Twitter Thread by Nathan Kalmoe



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Lots of ordinary Republicans are endorsing violence. We'd like that number to drop, but the precipitating causes deserve our focus even more than trying to persuade that violence is inappropriate. The main trouble is they trust & follow bad leaders. 1/

Lots of Rep leaders, led by the president & other extremists, encouraged direct action. That explicit behavioral leadership is the biggest risk for violence. We've seen other presidential violence effects when Trump has targeted individuals, spiking death threats against them. 2/

Related is the dangerous lie Trump and many Rep leaders have broadcast, claiming w/o a shred of credible evidence that the election was somehow fraudulent. @LilyMasonPhD & I found in Nov that the false belief that Dems cheated *doubled* Rep support for anti-Biden violence. 3/

Specifically: Reps supporting a military coup were 9% if no cheating & 16% if cheating belief, 8% vs. 14% for National Guard resistance by states, and 16% vs. 30% for ordinary citizens to prepare weapons to resist in their communities. Paired w/ action calls, that's bad. 4/

In Oct, we asked partisans if they trust their party's leaders to tell them the truth about the election results. 90% of Dems said prob or def yes, as did 87% of Reps. Notably, definitely was 54% for Dems but 32% for Reps. So some doubt there, but not enough. 5/

The big picture is the epistemic crisis that conservative leaders have caused in the party. Their multi-decade effort to discredit all sources of expert information has led an active fraction of the Rep party to only trust what their top leaders say. 6/ https://t.co/cfg6Q5CWiU

That exclusive trust becomes an even bigger problem when the party leadership is unable to control who leads the party, putting it at risk of takeover by demagogues like Trump, who enflame the party's worst instincts that preexisted him. 7/ https://t.co/2lSO1nT3ua

Of course, the even bigger picture motivating the violence comes into view when we recognize this as part of a multi-century conflict involving white supremacy & Christian nationalism against democratic egalitarianism. Reps are becoming an ethnic party. 8/ https://t.co/5xXKrTnq1n

Historically, US partisan violence has been most acute when partisanship & conflicting social identities like race & religion align. The Civil War, Reconstruction, & the establishment of Jim Crow are those. 9/ https://t.co/SGLWSSjcZL

This is true globally, too, as work by @joshua_gubler & Joel Selway shows. Civil wars are most likely when social IDs & contexts are aligned. That has individual psych parallels in @LilyMasonPhD's work showing that partisan animosity is highest when social identities align. 10/

Lily & I have evidence for our book that racist and sexist views enflame Republican animosity toward Democrats (reinforcing party reputations) while weakening Democrats' animosity toward Republicans (cross-cutting). 11/

I've gone on too long, so let's wrap up: the prox cause here is Rep leaders misleading Rep voters in election beliefs & action. They exclusively trust party leaders & linked social groups due to a long project to discredit all others. And ethno-nationalism is behind that. /end

p.s. I forgot to link @LilyMasonPhD's book. Our co-authored book project is "Radical American Partisanship: Mapping Violent Hostility, Its Causes, & What It Means for Democracy."

We're finishing it this spring, available next year. https://t.co/FviarxehU4

And here's the civil wars work by @joshua_gubler & Selway I mentioned. I could add a lot more cites here, of course, but other duties are calling... https://t.co/Uzz2ojImEC

And shout-outs to @MattGrossmann, @DaveAHopkins, @julia_azari, & @owasow whose essays I linked above but didn't tag.

15% of Reps endorsing the Capitol attack is similar to what Lily & I see for party violence more generally.

It is a notable decline from the 45% supporting the attack the night of the attack in YouGov's survey. Likely due to many Rep leaders against it. https://t.co/QwF1wHJ1Tr

And lastly (again), I haven't said anything on the role of extremist groups, micro-motives of who acts vs. not, & other dynamics beyond broad environment & public views. For that, you should turn to ppl like @jjmacnab, @MiaMBloom, @orensegal, @RachelKleinfeld, @engagedscholar.

You should also read essays by @hakeemjefferson emphasizing the synergy between Republican extremism and white power... https://t.co/u1tJVgP2uZ

And @Davin_Phoenix on the prevalence & effects of racial anger gaps for political action in an unequal nation. https://t.co/5ujiqQi50w