Revista de Comunicación Política

The connection between perceptions of media bias and influence and affective polarization: an examination in Brazil and Mexico and the United States

La conexión entre las percepciones de sesgos mediáticos y su influencia en la polarización afectiva: un examen en Brasil, México y Estados Unidos

Chau Tong
Cornell University
Orcid http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6609-9889
ctt39@cornell.edu

Haley Winckler
University of Wisconsin-Madison
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7408-8266
hwinckler@wisc.edu

Hernando Rojas
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Orcid https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0012-4041
hrojas@wisc.edu

Abstract: This study examines two types of news media-related perceptions (hostile media perceptions and third-person perceptions) and the relationship with affective polarization, or the increased partisan hostility between opposing members in Brazil, Mexico and the United States. Operationalizing affective polarization as the estimated discrepancy between members of one's own political party and those of others on certain personality traits, including intelligence, caring about the welfare of humanity, being informed, and being tolerant, we found strong and statistically significant positive correlations between each type of perception and affective polarization. In other words, thinking that the media is biased against one's own side and thinking that partisans on the other side are more susceptible to biased media influence respectively and directly associates with how one feels about adversarial partisans. The implications of these findings are discussed in relation to the prominence of perceptions of media bias and affective polarization in countries with different levels of media professionalism and party polarization.

Keywords: Brazil, Mexico, United States, public opinion, media effects, political perceptions, political attitudes, affective polarization, hostile media perception, hostile media effect, perceived media influence, third-person effect

Resumen: Este estudio examina dos tipos de percepciones relacionadas con los medios de comunicación (percepción de los medios hostiles y percepción de tercera persona) y su relación con la polarización afectiva, o la creciente hostilidad partidista entre miembros de partidos opuestos en Brasil, México y Estados Unidos. Operacionalizando la polarización afectiva como la discrepancia estimada entre los miembros del propio partido político y los de otros en ciertos rasgos de personalidad, como la inteligencia, el preocuparse por el bienestar de la humanidad, el estar informado, o el ser tolerante, encontramos correlaciones positivas fuertes y estadísticamente significativas entre dichas percepciones y la polarización afectiva. En otras palabras, pensar que los medios están sesgados en contra del propio bando y pensar que los partidarios del otro lado son más susceptibles a la influencia sesgada de los medios, se asocia directamente con lo que uno siente acerca de los que pertenecen a otros partidos. Las implicaciones de estos hallazgos se discuten en relación con la prominencia de las percepciones de sesgos mediáticos y la polarización afectiva en países con diferentes niveles de profesionalismo mediático y polarización partidista.

Palabras clave: Brasil, México, Estados Unidos, opinión pública, efectos mediáticos, percepciones políticas, actitudes políticas, polarización afectiva, percepción hostil de los medios, influencia mediática percibida, efecto de la tercera persona

Fecha de recepción: 01/03/2021
Fecha de aprobación: 23/08/2021

How to cite this paper / Cómo citar este artículo: Tong, C., Winckler, H., & Rojas, H. (2021). The Connection Between Perceptions of Media Bias and Influence and Affective Polarization - An Examination in Brazil and Mexico and the United States. *Revista de Comunicación Política*, *3*, e210301. https://doi.org/10.29105/rcp3-1

Introduction

The affordances of the current media environment are thought to foster political polarization as they facilitate content filtration, socially enabled echo chambers, and the distribution of extreme views on a historically unprecedented scale. Within political polarization studies, the examination of affective polarization, or the notion of people's dislike for those with differing political positions and partisan affiliations, has gained significant traction. This phenomenon emphasizes the "affective" and identity component of party membership as a driving factor pushing in- and out-party members apart (Iyengar et al., 2012).

Affective polarization is particularly problematic for democracy as it threatens basic notions of solidarity that are the core of democratic practices (Tong et al., 2020). If an individual considers that those in their imagined outgroup are not intelligent, tolerant, informed or don't care about the welfare of humanity, the incentives to engage those others in rational debate are diminished. Examining polarization writ large, scholars have contended that current changes to the contemporary media environment are introducing more nuanced effects to different phenomena of political polarization (Barberá, 2020; Persily & Tucker, 2020). On the one hand, social media and their mechanism of weak-tie connections have been found to facilitate cross-cutting exposure to incongruent information and interactions with different others (Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Bakshy et al., 2015, thus reducing political extremity and increasing awareness of ideological differences. On the other hand, individual and social filtering algorithms embedded in social media and digital platforms are also found to augment selective exposure to certain types of content (Flaxman et al., 2016; Prior, 2007), increase the salience of political identities and amplify hostility towards those with opposing political views (Garrett et al., 2014; Settle, 2018).

Affective polarization has been empirically examined quite extensively (and somewhat limitedly) in the context of the United States, even though the notion of unbalanced feelings for the in-groups and out-groups can be logically applied to other democracies with similar concepts of party identification. Motivated by this gap in the current literature, in this study, we propose an exploratory empirical examination into the state of affective polarization in Brazil and Mexico - two young democratic nations in Latin America with striking similarities in terms of levels of democratization, media professionalism and party polarization. Taking a comparative approach that juxtaposes these two cases alongside with the United States, we hope to theoretically explain how affective polarization vary under different conditions of political and media systems.

We also propose examining public perceptions related to the news media and fellow citizens, as well as their corresponding relationships with affective polarization. As opposed to a different line of research which focuses on the link between new media (including social media) and polarization, in this article, we focus attention on traditional news media and public perceptions of their potential bias and influence. Making theoretical connections between affective polarization, perceived media

influence (i.e. third person perceptions) and biased media perceptions (i.e. hostile media perceptions), we examine how the two types of perceptions independently and interactively correlate with the degree of affective polarization in the three countries of interest.

While the connection between feeling negatively about political opponents and perceiving the news media coverage to be biased in the opponents' favor has been well established in the context of the U.S. (Gunther, 1992, 1998), less empirical evidence has been found in Brazil and Mexico. Based on the extant literature on hostile media and third-person perceptions, we contend that negative feelings for the other side (i.e., affective polarization) can be reinforced if one perceives the media to be biased *and* having influential impact on others. There are at least two reasons for this argument: First, individuals who perceive the media to be biased and influential will ultimately consider that members of the out-groups will be swayed from the "correct" position by "biased" media and thus are more deserving of contempt. Second, perceptions of media bias and influence could increase perceptions of being threatened by a supposedly powerful entity, thus triggering negative feelings for the "out-groups" with undue favorable media treatment.

To test these propositions, we used data from a set of nationally representative surveys collected to understand the political cultures in the U.S., Brazil and Mexico. The findings are discussed in terms of the extent of the relationships between perceptions of media bias, media influence and affective polarization in different national contexts, as well as suggestions for future research.

Political Polarization

Efforts to define and assess political polarization have focused on different facets of polarization, including issue extremity, issue alignment, perceived polarization, elite polarization and affective polarization.

Initial conceptualizations of polarization were based on the increasingly prominent bimodality of public opinion distributions on several political issues (Fiorina et al., 2005; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). Under this logic, polarization implies that on possible positions for a given policy issue, less people identify with compromises in the center and instead prefer more extreme positions on either side of the issue (Abrams & Fiorina, 2012). While intuitively appealing, there has been a considerable debate on whether issue-level publics, particularly in the United States, have become more polarized over the past few decades. Scholars arguing for increased issue polarization point toward the polarization of political elites and argue that mass polarization will follow the pattern at the elite level (Druckman et al., 2013; Evans, 2003), or refer to the alignment of issue positions - the notion that partisans increasingly align with their party's position across several issues, with less partisans having cross-cutting preferences (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2005, 2008). Scholars arguing against increased issue polarization tend to focus on specific issues and how preference distributions for the most part

tend to remain stable, as well as the idea that affiliation with political parties becomes weakened over time (for a summary of this debate see Abrams & Fiorina, 2012). Issue polarization remains a major component of political polarization studies because of its relevance to democratic functioning. For example, under conditions of high polarization, when citizens are presented with opposing frames on an issue, partisans' opinion moves uniformly in the direction of the frame endorsed by their party, even if the other party's argument is stronger (Druckman et al., 2013).

Another facet of polarization is party system polarization, which refers to the "degree of ideological differentiation among political parties in a system", suggesting whether the parties would compete for the median voter or a more ideologized one (Dalton, 2008, p. 900). This dimension of polarization is argued to lead to political alignment, as the polarization at the party system level could explain the corresponding level of polarization among the elites and the public.

Finally, perceived and affective polarization are the two facets of polarization that are receiving a lot of attention, particularly in the domain of communication research. Perceived polarization refers to the evaluation by individuals about how distant social or political groups are from one another (Yang et al., 2016). Brought about by exposure to media reports about political polarization at the aggregate level, or discussions of the issue online and via social media, individuals perceiving increased polarization may come to change their conversation behaviors or become more polarized on issues (Ahler, 2014). Perceived increase in polarization could also lead to heightened dislike or distrust towards people from different social or political camps (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). This is commonly called "affective polarization" (Iyengar et al., 2012) or "psychological polarization" (Settle, 2018).

Affective polarization is prominently high in the United States, where dislike for members of the "other" party has more than doubled in the last 20 years according to Pew Research Center Report (2014). This intense dislike for people from the opposing party includes thinking their policies "are so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being", attributing negative traits to their supporters (for example, calling them selfish or lacking intelligence), and hesitating to initiate close relationships with the other side (Iyengar et al., 2012). Affective polarization has been theorized to root from considering partisan identity as a form of social group association. Due to this logic, fellow party members are viewed more positively as they are considered the "in-groups" as opposed to the "out-group" opposing party members.

Considering how party membership and identification are shared characteristics of political democratic systems, we are interested in how this identity relates to the discrepancy in partisan feelings in young but flourishing democracies like Brazil and Mexico. We further examine the hypothesis that: if politically active individuals perceive the media as biased and can sway others into a further incorrectly "biased" position, the different "others" will be condemned even more because of such supposedly negative media effects.

In the following section, we discuss the current literature on perceptions related to media, and how such perceptions relate to the levels of media professionalism in young democracies like Brazil and Mexico.

Perceptions of Media Bias

In tandem with affective polarization, perceptions of media bias have also been on the rise. The Pew Research Center (2014) data shows that, for example, in the United States trust in the news media has consistently declined. Distrust in the mainstream news media is even more pronounced among political partisans (especially those on the political right) who disproportionately use and trust partisan media outlets that align with their political beliefs. In Brazil, Ituassu et al. (2018) showed that in addition to mainstream media sharing, partisans who supported the two candidates in the 2014 presidential election shared about 40% of partisan content on Twitter, illustrating how partisan media have become prominent in the media diets of citizens and suggest the potential connections between partisan media sharing and polarization in this national context.

While the rise of partisan media might partly account for general dissatisfaction with the news (Jones, 2004), it has been well established that perceptions of media coverage and perceived slant in the opinion climate are often connected (Gunther, 1998). In other words, individuals who perceive the media to be biased against their side also estimate relatively less support for their side in the surrounding opinion environment. Cognitive biases such as negativity bias further make disagreeable content stand out in cognition and increase biased perceptions when individuals interpreting news content.

The phenomenon according to which politically involved individuals, particularly partisans, interpret neutral news as biased against their own position, was originally identified by Vallone, Ross, and Lepper (1985), and labeled as the hostile media phenomenon. This phenomenon refers to a perceptual bias by which partisans tend to perceive media coverage of an issue or group to be unfairly slanted against the group they belong to (Gunther, 1992), and has been consistently documented in the literature (Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Gunther et al., 2009; Rojas et al., 2016; Tsfati, 2007).

Schmitt et al. (2004) suggest three mechanisms that explain hostile media perceptions, including selective recall (i.e., negative information being more memorable), selective categorization (i.e., certain pieces of evidence being misinterpreted), and different standards (as to what constitutes "appropriate" evidence). In all cases, such colored interpretations result in perceiving media content as biased even when it is neutral.

It should be noted that the hostile media phenomenon is not necessarily confined to a specific nation, type of government, or media system. Evidence of biased interpretation of media content has

been documented in several countries, including Singapore (Chia et al., 2007), Israel (Tsfati, 2007), South Korea (Choi et al., 2009), Colombia (Rojas, 2010); and Switzerland (Matthes, 2011). While the hostile media phenomenon grew out of work testing reactions to specific types of media content, it has been extended to generalized evaluations of media content (see for example Barnidge & Rojas 2014), especially in national contexts where media fragmentation is generally low and the concept of partisan media is not widely applicable.

Hostile media phenomenon reflects a form of in-group bias grounded in the processes of group identity that evoke cognitive differentiation between the in-group and the outgroup (Matheson & Dursun, 2001). Affective involvement can also result in the perceptions of media bias (Matthes, 2011). This suggests that partisans or highly involved citizens often see the media as not supportive enough of their position and thus "biased" against their side.

Based on the current literature, we propose a positive correlation between affective polarization and perceptions of media bias. That is, perceptions of hostility in media content should be accompanied with the devaluation of the out-group, as partisans project that partisans on the other side must be poorly informed and malleable enough to accept the narrative of biased and "incorrect" media. Thus, we pose the following hypothesis:

H1. Perceptions of biased media will be positively related to affective polarization.

Third-person Perceptions

A closely related phenomenon to hostile media perceptions was described by Davison (1983). According to this notion, people tend to perceive greater media effects on others relative to the effects on themselves (third-person perception) and such perceptions can, in turn, evoke meaningful responses and outcomes (third-person effects). The basic underlying idea is that because negative media content is perceived to have more effects on others (particularly more distant others), anticipating such effects makes individuals respond in certain ways, hence an indirect effect on their own (McLeod et al., 2001).

Differential estimates of media effects on others have been systematically established (see for example Cohen et al., 1988; Price et al., 1998; Perloff, 1999 for a review) and the effects of such discrepant perceptions have been found to relate to pro-censorship attitudes (McLeod et al., 1997), compliance (Gunther et al., 2006), defiance (Tsfati & Cohen, 2005), withdrawal (Tewksbury et al., 2004), and corrective action (Rojas, 2010).

At the basis of these findings is a social distance corollary (Cohen et al., 1988; Duck & Mullin, 1995) according to which the perceived similarity, familiarity, and identification of in- and out-groups play a role in individuals' perceptions of who are affected and how severely affected they are by media

content. If the mere membership to a meaningless group (i.e., "Group A" and "Group B") leads to actions directed at favoring the members of the in-group against the members of the out-group (Billig & Tajfel, 1973), it is expected that with political affiliation as a social group designation, the presumed effects on the out-group are even stronger.

Thus, there should be a positive relationship between perceptions of media influence and affective polarization. In other words, perceiving that others are more susceptible to biased media messages (compared to the self) might be enough for partisans to discern an intellectual gap between themselves (and people like them) and those from the opposition. Thus, perception of media influence implies that one would see out-party members as being less informed and more misguided by media messages. We propose that assumptions about "greater" media influence on others can activate concerns about the possible consequences of such media on others as well as one's evaluations of them. Accordingly, we pose the following hypothesis:

H2. Third-person perceptions of media effects will be positively related to affective polarization.

As hostile media perceptions generate concerns about the public being swayed from the "correct" position and third-person perceptions refer to the implied evaluations of the effects of negative content, these two perceptions are closely related. Thus, we also examine whether hostile media perceptions or third-person perceptions are more consistent predictors of affective polarization and if there is an interaction effect between them. The following research questions are posed:

RQ1: Between biased media perceptions and third person perceptions, which are the more consistent predictor of affective political polarization?

RQ2: Do biased media perceptions and third person perceptions interact to amplify their potential effect on affective political polarization?

In the following, we introduce our rationale for choosing Brazil and Mexico as the two cases to consider alongside the United States.

Context or Rationale for Comparison

While previous research has extensively studied media perceptions and important political outcomes, including affective polarization in the United States and other developed Western democracies, significantly less attention has been paid to other young democracies. This lack of scholarly attention prevents the ability to explore the extent to which these phenomena occur, prevail and interact in other socio-political conditions.

Media system and public perceptions of the media

The Latin American media environment has transformed over different phrases of history, from the dominance of political power over public communication through investments in the 1940s, to the emergence of media commercialization and concentration in the 1990s, to the current state of moderate political democratization (Matos, 2012). In thriving democracies like Brazil and Mexico, despite market expansion and democratization, the media systems are still heavily influenced by pressures from external interests, namely the Church and elected politicians. Compared to their neighbors in the region, Brazil and Mexico have stronger broadcasting systems, lower media concentration and higher diversity (Matos, 2011).

Historically, due to the conservative control over the media, political news coverage tends to be more biased against left-wing candidates than right-wing candidates. The rise of commercial media, the "left turns" in politics and the rise of populist presidents, however, introduce new complexities and conflicts to the relationships between the media and the government. For example, research noted how some media, e.g., those owned by businesses with conservative interests, are more motivated to exercise the watchdog function than other types of media (Boas, 2013). Others noted how this watchdog function is overthrown when the media play a hand in conspiring against democracy (in Brazil, see Albuquerque, 2019; Paulino & Guazina, 2020). In Mexico, the media and telecommunication markets are characterized as one of the most concentrated ones in the world (Huerta-Wong & Gómez García, 2013), and controlled by key enterprises such as Televisa, who often benefit from deregulation and investment through foreign capital. The long-term connection between commercial forces and politicians affected the tone of news coverage especially in the 1980s, which was mostly empathetic towards the president and the government. However, with politicians owning regional media and media executives running for office seats, this dynamic becomes more complex (for Mexico, see more works such as Márquez-Ramírez, 2014; Márquez-Ramírez & Guerrero, 2014; Gómez García & Treré, 2014).

Brazil and Mexico both have a moderate level of media professionalization (score of 32.6 and 49.3 respectively) ("Word Press Freedom Index", 2016). According to Hallin and Mancini (2004)'s media typologies, the press media in both systems are still highly dependent on state subsidies and considered to be at the service of local oligarchs who use the media to solidify political control (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). There is a conflicting sentiment towards the news media in these systems, where citizens increasingly consider the media as one of the institutions with the most positive influence on national development (Vice & Chwe, 2017), although in some cases, trust in news media is not very high (Horowitz, 2013).

Party system and polarization

The politics of Brazil and Mexico both take place in a framework of a federal presidential representative democratic republic, where the President is head of state and head of government. The government is based on a congressional multi-party system politics. Party identification among the public in Brazil and Mexico is still weak and party competition is not yet fully open (McCann & Lawson, 2003). The level of party system polarization in these two countries is highly unstable across elections (see Dalton, 2008, 2017). In the past, larger parties used to dominate the political landscape (particularly Partido dos Trabalhadores, Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira and Partido Socialista Brasileiro in Brazil and Partido Revolucionario Institucional –PRI, Partido de la Acción Nacional –PAN, and Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional -MORENA in Mexico). However, what was observed during the 2018 Brazilian presidential election suggested a divergence from this trend, when Jair Bolsonaro, who then affiliated with Partido Social Liberal PSL (a small and lesser known party), competed against candidates from major parties and eventually won the presidency. Run-off competitions between major parties are likely to continue to be a feature of high-stake elections in the foreseeable future.

In Mexico, political polarization was less intense than in Brazil (according to data from Reuters Institute 2016). Current research also notes a growing disenchantment among the public with the leadership of major parties (Cuddington & Wike, 2015; Barthel & Mitchell, 2017). There were numerous cases of politicians and public figures being removed from positions due to corruption scandals. Due to this reason, the public had low confidence in the government and negative feelings for members of political parties who are constantly in direct opposition (Weitz-Shapiro & Winters, 2016; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

Comparison with the US

The US was identified in the Hallin and Mancini (2004)'s typology as belonging to the "liberal" group, high level of media professionalism. The politics of the US is also distinct from the other two countries because of the domination of the two major political parties in the democratic processes. These parties (Democratic and Republican) distance themselves ideologically at both the elite and electorate level (Webster & Abramowitz, 2017).

There are widespread perceptions, among the American right, that the mainstream news media has a "liberal bias". This narrative has been presented and reinforced by conservative politicians as well as conservative media sector. The notion of media bias, thus, are pervasive. With the increased media fragmentation and the rise of digital media outlets, public trust in the general quality of information has also decreased consistently (Pew Research Center, 2009). It is, thus, expected that the levels of affective polarization in the US, as well as perceptions of biased media will be higher than those in Brazil and Mexico. In the following, we describe our data collection process and sample as well as the measures of the variables of interest.

Methods

Samples

Data were collected between April and June of 2016 using online survey panels administered by Survey Sampling International (SSI). The sample was designed to reflect the population of adults (age 18+) in Brazil, Mexico and the United States. SSI uses a two-stage sampling process. First, subjects are randomly selected from each country's online panel constructed along geographic and demographic parameters. Next, subjects are presented with profiling questions to create a final sample that is balanced regarding certain demographics: age, gender and education.

The Brazilian dataset was completed between June 22 and June 26, 2016 and contains 520 complete responses; 14 responses were discarded due to excessive missing responses. The sample reflects well the Brazilian adult population in terms of gender (sample: 49% males; census[1] 48.5% males). In terms of age our sample is slightly younger than the population (sample: 18 to 39 years old 54%, 40 to 64 years old 34%, and 65 and over 12%; census 18 to 39 years old 46%, 40 to 64 years old 41%, 65 and over 13%), in terms of race more white than the general population (sample: white 56%; census 45%) and in terms of educational level significantly more educated than the general population (sample: did not complete high school 5.2%, high school and/or some college 52%, completed college 43%; census data: did not complete high school 56%, high school and/or some college 30%, completed college 14%).

The Mexican dataset was completed between April 11 and April 15, 2016 and contains 510 complete responses; 17 responses were discarded due to excessive missing responses. The sample reflects well the Mexican adult population in terms of gender (sample: 47% males; census[2] 49% males). In terms of age our sample is slightly younger than the population (sample: 18 to 39 years old 56%, 40 to 59 years old 32%, and 60 and over 13%; census 18 to 39 years old 51%, 40 to 59 years old 33%, 60 and over 16%), in terms of race our sample is less white than the general population (sample: white 13%; population[3] 17%) and in terms of educational level significantly more educated than the general population (sample: did not complete high school 2%, high school and/or some college 37%, completed college 61%; census data: did not complete high school 44%, high school and/or some college 47%, completed college 9%).

The United Sates dataset was completed between April 5 and April 10, 2016 and contains 514 complete responses; 10 responses were discarded due to excessive missing responses. The sample

[1] Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/condicaodevida/indicadoresminimos/sinteseindicsociais2016/default_tab_xls.shtm) describes 2016 Brazilian population estimates.
[2] Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (http://www.inegi.org.mx/) provides description of Mexican population estimates.
[3] INEGI, official Mexican statistics bureau, does not collect race information. This population estimate is based on less formal sources (https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demograf%C3%ADa_de_M%C3%A9xico).

reflects well the U.S. adult population in terms of gender (sample: 48% males; census[4] 49% males), age (sample: 18 to 44 years old 46%, 45 to 64 years old 38%, and 65 and over 16%; census 18 to 44 years old 48%, 45 to 64 years old 35%, 65 and over 17%), educational level (sample: did not complete high school 10%, high school and/or some college 53%, college 37%; census data: did not complete high school 11.6%, high school and/or some college 55.9, completed college 32.5%), and race (sample: white 78%; census 77%).

Measurement

Survey instruments were originally written in English. Then using back translation techniques, a Spanish and Portuguese version were developed.

Affective polarization, our core criterion variable, was measured using four items that asked whether they would describe people who vote for a political party as "intelligent," "ignorant and misguided," "intolerant," and interested in "the welfare of humanity." Subsequently, survey respondents had to answer parallel questions for major political parties in their country (Brazil: *Partido dos Trabalhadores -PT,* Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira –PSDB and Partido Socialista Brasileiro –PSB); Mexico: Partido Revolucionario Institucional –PRI, Partido de la Acción Nacional –PAN, and Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional -MORENA; United States: Democratic Party and Republican Party). In the United States, for each dimension of polarization, the gaps in the scores given to members of each party were coded as one (e.g., members of one party are more intelligent than members of the other party), whereas a lack of discrepancy (e.g., everyone is intelligent, or no one is intelligent) was coded as zero. In Brazil and Mexico, the gaps in the scores given to members of each party were averaged. The resulting variable for each individual then can range from zero (no discrepancies) to four (a discrepancy on every characteristic). For descriptive information on affective polarization see Table 1.

Third-person perceptions. Perceived media influence on others was measured by subtracting the degree of agreement with "The media have a lot of influence on my own opinion" from the statement "The media have a lot of influence in the opinion of people" (0: strong disagreement, 5: strong agreement). A positive value (from 1 to 5) indicated strong perceived media influence on others.

Perceptions of media bias. Respondents were asked to place their political ideology and the ideology of the mainstream media on a scale where 0 is the left, 5 is the center and 10 the right. The ideology discrepancy is calculated by subtracting one score from the other and taking the absolute value that indicates a perceived gap between one's own ideology and the mainstream media ideology (a similar method was used in other studies, for example, Rojas, 2010).

[4] United States Census Bureau QuickFacts (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/) describes US population estimates as of July 1, 2016.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis

	United States (*N* = 514)		Brazil (*N* = 520)		Mexico (*N* = 511)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Gender	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Age	45.9	16.0	40.8	15.7	40.0	14.6
Education	6.0	1.3	6.1	1.3	6.6	1.1
Income	2.7	1.4	3.2	1.1	2.8	1.3
Political interest	3.1	1.7	3.4	1.7	2.9	1.6
Partisanship	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5
Media use	2.9	1.2	3.7	1.1	3.3	1.1
Political talk	1.4	1.0	1.9	1.0	1.5	0.9
Perceptions of media bias	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.5
Third-person perceptions	1.8	1.7	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.7
Affective Polarization	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.1

Control variables:

Party ID. Party identification was measured from a single item asking respondents to indicate if they were a supporter or lean towards any particular political party. In the US survey, respondents placed their party preference on a 7-point scales (1: strong Republican, 7: strong Democrat). This was transformed into a dummy variable, with 0 indicating respondents identifying as independents and 1 indicating respondents identifying as a member of the Republican or Democratic party. In the other three countries subjects were asked if they identified with one of the main parties. A dummy variable was created in which 0 signifies no identification and 1 identifying with a one of the mainstream parties.

Political interest. Political interest was measured by asking respondents how interested they were in national politics on a scale ranging from 0 “not at all,” to 5 “a lot.”

Political talk. Frequency of political conversation was measured with a single item asking how frequently respondents talk about public affairs to other people on a 4-point scale ranging from “never” to “nearly every day.”

News media use. Respondents answered questions about their use of different media outlets including national daily newspapers, regional or local newspapers, national television news, regional television news, online news and social media news on six-point scales ranging from “never” to “frequently.” These items were averaged to create an index of news media use in each country (Cronbach’s alpha for Brazil .81; for Mexico .78; and for the United States .77).

Results

Before formally testing our hypotheses, a series of one-sample t-tests was conducted to examine the prominence of third-person perceptions, hostile media perceptions and affective polarization in each country. The results show that the means of each variable are statistically different from zero.

Third-person perceptions were common in all three countries: Brazil (M = 2.0, SD = 1.7, t = 26.64, p < .001); Mexico (M = 2.0, SD = 1.7, t = 25.93, p < .001); and the United States (M = 1.8, SD = 1.7, t = 24.64, p < .001).

In the same fashion, hostile media perceptions were recurrent in: Brazil (M = 2.0, SD = 2.5, t = 18.09, p < .001); Mexico (M = 2.3, SD = 2.5, t = 21.59, p < .001); and the United States (M = 1.2, SD = 1.4, t = 18.91, p < .001).

With regard to our criterion variable, affective polarization, we also find significant values in all countries: Brazil (M = 1.3, SD = 1.2, t = 24.14, p < .001); Mexico (M = 1.3, SD = 1.1, t = 26.22, p < .001); and the United States (M = 1.7, SD = 1.4, t = 27.05, p < .001).

To formally test our expectations, we performed a series of OLS regressions predicting affective polarization. In the analyses, demographics, media use patterns, political predispositions including political talk and political interest were included as control variables; then hostile media perceptions and third person perceptions were put in as separate blocks. To answer research question 2, we tested a possible interaction between hostile and third person perceptions, but it was not significant in any of the countries considered and thus results of the interaction block are omitted. In the three countries, we run separate models with identical variables.

Table 2. OLS Models Predicting Affective Polarization in Brazil

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender (Male = 1)	0.04	0.04	0.03
Age	0.08	0.08	0.07
Education	0.06	0.05	0.05
Income	0.10*	0.09	0.09
Political interest	0.13**	0.12*	0.11*
Partisanship	0.18***	0.18***	0.19***
Media use	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03
Political talk	0.03	0.03	0.04
Perceptions of media bias		0.10*	0.09*
Third-person perceptions			0.06
Incremental R^2		0.9%	0.3%
Total R^2	11.3%***	12.2%**	12.5%

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. N = 520. Significance at: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Table 3. OLS Models Predicting Affective Polarization in Mexico

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender (Male = 1)	0.09*	0.09*	0.09*
Age	0.07	0.07	0.07
Education	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04
Income	0.01	0.00	0.00
Political interest	0.12*	0.11*	0.11*
Partisanship	0.12**	0.14**	0.14**
Media use	0.05	0.05	0.05
Political talk	0.06	0.06	0.06
Perceptions of media bias		0.12**	0.12**
Third-person perceptions			0.01
Incremental R^2		1.4%	0.0%
Total R^2	7.0%***	8.4%***	8.4%

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. $N = 511$. Significance at: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In the Brazilian sample, political interest (β = .13, $p < .01$) and party identification (β = .18, $p < .001$) are significantly and positively related with evaluations of out-party members as more ignorant, misguided, less intelligent and less interested in general welfare. Perceptions of media bias is also significant (β = .09, $p < .05$), indicating that hostile media perceptions increase one's level of negative partisan affect. Third person perceptions were not related to affective polarization.

Table 4. OLS Models Predicting Affective Polarization in the United States

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender (Male = 1)	.02	.02	.01
Age	.04	.04	.02
Education	.02	.00	.00
Income	-.01	-.01	.00
Political interest	.13*	.11*	.09
Partisanship	.19***	.18***	.19***
Media use	.00	.02	.04
Political talk	.11**	.08	.08
Perceptions of media bias		.21***	.19***
Third-person perceptions			.15***
Incremental R^2		4.3%	2.3%
Total R^2	10.3%***	14.6%***	16.9%***

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. $N = 514$. Significance at: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In Mexico, there was a positive association between political interest (β = .11, p <.05) and party identification (β = .14, p < .05) with affective polarization. A perception of media bias was also significant (β = .12, p < .001).

In the United States, political interest (β = .13, p < .05), party identification (β = .19, p < .001), and political talk (β = .11, p < .05) are significant upon entry, with party identification (β = .19, p < .001) remaining significant in the final model. Perceptions of media bias (β = .19, p < .001) and third-person perceptions (β = .15, p < .001) significantly predicted affective polarization.

Discussion

Overall, our findings provide support for our expectation that perceptions of media bias (H1) and, to some extent, third-person perceptions (H2) positively correlate with affective polarization. In the three countries (Brazil, Mexico, and the United States), perceptions of media bias are significantly related to affective polarization. However, only in the United States, both perceptions of media bias and third-person perceptions are related with affective polarization.

Unsurprisingly, party identification is the most consistent predictor of affective polarization in the three countries considered, but our findings provide evidence that beyond party identification, perceptions about media content and how such content is perceived to influence others, also matter.

As one of our research questions, we sought to elucidate whether perceptions of media bias or third-person perceptions were more consistent predictor of affective polarization. The results suggest that perception of media bias seem to be the more stable predictor, with significant results in three out of the three countries considered. We also pondered whether both perceptions would interact, amplifying their effect on affective polarization, but did not find a significant interaction in any of the cases. This might be due to the close relation between these two perceptions, i.e., third-person effects occur when information is considered undesirable, as in biased media, and perceptions of biases have been related to fears that neutral "others" would be swayed by the "incorrect" information, thus considering media to be influential on others.

The most significant contribution of this paper is providing evidence that in fact perceptions of media bias and third-person perceptions do relate with affective polarization. This finding is particularly significant in a new communication environment in which perceptions of media bias and affective polarization are on the rise. Our country results also follow an interesting pattern: In the United States, the country in our study with the highest levels of affective polarization and the lowest gap between one's own position and the position of the mainstream media, perceptions explain close to 7% of change in levels of affective polarization, while in Brazil and Mexico they explain 1.2% and 1.4% respectively.

So, in the United States, a country with higher levels of journalistic professionalism and moderate party system polarization, the perception of bias in media and their influence is extremely important in predicting affective polarization, while in Brazil and Mexico, with lower media professionalism and higher party system polarization, their impact, while significant, is less powerful. One could argue that in Brazil and Mexico, as media professionalism is lower, the perception of bias is "accurately" higher and thus more extended, which in turns makes it less of an explanatory factor, while in the U.S., as actual professionalism is higher, having the perception of bias becomes a central aspect resulting in affective polarization.

Some limitations of our study are the cross-sectional nature of our design and the limited number of countries that do not allow for formal multilevel testing. It is plausible that people who are more affectively polarized also see media as more biased against them. However, if affective polarization leads to perceiving media bias and not the other way around, as we posit, it is hard to understand why in the U.S., where we have the highest levels of affective polarization, we have the lowest levels of perceived bias. The pattern of perceived media biased in our results and journalistic professionalism ("World Press Freedom Index", 2016), suggests to us that there is a relation between potential bias and perceived bias, in that in systems where the perception of bias is less tied to actual bias, its explanatory potential on affective polarization is higher. Further research that is experimental or longitudinal in nature is warranted to sort the thrust of the causal influence. In the same vein, research that incorporates a higher number of countries is also desirable to allow for more formal testing of system level variables. Another limitation of the study is that the samples from both Brazil and Mexico had a higher level of education compared to the general public. This could potentially lead to overestimating the level of affective polarization in these nations, as well as the extent of biased perceptions related to the media. The findings presented here thus might not accurately represent the opinion of the general public.

Nevertheless, based on the results of this study, we are convinced that exploring the role of media perceptions with respect to affective polarization, poses a fruitful path for the expansion of the literature concerned with the impact of media perceptions, as well as expands our understanding of the factors at play in an increasingly affectively polarized world.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

Abramowitz, A., & Saunders, K. (2005). Why Can't We All Just Get Along? The Reality of a Polarized America. *The Forum, 3*(2), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.2202/1540-8884.1076

Abramowitz, A., & Saunders, K. (2008). Is Polarization a Myth? *The Journal of Politics, 70,* 542–555. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608080493

Abrams, S. J., & Fiorina, M. P. (2012). "The Big Sort" That Wasn't: A Skeptical Reexamination. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 45,* 203–210. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096512000017

Ahler, D. J. (2014). Self-fulfilling Misperceptions of Public Polarization. *The Journal of Politics, 76,* 607–620. doi:10.1017/S0022381614000085

Albuquerque, A. (2019). Protecting democracy or conspiring against it? Media and politics in Latin America: A glimpse from Brazil. Journalism, 20(7), 906–923. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917738376

Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348, 1130–1132. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa1160

Barberá, P. (2020). Social media, echo chambers, and political polarization. In N. Persily & J. Tucker (Eds.), *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field and Prospects for Reform*. Cambridge University Press.

Barnidge, M., & Rojas, H. (2014). Hostile media perceptions, presumed media influence, and political talk: Expanding the corrective action hypothesis. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26, 135–156. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edt032

Barthel, M., & Mitchell, A. (2017). *American's Attitudes about the News Media Deeply Divided along Partisan Lines*. Pew Research Center. http://www.journalism.org/2017/05/10/americans-attitudes-about-the-news-media-deeply-divided-along-partisan-lines/pj_2017-05-10_media-attitudes_a-07/

Billig, M., & Tajfel, H. (1973). Social categorization and similarity in intergroup behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 3,* 27–52. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420030103

Boas, T. (2013). Mass media and politics in Latin America. *Constructing democratic governance in Latin America*, 48-77. http://people.bu.edu/tboas/media_LA.pdf

Chia, S. C., Yong, S. Y. J, Wong, Z. W. D, & Koh, W. L. (2007). Personal Bias or Government Bias? Testing the Hostile Media Effect in a Regulated Press System. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 19,* 313–330. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edm011

Choi, J., Yang, M., & Chang, J. (2009). Elaboration of the Hostile Media Phenomenon. *Communication Research, 36,* 54–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650208326462

Cohen, J., Mutz, D., Price, V., & Gunther, A. (1988). Perceived Impact of Defamation: An Experiment on Third-Person Effects. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 52, 161–173. https://doi.org/10.1086/269092

Cuddington, D., & Wike, R. (2015). *Declining Ratings for Mexico's Pena Nieto*. Pew Research Center. http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/08/27/declining-ratings-for-mexicos-pena-nieto/

Dalton, R. J. (2008). The Quantity and the Quality of Party Systems: Party System Polarization, Its Measurement, and Its Consequences. *Comparative Political Studies, 41,* 899–920. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414008315860.

Dalton, R. J. (2017). *Party System Polarization Index for CSES Modules 1-4*. http://www.cses.org/datacenter/usercommunity3/usercommunity3.htm

Davison, W. (1983). The Third-Person Effect in Communication. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 47,* 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1086/268763

Druckman, J., Peterson, E., & Slothuus, R. (2013). How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation. *American Political Science Review, 107,* 57–79. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000500

Duck, J. M., & Mullin, B. (1995). The perceived impact of the mass media: Reconsidering the third person effect. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 25,* 77–93. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420250107

Evans, J. H. (2003). Have Americans Attitudes Become More Polarized? An Update. *Social Science Quarterly, 84,* 71–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6237.8401005

Fiorina, M. P., & Abrams, S. J. (2008). Political Polarization in the American Public. *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 563–588. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.153836

Fiorina, M. P., Abrams, S. J., & Pope, J. (2005). *Culture Wars? The Myth of Polarized America*. Pearson Longman.

Flaxman, S., Goel. S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Online News Consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 80,* 298–320. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfw006

Garrett, R., Gvirsman, S. D., Johnson, B. K., Tsfati, Y., Neo, R., & Dal, A. (2014). Implications of Pro and Counter-attitudinal Information Exposure for Affective Polarization. *Human Communication Research, 40,* 309–332. https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12028

Gil de Zuniga, H., & Valenzuela, S. (2011). The mediating path to a stronger citizenship: Online and offline networks, weak ties, and civic engagement. *Communication Research, 38*(3), 397–421. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210384984

Giner-Sorolla, R., & Chaiken, S. (1994). The Causes of Hostile Media Judgments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 30,* 165–180. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1994.1008

Gómez García, R., & Treré, E. (2014). The # YoSoy132 movement and the struggle for media democratization in Mexico. *Convergence, 20*(4), 496–510. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856514541744

Guerrero, M., & Márquez-Ramírez, M. (2014). *Media systems and communication policies in Latin America*. Springer.

Gunther, A. (1992). Biased Press or Biased Public? Attitudes Toward Media Coverage of Social Groups. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 56,* 147–167. https://doi.org/10.1086/269308

Gunther, A. (1998). The Persuasive Press Inference: Effects of Mass Media on Perceived Public Opinion. *Communication Research, 25*, 486–504. https://doi.org/10.1177/009365098025005002

Gunther, A., Bolt, D., Borzekowski, D., Liebhart, J., & Price, J. (2006). Presumed Influence on Peer Norms: How Mass Media Indirectly Affect Adolescent Smoking. *Journal of Communication, 56,* 52–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00002.x

Gunther, A., Miller, N., & Liebhart, J. L. (2009). Assimilation and Contrast in a Test of the Hostile Media Effect. *Communication Research, 36,* 747–764. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650209346804

Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, D., & Papathanassopoulos, S. (2002). Political Clientelism and the Media: Southern Europe and Latin America in Comparative Perspective. *Media, Culture & Society, 24,* 175–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344370202400202

Horowitz, J. M. (2013). *Dissatisfaction in Brazil, Despite Positive Views of the Economy*. Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/21/dissatisfaction-in-brazil-despite-positive-views-of-the-economy/

Huerta-Wong, J. E., & Gómez García, R. (2013). Concentration and diversity of the media and telecommunications in Mexico. *Communication and Society*, (19), 113–152. https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v0i19.206

Ituassu, A., Lifschitz, S., Capone, L., Vaz, M. B., & Mannheimer, V. (2018). Sharing Media and Electoral Preference on Twitter: Analysis of Public Opinion during the 2014 Elections in Brazil. *Palabra Clave*, 21(3), 860–884. https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2018.21.3.9

Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, Not Ideology. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 76,* 405–431. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfs038

Jones, D. A. (2004). Why Americans Don't Trust the Media: A Preliminary Analysis. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 9*(2), 60–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/1081180X04263461

Levendusky, M., & Malhotra, N. (2016). Does Media Coverage of Partisan Polarization Affect Political Attitudes? *Political Communication,* 33, 283–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1038455

Márquez-Ramírez, M. (2014). Post-Authoritarian Politics in a Neoliberal Era: Revising media and journalism transition in Mexico. In M. A. Guerrero & M. Márquez Ramírez (Eds.), *Media Systems and Communication Policies in Latin America* (pp. 272–292). Palgrave Macmillan.

Márquez-Ramírez, M., & Guerrero, M. A. (2014). Introduction: Media Systems in the Age of (Anti) Neoliberal Politics. In M. Guerrero & M. Márquez-Ramírez (Eds.), *Media Systems and Communication Policies in Latin America* (pp. 1–23). Palgrave Macmillan.

Matheson, K. & Dursun, S. (2001). Social Identity Precursors to the Hostile Media Phenomenon: Partisan Perceptions of Coverage of the Bosnian Conflict. *Group Processes Intergroup Relations, 4,* 116–125. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430201004002003

Matthes, J. (2011). The Affective Underpinnings of Hostile Media Perceptions. *Communication Research, 40,* 360–387. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211420255

Matos, C. (2011). Media and democracy in Brazil. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 8*(1), 178–196. https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.180

Matos, C. (2012). *Media and politics in Latin America: globalization, democracy and identity* (Vol. 52). IB Tauris.

McCann, J. A., & Lawson, C. H. (2003). An Electorate Adrift? Public Opinion and the Quality of Democracy in Mexico. *Latin American Research Review, 38*(3), 60–81.

McLeod, D. M., Detenber, B. H., & Eveland, W. P. (2001). Behind the Third-Person Effect: Differentiating Perceptual Processes for Self and Other. *Journal of Communication, 51*(4), 678–695. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2001.tb02902.x

Mcleod, D. M., Eveland, W. P., & Nathanson, A. I. (1997). Support for Censorship of Violent and Misogynic Rap Lyrics. *Communication Research, 24,* 153–174. https://doi.org/10.1177/009365097024002003

Paulino, F. O., & Guazina, L. S. (2020). The Brazilian Media System in a Turbulent Environment. In D. K. Thussu & K. Nordenstreng (Eds.), *BRICS Media: Reshaping the Global Communication Order*. Routledge.

Persily, N., & Tucker, J. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field and Prospects for Reform*. Cambridge University Press.

Perloff, R. M. (1999). The Third-person Effect: A Critical Review and Synthesis. *Media Psychology, 1,* 353–378. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532785xmep0104_4

Pew Research Center (2009). *Public Evaluations of the News Media: 1885-2009. Press Accuracy Ratings Hit Two-decade Low*. http://www.people-press.org/2009/09/13/press-accuracy-rating-hits-two-decade-low/

Pew Research Center (2014). *Political Polarization in the American Public*. http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/

Price, V., Tewksbury, D., & Huang, L-N. (1998). Third-Person effects on publication of a holocaust-Denial advertisement. *Journal of Communication, 48*(2), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1998.tb02745.x

Prior, M. (2007). *Post-broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge University Press.

World Press Freedom Index (2016). Retrieved 31 August 2021, from https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2016

Rojas, H. (2010). "Corrective" Actions in the Public Sphere: How Perceptions of Media Effects Shape Political Behaviors. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 22,* 343–363. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edq018

Rojas, H., Barnidge, M., & Abril, E. P. (2016). Egocentric publics and corrective action. *Communication and the Public*, *1,* 27–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047315619421

Schmitt, K., Gunther, A. C., & Liebhart, J. L. (2004). Why Partisans See Mass Media as Biased. *Communication Research, 31,* 623–641. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650204269390

Settle, J. E. (2018). *Frenemies: How social media polarizes America*. Cambridge University Press.

Tewksbury, D., Moy, P., & Weis, D. S. (2004). Preparations for Y2K: Revisiting the Behavioral Component of the Third-Person Effect. *Journal of Communication, 54*(1), 138–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02618.x

Tong, C., Gill, H., Li, J., Valenzuela, S., & Rojas, H. (2020). "Fake News Is Anything They Say!"—Conceptualization and Weaponization of Fake News among the American Public. *Mass Communication and Society*, 23(5), 755-778. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2020.1789661

Tsfati, Y. (2007). Hostile Media Perceptions, Presumed Media Influence, and Minority Alienation: The Case of Arabs in Israel. *Journal of Communication, 57*(4), 632–651. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00361.x

Tsfati, Y., & Cohen, J. (2005). The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Democratic Legitimacy: The Case of Gaza Settlers. *Communication Research, 32,* 794–821. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650205281057

Vallone, R., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1985). The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 49*, 577–585. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.49.3.577

Vice, M., & Chwe, H. (2017). *Mexican Views of the U.S. Turn Sharply Negative: Widespread Dissatisfaction with Economy and Political Leaders*. Pew Research Center. http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/09/14/mexican-views-of-the-u-s-turn-sharply-negative/pg_2017-09-14_mexico_0-03/

Yang, J., Rojas, H., Wojcieszak, M., Aalberg, T., Coen, S., Curran, J., Hayashi, K., Iyengar, S., Jones, P., Mazzoleni, G., Papathanassopoulos, S., Rhee, J., Rowe, D., Soroka, S., & Tiffen, R. (2016). Why Are "Others" So Polarized? Perceived Political Polarization and Media Use in 10 Countries. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 21,* 349–367. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12166

Weitz-Shapiro, R., & Winters, M.S. (2016). Can Citizens Discern? Information Credibility, Political Sophistication, and the Punishment of Corruption in Brazil. *Journal of Politics, 79*(1), 60–74. https://doi.org/10.1086/687287

Winters, M.S. & Weitz-Shapiro, R. (2014). Partisan Protesters and Nonpartisan Protests in Brazil. *Journal of Politics in Latin America, 6*(1), 137–50.

Webster, S., & Abramowitz, A. (2017). The Ideological Foundations of Affective Polarization in the U.S. Electorate. *American Politics Research, 45*(4), 621–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X17703132