

Online Appendix

B Data Collection

At the pilot stage of the project, we started by looking at 56 of our cases. We noticed that the primary problem is locating high-quality sources that can yield the information we are looking for. After this formative stage yielded results, we decided to train RAs so that they become good in performing online and library/database searches that could yield news, articles and books with the information needed to pass a judgement. We then implemented a procedure of strict documentation, where principal investigators check to see that each case had a sufficient number of sources to be able to extract information of value. This increased substantially the cost of the data collection. As a result, we were not able to perform a traditional ICR exercise, where all cases or a significant fraction of them are coded multiple times from scratch. We did, however, recode, under the new rules of quality, the initial pilot cases while using a different assistant. We can look at the comparison and see what difference additional training and supervision made. For the 56 cases, we check to see how often the pilot cases and the subsequently performed codings agree on. We start by looking at whether early and later results agree that *a_gov* and *b_opp* are 0. We find that this is 67 % for the case of government position and 40 % for the case of opposition position. Usually, the more intensive data collection updated a 0 to a different value. We next check how often the original *a_gov* and *b_opp* codings disagree on directionality: that is, the early coding of government position is positive, whereas the later one is negative, or the other way around. We do the same for opposition positions. We find that this type of disagreement is very rare - it happens in under 5 per cent of the cases, for both opposition and government. This leads us to conclude that the main challenge is identifying relevant information to produce a non-0 coding (where such is due), a constraint more binding for opposition positions. If information is located, which way the preference runs, is not significantly prone to error. Thus, we face a ‘discovery’ challenge. As we have explained, we have maximized the chances of discovery while checking the inferred positions by investing considerable resources in training, building research skills, supervising, and documenting. We also believe that once information is located, it tends to be unambiguous and point coders in the same direction. That was partly our criterion: we want to see that there is a widely-perceived evidence of a stance in favor or against a foreign actor.

Our in-depth research looked at news, articles, and books, covering the history, elections, and foreign partners of a country. We kept going until we were convinced that we identified enough information to give us a stable estimate of the information we were looking for. We produced 9500 snippets or paragraphs of text as documentation, each sourced. We cite 2500 sources, including wires, newspapers, articles, books. For example, We draw on wires such as Xinxua (524), Deutsche Press Agentur (42), Agence France Press (910), RIA Novosti (13), Thai News Service (24) and

news papers such as the Moscow Times (9), New Straits Times, Malaysia (8). We include scholarly articles such as the journal of *Electoral Studies* (52) and book (chapters).

The data collection took an estimated 3,000 hours.

The primary search focused on English-language sources, but as noted in the text, other language sources were available based on the language proficiency of the coders. The newspaper databases also provide access to a varieties of different English language news from around the world.

Any large-scale data-collection exercise will face some limitations. We have drawn on books and scholarly articles, in addition to other sources in order to obtain an informed expert perspective on a case. For some cases, such as US interventions, these concerns are most likely to be ameliorated.

In terms of whether information is available or missing on polarization, we believe that information is more likely to be missing when a party does not adopt a position. In terms of interventions, information is likely less available on covert policies. We describe the potential implications in our analysis section.

C Simulation Studies

Figure C.1: Simulation Study of the Bias Due to Omitting B_{Opp}

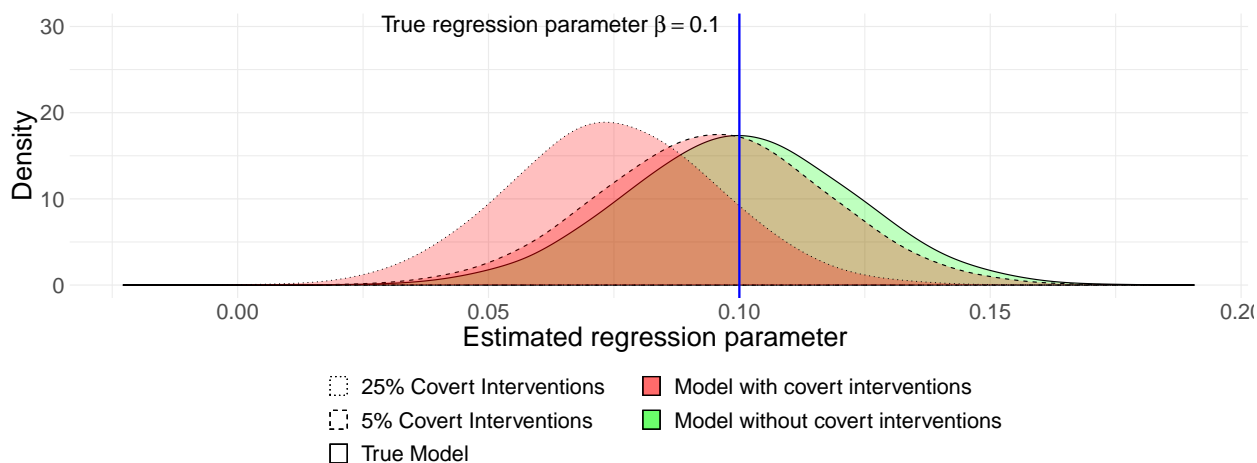
This graph is based on $n = 25,000$ simulations with $N = 125$ observations and shows the distribution of the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}$ for different values of the correlation between the government and the opposition platform – both when the model is correctly specified using $A_{gov} - B_{opp}$ (green) and when B_{opp} is omitted (red).



Attempts to estimate the prevalence of interventions that do not take polarization $A_{gov} - B_{opp}$ explicitly into account will generally produce biased or inefficient estimates of the determinants of intervention. Figure C.1 illustrates how taking into account only the government’s position will generate either biased slopes, or large confidence intervals. Specifically, if the government and the opposition would set their platforms independently ($\rho_{AB} = 0$) we would get a more noisy estimate of the true relationship (Case 1 in Figure C.1). However, it seems more likely that platforms are set in a fashion that to some extent reflects a general sentiment of the electorate towards specific interveners – i.e. we would expect a positive correlation ρ_{AB} between the platforms of the government and the opposition (Cases 2 and 3 in Figure C.1).³⁸ This positive correlation between platforms induces a downward bias to the estimated slope.³⁹ These predictions are in line with the weaker (and more noisy) relationship we estimate between polarization and candidate interventions using voting alignment with the US in the UN general assembly as an indicator for polarization instead of our preferred measure (cf. Figure 2).

Figure C.2: Simulation Study of the Bias Due to Covert Interventions

This graph is based on $n = 25,000$ simulations with $N = 125$ observations and shows the distribution of the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}$ for a scenario without covert interventions (green) and when some fraction p of interventions is not observed (red).



Along the same lines we can create simulations on the effects of covert interventions on our estimations. Figure C.2 shows the simulated distribution of regression coefficients for three different

³⁸Platforms that determine the stance of the government and the opposition with respect to the United States have a positive correlation with $\rho_{AB} = 0.27$ in our Process-Party dataset.

³⁹Note that under the classical OLS assumptions it is also possible to derive a closed form solution of the bias, depending on the correlation ρ_{AB} , the variances σ_A^2 , σ_B^2 and the error term.

scenarios: (i) all interventions are correctly observed, (ii) 5% of interventions are covert and therefore unobserved and (iii) 25% of interventions are covert and coded as 0. We see that covert interventions lead to a downward bias in the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}$.⁴⁰

D Policy Issues at Stake

Economic Dictionary

Econ: economic, trade, import, export, market, tariff, aid, investment, finance, construction, project, technical, transit, railway, ship, port, coast, transport, lake, oil, gas, energy, pipeline, fund, petroleum, offshore, river, money, grants, financial, bank, donors, private, energy, customs, health, companies, debt, rebuild, cash, reconstruction, investment, business, subsidy, economy, commercial, fishing, market, lend, credit, loans, education, trading, reforms, products, supply, technology, sanctions, mercosul, eec, nafta

Armed Conflict Dictionary

Armconfi: liberation, war, force, troop, military, nuclear, attack, peace, security, border, dispute, territory, breakaway, clash, mediation, rebel, refugee, violence, peacekeeping, chaos, guerrillas, revolutionary, separatist, patriotic, soldiers, insurgents, integrity, sovereignty, secede, fighting, army, patrol, base, pacific, invasion, war, territorial, frontline, occupation, appease, bombing, weapons, peace, olive, defense, march, escalation, nuclear, aggressive, warships, enmity

Alignment and Sphere of Influence Dictionary

Align: Soviet, China, Western, West, British, French, colony, African, Moslem, muslim, islamic, European, Caspian, join, founder, Commonwealth, integration, bloc, nonaligned, accession, sphere, francophone, capitalist, imperialism, neutralist, aligned, washington, london, kremlin, neutrality, non-aligned, Arab, base, ally, alliance, pact, NATO, Warsaw

Left-Right Dictionary

Left: leftist, left, left-wing, socialists, communist, radical, communism, capitalist, right, right-wing

Democracy and Human Rights Dictionary

Demhr: genocide, apartheid, opposition, people, religious, workers, human, minorities, dictatorship, transitional, democracy, voters, freedom, coup, restore, junta, emergency, immigrant, immigration, parties, revolution, persecution, fair, demonstrations, voting, protests, party, movement, protest, vote, factions, democratic, referendum, union, labor, parliament, conservative, racist, ethnic, minority, interim, liberal, campaigning, trial, harassment

⁴⁰We assume that covert interventions are not correlated with polarization. Note that under the classical OLS assumptions it is also possible to derive a closed form solution of this bias.

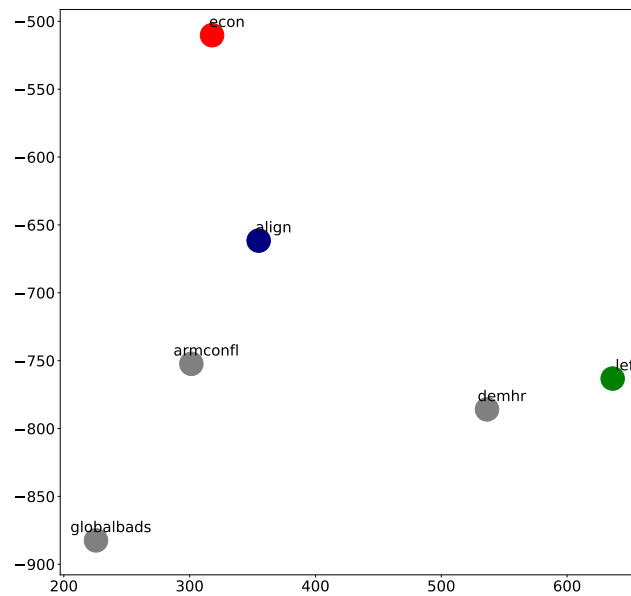
Global Bads

Globalbads: narcotics, trafficking, criminal, police, illegal, legal, terror, terrorist, terrorism, hezbollah, hamas, assassination, drug, environment, pollution

D.1 From dictionaries to semantic similarities

Figure D.3: Semantic Representations of Policy Issues

A visual representation of the obtained centroids and their positions in a two-dimensional representation of the semantic space under study. The plot has been produced using t-SNE (Maaten and Hinton 2008), perplexity=2, 5000 iterations.



E The Importance of Issues

Figure E.4: US Process and Candidate Interventions – Issues at Stake

Process interventions (pro-democracy interventions are denoted by positive values, negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy), and US candidate interventions (g+, pro-government, g-, pro-opposition)

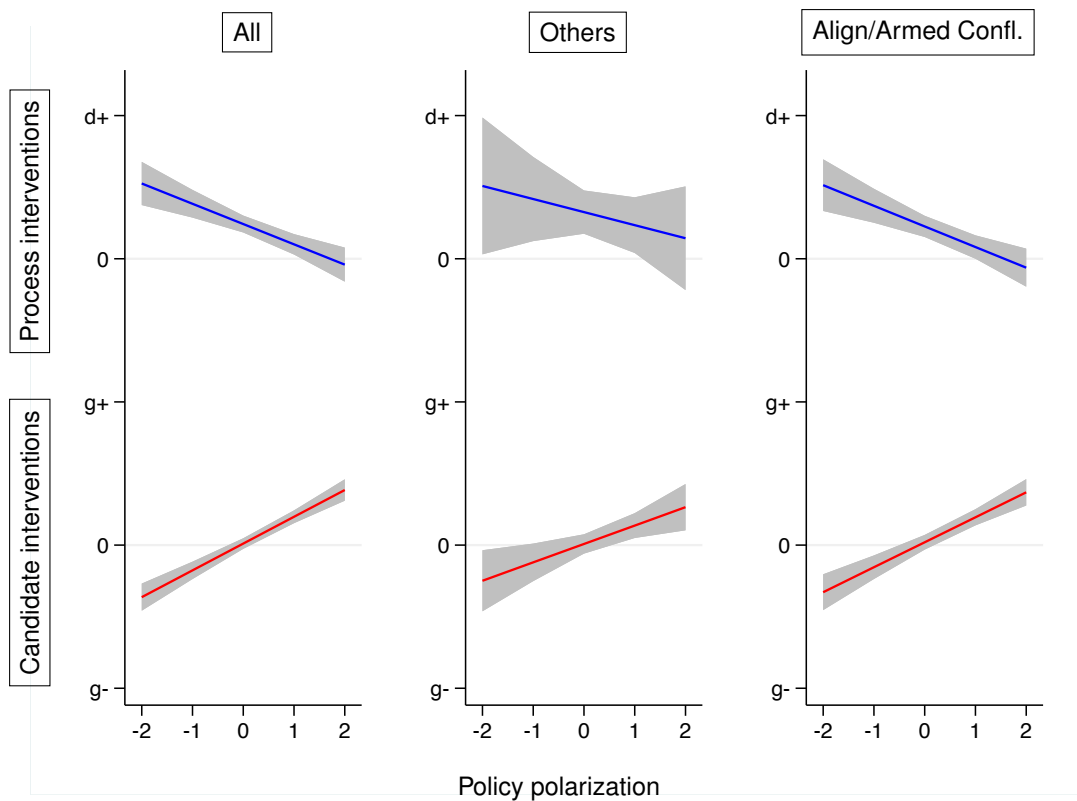


Table E.7: US Interventions – Role of the Importance of Issues

	Process Interventions			Candidate Interventions		
	All Issues	Lo Issues	Hi Issues	All Issues	Lo Issues	Hi Issues
Polarization	-0.134*** (0.0341)	-0.0808 (0.102)	-0.144*** (0.0396)	0.190*** (0.0286)	0.136* (0.0750)	0.174*** (0.0329)
Constant	0.230*** (0.0300)	0.306*** (0.0794)	0.226*** (0.0390)	0.00302 (0.0172)	-0.00658 (0.0249)	0.0197 (0.0229)
Observations	232	41	140	232	41	140
R-squared	0.082	0.018	0.107	0.304	0.223	0.267

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

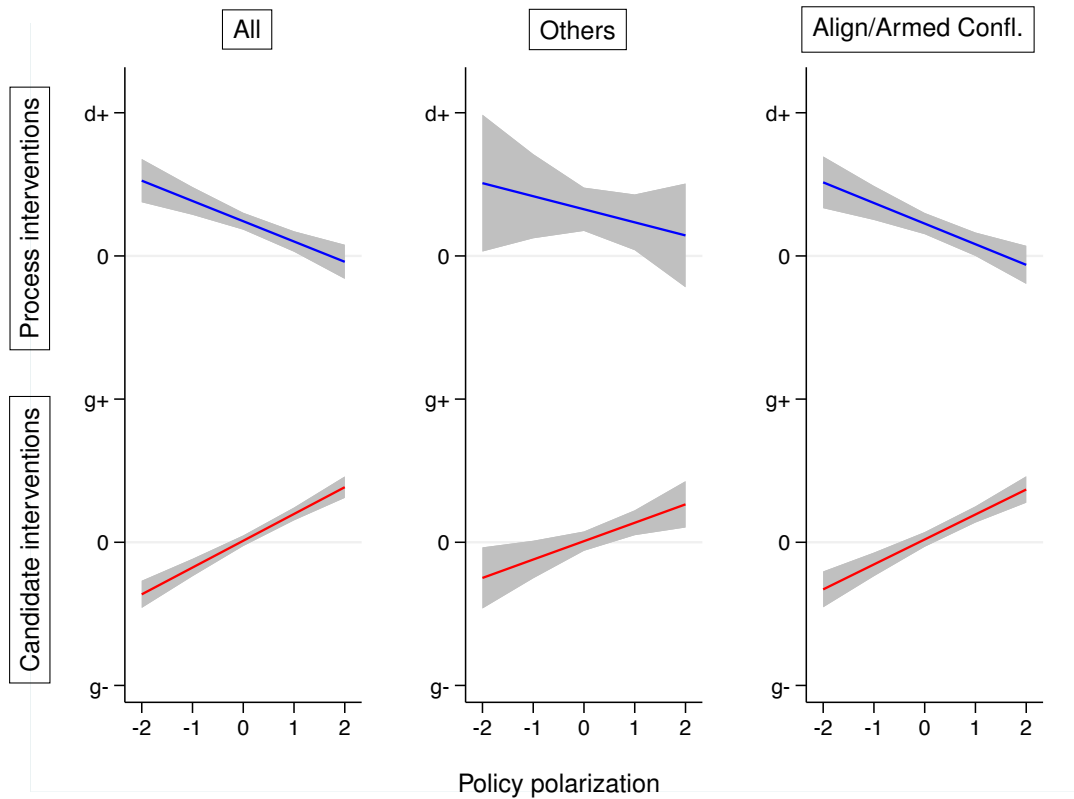
Note: US process interventions (pro-democracy interventions are indicated by positive values of the outcome variable, negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy), and US candidate interventions (positive values indicate pro-government interventions). We estimate:

$$\text{Process/Candidate Interventions}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Polarization}_i + \varepsilon_i.$$

Process/Candidate interventions take the values -1 , -0.5 , 0 , 0.5 and 1 . We have identified in section D the importance of various issues. Now we run separate regressions both for issues with high importance (Hi Issue) and those with low importance (Lo Issue).

Figure E.5: US Process and Candidate Interventions – Missing Opposition set to 0

Process interventions (pro-democracy interventions are denoted by positive values, negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy), and US candidate interventions (g+, pro-government, g-, pro-opposition). Note that coefficients very close to preceding table, so not provided separately.)



F Additional Empirical Analyses

Table F.8: US Process and Candidate Interventions: Seemingly Unrelated Regressions (SUR)

	Process Interventions			Candidate Interventions		
Polarization	-0.134*** (0.0340)			0.190*** (0.0285)		
UNGA alignment	-0.336*** (0.0668)			0.0696 (0.0579)		
Left-Right (CMP)	-0.0116 (0.0320)			0.176** (0.0835)		
Constant	0.230*** (0.0299)	0.196*** (0.0265)	0.0593* (0.0298)	0.00302 (0.0172)	0.0568*** (0.0193)	0.0682* (0.0388)
Observations	232	221	58	232	221	58

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: In this table we check the robustness of Table 2 with respect to a joint estimation via seemingly unrelated regression (SUR). We jointly estimate:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Process Interventions}_i &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Divisions}_i + \varepsilon_i \\ \text{Candidate Interventions}_i &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Divisions}_i + \zeta_i \end{aligned}$$

This allows us to take into account the correlation between the error terms ε_i and ζ_i in our estimations.

Table F.9: Logit Models of Interventions with Process-Party Polarization and Region Dummies

	Candidate Interventions			Process Interventions		
	Ordered	$Pr(g+)$	$Pr(g-)$	Ordered	$Pr(d+)$	$Pr(d-)$
Polarization	2.403*** (0.335)	2.270*** (0.409)	-2.160*** (0.613)	-0.712*** (0.235)	-0.606*** (0.219)	0.818 (0.748)
Developed Country	0.663 (0.603)	0.0612 (0.823)	-1.127 (1.157)	-0.729* (0.430)	-0.709 (0.433)	0.448 (0.853)
V-Dem Polyarchy	-0.908 (1.481)	0.0109 (1.832)	0.662 (2.206)	-0.0789 (1.061)	-1.217 (1.106)	-7.468*** (2.607)
Post Cold War	-0.448 (0.622)	-0.404 (0.879)	0.926 (1.125)	1.069*** (0.402)	1.617*** (0.558)	1.004* (0.602)
Constant		-4.015** (1.592)	-3.740 (2.784)		-1.021 (0.732)	-1.213 (1.615)
Observations	205	205	159	205	166	166
Region Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Note: US process interventions ($d+$ pro-democracy interventions are indicated by positive values of the outcome variable, $d-$ negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy), and US candidate interventions (positive values indicate pro-government interventions $g+$). We estimate:

$$\text{Process/Candidate Interventions}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Polarization}_i + \gamma \cdot \text{Controls}_i + \varepsilon_i.$$

Process/Candidate interventions take the values -1 , -0.5 , 0 , 0.5 and 1 . For candidate interventions we estimate an ordered logit model and binomial logit models on dummies that take a value of 1 if $c > 0$ denoted by $g+$ (and accordingly $g-$ for $c < 0$). For process interventions we repeat this approach and estimate again an ordered logit as well as binomial models using dummies for $d+$ (pro-democracy interventions with $p > 0$) and $d-$ (for $p < 0$).

Table F.10: Logit Models of Interventions with Process-Party Incumbent-Opposition Divisions

	Candidate Interventions		Process Interventions	
	$Pr(g+)$	$Pr(g-)$	$Pr(d-)$	$Pr(d+)$
Intervener (US) prefers Gvt.	2.264*** (0.524)		1.471* (0.844)	
Intervener (US) prefers Opp.		4.015*** (0.869)		1.519*** (0.552)
Developed Ctry	0.0558 (0.527)	-0.596 (0.842)	0.865 (0.858)	-0.478 (0.368)
V-Dem Polyarchy	-0.421 (0.962)	0.586 (1.748)	-6.312** (2.561)	-1.228 (0.759)
Constant	-2.665*** (0.659)	-4.178*** (1.107)	-1.657 (1.030)	-0.351 (0.398)
Observations	216	216	216	216

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: US process interventions (pro-democracy interventions are indicated by positive values of the outcome variable, negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy), and US candidate interventions (positive values indicate pro-government interventions). We estimate:

$$\text{Process/Candidate Interventions}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Divisions}_i + \gamma \cdot \text{Controls}_i + \varepsilon_i.$$

Process/Candidate interventions take the values -1 , -0.5 , 0 , 0.5 and 1 . For candidate interventions we estimate logit models on dummies that take a value of 1 if $c > 0$ denoted by $g+$ (and accordingly $g-$ for $c < 0$). For process interventions we repeat this approach and estimate again models using dummies for $d+$ (pro-democracy interventions with $p > 0$) and $d-$ (for $p < 0$).

Figure F.6: Interventions with Machine-Predicted Polarization (All Interveners)

Pro-democracy interventions are denoted by $d+$ (negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy) and candidate interventions ($g+$, pro-government, $g-$, pro-opposition): linear-fit on policy polarization from machine predicted polarization.

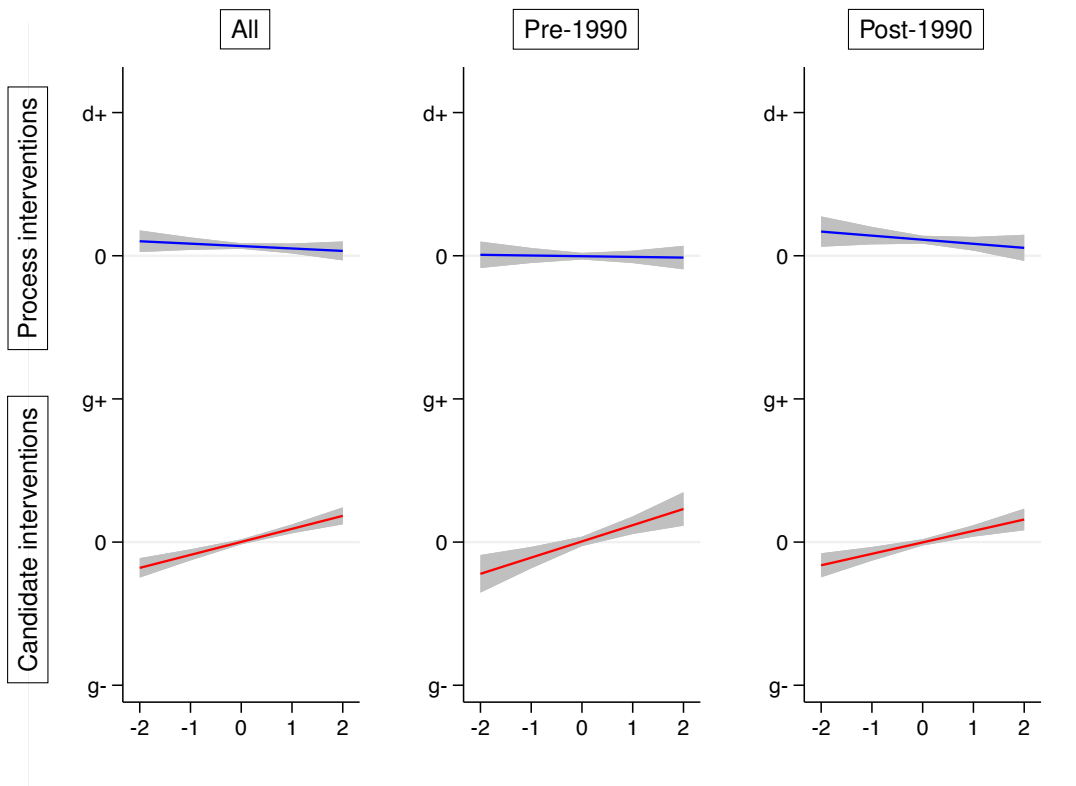
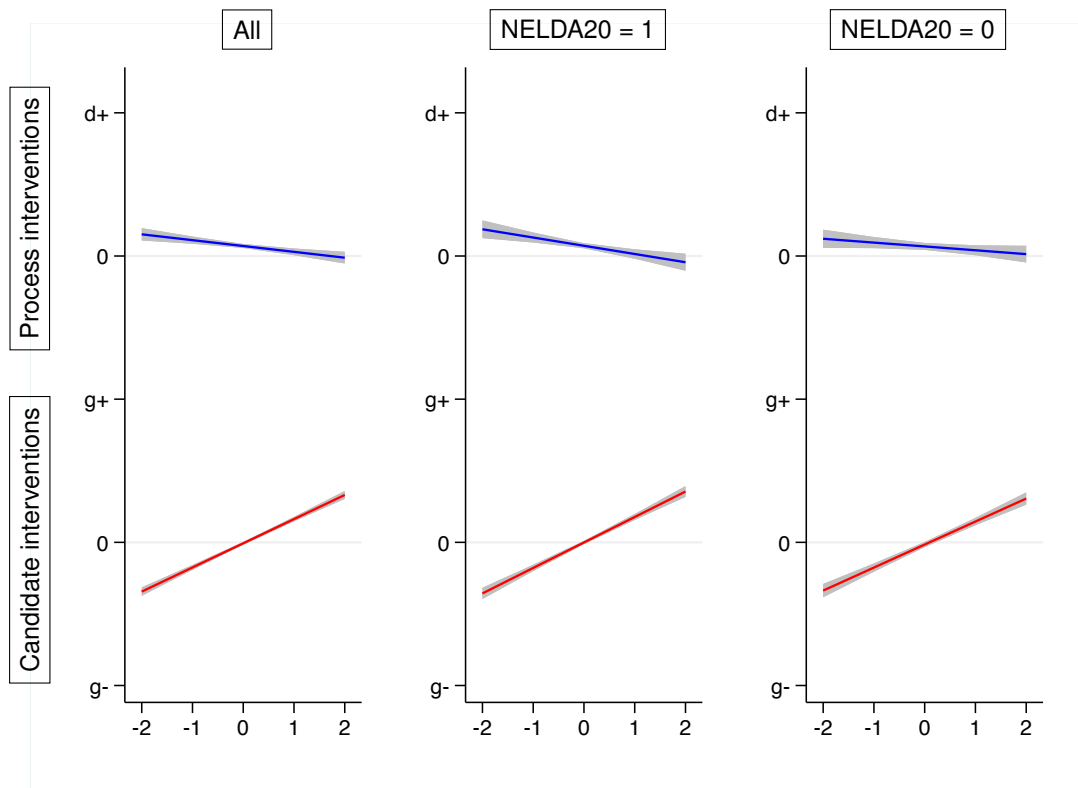


Figure F.7: Elections in which Incumbent Office Contested/Not contested (All Interveners)

Pro-democracy interventions are denoted by $d+$ (negative values denote actions that are undermining democracy) and candidate interventions ($g+$, pro-government, $g-$, pro-opposition): linear-fit on policy polarization from Process-Party data. We use NELDA to determine elections in which Incumbent Office Contested/Not contested ($NELDA20 = 1/0$).



G Critical Mentions in the Congressional Record as an Alternative Measurement of Process Interventions

Table G.11: Criticism of Elections in US Congress – Different Incumbent-Opposition Divisions

	Number of Negative Mentions		
Polarization	-32.46*		
	(18.17)		
UNGA alignment	10.39		
	(61.45)		
Left-Right (CMP)	-63.80		
	(73.17)		
Constant	97.52***	88.18***	108.6***
	15.29)	(19.64)	(27.33)
Observations	97	101	19
R-squared	0.044	0.001	0.053
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

Note: We use criticism of Elections in US Congress as the outcome variable. We estimate:

$$\text{Number of Negative Congress Mentions}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Divisions}_i + \varepsilon_i.$$

The table shows the results of OLS regressions using policy polarization from Process-Party data, UNGA voting alignment of government and L-R Polarization based on the CMP to measure divisions. Data is 1988-2012.

H A Comparison of Policy Positions: Process Party Data and UNGA Voting Alignment

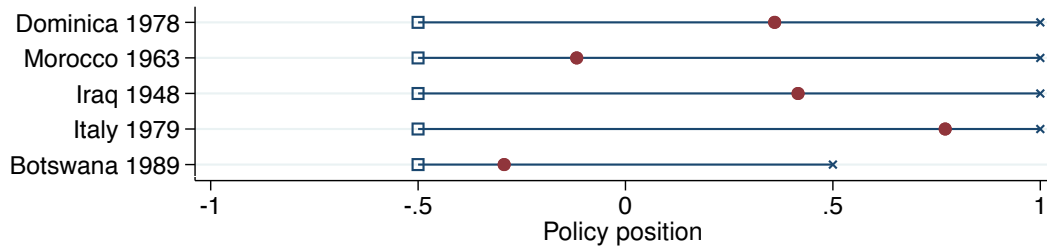
Figures H.10-H.12 in the Appendix show the views of the government and main opposition parties on issues of concern to the United States in the Process Party data. The difference between the two positions, the length of line, gives us a directed measure of polarization from the perspective of the US.

We add a measurement of voting alignment between the country's government and the US in the UNGA. We take Baturo et al. (2017)'s measurement for the year before the elections and rescale it to the interval $[-1, 1]$. This makes it easier to compare UNGA voting affinity to our measurement of more or less friendly policy stances towards the US.

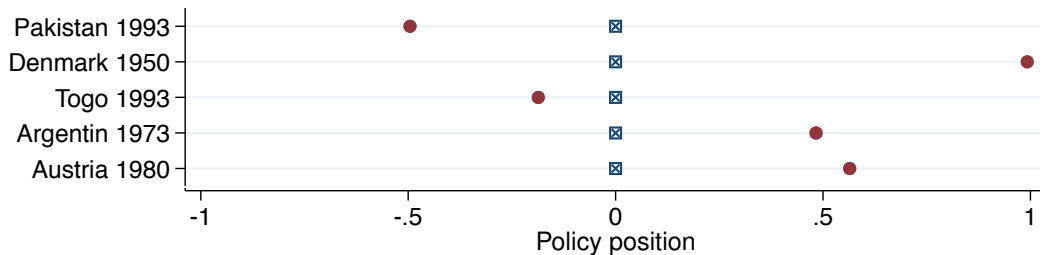
Figure H.8: Polarization in the Process-Party Data Compared to UNGA Voting Alignment

Process-Party data: government position on cooperation with the US x and opposition position \square [Country's UNGA voting alignment with US: \bullet]. The (length of the) black line from x to \square represents a directed measure of polarization. This Figure is an excerpt from Figures H.10-H.12 in the Appendix that show data for all available elections.

(a) Examples with High Polarization in Process Party Data



(b) Examples without Polarization in Process-Party Data



The first thing to note in Figure H.8 is that in the UNGA data we only have data for the government (red dot), and no data on how the opposition would have voted, had it been in power. Furthermore the correlation between our measurement of polarization (i.e. the length and the direction of the line between the government and the opposition stance towards the US) and voting alignment according to UNGA, rescaled to the interval from -1 (no alignment) to 1 (strong alignment), is weak for the entire available sample (cf. Figures H.10-H.12 in the Appendix). There are many cases of polarized relations where voting alignment varies wildly. Importantly, a researcher using UNGA voting to predict interventions may be misled. Looking at the UNGA voting alignment between the US and Morocco on the eve of the 1963 election (the second row in Figure H.8a), a researcher may predict intervention based on the observed, relatively negative stance of Morocco with respect to voting in line with the US. However, our data indicates that, all things considered, the government holds more friendly views on policies the US cares about than the opposition. An intervention would thus be potentially counterproductive. By the same token, consider the case of the Pakistani election in 1993 (first row in Figure H.8b). The government is not voting in line with the US in the UNGA, but our data suggests that there is no difference between government and opposition on the important policy issues of concern to the US. Hence from the perspective of the US there would be no point in engaging in activity that tries to replace the governing party. Figure H.9 shows that, indeed the UNGA voting alignment measurement is comparable to some extent to the government position measurement of the Process-Party dataset (right panel of Figure H.9) as opposed to the polarization measurement (left panel of Figure H.9). This may explain the much better fit of the polarization measurement in the empirical analysis.

Figure H.9: Comparison of Process-Party Data and UNGA Votes

This graph compares the polarization measurement and the coding of the government position from the Process Party Data with the UNGA voting alignment measure.

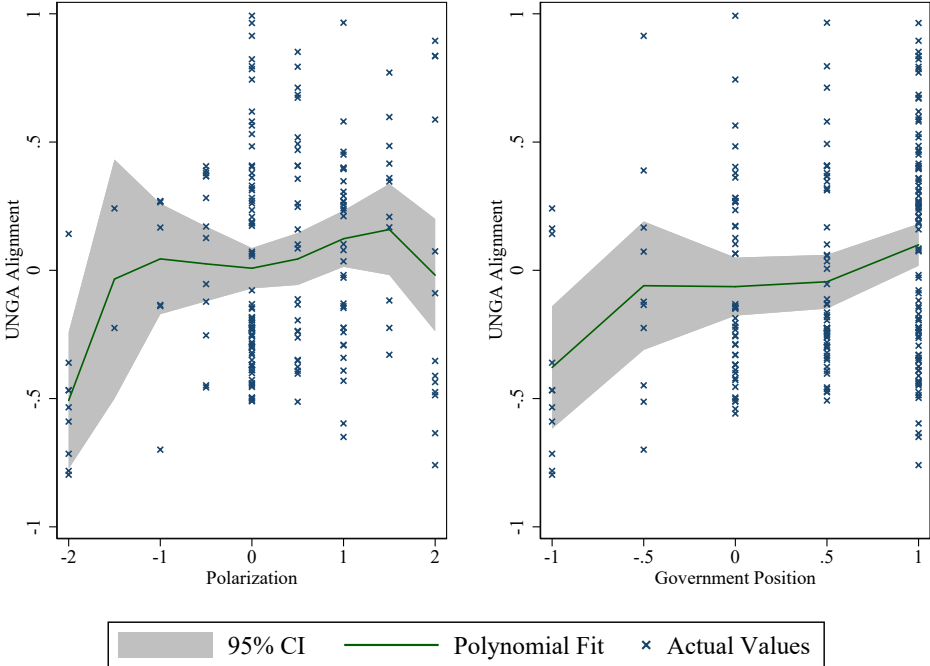


Figure H.10: Polarization in the Process-Party Data compared to UNGA Voting Alignment (*part 1/3, continues on Figure H.11*)

Process-Party data: government position on cooperation with the US x and opposition position □ [Country's UNGA voting alignment with US: ●]. The (length of the) black line from x to □ represents a directed measure of polarization. Elections are sorted by the government position in the Process-Party data in descending order, and then by polarization in ascending order.

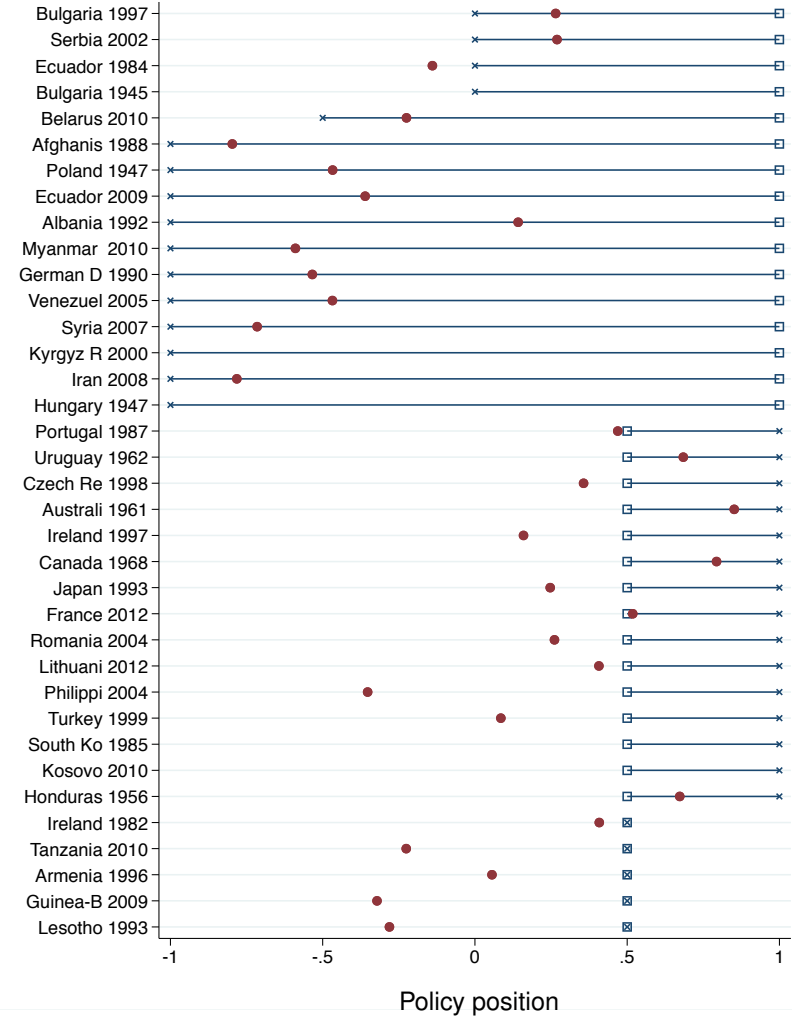
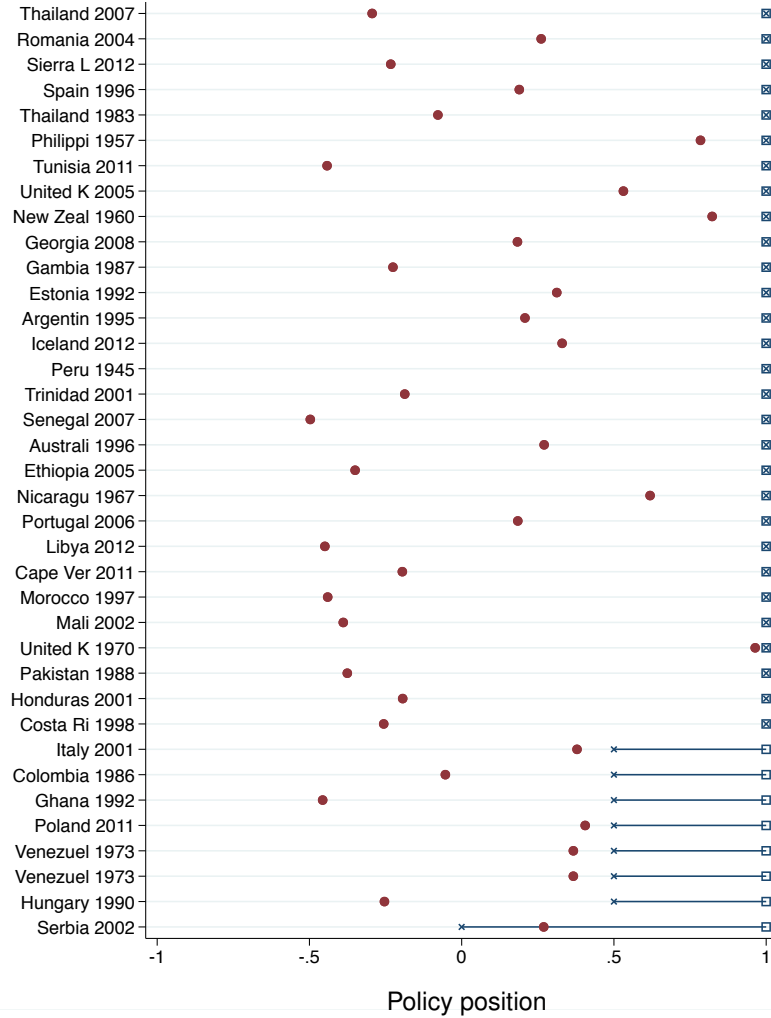


Figure H.11: Polarization in the Process-Party Data Compared to UNGA Voting Alignment (part 2/3, continued from Figure H.10)

Process-Party data: government position on cooperation with the US \times and opposition position \square [Country's UNGA voting alignment with US: \bullet]. The (length of the) black line from \times to \square represents a directed measure of polarization. Elections are sorted by the government position in the Process-Party data in descending order, and then by polarization in ascending order.

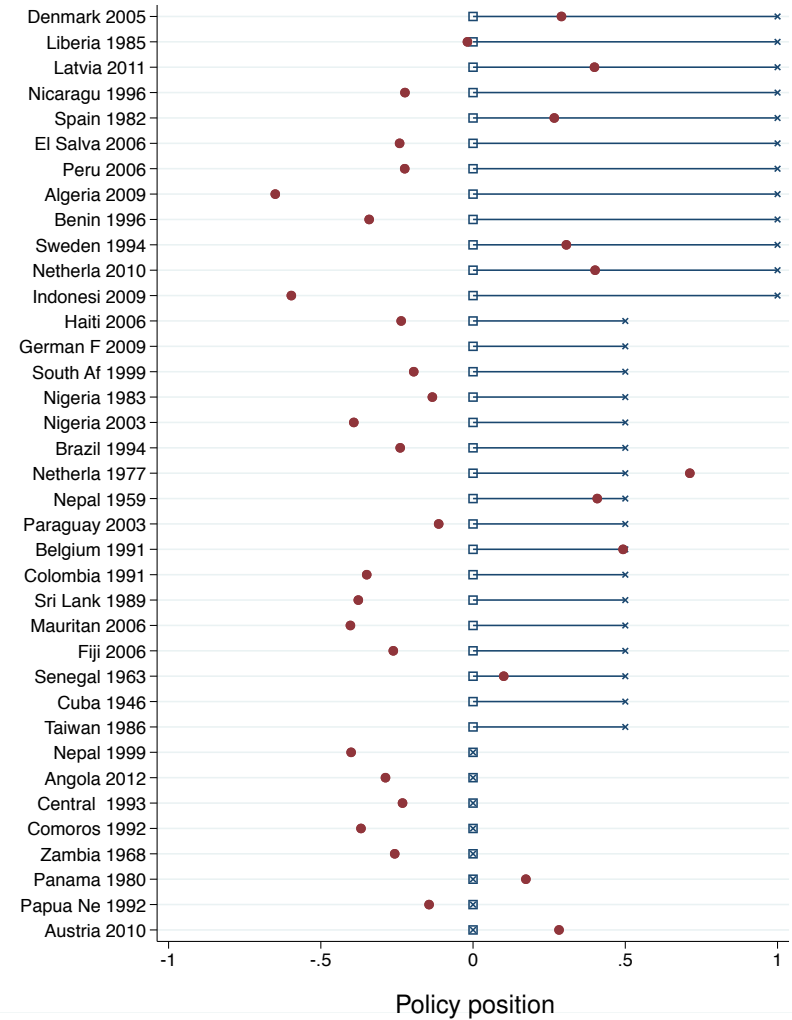
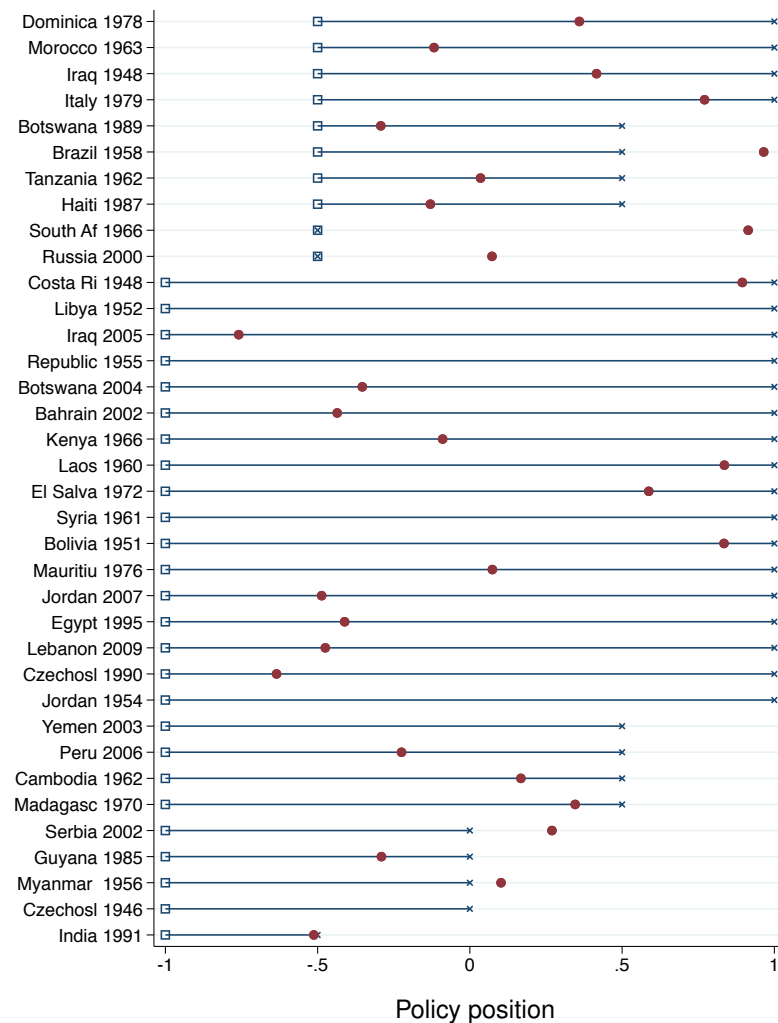
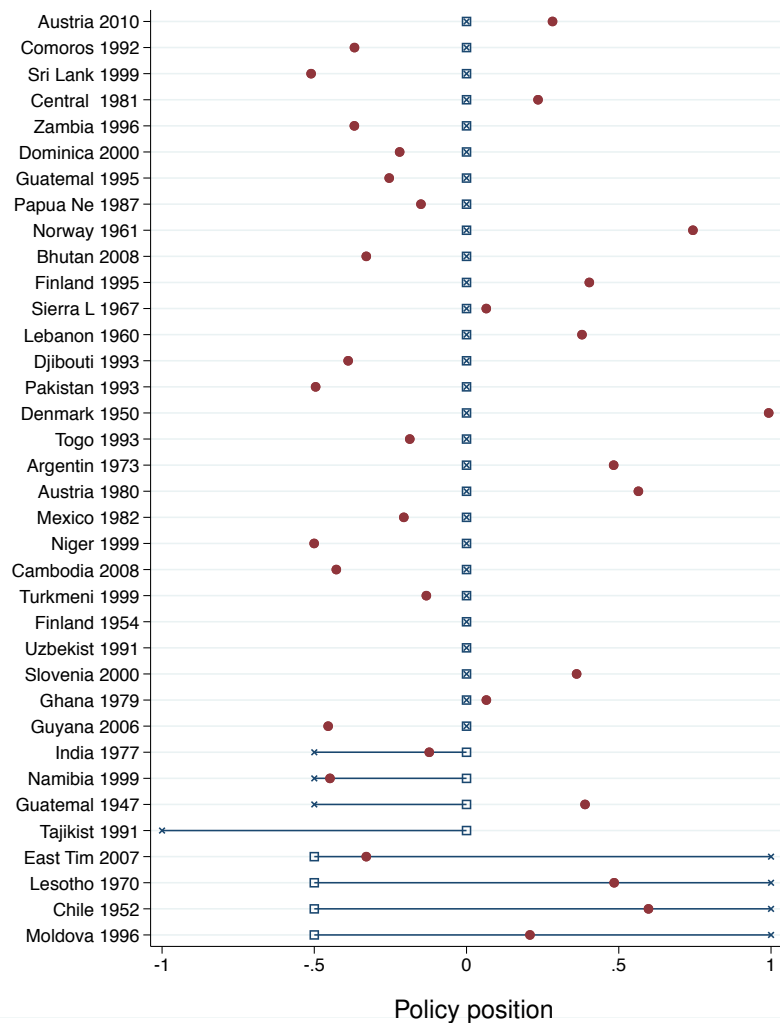


Figure H.12: Polarization in the Process-Party Data Compared to UNGA Voting Alignment (part 3/3, continued from Figure H.11)

Process-Party data: government position on cooperation with the US \times and opposition position \square [Country's UNGA voting alignment with US: \bullet]. The (length of the) black line from \times to \square represents a directed measure of polarization. Elections are sorted by the government position in the Process-Party data in descending order, and then by polarization in ascending order.

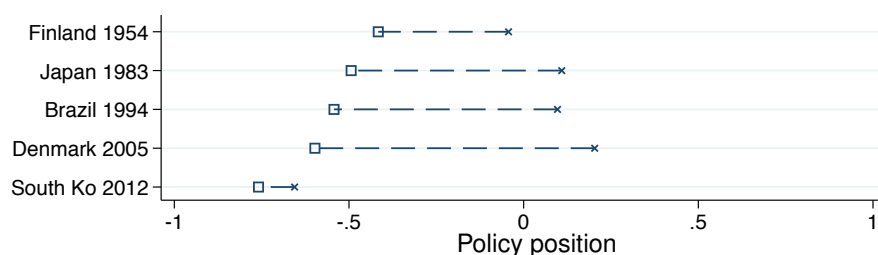


I A Measurement of Polarization Based on the Comparative Manifestos Project

Figure I.13 (cf. Figure I.15 in the Appendix for the entire available sample) shows the left-right split between the government and opposition for the countries in our sample that are also covered by the CMP dataset.⁴¹ There is reasonable variation but the overall number of available observations is low: only about 54 elections.

Figure I.13: Polarization Measurement Based on the CMP

Right-Left position of government \times and opposition \square for example countries (normalized so that left-right correspond to -1 and 1). The dashed line between \times and \square represents a directed measure of polarization based on CMP data. This Figure is an excerpt from Figure I.15 in the Appendix that shows data for all available elections.



Based on the number of overlapping cases the correlation between our measurement of friendly government position to the US on policies it cares about and the measurement of how right-wing the government is comes to 0.43, the correlation between the comparable opposition measures is 0.31, and it is 0.55 for the polarization measures derived by taking the differences of these positions in each dataset (direction and length of the line in Figure I.13). Thus, the correlation is reasonable, suggesting that left-right divisions as measured by CMP can proxy for the policy issues at stake in relations between the US and the countries covered by the US. Again, we add the caveat that this is a relatively small, and relatively special set of countries (more developed, with more stable party systems and more meaningful arraying of positions on a left-right spectrum). Figure I.14 plots the CMP polarization measurement compared to the government position measurement (right panel of Figure I.14) of the Process Party dataset as well as the polarization measurement (left panel of Figure I.14).

⁴¹For government and opposition measures we sum the left-right variable for all governing and opposition parties and we create an average based on the votes they obtained in the last election.

Figure I.14: Comparison of Process-Party Data and CMP Polarization

This graph compares the polarization measurement and the coding of the government position from the Process-Party Data with the CMP polarization measure.

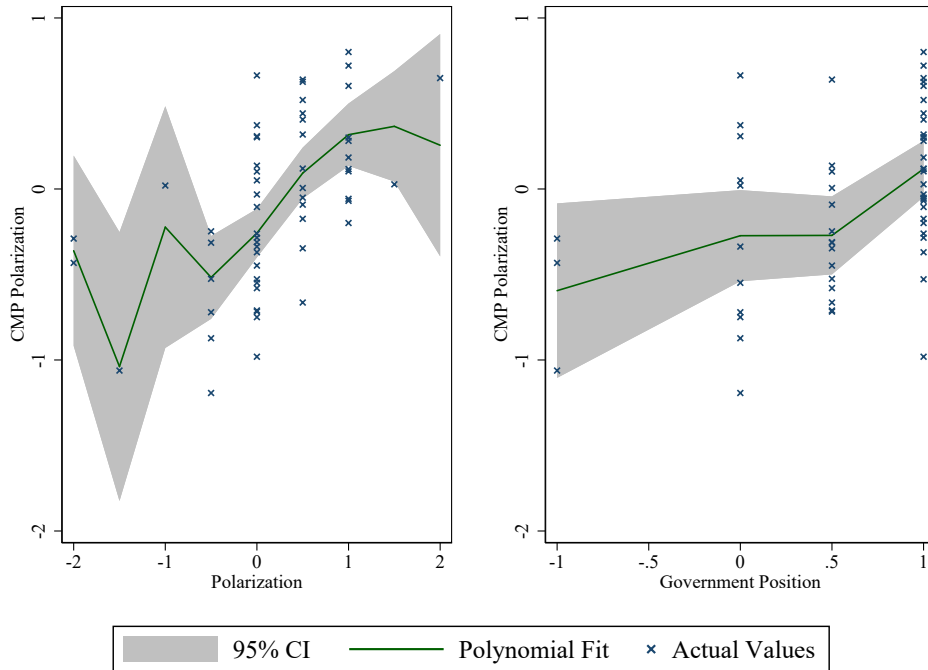


Figure I.15: Polarization Measurement Based on the CMP

Right-Left position of government x and opposition \square for available countries (normalized so that left-right correspond to -1 and 1). The dashed line between x and \square represents a directed measure of polarization.

