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Ducks Out of Water?
The Fit Between Personal Political Ideology and Community Realities Regulates
Vulnerability to Social Risk

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Abstract

A Community Fit Model of Vulnerability to Social Risk is proposed. It posits that home communities that confirm personal expectations about the inherent stability of the collective social world can provide the tether to a singular, consensual reality people need to feel protected against the risks of living collectively. Five studies assessed community fit through the match between personal political orientation and objective markers of the instability of one's home community (i.e., population mobility, economic inequality, voting patterns). Considerable evidence suggests that liberals expect greater instability in the collective social world than conservatives. Therefore, *unstable* home community realities should be consistent with the expectations of liberals (fit) and inconsistent with the expectations of conservatives (misfit). In contrast, *stable* community realities should be consistent with the expectations of conservatives (fit) and inconsistent with the expectations of liberals. Study 1 revealed that expectation-consistent communities protected individuals against election-induced anxiety about the future when they conferred epistemic certainty—that is, when people experienced a singular, consensual reality. Studies 1 through 5, and an internal meta-analysis across, each revealed that people in expectation-inconsistent or misfitting communities reported greater anxieties about their personal precarity when the risks of living collectively were more (vs. less) salient. However, participants in expectation-consistent fitting communities were comparatively resilient to these same risks. The present findings suggest that expectation-consistent home community realities can offer individuals symbolic protection against the risks of living collectively.

(233/250)

Humans have an enduring, structural need for home...when people lose that sense of home, they tend to lose their center of gravity... They may feel as though they are being hurtled around in a tornado, grabbing desperately for anything stable enough to hold onto...

In a New York Times op-ed (December 11, 2025), T. Friedman likened the residents of modern nations to Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. Both, he mused, need to feel moored to something socially shared in order to feel at home, and thus, protected against the risks of living in collective and often divided societies (Slavich, 2020; Murray, Lamarche et al., 2021), such as those posed by identity politics (Finkel et al., 2020; Fukuyama, 2018).

The residents inside one's physical home often provide such protective mooring (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Slavich, 2020). For instance, people living with *more* (vs. less) responsive romantic partners are comparatively immune to social rejection (e.g., Murray, McNulty et al., 2023), contagious illness (e.g., Cohen, 2021; Murray, McNulty et al., 2023), and reminders of death and relationship loss (Cox & Arndt, 2012; Plusnin et al., 2018). However, little research has examined whether the constitution of the community outside one's physical home can also provide such protective mooring. This paper draws on five studies to test a new theoretical model of the vulnerability-regulating effects of home communities that confirm (vs. disconfirm) personal expectations about the inherent stability of the collective social world. Broadly, this model assumes that living as an ideological duck-out-of-water leaves people more vulnerable to being psychologically buffeted about by the day-to-day risks posed by living collectively.

Seeking Epistemic Mooring: The Preference for Consistency

People are strongly motivated to perceive consistency and coherence in their social worlds (King & Hicks, 2021). People are motivated to perceive and maintain consistency between their thoughts and feelings (Festinger, 1957; Gawronski et al., 2008; Harmon-Jones et

al., 2009; 2012; Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005) and expectations and experiences (Heine et al., 2006; Jonas et al., 2004; Hillman et al., 2023). People are also motivated to perceive and maintain consistency between their self-views and the social contexts they inhabit (Schmader & Sedikides, 2018). And people are strongly motivated to believe that others share their internal experiences of the social world (Auger et al., 2016; Koudenburg et al., 2014; Enestrom et al., 2025; Heine et al., 2006; Higgins et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2023; Kruglanski et al., 2018; Rossignac-Milon & Higgins, 2018; Rossignac-Milon et al., 2021; Martens & Rutjens, 2026).

Indeed, experiencing social realities as shared or consensual is thought to help satisfy basic needs for epistemic certainty and social belonging (Higgins et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2023). For instance, people report greater meaning in lives when their romantic partner shares or validates their perspective on national events (Enestrom et al., 2025). They also report greater satisfaction when their romantic partner validates or shares their conceptions of themselves (Neff & Karney, 2005; Swann, 1983; Swann, 2012). Similarly, people in the U.S. feel more included when they remembered (or anticipated) living under a President that shared (vs. opposed) their views about themselves and social equality (Block et al., 2022), and, people prefer to live in communities that share their political views (Motyl et al., 2014, 2020). People also report more comfort depending on others when they live in communities that share (vs. oppose) their political preferences (Chopik & Motyl, 2016; Motyl et al., 2014, 2020). Introverts even prefer physical geographies that validate solitary self-conceptions such as mountains or woods, over geographies that invalidate such self-conceptions, such as oceans or open fields (Oishi et al., 2015).

Home Communities as Epistemic Mooring

The Community Fit Model of Vulnerability to Social Risk in Figure 1 builds on this theoretical and empirical foundation. This model assumes that living in a community that

confirms, rather than disconfirms, personal expectations about the inherent stability of the collective social world can provide a clearer ongoing testament or tether to one's existence in a singular, consensual social world. Given such epistemic mooring, expectation-consistent communities should generally feel safer and more navigable than expectation-inconsistent communities (Higgins et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2023). Accordingly, the model hypothesizes that community fit dynamically regulates vulnerability to the risks of collective living, such as those posed by vaccine-hesitant neighbors, volatile financial markets, or unreliable governments.

Specifically, experienced *fit*—that is, consistency between personal expectations about the collective world's stability and home community realities—decreases vulnerability the risks of living collectively. In contrast, experienced *misfit*—that is, inconsistency between personal expectations about the collective world's stability and home community realities—increases such vulnerability. The model focuses on personal expectations about the social world's stability or permanence because expectations about the constancy of central aspects of the social world, including its material (e.g., food, land, Alonzo & Kindsvater, 2008; Schaller et al., 2017; Sng et al., 2018) and social resources (e.g., family, friends, neighbors, Mikulincer & Shaver, 2020, 2003; Slavich, 2020), shape social perception and individual and collective behavior. We

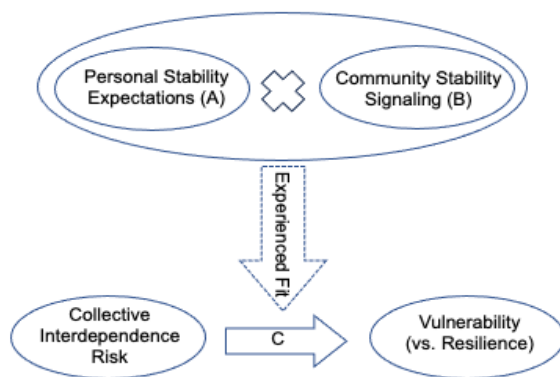


Figure 1. The Community Fit Model of Vulnerability to Social Risk

describe each model component in turn.

Personal stability expectations (A) refer to tacit expectations about the collective world's inherent stability and permanence, as opposed to instability and impermanence, that underlie differences in personal political ideologies or worldviews. The model assumes that individuals

who view the collective social world as relatively stable in nature expect its material (e.g., money) and social (e.g., relationship) resources to be freely and predictably available, whereas individuals who view the collective social world as relatively unstable in nature expect its material and social resources to be impermanent and unpredictably available.

Community stability signaling (B) refers to observable characteristics of one's home community that signal how the self and others collectively experience the collective social world's stability. Socio-ecological models of human behavior contend that communities develop shared expectations and norms that make it easier for people to keep themselves, and their kin, physically safe in a given geographic environment (Choi & Oishi, 2020; Sng et al., 2018; Yuki & Schug, 2020). For instance, people are more likely to hold interdependent, collectivist relationship values in communities where interpersonal conflicts need to be minimized, such as ones with stable (vs. fluid) residents (Oishi, 2010) or higher (vs. lower) concentrations of genetically related individuals (Sng et al., 2025). People are more likely to value marrying later and having fewer children in communities where competition for material resources and social capital is tighter, as is the case in densely (vs. sparsely) populated states (Sng et al., 2017).

Findings such as these suggest that the behavior, life circumstances, and values of individuals in one's home community may tacitly telegraph the community's expectations or experience of the social world's inherent stability or permanence (Sng et al., 2018). For instance, communities where most individuals spend their lives in the same city (Choi & Oishi, 2020), share the same religious affiliation (Andrews, 2011; Meagher, 2018), or attend small community churches (Oishi, Talhelm et al., 2015) may telegraph or signal collective expectations that social relationships are stable, as opposed to transitory, in nature. Communities where economic inequality is high, and affluent neighborhoods border struggling ones, may signal community

experiences of the collective social world as capricious or uneven in its allocational of material resources, as opposed to measured (Gau et al., 2014; O'Brian et al., 2019). And communities that reliably vote for conservative over liberal political candidates for public office may signal their collective expectations that social institutions and norms should be static in nature, as opposed to more fluid or dynamic (Carney et al., 2008; Chopik & Motyl, 2016; Motyl et al., 2014).

Experienced fit? Paths A and B interact to capture the hypothesized experienced of community fit—with fit *increasing* with greater *consistency* between personal expectations about the stability of the collective world and home community realities, and conversely, fit *decreasing* with greater *inconsistency*. This interaction captures the assumption that personal expectations of the collective social world's inherent stability may be consistent, or inconsistent, with the collective norms and behavior evident in the community that currently surrounds them (Choi & Oishi, 2020; Oishi & Tsang, 2022). For instance, people who expect friendships to be lifelong may move from rural hometowns to large cities where friendships are in constant flux; those who see wealth as inequitably distributed may live in communities where most thrive; and individuals who grew up in families that revered traditional values may live as adults in neighborhoods filled with progressive voters (Motyl et al., 2014). Accordingly, people living in the same community may differ in the degree to which they feel epistemically moored and tethered to a shared reality as opposed to epistemically adrift—like the proverbial duck out of water.

Vulnerability (vs. resilience) collective risk? Living as part of a broader neighborhood, city, state, or nation puts oneself and one's family at potential risk (Brody et al., 2016; Miller & Maner, 2012; Slavich, 2020). For instance, the policies enacted by a government can affect the stress people experience in their daily lives (Batra et al., 2023), and the vaccinations people choose (vs. forego) for themselves or their children can affect how readily contagious illness

spreads (DeVerna et al., 2025). The salience of such risks can vary over time—increasing, for example, when financial markets are volatile, politicians enter or leave public life, or flu season starts. They can also vary situationally. For example, people are more attuned to the potential to be hurt in situations where it is harder to predict or control others’ motivations (Gerpott et al., 2018; Murray & Pascuzzi, 2024; Simpson, 2007), such as situations where others are more powerful (Overall et al., 2016) or unreasoned (Murray, Lamarche et al., 2021).

Because perceiving reality as shared or consensual generally reduces anxiety and uncertainty (Heine et al., 2006; Higgins et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2023; Jonas et al., 2004), the model views expectation-consistent—or shared-reality affirming—communities as affording better symbolic protection against the risks of collective interdependence than expectation-inconsistent communities. Path C in Figure 1 thus captures the role that experienced fit (vs. misfit) plays in regulating vulnerability, as opposed to resilience, in the face of collective risk. The model specifically diagnoses vulnerability (vs. resilience) through worries about *future* precarity because future-oriented thoughts preoccupy attention and motivate behavior (Baumeister et al., 2020; Monroe et al., 2017), making such thoughts crucial to better understand.

Paths A, B, and C together advance two complementary hypotheses. Namely, people living in expectation-inconsistent or “misfitting” communities will feel *more* worried about their future precarity when the risks of collective interdependence are more (vs. less) salient. However, people living in expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities should be less worried about their future precarity in these same circumstances. The model thus paradoxically predicts that any symbolic protection communities offer may depend more on the consistency between personal and collective realities than on the actual stability of the home community itself.

Operationalizations, Hypotheses, and Study Overview

The community fit model represents a generative integration and extension of theory and empirical findings from shared reality, meaning maintenance, socioecological and person-environment fit literatures. This new model is the first to (1) pinpoint (in)congruence between personal expectations about the collective social world and community-evidenced realities as a source of fit; (2) index fit using objective features of one's home community socio-ecology rather than subjective perceptions of specific social contexts like a classroom or job interview; and (3) most uniquely and generatively, the first to hypothesize that community fit confers psychological resilience to collectively experienced social risks. We present five studies, and an internal meta-analysis, as the first tests of the community fit model. We specified all hypotheses and operationalizations a-priori, but only preregistered the Study 5 analyses.

Because people gravitate to ideologies that confirm their worldviews over ideologies that contradict them (Arrowood & Cox, 2020; Solomon et al., 1991), individual differences in political ideology can reliably signal individual differences in such stability expectations (Jost et al., 2003). Therefore, in all five studies, we operationalized personal stability expectations through self-reports of political orientation given its power to capture individual differences in such worldviews (Jost et al., 2003). Considerable evidence suggests that people on the political right, relative to those on the left, are more likely to see the collective social world as stable or permanent, as opposed to unstable or impermanent, in its fundamental nature.

In terms of material resources, conservatives see the collective social world as consistent and fair in its distribution of economic opportunity, whereas liberals see it as inconsistent and unfair (Chambers et al., 2019; Davidai & Ongis, 2019; Heiserman et al., 2020; Kraus et al., 2015, 2017; Waldtogel et al., 2021). Conservatives are also more likely than liberals to believe in the

power of the free market to distribute material resources fairly to those who seek them, rather than inequitably (Goudrazi et al., 2020; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Recognizing economic unfairness, liberals are instead more likely to believe the community members have a duty of material care to one another (Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2009; Waytz et al., 2019).

In terms of social resources, conservatives are more likely to expect social relationships to be structured around stabilizing, uniformity-eliciting roles, obligations, and institutions. For instance, as compared to liberals, conservatives are more likely to value conformity, loyalty, tradition, and group cohesion (e.g., Caprara et al., 2006; Cavazza et al., 2008; Desilets et al., 2020; Feldman, 2003; Graham et al., 2009; Jost et al., 2016; Piurko et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010). Relative to liberals, conservatives are also more likely to perceive consistency and uniformity in social relationships. Conservatives are more likely to overestimate group consensus (Rabinowitz et al., 2016; Stern et al., 2014), place greater value on traditional family structures (Baunach, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2022; Sherkat et al., 2011), and prioritize marriage (Gallup, 2024) and relationship commitment (Fangmeier et al., 2020). Conservatives are also more to see themselves, others, and events as static or stable in nature rather than fluid or changeable (Carney et al., 2008; Jost et al., 2008; Osborne & Sibley, 2020; Waytz et al., 2019).

Across studies, we operationalized home community realities through three observable characteristics of participants' home community: (1) population mobility, (2) economic inequality, and (3) history of voting for (vs. against) Democratic presidential/liberal candidates. Considered together these three characteristics should powerfully signal a community's collective experience of social relationships as more or less stable and predictable (in the case of population mobility); its experience of economic opportunity as more or less freely and evenly available (in the case of economic inequality), and its collective values and expectation of

continuity versus change in social groups and social structures (in the case of voting patterns).

Home communities that tacitly signal *instability* (i.e., higher population mobility, higher economic inequality, and more votes cast for Democratic presidential/liberal candidates) should be expectation-consistent for *liberals* (fit) and inconsistent for *conservatives* (misfit). In contrast, home communities that tacitly signal *stability* (i.e., lower population mobility, lower economic inequality, and fewer votes cast for Democratic presidential/liberal candidates) should be expectation-consistent for conservatives (fit) and inconsistent for liberals (misfit). Because expectation-consistent communities should better affirm the existence of a shared collective reality, people living in expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities should be less vulnerable to collective risk than those living in expectation-inconsistent or “misfitting” communities.

Table 1.

Overview of Studies

<i>Study</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Test</i>
1	Pre-/post-election	CF limits uncertainty when reality is singular, consensual	3-way singular reality X PO X CIS
2	Cross-sectional	CF protects against anxiety depending on government	3-way government anxiety X PO X CIS
3	Daily diary	CF protects against daily public sensitivity to societal threat	3-way daily public sensitivity to societal threat X PO X CIS
4	Pre-/post-midterm	CF protects against daily public sensitivity to societal threat	3-way daily public sensitivity to societal threat X PO X CIS
5	Daily diary	CF protects against daily community threat of COVID-19	3-way daily community COVID- 19 threat X PO X CIS

Note. CF refers to community fit; PO refers to political orientation; CIS refers to community instability-signaling (i.e., a composite of community population mobility, economic inequality, and liberal voting history).

Table 1 overviews the studies. Study 1 provides “proof-of-concept” for the model’s presumed underlying mechanism—that expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities protect against collective risk by testifying to the existence of a singular, consensual reality. Studies 2 through 5 then fully test the main hypothesis that fitting (vs. misfitting) home communities better protect against the risks posed by living in a collective society (Path C in Figure 1).

Study 1

Elections often elicit personal angst and uncertainty (Blanton et al., 2012; Ford et al., 2019; Ford et al., 2023) because people question whether politicians, government bodies, and opposing partisans will act in their best interest (Finkel et al., 2020; Pew Research Center, 2024). Therefore, elections provide an apt context to examine the presumed mechanism underlying the model—the assumption that expectation-consistent communities protect against collective risk because they can provide stronger testament or tether to a singular, consensual reality, as opposed to leaving people epistemically unmoored or adrift.

In a now classic paper, Spencer et al. (2005) argued that researchers can gain insight into a mechanism by varying it as a moderator—by showing that the hypothesized effects emerge when the assumed mechanism is present, but not when it is absent. If expectation-consistent communities protect because they provide testament to the experience of a singular, consensual reality, then moderation-of-process logic suggests the following: Living in an expectation-consistent or fitting community should protect against election-induced uncertainty when people do indeed experience social reality as singular and consensual at a given window of time, and thus, have reason to trust in their experience of fit. However, expectation-consistent communities should lose their protective capacity when people nevertheless experience social reality as divided or conflicted, and thus, have reason to distrust in their experience of fit.

Because elections can highlight either societal unanimity or division and discord, we tested these contrasting possibilities over the 2024 U.K. and U.S. national/federal elections. We asked participants to complete short online surveys the day before and the day after their respective elections. We collected three *situational* markers of the degree to which participants experienced a singular, consensual social reality, as opposed to multiple, conflicting social realities, prior to the election: (1) subjective reports of sharing the same reality as the “average person in the country”; (2) subjective perceptions of the election’s outcome as a toss-up, suggesting the experience of multiple, conflicting realities; and (3) objective variability in pre-election polling in participants’ home community, with greater variability suggesting the experience of multiple, conflicting realities. We also collected pre- and post-election measures of our key outcome variable, election-related angst and uncertainty, through the worry participants reported for the future they themselves, their family, their community, and country faced.

When people experienced a singular, consensual reality prior to the election, and thus had reason to trust in their experience of fit, we expected living in an expectation-consistent or “fitting” community to be protective. That is, we expected liberals living in instability-signaling communities (fit) to report fewer post-election worries about the future than liberals living in stability-signaling communities (misfit); we also expected conservatives living in stability-signaling communities (fit) to report fewer post-election worries about the future than conservatives living in instability-signaling communities (misfit). However, when people experienced multiple, conflicting realities prior to the election, and the hypothesized mechanism was comparatively absent, we did not expect such protective effects of community fit to emerge.

Method

The SOM provides study-specific detail about the materials and prior use of these data.

Transparency and Openness

The studies were preregistered to test hypotheses unrelated to the current study, but the community fit model hypotheses were anticipated in the U.S. preregistration.¹ An anonymized copy of each preregistration and the survey materials, data, and analysis syntax, are available on OSF: https://osf.io/hjf57/overview?view_only=3c27893087cd48c98c4f354bcf8dea28 (blinded citation, 2026). Across studies, Chat GPT was used in editing two paragraphs.

Participants

Based on research funds available to each lead investigator, participants ($N_{UK}=754$; $N_{US}=475$) were recruited through Prolific to complete pre- and post-election surveys. Retained participants ($N_{UK}=735$; $N_{US}=465$) had to be in committed romantic relationships, eligible to vote, and pass a research integrity check. They were evenly split on income (i.e., above/below the median household income; ~£40,000 in the U.K. and ~\$81,000 in the U.S.); U.S. participants were also evenly split between swing/non-swing states. Participants failing to provide sufficient location information to obtain any of the community markers (83 participants) and/or failing to complete the post-election survey (107 participants) left 1,041 participants for analysis. Participants (434 men, 536 women, 11 unspecified) averaged 41.6 ($SD=12.4$) years old. Most U.K. participants (~90%) identified as White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British). U.S. participants identified as White (~71%), Asian (~3%), Black (~8%), Latino/Latina (~5%), Indigenous (<1%), Middle Eastern (<1%), and mixed/other (~4%).

¹ The U.S. preregistration hypothesized that participants living in politically-incongruent communities (i.e., liberals in Republican-voting districts and conservatives in Democratic-voting districts) might experience heightened levels of uncertainty.

Procedure

Participants received a Qualtrics link to the survey at 9 A.M. (local time) on the day before the 2024 election (U.K. July 3rd/U.S. November 4th) and on the day after the election (July 5th/November 6th). While the pre-election survey closed as soon as we met the requisite sample on the day before the election, the post-election survey remained open for 48 hours to maximize retention. The large majority of participants completed the survey within 24 hours of receipt.

Measures

Political orientation. In the pre-election survey, participants described their political orientation on a single-item scale anchored, 1=*extremely left wing* to 9=*extremely right wing*.

Community instability (vs. stability) signaling. In the U.S. sample, using the American Community Survey, 2019-2013, we obtained (a) *total population mobility* for the participant's home county, represented as a percentage (from 0-100%) of the population in a given county that moved within the county, moved into the county from another county, moved into the county from another state, or moved into the county from another country; and (b) *economic inequality* (i.e., GINI coefficient) for the participant's home county, represented as an income-to-wealth ratio ranging from 0 (absolute equality) to 1 (absolute concentration of wealth). Using the Presidential election years from 2000-2020 from the MIT Data Science and Election lab, we obtained the (c) the average proportion of Democratic presidential votes cast in the participant's home county across these seven presidential elections. (The average proportion of Democratic presidential votes cast was strongly negatively correlated with the average proportion of Republican presidential votes cast, $r(548)=-.99$, in this study, and all subsequent studies.)

In the U.K. sample, we indexed mobility through (a) churn of the residential population in the local authority district (LAD) corresponding to participants' postal code (i.e., ratio of

households ending the year with a different last name), sourced from the 2022 Ministry of Housing, Community and Local government report, (b) inequality through the average level of economic deprivation in the same LAD, sourced from the same report, and (c) liberal-leaning voting through the local returns for the constituency corresponding to participants' postal code from 2010 to 2024. We indexed left- (vs. right-) lean through the proportion of times the seat/constituency was won by a left- (vs. right-) leaning party candidate. We z-scored and averaged each of these indicators within each sample to create an overall formative index of community instability (vs. stability) signaling specific to each country.

These indicators captured relatively independent community instability signals, as we had intended. Significant, but small to moderate positive correlations emerged between home community liberal/Democratic voting patterns and economic inequality, $r(862)=.411, p<.001$, and between population mobility and economic inequality, $r(911)=.071, p=.031$, but not between Democratic voting patterns and population mobility, $r(1034)=.019, p=.546$. Given our interest in creating a broad index of community in(stability), and consistent with the logic of a formative index, we z-scored and averaged these indices, such that higher scores on the index captured greater community *instability*-signaling (i.e., higher population mobility, higher economic inequality, more liberal leaning), as opposed to *stability*-signaling (i.e., lower population mobility, lower economic inequality, less liberal leaning). (In a formative measurement model, people who score relatively high on one indicator of the underlying construct are not necessarily expected to score high on the others because any one indicator is thought to be sufficient to index the construct (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Edwards &

Bagozzi, 2000).) Importantly, in this study, and in all subsequent studies, we found generally consistent effects with the individual indicators.²

Worry about future. In the pre-election ($\alpha=.79$) and post-election survey ($\alpha=.87$), participants reported how worried they currently felt about: “your own future”, “your family’s future”, “the future of your romantic relationship”, “your community’s future”, and “your country’s future”, 1=*not at all worried*, 7=*extremely worried*.

Shared reality with the average person in the country. In the pre-election survey, participants rated how they would feel “having a conversation with the average person in my country” in response to 8 shared reality items ($\alpha=.92$) which we averaged (e.g., “we would think of things at the exact same time”, “we would share the same thoughts and feelings about things”), 1=*completely disagree*, 7=*completely agree* (Rossignac-Milon et al., 2021).

Perceiving election as toss-up. In the pre-election survey, participants also rated the chance of each candidate winning the election (0-100%); we calculated the absolute value of the difference between Sunak/Starmer (U.K.) and Harris/Trump (U.S.) ratings, z-scored this absolute difference, and then reversed it (multiplied by -1). Higher scores captured closer to even odds of either candidate winning (i.e., the perception that the country disagreed about the best candidate), and thus, the perception of multiple, conflicting realities.

Polling uncertainty. In the U.S. sample, we used FiveThirtyEight’s aggregating polling averages, starting from the day Kamala Harris accepted the nomination (07/26/2024), to track the

² The sample size varies across the indicators in this, and all subsequent studies, because the data source did not contain information on the participant’s home county and/or the participant provided incomplete, conflicting, or inaccurate zip/postal code and/or county information.

projected Presidential vote (i.e., % projected Republican, % projected Democratic) in participants' home state. We calculated the difference between these percentages in each poll and then calculated the standard deviation of this difference across the polls to capture pre-election uncertainty. In the U.K. sample, we used IPSOS projected election results for participants' home constituencies. On June 18, 2024, approximately 2 weeks before the election, IPSOS categorized each constituency in terms of the difficulty of projecting a winner (e.g., strong Labour, likely conservative, lean Scottish National Party, toss-up). We scored constituencies receiving a rating of "strong" or "likely" as 0, those receiving a rating of "lean" as 0.5, and those receiving a rating of "toss-up" as 1. Higher scores captured greater division or uncertainty in voter preferences in participants' home communities, and thus, the existence of multiple conflicting realities.

Results

Because integrative data analyses afford increased statistical power and tests of generalizability (Curran & Hussong, 2009; Hussong et al., 2013; Wegener et al., 2022), we *z*-scored the measures and then combined samples. Sensitivity analyses using the *InteractionPowerR* 3-way interaction Shiny App (Baranger et al., 2023) suggested that the integrated sample ($N=1041$) provided ~83% power to detect a 3-way interaction ($\alpha=.05$) as small as $f^2=.008$ given assumed reliabilities and correlations among the predictors (see SOM). Table 2 presents descriptive information (raw scores) and intercorrelations among the *z*-scored variables.

Mechanism? Shared Reality Perceptions as Moderator

When participants experienced a more singular, consensual reality, we expected living in an expectation-consistent or "fitting" community to predict decreased about the future post-election worries, relative to living in a misfitting community. However, we did not expect living in a fitting community to be protective when participants experienced multiple, conflicting

realities. Because community fit is operationalized through the two-way interaction between political orientation and home community (in)stability, this hypothesis corresponds to a 3-way interaction between the pre-election experience of a singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and community stability-signaling in predicting post-election worry.

We conducted simultaneous regression analyses predicting post-election worries about the future from pre-election worries (to index change in worry) and the (centered) main effects, 2-way, and 3-way interaction(s) between each measure of singular (vs. multiple) reality perceptions, political orientation, and the composite index of community instability-signaling.

We reasoned the three indicators of singular, consensual (vs. multiple, conflicting) social realities would capture distinct ways in which participants might experience more (vs. less) singular pre-election realities. Consistent with this expectation, the intercorrelations between these indicators were near zero and nonsignificant, yet they nevertheless yielded parallel effects. The expected 3-way interaction between the experience of singular, consensual (vs. multiple conflicting) realities, political orientation, and community instability-signaling was significant for each of the three reality indicators. As expected, a significantly positive 3-way interaction emerged between shared reality with the average person in the country, political orientation, and community-instability signaling in predicting post-election worries about the future, $b=.104$, $SE=.037$, $\beta=.074$, $t(1032)=2.85$, $p=.005$, $95\%CI(.032, .176)$, $\eta_p^2=.008$. Also as expected, significantly negative 3-ways emerged between perceiving the election as a toss-up (i.e., multiple realities), political orientation, and community instability-signaling, $b=-.084$, $SE=.028$, $\beta=-.077$, $t(1032)=-2.96$, $p=.003$, $95\%CI(-.140, -.028)$, $\eta_p^2=.008$, and between polling uncertainty (i.e., multiple realities), political orientation, and community instability-signaling, $b=-.101$, $SE=.037$, $\beta=-.078$, $t(910)=-2.76$, $p=.006$, $95\%CI(-.173, -.029)$, $\eta_p^2=.009$, in predicting post-election worry.

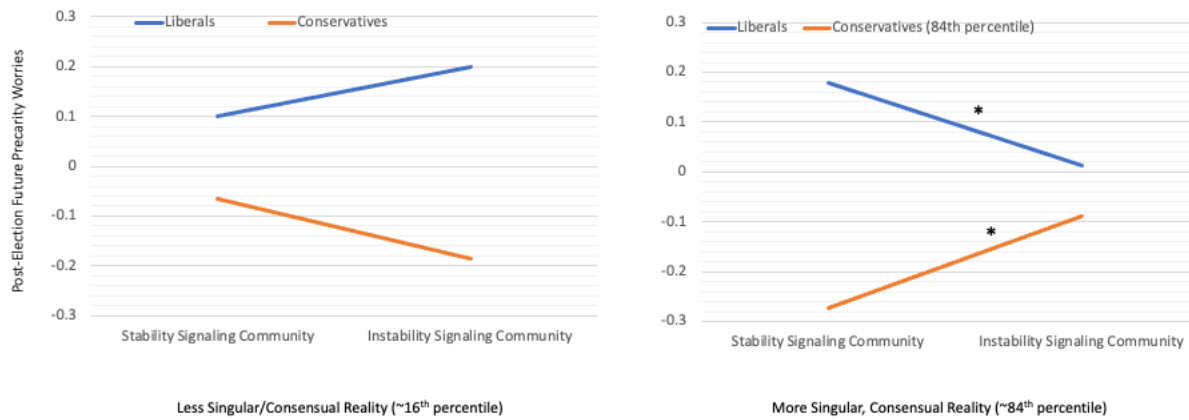
Given this convergence, and consistent with the logic of a formative index, we created an index of the experience of a singular, consensual reality by averaging across all three z-scored indicators (after reversing the election toss-up perceptions and polling uncertainty measures). Table 3 contains the results for this composite. Supplementary Tables 1 through 3, respectively, report the results using self-reported shared reality perceptions, election toss-up perceptions, and polling uncertainty as separate indicators of experienced singular (vs. multiple) realities.

Paralleling the results for the component measures of singular reality, the 3-way interaction involving this composite singular reality index was also significantly positive, $b=.224$, $SE=.050$, $\beta=.115$, $t(1032)=4.45$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.125, .323)$, $\eta_p^2=.019$. Figure 2 presents the predicted slopes. The conditional 2-way political orientation by community instability-signaling interaction for participants who experienced a less singular, less shared reality (16th percentile) is on the left side; the corresponding 2-way for participants who experienced a more singular, consensual reality (84th percentile) is on the right. The predicted simple slopes capture the effects of community instability-signaling on post-election worries for liberals (16th percentile) and conservatives (84th percentile). More negative slopes indicate that living in an instability- (vs. stability) signaling community predicts decreased worries about the future post-election, whereas more positive slopes indicate that living in an instability- (vs. stability-) signaling community predicts increased worries about the future.³

³ Because the samples differ in average political orientation, we decompose the interactions at the 16th and 84th percentiles on community instability and political orientation to increase comparability across studies. In a normal distribution, the 16th and 84th percentiles correspond to one standard deviation below and above the mean, respectively.

Figure 2.

Predicting post-election worries about the future from political orientation, community instability-signaling, and the experience of a singular, consensual reality prior to the election.



Note: Significant simple slopes ($p < .05$) are marked by as asterisk ().*

Table 2.*Descriptive information and intercorrelations for Study 1.*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Political orientation	4.510	2.212	--										
2. T1 shared reality	3.58	1.12	.112	--									
3. T1 Election toss-up	26.90 _{US} 57.46 _{UK}	28.67 _{US} 29.21 _{UK}	.065	-.035	--								
4. T1 Polling uncertainty	.0685 _{US} .2399 _{UK}	.0351 _{US} .3872 _{UK}	-.022	-.019	-.023	--							
5. T1 future worries	4.102	1.194	-.131	-.024	-.032	.028	--						
6. T2 future worries	3.704	1.420	-.211	.014	.015	.067	.556	--					
7. Population mobility	3.248 _{US} 0.090 _{UK}	0.891 _{US} 0.029 _{UK}	-.058	-.019	-.026	.087	.018	.014	--				
8. Economic inequality	0.460 _{US} 453.9 _{UK}	0.034 _{US} 2695.6 _{UK}	-.050	.071	.005	-.043	-.036	-.006	.082	--			
9. Democratic/liberal lean	0.481 _{US} 0.550 _{UK}	0.138 _{US} 0.396 _{UK}	-.119	.062	-.049	-.278	-.005	.058	.019	.403	--		
10. Singular reality composite	.0017	.5591	.029	.536	-.637	-.607	-.005	-.039	-.040	.056	.208	--	
11. Community instability-signaling composite	-.0256	0.753	-.114	.051	-.031	-.113	-.012	.031	.586	.764	.711	.098	--

Note. Population mobility reflects a percentage (from 0-100); economic inequality reflects the income/wealth ratio (from 0-1);

Democratic lean reflects the average proportion of presidential votes cast for liberal/Democratic candidates across the election years.

T1 and T2 respectively refer to pre-election and post-election.

Table 3.

Predicting post-election precarity worries from pre-election precarity worries; singular, shared reality perceptions; political orientation; and community instability-signaling in Study 1.

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	η_p^2
Pre-election precarity worries	.595	.028	.548	21.34	<.001	.540 .650	.306
Singular, shared reality composite	-.034	.036	-.024	-0.93	.355	-.105 .038	.001
Political orientation (PO)	-.115	.021	-.145	-5.62	<.001	-.156 -.075	.030
Community instability-signaling	.017	.029	.015	0.60	.552	-.040 .074	.000
PO X community instability-signaling	.040	.031	.033	1.29	.198	-.021 .100	.002
Singular reality X community instability-signaling	.045	.051	.023	0.89	.376	-.055 .145	.001
Singular reality X PO	.012	.036	.009	0.34	.733	-.058 .082	.000
Singular reality X community instability-signaling X PO	.224	.050	.115	4.45	<.001	.125 .323	.019

The significant main effect of political orientation reveals that liberals reported significantly greater post-election worries than conservatives, consistent with our assumption that liberals perceive greater instability in the world. More tellingly, the significant 3-way suggests that the hypothesized protective effects of living in an expectation-consistent community depended on participants experiencing reality as singular and shared.

When participants experienced a more singular, consensual reality (i.e., hypothesized mechanism present), the conditional 2-way between political orientation and community instability-signaling was significantly positive, $b=.161$, $SE=.037$, $\beta=.134$, $t(1032)=4.30$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.087, .234)$, $\eta_p^2=.018$. Liberals and conservatives reported less post-election worry about the future when they lived in expectation-consistent (fitting) than expectation-inconsistent (misfitting) communities. Liberals reported significantly *less* post-election worry about the future when they lived in *instability-signaling* (fit) communities than stability-signaling (misfit) communities, $b=-.139$, $SE=.058$, $\beta=-.123$, $t(1032)=-2.40$, $p=.017$, $95\%CI(-.253, -.025)$, $\eta_p^2=.005$. However, conservatives reported significantly *less* post-election worry about the future when they lived in *stability-signaling* (fit) communities than instability-signaling (misfit) communities, $b=.222$, $SE=.056$, $\beta=.196$, $t(1032)=4.00$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.113, .331)$, $\eta_p^2=.015$. Importantly, as we detail in the SOM, these contrasting simple effects exactly replicated when we decomposed the interactions involving each of the three individual indicators of singular, or shared reality. Thus, living in an expectation-consistent community protected against election-related uncertainty regardless of why participants experienced reality as singular, or shared.

In contrast, when participants experienced a less singular, consensual reality (i.e., hypothesized mechanism absent), the conditional 2-way between political orientation and community instability signaling was negative, but marginal in significance, $b=-.084$, $SE=.045$,

$\beta = -.070$, $t(1032) = -1.88$, $p = .061$, $95\%CI(-.173, .004)$, $\eta_p^2 = .003$. The simple effect of community signaling reversed its direction for both liberals, $b = .087$, $SE = .062$, $\beta = .077$, $t(1032) = 1.41$, $p = .159$, $95\%CI(-.034, .209)$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, and conservatives, $b = -.102$, $SE = .069$, $\beta = -.090$, $t(1032) = -1.47$, $p = .141$, $95\%CI(-.239, .034)$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, although neither simple effect was significant. This conditional 2-way was not significant using any of the individual indicators of singular reality.

Establishing Robustness: Generality of the Effects and Alternate Explanations?

First, because the index of community instability-signaling contained three components, the observed effects could be limited to the composite or driven by one component of the composite. However, when we used each component of the community-instability signaling composite as a separate marker of stability, the 3-way interaction between the composite index of a singular reality, political orientation, and community instability signaling was significantly positive with population mobility, $b = .182$, $SE = .041$, $\beta = .117$, $t(1015) = 4.47$, $p < .001$, $95\%CI(.102, .262)$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$, and liberal/Democratic voting history, $b = .128$, $SE = .033$, $\beta = .102$, $t(975) = 3.83$, $p < .001$, $95\%CI(.062, .194)$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$. It was not significant with economic inequality, $b = .008$, $SE = .050$, $\beta = .005$, $t(843) = 0.17$, $p = .865$, $95\%CI(-.089, .106)$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$.

Second, because voting patterns could provide a less obvious indicator of instability, it is important to establish that the effects remained robust when only population mobility and economic inequality were included in the community-instability signaling composite. The 3-way interaction between the experience of a singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and this 2-component index of community-instability signaling was significantly positive in predicting post-election worries about the future, $b = .199$, $SE = .050$, $\beta = .103$, $t(1015) = 3.97$, $p < .001$, $95\%CI(.101, .297)$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$.

Third, participants living in more (vs. less) instability-signaling communities may themselves occupy more (vs. less) precarious positions in society (Gau et al., 2014). Rather than capturing fit between personal expectations and collective realities, the observed effects of community fit could capture consistency between one's personal politics and personal social or economic standing. In other words, conservatives in instability-signaling communities and liberals in stability-signaling communities may be more vulnerable because conservatives in instability-signaling communities are having more economic/social struggles than they expect (misfit) and liberals in stability-signaling communities are having fewer economic/social struggles than they expect (misfit). If that is the case, home community instability and political orientation should significantly interact in predicting personal social/economic standing (i.e., SES). As detailed in the SOM, in stability-signaling communities, conservatives did report significantly higher socioeconomic status than liberals. However, the 3-way interaction between the experience of a singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and community instability signaling was still significant controlling for the main and interaction effects of SES.

Fourth, the index of community instability-signaling could capture another feature of the home community's socio-ecology, such as its harshness or density. Therefore, we obtained the poverty rates (as a proxy for harshness) and population size (as a proxy for density) of participants' home communities. As detailed in the SOM, the 3-way interaction between the experience of a singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and community instability-signaling remained significant in analyses that separately controlled for the main effect of poverty and its interactions with the experience of a singular reality and political orientation. This 3-way also remained significant in analyses that separately controlled for population size and its interaction with the experience of a singular reality and political orientation.

Finally, the U.K. and U.S. elections differed in several respects that could qualify the effects. The U.S. election had a liberal incumbent, whereas the U.K. election had a conservative incumbent. The outcome of the U.S. election remained a toss-up until the day of the election itself, whereas the Labour party was expected to win the U.K. election from the day the election was called. In addition, the U.S. is much more politically polarized than the U.K. (Finkel et al., 2020). Despite these differences, the reported effects generalized across samples. When we included the main and interaction effects for sample (0=U.S., 1=U.K.) in a further set of regression analyses, the 4-way between nation; the experience of a singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and community-instability signaling was not significant, $b=-.043$, $SE=.102$, $\beta=-.012$, $t(1024)=-0.42$, $p=.676$, $95\%CI(-.242, .157)$, $\eta_p^2=.000$.

Discussion

Study 1 provided moderation-of-process evidence for the presumed mechanism underlying the protective effects of living in an expectation-consistent or fitting community using statistically independent markers of the experience of a singular, consensual reality. When liberals experienced a more singular, consensual reality, they reported less post-election worry about the future when they lived in communities that signaled relative instability (fit) rather than stability (misfit). However, when conservatives experienced a more singular, consensual reality, they reported less post-election worry about the future when they lived in communities that signaled relative stability (fit) than instability (misfit). No such effects emerged when participants experienced a less singular reality. Studies 2-5 return to the model itself to test community fit's hypothesized power to protect against the risks of collective interdependence.

Study 2

In considering how attachment processes extend across personal and more collective

relationships, attachment theorists increasingly contend that political leaders and government institutions themselves occupy caregiving roles (Mayseless & Popper, 2007, 2019; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2023). Therefore, in a cross-sectional survey, we indexed collective interdependence risk through self-reported anxiety depending on the federal government and its leadership. We indexed vulnerability (vs. resilience) through participants' worry (vs. optimism) about the future precarity (vs. safety) of the social and financial fabric underlying their community and country.

We expected anxiety depending on the government, political orientation, and community stability-signaling to interact in predicting future precarity worries. We expected people living in expectation-inconsistent or “misfitting” communities to report greater worry about their future social and financial precarity when they felt more (vs. less) anxious depending on the government. That is, we expected liberals in stability-signaling and conservatives in instability-signaling communities to report greater worry about their own precarity the more (vs. less) anxious they felt depending on the government. However, we expected those living in expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities to be comparatively protected, as captured by a reduced, or even reversed, effect of government-related anxiety on future precarity worries.

Method

The SOM provides further detail about the materials and use of these data.

Transparency and Openness

This study was preregistered to test unrelated hypotheses about attachment to government. An anonymized copy of preregistration and the survey materials, dataset, and analysis syntax are on OSF: https://osf.io/hjf57/overview?view_only=3c27893087cd48c98c4f354bcf8dea28.

Participants

To be eligible, participants had to be U.S. citizens and pass a research integrity check.

Although 722 participants were recruited, 51 did not provide consent and/or pass an initial research integrity check, leaving 671. After applying preregistered exclusion criteria (i.e., failing either of two attention/bot checks, excessively short completion times, U.S. citizen/eligible to vote), 556 participants remained. Participants (147 men, 389 women, 23 nonbinary, 3 gender fluid, and 5 using a different label) averaged 55.08 ($SD=17.6$) years in age. 503 participants identified as White, 12 as Asian, 1 as Arab, 13 as Black, 6 as Latino/Latina, 2 as Indigenous/Aboriginal, and 19 as mixed/self-described. The majority (392) reported being involved in an established romantic relationship.

Procedure

Individuals registered with Research Match were invited to volunteer to participate in an online study examining relationships and political figures the autumn before the 2024 U.S. Federal Election. Participants completed online consent, the focal measures of attachment to government and perceptions of future safety, and basic demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, relationship status, political orientation), among measures unrelated to the current study (e.g., childhood experiences, trust in government, political polarization).

Measures

Political orientation. Participants indicated where they fell on a single-item scale anchored 1=*very left* to 7=*very right*, with left defined as “more socially liberal or progressive ideas” and right defined as “more socially conservative or traditional ideas”.

Community instability (vs. stability) signaling. We indexed (a) population mobility, (b) economic inequality, and (c) Democratic (vs. Republican) voting patterns as we did in Study 1 for the U.S. sample. Significant positive correlations emerged between home community

Democratic voting and population mobility, $r(548)=.246$, and economic inequality, $r(493)=.578$, and between population mobility and economic inequality, $r(494)=.324$, all $ps<.001$.

Collective interdependence risk. To capture anxiety about the current federal government's dependability, we created two measures of anxiety. Adapted from the Relationship Structures (ECR-RS) survey (Fraley et al., 2006), participants completed (a) 3 items capturing experienced *anxiety* about the government's dependability (i.e., $\alpha=.87$, "I often worry that people in government don't really care about me or people like me"; "I'm afraid that the government may let me or people like me down"; "I worry that the government won't care about me, or people like me as much as it cares about other people"; 1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly disagree*) and (b) 3 parallel items capturing *anxiety* about the dependability of Kamala Harris ($\alpha=.95$, the vice-president and Democratic candidate for president at the time). We averaged these 6 anxiety items ($\alpha=.88$) to capture greater anxiety about the current federal government's dependability, and thus, greater collective risk. We found parallel effects when we separately examined the government and Harris anxiety items as we report in the Results section.⁴

⁴ Participants also completed 3 parallel items capturing anxiety about the dependability of Donald Trump (the Republican candidate) and 6 parallel items capturing *avoidance* of the government (e.g., "I don't feel comfortable opening up about myself to people who administer government services") and 6 items capturing avoidance of Harris and Trump. We only used the government and Harris *anxiety* items to capture collective interdependence risk because they captured *uncertainty* about whether the current government could be counted on (heightening risk) rather than the conclusion that the current government could not be counted on (minimizing

Worry about future precarity (vs. safety). Participants completed (a) 5 items ($\alpha=.80$) adapted from Pew Research Center, rating how they expected their “life and local community” to change in the future in terms of “my personal financial situation”, “property crime (e.g., theft, burglary, car theft)”, “violent crime (e.g., bodily assault, murder)”, “corruption/self-interest in local community politicians”, and “corruptions/self-interest in local community police”, anchored, $-3=get\ much\ worse$, $3=get\ much\ better$; and (b) 5 items ($\alpha=.84$) capturing how they expected their life and the U.S. to change in the future in terms of “the U.S. economy”, “property crime (e.g., theft, burglary, car theft)”, “violent crime (e.g., bodily assault, murder)”, “corruption/self-interest among national political leaders”, and “corruption/self-interest in the judiciary”, anchored, $-3=get\ much\ worse$, $3=get\ much\ better$. We z-scored, reversed, and averaged all 10 items ($\alpha=.89$) to capture greater *worry* about future social/financial precarity.

Results

Table 4 presents the descriptive information (raw scores) and intercorrelations among the z-scored variables. Sensitivity analyses using the *InteractionPowerR* 3-way interaction Shiny App (Baranger et al., 2023) suggested that the integrated sample ($N=551$) provided ~96% power to detect a 3-way interaction effect size as small as $f^2=.0252$ given assumed reliabilities and correlations among the predictors (see SOM). We conducted simultaneous regression analyses predicting worries about one’s future social/financial precarity from the centered main effects and 2-way and 3-way interaction(s) between the composite index of anxiety about government dependability, the composite index of community instability-signaling, and political orientation.

risk). We did not include the Trump anxiety items in the composite because he was not a representative of the current government at the time of data collection.

Table 5 presents the results. The hypothesized 3-way interaction between the marker of collective interdependence risk—the composite index of anxiety about the current government’s dependability— political orientation, and community instability-signaling was significantly positive in predicting future social/financial precarity worries. The 3-way interactions involving the components of this collective risk index were also significant. That is, the 3-way interaction between anxiety about government dependability, community stability, and political orientation was significantly positive, $b=.104$, $SE=.040$, $\beta=.112$, $t(543)=2.60$, $p=.010$, $95\%CI(.025, .183)$, $\eta_p^2=.012$, and the 3-way interaction between anxiety about Kamala Harris, community stability, and political orientation was also significantly positive, $b=.102$, $SE=.041$, $\beta=.148$, $t(543)=2.47$, $p=.014$, $95\%CI(.021, .182)$, $\eta_p^2=.011$, in predicting future precarity worries.

Table 4.*Descriptive information and intercorrelations for Study 2.*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Political orientation	2.890	1.726	--								
2. Government dependability anxiety	3.406	1.118	.114	--							
3. Harris dependability anxiety	2.535	1.385	.578	.469	--						
4. Future precarity worries	-0.326	0.903	.200	.392	.345	--					
5. Population mobility	3.449	0.928	-.106	-.039	-.046	.024	--				
6. Economic inequality	0.470	0.035	-.136	-.001	-.077	-.019	.324	--			
7. Democratic voting	0.517	0.139	-.233	-.113	-.119	-.142	.246	.578	--		
8. Composite of community instability-signaling	-0.027	0.778	-.219	-.075	-.116	-.063	.695	.835	.794	--	
9. Composite of anxiety about government dependability	0.000	0.701	.413	.847	.867	.429	-.050	-.047	-.135	-.112	--

Table 5.

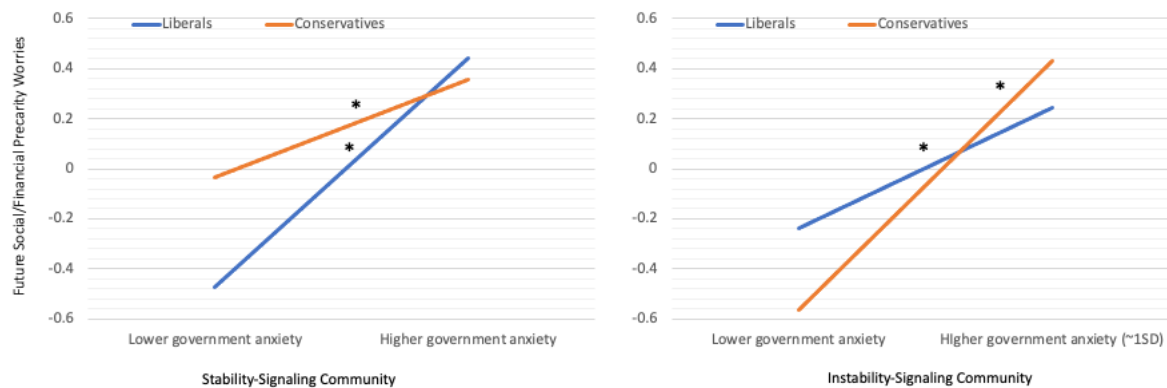
Predicting precarity worries from anxiety depending on the current government (composite index), community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 2.

Variable	b	SE	β	t	p	95%CI	η_p^2
Government dependability anxiety composite (i.e., collective risk)	.403	.039	.455	10.33	<.001	.327, .480	.164
Political orientation (PO)	.022	.032	.032	0.695	.487	-.041, .086	.001
Community instability-signaling	-.061	.038	-.068	-1.587	.113	-.136, .014	.005
PO X community instability-signaling	-.072	.044	-.081	-1.65	.099	-.158, .014	.005
Government dependability anxiety X community instability-signaling	.021	.048	.019	0.436	.663	-.074, .116	.000
Government dependability anxiety X PO	.000	.037	.000	0.010	.992	-.072, .073	.000
Government dependability anxiety X community instability-signaling X PO	.159	.046	.179	3.45	<.001	.068, .249	.021

Figure 3 presents the predicted slopes. The conditional 2-way between anxiety about the government's dependability and political orientation for participants living in stability-signaling communities (16th percentile) is on the left; the corresponding conditional 2-way for instability-signaling communities (84th percentile) is on the right. More positive slopes predict greater vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., greater anxiety about the government's dependability predicting increased worry), whereas more negative, or less positive, slopes capture increased comparative *resilience* to collective risk.

Figure 3.

Predicting precarity worries from anxiety about the government's dependability (i.e., collective risk), political orientation, and community stability-signaling in Study 2.



Note: Significant simple slopes ($p < .05$) are marked by as asterisk ().*

The risk-protective effects of community fit should be evident in two sets of complementary 2-ways. First, in *stability-signaling* communities versus *instability-signaling* communities, opposite 2-ways between collective interdependence risk and political orientation should emerge. That is, in stability-signaling communities, liberals (misfit) should evidence significantly *greater* vulnerability to collective risk than conservatives (fit), as captured by a more positive slope linking anxiety about government dependability to precarity worries for liberals than conservatives; but, in instability-signaling communities, conservatives (misfit) should evidence significantly *greater* vulnerability than liberals (fit). Second, for liberals (i.e., 16th percentile on left-right political orientation, or $\sim 1SD$ below the mean) versus conservatives (i.e., 84th percentile/ $\sim 1SD$ above the mean), opposite 2-ways between collective interdependence risk and community instability should emerge. That is, liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) should evidence significantly greater vulnerability to collective risk than liberals in instability-signaling communities (fit), as captured by a more positive slope linking anxiety about government dependability to precarity worries in stability- than instability-signaling communities; but conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) should evidence significantly *greater* vulnerability to collective risk than conservatives in stability-signaling communities (fit). We discuss each set of 2-ways, but we only report the simple slopes for collective risk once in the context of the conditional 2-way collective risk by political orientation interactions because these simple slopes are identical in each set of conditional 2-way interactions.⁵

⁵ For the sake of consistency, and to make the consistency in the directional effects across studies clear, we always fully decompose the 3-way interactions into the simple effects of collective risk

Instability-signaling vs. stability-signaling communities. In *instability-signaling* communities, conservatives (misfit) evidenced significantly *greater* vulnerability to collective risk than liberals (fit); the conditional 2-way between anxiety about government dependability and political orientation was significantly positive, $b=.129$, $SE=.056$, $\beta=.162$, $t(543)=2.30$, $p=.022$, $95\%CI(.019, .239)$, $\eta_p^2=.026$. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) anticipated significantly *more* financially/socially precarious futures when they felt *more* (vs. less) anxious about the government's dependability, $b=.578$, $SE=.096$, $\beta=.651$, $t(543)=6.02$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.389, .766)$, $\eta_p^2=.063$. However, liberals in instability-signaling communities (fit) were comparatively resilient to their own anxiety about the government's dependability, $b=.279$, $SE=.073$, $\beta=.314$, $t(543)=3.83$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.136, .422)$, $\eta_p^2=.026$.

In contrast, in *stability-signaling* communities, liberals (misfit) evidenced significantly *greater* vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., more positive slope) than conservatives (fit); the conditional 2-way between anxiety about government dependability and political orientation was significantly negative, $b=-.131$, $SE=.049$, $\beta=-.164$, $t(543)=-2.68$, $p=.008$, $95\%CI(-.227, -.035)$, $\eta_p^2=.013$. Liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) anticipated significantly *more* financially/socially precarious futures when they felt *more* (vs. less) anxious about the government's dependability, $b=.530$, $SE=.089$, $\beta=.597$, $t(543)=5.95$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.355, .704)$, $\eta_p^2=.061$. However, conservatives in stability-signaling communities were comparatively resilient to their own anxiety about the government's dependability, $b=.226$, $SE=.069$, $\beta=.255$, $t(543)=3.28$, $p=.001$, $95\%CI(.091, .362)$, $\eta_p^2=.020$.

for liberals and conservatives in instability-signaling and stability-signaling communities (even in the absence of fully symmetrical conditional 2-way interactions).

Liberals vs. conservatives. Conservatives evidenced significantly *greater vulnerability* to collective risk in instability- (misfit) than stability-signaling (fit) communities; the conditional 2-way between anxiety depending on the government and community instability was significantly positive, $b=.215$, $SE=.074$, $\beta=.195$, $t(543)=2.91$, $p=.004$, $95\%CI(.070, .360)$, $\eta_p^2=.015$. In contrast, liberals evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to collective risk in stability-signaling (misfit) than instability-signaling (fit) communities; the conditional 2-way between anxiety depending on the current government and community instability was significantly negative, $b=-.153$, $SE=.070$, $\beta=-.139$, $t(543)=-2.19$, $p=.029$, $95\%CI(-.291, -.016)$, $\eta_p^2=.009$.

Establishing Robustness: Specificity of the Effects and Alternate Explanations?

Because the community instability-signaling index contained three components, the observed effects could be limited to the composite or driven by one component. When we used each component of this index as a separate marker of instability signaling, the hypothesized 3-way interaction emerged. The 3-way interaction between the stability marker, risk, and political orientation was significantly positive with population mobility, $b=.078$, $SE=.038$, $\beta=.102$, $t(543)=2.072$, $p=.039$, $95\%CI(.004, .151)$, $\eta_p^2=.01$, economic inequality, $b=.098$, $SE=.039$, $\beta=.127$, $t(488)=2.49$, $p=.013$, $95\%CI(.021, .175)$, $\eta_p^2=.013$, and Democratic voting history, $b=.095$, $SE=.036$, $\beta=.130$, $t(542)=2.61$, $p=.009$, $95\%CI(.024, .166)$, $\eta_p^2=.012$.

In addition, the effects remained robust when only population mobility and economic inequality were included in the community-instability signaling composite. The 3-way interaction between anxiety depending on the government, political orientation, and this 2-component index of community instability-signaling was significantly positive, as expected, $b=.123$, $SE=.044$, $\beta=.148$, $t(543)=2.79$, $p=.005$, $95\%CI(.036, .209)$, $\eta_p^2=.014$.

Nonetheless, there are at least four alternate explanations for the effects. First, the data

are cross-sectional and the measures of anxiety depending on the government and future precarity worries are significantly, but modestly, positively correlated, $r(544)=.429, p<.001$. This raises the question of whether the measures are discriminable. Perhaps, had we reversed predictor (i.e., anxiety depending on the government) and outcome (i.e., future precarity worries), and treated future precarity worries as the indicator of collective risk and anxiety depending on the government as the outcome, we might have found the same exact effects. However, speaking to the discriminability of measures, the 3-way interaction between future precarity worries, political orientation, and community-instability signaling was not significant in predicting the composite index capturing anxiety depending on the government, $b=.060, SE=.048, \beta=.047, t(543)=1.24, p=.214, 95\%CI(-.035, .155), \eta_p^2=.003$. This 3-way was also not significant predicting the components of this index; anxiety depending on the government, $b=.043, SE=.060, \beta=.030, t(543)=0.72, 95\%CI(-.075, .161), \eta_p^2=.001$, or anxiety depending on Kamala Harris, $b=.077, SE=.054, \beta=.051, t(543)=1.43, p=.154, 95\%CI(-.029, .183), \eta_p^2=.004$.

In addition, Study 1 provided an opportunity to examine whether community fit *prospectively* predicted reduced vulnerability to government-related anxieties. Prior to the 2024 elections in the U.S. and U.K., Study 1 participants completed a measure capturing how they felt their own financial, social, and physical security (etc.) hinged on the political party that happened to be in power. As we detail in the SOM, we found a significantly positive 3-way interaction between this measure of collective risk—that is, feeling dependent on the political party in power—political orientation, and community instability-signaling in predicting post-election worries about the future (controlling for pre-election worries). In stability-signaling communities, liberals (misfit) reported greater post-election worries about their future when they felt more (vs. less) dependent on the political party in power prior to the election. However,

conservatives (fit) were comparatively resilient to this same risk.

Second, in Study 2, anxiety depending on the current government could simply reflect negative attitudes toward the government rather than the perceived risks of depending on the government. If that is the case, we should find similar effects using the items capturing avoidance toward the government, which would also capture negative government attitudes. However, a composite of government-related avoidance (i.e., avoidance of government/government services and avoidance of Kamala Harris) did not significantly interact with community stability and political orientation in predicting worry about future precarity, $b=.084$, $SE=.054$, $\beta=.081$, $t(543)=1.57$, $p=.118$, $95\%CI(-.021, .189)$, $\eta_p^2=.012$. Moreover, in further analyses that controlled for government-related avoidance and its interactions with community instability and political orientation, the reported 3-way interaction between the composite index of anxiety about government dependability, community instability, and political orientation was still significantly positive in predicting future social/financial precarity worries, $b=.264$, $SE=.071$, $\beta=.298$, $t(539)=3.71$, $p<.001$, $95\%CI(.124, .404)$, $\eta_p^2=.025$. Thus, the effects are specific to the uncertainty about the government's dependability (which heightens risk) rather than the belief or conclusion that the government is not dependable (which minimizes risk).

Third, people in misfitting communities may be more vulnerable to collective risk than those in fitting communities due to differences in socioeconomic status, as we delineated in exploring alternate explanations for the effects obtained in Study 1. However, as we detail in the SOM, home community instability and political orientation did not significantly interact in predicting a broad index of participants' socioeconomic status in this sample. In addition, the hypothesized 3-way interaction involving community fit was still significant in predicting precarity worries in analyses that controlled for SES and its interactions with anxiety depending

on the government, community instability, and political orientation.

Fourth, the index of community instability-signaling could capture some overlapping feature of the home community's socio-ecology, such as its harshness or density. As detail in the SOM, the 3-way interaction between anxiety depending on the government, political orientation and community signaling remained significant in predicting future precarity worries in analyses that separately controlled for poverty and its interactions with anxiety depending on the government and political orientation and in analyses that controlled for population size and its interaction with anxiety depending on the government and political orientation.

Discussion

Study 2 revealed the hypothesized collective-risk-vulnerability regulating effects of community fit in both stability- and instability-signaling communities. In stability-signaling communities, liberals (misfit) evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to doubting the government's dependability than conservatives (fit), but in instability-signaling communities, conservatives (misfit) evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to such doubts than liberals (fit). Nevertheless, participants were skewed to the political left and the data were cross-sectional. Studies 3-5 provided prospective tests of the community fit model using objective indicators of collectively experienced risk in samples that better spanned the political spectrum.

Study 3

In a daily diary study, we indexed collective interdependence risk through the public's daily sensitivity to economic and physical threats to the country as whole. The public's tacit awareness of threats to the economy and national security can be reliably tracked through the Internet searches of the local populace (Beall et al., 2016; von Scheve & Salmala, 2014) and the stock market activities of financial traders (Bloom, 2009, 2014; Nikkinen & Sahlstrom, 2004).

We combined two such markers to gauge daily variation in public sensitivity to societal threat.

We expected people living in expectation-inconsistent or misfitting communities to report greater worry about their personal financial precarity on days after the public seemed more attuned to societal threat, as compared to days when it seemed less attuned. That is, we expected liberals in stability-signaling and conservatives in instability-signaling communities to report greater worry about their precarity on days after the public was more (vs. less) attuned to societal threats. However, we expected people living in expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities to be comparatively protected, as captured by reduced, or even reversed, effect of public threat sensitivity on personal precarity worries.

Method

The SOM provides detail about the prior use of these data.

Transparency and Openness

The study was not preregistered. The survey materials and data are available on OSF: https://osf.io/hjf57/overview?view_only=3c27893087cd48c98c4f354bcf8dea28.

Participants

Qualtrics was contracted to recruit participants. Participants had to be in a monogamous, committed heterosexual romantic relationships; U.S. citizens; speak English as a first language; have at least one child under 18 living at home; and pass a research integrity check. Of 556 eligible participants, 251 who completed fewer than 3 days were dropped by Qualtrics (the majority dropped after one day), leaving 305 who completed an average of 6-7 of the 9 diary days (with 256 completing all 9 diaries). Participants (75 males, 229 females, 1 unspecified) averaged 39.5 ($SD=7.6$) years old; relationships averaged 13.9 years ($SD=7.7$); 237 participants identified as White, 14 as Asian, 31 as Black, 17 as Latino/Latina, and 6 as mixed/other.

Procedure

Participants received the survey link from Qualtrics at 6 PM (EST) each day. They were asked to complete the survey, which contained questions about the events and feelings they experienced that day, before bed. The link remained accessible until 6 AM (EST) the next morning to allow for shift work and time zones. The first assessment included demographic and background measures; the 9 remaining assessments repeated the same daily measures, including the items tapping financial precarity worries (the only items to tap social/financial precarity).

Measures

Political orientation. Participants reported their political orientation on a single item ranging from 1=*extremely liberal* to 9=*extremely conservative*.

Community instability (vs. stability) signaling. We indexed (a) population mobility, (b) economic inequality, and Democratic (vs. Republican) voting patterns as we did in Study 1, except that voting history only spanned 2000-2016 because these data were collected prior to the 2020 U.S. Federal Election. We z-scored and averaged each indicator to create an overall, formative index of community instability (vs. stability) signaling. As in Studies 1 and 2, these indicators provided relatively independent markers of community stability. Significant positive correlations emerged between home community Democratic voting and economic inequality, $r(260)=.633$, $p<.001$, and between population mobility and economic inequality, $r(260)=.180$, $p=.031$, but not between Democratic voting and population mobility, $r(303)=.068$, $p=.239$.

Collective interdependence risk. We obtained two daily indices of public sensitivity to societal economic and physical threats (Murray, Lamarche et al., 2021). First, we used Google Trends data to index how frequently participants in the same zip code as the participant searched for a particular term, relative to the total search volume. We tailored the search terms to match

the news cycle during the diary period, and so, the terms were: “border wall”, “recession”, “Trump/Mueller”, “trade war”, “global warming”, “terrorism”, “racism”, and “protest.” Second, we tracked the closing daily value of the VIX (Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index), aka the “fear index” on each assessment day.⁶ Because Google searches and VIX volatility were significantly positively associated at the daily level, $b=.1312$, $SE=.0231$, $z=5.68$, $p<.0001$, $95\%CI(.086, .176)$, we computed an overall index of daily public sensitivity to threat by averaging these z -scored indices. Supporting the validity of this index, and its capacity to impact individual experience on a daily basis, participants were themselves more likely to report that they had saw, heard, or read about specific threats to the economy and environment, etc. on days when the public’s risk sensitivity was higher (vs. lower) than usual (see SOM).

Worry about financial precarity. Participants responded to two items ($\alpha=.79$) capturing their daily experience of personal financial precarity adapted from Garðarsdóttir et al. (2012), which we averaged (i.e., “I worry about being able to pay my bills”; “I am anxious about the current state of the economy”, 1=*completely disagree*, 7=*completely agree*).

Results

Table 6 presents descriptive information and the within-person (below the diagonal) and between-person (above the diagonal) intercorrelations. Because days are nested within participants, the data likely violate assumptions of independence. Indicating such dependence, the intraclass correlation (ICC)—reflecting the proportion of variance in the precarity worries

⁶ Derived from the behavior of financial traders, the VIX is a daily economic indicator that tracks uncertainty in national and international events by forecasting greater volatility in the stock market over the next 30 days (Bloom, 2014).

that varied daily/within person—was .84. To adjust for dependence in the data, we estimated multilevel models using MLwiN (Goldstein et al., 1998), with day at Level 1 and participant at Level 2. Our analysis *Ns* for observations (1998) and participants (305) exceed recommendations that ESM studies aim for a Level 1 sample size of at least 835 (Gabriel et al., 2019) and a Level 2 sample size of at least 83 (Hox, 1995; West et al., 2022). Also, sensitivity analyses in the SOM suggest that with average completion rates in excess of 70%, this sample should provide ~100% power to detect medium ($d=0.5$) effects and ~40% power to detect small effects ($d=.0.2$).

We centered within-person variables (e.g., public threat sensitivity) on the participant's mean across days and between-person variables (i.e., community socio-ecology, political orientation) on the sample mean. We then predicted today's feelings of financial precarity from: (a) a random intercept term, (b) yesterday's feelings of financial precarity, specified as fixed, (c) yesterday's public threat sensitivity, specified as random, (d) the two-way interactions among yesterday's public threat sensitivity, political orientation, and community instability-signaling (vs. stability-signaling), (d) the 3-way interaction, and (e) the corresponding error terms. Because the daily measure of yesterday's public threat sensitivity was person-centered, this measure of collective risk compares days when the public evidenced *greater* than usual sensitivity to societal threat to days when it evidenced *less* than usual sensitivity. We included time as a covariate to control for linear changes in the outcome and the between-person means (i.e., participants' average exposure to public threat sensitivity and its 2-way and 3-way interaction(s) with community instability-signaling and political orientation) to further separate within-person effects from between-person effects (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). In complex models with multiple predictors, specifying multiple random effects can result in models failing to converge, making fixed specification appropriate on a case-by-case basis (Bates et al., 2018). We fit

random coefficient models to the intercept term, the daily measure of public threat sensitivity, and time, following recommendations to estimate maximally random models (Barr et al., 2013).

Table 7 presents the corresponding coefficients. As Table 7 reveals, liberals reported more concern about their financial precarity across days than conservatives, as captured in the significant main effect of political orientation. The hypothesized 3-way interaction between collective risk—yesterday’s public threat sensitivity—political orientation, and community instability-signaling was significant in predicting today’s financial precarity worries, $b=.0612$, $SE=.0250$, $z=2.45$, $p=.0143$, $95\%CI(.012, .110)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.139$. In terms of the components of the public threat sensitivity composite, the 3-way was significant using only Google searches as the sole indicator of yesterday’s public threat sensitivity, $b=.0331$, $SE=.0142$, $z=2.33$, $p=.0198$, $95\%CI(.005, .061)$; it was again positive, but not significant, using VIX volatility as the sole indicator, $b=.0246$, $SE=.0195$, $z=1.26$, $p=.2077$, $95\%CI(-.014, .063)$.

Figure 4 presents the conditional 2-way yesterday’s public sensitivity to societal threat by political orientation interaction for participants living in stability-signaling (16th percentile) on the left; the corresponding 2-way for instability-signaling communities (84th percentile) is on the right. More positive slopes predict greater vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., more public threat sensitivity predicting increased precarity worries), whereas more negative, or less positive, slopes capture increased comparative *resilience* to this collective risk.

Table 6.*Descriptive information and intercorrelations for Study 3.*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Political orientation	5.354	1.769	--	-.067	-.086	-.150	.077	.016	-.139	-.023	-.087
2. Daily Google searches	48.80	32.63	-.002	--	-.042	.003	-.011	-.000	.072	.028	.836
3. Daily VIX	13.08	1.144	-.000	.135	--	.051	-.044	-.007	-.008	-.027	.411
4. Daily precarity worries	2.629	1.830	.000	.027	.033	--	.005	-.004	-.047	-.021	.003
5. Population mobility	3.084	0.828	.085	-.008	-.002	-.000	--	.180	-.045	.521	-.032
6. Economic inequality	0.463	0.034	.004	.003	-.002	-.000	.179	--	.633	.857	-.019
7. Democratic voting	0.485	0.133	-.153	-.004	-.002	-.000	-.047	.634	--	.752	.073
8. Composite of community instability-signaling	-0.034	0.746	-.031	-.004	-.003	-.000	.522	.858	.749	--	.011
9. Composite of public threat sensitivity (i.e., Google searches + VIX)	-0.010	0.791	-.009	.735	.738	.039	-.012	.003	-.015	-.011	--

Note. Correlations involving within-person (i.e., person-centered daily variables) are presented below the diagonal and correlations involving only between-person variables (i.e., political orientation, community characteristics, and daily variables averaged across assessments) are presented above the diagonal.

Table 7.

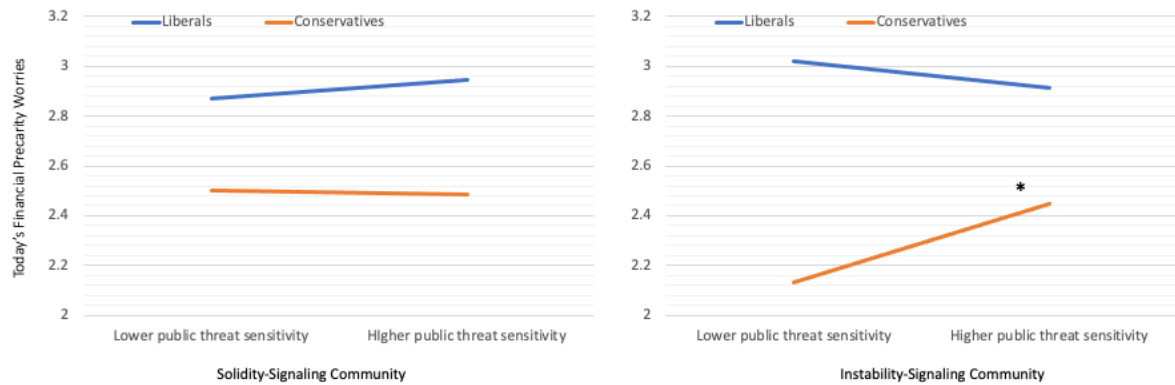
Predicting today's precarity worries from yesterday's public threat sensitivity (composite), community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 3.

Variable	b	SE	z	p	95%CI
<i>Intercept</i>	2.665	0.098	--	--	--
Yesterday's precarity worries	-.1358	.0229	-5.93	<.0001	-.181, -.091
<i>Yesterday's public threat sensitivity (i.e., collective risk)</i>	.0414	.0332	1.25	.2113	-.024, .106
Political orientation (PO)	-.1540	.0550	-2.80	.0051	-.262, -.046
Community instability-signaling	-.0475	.1316	-0.36	.7188	-.305, .210
PO X community instability-signaling	-.0504	.0710	-0.71	.4777	-.190, .089
Yesterday's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling	.0312	.0440	0.71	.4777	-.055, .117
Yesterday's public threat sensitivity X PO	.0295	.0183	1.61	.1074	-.006, .065
Yesterday's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO	.0612	.0250	2.45	.0143	.012, .110
<i>Mean public threat sensitivity</i>	-.1874	.2584	-0.73	.4654	-.694, .319
<i>Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling</i>	-.0148	.3695	-0.04	.9681	-.739, .709
<i>Mean public threat sensitivity X PO</i>	.0920	.1518	0.61	.5419	-.206, .390
<i>Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO</i>	.0805	.2139	0.38	.7039	-.339, .500
<i>Time</i>	-.0254	.0115	-2.21	.0271	-.048, -.003

Note. Italicized variables were specified as random model coefficients.

Figure 4.

Predicting today's precarity worries from yesterday's public threat sensitivity (i.e., collective risk), political orientation, and community instability-signaling in Study 3.



Note: Significant simple slopes ($p < .05$) are marked by as asterisk ().*

Instability- vs. stability-signaling communities. In *instability-signaling* communities, conservatives (misfit) evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to the public's sensitivity to societal threat on the prior day than liberals (fit); the conditional 2-way between yesterday's public threat sensitivity and political orientation in predicting today's precarity worries was significantly positive, $b = .0708$, $SE = .0247$, $z = 2.87$, $p = .0021$, $95\%CI(.022, .119)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .162$. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) reported significantly increased financial precarity worries on days after the public evidenced more (vs. less) threat sensitivity, $b = .1791$, $SE = .0579$, $z = 3.09$, $p = .002$, $95\%CI(.066, .293)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .174$. However, liberals in instability-signaling communities (fit) were comparatively resilient to the public's daily sensitivity to risk, $b = -.1043$, $SE = .0762$, $z = -1.37$, $p = .1707$, $95\%CI(-.254, .045)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.078$.

In contrast, in *stability-signaling* communities, liberals and conservatives did not significantly differ in their evidenced vulnerability to the public's threat sensitivity, although the

conditional 2-way between yesterday's public threat sensitivity and political orientation was negative as expected, $b = -.0142$, $SE = .0257$, $z = -0.55$, $p = .5823$, $95\%CI(-.065, .036)$, $r_{partial} = -.032$. In stability-signaling communities, the simple effect of public threat sensitivity was positive, as expected, but not significant for liberals (misfit), $b = .0526$, $SE = .0801$, $z = 0.66$, $p = .5093$, $95\%CI(-.104, .210)$, $r_{partial} = .038$. However, it was negative and not significant for conservatives (fit), $b = -.0052$, $SE = .0582$, $z = -0.09$, $p = .928$, $95\%CI(-.119, .109)$, $r_{partial} = -.005$.

Liberals vs. conservatives. Conservatives evidenced significantly *greater* vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., yesterday's public threat sensitivity) in instability-signaling (misfit) than stability-signaling (fit) communities: The 2-way conditional interaction between yesterday's public threat sensitivity in predicting today's precarity worries was significantly positive for conservatives, $b = .1319$, $SE = .0549$, $z = 2.40$, $p = .0164$, $95\%CI(.024, .240)$, $r_{partial} = .139$. In contrast, although in the expected direction, the corresponding conditional 2-way was not significant for liberals, $b = -.1129$, $SE = .0792$, $z = -1.43$, $p = .1527$, $95\%CI(-.268, .042)$, $r_{partial} = -.081$.

Establishing Robustness: Specificity of the Effects and Alternate Explanations?

The moderating effects of community instability-signaling were significantly evident for two of the three community indicators. The hypothesized 3-way interaction was significantly positive with economic inequality, $b = .0484$, $SE = .0197$, $z = 2.46$, $p = .0139$, $95\%CI(.010, .087)$, $r_{partial} = .150$, and Democratic voting history, $b = .0358$, $SE = .0175$, $z = 2.05$, $p = .0404$, $95\%CI(.001, .070)$, $r_{partial} = .116$, but not population mobility, $b = .0084$, $SE = .0195$, $z = 0.43$, $p = .6672$, $95\%CI(-.030, .047)$, $r_{partial} = .025$.

In addition, the effects remained robust when only population mobility and economic inequality, the most face valid measures of community instability, were included in the community-instability signaling composite. The 3-way interaction between anxiety depending on

the government, political orientation, and this 2-component index of community instability-signaling was significant, $b=.0551$, $SE=.0240$, $z=2.30$, $p=.0214$, $95\%CI(.008, .102)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.130$.

There are at least two alternate explanations for the effects. First, people in misfitting communities could be more vulnerable to collective risk than people in fitting communities due to differences in socioeconomic status (SES). However, community stability and political orientation did not significantly interact in predicting a broad index of socioeconomic status. Also, the hypothesized 3-way community fit interaction still significantly predicted precarity worries controlling for SES and its interactions with yesterday's public threat sensitivity, community instability, and political orientation (see SOM).

Second, the index of community instability-signaling could capture the home community's socio-ecology harshness or density. However, as we detail in the SOM, the 3-way interaction between yesterday's public threat sensitivity, political orientation and community signaling remained significant in predicting today's precarity worries controlling for poverty and its interactions with yesterday's unexpected political behavior and political orientation and in analyses that controlled for population size and its interaction with yesterday's public threat sensitivity and political orientation.

Discussion

The hypothesized collective-risk-regulating effects of community fit only emerged significantly in instability-signaling communities. In such communities, conservatives (misfit) were more vulnerable to the sociopolitical world behaving unexpectedly than liberals. Despite the asymmetries in the conditional 2-ways, and limited power to detect small effects (addressed in Study 5 and the meta-analysis), Study 3 provided the first evidence that community fit might regulate daily responses to collectively-experienced interdependence risks. Studies 4 and 5

examine the replicability of such effects in times of acute national turmoil and uncertainty.

Study 4

In an 8-week study spanning the 2018 U.S. midterm election, we again indexed collectively experienced interdependence risk through the public's sensitivity to societal threats, as captured through stock market volatility, that is, the VIX or "fear" index. We expected people living in expectation-inconsistent or "misfitting" communities to report greater worry about their future social/financial precarity on days when the public seemed more sensitive to threat, as compared to days when it seemed less sensitive. That is, we expected liberals in stability-signaling and conservatives in instability-signaling communities to report greater worry about their future precarity on days when the public was likely more (vs. less) attuned to societal threat. However, we expected people living in expectation-consistent or "fitting" communities to be comparatively protected, as captured by reduced, or even reversed, effect of the public's daily sensitivity to societal threats on subsequent personal precarity worries.

Method

The SOM describes prior use of these data.

Transparency and Openness

This study was not preregistered. The survey materials and data are available on OSF: https://osf.io/hjf57/overview?view_only=3c27893087cd48c98c4f354bcf8dea28.

Participants

Qualtrics was contracted to recruit participants. Participants had to be in a monogamous, committed heterosexual romantic relationship, U.S. citizens, speak English as a first language, have at least one child under 18 living at home, and pass a research integrity check. Of 373 eligible participants, we dropped 76 who completed fewer than 3 weeks participation (51

dropped after 1 week), leaving 297 who completed an average of 5 of the 7 weekly assessments (with 208 completing all 8 weeks). Participants (81 men) averaged 40.6 years in age ($SD = 7.7$) and relationships averaged 15.8 ($SD = 7.3$) years in length (3 dating, 1 engaged, 293 married). Participants had 2.5 children on average ($SD = 1.4$) who were 10.5 years old on average ($SD = 4.8$). Participants were recruited into one cohort, with 8 once-weekly assessments straddling the November 6, 2018 U.S. midterm election in the U.S., beginning 6 weeks before and concluding 1 week after the election.

Procedure

Qualtrics issued the first weekly survey link to participants at 6 PM (EST) on Thursday, September 27, 2018, 6 weeks before the 2018 midterm election, with subsequent surveys issued on Wednesday, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7 (the day after the midterm), and November 13, 2018. Participants were asked to complete the survey before going to bed on the day they received it, but the link remained accessible for 3 more days to maximize participant retention given the fixed timing of the midterm election. (The majority of participants completed the weekly survey on the same day they received it.) The first weekly survey contained demographic and background measures assessed once, whereas the subsequent surveys contained items assessed weekly over the next 7 weeks, including the precarity worries items utilized in the present study (i.e., all the precarity worry items in the survey).

Measures

Political orientation. Participants reported their political orientation on a single item ranging from 1=*extremely liberal* to 9=*extremely conservative*.

Community instability (vs. stability) signaling. We indexed (a) population mobility, (b) economic inequality, and (c) Democratic (vs. Republican) voting patterns as in Study 3. The

indicators again provided relatively independent markers of community (in)stability. Significant positive correlations emerged between home community Democratic voting and economic inequality, $r(255)=.601, p<.001$, and population mobility and economic inequality, $r(255)=.242, p<.001$, but not between Democratic voting and population mobility, $r(293)=.087, p=.138$.

Collective interdependence risk. We tracked the closing value of the VIX (Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index, aka the “Fear Index”) on each assessment day. Supporting the validity of this index of public threat sensitivity, and its capacity to impact individual experience on a daily basis, participants were themselves more likely to report that they had seen, heard, or read about specific threats to the economy and environment, etc. on days when collective risk sensitivity was higher (vs. lower) than usual (see SOM).

Financial precarity worries. At each weekly assessment, participants reported financial precarity worries on the same 2-item scale ($\alpha=.67$) used in Study 3, answering with reference to their feelings on that day (i.e., the assessment day).

Election precarity worries. At each weekly assessment, and with reference to their feelings on that particular day, participants reported whether they (a) “worried about the 2018 midterm election” or “worried about what was going to happen in this country” using “yes/no” responses, which we summed, and whether they thought (b) the 2018 midterm direction was moving in the wrong (-3) versus right direction (3). Because participants were significantly more likely to think the midterm was going in the wrong direction on days when they were more worried about the midterm election and country, $b=-.1583, SE=.0523, z=-3.02, p=.0025$, we reversed the right-direction item and averaged these z-scored scales to index election worries.

Results

Table 8 presents descriptive information and the within-person (below the diagonal) and

between-person (above the diagonal) intercorrelations. Because weeks are nested within participants, the data likely violate assumptions of independence. Indicating dependence, the intraclass correlation (ICC)—reflecting the proportion of variance in financial precarity worries and midterm worries that varied weekly/within person—was respectively .74 and .59. Therefore, we estimated multilevel models using MLwiN (Goldstein et al., 1998), with week at Level 1 and participant at Level 2. We centered within-person variables on the participant's mean across weeks and between-person variables on the sample mean. Our analysis *Ns* for observations (1477) and participants (296) exceed recommendations that ESM studies aim for a Level 1 sample size of at least 835 (Gabriel et al., 2019) and a Level 2 sample size of at least 83 (Hox, 1995; West et al., 2011). In addition, sensitivity analyses detailed in the SOM suggest that with average completion rates in excess of 70%, this sample should provide ~100% power to detect medium ($d=0.5$) effects and ~40% power to detect small effects ($d=.0.2$).

We predicted the current assessment day's financial precarity worries (or midterm election worries) from: (a) a random intercept term, (b) worries on the assessment day in the prior week, (c) the current assessment day's public threat sensitivity, as captured by the closing value of the VIX, specified as random, (d) the three two-way interactions between this week's public threat sensitivity, community instability (vs. stability) signaling, and political orientation, (e) the 3-way interaction, and the corresponding error terms.⁷ Because the measure of VIX volatility was person-centered, this measure of collective risk compared assessment days when

⁷ Unlike Study 3, where we examined the lagged effects of the public's sensitivity to societal threat (i.e., yesterday's risk predicting today's precarity), we examined the same-day effects of collective risk in the current study given the week-long lag separating the assessments.

the public evidenced greater than usual sensitivity to societal threat to days when it evidenced less than usual sensitivity. We controlled for time to account for linear changes in the outcome and the between-person means (i.e., participants' average exposure to public threat sensitivity and its 2-way and 3-way interaction(s) with community instability-signaling and political orientation) to further separate within- from between-person effects (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). We fit random coefficient models to the intercept, daily public threat sensitivity, and time, following recommendations to estimate maximally random models (Barr et al., 2013).

Tables 9 and 10 respectively present the model coefficients for financial precarity and midterm election worries. The significant main effects of political orientation reveal that liberals reported stronger financial precarity and election worries across assessments than conservatives. The hypothesized 3-way interaction emerged in predicting today's financial precarity worries, $b=.0158$, $SE=.0056$, $z=2.82$, $p=.0048$, $95\%CI(.005, .027)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.161$, but not in predicting election worries, $b=.0031$, $SE=.0035$, $z=0.89$, $p=.3735$, $95\%CI(-.004, .010)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.053$.

Figure 5 presents the predicted slopes. The conditional 2-way today's community sensitivity to threat (i.e., VIX volatility) by political orientation interaction for participants living in stability-signaling (16th percentile) communities is on the left side; the corresponding 2-way for those in instability-signaling communities (84th) is on the right. More positive slopes indicate greater vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., greater than usual VIX volatility predicting increased financial precarity worries), whereas more negative, or less positive, slopes capture comparative *resilience* to this daily indicator of public sensitivity to societal threats.

Table 8.*Descriptive information and intercorrelations for Study 4.*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Political orientation	5.461	1.944	--	-.002	-.365	-.138	-.031	-.144	-.207	-.175
2. Daily VIX (i.e., collective risk)	19.49	4.01	.001	--	-.065	-.153	.063	-.063	-.056	-.026
3. Daily midterm worries	-.003	0.058	.001	-.040	--	.291	.031	.096	.118	.112
4. Daily financial worries	2.691	1.766	-.000	.021	.069	--	-.099	-.023	-.048	-.078
5. Population mobility	3.093	0.751	-.039	.006	.000	-.000	--	.242	.015	.582
6. Economic inequality	0.460	0.035	-.147	-.003	.000	-.000	.277	--	.602	.851
7. Democratic voting	0.479	0.138	-.234	-.002	-.001	.000	-.002	.584	--	.739
8. Composite of community instability-signaling	-0.027	0.752	-.192	.000	-.000	-.000	.593	.860	.719	--

Note. Correlations involving within-person (i.e., person-centered daily variables) are presented below the diagonal and correlations involving only between-person variables (i.e., political orientation, community characteristics, and daily variables averaged across assessments) are presented above the diagonal.

Table 9.

Predicting today's financial precarity worries from today's public threat sensitivity (VIX volatility), community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 4.

Variable	b	SE	z	p	95%CI
<i>Intercept</i>	2.725	.0931	--	--	--
Last week's precarity worries	-.1893	.0277	-6.83	<.0001	-.244, -.135
<i>Today's public threat sensitivity (i.e., VIX)</i>	.0095	.0086	1.10	.2712	-.007, .026
Political orientation (PO)	-.1922	.0482	-3.99	<.0001	-.287, -.098
Community instability-signaling	-.2262	.1238	-1.83	.0673	-.469, .016
PO X community instability-signaling	.0059	.0593	0.10	.9203	-.110, .122
Today's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling	.0096	.0113	0.85	.3953	-.013, .032
Today's public threat sensitivity X PO	.0065	.0043	1.51	.1310	-.019, .149
Today's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO	.0158	.0056	2.82	.0048	.005, .027
Mean public threat sensitivity	-.3789	.1511	-2.51	.0121	-.675, -.083
Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling	-.0217	.1664	-0.13	.8966	-.348, .304
Mean public threat sensitivity X PO	-.0194	.0779	-0.25	.8026	-.172, .133
Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO	-.0174	.0858	-0.20	.8415	-.186, .151
<i>Time</i>	.0229	.0189	1.21	.2263	-.014, .060

Note. Italicized variables were specified as random model coefficients.

Table 10.

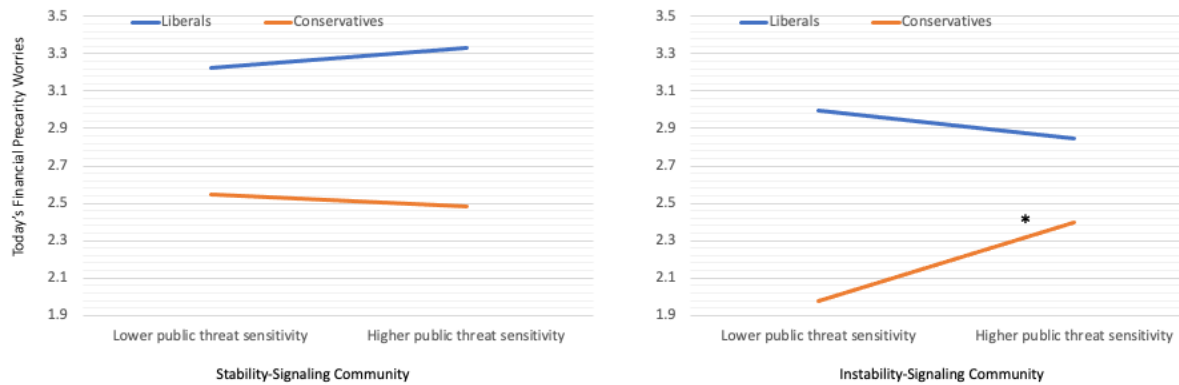
Predicting today's midterm election worries from today's the public's sensitivity to societal threats (VIX volatility), community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 4.

Variable	b	SE	z	p	95%CI
<i>Intercept</i>	.0052	.0405	--	--	--
Last week's midterm worries	-.1445	.0301	-4.80	<.0001	-.203, -.086
<i>Today's public threat sensitivity (i.e., VIX)</i>	-.0089	.0053	-1.68	.0930	-.019, .001
Political orientation (PO)	-.1398	.0210	-6.66	<.0001	-.181, -.099
Community instability-signaling	.0591	.0545	1.08	.2801	-.048, .166
PO X community instability-signaling	-.0031	.0261	-0.12	.9045	-.054, .048
Today's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling	-.0024	.0069	-0.35	.7263	-.016, .011
Today's public threat sensitivity X PO	-.0007	.0026	-0.27	.7872	-.006, .004
Today's public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO	.0031	.0035	0.89	.3735	-.004, .010
Mean public threat sensitivity	-.0308	.0680	-0.45	.6527	-.164, .102
Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling	-.0397	.0758	-0.52	.6031	-.188, .109
Mean public threat sensitivity X PO	.0270	.0350	0.77	.4413	-.042, .096
Mean public threat sensitivity X community instability-signaling X PO	.0122	.0389	0.31	.7566	-.064, .088
<i>Time</i>	-.0089	.0053	-1.68	.0923	-.019, .001

Note. Italicized variables were specified as random model coefficients.

Figure 5.

Predicting today's precarity worries from today's public threat sensitivity (i.e., VIX volatility), community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 4.



Note: Significant simple slopes ($p < .05$) are marked by as asterisk ().*

Instability- vs. stability-signaling communities. In *instability-signaling* communities, conservatives (misfit) evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to collective risk than liberals (fit); the conditional 2-way between today's collective risk (i.e., public threat sensitivity) and political orientation predicting today's precarity worries was significantly positive, $b = .0171$, $SE = .0061$, $z = 2.80$, $p = .0051$, $95\%CI(.005, .033)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .160$. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) reported significantly greater concern about their personal financial precarity on days when the public was likely more attuned to societal threats (i.e., on days when the VIX spiked more than usual), as compared to days it was less attuned, $b = .0422$, $SE = .0172$, $z = 2.45$, $p = .0143$, $95\%CI(.008, .080)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .142$. However, the simple effect of today's public risk sensitivity was negative and nonsignificant for liberals (fit), $b = -.0090$, $SE = .0124$, $z = -0.73$, $p = .4654$, $95\%CI(-.033, .015)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.042$, suggesting resilience.

In contrast, in *stability-signaling* communities, liberals and conservatives did not

significantly differ in evidenced vulnerability, although the conditional 2-way between today's collective risk sensitivity and political orientation was negative, as expected, $b = -.0043$, $SE = .0053$, $z = -0.81$, $p = .4179$, $95\%CI(-.015, .006)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.047$. The simple effect of today's collective risk sensitivity was positive, but not significant, for liberals (misfit), $b = .0092$, $SE = .0149$, $z = 0.62$, $p = .5353$, $95\%CI(-.020, .038)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .036$, and negative, but not significant, for conservatives (fit), $b = -.0037$, $SE = .0125$, $z = -0.30$, $p = .7642$, $95\%CI(-.028, .021)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.017$.

Liberals vs. conservatives. Conservatives evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to today's collective risk in instability-signaling (misfit) than stability-signaling (fit) communities. The 2-way conditional interaction between today's public sensitivity to societal threat and community stability was significantly positive for conservatives, $b = .0339$, $SE = .0147$, $z = 2.31$, $p = .0209$, $95\%CI(.005, .063)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .133$. The conditional 2-way interaction between today's public threat sensitivity and community stability was negative, but not significant for liberals, $b = -.0134$, $SE = .0135$, $z = -0.99$, $p = .3222$, $95\%CI(-.040, .013)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.058$.

Establishing Robustness: Specificity of the Effects and Alternate Explanations?

The moderating effects of community instability-signaling were evident for two of the three indicators. The hypothesized 3-way interaction was significantly positive in predicting financial precarity worries with population mobility, $b = .0084$, $SE = .0041$, $z = 2.05$, $p = .0404$, $95\%CI(.000, .016)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .119$, and Democratic voting history, $b = .0132$, $SE = .0048$, $z = 2.75$, $p = .0060$, $95\%CI(.004, .023)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .158$, but not with economic inequality, $b = .0052$, $SE = .0046$, $z = 1.13$, $p = .2585$, $95\%CI(-.004, .014)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = .071$. In addition, the effects remained robust when only population mobility and economic inequality were included in the community-instability signaling composite. The 3-way interaction between anxiety depending on the government, political orientation, and this 2-component index of community instability-signaling was

significant, $b=.0094$, $SE=.0048$, $z=1.96$, $p=.049996$, $95\%CI(.000, .019)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.115$.

Nevertheless, people in misfitting communities may be more vulnerable to collective risk than people in fitting communities due to differences in socioeconomic status (SES). However, community instability and political orientation did not significantly interact in predicting socioeconomic status. In addition, the reported 3-way interaction was still significant in predicting precarity worries controlling for SES and its interactions with today's public threat sensitivity, community instability, and political orientation (see SOM). The index of community instability-signaling could capture the home community's socio-ecology harshness or density. However, as we detail in the SOM, the 3-way interaction between public threat sensitivity, political orientation and community signaling in predicting today's financial precarity worries remained significant controlling for poverty and its interactions with public threat sensitivity on the prior day and political orientation; this 3-way was also positive, but marginal in analyses that controlled for population size and its interaction with yesterday's public threat sensitivity and political orientation.

Discussion

As in Study 3, the hypothesized collective-risk-regulating effects of community fit again only emerged significantly in instability-signaling communities. In such communities, conservatives (misfit) were more vulnerable to the sociopolitical world behaving unexpectedly than liberals. Nevertheless, the lower-order effects were less than robust, and the study was underpowered to detect small effects. Study 5, with preregistered analyses and ~100% power to detect small effects, examines the replicability of these effects in 3 daily diary samples obtained within the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

Study 5

As preregistered, we indexed *collective interdependence risk* in each of the three daily diary samples through the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the communities surrounding one's home, with the assumption that people would be more attuned to the physical and social risks posed by living collectively when COVID-19 cases were escalating more (vs. less) sharply. Specifically, we tracked the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in participants' home state and the closest most populous city. We indexed vulnerability (vs. resilience) to such risk through daily changes in feelings of personal precarity (vs. safety), as captured through worry about COVID-19 and the availability of basic necessities, such as groceries and healthcare. As we also preregistered, we combined samples because integrative data analyses afford increased statistical power and tests of generalizability (Curran & Hussong, 2009; Hussong et al., 2013).

We expected people living in expectation-inconsistent or “misfitting” communities to report increased worries about their own physical and social precarity on days after COVID-19 cases in their community spread more (vs. less) than usual. That is, we expected liberals living in stability-signaling and conservatives living in instability-signaling communities to report greater precarity worries when COVID-19 cases increased more (vs. less) than usual. However, we expected people living in expectation-consistent or “fitting” communities to be comparatively resilient, as captured by reduced, or even reversed, effect of more rapidly increasing community COVID-19 cases on subsequent feelings of personal precarity.

Method

The SOM provides more detail about the procedures and prior use of these data.

Transparency and Openness

The analysis preregistration is available on OSF:

https://osf.io/edg45/overview?view_only=2a0038ee127048a9972eed3c41e1335f. The survey materials and data are available on OSF:

https://osf.io/hjf57/overview?view_only=3c27893087cd48c98c4f354bcf8dea28. We describe the (limited) deviations from the preregistration in describing the results; the SOM contains a summary of additional preregistered analyses.

Participants

We recruited three separate online samples of U.S. participants to complete daily diary studies through Prolific (Sample 1, $N=233$, completing 8/10 assessments on average; 71% completing all 10), Research Match (Sample 2, $N=1520$, completing 5.7/7 daily assessments on average; 51% completing all 7), and Qualtrics (Sample 3, $N=555$, completing 9.6/11 assessments on average; 63% completing all 11). Participants ($N=2308$) either received payment (Samples 1 and 3) or volunteered (Sample 2). Across samples, participants (662 males, 1661 females, 25 unspecified) averaged 36.5 ($SD=11.0$) years old. In reporting racial/ethnic identity, 1722 participants identified as White, 166 as Asian, 11 as Middle Eastern, 181 as Black, 127 as Latino/Latina, 9 as Indigenous, 77 as mixed/other, 15 unspecified.

Procedure

Each sample participated online. On the first day, participants completed background surveys containing demographic and personality measures assessed once, including disease-sensitivity. In Samples 1 and 2, subsequent daily surveys were emailed to participants at 6 PM local time for the next 9 consecutive days in Sample 1 and 7 consecutive days in Sample 2. Participants had until 6 AM local time the next morning to complete the survey. In Sample 3, subsequent daily surveys were emailed to participants at 5 PM local time every other day for the next 3 weeks, resulting in 10 bidaily assessments. Participants had until a specified (local) time

the next morning (6-7 AM) to complete the survey. Samples 1-2 were nonexperimental; Sample 3 participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (see SOM).

Measures

Political orientation. Participants reported their political orientation on a single item ranging from 1=*extremely liberal* to 9=*extremely conservative*.

Community instability (vs. stability) signaling. We indexed (a) population mobility, (b) economic inequality, and (c) Democratic (vs. Republican) voting patterns as in Studies 3 and 4. The indicators again provided relatively independent markers of community stability. Significant positive correlations emerged between home community Democratic voting and population mobility, $r(2295)=.14, p<.001$, and economic inequality, $r(2118)=.610, p<.001$, and between population mobility and economic inequality, $r(2122)=.263, p<.001$.

Collective interdependence risk. For each assessment day, we obtained the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in (a) the *state* corresponding to participants' current home, and the (b) the most populous city closest to participants' current home from publicly available websites (e.g., www.coronavirus.jhu.edu/map), which we z-scored. For the latter measure, we obtained the *cumulative* total number of COVID-19 cases on each assessment day in each of the top 10 most populous cities in the U.S. (i.e., Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, NYC, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Diego, and San Jose) and then used participant zip codes and Google Maps to identify the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases on each assessment day in the most populous city that was geographically closest to the participant. Speaking to the validity of this index of collective risk, participants reported being more personally concerned about COVID-19 across days when they lived in communities with higher average case counts (see SOM).

Worry about future precarity. Each day participants reported how concerned they were

about (a) the future (i.e., “things never getting back to normal”, “the future”), (b) COVID-19 (i.e., “the spread of illness” and “COVID-19/coronavirus”), and (c) resource availability (i.e., “access to health care”, “having things I need to live”, “not being able to get help if I need it”, “access to groceries”, 0=*not at all concerned*, 4=*extremely concerned*). (Sample 3 did not complete the “spread of illness” item.) We z-scored and averaged each of these items to create an overall index ($\alpha=.90$), such that higher scores indicated greater precarity worries.⁸

Results

Table 11 presents descriptive information and the within-person (below the diagonal) and between-person (above the diagonal) intercorrelations. Because weeks are nested within participants, the data likely violated assumptions of independence. Indicating such dependence, the intraclass correlation (ICC)—reflecting the proportion of variance in the precarity worries that varied weekly/within person—was .86. Therefore, we estimated multilevel models using MLwiN (Goldstein et al., 1998), with week at Level 1 and participant at Level 2. We centered within-person variables (e.g., cumulative COVID-19 case counts) on the participant’s mean across days and between-person variables (i.e., community instability-signaling, political orientation) on the sample mean. Our analysis *Ns* for observations (12295) and participants (2146) exceed recommendations that ESM studies aim for a Level 1 sample size of at least 835

⁸ Although we preregistered that we would analyze these scales separately, we created a composite of all items because all 3 scales yielded parallel effects (as we report). We also preregistered that we would examine a composite of population mobility and economic inequality, which revealed parallel effects as we report. We decided to use the composite of all 3 markers of community instability to most efficiently capture community instability-signaling.

(Gabriel et al., 2019) and a Level 2 sample size of at least 83 (Hox, 1995; West et al., 2011). In addition, sensitivity analyses detailed in the SOM suggest that with average completion rates in excess of 70%, this sample should provide ~100% power to detect even small effects ($d=.0.2$).

As preregistered, we predicted today's precarity worries from: (a) a random intercept term, (b) yesterday's precarity worries, specified as fixed, (c) yesterday's marker of collectively-experienced risk—that is, yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases (in either the state or nearest most populous city corresponding to participants' home zip code), specified as random, (d) the three two-way interactions between yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases, community instability-signaling (vs. stability-signaling), and political orientation, (e) the 3-way interaction, and (f) corresponding error terms. Because the daily cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in a given location was person-centered, the resulting within-person measure compared days when participants experienced *greater* than usual spread of COVID-19 cases in their community to days when they experienced *less* than usual community spread of COVID-19 cases. As preregistered, we also controlled for the between-person means (i.e., the average number of COVID-19 cases in participants' state or closest city across assessment days) and its 2-way and 3-way interaction(s) with community instability-signaling and political orientation to further separate within- from between-person effects (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). Also following our preregistration, we did not control for time (as we did in Studies 3 and 4) given that cumulative COVID-19 case counts and time were strongly positively correlated (see SOM).

Table 11.*Descriptive information and intercorrelations for Study 5.*

Variable	Mean	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Political orientation	4.010	2.017	--	-.063	-.069	-.101	-.033	-.138	-.228	-.179
2. Daily cumulative state COVID-19 cases (i.e., collective risk)	53739.9	85538.5	-.001	--	.764	.071	-.306	.259	.276	.107
3. Daily cumulative nearest most populous city COVID-19 cases	35972.3	54356.4	-.002	.774	--	.055	-.320	.205	.242	.061
4. Daily precarity worries	1.691	0.970	.000	-.061	-.054	--	-.048	.065	.053	.032
5. Population mobility	3.384	0.881	-.035	.001	.001	-.000	--	.257	.100	.603
6. Economic inequality	0.470	0.036	-.143	-.001	-.000	-.000	.257	--	.621	.848
7. Democratic voting	0.537	0.145	-.239	-.002	-.001	-.000	.091	.623	--	.775
8. Composite of community instability-signaling	-0.017	0.759	-.188	-.001	.000	-.000	.601	.850	.773	--

Note. Correlations involving within-person (i.e., person-centered daily variables) are presented below the diagonal and correlations involving only between-person variables (i.e., political orientation, community characteristics, and daily variables averaged across assessments) are presented above the diagonal.

Table 12.

Predicting today's precarity worries from yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases in participants' home state, community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 5.

Variable	b	SE	z	p	95%CI
<i>Intercept</i>	-.0101	.0212	--	--	--
Yesterday's precarity worries	.0332	.0090	3.69	.0002	.016, .051
<i>Yesterday's cumulative state COVID-19 cases (i.e., collective risk)</i>	-.1391	.0702	0.33	.7414	-.277, -.002
Political orientation (PO)	-.0777	.0214	-3.63	.0003	-.120, -.036
Community instability-signaling	.0156	.0284	0.55	.5823	-.040, .071
PO X community instability-signaling	.0085	.0277	0.31	.7566	-.046, .063
Yesterday's state cases X community instability-signaling	.0784	.0887	0.88	.3789	-.095, .252
Yesterday's state cases X PO	-.0172	.0735	-0.23	.8181	-.161, .127
Yesterday's state cases X community instability-signaling X PO	.2724	.0903	3.02	.0025	.095, .449
Mean state cases	.0481	.0212	2.27	.0232	.006, .090
Mean state cases X community instability-signaling	.0100	.0227	0.44	.6599	-.034, .054
Mean state cases X PO	.0394	.0232	1.70	.0891	-.006, .085
Mean state cases X community instability-signaling X PO	-.0062	.0242	-0.26	.7949	-.054, .041

Note. Italicized variables were specified as random model coefficients.

Table 13.

Predicting today's precarity worries from yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases in geographically nearest most populous city, community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 5.

Variable	b	SE	z	p	95%CI
<i>Intercept</i>	-.0132	.0213	--	--	--
Yesterday's precarity worries	.0346	.0090	3.84	.0001	.017, .052
<i>Yesterday's cumulative city COVID-19 cases (i.e., collective risk)</i>	-.1858	.0698	-2.66	.0078	-.323, -.049
Political orientation (PO)	-.0807	.0214	-3.77	.0002	-.123, -.039
Community instability-signaling	.0177	.0284	0.62	.5352	-.038, .073
PO X community instability-signaling	.0097	.0276	0.35	.7263	-.044, .064
Yesterday's city cases X community instability-signaling	.1043	.0897	1.16	.2460	-.072, .280
Yesterday's city cases X PO	-.0170	.0731	-0.23	.8181	-.160, .126
Yesterday's city cases X community instability-signaling X PO	.2667	.0902	2.96	.0031	.090, .443
Mean city cases	.0408	.0212	1.92	.0548	-.001, .082
Mean city cases X community instability-signaling	.0068	.0258	0.26	.7949	-.044, .057
Mean city cases X PO	.0280	.0227	1.23	.2187	-.016, .072
Mean city cases X community instability-signaling X PO	-.0195	.0269	-0.72	.4715	-.072, .033

Note. Italicized variables were specified as random model coefficients.

Tables 12 and 13 respectively present the results for yesterday's state cases and nearest most populous city cases. Liberals reported stronger precarity concerns across assessments than conservatives, as captured in the significant main effect of political orientation. More telling, and consistent with the preregistered hypotheses, the 3-way interaction between the marker of collective risk—yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases in participants' home state—political orientation, and community instability-signaling was significantly positive in predicting today's precarity worries, $b=.2724$, $SE=.0903$, $z=3.02$, $p=.0025$, $95\%CI(.095, .449)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.065$; the 3-way interaction between yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases in the most populous city nearest to participants' homes, political orientation, and community instability-signaling was also significantly positive, $b=.2667$, $SE=.0902$, $z=2.97$, $p=.003$, $95\%CI(.090, .443)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.064$.

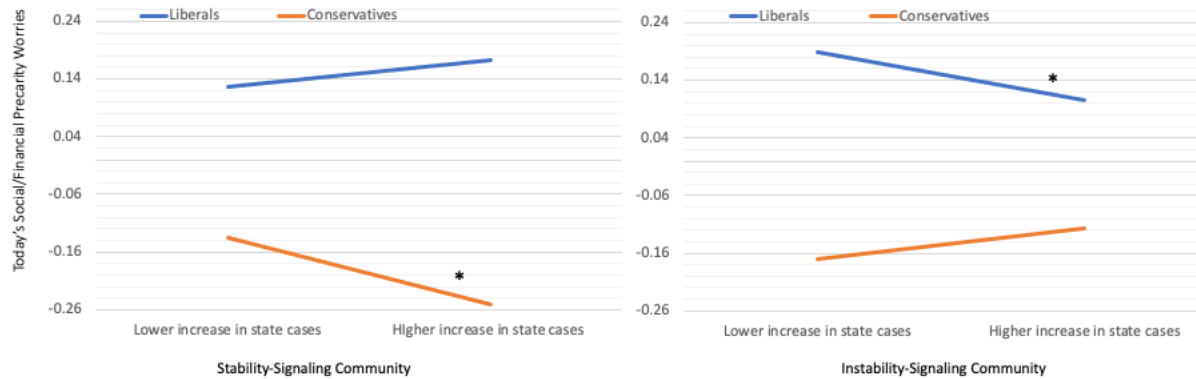
In addition, the hypothesized 3-way interactions were also robust using the individual markers of precarity worries in place of the composite. Using *state* cases as yesterday's indicator of collective interdependence risk, the 3-way interaction was significantly positive in predicting today's concern about the future, $b=.2419$, $SE=.1081$, $z=2.24$, $p=.0251$, $95\%CI(.030, .454)$, today's concern about COVID-19, $b=.2431$, $SE=.0991$, $z=2.45$, $p=.0143$, $95\%CI(.049, .437)$, and today's concern about resource availability, $b=.2533$, $SE=.1041$, $z=2.43$, $p=.0151$, $95\%CI(.049, .457)$. Using cases in the nearest most populous city as yesterday's indicator of collective interdependence risk, the hypothesized 3-way was significantly positive predicting today's concern about COVID-19, $b=.2444$, $SE=.1083$, $z=2.26$, $p=.0238$, $95\%CI(.032, .457)$, and today's concern about resource availability, $b=.2602$, $SE=.1019$, $z=2.55$, $p=.0108$, $95\%CI(.060, .460)$, and again positive, but marginal, predicting today's concern about the future, $b=.1983$, $SE=.1118$, $z=1.77$, $p=.0767$, $95\%CI(-.021, .417)$.

Figure 6 and Supplemental Figure 5, respectively, present the 3-way interactions involving yesterday's COVID-19 cases in participants' home state or nearest most populous city. The left side of Figure 6 captures the conditional 2-way interaction between collective interdependence risk (i.e., COVID-19 cases) for participants in stability-signaling communities (16th percentile), and the right side, the corresponding 2-way for participants in instability-signaling communities (84th percentile). More positive slopes capture greater vulnerability to collective risk (i.e., greater-than-normal increases in COVID-19 cases) predicting increased precarity worries), whereas more negative, or less positive, slopes capture comparative *resilience*. Sample did not significantly moderate the 3-way.⁹

⁹ In a further set of preregistered analyses, we also included contrasts comparing each sample to Sample 3. Sample did not significantly moderate the size of the observed 3-way. That is, the 4-way interactions between each of the condition contrasts, yesterday's spread of COVID-19 cases, community instability-signaling and political orientation was not significant using state cases as a marker of daily collective risk, or nearest most populous city cases ($|z_s| < 1$).

Figure 6.

Predicting today's precarity worries from yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases (i.e., collective risk) in one's home state, community instability-signaling, and political orientation in Study 5.



Note: Significant simple slopes ($p < .05$) are marked by as asterisk ().*

Instability- vs. stability-signaling communities. In *stability-signaling* communities, conservatives (fit) evidenced significantly *greater resilience* to collective risk than liberals (misfit); the conditional 2-way between yesterday's COVID-19 risk and political orientation predicting today's precarity worries was significantly negative using both state cases, $b = -.2313$, $SE = .1053$, $z = -2.20$, $p = .0278$, $95\%CI(-.438, .025)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.047$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b = -.2276$, $SE = .1009$, $z = -2.26$, $p = .0238$, $95\%CI(-.425, -.030)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.049$. Conservatives in stability-signaling communities (fit) reported significantly less precarity anxiety when home community COVID-19 cases increased more (vs. less) on the prior day. The simple effect of yesterday's state cases was significantly negative, $b = -.4477$, $SE = .1535$, $z = -2.92$, $p = .0035$, $95\%CI(-.749, -.147)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.063$, as was the simple effect of yesterday's cases in the nearest most populous city, $b = -.5117$, $SE = .1492$, $z = -3.43$, $p = .0060$, $95\%CI(-.804, -.219)$, $r_{\text{partial}} = -.074$.

However, liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) did not acclimate to this collective risk, as indicated by nonsignificant simple effects of yesterday's state COVID-19 cases, $b=.0151$, $SE=.1398$, $z=0.11$, $p=.9124$, $95\%CI(-.259, .289)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.002$, and nearest most populous city COVID-19 cases, $b=-.0564$, $SE=.1345$, $z=-0.42$, $p=.6745$, $95\%CI(-.320, .207)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=-.009$.

In *instability-signaling* communities, liberals (fit) tended to evidence greater resilience to collective risk than conservatives (misfit); the conditional 2-way between yesterday's collectively-experienced COVID-19 risk and political orientation predicting today's precarity worries was positive and marginal using state cases, $b=.1782$, $SE=.0947$, $z=1.88$, $p=.0601$, $95\%CI(-.007, .364)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.041$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b=.1746$, $SE=.0988$, $z=1.77$, $p=.0767$, $95\%CI(-.019, .368)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.038$. Liberals in instability-signaling communities (fit) reported significantly less precarity anxiety when the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in their home community increased more (vs. less) on the prior day. The simple effect of yesterday's COVID-19 cases was significantly negative using state cases, $b=-.2485$, $SE=.1030$, $z=-2.41$, $p=.0159$, $95\%CI(-.450, -.047)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=-.051$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b=-.2733$, $SE=.1117$, $z=-2.45$, $p=.0143$, $95\%CI(-.492, -.054)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=-.053$. However, conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) did not acclimate to this collective risk. The simple effect of yesterday's community COVID-19 cases was not significant for state, $b=.1079$, $SE=.1585$, $z=0.68$, $p=.2483$, $95\%CI(-.203, .419)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.015$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b=.07591$, $SE=.1609$, $z=0.47$, $p=.6884$, $95\%CI(-.098, .571)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.010$.

Liberals vs. conservatives. Conservatives evidenced significantly greater vulnerability to collective risk in instability-signaling (misfit) than stability-signaling (fit) communities. The 2-way conditional interaction between yesterday's COVID-19 risk and community instability-signaling was significantly positive for conservatives using both state cases, $b=.3699$, $SE=.1450$,

$z=2.55, p=.0108, 95\%CI(.086, .654), r_{\text{partial}}=.055$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b=.3896, SE=.1439, z=2.71, p=.0067, 95\%CI(.108, .672), r_{\text{partial}}=.058$. In contrast, the 2-way conditional interaction between yesterday's COVID-19 risk and community instability-signaling was negative, but not significant for liberals for state cases, $b=-.1750, SE=.1077, z=-1.62, p=.1010, 95\%CI(-.386, .036), r_{\text{partial}}=-.035$, and nearest most populous city cases, $b=-.1438, SE=.1102, z=-1.31, p=.1901, 95\%CI(-.360, .072), r_{\text{partial}}=-.028$.

Establishing Robustness: Specificity of the Effects and Alternate Explanations?

The hypothesized 3-way interactions were robust using the individual markers of community instability in place of the composite. Using cumulative *state* cases as yesterday's indicator of collectively-experienced risk, the 3-way interaction was significantly positive with Democratic voting history, $b=.1977, SE=.0738, z=2.68, p=.0074, 95\%CI(.053, .342), r_{\text{partial}}=.058$, and population mobility, $b=.0714, SE=.0352, z=2.03, p=.0424, 95\%CI(.002, .140), r_{\text{partial}}=.044$, and positive, but marginal, with economic inequality, $b=.0559, SE=.0316, z=1.77, p=.0767, 95\%CI(-.006, .118), r_{\text{partial}}=.040$, as separate markers of community instability-signaling. Using *nearest most populous city* cases as the collective risk indicator, the hypothesized 3-way interaction was significantly positive with population mobility, $b=.0784, SE=.0369, z=2.12, p=.0340, 95\%CI(.006, .151), r_{\text{partial}}=.046$, and Democratic voting history, $b=.0919, SE=.0365, z=2.52, p=.0117, 95\%CI(.020, .163), r_{\text{partial}}=.054$, and positive, but marginal, with economic inequality, $b=.0503, SE=.0305, z=1.65, p=.0989, 95\%CI(-.022, .123), r_{\text{partial}}=.037$.

In addition, the effects remained robust when only population mobility and economic inequality were included in the community-instability signaling composite. The 3-way interaction between yesterday's cumulative state cases, political orientation, and this 2-component index of community instability-signaling was significant, $b=.1972, SE=.0821,$

$z=2.40$, $p=.0164$, $95\%CI(.036, .358)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.052$, as was the 3-way interaction between yesterday's cases in the nearest most populous city, political orientation, and this 2-component index, $b=.2054$, $SE=.0839$, $z=2.45$, $p=.0111$, $95\%CI(.041, .371)$, $r_{\text{partial}}=.053$.

Nonetheless, the effects were specific to generalized worries about COVID-19, the future, and the continued availability of resources that people needed to survive. The 3-way was not significantly positive when we examined daily changes in worry about one's own health and the health of family, friends, and strangers, contrary to our preregistered hypotheses (see SOM). While this reasoning is speculative, these contrasting effects could suggest that community fit is especially important in predicting feelings of precarity (vs. safety) in situations where people have limited, or unknown, control over their personal outcomes—as could be the case when they are imagining what might happen to the crime rate in their community in the future or when they are trying to forecast their future vulnerability to unfavorable economic conditions.

Of course, there are alternate explanations for the observed effects—including those we entertained in Studies 1-4 as well as those Study 5 had unique data to address.

First, people in misfitting communities may be more vulnerable to collective risk than those in fitting communities due to differences in socioeconomic status. However, community stability and political orientation did not significantly interact in predicting socioeconomic status on an SES ladder from lowest to highest rung of society. Also, the hypothesized 3-way interactions were still significant when controlling for SES and its interactions with yesterday's collective COVID risk, community instability, and political orientation.

Second, the index of community instability-signaling could capture the home community's socio-ecology harshness or density. However, as we detail in the SOM, the hypothesized 3-way interactions remained significant controlling for poverty and its interactions

with yesterday's collective COVID-19 risk and political orientation; the hypothesized 3-ways were also significant in analyses that controlled for population size and its interaction with yesterday's collective COVID-19 risk and political orientation.

Third, although we attributed the moderating effects of political orientation to differences in expectations about the stability of the collective world, political orientation is also associated with other beliefs and values that could explain the effects. For instance, conservatives tend to be more religious (Feldman & Johnson, 2014) and more xenophobic than liberals (Sparkman & Eidelman, 2016). We included measures of religiosity and xenophobia in Study 5. As we detail in the SOM, the hypothesized 3-way interactions between yesterday's collective COVID-19 risk, political orientation, and community-stability signaling were still significant in analyses that separately controlled for main effects of religiosity and xenophobia and their interactions with yesterday's COVID-19 risk and community instability-signaling. Thus, the effects appear to be specific to political orientation (which should capture broad-based assumptions about the collective world) rather than more specific beliefs about God and religion or immigrants.

Discussion

Study 5 revealed the hypothesized collective-risk-vulnerability regulating effects of community fit in both stability- and instability-signaling communities. In stability-signaling communities, conservatives (fit) evidenced significantly greater *resilience* to greater than usual increases in community COVID-19 cases than liberals (misfit). However, in instability-signaling communities, liberals (fit) tended to evidence greater resilience to greater than usual increases in community COVID-19 cases than conservatives (misfit). In other words, liberals and conservatives in expectation-consistent communities reported significantly *less* anxiety about their future precarity on days when COVID-19 cases increased more than usual.

Establishing Robustness: Bayesian and Meta-Analytic Considerations

The community fit model conceptually corresponds to a 2-way interaction, such that the experience of community fit moderates the association (Path C in Figure 1) between collective interdependence risk and vulnerability (vs. resilience). However, because community fit itself depends on the 2-way interaction between personal expectations and community stability-signaling, evaluating the model necessitates statistically testing 3-way interactions. Because the test of a 3-way interaction is the test of the difference between 2-way interactions, 3-way interactions can be difficult to detect. So, in addition to ruling out alternative explanations, it is also valuable to take additional steps to assess statistical robustness.

The power to detect an interaction depends on whether the focal predictor, moderator, and outcome are continuous or categorical, as well as on their distributions (Aguinis et al., 2005; Baranger et al., 2023; Cohen, 1983; Shieh, 2019). It also depends on the associations among the predictors and outcome (Baranger et al., 2023) and on the expected shape of the interaction (Sommet et al., 2023). Holding the interaction effect constant, power is generally greater when the predictor explains meaningful variance in the outcome (Baranger et al., 2023; McClelland & Judd, 1993), which was the case for political orientation in the present studies. Power is also generally greater when predictors are measured continuously (Baranger et al., 2023; Cohen, 1983), which was also the case in the present studies. Power depends on the correlations among the predictors; depending on the directions and magnitudes of the predictor–predictor and predictor–outcome associations, predictor correlations can produce either suppression or enhancement (Baranger et al., 2023; Shieh, 2019). In the studies using objective indicators of singular and shared reality perceptions (Study 1) and collective risk (Studies 3–5), the predictors were only weakly correlated, limiting concerns about strong suppression or multicollinearity.

Perhaps most important, the community-fit model additionally predicts crossover interactions. Crossover interactions typically require less power to detect than fully attenuated interactions, which in turn require less power than partially attenuated interactions (Sommet et al., 2023). Three-way interaction-specific power analyses for the linear regression models in Studies 1 and 2 indicated at least 80% power to detect the observed three-way interaction effect sizes (Baranger et al., 2023). Our simulations for the multilevel models, however, evaluated power to detect conventionally defined small, medium, and large effects rather than the specific three-way interactions hypothesized here. Power to detect small effects in these models was low in Studies 3 and 4 (approximately 40%), although it was high in Study 5 (approximately 100%), but these simulations provide only indirect evidence regarding the hypothesized 3-way.

Nevertheless, statistical power is not the only factor to consider in assessing robustness. Wegener et al. (2024) argue that (low) statistical power and false positive rates have been inappropriately conflated in the literature because false positive rate formulae assume an invariant prior probability of the null hypothesis. However, when model hypotheses build on a strong theoretical and empirical foundation (e.g., the motivating effects of inconsistency in the present case) and data from multiple studies, the prior probability of the null hypothesis decreases. Consequently, increasing power (from moderate to high) has a near negligible impact on false positive rates. Rather than relying on power as a proxy for robustness, Wegener et al. (2024) used Bayesian principles to develop a Shiny App that evaluates the strength of evidence for the alternate hypothesis over the null based in a given set of studies (<https://seeing-statistics.shinyapps.io/StudySetEvidence/>). With 5 studies, a Type I error rate of .025, assumed power of .50, and a .90 prior probability of the null hypothesis, the present studies provide “very strong evidence” for the alternate hypothesis, with a $BF_{10} > 150$. Even if we assumed each

individual study had only .15 power to reject the null, finding the hypothesized 3-way across five studies would still provide “very strong evidence for the hypotheses” with a $BF_{10} > 150$.

According to Castillo et al. (2026), a stable effect is one that is “likely to replicate in magnitude and direction across samples” (p. 8). While the 3-way interaction was consistently and significantly positive across studies, its decomposition did reveal inconsistencies in magnitude, but not direction. This variability raises the question of whether particular conditional 2-way interactions were more robust than others. Because individual studies may over- or underestimate true effect sizes (Stanley & Spence, 2014), meta-analyses can be especially informative in assessing the stability of an effect across a set of studies (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2016; Fabrigar & Wegener, 2020; McShane Böckenholt, 2025; Wegener et al., 2024).

To assess the robustness of the hypothesized symmetries in the lower-order effects, we conducted an internal meta-analysis following recommendations from Goh et al. (2016). In each of the studies, we first converted individual model coefficients to partial correlations. For the multilevel models, we approximated the partial correlations by converting the Wald z statistics. The resulting partial correlations were then Fisher z -transformed prior to analysis. Studies 1, 3, and 5 contributed multiple effects. Specifically, Study 1 contributed effects using both singular, consensual reality perceptions and felt dependence on the political party in power as moderators; Study 3 contributed effects for both financial precarity and midterm election worries as outcomes; Study 5 contributed effects using yesterday’s state COVID-19 cases and nearest most populous city COVID-19 cases as risk markers. Therefore, we used a multilevel random-effects meta-analysis with a random intercept to account for the non-independence of effects from the

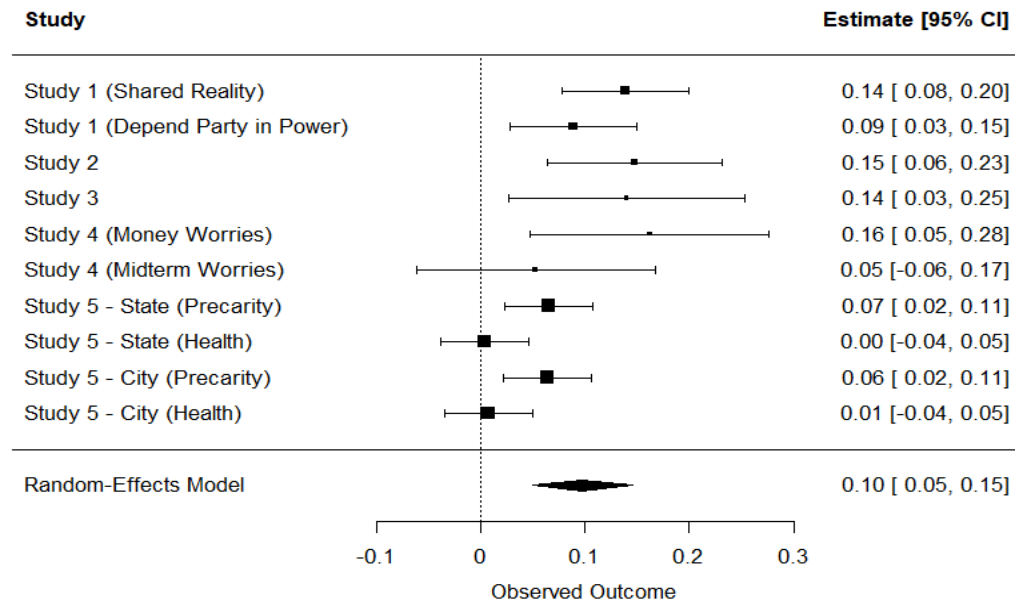
same study. Analyses were done using the R metafor package.¹⁰

Figure 7 presents the forest plots for the 3-way interaction; the SOM contains the forest plots for the lower-order effects. The hypothesized 3-way involving the composite index of community instability-signaling was significantly positive across studies, $b=.0975$, $SE=.0245$, $z=3.99$, $p<.0001$, $95\%CI(.0496, .1455)$. The consistently observed symmetries in the conditional two-way interactions in each study were also statistically robust across studies.

¹⁰ In order to include the 3-way interaction between the composite index of singular, consensual reality; political orientation; and community instability-signaling in predicting post-election future precarity worries from Study 1 in the meta-analysis, we decomposed this interaction as we did the interactions involving collective risk. Specifically, we decomposed this 3-way into the conditional 2-way interactions between the experience of a more or less singular reality and political orientation in stability- and instability-signaling communities; the conditional 2-ways between experiencing a singular, consensual reality and community instability-signaling for liberals and conservatives, and the simple effects of experiencing a singular, consensual reality for liberals and conservatives in stability- and instability-signaling communities.

Figure 7.

Forest plot for the 3-way community fit interaction.



Note. Squares represent the point estimate for each study, with size proportional to the study's weight in the random-effects model; horizontal lines indicate 95% confidence intervals, and the diamond represents the pooled estimate.

In instability-signaling communities, conservatives (misfit) were significantly more vulnerable to collective risk than liberals (fit), but in stability-signaling communities, liberals (misfit) were significantly more vulnerable to collective risk than conservatives (fit). That is, the 2-way collective risk by political orientation interactions were opposite in sign and significant in instability-signaling, $b=.0690$, $SE=.0242$, $z=2.86$, $p=.0043$, $95\%CI(.0217, .1164)$, and stability-signaling communities, $b=-.0601$, $SE=.0167$, $z=-3.59$, $p=.0003$, $95\%CI(-.0929, -.0273)$. In addition, conservatives were significantly *more* vulnerable to collective risk in instability-

signaling (misfit) than stability-signaling (fit) communities, but liberals were significantly more vulnerable to collective risk in stability-signaling (misfit) than instability-signaling (fit) communities. That is, the 2-way collective risk by community instability-signaling interactions were opposite in sign and significant for conservatives, $b=.0813$, $SE=.0213$, $z=3.81$, $p=.0001$, $95\%CI(.0395,.1232)$, and liberals, $b=-.0502$, $SE=.0187$, $z=-2.68$, $p=.0074$, $95\%CI(-.0869,-.0135)$.

Conservatives and liberals in *misfitting* communities generally reported *greater* worry about social/financial precarity when they were currently experiencing high (vs. low) levels of collective risk. The simple effect of collective risk was positive and significant for conservatives in instability-signaling communities, $b=.1011$, $SE=.0477$, $z=2.12$, $p=.0341$, $95\%CI(.0076,.1947)$, and positive, but short of significance for liberals in stability-signaling communities, $b=.0672$, $SE=.0467$, $z=1.44$, $p=.1503$, $95\%CI(-.0244,.1588)$. However, conservatives and liberals in *fitting* communities were comparatively invulnerable to collective risk. The simple effect of collective risk was negative and nonsignificant for conservatives in stability-signaling communities, $b=-.0126$, $SE=.0374$, $z=-0.34$, $p=.736$, $95\%CI(-.0860,.0607)$, and liberals in instability-signaling communities, $b=-.0080$, $SE=.04414$, $z=-0.19$, $p=.846$, $95\%CI(-.0892,.0731)$.

In addition, when we redid the meta-analysis including only the indicators of collective risk (and omitting the shared reality interaction in Study 1), all of the meta-analytic effects were parallel in size and significance. When we used the 2-component measure of community instability-signaling (i.e., population mobility and economic inequality) rather than the 3-component measure, all of the meta-analytic effects were again parallel in size in significance. The results of both of these additional meta-analyses are presented in the SOM. Two of the three markers of community significantly interacted with collective risk and political orientation to predict precarity worries. Specifically, the hypothesized 3-way interaction was significant across

studies using population mobility, $b=.0677$, $SE=.0230$, $z=2.95$, $p=.0032$, $95\%CI(.0227, .1127)$, and Democratic/liberal leaning voting patterns, $b=.0788$, $SE=.0216$, $z=3.65$, $p=.0003$, $95\%CI(.0365, .1211)$, as separate markers of community instability. It was marginal using economic inequality, $b=.0417$, $SE=.0237$, $z=1.76$, $p=.0785$, $95\%CI(-.0047, .0881)$.

Finally, meta-analytic effects are only as robust as the size of the file drawer. Study 2 included a measure of shared reality with the average person in the country that afforded an additional test of mechanism, though a weaker test because Study 2 lacked Study 1's naturalistic induction of election-induced uncertainty. Study 5 afforded another opportunity to examine whether living in an expectation-consistent (vs. inconsistent) community protected against public sensitivity to societal threat, as captured by daily VIX volatility. However, daily VIX values were lower, rather than higher, on days when COVID-19 cases increased more (vs. less) sharply. This suggests that VIX volatility was likely not functioning as a proxy for public sensitivity to societal threat in the context of the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic (when the threat of a yet-to-be understood and deadly virus dominated public consciousness). As we detail in the SOM, these further data yielded one nonsignificant and one significantly negative interaction. Nevertheless, with these (questionable) effects included, the meta-analysis continued to reveal a significantly positive 3-way interaction across studies and significant conditional 2-way interactions that were entirely consistent with community fit model predictions.¹¹

¹¹ When we included yesterday's VIX volatility (and its 2-way and 3-way interactions) with political orientation and community-instability signaling as control variables in Study 5, the 3-way interaction between yesterday's cumulative COVID-19 cases, political orientation, and community-instability signaling remained positively significant in predicting precarity worries

General Discussion

The present studies are the first to suggest that the fit between ideologically based expectations about the stability of the collective social world and home community realities dynamically shapes vulnerability to collective risk. When the risks of depending on unreliable governments and potentially infectious community members were more (vs. less) salient, people in expectation-inconsistent (i.e., misfitting) communities experienced significantly greater worry about the precarity of their future lives. However, people in expectation-consistent (i.e., fitting) communities appeared comparatively immune to such collective risks.

The Vulnerability-Regulating Effects of Community Fit

Study 1 attested to the presumed mechanism underlying the protective effects of community fit—the validation that people live in the same reality. When participants experienced a more singular, consensual reality prior to the election, and thus, had greater reason to trust in their experience of fit, liberals reported significantly less worry and uncertainty about the future post-election when they lived in instability-signaling (i.e., expectation-consistent) than stability-signaling (i.e., expectation-inconsistent) communities. However, conservatives reported less worry and uncertainty when they lived in stability-signaling (i.e., expectation-consistent) than instability-signaling (i.e., expectation-inconsistent) communities. However, no such protective effects emerged when participants experienced reality as less singular or shared, and more conflicting, and thus, had reason to distrust their experience of fit.

In Study 2, community fit predicted how readily anxiety about the federal government's

using both state cases, $b=.2288$, $SE=.0934$, $z=2.45$, $p=.0143$, $95\%CI(.044, .414)$, and city cases, $b=.2137$, $SE=.0943$, $z=2.27$, $p=.0232$, $95\%CI(.029, .399)$ to index yesterday's collective risk.

dependability generalized into concerns about the future social/financial precarity of one's community and country. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced greater vulnerability to this collective risk than (a) conservatives in stability-signaling (fit) and (b) liberals in instability-signaling (fit) communities. In contrast, liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced greater vulnerability to this collective risk than (c) liberals in instability-signaling (fit) and (d) conservatives in stability-signaling (fit) communities. In Study 1, living in a more (vs. less) fitting community also predicted whether feeling dependent on the political party in power generalized into post-election concerns about the future precarity of one's family and community life. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced greater vulnerability to this collective risk than conservatives in stability-signaling communities (fit). In contrast, liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced greater vulnerability than conservatives in stability-signaling communities (fit).

In Study 3, community fit predicted how readily the public's daily attunement or sensitivity to economic and physical threats to the country as a whole generalized into the next day's personal concerns about one's own financial precarity. Conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced greater vulnerability to the public's threat sensitivity than (a) conservatives in stability-signaling (fit) and (b) liberals in instability-signaling (misfit) communities. In Study 4, conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) again evidenced greater vulnerability to the public's daily sensitivity to threat than (a) conservatives in stability-signaling (fit) and (b) liberals in instability-signaling (misfit) communities.

In Study 5, with preregistered analyses, community fit predicted resilience to the spread of COVID-19 cases in one's communities. Conservatives in stability-signaling communities (fit) and liberals in instability-signaling (fit) communities reported decreased worries about their own

precarity on days when COVID-19 cases increased more (vs. less) than usual. However, conservatives in instability-signaling communities (misfit) and liberals in stability-signaling communities (misfit) evidenced no such capacity to discount this collectively faced risk.

Limitations

The current studies have limitations. First, the community fit model predicts symmetrical effects of fit for those on the political left versus right, but complete symmetry in the effects of community fit only emerged significantly in Studies 1, 2 and Study 5. However, all of the meta-analyses revealed opposite and significant 2-way collective interdependence risk by political orientation interactions in stability versus instability signaling communities, as well as opposite and significant 2-way interactions between collective interdependence risk and community instability-signaling for liberals versus conservatives. These significantly opposite 2-ways indicate that liberals and conservatives living in expectation-consistent (vs. inconsistent) communities consistently differ in vulnerability to collective risk, as the model anticipates.

Nevertheless, the particular simple effects of collective risk that emerged as significant varied. In Studies 1-4, living in expectation-*inconsistent* or “misfitting” communities predicted significantly increased *vulnerability* to collective risk, but in Study 5, living in expectation-*consistent* or “fitting” communities predicted significantly increased *resilience* to collective risk (i.e., worries were *lower* with higher than lower risk). Although the model is agnostic on this point, this variability suggests that a yet-to-be understood feature of collective risk could itself be important in shaping whether community fit increases vulnerability in an absolute sense, increases resilience, or increases both vulnerability and resilience. In fact, the meta-analysis only revealed one significant simple effect of collective risk—a positive, vulnerability-increasing effect of collective risk for conservatives in expectation-inconsistent communities. Further

research is needed to better understand whether the nature of collective risk plays a role in shaping the effects of community fit.

Second, the majority of participants were White, U.S. residents, and involved in live-in romantic relationships. Nevertheless, examining relationship status as a moderator in Studies 2 and 5 revealed that it did not significantly moderate the effects (see SOM). As often occurs with online and longitudinal research, we also lost participants because they were ineligible, freely elected to stop participating, or declined to provide crucial geographic/location information.

Third, the effects were relatively small in magnitude. Behavior is multiply determined (Götz et al., 2021) and concerns about future precarity are likely to be subject to many influences we did not assess. Also, we assessed community fit *indirectly*. Rather than using subjective reports of fit (which could be susceptible to biasing effects of self-esteem, etc.), we used objective markers of the socioecology of participants' home communities to gauge fit, or misfit, with personal views about the inherent (in)stability of the collective social world. In three of the five studies, we also used objective markers of collectively experienced risk. Given the subtlety of these measures, even small effects speak to the explanatory power of the community fit model in predicting resilience to the risks of collective life (Götz et al., 2021; Prentice & Miller, 1992).

Fourth, Study 2 was cross-sectional, which raises questions about the direction of the effects. However, when we reversed the roles of anxiety depending on the government and future precarity concerns as respective IV and DV in Study 2, the resulting 3-way interaction was not significant. In addition, Studies 3, 4, and 5 utilized objective markers of collective risk that participants' personal precarity worries could not conceivably change. Studies 1, 3, and 5 also obtained repeated measurements over time, allowing us to use the passage of time to establish the temporal precedence of personally perceived (Study 1) and collectively experienced (Studies

1, 3, and 5) collective interdependence risk over subsequent precarity worries.

Strengths and Future Directions

The evidence we assembled for the protective effects of community fit also survived a number of robustness tests. First, significant vulnerability-regulating effects of community fit consistently emerged using (a) two of the individual markers of community instability (i.e., population mobility and Democratic voting histories) and the (b) a 2-component index of community instability-signaling (i.e., population mobility and economic inequality) and (c) the 3-component index. Second, community fit predicted increased resilience to social risk when participants voiced that the government or party in power posed a direct threat to them (Studies 1 and 2) and when they witnessed the public's greater vulnerability to societal threats (Studies 3-5). Third, the effects of community fit could not be explained by differences in participant socioeconomic status (see SOM), community harshness (i.e., poverty rates), or population size in any of the studies and the effects of political orientation could not be explained by religiosity or xenophobia in Study 5 (where we had these measures available).

The present findings are also generative in their implications. Community fit predicted increased resilience to collective risk for conservatives *and* liberals, adding a further contextual nuance to the debate about whether people on the political right are more sensitive to threat (Bakker et al., 2020; Crawford, 2017; Frimer et al., 2017; Nail et al., 2009). Conservatives may well be more resistant to seeing instability in the collective social world than liberals (Jost et al., 2003), but liberals and conservatives were both similarly protected against risk when community realities better matched their personal expectations. The present findings also suggest that communities may only function as something socially shared or comfortably familiar when the community itself provides a fit to one's personal political ideology. Indeed, home community

instability never independently predicted how much participants worried about their own social or financial precarity. It was the home community reality's *fit* to personal political ideology that predicted vulnerability to collective risk. When the risks of living collectively were more salient, people in misfitting communities even found themselves believing something they presumably did not *want* to believe—that is, that their futures were less than rosy (Kunda, 1990).

Future research might examine whether the vulnerabilities imposed by living in a misfitting community extend beyond sensitivity to collective risk. For instance, people in misfitting communities could experience greater difficulty finding meaning in themselves (Heine et al., 2006; Higgins et al., 2021). The current studies offer suggestive evidence on this point. In Study 2 (U.S. sample), Study 3, and Study 4, we repeatedly assessed dissonant feelings (i.e., feeling “uncomfortable”, “uneasy”, and “bothered”, Elliot & Devine, 1994). In Study 5, we repeatedly assessed anxiety (e.g., feeling “uneasy”, “anxious/tense”, and “fearful the worst will happen”). Meta-analyses revealed that people in misfitting communities felt more unsettled on any given day than people in fitting communities (see SOM). Further research might explore the implications of vulnerability to such existential angst. For instance, if people use feeling more or less unsettled as a source of information, those living in misfitting (vs. fitting) communities might be more likely to question their goals or life choices (see Schmader & Sedikides, 2018). People in misfitting (vs. fitting) communities might also be more likely to turn to ideologically affirming online communities or news media to affirm their worldviews. Consistent with this possibility, feeling excluded can increase the appeal of radicalism (Pfundmair & Mahr, 2022).

The community fit model posits that feelings of being epistemically moored or tethered to a singular reality regulates vulnerability to the risks experienced as living as part of that community collective. That is why we focused on collective interdependence risks in the current

studies. However, it is feasible that community fit might offer a symbolic resource (vs. vulnerability) that could also impact how people react to personal experience of social risk, such as being rejected by a friend or acquaintance or struggling to succeed at work or school.

Future research could also examine the model propositions in different contexts and using different conceptualizations of fit. Perhaps community fit is more important in regulating personal precarity worries in contexts where the risks of living collectively seem higher, such as countries where there is a weaker social safety net or greater political polarization (Finkel et al., 2020). In addition, we relied on political orientation to index community fit, given its power to telegraph personal views about the (in)stability of the collective social world. However, such views could also be potentially telegraphed by generalized attachment security or trust in others. Communities differ in more than structural stability. They also differ in the proximity of genetically related individuals (Sng et al., 2024), the tightness (vs. looseness) of their norms (Gelfand et al., 2006), and the ease with which people can move in and out of relationships (Yuki & Shcug, 2012). Therefore, future research could examine whether people who expect relationships to be transient, such as those high on attachment avoidance, are better protected against social risk in *more* relationally mobile communities (that validate their expectations of transient relationships) than in less relationally mobile communities (that invalidate them). Future research could also examine whether people who are more traditional in their religious beliefs are better protected against social risk in tighter than looser communities, as marked by the prevalence of conservative houses of worship.

Conclusion

While prior theory and research have focused on close others as a source of vulnerability (vs. resilience) to the risks of living collectively (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Mikulincer & Shaver,

2003; Slavich, 2020), the present research examined the power of community. Like proverbial ducks out of water, people living in communities that tacitly disconfirmed their expectations of the collective social world struggled in the face of the risks of living interdependently. However, people living in communities that tacitly confirmed their expectations evidenced relative equanimity. The present findings thus suggest that people may find a comforting sense of home in geographic communities that validate their conceptions of the collective social world.

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