White Power! How White Status Threat Undercuts Backlash Against Anti-democratic Politicians*

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Abstract

Prior research shows the pro-Trump, anti-democratic January 6th insurrection (J6), led to a short-term reduction in Republican support for President Trump. However, less research explains *why* the anti-Trump backlash occurred among his base. We theorize white Republicans concerned about the declining status of Anglo whites in the American ethno-racial hierarchy will be the least likely to backlash against Trump after J6. Leveraging an unexpected-event-during-survey design (UESD) and a large survey fielded shortly before and after J6, we find the anti-Trump backlash post-J6 among white Republicans is cancelled out by those who strongly perceive anti-white discrimination (Study 1). We replicate this result with another UESD with a separate survey fielded during J6 (Study 2) and a difference-in-differences approach with additional panel surveys fielded around J6 (Study 3). Moreover, across 4 cross-sectional surveys, we find the negative relationship between J6 disapproval and Trump support post-J6 between 2021-2024 is attenuated among status-threatened white Republicans (Studies 4-7). Our evidence suggests status threat undercuts the ability for the white Republican mass public to hold co-partisan anti-democratic elites accountable for norm violations.

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Introduction

The January 6th (J6) attack on the U.S. capitol brought renewed attention to the effects of violent protest on political attitudes and group attachments. Previous research has shown that instances of highly publicized (racialized) violent mass behavior can shape support for partisan policy issues and mobilize voters on both the political right (Wasow, 2020) and left (Enos et al., 2019). Despite these findings, the distinct anti-democratic and White supremacist message associated with January 6th that was rejected by both Democrats and establishment Republicans opened questions about the consequences of the attack on mass support for Trump amongst Republicans.

Several existing studies find that J6 induced backlash against Trump amongst co-partisans (Eady et al., 2023, Frye, 2023, Noort, 2023), though this backlash was short-term and persisted at most two months post-J6 (Noort, 2023) and at worst only a few weeks (Frye, 2023). Still, these studies conclude that norm-violating behavior has an effect on public support and expressive partisanship, which could render such behavior electorally undesirable (Almond and Verba, 1963, Weingast, 1997, Svolik, 2020). However, we know less about whether this backlash occurred amongst *all* Republicans, and if not, *why* this backlash did or did not occur amongst segments of the Trump voter base.

To address these questions, we examine the attitudinal antecedents to changes in support for Trump amongst Republicans as a result of J6, focusing specifically on perceptions that whites' status is under threat. Prior research has identified consistent associations between perceptions of threat due to demographic change and populist tendencies, including support for far-right politicians like Donald Trump (Maier et al., 2023, Mutz, 2018a, Sides et al., 2019, Inglehart and Norris, 2017), support for political violence to achieve desired electoral goals (Piazza, 2022, Armaly et al., 2022, Krekó, 2021), and a decline in confidence in democratic processes, including elections (Morris and Shapiro, 2024). Building on this research and in light of the overtly racialized nature of the J6 insurrection, we ask specifically whether racial in-group status threat amongst white Republicans moderated the backlash against Trump

after J6 found in previous studies. Our results speak more broadly to the ways in which white status threat undercuts backlash against anti-democratic politicians.

In Study 1, we use an unexpected-event-during-survey design (UESD) with a large survey in the field around J6 and replicate prior research identifying a statistically significant decline in support for Trump amongst white Republicans shortly before (Dec 16-31) and after (Jan 12-21) J6. However, unlike prior research, we find that this decline in support occurs only amongst white Republicans who do not strongly perceive discrimination against their racial in-group. Amongst white Republicans who do perceive discrimination against Whites, there is no change in support for Trump post-J6. The lack of change in support amongst aggrieved white co-partisans is of the same magnitude as the decline in Trump support amongst non-aggrieved White Republicans, effectively cancelling out the effects of co-partisan distancing from Trump due to J6's violation of democratic norms. Aggrieved white Republicans are steadfast in their support, even in the face of violent anti-democratic events. In Study 2, we replicate Study 1 with another UESD using a separate survey fielded during J6 and a different measure of status threat (economic anxiety). In Study 3, we use a difference-in-differences design and panel surveys fielded around J6 to show J6 decreases Trump support among the *same* white Republicans over time who do not perceive anti-white discrimination over a year prior to J6. But, we show J6 does not shift Trump support among the same white Republicans who do perceive anti-white discrimination. In Studies 4-7, we leverage 4 cross-sectional surveys and assess if the dynamics explicated in Studies 1-3 persist between 2021-2024 by analyzing the association between disapproval of J6 (and Trump's role in it) and support for Trump conditional on racial status threat amongst white Republicans. Consistent with Studies 1-3 and our theoretical account, we find that there is a negative association between disapproval of J6 and Trump support (broadly construed), but that this relationship is attenuated for white Republicans that are status-threatened.

Our results are important for understanding the effects of violent, anti-democratic behavior on public support for elites. We build on previous research that shows violent protest leads

in-group members to temporarily alter their expressions of group affiliation (Eady et al., 2023). But we provide new, clarifying evidence that suggests deviant in-group behavior affects mass partisan support conditional on perceptions of dominant group status threat. We find that racial status threats moderate Republican backlash against Trump due to J6. This is an important caveat to consider when examining the conditions under which pro-democratic tendencies manifest in response to norm-violating, violent behavior.

Theoretical Motivation and Expectations

Anti-democratic Behavior in an Era of Polarization

The convergence of partisanship and policy preferences with social identities over the past five decades, and the ensuing animus between out-partisans, has been well-documented (Mason, 2015; Mason, 2018, Iyengar et al., 2019, Iyengar and Westwood, 2015). Given the highly crystallized nature of partisan identity (Mason, 2018) and Trump's steadfast support amongst Republicans, it was unclear whether to expect a political event—even an extreme one like J6—to change expressive partisanship and public opinion.

Several studies have emerged that find a definitive, though ephemeral, backlash against Trump amongst Republicans due to January 6th. Eady et al., 2023 finds that the number of Twitter users whose bios (a proxy for group identification) included terms associated with Trump and/or the Republican party dramatically decreased post-January 6th, which persisted for up to two months. Keeter, 2021 tracks approval of Trump amongst the same set of respondents using panel data from August 2020 to January 2021 and finds changes from approval to disapproval of Trump amongst 25% of the sample. Other studies take a quasi-experimental approach to identifying the effect that J6 had on support for the Republican party and Donald Trump. Van Noort, 2023 leverages a Gallup phone survey that was in the field during J6 to identify differences in support two days before and nine days after the insurrection. Van Noort finds that identification with the Republican party

declined by about 11 percentage points after J6 and favorability towards Trump declined by about 5 percentage points, but that these modest declines persisted for about a month. Taking a similar approach, Frye, 2023 also capitalizes on an "unexpected event during survey" design (Muñoz et al., 2020) but restricts the temporal window to gain further causal leverage. Frye is able to identify differences in partisan identification (a decline of 9 percentage points overall, 15 percentage points for those who voted for Trump in 2020) and a 0.62 point decline in evaluations of Trump (on a 7-point scale). Together, these studies suggest electorally meaningful consequences to norm-violating behavior - even amongst co-partisans.

But experimental work has found that politicians and parties face stark electoral consequences for flagrant violations of democratic norms (Carey et al., 2022, Scoggins, 2022, Graham and Svolik, 2020). Voters of all partisan identifications are willing to dole out such electoral penalties, though voters with the *strongest* partisan in-group attachments are those least likely to do so when the violation comes from a co-partisan (Albertus and Grossman, 2021, Saikkonen and Christensen, 2023).

This finding shapes our theoretical expectations about the factors that condition backlash to anti-democratic behavior. Because steadfast supporters are those most tolerant of such violations, we do not expect to see backlash to Trump amongst his core voter base, which skews older, non-college educated, and is majority white (Pew Research Center, 2018). But rather than examining how the strength of partisan attachment impacts support for Trump post-J6, we focus on a specific dimension of status threat: race.

Racial Status Threat and Responses to Violent, Anti-democratic Events

The highly racialized nature of Trump's presidential and "Stop the Steal" campaigns highlight the importance of considering the role that racial status threat played in conditioning responses to J6 amongst co-partisans. Trump supporters often subscribe to an ethnocentric worldview that frames their in-group–white, Republican, Christian–and its political and

cultural dominance as being under threat due to demographic change. Moreover, resentment towards racial and ethnic minorities consistently predicts support for right-wing populist candidates (Maier et al., 2023), including Trump. These resentments represent not just a mere dislike of minorities (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; Mason et al., 2021), but a sense of fear that whites are being displaced politically and culturally (Mutz, 2018b; Sides et al., 2019)–that their *racial status* is being threatened.

Indeed, several prior studies find that populist attitudes are consistently associated with support for political violence to achieve political goals (Piazza, 2022, Armaly and Enders, 2024, Krekó, 2021). Decomposing populist preferences, Piazza, 2024a, Piazza, 2024b finds that concerns about demographic change and the socio-cultural transformations it might bring mediates the relationship between populism and political violence.

Other recent papers replicate these findings, identifying links between a sense of threat due to perceptions of demographic change and lack of confidence in democratic processes (Thompson, 2022), including elections (Morris and Shapiro, 2024), and even support for J6 specifically (Armaly et al., 2022). These papers emphasize the partisan nature of demographic change and anti-democratic beliefs and behavior. Thompson, 2022 shows that perceptions about the ways in which demographic change will advantage each party shapes white Republicans' anti-democratic attitudes. Republicans assume minorities will identify as Democrats and displace the Republican party in electoral competition. This leads Republicans to hold steadfast to the Republican party at all costs, going along with an anti-democratic agenda that represents their last chance at a fair electoral shot. Racial status threat, in this case, appears refracted through partisan threat. In a similar vein, Morris and Shapiro, 2024 show that claims of electoral fraud perpetrated by racial minorities allow white Republican voters to avoid the tradeoff that remaining committed to the idea of democracy despite recent gains by non-white groups would require. In other words, feelings of threat due to ethnoracial minority advancement, specifically in the form of electoral gains, shapes anti-democratic beliefs about election integrity. A loss of trust in democratic electoral processes is associated

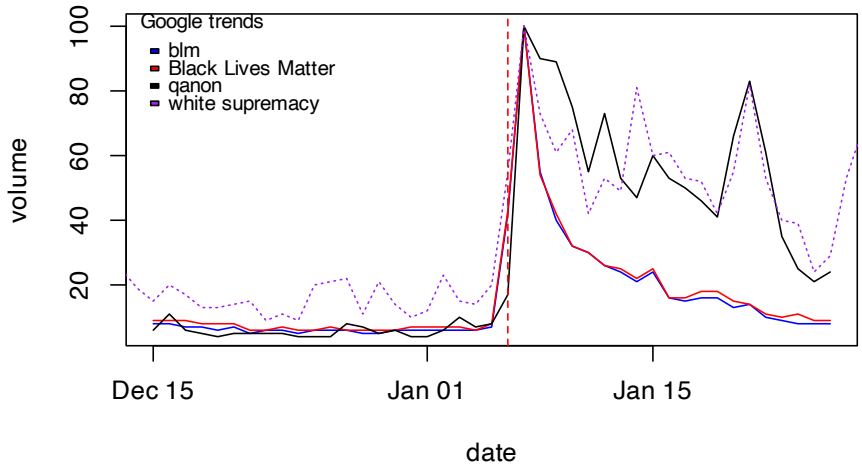

Figure 1: Google search trends 22 days before and after January 6th. Searches for racialized terms peak after J6.

with support for political violence (Piazza, 2024a).

As the U.S. continues to diversify and whites are under threat of being displaced as the ethnoracial majority group, white voters have mobilized in electorally consequential ways. As Jardina, 2019 writes, conservative white voters have mobilized around their white identity with the specific intent of preserving their racial group's relative status. This is a form of in-group status concern distinct from racial prejudice, which we find evidence of in this paper. This underscores the fact that we should expect the political responses to perceptions of racial status threat we have seen in the past to also condition responses to J6.

Additionally, racial status threat as a moderator of the effects of anti-democratic, violent manifestations fits with psychological models of group-based behavior. Individuals have consistently been found to show preferences towards their in-group (Fiske, 2000). But in-group biases are also affected by making outgroup identities salient. For example, discriminatory attitudes and behaviors increase when the salience of race is manipulated in laboratory experimental settings (Enos and Celaya, 2018, Sidanius and Pratto, 2001). Beliefs that an individual's group is under threat of being "replaced" due to demographic change also drive

discriminatory intergroup attitudes (Obaidi et al., 2022). News media coverage of J6 drew explicit comparisons between the capitol insurrectionists and BLM protesters, which may have made race especially salient amongst Trump's base and further heightened a race-based sense of threat. Indeed, previous work has found "among white Americans, strong rejection of BLM and feelings that whites are being 'left behind' are highly correlated with support for the January 6th insurrection" (Barreto et al., 2023, 6). In a descriptive exercise, we find that Google search trends for the terms "Black Lives Matter" and "blm riots" spike after J6 (Figure 1), which suggests that racial group-based concerns were being centered in the discourse surrounding J6 and may have been at play in shaping mass responses to the event.

We expect that support for Trump was not affected by J6 amongst white Republicans who felt most concerned about their racial in-group status. This stands in contrast to prior work that does find J6 causes co-partisans to distance themselves from the Republican party. These studies fail to consider the distinctly racialized—not just partisan—nature of the insurrection, and how it represented the culmination of the heretofore dominant racial group's desire to maintain their place in the American social hierarchy.

H1: White status threat will undercut the J6-induced decline in support for Trump amongst white Republicans.

To summarize, our paper differs from previous studies examining the effects of J6 on mass attitudes in several important ways. First, we center white Republicans, as opposed to voters of both parties or all Republicans, in our analyses. Previous studies have already shown that declines in support for Trump post-J6 were driven by Republicans (Eady et al., 2023; Noort, 2023; Loving and Smith, 2024), not voters of other parties, because of ceiling effects in Trump disapproval among non-Republicans. Given disproportionate support for Trump amongst white Republicans, they serve as the ideal demographic to study the effects of J6. Because white Republicans already hold comparatively high and stable rates of support for Trump,[1]

we might expect their opinions to remain obdurate, even in the face of an unprecedented and norm-violating event like J6. Any changes in support amongst Trump's core constituency would highlight the true effects of anti-democratic behavior on public opinion. Furthermore, eighty percent of registered Republicans identify as white compared to fifty-six percent in the Democratic party, thus it makes sense to focus solely on Anglo white Republican voters, especially since we theorize white status threat will undercut J6-induced backlash toward Trump.

As previously stated, we also examine whether perceptions of racial status threat moderate backlash to Trump. Finally, we focus only on changes in approval/favorability towards Trump, not changes in expressive partisanship or party identification (Eady et al., 2023, Noort, 2023, Loving and Smith, 2024), following work by Frye, 2023. We believe that focusing on attitudinal changes as opposed to behavioral changes may better capture short-term expressive backlash against Trump that is not reflected in more crystallized partisan attachments and preferences that are more difficult to consciously manipulate.

Study 1: Nationscape

Data and Design

Study 1 tests our hypothesis with the UCLA+Democracy Fund Nationscape survey (NS). The NS is a large survey of the American public ($N = 495,000$), fielded between July 2019-January 2021 in 77 weekly sample waves. Samples are provided by Lucid, a market research platform operating an online survey respondent exchange. The NS samples match national quotas for age, gender, race, ethnicity, region, income, and education. The sample is high quality. Inattentive respondents and repeat survey-takers were screened out. NS socio-demographic marginals match other high-quality surveys (Tausanovitch et al., 2019).

We subset the NS data to white Republican respondents surveyed between 2020-12-16 to 2021-01-16 ($N = 5030$).[2] On average, 252 white Republicans take the survey daily during

this period.[3] NS was not fielded between 2020-12-31 and 2021-01-11, so we do not have data immediately before or after J6. However, given prior research has identified Republican declines in Trump support during this time period are primarily due to J6 and not other events (Frye, 2023; Noort, 2023), we feel confident declines in Trump support for NS white Republican respondents interviewed after J6 are not driven by other events.

We analyze three Trump support outcomes. *Favorability* is a 4-point scale of respondent favorability toward Trump between "very unfavorable"-"very favorable." *Approval* is a 4-point scale of respondent approval of Trump's job between "strongly disapprove"-"strongly approve." *Trump index* is an additive index of *favorability* and *approval*.

The independent variable is equal to 1, 0 otherwise, if the respondent is interviewed post-*J6* (2021-01-06). The moderator is *white status threat*. We measure this with a 5-point scale of respondent perceptions of anti-white discrimination from "none at all" to "a great deal." This is an appropriate measure. Prior research demonstrates perceptions of anti-white discrimination motivates support for perceptibly pro-white policies and politicians (Mutz, 2018b; Jardina, 2019), particularly after non-white groups achieve some socio-political progress (Wilkins and Kaiser, 2014). Our main estimates adjust for several controls prognostic of Trump support (age, gender, income, college-education, union membership, ideology, and state). All covariates are rescaled between 0-1, so we estimate min-max coefficients.

Our estimation strategy is similar to an unexpected-event-during-survey design (UESD) (Muñoz et al., 2020), that is, we compare Trump support levels between respondents interviewed before and after *J6*. The core UESD identifying assumption is *ignorability*: respondent characteristics should be similar pre/post-*J6* conditional on the survey sampling mechanism. We find evidence in support of this assumption. White Republican respondents interviewed pre/post-*J6* are compositionally dissimilar on only 1/11 demographic, socioeconomic, and political characteristics (Figure A1), a result consistent with statistical chance. Thus, our *J6* coefficient estimates are relatively insulated from omitted variable bias.

We rule out the prospect of secular temporal trends affecting our *J6* coefficient estimates

Table 1: White Republicans backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but the backlash is attenuated among the status threatened (Study 1)

	Favorability (1)	**Approval** (2)	**Index** (3)	**Favorability** (4)	**Approval** (5)	**Index** (6)
J6 x Status Threat				0.11^{**}	0.09^{*}	0.10^{**}
				(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
J6	-0.07^{***}	-0.07^{***}	-0.07^{***}	-0.12^{***}	-0.11^{***}	-0.11^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Status Threat				0.12^{***}	0.13^{***}	0.13^{***}
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.11
N	5007	5022	5000	5007	5022	5000

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

by assessing the placebo "effect" of being interviewed after the median pre-treatment date (2020-12-23). The *J6* placebo effect conditional on or not on *status threat* is null, implying our main results are not driven by secular attitudinal trends disfavoring Trump (e.g. backlash to Trump's 2020 election loss, his fraud accusations, Table A1).

Results

Table 1 displays post-*J6* coefficients unconditional and conditional on *status threat*.[4] Consistent with prior research (Frye, 2023; Noort, 2023), *J6* reduced Trump *favorability*, *approval*, and the *index* among white Republicans by 7 points ($p < .001$, Models 1-3), equivalent to 23-24% of the respective outcome standard deviations. However, consistent with our hypothesis, the negative post-*J6* effect on Trump support among white Republicans is cancelled out by white Republicans who feel white people are status threatened ($0.01 < p < 0.05$, Models 4-6).

To illustrate these heterogeneous effects, we plot predicted values of the relevant outcomes conditional on respondents interviewed pre/post-*J6* and *status threat* (Figure 2). For the least status threatened white Republicans, Trump *favorability*, *approval*, and the *index* decline by 11-12 points (38-41% of the outcome standard deviations). However, for the most status threatened white Republicans, Trump *favorability*, *approval*, and the *index* remain stable

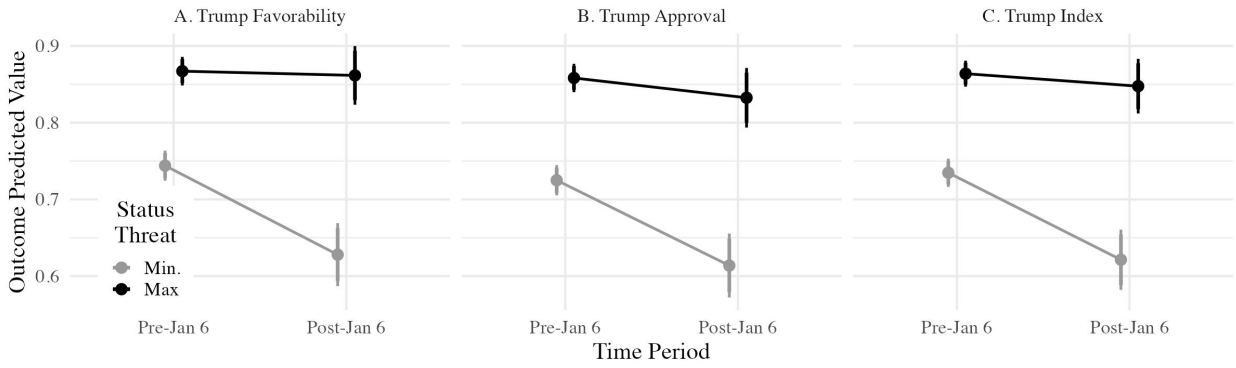

Figure 2: Status threat (min/max, denoted by color) attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans (Nationscape). Y-axis is the predicted value of the respective outcomes (denoted by panel title), x-axis is the time period respondents are interviewed during. Predicted values from fully-specified models with control covariates held at their means. 95% CIs displayed from robust HC2 SEs

regardless of being interviewed pre/post-*J6*. These findings suggest perceptions of *white status threat* undercut the prospect of pro-democratic backlash against anti-democratic elites among white Republican Trump supporters.

Robustness Checks

We rule out if other political, racial, and/or psychological attitudes that may be associated with *status threat* among white Republicans are motivating the mollification of backlash to Trump post-*J6*. The interaction between *status threat* and post-*J6* remains positive and statistically significant after adjusting for interactions between post-*J6* and ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam, 2010), old-fashioned racism (Lajevardi and Oskooii, 2018), perceived discrimination against Black people, racial resentment (Agadjanian et al., 2023), political ideology (Sniderman and Piazza, 1993), partisan strength (Albertus and Grossman, 2021), and economic anxiety (Mutz, 2018b). Moreover, interactions between post-*J6* and these alternative attitudinal constructs are largely null (Table A2). These results suggest *status threat* is the *superordinate* mechanism undercutting backlash toward Trump post-*J6*, not other attitudes that could plausibly mollify anti-Trump backlash.

A criticism of our study is that our results are substantively uninformative given prior research suggests attitudes toward Trump revert to their pre-*J6* average among his base a few weeks post-*J6* (Noort, 2023). First, we contend that short-term effects are meaningful given the high stability of Trump's support among his base (Jacobson, 2020). Indeed, we estimate a series of temporal placebo effects over the course of the entire pre-*J6* Nationscape temporal domain (2019-07-18 to 2020-12-30) and show the "true" post-*J6* effect in addition to the post-*J6* effect conditional on *status threat* is statistically larger than ***all*** pre-*J6* placebo effects (Figure A2). These findings are consistent with evidence from the Pew Research Center showing the drop in Trump approval after J6 was the largest survey-to-survey decline in Trump's approval they identified throughout his presidency (Keeter, 2021). Second, we also provide evidence that *status threat* may accelerate the decay in the anti-Trump backlash effect post-*J6*. Figure A3 shows, initially, both status and non-status threatened white Republicans are less likely to support Trump post-*J6* (Jan 12-13). But, in the last round of Nationscape interviews (Jan 14-15), status threatened white Republicans revert to pre-*J6* Trump support levels whereas non-status threatened white Republicans are still less supportive of Trump. These results suggest, to the extent that there is a previously identified average decay in anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among Trump's base, *this decay may be less prominent if Trump's base was less status threatened.*

Another concern is that our moderator (*status threat*) may be affected by post-treatment bias through *J6*. We do not find evidence our moderator is affected by post-treatment bias, as *status threat* is balanced pre/post-*J6* (Table A3).

Finally, we empirically justify our emphasis on evaluating how white *status threat* undercuts anti-Trump backlash post-*J6 among white Republicans specifically.* Using the full white NS subsample between 2020-12-16 to 2021-01-16, we show white *status threat* undercuts white backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but only among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans (Table A5). These findings demonstrate both racial status threat and partisanship play an important interrelated role in the extent of backlash against anti-

democratic politicians.

Study 2: Gallup

A disadvantage of Study 1 is that we do not have data on respondents interviewed immediately after and before *J6*, which could mean our results are driven by secular events and/or factors other than the onset of *J6*. Study 2 mitigates this concern by using another survey in the field near *J6* that includes respondents interviewed shortly before and after *J6*.

Data and Design

Study 2 tests our hypothesis using white Republicans from the Gallup World Poll ($N = 383$), a nationally representative adult survey fielded between 2021-01-04 and 2021-01-15.[5] The outcome is Trump *approval*, equal to 1 if the respondent approves of Trump's job, 0 otherwise. The independent variable is the same as Study 1, *J6*, equal to 1 if the respondent is interviewed after 2021-01-06, 0 otherwise. 81 white Republicans are interviewed pre-*J6*, 302 post-*J6*.

Our measure of *status threat* in Study 2 is equal to 1 if the respondent reports their personal financial situation is "worse off" than a year ago and/or their personal financial situation will get "worse off" in one year, 0 otherwise. Although our measure of *status threat* in Study 2 does not explicitly reference race or the socio-political status of whites, prior research demonstrates economic anxiety for white people is filtered through their concerns over the loss of white socio-political dominance (i.e. "racialized economics") (Sides et al., 2019; Fabian et al., 2020). Indeed, our own analysis using Nationscape data shows personal economic anxiety is associated with perceptions of discrimination against white people among whites, but not non-whites (Figure B5). Although our *status threat* measure in Study 2 is relatively blunt, if the same statistical pattern manifests in Study 2 like Study 1, then we can be more confident our measure may be tapping into a *racialized* economic anxiety. Control covariates are the same as Study 1 with the exception of union membership since the Gallup

Table 2: White Republicans backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but the backlash is attenuated among the status threatened (Study 2)

	Trump Approval	
	(1)	(2)
J6 x Status Threat		0.32^{**}
		(0.10)
J6	$-0.09^{\dagger}$	-0.23^{***}
	(0.05)	(0.06)
Status Threat		-0.01
		(0.11)
Controls?	Y	Y
R^2	0.14	0.18
Num. obs.	375	375

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

poll does not include union membership data.

Like Study 1, we use an UESD. White Republican respondent characteristics are balanced on 1/10 covariates pre/post-*J6* (Figure B4), suggesting our *J6* coefficients are insulated from omitted variable bias. Moreover, we rule out secular temporal trends by conducting a placebo test comparing outcome levels between respondents interviewed on January 4th to those interviewed on January 5th unconditional and conditional on *status threat*. The placebo test is statistically null, suggesting our main results are not driven by secular attitudinal trends disfavoring Trump in Study 2 (Table B6).

Results

Table 2 displays the post-*J6* effect unconditional and conditional on *status threat* for white Republicans.[6] Consistent with prior research and Study 1, *J6* reduced Trump *approval* by 9 percentage points (Model 1, $p < 0.10$), 18% of the pre-*J6* *approval* standard deviation. However, consistent with our hypothesis and Study 1, the negative effect of *J6* on Trump *approval* is obviated by *status threat* (Model 2, $p < 0.01$). Figure 3 displays predicted values of *approval* by being interviewed pre/post-*J6* and *status threat* among white Republicans. Among white Republicans who are not status threatened, *J6* reduces *approval* by 24 percentage

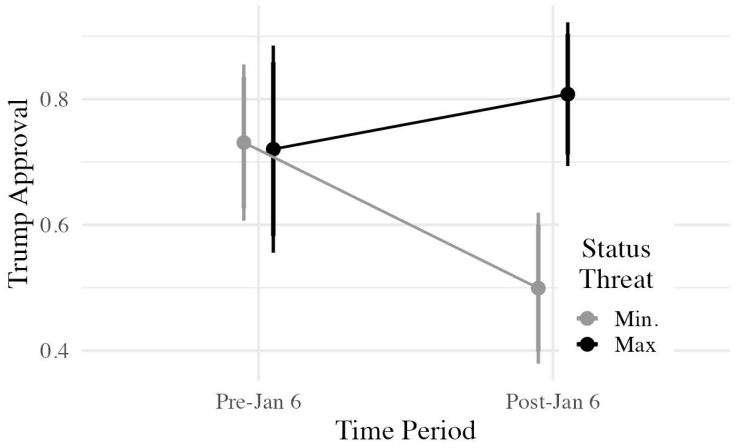

Figure 3: Status threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans (Gallup World Poll).

points. Conversely, among white Republicans who are status threatened, *J6* motivates an *increase* in Trump *approval* of 8 percentage points (albeit statistically insignificant). In sum, like Study 1, Study 2 demonstrates members of Trump's base are less inclined to engage in pro-democratic backlash toward anti-democratic elites (i.e. Trump) conditional on feeling status threatened.

Robustness Checks

Our heterogeneous effects may be driven by political ideology since it may be correlated with *status threat* and Trump *approval*. However, the interaction between *J6* and *status threat* adjusting for the interaction between *J6* and *ideology* is still positive and statistically significant whereas the interaction between *J6* and *ideology* is null (Table B7).

We assess temporal decay in effects post-*J6*. Like Study 1, we find the decay in the backlash effect post-*J6* among white Republicans would have been slower if there were less status threatened white Republicans. Among the whole white Republican sample, Trump approval is similar to pre-*J6* by January 12th (Figure B6, Panel A). However, among the non-status threatened white Republican sample, Trump *approval* does not revert to pre-*J6* levels until at least January 14th (Figure B6, Panel B). This discrepancy in temporal effect

decay may be due to the absence of a commensurate reduction in Trump *approval* among status threatened white Republicans (Figure B6, Panel C). Thus, consistent with Study 1, although prior research identifies a decay in the anti-Trump backlash effect post-J6, the decay would not be so quick if there were less status-threatened white Republicans.

We further validate our use of economic anxiety as a measure of white status threat by showing non-white Republicans do not backlash against Trump on the basis of being economically secure (Table B8). Given economic anxiety only seems to mollify anti-Trump backlash among whites, our status threat measure in Study 2 may be capturing economic anxiety refracted through racialized insecurity.

Study 3: Pew Panel

Studies 1-2 are limited in that we compare support for Trump among *different* respondents interviewed pre/post-*J6* instead of the *same* respondents interviewed pre/post-*J6*. Although we provide evidence respondents are compositionally similar pre/post-*J6* in Studies 1-2, our results may still be driven by unobserved compositional differences in respondents interviewed before and after *J6*. Panel data interviewing the same respondents at multiple time periods can mitigate these concerns. Therefore, we use panel data interviewing the same respondents between Sep. 2019-Jan. 2021 to evaluate the effect of *J6* conditional on *status threat*.

Data and Design

We identify consistent respondents in three nationally representative Pew Research American Trends Panel (ATP) surveys to assess the effect of *J6* conditional on *status threat*: Wave 53 (Sep. 2019), Wave 71 (Jul. 2020), and Wave 80 (Jan. 8-12 2021).[7] Waves 53 and 71 were fielded pre-*J6*. Advantageously, Wave 80 was fielded immediately post-*J6*. We subset to white Republican respondents in the Pew ATP data surveyed in all three waves ($N = 562$).[8]

Each Pew ATP survey wave samples from a Pew-curated online respondent panel. Thus,

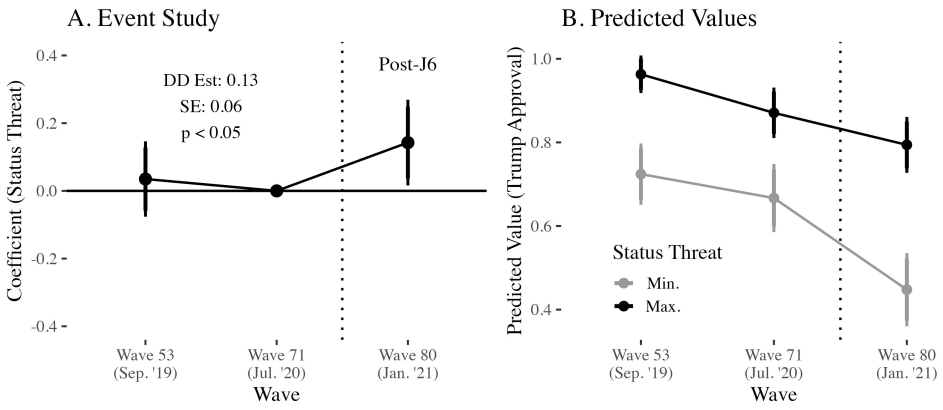

Figure 4: Status threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans (Pew American Trends Panel). Panel A characterizes the association between *status threat* and Trump *approval* (y-axis) conditional on wave (x-axis). Annotation denotes generalized difference-in-differences estimate for *J6* conditional on *status threat*. Panel B characterizes predicted values of Trump *approval* (y-axis) by wave for respondents at the minimum and maximum level of *status threat* (denoted by color). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust respondent-clustered SEs

only a subset of respondents in a given wave are re-interviewed in other waves. Although the Pew ATP data allows us to construct several panels between Waves 1-80 (Mar. 2014-Jan. 2021), we construct a panel using only Waves 53, 71, and 80 for several reasons. First, these waves all use consistent measures of Trump support (*approval*, our outcome of interest, equal to 1 if a respondent approves of Trump's job, 0 otherwise.). Second, Waves 71 and 80 are the last two ATP surveys asking respondents about their approval of Trump, so they're the least susceptible to intervening events between waves that could affect *approval*. Third, Wave 53 has a measure of white *status threat* that is the same as Study 1 (perceived discrimination against whites, from "none at all" to "a lot") and is recorded well before J6 (mitigating post-treatment bias) and other secular events that may shift *status threat* between waves (e.g. the 2020 BLM protests, Trump's election).

Our estimation strategy is a difference-in-differences (DD) approach evaluating the effect of being interviewed post-*J6* (Wave 80) conditional on *status threat*. Given the DD approach partials out fixed differences between status threatened and unthreatened white Republicans, the core DD identifying assumption is *parallel trends*: status threatened respondents should

Table 3: Status Threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans

	Trump Approval
	(1)
J6 x Status Threat	0.13*
	(0.06)
J6	−0.25***
	(0.04)
Status Threat	0.22***
	(0.05)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.07
Num. obs.	1686
N Clusters	562

Note: ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$. HC2 robust respondent-clustered SEs in parentheses.

have similar *approval* trends post-*J6* as unthreatened respondents in a counterfactual world where J6 did not occur, implying no time-varying confounders differentially affecting the status threatened. This assumption is theoretically reasonable, since attitudes toward national politicians tend to move in parallel (on average) between different mass public segments (i.e. the parallel publics thesis, see Page and Shapiro (2010)). Given the absence of a world where *J6* was not observed, the parallel trends assumption cannot be tested. But, parallel pre-*J6* outcome trends provide some evidence the assumption could have held. Across the Pew ATP Waves (53, 71, 80), we identify parallel outcome pre-trends. An event study demonstrates differences in Trump *approval* levels across status threatened and unthreatened white Republicans between Waves 53 and 71 are remarkably stable over the course of 10 months (Figure 4, Panel A).[9] Visually, predicted values of Trump *approval* for status threatened and unthreatened white Republicans also appear to move in parallel until after *J6* (Figure 4, Panel B). Thus, we believe our estimates assessing the effect of *J6* on *approval* conditional on status threat are relatively insulated from unobserved time-varying covariates differentially affecting the status threatened relative to the unthreatened.

Results

Table 3 characterizes a generalized DD estimate assessing the post-*J6* effect on Trump *approval* conditional on *status threat*.[10] Consistent with our hypothesis, relative to the unthreatened, status threatened white Republicans are more likely to approve of Trump by 13 percentage points, equivalent to 1/3 of the pre-*J6* *approval* outcome standard deviation. This effect is driven by a decline in Trump approval among status unthreatened white Republicans post-*J6* while the status threatened maintain their *approval* consistent with the outcome trend (Figure 4, Panel B). In sum, these findings are consistent with Studies 1-2, but are advantageous in that they evaluate trends in Trump *approval* pre/post-*J6* among the *same* white Republican respondents, mitigating the risk compositional differences explain our empirical conclusions.

Robustness Checks

We rule out alternative mechanisms that may forestall anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* other than *status threat*. Our results hold even after adjusting for interactions between *J6* and political ideology and perceived discrimination against Black people (Table C9), further suggesting white status threat is the superordinate mechanism undercutting anti-Trump backlash in the presence of anti-democratic activity.

We further validate the parallel trends assumption by using different Pew ATP panel data combinations between Waves 26 (Apr. 2017), 37, 38, 39, 48 to Wave 52 and Wave 52 to Waves 53, 59, 64, 65, and 69 (Jun. 2020). We assess the differential placebo effect of being interviewed between these wave pair combinations on Trump *approval* conditional on *status threat*. One caveat is that these samples use different combinations of white Republicans between two waves than the set of white Republicans in the three waves we primarily analyze. However, if *approval* trends remain similar across these different wave pairs conditional on *status threat*, we can be more confident in the parallel trends assumption for our sample of interest. Indeed, Figure C7 shows that these placebo effects are nearly all statistically

null, and all are smaller than the DD estimate between Waves 53, 71 and 80 in our main set of analyses. These results imply our results are not driven by secular factors differentially affecting the status threatened relative to the unthreatened other than *J6*.

Although Study 3 is advantageous vis-a-vis Studies 1-2 because we analyze the same respondents over time, a critical Study 3 shortcoming is that the final pre-*J6* wave is well before *J6* in our sample of interest (Jul. 2020). Therefore, intervening events between Jul. 2020 and Jan. 2021 may drive our results. To this end, we use the Nationscape data in Study 1 and assess if white Republicans interviewed on December 2020 are more or less likely to approve of Trump conditional on *status threat*. Although this exercise does not allow us to compare the same white Republicans interviewed between several time periods like Study 3, we can be more confident that intervening events between Jul. 2020 and Jan. 2021 do not explain our Study 3 results if we identifying if we identify statistically indistinguishable differences in Trump approval between Jul. 2020 and Dec. 2020 conditional on *status threat* among white Republicans. Indeed, we find Trump approval is not statistically different between Jul. and Dec. 2020 conditional on status threat (Table C10), suggesting Study 3's results are not driven by intervening events in the months between the last two waves of Pew ATP data on Trump approval. Finally, our results do not change including respondent and wave fixed effects (Table C11).

Like Study 1, we justify our emphasis on evaluating how white *status threat* undercuts anti-Trump backlash post-*J6 among white Republicans specifically*. Using the full white subsample in the Pew ATP for Waves 53, 71, and 80, we show white *status threat* undercuts white backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but only among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans (Table C12). These findings further demonstrate both racial status threat and partisanship affect the prospect of anti-Trump backlash after J6.

Studies 4-7: The Persistent Role of Status Threat

Studies 4-7 assess if the dynamic in Studies 1-3 persists after J6. Thus, we identify several surveys fielded post-J6 with white Republican subsamples that include measures of Trump support, disapproval of J6 plus Trump's role in J6, and white status threat. Consistent with our theory and hypothesis, we expect disapproval of J6 will be associated with less support for Trump among white Republicans. However, status threatened white Republicans may still support Trump despite their reservations concerning J6 and Trump's role in the insurrection.

Data and Design

Study 4, Nationscape (NS, Jan. '21)

The last NS wave (2021-01-12 to 2021-01-16) included several questions measuring disapproval of the January 6 insurrection (*J6 disapproval*). To this end, we generate a *J6 disapproval* index of several items: 1) disapproval of the "actions of the people who stormed the U.S. Capitol"; 2) disapproval of the way "Trump handled the storming of the Capitol?"; 3) agreement with the notion that "Donald Trump should have done more to end the violence at the Capitol." This is our main independent variable of interest for Study 3. We rescale this between 0-1. The last NS wave includes $N = 1075$ white Republicans. Our outcomes and status threat moderator are the same as Study 1. We assess the relationship between *J6 disapproval* and Trump *favorability*, *approval*, and the Trump *index* adjusting for control covariates conditional on Study 1's *status threat* measure.

Study 5, Pew American Trends Panel (Pew, Mar. '21)

Study 4 uses the March 2021 Pew American Trends Panel survey (Wave 84), a high quality nationally representative poll administered by the Pew Research Center. Like Studies 1-3, we subset the survey to white Republicans ($N = 3848$). There are three outcomes: Trump *favorability*, measured with a 0-100 feeling thermometer toward Trump where higher

(lower) values = warmer (colder); Trump *support*, measured from 0-4 with a survey item where respondents can report if they think Donald Trump was a "terrible president" to a "great president;" and the Trump *index*, an additive index of *favorability* and *support*. The independent variable (*J6 disapproval*) is an additive index of three items measuring: 1) how important respondents think it is for federal law enforcement agencies to find and prosecute those who broke into the U.S. Capitol on January 6 (scaled from 0-3, "not at all" to "very important"); 2) how little attention respondents think has been paid to the riot at the U.S. Capitol (scaled from 0-2, "too much attention" to "too little attention."); and 3) the extent to which respondents think Trump's conduct surrounding January 6 "was wrong, and senators should have voted to convict him" (scaled from 0-2). The moderator, white *status threat*, is measured similarly as Study 1, where respondents report "how much discrimination there is against white people" from "none at all" to "a lot" on a 0-3 scale. Models using Pew '21 data adjust for several control covariates: age, gender, ideology, college-educated, income, and census area fixed effects. All covariates are rescaled between 0-1.

Study 6, Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS, Apr. '21)

Study 5 uses the April 2021 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey white sample, a nationally representative poll of whites administered by a UCLA-led team. We subset the survey to white Republicans ($N = 1421$). The outcome of interest is Trump *favorability*, a scale between 0-4 from "not at all" to "very" favorable. The independent variable (*J6 disapproval*) is an additive index of two survey items: 1) if respondents think J6 was a "coordinated act of insurrection against the United States" instead of "a protest that went too far" (scaled from 0-1); 2) if respondents think Trump "encouraged or incited the (J6) attack" and "shares blame for what happened" as opposed to thinking "Trump had no connection to the rioters, he should not be blamed at all" (scaled from 0-2). The white *status threat* moderator is similar to Study 1, where respondents report "how much discrimination exists against whites" from "none at all" to "a lot" on a 0-3 scale. Models using CMPS '21 data

Table 4: *Status threat* attenuates the negative relationship between *J6 disapproval* and support for Trump

	Favorability (1)	**Approval** (2)	**Index** (3)	**Favorability** (4)	**Support** (5)	**Index** (6)	**Favorability** (7)	**Vote** (8)
J6 Disapproval x Status Threat	0.43***	0.37***	0.40***	0.43***	0.49***	0.47***	0.44***	0.35***
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)
J6 Disapproval	−0.78***	−0.86***	−0.82***	−0.79***	−0.79***	−0.81***	−0.79***	−0.89***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.06)
Status Threat	−0.08	−0.08	−0.08	−0.08**	−0.11**	−0.10**	0.01	0.09*
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.05)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Survey	NS	NS	NS	Pew	Pew	Pew	CMPS	Axios
R^2	0.37	0.44	0.45	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.43	0.37
N	1075	1076	1073	3848	1938	1938	1421	1559

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

adjust for several controls: age, gender, college-educated, income, ideology, and state fixed effects. All covariates are rescaled between 0-1.

Study 7, Axios Survey (Axios, Jan. '24)

Study 6 uses the January 2024 Axios survey, a nationally representative poll administered by Ipsos. We subset the survey to white Republicans ($N = 1559$). The outcome is Trump vote intention in the 2024 election (*Trump vote*), an indicator if respondents report they will vote for Trump in the 2024 election instead of Biden or another candidate. *J6 disapproval* is measured with an item measuring the extent to which respondents feel the following statement is believable (from "very" to "not at all," scaled between 0-3): "Donald Trump tried to incite a mob to attack the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 to overturn the election results." White *status threat* is an additive index of responses to two items: 1) the extent to which respondents believe "Government or elite policies discriminating against white people" is important in determining their 2024 election vote (from "not at all" to "most" important, scaled 0-4); 2) how much respondents agree that "white people's rights are under attack in America today" (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", scaled between 0-3). Models using Axios '24 data adjust for several controls: age, woman, college-educated, income, and state fixed effects. All covariates are rescaled between 0-1.

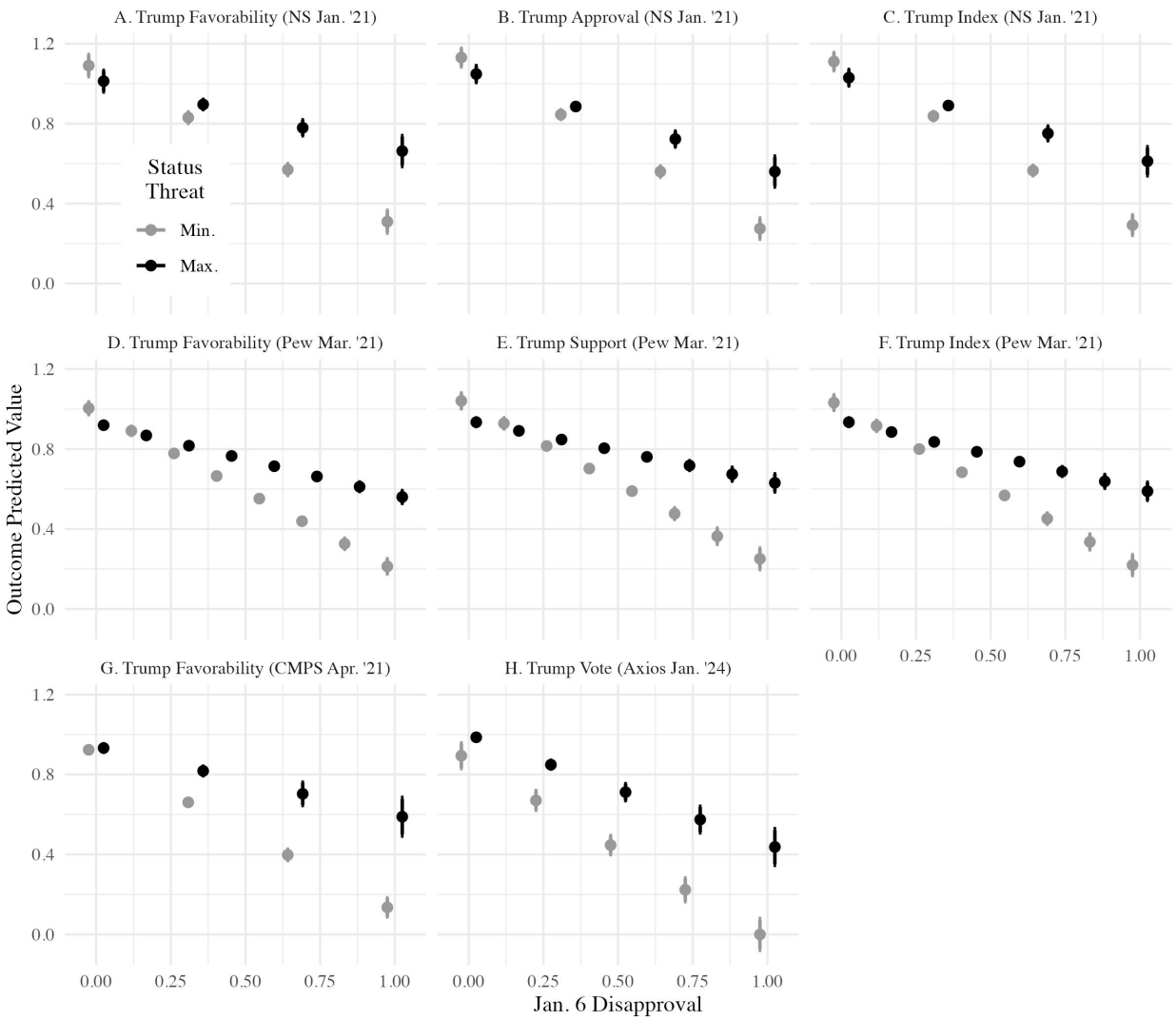

Figure 5: Predicted values showing the negative association between J6 disapproval (x-axis) and Trump support (y-axis) is attenuated for white Republicans who report white status threat (min/max, denoted by color). Panels A-G denote different outcomes and surveys specified on panel title. Estimates from fully-specified models with covariates held at their mean. 95% CIs displayed from robust SEs.

Results

Table 4 and Figure 5 characterize the association between *J6 disapproval* and the outcomes of interest across Studies 4-7. Consistent with our hypothesis and Studies 1-3, the negative association between *J6 disapproval* and the outcomes of interest measuring Trump support is attenuated by 38-61% for status threatened white Republicans ($p < 0.001$). These findings:

a) further suggest that the extent of pro-democratic backlash against Trump among Trump's base is constrained by concerns related to the loss of white socio-political dominance and b) suggest white status threat continues to play a role in motivating evaluations toward Trump among white Republicans despite reservations concerning anti-democratic behavior in the form of January 6.

Robustness Checks

We rule out if alternative mechanisms other than white *status threat* attenuate the relationship between *J6 disapproval* and support for Trump. Across the surveys in Studies 4-7, we demonstrate white *status threat* attenuates the negative relationship between *J6 disapproval* and Trump support net of adjusting for interactions between *J6 disapproval* and: ethnocentrism; perceived discrimination against Black people; old-fashioned racism; racial resentment; the FIRE racism scale (DeSante and Smith, 2020); partisan strength; political ideology; and economic anxiety (Table D13). These results further suggest white *status threat* is a superordinate mechanism that explains support for anti-democratic politicians among white Republicans despite reservations white Republicans have concerning anti-democratic elite behavior.

Again, we empirically justify our emphasis on assessing how white *status threat* undercuts anti-Trump backlash post-*J6 among white Republicans specifically*. Using the full white subsamples in the NS, Pew, CMPS, and Axios surveys, we show white *status threat* attenuates the negative relationship between *J6 disapproval* and Trump support primarily among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans (Table D14).

Conclusion

In this paper, we reexamine the effects of the January 6th insurrection, when thousands of Americans, goaded and guided by former President Trump and other far-right Republican

elites, violently stormed the U.S. capitol to prevent the peaceful transition of power between presidential administrations. We test whether perceptions of racial status threat moderate backlash to Trump caused by the January 6th insurrection. Across three studies, we leverage a quasi-experimental approach to show that a decline in favorability towards Trump occurs only for white Republicans who do not perceive discrimination against their racial in-group. However, amongst racially-aggrieved white Republicans—the core of Trump's voter base—we observe that the negative post-J6 effect on Trump support is cancelled out. In Studies 4-7, we examine whether evaluations of J6 up to three years after the attack are also moderated by racial status threat. We find that there is a negative association between opposition to J6 and support for Trump, broadly measured, but that this relationship is attenuated only for white Republicans that are status-threatened.

Our results show that status-threatened white Republicans are steadfast in their support for Trump, even in the face of violent anti-democratic events. Our results speak to both the conditional nature of reactions to anti-democratic norm violations (Studies 1-3), as well as their semi-durable effects (Studies 4-7). Where previous studies have concluded that co-partisans are willing to punish norm-violating elites, at least in the short-term, we show that pro-democratic tendencies may fail to manifest altogether because of dominant group status threat.

There are certain limitations present with the data we use. One potential issue is ruling out other causes of backlash against Trump unrelated to J6. For example, backlash may have been the result of mounting electoral fraud allegations against Trump or his loss of the presidential election. Future work should conduct placebo tests to definitively rule out these potential causes and better disentangle what may be a bundled treatment.

Notes

[1]For instance, in the UCLA Nationscape survey, Trump approval is 77% among Republicans during December 2020, but it is 24% among non-Republicans.

[2]We start our sample on 2020-12-16 so there are 15 days of data shortly before J6 that we can compare to data shortly after J6. The relatively small amount of data pre-J6 may reduce the risk our comparisons of respondents before and after J6 are driven by external pre-J6 events or secular compositional shifts in the NS white GOP sample.

[3]Our subsample does not include Republican leaners, but our results do not change including them (Table A4).

[4]See Section A.3 for estimating equations.

[5]We include Republican leaners in the white Republican subsample in Study 2 in order to garner statistical power in light of a much smaller sample vis-a-vis Study 1. Indeed, while our results assessing the effect of *J6* conditional on our Study 2 measure of *status threat* while excluding Republican leaners are statistically insignificant (albeit correctly signed), the coefficient for the interaction between *J6* and *status threat* excluding leaners is not statistically distinguishable from the same coefficient including leaners ($t = 1.2$), implying the lack of statistical significance may be a product of statistical power and not the absence of a population parameter post-*J6* effect.

[6]See Section B.4 for Study 2 estimating equations.

[7]For more methodological details on the Pew Research American Trends Panel, see `https://www.pewresearch.org/the-american-trends-panel/`

[8]Unlike Study 1 and like Study 2, we include Republican leaners due to the relatively small sample size of the Pew ATP panel in comparison to the NS survey. Results do not change including leaners but the leaner-inclusive sample is methodologically advantageous due to the apparent risk of parallel trends violations in our difference-in-differences estimation strategy while excluding leaners (Figure C8).

[9]Although approval stability should come as no surprise given prior research shows Trump's approval is highly stable among his base except for after J6 (Jacobson, 2020).

[10]See Section C.1 for the primary estimating equation used in Study 3.

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Supplementary Material (Online Appendix)

Contents

A Study 1

A.1 Covariate Balance

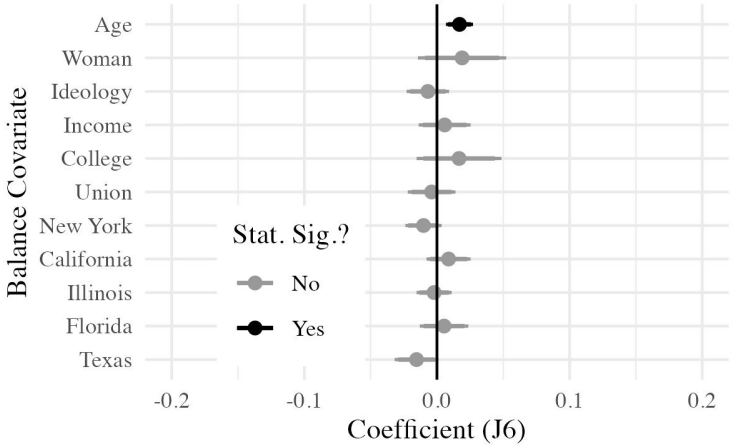

Figure A1: Covariate Balance (x-axis) Between White Republican Respondents Interviewed Pre- and Post-*J6* (Nationscape). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

A.2 Ruling Out Secular Temporal Trends

Table A1: White Republican Respondents Are Not Experiencing a Secular Pre-*J6* Trend in Trump Support Conditioning and Not Conditioning on Status Threat

	Favorability (1)	**Approval** (2)	**Index** (3)	**Favorability** (4)	**Approval** (5)	**Index** (6)
J6 Placebo x Status Threat				−0.06	−0.04	−0.05
				(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
J6 Placebo	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
White Status Threat				0.15***	0.15***	0.15***
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.10
N	3920	3931	3915	3903	3910	3898

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$. J6 placebo is equal to 1 if a respondent is interviewed after 2020-12-23, 0 otherwise. Post-*J6* data is censored in this placebo exercise. HC2 robust SEs in parentheses.

A.3 Estimation Strategy

In Study 1, we initially explore the effect of January 6 on attitudes toward Trump. Thus, we estimate the following linear model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 J6_i + \sum_{k=1}^{k} \beta_{k+1} X_{is}^k + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i is the outcome of interest characterizing support for Trump for respondent i, $J6_i$ is a binary indicator for whether a respondent is interviewed after January 6, $\sum_{k=1}^{k} X_{is}^k$ are k control covariates at the individual and state-level (s), ε_i are robust errors. We expect β_1 to be *negative* given prior research has identified that January 6 generated backlash against Trump. Additionally, to assess the heterogeneous effect of January 6 on attitudes toward Trump conditional on *status threat*, we estimate the following model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 (J6_i \times StatusThreat_i) + \beta_2 J6_i + \beta_3 StatusThreat_i + \sum_{k=1}^{k} + \beta_{k+3} X_{ic}^k + \varepsilon_i$$

Where $StatusThreat_i$ is our measure of *status threat* in Study 1. Consistent with our hypothesis, we expect β_1 to be *positive*, which would suggest the post-*J6* backlash effect was attenuated by *status threat*.

A.4 Temporal Placebo Tests

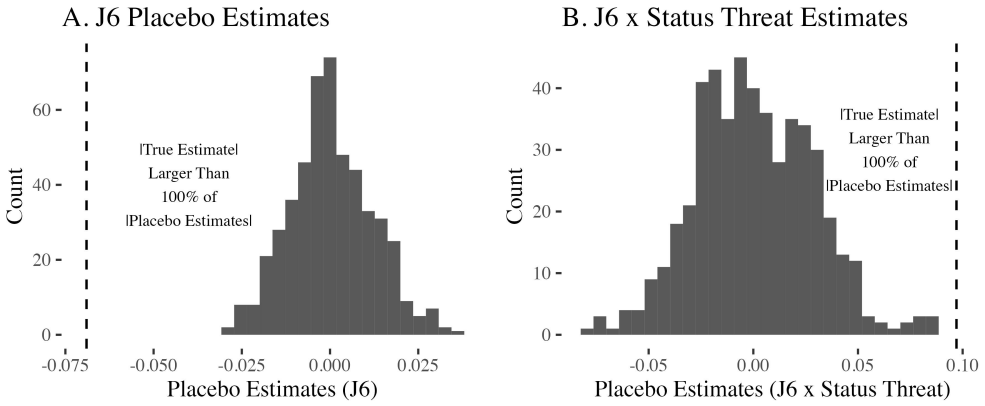

Figure A2: January 6 facilitated the largest decline in Trump support among white Republicans (and especially non-status threatened white Republicans) at least between July 2019-December 2020. Panel A characterizes a distribution of placebo effects comparing Trump support (the Trump *index*) 5 days after an arbitrary date and 15 days before said arbitrary date between August 2nd, 2019 and December 12th, 2020 (the temporal domain of the entire Nationscape survey). We choose 5 days after and before an arbitrary date since we compare the 5 days after *J6* to 15 days before December 30th in our main analyses. Panel B characterizes a distribution of placebo effects comparing Trump support 5 days after an arbitrary date and 15 days before said date conditional on *status threat*. Dashed vertical lines characterize the true post-*J6* effect and the post-*J6* effect conditional on status threat. Annotations denote what proportion of placebo effects the true effect is larger than (with effects converted to absolute value).

A.5 Ruling Out Alternative Mechanisms

Table A2: Adjusting for alternative mechanisms that may forestall anti-Trump backlash after January 6.

	Trump Index							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
J6 x Status Threat	0.08*	0.09*	0.11**	0.09*	0.07*	0.10**	0.10**	0.07*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
J6 x Ethnocentrism	0.06							0.08
	(0.08)							(0.07)
J6 x OFR		0.07						0.03
		(0.04)						(0.04)
J6 x PD Black			−0.01					−0.00
			(0.01)					(0.01)
J6 x Resentment				0.05				0.02
				(0.05)				(0.05)
J6 x Strong Partisan					−0.05*			−0.04
					(0.02)			(0.02)
J6 x Ideology						−0.04		−0.01
						(0.05)		(0.05)
J6 x Econ. Anxiety							−0.03	−0.04
							(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.12	0.11	0.16	0.16	0.21	0.11	0.14	0.28
Num. obs.	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$. Linear terms for J6 and the alternative mechanisms are not displayed. Ethnocentrism is the difference in favorability scales (very favorable to very unfavorable) concerning whites and the average concerning Latinos, Black people, and Asians. Old-fashioned racism is an index of two items measuring opposition to interracial marriage and disapproval of interracial dating. Economic anxiety is the belief that the nation's economy has gotten "worse" (as opposed to "better") compared to one year ago. HC2 robust SEs in parentheses.

A.6 Evaluating Effect Decay

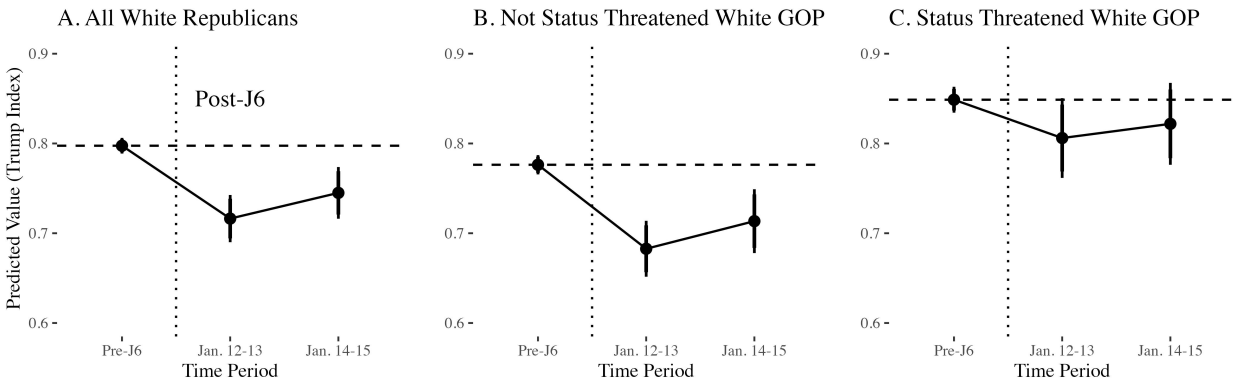

Figure A3: Status threatened white Republicans revert to pre-J6 attitudes concerning Trump earlier than white Republicans who are not status threatened. X-axis characterizes time periods (pre-*J6*, 2020-12-15 to 2020-12-31; Jan. 12-13; Jan. 14-15). Y-axis characterizes predicted values for the Trump index (holding control covariates at their means). Panels A-C characterize the full white Republican sample, non-status threatened white Republican sample, and status threatened white Republican sample. Status threat subset determined by being above the median level of the *status threat* measure in Study 1 (reporting whites experience "a lot" or "a great deal" of discrimination versus "none at all" to "moderate" discrimination). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

A.7 Ruling Out Post-Treatment Bias

Table A3: The J6 insurrection did not increase white *status threat* among white Republicans

	Status Threat (1)
J6	−0.01
	(0.01)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.03
Num. obs.	5030

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

A.8 Including Republican Leaners

Table A4: White Republicans backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but the backlash is attenuated among the status threatened (including Republican leaners)

	Favorability (1)	**Approval** (2)	**Index** (3)	**Favorability** (4)	**Approval** (5)	**Index** (6)
J6 x Status Threat				0.09^{*}	0.07^{*}	0.10^{**}
				(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
J6	-0.06^{***}	-0.07^{***}	-0.06^{***}	-0.10^{***}	-0.10^{***}	-0.11^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Status Threat				0.14^{***}	0.15^{***}	0.13^{***}
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.11
Num. obs.	6046	6062	6037	6046	6062	5000

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

A.9 Demonstrating Dynamic Intrinsic to White GOP

Table A5: *Status threat* undercuts white backlash against Trump post-*J6*, but only among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans

	Trump Index (1)
J6 x Status Threat x Republican	0.10^{*}
	(0.05)
J6 x Status Threat	-0.00
	(0.03)
J6 x Republican	-0.09^{***}
	(0.02)
Status Threat x Republican	-0.22^{***}
	(0.02)
J6	-0.02
	(0.01)
Status Threat	0.34^{***}
	(0.01)
Republican	0.49^{***}
	(0.01)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.47
Num. obs.	14343

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

B Study 2

B.1 Covariate Balance

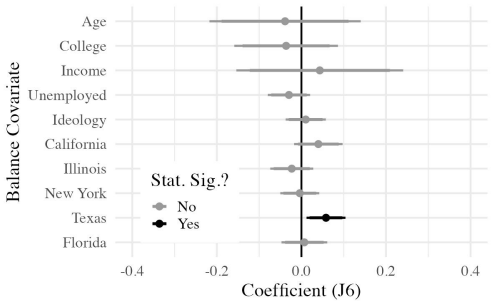

Figure B4: Covariate Balance (x-axis) Between White Republican Respondents Interviewed Pre- and Post-*J6* (Gallup World Poll). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

B.2 Validating Economic Anxiety as White Status Threat

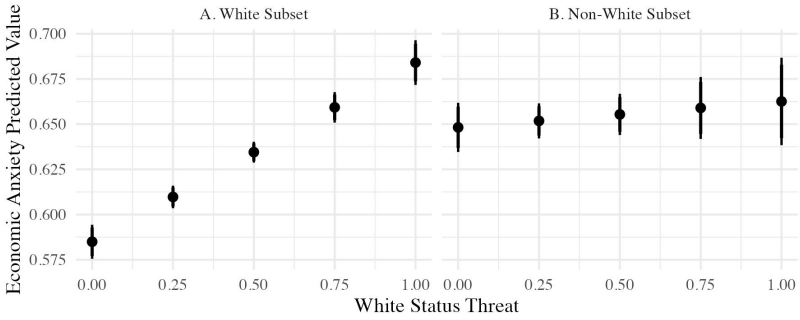

Figure B5: White Status Threat is Linked To Economic Anxiety Among Whites But Not Non-Whites

B.3 Ruling Out Secular Temporal Trends

Table B6: White Republican Respondents Are Not Experiencing a Secular Trend in Trump Support Conditioning and Not on Status Threat (Gallup World Poll)

	Approval	
	(1)	(2)
J6 Placebo x Status Threat		0.07
		(0.18)
J6 Placebo	0.01	−0.02
	(0.09)	(0.10)
Status Threat		0.03
		(0.36)
Controls?	Y	Y
R^2	0.26	0.26
N	78	78

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.4 Estimation Strategy

In Study 2, we initially explore the effect of January 6 on attitudes toward Trump. Thus, we estimate the following linear model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 J6_i + \sum_{k=1}^{k} \beta_{k+1} X_{is}^k + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i is the Trump *approval* outcome for respondent i, $J6_i$ is a binary indicator for whether a respondent is interviewed after January 6, $\sum_{k=1}^{k} X_{is}^k$ are k control covariates at the individual and state-level (s), ε_i are robust errors. We expect β_1 to be *negative* given prior research has identified that January 6 generated backlash against Trump. Additionally, to assess the heterogeneous effect of January 6 on attitudes toward Trump conditional on *status threat*, we estimate the following model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 (J6_i \times StatusThreat_i) + \beta_2 J6_i + \beta_3 StatusThreat_i + \sum_{k=1}^{k} + \beta_{k+3} X_{ic}^k + \varepsilon_i$$

Where $StatusThreat_i$ is our measure of *status threat* in Study 2. Consistent with our hypothesis, we expect β_1 to be *positive*, which would suggest the post-*J6* backlash effect was attenuated by *status threat*.

B.5 Ruling Out Alternative Mechanisms

Table B7: Ideology is not an alternative mechanism forestalling backlash against Trump post-*J6*

	Trump Approval
	(1)
J6 x Status Threat	0.30**
	(0.10)
J6 x Ideology	0.25
	(0.24)
J6	−0.41*
	(0.20)
Status Threat	−0.23
	(0.14)
Ideology	0.48*
	(0.21)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.18
Num. obs.	375

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.6 Evaluating Effect Decay

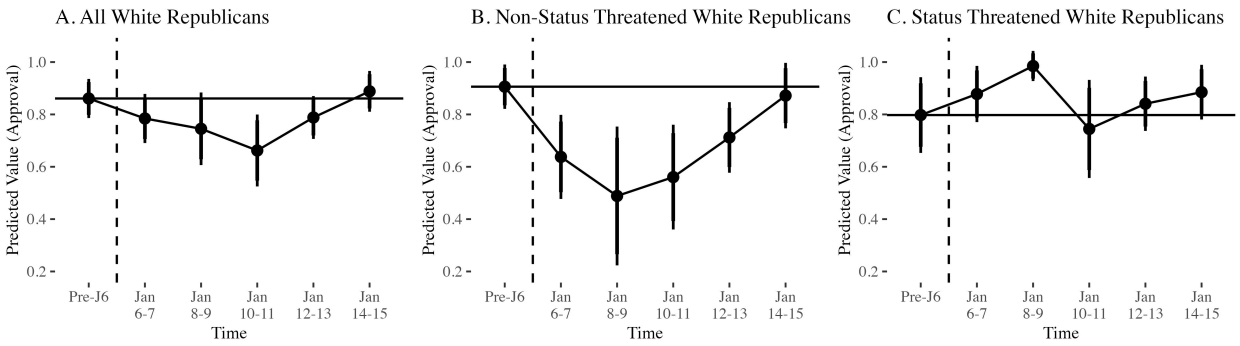

Figure B6: Temporal decay is faster than it would be because status threatened white Republicans do not respond to *J6*. X-axis characterizes time periods (pre-*J6*, 2021-01-04 to 2021-01-05; Jan. 6-7; Jan. 8-9; Jan. 10-11; Jan. 12-13; Jan. 14-15). Y-axis characterizes predicted values for Trump *approval* (holding control covariates at their means). Panels A-C characterize the full white Republican sample, non-status threatened white Republican sample, and status threatened white Republican sample. Status threat subset determined by whether the respondent reports their financial situation is worse off than a year ago or will get worse in a year (1/0). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

B.7 Further Demonstrating Economic Anxiety is Racialized

Table B8: Status threat does not mollify backlash against Trump post-*J6* for non-white Republicans

	Trump Approval	
	(1)	(2)
J6 x Status Threat	0.32**	−0.44
	(0.10)	(0.32)
J6	−0.23***	−0.08
	(0.06)	(0.21)
Status Threat	−0.21	0.10
	(0.14)	(0.60)
Controls?	Y	Y
Sample	White GOP	Non-White GOP
R^2	0.18	0.48
Num. obs.	375	40

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

C Study 3

C.1 Estimation Strategy

To generate the generalized main difference-in-differences estimate characterized on Table 3 and Figure 4, Panel A (the annotation). We estimate the following model:

$$Approval_{it} = \alpha + \tau(J6_t \times StatusThreat_i) + \beta_1 J6_t + \beta_2 StatusThreat_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where $Approval_{it}$ is Trump's approval for respondent i during wave t, $StatusThreat_i$ is the respondent's level of perceived discrimination against white people reported during the Pew ATP Wave 53 survey, and $J6_t$ is a binary indicator for whether the respondent is interviewed post-*J6* (during the Pew ATP Wave 80 survey). ε_{it} are respondent-clustered HC2 robust errors. If our hypothesis is supported, τ would be *positive*.

To generate the event study estimates characterized on Figure 4, Panel A and the predicted values on Figure 4, Panel B, we estimate the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} Approval_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1(Wave80_t \times StatusThreat_i) + \beta_2(Wave53_t \times StatusThreat_i) \\ + \beta_3 Wave80_t + \beta_4 Wave53_t + \beta_5 StatusThreat_i + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

Where $Wave80_t$ is a binary indicator for being interviewed in Wave 80 of the Pew ATP (Jan. 2021) and $Wave53_t$ is a binary indicator for being interviewed in the Wave 53 of the Pew ATP (Sep. 2019). If our hypothesis and parallel trends assumption is supported, β_1 would be positive and β_2 would be statistically null.

C.2 Temporal Placebo Tests

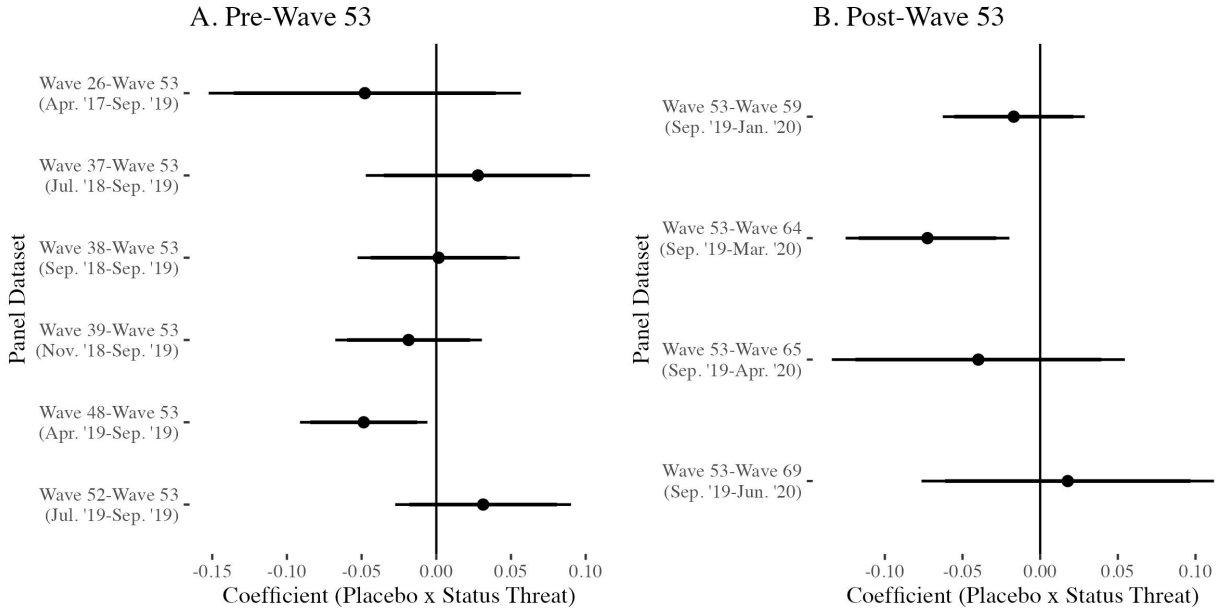

Figure C7: Temporal placebo tests assessing the effect of being interviewed between two time periods conditional on *status threat*. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 respondent-clustered robust SEs.

C.3 Ruling Out Alternative Mechanisms

Table C9: Adjusting for alternative mechanisms that may forestall anti-Trump backlash post-*J6*

	Approval			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J6 x Status Threat	0.13*			0.13*
	(0.06)			(0.06)
J6 x Ideology		0.04		0.03
		(0.02)		(0.02)
J6 x PD Black			−0.09	−0.08
			(0.07)	(0.07)
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.17
N	1686	1686	1683	1683
N Clusters	562	562	561	561

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$. Linear terms for *J6* and the alternative mechanisms are not displayed. HC2 robust respondent-clustered SEs in parentheses.

C.4 Ruling Out Intervening Events

Table C10: Intervening events between July and December 2020 do not explain the post-*J6* decline in Trump approval

	Approval
	(1)
Placebo x Status Threat	−0.03
	(0.02)
Placebo	0.03*
	(0.01)
Status Threat	0.17***
	(0.01)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.09
Num. obs.	14359

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$. Model adjusts for age, gender, income, education, unemployment, union status, ideology, political interest, state fixed effects. The placebo indicator compares respondents interviewed between July 1-30 and December 1-30. HC2 robust SEs in parentheses.

C.5 Including Respondent + Wave FEs

Table C11: Status Threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans (model adjusting for respondent and wave fixed effects)

	Trump Approval (1)
J6 x Status Threat	0.13*
	(0.06)
Controls?	Y
Respondent FE	Y
Wave FE	Y
R^2	0.69
Num. obs.	1686
N Clusters	562

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

C.6 Excluding Republican Leaners

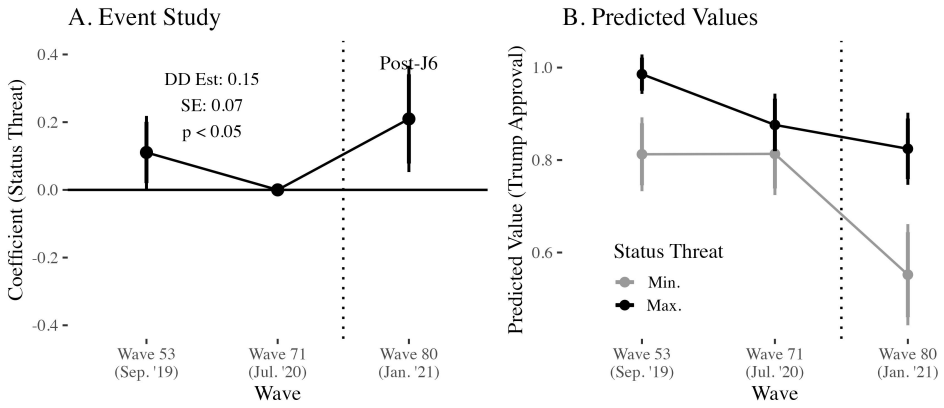

Figure C8: Status threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans (Pew American Trends Panel, excluding Republican leaners). Panel A characterizes the association between *status threat* and Trump *approval* (y-axis) conditional on wave (x-axis). Annotation denotes generalized difference-in-differences estimate for *J6* conditional on *status threat*. Panel B characterizes predicted values of Trump *approval* (y-axis) by wave for respondents at the minimum and maximum level of *status threat* (denoted by color). 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust respondent-clustered SEs

C.7 Demonstrating Dynamic Intrinsic to White GOP

Table C12: Status Threat attenuates anti-Trump backlash post-*J6* among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans

	Trump Approval (1)
J6 x Status Threat x Republican	0.14^{*}
	(0.07)
J6 x Status Threat	-0.01
	(0.03)
J6 x Republican	-0.24^{***}
	(0.04)
Status Threat x Republican	-0.05
	(0.07)
J6	-0.01
	(0.01)
Status Threat	0.20^{***}
	(0.04)
Republican	0.75^{***}
	(0.04)
Controls?	Y
R^2	0.57
Num. obs.	3354
N Clusters	1118

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

D Studies 4-7

D.1 Ruling Out Alternative Mechanisms

Table D13: *Status threat* attenuates the negative relationship between *J6 disapproval* and Trump support net of alternative mechanisms that may attenuate the relationship.

	Trump Index (1)	**Trump Index** (2)	**Trump Favorability** (3)	**Trump Vote** (4)
J6 Disapproval x Status Threat	0.29**	0.35***	0.23**	0.30**
	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.10)
J6 Disapproval x Ethnocentrism	0.21			
	(0.23)			
J6 Disapproval x OFR	0.04			
	(0.11)			
J6 Disapproval x PD Black	−0.05	−0.49***	−0.00	
	(0.03)	(0.09)	(0.10)	
J6 Disapproval x Resentment	0.03		−0.22	
	(0.13)		(0.12)	
J6 Disapproval x Strong Partisan	−0.09	0.27***	0.22***	0.20**
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)
J6 Disapproval x Ideology	0.02	−0.03	0.24*	
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.11)	
J6 Disapproval x Econ. Anxiety	−0.23**			
	(0.07)			
J6 Disapproval x FIRE (Empathy)			−0.08	
			(0.09)	
J6 Disapproval x FIRE (Fear)			−0.17	
			(0.09)	
J6 Disapproval x FIRE (Racism = Problem)			−0.23*	
			(0.10)	
J6 Disapproval x FIRE (White Advantage)			−0.23*	
			(0.11)	
Survey	NS	Pew	CMPS	Axios
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.52	0.52	0.49	0.39
Num. obs.	1073	1938	1421	1559

Note: ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$. Linear terms for interactions omitted from table.

D.2 Demonstrating Dynamic Intrinsic to White GOP

Table D14: *Status threat* attenuates the negative relationship between *J6 disapproval* and support for Trump, but only among white Republicans, not white non-Republicans

	Trump Index (1)	**Trump Index** (2)	**Trump Favorability** (3)	**Trump Vote** (4)
J6 Disapproval x Status Threat x Republican	0.44^{***}	0.95^{***}	0.68^{***}	0.93^{***}
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.10)	(0.15)
J6 Disapproval x Status Threat	-0.04	-0.44^{***}	-0.23^{***}	-0.58^{***}
	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.12)
J6 Disapproval x Republican	-0.04	-0.51^{***}	-0.25^{***}	-0.67^{***}
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Status Threat x Republican	-0.22^{**}	-0.50^{***}	-0.21^{***}	-0.50^{***}
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.06)	(0.13)
J6 Disapproval	-0.77^{***}	-0.33^{***}	-0.54^{***}	-0.24^{**}
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.08)
Status Threat	0.14	0.40^{***}	0.22^{***}	0.59^{***}
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.05)	(0.12)
Republican	0.23^{***}	0.61^{***}	0.28^{***}	0.66^{***}
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.09)
Survey	NS	Pew	CMPS	Axios
Controls?	Y	Y	Y	Y
R^2	0.67	0.83	0.70	0.68
Num. obs.	3102	4165	3001	3208

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$