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The Existence and Impact of Partisan Political Intolerance

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of:

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

By

Kyle McWagner

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Davin L. Phoenix, Chair
Professor Michael Tesler
Associate Professor Danielle Thomsen

2023

Dedication

To

My children: Zhenya, Lyla, and Hiro.
May they live in a more perfect democracy and society than I do.

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Acknowledgements

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Existence and Impact of Partisan Political Intolerance

by

Kyle McWagner

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Irvine, 2023

Associate Professor Davin L. Phoenix, Chair

This dissertation establishes the presence of partisan political intolerance among the American public. This form of political intolerance specifically targets members of the opposing mainline party and the partisans aligned with it. Additionally, it demonstrates that partisan intolerance is a strong predictor of many of the most troublingly anti-democratic attitudes in the American public, including but not limited to support for political hardball, preference for authoritarian rule, and approval of political violence. While observational, these findings are strongly suggestive that partisan political intolerance lies at the root of many of the most troubling trends in American politics.

In addition to the empirical work on the presence and effects of partisan political tolerance, this dissertation also establishes a significant theoretical framework for new measures of political tolerance. These measures align more closely with Sullivan's conception of political intolerance, departing from the predominant yet less favored method used over the past 40 years. Moreover, this dissertation introduces a fresh concept of political tolerance itself: valuing the democratic rights of one's political opponents above one's own political or policy preferences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

As partisan politics in the United States have become increasingly abrasive, people are casting doubt on the solvency of American democracy. (Still miles apart 2021) Particularly worrisome are the moves to restrict voting access for members of opposing parties, the reluctance to accept as valid votes cast by opposing partisans, the politicization of previously nonpartisan bodies that oversee the certification of elections, and the support of aggressive policing of legal and largely peaceful protests when they are perceived to be led by political opponents. (Metcalfe and Pickett 2021; Still miles apart 2021)

While political scientists have typically studied these developments within the frames of issue polarization, affective polarization, and negative partisanship, I argue that these frameworks are inadequate to describe the current political moment, and that these phenomena are better understood as expressions of political intolerance. Democracy can function regardless of the level of polarization, and it does not require that political parties like one another. It is theoretically possible for a highly polarized party ecosystem with high levels of negative partisanship to still support a democratic system, as long as the opposing partisan are willing to grant and protect the political and civil rights of their opponents or value the political and civil rights of their opponents higher than they value their desired political outcome. But when mainline partisan actors refuse to grant or protect the political or civil rights of their opponents, democracy ceases to work. This phenomenon is known as political intolerance.

Political intolerance is not a new phenomenon and has a large literature exploring it. However, political tolerance as currently conceived has two major limitations that hinder researchers' ability to use it to explain the contemporary partisan landscape. First, it is viewed

mostly as a dependent variable, the result of other forces, and not as an independent variable, the driver of other attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. And second, despite the broad conception of tolerance, political tolerance has been narrowly operationalized against extremist groups. As such political tolerance has not been used to describe the relationship between the two main political parties in the American system.

The primary goals of this dissertation project are to: (1) establish and propose reliable measures of political intolerance of opposing mainline partisans, (2) demonstrate that political intolerance of opposing mainline partisans is empirically distinct from measurements of polarization or negative partisanship, (3) demonstrate that partisan political intolerance is connected to support for anti-democratic positions both observationally and experimentally, and (4) help scholars and interested parties to reframe many of the anti-democratic attitudes and behaviors that we observe among the American public as antidemocratic attitudes that flow from individuals' willingness to sacrifice the rights and privileges of their political opponents for political gain.

Throughout this project I will be using the metaphor of disease to help us understand what the actual role of political tolerance is in our society as well as how tolerance is related both to its antecedents, and to its impacts. I present the foundation and a brief explanation for this metaphor here. Imagine a windowless, poorly ventilated office, where eight grad students spend a lot of time together in close proximity. Over a period of 2 days all the students in the office start to exhibit symptoms such as fever, chills, body aches, headache, fatigue, and nausea. An instructor observing the situation may inquire about the absence of the students. After an investigation the observer may draw two separate but related conclusions, (1) they may identify the shared symptoms as indicative of a flu outbreak, (2) considering the context of the students'

close interaction in the cramped office, they might further attribute the severity of the outbreak to their physical proximity. The observer can describe the occurrence as a flu outbreak, explain it as a consequence of the students' close proximity, or both. These tasks, however, are distinct. This distinction is important. It would be incorrect to label this outcome as a manifestation of physical proximity. Instead, it should be identified as a flu outbreak likely facilitated by the close proximity of the students. It is plausible that the cohort may not have actually suffered from a contagious disease, and the physical proximity might have been a mere coincidence.

For instance, a well-intentioned faculty member might have accidentally shared spoiled food with the students. The cohort eagerly consumed the food, leading to illness. In this scenario, improving office ventilation would not prevent such incidents. Ensuring food security for the graduate students and following proper food safety protocols would have a greater impact on preventing similar incidents in the future. Therefore, accurately *describing* a phenomenon before attempting to *explain* it is crucial.

Furthermore, conceptually differentiating between the symptoms and their underlying cause makes it easier to remember that the same disease can manifest in very different ways depending on the severity of the affliction and the personal characteristics of the afflicted. Some may experience many symptoms, while others may have only a few, for some the affliction may be a minor inconvenience while others fight for their life against it. Focusing solely on symptoms might lead to misconceptions that different individuals are afflicted with different diseases when, in fact, they are not.

This analogy to diseases has many direct and helpful parallels to political intolerance. Political intolerance is a disease. It has symptoms that can be observed in individuals' attitudes, behaviors and preferences. These symptoms vary depending on the individual, the social context,

and the severity of the affliction. In addition to symptoms, political intolerance has certain factors that may facilitate or hinder the spread or impact of the diseases. I will briefly elaborate on these symptoms and fractures in turn.

First, just like in the above analogy the symptoms of political intolerance are not and should not be conflated with the political intolerance itself. In the case of political intolerance, the symptoms are anti-democratic attitudes, behaviors and preferences. These can take on many different, forms from support for candidates that pursue hardball strategies in order to limit the political competitiveness of an opposing party, all the way to harassing and assaulting political opponents and supporting moves to transition from a democratic form of governance to an authoritarian one.

While the severity of these symptoms and the mechanisms by which they are anti-democratic may vary, the underlying disease does not. At their core, all of these symptoms are the result of an individual valuing their preferred political outcome more than they value the rights of their fellow citizens, particularly their political opponents. When one values a political outcome more than the rights of their political opponents, they are politically intolerant, and as a result may be willing or eager to restrict, weaken or eliminate the political rights of their fellow citizens to obtain those political goals.

As in the medical analysis above it would be counterproductive to look at individuals expressing the symptoms of intolerance and to jump straight to potential explanations of these symptoms without properly identifying the underlying condition first. It would be even more counterproductive to describe these symptoms as expressions of our explanations. Just as one would not look at the result of a flu outbreak and say this is an expression of physical proximity, we should not look at these anti-democratic attitudes, behaviors, and preferences and proclaim

that they are expressions of polarization and partisanship. Just because these factors may act as an accelerant for the outbreak does not mean that they are its causes. It is entirely possible that if high polarization and partisanship existed in a society where democratic norms were universally valued over other political outcomes that anti-democratic attitudes would not arise.

Additionally, understanding and accurately describing the underlying phenomena at play will help social scientists and pro-democracy activists identify many more factors that may contribute to the current outbreak of political intolerance beyond the flashy topics of polarization and partisanship, which have been so dominant in recent literature.

For instance, the scholarship on political tolerance has long pointed to a commitment to democratic norms as an important contributing factor to tolerance. To my knowledge, commitment to democratic norms has only been used to help explain support for hardball tactics like gerrymandering, or used to explain support for candidates who seem to endorse political violence once in the vast literature that exists on these topics. This is just one example of a whole host of factors that are known to be important contributors to political tolerance that the current literature surrounding these democratic attitudes simply has not engaged with. I aim to demonstrate in the following chapters that political tolerance generally, and partisan political intolerance in particular, is not uncommon among Americans, and that this interaction is the root cause of much of the anti-democratic attitudes that now and throughout our history have limited the scope, depth, and meaningfulness of American democracy.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 lays out the relevant literature and argues that current approaches of understanding the threat that our democracy is inadequate to the task. To do this I include a discussion and a novel typology of anti-democratic attitudes. Additionally, this chapter lays out

how the measurement constraints of the political intolerance literature have definitionally excluded measuring political intolerance for mainline opposing parties. Concluding by synthesizing these two literatures and laying out my theory of partisan political intolerance, my arguments for its use, as well as the potential implications of this theory.

Chapter 3 addresses the difficulty of constructing valid measures of partisan political intolerance and presents the measures that I will be using addressing their validity as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Next, using lucid surveys, I demonstrate the presence of partisan political intolerance in the general population, what factors predict partisan intolerance, and explore its relationship to and distinction from other common variables such as polarization, negative partisanship, and authoritarianism.

Chapter 4 uses observational data collected via lucid to determine that partisan political intolerance has an independent and meaningful effect on support for other antidemocratic attitudes such as support for hardball tactics, election denial, support for authoritarian government and political violence even when controlling for common variables in the literature such as authoritarianism, negative partisanship polarization and others.

Chapter 5 uses a preliminary experimental design with a treatment aimed at increasing partisan tolerance. The effectiveness of a 50-minute classroom intervention which is based on previous work aimed at increasing tolerance for extremist groups will be examined and its potential for further refinement and application explored. Additionally, this chapter will test whether increases in partisan tolerance are associated with decrease in other antidemocratic attitudes. The experimental design allows for a preliminary testing of the hypothesized causal relationship where partisan tolerance is the principal democratic attitude that all other democratic attitudes hang on.

Chapter 6 summaries and the findings from chapters 3-5 elaborates on the real world implications of these findings, and looks to the future. Specifically, to new conceptions and operations of tolerance/intolerance that will be used in future work. In this chapter I highlight both the practical and scholarly implications of these findings, discuss the limitations of this project and point to areas in need of future study.

Chapter 2: Literature and Theory

Introduction

Laying out the literature theory and groundwork for this dissertation will be accomplished in several sections. First it is essential to define and understand the types of attitudes that I am using partisan intolerance to explain, namely anti-democratic attitudes. Second, I will briefly explore the literature around prominent independent variables used to predict these anti-democratic attitudes namely partisanship and polarization. I will also explore why the theoretical link between partisanship/polarization and these anti-democratic attitudes is incomplete at best. Third I will explore the history and literature of political tolerance and demonstrate the inherent limitations of its current operationalization. And, lastly, I will provide the motivation and reasoning behind partisan political intolerance and lay out the theory that connects partisan political intolerance to other anti-democratic attitudes.

Anti-democratic attitudes

As democracy itself is a disputed concept anti-democratic attitudes will necessarily be disputed as well (Gallie 1955; Kurki 2010; Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021; Spicer 2019). What one considers an anti-democratic attitude is going to depend on the conception of democracy one has in mind and the type of definition that one is utilizing. Generally speaking, definitions of democracy are developed and used for two reasons. First, many definitions of democracy are constructed in order to speak to the essence of democracy and to clarify it as a concept. Definitions of this type take various forms depending on their originators' conception of democracy. The two most prominent of these definitions are listed below the minimalist/Schumpetarian definition, and the more traditional definition deriving directly from the etymology of the word both listed respectively below:

- A method of choosing rulers via competitive election.
  (minimalist/Schumpetarian) (Shapiro and Hacker-Cordón 1999)
- Rule by the people.

The second type of definition is less a definition than a collection of democratic attributes created and used in order to identify states that are democratic, are not democratic, or somewhere between, in the case of the polity score. These definitions tend to be much more practical and a closer reflection of the reality of democracy on the ground. Common factors in this list included but are not limited to (PolityProject n.d.; Storm 2008):

- The presence of reasonably competitive elections.
- Lack of massive voter or election fraud.
- The presence of broad suffrage.
- The presence of basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, association.
- Nature of executive recruitment.
- The efficacy of elected governments.
- Strengths of constraints on executive authority.
- The presence of political competition.

The primary purpose of this project is to provide evidence for hypotheses relating to two central claims. First, that partisan political intolerance is widespread in American society. And second, that this partisan intolerance plays a very important role in everyday partisan politics; specifically, it drives support for policies and actions that limit democracy. In order to

accomplish this task I require a definition of democracy that is concrete and practical, but that does not accommodate some amount of authoritarianism as doing so would lessen the definition's sensitivity to the very anti-democratic attitudes that I am modeling. As such neither the theoretical definitions nor the comparativist definitions are well suited to this project. As such, I provide a definition that is better suited to lay the foundation for understanding antidemocratic attitudes. Therefore, for my purposes I define democracy as a system of government in which:

> All citizens have meaningful ways to participate in the selection of or running of governments, where some minimal level of opportunity to participate in politics and society is equally available to all adult citizens regardless of their: resources, status, or identities.

In contrast to the extensive debate that has surrounded democracy notably less if any debate at all has taken place on what an anti-democratic attitude is. The lack of conceptual clarity on what is and what isn't an anti-democratic attitude significantly hinders scholars' ability to theorize and conduct research on anti-democratic attitudes as a cohesive concept. Despite this, there is no shortage of literature on the presence of anti-democratic attitudes held by the American public (Buyuker and Filindra 2020; Elam 1984; Thompson 2021; Voelkel et al. 2022).

What is sometimes less clear is what precisely individual scholars mean by anti-democratic attitudes. When referencing anti-democratic attitudes, articles may be referring to a whole host of attitudes, ranging from support for violence to support for reconsidering a group's tax-exempt status (Buyuker and Filindra 2020, Kalmoe and Mason 2022). Adding to this confusion, many articles speak directly to anti-democratic attitudes without actually invoking the label of "anti-democratic attitudes." For instance, many articles have been written on the

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implementation of various hardball strategies, meaning the use of strategies that–while legal–are anti-democratic in spirit since they involve the manipulation of democratic institutions for partisan political gain at the expense of democratic principles. In the American context hardball strategies usually take the form of electoral engineering via gerrymandering (McGann et al. 2016; Stephanopoulos 2017; Stephanopoulos and McGhee 2015) and manipulating voter access (Benson 2009; Perry, Whitehead, and Grubbs 2022; Rocha and Matsubayashi 2014; Shepherd et al. 2021). It can also take the form of manipulating the judiciary (Braver 2020; Keck 2021).

Various kinds of hardball politics have been used since the founding of the country and so are in many ways "politics as normal" in the American context. However, their common usage should not distract us from the fact that they are fundamentally anti-democratic. It is through just such mechanisms (electoral engineering and judicial manipulation) that democratic backsliding often occurs in the comparative context. For examples of this, we can look to Poland, Hungary, and Türkiye (Bakke and Sitter 2022; Bernhard 2021; Crum and Oleart 2023; Evci and Kaminski 2021; Holesch and Kyriazi 2022). But anti-democratic attitudes are not limited to support for violence or support for institutional manipulations; they can also include a simple lack of belief in either the validity or efficacy of democratic institutions, such as elections, leading individuals to favor more authoritarian institutions such as military rule (Fossati, Muhtadi, and Warburton 2022).

In order to provide conceptual clarity to this dissertation project and to lay the foundation for future research I utilize a three part definition of anti-democratic attitudes that is based on the definition of democracy provided above. An attitude need only meet one of the parts of the definition to be labeled an antidemocratic attitude. However, many anti-democratic attitudes will meet multiple or all parts of the definition. The three parts of this definition are listed below:

1. Attitudes that if acted on would differentially alter the minimum opportunity of some citizens more than others.

2. Attitudes that endorse restricting or eliminating the meaningful ways that other citizens can participate in politics and society.

3. Beliefs that if widely held would undermine the ability of a democracy to function.

With these definitions of anti-democratic attitudes and beliefs I can now clearly distinguish between attitudes that are anti-democratic and not. Attitudes that meet these definitions are diverse on various dimensions and as such it is useful to think about these attitudes relative positions on some of the axes on which various anti-democratic attitudes vary. To this end I utilize a typology to isolate two of these dimensions and to categorize different types of anti-democratic attitudes. On the X axis of this typology lies the legality or constitutionality of actions that result from these attitudes. Some of the actions that these attitudes lead to are illegal or unconstitutional while others are not. On the Y Axis of this typology lies the mechanism or the agent that the attitude delivers on its anti-democratic potential through. All of these attitudes and beliefs are held by individuals but some of them require formal institutions such as a legislature or the military to instigate actual anti-democratic action while others do not. Instead realizing their anti-democratic potential by the actions of individuals. This typology with various examples of each category is listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

Anti-democratic orientation		Legality	
		Legal/Constitutional	Illegal/Unconstitutional
Agent	Institutions	**Support for Hardball (attitude)** • Gerrymandering • Restricting polling locations • Court Packing	**Authoritarian preferences (attitude)** • Military takeover • Limiting freedoms (especially of option) • Misuse of police force for politics • Media censorship
	Individuals	**Personal beliefs (belief)** • Party loyalty over state loyalty • Election denial • Political intolerance	**Support for political vigilantism (attitude)** • Violence against opposing partisan or politics • Voter/Election fraud

The discussion here is exploratory and preliminary as this is important work that needs to be flesh out for its own purposes, while here it exists to allow me to talk in meaningful and precise ways about the results of partisan political intolerance, and also how partisan intolerance itself

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fits into the family of anti-democratic attitudes as intolerance itself clearly meets the definition of anti-democratic attitudes outlined above. Therefore, the discussion of this typology and the various anti-democratic attitudes that fit within it will necessarily be tailored to meet these ends and be less broad than they would be otherwise.

Despite the large variance of forms that these conceptualizations of anti-democratic attitudes take, there are two threads that pull through all of these separate attitudes. The first thread is the potential outcome of these attitudes. If large majorities of individuals hold them, democratic governance is very difficult and may even be difficult if a loud minority holds them. Second, the antecedent of each of these attitudes is the willingness to discourage political activity or weaken the political power of one's political enemies -- i.e., all of these anti-democratic attitudes are at their heart expressions of political intolerance against the mainstream opposing political party. I will elaborate on this argument in future sections.

First, I will discuss the X axis as it is the simpler of the two. This axis captures the constitutionality/legality of the direct outcomes of these various attitudes and beliefs. This is an important dimension as some of these attitudes lead to behaviors or support for behaviors that are illegal such as harassment, violence, election fraud, or the overthrow of the American government. By contrast other attitudes, while harmful to democracy, can be acted on without breaking the law or violating the constitution. This dimension is important in terms of converting these attitudes into behavior as the consequences for acting on the attitudes that result in illegal behavior are very different from acting on the attitudes that result in legal behavior. Thus, as noted by Westwood, 2022 acts of political violence are very rare in America. Even if a small percentage do claim to support political violence, less than a fraction of a percent of those who support political violence will act on it themselves. However, just because the obvious behaviors

stemming from these attitudes are very rare does not mean that these attitudes are politically

irrelevant. This will be discussed in greater depth in regard to the specific types of anti-

democratic behavior.

Moving from the X axis of this typology to the Y axis, I will now discuss the agent

dimension. This dimension deals with the level at which the supported actions take place. Some

of these attitudes are in support of actions which require institutions to be implemented/enforced

in order to have anti-democratic effects. Examples of these types of attitudes include, but are by

no means limited to, support for gerrymandering, media censorship, and support for a military

coup. An individual sitting in their home longing for these anti-democratic outcomes in itself

does not fundamentally threaten democracy. Each of these actions requires an institution,

whether it be a state legislature, the military, or some other institution to act on these attitudes in

order for democratic backsliding to manifest.

By contrast other anti-democratic attitudes corrode democracy without the intervention of

institutions. These antidemocratic attitudes can manifest democratic backsliding by motivating

individuals to make choices that undermine democratic governance or to support individuals who

make similar choices. Examples of these types of attitudes include, but are not limited to,

individuals believing that politicians from the other party are evil, that violence is an acceptable

way to punish political opponents, and -- importantly for this project -- partisan political

intolerance. Now that each of the axes has been introduced, I will look at each of the cells of this

typology individually. Starting in the bottom left with personal beliefs I will then discuss

hardball, authoritarian support, and political vigilantism in turn.

Personal Beliefs

Personal Beliefs are beliefs and preferences that individuals hold inside themselves that while legal (even constitutionally protected) and not requiring the intervention of some institution, nevertheless erode the foundations of democratic government. An excellent example of this is election denial. People are allowed to believe that an election was stolen, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. However, democracy becomes increasingly untenable when large portions of citizens are willing to believe an election is illegitimate or stolen simply because their preferred candidate did not win. Similarly, if citizens are more loyal to their political party than to the rule of law, democracy becomes fragile. In such a scenario, political expediency may lead one to disregarding the rule of law in order to further one's party's political goals, prioritizing party victory over the political rights of your opponents.

I hypothesize that these personal beliefs play a motivating and enabling role in the formation of the other anti-democratic attitudes we will discuss. If one believes that all elections in which their party loses are rigged, they may start to view elections as an unreliable mechanism for assessing the people's will, potentially favoring political systems without elections. Furthermore, if valuing one's party winning supersedes the political rights of opponents, tactics like gerrymandering and restricting voting access may seem appealing. And if such hardball measures fail to ensure victory or are impractical in a specific case, various forms of political vigilantism such as election fraud, or intimidation and harassment may become appealing alternatives.

Political Hardball

Political hardball refers to the willingness to exploit institutions or institutional rules in legally permissible ways to secure favorable political outcomes for oneself or political allies,

even at the expense of democratic principles and fairness. Examples of such behavior in the American context include gerrymandering, and strategically imposing obstacles to voting that disproportionately affect political opponents. While extensive literature exists on these hardball strategies, examining their history, effects, and legal intricacies (Benson 2009; McGann et al. 2016; Perry, Whitehead, and Grubbs 2022; Rocha and Matsubayashi 2014; Shepherd et al. 2021; Stephanopoulos 2017; Stephanopoulos and McGhee 2015), limited research delves into the individual-level factors and beliefs that drive support for these strategies more broadly. Partisans tend to perceive the unfairness of these tactics when used against their own political party but exhibit less sensitivity to their unfairness when utilized to their own advantage (Graham and Svolik 2020; Svolik 2019).

Although these strategies are not traditionally labeled as "anti-democratic," they certainly align with the definition provided above. They are sometimes referred to as norm violations, but I avoid using this term since its colloquial usage encompasses attitudes or behaviors that do not directly strike at the core of democracy, as outlined in my definition. For example, the act of a presidential candidate not releasing tax returns has been described as a norm violation or a breach of the "soft guardrails of democracy" (Montgomery 2020). While it may be desirable for presidential candidates to disclose their tax returns, the act itself does not directly pertain to the essence of democracy. It is conceivable that two democratic states could have different requirements regarding tax return disclosure, with one mandating it and the other not, without rendering the latter any less democratic than the former.

Authoritarian preferences

Authoritarian preferences are simply a preference for institutions and rules that are more closely associated with authoritarianism than democracy. These can vary from subtle preferences

for a stronger executive and weaker legislatures or courts, to blatant authoritarian preference like wishing the military would instigate a coup. These anti-democratic attitudes are, like hardball, centered on institutions and their actions, but unlike hardball strategies the type of institutional changes or behavior that are represented in those beliefs and attitudes are often illegal and/or unconstitutional.

It is possible that many individuals with these preferences do not see them as authoritarian. They may believe that their preferred strong executive is the only person who can protect democracy, likewise they may believe that the military is the only institution capable of saving democracy. This belief does not mean that their attitudes aren't antidemocratic, it is just that their conception of democracy is likely closer to electoral authoritarianism than it is to the definition of democracy used in this project (Ahn, 2023). This is an important avenue for future research as attitudes like this have not been expounded in great detail in the American context.

These authoritarian preferences pose a much more blatant threat to democracy than support for hardball strategy which shave away democratic rights and privileges off the edges and in the margins.
Whereas simply preferring authoritarian institutions over democratic ones is a much more explicit attitude than we are used to seeing in substantial numbers of democratic citizens. But these preferences are real both in the American context and in other democracies. And their presence needs to be the subject of much more extensive research than currently exists.

Political Vigilantism

An act of Political vigilantism is one which is both illegal and can be executed without the aid of an institution. Political vigilantism has played a major role acrost large stretches of American politics, both temporal and geographical. The most prominent and well known

examples of this are the acts of the KKK and other white supremist groups across the south post-bellum (Beaton 2011). Political vigilantism can operate under a nominally democratic set of laws and institutions and yield an essential authoritarian state. This can occur by use of election fraud, intimidation, threats, and violence to transform the electorate into a selectorate and transforming supposedly representative institutions into aristocratic ones.

A notable challenge in measuring support for political vigilantism is the notable scarcity of individuals in America willing to engage in this kind of behavior. Thus it might be reasonable to assume that the expressions of support for these types of illegal behaviors are essentially a form of cheap talk. This concern is amplified as these attitudes are very sensitive to satisficing question wording and the response options presented (Westwood et al. 2022). However, in a democracy support for political vigilantism affects political behaviors beyond individuals personal propensity to engage in these illegal acts. For example, if a politician engages in, encourages, or glorifies violence against political opponents then one who is absolutely opposed to violence as a means to answering political questions will be repulsed by these leaders who they may feel are a threat to democratic governance. However, those who express support for political violence but shy away from committing these acts themselves, are probably going to be less likely to be repulsed by these types of actions in their politicians and may even see them as a positive attribute of the candidate. Their support for these candidates can have direct and negative consequences for the democratic governance of the state. This is not a purely hypothetical example. As we have seen, several prominent candidates recently have made statements that encourage and glorify physical violence against political adversaries. We have even seen politicians such as Greg Gianforte, who outright physically attacked a reporter, go on to win multiple statewide elections. We see other members of the Republican party leaning into

language that glorifies the kind of violence that this politician engaged in statements like "Any guy who can do a body slam is my kind of guy" or "It's time for this so-called 'blue wave' to be body-slammed" (Gambino 2018; Griffiths 2018). Thus individuals who support violence (in the abstract) or other illegal or unconstitutional behavior but may not be willing or able to inflict violence themselves may nonetheless act on these attitudes by supporting and voting for candidates who glorify or engage in this kind of behavior themselves.

Stepping back from the individual cells and once again speaking to the larger collection, all of the anti-democratic attitudes, or particular expressions of them, have been studied and explored by political scientists to varying degrees, although rarely in conversation with each other. In the next section I explore the literature surrounding the two most important predictors of these anti-democratic attitudes (in the contemporary context) that the literature has identified -- Partisanship and Polarization. First I will do so broadly and then narrowly discuss the literature attaching these factors to various anti-democratic attitudes.

Partisanship

Partisanship is most commonly defined as a set of beliefs and feelings that culminate in a sense of "psychological attachment" to a political party. (The American Voter 1980) Although this definition was formalized and made popular by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (the Michigan four), the nature of this relationship had been the topic of discussion for decades prior to their work in *The American Voter*. In his 1908 work, Graham Wallas stated that:

> *"something is required simpler and more permanent, something which can be loved and trusted, and which can be recognized at successive elections as being the same thing that was loved and trusted before; and a party is such a thing."*

This emotional connection to the party that Wallas describes sounds very much like what today we would call partisanship. However the early titans of political science such as Downs and V. O. Key often downplayed the roles of these psychological or emotional connections in politics; and following the release of *The American Voter,* often complained that *The American Voter* took the politics out of Political Science (Oscarsson and Holmberg 2020).

With 60 years of development since *The American Voter,* research has shown that partisanship does in fact influence political ideology, policy preferences, religious beliefs and practice, consumer preferences, and many other elements of life. Additionally, partisanship is consistently identified as being the most important factor in determining an individual's vote choice and policy preferences and is consistent or "sticky" in the way the Michigan four hypothesized. (Barber andEdit with Zotero Pope 2019; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2004; Holmberg 2007; Huddy and Bankert 2017; Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015; Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen 2012; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Margolis 2018; Miles 2019; Nicholson 2012; NW, Washington, and Inquiries 2017; Sniderman and Stiglitz 2012; The American Voter 1980). While party identity can and sometimes does function simply as ideological or policy alignment with a political party, recent scholarship has added the important role that parti identity can play as its own social identity both in everyday life and in determining our political preferences (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015; Mason 2018; Mason and Wronski 2018). (Huddy PID people).

While the influence of partisanship continues to be pronounced, recently the United States and other western nations have seen a decrease in the number of individuals who self-identified with any given party. (NW, Washington, and Inquiries 2019; Wattenberg 1990) Despite this, voters still behave like partisans even when they don't self-identify with one party

or the other; while independents nominally outnumber self-identified partisans from either party and have been growing in number over the past 25 years, few are actual independents and the number of true independents may even be shrinking. (NW, Washington, and Inquiries 2019).

The paradox of a shrinking number of partisans but an increase in partisan behavior prompted researchers to investigate two separate lines of reason: negative partisanship and the super social identity stuff. Negative partisanship is simply defined as a dislike for an opposing party and shares similar origins with traditional partisanship. *The American Voter,* and other foundational works on partisanship, included negative evaluations of political parties alongside the self-identification and positive evaluation measures that we usually associate with partisanship. However, the amount of literature surrounding these negative evaluations, until quite recently, was dwarfed by the literature on positive partisanship. (Caruana, McGregor, and Stephenson 2015) This has changed in the past 10 years as we have seen an explosion of research into negative partisanship. (Abramowitz and Webster 2016, 2018; Medeiros and Noël 2014; Michael McGregor, Caruana, and Stephenson 2015)

One of the main themes in these works is that negative partisanship can motivate partisan-like behavior without a sense of attachment to a political party. This includes political behavior and attitudes such as voter turnout, vote choice, straight ticket voting, party identification/loyalty, being politically active online, and signing petitions. Additionally, negative partisanship is an important predictor of some political behavior that positive partisanship has struggled to predict, including political protest. (Caruana, McGregor, and Stephenson 2015; Medeiros and Noël 2014; Abramowitz and Webster 2018) Of particular interest here is that these effects are most pronounced in those who identify as "weak partisans" and "independents." (Abramowitz and Webster 2018)

Importantly not only does this research show that negative partisanship has important effects on political behavior and attitudes, it also has demonstrated that negative partisanship is growing. Negative partisanship rose in the US between 1980 and 2012; with the average feeling thermometer rating for the opposing party dropping from the mid 40s in 1980 to just below 30 in 2012. In a 2018 follow-up article, Abramowitz and Webster extended the time scale to 2016 and found that the average feeling thermometer for the opposing party had dropped to 23 degrees! (Abramowitz and Webster 2018) Investigation into the causes of this negative partisanship trend in the United States has concluded that it is primarily a function of growing racial resentment among white voters, racial sorting by party, and the increasing polarity and fractured nature of the media environment. (Medeiros and Noël 2014)

In relation to the anti-democratic attitudes of interests in this paper, partisanship has been tied to support for violence by Kalmoe, N. P. & Mason (2022) observationally and Kacholia and Neuner (2022) experimentally. It appears that individuals who are more committed to their partisan identity are more likely to support the use of violence against their political opponents, and that priming partisanship makes respondents more likely to support violence against their political opponents. Additionally, Graham and Svolik (2020) have connected support for various hardball strategies to partisanship. While partisanship is central to most other political attitudes, likely including anti-democratic attitudes, it is not the only variable that has been connected to anti-democratic attitudes.

Polarization

As the media environment has become more polarized in the U.S. so has its party ecosystem. This polarization has been measured and conceptualized in several ways but at its core party polarization arises when "subsets of a population adopt increasingly dissimilar

attitudes toward opposing parties and party members, as well as ideologies and policies."

(Heltzel and Laurin 2020) Note that in this definition of polarization there are functionally two

types of polarization: the first arises from the feelings about and towards members of the

opposing political party. This is called affective polarization. (Druckman et al. 2021) The second

arises from distinct ideologies and policy preferences held by the two parties; this is called

ideological polarization. (Dalton 2006) These two conceptions of polarization are

operationalized in different ways and are hypothesized to have different causes and effects. As

such, I will speak to them individually.

Affective polarization is usually operationalized by finding the difference between the

feeling thermometer rating of the respondent's preferred party and of the opposing party.

(Iyengar et al. 2019) This operalization links the concept of affective polarization with the

concept of negative partisanship as both make use of a feeling thermometer rating of an opposing

party. Despite this similarity, they are still operationally distinct as affective polarization is a

difference score and not a raw score as negative partisanship is. For example, two respondents

might give the exact same negative partisanship score for the opposing party on the thermometer,

say 23 degrees. If the first respondent felt very warmly about their preferred party, say 89

degrees, then they would have an affective polarization score of 66. Whereas the second

respondent might feel lukewarm about their preferred party, say 52 degrees, so they would only

have an affective polarization score of 29. Affective polarization is important as it has been

pinpointed as part of the underlying structure that makes it more likely that your neighbors and

friends share your politics. It is an important part of why Democrats and Republicans have such

different attitudes and why conversing about politics with some from the opposing party can be

so difficult. (Druckman et al. 2021)

The rise of affective polarization has been a keen point of scholarly interest particularly because of its associations with various anti-democratic attitudes and behaviors. Many articles have promulgated this connection (Gildron, Adams, and Horne 2020; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; Iyengar et al. 2019; McCoy and Somer 2019). Though this connection has recently been brought into question (see Broockman, Kalla, and Westwood 2021), there is some evidence to support these worries. And this connection is likely only strengthened by those with strong partisanship propensity to demonize and dehumanize their political opponents (Martherus et al. 2019). This demonetization makes extreme actions and likely anti-democratic attitudes easier to justify (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). Building on these extreme actions, finding recent scholarship has shown that extreme partisans are willing to support the use of violence as a method to correct political losses (Kalcholia and Neuner 2022; Kalmoe and Mason 2018). Finally, affective polarization can build on itself and reinforce negative attitudes over time, suggesting that if left untreated problems will only worsen (Hutchens, Hmielowski, and Beam 2019).

Perhaps given the range of anti-democratic and undesirable attitudes and behaviors associated with affective polarization it is not surprising that there have been many interventions defined with the goal of reducing affective polarization in order to also reduce the undesirable attitudes that it is associated with. Several of these innovations have proven successful at reducing affective polarization including correcting partisans' stereotypes about their political opponents. Examples of this include informing partisans that the opposing partisans are more similar to them than they thought (Ahler and Sood 2018) and showing partisans that out-party members do not actually desire their harm or demise (Druckman et al. 2022). Other successful interventions have found positive inter party contact, even if indirect or imagined, can reduce

polarization (Simonsson, Narayanan, and Marks 2021; Wojcieszak and Warner 2020). Seeing party elites model such positive interactions also seems to lead to a reduction in polarization (Huddy and Yair 2021).

While researchers have successfully reduced affective polarization, these reductions in affective polarization have often not led to decreases in anti-democratic attitudes (Voelkel et al. 2022a). Building on this, a recent megastudy tested over 20 interventions found only a weak connection between partisan animosity and anti-democratic attitudes, supporting the idea of distinct causal pathways (Voelkel et al. 2022b).

Ideological polarization can be operationalized in several ways with varying units of analysis all striving to measure the dissimilar ideologies and policy preferences that exist in a party system. A short list of operationalizations includes: comparing party platforms, looking at the voting records of legislators, and comparing the policy preferences of individuals who identify with various parties. (Coffey 2011; Fiorina and Abrams 2008) US political scientists for much of the 20th century felt that the American party system was insufficiently polarized, making it hard for individuals to be able to distinguish between the two main political parties. (Part I. The Need for Greater Party Responsibility 1950)

While previous scholars of American politics might have called an increase in the polarization of the party system a healthy development, most scholars today agree that the American party system today is experiencing an unhealthy amount of polarization. (Mason 2018) This manifests in symptoms such as legislative gridlock, stymying productive political conversations at all levels, and making mutually acceptable policies elusive. (Heltzel and Laurin 2020; Jones 2001) To the credit of these earlier scholars, they predicted that if the system became more polarized, voter interest and participation in politics would increase as eligible

voters would feel like a meaningful choice was actually being presented between the two parties. That is definitely what we have seen with the 2020 presidential election, which had the highest rates of voter turnout in many years. (Callander and Wilson 2007; Desilver 2021; Frey 2021) New scholarship has suggested that the relationship between polarization and turnout might not be best described by a simple linear relationship. Instead, they suggest that increased polarization does increase turnout up to a point, but a threshold exists where afterwards increases in polarization negatively affect trust in government institutions which can lead to decreased turnout. (Torcal and Magalhães 2022).

While ideological polarization of the party system and among elites, as well as affective polarization in the public, is well demonstrated in the literature, ideological polarization among the general public has been an intense area of scholarly discussion. (Wilson, Parker, and Feinberg 2020) This debate is perhaps best encapsulated in the 2008 articles "Political Polarization in the American Public" by Fiorina and "Is Polarization a Myth?" by Abramowitz. Fiorina argues that there has been little movement in the amount of ideological positions for many decades, citing self-reported ideologies recorded in the National Election Studies among other evidence. (Fiorina and Abrams 2008) Abramowitz counters by using issue questions from the same National Election Studies to show that since the 1980s individuals have increasingly held more ideologically consistent policy positions than they have in the past and are in that sense becoming more ideological. (Fiorina and Abrams 2008) This debate, sometimes referred to as party sorting or polarization, has continued and been refined over the years. (Davis and Dunaway 2016; Dunaway 2021; Fiorina 2017; Gillion, Ladd, and Meredith 2020; Hill and Tausanovitch 2018, 1958–2012)

While this is still a topic of debate in the literature it is beyond dispute that the American public believe that they are ideologically polarized and that these perceptions affect an individual's political attitudes and behaviors. (Wilson, Parker, and Feinberg 2020) This perceived, or false, polarization is usually operationalized by asking survey respondents to place the political parties on a left-right scale and then to measure the distance between the placed party positions. The further the respondent places the parties apart from each other ideologically, the more perceived polarization the individual is experiencing.

False polarization has been shown to be an equally, if not more, important predictor than actual polarization in the cases of negative affective evaluations of out-parties and out-party candidates, voting, participation, trust, and efficacy than actual polarization. (Enders and Armaly 2019). Additionally, false polarization has also been demonstrated to lead to decayed support for democracy both in the US and in Europe, to lead to more actual polarization, as well as increased prejudice and dehumanization. (Moore-Berg, Hameiri, and Bruneau 2020; Torcal and Magalhães 2022; Wilson, Parker, and Feinberg 2020)

This literature is replete with work citing the threat that polarization poses to democratic systems (Graham and Svolik 2020; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Mettler and Lieberman 2020; Svolik 2019). Although some of this literature focuses on the threat of ideological polarization (Mettler and Lieberman 2020) or perceived ideological polarization (Torcal and Magalhães 2022), the bulk of this work cites affective polarization as the preeminent attitude threatening democratic institutions and norms (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015).

Political Intolerance

While partisanship and polarization have had very active literature recently, the literature surrounding political tolerance/intolerance, especially in political science, has largely been left

by the wayside. This is unfortunate as this literature is both deep and, I believe, crucial to understanding America's current political landscape.

Political tolerance is typically defined as the extent to which political rights and civil liberties are extended to groups or individuals with whom we disagree (Sullivan et al. 1981; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1993; Marcus et al. 1995; Cain 2015). Yet this is not the only important definition; it is sometimes defined as allowing or protecting political activity by one's political enemies (J. L. Gibson 2006). It has also been defined as opposition to state actions that limit opportunities for citizens, individually or in groups, to compete for political power. (J. L. Gibson and Bingham 1985) Political tolerance was originally operationalized in the 1950s by asking respondents about outgroups which were widely despised across society, typically communists and atheists (Stouffer 1955; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1979). Later this shifted to the "Least Liked" model in which respondents were asked about which group they specifically disliked the most out of a list of commonly despised and often illiberal actors, commonly groups like the KKK or fascists (J. L. Gibson 1992a; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1979). This operationalization is still standard today (Hazama 2011) and necessarily excludes asking or thinking about individuals' political intolerance of major political parties.

Alternative operationalizations have been proposed and used, for instance the content-controlled method, which gives a list of various political activist groups representing a diversity of activist ideologies on several political topics. (Crawford and Pilanski 2014) For instance, researchers using this method are interested in political topics like gun control and abortion rights. They then will ask a series of political tolerance questions regarding both gun control activist groups and gun rights activist groups, with opposing activist groups being listed for every political topic of interest. Importantly, respondents answered questions about all activist

groups; this allowed for researchers to identify the effect of the respondents' ideology as well as the target group's ideology on respondents' political intolerance. Indeed, this line of research has shown that respondents are more tolerant of activists that share their ideology (Crawford 2014). However, this operalization just as the ones presented before necessarily excludes asking or thinking about individuals' political intolerance of major political parties.

This limitation was likely assumed irrelevant in the mid to late 20th century when Americans' political tolerance towards opposing partisans was taken for granted by political tolerance researchers. However, if this was ever a safe assumption, it certainly isn't one now. Political intolerance is perhaps most important to take note of not when it is targeted at fringe groups with illiberal aims (although this is still important) but when it is targeted at mainstream actors like most major political parties. It is doubtful that even a well-established democracy can resist backsliding when almost half the population views the other half as being unfit for the rights and privileges of a free and sovereign people and is actively trying to limit their ability to participate in the democratic process.

It is likely for this reason that Webster, in his 2020 book "How Anger Shapes Our Politics" designed experiments around how anger at the opposing political party might affect one's political tolerance. To my knowledge this is the first instance of a researcher in American politics trying to capture political intolerance for mainline opposing parties. To measure political intolerance, Webster uses two survey questions: 1) "The opposing party and its supporters are a threat to the country's well-being" and 2) "Those who hold different political views than me are less intelligent than I am." (Webster 2020, 109) While these measures represent an important first attempt, they do not conceptually or operationally capture political tolerance defined as allowing or protecting political activity by one's political enemies. This dissertation will build on

this initial foray by Webster to offer an examination of political intolerance towards mainline parities that is more in line with the extant scholarship's conceptualization and operationalization of intolerance.

Within the historical context that has been laid out, several important questions about political intolerance have endured, including where does it originate, what are the consequences of political intolerance on the political system, and how to instill political tolerance in individuals prone to intolerance. To the first question, the early work by David Sears and his colleagues studying child political socialization in children grades 5-9 from the Sacramento, California school district in 1971 found that politically intolerant positions were commonly held by children. In the same article, Sears demonstrated that the two most important predictors of intolerance in the children he studied were the amount of dislike the children had for a specific outgroup and the amount of threat that the children perceived from the outgroup.

Recent work has shown that dislike for the target group may only be weakly correlated with political intolerance although it depends heavily on the operationalization of intolerance being used. (Crawford 2014) In this line of research the term dislike is not usually used; instead researchers opt for prejudice, which is defined as negative evaluations of or feelings toward particular social groups and their individual members. (Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew 1979; Yzerbyt and Demoulin 2010) Whereas the amount of prejudice toward a group is perhaps only moderately related to political tolerance in more recent studies, threat has been constantly found to be a strong predictor of political intolerance.

However, threat itself is a multidimensional construct and different types of threat have been shown to have different effects on several outcomes of interest including political intolerance. (Crawford 2014; Kinder and Sears 1981) Specifically three primary dimensions of

threat are important to this story, namely symbolic threat or threat which stems from conflict over beliefs and values, realistic threat, or threat resulting from either real or perceived conflicts over resources, and safety threats, which arise from perceived danger from another group. (Crawford 2014)

Symbolic threat has consistently been shown to be predictive of prejudice but seems to have very little relationship to political intolerance. (Crawford 2014; Kinder and Sears 1981) However both realistic threat and safety threat has been shown to have important relationships to political intolerance, namely that safety threat predicts political intolerance of left-wing groups but not in right-wing groups and realistic threat predicts political intolerance of right-wing groups but not left-wing groups. Notably, though, it appears that the effect of realistic threat posed by right-wing groups is primarily driven by the threats that such groups pose to civil rights. (Crawford 2014) This is of interest as it is empirical evidence that respondents who display intolerance toward right-wing groups are sensitive to the tolerance paradox which was proposed formally by Karl Popper in 1962 and states that:

> "Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them." (Popper, Ryan, and Gombrich 2013)

Other potentially important antecedents of political intolerance include age. Several studies have shown that older individuals are more prone to intolerance than younger individuals, although this has not been tested in a within-individual design, so it is hard to distinguish an aging effect from a generational one. (Sullivan et al. 1981) Traditionally education, particularly

university education, has been positively associated with political tolerance. (Stouffer 1955)

Political sophistication, as well as strong negative emotions, have sometimes been associated

with political intolerance as well. (E. Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009)

However all of these have mixed evidence at best. (Crockett 1976; J. Gibson, Claassen, and

Barceló 2020) In addition to these demographic characteristics individual attitudes have also

been associated with intolerance notably authoritarianism, lack of support for democratic norms

and ideological extremism (van Prooijen and Krouwel 2017; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus

1993).

     Another part of this literature investigates what the results of political intolerance are in a

political system. There are countless historical examples of individuals acting in politically

intolerant ways. The most common expression of political intolerance is simply the stripping

away or denial of an individual's or a group's political and civil rights. This can be seen in

dramatic ways across US history; women and people of color, Black individuals in particular,

have been denied broad swaths of political and civil liberties for much of American history.

(Barreto, Nuño, and Sanchez n.d.; Davidson 1994; Firebaugh and Chen 1995; Issacharoff 2013;

Kreider and Baldino 2015; Riser 2010; Rosales n.d.; Ruth, Matusitz, and Simi 2017; Tolnay,

Deane, and Beck 1996; Wells-Barnett 2014)

     In addition, specific examples of political intolerance against other groups are common in

American history. A short list of examples might include: The Alien and Sedition Act, (T. D.

Halperin 2016), the failure to protect the civil liberties of dissenting or minority groups during

wars, (Chandler 2000; Rehnquist 2000) of which the Japanese internment stands out as a

poignant example. (Camp 2016; Kessler 1988; Luther 2003) The explicit denial of various

political rights to different religious and irreligious groups such as atheists and members of the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) are also common in US history. (Adams

and Bell 2016; Kinney 2011)

Additionally, we can include political groups like communists across the several red

scares that America has gone through. (Goldstein 2016) In each of these cases political

intolerance often leads to individuals from politically weak groups being left completely

politically impotent and at the whim of groups in power.

When these groups are left without meaningful political recourse the politically

oppressed often become subject to acts of violence. This is especially the case when members of

these groups strive to exercise their political rights such as voting or protesting (Luders 2005; L.

F. Williams 2004) but often such explicit resistance was not needed, being able to harm with no

real threat of reprisal is enticing to bad actors such that simply being a woman or a Native

American is sufficient to experience terrible acts of violence. (Findling et al. 2019; Taylor

1996)

A recent book on the subject titled "Radical Partisanship" by Nathan P. Kalmoe and

Lilliana Mason explores the circumstances under which political violence occurs in US history.

They find that political violence is often the result of outgroups practicing civil and political

rights that politically intolerant individuals wished they would not. And while political

intolerance motivated by racial prejudice is probably the most common kind in America, partisan

violence without a strong racial component is not unprecedented in American history;

individuals have sometimes suffered violence for the mere task of submitting a ballot for a

minority party. (Kalmoe and Mason 2022)

While the effects of political intolerance are historically self evident, there is a bizarre

lack of evidence in modern survey work to show that the expression of politically intolerant

attitudes (sometimes referred to intolerant judgments) is associated with actual intolerant behavior. The evidence ranges from a slight effect of the political intolerance on politically intolerant policies to no noticeable effect. (J. L. Gibson 1989; J. L. Gibson and Anderson 1985)

Gibson hypothesizes that perhaps the most common effect of political intolerance in the mass public is that individuals learn and internalize that political intolerance is widespread and acceptable. They also learn that there are real risks associated with expressing political views that others find objectionable. Gibson argues, based on a Preston conception of freedom, that individuals who do not feel there are safe opportunities for self expression are not free and thus that widespread and acceptable political intolerance renders the entirety of the polity less free. (J. L. Gibson 1992b) Gibson goes on to demonstrate that individuals who feel they can not freely express their political opinions without retribution are more likely to have homogenous friend groups and communities and indeed are more likely to be intolerant of others. Thus Gibson implies that the necessary result of political intolerance is more political intolerance in a self-perpetuating cycle that eventually has to lead to undesirable and undemocratic outcomes.

Given the terrible historical outcomes that political intolerance can have on politics, groups, and individuals, an important aspect of the political tolerance literature has always been the desire to find ways to increase the amount of political tolerance that individuals exhibit. Early attempts to answer this question used observational data and found that the more education an individual had and the more exposure to diversity the individual experienced in their daily life the more tolerant they were. (Stouffer 1955) These findings were tentatively treated as causal and it was hypothesized that as the American public became more educated and more Americans were exposed to a greater diversity of ideas and individuals they would become more politically tolerant. Indeed, follow-up work replicating Stouffer's method found that Americans had in

general become more educated and had more exposure to diversity over 20 years later and that Americans had also become more tolerant by Stouffer's measures. (J. Williams, Nunn, and Peter 1976) However the operationalization of political tolerance using the least liked method cast substantial doubt on this conclusion, suggesting instead that the objects of intolerance might have shifted but that political intolerance itself remains prevalent even in highly educated societies. (Hazama 2011)

Within the field of education, another line of research has investigated how different methods of civic education can affect tolerance. Civic education that focused on showing how messy and contentious democratic politics can be resulted in students expressing more political tolerance than those who experienced a more glossy version of democratic politics where compromises and consensus are presented as natural and easy. (Sears 1972; Zellman and Sears 1971) Although because of the costly and difficult nature of these types of interventions this line of research has not seen substantial follow up, a study with South Korean middle school students demonstrated similar effects. (Chung 1994)

Related to the education hypothesis is the political sophistication hypothesis. It has long been believed that strong negative emotions are associated with and perhaps cause political intolerance. It has been argued that the more politically sophisticated rely less on emotions to make political judgments than the politically unsophisticated do. (Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009) Empirical research has found that while negative emotions are related to political intolerance the effects are only modest. This is particularly true for feelings of anger or fear whereas "group based hatred" has been shown to be more important. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that political sophistication is not itself a predictor of tolerance. The evidence on whether political sophistication moderates the effect of negative emotions on political

intolerance is mixed, with some studies showing that it does have a modest mediating effect and others showing no moderating effect between negative emotion and political intolerance. (Gibson, Claassen, and Barceló 2020; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009)

Prominent political intolerance researcher James Gibson developed the "Sober Second Thought" hypothesis which posited that individuals who had expressed intolerance towards specific groups would express less intolerance if the individual was presented with tolerant counterarguments about electoral fairness or the marketplace of ideas. And indeed Gibson found that intolerance was susceptible to persuasion but found that threat perception significantly moderated the effects. Additionally, and discouragingly, while intolerant political attitudes were susceptible to persuasion, tolerant attitudes were even more susceptible to counterarguments. (J. L. Gibson 1998) While this paper has been highly cited, there is only one published attempt to replicate these findings in which similar small and moderated effects were found. (M. Petersen et al. 2011) Building on the notion of the sober second thought, a pre-registered study in 2019 reports that attempting mindfulness meditation is an even less effective form of sober second thought than counter arguments are. As a result, the authors do not recommend the pursuit of mindfulness meditation to mitigate political intolerance. (Erisen 2018; M. B. Petersen and Mitkidis 2019)

Partisan Political Intolerance

Partisan politics in the US have grown more and more concerning over the past two decades. This trend has primarily been explained by studying polarization, party sorting, and negative partisanship. While incredibly important, these phenomena do not in and of themselves describe the worrying events and trends that we have observed over the past several years including: the violence that was unleashed on largely peaceful protests (Gjelten 2020), the

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support for that violence along ideological lines,(Metcalfe and Pickett 2021) the politicization of previously nonpartisan bodies that oversee the certification of elections, (Scanlan 2021) the refusal to see votes cast by political opponents as valid and legal despite overwhelming evidence. (Most Republicans still believe 2020 election was stolen from Trump – poll 2021) It also does not account for the moves made by Republican lawmakers to limit voting access to favor their supporters, (Gardner, Rabinowitz, and Stevens 2021) nor the moves across the country to purge schools of teachers willing to talk about race in a meaningful way. (Meckler and Natanson 2022)

Polarization, party sorting, and negative partisanship may help explain these trends and events, but they do not describe them. Just as physical proximity may help explain a viral outbreak but does not describe it. All of the examples given above are expressions of political intolerance. The target of the intolerance includes the members of mainline political parties, most notable among whom are people of color and those who hold and support ideologies and policies that empower them.

However political scientists have not, as of yet, invoked the language and scholarship of political intolerance to understand these phenomena. This is a missed opportunity as the more accurately we describe the situation the better we will understand it and the more appropriate our proposed solutions can be. Yet as described above the most prominent ways of measuring political intolerance are definitionally incapable of measuring intolerance against the members of mainline political parties. The primary goals of this dissertation are to:

1. Reconceptualize tolerance in such a way that it is more generally applicable than current conceptualizations.

2. To demonstrate that even with traditional conceptualization and operationalization (The stuffer tolerance battery but with the opposing political party instead of with a least licked group.) we find that partisan political intolerance is quite common among American partisans.

3. To demonstrate that the current conceptualization is a powerful predictor of anti-democratic attitudes both those that are commonly thought of as such but others that have not typically been conceptualized in this way.

4. Test a 50 min classroom intervention to reduce intolerance as well as the causal link between anti-democratic attitudes and partisan intolerance.

5. Build on the Sullivans conception on political tolerance to integrate politics into political tolerance, and suggest a novel operationalize to accompany it that allows for partisan political tolerance in specific and political tolerance generally to be used as a proper independent variable to study anti-democratic attitudes.

Chapter 3: Measuring Partisan Political Intolerance

In this chapter I present a quantitative analysis of partisan political intolerance based on two broadly representative lucid surveys of 1020 and 3300 respondents respectively in order to demonstrate that partisan political intolerance is a phenomenon that (1) exists in meaningful amounts among American partisans (Prevalence), is not strongly associated with other important political factors such as partisanship, party ID, and polarization (Correlates), understand what factors demographic, sociological, and political are the strongest predictors of partisan political intolerance (Antecedents).

The main takeaways from this set of analysis is that partisan political intolerance is widespread with 36% of partisan respondents displaying more intolerance than they do tolerance towards the opposing party. That partisan political intolerance is not correlated and lacks meaningful non-linear associations with standard political items, and that partisan political intolerance itself has only very weak linear and non-linear antecedents among the demographic and sociotropic variables contained in this dataset. I begin the chapter by discussing the demographic and political attributes of the respondents. Next, I will delve into the analysis alluded to above. And finally, I will discuss the practical and theoretical implications of these results.

Data/Measurement

The data presented below come from 2 broadly representative lucid samples of 1030 and 3,330 American adults. The samples were collected in June of 2022 and February of 2023 respectively. Table 2 below provides the demographic and descriptive details for both of these samples.

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Table 2

Demographics	June 2022 Sample	Feb 2023 Sample
N	1030	3,330
Mean Age	46.6	46
Standard Deviation Age	17.4	17.4
Percent identifying as Women	50%	50%
Percent identifying as Men	49%	49%
Percent with a different gender identity	>1%	>1%
Percent with an Asian identity	3%	6%
Percent with an Black identity	13%	13%
Percent with an Hispanic identity	6%	9%
Percent with a Native American identity	1%	1%
Percent with an "other" racial identity	1%	1%
Percent with a White identity	74%	75%
Percent with an exclusively White identity	NA	71%
Percent with an Mixed identity	1%	5%

Mean years of education	NA	14
Standard Deviation of years of education	NA	2.4
Percent in the 1st Income Quartile	42%	42%
Percent in the 2nd Income Quartile	25%	31%
Percent in the 3rd Income Quartile	26%	9%
Percent in the 4th Income Quartile	10%	19%
Percent self identifying Democrat	45%	38%
Percent self identifying Democrat leaner	9%	8%
Percent affective Democrat leaner	NA	7%
Percent affective Republican leaner	NA	7%
Percent self identifying Republican leaner	6%	7%
Percent self identifying Republican.	26%	33%
Self identified liberal	38%	33%
Self identified moderate	33%	33%
Self identified Conservative	28%	34%

Consistent with the tradition laid out in the preceding chapter these surveys measured partisan political influence by inserting the relevant out party into the original 6 Stoffer times to measure the partisan intolerance of respondents I use the traditional 6 item political intolerance battery with the out group being the appropriate opposing party as displayed below:

Tolerance Items

1. Members of the {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should be banned from running for public office.

2. Members of the {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should be allowed to teach in public schools. (Reverse coded)

3. The {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should be outlawed.

4. Members of the {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should be allowed to make a speech in this city. (Reverse Coded)

5. The {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should have their electronic communications monitored by our government.

6. The {*out-party: Republican/Democratic}* party should be allowed to hold public rallies in our city. (Reverse Coded)

Additionally, traditional political measures were included to capture partisanship, affective and perceived ideological polarization, negative partisanship, authoritarianism, and ideology. Lastly there are batteries for each of the 4 different categories of antidemocratic attitudes including hardball measures sourced from several sources including the American Pulse Dataset, content-controlled versions of the hardball questions found in the ANES, and some additional hardball questions from forthcoming work by William Kidd. Additionally three types of perceived threat (Symbolic threat, Safety threat, and Rights threat) posed by the opposing

party and the percent of opening partisans that support varies threatening positions. To measure

willingness to violate democratic norms, questions were pulled from the American Pulse Dataset

and supplemented with original questions regarding election denial, and support for other

democracy subverting behavior. Support for authoritarian rule was measured using Torcal and

Magalhaes' four question battery (2022). Lastly, the political violence battery developed by

Kalmo and Mason (2022) was used to measure respondents' support for political violence. Each

of these batteries will be used to tap into the 4 dimensions of anti-democratic attitudes discussed

in the previous chapter. These will primarily be the subject of the preceding chapter but are listed

here along with the description of the types of items available in these surveys.

Hardball Items

All Items are on a 5-point scale either with either the level of agreement or level of support

varying. i.e.:

- "Support strongly,"

- "Support somewhat,"

- "Neither support nor oppose,"

- "Oppose somewhat,"

- "Oppose strongly"

Or

- "Strongly Agree"

- "Agree"

- "Neither agree nor disagree"

- "Disagree"

- "Strongly Disagree"

1. Would you support or oppose requiring voters to show proof of residence when voting, known to reduce turnout among *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* voters?

2. *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}*-controlled legislature redraws the state's congressional district maps, causing a Democratic Congressperson to lose their seat.

3. A *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}*-controlled legislature passes a law preventing ex-felons from voting. Since ex-felons tend to support *{outparty: Democrats/Republicans}*, this makes *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* more likely to win elections. Would you support or oppose this measure?

4. "Do you agree or disagree: {inparty: Democrats/Republicans} should reduce the number of polling stations in areas that typically support {outparty: Democrats/Republicans}."

5. "Do you agree or disagree: {inparty: Democratic/Republican} elected officials should sometimes consider ignoring court decisions when the judges who issued those decisions were appointed by {outparty: Democratic/Republican} presidents."

6. "When {inparty: Democrats/Republicans} are in power they should make sure that only loyal Republican judges are appointed. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?"

7. "When Republicans are in power they should expand the Supreme Court to create new positions for Republican judges and guarantee themselves a majority. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?"

Authoritarian preferences

All four items use a 5-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

There are many ways to govern a country. Please report the extent to which you either agree or disagree with each of the following opinions about different ways to run a country.

1. Elections are not a viable way to represent the people's will.

2. Only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office?

3. The army should govern the country.

4. National assemblies like congress should be limited so that we can have a strong leader.

Personal anti-democratic beliefs

1. "Do you agree or disagree with the following: When a *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* candidate questions the outcome of an election other *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* should be more loyal to the *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* party than to election rules and the constitution."

"Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree"

2. Elections are complicated affairs, some have argued that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from *{inparty: Donald Trump/Joe Biden}* and that the *{outparty: Joe Biden/Donald Trump}* presidency is illegal. Do you agree?

"Yes", "No", "I don't know"

Political Vigilantism Items[1]

Violence

All Items are on either a 4-point scale (the first two) or a 5-point scale (the last two) with

frequency varying in both cases i.e.:

- "Never"
- "Occasionally"
- "Frequently"
- "Always"

  OR

- "Not at all"
- "A little"
- "A moderate amount"
- "A lot"
- "A great deal"

1. When, if ever, is it OK for *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* to send threatening and intimidating messages to *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* leaders?

---

[1] Note that the violence items were added to the vigilantism index as one please as such violence has equal weight in the vigilantism batter as Electoral law braking despite it having more items in it.

2. When, if ever, is it OK for an ordinary *{inparty: Democrat/Republican}* in the public to harass an ordinary *{outparty: Democrat/Republican}* on the Internet, in a way that makes the target feel frightened?

3. How much do you feel it is justified for *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* to use violence in advancing their political goals these days?

4. What if *{outparty: Democrats/Republicans}* win the 2024 presidential election? How much do you feel violence would be justified then?

Electoral law braking

It would be better for everyone if poll workers would just misplace ballots cast for the Republican Party. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

"Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree"

These datasets will be used for the analysis found in this chapter and the subsequent one. Most of the analysis will rely on the February sample with the June sample used to supplement it or to demonstrate consistent findings in the two different samples.

Prevalence

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 speak to the prevalence of partisan intolerance among survey respondents. Figure 1 displays the distribution of partisan tolerance in survey response. On this scale respondents who scored close to 1 are those who responded in the most partisan intolerant way to each of the six questions displayed above. Reciprocally respondents who answered with the most tolerant responses to most of the questions in the battery received a score near zero. Scores above .5 indicate that the respondent on average responded with more partisan intolerance than tolerance. There are several important points to take away from Figure 1. First 34%, a substantive minority, of respondents responded with more intolerance than tolerance. For

context, 70% of Americans are politically intolerant of extremist groups (Boch 2020). And in the June sample I measured political intolerance against Neo-Nazis and found that approximately 60% of the sample were more intolerant of neo-notification than they were tolerant of them.

While it is reassuring to know that American partisans are less likely to hold intolerant attitudes towards the opposing political party than they are towards extremist groups, 34% is still a worryingly high proportion of respondents. Perhaps even more worrying is that only a small fraction of respondents to this survey held consistent strongly tolerant views across the entire partisan intolerance battery. In total, only 3% of respondents have partisan intolerance scores below .25. This means that while a substantive minority are more intolerant than otherwise, they are only opposed by a very small subset who have consistent and strong partisan tolerance leaving the plurality of respondents with indifferent/non-attitudes, or only weakly tolerant of the opposing political party. Interestingly this is very similar to the amount of high tolerance found towards Neo-Nazis in the June sample. In that case 2.7% of respondents have partisan intolerance scores below .25.
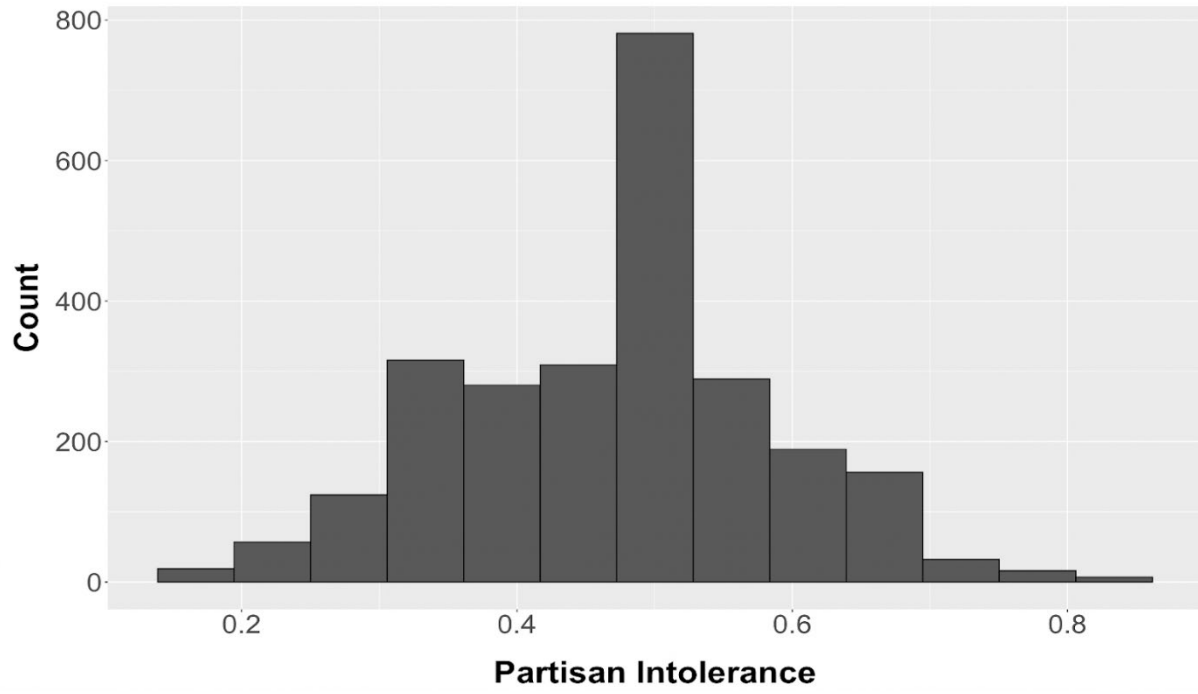
Figure 1
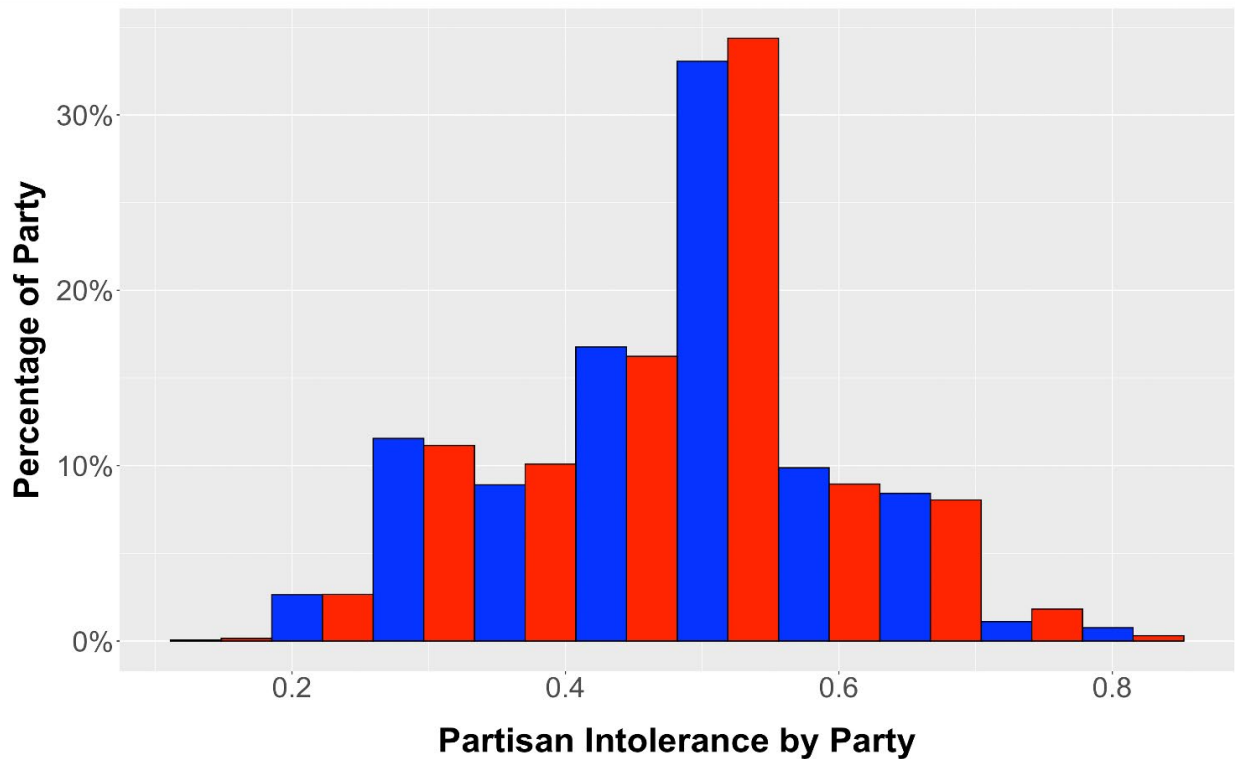
Figure 2

       Figure 2 displays this distribution when broken down by political party. Notably the distribution of partisan intolerance is nearly identical by party. Meaning that Democrats are just as likely as Republicans to express either partisan tolerance or intolerance. This may be surprising as the majority of expressions of partisan intolerance that are covered in the media and that have grabbed the most attention of academics are instances of Republicans expressing partisan intolerance against Democrats (Fishkin and Pozen 2018; Metcalfe and Pickett 2021; Most Republicans still believe 2020 election was stolen from Trump – poll 2021; Scanlan 2021). However, recent forthcoming work (Kidd 2023) suggests that the asymmetries in expressions of partisan intolerance (political hardball to be specific) are not due to asymmetries in the support for these strategies among partisans but in asymmetries in party elites' willingness to utilize and publicly advocate for these strategies.

In addition to similar distributions by political party figure 3 displays that we see a very similar trend when we look at partisanship by gender (Men in Blue, Women in Green). Once again the distribution of tolerance in the two groups is very similar in the case of gender. There is one noticeable difference, however; women in this sample were more likely to score in the middle of the tolerance scale than men. Besides this distinguishing feature, the distribution of tolerance by gender looks very similar. The theme presented in figure 1 and figure 2 is that there is not one subsection of society that is to blame for all or most of the partisan intolerance present in society. Generally speaking, partisan intolerance is present among all demographic subsections of society. This is true even for demographic characteristics that are generally associated with tolerance, age and education. While these characteristics do have statistically detectable effects on partisan intolerance with the older and those with bachelor's degrees being significantly more tolerant than the young and those without a bachelor's degree. This will be expanded on in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Figure 3
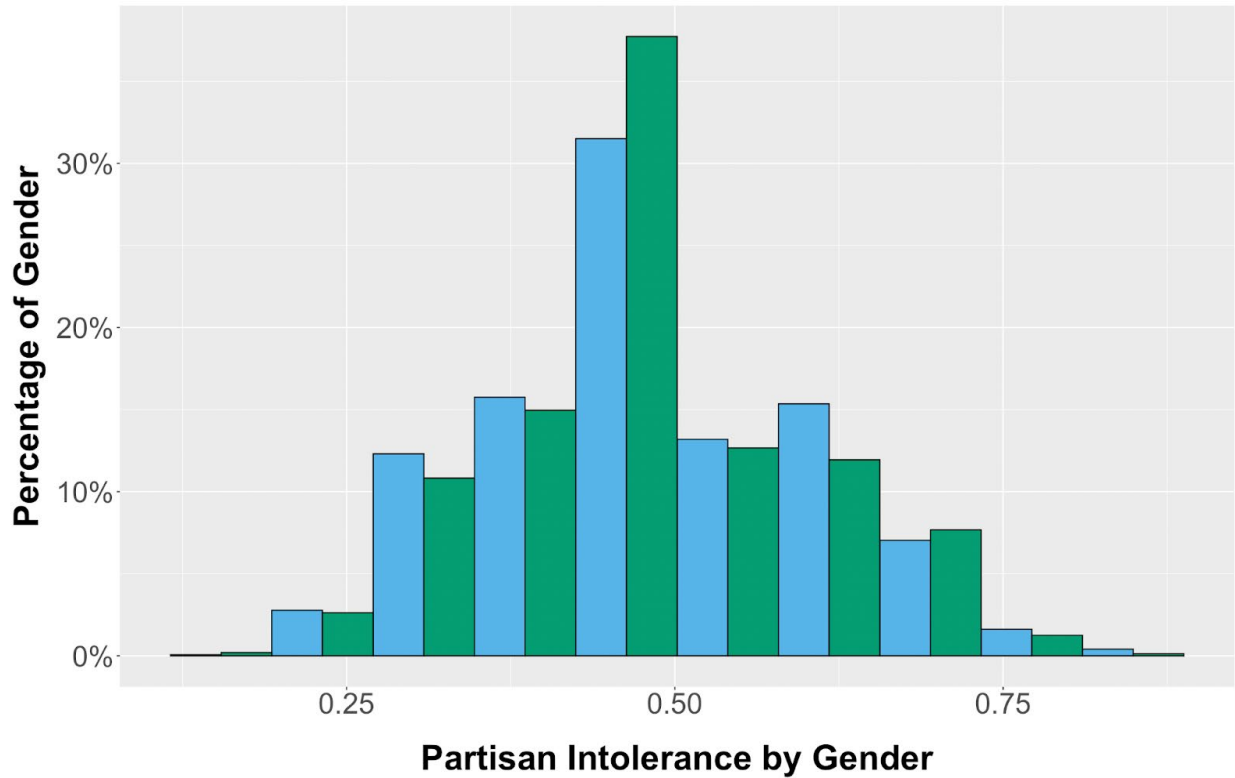
Figure 3

Turning back to differences in partisan tolerance by political party While in the aggregate the distributions of partisan intolerance are nearly identical, Democrats and Republicans differ on the specific questions on the battery that they are most likely to express intolerance on. Figure 3 explores these differences by comparing the percentages in each party that gave an intolerance response to each of the individual items of this battery. It is perhaps unsurprising given the current rhetoric surrounding critical race theory in public education that Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to want to bar the opposing party from teaching in public school. But Democrats are far more likely to support banning Republicans from running for public office or respond that the opposing party should be outlawed. This might be because when filling out the survey Democrats were thinking of Donald Trump who they may view as a criminal who should be barred from running for office. Or it is possible that thinking about dramatic political

moments in the past few years, such as the "Muslim ban," debates surrounding public health during the pandemic, Republicans response to the black lives matters movement, and 2020 election denial culminating in Jan 6, respondents concluded that this is beyond the pale and is disqualifies the republican party form benign a pillar of the US political system. Despite these differences in aggregate, both parties tend to respond with intolerance at similar rates even if the dimensions on which they are most likely to express intolerance differs.

Figure 4
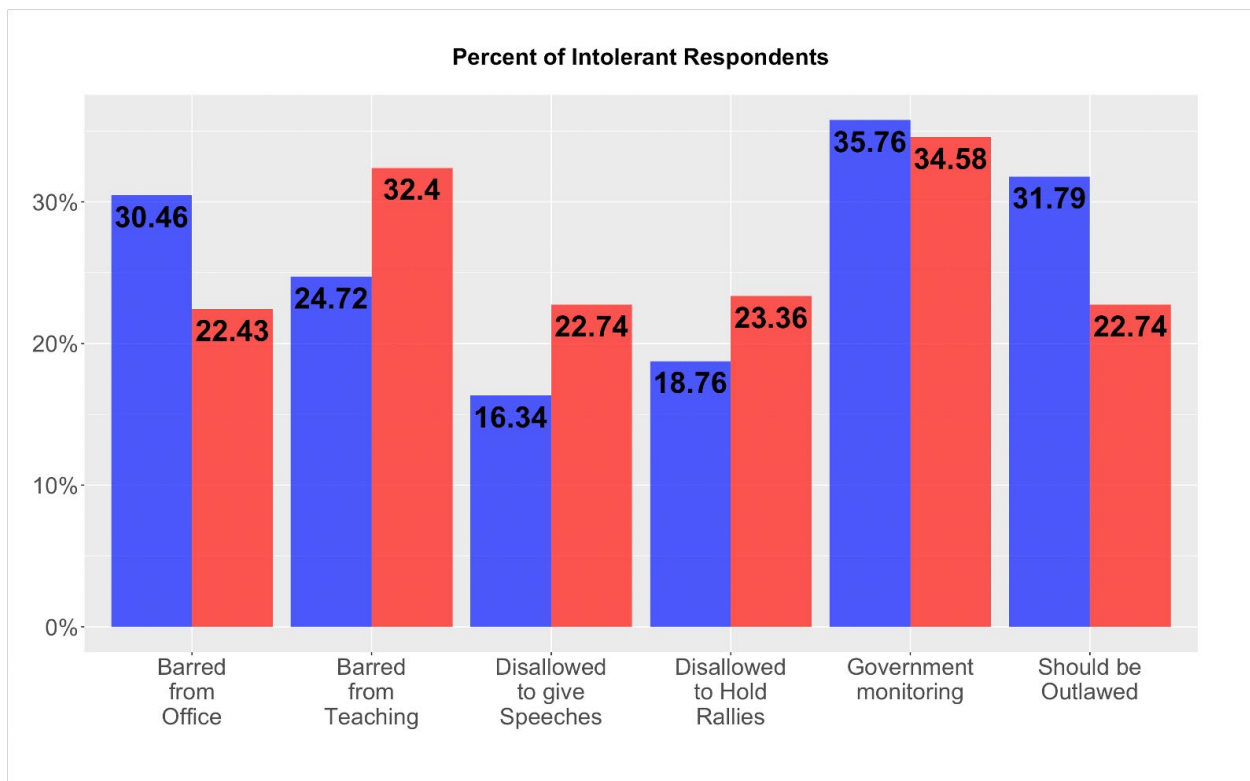
Figure 4

In summation, support is found for Hypothesis 1. Substantive minorities of all respondents, from both parties are willing to respond in partisan intolerant ways. And this is likely to be more conservative than actual partisan intolerance as social desirability bias likely means that some respondents perhaps responded with indifference or tolerance because they believe the intolerance that they hold to be socially undesirable.

Correlates

Moving on to Hypothesis 2, I will next investigate whether partisan intolerance, as measured by the traditional tolerance battery, is largely independent from other important measures in political science. Evidence for this hypothesis was collected by calculating the correlation coefficient between partisan intolerance and measures such as ideological strength, strength of partisan identity, social dominance, authoritarianism, as well as affective polarization, and perceived ideological polarization. The results from this analysis are displayed in Figure 5

	P.I.	A.P.	I.P.	N.P.	P.I.	P.S.	A.	S.D.	I.S.
Partisan Intolerance	1								
Affective Polarization	0.14	1							
Ideological Polarization	0	0.45	1						
Negative Partisanship	0.06	0.73	0.37	1					
Partisan Identity	0.18	0.48	0.25	0.06	1				
Partisanship Strength	0.07	0.48	0.29	0.11	0.67	1			
Authoritarianism	0.2	0.06	-0.05	-0.05	0.16	0.11	1		
Social Dominance	0.07	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.11	0.01	0.18	1	
Ideology Strength	0.04	0.32	0.4	0.18	0.38	0.4	-0.02	0.03	1
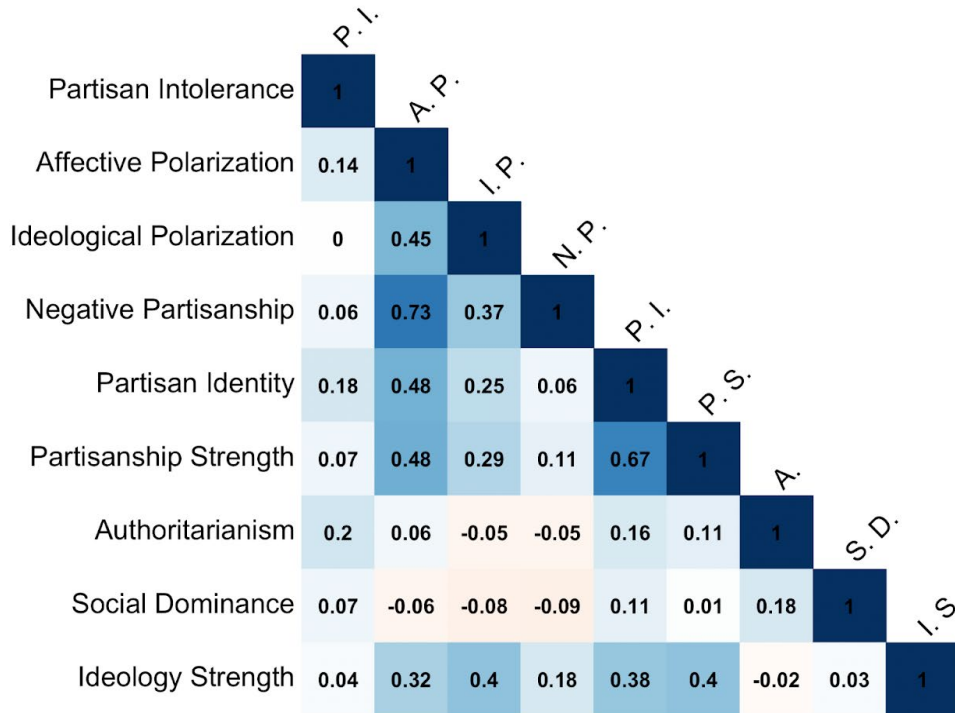
Figure 5

Remembering that correlation coefficient near 0 reflect very weak associations, correlation coefficient near -1 reflect strong negative associations, and correlation coefficients near 1 represent a strong positive association, it is instantly apparent that none of the measures included in this correlation matrix correlate very highly at all with partisan intolerance. This is

noteworthy as these are the very measures that are most often put forward to explain all of the anti-democratic attitudes discussed above. This means that the variation in these anti-democratic attitudes that is explained by respondents' partisan intolerance score is likely to be novel. Relatedly, it means that partisan intolerance is likely a distinct concept for measures such as polarization and partisanship. If it turned out that these variables were strongly associated with each other then it would cast doubt on the notion that partisan intolerance was in fact distinct from these other factors. That this is not the case speaks strongly for the potential of partisan intolerance to help build our understanding of these anti-democratic attitudes and is not simply a rehash of polarization or some other well defined and understood phenomena.

Figure 6

However just because there is no linear association between two variables does not mean that there is no association. In order to check for nonlinear associations between these

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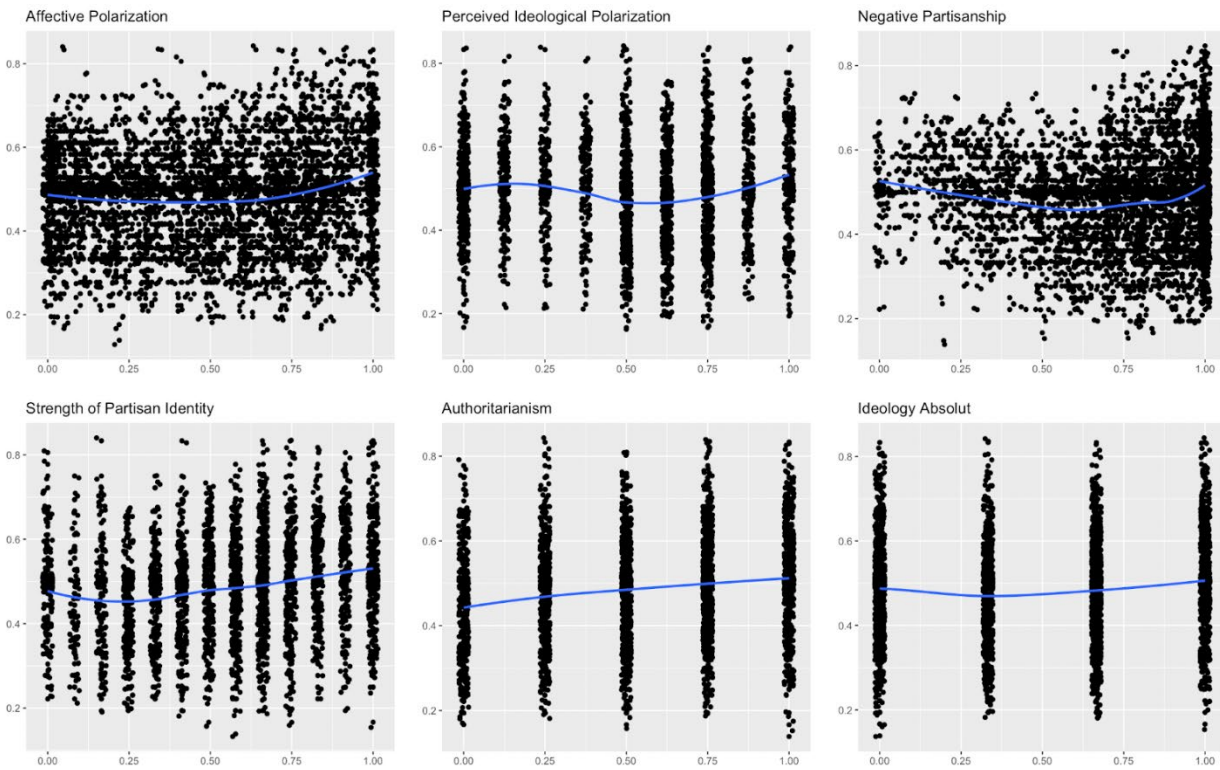important variables I use the semiparametric, and nonlinearly constrained LOESS algorithm. The LOESS plots are displayed in Figure 6. In Figure 6 the Y axis is always partisan political intolerance. The first takeaway is that in each case these associations are relatively weak and very noisy. This once again provides important evidence that partisan tolerance is its own factor that is related to but not just a rebranding of partisanship, polarization, or even authoritarianism. The second important takeaway is that there do appear to be some important nonlinear relationships to note. Most prominently in every case but one (authoritarianism) the association between these variables and partisan intolerance strengthens at the extremity of the X axis, meaning that to the extent that there is a meaningful relationship between these variables and partisan intolerance it is most likely to occur among individuals with very high levels of partisanship, polarization, and other factors. Figure 6 leads naturally to questions of not just association but of antecedents.

Antecedents

While measuring partisan political intolerance is new, studies of political intolerance against extremist groups or in general have been well studied. As discussed in the preceding chapter there are several important demographic and psychological variables that are thought to be the predictors of political intolerance. Ong the demographic variables the best predictors of political intolerance traditionally have been age and education (Berinsky and Lenz 2011; Peck n.d.; Schwadel and Garneau 2014). Other demographic variables such as race, and gender identity have been shown to have weak to mixed results depending on the study or context in question (Avery 1988; Sotelo 1999).

In addition to these demographic variables various psychological variables have been shown to be significant for predicting political intolerance. Namely among them are strength of

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personality, authoritarianism, perceived threat, and prejudice. However, of these psychological variables prejudice stands out as having the weakest and most mixed evidence. While prejudice for a group has always been core to theorizing about tolerance and is even embedded in the least liked method by having respondents select groups that they dislike the most, when it is a significant factor in predicting actual tolerance it tends to have a slight impact on political tolerance (Crawford 2014; Crawford and Pilanski 2014).

The above analysis of political corolitis notably includes two of these physiological factors: prejudice (in the form of negative partisanship) and authoritarianism. In the case of partisan political intolerance, it is clear that there is not a strong relationship between these facts and partisan intolerance. However, authoritarianism did have the strongest correlation coefficient (0.2) of all the variables included. To test this more formally as well as testing the utility of these other predictors I turn to multiple regression to ascertain the strength of these variables as predictors of partisan political intolerance. This will be done with several models including a demographic model, psychological model, a combined model as well as an interactive model with the various types of threat interacted with partisanship, as it has been hypothesized that different types of threat might be more prominent predictors of political intolerance among Democrats and Republicans.

First the demographic model is displayed numerically in Table 3. Several notable conclusions can be derived from Table 3. First, although several of these demographic characteristics reach traditional labels of significance. Overall the demographics model performs quite poorly only explaining 3% of the variance in partisan intolerance. This is important to keep in mind as I discuss these various demographic characteristics. When considering the demographics alone, imagining the model partisan intolerant individual is likely to be young,

with less education, and to make less than $35,000s a year. Additionally, even controlling for these other factors, individuals who only hold a White identity are likely to be slightly more tolerant of their opposing partisans than those who hold other racial identities. Further investigations revealed that this is primarily a function of non-white democrats being on average about 2 points less tolerant of their opposing partisan than Non-white Democrats, or Republicans of either White or non-white racial identities. Of all of these demographic variables age is by far the most meaningful predictor of partisan intolerance by itself accounts for a fifth of the adjusted R^2 of the demographic model. However, reiterating the limited utility of the demographic model generally, age the most impactful democrat variable overall can only explain a five point drop in partisan intolerance in the 80 years of life which are included in this data.

In the next model presented numerically in table 4. This model explores the psychological and political variables. Looking at the coefficients presented in table 4 the R^2 for this second model is meaningfully better than in the demographic model. The demographics plus psychological and political variables explains more than 14% of the variation in partisan intolerance. This meaningful improvement in the explanatory power of the model emphasizes that partisan intolerance is more of a product of psychology than it is of demographics.

Looking at the individual coefficients, the first point likely to catch the reader's eye is that the partisan identity of the respondent has very little effect on the amount of partisan intolerance that the respondent is likely to express. This relates to the graphical display of this in figure 2. Second it is clear that authoritarianism, symbolic threat, and safety threat are doing most of the work in this model. In the first instance remember that while authoritarianism has only a weak linear association with partisan intolerance its correlation coefficient of .2 was by far the strongest correlation displayed. It traditionally has been highlighted as an important antecedent

of political intolerance generally. So we should not be surprised by the role it plays in this

model.

Table 3

	Partisan Intolerance		
Predictors	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*
Age	-0.07	-0.09 – -0.04	<0.001
Years of Education	-0.00	-0.00 – -0.00	0.047
Women	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.00	0.486
Asian	0.00	-0.02 – 0.03	0.896
Black	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.365
Native American	0.01	-0.02 – 0.05	0.585
Other	0.00	-0.04 – 0.05	0.896
White	-0.03	-0.05 – -0.02	<0.001
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.01	0.434
Income (2nd Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.164
Income (3rd Quartile)	-0.03	-0.04 – -0.01	0.003
Income (4th Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.349
Observations	2997		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.040 / 0.036		

Table 4

Predictors	Partisan Intolerance		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Age	-0.08	-0.11 – -0.06	<0.001
Years of Education	-0.00	-0.00 – -0.00	0.040
Women	0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.971
Asian	0.01	-0.02 – 0.03	0.810
Black	0.01	-0.01 – 0.02	0.692
Native American	-0.00	-0.04 – 0.03	0.971
Other	-0.01	-0.05 – 0.04	0.886
White	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.00	0.040
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.01	0.557
Income (2nd Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.329
Income (3rd Quartile)	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.00	0.040
Income (4th Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.366
Party (Rep)	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.810
Authoritarianism	0.06	0.05 – 0.08	<0.001
Rights Threat	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.00	0.197
Symbolic Threat	0.10	0.07 – 0.12	<0.001
Safty Threat	0.03	0.01 – 0.05	0.040
Observations	2829		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.147 / 0.141		

Likewise, perceived threat has a role to play in partisan intolerance as well. Specifically in this model symbolic threat and to a lesser extent safety threat play meaningful roles in the model. Symbolic threat (threat to one's values) has traditionally been the least associated with tolerance of the three in the literature but at least in this dataset symbolic threat plays a meaningfully larger role than all of the other types of threat, and it's presence in the model is a largest single contributor to the better performance of the model.

Building on the role of these psycho/political factors I will now explore whether the interaction of partisan identity has a meaningful effect on partisan intolerance has been shown with other forms of political intolerance. This mode is displayed numerically in table 5. For ease of presentation the demographic variables are not displayed in Table 5 they are however being controlled for.

Table 5

Predictors	Partisan Intolerance		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Party (Rep)	0.01	-0.02 – 0.03	0.781
Authoritarianism	0.07	0.05 – 0.09	<0.001
Rights Threat	-0.02	-0.04 – -0.00	0.085
Symbolic Threat	0.10	0.07 – 0.13	<0.001
Safty Threat	0.04	0.01 – 0.07	0.059
Republican : Authoritarianism	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.01	0.628
Republican : Rights Threat	0.02	-0.01 – 0.05	0.374
Republican : Symbolic Threat	-0.01	-0.05 – 0.04	0.892
Republican : Safty Threat	-0.02	-0.06 – 0.03	0.628
Observations	2829		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.148 / 0.141		

Note that the adjusted R^2 has not improved at all meaning that increased predictive power of the interactive model is not substantially better than the non-interactive model. The substantive interpretation of this is that these pathological pathways (authoritarianism and perceived threat) likely function in very similar ways among both Democrats and Republicans.

Discussion

Taken together these analyses present a clear picture of partisan political intolerance among American partisans. Partisan intolerance is present among American partisans, and while it is thankfully not the majority position, substantial portions of both parties are unwilling to extend

political tolerance toward their opposing mainstream partisan points. This intolerance is only weakly associated with important political variables such as partisanship and polarization, indicating that partisan intolerance is not just a rebranding of already understood phenomena.

Like traditional political tolerance measures, partisan intolerance has important antecedents in age, authoritarianism, and perceived threat. Similarly, partisan intolerance, like other forms of intolerance, appears to be distributed similarly in both political parties. While the antecedents of partisan intolerance seem to be very similar to the antecedents of other forms of political intolerance, there is an important distinction that makes partisan intolerance a much more urgent and pressing problem than political intolerance against extremist groups. Mainstream partisans' intolerance of their mainstream partisan opponents is fundamentally incompatible with multiparty democracy. Functioning multiparty democracy is predicated on mainstream political parties fairly competing based on the quality of their candidates and the popularity of their platforms where partisans from all sides accept the outcomes of legitimate elections as legitimate, and politics can proceed unhindered until the next fair and free election begins.

I posit that partisan intolerance cuts at the heart of this process. One that holds partisan intolerance is not willing to accept political losses in order to accommodate fair competition with their political opponents. In fact, we should expect them to attempt to manipulate the rules that govern elections to benefit their political allies and disadvantage their political opponents. When these measures fail to give them the political outcomes they desire, we should not be surprised that these individuals are willing to support or at least tolerate attempts to subvert election outcomes by their fellow partisans. Nor should we be surprised when they resort to or support the use of political vigilantism to intimidate, threaten, and harm their political opponents. To

what end? Where does a democratic society that is willing to indulge in partisan intolerance end up? This path, if followed, can only lead to authoritarianism where democratic institutions such as elections are showpieces at best. If partisans are not willing to protect the political rights and power of their mainstream opponents then the only definite way to ensure that your political voice is heard is to silence your political opponents. The subsequent chapter explores this hypothesized relationship between partisan political intolerance and individuals' anti-democratic attitudes.

Appendix

This appendix reproduces all the tables and figures form the proceeding chapter with partisan ship coded as is traditionally done. Meaning that these tables and figures exclude all affective learners and instead just present self-identified leaners and self-identified partisans. One will note no meaningful change except for a drop in sample sizes and slightly larger confidence intervals. As such, this will not be repeated in subsequent chapters.

Table 6

Demographics	Feb 2023 Sample
N	2,590
Mean Age	47
Standard Deviation Age	17.5
Percent identifying as Women	51%
Percent identifying as Men	49%

Percent with a different gender identity	>1%
Percent with an Asian identity	3%
Percent with an Black identity	13%
Percent with an Hispanic identity	9%
Percent with a Native American identity	1%
Percent with an "other" racial identity	1%
Percent with a White identity	76%
Percent with an exclusively White identity	73%
Percent with an Mixed identity	4%
Mean years of education	14
Standard Deviation of years of education	2.4
Percent in the 1st Income Quartile	40%
Percent in the 2nd Income Quartile	32%
Percent in the 3rd Income Quartile	9%
Percent in the 4th Income Quartile	19%
Percent self identifying Democrat	44%

Percent self identifying Democrat leaner	9%
Percent affective Democrat leaner	NA
Percent affective Republican leaner	NA
Percent self identifying Republican leaner	8%
Percent self identifying Republican	39%
Self identified liberal	37%
Self identified moderate	27%
Self identified Conservative	36%
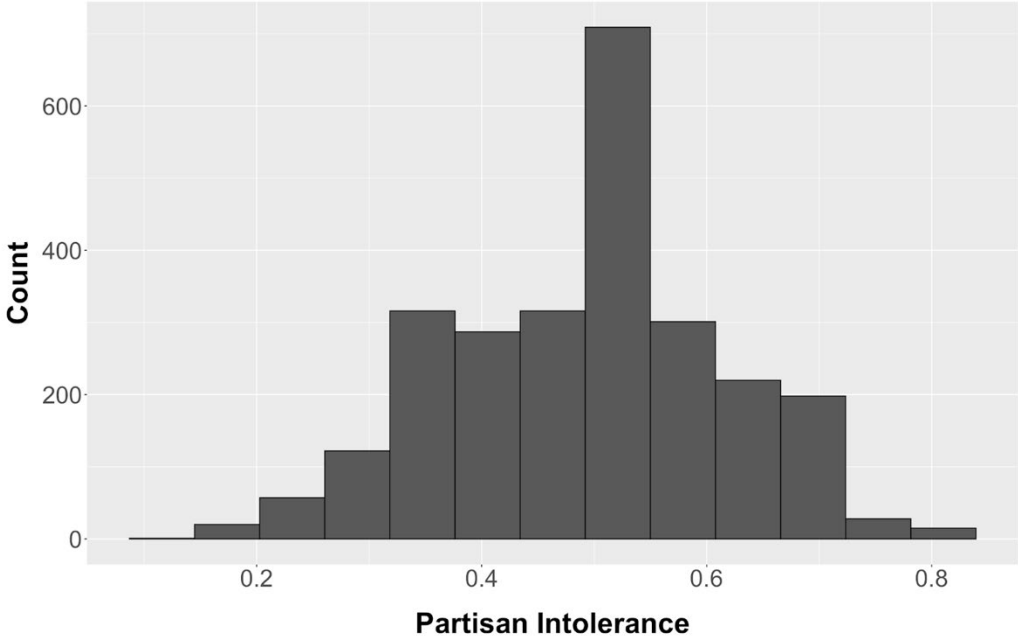
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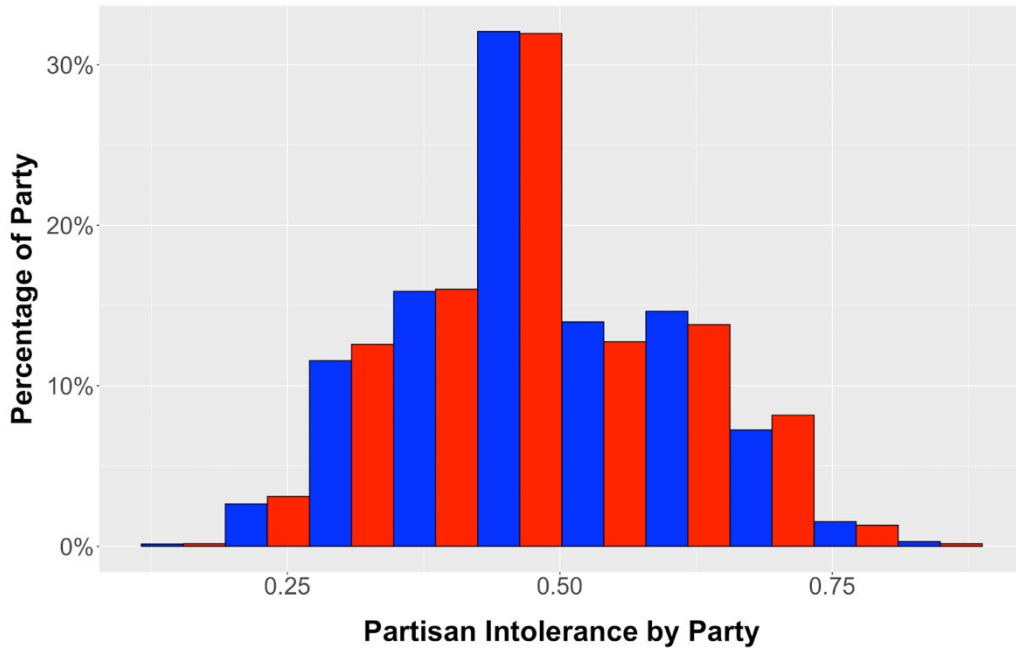
Figure 8

Appendix Figure 3

Figure 9

Percent of Intolerant Respondents

	Barred from Office	Barred from Teaching	Disallowed to give Speeches	Disallowed to Hold Rallies	Government monitoring	Should be Outlawed
Blue	30.46	24.72	16.34	18.76	35.76	31.79
Red	22.43	32.4	22.74	23.36	34.58	22.74
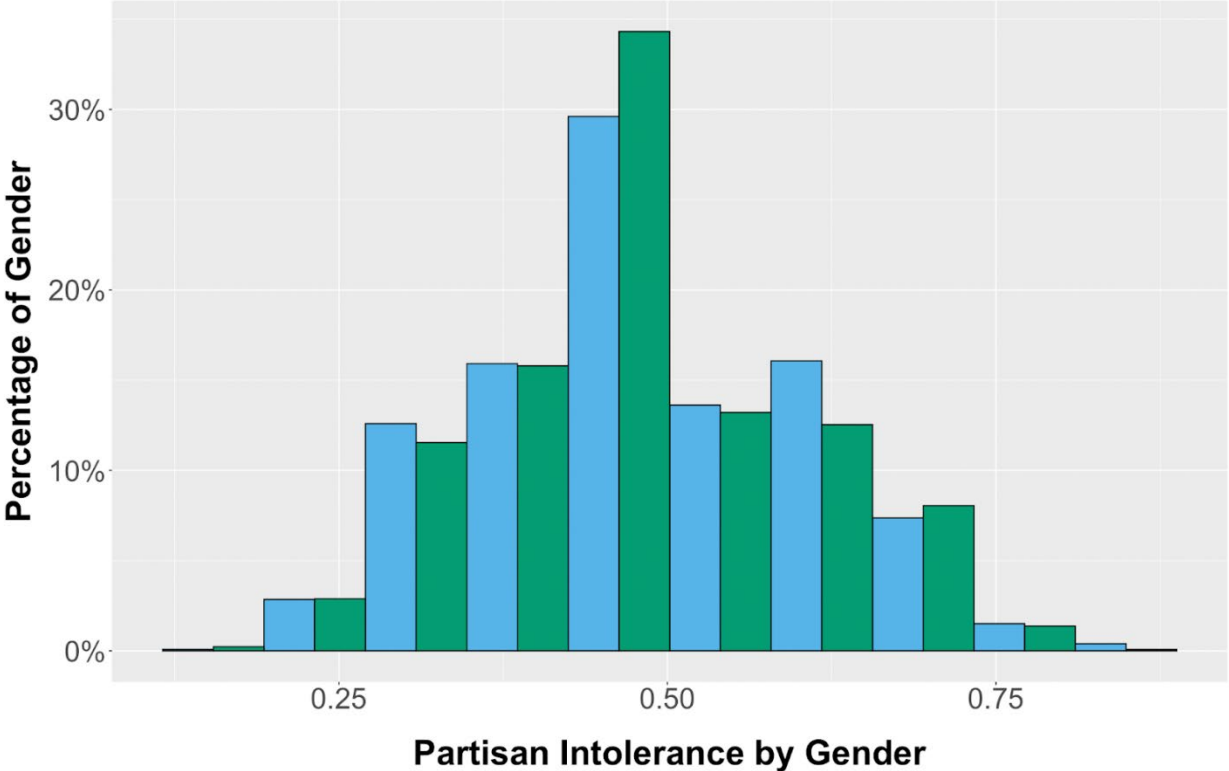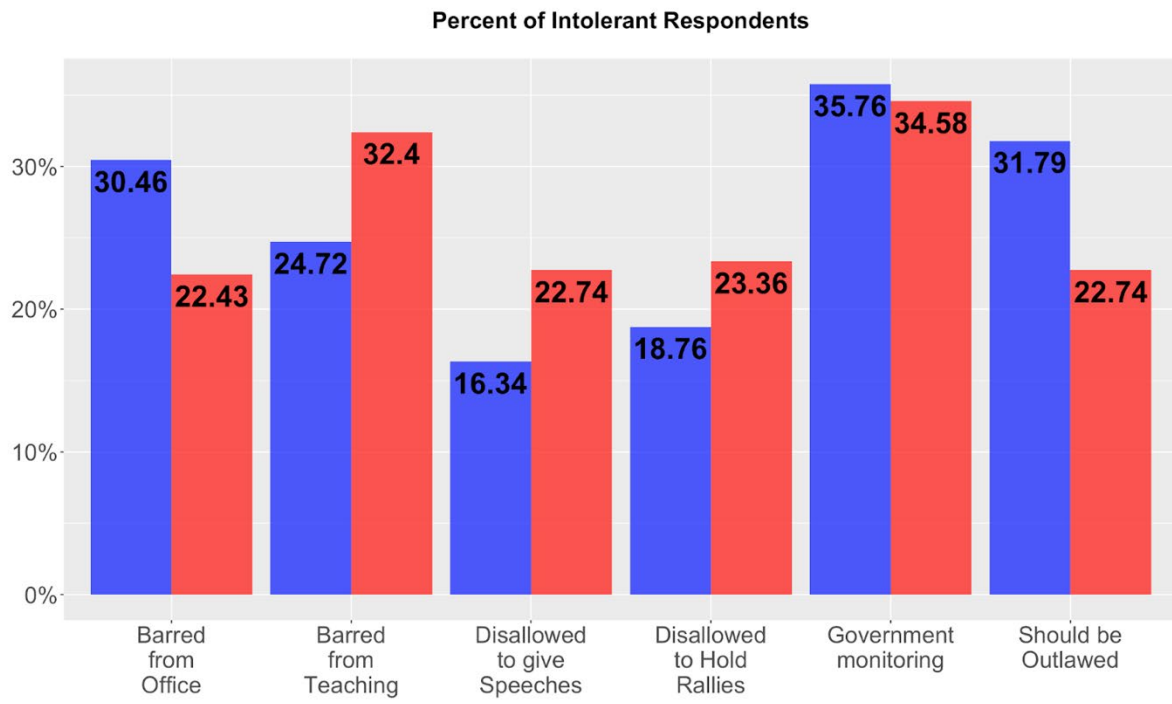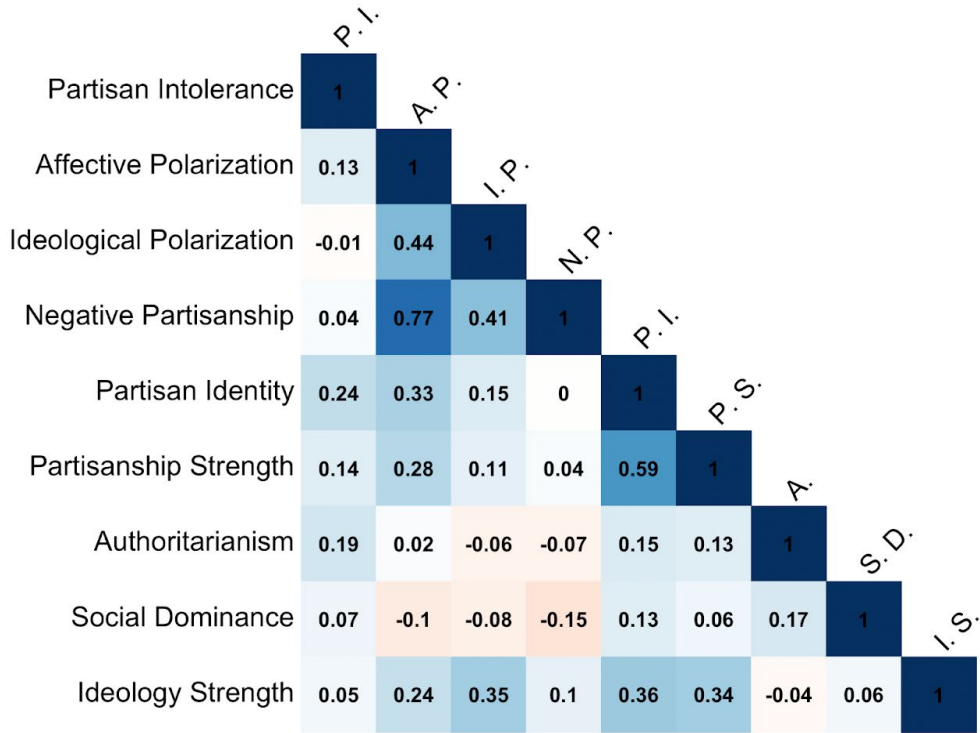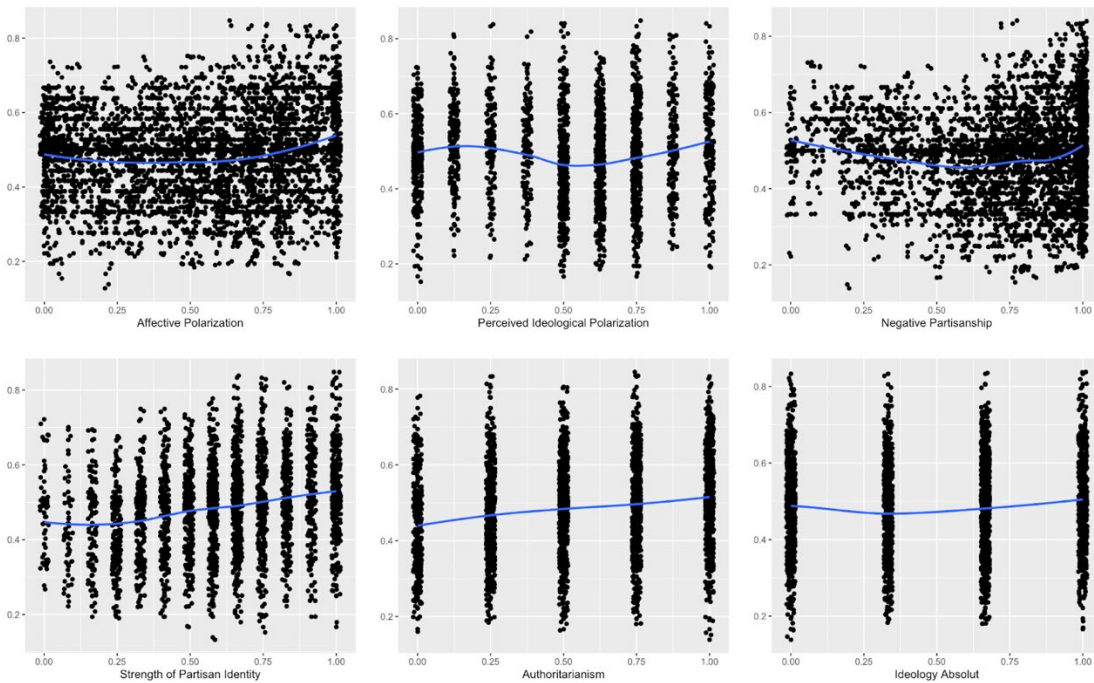
Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Table 7

Predictors	Partisan Intolerance		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Age	-0.07	-0.10 – -0.05	<0.001
Years of Education	-0.00	-0.00 – 0.00	0.188
Women	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.281
Asian	0.01	-0.02 – 0.03	0.764
Black	0.02	-0.00 – 0.04	0.181
Native American	0.02	-0.02 – 0.06	0.422
Other	-0.01	-0.06 – 0.04	0.791
White	-0.03	-0.05 – -0.01	0.003
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.01	0.448
Income (2nd Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – -0.00	0.093
Income (3rd Quartile)	-0.03	-0.04 – -0.01	0.008
Income (4th Quartile)	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.00	0.219
Observations	2575		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.045 / 0.039		

Table 8

Predictors	Partisan Intolerance		
	Estimates	CI	p
Age	-0.09	-0.11 – -0.06	<0.001
Years of Education	-0.00	-0.00 – 0.00	0.119
Women	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.862
Asian	0.01	-0.02 – 0.03	0.743
Black	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.320
Native American	0.01	-0.03 – 0.04	0.800
Other	-0.01	-0.06 – 0.04	0.743
White	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.00	0.114
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.02	-0.04 – 0.01	0.320
Income (2nd Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.00	0.275
Income (3rd Quartile)	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.00	0.106
Income (4th Quartile)	-0.01	-0.02 – 0.01	0.389
Party (Rep)	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.743
Authoritarianism	0.07	0.05 – 0.08	<0.001
Rights Threat	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.01	0.320
Symbolic Threat	0.10	0.08 – 0.12	<0.001
Safty Threat	0.03	0.00 – 0.05	0.112
Observations	2446		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.154 / 0.149		

Table 9

Predictors	**Partisan Intolerance**		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Party (Rep)	0.01	-0.02 – 0.04	0.777
Authoritarianism	0.07	0.05 – 0.09	<0.001
Rights Threat	-0.02	-0.05 – -0.00	0.116
Symbolic Threat	0.10	0.07 – 0.13	<0.001
Safty Threat	0.04	0.01 – 0.08	0.079
Republican : Authoritarianism	-0.01	-0.03 – 0.02	0.777
Republican : Rights Threat	0.03	-0.01 – 0.06	0.237
Republican : Symbolic Threat	-0.00	-0.05 – 0.05	0.991
Republican : Safty Threat	-0.03	-0.08 – 0.02	0.342
Observations	2446		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.156 / 0.149		

Chapter 4: Performance of Partisan Political Intolerance

Introduction

In this chapter I utilize the same data presented in chapter 3 to demonstrate that partisan political intolerance is an important predictor of the various types of antidemocratic attitudes discussed in chapter 2 including support for hardball tactics, authoritarian preferences, personal beliefs, and support for political vigilantism. I do this by exploring partisan intolerance's relationships with each of these anti-democratic variables graphically by analyzing their bivariate relationship, and the role they play in regression models replete with both demographic and socio/political controls. I then explore the functional form of these relationships both by exploring these relationships without the linear constraint, and various potential interactive effects particularly exploring whether the relationship between anti-democratic attitudes and antidemocratic attitudes varies by partisan identity and gender identity. I then discuss the implication of these results both for political science generally and the potential for treatments and interventions to reduce these anti-democratic attitudes.

Exploring the linear association of partisan intolerance on anti-democratic attitudes.

As anti-democratic attitudes of various types are going to be the dependent variable in each of the models and analysis presented in this chapter, I will briefly recap the discussion in Chapter 2 of what I mean by anti-democratic attitudes, and the various forms that they come in. As democracy itself is a disputed concept anti-democratic attitudes will necessarily be disputed as well (Gallie 1955; Kurki 2010; Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021; Spicer 2019). What one considers an anti-democratic attitude is going to depend on the conception of democracy one has in mind.

For my purposes I define democracy as a system of government in which all citizens have meaningful ways and channels to participate in the selection of or running of governments, where some minimal level of opportunity to participate is available to all adult citizens. As such I define anti-democratic attitudes as beliefs that if widely held undermine the ability of a democracy to function or attitudes that if acted on would differentially alter the minimum opportunity of some citizens more than others or that restricts or eliminates the meaningful ways and channels that average citizens participate in the selection or running of governments.

Building off this definition of antidemocratic attitudes I utilize a typology to categorize different types of anti-democratic attitudes. On the X axis of this typology lies the legality or constitutionality of behaviors that result from these attitudes. Some of the behaviors or actions that these attitudes lead to are illegal or unconstitutional while others are not. On the Y Axis of this typology lies the mechanism or the agent that is the target of the attitude. All of these attitudes and beliefs are held by individuals but some of them require formal institution such as a legislature or the military to instigate the actual anti-democratic behavior, while others don't require the actions of institutions to result in an antidemocratic outcome, these attitudes and beliefs instead function by the actions of individuals and not institutions. This typology with various examples of each category is listed below in Table 10. See chapter two for a full description of each of these categories. In this chapter the relationship between partisan intolerance and each of these four categories of anti-democratic attitudes will be explored.

Table 10

	Legality	
	Legal/Constitutional	Illegal/Unconstitutional

| Agent | Institutions | **Support for Hardball** Gerrymandering Restricting polling locations Court Packing | **Authoritarian preferences** Military takeover Limiting opposition Misuse of police force for politics Media censorship |
| | Individuals | **Personal beliefs** Party loyalty over state loyalty Election denial | **Support for political vigilantism** Violence against opposing partisan or politics "Misplacing" ballots |

Political Hardball as defined in chapter two is the willingness to manipulate institutions in legal ways such that they are more likely to deliver favorable political outcomes for one's self or ones political allies at the expense of democratic principles or fairness. Classical examples of this behavior in the American context include Gerrymandering, increasing the difficulty in voting that asymmetrically burdens your political opponents. While there is extensive literature on the many of these hardball strategies (Benson 2009; McGann et al. 2016; Perry, Whitehead, and Grubbs 2022; Rocha and Matsubayashi 2014; Shepherd et al. 2021; Stephanopoulos 2017; Stephanopoulos and McGhee 2015), the history and effects of their use and particularly on the legal details surrounding them, very little work speaks to what are the individual levels, factors and beliefs that drive support for the use of these types of strategies broadly. Given the theory presented in chapter 2 & 3 it would follow that partisan political intolerance would be a strong predictor of these anti-democratic attitudes. Strong evidence is found for this theory. Figure 13

displayed the bivariate relationship between partisan intolerance and an additive index comprising hardball strategies presented below:

Would you support or oppose requiring voters to show proof of residence when voting, known to reduce turnout among *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* voters?

A *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}*-controlled legislature passes a law preventing ex-felons from voting. Since ex-felons tend to support *{outparty: Democrats/Republicans}*, this makes *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* more likely to win elections. Would you support or oppose this measure?

When *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* are in power they should expand the Supreme Court to create new positions for *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* judges and guarantee themselves a majority. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

When *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* are in power they should make sure that only loyal *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* judges are appointed. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

{inparty: Democratic/Republican}-controlled legislature redraws the state's congressional district maps, causing a *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* Congressperson to lose their seat.

"Do you agree or disagree: {inparty: Democrats/Republicans} should reduce the number of polling stations in areas that typically support {outparty: Democrats/Republicans}."

"Do you agree or disagree: {inparty: Democratic/Republican} elected officials should sometimes consider ignoring court decisions when the judges who issued those decisions were appointed by {outparty: Democratic/Republican} presidents."

Figuer 1
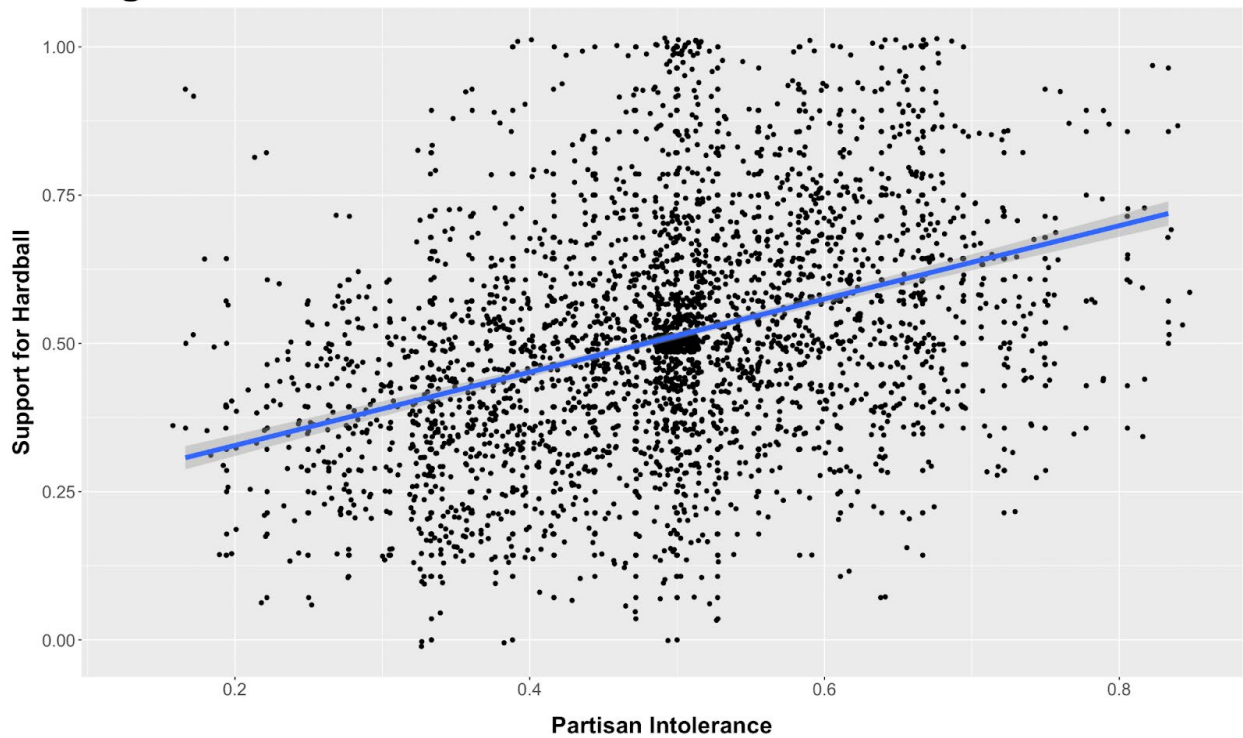
Figure 13

Figure 13 makes clear the strong linear association between individuals' partisan political intolerance and their support for hardball strategies to limit or restrict the political power of their political opponents. When run in a full regression model with both demographic and socio/political factors included (as is done in table 11) partisan intolerance is by far the strongest predictor of support for hardball strategies more than double the next two strongest predictors being the strength of partisan identity and the age of the respondent. Clearly the theory that

partisan intolerance is a very important predictor of support for hard ball is well supported in this

data.

Table 11

	Support for Hardball		
Predictors	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*
Partisan Intolerance	0.45	0.39 – 0.51	<0.001
Affective Polarization (Linear)	-0.17	-0.80 – 0.47	0.674
Affective Polarization (Quadratic)	0.56	0.21 – 0.92	0.004
Ideological Polarization	-0.04	-0.07 – -0.02	0.001
Negative Partisanship	-0.09	-0.13 – -0.05	<0.001
Partisan Identity	0.20	0.17 – 0.23	<0.001
Authoritarianism	0.04	0.02 – 0.06	0.001
Republican	-0.00	-0.02 – 0.01	0.674
Ideology Strength	0.05	0.03 – 0.06	<0.001
Education	0.00	-0.00 – 0.00	0.392
Age	-0.18	-0.22 – -0.14	<0.001
Woman	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.01	0.006
Asian	0.01	-0.04 – 0.06	0.674
Black	0.04	0.00 – 0.08	0.051
Hispanic	0.06	0.02 – 0.10	0.010
Native American	0.04	-0.02 – 0.10	0.379
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.02	-0.06 – 0.02	0.392
White	0.04	0.01 – 0.08	0.043
2nd Income Quartile	0.01	-0.01 – 0.02	0.573
3rd Income Quartile	0.00	-0.02 – 0.03	0.813
4th Income Quartile	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.645
Suburban community	0.00	-0.01 – 0.02	0.806
Urban community	0.02	0.00 – 0.04	0.029
Observations	2323		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.353 / 0.347		

Next turning to respondents' authoritarian preferences once again to briefly recap the discussion in chapter two these attitudes capture individuals' distaste for democratic institutions and preference for authoritarian institutions and other trappings of authoritarian government. These anti-democratic attitudes are, like hardball, centered on institutions and their actions, but unlike hardball strategies they type of institutional change or behavior that are represented in those beliefs and attitudes are illegal and/or unconstitutional. A list of the variables that go into the index is included below:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office?

Elections are not a viable way to represent the people's will.

The army should govern the country.

National assemblies like congress should be limited so that we can have a strong leader.

Figure 14 displays the bivariate relationship between partisan intolerance and an individual's authoritarian preference. Just as with hardball, those with high levels of tolerance have low levels of authoritarian preferences, and those with high levels of partisan intolerance have high levels of authoritarian preference. Table 12 displays the regression model replete with demographic and socio/political variables and once again we see that partisan political intolerance is by far and away the strongest predictor of individuals preference for authoritarian governance. This is consistent with the theory that partisan tolerance is the first and primary democratic attitude if one does not want to extend and protect the political rights and privileges to their political

opponents it should not be surprising that democratic governance is not as appealing to them as it is to someone who treasures the opponents political power and opportunities as they do their own.
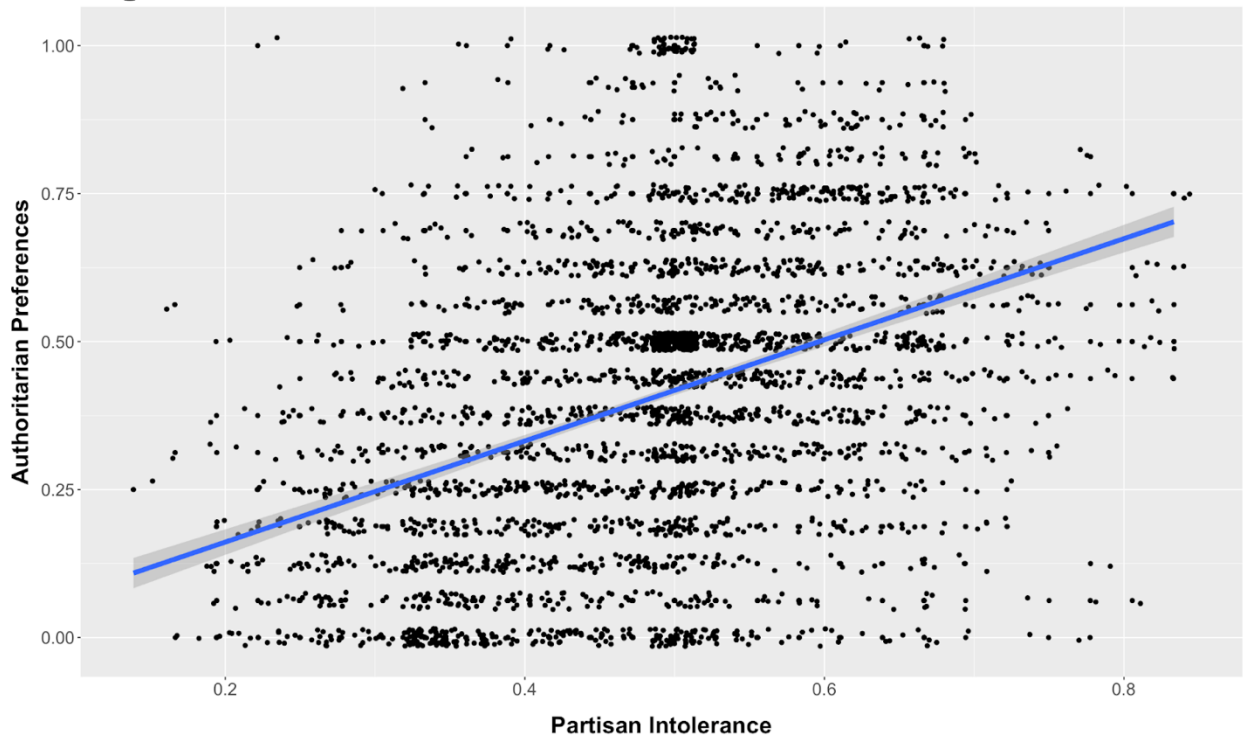
Figure 2

Figure 14

Table 12

Predictors	Authoritarian preference		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Partisan Intolerance	0.63	0.56 – 0.70	<0.001
Affective Polarization (Linear)	-0.28	-1.04 – 0.49	0.606
Affective Polarization (Quadratic)	0.40	-0.02 – 0.83	0.139
Ideological Polarization	-0.10	-0.12 – -0.07	<0.001
Negative Partisanship	-0.17	-0.21 – -0.12	<0.001
Partisan Identity	0.15	0.11 – 0.19	<0.001
Authoritarianism	0.11	0.09 – 0.14	<0.001
Republican	0.01	-0.01 – 0.02	0.645
Ideology Strength	0.00	-0.02 – 0.02	0.901
Education	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.00	0.162
Age	-0.39	-0.44 – -0.34	<0.001
Woman	0.03	0.01 – 0.04	0.001
Asian	0.00	-0.05 – 0.06	0.901
Black	0.08	0.03 – 0.12	0.003
Hispanic	0.04	-0.01 – 0.09	0.162
Native American	0.05	-0.02 – 0.12	0.257
Multiple Racial Identities	0.01	-0.04 – 0.06	0.765
White	0.06	0.01 – 0.10	0.031
2nd Income Quartile	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.245
3rd Income Quartile	-0.02	-0.05 – 0.01	0.344
4th Income Quartile	0.00	-0.02 – 0.03	0.901
Suburban community	-0.02	-0.04 – 0.00	0.162
Urban community	0.02	-0.00 – 0.04	0.199
Observations	2563		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.400 / 0.395		

Turning now to Personal Beliefs These attitudes are individual beliefs and preferences that individuals hold inside themselves that while not illegal are detrimental to the foundations of democratic government. For instance, one is allowed to believe that an election was stolen despite overwhelming evidence that it was not, however if an individual sees any election that their preferred politics loses as illegitimate or stolen, then democracy ceases to work. Likewise, when individuals are more loyal to their political party than they are to the rule of law or to the state itself then when it is politically advantageous to forgo the rule of law or to harm the state in order to further your parties political ends this is likewise detrimental to democracy:

> Elections are complicated affairs, some have argued that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from *{inparty: Donald Trump/Joe Biden}* and that the *{outparty: Joe Biden/Donald Trump}* presidency is illegal. Do you agree?

> "Do you agree or disagree with the following: When a *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* candidate questions the outcome of an election other *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* should be more loyal to the *{inparty: Democratic/Republican}* party than to election rules and the constitution."

Figure 15 displays the bivariate relationship and table 13 displays the result of the model with the relevant socio/political controls. The bivariate relationship in this case is also strong as it is when controls are added. Once again strong evidence is found that lack of commitment to the political rights of partisan opponents is a very strong predictor in these types of anti-democratic attitudes just as it was with the others.

Figure 3

Figure 15

Table 13

Predictors	Personal Beliefs		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Partisan Intolerance	0.61	0.52 – 0.70	<0.001
Affective Polarization (Linear)	1.21	0.22 – 2.19	0.039
Affective Polarization (Quadratic)	0.31	-0.25 – 0.86	0.444
Ideological Polarization	-0.05	-0.09 – -0.02	0.016
Negative Partisanship	-0.05	-0.11 – 0.01	0.195
Partisan Identity	0.26	0.22 – 0.31	<0.001
Authoritarianism	0.06	0.03 – 0.09	0.002
Republican	0.11	0.09 – 0.13	<0.001
Ideology Strength	0.03	0.00 – 0.06	0.066
Education	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.00	0.829
Age	-0.26	-0.32 – -0.20	<0.001
Woman	0.03	0.01 – 0.05	0.035
Asian	-0.01	-0.09 – 0.06	0.829
Black	0.02	-0.04 – 0.08	0.736
Hispanic	0.02	-0.05 – 0.08	0.825
Native American	0.00	-0.09 – 0.10	0.979
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.00	-0.06 – 0.06	0.979
White	-0.02	-0.07 – 0.04	0.736
2nd Income Quartile	-0.00	-0.03 – 0.02	0.846
3rd Income Quartile	-0.05	-0.09 – -0.02	0.020
4th Income Quartile	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.02	0.825
Suburban community	-0.02	-0.04 – 0.01	0.427
Urban community	0.03	0.00 – 0.06	0.066
Observations	2560		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.279 / 0.272		

Lastly, I examine the relationship between partisan intolerance and support for political vigilantism, that is anti-democratic attitudes where individuals desire to themselves or for others to take actions that are illegal in order to achieve their political goals. This includes acts of violence, support or willingness to harass political appoints, and for individual people in important positions to take illegal actions to subvert democracy, including things like poll works "losing" ballots cast for their political opinions. The measures that went into this battery are displayed below:

When, if ever, is it OK for *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* to send threatening and intimidating messages to *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* leaders?
When, if ever, is it OK for an ordinary *{inparty: Democrat/Republican}* in the public to harass an ordinary *{outparty: Democrat/Republican}* on the Internet, in a way that makes the target feel frightened?

How much do you feel it is justified for *{inparty: Democrats/Republicans}* to use violence in advancing their political goals these days?

What if *{outparty: Democrats/Republicans}* win the 2024 presidential election? How much do you feel violence would be justified then?

It would be better for everyone if poll workers would just misplace ballots cast for the *{outparty: Democratic/Republican}* Party.

Just as in each of the cases discussed above, I display the bivariate relationship (Figure 16) and the full model (Table 15). Figure four indicates that the distribution of support for political vigilantism is substantially different than any of the other anti-democratic attitudes that

we have looked at. I believe that this is primarily because these actuals are both illegal and are on a scale that is easier for respondents to imagine. This leads respondents to be less likely to respond affirmatively to these questions than they have the other anti-democratic attitudes. We see that many more respondents in this category were not supportive at all of any of the political vigilantism items. This is especially true when looking at the ones associated with violence. A key component of this category is the violence battery developed by Kalmo and Massion. I am sensitive to the response issues associated with this battery (Westwood et al. 2022). In order to mitigate these issues, I elicited an attention check right before the violence battery and dropped respondents that failed to pass the attention check. Given the fact that this data looks substantially different from the other anti-democratic attitudes that we have investigated we should proceed with caution and humility in the interpretation of these results. That said it appears that there is a positive association between partisan intolerance and support for political vigilantism. When looked at with controls we see, once again, that partisan intolerance is an important predictor of the anti-democratic attitude. In this case it is not the strongest predictor with age and the linear aspect of affective polarization both with more extreme coefficients. However partisan intolerance still has one of the largest effect sizes and is significant. Notably it has twice the effect on political vigilantism as the strength of partisan identity.

Figure 4
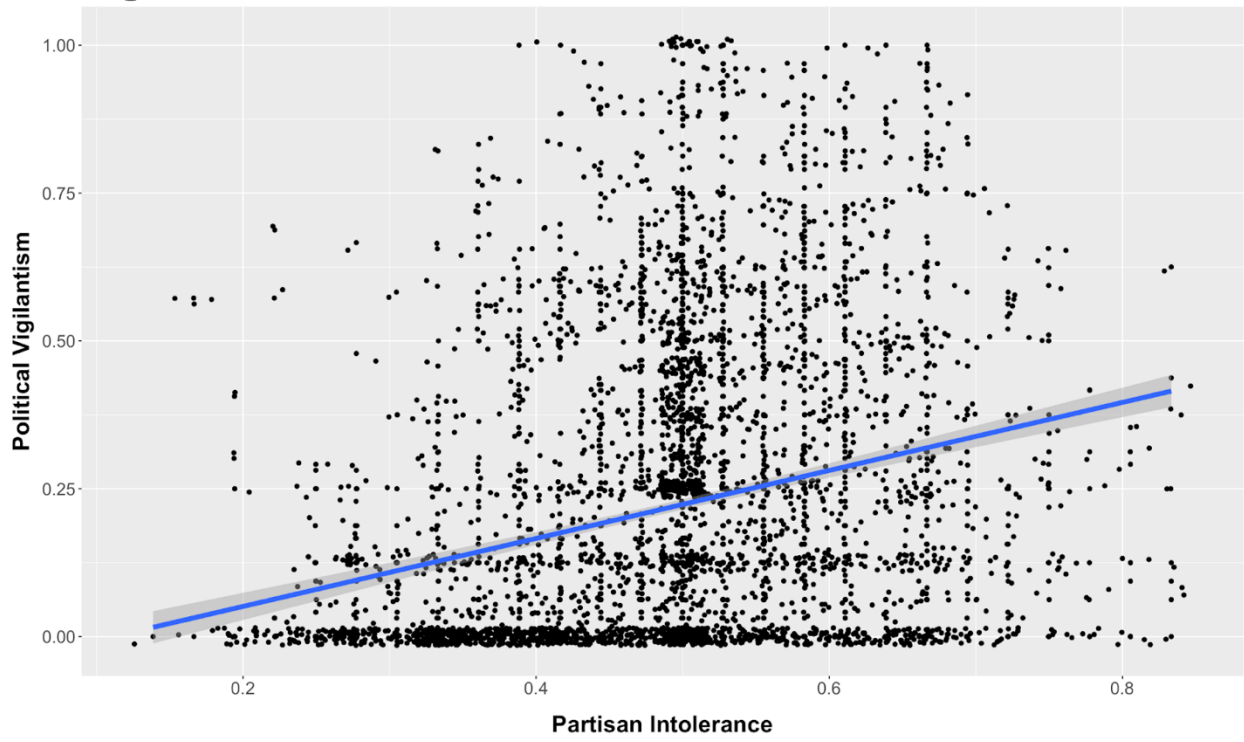
Figure 16

Table 14

	Political Vigilantism		
Predictors	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*
Partisan Intolerance	0.38	0.32 – 0.45	<0.001
Affective Polarization (Linear)	-0.95	-1.71 – -0.18	0.031
Affective Polarization (Quadratic)	0.89	0.47 – 1.32	<0.001
Ideological Polarization	-0.15	-0.17 – -0.12	<0.001
Negative Partisanship	-0.18	-0.23 – -0.13	<0.001
Partisan Identity	0.21	0.18 – 0.25	<0.001
Authoritarianism	0.01	-0.01 – 0.04	0.343
Republican	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.363
Ideology Strength	0.05	0.03 – 0.07	<0.001
Education	0.01	0.00 – 0.01	<0.001
Age	-0.45	-0.50 – -0.40	<0.001
Woman	-0.03	-0.05 – -0.02	<0.001
Asian	0.01	-0.05 – 0.07	0.788
Black	0.04	-0.00 – 0.09	0.126
Hispanic	0.08	0.03 – 0.13	0.004
Native American	0.05	-0.03 – 0.12	0.301
Multiple Racial Identities	-0.05	-0.09 – -0.00	0.089
White	0.04	-0.01 – 0.08	0.156
2nd Income Quartile	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.533
3rd Income Quartile	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.02	0.463
4th Income Quartile	0.01	-0.02 – 0.03	0.684
Suburban community	-0.00	-0.02 – 0.02	0.684
Urban community	0.01	-0.01 – 0.03	0.463
Observations	2551		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.423 / 0.417		

While the difficulty in modeling and collecting data in regards to individuals support for illegal action either take by themselves or by other individuals are real and need to be addressed in future scholarship for now it is sufficient to say it appears that just as in the other types of antidemocratic attitudes presented here partisan political intolerance is positively associated with political vigilantism. And the association is strong relative to other factors that should be predictive of political vigilantism in this case age has the strongest significant linear impact but partisan intolerance is not far behind and it still has a larger impact than the strength of the partisan identity. Clearly the unwillingness to extend and protect the political rights of your political opponents is strongly associated with the support for illegal action to harm them both politically and physically.

Exploring the functional form of partisan influence on anti-democratic attitudes

Just because there is a strong linear association doesn't mean that the functional form of the relationship is in fact linear. And just because some variable shows up as non-significant in an additive model does not mean that they would not play an important role in a multiplicative model, and of course it is internally possible that there are important nonlinear interaction that are taking place in these actual relationships. Just because social scientists are mostly considered with hypothesis testing simple beta coefficients does not mean that there aren't important or meaningful scholarship to be done in exploring these relationships in these complex ways. While these explorations do not produce coefficients that can be easily slotted into the null hypothesis testing framework, they can have important implications for our understanding of these relationships. This is especially important to consider when we are designing treatments meant to affect one variable in order to garner a downstream effect on another as is done in causal analysis.

To that end Figure 17 utilities LOESS in order to explore these relationships without the linear constraint of traditional OLS regression.
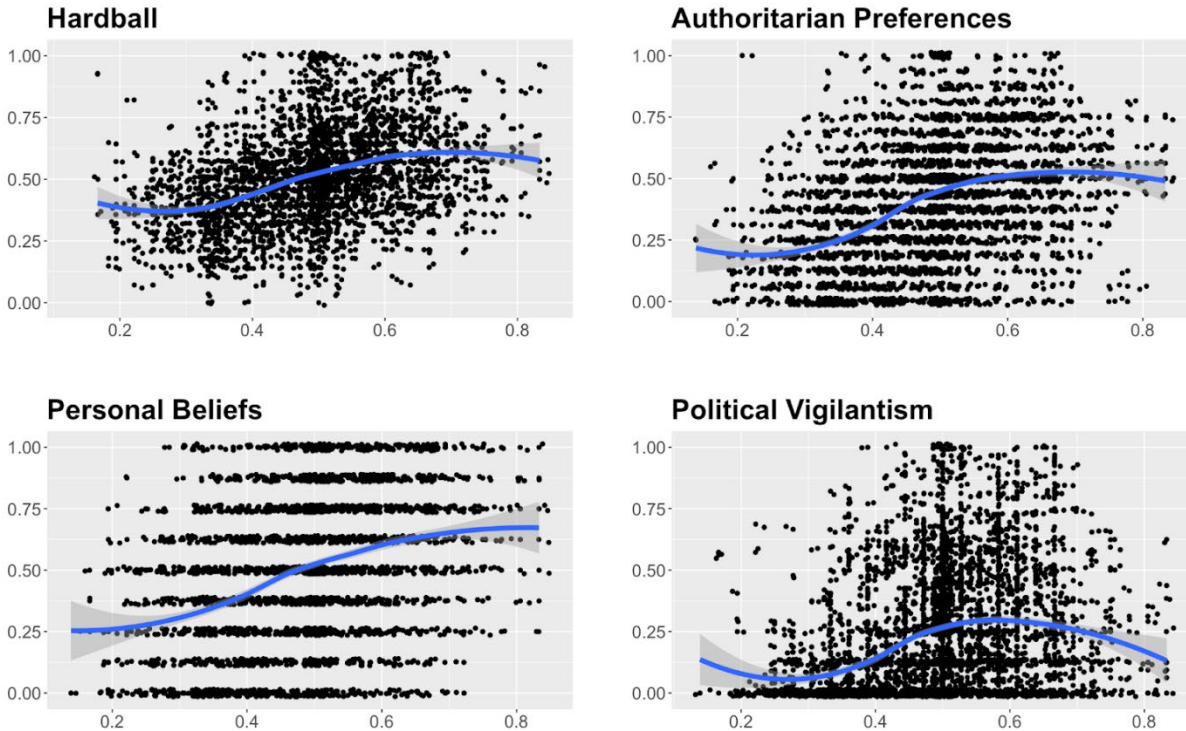

Figure 17

The graphic analysis presented in figure 17 demonstrates some interesting and useful insights to the understanding of the relationship between partisan political intolerance and these various anti-democratic attitudes. First note that for most of these relationships it is apparent that across the majority of the scale of partisan intolerance and for the bulk of respondents the functional form appears to be linear and in fact where the relationship is linear it appears to be a substantially stronger linear relationship than we saw in the linear models. This is primarily because the strength of the relationship appeared to be very weak if existent at all at the extremes of the partisan intolerant scale. That is to say that the super tolerant don't have substantially

different antidemocratic attitudes than the very tolerant. Likewise, the super intolerant do not appear to have substantially different anti-democratic attitudes than the very intolerant. What this means for future research is that the relationship is strongest among those who are weekly tolerant, indifferent or weekly intolerant. The implication is that the most successful interventions will be targeted at reducing partisan intolerance right in this range.

This is important and promising for two reasons. First remember that in chapter 3 I demonstrated that the bulk of respondents sit just in this range of the partisan intolerance scale. In total 92% of respondents in the February survey sit between .3 and .7 on the partisan intolerance scale. This is the exact section where the strong linear relationship appears. Meaning the group where a potential treatment would be the most effective at reducing anti-democratic attitudes is also where the vast majority of respondents sit. The second important implication is that effective treatments would not need to have a radical decrease in partisan political intolerance to have a meaningful impact on these anti-democratic attitudes. If the indifferent or weekly intolerant can be treated into becoming weekly tolerant one would expect meaningful drops in the various anti-democratic attitudes. Treatments may not need to turn the super intolerance into the weekly tolerant, relatively small drops in partisan intolerance among those in the center of the scale may result in meaningful drops in these anti-democratic attitudes that we are all so worried about.

The last issue that needs to be addressed in figure 17 deals with the relationship between partisan intolerance and political vigilantism. Every other plot in figure 17 is characterized by a very weak relationship between partisan intolerance and the anti-democratic attitude in question. Then as partisan intolerance increases the relationship transitions to a strong positive relationship, eventually plateauing, with increases in partisan intolerance no longer translating

into higher anti-democratic attitudes. The plot corresponding to political vigilantism shares this general characterization until it reaches high levels of partisan political intolerance, where instead of plateauing the LOESS line indicates a negative relationship. If reflective of the true relationship, then it is inconsistent with my theory. However there are several things to point out before jumping to this connection. First it is possible that this is a result of measurement error deriving from the difficulty in measuring point for illegal and violent behavior. Precautions were taken in this regard but these are new measures but perhaps they were not sufficient. Just because it is difficult to measure these attitudes does not mean that we should abandon them, these are some of the most important questions for the future of democracy and more research needs to be done into how to capture these attitudes. Second it is possible that this is a result of modeling error. We have a highly flexible algorithm that is likely to over fit the data (chase the variance rather than the functional form) in two circumstances (1) where the sample is small and (2) when at the edge of the plot where it doesn't have points further on or prior (in the case of happening early in the graph). Clearly where we see the negative relationship arising is precisely the location where overfitting is most likely to occur. Lastly it is important to note the error ribbon attached to the LOESS line widens out in a big way over this section of the graph and while even at the extremity of the error ribbon there is a slightly negative relationship it is very close to flat. Given all of these factors I do not think this is a huge problem for the theory in general, just a thing to keep our eyes on and to pay attention in future research and in the interactive analysis that is to follow.

The last analysis that will be done in this chapter will explore whether there are non-linear interactive effects built into these relationships particularly concerning partisanship and gender. It has already been demonstrated in chapter 3 that partisan political interference is

distributed sisterly both by party and by gender but just because there is symmetry in the distribution of a variable does not mean the effect of that variable is also symmetric. This is a particle of interest in regard to gender as in each of the regressions presentable who appeared to have slightly lower levels of these anti-democratic attitudes. The partisan interaction is explored in Figure 18 (Blue represents Democrats and Red represents Republicans), and the gender relationship is explored in Figure 19 (Blue represents Men and Green represents women).
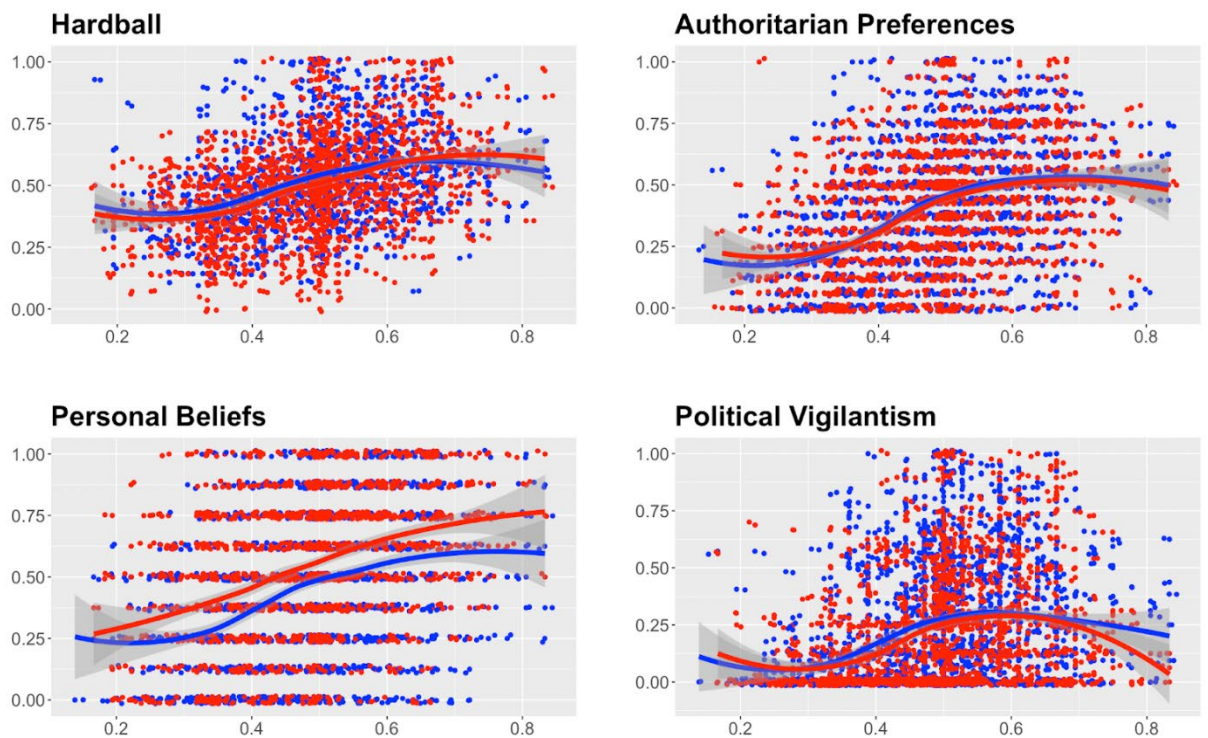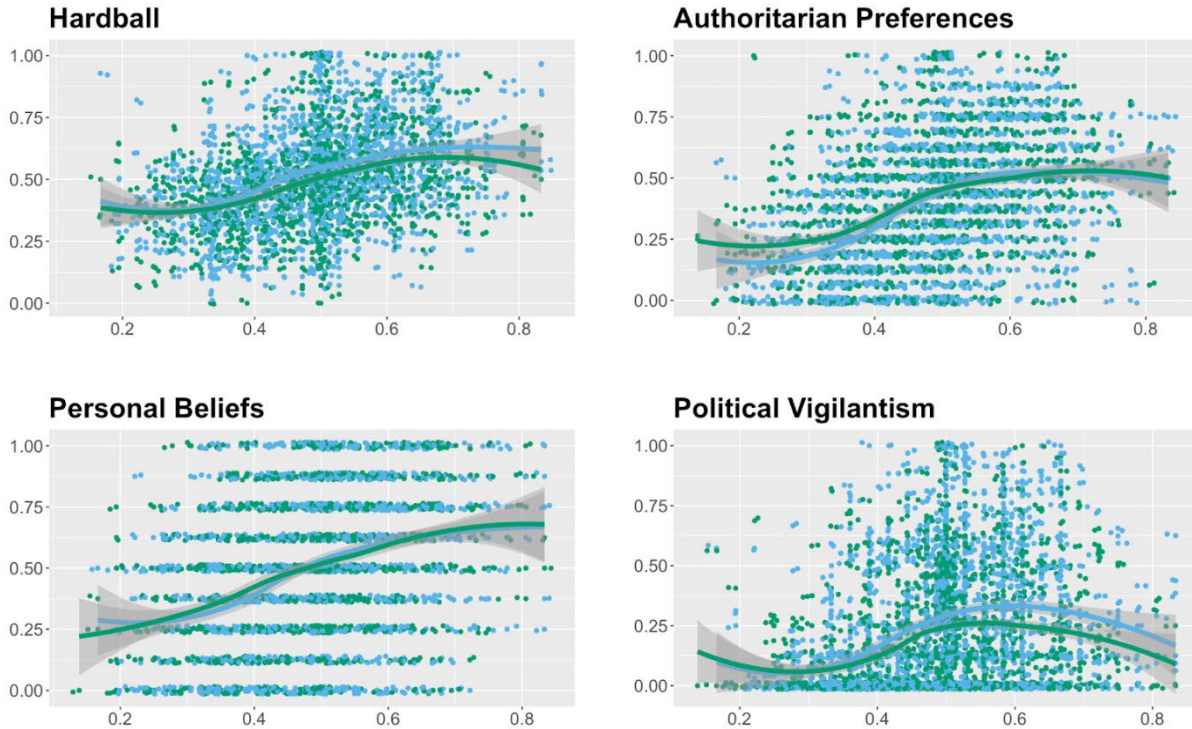

Figure 18

Figure 19

The important takeaway from these plots is that partisan intolerance functions in the same way among democrats as it does republicans, and the same way among women as it does in men. This is key to future attempts to model antidemocratic values; researchers likely do not need to consider model complicating interaction effects at least in these two dimensions. It is also important to future treatment attempts as in all cases explored here the most effective location to apply a treatment is in the center of the partisan intolerance scale. Setting aside the nature of the relationship figure 18 illuminates the only case in the preceding analysis where there is a meaningful main effect of the political party. As table 14 demonstrates and figure 18 makes clear, republican respondents are meaningfully and significantly more likely to harbor personal beliefs that are corrosive to democracy than democratic respondents are. In one sense this is likely to be expected. Remember that in this insistence the personal beliefs scale is composed of

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items dealing with election denial and whether or not republicans should be loyal to their fellow partisans or the state when they are not declared the winner of an election. Given the amount of rhetoric from Republican elites on exactly these issues it makes sense that republicans would be higher in those attitudes than their democratic counterparts. However, it is not like democratic respondents simply don't hold these views and republicans do. These attitudes exist in both political parties, and it is perhaps surprising that republicans are only 10 points higher than democrats on these measures on average. If democratic elites began to engage in some of this same rhetoric that Republican elites have, I would not be surprised if the gap between democrats and republicans on this measure disappeared. However, remember that of all of the main effects presented tables 3-5 partisan tolerance had one of the highest effects on these same personal beliefs and because there isn't really a meaningful interaction between the parties increases in partisan tolerance may be able to lower these democracy corroding beliefs among both parties to a very similar extent.

An important take away from figure 19 is that despite gender being a "significant" factor in every model presented in tables 3-5 this significance in most of the models likely doesn't translate into a meaningful difference on actual anti-democratic attitudes. Perhaps the one exception to this is in support for political vigilantism. Where among those with weak partisan intolerance (responds with partisan intolerance scores between .5 and .7) it does appear that women might be meaningfully less supportive of political vigilantism than men however even hear the actual difference is not huge. This serves as a general causation against assigning meaningfulness or importance based on significance alone.

Lastly, returning briefly to the apparent negative relationship that appeared at the extremes of partisan intolerance when predicting political vigilantism. Figure 18 makes clear that

the majority of that down turndown is due to about 13 republican respondents. It is impossible to say why there weren't more republicans higher up on political vigilantism at this point in the partisan intolerance scale. But I would be very hesitant to draw any strong conclusions based on the distribution of so few respondents.

Summary

In this Chapter I explored the relationship between partisan intolerance and various expressions of anti-democratic attitudes including support for hardball tactics, authoritarian preferences, personal beliefs, and support for political vigilantism. In each case it was found that there is a strong linear relationship both with and without controls. And these strong relationships still exist even when the linear constraint is lifted. These relationships are consistent within respondents from both political parties and are consistent in both men and women. In all of these groups partisan political intolerance is a substantive and important explanatory variable for the anti-democratic attitudes that the individuals in this sample hold. Although these analyses are only sufficient to demonstrate strong associations they are useful in that they imply the possibility of a causal relationship and also provide us with the insights into where treatments are likely to be most effective.

Large numbers of partisans are willing to sacrifice the political rights and democratic power of their political opponents for political gain. From this core attribute, I argue, flows out support for every other type of anti-democratic attitude that has been explored in the literature. This concept has a name: political tolerance, and whereas previous literature has focused on studying political tolerance against widely despised groups and political extremists, political intolerance is most threatening when the target of that intolerance are mainstream political opponents -- partisan political intolerance.

This work should not be seen as the final word on the role and impact of partisan intolerance on the American political landscape and not the final word but is an opening salvo. Many questions and important contributions still remain to be answered and made. Primary among them is investigating the causality of partisan intolerance on these other antidemocratic attitudes. Given the strong connection between the various definitions that were presented of political intolerance, there is reason to suspect a causal relationship between anti-democratic attitudes and partisan intolerance, with partisan intolerance causing or at least making appealing other anti-democratic attitudes. This is a promising avenue and an important development for future research because if this relationship is in fact causal then potentially one treatment focused on partisan intolerance could help reduce all the other anti-democratic attitudes. This is particularly existing given the literature has demonstrated that political tolerance is reducible in educational settings (Bird et al. 1994).

Another important avenue for future research deals with developing a measure of partisan political intolerance that does not do so by a collection of questions measuring the expressions of partisan intolerance, but instead is more directly related to the construct of partisan intolerance itself. As discussed above, political tolerance is hard to measure because when respondents are presented with vague conceptual questions about their tolerance, they tend to express very tolerant views. The current 6 question battery was developed to resolve this measurement issue and in this analysis I used the traditional 6-question tolerance battery in order to facilitate comparisons with previous studies of political tolerance. And this battery is still useful particularly for measuring the prevalence and distribution of partisan intolerance in a population. However, as I have laid out I see all of these other anti-democratic attitudes are merely expressions of partisan intolerance (As likely did Stofer as he used these anti-democratic

expressions to form the bases of his political tolerance scale), meaning that there is a tautological problem using the traditional 6 question battery to understand the effects that partisan intolerance has on other anti-attitudes.

This problem is not unique to tolerance; there is a similar measurement problem regarding racism. It is common for social scientists to use survey questions that ask respondents to reveal their racism and then use this measure of racism to predict other expressions of racism. When social scientists do this, they are not usually trying to make an argument about the novel utility of racial resentment scale or other measures of racism in predicting these other attitudes or behaviors. Instead, it is usually used to indicate that these other attitudes and behaviors are in themselves racist or are strongly motivated by racism. It is in this same vein that I have used the traditional partisan intolerance scale. Just as our understanding of various seemingly color blind policies are enhanced when we see that they are in fact racist or are strongly motivated by racism, our understanding of these diverse anti-democratic attitudes is greatly enhanced when we see them as fundamental expressions of partisan intolerance or at least strongly motivated by them.

Despite this it would be ideal if our operationalization of partisan intolerance was in itself closer to the concept of partisan intolerance, a measurement of the expressions of partisan intolerance. This will likely be a difficult task but represents an important line of research. Perhaps measures such as "Do you think {out-party} are worthy of competing for political power" will provide enough context that respondents will be willing to express their intolerance without asking about specific expressions of intolerance. This is a very important vein of research moving forward.

This work has important implications for political intolerance, partisanship, and anti-democratic attitudes literature. Partisan intolerance is prevalent among American partisans and a strong amount of partisan tolerance is in short supply. This is indisputably a problem for American politics. There are, however, instances when strong political tolerance is difficult to justify. For instance, it is understandable to want to limit the political power of those that wish to end democracy. This problem is known as the paradox of tolerance. The tolerance paradox was proposed formally by Karl Popper in 1962 and states that:

> "Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them." (Popper, Ryan, and Gombrich 2013)

Thus, citizens who are committed to a tolerant democratic society may rightly be wary of extending unlimited tolerance towards those that threaten the same society. This is relevant to the question of partisan tolerance because as alluded to above, the elite of the Republican Party have proven to be very willing to engage in election engineering and anti-democratic behavior and rhetoric that threaten the foundation of a fair democratic system. In response to these threats some partisan intolerance may be understandable, even if not laudable. This is not to believe the severe problem caused when that partisan intolerance is held by a member of a partisan of either side. If anything, the fact that some of the intolerance may be understandable makes the situation that much more difficult to defuse. And it does need to be defused. With only a small present of all partisans strongly committed to tolerance the democratic system is likely much more fragile than we often like to think. Given right elite cues American partisans would likely happily vote for democratic backsliding.

Chapter 5: Exploring Mitigating Partisan Political Intolerance – A classroom intervention

Having established that partisan political intolerance is a relatively common phenomenon among American partisans and having displayed the strong theoretical and observational association between partisan political intolerance and a full spectrum of anti-democratic attitudes, this chapter discusses the results of a preliminary experiment designed in an attempt provide evidence for two important hypotheses:

H1: A 50 minute classroom discussion can reduce a participant's level of partisan intolerance.

H2: Reductions in participants' partisan intolerance will correspond to reductions in the various forms of antidemocratic attitudes discussed throughout this project.

Classroom interventions designed to increase political tolerance stretch back to 1968 when Daviod Zellman and Sears performed randomized controlled experiments on 1384 5th, 6th, and 8th graders in Sacramento. Classrooms were randomly assigned by classroom into a treatment or control. In the treatment group students were taught from a curriculum that emphasizes the conflicting nature of democratic politics and the importance of free speech and expression even if it leads to political conflict. Although the full results of this study were never published (as far as I can tell). The results of this analysis were apparently promising with students coming out of the treatment on average 8% more tolerant than students in the control group who were given the standard civics curriculum being used by the schools at the time (Zellman and Sears 1971).

This experiment was followed up in 1971 later among 946 5th, 6th, and 8th graders in Fresno California. A similar methodology was implemented in which teachers were trained acrost 6-8 weekly meetings to emphasize the normality of conflict, a specific text was recommended for classroom and students were exposed to the curriculum over 2.5 weeks. This follow up study resulted in no significant difference in political tolerance between the students in the treatment over the control. This was attributed to the schooling district's reduction of curriculum over a shorter time period compared to the original study. (Sears 1972)

The next major contribution to this research agenda comes from a string of 5 articles published in the early 1990s from a group of co-authors including Patricia G. Avery, Karen Bird, Sandra Johnstone, John L. Sullivan, and Kristina Thalhammer (1992, 1994, 1994, 1994, 1994). This team developed a 4 week curriculum Titled "Tolerance for Diversity of Beliefs" which was based on Sullivan's conception of tolerance: "willingness to apply these [democratic] norms without disfavor to those whose ideas or interests one opposes." The curriculum aimed to Increase students' understanding of how the abstract principles of freedom of speech and minority rights are embedded in a system of legal protections and rights. This curriculum attempted to accomplish these objectives by engaging in case studies, role-playing, simulations, and mock interviews to examine the historical, psychological, and sociological dimensions of tolerance and intolerance. Specifically, students engaged in discussions and descriptions of historical examples of minority groups suffering under intolerant regimes, such as the holocaust, Japanese internment.

This curriculum was originally tested on 442 students from Minnesota three schools in 1991. Both a random treatment and control measures were utilities and a small repeated measures design (59 students) in both designs significant though modest decreases in political

tolerance resulted and these differences were persistent several weeks after the completion of the curriculum (Avery et al. 1992).

The success of this curriculum is very promising; however, the scope of political tolerance, conceptually and operationally, was constricted in two profound ways. First, despite the broad Sullivan conception of tolerance, it is clear that their analysis and curriculum were specifically designed to increase tolerance for small, unpopular groups, such as the KKK or atheists. In several places, they specifically mention the rights of dissidents or outcasts. This operationalization narrows the target of intolerance from "those whose ideas or interests one opposes" to dissidents, outcasts, and extremists. As discussed elsewhere in this project, this conception severely limits political intolerance's ability to address our current moment of partisan animosity. The second major limitation in scope is that, despite the broad conceptualization of commitment to "democratic norms," in practice, the curriculum and analysis were fundamentally rights-centric and focused on the removal of these rights. This is a very narrow conception of antidemocratic attitudes. As discussed before, this fundamentally limits tolerance's ability to address any anti-democratic attitude but authoritarian preference.

This literature on the efficacy of classroom intervention is eminently relevant to our contemporary political situation, especially given the strong evidence presented in the previous two chapters that partisan political intolerance is quite common in American society and strongly associated with anti-democratic attitudes. In this chapter, I propose and test a new curriculum that is based on a broader conception of political tolerance, both in terms of the number of people it applies to and the democratic norms at its core. This conception of tolerance is built on the foundation of Sullivan's work insofar as it is aligned with the commitment to upholding democratic norms, particularly in relation to potential groups with whom one disagrees.

However, it also incorporates political goals that are central to the respondents' desires and weighs the relative value of these political goals against the democratic norms as they apply to political groups who oppose the respondents' preferred political outcome.

In order to build on the existing literature, test whether partisan intolerance can be manipulated similar to political intolerance and attempt to collect evidence of the causal link between partisan political intolerance and anti-democratic attitudes, a pilot study was conducted with a convenience sample of 65 students. The sample included both a control group and a treatment group, with an opt-in mechanism built into both groups. The purpose of this design was to compensate for the convenience nature of the sample and gather evidence of the causal relationship between partisan political intolerance and antidemocratic attitudes. To assess the impact of the treatment, a pre-test and post-test were administered to all participants a week apart, with approximately one-third of the students receiving the treatment in between. This design allowed for accounting for the effect of the treatment over and above any pre-existing differences between students. Students in the mass media class were incentivized to participate in all aspects of the project through the potential for extra credit points. 98 students, approximately 77% of the total class participated in some element of the project. The primary analysis focuses on the 65 (51% of the total class) students who completed both surveys but did not attend the discussion (control group, n=42) and the students who completed both surveys and attended the discussion (treatment group, n=23). The remaining 33 students missed one of the surveys, making responses unusable in the difference-in-difference design. The demographic information for the participating students is presented in Table 15, categorized by control and treatment groups. It is important to consider selection effects in this opt-in design, as they can introduce biases.

Table 15

	Control	Treatment
N	42	23
Mean Age	21.4	21.4
Standard Deviation Age	1.5	1.1
Percent identifying as Women	74%	52%
Percent identifying as Men	26%	48%
Percent with a different gender identity	0%	0%
Percent with an Asian identity	38%	38%
Percent with an Black identity	6%	0%
Percent with an Hispanic identity	36%	29%
Percent with an multiple racial identities	21%	12%
Percent with a Native American identity	0%	0%
Percent with an "other" racial identity	4%	16%
Percent with a White identity	28%	8%
Percent with an exclusively White identity	13%	4%

Percent self identifying Democrat	68%	70%
Percent self identifying Democratic leaner	12%	12.5%
Percent affective Democrat leaner	2%	0%
Percent affective Republican leaner	0%	0%
Percent self identifying Republican leaner	4%	0%
Percent self identifying Republican	2%	12%
Self identified liberal	77%	77%
Self identified moderate	15%	29%
Self identified Conservative	8%	4%
Mean Preserved Ideological Polarization	.57	.65
Standard deviation of Preserved Ideological Polarization	.24	.22
Mean affective polarization	.35	.34
Standard deviation of affective polarization	.24	.21
Percent that pay attention to politics some or most of the time	90%	95%
Percent that are Majoring in political science	70%	91%
First gen	40%	41%

Percent that are Freshman	9%	0%
Percent that are Sophomores	13%	33%
Percent that are Juniors	38%	46%
Percent that are Seniors	38%	17%
Mean of pretest Tolerance	.38	.39
Standard deviation of pretest Tolerance	.16	.20

In regards to important demographic distinctions between the treatment and the control groups, there are several key points to note. Firstly, the control group has almost twice as many individuals who identify as women compared to those who identify as men. While gender has been shown to play a role in tolerance, the effect size is generally small and often not statistically significant. Considering this, the gender disparity is unlikely to have a substantial impact on the results. Another significant distinction is in the racial composition of the treatment and control groups. Specifically, the treatment group has fewer individuals identifying as white compared to the control group. Race has been shown to be an important factor in political tolerance, with white respondents generally exhibiting higher levels of tolerance than non-white respondents. However, as the difference in racial composition is likely to have only a small effect, it is unlikely to substantially impact the results or analysis.

Regarding political ideology, the most significant difference is that members of the control group were substantially more likely to report being political moderates compared to those who did not participate in the treatment. This is interesting and may have implications for the effectiveness of the intervention. Political moderates are often considered to be a bastion for

democracy and tend to have more tolerant views compared to individuals at the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. However, we should note that the actual distribution of intolerance in the pre-survey was nearly identical between the treatment and control groups. Therefore, if there is an issue in this regard, it is only a small one.

Perhaps more consequential, political moderates may engage with the treatment differently than ideological extremists do. This may modify the treatment effect both for the moderates themselves but could also affect the overall classroom environment and, consequently, the effectiveness of the treatment on those that are not moderates as well. It is difficult to precisely determine the effect of the interaction between political ideology and the treatment itself without access to previous literature that includes reports on this specific interaction. However, it is plausible to expect that such an interaction exists and should be carefully observed in the analysis of the results.

Based on the work of Svolik and the finding that participants in the treatment perceive greater ideological polarization between parties compared to those in the control, it is plausible to suggest that this perception could potentially lead to a greater willingness to support antidemocratic behaviors in their political actions and hold antidemocratic attitudes themselves than those in the control. Indeed, considering the potential influence of pre-existing ideological polarization on partisan intolerance is important. It suggests the need for adjustments in future iterations of the experiment to account for this factor. As it stands now this makes the test more conservative than it would otherwise be.

By addressing and measuring the levels of partisan intolerance at the pre-test stage, researchers can better understand the impact of the treatment on reducing intolerance beyond any initial partisan differences. This allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of the intervention's

effectiveness and ensures a more rigorous analysis of the causal relationship between the treatment and the outcome variables.

The differences in majors and student status between the treatment and control groups are also worth considering. While both groups primarily consisted of political science majors, the control group had a larger proportion of students from other majors, such as media studies and sociology. This variation in majors could potentially have an effect on the treatment outcomes, although it is difficult to predict the exact direction of this effect. Students from different majors may have different perspectives and levels of engagement with political issues, which could influence their responses to the treatment.

Furthermore, the distribution of students across different academic years also differs between the treatment and control groups. The control group had a relatively equal proportion of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, with a few freshmen included, while the treatment group lacked freshmen and had only a few seniors. This discrepancy in academic year composition could potentially introduce variations in experience, knowledge, and attitudes that may impact the outcomes of the experiment. Considering these differences in majors and academic years, it is important to acknowledge them as potential factors that could influence the results. Future iterations of the experiment could aim for a more balanced representation of majors and academic years to better understand the generalizability of the treatment across different student populations.

Most importantly however, the mean partisan tolerance scores were nearly identical between the two groups, which mitigates the potential risk of self-selection bias playing a role in the analysis that follows. If participants attending the treatment differ substantially from those

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attending the control group especially if the mean was close to one of the extremes instigating a ceiling or floor effect this could have posed a substantial problem to the analysis.

In the next section, I will discuss the treatment itself, the results of the analysis, and reflect on some of the shortcomings of this design. I will also suggest improvements for future iterations of this study.

The treatment in this iteration was based on the new conception of tolerance in hand, namely: the degree to which one values democratic norms in the context of the opposing political party, compared to other preferred political outcomes, leads to two potential mechanisms to decrease an individual's intolerance. One way is by making respondents value the preferred political outcome less, the second is by increasing their commitment to democratic norms in the partisan context.

In regards to the first possibility, it is most likely to be achieved not by making them less favorable to their political outcome, but by convincing them that the political alternative is not as bad as one might think. Individuals who perceive lower levels of polarization between the two parties and have moderate ideological interests have been shown to be more tolerant than those who perceive high levels of polarization between the two parties (Graham and Svolik 2020; M. Svolik 2018; M. W. Svolik 2019). Thus, an intervention that helps individuals think more like centrists is likely to reduce intolerance. I hypothesize that this is why the treatments used by the polarization research lab have been shown to be effective at reducing many antidemocratic outcomes (Jan G. Voelkel et al. 2022; J.G. Voelkel et al. 2022). The treatments were designed to modify affective polarization, and they do achieve that.

However, most treatments that are successful at reducing affective polarization or negative partisanship are not effective at reducing anti-democratic attitudes. Therefore, the

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treatments that do work must be operating through some other mechanism, and I propose that they function by helping respondents think more like centrists, who have been shown to act as a bulwark against support for anti-democratic political candidates (Graham and Svolik 2020).

While this pathway may be a very beneficial one, it is not the pathway that I will be attempting to utilize today. More in line with traditional classroom political tolerance interventions, in this chapter, I will explore the utility of strategies meant to increase students' engagement with the democratic norms at the heart of tolerance. Students were recruited for this analysis at the University of California Irvine participating in a mass media class offered by the Department of Political Science. In the following section I first discuss the treatment itself, along with the theory that motivated the lesson design and how the students engaged with it. Subsequently I will describe the relevant demographics of the students that participated in the study as well as the analysis and results of the experiment.

As mentioned before, this treatment was based on the theory that increasing students' commitments to political norms would reduce their intolerance. The lesson plan for this 50-minute engagement was based on a group discussion model. In which the instructor prompted students with questions, the students first discussed the question in groups of two or three while the instructor monitored and guided the discussion, encouraging students who were struggling to hold meaningful conversations. In total, there were 29 students split up into 11 groups.

Interspersed with the discussion were also short writing activities, where the groups had to summarize their discussion into a concrete statement or list, such as a definition of democracy or a list of things they would be willing to sacrifice to live in a democracy. Once the small group discussion had run its course the instructor then transitioned to a class-wide discussion in which the instructor first relied on volunteers to share their answers to the prompt and to explain their

thought process and reasoning. Then the instructor called on groups that had raised important points in their small group discussion that had not yet been added to the class-wide discussion.

These discussions were conversational in nature, where students were encouraged to respond to each other's answers. The instructor's role was primarily to guide the discussion and to ensure that all the students and groups were engaging with the ideas of the session. Below, I have included the narrative guide for the session.

Before the session started the instructor wrote three questions on the board, two visible and one obscured These questions formed the foundation of the discussion that followed and included:

- How would you define democracy?

- Is democracy important to you? Why or why not?

- What are you personally willing to sacrifice to live in a democracy? (concealed)

As students trickled into the classroom (a lecturer hall with capacity for 100 students) they were encouraged to come up the first 4 rows and instructed to form into small groups of 2 or three students. Instruction began at 2 after the hour and attendance sheets were distributed to the students in attendance 4 additional students arrived within the first 10 minutes of instruction and they were given the same instruction and where provided with attendance sheets at appropriate moments.

When students were asked to define democracy they overwhelmingly focused on the rule of the people in a way that was very centered on institutions such as voting as one might expect would come out of a minimalist/Schumpetarian understanding of democracy. No group organically mentioned ideas about respect for certain protected rights or the conception of "fair play" between political rivals. When the instructor brought up these components of democracy,

several groups pushed back that democracy rarely lives up to its promise of both rights

protection and a fair competitive environment. The instructor indicated that this was a true and

important point, asked them to take 30 seconds to think about why that is, and then informed

them that the session would come back to this important point.

Students were then directed to the follow up question: Is democracy important to you?

Why or why not? The vast majority of students answered that it was important to them. When

asked why students expressed beliefs that democracy delivered better governance outcomes or

that it led to a stronger civil society than other governance systems. They believed that these

improved outcomes were the result of several attributes of democracy including

- Democracy is more sensitive to the needs of the people.

- There being more ideas available to the government and political officials likely

  leading to a better set of possible solutions to problems than is likely in other

  forms of governance.

- Democracy leading to individuals having a greater stake in and thus investment in

  the society

- Free civil society is less of a threat to democracy than other forms of government

  and thus a thriving civil society is more likely which improves the lives of

  everyday citizens substantially.

Some students indicated that Democracy was not that important to them and that while they

appreciated some of the things that were mentioned they never "thought about it that much" and

expressed skepticism that some of the above discussed benefits of democracy whereas exclusive

to democracy as others seemed to think or that democracy wasn't as good at these things as

others seemed to think. They evidenced this by pointing to the contemporary American democracy that they currently found themselves in.

Building off of this discussion, the instructor asked what people would be willing to give up or sacrifice to live in a democracy. In the class-wide discussion, students' answers regarding what they would be or would not be willing to give up generally fell into three categories: money, time, and safety. Specifically, students mentioned that they were willing to pay taxes to fund elections, serve on juries, take the time to vote, and some students expressed a willingness to put themselves in potentially dangerous positions, as one might expect in a protest movement, if they believed that democracy was at stake.

Strikingly, these same elements that some students expressed a willingness to give up to live in a democracy were the exact same elements that other students found unreasonable. For instance, one student specifically brought up the example of paying more taxes, implying that he personally would be willing to live in a less democratic society if it meant paying fewer taxes. Other students expressed attempts to avoid some of the time commitments that others expressed willingness to participate in. Lastly, the willingness to give up safety was questioned in two ways. First, a student mentioned that in states where democracy leads to loose gun laws, they believed it put themselves and their children at risk, and democracy was not worth that. Another student raised the point that while many people have died to obtain and defend democracy, their commitment might have been more to overcoming bad governance rather than to democracy itself. They suggested that most people are actually interested in good governance and don't mind as much how it is achieved. Many of these students acknowledged that they would likely be willing to give up these things to live in a perfect democracy; they would not be willing to give

up these things to live in what they perceived as the substandard and meaningful flawed democracy which they were most familiar with.

After most of the groups had participated in this discussion in one form or another the instructor stated that this was a really important discussion as democracy does not come without costs and that if the students wanted to live in a democracy or if they wanted to live in a better democracy there where things they had to be willing to sacrifice. Specifically, the instructor prompted students to consider what democracy would look like if most of the individuals who lived in it valued winning political battles more than the democratic principles. Students were then instructed to consider this question in their minds and then the instructor asked a follow up question that was to be discussed in their groups: What type of behavior would you expect from politicians who valued their preferred political outcome more than they valued the rights of their political opponents?

In the discussion that followed, a whole range of behaviors were discussed, ranging from killing everyone who disagrees with them to restricting the rights of political opponents and engaging in electoral engineering such as gerrymandering. It was noted that this range reflects the level of disagreement between personal political goals and the respect for the rights of opponents. For instance, if someone valued a policy so strongly that they were willing to kill for it, they might resort to violence. However, if a politician only slightly valued the political victory over the rights of their opponents, one might expect them to simply try to inconvenience the opposition voters more than their own supporters.

From this point, students were asked if they could think of any concrete examples of American politicians in the last 5 years engaging in any of these behaviors. After discussing some examples they came up with, it was noted that all of the examples were related to the party

they specifically didn't support, which was apparent based on their discussion. Students were then encouraged to think of examples of politicians from their own party engaging in these kinds of behaviors. The instructor gave them time to think of some examples and then provided several examples of both Democrats and Republicans engaging in this kind of behavior.

The last significant discussion revolved around the students' personal responsibility when their preferred political candidate proposed or had a track record of redistricting or undermining democratic norms to achieve their political ends. After a brief group discussion, the instructor solicited the students' thoughts, and the first response was that it was a difficult question to answer. However, they believed they shouldn't vote for the opposing politician because they are likely to engage in the very same tactics. At this point, the instructor presented a hypothetical scenario, slightly contrived, where the opposing politician was firmly committed to the democratic rights of their opponents and had a track record of defending their political opponents' rights, even when it was politically inconvenient for them to do so. In contrast, the student's preferred candidate aligned perfectly with their social and economic policy preferences but had a history of, and was campaigning on, some of the strategies discussed earlier. The students were given 30 seconds to contemplate the scenario internally, and then the instructor revisited the last question written on the board: "What are you willing to sacrifice to live in a democracy?" Afterward, the students were excused, and the session concluded at 54 minutes past the hour. In total, the session lasted 52 minutes.

Next, I will address the results of the difference-in-difference design and present both numerical and graphical analyses. First, I examine the treatment effect utilizing traditional OLS regression (Table 16), accompanied by a means plot represented in Figure 19. It is worth noting that both the treatment and control groups experienced a slight decrease in political tolerance

over the three weeks of the experiment. This decrease could be attributed to random chance or possibly influenced by the shared content presented in the class that the participants all shared during that time frame. On average, there was a decrease in partisan political intolerance across the study, and those who attended the treatment experienced a 66% larger decrease in intolerance compared to those in the control group. This indicates that the treatment effect aligns with the hypothesized direction. However, it is important to highlight that the magnitude of this difference is very small. To establish statistical significance for an effect size of this magnitude, a sample size of 1760 participants would be necessary, with approximately 880 individuals per treatment condition.

Table 16

Predictors	Difrence in Partisan Intolerrence		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*
Intercept: Control	-0.03	-0.07 – 0.01	0.301
Treatment	-0.02	-0.09 – 0.05	0.593
Observations	65		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.005 / -0.011		

However, even if significant, an effect size of this magnitude would hardly be worth the effort, in my estimation. In practice, if this were a reflection of a true effect and not just random chance, and this treatment was applied to every participant in the study presented in Chapters 3 and 4, the mean tolerance level would change from a mean of .49 to .47. Even accounting for the steep slope in that portion of the graphs presented in Figure 17 of Chapter 4, this would only

correspond to a decrease in anti-democratic attitudes of less than a single point. Thus, if a treatment similar to the one presented here is to be beneficial in the future, it needs to be made significantly more potent than it was in this small pilot. Thoughts will be given to this point in the conclusion of this chapter.
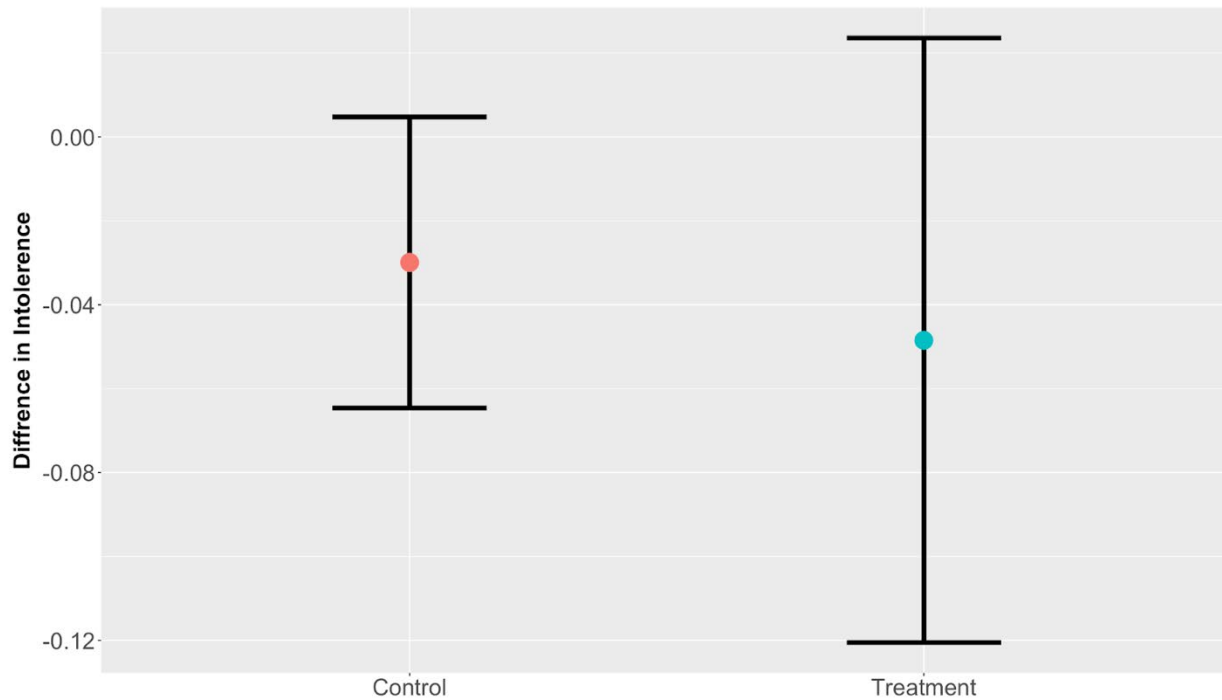

Figure 20

In Figure 20, the effects of the treatment on different types of anti-democratic attitudes are presented. None of these examples show a significant distinction between the treatment and control groups, and the direction of the effect in all but one case is contrary to what was hypothesized. This suggests that, if anything, the treatment had the opposite effect of what was intended. However, it is important to note that these effect sizes are statistically indistinguishable from zero, meaning that they are not statistically significant. Therefore, it is not meaningful to

interpret these findings as indicating a true effect of the treatment. It should be noted, however, that the direction of the effect for hardball attitudes aligns with the hypothesized direction and is the largest effect observed in Figure 21. Although the effect size is still small and statistically indistinguishable from zero, a considerable amount of time was dedicated to discussing hardball strategies, such as gerrymandering, during the session. This may suggest a slight decrease in support for gerrymandering as a direct result of that discussion, in addition to its potential impact on any moderating effect from decreases in partisan intolerance.
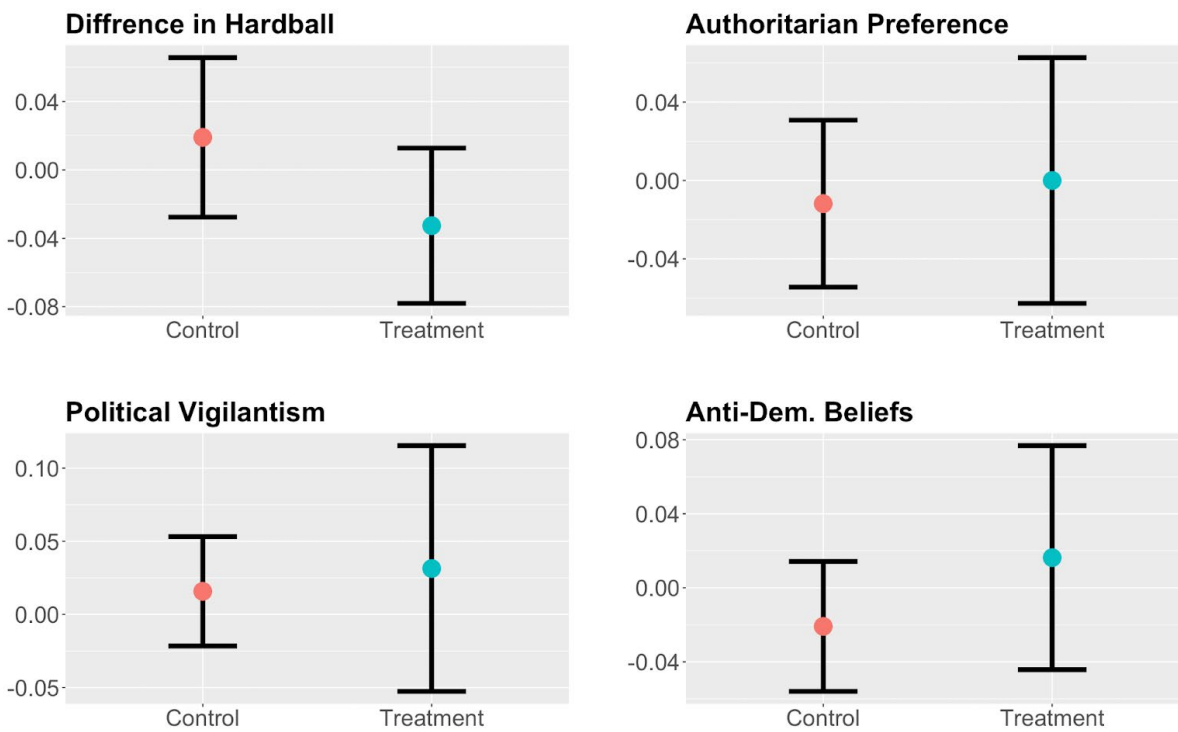

Figure 21

Looking now at the hypothesized moderating effect, it is explored graphically in Figure 22 and numerical in table 17. The figure plots the partisan intolerance difference against the difference scores for each of the respective anti-democratic attitudes. According to the causal hypothesis, if the partisan intolerance score increases, resulting in a positive difference score,

then the difference scores for each of the partisan intolerance attitudes should also show a positive trend. Conversely, if the partisan intolerance score decreases between the pre-test and post-test, there should be a corresponding decrease in the antidemocratic attitude scores. This would imply that a significant positive slope would provide strong evidence of the causal link between partisan intolerance and these other antidemocratic attitudes. Figure 21 and Table 17, however, present very weak or no evidence supporting this hypothesis. In each case, the slope of these lines is statistically indistinguishable from zero, and even if they were significant, the practical significance would be minimal. The one relationship that shows slight promise is the case of political vigilantism. In this case, there does appear to be a slight slope, and it does move in the hypothesized direction. However, not too much should be read into this.
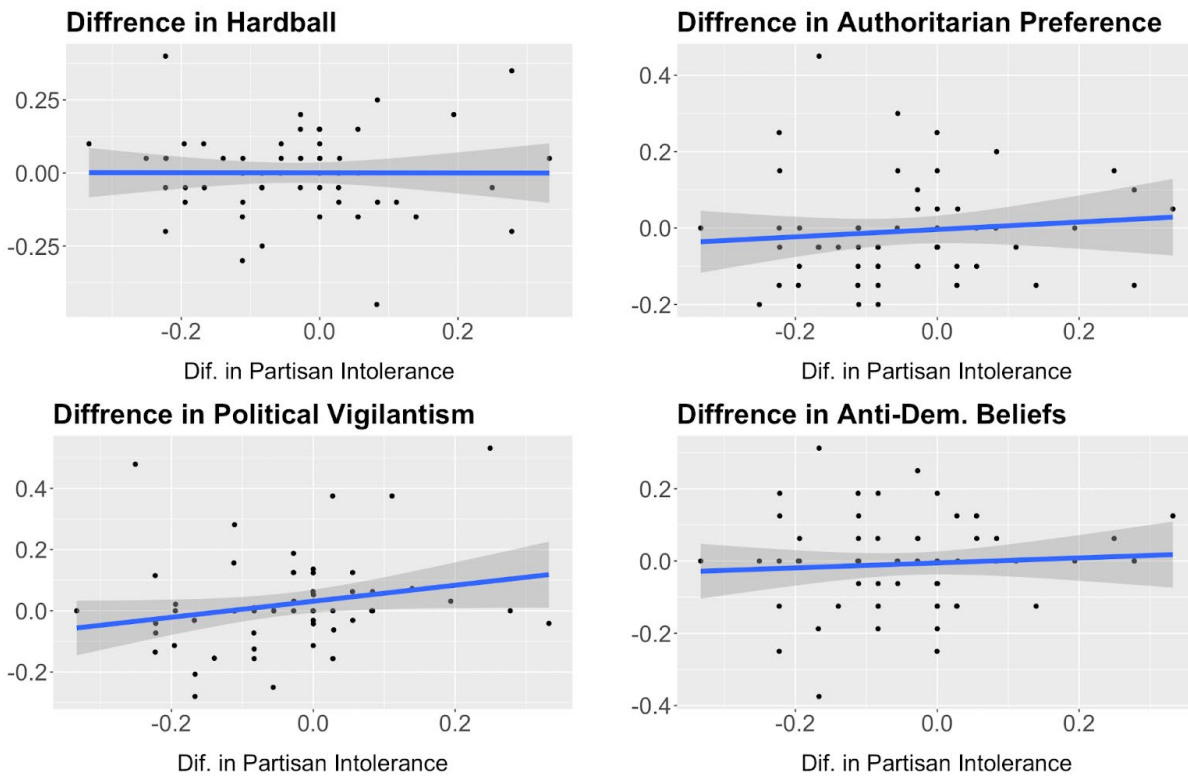

Figure 22

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This result is disappointing considering the strong theoretical and observational association between partisan intolerance and these anti-democratic attitudes. Despite this particular pilot data not finding evidence to support a causal relationship, it is important to acknowledge the existing strong theoretical and observational associations. Therefore, it is worth investigating the potential factors that may have contributed to these results, even if a causal link exists, in order to address them in future data collection. One possibility is that the observed variation between the pre and post tests is simply a result of measurement error, rather than reflecting actual shifts in beliefs or attitudes. As shown in Figure 20 and Figure 21, the mean differences in the various scores are extremely small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. This is the exact distribution that we would find in random error. To mitigate this, future designs can utilize survey instruments that are less prone to measurement error. This will require trial and error to identify more reliable and valid measures for tolerance. Another avenue to explore is the development of a stronger treatment that can effectively impact individuals' tolerance scores. By enhancing the treatment, a larger signal can be generated for the model to detect meaningful changes. Potential options for achieving this are discussed in the subsequent section.

Table 17

Predictors	hardball			Authoritarian Preference			Political Vigilantism			Anti-Dem. Beliefs		
	Estimates	*CI*	*p*	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*
Intercept: Control	0.00	-0.03 – 0.04	0.988	-0.00	-0.04 – 0.03	0.842	0.03	-0.01 – 0.07	0.105	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.03	0.747
Difference in partisan intolerance	-0.00	-0.26 – 0.26	0.988	0.10	-0.16 – 0.35	0.842	0.26	-0.01 – 0.54	0.105	0.07	-0.16 – 0.30	0.747
Observations	65			59			64			65		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.000 / -0.016			0.010 / -0.007			0.055 / 0.040			0.006 / -0.010		

At this point, it is important to discuss the limitations of this session as an intolerance-decreasing treatment and reflect on improvements that should be included in future iterations of this treatment. The literature discussed above on the efficacy of classroom interventions

universally has two important distinctions from the small pilot that was conducted in this project. First, and probably most importantly, in all of the cases in the literature, the instructors were given an extended period to pursue a curriculum meant to decrease intolerance. In the Sullivan experiment, students received a total of 7 lessons over a 4-week period of time. In the Sears experiment, the author lamented that the treatment had to be reduced to 2.5 weeks, significantly limiting the impact of the curriculum. However, it is never discussed what the original proposed curriculum length was for this study or what it was in the pilot. Nonetheless, we can surmise that it was longer than 2.5 weeks. In this project, I attempted to reap pro-tolerance benefits in a single 50-minute session. This is a significant limitation. However, treatments that take 14 hours, while promising, are difficult to implement and are therefore of very limited utility. What is the point of an effective treatment that can't be applied? Thus, the 50-minute time restriction was imposed, as a treatment of this duration could be easily integrated into many civic society events or calendars and would be of great utility if it could be made to be effective.

Another important consideration is the difference in age groups between the previous experiments and the sample in this project. The previous experiments focused on adolescents, recognizing that adolescence is a critical period for norm formation (Adams 1985; Adelson 1971; Gallatin 1985; Hollin 1992). However, the sample in this project consisted of university students, primarily political science majors. It is likely that political norms have already solidified to some extent for these students, potentially making it more challenging to influence their perspectives on political intolerance. Moreover, the fact that the majority of students were upperclassmen political science majors further reinforces this likelihood.

While interventions for adolescents are valuable for long-term change, it is crucial to develop effective treatments for adults as well. Addressing political intolerance among adults is

necessary since political leaders who prioritize their own victories over the rights of their opponents are unlikely to invest in training children to be less supportive of anti-democratic behaviors. Consequently, it becomes essential to focus on reducing intolerance among adults before successful curriculum adjustments can be made for adolescents.

It is worth noting that despite the development of the Tolerance for Diversity of Beliefs curriculum more than 30 years ago, there appears to be limited implementation or adoption of the curriculum in secondary school civic curricula, both in research and institutional settings. This highlights the need to first tackle intolerance among adults before expecting widespread institutional adoption of pro-tolerance curricula for adolescents. Overall, the complexity of addressing political intolerance requires flexible and practical treatments that can be used to help instill political tolerance in adults who can then vote for and demand long-term and meaningful improvements to civics education for adolescents that deeply instills commitments to democratic norms that can serve as a check on opportunistic politicians who are willing to cheapen or brake democracy to achieve their political goals.

While these design choices are important, they both inevitably make the task of reducing an individuals' partisan political intolerance significantly harder. But the difficulty of the task should not discourage us from pursuing this important strain of research. And this attempt to do so should be interpreted as a first attempt at doing so. With this in mind I will reflect now on improvements that should be incorporated in the following iterations of this treatment to make it more efficacious

First, I think it is a mistake to only pull on one of the levers that affect tolerance when there are two. Future iterations should take advantage of this fact both to help the recipient think like centrests and to strengthen their commitment to democratic norms. This is especially the

case when a discussion can effectively accomplish both objectives or seamlessly transition from one topic to another. For instance, one approach could involve providing examples of politicization from both parties that result in antidemocratic outcomes. This can be followed by highlighting the low levels of support for such behaviors among partisans of the opposing party. By demonstrating the similarity in attitude distributions between the two parties, the aim is to convey that most members of the opposing party are reasonable individuals who also respect the rights of others, just as most individuals from their own party do. Consequently, it becomes apparent that all that is required for the majority to have the courage to condemn these harmful actions and to hold accountable those within their ranks who engage in such strategies. By doing so, politicians from both sides will be unable to escape the consequences of this type of behavior. This recommendation also ties into my next suggestion for improvement.

It is crucial to clarify that when I mention "thinking like a centrist," it does not imply becoming a centrist in terms of political ideology. Centrists, as described by Svolic, often lack strong affiliations with specific policies and are more inclined to consider non-policy factors, such as commitment to democracy, when selecting candidates. The willingness to prioritize democratic norms over preferred policies is the attribute of centrists that would be desirable to instill in partisans. Increasing individuals' commitment to democratic norms for their own sake is an essential element of this process. However, it is equally important to demonstrate to individuals that protecting democratic norms will lead to better long-term outcomes compared to simply winning a particular political battle over a specific policy. Thus, "thinking like a centrist" entails fostering a greater willingness among individuals to hold politicians accountable for violating democratic norms. It should be noted that this does not imply that respondents need to be tolerant of intolerance. On the contrary, it means that they need to be willing to electorally

punish instances of intolerance within their own party, as well as in the opposing party. By encouraging individuals to prioritize democratic norms and demonstrate their commitment through electoral consequences, the aim is to create a more resilient democratic system that values and protects the fundamental principles of democracy.

The discussion could be modified to effectively emphasize that the overwhelming majority of partisans from both sides oppose anti-democratic behaviors in their political leaders. It is crucial to highlight that there are politicians from the opposing side who are committed to upholding democratic values, even if their policy preferences differ for the participants on other important dimensions. By emphasizing this point, participants can recognize that there is common ground in the shared commitment to democracy and respect for differing perspectives. This approach encourages participants to view individuals from the other party as allies in defending democratic principles, despite policy differences in other domains.

Additionally, I believe the treatment could be greatly enhanced by placing a stronger on their personal actions, and their consequences in regards to anti-democratic outcomes. For instance, it might be helpful to ask students to think of what situations politicians might want to encourage to be able to get away with their anti-democratic behavior. And make sure that the point comes out that such politicians would likely be served well by increasing polarization, demonizing the opposing party and centrists within their own party, and generally making it seem like your only option is to vote for them even if you don't love their tactics. Have the participants ponder whether they have supported politicians that engage in this behavior. Then perhaps show the Utah governor's clip that shows the alternative.

Lastly, future iterations of this treatment need to explicitly highlight how each of these anti-democratic attitudes undermines the very foundations that the students expressed their

appreciation for in democracy. It is crucial to convey that when a group feels excluded, their sense of investment in society diminishes. When minority or dissenting opinions are suppressed, the range of policy options narrows, potentially leading to reduced policies options that can be considered. Likewise, if this path is pursued the government simply becomes more isolated and less sensitive to the needs of the people. Additionally, as minority voices are stripped of their political power, it becomes easier for those who desire to limit their participation in civic society, ultimately resulting in worsened lives for all citizens. This speaks to a statement raised by one of the participants during the treatment session, which the instructor mentioned following up on but ultimately failed to do so. The statement highlights that the democracies we live in often do not fully live up to their democratic ideals and frequently fall short of their promises. It is essential to emphasize that this is, to some extent, because the individuals participating in the democracy are willing to compromise democratic principles in pursuit of political or economic objectives. Are we each part of the problem? And if so, how do we become part of the solution?

Drawing all these points together I feel would be a much stronger motivation for students to seriously consider what their responsibility is to effect change within their own party and in the political system at large and the consequences for not doing so. Talk about primaries, donations and other mechanisms that they can use to support democracy in their own party. If partisan intolerant candidates start losing this sends a strong signal to party elites that antidemocratic behavior is not acceptable and will be punished by their supporters.

And lastly end by drawing the connection that if democracy is on the ballot that it is likely the most important issue on the ballot because if it loses there might not be a ballot next time or perhaps their ballot will simply mean less this time than it did last time. And even if the candidates are giving you the policies that you want over time this process will result in the loss

of the benefits of democracy, and if the benefits of democracy become less clear to your political opponents, they will also likely become less committed to democratic outcomes and perhaps consider other types of anti-democratic attitudes in order to gain control. Emphasizing that this is how you backslide into an authoritarian regime. And this can happen fast; within 20 years by slow and incremental steps Venezuela, Hungary, Russia, and Türkiye have slipped from being democratic, some of them strong democracies, to electoral authoritarianism or outright dictatorships. This occurs when opportunistic leaders see the opportunity meaning that they do the thing their supporters will punish them for doing these types of things then someone will eventually do it. And may be successful. And ultimately it is only democratic dedicated citizens that serve as a bulwark to defend both democracy and the good governance that can result from it.

This kind of treatment is likely to require multiple iterations and much trial and error, as it requires aligning the right combination of factors to effectively address the issue of political intolerance. This is not an easy path, but one that is worth the effort. If, after much trial and error, a 50-minute treatment is found to be ineffective in significantly reducing political intolerance among adults, it may be necessary to consider expanding the treatment to a 90-minute session. This is the type of treatment that is worth fighting for, and I am prepared to dedicate many years to the pursuit and refinement of treatments that can genuinely enhance Americans partisan political tolerance.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Looking Forward

Having made my arguments, laid out my theory, and presenting the findings of this dissertation, I would like to take you back to the beginning of this project. The idea that lies at the heart of this project originated on January 6th, 2021. At that time, my dissertation project focused on the role of university education in political socialization. However, every university across the country was shuttered to varying degrees, completely obstructing my research agenda. While my research was stymied, mainstream partisan politics were also in turmoil. False claims of electoral fraud and stolen elections dominated the headlines for months, despite numerous court cases consistently finding no evidence to substantiate these claims. While lawyers struggled and failed to peddle these lies to the American judicial system, activists, including the former president himself, were successful in fueling these narratives among his base. The mounting pressure finally culminated on January 6th when the former president incited a mob to pressure lawmakers into subverting the outcome of a fair election. The American government is a big ship that does not change course easily, especially according to the whims of one man-- even the president., But on Jan 6th, President Trump tried very hard to turn that boat around.

Like many others, I set aside my work and watched in complete disbelief as up to 80,000 protesters surrounded the US Capitol, with over 2,000 storming the building in an attempt to coerce lawmakers into undermining democracy and installing an unelected executive at the helm of the executive branch—an unprecedented event in America's history. Helpless to do anything, I observed the discussions on Twitter and the commentary of news pundits, who highlighted the

polarization and partisanship within our society. They raised fundamental questions about the viability of American democracy in the face of such forces.

In the following days, I thought about this a lot. However, unlike most Twitter users and pundits, I had recently emerged from the literature surrounding political tolerance—an important aspect that university education is meant to promote. And something didn't quite sit well with me. Eventually it clicked: refusing to relinquish power to a political opponent, resorting to extralegal means to secure political victories at the expense of democratic norms and the rights of political opponents—this has a name: political intolerance. The instigators and perpetrators of January 6th were politically intolerant, and that intolerance motivated them to act in anti-democratic ways. Why then in light of such gross displays of political intolerance was this term missing from our collective vocabulary about this event?

I believe it is because political tolerance has long been relegated to the notion of tolerance towards extremist groups. Allowing Nazis to hold a rally in a neighborhood filled with Holocaust survivors is an example of that kind of tolerance. While this is an expression of tolerance, it is not the only or the most important type. During his presidency, John Adams practiced and wielded intolerance towards his political opponents. Nevertheless, at the end of his presidency, he demonstrated the simplest and most necessary act of political tolerance that a politician can render: he handed over the reins of government to a political opponent because that opponent had won more votes. This act is just as much an act of tolerance as allowing the KKK to spew racist lies in the town square, but it is far more important.

And I realized that many Americans lacked this basic and essential form of tolerance--that is partisan political intolerance. Years after this idea was first hatched, you have read the dissertation about the percentage of Americans who lack partisan tolerance, the theory

explaining why it matters, the political consequences of this intolerance for mainstream political opponents, and the challenging yet promising endeavor of altering partisan political intolerance among adults in a 50-minute window.

This dissertation marks not the end but rather the beginning of a journey. After pondering this project for two years, seriously working on it for one year, and dedicating the past two months to writing it, my understanding and thinking on political intolerance and anti-democratic attitudes have constantly evolved, sometimes rapidly. Now, at this juncture, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the future of this project—the directions it can take, the foundations it is built upon, its significant contributions, its current limitations, and how I envision overcoming these limitations as I move forward.

Firstly, the project has laid a solid groundwork for further exploration. It has provided a comprehensive understanding of political intolerance and its detrimental effects on democracy. This understanding forms the basis for future research and initiatives aimed at addressing and mitigating partisan intolerance in society. Secondly, the project has made important contributions by shedding light on the prevalence and consequences of partisan intolerance. By revealing its precedents, prevalence, and impacts, the project has offered valuable insights for policymakers, scholars, and activists striving to promote tolerance and strengthen democratic values.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the current limitations of this work.

1. All of it is based on an operationalization that is severely limited in its ability to produce a measure that is viable as an independent variable.

2. The conception of the antidemocratic attitudes I am trying to explain and predict is still undertheorized.

I will speak to each of these libations in turn and offer my current thinking and likely paths forward with this research agenda.

Firstly, I need to address the concept of political tolerance and its evolution in the literature, both in terms of conceptualization and operationalization. Initially, Stouffer defined political tolerance as the "willingness to extend rights to political or social groups generally considered marginal or extremist within society" (Avery et al., 1992). Sullivan expanded upon this conception by emphasizing that an individual's personal feelings towards the groups in question are more significant than society's perception of those groups. Sullivan defined political tolerance as a willingness to apply democratic norms without disfavor to those ideas or interests one opposes (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1993).

However, this definition has been hindered by an operationalization that, while accounting for individuals' personal aversions, essentially was only applied to groups generally considered marginal or extremist within society. This limitation led to my initial contribution to the literature, highlighting that the opposing political party is the most obvious and prominent example of a group whose ideas or interests one opposes. Consequently, I simply incorporated the opposing political party into the traditional Stouffer questions, just as Sullivan integrated new outgroups into Stouffer's original questions.

In retrospect, this is suboptimal for my purposes. These 6 questions were designed with the express purpose of measuring the existence of political intolerance in society. It was a thing to be measured, predicted, and moderated. Since these were the primary goals, it was not necessary to create a measure that was capable of measuring the concept of intolerance itself, all that was needed was to measure its presence. This was convenient because, as discussed in chapter 2, measuring tolerance itself is very difficult. Therefore, much like physicians before the

use of magnification would often tell the presence of a disease solely based on its symptoms without ever having directly observed the bacteria that caused or motivated the symptoms, social scientists have always measured the presence of political intolerance by its symptoms.

To measure, predict, and moderate political intolerance, a symptom-based diagnosis was, and still is, entirely sufficient. However, my objective is to utilize political intolerance as a predictor to better comprehend and elucidate anti-democratic attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, the measurement of political intolerance based on the presence of these anti-democratic attitudes inevitably elicit endogeneity concerns (and rightly so). This concern can be somewhat alleviated by the fact that many of the anti-democratic attitudes I aim to address are conceptually distinct from the anti-democratic attitudes employed in the political tolerance scale. Thus, the extent to which they are related likely stems from a latent variable in the model that influences both distinct types of anti-democratic attitudes, namely partisan political intolerance. As mentioned before, this is similar to how the racial resentment scale is used.

These arguments would be much stronger, however, if there was an instrument that could be used to measure partisan political intolerance directly and not just assess its presence by its symptoms. Additionally, decoupling political intolerance from some of its most dangerous downstream effects (Authoritarian preference) would allow political scientists to more easily associate other anti-democratic attitudes, such as support for hardball, as the expressions of partisan intolerance that they are. These are tried and tested methods to curtail the political power of opponents and diminish the quality of a democracy. Under what circumstances would politicians and individuals seek to limit the political power of their opponents? The answer is simple: political intolerance. However, current conceptions and operationalizations of political intolerance completely fail to encompass any form of political intolerance (particularly partisan

intolerance) that does not involve an attempt to or sport for illegally stripping political opponents of their political rights.

Thus, the challenge moving forward is for me to build a survey instrument that, while holding true to the Sullivan conception of tolerance, is operationalized in such a way that respondents are willing to express their intolerance. The difficulty in this lies in the vagary that is embedded in the Sullivan conception, specifically around the "ideas and interest" that one might be opposed to. Note that even though these ideas and interests play a critical role in the definition of intolerance, they do not appear in the instruments that Sullivan developed.

I believe that the key to a successful operationalization of tolerance itself lies in its inclusion. It is striking, however, how apolitical this definition of political tolerance is: ideas and interactions that one opposes need not necessarily be political and strike me as overly broad. Just as Stouffer innovated the operationalization of tolerance by shifting from an abstract or hypothetical group to a concrete one (against whom one would be willing to express intolerance), I propose to provide a concrete political issue against which respondents can weigh their commitment to democratic norms. This operationalization allows for the actual measurement of the concept that Sullivan proposed years ago, and it suggests an updated and inherently political definition for political tolerance: **Valuing the democratic rights of others more highly than your preferred political outcome**.

If someone is willing to sacrifice the democratic rights of their opponents in order to achieve their desired policy outcome, then they are exhibiting intolerance. This intolerance serves as both a justification and a license for individuals to hold and act upon the anti-democratic attitudes previously labeled as hardball, authoritarian preferences, and political vigilantism.

To be clear, I am not arguing that this political tolerance is always good or moral. Just that this is what tolerance is. And it is entirely possible for one to be tolerant in one policy domain, for instance tariff policies, while at the same time being intolerant on another policy dimension, such as vaccine mandates. This both reflects the complex nature of human preferences and allows for an important caveat in regards to the paradoxes of tolerance. It is possible to be tolerant within the scope of normal democratic debate and value the collective democratic rights of all citizens as being more important than the democratic rights of some few citizens that seek to restrict or illuminate the democratic rights of others. In the end, democracy can only be defended by democrats and democrats have a democratic duty to defend democracy. However, harkening back to the medical analogy used above, if intolerance is a sickness whose symptoms manifest in the form of anti-democratic attitudes, then the best and most preferable way to fight this disease is through prevention. To fight intolerance where it is and to teach tolerance to the up and coming generation is the key to fostering a more perfect democracy than we currently have.

Democracy is a social tool and technology that has the potential to greatly benefit society and the individuals and groups that compose it. Like many tools that are highly useful, it is also difficult or impossible to use to its full potential before certain skills are acquired. Political tolerance (within the bounds of democratic debate) is that skill in the case of democracy. However, like the written word, while useful, democracy is not a tool that humans have an inborn ability to use. The skills to utilize these tools must be actively taught, sought after, and practiced before one is sufficiently adept at political tolerance to be able to unlock the full potential of democracy. As mentioned above, tolerance can be taught; but most children or adults are not exposed to the type of curriculum that is likely to impart political tolerance. As such, we

should not be surprised by the abundance of intolerance and the scarcity of individuals with a strong commitment to tolerance.

The second limitation of this dissertation is that, in its current state, the typology employed to classify anti-democratic attitudes is admittedly under-theorized. The problems primarily stem from the bottom left cell currently labeled personal beliefs. There are several problems with this cell.

The first is that it is by far more complex than the other cells. And further, it probably could use a typology inside itself to help straighten it out and do better conceptualize it. Most of the items in this cell are anti-democratic by virtue of the last part of the three part definition of anti-democratic attitude. Namely, that if widely held, these beliefs would undermine the ability of a democracy to function. This is a very broad definition. It includes things like partisan political intolerance, a lack of commitment to democratic norms, election denial, perhaps beliefs about the immoral or evil intentions of the opposing political party, or even a refusal to vote.

The real challenge lies in the fact that these factors are likely positioned at different points in the causal chain. For example, believing that the opposing party is evil likely precedes partisan intolerance, while election denial likely occurs subsequent to partisan intolerance. Furthermore, the inclination to abstain from voting seems unrelated to tolerance altogether. This conceptual complexity creates a messy framework, and the low Cronbach's alpha on the items used in chapters 3 and 4 reflects this conceptual confusion.

Second, while all of the other cells are populated with attitudes, this cell is primarily populated with beliefs. This undermines the idea of formulating a typology of anti-democratic attitudes. Additionally, the title of this particular cell is confusing, particularly the inclusion of

the term "personal." All the items within these cells pertain to personal attributes that are held by or expressed by individuals.

The second concern can be partially resolved by rethinking the typology as primarily centered around an anti-democratic orientation, while classifying the other three cells as attitudes and the last one as beliefs that predominantly influence these attitudes. However, this approach does not resolve the first issue, which remains the more prominent of the two concerns. This is important, as I believe a much more solid and well-conceptualized understanding of anti-democratic attitudes and beliefs is crucial to advance the literature in this field. It represents an important research agenda for my future endeavors.

In summary, this project does not claim to be the definitive authority on partisan political intolerance and anti-democratic attitudes. However, it reflects my interests, passions, and contributions to the existing literature. It serves as a catalyst to reshape our understanding of political intolerance, reimagine our political landscapes in terms of partisan intolerance, and establish a foundation and valuable tool for scholars and advocates as we strive, together, to envision and construct a better democracy for future generations that surpasses the one we inherited.

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