# Domestic Polarization and International Rivalry

## How Adversaries Respond to America's Partisan Politics

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How do foreign rivals perceive and respond to heightened domestic polarization in the United States? The conventional thinking is that polarization weakens and distracts the U.S., emboldening its adversaries. However, untested assumptions underlie this claim. We use two strategies to explore mechanisms linking domestic polarization and international rivalry. First, we field a survey experiment in China to examine how heightening perceptions of U.S. polarization affects public attitudes towards Chinese foreign policy. Second, we investigate how U.S. rival governments responded to an episode of extreme partisanship: the U.S. Capitol attacks on January 6, 2021. Drawing on ICEWS event data, we explore whether foreign rivals increased hostility towards the U.S. following the Capitol riots. Both studies fail to show robust evidence for the emboldening hypothesis. Extreme polarization has other negative consequences for American foreign policy, but we find no evidence that it makes adversaries materially more assertive towards the United States.

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**Key Words**: polarization; rivalry; U.S.-China; survey experiment; international relations

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In January 2018, in a guest column in *The New York Times*, former U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice wrote: "[T]he most significant, long-term threat to our security may be our domestic political polarization. America's adversaries exploit the vulnerability created by our dysfunctional democracy" (Rice 2018). This sentiment reflects a pressing concern shared by U.S. policymakers from both parties: domestic polarization weakens the U.S. and emboldens its rivals[1] to be more aggressive in international politics. The argument is often applied to U.S.-China relations, where analysts warn that extreme polarization[2] will "diminish the U.S. claim of global leadership," giving China an "opportunity to show the world an alternative" (Wertime 2020).

This logic, which we term the *emboldening hypothesis*, is closely connected to debates in international relations. The rise and fall of great powers—states that exert major influence in global politics—is a central preoccupation of political scientists and historians. Many contemporary discussions of power transition focus on the U.S.-China rivalry, debating the speed of China's rise and the prospect of American decline (e.g., Beckley 2018; Brooks and Wohlforth 2015; Goddard 2018; Kroenig 2020), as well as the probability of conflict between the two (e.g., Allison 2017; Brands and Beckley 2022; Mearsheimer 2021; Rosato 2021; Shifrinson 2018). In American politics, one potential source of decline comes from within (Cooley and Nexon 2020; Kupchan and Trubowitz 2007; Musgrave 2019): deepening polarization could increase perceptions that the U.S. is weak or retrenching from international politics, creating opportunities for its rivals to exploit.

Despite persistent warnings that America's partisan politics empower its adversaries, we know little about how polarization in the U.S. affects their perceptions and behaviors. This is partly because many U.S. rival governments lack transparent political institutions through which to observe foreign policy making processes. Government officials in countries like Russia, China,

[1] A *rival* is a pair of states (a dyad) that "create and sustain a relationship of atypical hostility for some period of time" (Thompson 2001, p. 557-558). We use the terms "rival" and "adversary" interchangeably. The former is more commonly used by academics in international relations (e.g., Diehl and Goertz 2000; Colaresi, Rasler and Thompson 2008), while the latter is common among foreign policy practitioners (Poast 2020).

[2] By *extreme polarization*, we refer to the increase in both the perceived ideological and social distance between the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. Ideological polarization means that partisans have increasingly different policy preferences. Social or affective polarization means that partisans increasingly like their in-party and dislike their out-party (Mason 2016; Iyengar et al. 2019). As polarization becomes more extreme, the stakes of winning become heightened, posing dangers for democratic governance (McCoy and Somer 2019).

and Iran emphasize polarization and instability in the U.S., but it is unclear if this rhetoric has substantive impacts. For instance, an article from Chinese state-run news agency *Xinhua News* describes the U.S. as "plagued by growing domestic chaos…politicians from two parties are locked in a 'against for against' style veto politics, which is fundamentally weakening the United States" (Liu 2021). Perhaps, as many U.S. officials fear, such narratives embolden foreign rivals and their publics. Alternatively, rival governments could use this rhetoric to serve their own domestic political ends—for example, to emphasize the stability of autocratic institutions relative to American-style democracy—but it may not reflect or impact their foreign policy.

We argue that three alternatives to the *emboldening hypothesis* are plausible. One is that extreme polarization makes adversaries more cautious in challenging the U.S., especially if they expect leaders of a polarized America to seek an external scapegoat (*dampening hypothesis*). A second possibility is that emboldening and dampening effects co-exist: adversaries may be assertive on issues core to their national interests but avoid provoking the U.S. on peripheral issues (*selective assertiveness hypothesis*). A final possibility is that extreme polarization has little effect on the response of rival states (*status quo hypothesis*). The status quo could be maintained either if foreign powers adopt a "wait and see" approach in response to a volatile, polarized U.S., or if they believe domestic polarization will not impact American capabilities or its foreign policy.

Examining the effects of America's partisan politics on the attitudes and behavior of foreign adversaries is challenging because polarization is a complex, structural phenomenon. Both ideological polarization in Congress and affective polarization among the American public have increased in recent decades. Simultaneously, hostility between the U.S. and its foreign adversaries like Russia and China has grown, reflecting a change in the relative power of the U.S. in the international system. Research strategies that analyze long-term patterns of America's domestic polarization and the assertiveness of rival powers towards the U.S. may mistakenly conclude that these two trends are causally related, when in fact they could just be co-occurring.

To remedy this problem, we propose two research strategies. We first analyze the effects of polarization as a multidimensional phenomenon by priming many types of polarization in a pre-

registered[3] survey experiment of 2046 Chinese adults. Half of survey respondents are randomly assigned to read vignettes adapted from Chinese media about extreme polarization in American politics. We find no evidence that heightening perceptions of polarization in the U.S. makes the Chinese public favor a more assertive foreign policy, nor does it impact the Chinese public's assessment of American strength or the future of U.S. foreign policy.

Our second approach analyzes the response of foreign rivals to a single, hyper-partisan event in American politics: the attacks on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 following the 2020 U.S. presidential election. We focus on January 6th because the dominant narrative in U.S. rival countries was that the Capitol insurrection exemplified extreme partisanship in American politics and society. Moreover, U.S. policymakers explicitly linked the event to the emboldening hypothesis. This observational analysis complements our survey experiment by focusing on elite behavior and expanding our study beyond China. We look at the behavior of eight U.S. rival countries identified by the Peace Data V2.01 (Diehl, Goertz and Gallegos 2021): Cuba, China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Syria, and Venezuela. Using a difference-in-differences design, we measure how America's rivals behaved towards the U.S. and other countries before and after January 6, 2021 with daily political event data from the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) database (Boschee et al. 2018). We find that rival powers slightly increased their hostility towards the U.S. relative to other countries directly after the U.S. Capitol riots, but this effect does not persist beyond two weeks. We show this effect was driven by low intensity events, such as statements that mocked and criticized American democracy. Many of these statements likely cater to domestic audiences within rival countries. However, we do not find evidence that January 6th fundamentally changed how rival countries behaved towards the U.S.

Employing these two different concepts of polarization—as a multidimensional phenomenon and as a phenomenon encapsulated in a single event—allows us to explore the same research question in multiple ways. Both approaches find limited evidence for substantive or persistent emboldening effects. We argue that if heightening perceptions of U.S. polarization does not neg-

[3]This experiment is preregistered with Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) hosted by the Center for Open Science's OSF Registry at: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/N8X5B.

atively impact the attitudes of foreign publics or only influences low-intensity actions taken by rival governments, it is difficult to believe polarization is shaping rival behavior in more extreme ways, at least in the short term. Our findings come with two important caveats. First, we do not interpret our results to mean that extreme polarization in the U.S. does not or cannot have serious national security consequences. We discuss other negative consequences of extreme polarization for U.S. foreign policy, including detrimental impacts of polarization on maintaining international commitments and cooperating with allies and adversaries. Our observational analysis also finds that U.S. polarization invites mocking and criticism from foreign adversaries, which may negatively affect global perceptions of the U.S. and American-style democracy. Second, we do not wish to imply that U.S. rivals like China are not becoming more assertive in international politics. By contrast, our survey results show that many respondents in China support a more assertive posture towards the U.S. in the future. However, we caution against attributing assertive attitudes or behaviors of foreign rivals in recent years primarily to domestic politics in the United States.

## The Emboldening Hypothesis and Its Alternatives

A dominant narrative in Washington is that extreme polarization emboldens foreign adversaries. By *emboldening*, we mean an increasing assertiveness towards the U.S., which could take many forms, from outspoken criticism to overt militarization. Activities most concerning to U.S. policymakers are those that could escalate into militarized crises, such as coercive threats, military buildups, or–in extreme cases–invasion or occupation of territory. There are two assumptions underlying this *emboldening hypothesis*. The first is that foreign adversaries perceive polarization as either weakening or distracting the state. In the U.S., extreme polarization is associated with processes that could diminish state capabilities and undermine aspects of democratic governance. Congressional polarization, for example, contributes to legislative dysfunction and partisan gridlock (Binder 2014; Lee 2015). Ideologically polarized legislators are unlikely to work across the aisle, reducing Washington's ability to take substantive, timely actions in foreign affairs.

America's adversaries could also view polarization as contributing to societal dysfunction. Researchers have shown that affective polarization in the American public—the tendency to like

one's in-party and dislike one's out-party (Mason 2018; Iyengar et al. 2019)—is correlated with negative trends like declining support for democratic norms (Kingzette et al. 2021), rising anger within the populace (Webster 2020), and increased potential for intergroup hostility and political violence (Kalmoe and Mason 2022). It is therefore reasonable for foreign rivals to view an internally divided U.S. as a hegemon in decline. Rivals may also expect polarization to distract the state, diverting attention away from foreign to domestic affairs. With finite resources and attention, a polarized America would be less engaged in global politics. These observations could lead adversaries to anticipate that the U.S. will increasingly "retrench" from the world.

The second assumption of the *emboldening hypothesis* is that in response to perceived decline, rival states will be more assertive. Similar arguments about domestic crisis and opportunistic adversaries are made in other areas of international relations. Walt (1996) describes how domestic revolutions weaken the state, prompting foreign adversaries to invade or extract concessions. Likewise, states weakened by internal conflict are more likely to be targeted in militarized disputes (Fanlo 2022; Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz 2008). This assumption also reflects a traditional realist argument in international relations: states seek opportunities to expand their power and influence to guarantee their survival (Mearsheimer 2001). Variations of this argument applied to the U.S.-China rivalry suggest that a rising China will challenge a U.S.-led global order.[4] A weakened, polarized America could accelerate what some characterize as "inevitable" conflict between the two rivals (Mearsheimer 2021; Rosato 2021).

The concern that polarization in the U.S. emboldens rival powers is a prominent theme in the Biden administration. In April 2021, President Biden warned that deepening polarization leads America's adversaries to believe that "the sun is setting on American democracy" (Biden 2021). Analysts are especially wary about how polarization will affect U.S.-China relations as China becomes a peer competitor with different interests and values relative to the United States. After the 2020 U.S. presidential election, one expert summarized: "China will benefit from America's culture wars and deep societal divisions, and perhaps do what it can to fuel them." Another warned

[4]See Weiss and Wallace (2021) for a review of how the U.S.-China rivalry affects the liberal international order.

of "possible security implications, including China moving against [the Taiwanese islands of] Quemoy or Matsu, or even Taiwan" (Wertime 2020). In sum, an emboldening logic implies that America's growing partisan divide will contribute to perceptions of its decline and retrenchment, creating a window of opportunity for adversaries to exploit.

**Emboldening Hypothesis**: *Heightened polarization in the United States will make rival powers more assertive in international politics.*

We argue that the emboldening hypothesis is plausible but not inevitable. To understand why, consider two questions, the answers to which rely on assumptions about how states behave in international politics. First, (how) does polarization shape American adversaries' expectations about U.S. behavior in international politics? The *emboldening hypothesis* predicts that adversaries believe polarization weakens or distracts the U.S., causing retrenchment. However, there are many alternatives that are theoretically possible. Rivals could expect America's domestic polarization to permeate its foreign policy, creating more uncertainty. Or, rivals may expect the U.S. to be more assertive because it seeks a foreign scapegoat for its own domestic problems. Or, rivals could see polarization as a domestic issue that will not impact American foreign policy at all. Second, how might adversaries respond to anticipated changes in U.S. behavior? The *emboldening hypothesis* expects U.S. adversaries to respond opportunistically to decline and retrenchment. However, adversaries could instead want to be more cautious, trying to preserve the status quo. By disentangling these questions, we identify three more ways that polarization in the U.S. could influence its relations with foreign rivals.

### Alternative 1: Dampening

A first alternative is that polarization in the United States will make its foreign rivals *less* assertive in international politics, which we term the *dampening hypothesis*. There are two logics that could lead to dampening effect. The first considers a different response that rivals could have to U.S. retrenchment. If polarization distracts the U.S. and makes it less active in international affairs, an alternative response is that foreign rivals may see less need to counter American influence abroad. The likelihood of this response depends on the objectives of the adversary. If one assumes the

adversary is a rational security seeker that is somewhat satisfied with the status quo—rather than a revisionist state that is dissatisfied with the status quo—a dampening effect is more likely.

The second logic follows from diversionary theories of conflict (Levy 1988). Leaders facing domestic instability have incentives to stoke an adversarial relationship with a foreign country in order to generate national unity. In this instance, domestic polarization could cause U.S. leaders to seek a scapegoat abroad to distract from its own dysfunction and reduce partisan division. China is a likely case for this logic. Some argue that rallying the American public in response to a rising China will reduce polarization (Brooks 2019; Ganesh 2021), although evidence for this claim is disputed (Myrick 2021). Chinese leaders are concerned that U.S. politicians will scapegoat China to divert attention from America's domestic problems. Analysts in Beijing view the "vilification of China" as "rooted in extreme ideological polarization" (Jun 2021). Rational Chinese decision makers may anticipate that aggressive foreign policy would provide U.S. leaders an opportunity to boost their popularity by generating a "rally 'round the flag effect" (Mueller 1970). Since states have incentives to avoid provoking leaders with diversionary incentives (Chiozza and Goemans 2004), perceptions of heightened polarization in American politics could actually make foreign adversaries *less* assertive.

**Dampening Hypothesis**: *Heightened polarization in the United States will make rival powers less assertive in international politics.*

### Alternative 2: Selective Assertiveness

A second alternative to the *emboldening hypothesis* blends logics of the emboldening and dampening hypotheses. Polarization could weaken the U.S. and embolden its adversaries, but this effect may be limited to certain foreign policy issues. Specifically, adversaries may be more assertive on issues closest to their core national interests that are peripheral to the U.S. We term this the *selective assertiveness hypothesis*. It stems from the fact that adversaries' decision-making could be shaped by the coexistence of two countervailing forces. On one hand, wariness of being scapegoated restrains a U.S. rival from taking aggressive actions on unimportant issues. On the other hand, a perceived window of opportunity to take advantage of a polarized, weakened U.S.

encourages a rival to be more assertive about core national interests.

In the context of U.S.-China relations, some strategists and officials believe that "China should clarify the priority of its national interests and avoid 'strategic rash advance'."[5] For example, China's broadening of its core interests—which initially included only Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet but now also encompass claims in the South and East China Sea (Swaine 2011)—led Zhu Feng, a Chinese foreign policy scholar, to argue that "Chinese officials are now using the terms 'important interests' and 'core interests' interchangeably, which diminishes the weight of the latter."[6] More recently, the former Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. warned that China must "not fight a war of anger" and "must not allow it [Chinese people's interests] to be plundered by anyone or lose it through our own carelessness, negligence and incompetence."[7] His words attracted extensive discussions in Chinese political and diplomatic circles as they were interpreted as implicit criticism of China's "unbounded" tough line on the U.S. As American politics further polarizes, China may see a chance to advance its national interests through assertive foreign policy. Simultaneously, Chinese leaders could be concerned that polarization gives U.S. leaders incentives to scapegoat foreign adversaries, prompting Beijing to tread carefully. The combination of these conflicting incentives implies that heightened polarization in the U.S. could make China selectively assertive, focusing on foreign policy issues closest to its core national interests.

**Selective Assertiveness Hypothesis**: *Heightened polarization in the United States will make rival powers more selectively assertive on policy issues they perceive as core to their national interests and peripheral to the United States.*

### Alternative 3: Status Quo

A final possibility is that heightened polarization in the United States will lead to no change in the responses of its foreign adversaries, instead preserving the status quo (*status quo hypothesis*). There are two reasons why this could occur, and they depend on assumptions made about the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy. First, one could assume domestic polarization will eventually permeate U.S. foreign policy, making it more volatile and unpre-

[5] Yan Xuetong quoted in Pu and Wang (2018).
[6] As quoted in Swaine (2015).
[7] As quoted in Nakazawa (2022).

dictable in the future. If policies rapidly swing depending on who occupies the White House, adversaries will struggle to anticipate U.S. behavior. In democracies, foreign policy stays fairly consistent over time despite alternation of political power (Leeds and Mattes 2022). However, party turnover in highly polarized democracies—particularly those that become polarized on foreign policy issues—could lead to bigger changes in foreign affairs. If U.S. polarization makes adversaries leaders unsure about the future of American foreign policy, they may adopt a "wait and see" approach when determining how to orient their policies vis-á-vis the U.S.[8]

Alternatively, one could assume that adversaries perceive polarization in the U.S. to be a domestic phenomenon disconnected from foreign policy. This logic is linked to traditions in international relations that focus on variation in the structure of the international system, with states only differentiated by their capabilities (Waltz 1979). In this vein, rival governments could believe U.S. foreign policy is shaped by realpolitik factors, but insulated from the partisan divide. Indeed, there is far more bipartisanship in foreign policy relative to domestic policy (Bryan and Tama 2022; Kertzer, Brooks and Brooks forthcoming). And core aspects of America's foreign policy—including its security commitments and promotion of liberal norms and an open world economy—persist despite major domestic changes (Chaudoin, Milner and Tingley 2010).

Some Chinese scholars hold similar perspectives. For example, a Tsinghua University political scientist argues that "in general, the current extreme political polarization should not be read as a sign of a destined U.S. decline…it is still a periodic phenomenon" (Ren 2022). Along similar lines, a Peking University scholar warns that "China should avoid underestimating the U.S. capability to unify and pool resources after a full mobilization" (Jie 2020). In short, both of these logics—that polarization will be insulated from American foreign policy, or that polarization will permeate American foreign policy, making it less predictable—could result in preservation of the status quo:

**Status Quo Hypothesis**: *Heightened polarization in the United States will lead to no change in the attitudes or behaviors of rival powers.*

[8]Chinese leaders adopted similar responses to uncertainty around the preferences of new leaders in the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan (Miura and Weiss 2016).

## Experimental Evidence from the Chinese Public

We first evaluate these four hypotheses in a survey experiment that primes members of the Chinese public to think about polarization in the U.S. and captures their attitudes towards American and Chinese foreign policy. The experiment tests the causal logic of the emboldening hypothesis and its alternatives. Our experimental findings are most consistent with the *status quo hypothesis*: we do not find evidence that priming polarization in U.S. significantly impacts respondent attitudes about how assertive China should be towards the U.S. We show that this is largely because the Chinese public does not view polarization as likely to change U.S. foreign policy or erode American capabilities.

### Public Opinion in Authoritarian Regimes

We build on literature that uses experimental public opinion research in authoritarian contexts to assess the microfoundations[9] of theories of international relations (e.g., Bell and Quek 2018; Li and Chen 2021; Quek and Johnston 2017/8; Weiss and Dafoe 2019). It is more common to study democratic rather than autocratic public opinion[10], but scholars recognize that public opinion can matter in institutionalized autocracies that manage political processes through parties or legislatures (Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014). The quasi-democratic features of institutionalized autocracies are far from truly representative or competitive.[11] But relative to other types of autocracies, like personalist or monarchist regimes, citizens are better positioned to extract concessions from their governments (e.g., Malesky and Schuler 2010). Autocrats who face domestic publics with varying policy preferences[12] and could be punished for poor decisions may be as attuned to the public as their democratic counterparts (Weeks 2014).

Studying public opinion in China is especially important. Historically, economic growth and

[9] We follow Kertzer's (2017) use of microfoundations as "an analytic strategy where one explains outcomes at the aggregate level via dynamics at the lower level" (p. 86). Experimental public opinion research can help us understand whether the attitudes and behaviors of foreign publics are consistent with expectations of the *emboldening hypothesis*.

[10] This is because many theories of international relations rely on assumptions about democratic publics (Kertzer 2021), and mechanisms by which democratic publics influence their leaders are clear (Chu and Recchia 2022; Tomz, Weeks and Yarhi-Milo 2020).

[11] And, indeed, in recent years, political power in China has become increasingly concentrated under President Xi.

[12] Recent scholarship shows that the Chinese public holds coherent ideological preferences (Pan and Xu 2018).

nationalistic sentiment were key sources of domestic legitimacy for the Chinese government (Holbig and Gilley 2010). In recent years, however, economic slowdown led the regime to rely more on nationalism and populism for legitimacy (Dai and Shao 2016; Weiss and Dafoe 2019; Potter and Wang 2022).[13] Elite interviews (Manion 2014), observational studies (Jiang and Zeng 2020), and experiments (Meng, Pan and Yang 2017; Chen, Pan and Xu 2016) show that there are conditions under which Chinese officials are responsive to public opinion. Weiss (2014) also finds that the Chinese government can strategically leverage their vulnerability to public pressure in order to demonstrate resolve. Of course, we cannot directly extrapolate from public opinion surveys to Chinese elites. As in many countries, there is a sizeable elite-public gap in China on various policy issues.[14] However, studying public opinion on foreign policy in China is a useful way to test microfoundations of international relations theories when elite decision-makers are hard to access. And the opinions of foreign publics are themselves an important subject of study. Numerous studies, for example, highlight how foreign public opinion can shape international status and global influence (Chu 2021; Goldsmith and Horiuchi 2009; Goldsmith, Horiuchi and Matush 2021).

**Survey Design**

We design and field an online survey experiment in March 2022 to 2046 Chinese adults living in mainland China via the survey firm Qualtrics.[15] We recruit a quota sample based on two target demographic characteristics—age and sex—matched to the 2020 Chinese census. This sample is not fully nationally representative: on average, respondents in online surveys in China are more

[13] This concept is known as "mass line" in China. For example, in 2016, President Xi (re)emphasized that officials "must learn to follow the mass line through the internet…understand what the masses think and hope, collect good ideas and good suggestions, and actively respond to netizens' concerns" (Thomas 2019).

[14] For example, despite the common view that the Chinese government enjoys high support (Cunningham, Saich and Turiel 2020), research shows a quiet majority in China holds more politically liberal views (Pan and Xu 2018).

[15] The project was reviewed by Duke University's Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB), protocol no. 2022-0343. The appendix discusses ethical considerations for conducting research in this context. In studying topics related to politics and policy in China, an online survey is preferable to a face-to-face survey because respondents can maintain anonymity and are more likely to respond with true policy preferences (Huang and Yeh 2017). Consistent with best practices on survey research in China (e.g., Weiss and Dafoe 2019; Gruffydd-Jones 2019; Jee and Zhang 2021), we do not disclose our university affiliation prior to the survey, as respondents may not be truthful if they are aware that survey is being conducted by researchers based in the U.S.

educated, more affluent, more politically engaged, and more likely to live in urban areas relative to the general population. However, our sample is an informative subset of Chinese adults when studying foreign policy attitudes. As Wang and Huang (2021) explain, Chinese adult Internet users, now over half of the Chinese population, are "more politically active, and therefore worth particular attention" (p. 761). Increasingly, the Internet is the primary way that most average Chinese citizens consume media and participate in politics (Yang 2009). The perspectives of this politically engaged sample are valuable when understanding opinions about foreign policy.

Our survey first asks respondents about their demographic characteristics and political attitudes.[16] Then, each respondent is randomly assigned to either a treatment or control condition. Respondents in the treatment group read a prime (see full text in appendix) about extreme polarization in American politics and society, while respondents in the control group move to the outcome questions without reading a prime.[17] We aim to create the strongest possible prime while still being realistic. To do so, we emphasize multiple dimensions of polarization across four screens, embedding powerful images on each screen. The prime discusses both ideological and affective polarization among both politicians and the public using text adapted from real articles published in *The People's Daily*, the authoritative voice of the regime. It also discusses polarization as both a dynamic phenomenon that has increased over time in the U.S. and highlights an episode of extreme polarization at one moment in time: the January 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol attacks.

The prime focuses on the general phenomenon of domestic polarization in the U.S. rather than on partisan differences in U.S.-China policy. For example, respondents are told: "There has been an increasingly stark disagreement between Democrats and Republicans on economy, racial justice, climate change, law enforcement, international engagement and a long list of other issues", and that "This disagreement between Democrats and Republicans has gradually changed from policy differences to identity battles."[18] Respondents who read the prime (treatment) and

[16] The variables we collect are: sex, age, geographic region, urban/rural location, education, household income, household size, ethnicity, Communist Party membership, interest in foreign affairs, main source of news, previous travel to the U.S., general political attitudes and general hawkishness (attitudes towards the use of military force).

[17] We find no evidence of differential attrition between treatment and control groups.

[18] These statements are directly adapted from an article in *The People's Daily* (Sheng 2021).

those who did not (control) then answer questions about U.S. foreign policy:

*In the next few years, do you think the United States is likely to be: Much weaker / Somewhat weaker / Neither weaker nor stronger / Somewhat stronger / Much stronger*

*In the next few years, do you think the United States is likely to be: Much less active in global affairs / Somewhat less active in global affairs / About the same / Somewhat more active in global affairs / Much more active in global affairs*

*In the next few years, do you think U.S. foreign policy towards China is likely to be: Much less assertive / Somewhat less assertive / About the same / Somewhat assertive / Much more assertive*

To measure uncertainty over U.S. foreign policy, we ask respondents to quantify how certain they are about their predictions using a slider bar from 0 (not at all confident) to 100 (completely confident). Next, respondents are asked what China should do in foreign policy in the next few years, which is the primary outcome of interest:

*In the next few years, do you think Chinese foreign policy towards the United States should be: Much less assertive / Somewhat less assertive / About the same / Somewhat assertive / Much more assertive*

We then ask respondents how assertive[19] Chinese foreign policy towards the U.S. should be on six salient issues: Taiwan, South China Sea, Cybersecurity, Trade and Global Supply Chain, Global Leadership, and Outerspace. These issues are presented to respondents in a matrix format with the options: *Much less assertive*, *Somewhat less assertive*, *About the same*, *Somewhat more assertive*, *Much more assertive*. On a new screen, respondents rate the importance of each issue separately for China and for the U.S. on a 1 ("not important at all") to 5 ("very important") scale. Finally, to gauge respondent's understanding of the prime, we ask:

*The United States has two major political parties: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. How often would you say these parties agree? Almost Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Almost Never / I don't know.*

As anticipated, relative to the control group, we find that respondents in the treatment group are on average less likely to report that the two parties in the U.S. "Sometimes" or "Almost Always" agree, and that this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).[20]

[19] There is debate over the meaning and the Chinese translation of "assertiveness" (Chen, Pu and Johnston 2013). At the end of the survey, we ask how respondents interpret "assertive Chinese foreign policy." The vast majority of respondents interpret this to mean "defend[ing] China's interests more resolutely" (see appendix).

[20] In our pre-analysis plan, we describe this question as being somewhat of a "hard test" of the polarization prime because the wording of the question itself may make the control group think about polarization in the U.S.

### Results of Survey Experiment

Our core analyses compare differences in mean outcomes in the control and treatment groups. To evaluate the *emboldening*, *dampening*, and *status-quo* hypotheses, the outcome is how assertive respondents think Chinese foreign policy should be towards the United States. We code responses as: *Much more assertive (2), Somewhat more assertive (1), About the same (0), Somewhat less assertive (-1)*, and *Much less assertive (-2)* and calculate the mean response within the treatment and control samples. If average attitudes towards China's assertiveness in the treatment group are not significantly different from the control group, this is evidence for the *status quo hypothesis*. If the average response to this outcome variable is lower in the treatment relative to control group, this is evidence for the *dampening hypothesis*. The inverse (higher average response in treatment relative to control group) is evidence for the *emboldening hypothesis*. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses in the treatment and control groups, with the mean response indicated by a black triangle. The majority of respondents in our sample prefer that China be "about the same" or "somewhat more assertive" towards the U.S. in the future. However, the results of a two-sample t-test show that there is not a statistically significant difference between the average response in the treatment and control groups, suggesting that heightened awareness of U.S. polarization does not change the status quo (*status quo hypothesis*).

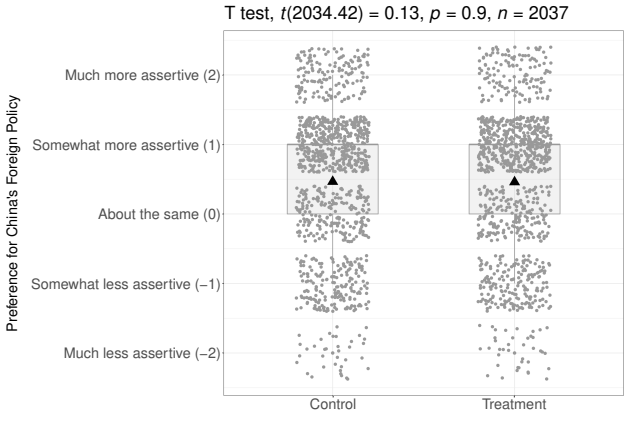


Figure 1: Attitudes Towards China's Assertiveness in Foreign Policy

The *selective assertiveness hypothesis* anticipates that respondents will want China to be more

assertive towards the U.S. on issues they perceive as core to Chinese national interests and peripheral to the U.S. To identify core issues, respondents separately rated the importance of six foreign policy issues to both China and the U.S. on a scale from 1 ("Not Important at All") to 5 ("Very Important"). "Core issues" are those perceived as significantly more important to China relative to the United States. As the left panel in Figure 2 shows, the two core issues identified by survey respondents are Taiwan and the South China Sea.[21] To test the *selective assertiveness hypothesis*, we ask respondents whether they think China should be more or less assertive towards the U.S. in the six issue areas. This hypothesis anticipates that the average mean response for the two "core issues" (Taiwan and the South China Sea) would be higher in the treatment relative to the control group. The right panel of Figure 2 shows, however, that respondents in the treatment group are *not* systematically more assertive on issues core to China than respondents in the control group, giving us no evidence for this hypothesis.

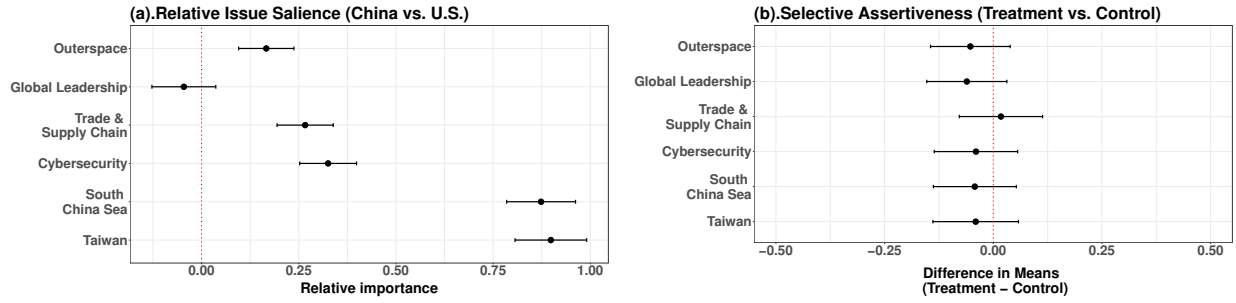


Figure 2: Selective Assertiveness: (a) Relative Importance of Foreign Policy Issues to China vs. U.S. and (b) Attitudes Towards China's Assertiveness in Different Foreign Policy Issues

Both results are most consistent with the *status quo hypothesis*: heightening perceptions of polarization in the U.S. does not appear to have a significant impact on how assertive respondents believe China should be towards the U.S.[22] Our theory proposed two mechanisms that explained why increasing polarization in the U.S. may simply preserve the status quo. The first mechanism was that rivals see polarization as increasing volatility in U.S. foreign policy, leading them to

[21] The left panel of Figure 2 plots the average difference in relative importance (Importance to China - Importance to the U.S.) of each issue among respondents in the control group. Positive (negative) values indicate greater perceived importance to China (the U.S.). These results are consistent if we instead define "core issues" using only the control group, only the treatment group, or the full sample (see appendix).

[22] The appendix shows that the null findings presented in this paper are robust to alternative modeling choices and the inclusion of pre-registered demographic covariates.

adopt a "wait and see" approach. If respondents who read the polarization prime were significantly less confident about their expectations for U.S. participation in global affairs or U.S. foreign policy towards China, this would be consistent with the first mechanism. However, the average confidence level for these outcome questions is fairly high (a mean confidence level of 75-80 out of 100) in the sample. This confidence level does not significantly differ in the treatment group relative to the control group, giving us no evidence for this mechanism.[23]

The second mechanism is that foreign rivals see U.S. polarization as disconnected from its capabilities and foreign policy. Figure 3 shows, on average, survey respondents in the treatment and control groups did not have different expectations about whether the U.S. would become stronger or weaker in the future (left), how active the U.S. would be in international affairs in the next few years (upper right), and how assertive the U.S. would be towards China (lower right). The median respondent in both groups anticipated that American foreign policy would remain "about the same." This evidence supports the second variant of the *status quo hypothesis*: respondents in the treatment group understood that polarization decreases the likelihood of agreement between the Republican and Democratic parties, but they did not view polarization as likely to impact U.S. foreign policy in the future. We see no significant evidence, for example, that priming polarization made respondents expect that the U.S. would be less active in foreign affairs because it was hampered by Congressional gridlock or distracted by societal divisions. In turn, heightening perceptions of polarization in the U.S. did not embolden the Chinese public.

A common objection to null results in survey experiments is that they arise from a "low quality" sample of inattentive survey respondents. In the appendix, we use many strategies to show this is extremely unlikely. We screen for bots and inattentive respondents pre-treatment (Newman et al. 2021), include a manipulation check post-treatment, and demonstrate that "treated" respondents spent considerable time (median: 64.6 seconds) reading the prime. We also perform consistency checks on demographic questions unrelated to the treatment to demonstrate that the sample is high quality. This suggests that null findings are not due to inattentiveness.

[23] We also conduct a two-sample F-test, which shows that the variance in the attitudes towards China's assertiveness are not significantly different from each other between the treatment and control group (see appendix).

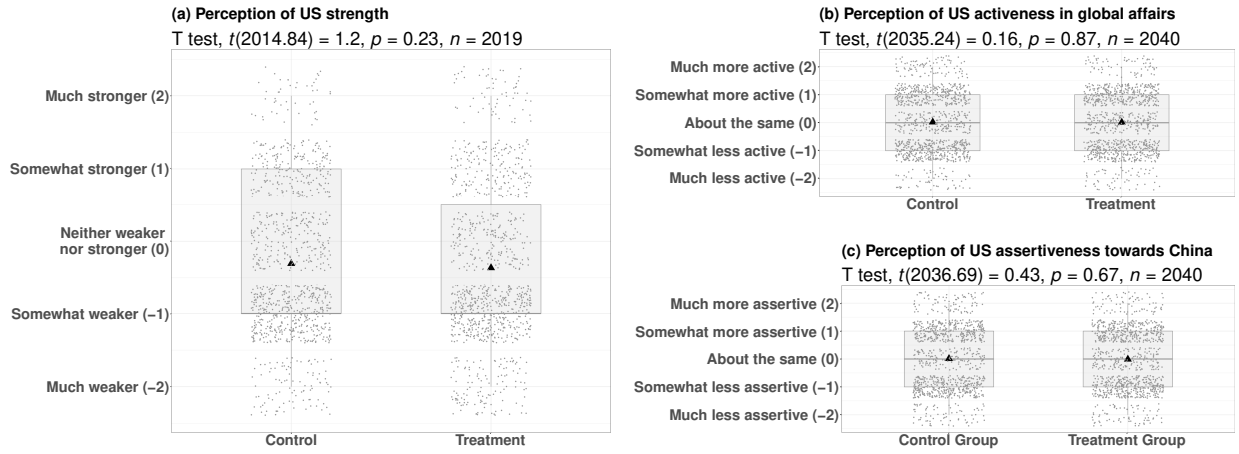


Figure 3: Expectations for U.S. Power and Foreign Policy

A second objection is that even if we do not find overall evidence for an emboldening effect, certain subsets of our sample could be emboldened by the polarization prime. In our pre-analysis plan, we proposed exploratory analysis to probe heterogeneous treatment effects using five moderating variables: interest in foreign affairs, previous experience in the US, membership in the Communist Party, political attitudes, and general hawkishness. The only substantive heterogeneous effect we observe is for hawkishness.[24] Among hawkish respondents, those primed to think about U.S. polarization believed that China should be *less* assertive towards the U.S. This logic was more consistent with a dampening rather than an emboldening effect. However, we caution against over-interpreting this effect as it becomes insignificant when demographic controls are included in the model. Our primary takeaway is that we find no evidence for the *emboldening hypothesis* within relevant subsets of our sample (see appendix) or in our full sample.

An additional objection to null effects in a survey experiment is that respondents are "pre-treated" (i.e., already widely aware of polarization in the U.S.). We emphasize, however, that our survey is priming experiment: the idea is for polarization in the U.S. to be "top of mind" when respondents answer questions about U.S. and Chinese foreign policy.[25] The treatment is not intended to deliver new information, but rather to ensure that respondents think about U.S.

[24] Following Weiss and Dafoe (2019), we ask whether China relies on military strength "too much, too little, or about the right amount to achieve its foreign policy goals?" and create an indicator for hawkishness (1 = "too little").

[25] Myrick (2022) takes a similar approach in a priming experiment about perceptions of U.S. polarization in the United Kingdom.

polarization when answering outcome questions. Even still, our manipulation check (see appendix) shows that respondents who read the polarization prime are less likely to believe that the Republican and Democratic party agree, indicating the treatment group updated their assessment of American politics. Moreover, if the Chinese public had already deeply internalized the emboldening logic, then we would expect respondents in both control and treatment conditions to believe the U.S. would be "much weaker" in the future. However, as the left panel on Figure 3 shows, the views of the average respondent in the sample are not so extreme. On average, respondents believe that the U.S. will only be slightly weaker in the next few years. These findings make us skeptical that our null results are explained by pre-treatment bias.

Of course, our survey results are specific to U.S.-China relationship. China differs from other U.S. rivals in terms of its size, technological advancement, degree of development, and the complex strategic environment it faces. These features caution us against generalizing these results to other U.S. adversaries. Our survey is also limited by its focus on public opinion rather than on actions taken by government officials. In addition, the outcomes we observe in the survey are attitudinal rather than behavioral. To address these limitations, we complement the experimental design with an observational study.

## Observational Evidence from Rival Governments

Our second study analyzes the change in behavior of rival governments towards the United States following a single episode of extreme polarization: the January 6th attacks on the U.S. Capitol. On January 6, 2021, supporters of the incumbent president Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol, attempting to overturn Joe Biden's recent victory in the 2020 U.S. presidential election. As one analyst described, the Capitol insurrection was a "culmination of decades of increasing polarization in the United States, seen in a deeply divided Congress, extremism in the media, and political violence in the streets" (Hicklin-Coorey 2021). We focus on January 6th because U.S. policymakers directly linked this episode of partisan violence to the *emboldening hypothesis*. As National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, summarized, "January 6 has had a material impact on the view of the United States ... Adversaries look at it, you know, more sort of rubbing their hands together

and thinking, 'How do we take advantage of this in one way or another?'" (Widakuswara 2022). We also argue that January 6th is a real-world test of the emboldening logic because stories and images from the insurrection dominated international news in the days that followed, heightening the salience of U.S. polarization for foreign observers. In an appendix, we show that state-run media outlets in U.S. rival countries overwhelmingly emphasized the partisan, divisive aspects of January 6th and its aftermath.[26] Of course, no one event embodies U.S. polarization, and January 6th does not embody polarization alone. Therefore, in our analysis, we consider January 6th to be a "bundle treatment," increasing global awareness of U.S. polarization, but also drawing attention to related issues of political violence and democratic decline.

Our analysis examines whether foreign rivals of the U.S. changed their behavior towards the U.S. after the January 6th attacks. We focus on actions taken by eight rival governments identified by the Peace Data V2.01: Cuba, China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Syria, and Venezuela (Diehl, Goertz and Gallegos 2021).[27] We construct a sample of directed-dyads in which these eight U.S. rivals are the "initiators" and other countries in the international system are the "targets." We include only target countries coded by the Peace Data as maintaining "significant and ongoing interactions" with each of these eight initiators.[28] This results in a sample of 188 directed-dyads.

Our approach uses a difference-in-differences framework to compare how U.S. rivals behave towards the U.S. relative to how they behave towards other states before and after the U.S. Capitol attacks. We conduct this analysis for twelve time windows around January 6th, ranging from a 5-day window to a 60-day window in 5 day increments.[29] The outcome of interest is the frequency and the degree of cooperative and hostile interactions between states, drawn from the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) database (Boschee et al. 2018). ICEWS identifies events

[26] We acknowledge that some U.S. commentators emphasized that January 6th did not reflect U.S. polarization, but rather demonstrated the resilience of American democracy and generated bipartisan Congressional proposals to prevent similar events from occurring in the future (Levine 2022). We show in an appendix, however, that the narrative in most U.S. rival countries was that January 6th exemplified extreme polarization and democratic dysfunction.

[27] Since the Peace Data only covers the 1990-2015 period, we rely on rivalry codings from 2015.

[28] Diehl, Goertz and Gallegos (2021) argue that this approach results in "a more valid and useful population than the politically relevant dyad approach" (p. 607). In the appendix, we replicate the analysis on a different sample of politically relevant dyads and find similar results.

[29] A 60-day window means 60 days before and after January 6, 2021 (a total of 120 days). We select this length of time so that our largest window of time still begins after Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 election.

by relying on machine-coded news reports. The advantage of using this data is that it provides information on fine-grained, daily interactions between countries. However, because the data is machine-coded, it includes politically irrelevant events. To ensure our results are not an artifact of noisy data, we remove duplicate entries and keep only events initiated by the "Foreign Ministry" or "Military" of the initiator countries, as coded by ICEWS.[30] This leaves us with 1553 events among 188 directed-dyads within the 60-day window before and after Jan 6, 2021.

Our unit of analysis is the directed-dyad day. For each unit, we construct a measure of the dependent variable, *U.S. Rival Behavior*, by averaging the daily intensity score of events that occurred within the directed-dyad.[31] In the ICEWS data, the intensity score measures the degree of hostility or cooperation of each event on a scale from -10 (most conflictual) to 10 (most cooperative).[32] Averaging the intensity score by day mitigates reporting biases, as events in some dyads may be reported on at a systematically higher rate.[33] In our 60-day window, the resulting measure ranges from -10 to 8.3, with a mean of 0.68 and standard deviation of 3.12.

Another challenge is how to handle days where there are no events within a dyad. In our sample, within the +/- 60-day window, about 48% of the total 188 directed-dyads do not experience any event at all.[34] The conventional approach in this literature is to treat "no event" observations as zeros (Leeds 1999; Mattes and Rodríguez 2014). Relying solely on this approach, however, may not be suited to our analysis. It assumes that events or actions that have an intensity score equal to zero are either (1) unlikely to meaningfully impact on interstate relations and/or (2) unlikely to reveal any intentions of the initiator, and thus can be approximated as no event or action occurring.[35] However, the imputed zeros might arise from different data generating processes. For example, some dyads might be inherently less likely to experience any event than others, and

[30] The relevant variable in ICEWS is *Source.Sectors*. We do not specify the target (*Target.Sectors* because official condemnations or sanctions against individuals in another country could be hostile government behavior.

[31] For more details on this approach, see Goldstein (1992) and Gerner et al. (2002).

[32] Examples include: *fight* (-10), *threaten* (-6), *criticize* or *disapprove* (-2), *provide aid* (7), and *military retreat* (10).

[33] Leeds (1999) and Mattes and Rodríguez (2014) adopt a similar strategy.

[34] This high censoring rate (the proportion of no event observations) happens even though we only include dyads that maintain significant and ongoing interactions.

[35] Examples of actions that have an intensity score equal to 0 include: *consider policy option*, *engage in symbolic act*, and *acknowledge or claim responsibility*.

including these observations in the analysis could bias our results.

To address this problem, we use two strategies. First, we use OLS models with a restricted sample of directed-dyads that experienced at least one event in the previous month.[36] Second, we use Heckman correction—a statistical technique that addresses biases that can occur when the data we observe is a non-random sample—with the full sample of directed-dyads. The Heckman models first model the probability of experiencing any event between a directed-dyad in a probit model (first stage), and then model the intensity of the event using OLS (second stage). In both sets of models, we adopt a difference-in-differences approach that compares changes in the average level of hostility ($Y_{it}$) of two groups of directed-dyads before and after January 6th. The two groups are: (a) U.S. rivals targeting the U.S. ("treated") and (b) U.S. rivals targeting any other country they regularly interact with ("control").[37] Because both approaches give us similar results and there are debates about identifying DiD effects with non-linear models (Puhani 2012), we present OLS models in the paper and Heckman models in an appendix. The main model specification is:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta D_{it} + \gamma Time_t + \tau D_i * Time_t + X'_{it}\psi + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where $Y_{it}$ is the daily average intensity score of all events in directed-dyad $i$ at time $t$.[38] $D_i$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the target state in directed-dyad $i$ is the U.S. and zero otherwise. $Time_t$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 if a day is in the treated period (Post-Jan 6) and zero otherwise. $X_{it}$ is a list of control variables commonly used in analysis of dyadic events that could affect both the probability and type of interactions between two countries (e.g., Mattes and Rodríguez 2014). These variables include the contiguity between the initiator and the target (*Contiguity*), log value of the total trade between the initiator and the target (*Trade*), and the level of democracy of the initiator (*Initiator Polity 2*) and the target (*Target Polity 2*).[39] The coefficient ($\tau$) of the

[36] We use the lower bound of the 60-day window as the cut off point, meaning the directed-dyad must experience at least one event in the period of 2020/10/8 through 2020/11/07 to be included in the sample.

[37] An alternative design would compare the behavior of rivals towards the U.S. ("treated") with the behavior of non-rivals towards the U.S. ("control"). However, this would require us to assume that January 6th *only* affected how rival governments responded to the U.S. That said, this analysis shows similar results (see appendix).

[38] In the Heckman Model, $Y_{it}$ in the selection equation represents whether or not there is an event between directed-dyad $i$ at time $t$.

[39] In the Heckman Model, we only include these controls in the selection equation as exclusion restrictions.

interaction term between $D_i$ and $Time_t$ is the DiD estimate, which is the quantity of interest.

**Results of Observational Analysis**

We present our findings graphically, leaving regression tables and robustness checks to the appendix. In Figure 4, we plot the DiD estimate from twelve OLS models that use different time-windows, from 5 to 60 days before and after January 6, 2021.[40] The estimates show that directly after January 6th, the actions that U.S. rivals took towards the U.S. became more hostile relative to their actions towards other countries they regularly interacted with. This effect is short-lived, only reaching statistical significance at conventional levels in the 5-day and 10-day windows.[41] In the 50-day time window, the estimated effect of January 6th on the intensity score becomes positive (albeit small in magnitude), indicating that rivals' actions towards the U.S. became more cooperative. One explanation of this positive effect is that rivals may have incentives to not provoke a newly elected President Biden, who was inaugurated by the 50-day time window.

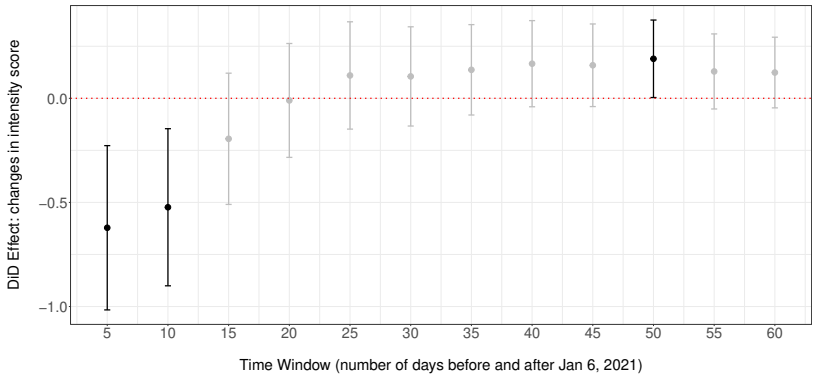


Figure 4: DiD estimates of changes in intensity scores

Figure 5 plots the predicted level of intensity scores of the U.S. Rival—U.S. dyads in the Post-Jan 6 periods. The absolute value of these predicted values are smaller than 1, suggesting that the DiD effects are driven by low-intensity actions. For instance, in the ICEWS dataset, the intensity score that corresponds to *make pessimistic comment* is -0.4, to *appeal for policy change* is -0.3,

[40] Error bars in figures represent 95% confidence intervals. Models contain robust standard errors, although results look similar if standard errors are clustered instead by directed-dyad (see appendix).

[41] Results look similar in the Heckman models, with a slightly longer period of initial hostility after January 6th.

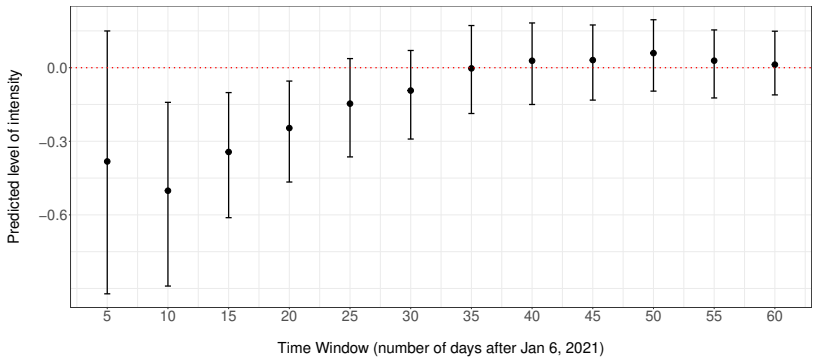


Figure 5: Predicted level of intensity scores of U.S. Rival—U.S. dyads in the Post-Jan 6 Periods

and to *decline comment* is -0.1. The intensity score associated with *criticizing*, *denouncing*, or launching an *official complaint* is -2.0. For example, on Jan 7, 2021, ICEWS records thirteen events initiated by China towards the U.S., five of which are coded as *accuse*, *criticize*, or *denounce*. One of these negative events likely refers to Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's comment during the regular press conference: "[I]f you still remember how some U.S. officials, lawmakers and media described what's happened in Hong Kong, you can compare that with the words they've used to described the scenes in Capitol Hill…what's the reason for such a stark difference in the choice of words? Everyone needs to seriously think about it and do some soul-searching on the reason" (PRC Foreign Ministry 2021). Such comments are used by Chinese officials to accuse the U.S. of being hypocritical in foreign affairs.[42] In brief, the DiD effects appear to be driven by harsh words from rivals targeted at the U.S. rather than material actions.

A few assumptions are needed to estimate DiD effects. For one, the "treatment" must not be determined by the outcome. This strikes us as plausible, given that the U.S. Capitol attacks on January 6th were instigated by domestic supporters of then-President Donald Trump rather than by foreign actors. Another assumption is that in the absence of the treatment, the difference between the treated and comparison groups must remain constant over time (i.e., follow parallel trends). The parallel trends assumption is more difficult to validate. In an appendix, we

[42]Russian officials made similar comments criticizing the U.S. after January 6th (see, e.g., Harned 2021).

provide visual checks of this assumption and show that it likely holds for most time windows.[43] Finally, the treatment must not "spillover" in a way that affects the comparison group. A concern would be if the January 6th riots affect not only U.S. rivals' actions towards the U.S., but also their actions towards protégés of the U.S. (e.g., Russia vs. Ukraine, China vs. Taiwan). To analyze potential spillovers, we examine whether January 6th also affects U.S. rivals' action against U.S. protégés.[44] This analysis drops the U.S. from our sample, and codes a directed-dyad as a 1 (indicating "treated") if the target state is a U.S. protégé, and a 0 otherwise. The DiD effects using this new sample (see appendix) are statistically insignificant across the time window, suggesting January 6th did not affect the hostility of U.S. rivals towards U.S. protégés. Therefore, it is unlikely that there were substantial spillover effects in our original analyses.

Taken together, our findings indicate that U.S. rivals criticized and mocked U.S. politics shortly after the January 6th attacks on the U.S. Capitol. However, these effects did not persist and were not matched by substantive behavioral changes. Our appendix shows these findings are robust to other modeling and measurement strategies, including different comparison groups and alternative measures of the dependent variable. There are still limitations to this analysis. We cannot capture long-term effects of January 6th that extend beyond our 60-day window. This is because actions taken by rival governments that occur months or years after our period of observation are difficult to attribute to the U.S. Capitol attacks. We emphasize that we also do *not* interpret our findings to mean that January 6th had no impact on the behavior of rival governments. Many reports note that U.S. rivals instrumentalized January 6th to serve their domestic political ends by drawing misleading parallels between U.S. Capitol rioters and their internal political opponents (Brookings Institute 2021). In this vein, hostile actions observed in the ICEWS data could be directed towards domestic audiences. We also do not discount the negative repercussions January 6th could have had on intangible outcomes, such as foreign perceptions of American democracy

[43] Three time windows (5-Day, 20-Day, and 25-Day) show signs of potential violations of the assumption, indicating we should exercise caution in interpreting the results as causal estimates.

[44] We define U.S. protégés as countries that hold formal defense agreements with the U.S., including NATO members, Trio Treaty members, ANZUS members, and bilateral treaty members (Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and the UK). We also code Taiwan and Israel as U.S. protégés as it is believed that the Taiwan Relations Act and American pledges to support Israel serve as de facto pledges of support (Beckley 2015).

and U.S. global leadership.[45] However, with respect to Washington's chief foreign policy concern about the Capitol attacks—that they prompted substantially more aggressive actions towards the U.S. or its protégés—we fail to find evidence for large or persistent emboldening effects.

## Conclusion

A common refrain in Washington is that extreme polarization weakens and distracts the United States, emboldening foreign rivals like China to become more assertive in international politics (*emboldening hypothesis*). Increased assertiveness could take many forms, from hostile rhetoric to provocative forms of militarization. We argued that there were untested assumptions underlying this conventional wisdom. In this paper, we theorized about mechanisms linking domestic polarization and international rivalry. We pre-registered our hypotheses and used a results-blind approach to evaluate how U.S. rivals perceive and respond to America's partisan politics.

We used two empirical strategies to test our hypotheses. In a survey experiment fielded to 2046 Chinese adults, we heightened perceptions of polarization in the U.S. using text and images from Chinese news sources. We then measured how priming polarization affected expectations about what the U.S. would do in foreign policy and how China should respond. We found that the polarization prime did not have a significant impact on respondents' assessments of U.S. foreign policy. In turn, we find no evidence that heightening polarization changes beliefs about how assertive China should be in international politics.

Our second approach used event data to analyze how a larger group of American rivals responded to an episode of extreme polarization: the U.S. Capitol attacks on January 6, 2021. We compared actions taken by rival governments towards the U.S. and other states before and after January 6th. We found that U.S. rivals increased their hostility towards the U.S. relative to other countries directly after the U.S. Capitol riots, but this effect was short-lived. While foreign rivals became more likely to criticize the U.S. government after January 6th, we note that such criticism could have primarily been geared towards a domestic audience. We fail to find evidence for more

[45] For example, Monde Muyangwa, Director of the Africa Program at The Wilson Center, remarked: "As the events of January 6 unfolded, many Africans noted that the United States' credibility, standing, and moral authority to speak on democratic governance globally … have been gravely injured and diminished" (Muyangwa 2021).

intense or persistent hostile actions from U.S. rival governments.

Overall, we found limited evidence to support the *emboldening hypothesis* using these strategies. Our strategies cannot assess longer-term effects of U.S. polarization. However, finding no evidence of an emboldening effect, at least in the short-term, does suggest a sense of prudence from foreign rivals. It further cautions against assuming that U.S. polarization has the drastic, far-reaching impacts on foreign adversaries that American policymakers express concern about. Of course, there are circumstances under which these findings may change. For example, despite an increase in domestic polarization, there is still a fair degree of bipartisanship in Washington around foreign policy (Bryan and Tama 2022) and the China threat in particular (Nerkar 2021). But if China policy becomes more partisan, Chinese leaders might have different expectations about U.S. foreign policy in the future, depending on which party occupies the White House. More generally, if the parties in the U.S. become strongly polarized on key foreign policy issues—for example, if one party became far more hawkish towards certain adversaries—increasing awareness of partisan differences could affect attitudes and behaviors of U.S. rivals.

We do not interpret our findings to suggest that foreign rivals will not become more assertive towards the U.S. Our survey results showed the opposite: on average, Chinese respondents thought that China should take a somewhat more assertive posture towards the U.S. However, our results do suggest desires for more assertive Chinese foreign policy are not causally linked to perceptions of growing polarization in the U.S. A deeply divided America may be a convenient subject of mockery or an opportunity for authoritarian regimes to enhance their legitimacy, but we do not find evidence that partisan divisions inherently invite external aggression. We also do not interpret our largely null findings in this paper to mean that extreme polarization in the U.S. does not have severe consequences for U.S. foreign policy. Existing research, for example, has shown that polarization in the U.S. can jeopardize its commitments to allies (Schultz 2018; Myrick 2022). Polarization can also make it difficult to tackle risky or complex global problems, such as pursuing cooperative agreements with foreign adversaries. Our findings do, however, emphasize that we lack strong evidence that polarization in America is emboldening its adversaries or

making them more assertive towards the United States.

Our results suggest many directions for future research. Since our survey experiment was fielded in China, the results can only speak to that political context. Extensions of our experiment could look beyond China to perceptions of U.S. polarization held by other rival publics. Other survey experiments might consider alternative sources of domestic instability and strife, like democratic erosion, structural racism, and economic inequality. Following Kertzer, Brutger and Quek's (2021) innovative dyadic survey experiment on the U.S.-China security dilemma, a reciprocal survey in the U.S. could explore whether heightening perceptions of domestic weakness in China emboldens the American public. Extensions of our observational analyses might investigate how U.S. adversaries responded to other episodes of polarization, including contested Supreme Court nominations, government shutdowns, and polarizing electoral cycles. Such strategies would contribute to our understanding of the conditions under which domestic partisan politics can shape interactions between rival states in international relations.

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# Domestic Polarization and International Rivalry

## *Online Appendix*

Rachel Myrick and Chen Wang

*The Journal of Politics*

## Part I: Survey Experiment



## Part II: Observational Analysis

# I-A. Survey Experiment Details

## Survey Overview & Sample

For this project, we fielded a public opinion survey online to a sample of 2046 adults living in mainland China from March 28-31, 2022. The survey questionnaire, hypotheses, and proposed analyses were preregistered with the Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) registry hosted by the Center for Open Science Foundation (OSF).[1] The survey was distributed to an opt-in online panel of adults via the survey firm Qualtrics. We used quota sampling to match our sample to the 2020 Chinese National Census on two target demographics: age and sex.

| Category | | Target | Actual |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGE | 18-34 | 30% | 30.4% |
| | 35-54 | 32% | 32.4% |
| | 55+ | 38% | 37.3% |
| SEX | Male | 48% | 48% |
| | Female | 52% | 52% |

While this sample is nationally representative on age and sex, it is of course not fully representative on other demographic characteristics. Comparing our survey data with the 2020 Chinese Census[2], we see that relative to the national population, adults in our sample are:

- More likely to live in urban areas. In the 2020 Census, 63.89% of respondents lived in urban areas, whereas 97.3% of our sample lived in urban areas.
- Somewhat more likely to be ethnically Han. In the 2020 Census, 91.1% of the population is ethnically Han, whereas 96.7% of our population is Han.
- More likely to receive higher education. In the 2020 Census, about 15.47% of the population have college degrees, whereas 78.6% of our sample have college degrees.
- More likely to reside in North China. In the 2020 Census, the population lived in the following regions: East China (30.04%), North China (12.01%), Central and South (29.07%), Northeast (6.99%), Southwest (14.55%), and Northwest (7.34%). In our sample, the regional distribution is: East China (28.69%), North China (28.54%), Central and South (22.73%), Northeast (4.30%), Southwest (11.53%), and Northwest (3.91%).

## Ethics

The project was reviewed by Duke University's Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB), protocol no. 2022-0343. In designing our survey, we follow suggested best practices in survey research

[1] The preregistration is available here: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/N8X5B.

[2] Census data is from the 2020 Seventh National Population Census in China, as published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (http://www.stats.gov.cn/).

in China and take care to minimize any potential risk to participants. First, we inform participants that the study is being conducted by university researchers and their responses will be anonymous and only used for academic research. Participants are made aware of the content of the survey in advance and choose whether or not to participate. They are able to exit the survey at any time and can skip any question they prefer not to answer. Second, we do not collect individually identifiable information from survey participants. We program the survey and then partner with Qualtrics to distribute the link to members of its online panel living in China.

Third, we opt not to ask questions deemed politically sensitive in this context. The survey focuses on Chinese attitudes towards American politics and foreign policy. These topics are regularly discussed by Chinese officials and featured in major media outlets in China. We avoid questions about attitudes towards the Chinese government and political leadership as well as foreign policy issue areas that may be sensitive or controversial. In survey items related to Chinese foreign policy, we generally frame the questions to ask respondents what they think China *should* do in the future rather than asking for an evaluation of existing policy.

Finally, we do not engage in any deception in the survey. The information provided to respondents in the polarization prime draws on language from real media reports. In our IRB submission, however, we requested to waive one element of informed consent: disclosure of our university affiliation prior to the survey. Our concern was that respondents may not be truthful in their answers if they are aware that survey was being conducted by researchers based at American universities. In addition to concerns about potential non-response bias, respondents could exaggerate their unfavorability towards American foreign policy if they perceived the survey to be affiliated with an American institution. Omitting institutional affiliation in the informed consent declaration is consistent with best practices in recent survey research conducted in China related to politics and international relations.[3]

[3]See, for example, Gruffydd-Jones (2019); Jee and Zhang (2021); Weiss and Dafoe (2019).

## I-B. Survey Instrument

The survey instrument is described below. The survey was only distributed to respondents in Chinese. The English translation of the text is in *italics*.:

**consent_text**:

*You are invited to participate in a study about your attitudes towards American foreign policy and Chinese foreign policy. Your participation will take approximately 10-15 minutes.*

我们邀请您参加此次问卷调查。此问卷旨在了解您对于美国外交政策和中国外交政策的看法。完成此次问卷大约需要10-15分钟。

*The data collected from this survey is collected by university researchers and will only be used for academic research. Your answers will be confidential. We will not ask for your name or any information that might identify you.*

调查结果将会被大学研究员收集，并将只用于学术目的。我们不会询问您的姓名或其他任何可能确认您身份的信息。

*Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to skip questions or not participate in the study or to withdraw at any time. In order to receive compensation for participating in this study, you must proceed to the final screen of the survey.*

参见本次调查完全基于自愿。您可以拒绝参见本调查，或者在调查中的任何时候选择退出。如果您完成了本次调查，您会收到指定数额的奖励。

*If you have any questions, you may contact the researchers at: zmyj@yahoo.com*

如果您对本研究有任何问题，请联系：zmyj@yahoo.com

*Do you agree to these terms?*

- *Yes / No*

您是否同意以上条款?

- 是/否

If respondents consent to participating in the survey, they next answer a series of demographic questions.

**sex**: *What is your sex?*

- *Male / Female*

**sex**: 您的性别是?

- 男/女

**age**: *What is your age?*

**age**: 您的年龄是?

**income**: *What is your annual household income?*

- *Less than 10,000 CNY / 10,000 CNY – 50,000 CNY / 50,000 CNY – 100,000 CNY / 100,000 CNY – 150,000 CNY / 150,000 CNY – 200,000 CNY / 200,000 CNY – 300,000 CNY / 300,000 CNY – 500,000 CNY / 500,000 CNY – 1,000,000 CNY / More than 1,000,000 CNY / Prefer not to answer*

**income**: 您家庭年收入的范围是多少?

- 1万元人民币以下/ 1万到5万元人民币之间/ 5万到10万元人民币之间/ 10万到15万元人民币之间/ 15万到20万元人民币之间/ 20万到30万元人民币之间/ 30万到50万元人民币之间/ 50万到100万元人民币之间/ 100万元人民币以上/ 选择不回答

**household**: *What is the number of household members in your house including children?*

- *1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 or more*

**household**: 您的家庭成员有几人（包括子女）?

- 1人/ 2人/ 3人/ 4人/ 5人或者以上

**intaffairs**: *How much time on average do you spend each day on reading news about international affairs?*

- *None / Less than 30 minutes / 30 minutes to an hour / More than an hour*

**intaffairs**: 您平均每天花费多长时间阅读有关国际事务的新闻?

- 从不/ 少于30分钟/ 30分钟到1个小时/ 1个小时以上

**intaffairs_source**: *From which of the following news sources do you often get information about international affairs? (Select all that apply)*

- *Domestic internet International internet Local TV news National TV news Local radio news broadcasts National radio news broadcasts City newspapers Provincial newspapers National newspapers Little papers [xiaobao] Printed magazines*

**intaffairs_source**: 您从以下哪些新闻来源获取有关国际事务的信息? （请选择所有适用选项）

- 国内网站/ 国际网站/ 地方电视新闻/ 央视新闻/ 地方广播电台/ 中央广播电台/ 地方报纸/ 省市级报纸/ 国家级报纸/ 小报/ 印刷杂志

**intaffairs_primary**: *Among the following news sources, which one do you rely on most to get information about international affairs? (Select only one)*

- *Domestic internet  International internet  Local TV news  National TV news  Local radio news broadcasts  National radio news broadcasts  City newspapers  Provincial newspapers  National newspapers  Little papers [xiaobao]  Printed magazines*

**intaffairs_primary**: 您最依赖于以下哪个新闻来源获取有关国际事务的信息？（请选择一项）

- 国内网站/ 国际网站/ 地方电视新闻/ 央视新闻/ 地方广播电台/ 中央广播电台/ 地方报纸/ 省市级报纸/ 国家级报纸/ 小报/ 印刷杂志

**us_travel**: *Have you traveled to the United States?*

- *Yes / No*

**us_travel**: 您是否曾经到过美国?

- 是/ 否

**us_time:** *How much time in total have you been in the United States?*

- *None / Less than one month / 1-6 months / 6-12 months / 1-3 years / More than 3 years*

**us_time**: 您累计在美国待过多长时间?

- 从未到过美国/ 少于1个月/ 1个月到6个月/ 6个月1年/ 1年到3年/ 3年以上

**region**: *Which region do you live in?*

- *Northeast (Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang)  North China (Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia)  Northwest (Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang)  Southwest (Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet)  Central and South (Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan)  East China (Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong)*

**region**: 您居住在哪个地区?

- 东北（辽宁，吉林，黑龙江）/ 华北（北京，天津，河北，山西，内蒙古）/ 西北（陕西，甘肃，青海，宁夏，新疆）/ 西南（重庆，四川，贵州，云南，西藏）/ 中南（河南，湖北，湖南，广东，广西，海南）/ 华东（上海，江苏，浙江，安徽，福建，江西，山东）

**urban**: *Are you an urban or rural resident?*

- *Urban / Rural*

**urban**: 您居住在城市还是农村?

- 城市/ 农村

**hawkish**: *In general, does China rely on military strength too much, too little or about the right amount to achieve its foreign policy goals?*

- *Too much / Too little / About right / Don't know / Prefer not to answer*

**hawkish**: 一般来看，您认为中国在实现外交目标方面过多地依赖军事力量，过少地依赖军事，还是不多不少地依赖军事力量?

- 过多依赖/ 过少依赖/ 不多不少/ 不知道/ 选择不回答

**education**: *What is your highest education level?*

- *No formal education / Primary school / Junior Secondary School / Senior Secondary School (including Secondary Technical School) / College (including Junior College) / Master / Doctoral*

**education**: 您的最高学历是?

- 没有接受过正规教育/ 小学毕业/ 初中毕业/ 高中毕业（包括中等职业学校）/ 大学毕业（包括大专）/ 硕士/ 博士

**ethnicity**: *What is your ethnicity?*

- *Han / Minority / Prefer not to answer*

**ethnicity**: 您的民族是?

- 汉族/ 少数民族/ 选择不回答

**ccp**: *Do you belong to the Communist Party?*

- *Yes / No / Prefer not to answer*

**ccp**: 您是否是中共党员?

- 是/ 否/ 选择不回答

**pol_views:** *How would you describe your political views?*

- *Very conservative / Somewhat conservative / Moderate / Somewhat liberal / Very Liberal / Don't know / Prefer not to answer*

**pol_views**: 总的来说，您认为您的政治观点是?

- 非常保守/ 比较保守/ 温和的/ 比较开放的/ 非常开放的/ 不知道/ 选择不回答

At the end of the demographic questions, survey respondents must pass a simple attention check. Respondents who do not answer this question correctly are screened out of the survey before the experiment begins.

**attn**: *Many people like sports. We are checking to make sure you're reading carefully. Instead of clicking on your favorite sport, please select the third answer out of the four choices below.*

- *Basketball / Table Tennis / Football (Soccer) / Badminton*

**attn**: 很多人喜爱体育运动。我们想确认您是否在认真阅读本问卷。在下列选项中，不论您最喜欢的运动是什么，请选择第三个选项。

- 篮球/ 乒乓球/ 足球/ 羽毛球

The experiment embedded in the survey is a priming experiment. Respondents are randomly assigned to one of two conditions: treatment or control. Respondents in the treatment condition read a prime about extreme polarization in the American politics and society, while respondents in the control condition move to the outcome questions without reading a prime. The prime emphasizes many dimensions of polarization, including both ideological and affective polarization, as well as polarization among both politicians and the public. We also highlight a recent episode closely linked to extreme polarization in American politics: the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol. To closely reflect information that survey respondents receive in the real world, we construct the text of the prime based on Chinese media sources. We add images from the same sources to make the prime more engaging for survey respondents. The phrases and images we use are directly adapted from news articles published in *The People's Daily*, the largest newspaper in China. The text of the prime is below. Footnotes link to news articles from which language was directly adapted.

*We would like to start by providing some information about politics in the United States, based on news reports. Please read this information carefully because you will be asked questions about it.*

我们首先将会为您提供一些关于美国政治的信息。这些信息是摘自新闻报道。请认真阅读这些信息，因为之后的一些问题会基于这些信息。

- *The United States of America has become the "Divided States of America."*[4]
- 美利坚合众国现在已经变成了"美利坚分裂国"。
- *American society has long been haunted by polarization and division, but today, the two major political parties – the Republican Party and the Democratic Party – disagree more than ever.*[5]
- 美国社会长期以来受内部分裂的困扰。但是美国两党（共和党和民主党）的这种分裂从未像今天这样白热化。


[4]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0817/c90000-9884771.html

[5]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html. Image from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0804/c90000-9880185.html

[NEW SCREEN]

- *There has been an increasingly stark disagreement between Democrats and Republicans on economy, racial justice, climate change, law enforcement, international engagement and a long list of other issues.*[6]
- 众所周知，美国两党在经济、种族、气候变化、执法、国际参与以及其他一系列问题上的分歧日益明显。
- *Members of the U.S. Congress vote more along party lines on many important and major public matters.*[7]
- 美国议员们在诸多重大公共事项上更多地从党派利益出发投票。
- *Majorities of Americans describe both parties as "too extreme."*[8]
- 多数美国民众用"太极端"来描述美国两党。

[NEW SCREEN]

- *This disagreement between Democrats and Republicans has gradually changed from policy differences to identity battles.*[9]
- 美国两党间的政策之争日益变为身份之争。
- *Today, about 80% of voters generally hate each other's political parties.*[10]

[6]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html
[7]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html
[8]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html. Image from: http://en.people.cn/NMediaFile/2021/0301/FOREIGN202103011637000088715563205.jpg
[9]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html
[10]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/1207/c90000-9929403.html

- 今天，有将近*80%*的投票者互相仇恨对方的党派。
- *Political hatred sparked by political fanaticism has become the root cause of constant social unrest and division in the U.S.*[11]
- 政治狂热激发的政治仇恨已经成为美国社会持续动荡撕裂的根源。

[NEW SCREEN]

- *On January 2021, violent demonstrators stormed the U.S. Capitol after refusing to accept the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.*[12]
- *2021*年*1*月*6*日，由于不愿接受美国*2020*年总统选举结果，暴力示威者们冲击了美国国会大厦。
- *The angry mob tried to stop the certification of the presidential election.*[13]
- 愤怒的暴徒们试图阻止国会议员认证美国总统大选结果。
- *This attack showed how deeply polarized the United States is.*[14]
- 这次冲击昭示了美国极度分裂的现状。

[11]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0517/c90000-9850610.html. Image from: http://en.people.cn/NMediaFile/2021/0120/FOREIGN202101200913000062595806985.jpg

[12]Text adapted from: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/1208/c90000-9930027.html

[13]Text adapted: http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/1213/c90000-9931847.html

[14]Image from: http://www.people.com.cn/mediafile/pic/BIG/20210325/96/13896115065572479036.jpg


Both treatment and control groups then answer outcome questions about the United States and China. The first question asks respondents to evaluate the relative strength or weakness of the United States.

**us_strength:** *In the next few years, do you think the United States is likely to be:*

- *Much weaker / Somewhat weaker / Neither weaker nor stronger / Somewhat stronger / Much stronger / I don't know (NA)*

**us_strength:** 在未来几年，您认为美国的综合国力会如何变化?

- 比现在弱很多/ 比现在弱一些/ 维持现状/ 比现在强一些/ 比现在强很多/ 不知道

Then, respondents make predictions about what American foreign policy will look like in the next few years. For each question, they quantify how certain they are about their prediction using a slider bar, where higher values indicate more certainty. These questions read:

**us_active:** *In the next few years, do you think the United States is likely to be:*

- *Much less active in global affairs / Somewhat less active in global affairs / About the same / Somewhat more active in global affairs / Much more active in global affairs*

**us_active:** 在未来几年，您认为美国在国际事务的参与上会:

- 在很大程度上减少参与国际事务/ 在一定程度上减少参与国际事务/ 保持不变/ 在一定程度上更积极的参与国际事务/ 在很大程度上更积极的参与国际事务

**us_active_conf:** *How confident are you about your answer to the previous question?*

- *Slider Bar: 0 (Not at All Confident) to 100 (Completely Confident)*

**us_active_conf:** 对于上一个问题中您所做出的预测，您有多大的把握?

- 0 (完全没有信心) to 100 (完全有信心)

[NEW SCREEN]

**us_assertive:** *In the next few years, do you think U.S. foreign policy towards China is likely to be:*

- *Much less assertive / Somewhat less assertive / About the same / Somewhat assertive / Much more assertive*

**us_assertive:** 在未来几年，您认为美国对待中国的外交政策会:

- 在很大程度上有所缓和/ 在一定程度上有所缓和/ 保持不变/ 在一定程度上更加强硬/ 在很大程度上更加强硬

**us_assertive_conf:** *How confident are you about your answer to the previous question?*

- *Slider Bar: 0 (Not at All Confident) to 100 (Completely Confident)*

**us_assertive_conf:** 对于上一个问题中您所做出的预测，您有多大的把握?

- 0 (完全没有信心) to 100 (完全有信心)

Next, respondents are asked what China should do in foreign policy in the next few years. The question reads :

**china_assertive:** *In the next few years, do you think Chinese foreign policy towards the United States should be:*

- *Much less assertive / Somewhat less assertive / About the same / Somewhat more assertive / Much more assertive*

**china_assertive:** 在未来的几年中，您认为中国对待美国的外交政策应该:

- 在很大程度上有所缓和/ 在一定程度上有所缓和/ 保持不变/ 在一定程度上更加强硬/ 在很大程度上更加强硬

The last set of outcome questions asks about respondent attitudes towards different issues in the U.S.-China relationship. These issues are presented in random order to respondents in a matrix format, with the options: *Much less assertive*, *Somewhat less assertive*, *About the same*, *Somewhat more assertive*, *Much more assertive*. The text reads:

*In your opinion, in the next few years, when competing with the United States on the following issues, should Chinese foreign policy be:*

| | *Much less assertive* | *Somewhat less assertive* | *About the same* | *Somewhat more assertive* | *Much more assertive* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Taiwan* | | | | | |
| *South China Sea* | | | | | |
| *Cybersecurity* | | | | | |
| *Trade and Supply Chain* | | | | | |
| *Global Leadership* | | | | | |
| *Outerspace* | | | | | |

在未来几年中，同美国在下列事务的博弈中，您认为中国应该：

| | 在很大程度上有所缓和 | 在一定程度上有所缓和 | 保持不变 | 在一定程度上更加强硬 | 在很大程度上更加强硬 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 台湾 | | | | | |
| 南中国海 | | | | | |
| 网络安全 | | | | | |
| 贸易与供应链 | | | | | |
| 全球领导力 | | | | | |
| 外太空 | | | | | |

On a new screen, respondents see two more matrix questions with the same six issues. They are asked: "*In your opinion, how important are the following issues for China?*" [ 您认为下列事务对中国的重要性是多少? ] and *In your opinion, how important are the following issues for the United States?*" [ 您认为下列事务对美国的重要性是多少? ] Participants rate the importance of each issue on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "Not Important at All" and 5 indicating "Very Important."

After the respondent completes the outcome questions, we evaluate their perception of polarization in the U.S.

**parties_us**: *The United States has two major political parties: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. How often would you say these parties agree?*

- *Almost Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Almost Never / I don't know*

**parties_us:** 美国有两个主要政党：共和党和民主党。您认为他们在何种程度上互相同意彼此?

- 几乎总是互相同意/ 有时互相同意/ 很少互相同意/ 几乎从不互相同意/ 不知道

At the end of the survey, we further ask respondents how they interpret the translation of the word "assertive."

**assertive_def**: *We used the word "assertive" a lot in this survey and we want to know how respondents interpret this word. What do you think best describes a more assertive Chinese foreign policy?*

- *Defend China's interests more resolutely. / Defend China's interests more actively. / Defend China's interests more aggressively. / Expand China's influence more resolutely. / Expand China's influence more actively. / Expand China's influence more aggressively. / Don't know*

**assertive_def:** 在本次问卷中我们多次提及"强硬"一词。我们想了解您是如何理解该词的。在下列选项中，您认为最能准确描述更加强硬的中国外交政策的一项是?

- 在维护中国利益方面更加坚定/ 在维护中国利益方面更加积极/ 在维护中国利益方面更加具有攻击性/ 在拓展中国影响力方面更加坚定/ 在拓展中国影响力方面更加积极/ 在拓展中国影响力方面更加具有攻击性/ 不知道

# I-C. Sample Quality & Respondent Attentiveness

Increases in fraudulent responses in surveys fielded online raise concerns about data quality in online surveys (Aronow et al. 2020; Newman et al. 2021). This concern is especially relevant to our paper because the key result in the survey experiment is a null result: priming U.S. polarization appears to have no effect on respondent attitudes towards assertiveness in Chinese foreign policy. It would be problematic if our sample was "poor quality" (i.e., if there was a sizeable portion of our sample made up of bots and/or inattentive respondents), as this could induce measurement error. This appendix explains what we did to rule out that possibility through survey design and assessments of sample quality.

First, we mitigated concerns about response quality through elements of the survey design. We kept the survey questions short and simple, and tried to make the content stimulating for survey respondents. We also increased engagement with the treatment condition by using visual cues and images (see survey instrument in Appendix B). Next, we screened out potential bots and inattentive respondents before delivering the treatment. To screen out bots, we asked respondents to complete a reCAPTCHA question before entering the survey. To screen out inattentive respondents, we embedded a simple attention check within the first few minutes of the survey. This attention check question is:

**attn**: *Many people like sports. We are checking to make sure you're reading carefully. Instead of clicking on your favorite sport, please select the third answer out of the four choices below.*

- *Basketball / Table Tennis / Football (Soccer) / Badminton*

Respondents who did not answer "Football (Soccer)" were screened out of the survey before the experiment started. Their responses were not included in our target quotas or in our final analyses.[15] Note that we screened out these respondents *before* the treatment, since including only responses from survey participants who pass attention checks and/or manipulation checks after the treatment can be a form of post-treatment bias (Montgomery, Nyhan and Torres 2018).

After collecting the survey data, we performed other checks for engagement and attentiveness. To stay consistent with our pre-analysis plan, we do not further modify our sample beyond the screener questions we initially proposed. First, we checked for evidence that respondents read the polarization prime by looking at the length of time respondents spent on the treatment. As Figure 1 shows, the median respondent spent 64.61 seconds reading the prime. Second, we checked for evidence that the treatment updated respondent's perceptions about the amount of relative agreement between the two political parties in the United States. After answering all the outcome questions, respondents in both groups answer the following question:

**parties_us**: *The United States has two major political parties: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. How often would you say these parties agree?*

- *Almost Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Almost Never / I don't know*

[15] 6% of the initial sample did not pass the attention check, and therefore did not move forward in the survey. We note that this figure is significantly better than comparable online samples of U.S. adults (e.g., Aronow et al. 2020).

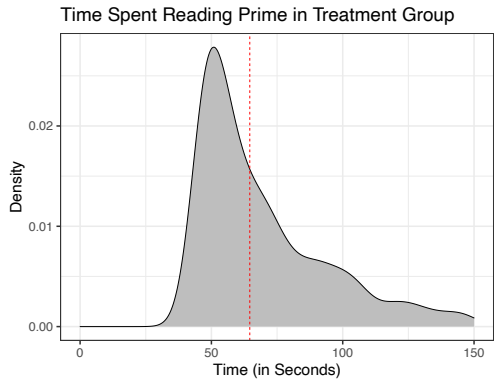


Figure 1: Time (in Seconds) Survey Respondents Spent Reading Polarization Prime

We asked this question *after* asking respondents about foreign policy outcomes in order to avoid priming respondents in the control group to think about polarization before answering outcome questions. In our pre-analysis plan, we noted that we saw this question as an indirect and somewhat difficult manipulation check because simply bringing up political parties in the U.S. could cause respondents who were not primed to think about polarization to consider it. Nevertheless, consistent with our expectations, we still find evidence that respondents in the treatment group are less likely to believe that political parties in the U.S. agree. Table 1 presents the results of a logistic regression model, where the dependent variable is coded 1 if a respondent's answer is "Almost Always" or "Sometimes" and 0 otherwise.[16] On average, respondents in the treatment group are 5 percentage points less likely to believe that political parties in the U.S. agree.

Table 1: How Often Would You Say These Parties Agree?

| | *Dependent variable:* |
|---|---|
| | Almost Always/Sometimes |
| Treatment | $-0.191^{**}$ |
| | (0.093) |
| Constant | $-0.477^{***}$ |
| | (0.065) |
| Observations | 1,993 |
| Log Likelihood | −1,301.041 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 2,606.083 |
| *Note:* | $^{*}$p<0.1; $^{**}$p<0.05; $^{***}$p<0.01 |

Finally, we checked for other inconsistencies in responses using a different set of demographic questions that were not directly related to the treatment. The survey asks respondents two questions about travel to the U.S. The first question says: "Have you traveled to the United States?" On the next screen, we ask: "How much time in total have you been in the United States?" We

[16]Respondents who chose "I don't know" and missing responses are dropped from the model.

check the proportion of respondents in our sample who answer this question consistently (i.e., who respond "No" to the first question and "None" to the second question, or who respond "Yes" to the first question and do not respond "None" to the second question). We find that 2027/2046 respondents answer this question consistently, or 99.1% of our sample, providing further evidence of overall attentiveness. Taking these factors into consideration, we think it is extremely unlikely that the null result in the survey is attributable to poor sample quality.

## I-D. Interpretation of "Assertive" Foreign Policy

There are debates around the appropriate translation of the phrase "assertive foreign policy" [强硬的外交政策]. To understand how survey respondents interpret this phrase, we ask the following question at the end of the survey:

**assertive_def**: *We used the word "assertive" a lot in this survey and we want to know how respondents interpret this word. What do you think best describes a more assertive Chinese foreign policy? [在本次问卷中我们多次提及"强硬"一词。我们想了解您是如何理解该词的。在下列选项中，您认为最能准确描述更加强硬的中国外交政策的一项是？]*

- *Defend China's interests more resolutely [在维护中国利益方面更加坚定].*
- *Defend China's interests more actively [在维护中国利益方面更加积极].*
- *Defend China's interests more aggressively [在维护中国利益方面更加具有攻击性].*
- *Expand China's influence more resolutely [在拓展中国影响力方面更加坚定].*
- *Expand China's influence more actively [在拓展中国影响力方面更加积极].*
- *Expand China's influence more aggressively [在拓展中国影响力方面更加具有攻击性].*
- *Don't know [不知道]*

The results, depicted in **Figure 2**, show that while there is variation in the interpretation of this phrase, the modal survey respondent interprets it to mean "defend China's interests more resolutely."

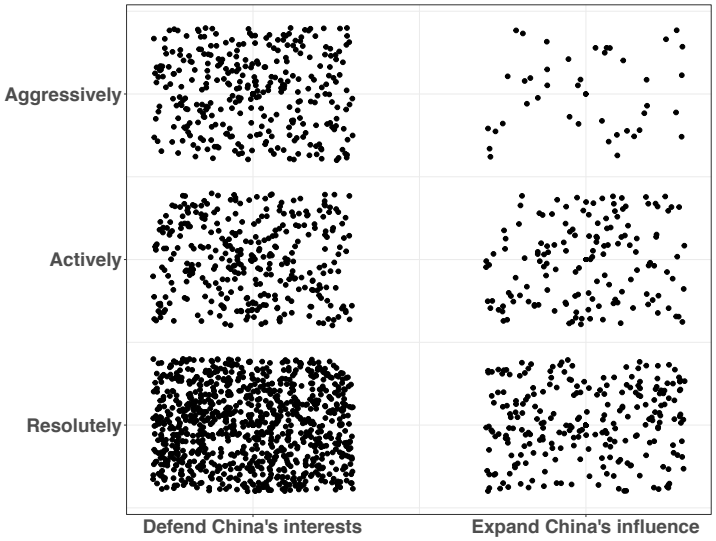


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents' Interpretation of Assertive Chinese Foreign Policy

## I-E. Robustness Checks for Survey Experiment

Table 2 replicates the core analyses in the paper that examine whether the polarization prime (*Treatment*) impacts how assertive respondents believe that China should be towards the U.S. Models 1 and 2 use OLS regression, and the dependent variable is constructed using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "Much less assertive" (-2) to "Much more assertive" (2). Models 3 and 4 are logit models with a binary dependent variable, where 1 indicates that the respondent thought China should be either "Somewhat more assertive" or "Much more assertive" towards the United States. Models 2 and 4 include a set of pre-registered demographic controls for: sex, age, ethnicity, urban/rural location, and higher education. Across all models, the estimated coefficient on *Treatment* is substantively small and not statistically significant at conventional levels. Overall, this is finding is most consistent with the *status quo hypothesis*.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Preference for Chinese Assertiveness

| | Assertiveness of China | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | OLS | | Logit | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Treatment | −0.006 | −0.001 | 0.052 | 0.054 |
| | (0.047) | (0.047) | (0.090) | (0.091) |
| Female | | −0.130** | | −0.087 |
| | | (0.049) | | (0.096) |
| Age (35-54) | | 0.141* | | 0.211+ |
| | | (0.059) | | (0.116) |
| Age (55 Plus) | | −0.097 | | −0.215+ |
| | | (0.064) | | (0.124) |
| Han Ethnic | | 0.286* | | 0.626* |
| | | (0.133) | | (0.258) |
| Urban | | −0.181 | | −0.267 |
| | | (0.149) | | (0.299) |
| Higher Education | | 0.029 | | 0.040 |
| | | (0.065) | | (0.126) |
| Constant | 0.464*** | 0.404* | 0.298*** | −0.008 |
| | (0.033) | (0.196) | (0.064) | (0.386) |
| Observations | 2,037 | 2,000 | 2,037 | 2,000 |
| $R^2$ | 0.00001 | 0.014 | | |
| Log Likelihood | | | -1,385.416 | -1,347.091 |

*Note:* +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3 examines the relationship between the polarization prime (*Treatment*) and respondent attitudes towards U.S. foreign policy in the future. All models use OLS regression. The dependent variables are constructed using 5-point Likert scales that range from -2 to 2. In Models 5 and 6, the dependent variable is how strong or weak respondents think the U.S. will be in the next few years (-2 = "Much weaker" and 2 = "Much stronger"). In Models 7 and 8, the dependent variable asks whether respondents think the U.S. will be more or less active in global affairs in the next few years (-2 = "Much less active" and 2 = "Much more active"). In Models 9 and 10, the dependent variable asks whether respondents think the U.S. will be more or less assertive towards China in the next few years (-2 = "Much less assertive" and 2 = "Much more assertive"). Models 6, 8, and 10 contain a set of pre-registered demographic control variables. Across all models, the estimated coefficient on *Treatment* is not statistically significant, indicating that, on average, respondents who were primed to think about polarization in the U.S. did not view U.S. foreign policy differently than those in the control group.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Perceptions of the U.S. Strength and Foreign Policy

| | OLS Model Results | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | U.S. Strength | | U.S. Activeness | | U.S. Assertiveness | |
| | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| Treatment | −0.058 | −0.055 | −0.008 | 0.0005 | −0.022 | −0.018 |
| | (0.048) | (0.048) | (0.049) | (0.049) | (0.050) | (0.050) |
| Female | | 0.066 | | −0.001 | | −0.213*** |
| | | (0.051) | | (0.051) | | (0.053) |
| Age (35-54) | | 0.007 | | −0.003 | | 0.164** |
| | | (0.061) | | (0.062) | | (0.063) |
| Age (55 Plus) | | 0.164* | | −0.310*** | | −0.336*** |
| | | (0.066) | | (0.067) | | (0.068) |
| Han Ethnic | | −0.033 | | −0.251+ | | −0.421** |
| | | (0.137) | | (0.138) | | (0.141) |
| Urban | | 0.228 | | −0.009 | | −0.038 |
| | | (0.161) | | (0.156) | | (0.159) |
| Higher Education | | −0.201** | | −0.096 | | 0.029 |
| | | (0.068) | | (0.068) | | (0.070) |
| Constant | −0.306*** | −0.434* | 0.022 | 0.463* | 0.012 | 0.618** |
| | (0.034) | (0.207) | (0.035) | (0.205) | (0.036) | (0.209) |
| Observations | 2,019 | 1,982 | 2,040 | 2,001 | 2,040 | 2,002 |
| $R^2$ | 0.001 | 0.016 | 0.00001 | 0.017 | 0.0001 | 0.041 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.0002 | 0.013 | -0.0005 | 0.013 | -0.0004 | 0.037 |
| *Note:* | | | | | | +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 |

## I-F. Relative Importance Plots for Foreign Policy Issues

To assess the *selective assertiveness hypothesis*, we needed to identify a set of foreign policy issues that respondents in China perceived as "core" to China's national interests but peripheral to the United States. To do so, we asked respondents to rate the importance of six foreign policy issues to China and to the United States separately on a 1-5 scale, with 1 indicating the issue was "Not Important at All" and 5 indicating it was "Very Important." These issues were:

- Cybersecurity
- Global Leadership
- Outerspace
- South China Sea
- Taiwan
- Trade and Supply Chain

In our pre-analysis plan, we specified that we would use only the control group to construct these relative importance measures.[17] Figure 3 plots the *t-test* of the average difference in relative importance (Importance to China – Importance to the U.S.) of each issue among respondents in the control group (Panel a), treatment group (Panel b), and the full sample (Panel c), respectively. The results show that two issues—Taiwan and South China Sea—are consistently rated as much more important to China relative to the U.S. across all these samples. We therefore label these two issues "core" to China in our analyses.

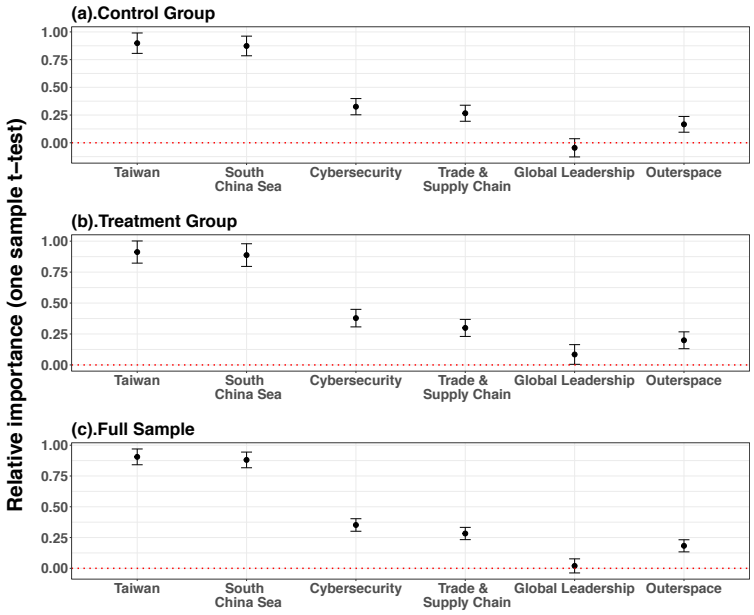


Figure 3: Relative Importance of Foreign Policy Issues to China vs. U.S. Across Different Samples

[17] The rationale for doing so was to preempt the potential concern that the treatment would impact respondents' assessments of issue importance.

## I-G. Perceptions of Volatility in U.S. Foreign Policy

We also considered the possibility that the polarization prime might make respondents believe U.S. foreign policy would be more volatile or uncertain in the future.[18] After asking respondents about U.S. foreign policy—specifically, whether they thought the U.S. would be more/less active in global affairs (US_ACTIVE) and more/less assertive towards China (US_ASSERTIVE)—we asked them how confident they were in each of their answers. Respondents reported their confidence level on a slider bar from 0 ("Not at all confident") to 100 ("Completely confident"). We proposed in our pre-analysis plan that lower confidence levels in the treatment group relative to the control group would indicate that respondents primed to think about U.S. polarization were more uncertain about the future of American foreign policy.

Figure 4 plots the distribution of these outcome questions by respondents' treatment status with the *t-test* result on top of each figure. Overall, we found that the average confidence level for these outcome questions was fairly high across both groups. While respondents in the treatment group tended to be on average slightly less confident about their assessments of U.S. foreign policy, this difference was not statistically significant.

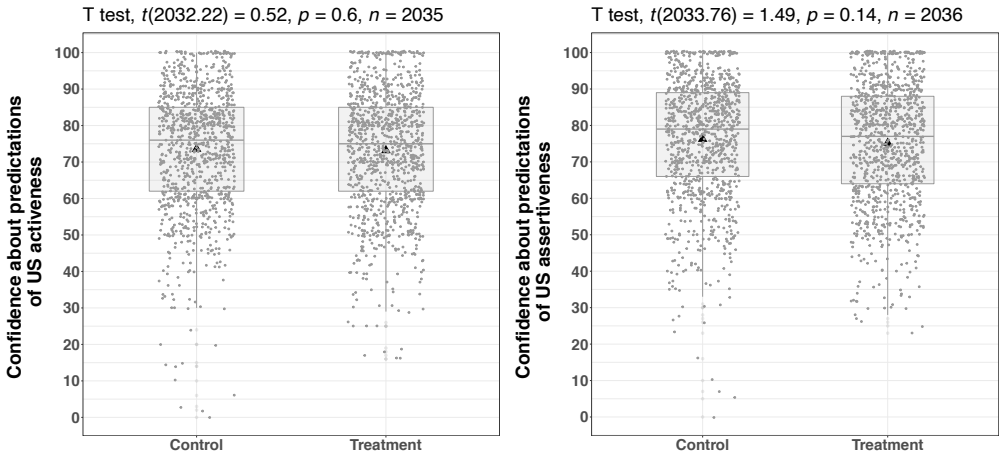


Figure 4: Confidence about Predictions of U.S. Activeness and U.S. Assertiveness Across Treatment and Control Groups

An alternative way to conceptualize uncertainty around the outcome questions is to look at the variance of responses. Table 4 summarizes *F-test* results that show the variance of responses to these two outcome questions are not significantly different in the treatment group relative to the control group.

Table 4: F-test of Perceptions of U.S. Activeness and U.S. Assertiveness

| | Var (Control) | Var (Treatment) | F-test |
|---|---|---|---|
| **U.S. Activeness** | 1.244 | 1.175 | $F$=1.06, p-value=0.355 |
| **U.S. Assertiveness** | 1.311 | 1.271 | $F$=1.032, p-value=0.62 |

[18] Our theory proposed two mechanisms that could preserve the stats quo. The first mechanism was that rivals see polarization as increasing volatility in U.S. foreign policy, leading them to adopt a "wait and see" approach.

## I-H. Exploratory Analysis of Heterogeneous Effects

While our key results in the survey experiment are null, it is possible that different subsets of the sample could display an emboldening effect. Consistent with our pre-analysis plan, we looked for heterogeneous effects across the following moderator variables (all measured pre-treatment): interest in foreign affairs, previous experience in the U.S., CCP membership, political attitudes, and general hawkishness. These variables were operationalized as follows:

- *High interest in international affairs*: Coded as 1 if respondent reports spending 30 minutes or more each day on reading about foreign affairs and 0 otherwise.
- *Access to International Internet*: Coded as 1 if respondent reports getting news from "International Internet" and 0 otherwise.
- *Internet News*: Coded as 1 if "Domestic Internet" or "International Internet" is the source respondents report getting news from the most and 0 otherwise.
- *Any Experience in the U.S.*: Coded as 1 if respondent answers "Yes" to "Have you traveled to the United States?" and 0 otherwise.
- *Significant Experience in the U.S.*: Coded as 1 if respondent reports spending 1 or more years in the U.S. and 0 otherwise.
- *Communist Party membership*: Coded as 1 if the respondent reports belonging to the Community Party and 0 otherwise.
- *Political ideology*: Coded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Very Liberal) to 5 (Very Conservative).
- *Hawkishness*: Coded as 1 if the respondent answers that China relies "too little" on military strength to achieve their foreign policy goals and 0 otherwise.

The regression tables show heterogeneous effects by internet and media (Table 5), prior experience in the U.S. (Table 6), and party affiliation and political viewpoints (Table 7). In these three tables, the models are OLS regression models, and the dependent variable (CHINA_ASSERTIVE) is measured on a 5-point Likert scale from "Much less assertive" (-2) to "Much more assertive" (2). The dependent variable is regressed on an indicator for the polarization treatment, the relevant moderator variable, and an interaction of the two. Odd-numbered models contain no demographic controls, and even-numbered models contain demographic controls for sex, age, ethnicity, urban/rural, and higher education.

The primary takeaway from these tables is that we do not find evidence of an *emboldening effect* across different subsets of our sample. In fact, there is no significant heterogeneous effect by these most of these moderators except for hawkishness. The coefficient of the interaction term between *Treatment* and *Hawkish* in Table 7 is significant at 90% confidence level. We further run additional OLS models for hawk and non-hawk subsets of our sample, which are reported in Table 8. The results show that there may be a small dampening effect among the most hawkish members of the sample (Model 3 in Table 8), but the effect becomes insignificant when demographic controls are included.

Table 5: Exploration of Heterogeneous Effects by Access to Internet and Media

| | Assertiveness of China | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Polarization Treatment | −0.088 | −0.089 | 0.064 | 0.057 | −0.001 | −0.008 |
| | (0.094) | (0.095) | (0.073) | (0.073) | (0.061) | (0.061) |
| High Int. News Interest*Treatment | 0.109 | 0.117 | | | | |
| | (0.108) | (0.109) | | | | |
| Access to Int. Internet*Treatment | | | −0.119 | −0.100 | | |
| | | | (0.095) | (0.095) | | |
| Internet Primary News Source*Treatment | | | | | −0.001 | 0.024 |
| | | | | | (0.095) | (0.095) |
| High Int. News Interest | 0.083 | 0.085 | | | | |
| | (0.077) | (0.078) | | | | |
| Access to International Internet | | | 0.036 | 0.025 | | |
| | | | (0.067) | (0.068) | | |
| Internet Primary News Source | | | | | 0.030 | −0.0002 |
| | | | | | (0.067) | (0.068) |
| Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 2,036 | 2,000 | 2,035 | 1,999 | 2,033 | 1,997 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.002 | 0.013 | −0.001 | 0.010 | −0.001 | 0.009 |
| *Note:* | | | | | | $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.001 |

Table 6: Exploration of Heterogeneous Effects by Prior U.S. Experience

| | Assertiveness of China | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Polarization Treatment | −0.018 | −0.021 | −0.004 | 0.0003 |
| | (0.066) | (0.067) | (0.048) | (0.048) |
| Any U.S. Travel*Treatment | 0.030 | 0.043 | | |
| | (0.093) | (0.094) | | |
| Significant U.S. Travel*Treatment | | | −0.024 | −0.021 |
| | | | (0.227) | (0.227) |
| Any U.S. Travel | −0.122$^{+}$ | −0.155$^{*}$ | | |
| | (0.066) | (0.069) | | |
| Significant U.S. Travel | | | −0.077 | −0.092 |
| | | | (0.159) | (0.160) |
| Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 2,035 | 1,999 | 2,036 | 2,000 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.001 | 0.012 | −0.001 | 0.010 |
| *Note:* | $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.001 | | | |

Table 7: Exploration of Heterogeneous Effects by Political Affiliation and Ideology

| | Assertiveness of China | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Polarization Treatment | 0.013 | 0.005 | 0.003 | 0.012 | 0.080 | 0.078 |
| | (0.058) | (0.058) | (0.135) | (0.136) | (0.058) | (0.058) |
| Communist Party*Treatment | −0.036 | −0.012 | | | | |
| | (0.100) | (0.100) | | | | |
| Political Ideology*Treatment | | | −0.002 | −0.003 | | |
| | | | (0.052) | (0.052) | | |
| Hawkish*Treatment | | | | | −0.241* | −0.220* |
| | | | | | (0.100) | (0.100) |
| Communist Party | 0.024 | 0.005 | | | | |
| | (0.071) | (0.072) | | | | |
| Political Ideology | | | −0.158*** | −0.162*** | | |
| | | | (0.037) | (0.037) | | |
| Hawkish | | | | | 0.227** | 0.256*** |
| | | | | | (0.071) | (0.071) |
| Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 1,967 | 1,936 | 1,998 | 1,962 | 1,969 | 1,935 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | −0.001 | 0.009 | 0.017 | 0.029 | 0.004 | 0.017 |
| *Note:* | | | | | | $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.001 |

Table 8: Treatment Effects for Hawk and Non-Hawk Respondents

| | Assertiveness of China | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Non-Hawk | | Hawk | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Treatment | 0.080 | 0.078 | −0.161* | −0.117 |
| | (0.059) | (0.059) | (0.080) | (0.080) |
| Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 1,296 | 1,279 | 673 | 656 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.001 | 0.020 | 0.004 | 0.018 |
| *Note:* | | | | $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.001 |

# Part II:: Observational Study

## II-A. U.S. Rival Media Coverage of January 6th

One possible objection to our use of the January 6, 2021 attacks on the U.S. Capitol as an event that exemplifies "extreme polarization" is that some commentators argue that January 6th did not heighten the salience of U.S. polarization. Instead, some U.S. commentators argue that January 6th generated bipartisanship in Congress and demonstrated the resilience of American democracy.[19]

However, we believe that January 6th is an appropriate event for a real-world test of the *emboldening hypothesis* because stories and images from the Capitol insurrection dominated international news in the days that followed, increasing the salience of U.S. polarization for foreign observers. Media outlets in U.S. rival countries overwhelmingly emphasized the partisan, divisive aspects of January 6th and its aftermath. Moreover, U.S. policymakers explicitly connected January 6th to the emboldening hypothesis (Widakuswara 2022). Below we include examples of coverage of January 6th from major media outlets in three U.S. rival countries—China, Russia, and Iran—to illustrate how the response of foreign official responses and state media likely heightened awareness of U.S. polarization for their respective publics.

### China

- The U.S. Capitol attack received extensive coverage in both Chinese official news outlets and pro-government social media accounts, with strict guidelines from the propaganda organ to emphasize democratic dysfunction and U.S. decline. According to Tracy Wen Liu, an investigative report who frequently contributes to *Foreign Policy*, one of her sources in China (a Chinese report) told her that they are required to "focus on how the United States' global reputation would be damaged and deteriorated…and how democracy could be hijacked by a group of uneducated people and how democracy could only be realized when the population is highly educated."[20] For example, one day after the attack, *Global Times*, an official mouthpiece known for its hawkish view, published an article with a title as "A Significant Shame – a Waterloo for the U.S. image."[21]

- Chinese official coverage of the Jan 6th attacks emphasized the U.S. domestic polarization as the root cause. For example, two days after the attack, an article published by China Central Television stated that "while the riots at Capitol Hill already became history, the prologue of Americans against Americans only indicates that the deep division of the U.S. can hardly be healed."[22] Even one year later, on the first anniversary of the Capital attack, *The People's Daily* published an editorial commentary arguing that "the real threat to the U.S. democracy is its domestic politics."[23]

- Chinese news and official statements also tend to draw parallels between the Hong Kong protest in 2019-2020 and the Capitol Hill riots to criticize the U.S. for adopting "double-standards." For example, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying com-

[19] See, for example, bipartisan Congressional efforts to prevent an event like January 6th from occurring again (Levine 2022).

[20] Accessed at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/08/chinese-media-calls-capitol-riot-world-masterpiece/

[21] Accessed at: https://world.huanqiu.com/article/41Q0uZDkYGN

[22] Accessed at: http://m.news.cctv.com/2021/01/08/ARTIWEb80E1dtnfWAtpVdzmu210108.shtml

[23] Accessed at: http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0113/c1002-32330070.html

mented during a regular press conference: "[I]f you still remember how some U.S. officials, lawmakers and media described what's happened in Hong Kong, you can compare that with the words they've used to described the scenes in Capitol Hill...what's the reason for such a stark difference in the choice of words? Everyone needs to seriously think about it and do some soul-searching on the reason." [24] *Global Times* also tweeted "@Speaker-Pelosi once referred to the Hong Kong riots as "a beautiful sight to behold" — it remains yet to be seen whether she will say the same about the recent developments in Capitol Hill", with side-by-side photos of Hong Kong protesters occupying the city's Legislative Council Complex and the Capitol Hill riots[25]

**Russia**

- Russian news outlets extensively covered the U.S. Capitol attacks, both as the insurrection was unfolding and in the aftermath. For example, between January 15, 2021 and June 15, 2021, *Russia Today*, the Russian state-controlled international news outlet, published 129 articles tagged as "Capitol Riot News," an average of over 20 articles per month. The articles were accompanied with images depicting rioting, chaos, and partisan violence. [26]

- Russian coverage of the Capitol insurrection stressed democratic dysfunction and partisan divisions in the United States. For example, the lead article about the U.S. Capitol attacks printed in the *The Moscow Times* on January 7, 2021 was titled "Russia Sees U.S. Democracy 'Limping' After Capitol Stormed." Accompanied by a picture of pro-Trump rioters, the article read: "Russia on Thursday pointed to the storming of the U.S. Capitol building as evidence of America's decline, with officials saying its out-of-date electoral system and deep divisions had left its democracy 'limping on both feet.'"[27]

- Russian news repeatedly emphasized hypocrisy of the U.S. in managing its domestic political problems. For example, state-run Russian news agency *TASS* ran a series of articles describing problems with democracy and extreme polarization in the U.S. after the January 6th attacks. A TASS article published on January 28, 2021 read, "Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that "our Western partners, who are so worried about democracy in Russia, [should] concentrate on the settlement of their own problems."[28]

**Iran**

- In the media and official statements, Iranian leaders emphasized political dysfunction in the U.S. and criticized American-style democracy. For example, the day after the U.S. Capitol riots, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani remarked, "You saw what happened in the United States; what we saw is how false and fragile Western democracy is and how it does not have a strong foundation."[29]

[24] Accessed at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa$_e ng/xwfw_6$65399/$s2510_6$65401/$2511_6$65403/202101/$t20210107_6$93569.$html$

[25] Accessed at: https://twitter.com/globaltimesnews/status/1347005117199904768?ref$_s rc = twsrc\%5Etfw$

[26] Accessed at: https://www.rt.com/trends/trump-supporters-capitol-riots-news/

[27] Accessed at: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/01/07/russia-sees-us-democracy-limping-after-capitol-stormed-a72551

[28] Accessed at: https://tass.com/politics/1250093

[29] Accessed at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/01/iran-president-rouhani-storming-capitol-building-trump-biden.html

- Iranian news outlets described the January 6th attacks as exemplifying extreme polarization occurring in the U.S. Borrowing language from U.S. academic research on polarization, for example, a February 2021 article in *Tehran Times*, Iran's oldest English-language daily newspaper reported, "Republicans and Democrats are more divided along political and ideological lines – and partisan antipathy has been going deeper and more extensive – than at any point over the last two decades. These trends manifest themselves in myriad ways, both in politics and in everyday life. Many pundits consider the attack on the Capitol building on January 6 as a turning point in the history of the United States."[30]

[30] Accessed from: https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458530/Scholar-says-it-s-not-clear-Biden-can-overcome-polarization-soon

## II-B. Parallel Trends Assumption of the DiD Design

In Figure 5, we conduct visual checks of the parallel trend assumption for our DiD design. The plots indicates that this assumption appears to hold fairly well for most window widths. Three time windows (5-Day, 20-Day, and 25-Day) show potential violations of this assumption. Therefore, as discussed in the paper, we are cautious about interpreting any of our estimates as causal.

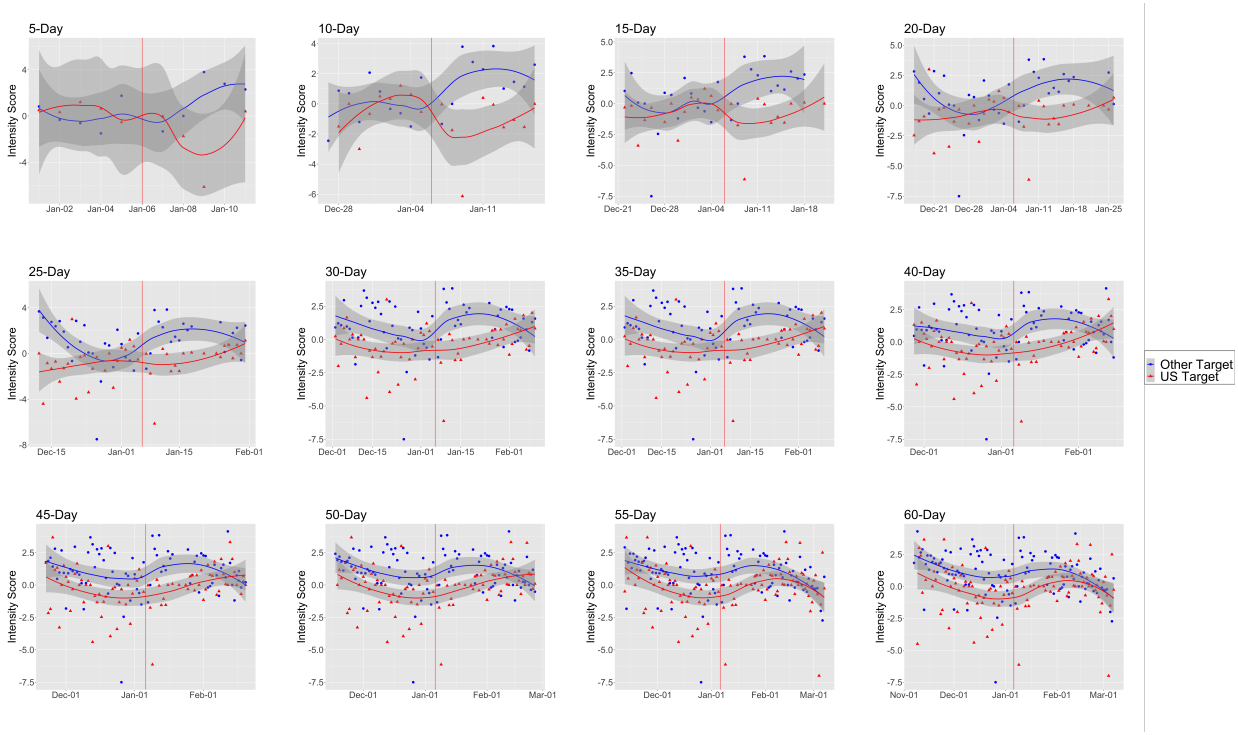


Figure 5: Visual Check of Parallel Trend Assumption

## II-C. Regression Tables Corresponding to Figures in the Main Text

In the main text of the paper, we presented the results from two sets of OLS models that adopt a DiD design graphically. This appendix contains the corresponding regression tables. Table 9 shows OLS models with twelve different time windows before and after Jan 6, in which the treatment group is the U.S. Rivals–the U.S. directed-dyads and the control group is the U.S. Rivals–other states directed-dyads. Table 10 shows another set of OLS models with the same twelve different time windows, but with the U.S. Rivals–U.S. Protégés directed-dyads as the treatment group.

Table 9: OLS Model Results: U.S. Target vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | 0.114 | −0.167 | −0.301** | −0.369*** | −0.416*** | −0.347*** | −0.286*** | −0.265*** | −0.249*** | −0.245*** | −0.204** | −0.207*** |
| | (0.146) | (0.139) | (0.117) | (0.101) | (0.095) | (0.088) | (0.080) | (0.077) | (0.073) | (0.069) | (0.067) | (0.063) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.164* | 0.239*** | 0.173** | 0.107* | 0.088* | 0.091* | 0.084* | 0.073* | 0.044 | 0.019 | 0.008 | −0.001 |
| | (0.067) | (0.064) | (0.054) | (0.046) | (0.044) | (0.041) | (0.037) | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.029) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.622** | −0.523** | −0.194 | −0.010 | 0.110 | 0.105 | 0.137 | 0.166 | 0.159 | 0.190* | 0.129 | 0.124 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.201) | (0.192) | (0.161) | (0.139) | (0.131) | (0.122) | (0.111) | (0.106) | (0.101) | (0.095) | (0.092) | (0.087) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.015 | 0.027* | 0.023* | 0.027** | 0.020* | 0.023** | 0.019* | 0.024** | 0.026*** | 0.024*** | 0.021** | 0.019** |
| | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.011) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.007 | 0.009 | 0.004 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.001 | 0.0002 | 0.00001 |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | −0.0001 | −0.001 | −0.0003 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.005 | −0.006* | −0.006* | −0.007** | −0.005* | −0.006* | −0.005* |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.009 | −0.006 | −0.010* | −0.006 | −0.007+ | −0.008* | −0.006* | −0.007* | −0.006* | −0.007** | −0.007** | −0.007** |
| | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) |
| Constant | −0.217* | −0.289** | −0.178* | −0.028 | 0.030 | 0.017 | 0.054 | 0.012 | 0.034 | 0.027 | 0.018 | 0.028 |
| | (0.105) | (0.101) | (0.084) | (0.073) | (0.069) | (0.064) | (0.058) | (0.055) | (0.053) | (0.050) | (0.048) | (0.045) |
| Observations | 540 | 1,080 | 1,620 | 2,160 | 2,700 | 3,240 | 3,780 | 4,320 | 4,860 | 5,400 | 5,940 | 6,480 |
| $R^2$ | 0.036 | 0.037 | 0.024 | 0.019 | 0.016 | 0.014 | 0.011 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.006 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.031 | 0.020 | 0.016 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.008 | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.005 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 10: OLS Model Results: U.S. Protégés vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Protégés | 0.024 | −0.090 | −0.194$^{+}$ | −0.161$^{+}$ | −0.125 | −0.081 | −0.077 | −0.104 | −0.069 | −0.044 | 0.004 | 0.006 |
| | (0.122) | (0.130) | (0.111) | (0.097) | (0.092) | (0.085) | (0.077) | (0.073) | (0.070) | (0.066) | (0.064) | (0.060) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.162$^{**}$ | 0.214$^{**}$ | 0.145$^{*}$ | 0.082$^{+}$ | 0.072 | 0.077$^{+}$ | 0.073$^{+}$ | 0.057 | 0.034 | 0.014 | 0.008 | −0.002 |
| | (0.062) | (0.066) | (0.057) | (0.050) | (0.047) | (0.044) | (0.039) | (0.037) | (0.036) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.030) |
| U.S. Protégés × | 0.014 | 0.173 | 0.195 | 0.169 | 0.113 | 0.092 | 0.077 | 0.108 | 0.065 | 0.033 | −0.004 | 0.007 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.163) | (0.173) | (0.148) | (0.130) | (0.123) | (0.114) | (0.103) | (0.098) | (0.094) | (0.088) | (0.086) | (0.080) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.021$^{+}$ | 0.034$^{*}$ | 0.026$^{*}$ | 0.029$^{**}$ | 0.021$^{*}$ | 0.025$^{**}$ | 0.021$^{**}$ | 0.025$^{***}$ | 0.027$^{***}$ | 0.024$^{***}$ | 0.021$^{**}$ | 0.019$^{**}$ |
| | (0.012) | (0.013) | (0.011) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.004 | 0.005 | −0.0002 | −0.006 | −0.006 | −0.006$^{+}$ | −0.007$^{*}$ | −0.006$^{+}$ | −0.006$^{+}$ | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 |
| | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | 0.0003 | −0.0001 | 0.002 | −0.0005 | −0.001 | −0.003 | −0.005 | −0.005$^{+}$ | −0.006$^{*}$ | −0.004$^{+}$ | −0.005$^{*}$ | −0.005$^{*}$ |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.014$^{**}$ | −0.013$^{*}$ | −0.015$^{**}$ | −0.010$^{*}$ | −0.011$^{**}$ | −0.012$^{**}$ | −0.009$^{**}$ | −0.010$^{**}$ | −0.008$^{**}$ | −0.009$^{**}$ | −0.009$^{**}$ | −0.008$^{**}$ |
| | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Constant | −0.204$^{*}$ | −0.260$^{**}$ | −0.126 | 0.007 | 0.078 | 0.051 | 0.088 | 0.057 | 0.073 | 0.069 | 0.053 | 0.065 |
| | (0.095) | (0.101) | (0.086) | (0.075) | (0.071) | (0.066) | (0.060) | (0.057) | (0.055) | (0.051) | (0.050) | (0.046) |
| Observations | 480 | 960 | 1,440 | 1,920 | 2,400 | 2,880 | 3,360 | 3,840 | 4,320 | 4,800 | 5,280 | 5,760 |
| $R^2$ | 0.038 | 0.029 | 0.019 | 0.012 | 0.008 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.008 | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.004 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.022 | 0.014 | 0.008 | 0.005 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.004 | 0.003 |

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.01

## II-D. Heckman Models

In the paper, we discuss alternative approaches to handling directed-dyad days in which no interaction within the dyad occurs. Our main models in the paper are simple OLS models with a restricted sample of directed-dyads that experienced at least one event in the previous month. This appendix reports results from Heckman correction models with the full sample of directed-dyads. In the first stage, we model the probability of experiencing any event between a directed-dyad in a probit model. In the second stage, we model the intensity of the event using OLS (second stage).

Table 11: Heckman Model Results: U.S. Target vs Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| **Probit Selection Outcome** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| U.S. Target | 1.726*** | 1.376*** | 1.336*** | 1.271*** | 1.239*** | 1.201*** | 1.212*** | 1.143*** | 1.142*** | 1.074*** | 1.035*** | 1.016*** |
| | (0.243) | (0.169) | (0.137) | (0.120) | (0.108) | (0.097) | (0.090) | (0.085) | (0.079) | (0.076) | (0.073) | (0.071) |
| Post-Jan 6 | −0.031 | −0.009 | −0.174* | −0.192** | −0.118* | −0.096* | −0.064 | −0.083* | −0.053 | −0.061+ | −0.042 | −0.038 |
| | (0.144) | (0.088) | (0.074) | (0.065) | (0.055) | (0.049) | (0.045) | (0.042) | (0.039) | (0.037) | (0.035) | (0.034) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.259 | 0.112 | −0.006 | 0.013 | 0.038 | 0.055 | 0.030 | 0.081 | 0.043 | 0.122 | 0.178+ | 0.185+ |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.329) | (0.226) | (0.190) | (0.167) | (0.148) | (0.133) | (0.123) | (0.115) | (0.109) | (0.103) | (0.099) | (0.095) |
| Contiguity Type | −0.047 | −0.069*** | −0.073*** | −0.080*** | −0.091*** | −0.080*** | −0.078*** | −0.074*** | −0.072*** | −0.066*** | −0.064*** | −0.063*** |
| | (0.031) | (0.020) | (0.016) | (0.014) | (0.012) | (0.011) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.020+ | 0.016* | 0.020** | 0.014** | 0.015** | 0.017*** | 0.019*** | 0.021*** | 0.022*** | 0.023*** | 0.024*** | 0.025*** |
| | (0.011) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | −0.008 | −0.005 | −0.001 | −0.001 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.001 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.003 |
| | (0.010) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.037** | −0.019* | −0.013* | −0.008 | −0.011* | −0.009* | −0.007+ | −0.009* | −0.008* | −0.009** | −0.008* | −0.008** |
| | (0.013) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Constant | −2.126*** | −1.768*** | −1.750*** | −1.632*** | −1.588*** | −1.615*** | −1.643*** | −1.683*** | −1.709*** | −1.739*** | −1.763*** | −1.797*** |
| | (0.214) | (0.144) | (0.115) | (0.097) | (0.085) | (0.076) | (0.070) | (0.066) | (0.062) | (0.060) | (0.057) | (0.055) |
| **OLS Outcome** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| U.S. Target | 0.322 | −0.648 | −1.010 | −0.478 | −1.277+ | −1.208+ | −1.080+ | −1.082+ | −0.901+ | −1.243* | −1.326** | −1.377** |
| | (1.890) | (1.278) | (1.042) | (0.843) | (0.707) | (0.645) | (0.596) | (0.578) | (0.529) | (0.504) | (0.492) | (0.480) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 2.298** | 1.854*** | 1.725*** | 0.929* | 0.361 | 0.323 | 0.207 | 0.184 | −0.033 | −0.170 | −0.271 | −0.397+ |
| | (0.731) | (0.511) | (0.480) | (0.441) | (0.358) | (0.313) | (0.279) | (0.272) | (0.250) | (0.236) | (0.227) | (0.223) |
| US Target × | −3.191** | −2.223* | −1.746* | −0.780 | 0.238 | 0.318 | 0.437 | 0.547 | 0.644 | 0.807+ | 0.703 | 0.814+ |
| Post-Jan 6 | (1.172) | (0.906) | (0.824) | (0.795) | (0.691) | (0.613) | (0.547) | (0.537) | (0.499) | (0.472) | (0.461) | (0.453) |
| Constant | −0.063 | 0.310 | 0.365 | −1.620 | −0.654 | −0.353 | −0.191 | −0.081 | −0.363 | 0.412 | 0.782 | 0.758 |
| | (3.028) | (2.361) | (1.894) | (1.486) | (1.235) | (1.141) | (1.051) | (1.048) | (0.933) | (0.926) | (0.921) | (0.909) |
| Observations | 1,580 | 3,160 | 4,740 | 6,320 | 7,900 | 9,480 | 11,060 | 12,640 | 14,220 | 15,800 | 17,380 | 18,960 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 11 show results from these Heckman models with twelve different time windows. It demonstrates that January 6th riots did not make U.S. rivals significantly more or less likely to take actions towards the United States relative to other states (the interaction term is insignificant in the selection part of the models), but they did cause the actions taken by U.S. rivals against the United States to become more negative––that is, more conflictual or hostile––in the the 5-day, 10-day, and 15-day windows relative to their actions towards others. This pattern is very similar to the OLS models reported in the main text. Figure 6 illustrates these findings graphically.

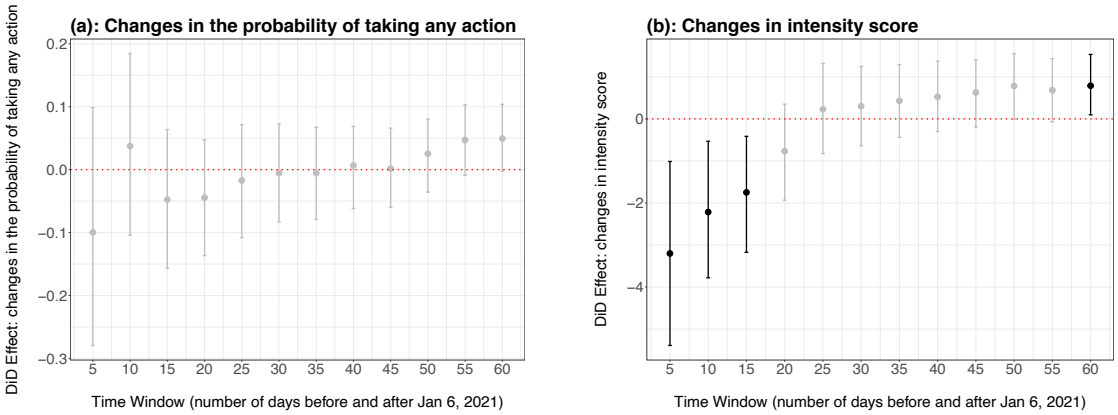


Figure 6: Difference-in-Difference Effect using Heckman Correction Models

## II-E. Robustness Checks

We conduct a series of robustness checks with different model specifications, alternative dependent variables, and different ways to construct the comparison groups. The robustness checks are as follows:

- First, we consider different standard errors. Table 12 reports OLS models that treat "U.S. Rivals–U.S." directed dyads as the treatment group and "U.S. Rivals–Other States" directed dyads as the control group, with standard errors clustered by directed-dyad.
- Second, we replicate the analysis with a two-period DiD design. Table 13 reports OLS models that treat "U.S. Rivals–U.S." directed dyads as the treatment group and "U.S. Rivals–Other States" directed dyads as the control group, but with daily observations aggregated into two periods (pre vs. post January 6th).
- Third, we consider an alternative way to measure the dependent variable. In our main analysis, the dependent variable is the daily average of intensity scores, which includes both hostile and non-hostile interactions. Table 14 reports OLS models that treat "U.S. Rivals–U.S." directed dyads as the treatment group and "U.S. Rivals–other States" directed dyads as the control group, but with the dependent variable as the daily average of intensity scores of only *hostile* interactions.
- Fourth, we consider an alternative coding of U.S. protégés. Table 15 reports OLS models that treat "U.S. Rivals–Non-U.S. Democratic Rivals" as the treatment group and "U.S. Rivals–other States" as the control group. Specifically, we first drop the U.S. from our sample, and then code a directed-dyad as a 1 (indicating "treated") if the target state is the U.S. rival's own democratic rival, and 0 otherwise. The results are similar to those reported in Table 10, further suggesting that the short-lived increase in hostility from U.S. rivals was targeted towards the U.S. rather than U.S. protégés.
- Fifth, we address concerns that our finding might be driven by the unique sample we use, which relies on Peace Data's identification of dyads with meaningful interactions. We run an additional robustness check of our initial model on a different sample. The different sample uses the set of "politically relevant dyads" as commonly defined in the international relations literature. This sample includes the same eight U.S. rivals on the initiator side and major powers and their land contiguous neighbours on the target side. Results from these models are reported in Table 16, which are similar to those in the main text.
- Sixth, we consider an alternative design of the comparison groups in the DiD framework. Table 17 reports OLS models that treat "U.S. Rivals–U.S." as the treatment group and "Non-Rivals–U.S." as the control group. Results from these models are similar to those we reported in our main tests. U.S. rivals were indeed slightly more hostile towards the U.S. shortly after Jan 6, not only when compared to their behaviors toward other countries but also compared to other countries' behaviors toward the U.S.
- Seventh, another concern is that the short-term hostility we observe after January 6th in the main analyses is not unique to U.S. rivals. If, for example, we find that U.S. allies also used

more critical rhetoric after January 6th, this would suggest that a broader set of countries mocked and criticized the U.S. To address this concern, we replicate our core analyses using a group of U.S. allies rather than U.S. rivals. We proxy U.S. allies as NATO member countries. In the analyses, the "treated" dyads are "NATO Members – U.S." and the comparison dyads are "NATO Members – Other Countries." Results from these models are reported in Table 18, which show no evidence for an increase in short-term hostility. This suggests that the criticism and mocking that we observe in the main analysis was specific to U.S. rival governments.

Table 12: OLS Models with SEs Clustered on Directed-Dyads: U.S. Target vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | 0.114 | −0.167 | −0.301* | −0.369** | −0.416*** | −0.347*** | −0.286*** | −0.265** | −0.249** | −0.245** | −0.204** | −0.207** |
| | (0.191) | (0.152) | (0.128) | (0.114) | (0.099) | (0.089) | (0.084) | (0.086) | (0.084) | (0.077) | (0.073) | (0.074) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.164** | 0.239*** | 0.173*** | 0.107* | 0.088* | 0.091* | 0.084* | 0.073* | 0.044 | 0.019 | 0.008 | −0.001 |
| | (0.058) | (0.061) | (0.052) | (0.046) | (0.043) | (0.040) | (0.036) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.028) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.622+ | −0.523* | −0.194 | −0.010 | 0.110 | 0.105 | 0.137 | 0.166 | 0.159 | 0.190+ | 0.129 | 0.124 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.337) | (0.245) | (0.183) | (0.153) | (0.141) | (0.128) | (0.124) | (0.119) | (0.114) | (0.106) | (0.101) | (0.101) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.015 | 0.027+ | 0.023+ | 0.027** | 0.020* | 0.023* | 0.019* | 0.024** | 0.026*** | 0.024*** | 0.021** | 0.019** |
| | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.012) | (0.011) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.007* | 0.009 | 0.004 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.001 | 0.0002 | 0.00001 |
| | (0.003) | (0.007) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | −0.0001 | −0.001 | −0.0003 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.005* | −0.006** | −0.006** | −0.007** | −0.005** | −0.006** | −0.005** |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.009 | −0.006 | −0.010* | −0.006 | −0.007+ | −0.008* | −0.006+ | −0.007* | −0.006* | −0.007** | −0.007** | −0.007** |
| | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Constant | −0.217* | −0.289* | −0.178+ | −0.028 | 0.030 | 0.017 | 0.054 | 0.012 | 0.034 | 0.027 | 0.018 | 0.028 |
| | (0.091) | (0.126) | (0.105) | (0.084) | (0.073) | (0.067) | (0.061) | (0.057) | (0.053) | (0.051) | (0.049) | (0.046) |
| Observations | 540 | 1,080 | 1,620 | 2,160 | 2,700 | 3,240 | 3,780 | 4,320 | 4,860 | 5,400 | 5,940 | 6,480 |
| $R^2$ | 0.036 | 0.037 | 0.024 | 0.019 | 0.016 | 0.014 | 0.011 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.006 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.031 | 0.020 | 0.016 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.008 | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.005 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.01

Table 13: OLS Models with Two-Period DiD Design: U.S. Target vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | 0.114 | −0.167 | −0.301$^{+}$ | −0.369$^{*}$ | −0.416$^{*}$ | −0.347$^{*}$ | −0.286$^{+}$ | −0.265$^{+}$ | −0.249 | −0.245 | −0.204 | −0.207 |
| | (0.174) | (0.226) | (0.181) | (0.149) | (0.160) | (0.162) | (0.149) | (0.150) | (0.155) | (0.152) | (0.155) | (0.146) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.164$^{*}$ | 0.239$^{*}$ | 0.173$^{*}$ | 0.107 | 0.088 | 0.091 | 0.084 | 0.073 | 0.044 | 0.019 | 0.008 | −0.001 |
| | (0.080) | (0.104) | (0.083) | (0.068) | (0.074) | (0.074) | (0.068) | (0.069) | (0.071) | (0.070) | (0.071) | (0.067) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.622$^{*}$ | −0.523$^{+}$ | −0.194 | −0.010 | 0.110 | 0.105 | 0.137 | 0.166 | 0.159 | 0.190 | 0.129 | 0.124 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.240) | (0.312) | (0.250) | (0.205) | (0.221) | (0.223) | (0.205) | (0.207) | (0.213) | (0.209) | (0.213) | (0.202) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.015 | 0.027 | 0.023 | 0.027$^{+}$ | 0.020 | 0.023 | 0.019 | 0.024 | 0.026$^{+}$ | 0.024 | 0.021 | 0.019 |
| | (0.017) | (0.022) | (0.017) | (0.014) | (0.015) | (0.016) | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.014) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.007 | 0.009 | 0.004 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.001 | 0.0002 | 0.00001 |
| | (0.007) | (0.009) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Target Polity | −0.0001 | −0.001 | −0.0003 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.005 | −0.006 | −0.006 | −0.007 | −0.005 | −0.006 | −0.005 |
| | (0.006) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.009 | −0.006 | −0.010 | −0.006 | −0.007 | −0.008 | −0.006 | −0.007 | −0.006 | −0.007 | −0.007 | −0.007 |
| | (0.007) | (0.009) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Constant | −0.217$^{+}$ | −0.289$^{+}$ | −0.178 | −0.028 | 0.030 | 0.017 | 0.054 | 0.012 | 0.034 | 0.027 | 0.018 | 0.028 |
| | (0.126) | (0.163) | (0.131) | (0.107) | (0.115) | (0.117) | (0.107) | (0.108) | (0.111) | (0.109) | (0.112) | (0.106) |
| Observations | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 |
| $R^2$ | 0.121 | 0.135 | 0.141 | 0.160 | 0.135 | 0.118 | 0.111 | 0.106 | 0.090 | 0.076 | 0.063 | 0.064 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.059 | 0.074 | 0.081 | 0.102 | 0.074 | 0.057 | 0.049 | 0.043 | 0.026 | 0.011 | -0.003 | -0.001 |

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.01

Table 14: OLS Models with Intensity Scores of Only Hostile Interactions as DV: U.S. Target vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | −0.513$^{***}$ | −0.445$^{***}$ | −0.539$^{***}$ | −0.578$^{***}$ | −0.602$^{***}$ | −0.544$^{***}$ | −0.505$^{***}$ | −0.459$^{***}$ | −0.455$^{***}$ | −0.401$^{***}$ | −0.360$^{***}$ | −0.358$^{***}$ |
| | (0.143) | (0.132) | (0.103) | (0.089) | (0.077) | (0.073) | (0.064) | (0.063) | (0.060) | (0.057) | (0.055) | (0.051) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.033 | 0.107$^{+}$ | 0.121$^{*}$ | 0.062 | 0.038 | 0.051 | 0.050$^{+}$ | 0.058$^{*}$ | 0.035 | 0.037 | 0.031 | 0.025 |
| | (0.066) | (0.061) | (0.048) | (0.041) | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.028) | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.023) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.320 | −0.371$^{*}$ | −0.057 | 0.084 | 0.145 | 0.070 | 0.021 | −0.002 | 0.042 | 0.005 | −0.037 | −0.047 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.197) | (0.182) | (0.143) | (0.122) | (0.106) | (0.101) | (0.089) | (0.086) | (0.083) | (0.078) | (0.075) | (0.070) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.007 | 0.015 | 0.020$^{*}$ | 0.025$^{**}$ | 0.025$^{***}$ | 0.024$^{***}$ | 0.021$^{***}$ | 0.026$^{***}$ | 0.031$^{***}$ | 0.027$^{***}$ | 0.024$^{***}$ | 0.023$^{***}$ |
| | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Bilateral Trade | −0.002 | 0.011$^{*}$ | 0.006 | 0.001 | 0.0003 | 0.0001 | −0.001 | −0.002 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.002 |
| | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Target Polity | −0.001 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.004 | −0.004 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.004$^{*}$ | −0.005$^{*}$ | −0.005$^{*}$ | −0.005$^{**}$ | −0.005$^{**}$ |
| | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Initiator Polity | 0.003 | −0.002 | −0.005 | −0.004 | −0.004 | −0.005$^{+}$ | −0.004 | −0.005$^{+}$ | −0.004$^{+}$ | −0.004$^{+}$ | −0.005$^{*}$ | −0.004$^{*}$ |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Constant | −0.028 | −0.346$^{***}$ | −0.296$^{***}$ | −0.213$^{***}$ | −0.187$^{***}$ | −0.200$^{***}$ | −0.171$^{***}$ | −0.184$^{***}$ | −0.169$^{***}$ | −0.173$^{***}$ | −0.179$^{***}$ | −0.162$^{***}$ |
| | (0.103) | (0.095) | (0.075) | (0.064) | (0.055) | (0.053) | (0.046) | (0.045) | (0.043) | (0.041) | (0.039) | (0.037) |
| Observations | 540 | 1,080 | 1,620 | 2,160 | 2,700 | 3,240 | 3,780 | 4,320 | 4,860 | 5,400 | 5,940 | 6,480 |
| $R^2$ | 0.085 | 0.051 | 0.045 | 0.039 | 0.040 | 0.035 | 0.035 | 0.031 | 0.028 | 0.024 | 0.022 | 0.022 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.073 | 0.045 | 0.041 | 0.036 | 0.037 | 0.033 | 0.033 | 0.029 | 0.027 | 0.023 | 0.020 | 0.021 |

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.01

Table 15: OLS Models: Democratic Rival Target vs. Other Target

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| Democratic Rivals | 0.085 | −0.004 | −0.148 | −0.138 | −0.125 | −0.078 | −0.079 | −0.155* | −0.131* | −0.114+ | −0.101+ | −0.095+ |
| | (0.111) | (0.118) | (0.101) | (0.089) | (0.084) | (0.078) | (0.070) | (0.067) | (0.064) | (0.060) | (0.058) | (0.054) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.170** | 0.232*** | 0.150** | 0.083 | 0.072 | 0.093* | 0.086* | 0.057 | 0.034 | 0.012 | −0.002 | −0.013 |
| | (0.064) | (0.068) | (0.058) | (0.051) | (0.048) | (0.045) | (0.040) | (0.038) | (0.037) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.031) |
| Democratic Rivals × | −0.034 | 0.035 | 0.125 | 0.126 | 0.087 | −0.011 | −0.013 | 0.082 | 0.054 | 0.038 | 0.052 | 0.061 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.147) | (0.157) | (0.134) | (0.117) | (0.111) | (0.103) | (0.093) | (0.088) | (0.085) | (0.080) | (0.077) | (0.072) |
| Contiguity Type | 0.023+ | 0.034* | 0.024* | 0.027** | 0.019+ | 0.023** | 0.019* | 0.022** | 0.024** | 0.021** | 0.019** | 0.016** |
| | (0.013) | (0.014) | (0.012) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.004 | 0.005 | −0.0002 | −0.006 | −0.006 | −0.007+ | −0.007* | −0.007* | −0.007* | −0.005+ | −0.004 | −0.004 |
| | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | −0.001 | −0.001 | 0.003 | −0.0002 | −0.0005 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.003 |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.014** | −0.013* | −0.014** | −0.009* | −0.010* | −0.011** | −0.008** | −0.009** | −0.008** | −0.009** | −0.009** | −0.008** |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) |
| Constant | −0.227* | −0.276** | −0.118 | 0.017 | 0.093 | 0.067 | 0.104+ | 0.088 | 0.104+ | 0.100+ | 0.087+ | 0.096* |
| | (0.098) | (0.104) | (0.089) | (0.078) | (0.074) | (0.069) | (0.062) | (0.059) | (0.056) | (0.053) | (0.051) | (0.048) |
| Observations | 480 | 960 | 1,440 | 1,920 | 2,400 | 2,880 | 3,360 | 3,840 | 4,320 | 4,800 | 5,280 | 5,760 |
| $R^2$ | 0.039 | 0.028 | 0.018 | 0.011 | 0.008 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.005 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.025 | 0.021 | 0.013 | 0.008 | 0.005 | 0.008 | 0.007 | 0.008 | 0.007 | 0.005 | 0.004 | 0.004 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.01

Table 16: OLS Model Results: U.S. Target vs. Other Target (Politically Relevant Dyad)

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | 0.252 | −0.021 | −0.177 | −0.241* | −0.287** | −0.232* | −0.198* | −0.188* | −0.193* | −0.200** | −0.172* | −0.173* |
| | (0.175) | (0.157) | (0.132) | (0.113) | (0.109) | (0.101) | (0.091) | (0.086) | (0.083) | (0.078) | (0.074) | (0.070) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.169+ | 0.248** | 0.167* | 0.126* | 0.084 | 0.062 | 0.040 | 0.020 | −0.027 | −0.063 | −0.062 | −0.064+ |
| | (0.096) | (0.086) | (0.072) | (0.062) | (0.059) | (0.055) | (0.050) | (0.047) | (0.045) | (0.042) | (0.041) | (0.038) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.627** | −0.533* | −0.188 | −0.029 | 0.114 | 0.134 | 0.181 | 0.219+ | 0.229* | 0.272** | 0.199* | 0.186+ |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.238) | (0.214) | (0.179) | (0.154) | (0.148) | (0.137) | (0.124) | (0.117) | (0.112) | (0.105) | (0.101) | (0.095) |
| Contiguity Type | −0.011 | 0.015 | 0.007 | 0.013 | 0.007 | 0.012 | 0.010 | 0.012 | 0.019+ | 0.016 | 0.018+ | 0.016+ |
| | (0.023) | (0.021) | (0.017) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.011) | (0.011) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.009) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.0005 | −0.005 | −0.006 | −0.005 | −0.005 | −0.001 | −0.001 | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.003 |
| | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Target Polity | −0.005 | −0.013+ | −0.009 | −0.011* | −0.015** | −0.017*** | −0.017*** | −0.016*** | −0.017*** | −0.014*** | −0.015*** | −0.013*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.003 | 0.003 | −0.005 | −0.002 | −0.004 | −0.006 | −0.006 | −0.010* | −0.009* | −0.011** | −0.010** | −0.010** |
| | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) |
| Constant | −0.126 | −0.176 | −0.095 | 0.011 | 0.109 | 0.079 | 0.112 | 0.033 | 0.054 | 0.040 | 0.030 | 0.022 |
| | (0.157) | (0.141) | (0.118) | (0.102) | (0.097) | (0.090) | (0.082) | (0.077) | (0.074) | (0.070) | (0.067) | (0.063) |
| Observations | 370 | 740 | 1,110 | 1,480 | 1,850 | 2,220 | 2,590 | 2,960 | 3,330 | 3,700 | 4,070 | 4,440 |
| $R^2$ | 0.026 | 0.031 | 0.018 | 0.016 | 0.018 | 0.016 | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.010 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.007 | 0.021 | 0.011 | 0.012 | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.010 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.009 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 17: OLS Models: U.S. Rivals–U.S. vs. Non-Rivals–U.S

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Rival Initiator | 0.119 | −0.124 | −0.211* | −0.253*** | −0.280*** | −0.242*** | −0.202** | −0.174** | −0.133* | −0.104+ | −0.072 | −0.097+ |
| | (0.150) | (0.112) | (0.091) | (0.076) | (0.072) | (0.067) | (0.066) | (0.063) | (0.061) | (0.060) | (0.059) | (0.058) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.061 | 0.062 | 0.047 | 0.055 | 0.077* | 0.072* | 0.091** | 0.094** | 0.108*** | 0.124*** | 0.113*** | 0.085** |
| | (0.078) | (0.058) | (0.048) | (0.040) | (0.038) | (0.035) | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.031) | (0.030) |
| U.S. Rival Initiator × | −0.519** | −0.347* | −0.068 | 0.042 | 0.121 | 0.124 | 0.129 | 0.145+ | 0.094 | 0.085 | 0.024 | 0.037 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.189) | (0.141) | (0.115) | (0.096) | (0.091) | (0.084) | (0.083) | (0.079) | (0.077) | (0.076) | (0.075) | (0.073) |
| Contiguity Type | −0.036 | −0.007 | 0.018 | 0.022 | 0.014 | 0.011 | 0.019 | 0.028+ | 0.033* | 0.043** | 0.034* | 0.033* |
| | (0.036) | (0.027) | (0.022) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.016) | (0.016) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Bilateral Trade | 0.020 | 0.029** | 0.025** | 0.018* | 0.027*** | 0.028*** | 0.028*** | 0.031*** | 0.032*** | 0.036*** | 0.035*** | 0.036*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.010) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Initiator Polity | −0.001 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.002 | 0.002 | −0.0002 | −0.0003 | −0.0002 | −0.001 | 0.0005 | −0.001 |
| | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Constant | −0.269 | −0.623* | −0.686** | −0.533* | −0.689*** | −0.669*** | −0.716*** | −0.836*** | −0.879*** | −1.011*** | −0.946*** | −0.927*** |
| | (0.417) | (0.311) | (0.253) | (0.212) | (0.201) | (0.186) | (0.183) | (0.174) | (0.170) | (0.167) | (0.165) | (0.160) |
| Observations | 350 | 700 | 1,050 | 1,400 | 1,750 | 2,100 | 2,450 | 2,800 | 3,150 | 3,500 | 3,850 | 4,200 |
| $R^2$ | 0.040 | 0.058 | 0.045 | 0.040 | 0.040 | 0.033 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.024 | 0.025 | 0.021 | 0.019 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.050 | 0.039 | 0.036 | 0.036 | 0.030 | 0.023 | 0.024 | 0.022 | 0.023 | 0.019 | 0.018 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.01

Table 18: OLS Models: NATO Members–U.S. vs. NATO Members–Others

| | 5-Day | 10-Day | 15-Day | 20-Day | 25-Day | 30-Day | 35-Day | 40-Day | 45-Day | 50-Day | 55-Day | 60-Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| U.S. Target | 0.061 | 0.028 | 0.032 | 0.027 | 0.018 | 0.007 | 0.015 | 0.012 | 0.009 | 0.002 | 0.027 | 0.028 |
| | (0.107) | (0.073) | (0.057) | (0.050) | (0.043) | (0.039) | (0.035) | (0.033) | (0.031) | (0.029) | (0.029) | (0.027) |
| Post-Jan 6 | 0.109* | 0.068* | 0.063** | 0.052* | 0.051** | 0.047** | 0.035* | 0.026+ | 0.029* | 0.030* | 0.033** | 0.026* |
| | (0.045) | (0.031) | (0.024) | (0.021) | (0.018) | (0.016) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| U.S. Target × | −0.162 | −0.005 | 0.037 | 0.023 | 0.047 | 0.043 | 0.052 | 0.050 | 0.086* | 0.079* | 0.056 | 0.049 |
| Post-Jan 6 | (0.143) | (0.098) | (0.077) | (0.067) | (0.057) | (0.052) | (0.047) | (0.044) | (0.041) | (0.039) | (0.038) | (0.036) |
| Contiguity Type | −0.011 | −0.011 | −0.010+ | −0.009+ | −0.008+ | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.004 | −0.003 | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.002 |
| | (0.011) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Bilateral Trade | −0.002 | 0.001 | 0.001 | −0.0002 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.005 | 0.005 | 0.004 | 0.005 |
| | (0.012) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Target Polity | 0.012* | 0.012*** | 0.010*** | 0.014*** | 0.009*** | 0.008*** | 0.008*** | 0.007*** | 0.005*** | 0.004** | 0.004** | 0.004** |
| | (0.005) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Initiator Polity | 0.004 | 0.008+ | 0.008* | 0.012*** | 0.009*** | 0.008*** | 0.008*** | 0.008*** | 0.006*** | 0.005** | 0.006*** | 0.006*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Constant | −0.090 | −0.142 | −0.135 | −0.187* | −0.143+ | −0.153* | −0.171** | −0.150** | −0.146** | −0.133** | −0.148** | −0.140** |
| | (0.185) | (0.127) | (0.099) | (0.087) | (0.074) | (0.066) | (0.061) | (0.057) | (0.053) | (0.050) | (0.049) | (0.047) |
| Observations | 800 | 1,600 | 2,400 | 3,200 | 4,000 | 4,800 | 5,600 | 6,400 | 7,200 | 8,000 | 8,800 | 9,600 |
| $R^2$ | 0.016 | 0.015 | 0.014 | 0.021 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.009 | 0.008 | 0.006 | 0.007 | 0.006 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.007 | 0.010 | 0.011 | 0.019 | 0.011 | 0.010 | 0.010 | 0.008 | 0.007 | 0.005 | 0.006 | 0.005 |

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.01

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