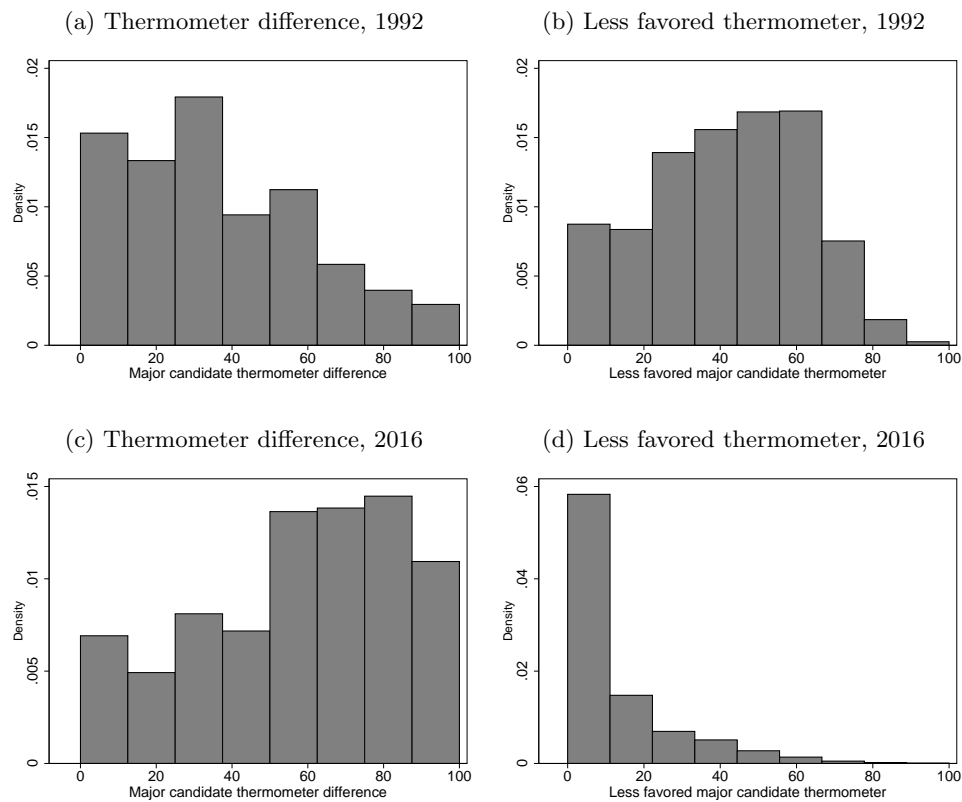


# Online Appendix: Prospects for Third Party Electoral Success in a Polarized Era

## Appendix A: Preferences for the major party presidential candidates in 1992 and 2016

Figure 1: Major party candidate feeling thermometers



## Appendix B: Assessing impact of polarization on third party success

Although third party electoral success has generally increased as major party polarization has increased, that relationship is likely not causal. We ran various OLS regressions to assess the impact of the change in the polarization in the U.S House (from time  $t - 2$  to  $t - 1$ ) on the change in third party success (from time  $t - 1$  to  $t$ ). Polarization is measured as the absolute value difference in NOMINATE scores of the average Democrat and average Republican (results are the same if instead using party medians). Third party success is the total vote share for non-major party candidates in all U.S. House elections. We included a mix of controls, such as a midterm election-year dummy, presidential (net) approval, and growth in disposable income during the second quarter of the election year. An error correction model is not appropriate in this case. We could not reject the null hypothesis of no cointegration using the `vecrank` command in Stata, which implements the Johansen test. We omit the results, as the models do not perform well with little to no statistically significant coefficient estimates. We conducted a similar analysis using the number of third party candidates as the dependent variable. That is, perhaps polarization influences the supply of candidates. We did not find a relationship between that variable and polarization. But for our purposes, these null results are informative by stressing that one cannot simply infer any sort of causal relationship. We do not find evidence that polarization detracts from third party success either. Endogeneity, however, is a potential problem in any analysis of polarization and third party success, since (potential) third party success could also contribute to increased polarization. Yet our findings here are still instructive in questioning any positive impact of polarization on third party success.

## Appendix C: Additional third party vote models

Tables 1 and 2 present the probit model on presidential third party voting for 1980 and 1996, which correspond with Tables 2 and 3 in the main text. These results show that the thermometer

Table 1: Anderson vote, 1980 (Probit)

	(1) b/se	(2) b/se
Third party vote		
Thermometer for favorite major candidate	-0.046** (0.006)	
Thermometer for least favorite major candidate	-0.001 (0.004)	
Distrust	0.019 (0.068)	0.094 (0.061)
Partisan strength	-0.231** (0.089)	-0.255** (0.080)
National economy (better to worse)	-0.171† (0.095)	-0.052 (0.086)
College degree	0.472** (0.178)	0.468** (0.164)
Income	-0.011 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.011)
Black	-1.050† (0.543)	-0.721† (0.417)
Age	-0.020** (0.005)	-0.020** (0.005)
Major candidate thermometer difference		-0.015** (0.004)
Constant	3.678** (0.697)	0.343 (0.444)
Log likelihood	-166.571	-195.191
Obs.	775	775
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$		

gap between the major party candidates has a consistent impact on third party voting. The operationalization that focuses on the worst outcome (independent effect of the thermometer of the less favored major party candidate), however, does not have an impact. We conjecture that the a voter's independent focus on that candidate will have a more consistent impact in the current polarized era, which is typified by extremely low thermometer ratings for the less favored major party candidate (see Figure 3 in main text).

Tables 3 to 6 report multinomial logit models of presidential vote choice for the 1980, 1992,

Table 2: Perot vote, 1996 (Probit)

	(1) b/se	(2) b/se
Third party vote		
Thermometer for favorite major candidate	-0.027** (0.005)	
Thermometer for least favorite major candidate	0.004 (0.004)	
Major candidate thermometer difference		-0.012** (0.003)
Distrust	0.099† (0.057)	0.160** (0.054)
Partisan strength	-0.299** (0.077)	-0.323** (0.075)
National economy (better to worse)	0.116 (0.082)	0.173* (0.078)
College degree	-0.410* (0.160)	-0.390* (0.157)
Income	0.004 (0.011)	0.008 (0.011)
Black	-0.362 (0.329)	-0.581† (0.316)
Age	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.011* (0.004)
Constant	0.814 (0.532)	-0.844* (0.375)
Log likelihood	-213.462	-223.832
Obs.	993	993
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$		

1996, and 2016 elections. The third party vote, which is the omitted baseline group, is Anderson in 1980, Perot in 1992 and 1996, and any non-major candidate (mostly Johnson and Stein) in 2016. The focus of these estimates is the impact of distrust, while controlling for other factors. These estimates are consistent with the conclusions based on a simple comparison of means of the distrust index in the main text.

Table 3: Presidential vote in 1980 (Multinomial logit, Anderson vote baseline)

	b/se
Reagan	
Independent	-0.951* (0.425)
Democrat	-1.337** (0.298)
Distrust	-0.029 (0.120)
National economy (better to worse)	0.363* (0.165)
College degree	-0.650* (0.308)
Income	0.015 (0.022)
Black	0.522 (1.106)
Age	0.037** (0.010)
Constant	-0.573 (0.853)
Carter	
Independent	0.217 (0.542)
Democrat	2.013** (0.355)
Distrust	-0.343** (0.126)
National economy (better to worse)	-0.061 (0.176)
College degree	-0.814* (0.338)
Income	0.008 (0.024)
Black	2.507* (1.033)
Age	0.046** (0.010)
Constant	-0.747 (0.922)
Log likelihood	-490.265
Obs.	778
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$	

Table 4: Presidential vote in 1992 (Perot vote baseline)

	b/se
Bush	
Independent	-1.616** (0.284)
Democrat	-1.796** (0.207)
Distrust	-0.195** (0.071)
National economy (better to worse)	-0.330** (0.099)
College degree	0.794** (0.203)
Income	-0.059** (0.015)
Black	0.825 (0.638)
Age	0.025** (0.005)
Constant	2.333** (0.505)
Clinton	
Independent	0.697* (0.291)
Democrat	2.307** (0.211)
Distrust	-0.348** (0.072)
National economy (better to worse)	0.305** (0.103)
College degree	0.798** (0.209)
Income	-0.062** (0.014)
Black	2.594** (0.523)
Age	0.025** (0.005)
Constant	-1.758** (0.528)
Log likelihood	-966.679
Obs.	1414
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$	

Table 5: Presidential vote in 1996 (Multinomial logit, Perot vote baseline)

	b/se
Clinton	
Independent	-0.478 (0.504)
Democrat	1.548** (0.299)
Distrust	-0.389** (0.112)
National economy (better to worse)	-0.736** (0.163)
College degree	0.565† (0.335)
Income	-0.040† (0.022)
Black	2.623** (0.801)
Age	0.020* (0.009)
Constant	3.076** (0.772)
Dole	
Independent	-1.829** (0.455)
Democrat	-2.730** (0.324)
Distrust	-0.160 (0.119)
National economy (better to worse)	0.231 (0.168)
College degree	1.018** (0.341)
Income	-0.004 (0.023)
Black	-1.502 (1.277)
Age	0.029** (0.009)
Constant	0.629 (0.788)
Log likelihood	-496.404
Obs.	994
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$	



Table 6: Presidential vote in 2016 (Non-major party vote baseline)

	b/se
Clinton	
Independent	0.696** (0.265)
Democrat	2.559** (0.215)
Distrust	-0.342** (0.077)
National economy (better to worse)	-0.387** (0.103)
College degree	0.322† (0.189)
Income	0.009 (0.012)
Black	1.161** (0.377)
Age	0.019** (0.005)
Constant	0.684 (0.494)
Trump	
Independent	-1.618** (0.237)
Democrat	-1.982** (0.216)
Distrust	0.054 (0.078)
National economy (better to worse)	0.636** (0.101)
College degree	-0.505** (0.184)
Income	-0.005 (0.012)
Black	-1.098* (0.500)
Age	0.026** (0.005)
Constant	-0.744 (0.485)
Log likelihood	-1151.216
Obs.	2493
Significance levels: † $p < .1$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$	