

Appendix

Appendix A. Additional results and robustness checks

Appendix B. Experiment materials

Appendix A. Additional results and robustness checks

Table A1. Sample composition

Fieldwork	December 6, 2019
Initial N	1,106
Failed attention check (%)	25 (2.3)
Final valid N	1,081
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Female, %	50.8
Age in years, average (SD)	39.7 (12.4)
English first language, %	97.2
Race, %	
- Hispanic/Latino	6.2
- White/Caucasian	75.7
- Black/African American	13.5
- Native American	1.7
- Asian origin	7.2
Education, selected categories, %	
- High school	7.7
- Some college but no degree	19.1
- Bachelor's degree	42.3
- Master's degree	16.0
Respondent Big Five, average on 1-7 scale (SD)	
- Extraversion	3.6 (1.7)
- Agreeableness	5.3 (1.3)
- Conscientiousness	5.5 (1.4)
- Emotional Stability	4.9 (1.5)
- Openness	4.9 (1.3)
Respondent Dark Triad, average on 1-7 scale (SD)	
- Narcissism	3.4 (1.6)
- Psychopathy	2.9 (1.6)
- Machiavellianism	2.9 (1.7)
Interest in politics, %	
- Not at all	2.0
- Not very	10.6
- Somewhat	41.8
- Very	45.6
Party ID, %	
- Strong D	29.5
- Leaning D	25.6
- Neither/Independent	10.6
- Leaning R	18.0
- Strong R	16.3
Left-right, average on 0-10 scale (SD)	4.6 (3.1)

Note. Percentages on all profile variables computed only for respondents having passed the attention check

Table A2. Affective polarization and exposure to campaign messages; direct effects (alternative measure of affective polarization: dislike for out-party)

	M1			M2			M3		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Negative ^a	2.49	(2.21)							
Negative Uncivil ^a				3.23	(2.47)				
Negative Uncivil Populist ^a							5.26	(2.86)	†
Constant	72.36	(2.00)	***	72.36	(2.02)	***	72.36	(2.03)	***
N	967			528			354		
R2	0.00			0.00			0.01		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization (alternative measure, based on the reversed feeling thermometer for the out-party, 0-100).

^a The reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A3. Affective polarization and exposure to campaign messages; moderation with populist attitudes (alternative measure of affective polarization: dislike for out-party)

	M1			M2			M3			M4		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Populist attitudes (POP)	1.18	(0.75)		-1.53	(1.81)		-1.56	(1.79)		-1.63	(1.87)	
Republican ^a	-2.97	(0.48)	***	-2.94	(0.48)	***	-2.99	(0.65)	***	-2.97	(0.84)	***
Female	-2.18	(1.50)		-2.05	(1.50)		-0.86	(2.02)		-1.02	(2.59)	
Age	0.15	(0.06)	*	0.14	(0.06)	*	0.07	(0.09)		0.10	(0.11)	
Education	-0.44	(0.43)		-0.44	(0.43)		0.07	(0.58)		-0.14	(0.75)	
Dark core ^b	-8.20	(0.57)	***	-8.21	(0.57)	***	-8.78	(0.76)	***	-7.91	(0.96)	***
Negative ^c				-15.60	(10.73)							
Negative Uncivil ^c							-16.95	(11.55)				
Negative Uncivil Populist ^c										-8.11	(13.82)	
POP * Negative				3.26	(1.98)							
POP * Negative Uncivil							3.70	(2.13)	†			
POP * Negative Uncivil Populist										2.41	(2.53)	
Constant	102.09	(7.21)	***	115.11	(11.49)	***	113.05	(12.72)	***	112.18	(14.76)	***
N	966			966			527			353		
R2	0.28			0.28			0.31			0.28		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization (alternative measure, based on the reversed feeling thermometer for the out-party, 0-100).

^a 5-point scale from 1 “Strong Democrat” to 5 “Strong Republican.”

^b Average score of respondent’s narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, from 1 “very low” to 7 “very high.”

^c The reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A4. Affective polarization and exposure to campaign messages; direct effects (all respondents, including failed attention checks)

	M1			M2			M3		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Negative ^a	0.02	(0.07)							
Negative Uncivil ^a				0.07	(0.08)				
Negative Uncivil Populist ^a							0.19	(0.10)	†
Constant	4.90	(0.07)	***	4.90	(0.07)	***	4.90	(0.07)	***
N	988			540			361		
R2	0.00			0.00			0.01		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of positive in-party stereotypes and negative out-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a The reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A5. Affective polarization and exposure to campaign messages; moderation with populist attitudes (all respondents, including failed attention checks)

	M1			M2			M3			M4		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Populist attitudes (POP)	0.13	(0.03)	***	-0.00	(0.06)		-0.00	(0.06)		0.00	(0.06)	
Republican ^a	-0.08	(0.02)	***	-0.08	(0.02)	***	-0.08	(0.02)	***	-0.10	(0.03)	***
Female	-0.03	(0.05)		-0.03	(0.05)		0.01	(0.07)		-0.02	(0.09)	
Age	0.00	(0.00)	†	0.00	(0.00)		0.00	(0.00)		0.01	(0.00)	†
Education	-0.00	(0.01)		-0.00	(0.01)		-0.01	(0.02)		-0.02	(0.03)	
Dark core ^b	-0.23	(0.02)	***	-0.23	(0.02)	***	-0.23	(0.03)	***	-0.22	(0.03)	***
Negative ^c				-0.84	(0.37)	*						
Negative Uncivil ^c							-0.76	(0.41)	†			
Negative Uncivil Populist ^c										-0.50	(0.47)	
POP * Negative				0.16	(0.07)	*						
POP * Negative Uncivil							0.15	(0.08)	*			
POP * Negative Uncivil Populist										0.12	(0.09)	
Constant	5.07	(0.25)	***	5.77	(0.39)	***	5.79	(0.45)	***	5.89	(0.50)	***
N	987			987			539			360		
R2	0.21			0.22			0.23			0.24		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of negative out-party stereotypes and positive in-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a 5-point scale from 1 “Strong Democrat” to 5 “Strong Republican.”

^b Average score of respondent’s narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, from 1 “very low” to 7 “very high.”

^c The reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A6. Exposure to campaign messages and affective polarization; moderation with populist attitudes and partisan identification

	M1			M2			M3		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Populist attitudes (POP)	-0.00	(0.06)		-0.00	(0.06)		0.00	(0.06)	
Republican (REP) ^a	-0.14	(0.04)	***	-0.14	(0.04)	**	-0.14	(0.04)	***
Female	-0.04	(0.05)		-0.00	(0.07)		-0.04	(0.09)	
Age	0.00	(0.00)		0.00	(0.00)		0.01	(0.00)	
Education	0.00	(0.01)		-0.01	(0.02)		-0.02	(0.03)	
Dark core ^b	-0.24	(0.02)	***	-0.24	(0.03)	***	-0.23	(0.03)	***
Negative ^c	-1.00	(0.38)	**						
Negative Uncivil ^c				-0.94	(0.42)	*			
Negative Uncivil Populist ^c							-0.67	(0.48)	
POP * Negative	0.15	(0.07)	*						
REP * Negative	0.07	(0.04)	†						
POP * Negative Uncivil				0.15	(0.08)	†			
REP * Negative Uncivil				0.08	(0.05)	†			
POP * Negative Uncivil Populist							0.13	(0.09)	
REP * Negative Uncivil Populist							0.06	(0.06)	
Constant	5.91	(0.40)	***	5.94	(0.45)	***	6.00	(0.51)	***
N	966			527			353		
R2	0.22			0.24			0.26		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of positive in-party stereotypes and negative out-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a 5-point scale from 1 “Strong Democrat” to 5 “Strong Republican.”

^b Average score of respondent’s narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, from 1 “very low” to 7 “very high.”

^c Reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A7. Exposure to campaign messages and affective polarization; direct effects
(alternative reference category for campaign messages)

	M1			M2		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative Uncivil) ^a	0.23	(0.10)	*			
Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative) ^b				0.22	(0.09)	*
Constant	4.87	(0.07)	***	4.88	(0.06)	***
N	353			441		
R2	0.02			0.01		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of positive in-party stereotypes and negative out-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a The reference category is “Negative Uncivil” (no populism).

^b The reference category is “Negative” (no populism or incivility).

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A8. Exposure to campaign messages and affective polarization; moderation with populist attitudes (alternative reference category for campaign messages)

	M1			M2		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Populist attitudes (POP)	0.15	(0.06)	*	0.16	(0.05)	**
Republican ^c	-0.05	(0.03)	†	-0.10	(0.02)	***
Female	-0.07	(0.09)		-0.17	(0.08)	*
Age	0.00	(0.00)		0.00	(0.00)	
Education	-0.02	(0.03)		-0.01	(0.02)	
Dark core ^d	-0.27	(0.03)	***	-0.26	(0.03)	***
Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative Uncivil) ^a	0.35	(0.47)				
Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative) ^b				0.37	(0.43)	
POP * Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative Uncivil)	-0.03	(0.09)				
POP * Negative Uncivil Populist (vs. Negative)				-0.03	(0.08)	
Constant	5.21	(0.48)	***	5.20	(0.42)	***
N	353			441		
R2	0.26			0.25		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of negative out-party stereotypes and positive in-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a The reference category is “Negative Uncivil” (no populism).

^b The reference category is “Negative” (no populism or incivility).

^c 5-point scale from 1 “Strong Democrat” to 5 “Strong Republican.”

^d Average score of respondent’s narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, from 1 “very low” to 7 “very high.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Table A9. Exposure to campaign messages and affective polarization; direct effects and moderation with populist attitudes (fear)

	M1			M2		
	Coef	Se	sig	Coef	Se	sig
Fear message ^a	0.04	(0.08)		-0.77	(0.40)	†
Populist attitudes (POP)				-0.02	(0.06)	
Republican ^b				-0.08	(0.02)	***
Female				0.01	(0.07)	
Age				0.00	(0.00)	
Education				-0.00	(0.02)	
Dark core ^c				-0.23	(0.03)	***
POP * Fear message				0.15	(0.07)	*
Constant	4.90	(0.06)	***	5.78	(0.43)	***
N	527			526		
R2	0.00			0.21		

Note: All models are OLS regressions. Dependent variable in all models is affective polarization, measured as the existence of negative out-party stereotypes and positive in-party stereotypes (1-7).

^a The reference category is “Positive campaigning.”

^b 5-point scale from 1 “Strong Democrat” to 5 “Strong Republican.”

^c Average score of respondent’s narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism, from 1 “very low” to 7 “very high.”

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1

Appendix B. Experiment materials

In December 2019 we surveyed a sample of US residents through the Amazon Mechanical Turk online platform. The study intended to test whether individual differences moderate the reception and effectiveness of negative and uncivil political messages. Respondents were first asked some initial questions about their personal profile (socio-demographic characteristics, political preferences). They were also asked several batteries of questions about their individual profile (including populist attitudes). They were then exposed to a mock newspaper article presenting a statement by a fictive Republican candidate (Paul A. Bauer), either promoting his policy positions about the automobile industry, or attacking his (equally fictive) Democratic opponent (Carl B. Meyer). Respondents were randomly exposed to one of the following eleven treatments: (1) positive policy (i.e., Bauer promotes his policies on automobile industry taxation), (2) positive character, (3) negative policy attack, (4) negative character attack, civil, no fear, no populism, (5) negative character attack, civil, fear, no populism, (6) negative character attack, civil, no fear, populism, (7) negative character attack, civil, fear, populism, (8) negative character attack, uncivil, no fear, no populism, (9) negative character attack, uncivil, fear, no populism, (10) negative character attack, uncivil, no fear, populism, (11) negative character attack, uncivil, fear, populism. Our analyses will compare the effects of exposure to *positive* messages ($N = 192$) with exposure to three increasingly harsh negative messages: *negative* ($N = 889$), *negative uncivil* ($N = 395$), and *negative uncivil populist* ($N = 200$) messages. The further difference between messages with and without fear appeals (in grey) will not be explored in this article.

After exposure to the experimental treatment, among other batteries, respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with a series of statements describing “people who are Republicans” (and, separately, to describe “people who are Democrats”). The statements they had to evaluate were “patriotic”, “closed-minded”, “intelligent”, “hypocritical”, “selfish”, “honest”, “open-minded”, “generous”, and “mean”. The overall evaluation of these statements in light of the partisan affiliation of the respondents provides measures of the extent to which respondents hold “negative stereotypes for the out-party”, on the one hand, and “positive stereotypes for the in-party”, on the other hand - that is, to what extent they really like their party and really dislike their opponents, beyond partisanship.

Treatments and materials

(highlights are as presented to the respondents)

* Introduction to the stimulus (all participants):

*On the following page you will read some information about two candidates, who will compete next year for a seat in the US House of Representatives for Minnesota's 9th Congressional district: Republican **Paul A. Bauer**, and Democrat **Carl B. Meyer**. Please read the information on the following page carefully.*

[page break]



Paul A. Bauer
Republican Party

Candidate for the US House of Representatives
Minnesota 9th Congressional district

Paul A. Bauer's positions on taxation

Bauer is strongly opposed to increased taxation: *"I believe the government should tax only to raise money for its essential functions, e.g., to enforce contracts, maintain basic infrastructure and national security, and protect citizens against criminals."* According to Bauer, low taxation is the best route to growing the economy. The government should reduce taxes for businesses to allow them to grow and hire more employees. People should pay less income taxes so that they can hold on to more disposable income to spend, save, or invest.



Carl B. Meyer
Democratic Party

Candidate for the US House of Representatives
Minnesota 9th Congressional district

Carl B. Meyer's positions on taxation

Meyer supports increased taxation in specific circumstances, especially for wealthier citizens. According to Meyer, *"raising taxes for the wealthier citizens will provide money for government spending, which will in turn generate business, employment, and boost the economy by pumping more money into it."* According to Meyer, via increased taxation the government can subsidize vital services that keep the country running: infrastructure (e.g., roads and bridges), health care, and education.

[page break]

In the next page we will show you a newspaper clipping, containing a statement from Paul A. Bauer (Republican) on the issue of taxation for the automobile industry. Please read the text carefully.

[page break]

* Positive policy

"Bauer promotes Republicans' tax policy"

*Yesterday, Republican candidate for Congress Paul A. Bauer gave a speech in front of his supporters in Little Rock, Minnesota. One of his key messages was on the economy. He described his plans: "If I win the next election, I will work in the House of Representatives to substantially decrease taxes for the auto- mobile industry. **This is good news.** Automobile factories are an important economic actor in our state, providing jobs for tens of thousands of people. Lower taxes will keep these companies in*

our country, instead of moving abroad. The result would be lower unemployment and higher tax revenues. **The Republicans' low taxation policies will benefit the country.**" Today, Bauer will continue his rally visiting a plant in New Venice and talking with workers.

* Positive character

"Bauer promotes Republicans' tax policy"

Yesterday, Republican candidate for Congress Paul A. Bauer gave a speech in front of his supporters in Little Rock, Minnesota. One of his key messages was on the economy. He described his plans: "If I win the next election, I will work in the House of Representatives to substantially decrease taxes for the automobile industry. **My strong experience on this issue is good news.** Automobile factories are an important economic actor in our state, providing jobs for tens of thousands of people. Lower taxes will keep these companies in our country, instead of moving abroad. The result would be lower unemployment and higher tax revenues. **My low taxation policies will benefit the country.**" Today, Bauer will continue his rally visiting a plant in New Venice and talking with workers.

* Negative policy civil, no fear, no populism

"Bauer attacks Democrats on tax policy"

Yesterday, Republican candidate for Congress Paul A. Bauer gave a speech in front of his supporters in Little Rock, Minnesota. One of his key messages was on the economy. He attacked his competitor, Carl B. Meyer. "Democrat Carl Meyer announced that, if he wins the next election, he will work in the House of Representatives to substantially increase taxes for the automobile industry. **This is bad news.** Automobile factories are an important economic actor in our state, providing jobs for tens of thousands of people. Higher taxes would cause these companies to migrate to other counties - or even worse, abroad. The result would be rising unemployment and lower tax revenues. **The Democrats' high taxation policies will damage the country.**" Today, Bauer will continue his rally visiting a plant in New Venice and talking with workers.

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"Bauer attacks Meyer on tax policy"

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citizens.” Today, Bauer will continue his rally visiting a plant in New Venice and talking with workers.

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“Bauer attacks Meyer on tax policy”

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* Negative character civil, fear, populism

“Bauer attacks Meyer on tax policy”

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* Negative character uncivil, no fear, no populism

“Bauer attacks Meyer on tax policy”

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* Negative character uncivil, fear, no populism

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* Negative character uncivil, no fear, populism

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Notes