

Summary

Conservatives identifying as strong Republicans are more likely than liberals/strong Democrats to choose a "strong leader" over democracy, justify political violence, plan to carry a firearm in settings where they consider such violence justified, and anticipate civil war. There is no difference in party affiliation for the small minority who assert willingness to actually commit such violence.

Background

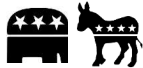
Recent research found high levels of support for extreme beliefs and political violence (use of force or violence to advance political aims), variable support for democracy, and widespread expectation of civil war in the US. Political violence experts are warning of escalation. *This study asked: Do people's views vary by their party affiliation or political ideology?*

Methods

Large, nationally representative survey of 8,620 US adults conducted online May 13 to June 2, 2022. Respondents chose and ranked their strength of party affiliation and political ideology and answered questions about democracy, society, and violence.

Findings

Findings for political ideology aligned with those for party affiliation.



Strong Republicans are *more likely* than strong Democrats to:

- Agree that "having a strong leader for America is more important than having a democracy"
- Think social and cultural conditions in the US may justify the use of force or violence
- Plan to openly carry a firearm in settings where they consider political violence justified
- Anticipate "in the next few years, there will be civil war" in the US

Support for and willingness to engage in political violence:

1 in 3 US adults consider violence *usually or always justified* for specific political aims, including ~35-50% Republicans and ~25-27% of Democrats.

Only a minority (3% or less) of US adults are very or completely willing to threaten, injure, or kill to advance a political aim, with no significant differences by party affiliation. However, with an adult population of nearly 260 million, this small minority still represents a large number of people.



Big Picture

This study builds on prior work to suggest conditions are emerging for large-scale political violence in the US in the near future.

In describing support for and willingness to engage in political violence by party and ideology, this study helps to:

- Estimate the scope of the problem
- Identify risk and protective factors
- Develop effective prevention and intervention strategies