



Journalistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft (JKW)

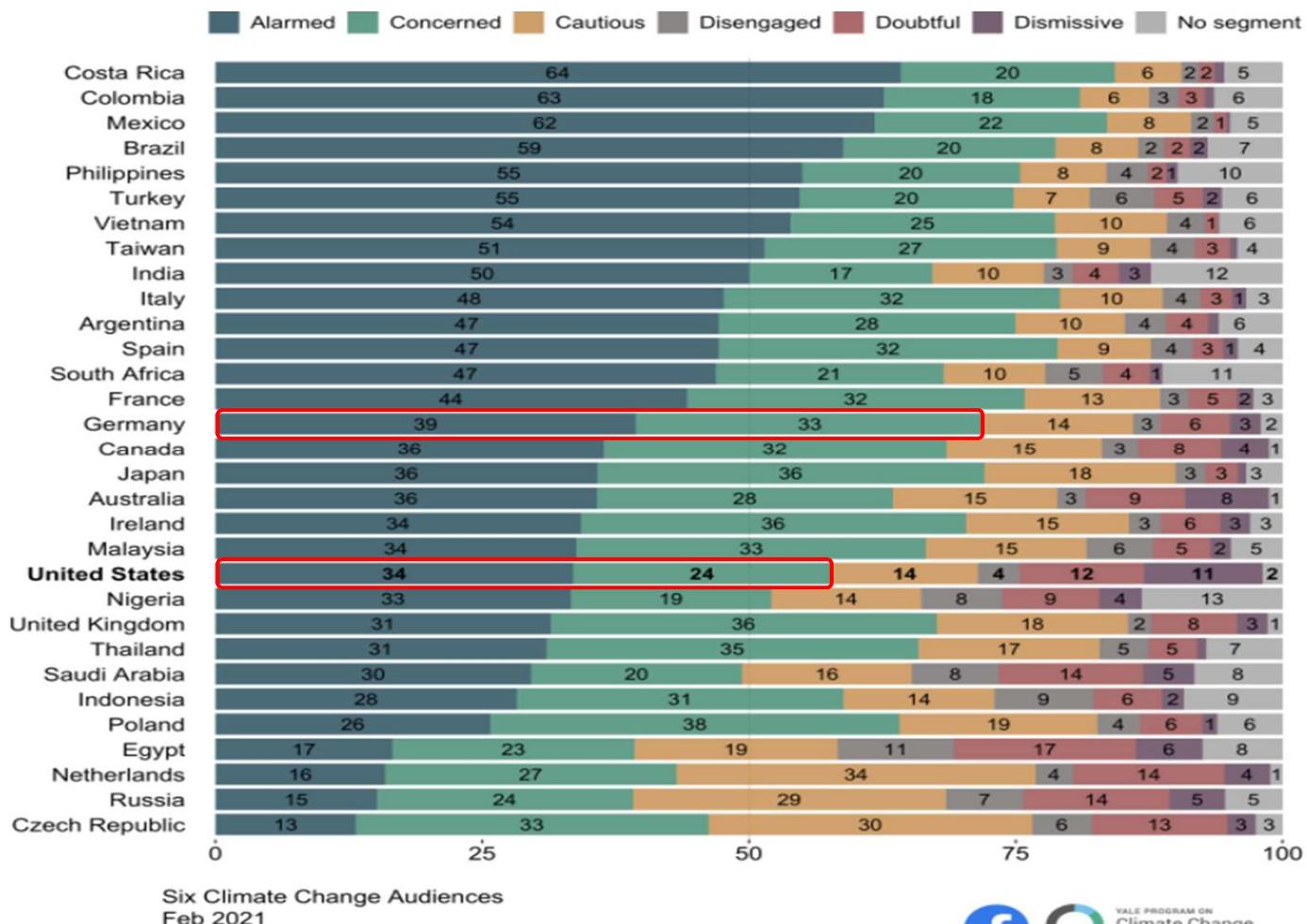
Vorlesung: Journalismus in der digitalen Gesellschaft

Sitzung 11: Polarisierung, Soziale Medien und Journalismus

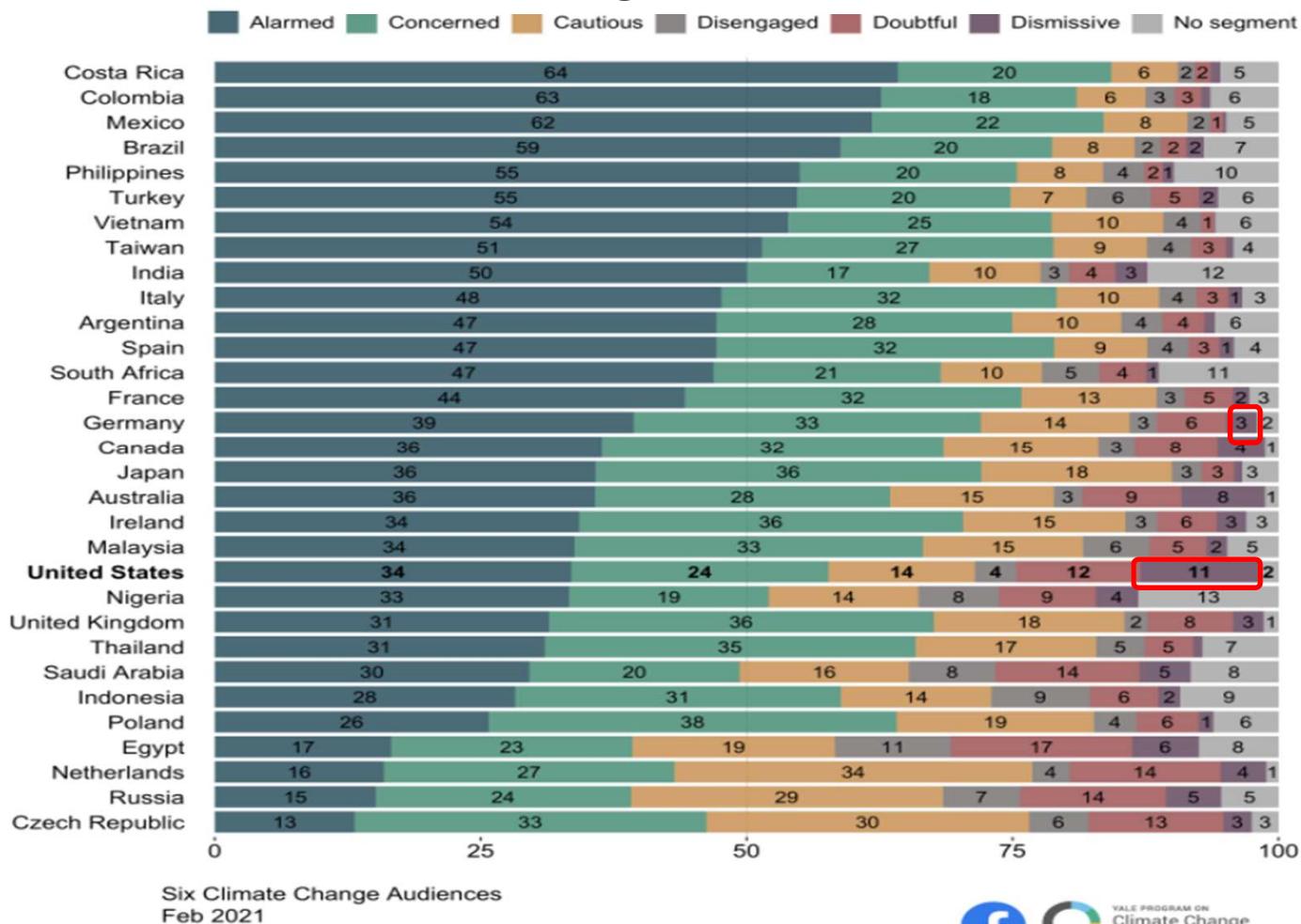
Wie tragen Journalismus und Social Media zu Polarisierung bei und ist das überall gleich?

Inputs: Prof. Dr. Michael Brüggemann, Guest: Prof. Dr. Axel Bruns

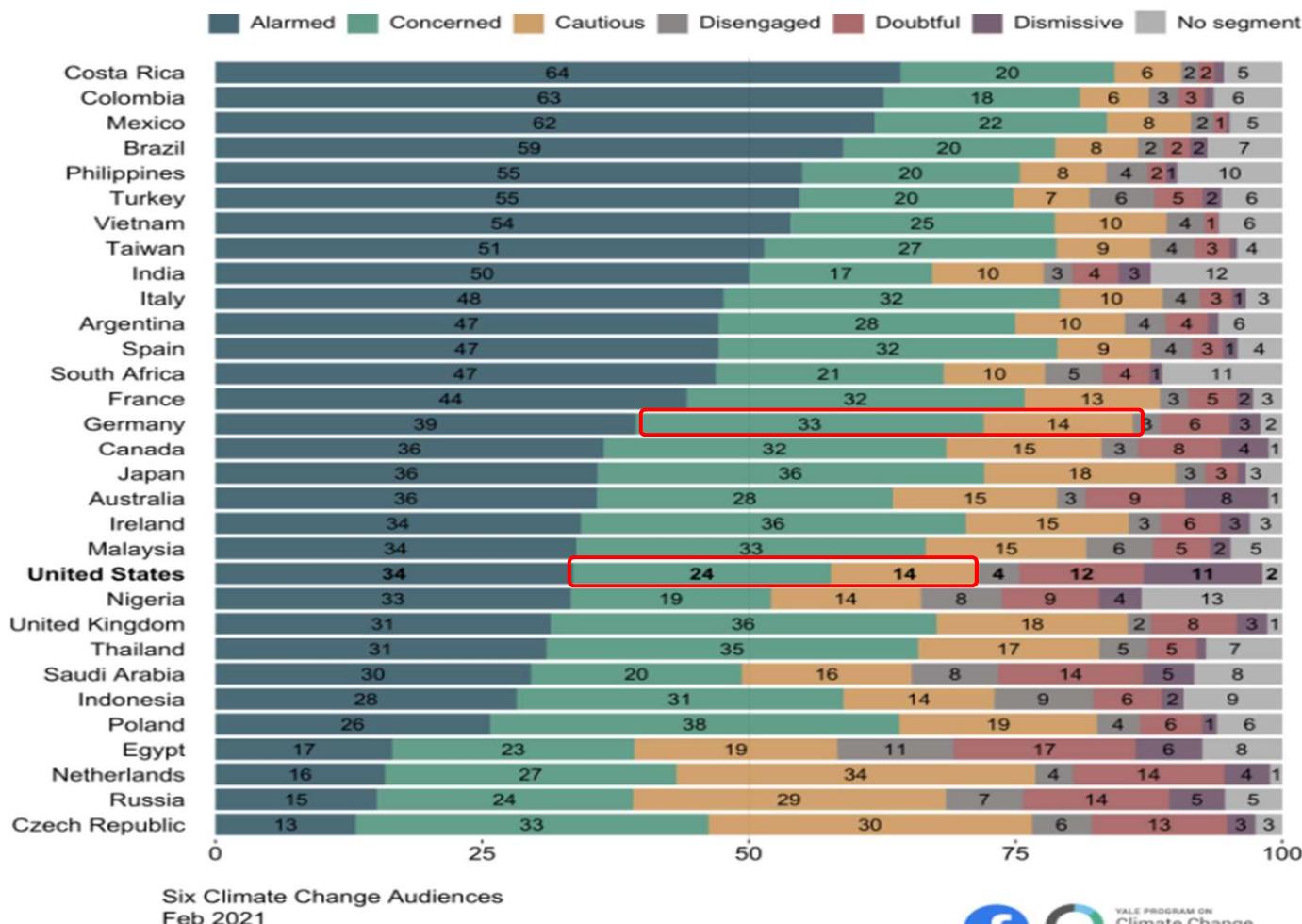
Polarization = 50/50 split of opinions on an issue?



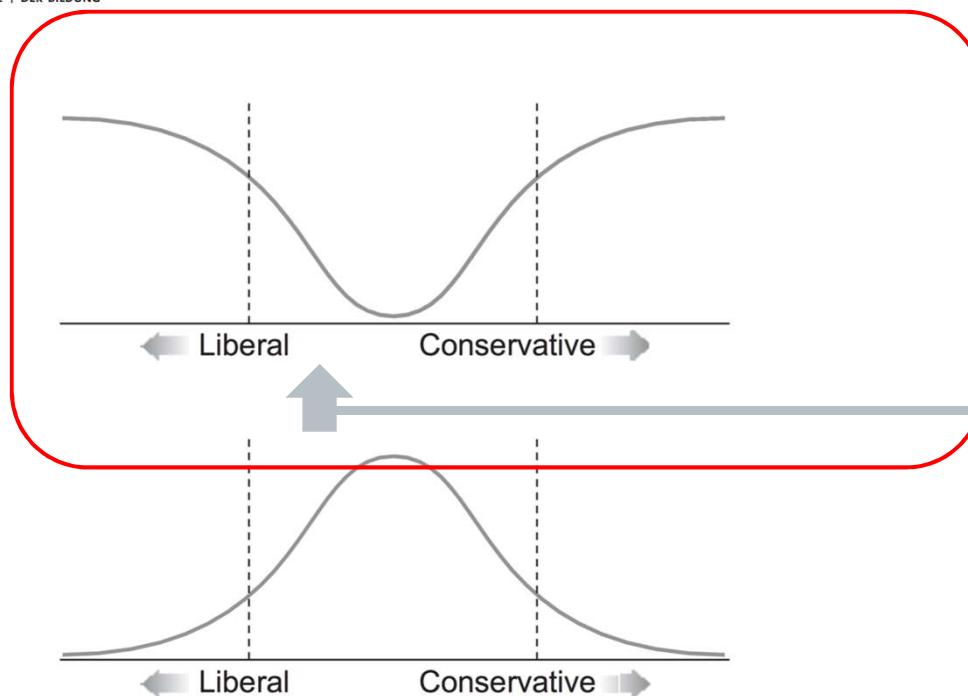
Polarization = Strong extreme voices ?



Polarization = Weak center?



One (!) dimension of Polarization: Diverging and increasingly extreme attitudes

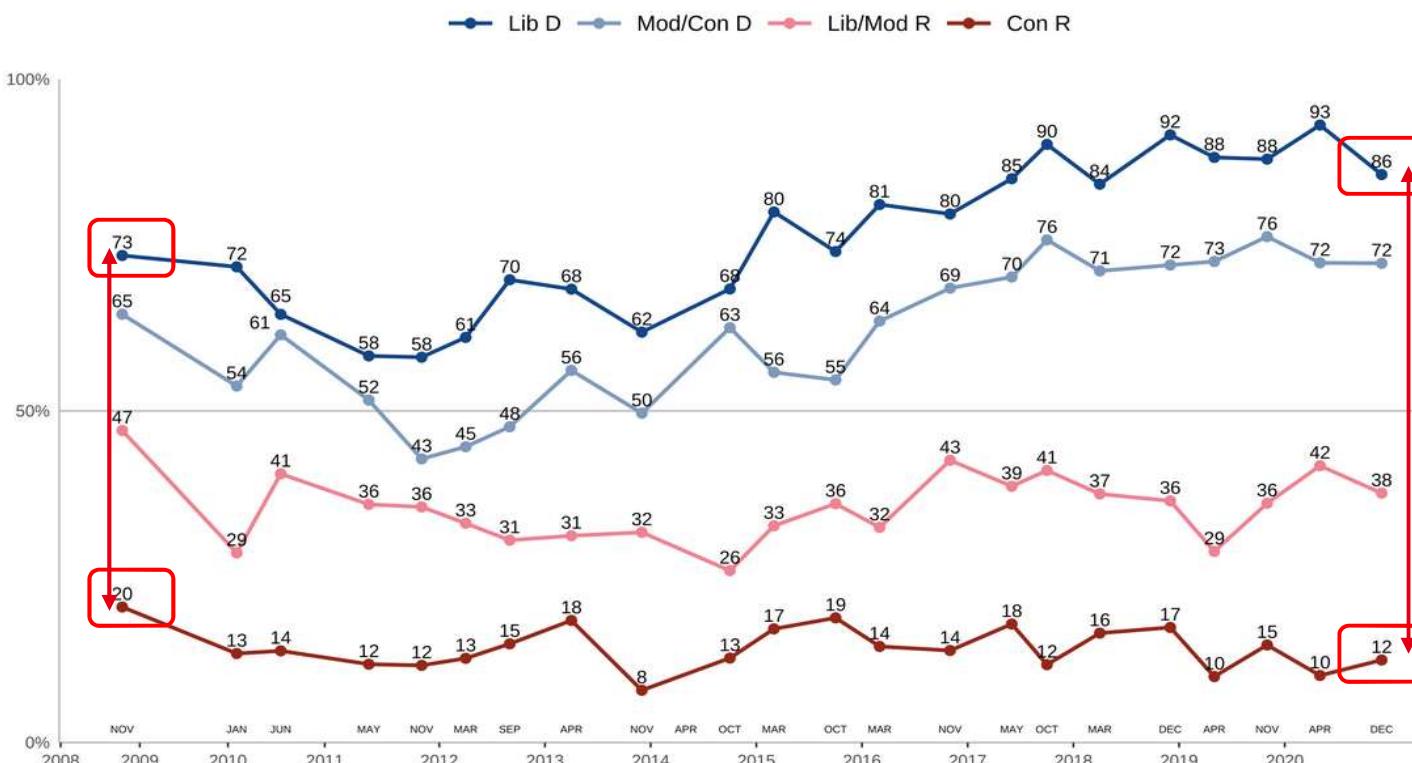


Polarization as
“emergence of
two-peaked
(“bimodal”)
distributions of
views”

(Gentzkow, 2016,
pp. 10)

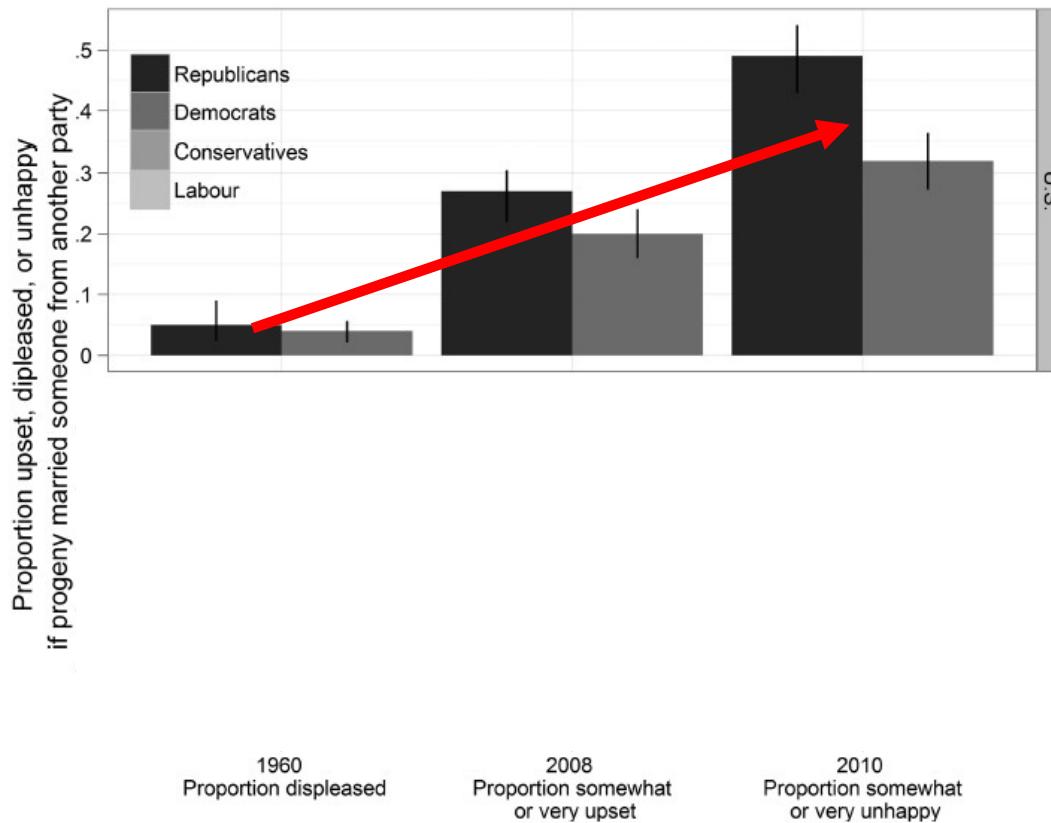
Most Democrats think global warming should be a "high" or "very high" priority for the president and Congress

- % "high" or "very high" priority -



Do you think the following should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority
for the president and Congress? [Global warming]
December 2020.

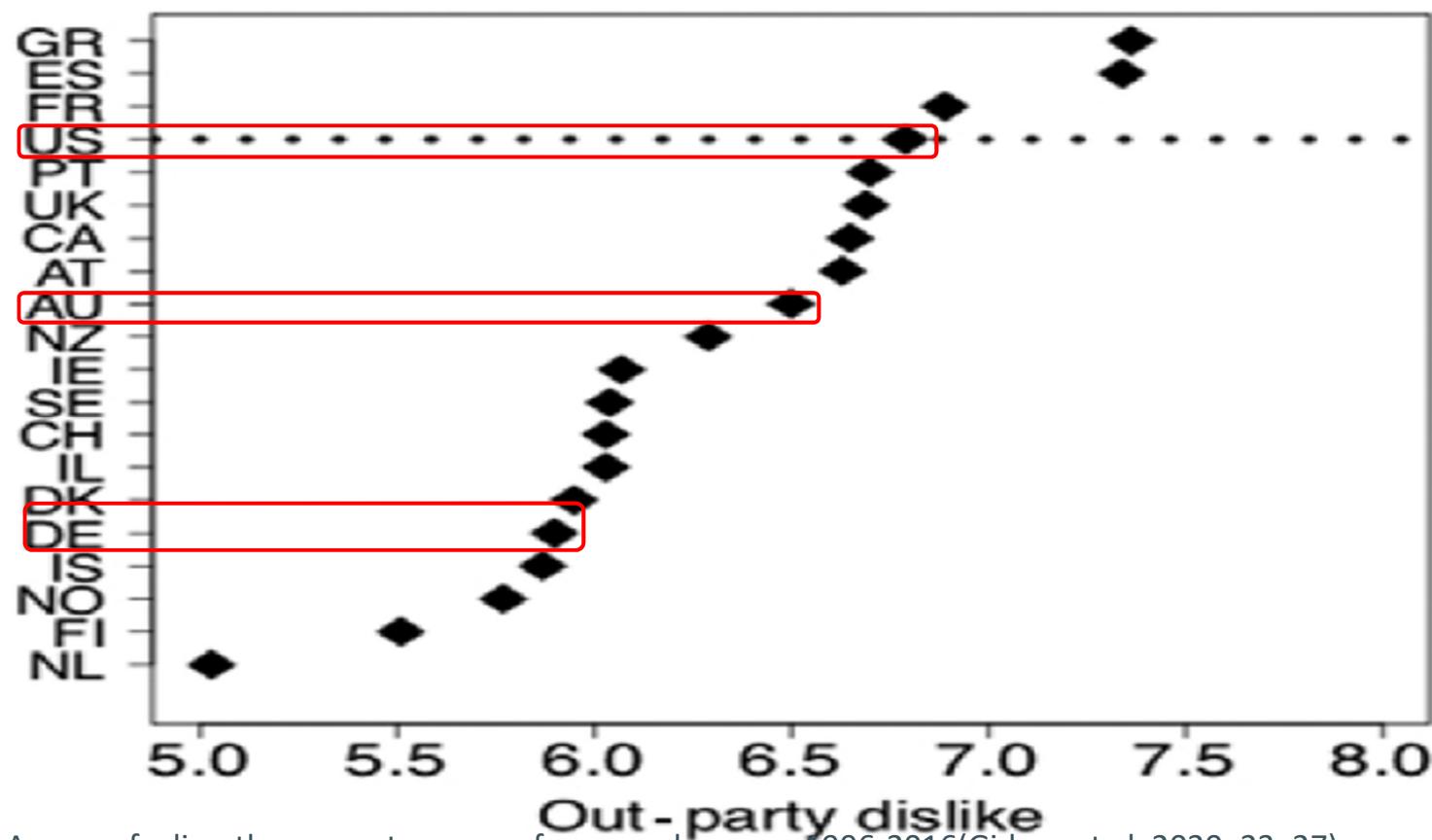
AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION IN THE U.S.: THE MARRIAGE QUESTION



Would you be unhappy, if your son/daughter married someone from the other party?

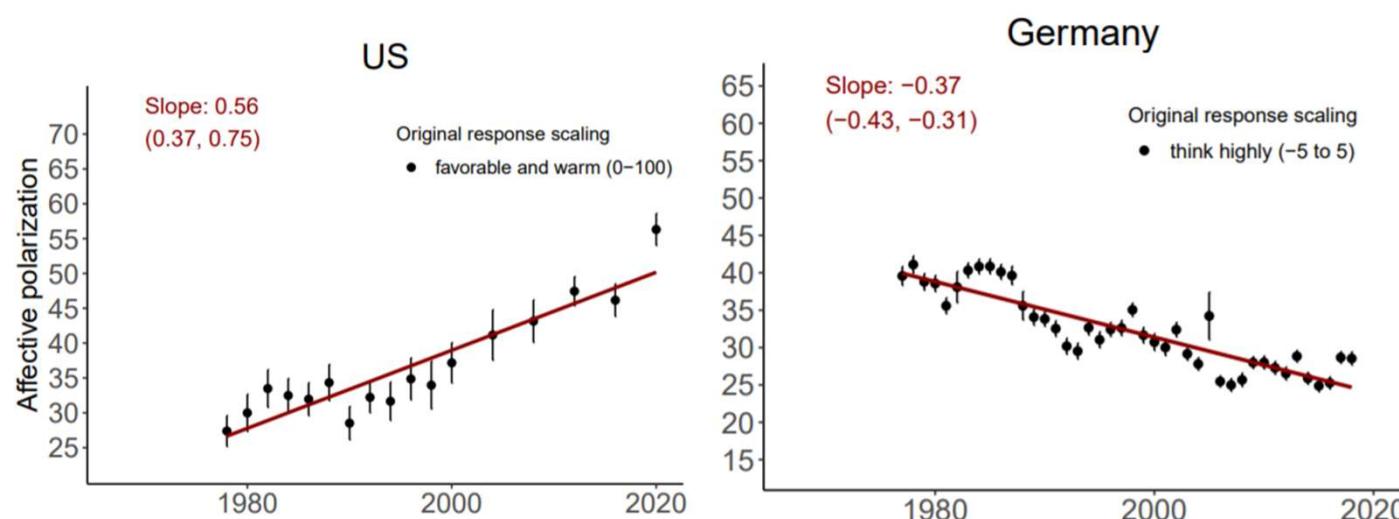
Iyengar et al. (2012) 14

AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION: DISLIKE OF THE OUT-GROUP



Average feeling-thermometer scores for several surveys 1996-2016(Gidron et al. 2020, 23; 27)

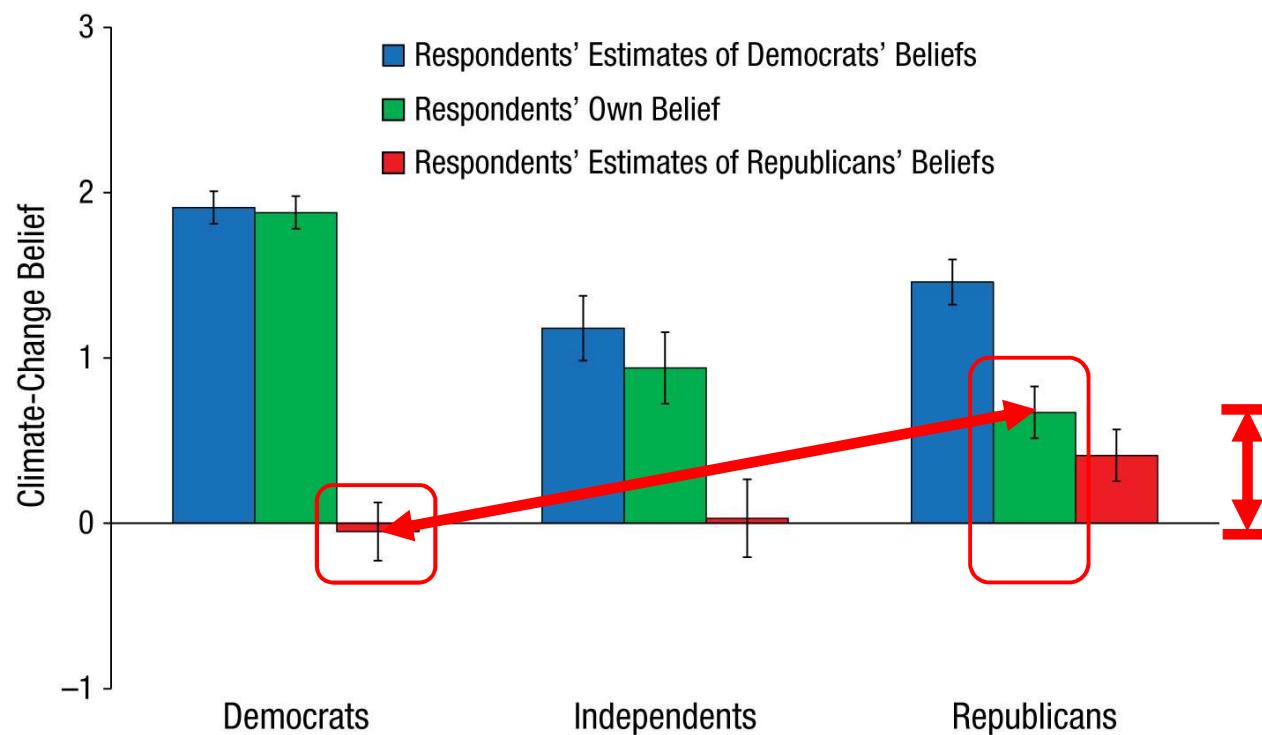
POLARIZATION AS INCREASING AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION



Affective polarization: dislike of out-party minus like of In-Party (Iyengar et al 2012)

Boxell et al. 2021 (similar results: Gidron et al. 2020, 23; 27)

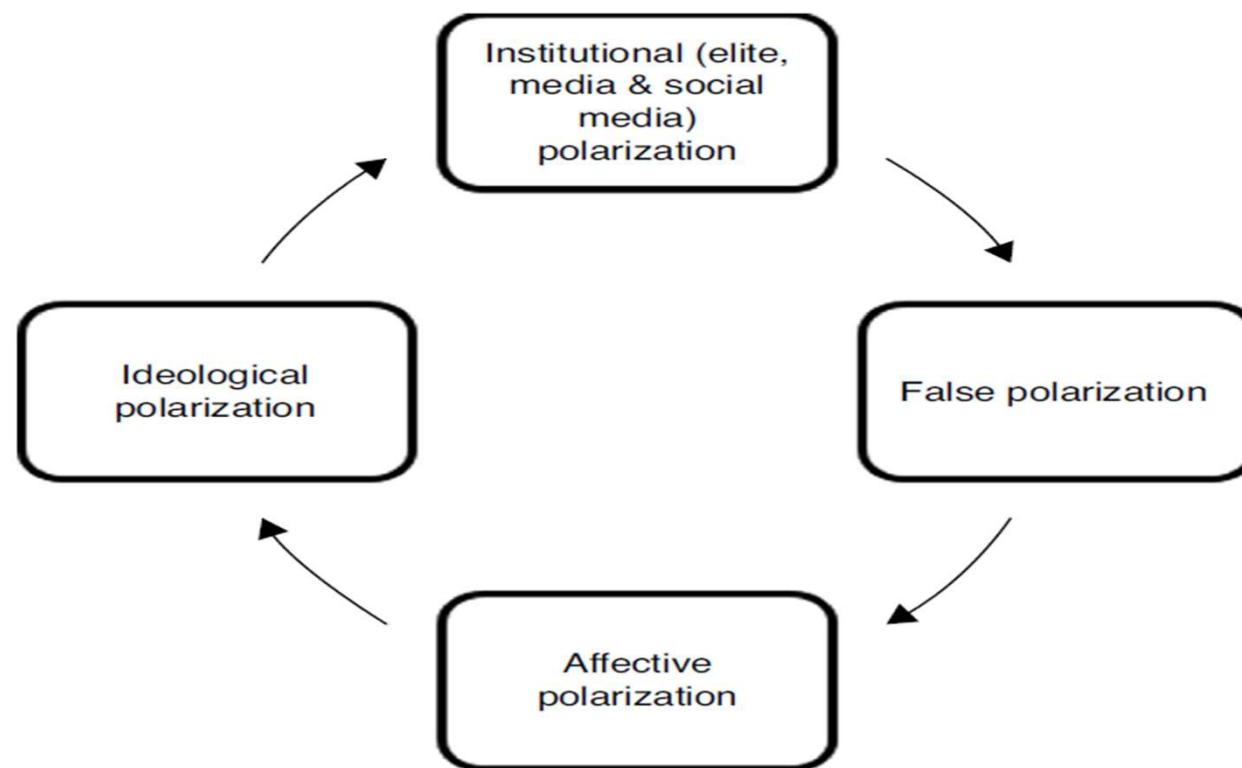
FALSE POLARIZATION: FALSE (= TOO EXTREME) GROUP META-PERCEPTIONS



van Boven et al. (2018): Surveys from 2014/2016; Bias can be corrected (Ruggeri et al. 2021)

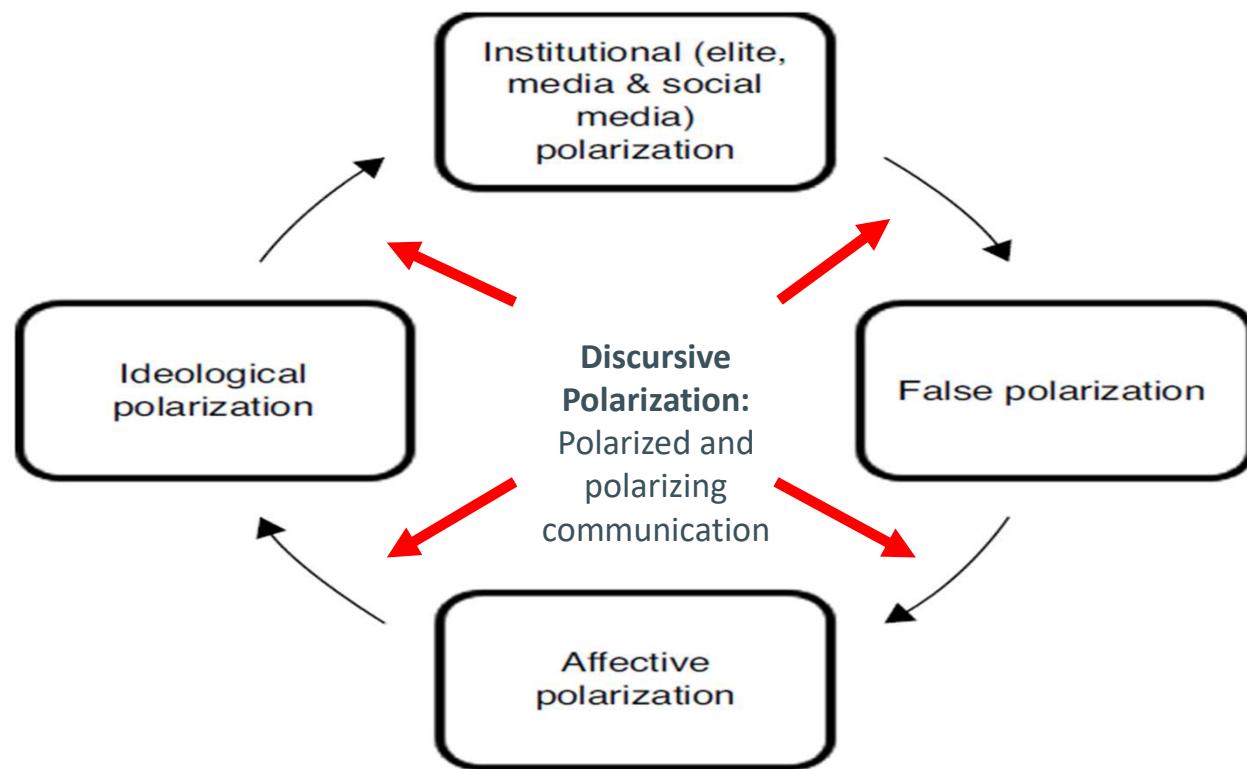
POLARIZATION AS A

- 1) MULTIDIMENSIONAL
- 2) PROCESS OF
- 3) SOCIAL DIVERGENCE



Wilson (2020: 224)

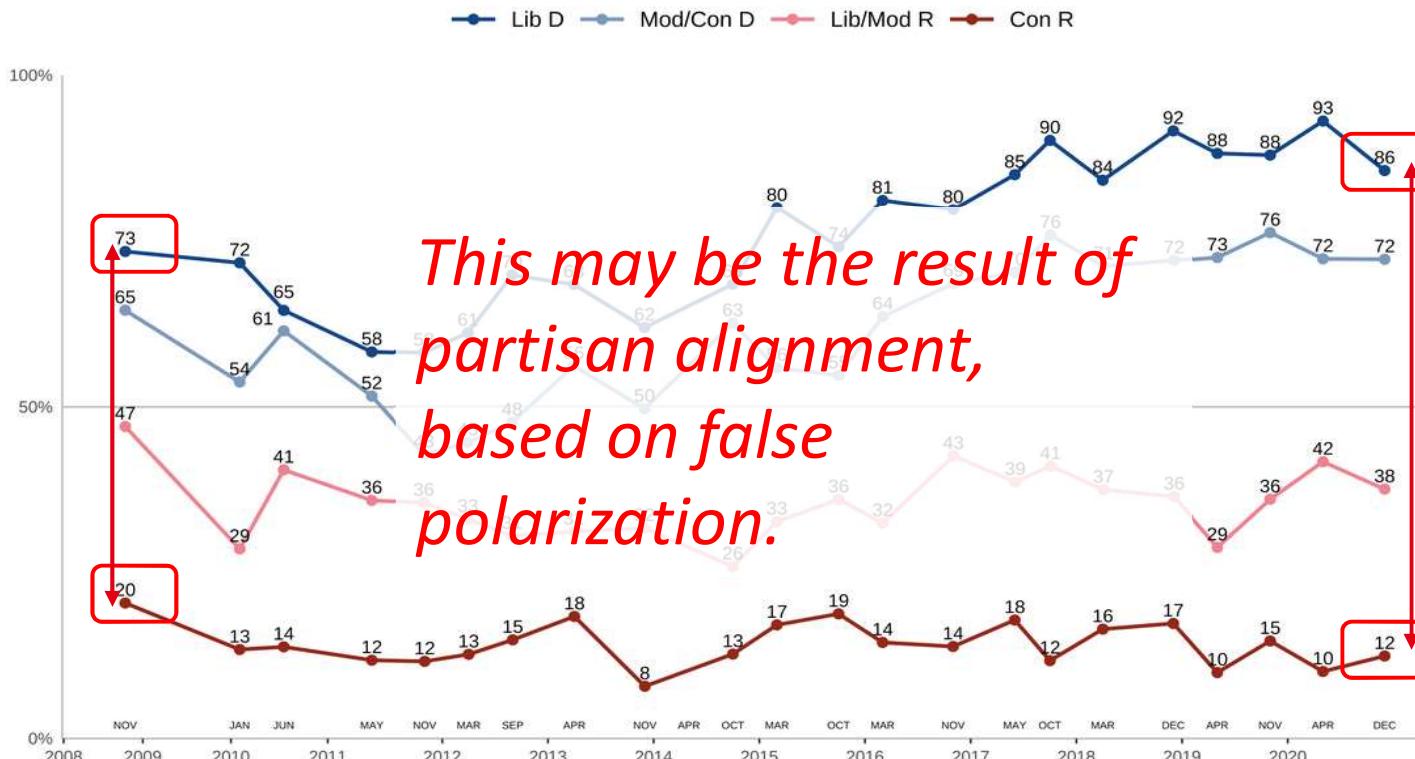
POLARIZATION IN AND THROUGH DISCOURSES



MB, based on Wilson (2020: 224)

Most Democrats think global warming should be a "high" or "very high" priority for the president and Congress

- % "high" or "very high" priority -



Do you think the following should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority
for the president and Congress? [Global warming]
December 2020.


 YALE PROGRAM ON
Climate Change
Communication


 GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE
COMMUNICATION

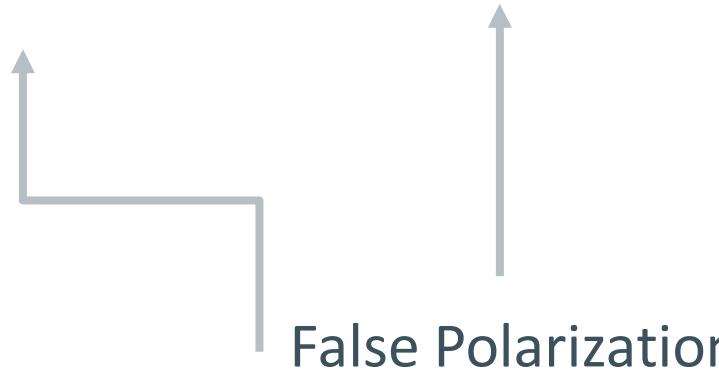
Diskursive Polarisierung: Wie entsteht Polarisierung in medialer Kommunikation?

Welche Rolle spielt der Journalismus (das Mediensystem, die Journalismuskultur), welche Rolle die sozialen Medien?

Welche Rolle spielen Kontextfaktoren jenseits der Medien (politisches System, historische Konfliktlinien, Strategien politischer Akteure)?

Polarization and **discursive** Polarization

Polarization of mind sets ≠ Discursive Polarization: as emerging and depicted in media debates



Brüggemann/Meyer (2022)

DISCURSIVE POLARIZATION: POLARIZATION IN AND THROUGH COMMUNICATION

- Actors' communications: polarizing challengers, responses
- Affordances of social/mass media arenas
- Interventions by journalists/platform providers



- *Extra-Media Factors*: e.g.

Formative rifts in society

Unresolved social grievances/conflicts

Political institutions: e.g. Two-party system



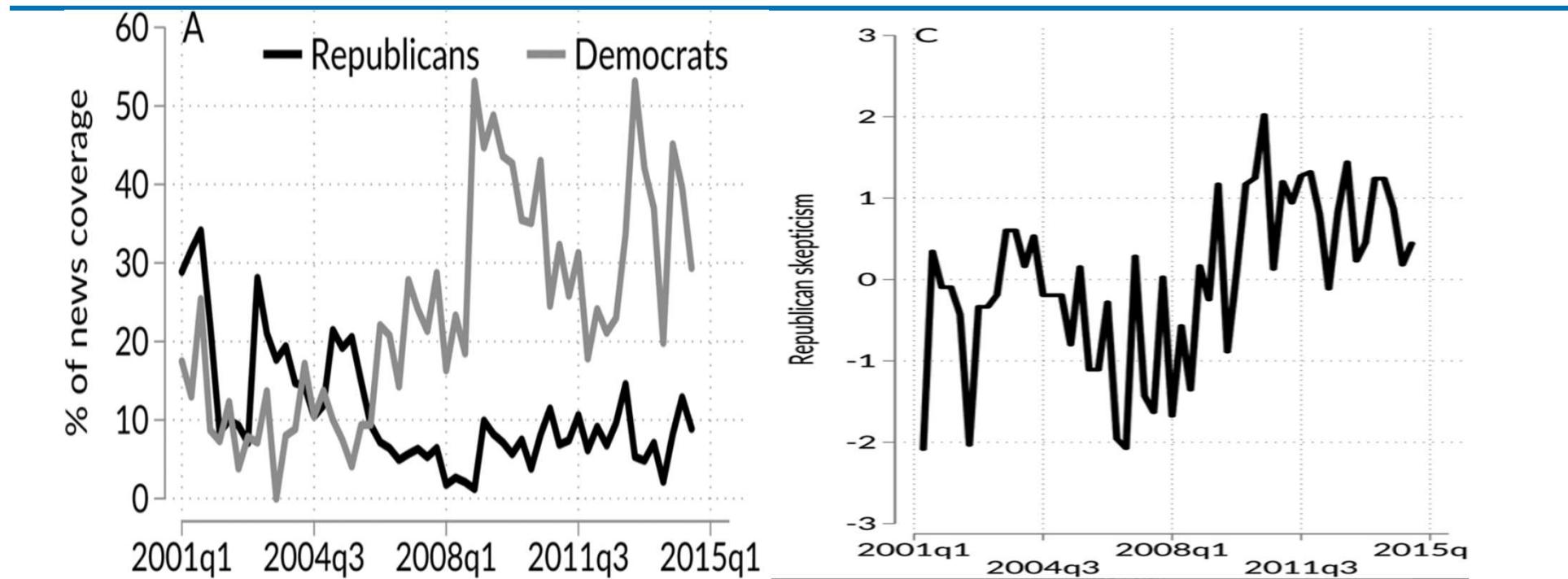
**Discursive
Polarization =**
polarized and
polarizing
debates



Polarization
of publics

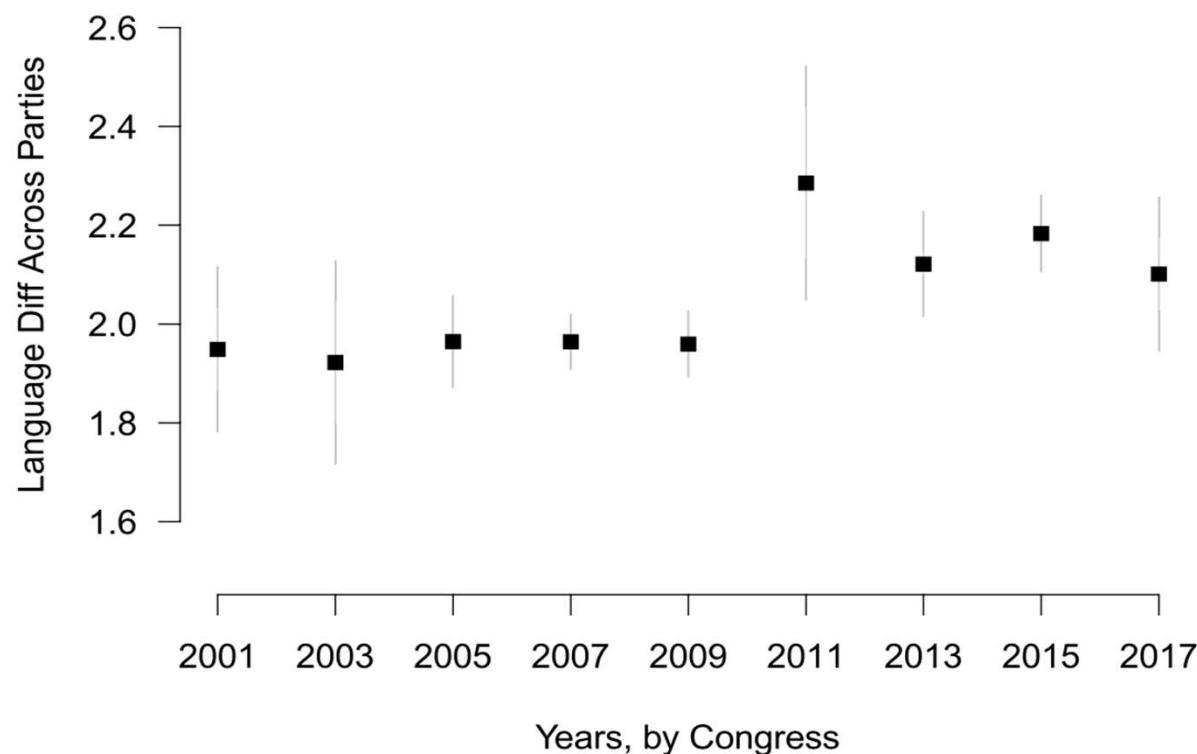
	Statement / Content	Interaction / Network
Issues	Problem definitions Epistemic assumptions Opinions / evaluations Σ Polarized framing of issues	Homogenous amplification of extreme frames Dismissal of / isolation from opposing frames Σ Polarized issue networks
Σ Ideological Polarization		
Groups	Social identity polarization (us-versus-them) Negative constructions of out-groups Σ Polarized group-related content	Ideologically homogenous (follower-)networks Ideologically heterogeneous & dismissive interaction Σ Polarized group-related networks
Σ Affective Polarization		
Σ Discursive Polarization		

News media: Elite cues polarizing the outgroup



Merkley/Stecula (2020): Automated content analysis + review of surveys + experiment ->
Out-group cues from democratic elites caused backlash/greater skepticism among Republicans

News coverage of climate change: Diverging partisan language



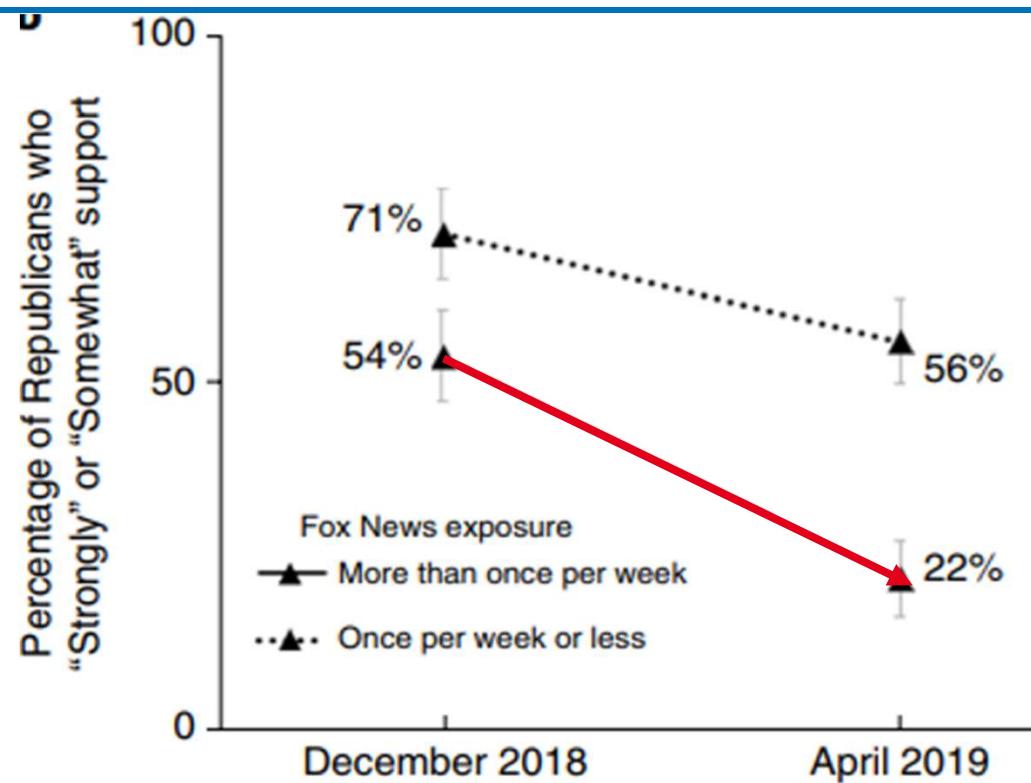
Chinn (2020) Partisan statements in the news on climate change

Journalism: Professional routines polarize debate Balance, conflict, negativity/deviance

- False balance: tendency to balance climate research by denial (Boykoff/Boykoff 2004)
- Beyond false balance: trend towards interpretive climate journalism in different countries (Brüggemann/Engesser 2017) and over time (Merkley 2020)
- But: polarizing extreme voices with strong presence in the news (Brüggemann/Engesser 2017; Merkley 2020)

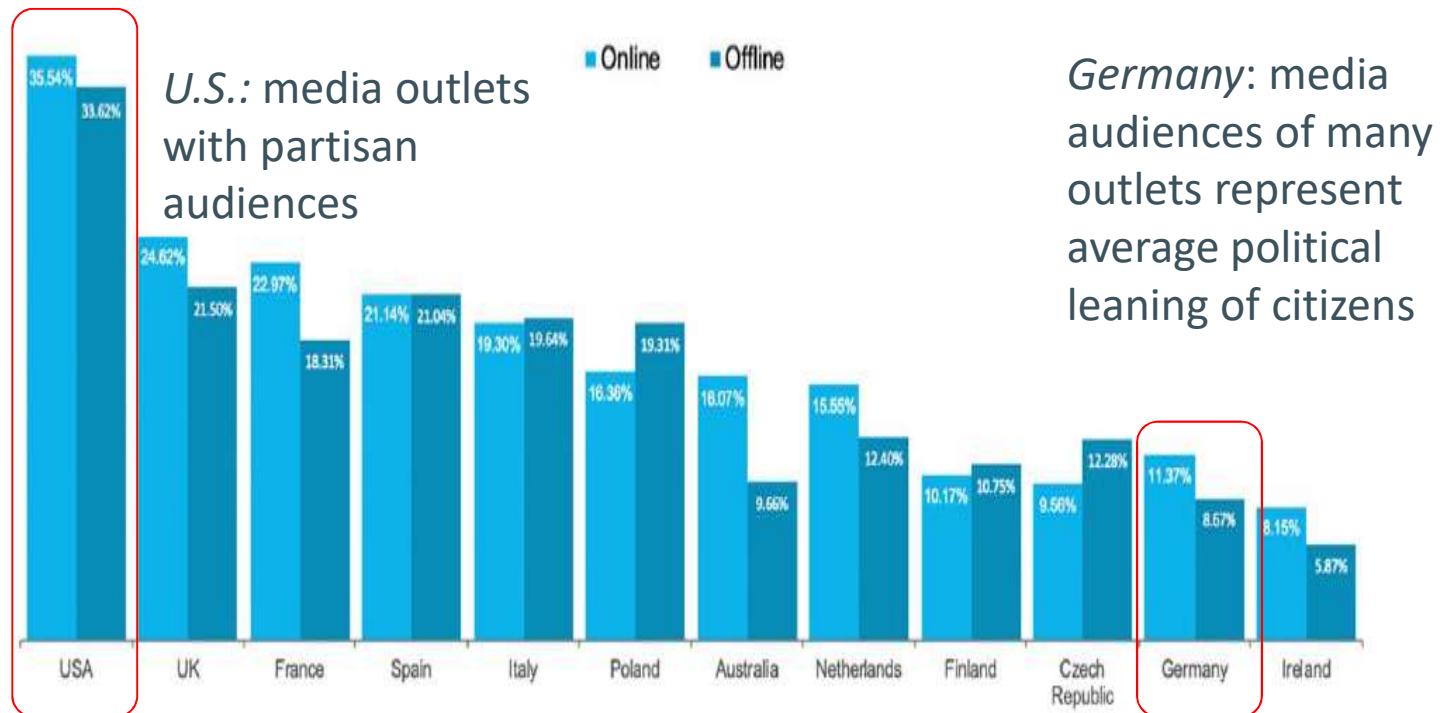
Polarizing media system 1: Hyperpartisan media

Fox news effect:
Heavy viewers'
less support for
Green New Deal



Gustafson et al. (2019): Partisan polarization over the Green New Deal

Polarizing media system 2: News outlets with partisan audiences



Fletcher et al. (2020)