

**TITLE: Color and neighborhood choice**

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**VERSION: 1.0.0**

# PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI):

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# KEY PERSONNEL

**Name**: Anand Edward Sokhey

**Role in project**: Faculty Advisor

# GENERAL RESEARCH STAFF

N/A

# OBJECTIVES

This study is designed to answer the question of whether or not people will infer how individuals infer the political partisanship of a neighborhood and what that does to influence the degree to which they would like to live in that neighborhood. The chapter seeks to address an existing gap in the literature where experimental evidence suggests that visual features of a neighborhood predicts partisan inferences and, as a result, the degree to which someone would want to live there; however, observational evidence does not come to the same conclusion, instead, it suggests that these inferences do not matter in light of non-political information about a neighborhood.

# BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

This study is part of a much larger book project. In an era of significant political polarization among the U.S. public, there is a lot of literature that seeks to examine how we might be able to reduce some of this political polarization. There is a significant amount of literature that is showing how polarization bleeds into non-political decision making — that we take partisanship into account where it is a decision that is not traditionally considered to be a political space. This chapter seeks to add this dimension to the larger project examining the informational role that color plays to activate partisan identity and the degree to which the activation of that identity shapes non-political behavior.

As part of a larger project examining the informational role that the colors red and blue can play in politics due to their strong associations with the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively, one potential mechanism for inferring the partisanship has largely been attributed to things like yard signs displayed in front of the houses, the make and model of the car, the presence of ethnic food establishments nearby, and more. However, this work has glossed over the role of these two colors in communicating partisanship. The previous studies for this project have examined explicitly political situations and the way in which these colors influence how people behave and express attitudes. This chapter seeks to examine whether these effects show up in non-political situations. So it builds upon both the gap in the existing literature as well as testing the mechanism in a much less obvious situation.

# PRELIMINARY STUDIES

There have not been any preliminary studies to-date.

# RESEARCH STUDY DESIGN

The study is a simple 2x3 design. Once the study has begun, participants will be presented with a real-estate flyer. The real-estate flyer shows some basic information about the neighborhood’s characteristics. What varies on the flyer is the color swatch for the “favorite car color” of the current residents of the neighborhood. There are one of two colors — red or blue. Once participants have had a chance to view the flyer, they are asked three questions getting at how much they like the neighborhood, whether they would like to live there, and what they infer the partisanship of the neighborhood to be.

After responding to these questions, they then get a second page to the flyer which tells all participants that the neighborhood is 20 minutes away from the nearest metro area. In one of the treatment conditions, this is the only information that the participants see. In the other two they are told that the neighborhood voted either 60% Republican in the previous election or 60% Democratic in the previous election. I then ask participants the same questions I did after they saw the first page of the flyer.

I counterbalance a number of basic demographic and political attitude questions. Meaning half the participants are asked to confirm their age, gender, education, attention paid to politics, and their partisan identity before receiving the treatment and the other half are asked these questions afterwards. The goal of this is to randomly account for priming effects and post-treatment bias of asking about partisanship before or after the treatment.

At the completion of data collection, I have pre-registered that I will fit a series of ordered logistic regression models to test my hypotheses that 1). People will see the neighborhood with red cars as more Republican and blue are as more Democratic; 2) that they will express more positive impressions of the neighborhood that they infer is congruent with their partisanship; 3) and finally, once they receive information about the actual partisanship of the neighborhood, these initial effects will dampen and impressions toward the neighborhood will largely be driven by the information of the partisan composition of the neighborhood.

I have funding to recruit 600 total participants for the study based on a projected median time to complete the study being no more than 6 minutes.

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| **Name of procedure/instrument/tool** | **Purpose (i.e., what data is being collected?)** |
| **Political Questionnaire** | This is designed to gather basic information about the political preferences of the participants. These self-reported questions gather information on:   * Party Identification * How closely do they follow politics |
| **Demographics Questionnaire** | This is designed to gather information for any variables that may confound the effect of the treatment on the outcome variables. These self-reported questions gather information on:   * Sex * Gender * Age * Education |
| **Treatment** | Gather no information on participants. |
| **Post-treatment questionnaire** | Self-reported questions to act as outcome variables:   * Whether participants like the neighborhood. * Whether participants would want to live in the neighborhood. * What the partisanship of the neighborhood is. |

# FUNDING

The research is self-funded.

# ABOUT THE SUBJECTS

I aim to have 600 subjects participate I the study. The population of interest are adults (18+) residing in the United States.

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| **Subject Population(s)** | **Number to be enrolled in each group** |
| **U.S. residents older than 18 years of age** | 600 |
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# VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

NA

# RECRUITMENT METHODS

Participants will be recruited through the online survey experiment platform Prolific. Participants are those who have signed up themselves to earn money by participating in online surveys and survey experiments. The recruitment settings I have on Prolific require that my study shows up on the list of studies that individuals can opt into only for those that are citizens of the United States – this aids in my goal of having a nationally representative sample.

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| **List recruitment methods/materials and attach a copy of each in eRA** |
| 1. **Prolific. Materials included in eRA** |
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# COMPENSATION

Upon completion of the study, participants will be compensated through their Prolific account according to their policies. Compensation will be calculated based on a $12.00/hour rate using the amount of time participants took to complete the study (as determined by Prolific). I anticipate the average participant should take no more than 6 minutes, on average, to complete my study, which means ~$1.2 per participant.

# INFORMED CONSENT

Before beginning the study, participants will be presented with the Informed Consent document. Before participants can begin the study, they will need to “Agree” to participate in the study. For those that do not want to participate in the study after viewing the informed consent agreement. No data will be collected on these participants who do not want to participate.

# PROCEDURES

Participants will be recruited on Prolific. If they choose to participate in the study, they will be routed to the study in Qualtrics. Once they have completed the informed consent, they will be randomly assigned to either view the treatment first or to view the political and demographics questionnaires.

For the political and demographics questionnaires, participants will be asked questions about their partisan identity, their tendency to follow politics, age, gender, sex, education, and their tendency to avoid conflict.

Immediately after participants have viewed the treatment, they will be asked three questions to measure the effect of the treatment: to rate their feelings as warm or cold toward the neighborhood; how likely they would be to live in the neighborhood; and what the political leanings of the neighborhood are.

Participants will then be randomly assigned into one of three conditions. Consistent between the three conditions is that they are told that they are being given more information about the neighborhood. In the Republican condition, the neighborhood is 20 minutes away from the nearest metro area and that 60% voted for the Republican candidate in the most recent election. In the Democratic condition, the neighborhood is 20 minutes away from the nearest metro area and that 60% voted for the Democratic candidate in the most recent election. In the no information condition, the neighborhood is 20 minutes away. I then ask the same three questions about the neighborhood again: to rate their feelings as warm or cold toward the neighborhood; how likely they would be to live in the neighborhood; and what the political leanings of the neighborhood are.

After completing the demographics and political questionnaires as well as the treatment, participants will then be debriefed. After moving past the debrief, they will automatically be redirected back to their Prolific account to confirm completion of the study and payment for their participation.

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| **Visit #** | **Procedures/Tools** | **Location** | **How much time the visit will take** |
| 1 | * Demographics questionnaire * Political questionnaire * Treatment * Debrief | Prolific | 6 minutes |
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# SPECIMEN MANAGEMENT

NA

# DATA MANAGEMENT

The data of the participants will be collected through self-reports. Participants can take the study in the setting of their choosing, on a device of their choosing.

The data will be collected on Qualtrics and deidentified data will be downloaded in a database format. The database with the deidentified data will be stored on a password-protected device in a locked office. As individuals are recruited through Prolific, I have minimal interaction with participants – the platform is providing the respondents, like other providers (Mechanical Turk, YouGov, etc.).

The data security risk is standard.

# PROVISIONS TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY INTERESTS OF PARTICIPANTS

The data collected in this study are based on voluntary self-reports by the participants. They can choose to not answer questions if they would like. That is, The data collected here will largely be common to any online study they participate in.

Participants can complete this study anywhere and at anytime they choose — so long as they have access to the internet. Participants are not in any position where a researcher can put any undue pressure on participants to share anything about themselves they are uncomfortable with.

# WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPANTS

Once participants have provided informed consent, the researchers will not withdraw participants. Any premature completion the study on behalf of the participants will be their choice or if they face technical problems (e.g., disconnection from the internet).

# RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS

I anticipate minimal risks to participants. As the subject material is about politics, participants may experience slight psychological discomfort, but no part of the study intends to induce discomfort/more discomfort than people may normally experience when coming across political materials in the everyday world.

# MANAGEMENT OF RISKS

NA (minimal risk)

Informed consent is obtained and a debrief at the end of the study provides additional information on the purpose of the study.

# POTENTIAL BENEFITS

There is no direct benefit to the subjects.

The study hopes to contribute to our collective understanding of how colors may convey politically-relevant information to individuals. I hope that this will explain the effects of political polarization coming from such information, how individuals can use such simple sources of information to make decisions about non-political decisions.

# PROVISIONS TO MONITOR THE DATA FOR THE SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS

Not applicable (minimal risk).

# MEDICAL CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

Not applicable

# COST TO PARTICIPANTS

Participation should take only about 6 minutes. Participants should have internet access and can preform the study on a laptop or desktop. There are no required additional costs to the participant.

# DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Not applicable

# INVESTIGATIONAL DEVICES

Not applicable

# WORKING WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Not applicable

# SHARING OF RESULTS WITH PARTICIPANTS

During the debriefing participants are welcomed to email the researchers about the study and are told that I am happy to share results and papers that use the data from this study.

# REFERENCES