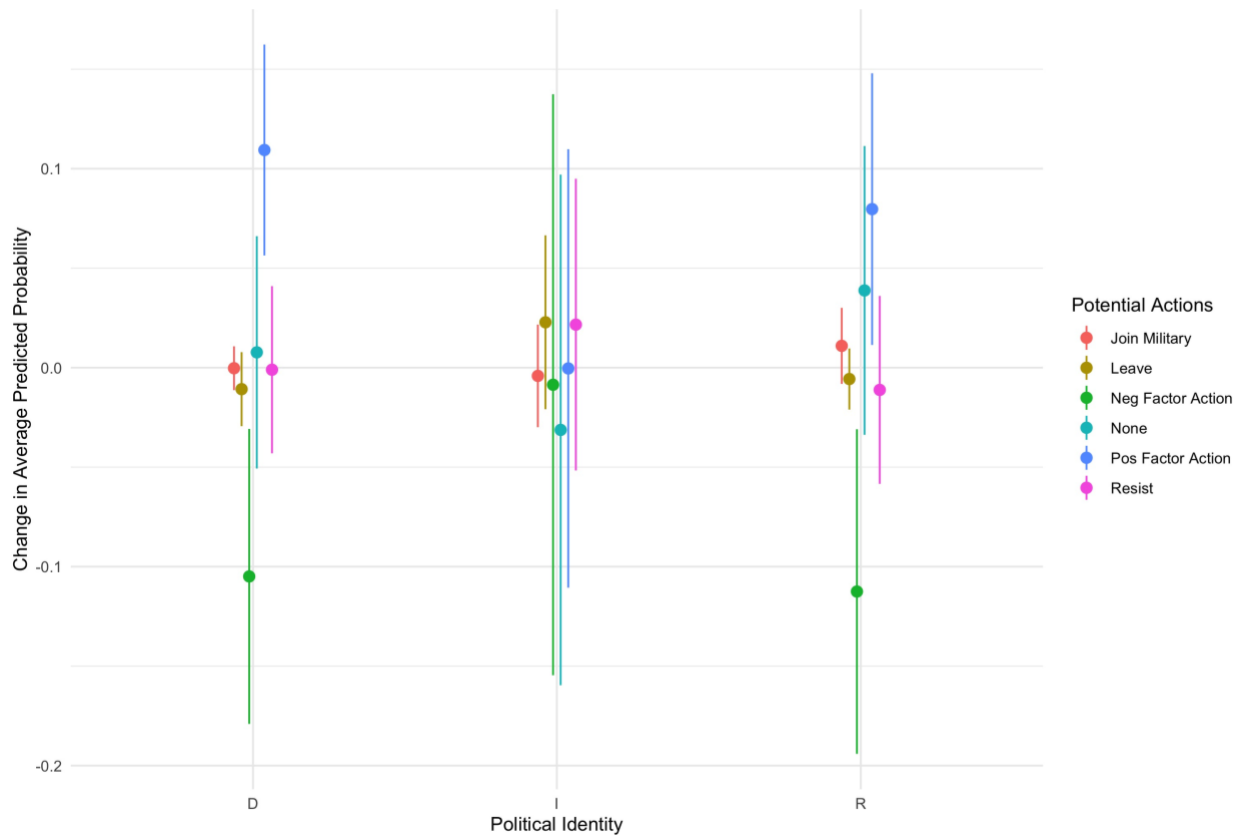
<sup>13</sup> Scree plot and factor analysis details can be found in the supplementary materials.

status, and the resultant affective polarization biases, result in a roughly 9% decrease in the average predicted probability an individual says they would take a negative action. There is a corresponding 8% increase in the likelihood that those co-partisan individuals say they would take a positive action. Importantly, there is no substantive or statistically significant effect on the costliest actions that respondents were presented with, nor on the “no action” option.



*Fig 1.5: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-partisan Status on the Likelihood a Respondent Takes an Action*

If we look at the heterogeneous treatment effects of co-partisan status on differing partisan identities, I find further evidence for my theory and hypothesis. There are no substantive or statistically significant effects on the likelihood that an individual identifying as “Independent” says they would take an action. This supports my theory, as independents should have lower levels of affective polarization. Thus, they should be minimally impacted by the political identity of the party proposing the institute the draft. Meanwhile, I find that affective polarization impacts the likelihood that individuals who identify as Republican or Democrat say they would take a political action to a significant degree. Both political identities experience a



*Fig 1.6: HTE-Predicted Probabilities of Potential Actions Conditional Upon Party ID*

11% decrease in the average predicted probability that they would take a negative action. There is a small difference in the likelihood that partisans would take a positive action. Democrats have a 11% increase in the likelihood they would take a positive action, while Republicans only experience an 8% increase. Again, there is no substantive or statistically significant effect on the likelihood partisans would take one of the extremely costly actions of leaving the US, joining the military, or illegally resisting the draft.

The full analysis using a logistic regression can be found in the supplementary materials, but further supports my hypothesis. The coefficients produced by the logistic regression provide evidence that co-partisanship has a statistically significant increase on a respondent's likelihood to say they would take some actions in support, while also decreasing the likelihood they would

take an action in opposition to the implementation of the draft. Similar to the factor analysis, there was no statistically significant effect on “no action,” “leave,” “resist,” or “join the military.”

### Tying Policy Support to Legal Consequences: Social Identity’s Impact on Support for Criminal Punishment

Along with general support for a policy and subsequent actions an individual may take to express that support or opposition, I hypothesize that affective polarization should result in individuals who are co-partisan with a policy’s creators to consider the policy more legitimate and more important. One possible manifestation of this is support for legal consequences for individuals who violate the policy. In the case of the draft, this would be legal consequences for those who illegitimately and illegally avoid being drafted.

*Hypothesis 3: An individual will support more stringent legal punishments for those who violate the legal requirements of a policy that originates from a co-partisan government than when a policy originates from an out-party government.*

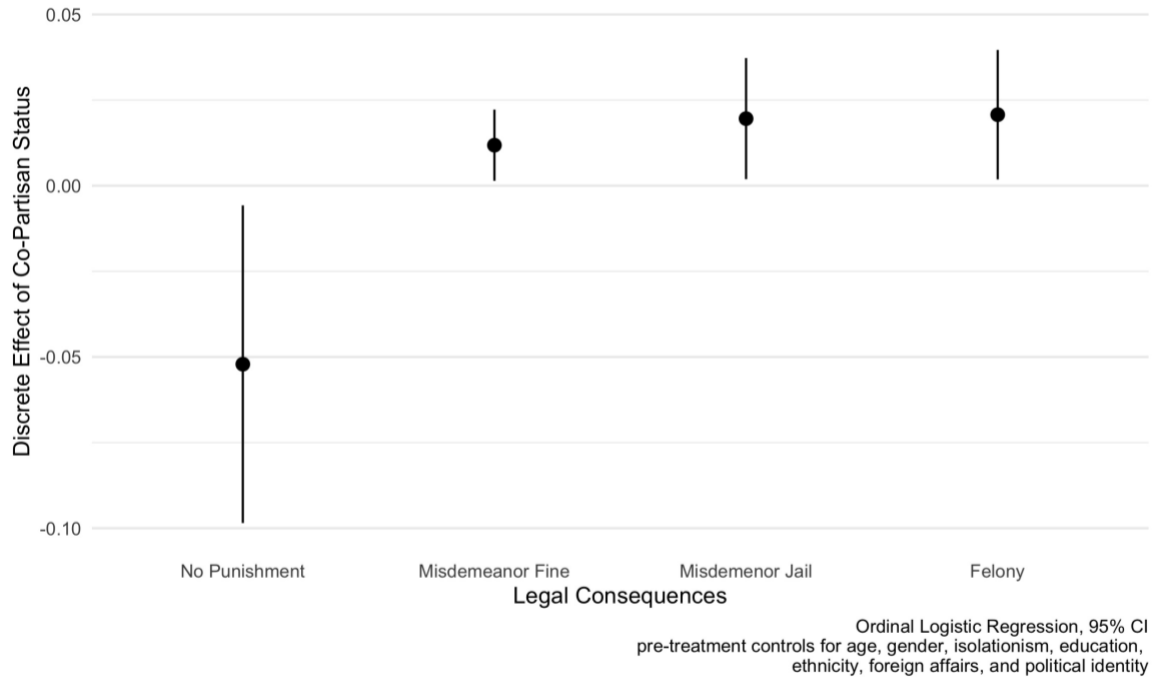
Fitting the unpopular nature of implementing the draft, the descriptive data shows that 72% of respondents would prefer either no legal consequences or a simple misdemeanor charge with a possible monetary fine for illegally avoiding the draft. 24% of respondents preferred jail time as a consequence, with either a felony or misdemeanor charge.<sup>14</sup>

As hypothesized, I do find a statistically significant relationship between an individual’s co-partisan status and their preference for legal punishment. An ordinal logit regression using pre-treatment controls results in the predicted probability that a co-partisan individual prefers “no punishment” decreasing by a little over five percent. Correspondingly, the predicted probability

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<sup>14</sup> 4% of respondents did not answer this question.

that a co-partisan individual prefers a misdemeanor and a fine or jail, or a felony and jail, rise by around two percent each.



*Fig 1.7: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-Partisan Status on the Predicted Probability a Respondent Chooses a Criminal Punishment*

Once we condition the effect of co-partisanship on political identity, we see that both Republican and Democrat co-partisans are roughly 8% less likely to prefer “no punishment” with a corresponding increase in the likelihood to choose one of the substantive legal consequences. All the results are statistically significant except for Republican’s predicted probability of preferring a punishment of a misdemeanor and monetary fine.

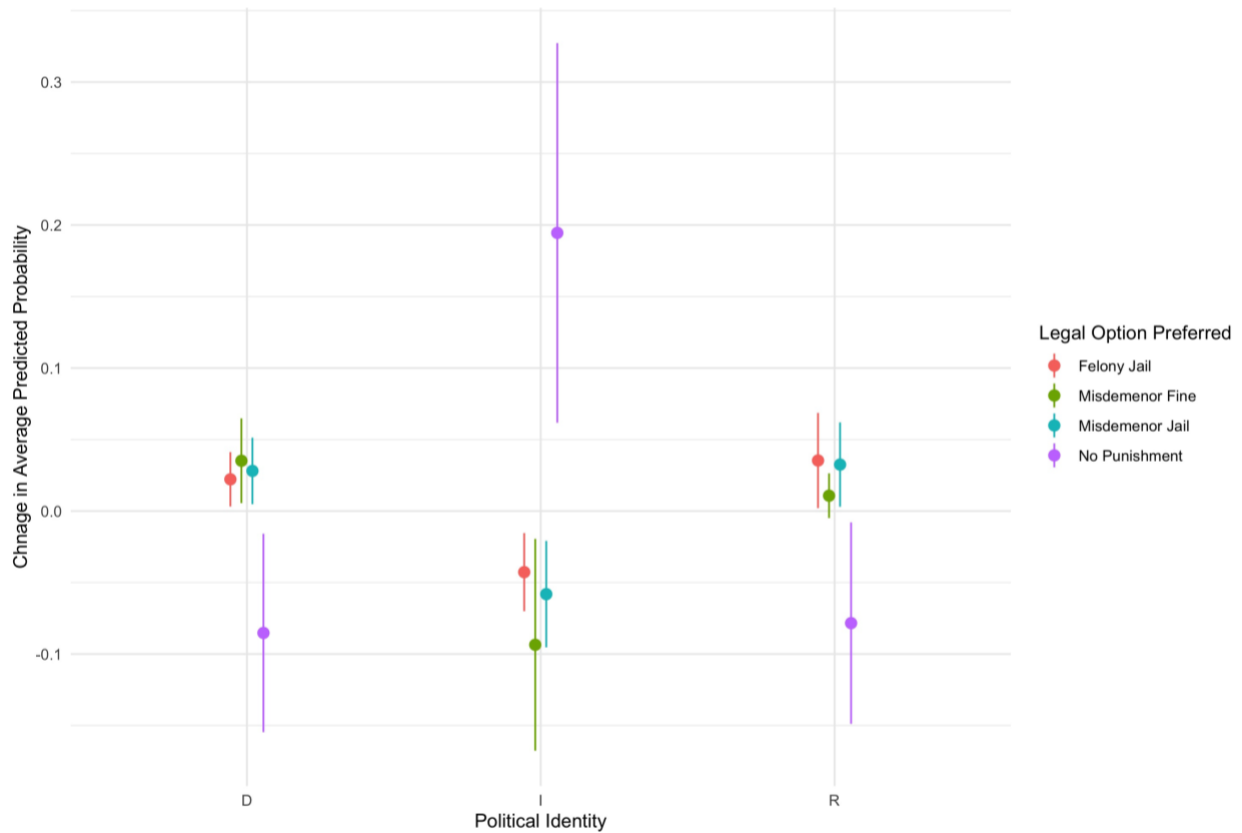


Fig 1.8: HTE-Predicted Probabilities of Preferred Legal Consequences Conditional upon Party ID

However, those individuals identifying as “Independent” pose a theoretical quandary. The effect of the co-partisan treatment on Independents is statistically & substantively significant, to a much higher degree than the declared partisans. Even more curious is that the effect of co-partisan status is opposite my theory. Independents are less likely to support legal consequences when the govt is more aligned towards their “leaning” ideology and more likely to prefer no punishment at all. Given this surprising result, it is worth further exploring the underlying data on independents and their preferences for judicial consequences for illegitimately avoiding the draft.

Overall, respondents heavily favored light or no legal punishment for violating the proposed policy. 50% of Independents responded that they preferred “no punishment” while only

8% indicated that they supported a Felony charge and jail time. While this is in line with the Democratic respondents (Republicans were more supportive of harsher consequences, but not substantially), the sample of respondents who identified as Independent is unique in my dataset. There are only 64 co-partisan Independents that provided information on their judicial preferences compared to 316 Independents who are not co-partisan. While all the underlying data and analysis in this research contains this skew due to how I constructed my co-partisan variable, this is the only result that showed any statistical or substantive significance. Considering the skewed nature of both the legal preferences and the co-partisan distribution of Independents, and the lack of effect of co-partisanship on Independents in all other analysis, I believe this result is simply due to random chance and a relatively small sample size. However, this cannot be confirmed with the data I have at this time. Further exploratory research is needed to either support my hypothesis that my result is erroneous chance, or both replicate and explain the apparent reluctance of Independent voters to support the policy presented by the political group they most closely identify with.

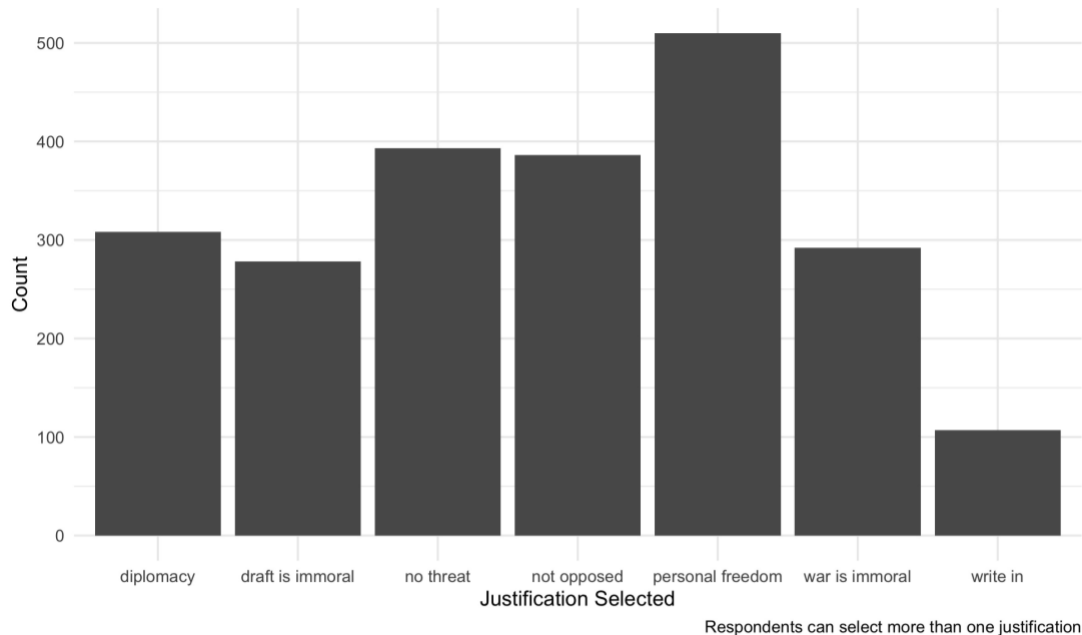
In sum, I find only minimal evidence to support my hypothesis that affective polarization will impact the level to which an individual prefers policies be enforced. While there are statistically significant effects for co-partisanship on the severity of criminal punishment for draft-dodgers, the findings here are relatively weak. Not only are the lower bounds of the 95% confidence intervals nearly zero, but the substantive effect is minimal. There is less than a 2.5% increase in the average predicted probability that co-partisans prefer any of the actual criminal punishments, and only slightly more than a 5% decrease in the likelihood they prefer no punishment. These results are slightly more substantive when we account for the heterogeneous treatment effects co-partisanship may have conditional upon political identity, which aligns with my theory.

However, even the self-identified partisans show less than a 5% increase in average predicted probability that they prefer a criminal punishment.

### Searching for a Mechanism: Does Social Identity Impact Threat Perception?

My fourth and final hypothesis was that due to informational asymmetry, individuals are forced to trust the government in assessing the severity of threats posed to the nation. Individuals who are highly affectively polarized should trust their co-partisans threat assessments to a greater degree, while mistrusting opposing partisans' threat assessments.

*Hypothesis 4: When justifying their opposition to the draft, individuals who are co-partisan with the government will be less likely to evoke a lack of sufficient external threat than individuals who are not co-partisan.*



*Fig 1.8: Justifications for Opposition to the Draft*

Looking at the descriptive data for individual justifications we see that “personal freedom” is the most cited reasoning, followed by “not enough threat” to justify the draft.

Favoring diplomacy and being morally opposed to war or the draft are all relatively equally represented with around 300 observations.

I find no evidence to support my hypothesis that threat perception will be impacted by affective polarization. There is actually no statistically significant relationship between co-partisanship and any of the justifications provided in the survey experiment for opposing the policy of selective service. The only response option that does show a relationship is “not opposed,” which shows a positive and statistically significant relationship to an individual being co-partisan with the proposing government. This is consistent with my overall theory but fails to illuminate any specific mechanism by which affective polarization undermines defense policy support.

***Table 5.1: Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Justification***

	No Threat	Personal Freedom	Favor Diplomacy	War is Immoral	Draft is Immoral	Not Opposed
copart	-0.072 (0.123)	-0.026 (0.115)	-0.216 (0.138)	-0.027 (0.138)	-0.089 (0.141)	0.333** (0.128)
#Obs	1687	1687	1687	1687	1687	1687
AIC	1839.1	2024.3	1547.1	1536.7	1504.4	1700.4
BIC	1920.6	2105.8	1628.5	1618.1	1585.9	1781.8
F	1.567	4.949	5.545	3.191	2.431	9.144
RMSE	0.42	0.45	0.38	0.37	0.37	0.40

DV is a binary choice of a justification for opposing the draft.

Model is estimated using a Logit Regression

Pre-treatment controls are not displayed but include gender, political identity, isolationism, foreign affairs, and age

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

One possible reason for this lack of result is inherent in the design of my study. The threat from China is broadly recognized by Americans (Pew Research Center 2021), and it is

often cited as the one bipartisan issue present in today's political environment (Caruthers & Sun 2023, Waltz 2024). Thus, threat perceptions of China are already formed for most individuals and less likely to be impacted by a relatively benign treatment like changing the political party of the government declaring that China is a threat. This, however, is an untested conjecture and would need to be more fully explored.

### **Implications of Social Identity Biases for Defense Policy**

The results of this analysis provide additional evidence that the US populace is affectively polarized. This affective polarization will impact defense policy support, actions taken in support of a policy, and how seriously an individual thinks that policy should be taken by the public. Individuals are more likely to support implementing the draft to confront a security threat posed by China if it originates from their co-partisans, and conversely, more likely to oppose the same policy should it originate from the opposition party. This analysis indicates the strongest effects of co-partisanship will be a decrease in the strong opposition and a relatively equal boost in support and strong support. As the individuals who reside in the extreme areas of the support/oppose continuum should be the most likely to become politically active in pursuit of their policy preferences, this result provides an indication that the initial effects of affective polarization may feed into a cycle of increasing ideological polarization.

Because of the biases inherent to affective polarization, co-partisans remove their strong opposition to a policy and bolster their support, while the opposition does the inverse. This will theoretically decrease moderating dissent within each party. A lack of moderating forces could further divide parties along ideological lines, despite there being no initial ideological divide over this specific policy. The findings that co-partisans are more likely to say they'll take some

form of political communication action in support of a policy, and their increased preference to back that policy with legal consequences should further work to create an actual ideological divide.

This evidence indicating that affective polarization biases policy support is important from a defense policy perspective. The US military necessarily works through the Department of Defense political appointees to provide recommendation to the executive and legislative branches of government. My research provides evidence that defense policy will be viewed through a partisan lens because of the political identity of those civilian officials who have to power to enact policy change. Defense policies will not be evaluated and judged by the US public based solely on their content and merit, but partially based upon which political party is in power when during the process of crafting and implementing a policy. Most recent DOD policies have been ideologically salient before they were judged by the public i.e. allowing openly homosexual or transgender members to serve, vaccination requirements, or DOD abortion policies. But some, like the previously mentioned Space Force and the hypothetical implementation of selective service, had no clear ideologically bias. The results of my research suggest that while the democratic respondents of these polls might hold some ideological opposition to the Space Force, such as preferring to allocate funds elsewhere or opposing the militarization of space, it is likely they also had a biased assessment of this policy because of their disdain for the Trump administration that was implementing it.

This phenomenon also has potential consequences for the study of international politics. The study of how democracies act in the international realm often hinge on the incentive in a democracy to gain a popular coalition. Democracies are thought to prevail more often in conflicts because they know the political consequences of losses, and thus fight more winnable

wars, and work hard to gain broad support at home prior to any militant action (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2004). Both these things increase their credibility (Fearon 1994) and thus their deterrent capacity. This line of factors also influences some of the hypothesized mechanisms behind the Democratic Peace (Mousseau 2021). If the political party in charge of the US at any point is less able to gain a popular coalition of civilian support due to affective polarization, its ability to prevail in a conflict, deter through credibility, or remain peaceful with other democracies is *relatively* degraded.

Similarly, as individuals bias their view of policy and government actions, the mechanisms underlying audience costs lose their potency. If individuals do not punish the party in charge of implementing an unpopular policy, there is no more cost in audience cost. Similarly, if opponents of a party will always inflict the “cost” due to polarization, then there we remove the incentive for politicians to alter their behavior in a way to avoid that cost.

Importantly, the above examples are stated in terms of extremes (i.e. co-partisans refusing to inflict any cost on their party) to illustrate a theoretical point. My research points to a much smaller magnitude of effect, however, the logic should apply along a continuum, so that as individuals become more affectively polarized, they inflict less cost upon their party and more upon the out-party for the same policy or action. This should proportionally reduce the effectiveness of a theoretical mechanism like an audience cost.

Selectorate theory is similarly affected. If we assume that a ruling parties winning coalition<sup>15</sup> is primarily composed of those individuals who form their social group, then affective polarization reduces costs for politicians to enact costly policies. Their “winning coalition” is biased towards approval and not protest or punishment of their in-group politician. This in turn

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<sup>15</sup> In this case, we’ll assume the part of the selectorate that is needed to form a winning coalition during an election, not the winning coalition needed to remain in office during a term.

reduces incentive for politicians to moderate their policies, as my research indicates policy approval is not wholly dependent on the content of the policy.

It is important not to overstate the results of my experiment, as policy content clearly still plays the primary role in determining support garnered, but I believe it is important to recognize that even defense policy is impacted not only by the actual policy, but which administration attempts to enact it.

This study does have important scope conditions. Utilizing a concrete policy like selective service improves the realism and external validity of the scenario; however, it also limits generalizability outside of that specific policy. Support for reinstating the draft is historically a bi-partisan national security issue (Pew Research Center 2011), so this study's results are unlikely to extend to security policy that is already ideologically salient (gender and sexuality inclusion in the military, for example), though that is an area deserving of future research. This study is also scoped with a broadly recognized threat in a growing and aggressive China (Pew Research Center 2021). Thus, how affective polarization, and the trust it engenders in co-partisans, affects a more disputed national security threat remains untested.

However, these results have important implications for how we interpret other academic research involving ideological polarization. IR experiments often leave the political identity of the government neutral to isolate the effects of some variable on domestic support, i.e., international status on domestic support (Powers and Renshon 2022) or the effect of candidate security policy preference on voter support (Tomz et al. 2020). My research indicates that these studies have excluded the mediating variable of co-partisanship that negatively affects the external validity of these experiments. In populaces that are affectively polarized, co-partisan status will likely diminish negative reactions, while negative reactions will be exacerbated for

individuals whose co-partisan group is not in power. Depending on the political structure and social identity distribution of a country, this could impact how politically salient domestic support actually is to the political elite.

Further research should integrate affective polarization into studies involving domestic political support. Examining how ideological preferences and affective polarization interact will be essential to understand how foreign policy will operate in the new US reality of polarization. One key question is, what factors lead to ideological preference overriding in-group identity and vice versa? The recent turmoil within the Republican party over their foreign policy preferences involving NATO, South Korea, and Ukraine highlight the relevance of this area of study for both scholars and practitioners of security policy.

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## CHAPTER 2

# THE PARTISAN DETERMINANTS OF CITIZEN SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC COUNTER- EXTREMISM POLICY IN THE US<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Lyells, Christopher. To be submitted to the Journal of Conflict Resolution

## Abstract

Political violence and domestic extremism are increasing threats to US national security. Any political response to these threats is likely to be highly controversial due to the potential for government abuse of counter-extremism powers and political repression. Assuming that broad support of a policy is necessary for it to be seen as legitimate in a democracy, understanding factors that impact public approval becomes highly important to both scholars and policymakers. One potential factor that is of increasing importance in American politics, and highly relevant to political violence, is affective polarization. Affective polarization, biased perceptions based upon how an individual socially categorizes themselves and others, should impact both how threatening an individual finds domestic extremists, and how willing they are to increase the powers of the government to combat extremist groups.

To explore how political identity, and the resultant affective polarization, impact support for counter-extremism policy, I conduct a survey experiment testing how an individual's political identity interacts with the ideology of political violence groups and the political identity of the party introducing a counter-extremism policy proposal. I find that while individuals are substantially less likely to support counter-extremism policy in response to political violence by their ideological peers, when the policy is introduced by in-group political elites, individuals espouse higher levels of policy support. However, the identity of the party introducing counter-extremism policy has no impact on policy support on individuals who are not ideological peers with the political violence groups.

## Introduction

While China is often cited as the primary international threat to US security (Lam & Silver 2023) and is the focus of national security documents like the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, a 2024 Council on Foreign Relations survey found foreign policy experts are more concerned with violence internal to the United States (Stares 2024). Given this assessment, policies designed to mitigate or prevent these domestic extremists should be of increasing interest to US security experts and scholars.

Political violence and extremism are becoming more common in the United States. A poll conducted by the Economist found that over 60% of US residents view domestic terrorism as a “serious threat to the country” (Frankovic 2021). Meanwhile, Reuters identified 213 cases of political violence between January 7, 2020, and August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (Parker & Eisler 2023). These instances range from individual assaults to property damage and violence between groups associated with protests.

This rise in political violence has coincided with increasing partisanship and polarization in the US (Mason 2015; Levendusky 2017), and that partisan divide has percolated into US views of domestic extremism and the policies introduced as solutions. A casual glance at recent history easily finds acts of violence committed in the name of both right and left wing ideologies. The political and public response to this violence seems to have been influenced heavily by partisan identity and ideology, biasing assessments of violence that constitutes a threat and violence that is the unfortunate consequence of a legitimate cause.

At this point it is useful to define “political violence” for the purposes of this study. The term “political violence” can be used to describe a myriad of phenomena encompassing any act

that has a political goal and an element of violence in service of that goal. I focus my research on a small specific subset of political violence. Using existing typology, we can largely lump the political violence occurring in the United States under what has been labeled intercommunal violence, domestic terrorism, and mass protest. Under these typologies non-state groups target both the state and non-state actors through a spectrum of violence in pursuit of achieving their political objectives (Kalyvas 2019). “Intercommunal violence” covers acts of violence committed by non-state actors against other non-state actors. This subset of violence was often associated with ethnically driven riots, but recent research has shown that this type of political violence is more likely in democracies (Beaulieu 2014) where elections serve as flashpoints for groups to organize violence (Dunning 2011). Domestic terrorism, meanwhile, is defined by the characteristics of non-state actors committing violence against their state and its residents during times of relative peace (Kalyvas 2019). Mass protests fall under the umbrella of political violence when they escalate to violence. Of note, political violence associated with mass protests is most often directed against material objects and, in democracies, associated with elections and can transition into intercommunal violence (Beaulieu 2014).

### Left-Wing Violence in Pursuit of Social Justice

On the left, the most prominent example of political violence was the property destruction committed during social justice protests in the wake of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of police officers.<sup>17</sup> In the wake of these protests, which included political violence committed on behalf of further ideologically “left” political goals, we see a polarized response from US political elites and the general public. In 2021, the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law documented the introduction of 92 pieces of anti-protest legislation. This represents

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<sup>17</sup> While there is no official tabulation, one examination of insurance claims by businesses placed the damages done in the 1-2 billion dollar range (Silver 2022)

more bills than were introduced the previous three years combined (ICNL 2023).<sup>18</sup> While some were introduced by Democrats,<sup>19</sup> the vast majority, including federal legislation, were sponsored by Republicans (ICNL 2023). Additionally, once Republicans regained their majority in the House of Representatives, they dedicated several subcommittees to “examine the threat of organized left-wing violence and how the federal government, and the Department of Homeland Security in particular, can best help state and local law enforcement understand, anticipate, and prepare for, respond to these threats.” (Bishop, 2023).

The Democratic party’s policy response was, by and large, aimed less at directly combating the political violence, and more at meeting the policy objectives of the protestors. House Democrats introduced the “Justice in Policing Act,” while some cities and counties complied with calls to “defund the police” by moving funding from law enforcement budgets to support community service projects (Subramanian & Arzy 2021).

The general public had a similarly polarized response to this political violence. Rolling Stone ran an article titled “9 Historical Triumphs to Make You Rethink Property Destruction” (Myerson & Martin 2020), with the general intent to justify violent property damage in the pursuit of what they consider a righteous cause. Correspondingly, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 32% of Democrats responded affirmatively to the questions “More violent protests and unrest are an appropriate response to the killing of an unarmed man by police,” while only 12% of Republicans did (Jackson & Lohr 2020). Only 53% of Republicans responded to a separate Pew Research poll that it was very important for the country that people are free to peacefully protest,

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.icnl.org/post/news/analysis-of-anti-protest-bills?location=&status=&issue=12&date=custom&date\\_from=2020-01-01&date\\_to=2024-01-20](https://www.icnl.org/post/news/analysis-of-anti-protest-bills?location=&status=&issue=12&date=custom&date_from=2020-01-01&date_to=2024-01-20)

<sup>19</sup> Democratic Rep. Colleen Garry introduced “anti-protestor” legislation in Massachusetts in response to protestors blocking traffic during rush hours.

compared to 82% for Democrats (Pew Research Center 2020). This brings to question whether Republicans are actually less in favor of the right to peacefully protest while Democrats are more in favor of violent protests, or are the identities of the protestors truly driving this incongruence of opinion?

### Right-Wing Violence in Pursuit of Political Objectives

For the examples of recent right wing political violence, we can turn to the events of January 6<sup>th</sup> at the US capitol, the plot to kidnap the Democratic governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer, or the attack on Senator Nancy Pelosi's husband Paul. Similar to the Democrats' response to the violent acts committed in conjunction with the social justice protests of 2020, Republicans' legislation did not aim to counter the right-wing extremists who committed acts of political violence. They instead introduced legislation and policies largely in line with the goals of these extremists. In 2022, Republicans introduced the American Confidence in Elections Act which would have put barriers on vote by mail and increased voter ID requirements, among other restrictions. Similarly, Republican Representative Dan Crenshaw introduced Anti-Lockdown legislation that "ensures the president lacks authority to issue a nationwide lockdown or to impose a blanket ban on interstate travel" (Crenshaw 2021).

Meanwhile, the Biden administration announced it was standing up a specialized unit dedicated to combating domestic terrorism (Tucker 2022). The unit was not created specifically targeting right wing extremists but was created following a surge in white nationalist attacks, and this threat was referenced by both President Biden and Attorney General Merrick Garland (Barrow 2019). This announcement was met with scorn from Republican lawmakers and conservative think tanks. The prominent Heritage Foundation decried that the unit would be used

to target conservatives and that it could not be trusted as a neutral adjudicator (Ries & Canaparo 2022).

The US population is correspondingly polarized on their opinion of domestic terrorist groups. A 2021 Economist poll revealed that while 61% of Democrats saw domestic terrorism as an “immediate and serious threat to the US,” only 13% of Republicans held the same opinion (Frankovic 2021). Again, this begs the question: Do Republicans think these act of violence are an acceptable form of political expression? Are Democrats really that much more opposed to acts of violence in pursuit of a political goal? Some public opinion research indicates yes, Americans are increasingly comfortable with political violence and actions outside established democratic norms being taken to attain political objectives. One survey found that 23% of Americans agree with the statement that “Because things have gotten so off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country” (PRRI American Values Survey 2023), an increase of 17 percentage points since a 2021 survey. A partisan breakdown of the data might support the idea that Republicans truly are less concerned with political violence, as 33% of Republicans held that affirmative view, compared to 13% of Democratic respondents.

There are scholars who disagree that there is an increase in support for political violence. Westwood et al. (2022) argue imprecise survey questionnaires, disengaged respondents, and vaguely worded scenarios have created a significant upward bias in these reported numbers, and that Americans’ support for political violence is actually very low, not partisan in nature, and not a policy problem.<sup>20</sup> One anecdotal example stands in contrast to their conclusions. There is a 36% split between Republicans and Democrats on if January 6<sup>th</sup> rioters should be criminally

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<sup>20</sup> This is an argument to tackle later. They look at very specific instances of political violence and have people judge if they support that instance, which we see the politicians handwave away all the time with condoning words but no action. You are always only going to have a very small population who supports political violence, but will you tacitly accept it or will you fight it?

prosecuted, and a 40% split on if criminal penalties would be less severe than they should be (Pew Research, 2021).<sup>21</sup>

I believe this disparate evidence on US polarization deserves further study. Furthermore, the recent instances of polarized responses to political violence in the US elicit several questions which are important to both scholars and policy makers. First, why do we see these disparate political reactions at the government level, and why does citizen support fall along similarly polarized lines? Research on domestic counter-terrorism and social identity offer us some clues here.

### Social Identity and Political Violence

Scholars of political violence have conducted research demonstrating that an individual's ideological congruence with that of a political violence organization affects how legitimate they view that violence (Norman 2022), while the support for infringing upon the civil liberties of suspected terrorists is dependent on the social categorization of a suspected terrorist and the partisan orientation of the respondent (Caton & Mullinix 2022). Both these factors, how legitimate one views political violence, and the willingness to take extreme measures to counter it, should translate to individuals who are co-ideational with an active political violence group espousing lower support for domestic counter-extremism policy in general.

However, this brings us to the second intriguing question elicited from the polarized responses to political violence in America. Does the identity of the party introducing a counter-extremism policy matter? This question goes unanswered in previous scholarly research. I believe focusing only on the orientation of the individual citizen identity and the extremist group identity only examines half of the relevant relationships. The partisan identity of the government

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<sup>21</sup> Of note, the Westwood et al. 2022 article uses scenarios of severe political violence escalating to murder, so they are not directly comparable

in power (and their perception of and reaction to an extremist group) is likely to interact with the ideology of an extremist group and an individual's political identity to influence how individuals perceive political violence and any policy proposals.

Using foundational scholarship on social identity theory and existing research on counter-terror policies, I theorize that, along with the ideologic orientation of an extremist organization, the partisan source of a counter-extremist policy will also affect individual level policy support. Specifically, if the party closest in ideology to an extremist group proposes counter-terror policies targeting that group, that group will be seen as a credible threat by co-ideational citizens, and counter-terror policies will be more broadly supported than a policy emanating from an opposition party. To test this theory, I will conduct a survey experiment on a convenience sample of US residents.

That individuals who identify as Republican would support policy emanating from Republican politicians is not, at first glance, a particularly interesting hypothesis. However, it becomes interesting when you consider the implications for both academic study of security policy and the state of democracy in the US.

I argue that a policy is made up of two parts. First, the content of the policy. This is what is normally thought of as driving an individual's policy support (and, in a world without biases it would be the sole driving factor of individual level policy support<sup>22</sup>). This is the driving mechanism behind the Median Voter Theorem. Every individual has a set of interests that drive a preferred policy, and the policy that matches those individual level preferences closest is the one that the individual most prefers. Thus, elites are rewarded by crafting policies that appeal to the

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<sup>22</sup> I am only considering individual level policy support at the citizen level. Once you get into the political elite and policy maker level, I assume there are many competing interests that drive policy support that go beyond just the content of the policy. A citizen likely doesn't have to worry about forming coalitions to pass legislation or garnering support for a committee position.

median voter's policy preferences to gain the largest base of support (Downs 1957, Munger & Munger 2015, Fiorina 1999).

However, I argue there's a second important factor that constitutes a policy: what party is it associated with, or the policy's "identity". For my purposes in this research, I assume a policy takes on the political identity of the party introducing and attempting to implement it. While most research on polarization and partisanship has focused on support for politicians (Mason 2015, Levendusky 2017, Orr and Huber 2020), or one specific act of violence (Westwood et al. 2022), I focus on support for a specific policy, separated from any election cycle or specific political candidate. I argue that in the US's highly polarized environment, a policy is not judged only on its content, but on its political "identity," which, for the purposes of this specific research, I directly tie to its affiliation with a specific political party.

The relationship between the content of a policy platform and its identity area is important. Tax cuts and military spending were long associated with a conservative, Republican policy platform, while social spending would be associated with a liberal Democratic policy. With ideology (content) and identity so closely tied, it is easy to assume that individuals who identify with a political party do so purely because the policies that the party espouses and implements are closer to that individual's preference. If this is the case, a Democrat could craft a policy that, as it included content closer to the preferences of Republican citizens, would garner increased policy support (which is the scope of my research, not extending support to the level of swapping votes to another party) from those individual Republicans. If, however, the "identity" of a policy does impede support from individuals who identify with the opposing party, that Democrat may not see the increase in support for their policy by adjusting it to the ideological preferences of Republican citizens.

Regardless of whether an individual is going to approve or disapprove of (or vote for) a politician, their approval and disapproval of a policy is important. If the “identity” of a policy does impact individual level policy support, this social identity bias could be an impediment, not only to government effectiveness and policy implementation (Binder 2015, Boller 2022), but to closing the ideological gap that has developed in the US. If a policy is introduced and viewed more negatively just because it is associated with a political party outside an individual’s group identity, regardless of content, then we have the possibility (though only one of many factors) of a diverging ideological system.

Consider, for example: A party introduces a policy, and that party’s adherents have an overly positive bias of the policy. Meanwhile, the opposition has an overly negative bias against it. Given the recent examples of media companies altering their coverage to match their viewers preferences (Ellison et al. 2023), and push back that politicians have received for A) altering policy to make it palatable to opposition lawmaker and B) voting for opposition sponsored legislation (McCullough 2024) it is possible to build a logical argument that social biases expressed at the introduction of a policy can contribute to worsening polarization regardless of a party’s policy content. Media and social media actors are incentivized to cater to partisan biased initial opinions, and political actors might be treated as traitors to their social group for cooperating with the out-group. These forces should exacerbate any initial partisan division of public opinion, and if this division of public opinion is based on identity and not ideology, altering policy content will not be as effective as it should at solving this dilemma. While that is a broad theory, this research paper focuses only on the initial condition of public opinion on a policy introduced from a partisan source. To explore this area, I focus on a specific policy, one designed to combat domestic counter-extremism.

This research also drives at the still under-studied area of how increasing polarization in the US affects security policy. When individuals distrust members of the opposition party, they also distrust the government when the opposition is in control (Levendusky 2017). Domestic counter-extremism policies should be particularly susceptible to this mistrust, as an increase in the government's ability to combat extremism and terrorism often will have the unintended consequence of increasing its ability to oppress ordinary citizens (Field 2017). In an affectively polarized society, where individuals assume the out-group members are malicious actors and seen as an enemy, the formulation of counter-extremism policy has the potential to be seen as the foundation of political repression. This should be particularly salient in the US, where radicalism is baked into its collective history and is largely seen in a positive light. The founding fathers, abolitionists, suffragists, and civil rights activists have all been labeled extremists and have had the government and society target them, only later to be viewed as morally righteous victims of oppression.

Government sponsored anti-radicalism measures have correspondingly faced strong criticism when announced, with critics labeling them as politically motivated policies targeting free speech and constitutionally guaranteed rights (Neumann 2013). In a polarized environment, these debates and policy battles won't solely be waged over the tradeoffs between liberty and security but influenced by biases of mistrust, dislike, and fears of political repression, potentially hindering the ability of policymakers to arrive at an optimal domestic extremism strategy. By examining how the source of a policy affects the biases resulting from affective polarization, I hope to provide policymakers with an understanding of barriers to gaining broad citizen support, in hopes that they can use that knowledge to work around these potential barriers.

## **The Relationship Between Political Identity and Support for Domestic Security Policy**

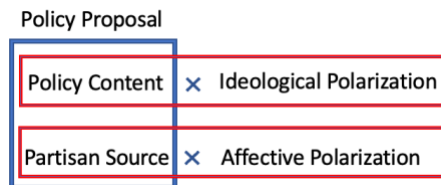
I argue that an individual's assessment of counter-extremism policy will be biased by the political identity of the party introducing the policy and the ideological identity of the extremist group. The identity of these actors will elicit cognitive biases and impact the level to which individuals will support that policy, conditional upon that individual's political identity. The theoretical foundation for my argument begins with the social dynamics of group behavior. Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains inter-group conflict as the resultant of individuals sorting themselves into specific groups based on perceived similarities and differences (Tajfel & Turner 1986). This sorting results in biased perceptions, where members of an individual's "in-groups" are perceived favorably. Conversely, groups the individual does not identify with, "out-groups," are viewed negatively, with their negative qualities exaggerated (Islam 2014).

The effects of social grouping are often described in terms of polarization, which can be further subdivided into ideational polarization and affective polarization. Ideational polarization, or issue-based polarization, captures the differences in policy preferences, whereas affective polarization, or identity-based polarization, denotes the predisposition to view the in-group favorably while harboring antipathy and distrust towards outgroups (Myrick 2021). The American public has been increasingly polarized in recent years, increasing in both ideational and affective polarization (Mason 2015), which has the potential to adversely affect the implementation of domestic counter-extremism policy.

These two components of polarization directly relate to how I conceptualize policy support as being comprised of two components, the policy content and the policy identity. For the purposes of my research, policy identity is going to be scoped to, and directly associated

with, the political identity of the party who is introducing and implementing the policy.<sup>23</sup> With this conceptualization, ideological polarization should interact with policy content, while affective polarization should interact with the policy’s “identity.”

*Fig 2.1: Components of a policy*



A policy emanating from the opposition party should garner opposition for two complementary reasons. First, a policy proposed by the opposition party is likely to be ideologically incompatible as the US has become more ideologically polarized (Abramowitz 2010). This is not inherently problematic, as adjusting policy to fit the preferences of the majority of a constituency is the basis of democracy. Even under ideological polarization, policymakers can alter their policy to meet the ideological preferences of the majority of the relative audience.

However, even if a policy was ideologically compatible with an individual’s baseline preferences, it may not be seen that way. The increase in affective polarization in the US should result in a general distrust of policies emanating from the outgroup party, independent of a policy’s content. This affective polarization should result in a proposal from the opposition party receiving less support than from the in-group constituency. This should be especially salient with regard to domestic extremism policy, which is the focus of this specific research. When the government’s ability to counter domestic extremism increases, so too does its ability to oppress ordinary civilians (Field 2017). Some go so far as to argue that counter-terror policies present a

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<sup>23</sup> This constitutes a scope condition for my analysis. In the conclusion I return to discuss the implication of this choice and how further research can examine how the identity of a policy might change.

graver threat to a citizenry than terrorism itself does (Wolfendale 2007). Thus, counter-extremism policies are likely to generate a not unfounded fear that they will be applied too broadly and degrade the civil liberties of citizens ideologically or socially adjacent to the extremist group but not part of it.

The biases resultant of affective polarization should be amplified when confronting a threat emanating from an outgroup. Threats to an individual can range from physical threats to ideological or “way of life” threats. While all categories of threat have been shown to be highly predictive of an individual’s willingness to persecute an outgroup, ideological threats are more salient to individuals than physical threats, eliciting an increased response (Gibson 2006). In a polarized environment, this should produce divergent levels of threat perception. The co-ideational citizens may perceive a level of threat from an extremist group based on the risk of physical violence, but the ideological goals are complementary and thus present no threat. This creates a reduced threat perception when compared to members of the outgroup, to whom the extremist group presents both a physical and ideological threat.

The physical threat to the in-group may be further reduced if the extremist group is discriminating in its violence, avoiding threatening the in-group interests. “Personal proximity” to terrorism victims, or how culturally close to the victims an individual is, has been shown to directly impact the level of threat an individual feels after an attack (Avdan & Webb 2018). Accordingly, an individual should perceive a lower level of threat when violence committed by a co-ideational group remains highly focused on outgroup targets, alleviating the perception of risk for in-group members.

Thus, we have the theoretical foundation to contend that individuals in a polarized environment will inherently distrust policy originating from opposition groups regardless of

content and view perceive extremist organizations from outgroups as more threatening than extremist organizations from their identified in-groups. These factors collide when dealing with domestic counter-extremism and counter-terror policies.

How threatening a group is perceived to be impacts the willingness of individuals to support counter-terror policies (Malhotra & Popp 2012), their inclination to curtail their own civil liberties (Davis & Silver, 2004), and their willingness to impinge upon the civil liberties of suspected members of the group (Canton & Mullinix 2022). While this correlation between perceived threat level and the de-prioritization of civil liberties is true of any extremist group, those extremist groups that are seen as belonging to an outgroup are generally seen as more threatening, and thus individuals are more willing to curtail the civil liberties of these groups in pursuit of security (Canton & Mullinix 2022). These phenomena should intensify as affective polarization, and the corresponding dislike and distrust between groups rises (Levendusky 2017).

Inversely, a sufficient level of ideological similarity between an individual and an extremist organization should moderate the perceived threat. They will be more likely to consider potential political violence morally just, therefore, less likely to label any violence as “terrorism” if it is in support of ideological objectives they approve of (Norman 2022). If potential violence from an organization is seen as legitimate, that individual should be less likely to consider the threat sufficient to support domestic counter-extremism policies, reducing their willingness to infringe upon the population or a suspect’s rights. This in-group bias has been shown to have twice the magnitude of effect on an individual’s view of violence legitimacy as the number of fatalities incurred, and this bias should intensify as the individual becomes increasingly polarized (Norman 2022; Lelkes & Westwood 2016).

However, social groups, their biases, and their threat perceptions do not exist in a closed system. One possible influence on these group perceptions and preferences is the effect of policy elites. The effect of elite rhetoric on public opinion, and the consequences that follow, remain contentious due to methodological difficulties. A logically coherent and empirically supported argument can be made that political elites follow public opinion in order to secure vote share and maintain power (Burnstein 2003). Conversely, theories based on leader priming, persuasion, and cueing all contend that elite opinion influences constituency opinion and behavior (Gabel & Scheve 2007, Druckman et al. 2013). Most domestic extremism and polarization research builds on the latter, focusing on how demonizing and aggressive rhetoric from elites increases polarization (Kalmoe et al. 2018) and can lead to increase acts of domestic terrorism against an outgroup (Piazza 2020) while demonstrating that domestic actors can publicize threats in order to manipulate public fear in their preferred direction (Sunstein 2004).

While substantial academic rigor has been applied to how elite rhetoric can exacerbate polarization and increase the willingness of individuals to infringe upon outgroups, it has not yet been examined if in-group elites can moderate the biases resultant from polarization that inhibit in-group members from perceiving ideologically adjacent extremist groups as threatening purveyors of illegitimate violence. This study will look to rectify this gap in the literature.

### Extremist Ideology, Government Political Identity, and Affective Polarization: How do They Interact?

I argue that the partisan source of a domestic counterterrorism policy and the ideological identity of a violent extremist threat will elicit cognitive biases and impact the level to which individuals will support that policy, conditional upon that individual's political identity. This

should happen despite holding the content of the policy constant. For example, an individual should be less likely to support a counter-extremism policy proposed in response to political violence committed by a group that is ideationally aligned with their political identity.<sup>24</sup> However, if the policies originate from a partisan source aligned with the individual, that hesitation to counter like-minded political violence groups will be attenuated, and they should be more likely to support counter-terror policies than if members of an opposing political party introduced the policies.

Using scope conditions of the two-party system of the US and a binary “left” vs “right” ideological extremist group, this creates four categories of relationships between the individual, the government, and the extremist group.<sup>25</sup> To simplify discussion and cut down on lengthy descriptions I label these four categories according to the individual’s co-partisan status relative to both the government and the extremists. I classify individuals who are co-partisan with both the government and co-ideational with the extremist group as “both”. Individuals who are out-partisan with both the government and the extremists are labeled “neither.” Individuals who are co-partisan with the government but ideationally opposite from the extremists are in a group termed “government”, and those co-ideational with the extremists but out-party from the government are grouped under “extremists.”<sup>26</sup>

**Both:** *individuals who are co-partisan with the government and co-ideology with the extremists*

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<sup>24</sup> Democrat should be less likely to support counter-extremism policies in response to left-wing political violence while Republicans should be less likely to support counter-extremism policies in response to right-wing political violence.

<sup>25</sup> All partisanship references will be with respect to the individual citizen. So, if someone is referred to as “co-partisan with the extremist group” I am referring to the individual citizen being co-partisan and not that the government in power is co-ideational with the extremists.

<sup>26</sup> Note, importantly, that these individuals are not extremists, they are simply co-ideational with only the extremists in this scenario.

**Neither:** *individuals who are not co-partisan with the government nor co-ideology with the extremists*

**Government:** *Individuals who are co-partisan with the government, but not the extremists*

**Extremists:** *Individuals who are co-ideology with the extremists, but not the government*

*Table 2.1: 2x2 matrix of group categorization*

	Co-Partisan w/ Govt	Out-Party w/ Govt
Co-Ideology w/ Extremists	<b>"Both"</b>	<b>"Extremists"</b>
Opposing Ideology to Extremists	<b>"Government"</b>	<b>"Neither"</b>

These classification labels are derived by describing the “in-group” status of the individual. Using this logic, an individual in the “Both” category is in the social/political groups of both the government and the extremist groups. Meanwhile an individual in the “Extremists” group is only in the same social grouping as the extremists, thus out-party with the government.

Based upon the established literature, I derive a theory of how an individual’s social identity affects counter-extremism policy support through the mechanism of threat perception. Unlike previous research (Avdan & Web 2019, Westwood et al. 2022, Norman 2022, Caton & Mullinix 2022), I don’t isolate the relationship between an individual and extremists but include the political identity of the elites trying to counter the political violence. I hypothesize that this results in two “forces,” or social biases, acting upon the individual. First the relationship between the individual and the extremists, and secondly, the relationship between the individual and the political party introducing the policy. As I introduce my hypotheses, I will first hypothesize an

overall direction for each of these effects. Then, using those initial hypotheses, I will lay out how the direction of these effects should combine to result in an overall ordered effect for my four categories of social relationships.

### Hypothesis 1: Threat Perception

Because of the salience of political identity in the US, I theorize that the relationship between these group identities should bias threat perception in consistent patterns. Initially, I should find evidence that individuals who are similar ideologically to a violent political group will find it more less threatening. These findings should correlate with previous scholarship that indicate a common social identity legitimizes political violence (Norman 2022), and that “personal proximity” of foreign terror victims drives threat perceptions of international terror groups (Avdan & Webb 2018).

*Hypothesis 1a: Individuals who are ideologically aligned with an extremist group will find it less threatening than individuals who are ideologically opposed to the goals of that group.*

However, I anticipate another social identity to be impactful as well. If the policy elite, whom I assume are seen as legitimate leaders, deem a threat credible enough to pursue a mitigating policy, that message should be received and internalized by the in-group members, who will adjust their threat perceptions accordingly. Thus, an individual who is co-partisan with the government proposing the policy will perceive a higher threat than those individuals who are out-party with the government.

*Hypothesis 1b: Individuals will perceive extremist groups as more threatening if co-ideational policy elite introduce counter-extremism policy targeting those groups*

These hypotheses predict a variable threat perception of extremist groups, dependent upon the social identity relationship between both the individual and the extremists, and the individual and the party introducing the legislation.

### “Government” Category:

The individuals in the “government” category, who are co-partisan with the government and ideologically opposed to the extremists, should perceive the greatest threat. Hypothesis 1a predicts that the ideational disparity between the individual and the extremists in this category increases threat perception compared to those who are co-ideational. In addition, Hypothesis 1b predicts that the co-partisan relationship between the individual and the government will also increase threat perception. These two forces should add together to create the highest threat perception of all four social categorizations.

### “Extremists” Category:

Those individuals in the “extremists” category, those who are out-party with the government and co-ideational with the extremist group, should perceive the lowest threat. Hypothesis 1a predicts that the ideational similarity between the individual and the extremists in this category decreases threat perception. Furthermore, Hypothesis 1b predicts that the out-party relationship between the individual and the government will result in a lower threat perception than individuals who are co-partisan. These two forces should add together to create the lowest threat perception of all four social categories.

### “Both” and “Neither” Categories:

The final two categories of relationships, being co-partisan the government and co-ideational with the extremists (categorized as “both”) and being out-party with both (categorized as “neither”), are theoretically murkier, but significant both to policy makers and scholars. Both categories should fall between the two extremes of being aligned with the government against an out-group threat (highest level of support) and having an out-party government propose policy

targeting an ideologically aligned extremist group (lowest support), but they lack a firm theoretical ordering.

In these two groups, the two variables of government party ID and extremist ideology should bias an individual's policy preference in countervailing directions. Hypothesis 1a predicts that individuals who are co-ideational with the extremist will find them less threatening than individuals who are ideationally opposed. Taken in isolation, this predicts that the "neither" group, who are ideationally opposed, will find the extremists more threatening than the "both" group, who are co-ideational.

However, Hypothesis 1b predicts an opposite effect for the social relationship between the individual and the government. This effect, in isolation, should result in the "both" group, who are co-partisan with the government, having a higher threat perception than the "neither" group, who are out-party.

Assuming an ideologically average preference for counter-extremism policy, the effect of opposing political and ideological identities of the actors should be determined by which relationship is more salient to the average citizen. Currently, American citizens express historically low levels of trust in the government (Pew Research Center 2023), and some argue, are increasingly comfortable with political violence (Rand & Pape 2023, Westwood et al. 2023). Thus, I expect the orientation of an individual's ideology to that of an extremist group to, on average, be more significant than the effect of their partisan orientation with regard to the government. This should result in individuals who are out-party with the government, but also ideologically opposed to the extremist group (the "neither" group) to, on average, have perceive a greater threat than those individuals who are co-partisan with the government, but also ideologically aligned with the extremist group (the "both" group).

Below is a summary of each category, the directionality of the social identity bias with respect to their threat perception, and how that category should rank in terms of ordered threat perception. Of note, the chart does not display the relationship between the individual and the government or extremist group, just the hypothesized resultant effect on their threat perception.

*Table 2.2: Social Category and Threats Perception*

Relationship Category	Direction of Group ID Biases		Predicted level of threat perception
	Gov't	Extremists	
"Government"	Increase Threat Perception	Increase Threat Perception	Highest
"Neither"	Decreased Threat Perception	Increase Threat Perception	Second Highest
"Both"	Increase Threat Perception	Decreased Threat Perception	Second Lowest
"Extremists"	Decreased Threat Perception	Decreased Threat Perception	Lowest
* classification labels are derived by describing the "in-group" status of the individual. Using this logic, an individual in the "Both" category is in the social/political groups of both the government and the extremist groups. Meanwhile an individual in the "Extremists" group is only in the same social grouping as the extremists, thus out-party with the government.			

### Hypothesis 2: Counter-Extremism Policy Support

My theory suggests that an individual's threat perception of an extremist group varies along with the orientation of their social identity to that of the extremist groups. This should be one factor that impacts their espoused support for the policy being proposed to mitigate that threat. The established literature suggests that individuals will be more inclined to see political violence as legitimate if the group's political goals are ideologically similar to their own (Norman 2022), they are less inclined to support violating civil liberties if suspected terrorists are part of a perceived in-group (Caton & Mullinix 2022), and more likely to find a

terrorist group threatening if they attack a culturally and racially similar foreign country (Avdan & Webb 2022). Drawing from these findings, being co-ideational with an extremist group should lead to a reticence on the part of the individual to support counter-terror policies that they believe will be used to target that extremist group. Conversely, if extremists identify as part of an ideational out-group individuals should profess a higher support for empowering the government to counter this threat.

*Hypothesis 2a: Individuals who are co-ideational with an extremist group will have lower levels of support for counter-extremism policy than those who are ideationally opposed*

In the affectively polarized environment of the US, I suspect that most policy emanating from an out-group political party will garner lower individual support. In the case of counter-extremism policy that empowers the government to target US citizens who are ideationally opposed to the governing party, these policies may not only be seen as unnecessary, but untrustworthy and a means of political suppression. Meanwhile, if a counter-extremism policy emanates from the individual's in-group political party, it should be seen as more necessary and more just due to the increased threat perception predicted in hypothesis 1. Co-partisans should also believe their in-group elites will be less likely to abuse any new powers gained by enacting counter-extremism policy. Furthermore, as they are not part of the social group associated with the threat, co-partisans should view the likelihood that they are going to be a victim of improper use of counter-extremism policy to be unlikely. This should translate into individuals that are co-partisan with the government having higher levels of support for the proposed counter-extremism policy.

*Hypothesis 2b: Individuals who are co-partisan with the government will have higher levels of support for the proposed counter-extremism policy, on average, than those who are not co-partisan.*

As with Hypothesis 1 on threat perception, these two hypothesized forces should act in an additive manner, and result in heterogeneous effects on my social relationship categories. Given that the directional effect of the biases are the same between threat perception and policy support, I expect the ordered of the effects to be the same as well.

*Table 2.3: Social Category and Policy Support*

Relationship Category	Direction of Group ID Biases		Predicted level of policy support
	Gov't	Extremists	
"Government"	Increase Policy Support	Increase Policy Support	Highest
"Neither"	Decrease Policy Support	Increase Policy Support	Second Highest
"Both"	Increase Policy Support	Decrease Policy Support	Second Lowest
"Extremists"	Decrease Policy Support	Decrease Policy Support	Lowest
* the chart represent the directionality of the biases due to affective polarization, not the co-partisan status of the individual. i.e. because individuals in the "government" category are ideationally opposed to the extremist group, they should have a higher level of policy support.			

In order to better capture what “support” may look like outside a professed “support” or “oppose” on a survey, I also look at how support/opposition might translate to both political activity and legal consequences for members of the extremist organization. Both these variables are, in my view, simply different measures of the level to which an individual supports a policy, by looking at how they might translate that support into a material political action, and by examining how seriously they believe that policy should be taken by the criminal justice system. By measuring in multiple ways, and in asking respondents to consider more than just an

immaterial level of support, I hope to increase the confidence in any empirical results while simultaneously increasing our information of what “support” might translate too in the real world.

The hypothesized order of these support levels, and any empirical evidence of the relative power of these two biases is important to policy makers. If the positive biases associated with in-party identification with the government can overpower the biases associated with socially identifying with an extremist group, then, theoretically, a strategy exists<sup>27</sup> where the government can execute an effective information campaign to bolster support for counter-extremism policy across the political spectrum. If, however, the biases associated with being in-party with the government are, on average, overshadowed by in-group relationship between an individual and an extremist group, we will have evidence that A) the power of elite cueing in this case is limited and B) a minimal political communication strategy is unlikely to be effective, and a more robust strategy will be needed to garner support.

### **Experimental Design**

To test these hypotheses, I conduct an experimental survey where respondents are presented with a domestic counter-extremism policy that remains constant, while I randomize the ideology of the terrorists, and the political party introducing the policy. The survey experiment was run through Qualtrics, and provided to a convenience sample of US residents, specifically, undergraduate political science students at the University of Georgia. I conduct two rounds of the survey. The first from 4 November to 11 December 2022 with 1,364 respondents beginning the survey, while the second round was conducted from November 13<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 and

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<sup>27</sup> Within the limited scope conditions of this study i.e. no counter information campaign (which is unlikely in our fractured information environment) nor external events undermining the government’s credibility

1,111 respondents initiated the survey. Of those total respondents, 1242 completed enough of the survey on the first round to be useful for my analysis, while 1046 provided useful data on the second round. Of these individuals, 869 passed the attention check for the first survey, while 953 passed at least one attention check on the second. This provides 1822 observations with high quality data.<sup>28</sup> The design of the survey did not require individuals to answer every question, so there are observations that may not have data for every variable. As such, there will be fluctuations in the total number of observations based upon which variables are included in specific analysis.

The surveys treatments and measurement questions are identical between runs. However, the first survey included only 1 post-treatment question, asking the respondent to confirm the ideological lean of the extremist group. In the second survey run, I include a second post-treatment question, asking them the party identity of the government in power. To reduce the number of treatment check failures from the first survey, I also put the treatment scenario and the question on the same survey page, allowing individuals to “scroll up” to review the scenario if they couldn’t remember the answer to the question.

The scenario presented in the survey is composed of two main treatments: a description of the extremist threat and a domestic counter-terror policy proposal. These treatments, when combined with the political identity of the respondent, serve as the independent variables for this study. The full survey is available in the supplementary material.

By creating a survey experiment where the policy content remains constant, I can test my hypothesis and see the effects of varying only the policy “identity,” which in this case, I assume

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<sup>28</sup> I do run supplementary analysis using OLS to show that while result are attenuated without excluding those individuals who fail post-treatment checks, the directionality and statistical significance remain.

is determined (or at least impacted) by the political identity of the politicians who introduce the counter-extremism policy.

#### Treatment 1: Ideological Orientation of the Threat

The first treatment will be the ideological orientation of the extremist organizations. For right-wing terrorist organizations, they will be described as a loose collection of anti-government groups focused on targeting the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Center for Disease Control (CDC), and state-level judicial and executive bureaucracies. The left-wing terrorist organizations will be described as a loose coalition of groups planning on targeting pro-life, anti-climate change, and pro-2<sup>nd</sup> amendment political organizations, including lawyers and members of the judicial branch.

#### Treatment 2: Partisan Source of the Proposed Counter-Terror Policy

The second treatment effect will be the source of proposed executive action and legislation to combat the rising terrorist threat. The Republican treatment describes legislation derived from research conducted at the conservative leaning Heritage Foundation and now championed by House and Senate Republicans. The second treatment describes legislation derived from research conducted by the Urban Institute, a leading liberal think tank, and now championed by House and Senate Democrats. The policy proposal will be equivalent; the creation of specialized federal, state, and local task force organizations whose sole purpose will be to combat emerging domestic extremist organizations. The Justice Department is also described as getting “additional resources and authorities to aid in prosecuting any individuals who are found to have participated in the planning or participation of political violence.”

### Independent Variable 1: Partisan Relationship

My primary independent variable is the partisan relationship between the individual respondent and the government and the extremist organization. I construct this variable from the two treatments and the respondents declared political identity. The result is a four-category categorical variable describing the co-partisan status of the individual:

- “Both” – Respondent is co-partisan with both the government and the extremist groups
- “Neither” – Respondent is out-party with both the government and the extremist groups
- “Extremists” - Respondent is out-party with the government but co-ideational with the extremist groups
- “Government” – Respondent is co-partisan with the government but ideationally opposite the extremist groups

### Constructing the Partisan Relationship variable:

The respondent is asked to identify their political identity (PID) in the survey, selecting from Democrat, Republican, Independent, Other (write in option) and Don’t Know. Those individuals who select Democrat or Republican are immediately binned into their respective partisan buckets.

Those individuals who select Independent, Other, or Don’t Know, are asked a follow up question on if they feel closer to the Republican or Democratic Party, with the option to select neither if desired. Those individuals who select that they identify closer to the Republican or Democratic party are then categorized into the primary Republican or Democratic bins.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> This is a measurement decision that can be argued over. I bin these “leaners” together to increase the sample size available, and argue that I am theoretically justified because although a large number of Americans will claim to be “independent” or not affiliated with any political party, research shows these leaners are increasingly polarized as well (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). In addition, the inclusion of these individuals should only suppress any effects I find, as a true independent should not have the same group identity biases that my study seeks to identify. Thus, I feel that including these individuals in the two main categories of PID is justified.

My dependent variables will measure to what extent they support or oppose the proposed policy, actions they may take in response to the proposed policy, the level of threat the respondent perceives the group to pose, and to what extent they support or oppose legal consequences for members of the extremist organization. These variables tie directly to my hypothesis, and all respondents will receive the same question and response options. The full question bank with responses is available in the appendix.

#### Dependent Variable 1: Level of Respondent Support for the Counter Terror Policies

My primary dependent variable will measure how much the respondent supports or opposes the proposed policies. This is done with a 7-point Likert scale response option ranging from “strongly oppose” to “strongly support” resulting in a seven-level ordinal variable. In an attempt to mitigate the potential effects of smaller sample sizes in some of these response options I run parallel analysis where I treat this as a numeric variable.

*Question 1: To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed policies?*

I also ask the respondent what potential actions they would consider in response to the proposed policy in an attempt to quantify exactly what a level of opposition or support may look like.

*Question 2: What actions would you consider taking to convey your opposition or support?*

This question has 11 categorical response options, of which, the respondent can select multiple options:

*I would support the targeted organizations through a commitment of time or money*  
*I would protest in opposition to these policies*  
*I would support organizations opposed to these policies through a commitment of time or money*  
*I would communicate my opposition to my political representative*  
*I would communicate my opposition through social media*  
*I would take no action in opposition or support of the proposed policies*  
*I would communicate my support through social media*  
*I would communicate my support to my political representative*

*I would support organizations who support these policies through a commitment of time or money*  
*I would attend a “rally” in support of these policies*  
*I would apply to be an active participant in a task force*

Because the respondent can select multiple options independently, I treat each selection as a unique binary variable.

#### Dependent Variable 2: Level of perceived threat from the extremist group

My second dependent variable will measure how threatening to the “American way of life” a respondent finds the described extremist groups. This variable attempts to uncover one of the causal mechanisms at work, furthering our understanding of why group identity impacts how willing individuals are to support domestic security policy. This question uses 5-level ordinal response options, which again, translates directly into an ordinal variable.

*Question 3: How threatening to the American way of life do you find these groups to be?*  
*Response options: Not threatening at all, A minor threat, A moderate threat, A significant threat, An existential threat*

#### Dependent Variable 3: Level of Respondent Support for Legal Consequences

My third dependent variable will measure how altering the source of the policy affects respondents' willingness to involve the US justice department in punishing and deterring membership in the extremist organization. In the first round of the survey, I measure three aspects of judicial power: criminalizing membership, curtailing the right to bear arms for members, and using membership as a reason to legitimately expand investigations into friends and family of the member. In the second round of the survey, I limit my measurement to level of support for criminalizing membership. All questions have a 7-point Likert scale response from Strongly Oppose/Disagree to Strongly Support/Agree. This creates a 7-level ordinal variable that I also use as a numeric variable for parallel analysis.

*Question 1: To what level do you support the US government criminalizing membership in any extremist group they designate a serious threat?*

*Questions 2: To what level do you agree that identified members of these extremist groups should have their 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights curtailed, limiting their access to firearms?*

*Question 3: To what level do you agree that an individual's membership in an extremist organization should serve as just cause of expanding investigations into their immediate friends and family?*

### Control Variables

I have several demographic pre-treatment control variables that are measured via survey responses. These controls include a numeric variable for age, and categorical variables of gender, race, religion, interest in politics, political identity, and ideology.

### Observation & Data Inclusion Criteria:

I use several data management decisions to increase confidence that any results are not a result of data selection. My baseline data is the combination of both runs of the survey merged together, then removing all respondents who failed to pass at least one post-treatment attention check. I expect these results to be the 'highest quality,' as the respondents will have demonstrated they read the scenario, and I will still maximize observations. However, I also run the analysis without filtering out those respondents who fail the post-treatment checks. When including these observations, I expect results to be lower in both magnitude and statistical significance. I also want to see if there is any significant difference between the first and second survey runs. This goes towards replicating my experiment and increasing the confidence in any results I may find.

Finally, I show analysis that filter out all individuals who responded that they were politically "Independent," or generally not affiliated with either the Republican or Democratic parties in the US. I do this because there is an argument that these individuals fall outside the

scope of my theory. My theory and hypotheses hinge on group-identity biases impacting preferences and perception. Individuals who don't identify as part of one of the groups that I am examining should not have salient biases. However, I do this only as a supplementary analysis for two reasons. First, research has shown that even those individuals who claim to be "independent" or not affiliated with one of the two main political parties in the US are increasingly polarized (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), and possibly do fall into the bounds of my theory despite their response. In this case, we would expect there to be some bias present (thus my treatment would elicit some effect), but likely not at the same level as those who proudly identify as a partisan. Secondly, if I want to get an accurate look at how the political identity of an extremist group and the government tasked with managing that threat impacts support levels, I need to consider a realistic electorate sample, and that includes those individuals who proclaim to be independent.

### **Analysis**

The results of my experiment provide evidence that social identity does impact how an individual assesses a domestic security policy and that threat perception is one mechanism through which this occurs. However, my results are not fully consistent with my hypothesis as I find evidence that depending on the political identity of the threat, co-partisan status with the government does not have a homogenous impact.

I begin my analysis by testing my second hypothesis. While counterintuitive, I believe that establishing that social identity does impact support for counter-extremism policy is important before testing for the underlying mechanism. I hypothesized that the orientation of an individual's political identity (PID), the government PID, and the extremist group's ideology will

impact the level of support the individual espouses for the proposed policy. I hypothesize that those who are co-partisan with the government, but opposing ideology from the extremist group

*Table 2.4: Social Category and Policy Support*

Relationship Category	Direction of Group ID Biases		Predicted level of policy support
	Gov't	Extremists	
"Government"	Increase Policy Support	Increase Policy Support	Highest
"Neither"	Decrease Policy Support	Increase Policy Support	Second Highest
"Both"	Increase Policy Support	Decrease Policy Support	Second Lowest
"Extremists"	Decrease Policy Support	Decrease Policy Support	Lowest

\* the chart represent the directionality of the biases due to affective polarization, not the co-partisan status of the individual. i.e. because individuals in the "government" category are ideationally opposed to the extremist group, they should have a higher level of policy support.

should have the highest levels of support. Individuals who are out-group with both the government and the extremist groups should have the second highest levels of support. Individuals who are co-partisan with the government and co-ideational with the extremist group should have the third highest levels of support. Finally, individuals who are out-party from the government and co-ideational with the extremists should espouse the lowest levels of support for the counter-extremism policy.

## Affective Polarization: Biasing Policy Support...Sometimes

I begin my analysis by conducting nine total OLS regressions for this first analysis of hypothesis 1, all of which result in substantive and statistically significant support for my hypothesis. These regressions differ in their data inclusion and control use, but all use the 7-level ordinal DV of policy support converted to a continuous variable and regressed on the IV of co-partisan category. As I ran two separate survey experiments, I show results from both surveys individually as well as the combined observations. Regressions denoted with a “+” include pre-treatment controls for age, gender, political identity, ideology, religion, race, and interest in politics.<sup>30</sup>

The fifth and sixth regressions are labeled with a “Post Treat Filter” and exclude individuals who failed to pass at least one post-treatment manipulation check. This is done to minimize the effects of type II errors due to respondent inattention on the survey.<sup>31</sup> Finally, in the seventh and eight regressions I limit my observations to only those individuals who fall within a “partisan” category, meaning I exclude individuals who were measured as “Independent.” This was done to account for the argument that as these individuals should not have a salient political identity, they do not fall within the scope of my theory and will not have the resultant biases impacting their policy support. As a lack of social bias should result in no treatment effect, these regressions should show larger effects.

All regressions produce substantive and statistically significant coefficients in the hypothesized direction. While this may seem like an excessive amount of data to present, I do so

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<sup>30</sup> The results for the controls are not shown in this main analysis, for the full table, please see the appendix.

<sup>31</sup> See supplementary material section 3 for full analysis of manipulation check errors

**Table 2.5: OLS Regression of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support**

	RD 1&2	RD 1&2+	RD1+	RD2+	RD 1&2 Post Treat Filter+	RD1 Post Treat Filter+	RD2 Post Treat Filter+	Partisans Only+	Partisans Filtered+
Both	0.295*** (0.074)	0.309*** (0.075)	0.237* (0.109)	0.378*** (0.105)	0.389*** (0.086)	0.358** (0.137)	0.400*** (0.110)	0.313*** (0.084)	0.414*** (0.096)
Gov't	0.517*** (0.074)	0.524*** (0.075)	0.423*** (0.109)	0.642*** (0.103)	0.668*** (0.085)	0.588*** (0.133)	0.735*** (0.110)	0.543*** (0.084)	0.725*** (0.095)
Neither	0.495*** (0.071)	0.515*** (0.073)	0.436*** (0.106)	0.613*** (0.100)	0.628*** (0.083)	0.612*** (0.132)	0.630*** (0.106)	0.540*** (0.085)	0.673*** (0.097)
#Obs.	2288	2231	1206	1024	1779	848	931	1684	1339
R2	0.028	0.045	0.041	0.076	0.068	0.077	0.092	0.049	0.073
R2 Adj.	0.026	0.030	0.014	0.045	0.050	0.040	0.058	0.031	0.053
RMSE	1.21	1.21	1.28	1.10	1.21	1.30	1.10	1.20	1.20

co-partisan with just the extremists is the baseline treatment to which the others are compared

pre-treatment controls are not displayed, but include age, gender, race, religion, PID, ideology, and interest in politics

+ denotes regressions including pre-treatments controls

DV is Policy Support on a continuous scale from 1-7

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

for several purposes. First, I find evidence to support my hypothesis that political identity policy support across all regressions. That I was able to replicate my results with different samples, controls, and data inclusion criteria, more than a year apart, gives confidence to their validity. Secondly, while I find substantive and statistically significant results across my data inclusion criteria, the second run of the experiment yields more substantive results. This may be due to several reasons.

First, while the wording of the scenario, treatment, or measurement questions remained constant, the format of the survey changed slightly. Survey participants on the second run were given two treatment checks instead of one. Also, they were able to return and review the scenario while answering the manipulation checks where the individuals taking the first survey were not able to review the scenario. They were not required to answer the manipulation check correctly in order to proceed with the survey. These changes were implemented due to the high failure rate (29%) of survey respondents on the first run on the experiment. Overall only 10% of respondents failed both treatment checks on the second run off the experiment. Secondly, the salience of political identities among the college students, and the topic of domestic extremism, may have increased in salience between survey experiments. This could also result in greater treatment effects but requires further research to confirm.

Across this spectrum of data and control inclusion, the OLS regressions provide coefficient estimates that indicate an individual's partisan and ideological relationships have a substantive and statistically significant effect on their support for domestic extremism policy. The "Both" category shows an average increase in policy support between .309 and .414 on the 7-pt Likert scale when compared to individuals in the "Extremists" category. This translates to a 5-7% increase in policy support for individuals who go from an out-party to a co-party

government treatment when they are co-ideology with the extremists. Additionally, as hypothesized, both the “government” and “neither” treatment groups show higher policy approval than the “extremists” and “both” categories. These groups average 9-12% higher policy approval than the extremist category.

What these regressions don’t tell is where along the spectrum of support that change is taking place. To explore what “levels” of policy support are impacted by affective polarization, I conduct an ordinal logit regression and present the average discrete effect of each social treatment category on policy support. Unless otherwise noted, discrete effects were created using regressions that exclude individuals who failed all manipulation checks.<sup>32</sup> These discrete effects are presented in the “average change in predicted probability” that an individual in a treatment group would choose a level of support, when compared to individuals in the “extremist” group.

Calculating the discrete effects, I find a statistically significant effect for each category of social identity when compared to the baseline “extremist” category. However, the ordered magnitude of the effect is not fully in line with my hypothesis. Those individuals who are out-party with the government and co-ideational with the extremists (the extremist category) do indeed respond with the lowest average level of support for the proposed counter-extremism policy. Also, in support of my hypothesis, being co-partisan with both the government and the extremists (the ‘both’ category) does elicit an increase in the predicted probability an individual chooses a level of support and a decrease in the predicted probability they choose a level of opposition, when compared to the extremist category.

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<sup>32</sup> OLS estimates will show all data inclusion options and discrete effect plots using all observations can be found in the supplementary material. Any change in results due to data inclusion decisions will be noted in the main analysis

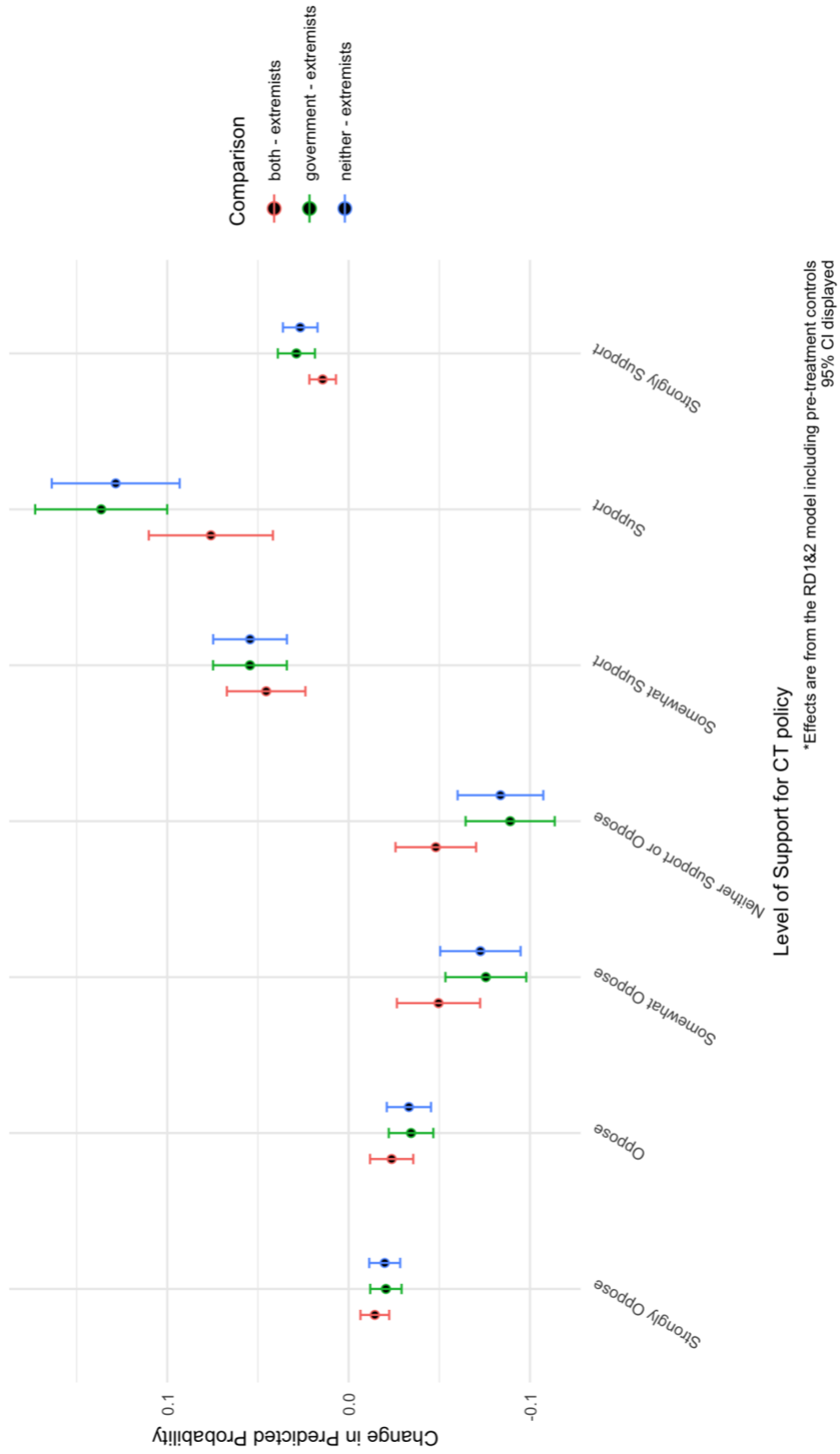


Fig 2.1: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Policy Support

However, going from an out-party to a co-partisan government fails to elicit a substantive or statistically significant effect for those individuals who are ideationally opposed to the extremist groups (i.e. the difference between the “neither” and “government” groups). If we change the reference category from extremists to “government” and isolate that relationship between the “neither” and “government” categories, we can demonstrate this clearly.

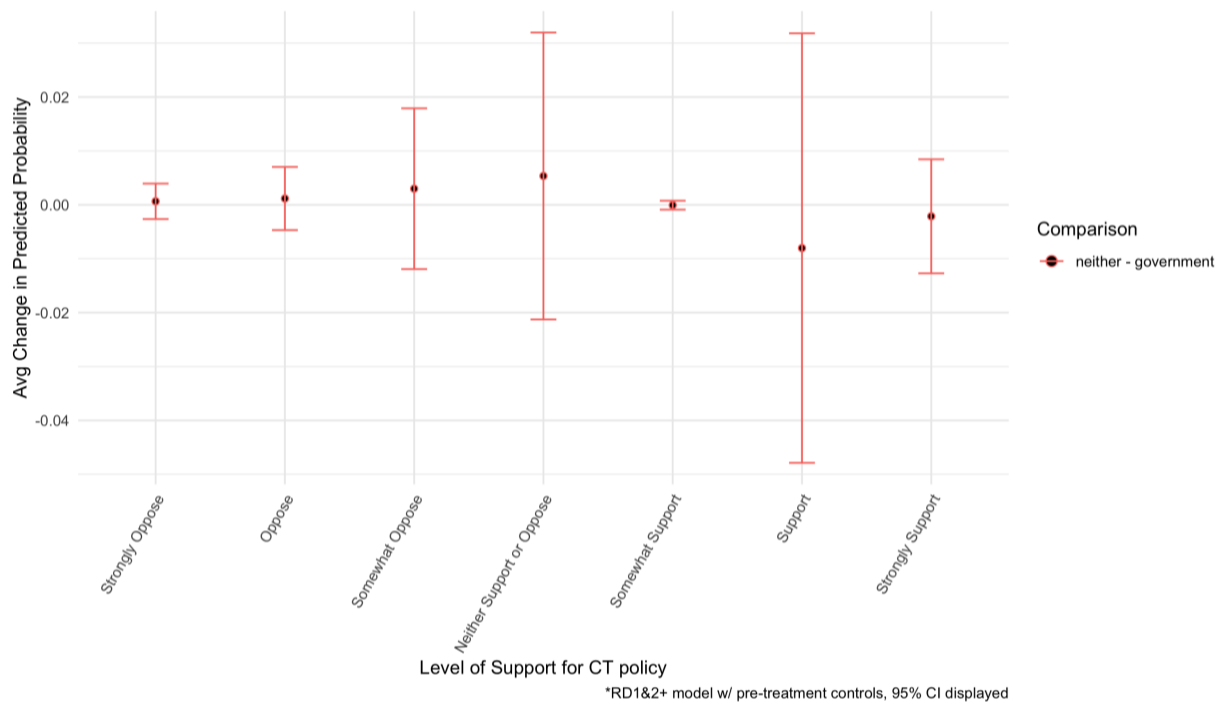


Fig 2.2: Avg Discrete Effect of Govt and Neither Treatments on Policy Support

I find no evidence that changing the political identity of the government elicits a change in level of support for counter extremism policy if the individual is ideationally opposed to the extremist threat. However, we have evidence that moving from co-ideational with the extremists to also co-partisan with the government (the both-extremist comparison) elicits a substantive and significant increase on the predicted probability that a respondent selects a level of support, while decreasing the probability that they select a level of opposition or remain neutral. This is in

contradiction to my hypothesis that affective polarization should cause an in-group bias favoring a co-partisan government and homogeneously increase the average level of support for a policy, regardless of threat identity. These results suggest that an individual's social identity with regard to the government may have a heterogeneous treatment effect which falls outside of my theory and is worthy of future study.

The ordinal model also reveals important information in where the effect of social identity occurs along the continuum of support. The change in level of support elicited by varying the social relationship between an individual, their government, and an extremist threat, is concentrated in the central, more benign support levels. We find very little substantive effect at the Strongly Oppose, Oppose, and Strongly Support levels, roughly around a 2% increase or decrease respectively. However, the effect on "I support the proposed policies" is highly substantive, with its predicted probability increasing by roughly 8% for the co-partisan 'both' category and increasing by approximately 12-13% for the 'government' and 'neither' categories. This correlates with the 7-8% drop in predicted probability we for the "somewhat oppose" and "neither support nor oppose" levels and is accompanied by a 7% increase in the likelihood a respondent selects "somewhat support."

Beyond just examining the discrete effect of moving between the co-partisan categories, it is useful to look at the overall predicted probability an individual will select a level of support. This gives us a broader look at how popular the counter-extremism policy is. We see that with our convenience sample of undergraduate political science students, the counter-extremism policy receives broad, if not overly enthusiastic, support. "Strongly Support" never has more than a 5% predicted probability. Importantly, across the spectrum of social identity groups,

opposition and strong opposition to the policy is extremely low coming in below 7% and 4% predicted probability across all treatment groups.

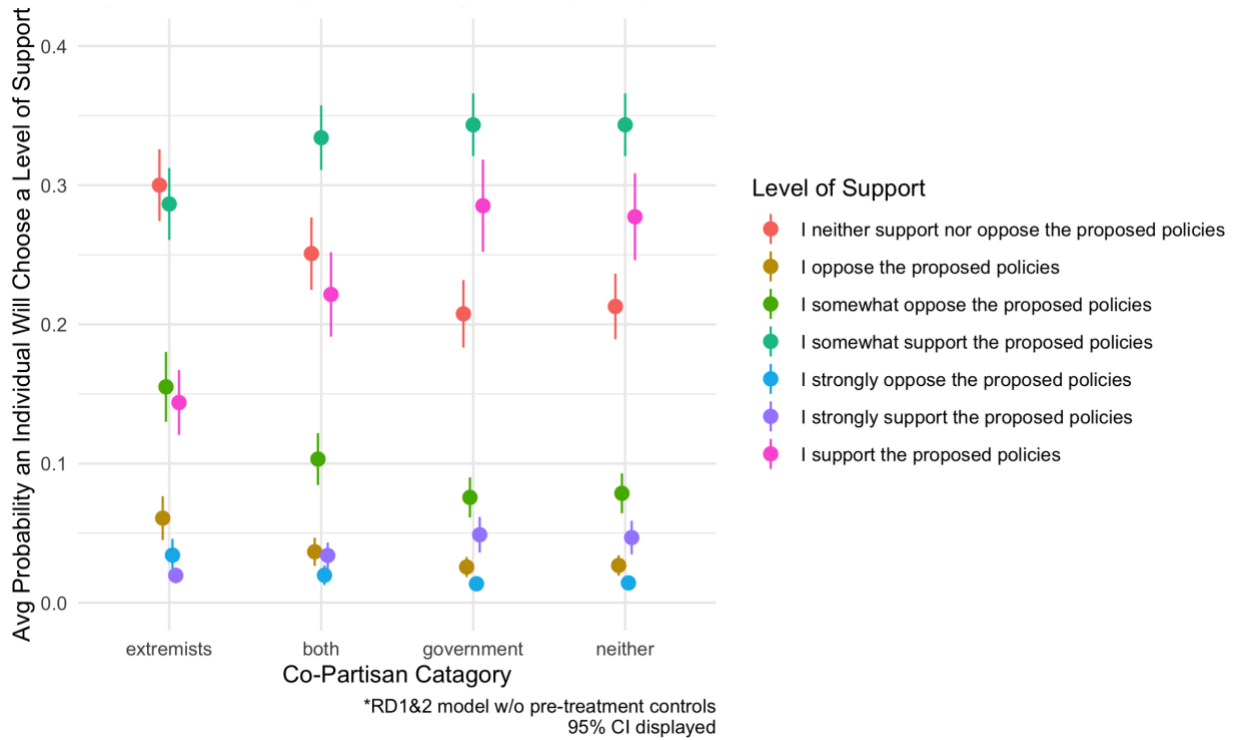


Fig 2.3: Probability of Selecting a Policy Support Level

This muted effect at the extreme ends of the support spectrum is potentially important pending further research. Those individuals who are most likely to take political action in response to a proposed policy should, theoretically, reside in those extreme levels of support or opposition. If we're seeing overall low levels of support on those extreme ends, and only minimal movement elicited by social identity biases, then it is less likely that affective polarization meaningfully impacts participation in political action that influences other citizens and the political elite.

If this is the case, then these social biases, while evident in this study, may lack substantive political power. To examine this in the specific context of counter-extremism policy, we move to my next test of an individual's "support," their likelihood of pledging to some sort of political action.

#### Beyond the Abstract: Policy "Support" in Action

To test my hypothesis that affective polarization will impact not policy approval, but political action I queried survey participants on what actions they would potentially take in response to the introduction of the domestic extremism policy. Participants were presented with 11 actions of support or opposition to choose from. Political actions in opposition to the policy include supporting the extremist organizations with time and/or money, protesting the policy, supporting organizations opposing the counter-extremism policy, communicating opposition through social media or to their political representative. Actions in support of the counter-extremism policy included joining the counter-extremism task force, rallying in support of the policies, supporting organizations promoting the policy, and communicating support on social media or to their political representative. Individuals could also say they would elect to take no action.

A broad overview of the coefficients produced by the logit regression provides some support for my hypothesis that affective polarization will impact political action. Across the potential actions, those individuals who are in the "both," "neither," and "government," treatment groups see a decrease in the likelihood they would take a negative political action and an increase in the likelihood they would take supporting action. To more intuitively discuss

**Table 2.6: Logistic Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Potential Actions**

	Supt Ext Group	Protest	Supt Orgs Fighting Policy	Convey Opp Political Rep	Neg Social Media	No Action	Positive Social Media	Convey Supt Political Rep	Supt Orgs Promoting Policy	Rally	Join Task Force
Both	0.066 (0.373)	-0.077 (0.320)	-0.320 (0.258)	-0.018 (0.220)	-0.533* (0.215)	-0.195 (0.145)	0.359+ (0.192)	0.539* (0.237)	0.732* (0.319)	0.515 (0.345)	1.072 (0.843)
Gov't	0.779* (0.327)	-0.565 (0.362)	-0.744** (0.284)	-0.466+ (0.239)	-0.918*** (0.231)	-0.364* (0.143)	0.613*** (0.184)	0.699** (0.227)	1.508*** (0.292)	1.034** (0.315)	1.101 (0.833)
Neither	0.341 (0.342)	0.102 (0.308)	-0.591* (0.266)	-0.188 (0.223)	-0.310 (0.196)	-0.397** (0.140)	0.585** (0.182)	0.757*** (0.224)	1.329*** (0.295)	0.960** (0.316)	1.160 (0.829)
#Obs	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780
AIC	727.4	690.7	892.5	1192.6	1290.2	2434.6	1783.5	1410.6	1139.6	891.1	266.7
BIC	908.4	871.7	1073.5	1373.6	1471.2	2615.5	1964.4	1591.6	1320.6	1072.1	447.7
F	1.543	2.660	1.363	1.081	2.140	2.755	3.056	1.391	2.517	2.808	1.182
RMSE	0.22	0.21	0.25	0.30	0.32	0.49	0.39	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.11

DV is a binary choice of a potential action. "Extremist" is the reference category

Model is estimated using Logistic Regression Using Rd 1 & 2 data control variables are not displayed, but the full table can be found in the supplementary material controls include pid, ideology, interest in politics, race, religion, age, and gender

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

the coefficients, I present and discuss the results using discrete effects, which manifest in the average change in predicted probability an individual selects a specific category of action. The results paint a clearer picture of what political actions might result from the introduction of counter-extremism policy in the US. Overall there appears to be little statistically significant impact on the predicted probability that individuals say they would take a negative action of opposition to the policy. Those in the “government” treatment group, who are out-group from the extremists and co-party with the government see the greatest impact, seeing a 5% decrease in the likelihood they support organizations opposing the policy, and a 9% decrease in the likelihood they convey their opposition through social media. Individuals in the “Both” group see a 6% decrease in the predicted probability they will post their opposition on social media, while the “neither” group is only 4% less likely to support organization opposing the policies.

Affective polarization has a more substantial impact on positive actions. All the treatment categories are substantively more likely to take the positive factor action than the extremist group. As hypothesized, the smallest impact is on the “both” category, who, like the “extremists” are co-ideology with the extremists but also co-party with the government. These individuals are nearly 5% more likely to convey policy support to their political representative and 4% more likely to support organizations promoting the policy. As hypothesized, the “neither” and “government” groups see even larger effects, seeing 7-11% increases in the predicted probability that an individual will take a positive action. These groups also see a 5% increase in the likelihood individuals say they would rally in support of these policies.

**Table 2.7: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Potential Actions**

	Supt Ext Group	Protest	Supt Orgs Opposing	Convey Opp Political Rep	Neg social media	No Action	Pos social media	Convey Supt Political Rep	Supt Orgs Promoting Policy	Rally	Join Task Force
copart	0.002 (0.013)	-0.004 (0.015)	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.002 (0.022)	-0.059* (0.024)	-0.046 (0.034)	0.049+ (0.026)	0.050* (0.022)	0.038* (0.016)	0.023 (0.015)	0.009 (0.007)
Gov't	0.038* (0.015)	-0.022 (0.014)	-0.047** (0.018)	-0.039+ (0.020)	-0.090*** (0.022)	-0.086* (0.034)	0.090*** (0.026)	0.069** (0.022)	0.111*** (0.019)	0.057*** (0.016)	0.010 (0.007)
Neither	0.014 (0.013)	0.005 (0.015)	-0.039* (0.018)	-0.018 (0.021)	-0.037 (0.024)	-0.094** (0.033)	0.085*** (0.026)	0.076*** (0.021)	0.090*** (0.018)	0.052** (0.016)	0.011 (0.007)
#Obs	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780	1780
AIC	727.4	690.7	892.5	1192.6	1290.2	2434.6	1783.5	1410.6	1139.6	891.1	266.7
BIC	908.4	871.7	1073.5	1373.6	1471.2	2615.5	1964.4	1591.6	1320.6	1072.1	447.7
F	1.543	2.660	1.363	1.081	2.140	2.755	3.056	1.391	2.517	2.808	1.182
RMSE	0.22	0.21	0.25	0.30	0.32	0.49	0.39	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.11

Coefficients displayed are the average discrete effect which represent change in predicted probability of a respondent taking the action

DV is a binary choice of a potential action in support or opposition of the draft.

Model is estimated using Logistic Regression, 'Extremists' is the reference category

Pre-treatment controls are not displayed but include gender, age, PID, isolationism, and foreign affairs. see supplementary materials for full regression table

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

There are potentially interesting implications given the evidence that positive actions are much more impacted by an individual's social relationship to the government and extremist groups than negative actions. Previous research shows that political action is spurred more by opposition than support (Miller & Krosnick 2004) and that social media, and news media in general, emphasize negative content due to its outsized potential to generate more 'clicks' (Trussler & Soroka 2014), a muted effect on negative actions as compared to the biases increasing "positive actions" of support could limit the political salience of these biases. This is of course just a hypothetical connection, but could be the focus of future study.

Another noteworthy result from this data is the similarity in between the "government" and "neither" groups. Consistent with the previous analysis on policy approval, a co-partisan government has minimal treatment effect on individuals facing out-group political violence. The only significant difference between those two treatment groups is that the "government" group sees a decrease of 9% in the predicted probability that they post their opposition on social media. This provides further evidence that of being co-partisan government treatment has a heterogeneous effect, dependent on the ideology of the extremist threat.

While these results largely line up with my hypotheses, we still have not uncovered the causal mechanism that results in these biases translating into both changes in level of policy support and political actions. I theorize that this change in both support level and potential political action is due to changing threat perception of the extremist group, and that the political identity of the government who declares the group a salient threat is one component that may impact individual level threat perception.

Threat Perception: The Mediating Variable Between Social Identity and Policy Support

The results of my analysis do not support my hypothesis that political elites can garner policy support by identifying a threat and conveying its legitimacy by spending political capital to mitigate it. Using OLS, I find no statistically significant evidence that changing the political identity of the government in power impacts the threat perception of the extremist group for individuals who are co-ideational with that group. There is no substantively or statistically

***Table 2.8: OLS Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Threat Perception***

	Rd 1 & 2	Rd 1 & 2+	Partisans+
Both	0.053 (0.055)	0.110+ (0.063)	0.105 (0.069)
Gov't	0.383*** (0.055)	0.494*** (0.062)	0.548*** (0.068)
Neither	0.489*** (0.053)	0.624*** (0.061)	0.651*** (0.070)
#Obs	2231	1779	1339
R2	0.122	0.151	0.174
R2 Adj.	0.109	0.136	0.157
RMSE	0.88	0.88	0.87

co-partisan with just the extremists is the baseline treatment to which the others are compared

pre-treatment controls are not displayed, but include age, gender, race, religion, PID, ideology, and interest in politics

+ denotes regressions excluding respondents who failed pass at least 1 manipulation check

DV is numeric 1-5 variable of perceived threat to the American way of life.

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

significant effects for individuals in the “both” treatment group, and the coefficients for the “neither” group, who are out-party with the government, are actually larger than the coefficients for the “government” group who are in-party with the government. What I find is that of the two relationships we’ve isolated, threat perception is largely based on the group relationship between the individual and the extremist organization.

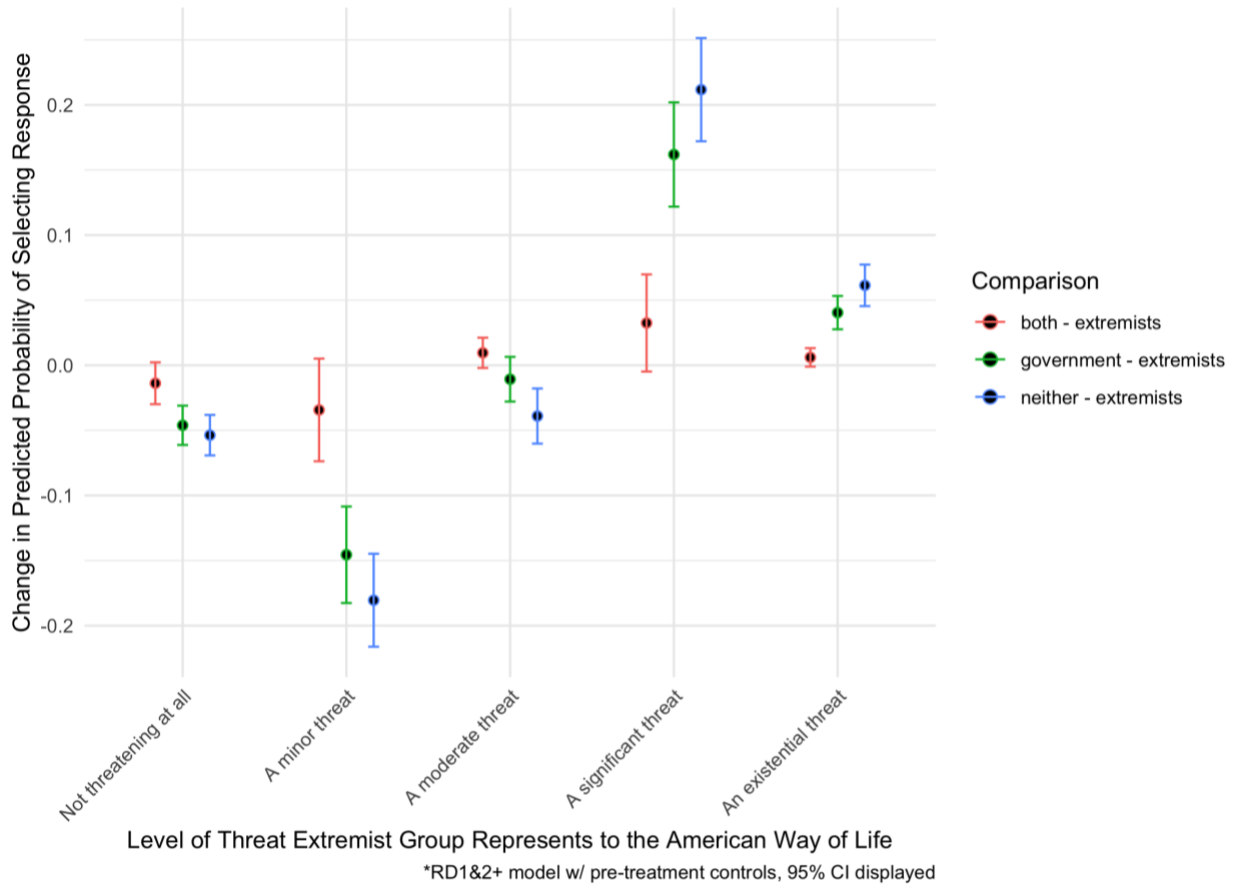


Fig 2.4: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Policy Support

Looking at the average discrete effects from an ordinal regression, the effect of having an ideationally opposite extremist group active in the scenario decreases the predicted probability individuals consider it a minor threat by 15-18% while increasing the predicted probability they consider it a significant threat by 16-22%. These results are in line with previous findings that

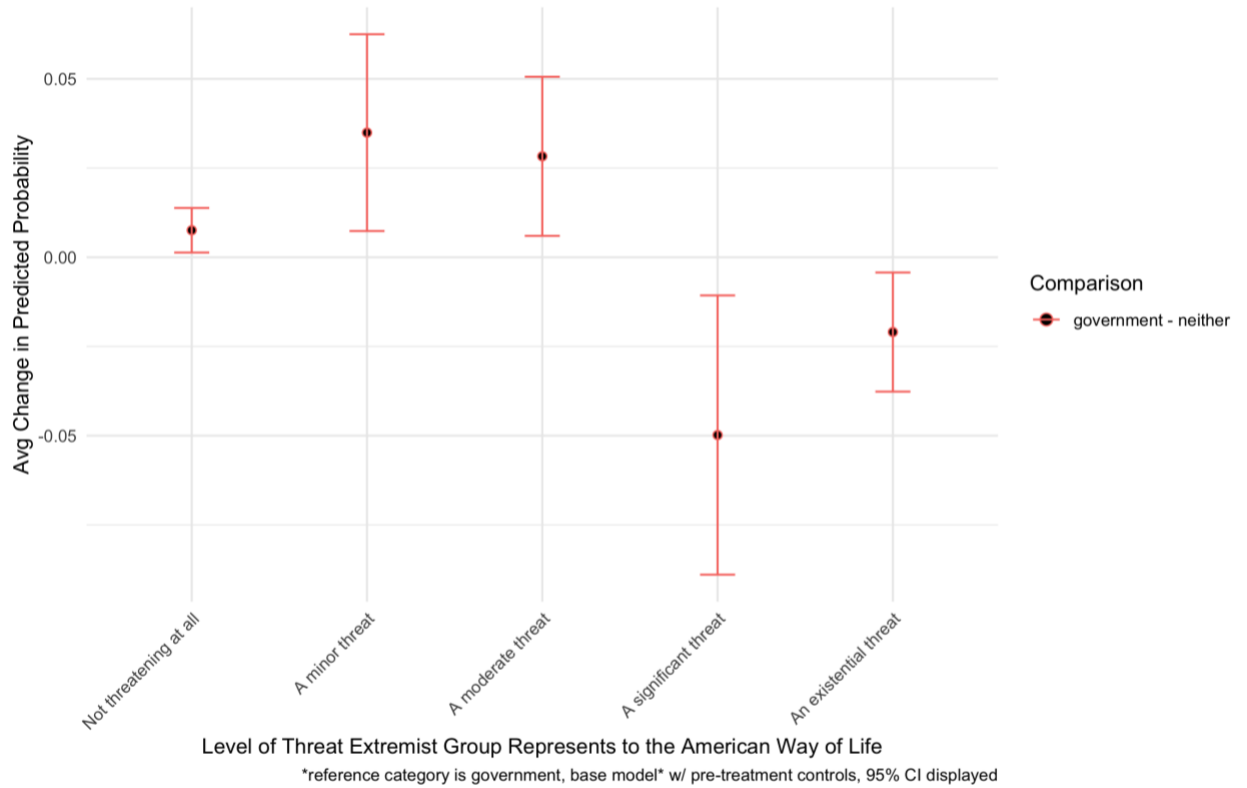
out-group political violence is considered more threatening (Gibson 2006, Avdan & Webb 2018).

However, we see that the 95% confidence intervals for the “both” group include a null result for each level of threat a respondent could select. Even if the results for the “both” group were statistically significant, there would not be much a substantive effect, with the differences in predicted probability being 4% or less for all levels.

This is an issue for my theory. I argue that social identity biases interact with political elite cueing to impact threat perception. This altered threat perception then impacts counter-extremism policy support. In my initial analysis of policy support and political action, I find substantive and statistically significant effects when moving from the “extremist” to the “both” treatment groups. As there is no correlating statistically significant effect on threat perception when moving between those treatment groups, I find no evidence supporting the theory that threat perception is one of the driving forces behind the variation in domestic counter-extremism policy support associated with affective polarization.

In addition to this regression showing no support for my hypothesis that going from an out-party to a co-partisan government will increase threat perception for individuals who are co-ideology with the extremists (comparing “both” to “extremists”), I find evidence that going out-party to co-party government decreases threat perception for individuals who are ideologically opposed to the extremists (i.e. comparing the “neither” and “government” groups). This is the opposite of what my hypothesis and theory would expect.

All observations in the figure above are respondents ideationally opposed to the extremists. I expected to find the effect of a co-party treatment in the “government” group to



*Fig 2.5: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Threat Perception*

result in an overall higher threat perception than those individuals who received an out-party treatment. According to my theory, the positive in-group biases associated with affective polarization should result in higher levels of perceived competence, trust, and overall favorable perception of in-group policy elites (Tajfel & Turner 1986, Islam 2014). I expected that when those in-group elites identified a threat as serious, that individuals would increase their threat perception at a greater rate than if an out-party politician identified an extremist as a threat. The results of the experiment do not support this theory.

Without substantive or statistically significant results I lack evidence to support my theory that affective polarization interacts with elite cueing to alter the threat perception of an extremist organization. Furthermore, the results of this analysis don't match up the way I would

expect if threat perception was one of the underlying mechanism through which social identity biases impacted policy support.

### The Consequences of Policy Support: Criminalization of Extremist Groups

My final dependent variable of interest is how an individual's co-partisan status affects their support levels for various legal consequences. As with the actions measurement, this is a highly imperfect strategy intended to gauge as best as possible what the real-world consequences of changes in policy support may look like. If policy support changes but we don't see an associated variance in support for legal consequences, then that policy support may be superficial.

For this test, I provide respondents on the first survey run with three potential legal consequences for members of the extremist groups. First, making membership in the group illegal. Second, curtailing the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights of extremist group members, limiting their access to firearms. Finally, I ask if membership in an extremist group should be just cause for expanding an investigation into the members family and friends. I was only able to include the measurement for support of making membership of the group illegal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of my survey experiment.

The results of my OLS analysis largely track with my hypotheses in ordered magnitude and direction. The 'government' and 'neither' groups see a statistically significant discrete effect of increase in support for legal consequences across the board, while the "both" category only has statistically significant results when asked to what level they supported criminalizing group membership.

**Table 2.9: Linear Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Preference for Legal Consequences**

	Criminalize Membership	Criminalize Membership+	Curtail 2nd Amendment	Curtail 2nd Amendment+	Investigate Family	Investigate Family+
Both	0.103 (0.088)	0.247* (0.101)	0.102 (0.126)	0.198 (0.157)	0.087 (0.126)	0.271+ (0.159)
Gov't	0.405*** (0.088)	0.554*** (0.100)	0.349** (0.126)	0.471** (0.152)	0.343** (0.125)	0.572*** (0.153)
Neither	0.307*** (0.086)	0.494*** (0.098)	0.162 (0.123)	0.398** (0.151)	0.557*** (0.123)	0.829*** (0.153)
#Obs.	2227	1778	1208	849	1205	849
R2	0.060	0.079	0.226	0.250	0.062	0.093
R2 Adj.	0.046	0.062	0.205	0.221	0.036	0.059
AIC	7930.9	6369.3	4443.9	3156.4	4421.8	3174.7
BIC	8125.0	6555.7	4617.2	3312.9	4595.0	3331.2
F		4.655		8.775		2.714
RMSE	1.41	1.42	1.48	1.49	1.47	1.51

co-partisan with just the extremists is the baseline treatment to which the others are compared

+ denotes exclusion of respondents who fail all manipulation checks

Model is estimated using Linear Regression & includes full controls

full regression table can be found in the supp material

DV is numerical measurement of support for a legal consequence on a 7 pt scale

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Again, to examine exactly where the social category treatments have an impact on levels of support, I will use an ordinal logit regression to produce discrete effects plots. I find that going from an out-party government to a co-partisan government has a statistically significant discrete effect on individuals who are co-ideational with an extremist group for criminalizing membership in an extremist organization (comparing “both” to “extremists”). However, we don’t

see the same statistical significance when the “both” treatment group is asked if members should have their second amendment rights curtailed or if membership in an extremist organization should be just cause for law enforcement to investigate that individual’s associates. Given that the sample size for the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment and expanding investigations dependent variables are less than half the size of the criminalizing membership variable, this is not all that surprising. This treatment effect the support for criminalizing membership also loses magnitude and statistical significance if I don’t exclude individuals who didn’t pass at least one post-treatment manipulation check.<sup>33</sup>

The directionality of the effects of the “both” treatment group when compared to the “extremists” group remain consistent with my hypothesis, even if substantively insignificant. I find under 5% change in predicted probability (decrease for oppose, increase for support) across all variables and levels of support, with the lowest effect being seen when examining support for curtailing 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights Here I find less than a 2.5% change in the predicted probability, with 95% confidence intervals that include not only null results, but effects in the opposite direction.

As for the “government” and “neither” treatment groups, these charts show discrete effects broadly following the same patterns we’ve come to expect from the data obtained via this survey experiment. The “government” and “neither” treatment groups almost always have a statistically significant effect and always in the hypothesized direction. Interestingly, the ordered

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<sup>33</sup> See Supplementary materials for these charts. Directionality remains consistent, but the smaller effects push the 95% CI to include a null result.

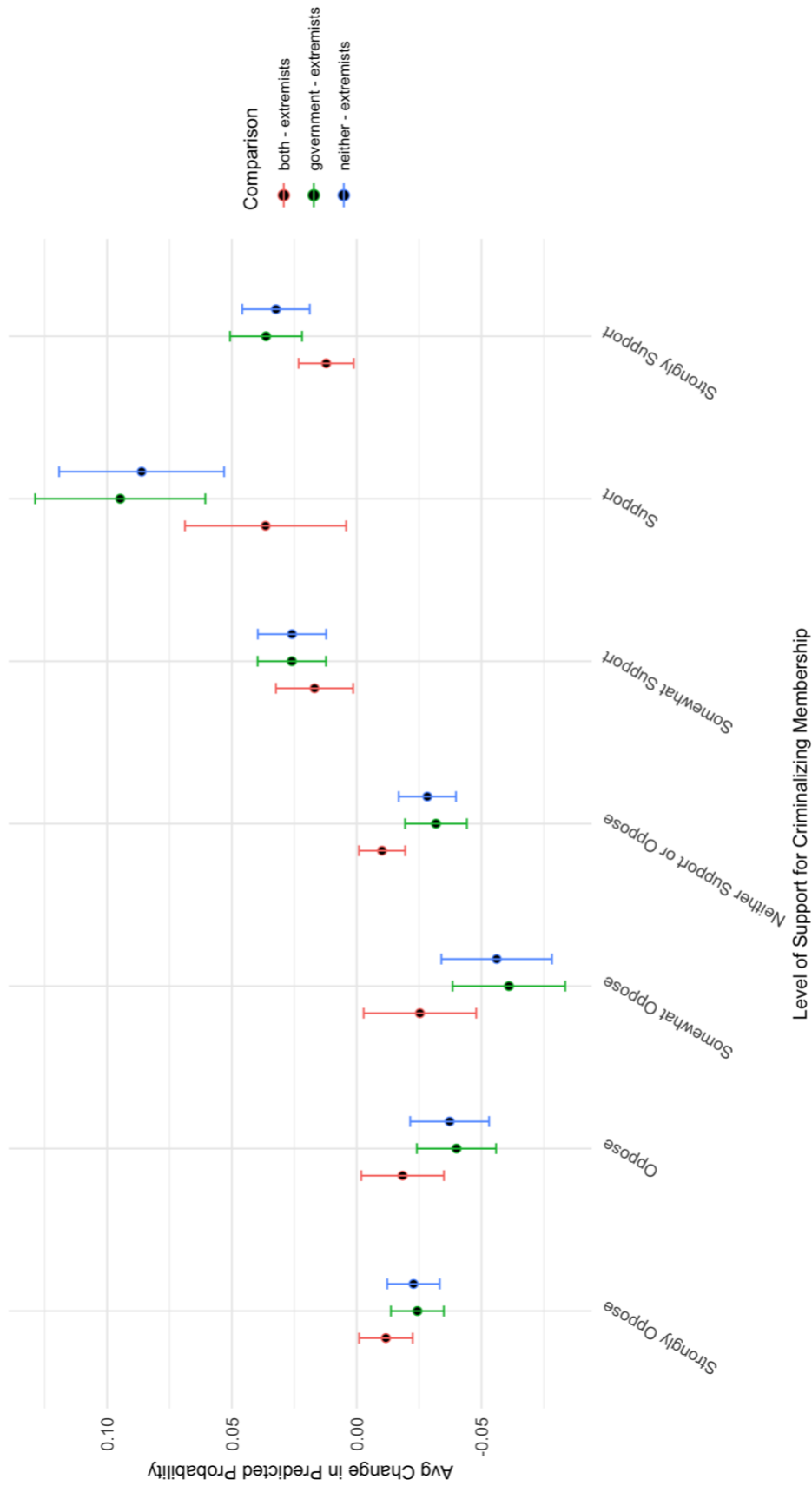


Fig 2.6: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Support for Criminalizing Membership

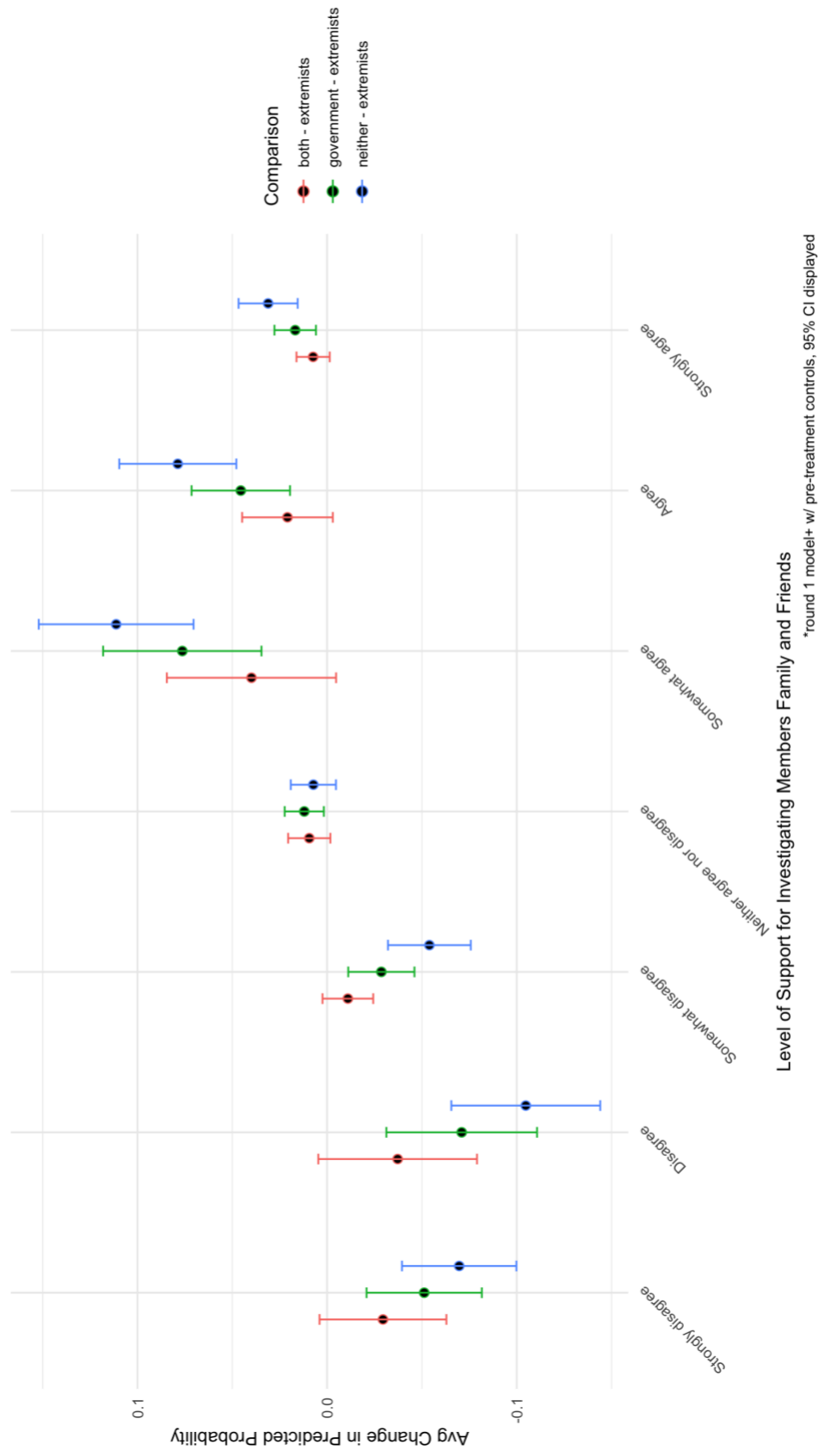


Fig 2.7: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Support for Investigating Friends and Family

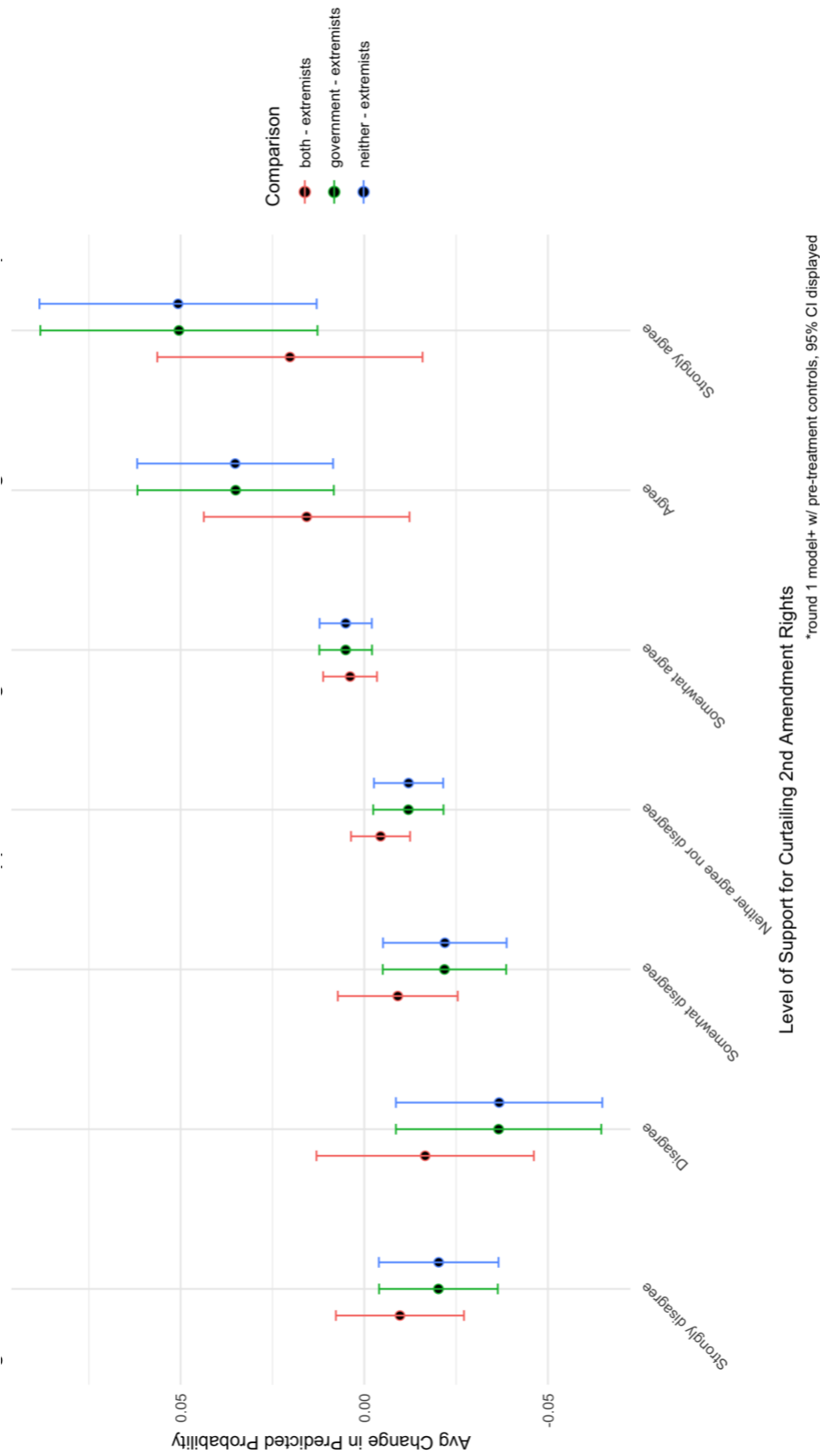


Fig 2.8: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Support for Curtailing 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Rights of Extremist Group Members

magnitude of the discrete effect of the ‘government’ and “neither” groups is different for each type of criminal consequence. The “government” treatment group has a slightly higher predicted probability of supporting criminalizing membership in the group than the “neither” treatment group. This is in line with my original hypothesis that affective polarization should result in higher levels of support for criminal consequences when proposed by an in-group political party. Meanwhile, the “government” treatment group has a lower predicted probability of supporting investigations into family and friends, and there is no statistical or substantive difference between the two groups on their predicted probability of supporting the limitation of extremist’s right to bear arms. These results show a reverse directionality, or no relationship. That we find no evidence of a consistent relationship undermines the confidence that any relationship exists at all.

From an inductive research perspective, we see evidence that the effect of these social biases are attenuated by the level to which a criminal consequence might violate a normatively accepted “civil right” in the US. These biases have the largest effect on the “expanding investigations” question. While I provided no legal justification for this authority in my scenario, it is not hard to imagine that investigating known associates of someone who is involved in committing violent crimes falls within the normal jurisdiction of US law enforcement.

The effects of social identity biases are about half the size for criminalizing membership in designated extremist groups as they are for expanding investigations into associates. While I don’t specifically mention violating any civil rights in the scenario, criminalizing membership in a group would generally run into issues with the First Amendment and its guaranteed right to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. The smallest effects take place when I explicitly mention curtailing the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights of members of designated extremist groups. Here

we see that even those who are ideationally opposed to the extremist in the “neither” and “government” groups only have a maximum 5% increase in the predicted probability they “strongly agree” with explicitly limiting a constitutionally protected right.

These results usefully build on previous studies. First, consistent with Caton & Mullinix (2022), I find an increased willingness to constrain or limit the constitutional rights of out-group members. This expands on their research which looked at white nationalist and Islamic terrorist groups, and shows their results hold and can be repeated as we expand the scope conditions to more conventional right and left wing political groups.

Secondly, they question whether the framing of a “civil rights” violation has any effect (Caton & Mullinix 2022). Here we observe that it does. Expressly curtailing a constitutional right, even one that has been legally curtailed in the past like the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment, reduces the effects of affective polarization. Of all the dependent variables examined, the effect of social group identity on explicitly restricting a constitutional right showed the lowest divergence across treatment groups.

Furthermore, partisan cueing shows no statistically significant effect on explicitly curtailing a constitutional right. The difference between the “government” and “neither” groups is so small as to be indistinguishable on the effects plot (though examination of the coefficients shows they do differ at the tens or hundredths decimal places), and the difference between the “both” and “extremists” groups are both substantively and statistically insignificant. Thus, we find no evidence that in-group elite cueing increases support for restricting a constitutionally protected right.

Conversely, and I would argue negatively for the US, we see an increase in the effects of affective polarization and group identity on standard legal authorities such as just cause for

investigations. Individuals are much more supportive of the Justice Department investigating ideationally opposed political violence than co-ideational. This is concerning as what rights are constitutionally protected are rarely fully agreed upon. Furthermore, this research has provided preliminary evidence that framing does indeed impact the willingness of individuals to impinge upon the rights of out-group members. Theoretically, if a social group adopted a narrow view of what rights are protected by the US constitution, they would be more supportive of using that narrowed view against their ideological opponents.

## **Conclusion**

With the data obtained here, we can begin to draw some preliminary conclusions, although with serious caveats on the external validity of these results. First, I do find support for my hypothesis that affective polarization impacts policy support, though not homogeneously. While I find that individuals will consistently support counter-extremism policy targeting out-group extremists at higher levels than in-group extremists, the effects of which party proposes these policies are heterogeneous. If the extremist organization is ideologically aligned with the individual, a co-party policy does elicit higher levels of support, in both immaterial espoused support and in how likely they are to say they'd take a political action. However, if the individual is ideologically opposed to the extremist, I find no consistent substantive effect.

This result begs the question “why?” Why do I find no evidence of affective polarization bias for counter-extremism policy targeting out-group extremists? Does the credibility gained by a political party acting against its ideological peers imbue a roughly equivalent positive bias as in-group social identity? Further research is needed to replicate these results and develop the theory and evidence explaining them.

Beyond the why, the evidence gathered on policy support does have applications for national security experts. Primarily, if possible, that the party which is ideologically closest to the extremists should propose the policy. This scenario results in both the highest overall level of policy support, and, importantly, the lowest overall policy preference divergence between partisans. Given the controversial nature of domestic security policy, maximizing public support and reducing partisan divisions that can be further exploited by the extremist is a crucial goal. My research indicates that it is possible.

Furthermore, in this context, social identity and affective polarization have the most effect on moderate levels of policy support. This is in contrast to my research on defense policy support, which showed the highest levels of change at the extreme ends of the support spectrum (Lyells 2024 forthcoming). Given the overall low levels of both strong support and opposition to the scenarios policy proposal, this is perhaps not surprising. However, it is potentially important that social identity's biggest impact is the increase in "support" and a roughly correlating decrease in "somewhat oppose" and "neither support nor oppose." This could possibly indicate that the surveyed individuals were not firmly entrenched in their opinion, leaving room for additional elite and media influence on policy approval. Further research is needed to examine how affective polarization influences the veracity of support on different type of security policies and how that support changes under partisan discourse.

While I do find some evidence that affective polarization impacts policy support, I find no evidence supporting my theory that threat perception is the mechanism through which this occurs. I find no statistically significant effect on going from an out-party to an in-party policy for individuals who are co-ideology with the extremists. Furthermore, for individuals who are ideationally opposed to the extremists, the out-party policy proposal elicits a higher threat

perception that the in-party proposal. This effect is opposite my theory and does not correlate with the effects I see on levels of policy support. This leaves the exact reasoning for the change in policy support still in need of more research. Any potential mechanism would need to explain the heterogeneous effects on policy support, where social identity and affective polarization only seem to impact policy support when the extremist group is co-ideational to the individual.

Additionally, while I find evidence that the social identity relationship between an individual and the extremists affects support for specific tools the justice department could use to combat extremist groups, I find little evidence that a co-partisan policy interacts with that relationship. From a policy support perspective this is both positive and negative. If an individual who is out-group from the extremists doesn't seem to increase their willingness to empower to the justice department just because their party says its important, this could act as a potential barrier to a political party abusing counter-extremism policy for political persecution. However, it could be a problem that party elites have limited cueing power (at least within the confines of this scenario) to garner support for legitimate methods of combating extremism.

These findings support the premise that affective polarization does indeed play a role in policy support, but as it is most impactful in the moderate levels of support and positive political actions, and shows limited effect on support for specific empowerment of the justice department, the overall impact of social identity and affective polarization on initial public opinion may be of limited political importance.

Finally, while my findings don't directly refute the assertion that there is a broad, bi-partisan disdain for political violence (Westwood et al. 2022), it does provide evidence that there is a distinct divergence in support for how the government should handle that violence based upon an individual's social identity is oriented to a violent political organization, and the party

introducing the policy. This to me, is an important distinction. While everyone can roundly denounce an act of violence, the willingness to act on that denunciation is probably a more accurate representation of how an individual truly perceives political violence. simply “not supporting” political violence and calling political violence “bad” should largely be expected, especially since the research examples were high end assaults and murders. What policy solution you support is, in my opinion, a better gauge of how individuals perceive a problem.

#### Scope Conditions and Avenues for Further Research

These findings and conclusion do come with significant scope conditions and qualifications regarding their external validity. First, this research was conducted on a convenience sample of undergraduate students at the University of Georgia enrolled in a Political Science class. While I obtained a fairly balanced ratio of individuals who identify as Republican or Democrat, I clearly lack a representative for the US population. This research needs to be conducted on a broader population of US residents to increase its external validity.

Also, due to limitations in resources, I scoped this research to single party policy proposals. This is clearly not a realistic scope condition. It is highly likely that in the event an extremist group is the target of a policy from a co-ideological political party, that policy will emerge as a bi-partisan effort from the beginning. The effects of bipartisanship on public opinion are reasonably well studied, generally increasing support among the public for both the policy and the politicians (Westwood 2022, Paris 2017). However, that preference for bipartisanship does not outweigh preferences for partisan policy goals (Harbridge et al. 2014). The way in which bipartisan policy proposals impact an ideologically charged policy like domestic counter-extremism has yet to be studied and could provide valuable insight to scholars and practitioners of national security.

In addition to not considering bi-partisan policy proposals, I treated the political parties as unified blocks. Currently however, experts have identified as many as five different blocks within the Republican Party (Samuels 2023, Broadwater 2023). Given the lack of unified response and push and pull we've observed in securing funding for Ukraine and support for bi-partisan legislation on the southern US border, further research should examine how changing which group within a party the policy originates from affects public opinion.

Finally, one weakness of experimental research, particularly in security policy, is the external validity of any inferences made from the results. For my experiment, one potential concern is that a "rally around the flag" effect would take place following a rise in domestic political violence perpetrated by a small outgroup. This might garner broad, non-partisan political support for domestic counter-terror policies, negating the main premise of this research. While this is possible, even probable, this research design is centered on preventative policies targeting a "rising" threat, which would necessarily take place before any nationally unifying attack were to take place. In addition, political unity from security threats has proven to be fleeting, dissipating as the security threat becomes normalized (Field 2017).

### Moving Forward

Political violence, both actual and the specter of, are becoming a reality of political life in America. Even if Americans don't support political violence (Westwood et al. 2022), politicians are providing indication that they factor violence into their decision-making calculus. One former state politician ascribed a fear of his own party's supporters to his decision to accede to their demands (D'Andrea 2024), while Mitt Romney relayed a Republican congressman voted against impeaching Donald Trump out of "fear for his family's safety" (Coppins 2023). If politicians want to enact policy to reduce this threat of violence, they need to understand the

impediments to garnering policy support, and this research indicates that social identity, and the resultant affective polarization, is one of those impediments.

As polarization and domestic political violence become increasingly salient threats to US security, policymakers will need to be highly cognizant of how their policies may assuage or exacerbate the underlying issues. Up until recently, it was thought that only political elites were polarized, but recent increases in ideological and affective polarization among the US citizenry carry novel implications for domestic policy support (Levendusky 2017). If affective polarization overrides ideological preferences, no longer will aligning the content of a policy bill with the majority of citizens suffice to garner support. Political elites will have to navigate polarized group dynamics. My research indicates that in-group politicians do have some ability to overcome this obstacle. Adjusting the source of domestic security policy, and thus its political identity, is one possible way to mitigate the biases generated by polarization. They can lead their political peers' initial opinion while simultaneously avoiding backlash from the out-group. This leads to a reduction in the partisan opinion gap on counter-extremism policy, a welcome result for US national security.

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### CHAPTER 3

CHINESE COERCION IN THE PHILIPPINES: FILIPINO PUBLIC OPINION DURING A 4<sup>TH</sup>

TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Lyells, Christopher. To be submitted to the Journal of Conflict Resolution

## Abstract

The US has identified China as its primary competitor on the international stage. Furthermore, the US has specified the South China Sea and Taiwan as two areas of focus to deter and disrupt Chinese ambitions to expand territorial control. Due to the rapidly increasing capabilities of the Chinese military, the US military's ability to operate in these two areas is now contested. In response, the US military has adopted a strategy of dispersed operations. While there are numerous challenges inherent to dispersed operations, the geography of the South Pacific necessitates that US depend on access to allied nation territory as a prerequisite.

This dependency on allies makes the US particularly vulnerable to a "wedge strategy." A wedge strategy is predominately an academic term used to categorize the coercive degradation or dissolution of a coalition or alliance. If China were able to coerce US allies away from allowing military access to their territory, US military capacity would be adversely affected, degrading deterrence and combat effectiveness.

I test the foundational aspects of the theory underlying a wedge strategy by conducting a survey experiment in the Philippines testing how public support for allowing US military operations in defense of Taiwan varies in response to Chinese coercive threats. I find little change in Filipino public opinion due to the coercive treatments. While this result fails to provide evidence supporting the theorized mechanisms of a wedge strategy, it does provide welcome results for US strategists that, within the confines of my experiment, China lacks the capacity to coerce the broader Filipino public.

## **American Interests in the South China Sea: Vulnerable to a Chinese Wedge Strategy?**

One of the few bi-partisan agreements in America is the recognition that China poses the greatest international threat to US interests (Carothers & Sun 2023). Fittingly, the 2022 US National Security Strategy highlights China as the only country with the intent and capability to “reshape the international order.” While US competition with China has taken on a global scale, two of the primary areas of contention are Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea and the status of Taiwan as a self-ruling island, both of which are mentioned explicitly in the 2022 NSS and NDS (Biden 2022, Biden 2022). These two areas, unfortunately, pose significant challenges for the military aspect of any strategy designed to deter or defeat a forceful Chinese take-over of these geographic areas.

The Philippines, a US treaty ally, lies astride both these geographic points of contention. While the Philippines may not contribute large amounts of military power to US competition with China, they can provide access to their territory, both for the prepositioning of logistical requirements and conduct of military operations. This access to otherwise contested geography would enhance the effectiveness and survivability of US military forces. In turn, the increase in military effectiveness would increase the deterrent capacity of US military forces seeking to blunt Chinese encroachment in Taiwan and the SCS.

The US and the Philippines have relatively aligned national interests in the South China Sea. Both look to delegitimize China’s territorial claims established in the national policy declaration often referred to as the “Nine-Dash Line.” To do this, both states have a vested interest in maintaining the norms of freedom of navigation and designated maritime territorial limits established via the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS). However, the two countries’ national interest begin to diverge when we look at Taiwan. While each state

prefers to maintain the status quo, both Filipino politicians and US based national security experts are hesitant to proclaim the Philippines as a ready ally in the event China tries to establish control over the island by force.

When we turn to academic theory and scholarly research to offer insight on these geopolitical dynamics, we run into a relatively understudied concept at the cross-section of the alliances and coercion called a “wedge strategy” (Crawford 2011/2021, Huang 2021, Izumikawa 2013). Plainly speaking, a wedge strategy is a coercive strategy employed by one state to dissolve or weaken an alliance that threatens their interests. The objective is to reduce the overall economic, diplomatic, and military power that underlies both the deterrent and coercive capability of an alliance, with the ultimate objective of increasing the likelihood of victory should a military conflict occur.

While academics have established the theoretical underpinnings of wedge strategy, and have referenced several case studies, little research has been done on how the theorized mechanisms of a wedge strategy affect policy evaluation at the individual level. Nor has there been research done on how effective a wedge strategy might be in the specific context of the US, China, and the Philippines, during crisis over Taiwan. To rectify this gap in scholarly research, and to provide US strategists with a current examination of Filipino public opinion, I conduct a survey experiment testing the tenets of a wedge strategy applied against the Philippines by China.

Measuring individual level support for allowing US military operations in the defense of Taiwan to be conducted from Filipino territory in the face of coercive threats serves two purposes. First, in the absence of access to political elites who wield the actual power to make these types of decisions, this sample is useful to examine how they might react in similar

circumstances. While there are concerns with differences between elite and mass cognition and decision making (Oberholtzer et al. 2019, Hyde 2015, Hafner-Burton et al. 2013), recent research indicates that gap has been vastly overestimated and these groups respond to experimental treatments in very similar manners (Kertzer 2022).

Secondly, the residents of the Philippines might be the actual target of the coercive threat, with China hoping to influence public opinion to the point that the public puts pressure on the Filipino government to acquiesce to its demands. While the study of exactly how public opinion in the Philippines gets translated into government policy is outside the scope of this research, there is broad consensus that politicians in democratic systems, and to a lesser extent authoritarian governments, are impacted by public opinion (Wlezien & Soroka 2021, Peters 2013, Quek & Johnston 2017, Weiss & Dafoe 2018). This is especially true for politically salient issues that motivate citizens (Lax and Phillips 2012, Rasmussen et al. 2019).

The US and Philippines have found themselves adjacent to this academic theory in the not distant past. In 2004, insurgents kidnapped and threatened to execute a Filipino truck driver supporting the US coalition unless the Philippine's withdrew its troops from Iraq. This proved to be a highly salient issue for Filipino citizens. After initially refusing to comply with the terrorists demands, the Filipino government relented, as citizens produced such strong political pressure that it threatened to collapse the administration (Caballero-Anthony 2004). Given that it would be detrimental to US objectives should China be able to influence Filipino public opinion, it becomes imperative to assess how public opinion, and any changes resultant of Chinese coercive threats, impacts approval of the Filipino government and its handling of a hypothetical Taiwan crisis.

Both these justifications go towards examining the micro-foundations of the theories undergirding a wedge strategy. While wedge theory in general is focused on outcomes at the state level, we can take a micro-foundational approach by examining outcomes at the individual level (Kertzer 2017). This approach works to rectify a specific critique of theories of coercion, that they have not sufficiently addressed how individuals respond to coercive strategies (Kertzer & Zeitzoff 2017, Schelling 1966, Pape 1996).

### The Problem of Access

Historically, the US has been able to project power in the Taiwan Strait at will. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996 resulted in the US sending two carrier battle groups through the strait in a show of force. The objective of this display of power was making the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) cease their military threats towards Taiwan (Gunness & Saunders 2022). However, even though the veiled threat was apparently successful, a mere three years later the Naval War College was sounding the alarm. Rapid modernization of Chinese long-range fires was enabling China to pursue an “anti-access” strategy, which, might one day prevent the Navy from operating close enough to Taiwan to be effective in a crisis (Porch 1999).

According to recent reports, that time has come. One unclassified set of simulations run by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), resulted in the US Navy typically losing two carriers and between 10 and 20 large surface vessels in defense of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan (Cancian et al. 2023). The Navy is far from alone in their vulnerability. In these simulations, the Air Force losses of hundreds of aircraft, and 90% of those losses occur on the ground to long range fire. These results were on the optimistic side of recent analysis. While CSIS predicts that the Chinese invasion fails in the face of a joint defense by the US, Taiwan, and Japan, recent DOD analysis have been less optimistic. Gen. John Hyten, then the Vice

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, remarked that one classified wargame “failed miserably,” with an enemy that “just ran rings around us” (Copp 2021).

These reports consistently demonstrate that the advancement of long-range precision fires combined with persistent and real time intelligence has made the doctrine under which the US operated the past 30 years untenable. No longer will the US and its allies be able to operate from a main operating base that is relatively safe from enemy fire. Nor will the US be able to conduct mid-air refueling operations close to the battlefield, extending the range and endurance of its combat aircraft.

These challenges have become the focus of US security policy makers. The 2022 National Security Strategy states that “The Department will work with Allies and partners to ensure power projection in a contested environment” (Biden 2022), with the South China Sea and Taiwan mentioned specifically as areas where the US wants to maintain operational access.

#### A New Strategy: Dispersed Deployment

To operate in this new environment, the US military is adopting a strategy of dispersed, highly mobile operations. As this concept has developed it has been given several names, from “expanded maneuver” (Vergun 2021), to what the US Air Force has termed “Agile Combat Employment” (ACE). While defined vaguely by Air Force Doctrine note 1-21 as “a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver executed within threat timelines to increase survivability while generating combat power,” it can be more colloquially described as a strategy of dispersing many small, mobile units to forward operating areas to complicate the enemy’s detection and targeting processes. Improving the USAF’s ability to implement this strategy is a major line of effort at this time (Cancian et al. 2023)

While there are numerous technical, logistical, and personnel challenges to implementing this strategy, there are also political and diplomatic challenges that need to be addressed. As conceptualized by the USAF, “Access, basing, and overflight are essential to the successful application of ACE.” Additionally, “Equipment and supply pre-positioning” and “Access to forward operating sites, including partner military and civil airfields” are required capabilities (Air Force Doctrine Note 1-21). The need for prepositioned supplies is essential as any logistical trail supplying the operational units will be well within the enemies reach, and likely a priority target.

### Expanding Access in the Philippines

To this end, the US government has been rather successful in increasing military access to the Philippines. Despite former Filipino President Duterte’s pivot away from the US (Ali & Lema 2021), he never abdicated the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), nor withdrew from the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) or the supplementary Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). With these institutional frameworks in place, the Philippines quickly pivoted back to the US as promised infrastructure investments from China never materialized and China increased aggressive actions in the South China Sea (SCS) (Strangio 2023).

In addition to toning down rhetoric lambasting the US and castigating China for their actions in the SCS (Heydarian 2018), in April 2023, the Philippines and the US announced expanded military access at four new sites (US Department of Defense 2023). Balabac Island is located in the Southeast at the southern tip of the Palawan island chain, placing it only 180 nautical miles south of the contested Spratly Islands. The other three new bases are in the Northern Luzon region. Luzon is the northernmost region of the Philippines, putting it closest to Taiwan, with one of the sites, the Cagayan North International Airport (also known as Lal-lo

airport), being only 266 miles from the southern coast of Taiwan. These bases provide a key jumping off point to the northern Batanes Islands of the Philippines and the Luzon Strait.



(Cepeda 2023)

### The Taiwan Problem: A Divergence of Interests

While access to these bases seemingly improves the military capacity of US forces in the region, thereby increasing the deterrent capacity of the US, the Philippines is not an enthusiastic ally in the US's pursuit to maintain the status quo in Taiwan via military deterrence. The Philippines' publicly expressed interests are their territorial claims in the SCS and deterring China's encroachment thereof. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., whose government negotiated the expanded access with the US, has claimed that the expanded US bases are not for "offensive action" against any country, but originally put in place to help respond to natural disasters and the effects of climate change. He reportedly told the Chinese foreign minister that these bases were "not intended to be military bases to attack, to move against anyone, any country, not China, not any country." President Marcos Jr. continued that any offensive action conducted

from these bases or using these bases as logistical support for offensive action, would be “outside the parameters” of what the Philippines and the US had discussed (Marcos Jr. 2023, Cepeda 2023).

During a trip to Tokyo in 2023, President Marcos Jr. provided a different rationale. He repeatedly mentioned that the motivation for expanding US basing access was defending Philippine territorial sovereignty (Venzon 2023). This justification for expanding cooperation with the US military corresponds with the “three redlines” that the Philippines conveyed to China by the previous Duterte administration: Chinese infrastructure development on Scarborough Shoal, harassing Filipino soldiers in the South China Sea, and independent harvesting of natural resources in the Philippine claimed areas of the SCS (Viray 2018). Former President Duterte, in his usually blustery style, threatened to go to war with China should they cross these three redlines. As for a crisis in Taiwan, President Marcos Jr. stated his priority would be the safety of the roughly 150,000 Filipinos who reside in Taiwan (Venzon 2023).

US based experts on the Indo-Pacific region are similarly skeptical of the Philippines willingness to assist in the defense of Taiwan. John Culver, who served as a senior member of the US National Intelligence Officer for East Asia, believes most US treaty allies in the Pacific, including the Philippines, would balk at being asked to become involved in a conflict with China over Taiwan (Wertime 2020). Similarly, a RAND policy expert testified to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission that it was uncertain whether the Philippines would allow the US military access to basing (Lin 2021). Other experts are more optimistic, doubting direct military assistance in a conflict but anticipating limited access to basing (Cooper & Chestnut Greitans 2022).

Despite this rhetoric, any diplomatic communications coming out of the Philippines should be taken with a grain of salt. The Philippines does have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo in the region, and that includes not angering either the most powerful country in the region and its largest economic trading partner in China (World Bank 2024), nor its defensive treaty ally and main source of security aid in the US (Sula 2024). Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, then President Duterte relayed through his ambassador that that if needed, US forces could return to Subic Bay and Clark Air Base (Cruz de Castro 2023). That same ambassador, Jose Manuel Romualdez, who is related to President Marcos Jr., relayed that the Philippines would allow US forces access to their territory if “*it is important for us, for our own security*” (Nakamura & Shiga 2022).

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the US is expending diplomatic and financial effort to gain access to bases that it does not anticipate having access to in the event of a military crisis in Taiwan. Wargames run at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), in which US government officials participated, included the use of Philippine territory (Pettyjohn et al. 2022). According to Becca Wasser, who ran the simulation, these bases were crucial to providing essential operating areas and logistics when Japan and Australia were too far away to be as effective (McPherson et al. 2023).

### Coercion in the Philippines

If we assume that the US would gain even a moderate increase in deterrence ability and military capacity by being able to stage military operations from the Philippines (Cancien et al. 2023, Pettyjohn et al. 2022), China is unlikely to quietly accommodate such a development. One previous intelligence expert suggests that any country allowing US military forces access to

“bases, waters and airspace” will become targets for Chinese aggression across the spectrum of national power (Culver 2020).

The Philippines has shown itself vulnerable to coercion in the past. While supporting the US led combat operations in Iraq, a Filipino truck driver was kidnapped by Al Qaeda insurgents. The terrorists compelled the Philippines to withdraw their soldiers from Iraq, against vigorous US protest, in exchange for the return of the hostage (Glanz 2004). Scholars have argued that the move was necessary to prevent a public backlash that could have toppled the Philippine government at the time (Caballero-Anthony 2004).

While public opinion in the Philippines currently favors the United States (Poushter & Bishop 2017), how will that public opinion fare under coercive actions by China during a crisis? There is one area of academic study that can offer a framework through which we can examine this scenario. Several scholars have developed a theory of the “wedge strategy” (Crawford 2011, Crawford 2021, Izumikawa 2013, Huang 2020). In a wedge strategy, one state uses coercive strategies to weaken or dissolve the cooperation of two states that could work against them. In this scenario, China would attempt to coerce the Philippines to disallow US forces from operating or obtaining logistical support from Filipino territory to disadvantage the US during a crisis. The question is, however, will it work? If the US requests access to Filipino territory, will the population support their ally, or will China be able to influence public opinion against the US by issuing coercive threats? This confluence of academia and geopolitics provides us an opportunity to empirically test the predictions of US policy experts and the underlying mechanisms of a relatively new theory of alliances and coercion.

## **The Theory of Coercion: Getting States to Do What You Want**

I would argue that while the study of wedge strategies has largely been subsumed under literature on alliances, the underlying mechanisms of the actual wedge strategy (as opposed to the factors working to hold an alliance/coalition together) are more appropriately viewed as coercion. Coercion is roughly defined as inflicting a material cost or threatening to inflict a material cost in an attempt to alter a target state's behavior from what they would do without the threat. Any theory of coercion implicitly assumes the target of coercion is “sensitive” to the cost and benefits of an action. That sensitivity means that by increasing the relative cost for an option, the coercer can reduce the overall utility for that choice and disincentivize that option (Dafoe et al. 2019).

Interstate coercion, and academic interest in it, goes as far back as Thucydides (Art and Greenhill 2018). For modern IR, the study of interstate coercion took prominence during the Cold War when Schelling (1966) applied the rationalist school of thought to the problem of deterrence. Building off expected utility theory, deterrence theory was based on the idea that a credible threat of inflicting punishment at a greater utility than the potential gain from action would result in a net-negative utility for that action and thus result in that action not being taken (Jervis 1989). While historically focused on threats, the study of coercion has more recently begun to include using positive inducements, either standalone or in conjunction with threats, as a coercive strategy (Nincic 2010).

Coercion is generally broken up into two separate categories, deterrence, and compellence. Deterrence involves preventing an actor from taking an action or enacting a change that it otherwise would. It is inherently about maintaining the status quo (Schelling 1966). Compellence is based on the intent to force a state to take an action it otherwise would not

(Nincic 2010). Of the two, compellence is considered “harder” to accomplish (Schelling 1966, Art and Greenhill 2018), with scholars estimating success rates between 17 and 35% (Markwica 2018). Though compellence is harder to achieve, deterrence is generally more difficult to evaluate. While a deterrence failure might be easily noted, “successful” deterrence results in no observable action by a state, complicating empirical evaluation of deterrence effectiveness (Lebow and Stein 1990).

### Cognitive Coercion: Explaining Deviations from a Rational Model

While theories of coercion were born from theories assuming purely rational actors, anomalies of coercion failure where a purely utilitarian cost-benefit calculation would predict coercive success have prompted scholars to loosen or abandon that underpinning assumption of rational expected utility calculation and adopt cognitive explanations for deviations from the rational prediction. Robert Jervis (1976), with his focus on how human cognition impacts perception, explored how building a substantial deterrent posture could present a threat to other states, ultimately undermining the intended deterrence by inducing a “security spiral.” Later, applying the tenants of prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979), scholars theorized that the cognitive bias of loss aversion, and the resultant risk acceptance to prevent losses, could explain why compellence was more difficult than deterrence (Jervis 1992, Levy 1997) and why militarily superior states fail to coerce weaker targets<sup>35</sup> (Berejikian 2018). In situations where the perception of the “status quo” is heterogenous, both states may become “risk-seeking” to prevent losses, degrading any deterrent posture (Jervis 1992). Recently, scholars have turned to emotions for explaining why coercion may fail (Markwica 2018), leveraging the human response

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<sup>35</sup> A rational explanation has been developed for this phenomenon as well. Sechser (2010) contends that militarily superior states don’t account for the reputational cost a smaller state absorbs when accommodating coercion, this leads to an imbalance in threats and inducements and the coercive threat being rejected. Ultimately, this explanation comes down to an information problem that can be subsumed under bargaining theory (Fearon 1995)

of anger at threats or attempts at illegitimate control to explain why coercive threats may backfire (Dafoe. et al. 2019, Stein 2013)

### The “Wedge Strategy”

While subsumed mostly within alliance literature, one specific type of coercive strategy is known as a “wedge strategy” (Crawford 2011). The coercive theory remains largely the same as in general dyadic coercion, but a wedge strategy is defined by the expansion of the “actors” to include two [potential] allies<sup>36</sup> and an adversary/competitor that wishes to weaken or dissolve the cooperation of two states that might work against them. By virtue of the historical cases used to develop this theory, at least one of the allies is a great power, while the other may be another great power or a small or middle power state (Huang 2020).<sup>37</sup> Of these allies, one becomes the “target” of coercion by the divider (or state attempting to split or weaken the alliance or coalition).

The type of wedge strategy can be subset as either coercive (i.e., threats of punishment) or one of inducement (Crawford 2021) towards the target state.<sup>38</sup> Russia’s threats of shutting off oil and natural gas to western Europe in the face of sanctions over the 2022 invasion of Ukraine would be an example of a coercive wedge strategy, while the US providing financial and military incentives to Middle Eastern states who recognize Israel would be an inducement strategy (Ephron 2020).

A wedge strategy's propensity for success theoretically hinges on several factors. The magnitude of the change the divider is trying to induce (Crawford 2021), the interdependence of

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<sup>36</sup> The term ally here is used very broadly, this could be as simple as coalition members or tertiary support actors.

<sup>37</sup> I see no theoretic argument to limit the actors in a wedge strategy to specific power capabilities, though great powers will necessarily have a greater capacity for threats and inducements.

<sup>38</sup> I have been unable to find any research that categorizes wedge strategies with the traditional compellent and deterrent dichotomy traditionally used in coercion literature.

the allies (Huang 2020), and the inducement capability of the divider (Izumikawa 2013).<sup>39</sup> While it is generally agreed upon that inducement (or accommodation) strategies are more likely to result in the desired weakening of an opposing alliance (Crawford 2011, Huang 2020), there are arguments that pure coercive strategies have been historically successful and attractive to states who lack resources for significant inducement (Izumikawa 2013). Of note, the study of wedge strategies usually focuses on removing militarily potent allies (Crawford and Izumikawa). Only Huang (2020), with the Chinese focus on US global presence, focuses his theory on denying a major power access to a smaller state's territory via a wedge strategy.

As both coercive and inducement strategies have been shown to work, it is important to examine both strategies with regard to the current situation in the South China Sea, where the US and Philippines are treaty allies (though very proscribed treaty allies) and China is a potential dividing force.

### **A Wedge Strategy Applied to the Philippines**

The real-world situation in the South China Sea is such that China adopting a wedge strategy is entirely realistic. The US has a much less powerful ally in the Philippines that, should they join the US in any conflict with China, would give a significant strategic benefit to the US purely through geography. If the Philippines were to remain neutral, that benefit would evaporate, and China would be the one advantaged, relatively at least. The policy elites of the Philippines are far from oblivious to the dangerous position they find themselves in. Philippine Senators have called for the abdication of the EDCA as they argue it makes the Philippines a target (Mercado 2020), though the preferred outcome is maintaining the status quo in the region (Galag 2022).

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<sup>39</sup> This is not an exhaustive list, but these are the primary variables that have been developed in the literature.

Complicating matters for the US, its mutual defense treaty with the Philippines does not extend to a confrontation with China over Taiwan. This should theoretically make Chinese coercive efforts to prevent the Philippines from joining a conflict easier. The Philippines could credibly claim they are under no legal obligation to assist the US in such a conflict (as the US has done to them when called to defend the Philippines from Chinese aggression in the South China Sea). Empirical evidence indicates this type of alliance, where one party is involved in a conflict that the alliance doesn't technically cover, only leads to a wartime coalition 25% of the time (Leeds 2003). While the Philippines has recently re-pivoted towards the US, they had embraced China and threatened to end military cooperation with the US within the last six years. China is the Philippines' top trade partner and enables P2.1 trillion in economic activity (Punongbayaan 2023, Philippine Statistics Authority 2023). While this provides coercive economic leverage, China is also the main claimant to the disputed Islands in the SCS. This provides an irreplaceable inducement capacity that meets the Philippines' primary security and foreign policy concerns.

Given that China appears to have some coercive leverage they can apply on the Philippines, one critical factor to how effective that leverage might be is how “far” Beijing has to move the Philippines' position (Crawford 2021). Following House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, Manila issued an official statement saying that it “Adheres to the One-China policy” and urged restraint by all parties (Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs 2022). Importantly, the One-China policy of the US and the Philippines differ slightly. The Philippine One-China policy states that it “fully understands and respects” that Taiwan is an integral part of Chinese territory, while the US's official policy just “acknowledges the Chinese position” on Taiwan as an integral part of Chinese territory (Galag 2022). While individual views will be more

heterogeneous, the Philippines' official position can be interpreted as recognizing the CCP as the rightful authority over Taiwan.

Similarly, with regard to basing access, the current status quo does not include allowing the US to conduct combat operations from Philippine territory. The Philippine Ambassador to the US remarked that US forces “might” be allowed *in*<sup>40</sup> the Philippines during a conflict “if it is important for us, for our own security” (Hale 2022). From this perspective, the US would be seeking a policy change on the part of the Philippines, while China would be attempting to deter that policy change. These two factors indicate that the Philippines' baseline preferences don't have to move all that far to be compatible with China's theoretical objective of preventing US military operations from the Philippines.

In addition, the independent governance of Taiwan is not of direct interest to the Philippines, at least as expressed publicly. During a trip to Tokyo in 2023, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said his priority during a crisis in Taiwan would be the safety of the approximately 150,000 Filipinos who reside in Taiwan. Additionally, he repeatedly mentioned that the Philippines' concern, and the motivation behind expanding US basing access and exploring visiting forces agreements (VFA's) with Japan, is Philippine territorial sovereignty. He made no mention of maintaining Taiwan's self-governing status, other than saying the Philippines “would not go to war with anyone,” but sees little hope that the Philippines wouldn't be involved simply due to their proximity (Venzon 2023).

Evidence points to the Philippines being hesitant to get drawn into a conflict between the US and China. This puts China in the realm of implementing a coercive strategy with the goal of getting the Philippines to do what it would probably rather be doing anyways. In the study of

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<sup>40</sup> Emphasis is my own

breaking up alliances and coalitions, this has been called a “reinforcing wedge strategy” (Crawford 2011). This type of strategy should be easier than the “countervailing wedge strategy” that falls more in line with pure compellence, where the state employing the wedge strategy is trying to get the target to do something they would not otherwise do.

Additionally, the Philippines is geographically distant and has divergent strategic priorities (at least in this instance) from the US. These factors can improve the likelihood of a successful coercive wedge strategy (Crawford 2011). Given the lack of an espoused national interest in Taiwan, I expect that coercive threats and inducements will be an effective strategy to lower domestic Filipino support for the Philippines to allow US military operations in defense of Taiwan, leading to my first hypothesis

*Hypothesis 1: Coercive threats and inducements will be more effective than no coercion at reducing Philippine support for allowing US military operations to be conducted from Filipino territory*

While my first hypothesis lumps all coercive and inducement strategies together, established theory on coercion leads to the expectation that different strategies will have different levels of effectiveness. To test this concept, I vary the coercive strategy employed by China. As a baseline strategy, China takes no coercive action, only sending a diplomatic team to Manila to discuss the crisis. The second strategy tested is one of economic coercion. In this scenario, China threatens to completely sever economic ties with the Philippines if they allow US forces to conduct military operations against China from the Philippines’ territory. The third coercive strategy will be a limited military threat. China will threaten to target all US forces on Philippine territory and their supporting logistics should they engage in military operations from the Philippines. In this threat, China will cite its right to self-defense, as well as note their selective targeting of only US forces, though they will not be able to guarantee that Filipino citizens won’t

be affected. The fourth strategy will be the coercive military threat, plus an added inducement. In this scenario, China offers to recognize Manila's claims on the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal if they refuse the US request and deny operating rights to the military.

Coercive strategies that assail the reputation and honor of a state tend to be interpreted as provocations that harden the resolve of the target state (Dafoe et al. 2019). If that strategy is in pursuit of objectives that violate accepted norms, then it becomes more provocative still (Stein 2013). This is further exacerbated by the tendency of major powers to insufficiently "compensate," either through inducement or increased cost, for the reputational damage that capitulation entails (Sechser 2010). Therefore, I expect that the more provocative a coercive threat is, the less effective it will be. I theorize that a pure punishment strategy, broadly applied without efforts to discriminate targeting, is likely to be the more provocative than a limited military strike by China, selectively targeting US military forces.

I have chosen to test an economic punishment strategy because China has shown a preference for this coercive strategy in the past. During disputes over rights in the South China Sea, China implemented additional inspection requirements on Filipino agricultural imports, resulting in spoilage in port awaiting inspection. Similar coercive strategies have been implemented against Japan and Norway in the last decade (Harrel et al. 2018). Additionally, the US and its western allies have engaged in economic coercion and, therefore, provided Beijing with precedence and justification. I believe this is the most realistic broad punishment strategy because if China wishes to retain some semblance of international legitimacy, they'll need to abstain from a military punishment strategy as it is normatively unacceptable (as Russia has recently discovered).

While an economic punishment strategy is likely to be attractive and plausibly effective, economic losses from China are replaceable (to a degree) by further integration with the US and western ally economies. This replaceability of the coercive threat should lead to a lower likelihood of success (Huang 2021).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, any conflict over Taiwan will be economically devastating to the Philippines, even if they don't participate (Galag 2024, Arugay 2022). If there's little difference between the economic "cost" inflicted on the Philippines regardless of whether they accommodate China's threat, then we should see little impact on public opinion.

Given the plausible replaceability of Chinese trade, the tendency to resist a punishment strategy, and the low relative cost of economic sanctions, I hypothesize that the economic punishment strategy will be a less effective coercive strategy than military threats.

*Hypothesis 1b: A coercive threat that adopts an economic "punishment" strategy will be less effective than a coercive threat is tied to specific military objectives related to self-defense*

Finally, I expect that the inclusion of inducements as a positive incentive for capitulation should impact the effectiveness of a coercive strategy. From a rational standpoint, an inducement should help cover the reputational "cost" of submission, enabling the location of an acceptable bargaining range. It also offers a justification that leaders can use to avoid domestic audience costs (Levendusky and Horowitz 2012). Behavioral theory would anticipate roughly the same effect, though through different mechanisms. First, an inducement will likely work to soften any provocation by allowing the coercing state to absorb some losses as well (Dafoe et al. 2019), and

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<sup>41</sup> The cognitive theory behind this hypothesis is not inconsistent with a purely rational decision making assumption. If the economic threat is seen as less costly than the military threat, then a rational model would predict that it would be less effective than both the military threat and the military threat plus the inducement.

it will likely reduce humiliation, anger, and fear with respect to the coercer (Markwica 2018). These should all decrease the emotional mechanisms leading to non-compliance.

Not all inducements are equal, however. One that addresses core interests and is not easily substitutable by other states should be most effective (Crawford 2011, Huang 2021). During a trip to Tokyo in 2023, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. repeatedly mentioned that Philippine's concern, and the motivation behind expanding US basing access and exploring visiting forces agreements (VFA's) with Japan, is Philippine territorial sovereignty, with no mention of the Taiwan issue (Venzon 2023). An inducement tied to this core national interest, that can't be obtained any other way besides force, with its long running and very public nature, should be effective.

Taken as a whole, we emerge with a fairly consistent set of state priorities. The Philippines cares most about its territorial claims in the South China Sea and views expanding military cooperation with the US and its allies as a way to counter China's expansionism. Second, it cares about the situation in Taiwan primarily because it is a threat to the Filipino citizens residing there and because any conflict would likely destroy the hedged position that the Philippines has established, where it is tied economically to China while being supported militarily by the US. Thus, a strategy by China that mitigates these concerns to the highest degree should be most influential. Under Crawford's (2011) framework, this would be a Specific Linkage Appeasement. According to his historical case studies, it is usually applied as a last-minute crisis maneuver. To that end, I hypothesize that when China offers an inducement to alleviate its territorial threat to the Philippines, Filipino support for US forces will be lower.

*Hypothesis 1c: A coercive threat with an inducement tied to vital national interests will be more effective at gaining compliance than coercive threats with no inducement*

## Different People Different Effects

Hypothesis 1 broadly posits that, on average, coercion and inducement should be more effective at lowering support for allowing US military operations than no coercive threat. At the individual level, however, I expect there to be heterogeneous treatment effects based upon pre-existing preferences. I anticipate that individuals who have a favorable view of China and those who favor a strong relationship will be more affected by coercive threats or inducements than individuals who do not. Individuals who hold a positive view of China should be more likely to see them as a legitimate actor on the global stage and support their justification for the forceful reunification of Taiwan. Similarly, individuals who value strengthening the relationship between China and the Philippines should be more hesitant to upset a state they see as a valuable partner. Both factors should lead to individuals being less likely to incur the threatened costs associated with allowing the US to conduct military options for the Philippines.

*Hypothesis 2a: As an individual's favorable perception of China increases, so will the effectiveness of coercive threats and inducements at lowering support for allowing US military operations*

*Hypothesis 2b: Individuals who desire a close relationship with China will be less supportive of allowing US military operations from Philippine territory in the face of coercive threats or inducements from China.*

Likewise, those individuals with an isolationist foreign policy preference should be more affected by coercive threats than those who think the Philippines should be actively involved in the affairs of other states. Assuming that an isolationist world view impacts an individual's assessment of utility, I posit that it decreases the assessment of benefit while increasing the assessment of costs in a foreign policy action that entangles the Philippines in external affairs. As the preference for isolationism increases, the benefit assessment should decrease while the costs assessment increases, decreasing the overall utility calculation. This should result in coercive

threats being more effective at decreasing support for US military operations as an individual's isolationist tendency increases.

*Hypothesis 2c: Individuals who are more isolationist will be less supportive of allowing US military operations from Philippine territory in the face of coercive threats or inducements from China.*

### Policy Preference in Action: The Political Consequences of a Response

The true measure of any coercive strategy targeting public opinion is how that opinion influences politicians. If individual's policy preferences do not correlate with how they assess the performance of the government an issue may not be politically salient. I expect that a policy affecting the Philippines relationship with China and the US, and possibly embroiling the Philippines in a military conflict, will be salient. I anticipate that President Ramos Jr.'s response to Chinese coercive threats will produce heterogeneous effects based on the individuals pre-existing policy preference. The more an individual supported the Philippines getting involved and aiding the US, the more they will approve of President Marcos Jr.'s decision to reject Chinese coercion. Correspondingly, the more an individual opposed allowing US military operations, the more they will disapprove of a decision to reject Chinese demands.

*Hypothesis 3: The more an individual prefers assisting the US in the defense of Taiwan, the more they will approve of the government's decision to reject Chinese coercion*

### Constructing an Experiment

To test my hypothesis on Chinese coercion capacity against the Philippines, I conduct an experimental survey of the Philippine population. The broad scenario involves a crisis over Taiwan where the US wants to use Philippine territory to conduct defensive combat operations in support of Taiwan. China is trying to prevent that from happening. They issue coercive threats to the Philippines with the goal of getting the Philippines to disallow US combat operations from their territory. To assess the impact of these coercive threats on the strength of the US-

Philippines alliance, I measure the level to which Philippine residents support the policy of allowing US operations from Philippine territory after facing a coercive threat or inducement. To assess the political impact of these threats, I then measure approval level of the government decision to accommodate or refuse the Chinese request.

I obtain my survey sample of using the survey research company SAGO. The survey was conducted in the Philippines from 16-27 June 2023. I end up with a total of 1825 respondents, however, I was only able to fund obtaining demographic information for 1452 of those individuals, and some individuals failed to answer all the pre-treatment questions. This results in varying observation counts for my statistical analysis.

Prior to respondents being presented with the scenario and embedded treatments, they answer several demographic and opinion questions that serve as pre-treatment controls and the basis for evaluating heterogeneous treatment effects (HTE). They include respondent age, gender, tendency towards an isolationist foreign policy preference, outlook on China-Philippines integration, support for the Marcos Jr. government, and their views on the favorability of the US, China, and Taiwan.<sup>42</sup>

Age is a continuous numerical variable measured in years. Gender is a categorical variable. Isolationism, Filipino government support, and Chinese integration are seven level ordinal variables. The favorability rating of the US, China, and Taiwan was obtained using a 0-100 sliding scale and is treated as a numeric continuous variable.

#### Scenario: A 4<sup>th</sup> Taiwan Straight Crisis

All respondents were presented with a scenario in which China has become frustrated with Taiwan moving closer towards declaring independence and has increased its aggressive

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<sup>42</sup> Full survey questions and response options are provided in the supplemental materials

actions toward the island. This frustration culminates in China moving military assets that could constitute an “invasion force” toward east coast deployment positions. In response, the US has begun to flow military forces into the region. As the Philippines is the closest land mass and has agreements with the US to allow military forces on Philippine territory, a large contingent of US military equipment has ended up there. At this point in the scenario, the survey randomly varies the treatment condition, which will be China’s response to the increased military presence in the Philippines.

#### Independent Variable 1: Chinese Coercive Strategy

My first independent variable is a four-level categorical variable. I have selected four coercive strategies that broadly represent the China’s available coercive strategies. The Chinese objective for each strategy is to prevent the Philippines from allowing US combat operations to be conducted from their territory. These treatments are randomly assigned to the participants, with a 1.5x overbias towards the military threat + inducement treatment so that treatment group is large enough to compare to the others independently.

The first treatment of “no coercion” was given to 404 individuals. Here the US requests permission to conduct combat operations from Philippine territory, but China makes no public threats or statements, instead sending private diplomatic representatives. 406 individuals received the second treatment. In this treatment group, China issues a coercive threat to sever all economic ties with the Philippines. As this coercive strategy broadly impacts the Filipino citizenry with little discrimination, nor does it selectively target the US threat to China, I consider this a “punishment” threat. It simply punishes the Philippine population for actions they do not directly control.

The third treatment is a coercive military threat, received by 406 respondents. China threatens that in the event of military hostilities, they will attack US forces stationed in the Philippines along with any logistical facilities that enable those forces. This includes ports, railways, airfields, and general building infrastructure. This is meant to replicate a normatively acceptable justification of self-defense by China and lower the provocation of the coercive threat by again adhering to the norm of discriminate targeting.

The fourth treatment is a coercive military threat with an inducement added. 611 individuals comprise this treatment group. Here China threatens the same attacks on US military forces and their enablers but includes an inducement. Should the Philippines disallow US operations, China will recognize Philippine claims in the South China Sea and withdraw their presence from the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal.

#### Dependent Variable 1: Support for Allowing US Forces to Conduct Operations from the Philippines

The first dependent variable will be measured through each individual's response to a question asking to what level they either support or oppose allowing US forces to conduct combat operations from Filipino territory. The respondent's policy preference is measured via a seven-point Likert scale response option. This results in a seven-level ordinal variable. Following the measurement question, I conduct a treatment check to assess if the respondent remembered the scenario.

DV1 Question: *Should this crisis escalate to a military conflict between China and the United States, to what level do you support allowing the US to conduct offensive military operations from Philippine territory?*

Response Options: *Strongly Oppose / Oppose / Slightly Oppose / Neither Oppose nor Support / Slightly Support / Support / Strongly Support*

Treatment Check 1: *what type of threat did Chinese President Xi Jinping issue to the Philippines over US basing during a conflict?*

#### Independent Variable 2: Filipino Response to Chinese Coercion

My second IV is the response of the Filipino government to Chinese coercive threats. Following the questions measuring respondents' support for allowing US combat operations, I randomly assign a treatment scenario where President Ramos Jr. either acquiesces to Chinese demands and disallows US military operations or rejects the coercive demands and allows US military operations in defense of Taiwan. For each treatment, I include a justification statement from the government for their decision. Additionally, the "reject" treatments and the acquiesce treatment with the inducement, I add in a costly signal to increase the credibility of China to carry out their promised coercive action. This treatment design results in a dummy variable where 1 is coded to the 'reject' treatment. Following the scenario, I conduct a treatment check to assess if the respondent internalized the Filipino response to Chinese coercion.

#### Dependent Variable 2: Approval of Presidential Crisis Handling

The second DV measures how each respondent approves or disapproves of President Ramos Jr.'s response to Chinese threats. They are provided seven response options to choose from, resulting in a seven-level ordinal variable.

DV 2 question: *Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of President Marcos Jr.'s decision on this crisis with China*

Response Options: *Disapprove very strongly / Disapprove moderately strongly / Disapprove slightly / Neither approve nor disapprove / Approve slightly / Approve moderately strongly / Approve very strongly*

#### Pre-Treatment Views of Filipino Residents

Before examining the results of the experimental survey, I pause to examine the pure descriptive data gathered on Filipino residents' views on the relevant actors in this scenario. This

data represents one small snapshot in time, but how the Filipino population feels about the US, China is essential knowledge to aid military and diplomatic officials understand one of our key allies.

Filipino respondents show an overwhelmingly positive view of the United States, with over half of individuals reporting a favorable view of the US in the top 20%. And less than 5% of individuals assigning a favorability rating in the bottom 40%. Taiwan has a less pronounced, but overall favorable rating. Meanwhile, China has an overall negative perception among the Filipino populace, but not to a drastic degree. While 759 individuals ranked China in the bottom 40%, 512 ranked them in the middle (40-60) percent, and 487 ranked them in the top 40%.

Despite this net negative feeling towards China, overall, the respondents favor strengthening their relationship with China. Only 390 individuals responded that they disagreed (to any level) that strengthening the relationship between China and the Philippines was important. Meanwhile 535 individuals somewhat agreed, and 397 agreed. That only 193 “strongly agreed” indicates a general lack of enthusiasm for increasing ties between the two states. However, those who “strongly agree” still outnumber any of the disagree categories. This snapshot of public opinion indicates that while Filipinos don’t perceive China as a “good” actor, they still assess that the Philippines is better off if they have a strong relationship with China than not.<sup>43</sup>

### **Public Opinion in Response to Chinese Coercive Threats**

To test my hypothesis that all coercive threats will lower public support for US military operations when compared to the “no coercion” treatment I employ an ordinal logit regression. I run several models, the first being a simple regression where the ordinal “level of support” is the

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<sup>43</sup> For survey balance chart and graphical representation of demographic characteristics of the survey sample please see the supplementary materials

DV, and the only IV is the categorical “strategy” treatment the survey participants received. I then run this with three levels of pre-treatment controls. The first set of pre-treatment controls includes age and gender. The second set adds on variables for isolationism, approval of the government of the Philippines, and support for deepening integration with China. The last set of pre-treatment controls adds on 0-100 ratings of favorability for Taiwan, the US, and China. The final regression uses only the Age and Gender controls and only uses observations where the respondent answered at least one post treatment question correctly.

**Table 3.1 Ordinal Logit Regression Analysis of Coercive Strategy on Support for US Military Operations**

	Supt Ops	Supt Ops+	Supt Ops++	Supt Ops+++	Supt Ops#
econ	-0.078 (0.122)	-0.148 (0.140)	-0.101 (0.142)	-0.020 (0.145)	-0.166 (0.156)
mil	-0.232+ (0.124)	-0.291* (0.139)	-0.280* (0.140)	-0.273+ (0.143)	-0.299+ (0.157)
mil + induce	-0.228* (0.113)	-0.277* (0.128)	-0.284* (0.128)	-0.270* (0.131)	-0.311* (0.144)
# Obs	1825	1452	1448	1398	1195
AIC	7043.1	5541.7	5495.6	5109.7	4564.8
BIC	7092.7	5599.8	5648.7	5277.5	4620.7
RMSE	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.45	4.44

the baseline treatment is 'no coercion'

#includes only those observations that answered at least 1 post-treatment attention check correctly

+++ controls include all from ++ and add 0-100 favorability ratings for the US, China, and Taiwan

++ controls include age, gender, isolationism, government support, and support for integration with China

+ controls include age and gender

### used to replace ordinal control coefficients that were not statistically significant

DV is 7-Level Ordered variable of Policy Support.

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

The results are relatively consistent across the levels of pre-treatment controls and the data inclusion criteria<sup>44</sup> and gives us a general picture of treatment effects. The economic punishment treatment is not statistically significant in any of the regressions, and the coefficients produced are much smaller than of the military threats. Meanwhile, the military plus inducement threat has a statistically significant effect in all the regressions, while the military threat treatment occasionally dips beneath a p. value of .95, but never below .9. Substantively, the coefficients of the military and military threat + inducement treatment groups are very similar.

To better enable interpretation of the coefficients provided by the ordinal logit regression, I present them in a graphical figure of discrete effects, which take the form of the average change in predicted probability an individual in a specific treatment group will choose a level of support when compared to the baseline treatment group of “no coercion.”

I find results largely in line with my hypothesis, though not at a highly substantive or statistically significant level. Starting with my first hypothesis, I don’t find evidence that all coercive threats would be more effective than the “no coercion” treatment. Only the two military threats show any statistically significant effect on public support for allowing US military operations. Both military threats show roughly equivalent substantive effects, only decreasing the average predicted probability an individual chooses support or strongly support by about 3% and increasing the likelihood of opposition or strong opposition by about 2.5%. The 95% confidence intervals for both treatments are very close to a null result, though the military threat + inducement is slightly more statistically significant. This is likely due to its larger treatment group.

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<sup>44</sup> Full regression tables including coefficients for controls is in the supplementary material

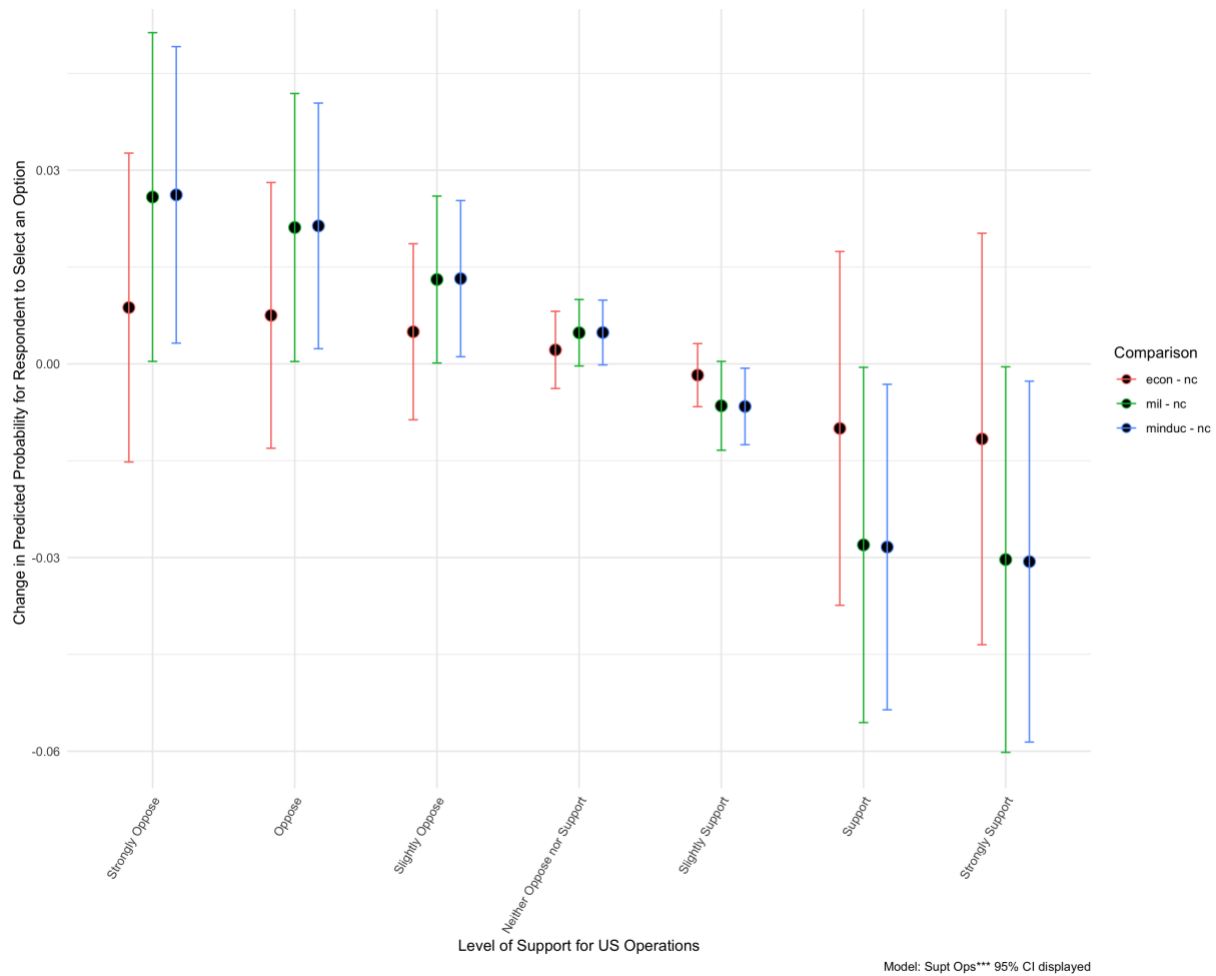


Fig 3.1: Discrete Effect of Coercive Strategy on Average Level of Support

Unlike the military threats, I find no evidence that the economic punishment threat has any statistically significant effect on public support for US military operations. The direction of the (very small) effects is consistent with my first hypothesis, but the 95% confidence intervals are so large that I cannot draw conclusions. However, these results do support hypothesis 1b. The economic punishment threat is the only threat to produce no statistically significant results, providing evidence that it is the least effective of the coercive threats that participants were exposed too.

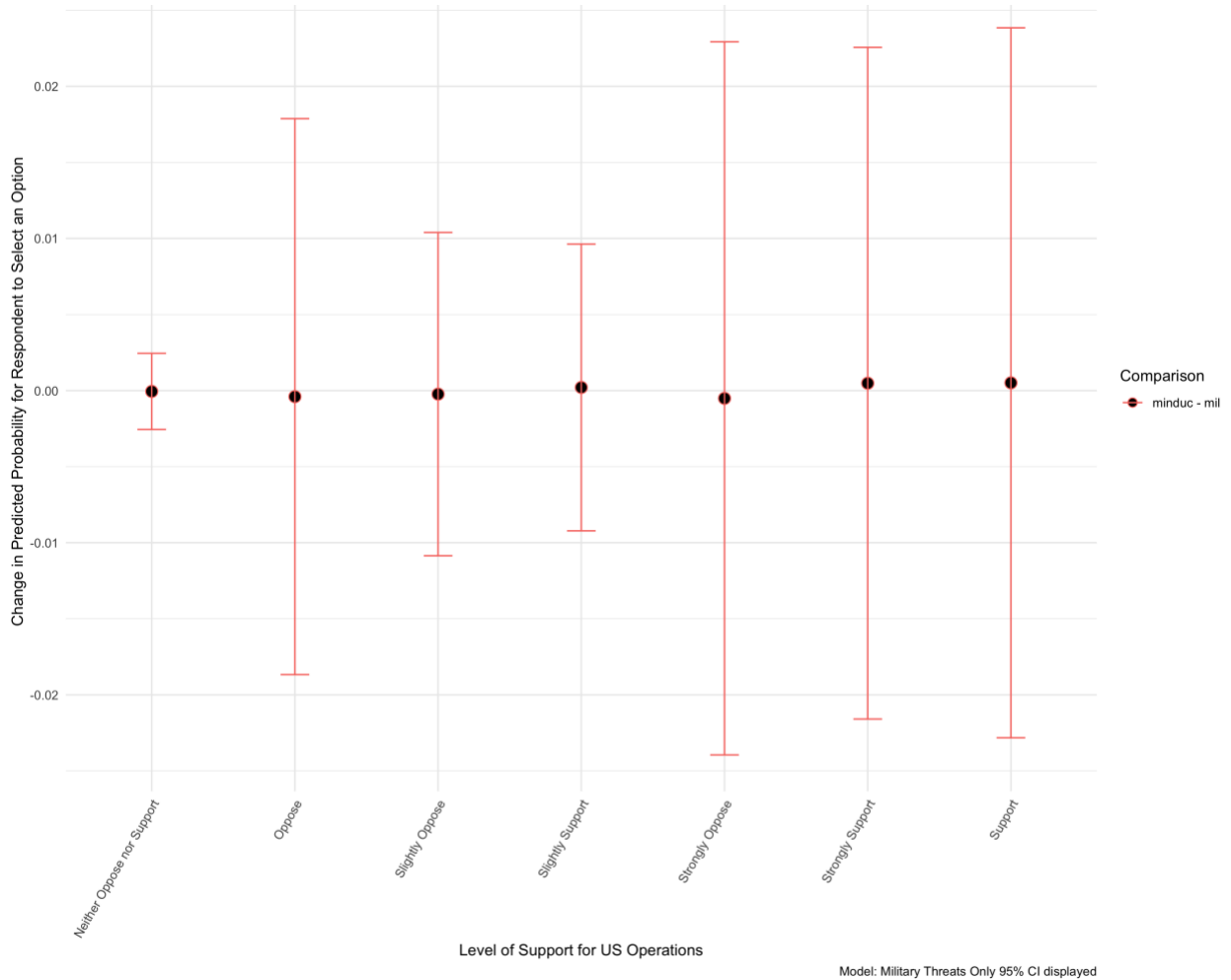
Finally, I find no support for the final part of my first hypothesis. This experiment provides no evidence that a positive inducement in conjunction with a threat increases the effectiveness of coercion when compared to that of just a threat.<sup>45</sup> In fact, when compared to the standalone military threat treatment, there is no distinguishable substantive or statistically significant difference in the average predicted probability an individual will select a given level of support.

The results of this first analysis paint a relatively positive picture for US strategists. The effect of coercive threat treatments on the level of support for US military operations during a crisis only somewhat supports my hypothesis and the tenets of wedge theory. While military threats do have a statistically significant effect, the treatment scenarios that Filipino residents were presented with have little substantive effect. A change of 1-3% in the likelihood an individual chooses a level of support is evidence that, at least within the confines of my survey experiment, the Chinese coercive treatments presented have little material impact on altering the broad picture of public opinion. This is positive news for the US and its stated strategy in the Pacific region. Any lack of ability for China to influence Filipino public opinion to the detriment of the US strategy should be welcomed and accounted for (with attentiveness due to the

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<sup>45</sup> The results of this initial regression analysis render my pre-registered analysis plan for hypothesis 1c largely incoherent. I had hypothesized that the inclusion of a positive inducement would increase the effectiveness of a coercive strategy when compared to a strategy that included only a threat. My original plan was contingent on there being a different effect between coercive strategies with an inducement and those without. To examine this hypothesis, I planned to create two categories of threats, with both the military threat and the punishment threat in a single category of just 'threats,' and the military + inducement threat in the inducement category. My first analysis indicates that the difference is really between economic punishment vs limited military coercive threats. Thus, to better examine the effect of an inducement tied to a threat, I will deviate from my initial analysis plan. I will hold the military threat constant and examine how the additional inducement treatment impacts public opinion.

constraints of a survey experiment and its inherently limited external validity). Furthermore, the cheapest Chinese coercive strategy presented in this study, economic sanctions, had no statistical effect and essentially no substantive effect. In this scenario China had to resort to escalating all the way to specific, though limited, military threats to achieve even a modicum of their strategic objectives.



*Fig 3.2: Discrete Effect of Inducement Strategy on Average Level of Support*

While encouraging results for US national security experts, the results are less helpful for validating the components of a wedge strategy. The scenario presented was largely a best-case for successful coercion by China to degrade the cooperation between the Philippines and the US.

In the presented scenario China was trying to prevent a change in Filipino policy, which coincided with trying to get the Philippines to do what it would arguably prefer to do anyways. Both of these factors should have made a wedge strategy more likely to be successful (Crawford 2011). China also had an irreplaceable inducement tied to a vital Filipino national interest in concessions in the SCS. This inducement had zero effect on public opinion when it was theorized to be a highly effective (Huang 2020, Izumikawa 2013)

#### A Different Perspective: Pure Predicted Probabilities

Given that I find little evidence that China can substantively influence public opinion through these specific coercive strategies, we can turn to analyzing the overall predicted probabilities for each level of support. While it's slightly harder to discern the average discrete effect of the coercive treatment when data is presented this way, it does provide a broader overview of how the Filipino population feels about supporting US military operations in the event of a crisis over Taiwan. Using change in predicted probability, we can easily observe the treatment effect, but lack an understanding of where that effect takes place on the continuum of public opinion.

Due to overwhelming similarity in the military and military + inducement treatment groups, I've combined those two treatment groups to leverage the statistical power of a larger treatment group size for all analysis going forward.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, I use the regression with no pre-treatment controls so that I can present the predicted probabilities without the controls being held constant.

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<sup>46</sup> Figures with these treatment groups separated can be found in the supplementary material. They do not meaningfully change the results or inferences.

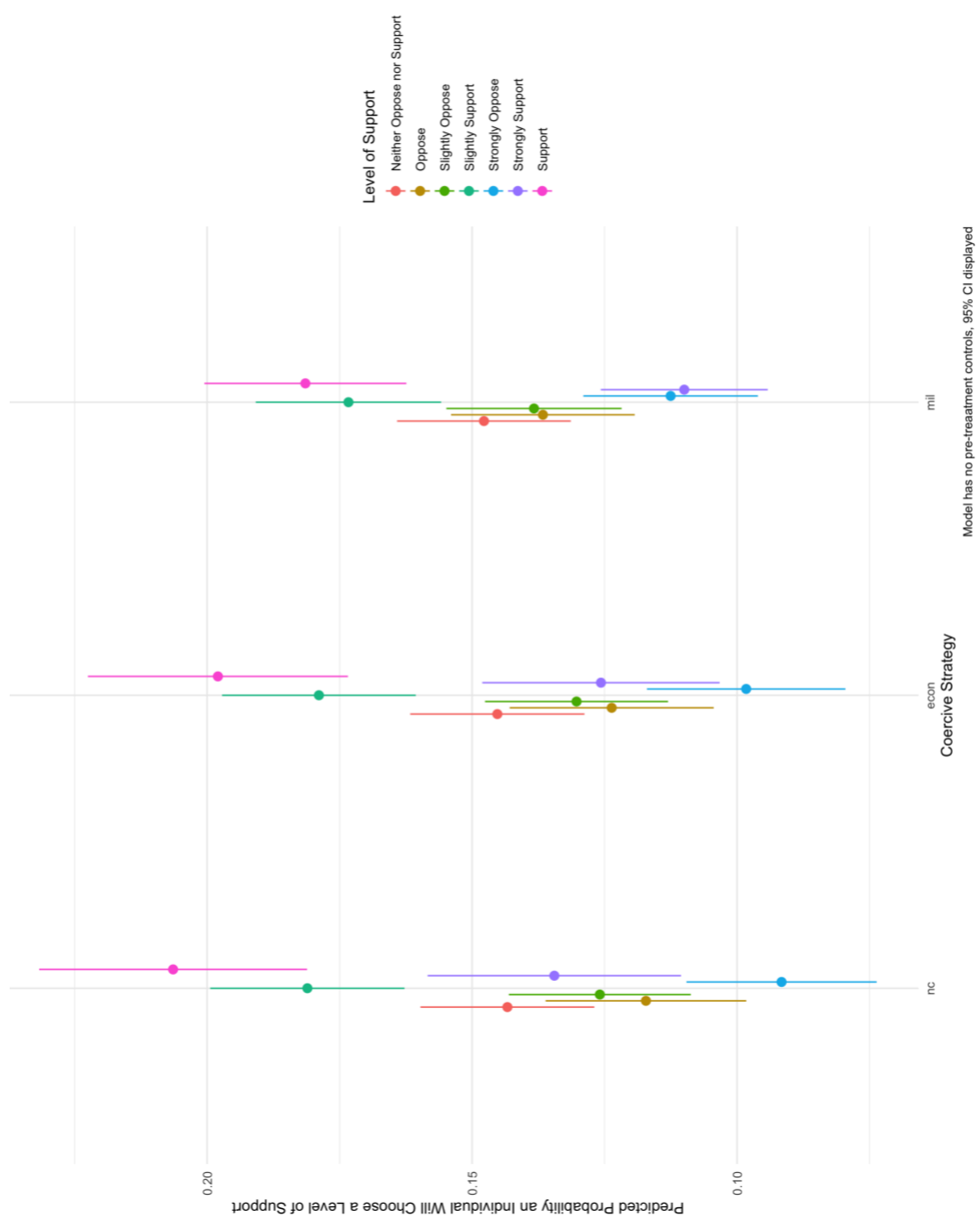


Fig 3.3: Predicted Probability a Treatment Group Will Choose a Level of Support

This model produces a fairly tight clustering of predicted probabilities across treatment groups, though the variance of predicted probabilities decreases as coercive threats get more effective. The highest level of support is the “no coercion” treatment group. Here we see the lowest average predicted probability is “strongly oppose” at roughly 9%, while “support” has the highest probability of being selected at approximately 21%. The lowest levels of support are seen in the military threat treatment group. “Support” is again the most likely option for respondents, now at 18% average predicted probability after a slight decrease. Meanwhile, “Strongly Oppose” has increased in probability and “Strongly Support” has fallen, leading then to be roughly equivalent at 11% average predicted probability.

While I have chosen the y-axis limits on this figure to enable easier visual assessment of the coefficients, it is important to recognize that despite how much “higher” the predicted probability of “support” and “slightly support” appear on the figure, they are only 4-5% more likely on average than “oppose” and “slightly oppose.” This relatively tight clustering of predicted probabilities (in all treatment groups) indicates a relative lack of consensus in the Philippines with regard to how their state should best approach a crisis over Taiwan. Depending on how much a real-world scenario might change this distribution of Filipino public opinion, the US finds itself in a scenario where its ally’s population is not firmly committed to assisting its strategic goals, but neither are they firmly opposed.

#### Different Effects on Different People: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects Among the Filipino Population

While the analysis above presents a fairly positive picture for the US, it is important to examine how coercive threats may heterogeneously impact individuals based upon their current perception of the world and their foreign policy preferences. My second hypothesis is that

individuals who desire a stronger relationship with China would be more affected by coercive threats than those who did not want a stronger relationship with China. I use two independent variables to look at how an individual views China. First, I use a 0-100 continuous measurement of how favorable an individual views China.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, I use a variable that measures their level of agreement that strengthening the relationship between China and the Philippines is important.

These are two distinct ideas as someone who is lukewarm on their favorability of China can still strongly agree that the Philippines should have a stronger relationship with China. I will test both as each concept fits with the broader theory that coercive threats will have a greater effect on an individual who values a positive relationship with China.

When I test the effect of coercive threats conditional upon an individual's perception of China, I find some evidence to support my hypothesis. When exposed to a military threat treatment, the more favorable an individual views China, the more effective that military coercive threat is at increasing the predicted probability they choose a level of opposition, and decreasing the likelihood they choose a level of support. Those individuals with a more negative view of China don't show substantive or statistically significant change when exposed to a military threat.

As with the previous analysis, I find no evidence that an economic punishment threat has any substantive or statistically significant effect on the level an individual supports allowing US military operations, regardless of how favorably they perceive China.

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<sup>47</sup> Using this measure as an interactive independent variable was not in my pre-registered analysis plan, and should be considered exploratory analysis.

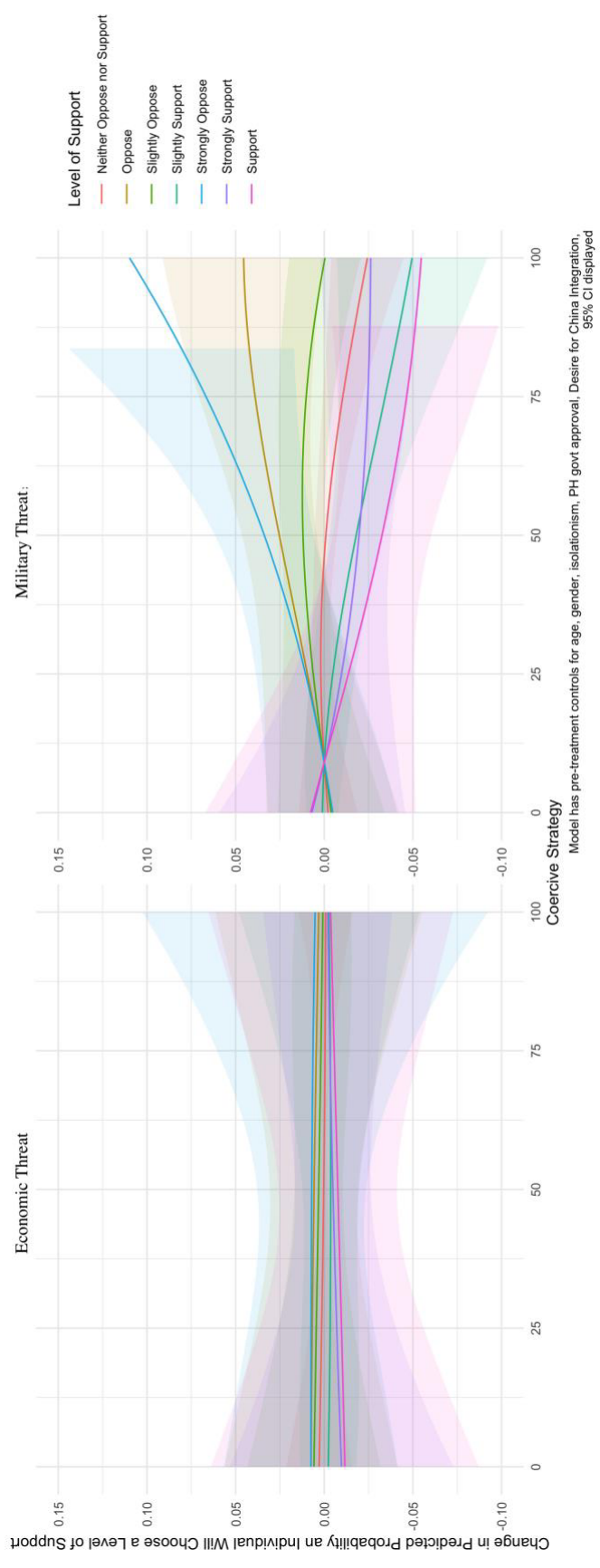


Fig 3.4: HTE of Perception of China on the Effectiveness of Coercive Treatments

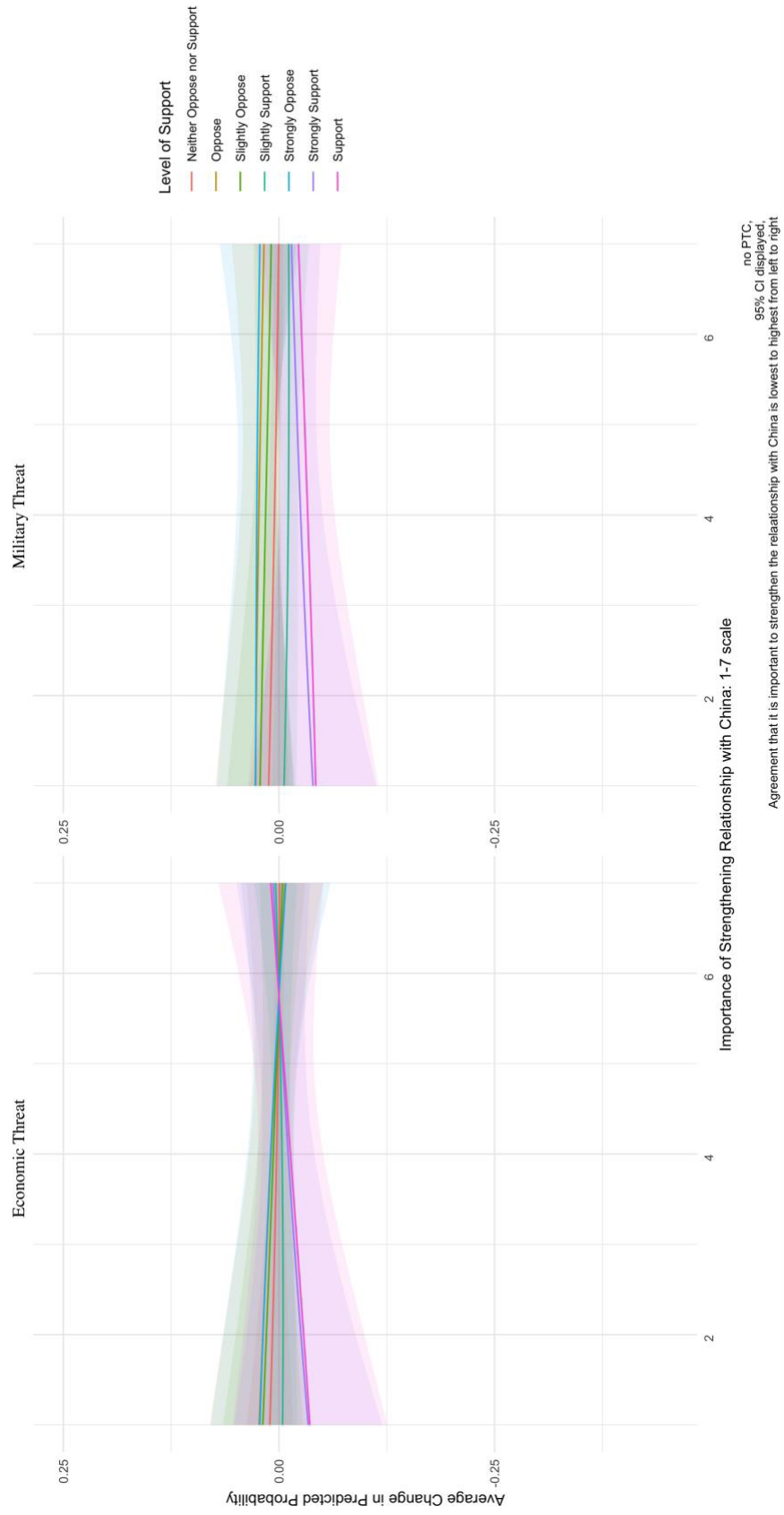


Fig 3.5: HTE of Desire for a Stronger Relationship with China on Effectiveness of Coercive Treatments

While I find some evidence to support my hypothesis using the “China Perception” variable, I find no evidence to support my hypothesis that those favoring a stronger relationship with China will be more susceptible to coercive threats. The coercive treatments have no statistically significant effect and show very little substantive effect across the range of approval for strengthening the relationship with China.

These results pose an interesting question: why is there such a significant difference in heterogeneous treatment effects when the two conditional variables are so similar? One hypothesis is that those individuals who espoused a positive view of China are more likely to already prefer China’s desired outcome and policy objectives. Meanwhile, the desire to strengthen the relationship between the two states is conditional upon China behaving as a legitimate actor in the relationship. Their coercive threats towards the Philippines undermines the legitimacy of the relationship. However, this is pure conjecture and an area of further study for scholars of coercion and alliance dynamics.

#### Heterogeneous Treatment Effects of Isolationism

Similar to the effect of an individual’s perception of China, I find some support for my hypothesis that the coercive treatment has heterogeneous effects based upon isolationist foreign policy preference. Individuals who espouse isolationist policy preferences are more impacted by Chinese coercive threats. The economic coercive threat elicits little substantive and no statistically significant change when compared with the no coercion. The military coercive threats do have a substantive effect, however. I find that as a person grows more isolationist in their foreign policy preferences, they are more likely to oppose allowing US military operations in support of Taiwan and less likely to support such a measure. The largest effects are on the likelihood of selecting the “Strongly Oppose” or “Support” categories. Those individuals who



are most isolationist have approximately a 5% increase in average predicted probability of selecting “Strongly Oppose” and a 5% decrease in average predicted probability to select “Support.” There is no substantive or statistically significant effect on those individuals who are least isolationist in their foreign policy preferences.

#### The Impact of Heterogeneous Treatment Effects:

Of my three sub-hypotheses in hypothesis 2, I only find partial support for only two. I find evidence that the impact of coercive threats is indeed conditional upon an individual’s perception of China. This heterogeneous treatment effect results in a military coercive threat being more effective as an individual’s view of China becomes more positive. Meanwhile, those who hold the most negative views of China having no statistically or substantively significant changes to their level of support for allowing US military operations to be conducted from Filipino territory.

These are encouraging results for US interests. China only appears to be becoming more belligerent in the SCS, frequently harassing Filipino fishermen and sailors. Should this continue, China could be viewed more negatively across the Philippines, further decreasing the effectiveness of coercive threats during a crisis. Similarly, China’s economy will likely recover from its recent slump and increasing integration with China may become even more attractive to Filipino residents. My analysis provides no evidence that China would be able to leverage this turn of events to more effectively coerce the Filipino population.

From a coercion theory standpoint, I find some evidence to support the concept that it is easier to coerce individuals whose preferences are closer to the coercer’s objective (Crawford 2011). Filipinos who reported more isolationist foreign policy preferences *should* prefer to stay out of any crisis over Taiwan, which would logically include not basing and support US military

operations. Their preference should generally align with China's objective. I find some limited evidence that coercive threats alter isolationist's support for entangling their nation in a crisis involving the two largest militaries in the world. It is possible that Filipinos who are inclined towards an isolationist worldview do not believe that a crisis over Taiwan won't affect them even if they don't support the US, but this is conjecture and further study of Filipino foreign policy preferences would be required to assess its validity.

### **After the Threats: Public Approval of the Filipino Response**

While it is important to study how the Filipino population reacts to Chinese threats, the power of public opinion is less in how they feel about a particular issue, and more in how the government's actions to that issue affects public opinion about the government; i.e. if you strongly support abortion rights in the US, but you still highly approve of the current government that has restricted abortion rights, then I would argue that abortion rights are not a salient issue to you, and it becomes a less powerful vehicle to pressure the government to address an individual's policy preferences. To address this, I examine how the Philippine's response to the Chinese coercive threat impacts overall public approval of the President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s handling of the crisis.

I present survey participants with two randomized treatments that encompass President Ramos Jr.'s response to the coercive threats: acquiesce to the demands of China and disallow US military operations to be conducted from the Philippines, or reject Chinese demands and allow US military operations. For the economic and military threat scenarios, a rejection of Chinese demands is followed by a costly signal from China. In the economic threat scenario, China delays inspections for inbound Filipino cargo, stranding shipments in port. In the military

scenarios, China conducts missile tests that pass over the Philippines and conduct live fire naval exercises in Filipino territorial waters.

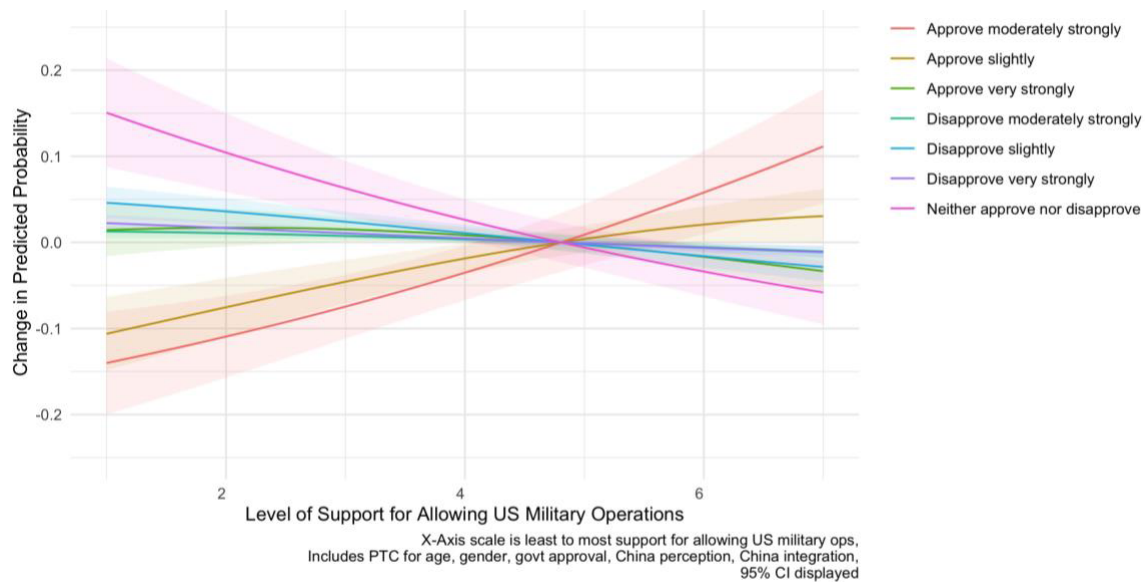
Given that I expect Filipino's reactions to the government's decision to either reject or acquiesce to the Chinese coercive threat to be based upon their pre-existing level of support for allowing US military operations to be conducted from Filipino territory, I run an ordinal logit regression with an interaction between the previous dependent variable, individual level of support, and the dummy variable for government action, where 1 represents a rejection of Chinese coercion and allowing US military operations, and 0 represents acquiescence and barring US military operations. While the Filipino government's action is randomly assigned, the level of support an individual expresses for allowing US military operations is not. To help alleviate this lack of randomization I include controls for age, gender, isolationism, pre-treatment approval of President Marcos Jr., desire for integration with China, and perception of China.

My hypothesis is that as there are a wide range of policy preferences a cross the Filipino population, there will also be a wide range of reactions to President Marcos Jr. choosing a foreign policy position. If the Philippines rejects Chinese coercive threats, those individuals who support allowing US operations from Filipino territory should have higher approval ratings of how President Marcos Jr. handled the crisis than those individuals who opposed allowing US military operations.

#### Individual Levels of Approval on how President Marcos Jr. Handles the Taiwan Crisis

The regression below uses an ordinal logit with the dependent variable being the seven-level approval rating of President Ramos Jr's handling of the crisis. The first independent variable is the seven-level variable measuring support for allowing US military operations during the crisis (this was the dependent variable from the first set of analyses). For this analysis, this

variable has been converted from ordinal to continuous to facilitate the interpretation of the resultant coefficients. Coefficients produced using the variable in its original ordinal form can be found in the supplementary material, and results are not significantly impacted. The second IV is the dummy variable for Filipino action where acquiescing to China’s coercive demands is coded 0, while rejection of the demands is coded 1. This coding schema results in the chart below showing the average change in predicted probability that a “rejection” of the coercive demands elicits in support for the president’s actions, dependent upon the previous support for allowing US operations.



*Fig 3.7: HTE of Rejection of Chinese Coercive Threats on Approval of Crisis Handling*

The results of this regression only somewhat confirm my third hypothesis. I find some substantive and statistically significant effect of the response treatment, but the effects are largely isolated to three specific levels of approval: “Approve moderately strongly,” “Approve slightly,” and “Neither approve nor disapprove.” For these three levels of crisis response approval, I find evidence that individuals who opposed allowing US military operations are decreasingly likely to select a support option while increasingly likely to select the neutral response. As the support for

allowing US military operations increase, so does the predicted probability that the individual approves of President Ramos Jr's response. Correspondingly, the predicted probability they select the neutral response decreases.

Interestingly, there is little substantive or statistically significant effect on the predicted probability an individual will select the four remaining levels: "Disapprove strongly," "Approve strongly," "Disapprove slightly," and "Disapprove moderately strongly." This indicates that while President Ramos Jr. might lose some level of support for responding to China in manner opposite an individual's preference, he doesn't incur much, if any, backlash or opposition. Instead, a policy decision in opposition to the individual's preference results in a shift to a more neutral assessment of crisis handling represented by "neither support nor oppose."

This lack of backlash to a national security policy choice, combined with President Ramos Jr.'s overwhelming support,<sup>48</sup> paint the picture of a leader who has the political freedom to do as he sees fit during a crisis over Taiwan. With no large increases in disapproval when he chooses a policy against the preferences of the individual, there is little domestic public opinion incentive for President Ramos Jr. to consider in his decision-making process.

### **Conclusion:**

While perhaps academically unsatisfying, the largely insignificant results of this experiment do have implications for US national security policy. This analysis provides evidence that strategic planners need not be overly concerned with China influencing the Filipino population with coercive threats or inducements during a crisis. There is unlikely to be a dramatic shift in opinion and support for allowing US military operations because of some last

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<sup>48</sup> See the distribution of the pre-treatment Presidential Approval variable in the supplementary materials

minute threat from China. What appears to matter more is the underlying domestic situation during the lead up to the crisis. Does the US maintain at least an average level of support among the populace? Do Filipino perceptions of China remain generally unfavorable? Does the president maintain the overwhelming level of approval represented by this survey? If so, then it is likely that the Filipino leadership will retain enough public support regardless of their decision to reject or accept Chinese coercion.

The largest vulnerability to US access to the Philippines revealed in this analysis is the individual's perception of China. This is largely unhelpful for US policy makers, as this variable is likely out of their control. However, it is likely not out of China's control. Should China tone down their rhetoric and aggressive gray zone operations in the contested waters in the SCS, they may be able to create a more positive image among Filipino residents. US strategists and policy makers should be aware that this was the essentially the only variable that showed a truly substantive effect on an individual's willingness to acquiesce to Chinese coercion. Even if Filipino perception of China trends more positive, my analysis indicates that threats of economic sanctions will remain ineffective as a coercive instrument, at least when the target of influence is public opinion. At no point do I find a substantive or statistically significant treatment effect for those individuals who were given the economic threat scenario.

While I find little ability for China to influence Filipino residents' opinion on aiding in the defense of Taiwan, Filipino presidents have shown themselves open to inducement in the past. Former President Duterte explicitly tied the continuation of the Visiting Forces Agreement to the US delivering COVID-19 vaccines to the Philippines (McPherson et al. 2023). Additionally, Duterte's pivot to China happened to coincide with the promise of an influx of Chinese money via the Belt and Road initiative and the threatened reduction of US military aid

due to human rights violations during his war on drugs (Villamor 2016, Zengerle 2016). Duterte had made these infrastructure projects a major platform of his presidency (Cruz de Castro 2019, Katigbak 2018). As time went on and the promised funding never arrived, Duterte seemed to cool on his relations with China and open back up to the US (Lema & Petty 2018, Grossman 2021).

This is an anecdotal case, but the correlations warrant further academic study. While these foreign policy positions were changing, the US remained highly popular with Filipinos, while China was viewed considerably more negatively (Poushter & Bishop 2017). Despite this, Duterte had exceedingly high approval ratings (Pulse Asia Research 2022), even as he alienated a popular ally and moved closer to a state most Filipinos viewed negatively. In this circumstance, the Filipino President appears to have significant leeway in charting and changing a foreign policy path without suffering overt damage in overall approval.

My study provides further evidence of this policy flexibility. President Marcos Jr. does suffer a loss of support when he responds to the crisis scenario in a way contradictory to an individual's preference, but that loss of support doesn't translate into opposition, it increases the likelihood the individual is apathetic about the government's response. Considering the overwhelming popularity of the Filipino president over the last two terms, this transfer of support to apathy is theoretically not as salient an incentive as it would be if the non-preferred policy resulted in an increase in moderate to strong opposition/disapproval or, if the President did not have such a high approval rating already. Given these results and historical observations, further study of the alliance dynamics between the US and the Philippines, and Chinese coercive strategies on Filipino political elite, seems warranted.

My results are less useful for establishing empirical support for the academic theories we turn to when examining coercion and dynamics in alliances. I find very little evidence that the factors highlighted in the theory behind a “wedge strategy” have a salient impact on how individuals feel about supporting an ally. The scenario the Filipino residents were exposed to was relatively best case for a successful wedge strategy. China was attempting to coerce the Philippines to adopt a policy that was relatively close to the Philippine’s espoused preference. This “reinforcing wedge strategy” should have increased the effectiveness of the coercive attempt (Crawford 2021). China was able to offer an inducement that was not replaceable by another state and tied to a vital national interest. According to current theory, this should have further increased the effectiveness of the coercive strategy (Izumikawa 2013, Huang 2021, Levendusky and Horowitz 2012, Dafoe et al. 2019, Markwica 2018). However, the treatment that included an inducement showed no substantive or statistical difference from the treatment that did not include the inducement.

As for economic coercion, based on existing theory, I posited that they would be a less effective coercive instrument against the Philippine’s. Economic sanctions represent a ‘cost’ that can be mitigated to some degree by the Philippine’s allies. Furthermore, if a conflict does occur, the Philippines is likely to incur significant economic costs regardless of Chinese trade embargoes. Finally, I included the cognitive rationale that an economic embargo on the Philippines would be seen as an unjust punishment of Filipino’s who have little to do with the crisis, or China’s objectives. Subsequently, my analysis does provide evidence that the economic threat was less effective than the military threat. However, there is another possible mechanism at work. It’s possible that economic sanctions are simply seen as less costly, on average, by Filipino citizens than the military threats. They may not go through the logic of replaceability or

the strategic forethought that the Philippines will suffer economic costs regardless of whether they allow or disallow US military operations. To fully explore why the economic threat had no effect, further research is needed.

While I find no evidence to support the underlying mechanisms of a “wedge strategy,” I must caveat that this was a very scoped scenario over one particular issue. My lack of evidence goes only as far as the data I collected, Filipino public opinion on a crisis over Taiwan involving the US and China, with the limited threats China issued. Given this lack of evidence there are several things to consider. First, even with no coercive threat issued (essentially the no coercion treatment), Filipino residents might assume economic and military consequences from China in the event of a military clash between the US and China. If the participants in the survey experiment assume that the costs will be similar regardless of the coercive threats by China, then there would be little to no change in public opinion.

Additionally, Filipino residents might have already assessed the risks inherent to their position as an ally of the United States but a close regional neighbor to China and Taiwan. If individuals assume a crisis can't avoided by their decision to allow or disallow US military operations from Filipino soil, and the costs of a crisis will be levied upon them regardless of the Philippines actions, then coercive threats should have very little impact on the national security policy opinions.

Finally, I tested relatively low-cost threats from China. Military threats were capped at targeting US forces and their logistical support. I did not test threats associated military punishment of the Filipino populace or the forced seizure of territory. These might be seen as more costly than my treatments. These more costly strategies might also move beyond what Filipino residents already assume the costs of a Taiwan crisis would be, eliciting an effect where

my treatments did not. I chose not to test these due to limited resources and the fact that coercive strategies based on inflicting punishment on the populace are rarely successful (Pape 1996). However, without empirical testing under these circumstances, I cannot assess their efficacy in comparison to my coercive treatments.

In sum, I find little evidence to validate key components of theory underlying a wedge strategy. Coercive threats and costly signals do not dramatically impact Filipino public support for aiding the US in the defense of Taiwan. Those opinions have possibly already factored into individuals' utility calculations, or they believe that costs will be similar regardless of their actions, rendering coercive threats moot. These findings indicate that while US strategic planners should closely monitor existing public opinion, there is empirical evidence that it will not change at a moment of crisis, dramatically altering the policy preference of the Filipino residents and upending operational plans.

However, there are two policy takeaways we can infer from my findings. First, the one variable that impacted the effectiveness of coercive threats in a salient manner was an individual's perception of China. Those individuals who viewed China favorably were substantively impacted by coercive threats while those who viewed China negatively were not. If the US wishes to exploit this relationship, they could pursue an information campaign designed to highlight the negative actions of Chinese actors in the South China Sea and anywhere that Filipino and Chinese interests conflict.

Secondly, the confidence that public opinion will not dramatically shift under coercion or inducement should not be extended to the Philippines government. My research indicates the Presidents have significant freedom to chart a security policy path between China and the US without incurring significant opposition. From this we can infer that the President, not the public,

should be the objective of influence with respect to opinions on the defense of Taiwan. While the idea of convincing/persuading an ally's leader that they should support your cause isn't groundbreaking, neither is the idea of doing the same to their population. What's important from these findings is that in a resource limited world, if the US must make a choice on where to put its effort, based on my findings, those resources should be directed at the political elite of the Philippines.

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## CONCLUSION

The evidence gathered in my research on how affective polarization and Chinese coercion may impact public support for US security policy should both comfort and concern policymakers and security experts. The biggest problem for policymakers in building public support for a security policy results from internal US division, not from China. My research indicates that while China has little capacity to influence public opinion in the Philippines to the detriment of US security, internal divisions in the US populace pose a more impactful factor.

Chinese coercive threats, inducements, and costly signals have little substantive effect on Filipino public opinion regarding US military operations. Despite a range of coercive treatments tested in my research, there was little homogenous effect across the populace in the Philippines. Economic threats showed no effect, while the military coercive treatments were only effective at lowering support for allowing US military operations among those individuals who held more favorable views of China. Neither an isolationist worldview nor a strong desire to see a stronger relationship between China and the Philippines resulted in any change in average support level for allowing US military operations in defense of Taiwan.

Furthermore, the Philippines' President, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has significant freedom to chart his state's foreign policy path, regardless of the views of his constituents. When rejecting the Chinese demands and allowing US military operations, individuals who were most against that policy don't see any substantive increase in the likelihood they "disapprove" of how the crisis was handled. There is a decrease in the predicted probability those individuals moderately or slightly approve of how the crisis was handled, but that decrease in approval is shifted into an

increase in the likelihood individuals who oppose the policy say they neither approve nor disapprove of how President Marcos Jr. handled the crisis with China. These results imply that the Filipino President is unlikely to face significant public backlash, regardless of his policy decisions.

While President Marcos Jr. may be able to build a coalition of public support to bolster his national security decision, my research indicates that no such luxury exists for US policymakers. When presented with a policy to re-implement selective service to mitigate a declining military force in the face of a resurgent and globally aggressive China, partisan individuals are substantially more likely to drop their opposition and support this controversial and unpopular policy if it is proposed by a co-partisan government. The converse is also true, if the draft is proposed by the opposing party, individuals decrease their overall level of support and increase the likelihood they oppose the measure.

Beyond that intangible “level of support,” co-partisanship between the government and individual manifests in potential political action. An out-partisan individual has a diminished likelihood of taking a positive, supportive, political action, and an increase in the likelihood they convey their opposition to the draft through political action. Furthermore, out-partisans were nearly 10% less likely to want to enforce the draft with even minimal criminal penalties.

Given the scholarship indicating government responsiveness to public opinion (Lax and Phillips 2012, Rasmussen et al. 2019), a lack of constituent support (and increase in opposition) for a security policy proposed by an out-party government could manifest in a lack of support from the opposing politicians. This would then reduce the likelihood of bi-partisan policymaking and increase the policy’s attractiveness as a potential wedge issue to be exploited by political entrepreneurs (Snyder et al. 2009).

My research indicates that this increase in co-partisan support and out-party opposition isn't a homogenous effect. When I examine how affective polarization and social identity impacts support for domestic counter-extremism policy, I find heterogeneous effects dependent on the individual's relationship to the threat. When individuals are faced with a group committing political violence in pursuit of an ideological objective that they oppose, political identity appears to play little if any factor in determining policy support. Both co-partisans and out-partisans approve of the counter-extremism policy at the roughly same level. However, when the political violence group has goals that are ideologically similar to an individual, political identity does matter. I find that a policy proposed by a co-partisan government in response to ideologically aligned violence sees up to an 8% increase in the likelihood that an individual "supports" the measure, when compared to that same policy when proposed by an out-party government.

The "why" behind the heterogeneous impact of political identity on policy approval remains a mystery. My research provided no evidence to support my theory that affective polarization would increase the perceived threat of the extremist groups, thus justifying the increased policy support. One alternative theory is that political parties gain credibility when pursuing policies that target extremists who are ideological peers, but further research is needed to explore this possibility.

The impact of affective polarization in my study should not be overstated. Co-partisanship rarely breached having a 10% impact on the likelihood an individual chose a specific policy approval level and had even less impact on tangible political actions or judicial consequences. However, the implications of a US electorate that judges a policy even partly by its partisan source are troubling. That I find individuals are 13% less likely to strongly oppose

such a consequential and controversial policy as the draft, just because their in-group party proposed it, is concerning. Affective polarization's impact on strong opposition and strong support of the draft implies that, at least within the confines of my experiment, politicians have gained at least some leeway to implement 'costly' policies without actually absorbing costs from their in-group. Alternatively, politicians are likely to absorb outsized costs from those individuals who belong to out-party groups. Depending on the electoral dynamics at play, this could be an incentive against implementing a policy they otherwise would.

There are several positives to be gleaned from the data produced in this study. First, affective polarization does not impact the entire US electorate. Those who identified as "Independent" showed almost no treatment effects when exposed to the scenarios that varied the source of the draft policy. Their policy approval and likelihood to take a political action were stable regardless of the partisan source of the selective service policy. While I did not explicitly test heterogeneous treatment effects in my study of domestic extremism, filtering out the independents from the dataset increased the magnitude of the coefficients. From this we can infer that those independent "leaners" and out-party independents are less prone to the biases associated with affective polarization.

The second positive we can take from this research concerns the heterogeneous effect of affective polarization dependent on the ideology of the domestic threat. When threatened by out-group extremists pursuing ideological goals incompatible with their own, individuals do not increase their already relatively high support for domestic counter-extremism policy due to a co-party government. Nor does a co-party endorsement increase the likelihood they explicitly infringe upon the constitutional rights of the extremists. This suggests at least some hesitance, at the outset and not accounting for inflammatory rhetoric, to demonize the outgroup extremists.

I also find evidence that in-group elites can alter support to police their more malign elements. Co-partisan sponsorship of the counter-extremism policy leads to a smaller, but not insignificant, increase in support for the policy, and likelihood to support the policy with political action. This is perhaps the most important finding of this research. The lowest overall support for a counter-extremism policy, and the largest divide in policy assessment, results from a scenario where the extremists and the government are in opposing ideological groups. In this scenario, those individuals who are out-party from the government but co-ideology with the extremists exhibit the lowest policy approval, while those individuals aligned with the government and out-group from the extremists show the highest policy support. Assuming that higher average policy approval and a lower partisan split in policy approval are better for the US, this is the worst structural arrangement.

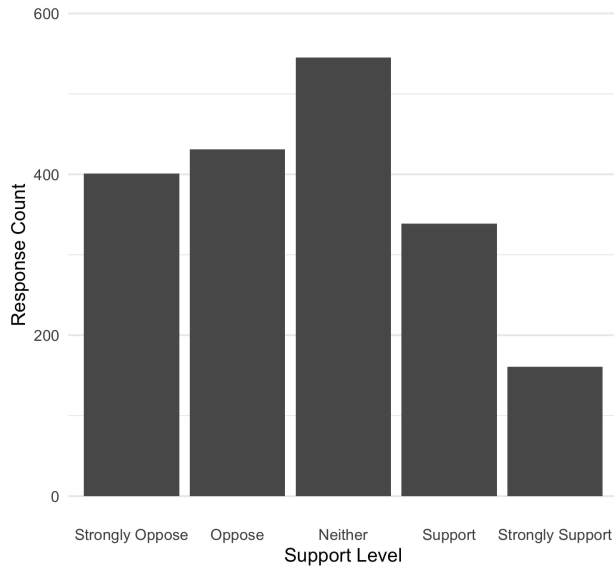
If, however, the party ideologically aligned with the extremists decides to pursue legislative action to counter the political violence, they increase support among their in-group members without losing any policy support amongst out-party members. This results in the highest average policy approval and the lowest partisan divide in policy approval. While this does not equate to a policy “lever” that any government may implement to solve a problem, it does identify an actionable strategy to increase policy support should the US continue to be plagued by political violence.

While there continues to be many areas for further research, specifically the mechanism underlying affective polarization’s impact on policy support, my research provides useful information for US security experts. While there is much focus on China and their ability to coerce US allies, I find relatively little threat from that scenario. China is unlikely to bully or bribe the Philippines to abandon the US, at least within the constraints of my scenario. Security

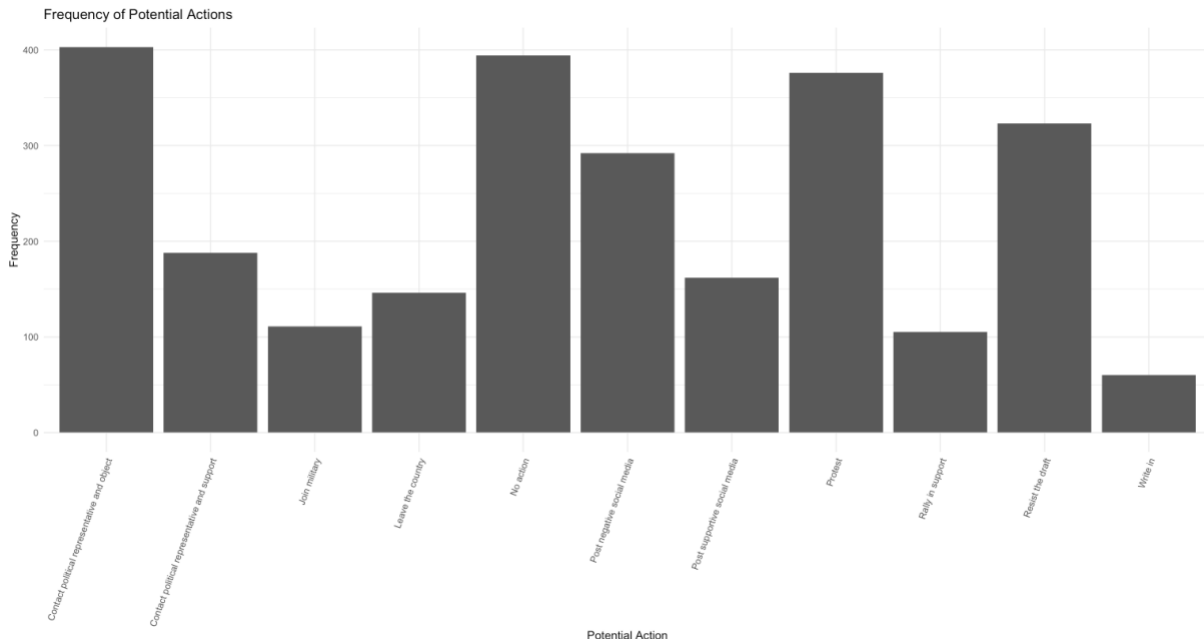
experts do have to contend with a US population who will judge their policies, at least partially, according to the partisan identity of those who create and seek to implement them. This is a problem outside the realm of security professionals, but a structural constraint they must deal with for the time being. Being aware of affective polarizations existence, and its impact on policy support, is one step towards being able to successfully implement a national security strategy in the US.

APPENDIX A  
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR CHAPTER 1

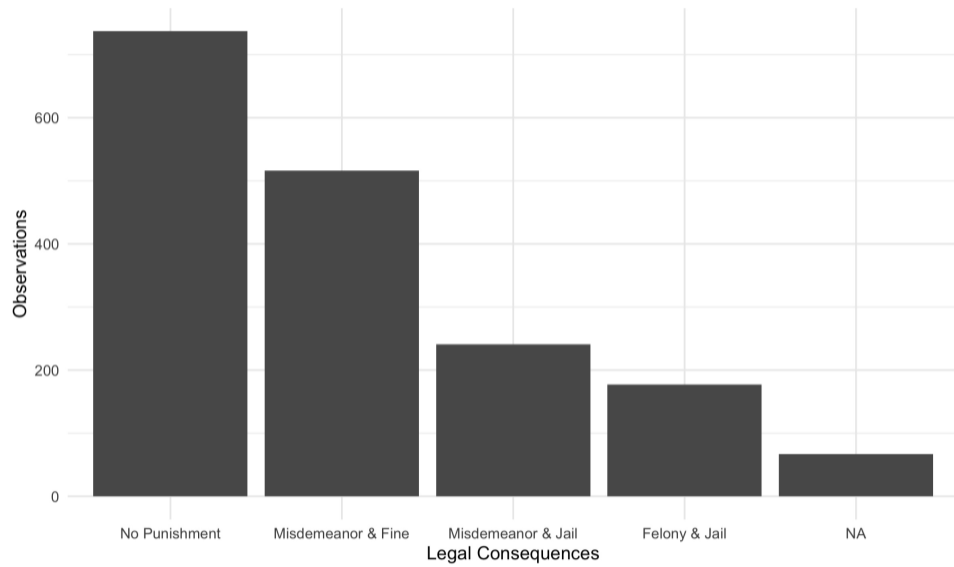
## Graphical Descriptions of Variables



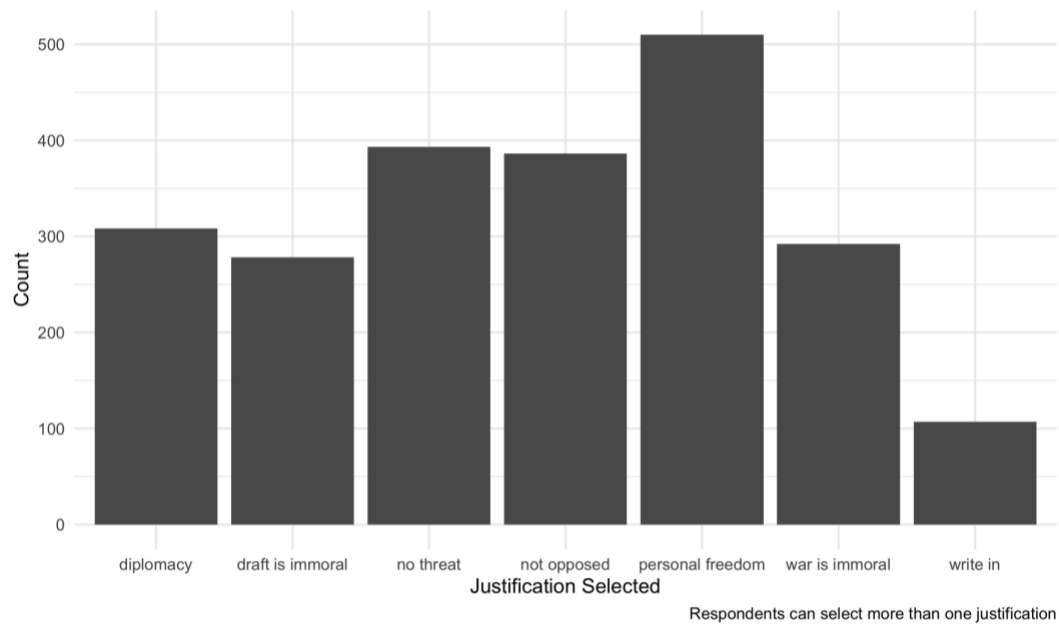
*Fig A.1: Distribution of Survey Respondents Support for Instituting the Draft*



*Fig A.2: Frequency of Potential Actions Respondents Would Take in Response to the Draft*



*Fig A.3: Frequency Distribution of Respondent Preferences for Legal Consequences for Illegitimately Avoiding the Draft*



*Fig A.4: Frequency Distribution of Respondent Justification for Opposing the Draft*

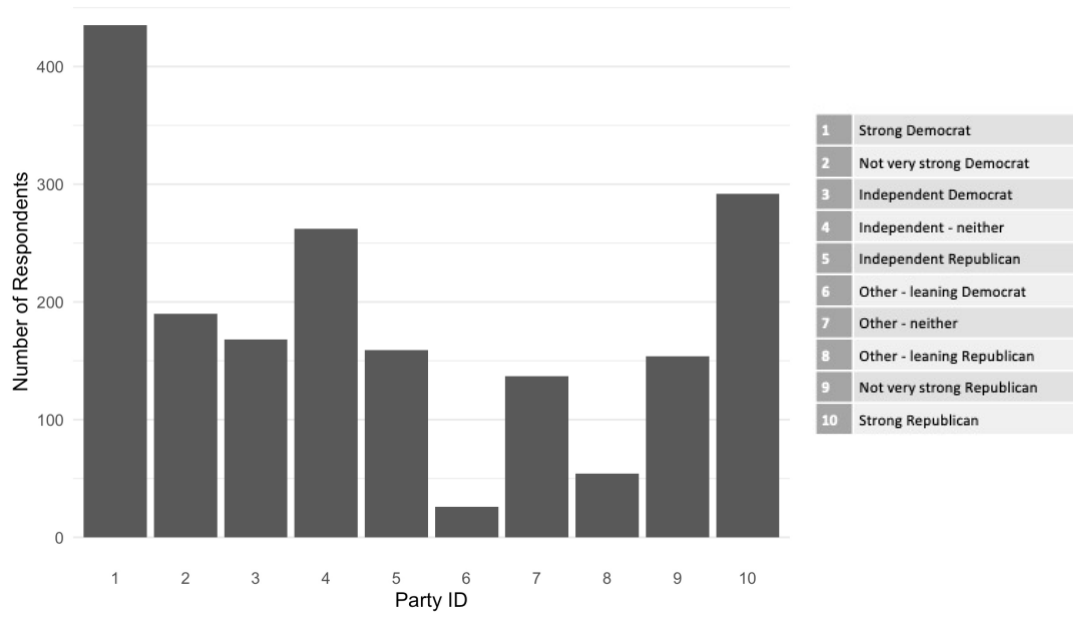


Fig A.5: Distribution of Political Identity of Survey Participants

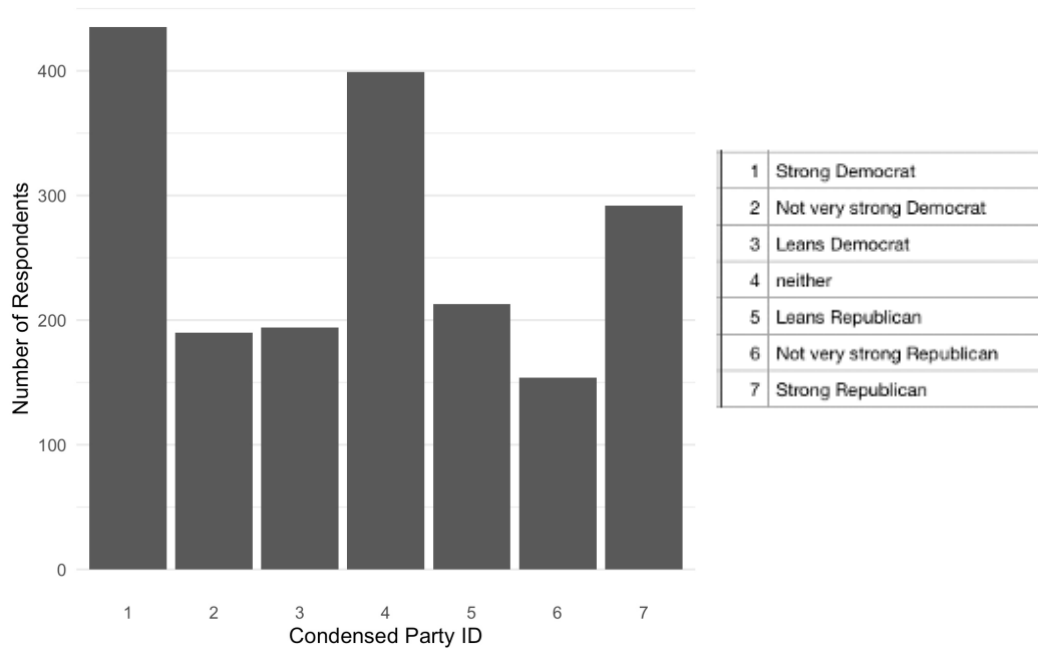
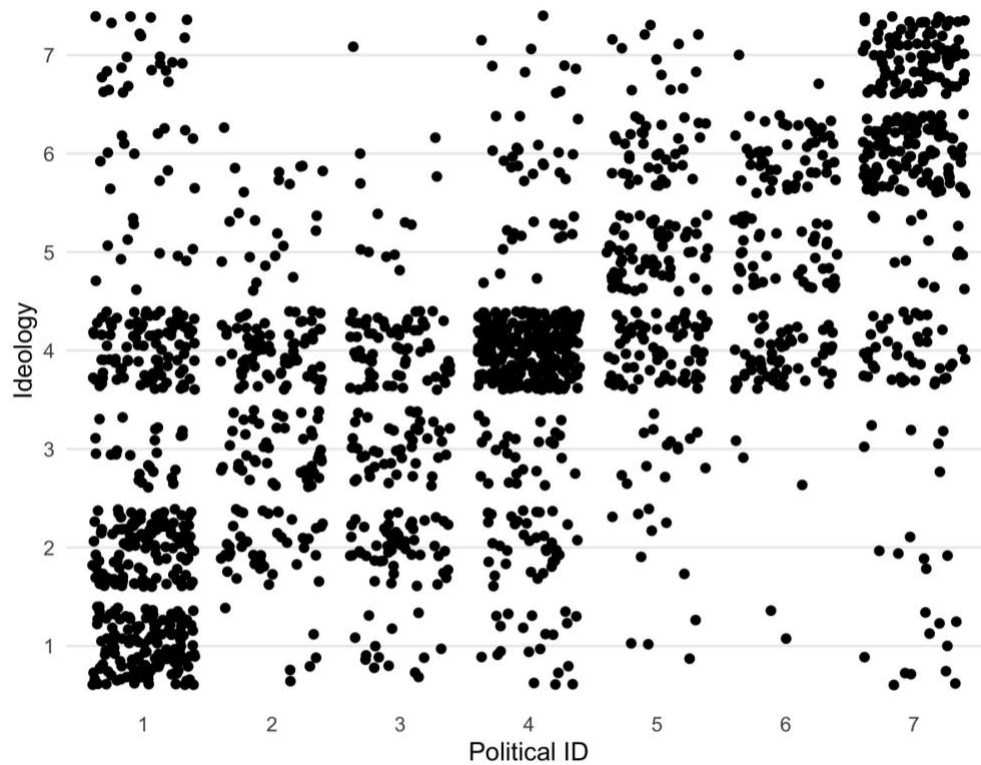


Fig A.6: Distribution of Condensed Political Identity of Survey Participants



*Fig A.7: Correlation Between Respondent Political ID and Ideology*

### Survey Balance Test

A balance chart of relevant demographic variables confirms that respondents have effectively been randomly assigned to a co-partisan status. The variables represented are individual level responses to include gender, age, income, region, ethnicity, education, and ideology. If I have effectively randomized the treatment, then these variables should not be associated with either co-partisan or opposing partisan status, which they are not as evidenced by the roughly equal “mean” value of the variables for each group. The “political\_party” variable does appear to be skewed slightly higher in the group that received the not co-partisan treatment; however, this is a result of “independents” (coded 4 on the survey) who also are ideologically moderate (coded 4 on the survey response for ideology) coded a 0 for co-partisan. This results in

more respondents who have a “4” political party being coded as opposing party than co-partisan. As the median value of the 1-7 coding for pol-party is 3.5, this biases the not co-partisan group mean upwards.

*Table A.1: Survey Experiment Balance Chart*

	Co-Partisan (N=768) / Mean	Opposing Partisan (N=1109) / Mean	Diff. in Means	Std. Error
Policy Support Lvl	2.9	2.6	-0.3	0.1
ideology	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.1
age	45.4	44.6	-0.8	0.8
hhi	9.4	9.1	-0.2	0.3
gender	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0
ethnicity	2.7	2.9	0.2	0.1
hispanic	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.1
education	5.7	5.7	0.0	0.1
political_party	3.8	4.4	0.6	0.1
region	2.6	2.6	0.0	0.0

Full Regression Chart Showing Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support

***Table A.2 Ordinal Probit Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support***

	Base	PT Control	HTE
copart	0.247*** (0.049)	0.249*** (0.051)	0.346*** (0.074)
copart × Ind			-0.519** (0.160)
copart × Rep			-0.074 (0.111)
Female		-0.065 (0.050)	-0.065 (0.050)

	Base	PT Control	HTE
Ind		0.131+	0.251**
		(0.069)	(0.080)
Rep		0.321***	0.359***
		(0.057)	(0.078)
isolationism2		-0.079	-0.081
		(0.125)	(0.125)
isolationism3		0.111	0.098
		(0.112)	(0.112)
isolationism4		0.252*	0.241*
		(0.100)	(0.101)
isolationism5		0.224*	0.211*
		(0.103)	(0.103)
isolationism6		0.453***	0.444***
		(0.121)	(0.121)
isolationism7		0.658***	0.645***
		(0.115)	(0.115)
foreignaffairs2		-0.081	-0.088
		(0.066)	(0.066)
foreignaffairs3		-0.094	-0.098
		(0.075)	(0.075)
foreignaffairs4		0.043	0.024
		(0.095)	(0.096)
age		0.005***	0.005***
		(0.002)	(0.002)
Num. Obs.	1877	1877	1877
BIC	5817.8	5805.9	5810.4

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

DV is "level of policy support"

Model is estimated using Ordinal Probit Regression

## Robustness Checks

Robustness Check 1: In this robustness check there is no recategorization of “leaners” using ideology. PID is measured based solely on initial survey response. As Independents likely don’t experience the same affective polarization biases as those with a politically salient identity, I also run the analysis with observations where PID is coded as “I” removed.

***Table A.3: Ordinal Probit Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support***

	Base	PT Control	Partisans Only	Partisan HTE
Copartisan	0.300*** (0.050)	0.288*** (0.051)	0.304*** (0.055)	0.342*** (0.074)
Copart*PID (R)				-0.084  (0.111)
#Obs	1877	1877	1478	1478
AIC	5779.5	5726.5	4530.9	4532.4
BIC	5807.2	5815.1	4621.0	4627.7
RMSE	2.78	2.78	2.83	2.83

### Notes

Control variables are included in the regression, but excluded from the table

DV is Levels of Policy Support. Model is estimated using an Ordinal Probit Regression

PID alternate measurement

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

The coefficients produced by the ordinal probit regression retain their statistical and substantive significance and align with the primary analysis.

***Table A.4: Discrete Effect of Being Co-Partisan on Policy Support***

		Base	PT Control	Partisans Only	Partisans HTE
Copart	Neither	0.017***	0.016***	0.014***	0.015***
	Oppose	-0.033***	-0.031***	-0.032***	-0.031***
	Strongly Oppose	-0.084***	-0.079***	-0.084***	-0.085***
	Strongly Support	0.049***	0.045***	0.049***	0.048***
	Support	0.052***	0.049***	0.053***	0.053***
#Obs.	1877	1877	1478	1478	
AIC	5779.5	5726.5	4530.9	4532.4	
BIC	5807.2	5815.1	4621.0	4627.7	
RMSE	2.78	2.78	2.83	2.83	

The discrete effects show largely the same. There is no substantive change in the results.

Robustness Check 2: For this robustness check, I code all respondents who have contradictory ideologies and political ID's categorized as "Independent." The effects of the treatment remain consistent in their statistical significance and their direction.

Table A.5: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-partisan Status on Policy Support

		Est.	S.E.
copart	1	-0.056***	0.014
	2	-0.021***	0.006
	3	0.012***	0.003
	4	0.034***	0.009
	5	0.032***	0.008
Num.Obs.		1877	
AIC		5799.8	
BIC		5827.5	
RMSE		2.78	

DV is Levels of Policy Support. Model is estimated using an Ordinal Probit Regression

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Robustness Check 3: For the final robustness respondents who replied with an ideology of 1 and a political ID of 7 and those who replied with an ideology of 7 and a political ID of 1 are excluded from the data under the assumption they were either not paying attention or providing invalid information to the survey. All other contradictory ideology and political ID responses are coded as “independent.” Again, results remain consistent in terms of both statistical significance and directionality.

Table A.6: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Policy Support

**Figure 2.4: Discrete Effect of Being Co-Partisan on Policy Support**

		Est.	S.E.
copart	1	-0.061***	0.014
	2	-0.024***	0.006
	3	0.014***	0.003
	4	0.038***	0.009
	5	0.033***	0.008
Num.Obs.		1843	
AIC		5665.8	
BIC		5693.4	
RMSE		2.77	

DV is Levels of Policy Support. Model is estimated using an Ordinal Probit Regression

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Analysis of Potential Actions using binary variables and logistic regression

The following shows the effects of co-partisan status on an individuals likelihood they say they would take a political action. Unlike the primary analysis, this analysis does not combine dependent variables using factor analysis. Results remain consistent and there are no noteworthy deviations. To evaluate the substantive nature of the coefficients produced by the regression I will take two approaches. First, I'll exponentiate the coefficients to convert them into odds-ratios. Secondly, so as to not overstate the impact of co-partisanship on the likelihood that an individual says they will take a potential action, I will look at the average discrete effect which presents coefficients in the relatively simple to understand change in predicted probability.

**Table A.7: Logistic Regression Analysis of Co-Partisan Status on Potential Actions**

	Leave US	Resist	Protest	Communicate to Political Rep: Neg	Neg Social Media	No Action	Pos Social Media	Communicate to Political Rep: Pos	Rally	Join Mil
copart	-0.142	-0.110	-0.300*	-0.415**	-0.359*	0.044	0.714**	0.558**	0.546*	0.300
	(0.199)	(0.140)	(0.131)	(0.129)	(0.145)	(0.125)	(0.200)	(0.184)	(0.262)	(0.213)
# Obs.	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715
AIC	858.2	1512.8	1680.4	1725.4	1455.5	1793.6	884.4	934.7	571.8	780.0
BIC	939.9	1594.5	1762.1	1807.1	1537.2	1875.3	966.1	1016.4	653.5	861.7
F	6.687	6.941	5.797	6.676	3.259	5.996	2.447	7.730	2.018	3.743
RMSE	0.26	0.37	0.39	0.40	0.36	0.41	0.26	0.27	0.19	0.24

DV is a binary choice of a potential action in support or opposition of the draft.  
Model is estimated using Logistic Regression

Pre-treatment controls are not displayed but include gender, age, PID, isolationism, and foreign affairs (see supplementary materials for full regression table)

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Interpreting only the statistically significant coefficients, I find that a co-partisan individual has a decrease of 26% in the odds they say they would protest a decrease of 34% in their odds of contacting their political representative in opposition, and a 30% decrease in the odds of posting on social media in opposition when compared to out-partisans. correspondingly, co-partisans have 204% times the odds of posting support on social media, 175% of the odds of contacting their political representation in support, and 172% of the odds of rallying in support of instituting the draft compared to out-partisans.

While those increases and decreases in the odds an individual takes an action sound significant, it is important to cage them to the low probability that an individual says they would take an action at all. With regard to the largest effect I find, the increase in likelihood a co-

partisan individual posts support on social media, only 124 individuals out of 1877 (6.6%) indicated they would take that action.

**Table A.8: Avg Discrete Effect of Co-Partisan Status on Potential Actions**

	Leave	Resist	Protest	Communicate to Political Rep: Neg	Negative social media	no action	Positive social media	Communicate to Political Rep: Pos	Rally	Join Military
copart	-0.009	-0.015	-0.046*	-0.065***	-0.044*	0.007	0.049***	0.043**	0.021*	0.017
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.013)
#Obs	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715	1715
AIC	858.2	1512.8	1680.4	1725.4	1455.5	1793.6	884.4	934.7	571.8	780.0
BIC	939.9	1594.5	1762.1	1807.1	1537.2	1875.3	966.1	1016.4	653.5	861.7
F	6.687	6.941	5.797	6.676	3.259	5.996	2.447	7.730	2.018	3.743
RMSE	0.26	0.37	0.39	0.40	0.36	0.41	0.26	0.27	0.19	0.24

DV is a binary choice of a potential action in support or opposition of the draft.  
Model is estimated using Logistic Regression

Pre-treatment controls are not displayed but include gender, age, PID, isolationism, and foreign affairs. see supplementary materials for full regression table

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Being co-partisan with the government decreases the average predicted probability an individual will say they'd protest by 4.6%, communicate their opposition to their political representative by 6.5%, and post their opposition on social media by 4.4%. Co-partisan status then increases the average predicted probability a respondent said they would post support on social media by 4.9%, communicate their support for the draft to their political representative by 4.3%, and potentially rally in support of the draft by 2.1%.

#### Heterogeneous Treatment Effects of Co-Partisanship Conditional upon PID

When I model the interaction between co-partisan status and political identity, I receive some additional evidence that affective polarization derivative of an individual's political identity impacts the willingness to take action in support of, or opposition to a policy.

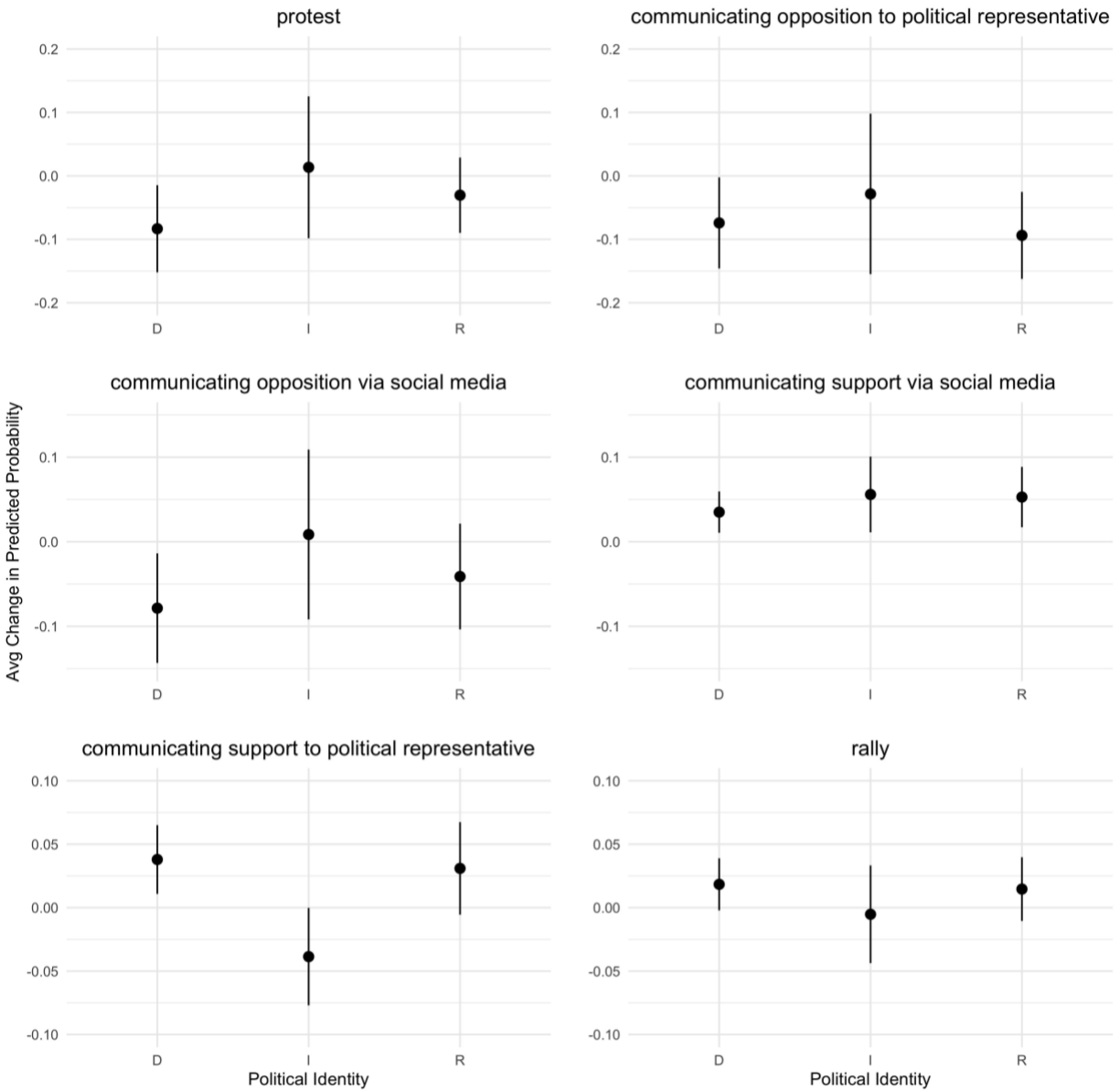


Fig A.8: Potential Actions Conditional Upon Party ID

Republican Respondents who received the co-partisan treatment see a statistically significant 10% decrease in their average predicted probability of communicating opposition to their political representative, and 5% increase in the likelihood they commit to posting support via social media. Co-partisan Democrats see statistically significant effects across a broader range of

actions, though the effect size is similar. Co-partisan democrats are nearly 9% less likely to say they would protest the draft or communicate their opposition through either social media or to their political representative. Meanwhile, they see approximately 4% increase in the average predicted probability they would communicate their support to their political representative or through social media.

Those individuals who identify as Independent largely fail to see substantive or statistically significant coefficients. However, Independents do show a statistically significant response to the co-partisan treatment for the communicate support through social media or through your political representative categories. They experience a little more than 5% increase in average predicted probability they say they would communicate support over social media and about a 4% decrease that they would communicate support to their political representative when exposed to a co-partisan policy proposal.

Finding any statistically significant effect of co-partisanship on Independent's propensity for political action is surprising. The previous analysis revealed that the co-partisan treatment had no effect on Independent's policy support. The increase in predicted probability for communicating support theoretically holds with my theory, as individuals who identify as "Independent" can still be co-partisan under my measurement scheme based upon their ideological preference. However, the 4% decrease in average predicted probability of communicating support to their political representatives is in opposition to my theory and hypothesis. Further research into how individuals who identify as independent communicate their policy preferences may help illuminate this mystery.

APPENDIX B  
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR CHAPTER 2

Analysis of Post-Treatment Manipulation Check Failures

Respondents on the first survey experiment failed the post-treatment manipulation check at a relatively high rates of 28% (362 failures out of 1228 observations). Only one manipulation check was used on the first run of the experiment, querying the respondent as to the political identity of the government in the scenario. Due to the high failure rates, two adaptations were made to the structure of the experiment. First, a second manipulation check was added, asking the ideology of the extremists in the scenario. Second, the respondent was able, but not forced, to scroll up on the survey and revisit the scenario if they were unable to recall the answer to the manipulation check. With these changes, and coding only those individuals who fail both of the 2<sup>nd</sup> run manipulation checks as “failing,” I have much lower failure rates.

Table 3.1 breaks down the manipulation check failures by round and by my dependent variable, the social category of the respondent with respect to the government and extremist groups. There is no observable pattern, with the government treatment group having the lowest percentage of failures in the first round, but highest percentage of failures in the second.

***Table B.1 Manipulation Check Failures by Survey Round & Treatment Group***

		1st Round / Fail	1sr Round / Pass	2nd Round / Fail	2 <sup>nd</sup> Round / Pass	All
Extremists	N	99	207	24	206	536
	% row	18.5	38.6	4.5	38.4	100.0
Both	N	94	194	19	230	537
	% row	17.5	36.1	3.5	42.8	100.0
Gov't	N	69	223	27	229	548
	% row	12.6	40.7	4.9	41.8	100.0
Neither	N	107	244	30	281	662
	% row	16.2	36.9	4.5	42.4	100.0
All	N	369	868	100	946	2283
	% row	16.2	38.0	4.4	41.4	100.0

Figure 3.1 demonstrates the heterogenous treatment effect when we condition support for counter-extremism policy on whether the individual passed at least one manipulation check. There are no substantive or statistically significant effects for any of the treatment groups that failed the manipulation checks, while we see consistent effects in the hypothesized direction for those individuals who passed at least one manipulation check.

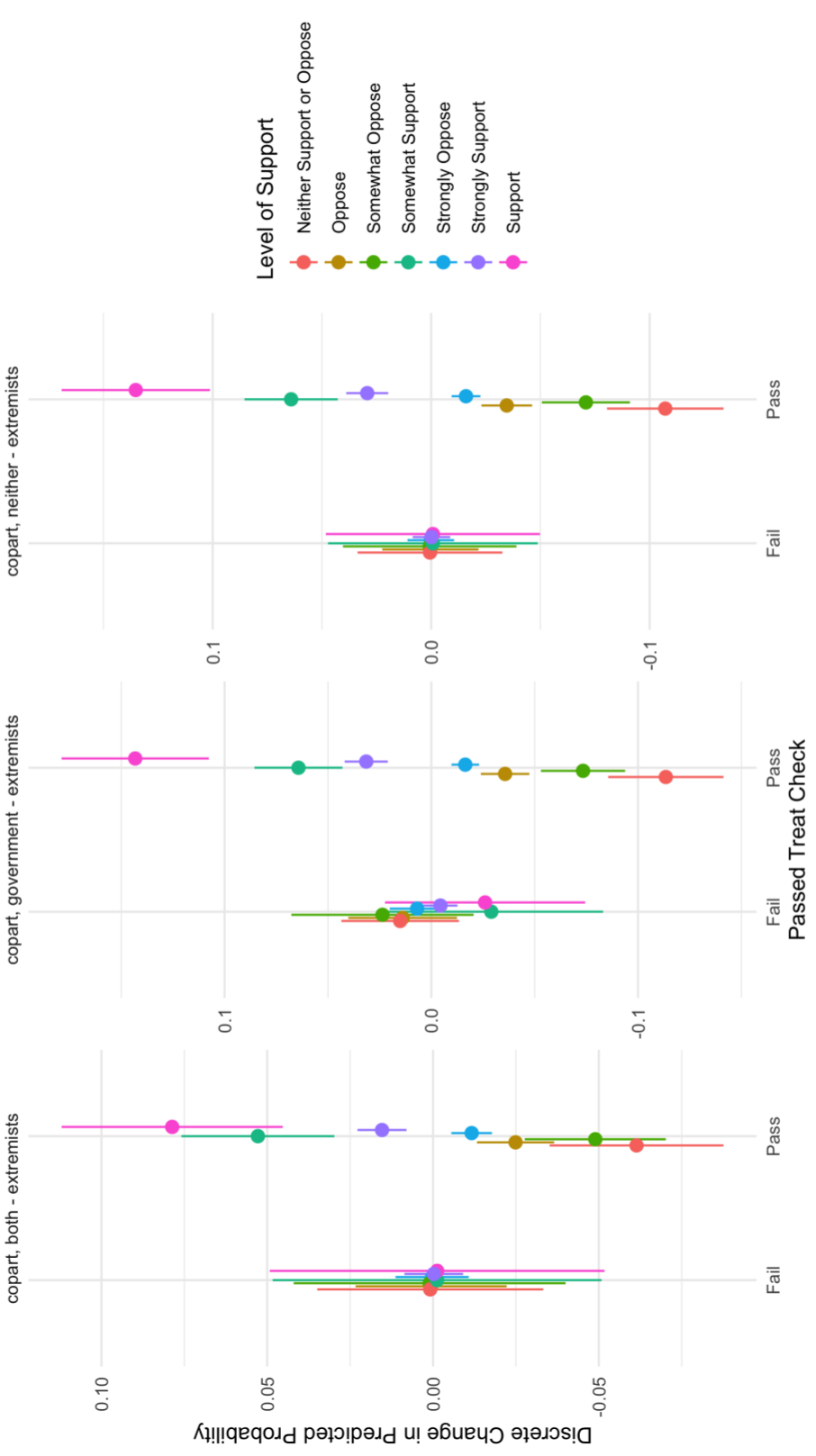


Fig B.1: Discrete Effects Conditional Upon Manipulation Check

A balance chart of demographic characteristics reveals only small differences in the survey population that failed all manipulation checks.

*Table B.2: Survey Experiment Balance Chart*

	Fail (N=469)		Pass (N=1814)		Diff. in Means	Std. Error
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.		
copart	2.53	1.17	2.60	1.13	0.07	0.06
ideology_num	3.85	1.53	4.05	1.59	0.19	0.08
age	19.78	3.33	19.73	1.54	-0.05	0.16
gender_num	1.62	0.49	1.59	0.49	-0.02	0.03
race_num	4.82	1.93	5.10	1.71	0.29	0.10
	N	Pct.	N	Pct.		
pid_condensed	D	190	40.5	847	46.7	
	I	31	6.6	94	5.2	
	R	248	52.9	873	48.1	

\*Some values represent categorical choices but have been transformed to numeric to enable balance testing

Furthermore, running a series of logistic regressions using the successful completion of at least one manipulation check as the dependent variable, and demographic characteristics as the independent variable, we find few substantive or statistically significant correlations. Of most concern fact that individuals in the government group were 5% more likely to pass the manipulation check. This treatment combination, of an in-party government and an out-group ideology threat may elicit greater attention than the other social combinations.

**Table B.3: Likelihood of Passing at Least One Post-Treatment Manipulation Check**

		PID	Race	Social Category	Treatment
PID	I - D	-0.065			
	R - D	-0.038*			
race	Asian - White		-0.072*		
	Black - White		-0.084+		
	Hispanic - White		-0.074+		
	Multi-racial - White		0.079*		
	Native American - White		-0.141		
	Other - White		0.032		
copart	both - extremists			0.019	
	government - extremists			0.054*	
	neither - extremists			0.023	
treatment	L_ext R_gov - L_ext D_gov				0.007
	R_ext D_gov - L_ext D_gov				0.076**
	R_ext R_gov - L_ext D_gov				0.090***
#Obs		2283	2245	2283	2283
AIC		2318.6	2267.1	2321.7	2303.9
BIC		2335.8	2307.1	2344.6	2326.9
F		3.107	3.021	1.681	7.486
RMSE		0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40

DV is a binary variable of passing at least 1 manipulation check.

Model is estimated using a logistic regression

Coefficients presented as Avg Discrete Effects

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

### Supplementary Analysis Charts Using All Observations

Using all observations from round 2 of the survey experiment, I find complimentary results to the primary analysis using only individuals who passed at least one manipulation check. All results remain substantively and statistically significant with similar discrete effects on policy support.

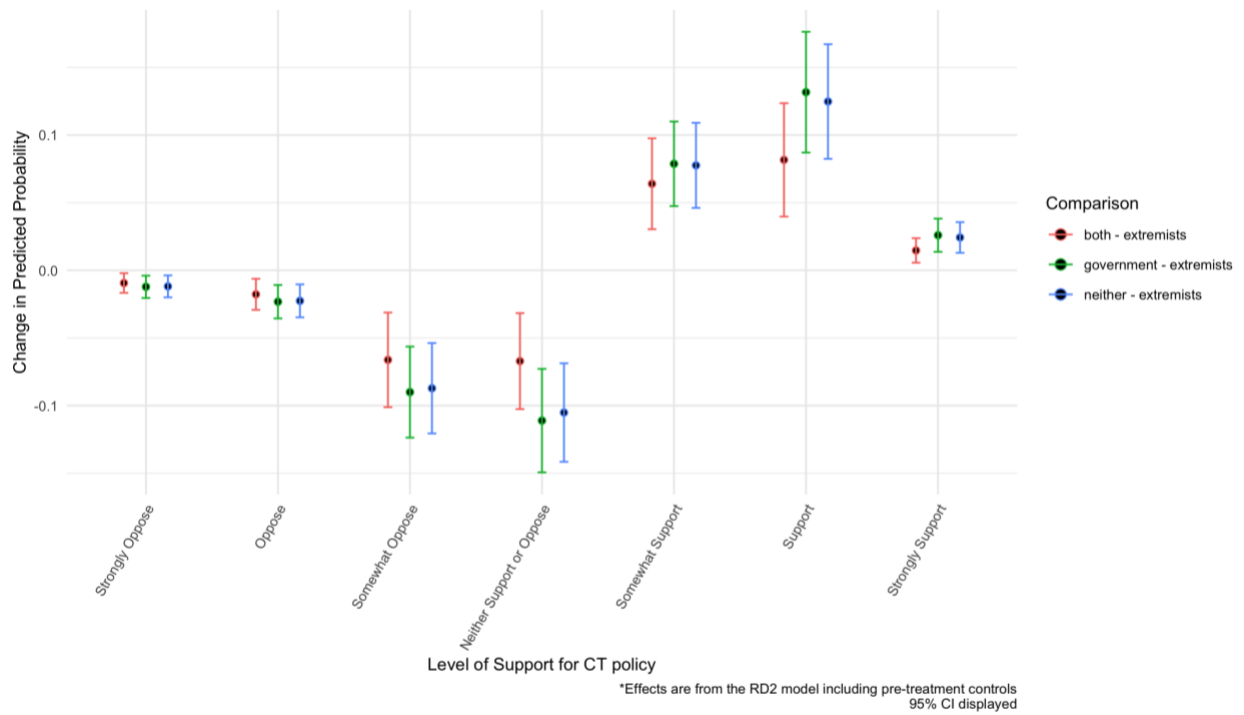


Fig B.2: Partisan Orientation Effect on Support for Counter Extremism Policy

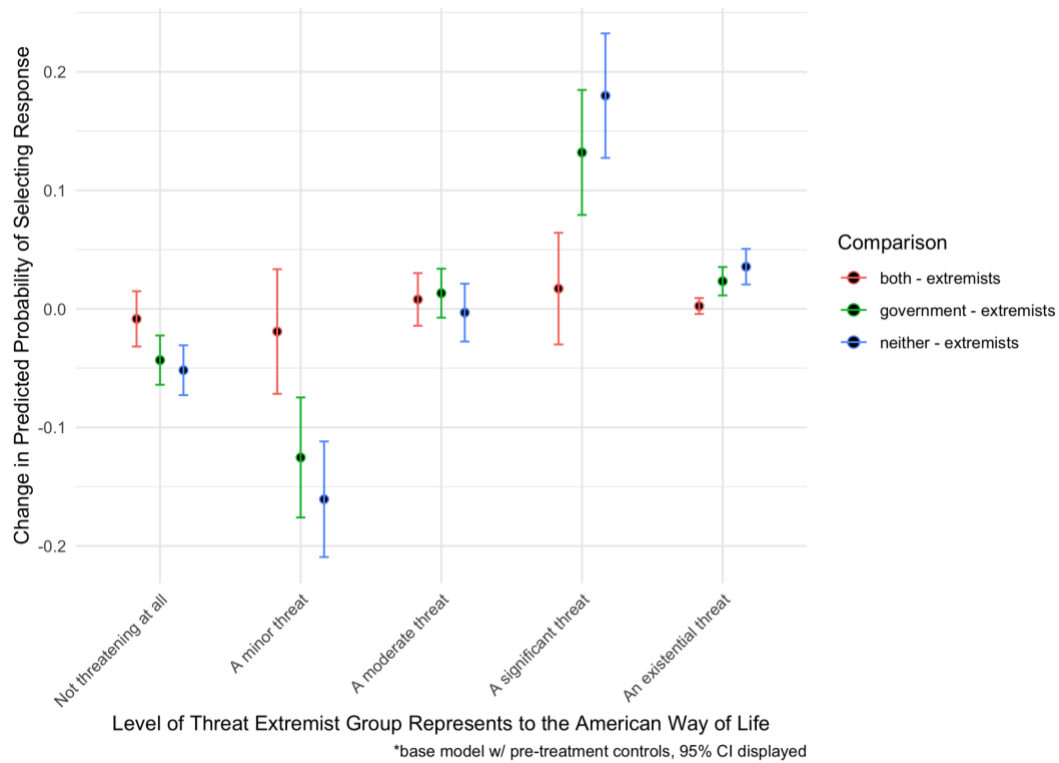


Fig B.3: Discrete Effect of Partisan Orientation on Threat Perception – All Observations

Figure 3.1 again shows similar results to the primary analysis with no substantive changes to inferences made. Using only the round 2 observations, I do lose the statistical significance between the “neither” and “government” treatment groups with regard to threat perception, however, this does not impact the inferences drawn, only future potential research.

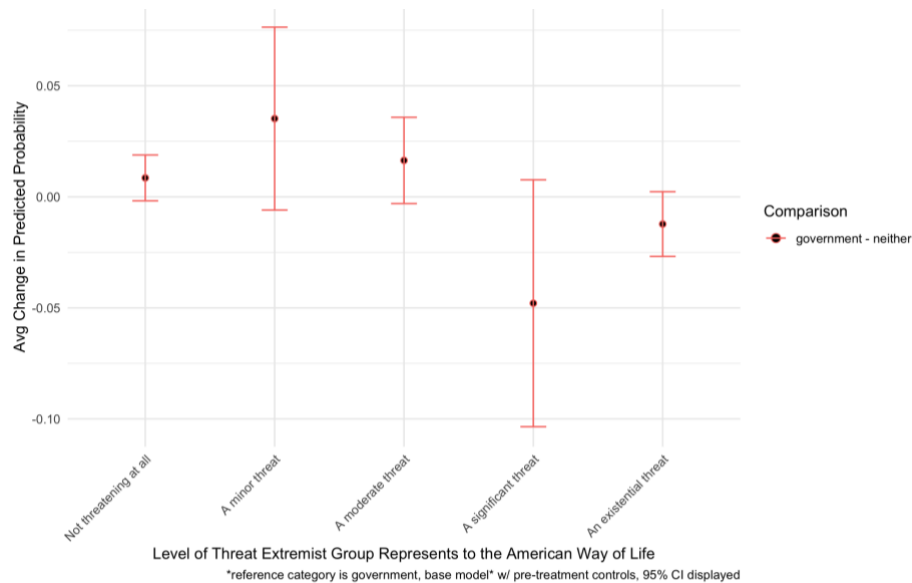


Fig B.4: Discrete Effect of “Neither” treatment compared to “Gov’t” on Threat Perception

Again we see very little substantive change when using only round 2 observations to examine how affective polarization impacts individual preference for justice department authorities. Directionality is overall the same as are the ordering of the dependent variable categories. Overall, we find a slight decrease in effect size and an increase in the 95% confidence intervals. This is expected considering the null results produced by those individuals who failed the manipulation check, but does not substantively effect the results nor inferences gained from this research.

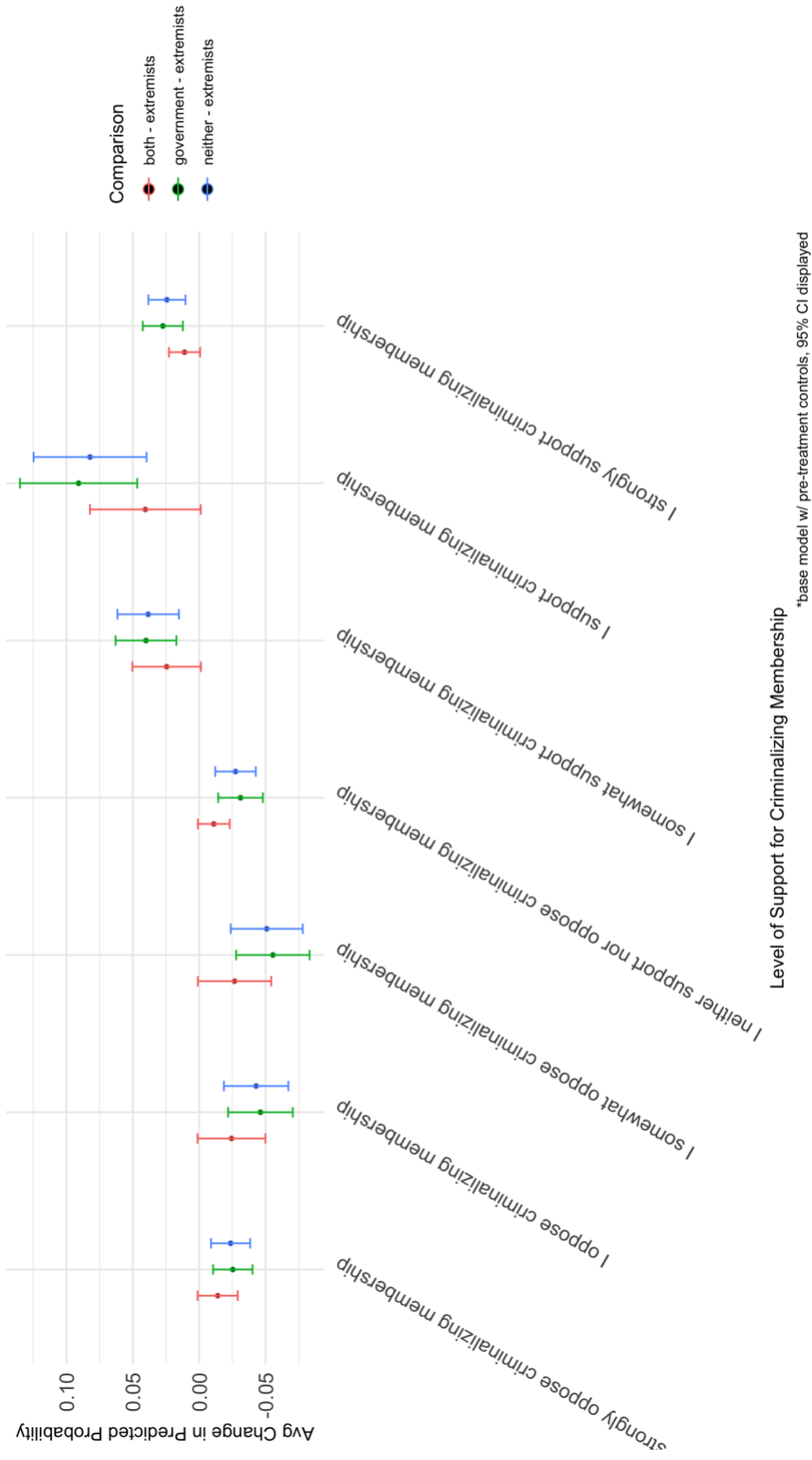


Fig. B.5: Support for Criminalizing Membership – All Observation

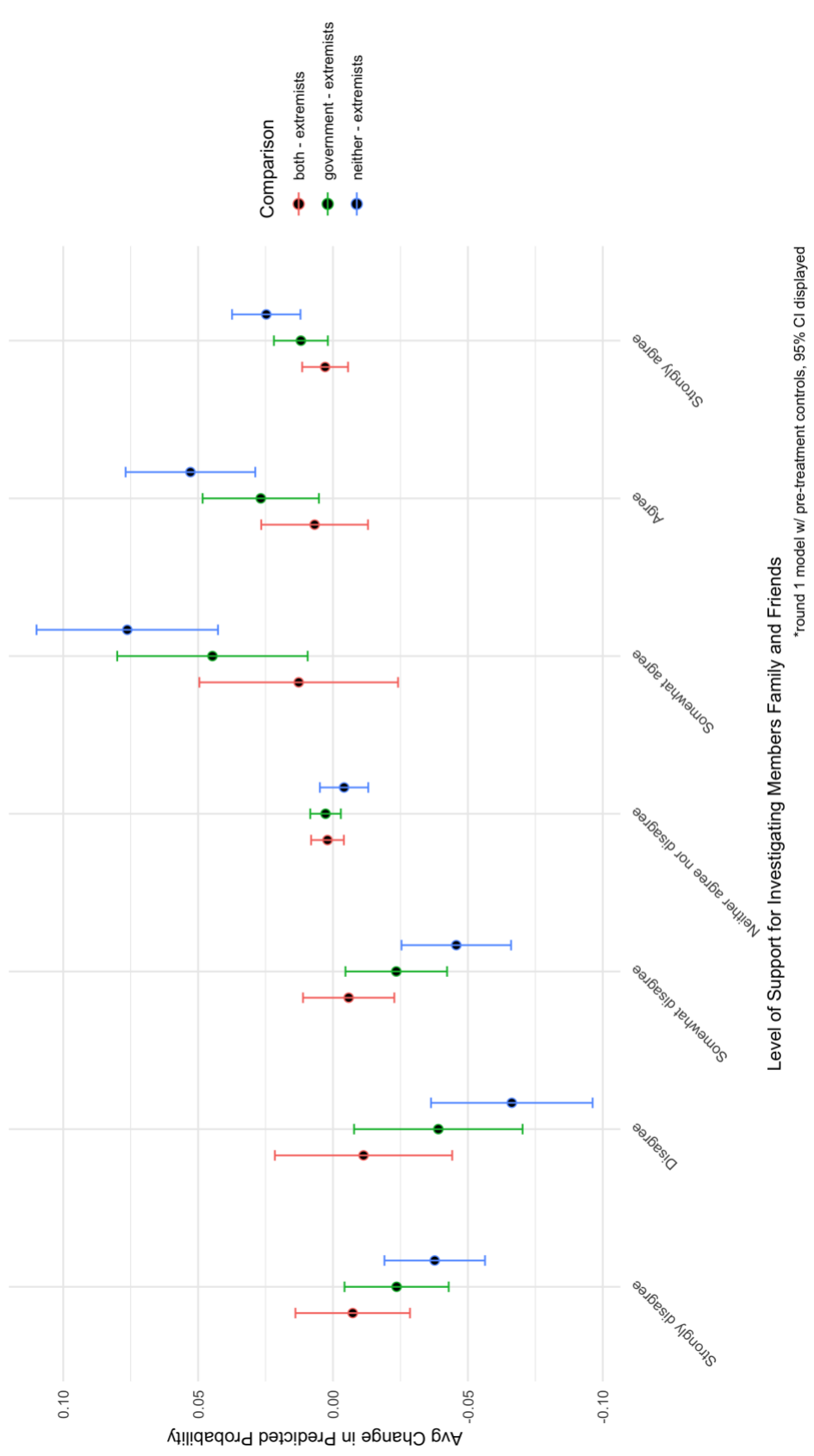
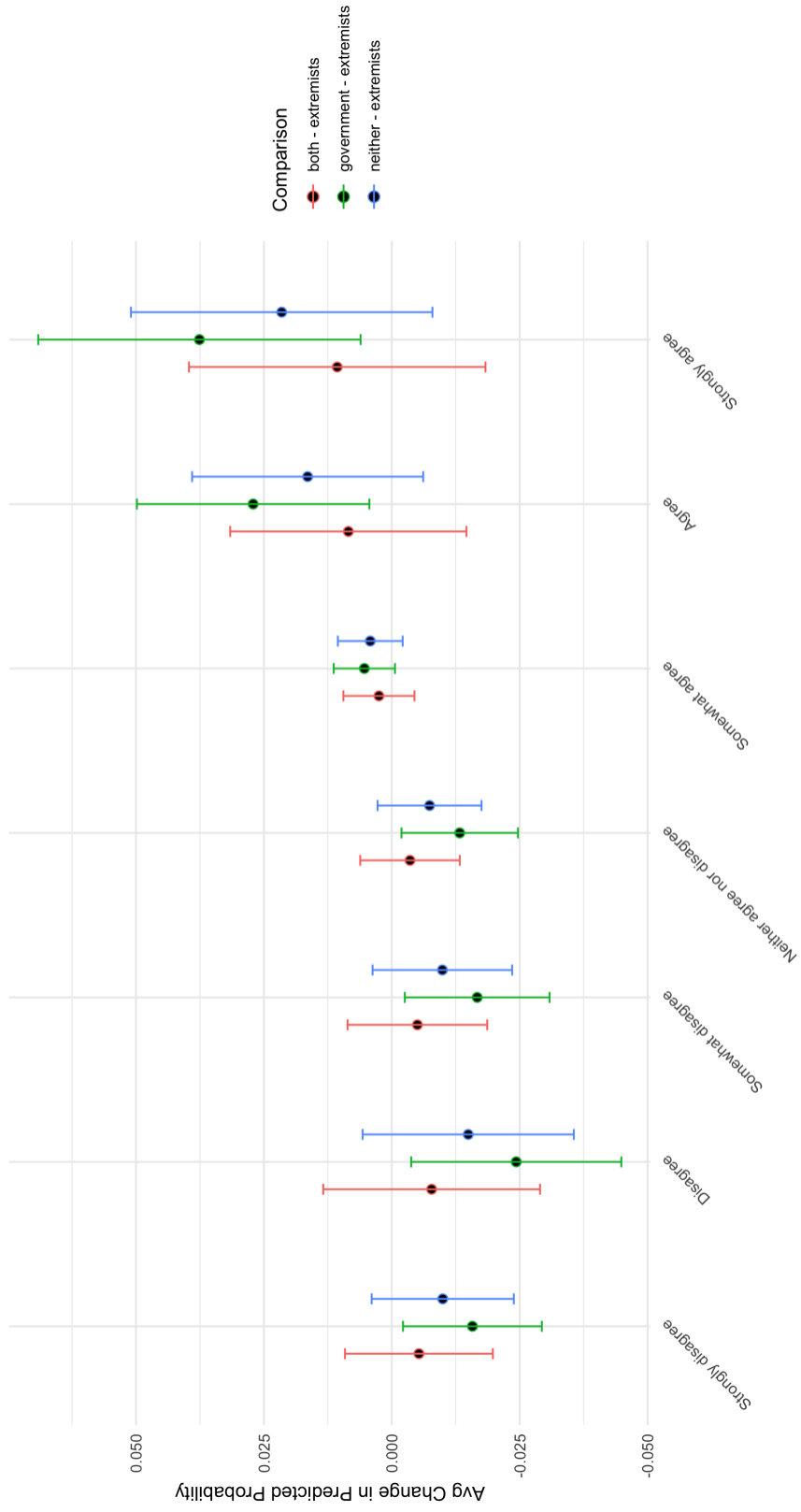


Fig B.6: Support for Investigating friends and Family – All Observations



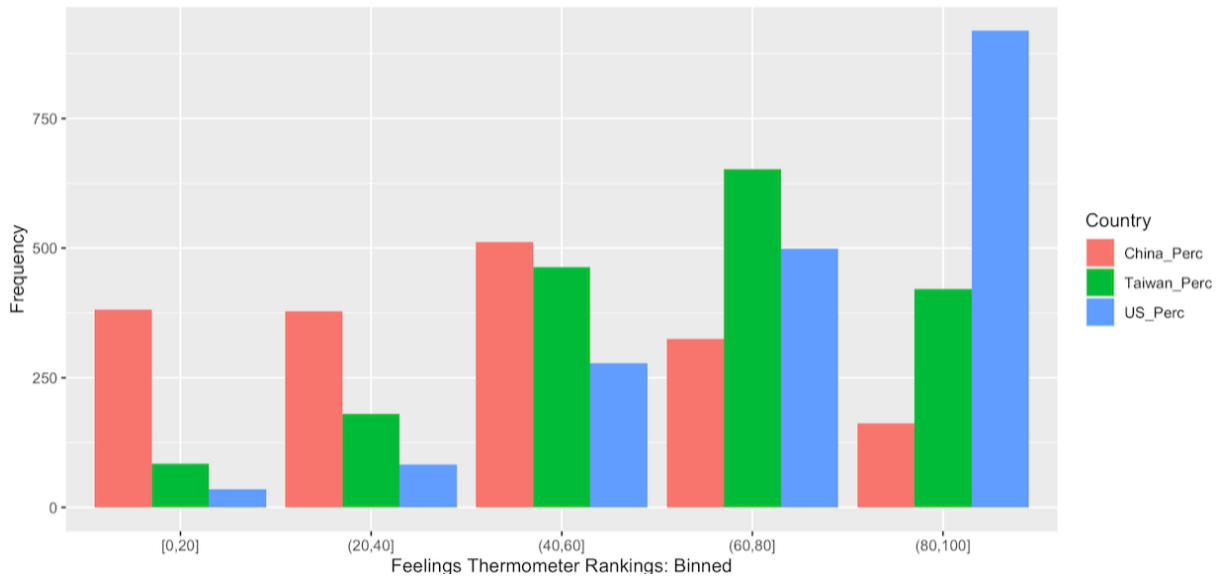
Level of Support for Curtailing 2nd Amendment Rights  
 \*round 1 model w/ pre-treatment controls, 95% CI displayed

Fig B.7: Support for Curtailing 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Rights – All Observations

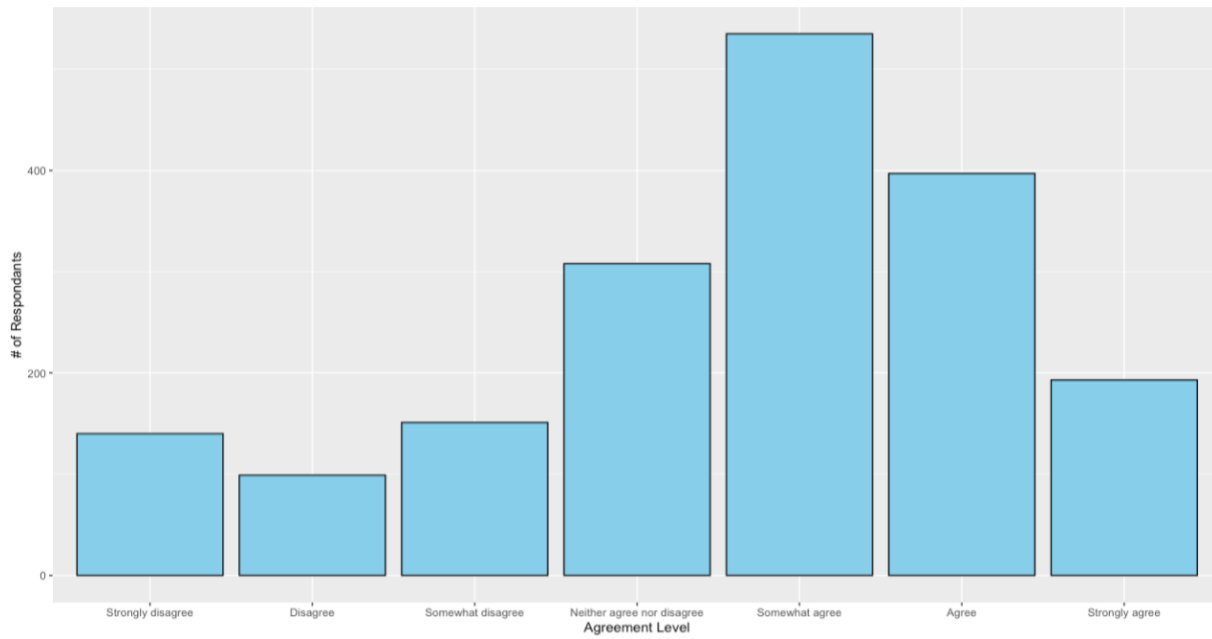
APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR CHAPTER 3

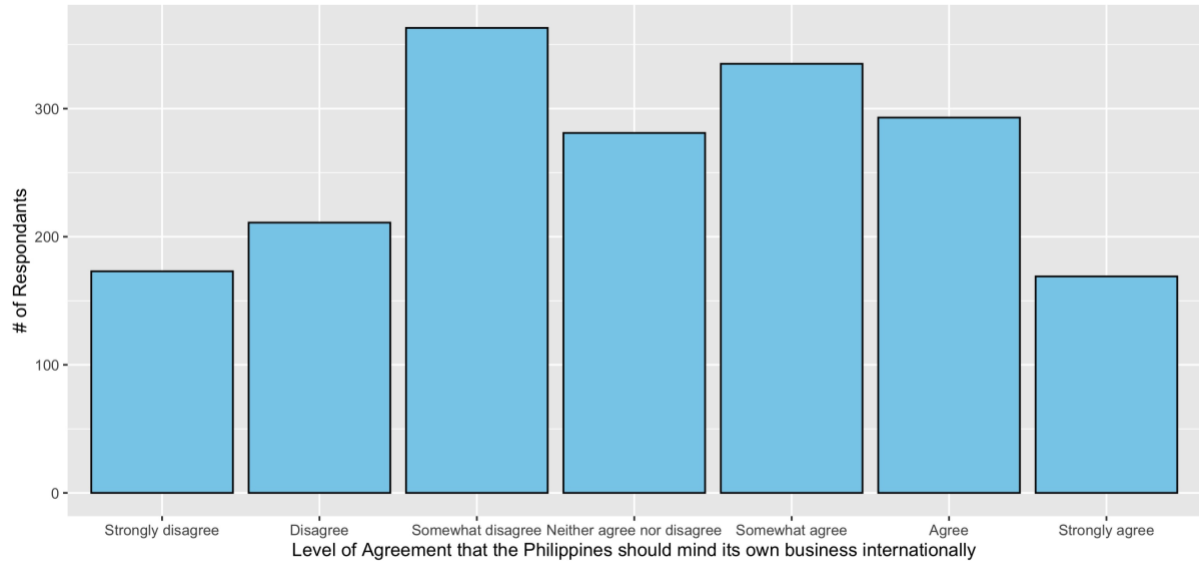
Descriptive Data Figures



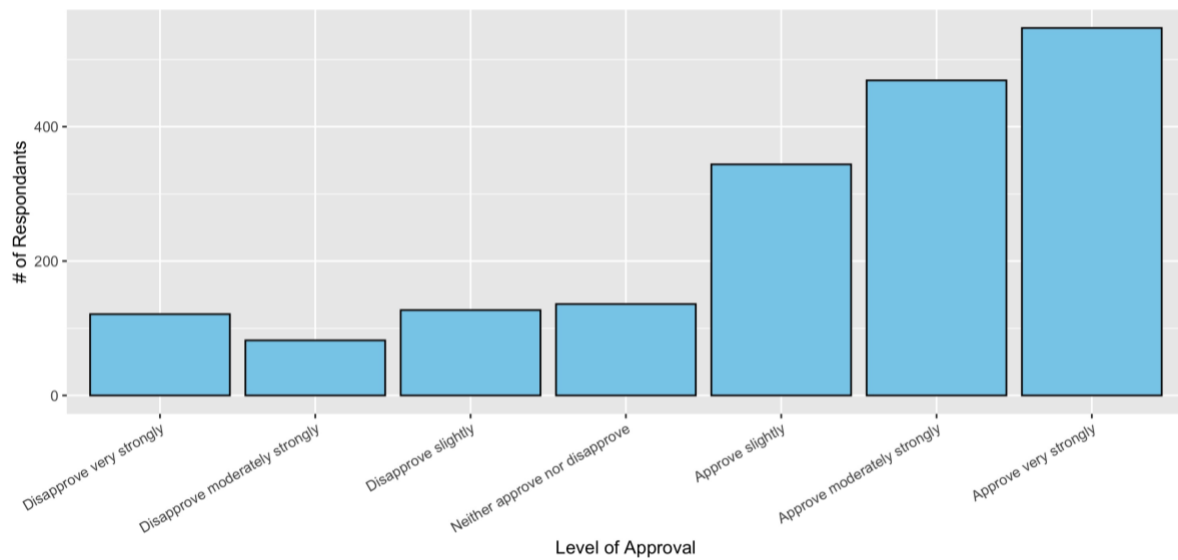
*Fig C.1: Feeling Thermometer Responses: Binned*



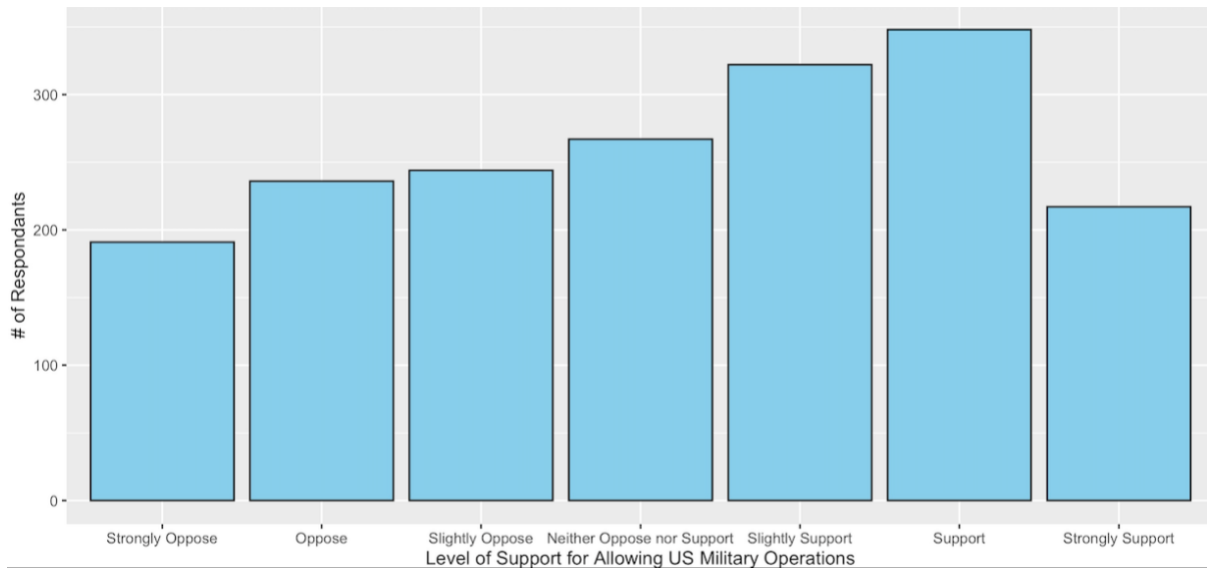
*Fig C.2: Preference for Strengthening the Relationship Between China and the Philippines*



*Fig C.3: Pre-Treatment Distribution of Isolationist Foreign Policy Preference Among Respondents*



*Fig C.4: Pre-Treatment Approval Levels of President Marcos Jr.*



*Fig C.5: Post-Treatment Support for Allowing US Military Operations to be Conducted from Filipino Territory*

*Table D.1: Coercion Survey Experiment Balance Chart*

	No	No	Econ	Econ	Mil	Mil +	Mil +
	Coercion	Coercion	(N=406) /	(N=406) /	(N=406) /	Induce	Induce
	(N=404) /	(N=404) /	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	(N=611) /	(N=611) /
	Mean	Std. Dev.			Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
China Perception	45.6	26.7	47.8	24.7	44.9	44.2	26.4
US Perception	77.7	20.6	77.0	20.1	76.8	76.3	21.6
Taiwan Perception	65.4	21.8	64.2	20.9	63.6	64.5	23.0
Age	34.2	11.1	34.4	11.1	33.3	32.6	10.2
China Integration	4.7	1.7	4.6	1.7	4.5	4.7	1.6
Isolationism	4.2	1.8	4.0	1.8	4.1	4.0	1.7
Gender	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	N	Pct.
	F 160	39.6	163	40.1	186	248	40.6
	M 155	38.4	147	36.2	147	247	40.4

\*Some values represent categorical choices but have been transformed to enable balance testing

**Supplementary Figures for Analysis:**

Full Regression for table 3.1

*Table D.2: Ordinal Logit Regression Analysis of Coercive Strategy on Support for US Military Operations*

	Supt Ops	Supt Ops+	Supt Ops++	Supt Ops+++	Supt Ops#
Strongly Oppose Oppose	-2.294*** (0.110)	-1.462*** (0.191)	-1.606*** (0.218)	-0.070 (0.308)	-1.331*** (0.209)
Oppose Slightly Oppose	-1.332*** (0.096)	-0.512** (0.183)	-0.651** (0.210)	0.945** (0.305)	-0.405* (0.201)
Slightly Oppose Neither Oppose nor Support	-0.687*** (0.092)	0.145 (0.182)	0.011 (0.209)	1.661*** (0.307)	0.267 (0.200)
Neither Oppose nor Support Slightly Support	-0.088 (0.091)	0.690*** (0.182)	0.569** (0.209)	2.291*** (0.309)	0.827*** (0.201)
Slightly Support Support	0.659*** (0.092)	1.458*** (0.185)	1.371*** (0.212)	3.209*** (0.314)	1.617*** (0.205)
Support Strongly Support	1.862*** (0.105)	2.710*** (0.197)	2.678*** (0.223)	4.689*** (0.328)	2.821*** (0.219)
treat econ	-0.078 (0.122)	-0.148 (0.140)	-0.101 (0.142)	-0.020 (0.145)	-0.166 (0.156)
treat mil	-0.232+ (0.124)	-0.291* (0.139)	-0.280* (0.140)	-0.273+ (0.143)	-0.299+ (0.157)
treat minduc	-0.228* (0.113)	-0.277* (0.128)	-0.284* (0.128)	-0.270* (0.131)	-0.311* (0.144)
Age		0.017***	0.019***	0.009+	0.020***

	Supt Ops	Supt Ops+	Supt Ops++	Supt Ops+++	Supt Ops#
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
GenderMale	0.659***	0.622***	0.544***	0.706***	
	(0.095)	(0.096)	(0.098)	(0.105)	
isolationism.L		-0.164	-0.001		
		(0.161)	(0.164)		
isolationism.Q		0.205	0.073		
		(0.159)	(0.163)		
isolationism.C		-0.060	-0.090		
		(0.138)	(0.140)		
isolationism^4		-0.181	-0.204		
		(0.133)	(0.136)		
isolationism^5		-0.165	-0.115		
		(0.116)	(0.118)		
isolationism^6		-0.206+	-0.190+		
		(0.110)	(0.113)		
PH_govt_approvalApp rove slightly		-0.116	-0.117		
		(0.139)	(0.141)		
PH_govt_approvalApp rove very strongly		0.290*	0.143		
		(0.131)	(0.135)		
PH_govt_approvalDis approve moderately strongly		-0.259	-0.223		
		(0.236)	(0.239)		

	Supt Ops	Supt Ops+	Supt Ops++	Supt Ops+++	Supt Ops#
PH_govt_approvalDis approve slightly			-0.072 (0.189)	0.020 (0.193)	
PH_govt_approvalDis approve very strongly			0.084 (0.203)	-0.042 (0.214)	
PH_govt_approvalNeit her approve nor disapprove			-0.107 (0.191)	0.069 (0.194)	
China_int.L			-0.759*** (0.176)	-0.190 (0.188)	
China_int.Q			0.330* (0.165)	0.272 (0.170)	
China_int.C			0.125 (0.159)	0.046 (0.166)	
China_int^4			-0.218 (0.157)	-0.140 (0.164)	
China_int^5			-0.089 (0.144)	-0.101 (0.150)	
China_int^6			-0.096 (0.124)	0.012 (0.128)	
Taiwan_Perc				0.002 (0.003)	
China_Perc				-0.020*** (0.002)	
US_Perc				0.035*** (0.003)	
Num.Obs.	1825	1452	1448	1398	1195

	Supt Ops	Supt Ops+	Supt Ops++	Supt Ops+++	Supt Ops#
AIC	7043.1	5541.7	5495.6	5109.7	4564.8
BIC	7092.7	5599.8	5648.7	5277.5	4620.7
RMSE	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.45	4.44

the baseline treatment is 'no coercion'

# includes only those observations that answered at least 1 post-treatment attention check correctly

+++ controls include all from \*\* and add 0-100 favorability ratings for the US, China, and Taiwan

++ controls include age, gender, isolationism, government support, and support for integration with China

+ controls include age and gender

DV is 7-Level Ordered variable of Policy Support.

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

#### Predicted Probability of Choosing a Level of Support for Allowing US operations:

Maintaining the initial treatment scheme of separate military and military + inducement treatments in the ordinal regression results in predicted probabilities of choosing a level of support that are almost identical to the combined measurement scheme. The coefficients produced are not substantively or statistically different.

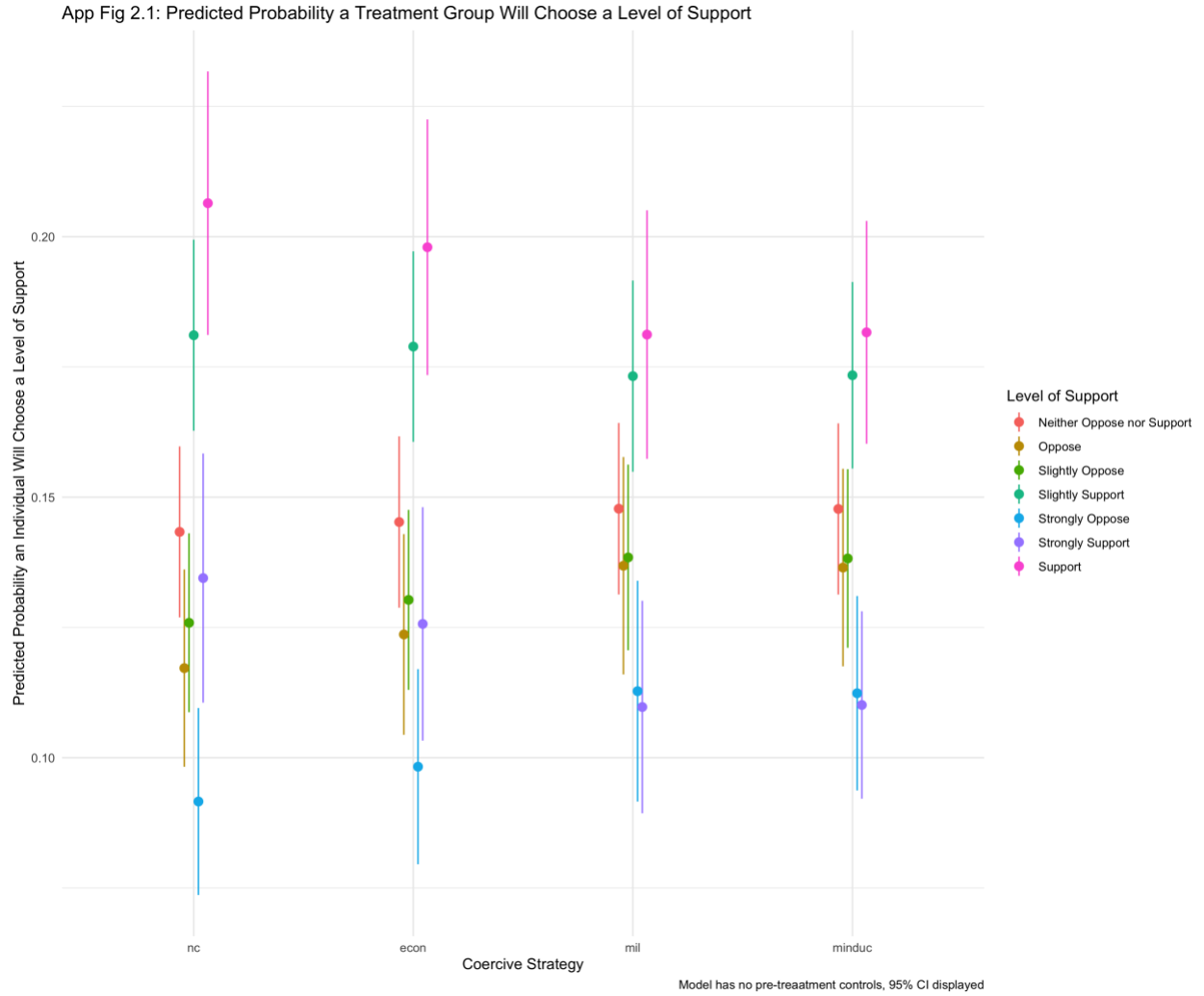


Fig C.6: Predicted Probability of Support by Treatment Group

Heterogeneous Treatment Effects of China Perception on Efficacy of Chinese Threats:

The full regression table for figure 2.1 is below.

***Table D.3: HTE of Perception of China on the effect of Coercive Strategy on Support for US Military Operations***

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econ × China Perc	0.001 (0.006)
mil × China Perc	-0.007 (0.005)
econ	-0.095 (0.316)
mil	0.064 (0.249)
China Perc	-0.008+ (0.004)
Age	0.014** (0.005)
Gender (M)	0.541*** (0.098)
Isolationism1	-0.176 (0.164)
Isolationism2	0.122 (0.163)
Isolationism3	-0.096 (0.141)
isolationism4	-0.244+ (0.135)
isolationism5	-0.174 (0.117)
isolationism6	-0.215+ (0.111)
PH govt approval (Approve slightly)	-0.157

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	(0.140)
PH govt approval (Approve very strongly)	0.218
	(0.134)
PH govt approval (Disapprove moderately strongly)	-0.367
	(0.242)
PH govt approval (Disapprove slightly)	-0.134
	(0.191)
PH govt approval (Disapprove very strongly)	-0.091
	(0.209)
PH govt approval (Neither approve nor disapprove)	-0.176
	(0.193)
China int 1	-0.436*
	(0.187)
China int 2	0.376*
	(0.171)
China int 3	0.101
	(0.164)
China int 4	-0.216
	(0.161)
China int 5	-0.101
	(0.148)
China int 6	-0.064
	(0.126)
# Obs	1401
AIC	5299.8
BIC	5462.4
RMSE	4.45

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DV is 7-Level Ordered variable of Policy Support.

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+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Effect of separating military and inducement treatments on HTE of China Perception:

We do find slightly different effects for the military treatment and the military + inducement treatment when we look at the heterogeneous treatment effects of how a Filipino resident perceives China. The military threat without the inducement is more effective at reducing support for assisting the US as an individual's perception of China grows more favorable. However, the military threat treatment appears to elicit a backlash for those individuals who view China most negatively. However, this backlash effect is not statistically significant, and not overly substantial either. The inducement treatment does not have this backlash effect, showing no statistical or substantive effect for those who view China most negatively. However, the general inferences are still largely the same. Perception of China remains a statistically significant factor, specifically on the predicted probability an individual selects strongly oppose, oppose, support, or slightly support. Further research could examine when and why an inducement bundled with a coercive threat might actually decrease the effectiveness when compared to a pure threat.

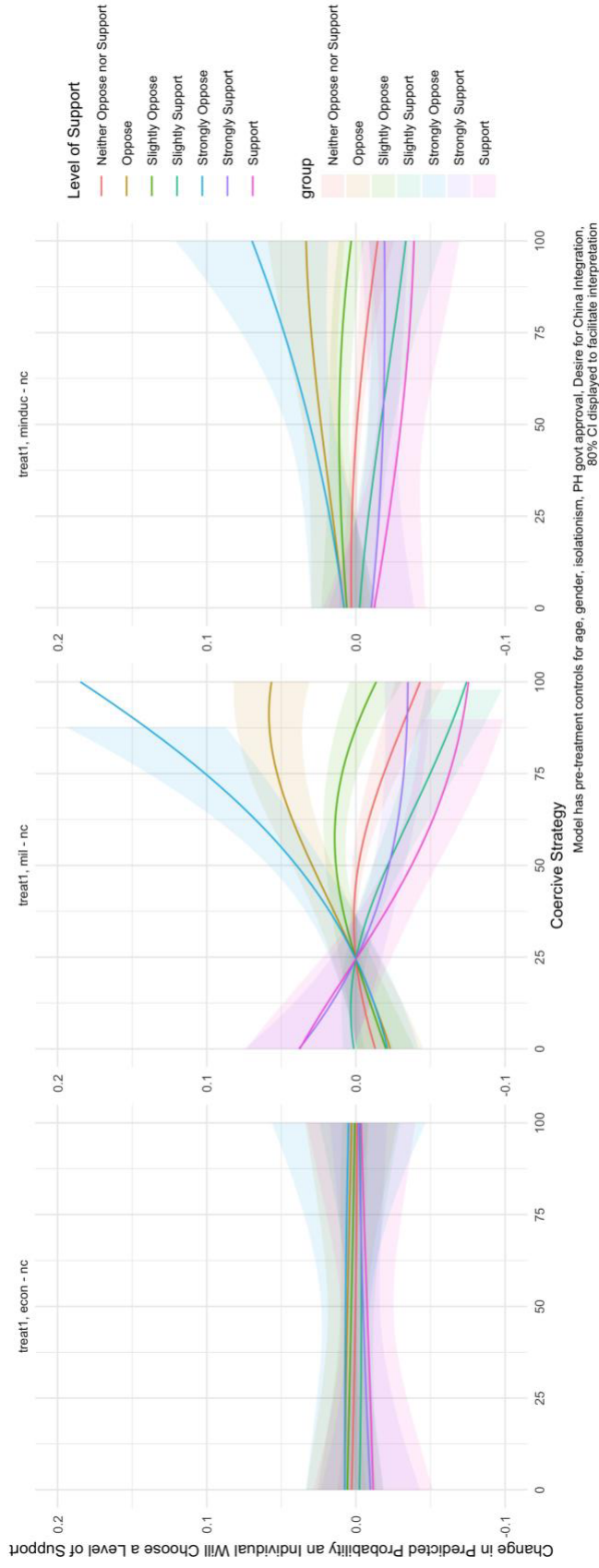


Fig C.7: Effects of Coercive Threats Conditional on Perception of China

Supplementary material for hypothesis 2c: HTE of isolationism

Full Regression Table for the analysis of heterogenous treatment effects dependent on an individual's proclivity towards an isolationist foreign policy preference.

***Table C.4: HTE of Isolationism on the effect of Coercive Strategy on Support for US Military Operations***

	Model 1
mil_treatecon	0.098 (0.381)
mil_treatmil	0.081 (0.311)
num_iso	0.029 (0.060)
China_int.L	-0.440* (0.188)
China_int.Q	0.410* (0.168)
China_int.C	0.116 (0.165)
China_int^4	-0.219 (0.161)
China_int^5	-0.110 (0.148)
China_int^6	-0.078 (0.126)
Age	0.014** (0.005)
GenderMale	0.552*** (0.098)
PH_govt_approvalApprove slightly	-0.169 (0.140)

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	Model 1
PH_govt_approvalApprove very strongly	0.226+
	(0.132)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove moderately strongly	-0.372
	(0.240)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove slightly	-0.179
	(0.191)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove very strongly	-0.103
	(0.209)
PH_govt_approvalNeither approve nor disapprove	-0.228
	(0.192)
China_Perc	-0.012***
	(0.002)
mil_treatecon × num_iso	-0.042
	(0.088)
mil_treatmil × num_iso	-0.080
	(0.070)
Num.Obs.	1401
AIC	5303.3
BIC	5439.7
RMSE	4.45

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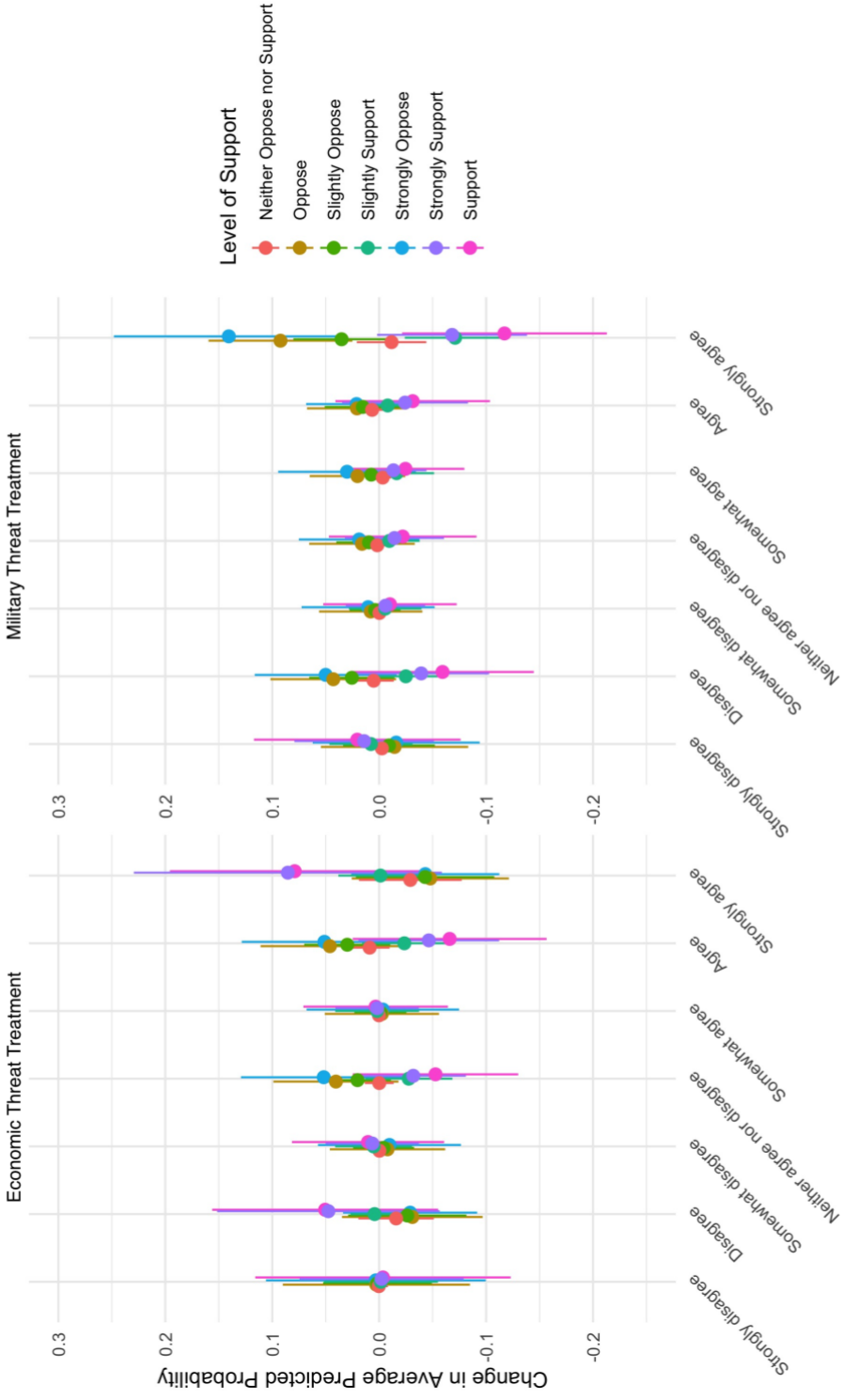
DV is 7-Level Ordered variable of Policy Support.

Isolationism has been converted to a continuous variable with values from 1 to 7

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Heterogeneous treatment effects of coercive threats on isolationism: ordinal isolation variable model

Using the original ordinal isolationism variable complicates interpretation of the trends but provides a more theoretically appropriate view of the data. As with the numeric variable representation, there are no statistically significant effects for the economic threat treatment group. As for the military threat treatment, we see little impact until the individual strongly agrees that the Philippines should mind its own business in the international arena. At this point the military coercive treatment is both substantively and statistically significant.



The Philippines Should Mind It's Own Business Internationally

Includes PTC for age, gender, gov't approval, China perception, China integration, 95% CI displayed

Fig C.8: Effect of Coercive Threats Conditional on Isolationism – Ordinal Measure

Heterogeneous treatment effects of coercive threats on isolationism: 4 treatment category model

Returning to the original four treatment measurement scheme has little impact. Both the military and the military + inducement treatments result in similar trend lines and do not represent a significant deviation from the original analysis.

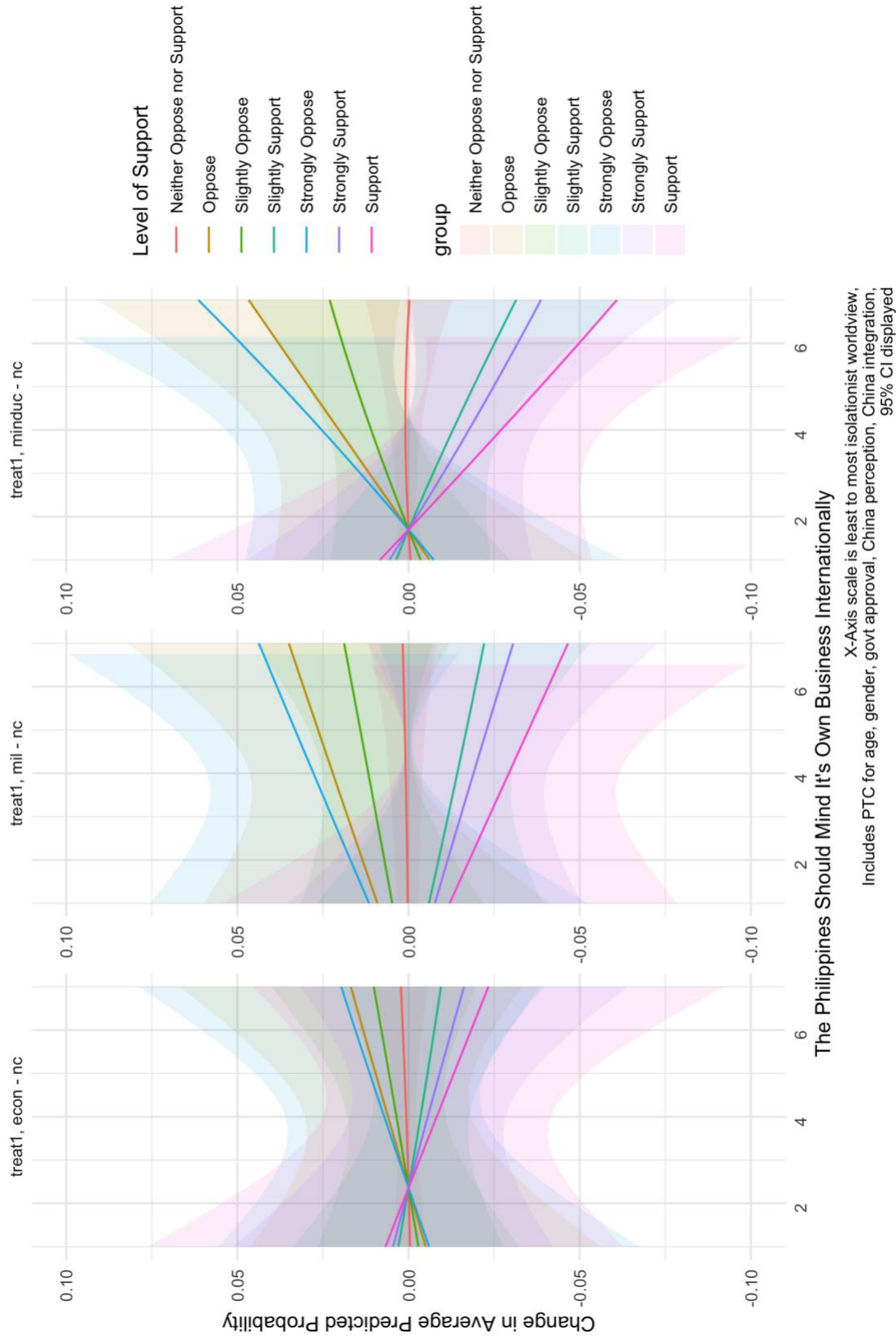


Fig C.9: Effects of Coercive Threats on Support for US Military Operations Conditional Upon Isolationism

Supplementary material for Hypothesis 3: Approval of President Marcos Jr.

Full regression table for the analysis of how the decision to either accommodate or reject Chinese coercive demands impacts the Filipino approval of how President Marcos Jr. handled the crisis.

*Table C.5 HTE of PH Response to Crisis Dependent on Previous Policy Preference*

	Model 1
dv2_treat	1.287*** (0.230)
num_supt_ops	0.040 (0.035)
Age	0.000 (0.005)
GenderMale	-0.191+ (0.100)
isolationism.L	0.410** (0.148)
isolationism.Q	-0.141 (0.154)
isolationism.C	0.185 (0.133)
isolationism^4	0.562*** (0.134)
isolationism^5	-0.177 (0.119)
isolationism^6	-0.428*** (0.123)
PH_govt_approvalApprove slightly	0.495*** (0.149)
PH_govt_approvalApprove very strongly	0.369** (0.138)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove moderately strongly	0.701** (0.241)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove slightly	0.885*** (0.200)
PH_govt_approvalDisapprove very strongly	0.845*** (0.212)

	Model 1
PH_govt_approvalNeither approve nor disapprove	1.243*** (0.218)
China_Perc	0.001 (0.002)
China_int.L	-0.132 (0.169)
China_int.Q	0.121 (0.158)
China_int.C	0.054 (0.156)
China_int^4	0.428** (0.159)
China_int^5	0.000 (0.151)
China_int^6	-0.242+ (0.136)
dv2_treat × num_supt_ops	-0.268*** (0.050)
Num.Obs.	1384
AIC	4717.0
BIC	4874.0
RMSE	3.84

DV is 7-Level Ordered variable of Approval.

Policy Preference has been converted to a continuous variable with values from 1 to 7

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

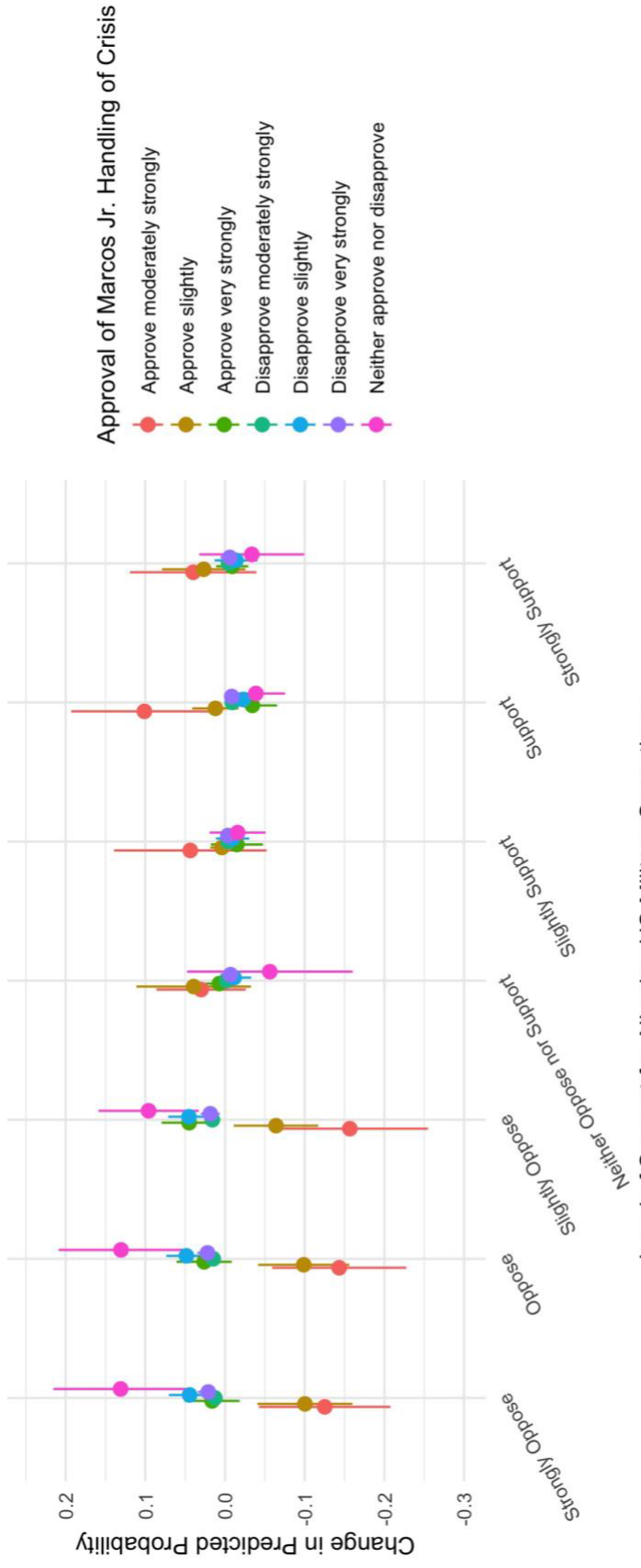


Fig C.10: Effect of PH Rejection of Chinese Demands Marcos Jr. Approval Conditional on Policy Approval

The results and inferences obtained by using an ordinal measurement to measure individuals support for allowing US operations in defense of Taiwan to be conducted from Filipino territory remain consistent with the primary analysis that uses a continuous variable. I continue to find no major consequences for President Marcos Jr.