

Vision and Division: Political Leanings Shape Visual Attention and Attitudes Toward Political Imagery

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Abstract

How do political leanings shape visual engagement with politically charged content? Here, we report the results of the first large-scale eye-tracking study on a politically and demographically diverse sample. We find that while Democrats and Republicans tend to focus on the same objects—giving more attention to personalized depictions of a polarizing issue, which they view more positively, and less attention to depersonalized depictions, seen as more negative—Democrats spend significantly more overall time fixating on political visuals than Republicans. This suggests that although both groups pay attention to the same visual objects, they engage differently with the broader context of these images. We further show that these differences in visual engagement mediate partisanship’s effect on attitudes, revealing a yet unexplored pathway through which visual processing may contribute to attitude polarization. Our results remain robust across different study waves, image selections, measures of partisanship and ideology, and participant devices.

Introduction

In today's digital age, the world has become profoundly visual, with images permeating nearly every aspect of our daily lives (see e.g., 1–4). From the relentless streams of photos and videos shared on social media to the dynamic infographics and banners that dominate websites, visual content engages us (5, 6), informs us (7, 8), and influences our perceptions and decisions (9–11).

As of now, research on visuals in politics has examined in great detail how images can communicate and reinforce attitudes toward polarizing topics (1, 12–18). Political neuroscience has looked into the neural underpinnings of these effects, identifying a strong link between political ideology and cognitive processing in how people resolve informational conflicts (19), regulate behavior (20, 21), and respond to ideologically consistent or inconsistent information (22–24). These differences have given rise to the concepts of a "political brain" (22) and "neural polarization" (25), which illustrate how individuals distinctly process, interpret, and respond to ideological stimuli (26, 27).

A critical gap addressed by current research is the lack of robust evidence on how partisans *visually* engage with naturalistic depictions of politically polarizing issues that lack explicit ideological cues, focusing on what viewers pay attention to in these political images (1) and how their patterns of visual engagement shape subsequent attitudes. Understanding whether and how political biases modulate visual engagement helps trace the subtle, less-explored mechanisms through which political divides are manifested and reinforced.

We fill this gap by conducting the first large-scale eye-tracking study in a real-world, non-laboratory setting linking participants' eye-tracking behavior with their survey responses. We do it across three waves on different crowdsourcing platforms (Total N=2,637: Wave 1: Lucid (N=1,082, June 2023); Wave 2: Prolific (N=924, March 2024); Wave 3: Prolific (N=631, September 2024)).

The study uses the I-VT (Velocity-Threshold Identification) algorithm, WebGazer (28), to track participants' gaze via their webcams, analyzing eye positions to determine where and

how long individuals focus on specific parts of a visual scene. Participants used everyday devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets, ensuring that the study reflects how people typically engage with online content (29). This approach improves ecological validity by mimicking real-world environments, making the findings more representative of actual behavior (30, 31).

Our key finding is the consistent difference in how Democrats and Republicans engage with politically charged visuals. Democrats, particularly Strong Democrats, tend to fixate on political images longer than Republicans, with Strong Democrats spending an average of 12 milliseconds more on these visuals than Strong Republicans. Moreover, Strong Democrats are more attentive to specific objects within the scenes, focusing more on both positive ($b = 17.866$, $SE = 4.414$, $P = 0.0001$) and negative depictions ($b = 14.095$, $SE = 4.305$, $P = 0.003$) of a polarizing issue. By contrast, Strong Republicans demonstrate shorter and less frequent fixations. Although all participants viewed the images for a controlled five-second interval, Republicans' shorter fixation durations suggest a more cursory and surface-level examination of the content, which aligns with prior research showing conservatives are more inclined to avert their gaze from disagreeable political campaign posters (32), reflecting a broader tendency toward selective avoidance (33).

Yet, this tendency toward selective avoidance does not extend to the object level. Contrary to previous findings (see e.g., 34), we find that both Democrats and Republicans engage with political images as holistic representations of a polarizing issue, responding to the broader context rather than selectively fixating on objects aligned with their ideological positions. Both Democrats and Republicans consistently spend more time on objects associated with positive stereotypes than on those tied to negative ones, suggesting that their attention is guided by similar cognitive mechanisms. These findings illustrate that responses to polarizing visuals are influenced more by the issue as a whole than by ideological biases at the object level.

Finally, we demonstrate that these variations in visual processing mediate the effect of

partisanship on people's attitudes toward the depicted content. Unsurprisingly, the major difference in evaluations is explained by the direct effect of partisanship. However, the causal mediation analysis shows that at least one percent of the resulting attitude is explained by how partisans viewed political images. Even though this effect might not seem large given the nature of the dependent variable, it has important substantive implications for understanding the mechanisms of political polarization due to consistent daily exposure to political images, for instance, in social media.

Taken together, these findings help us understand how partisan identity fundamentally influences not only what individuals think about political issues but also how they visually perceive and process political information. The finding that Democrats and Republicans engage differently with the same images—even without any partisan cues to guide interpretation—suggests that partisanship affects cognitive processes at a very basic perceptual level. This means that bridging political divides requires more than just addressing differences in beliefs—it calls for an understanding of how deeply partisanship influences perception itself. Acknowledging that people quite literally "see" the world differently based on their political identities highlights the necessity of considering these fundamental perceptual disparities in any effort to bridge the gap.

Results

1. Partisanship Shapes Visual Information Processing and Attitudes

The Materials and Methods Section describes the study design, procedures, and sample in detail. Here we provide a brief overview:

The study, conducted in three waves, recruited participants via Lucid Theorem (Cint) and Prolific platforms in waves 1 and 2, and exclusively through Prolific in wave 3. After consent, participants completed a Qualtrics survey on social demographics and political attitudes, followed by a 1-minute, 40-point calibration for eye-tracking. In waves 1 and 2, participants

viewed 16 and 31 images respectively related to diverse portrayals of immigration. These images represent diverse portrayals of immigration in the media, including migrant caravans, close-up and wide-angle shots of crowds, camps, women and children, men, police, and military personnel. They were selected to reflect real-life visual narratives without explicit partisan cues (Author, year). Wave 3 featured 15 different images of 'crowds' and 'women and children' depicted together. Images were displayed for 5 seconds, followed by a 1-second black screen, and participants answered questions about their attitudes toward the images on a 7-point scale. Participants used laptops, desktops, mobile phones, and tablets. The sample was diverse, covering all 50 U.S. states, aged 18–85, with a near-balanced gender distribution, and a range of educational and income levels. Political affiliations were roughly balanced, with 832 Democrats, 774 Republicans, and 970 Independents, including strong partisans on both sides. Attitudes toward immigrants were moderately balanced, with a mean score of 2.8 on a 5-point scale.

The neuroscientific basis of motivated political information processing explains the "partisan lens effect," where partisan identity shapes neural responses to political content (24). Research shows that conservative and liberal attitudes drive polarized neural activity (19, 27, 35), with ideological differences often inferred from issue positions (36), though the relationship between partisanship and ideology varies over time (37). This study extends prior work by directly testing the partisan lens effect (38), examining how partisan identity influences visual information processing of politically sensitive visuals. By treating partisan identity as a core mechanism, while accounting for ideology and issue positions, we hypothesize that strong partisans will show the largest engagement gaps. Heightened ingroup favoritism and outgroup antagonism among strong partisans (39, 40) are expected to drive polarized responses to political visuals depicting a contentious topic.

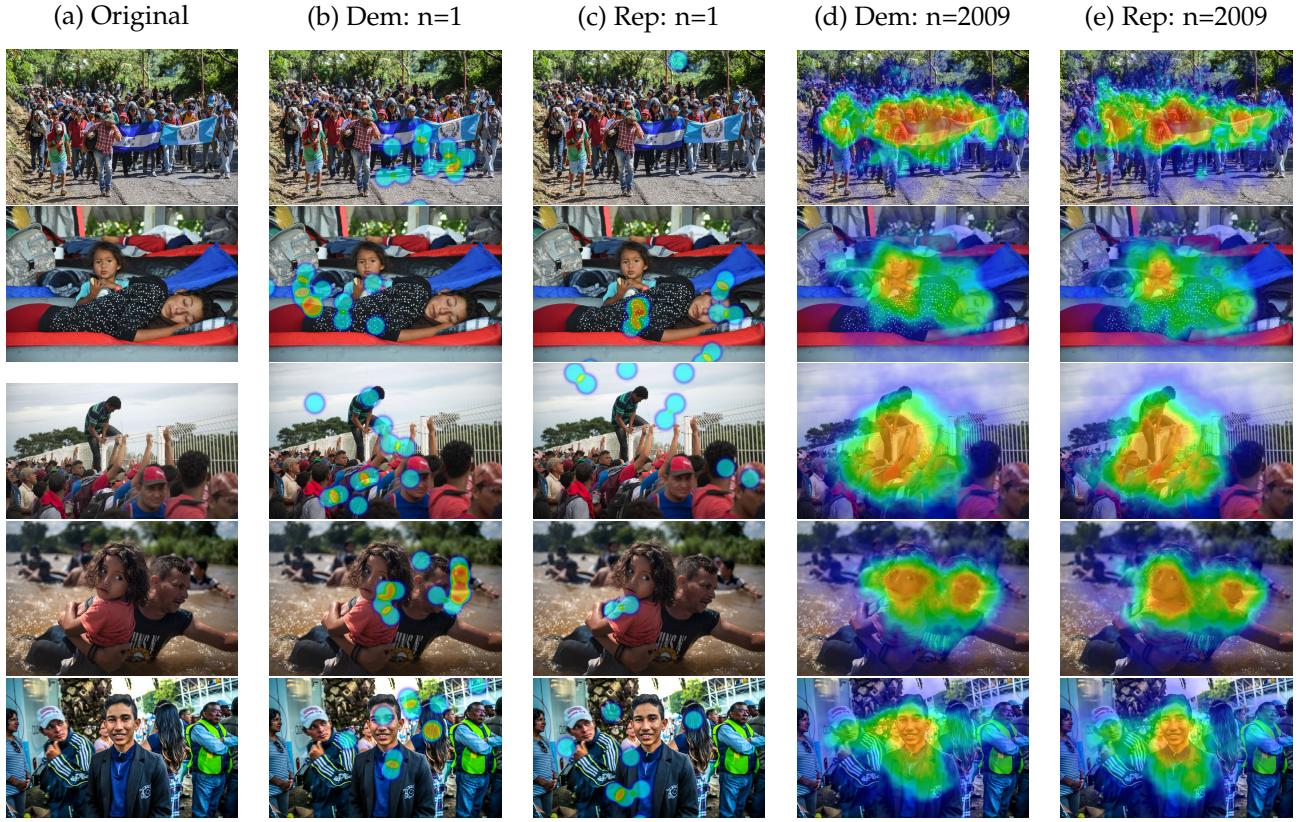
Our primary predictors of interest are *Partisanship* (*R-D*) on a 7-point scale, where 1 represents partisans who identify themselves as "Strong Republican" and 7 stands for "Strong Democrat." *Strong Rep vs. Strong Dem* is a binary variable derived by subsetting only Strong

Republicans and Strong Democrats from the *Partisanship* (*R-D*) variable, where 0 indicates "Strong Republican" and 1 indicates "Strong Democrat." *Attitudes to immigrants* is a 5-point scale variable where 1 represents advocating for deporting illegal immigrants and 5 stands for being against this measure. Since our images specifically portray migrant caravans from Central America traveling through Mexico to the U.S.-Mexico border, we determined that this question on attitudes about immigrants would best capture respondents' views on this particular issue. We measured *Ideology (main)* using a 7-point conservative-liberal scale, where 1 represents "very conservative" and 7 represents "very liberal." Additionally, we constructed *Ideology (social)* as the average of responses to the questions on attitudes on abortion, same-sex marriage, affirmative action, state-funded higher education, and immigrants (Cronbach's alpha = 0.78).

Our dependent variable is average fixation duration (AFD), measured in milliseconds, which reflects the time a viewer's gaze remains fixed on a visual stimulus or area. AFD typically ranges from 60 ms, indicating minimal focus, to 1000 ms, suggesting careful examination (41, 42). It captures both the cognitive effort required to process visual information (43) and the viewer's motivation to engage (44). Figure 1 presents heatmaps illustrating AFD for a random Democrat (Figure 1 b), a random Republican (Figure 1 c), and the combined average for both groups (Figure 1 d and e). Warmer colors (red and yellow) indicate longer fixation durations, while cooler colors (blue and green) represent shorter durations. Fixations are defined as periods where the eye is stationary for at least 60-200 milliseconds. For the baseline analysis, we used a threshold of 60 milliseconds, with alternative thresholds detailed in Appendix D.2.

AFD is crucial for understanding how viewers process political and emotionally charged content. Previous research shows that people tend to fixate longer on both pleasant and unpleasant stimuli that evoke higher arousal (45–47). However, the influence of arousal on fixation duration varies depending on the specific emotion experienced. For example, anger may prompt shorter fixations as people quickly shift their attention to different targets in

Figure 1: Partisan Visual Fixations on Immigration Images



Note: The columns refer to (a) Original image; (b) heatmap of fixations for a randomly selected self-identified Democrat; (c) heatmap of fixations of a randomly selected self-identified Republican; (d) heatmap of overlay of fixations for all respondents who self-identified as Strong and Not So Strong Democrats; (e) heatmap of overlay of fixations for all respondents who self-identified as Strong and Not So Strong Republicans. These heatmaps are only from waves 1 and 2.

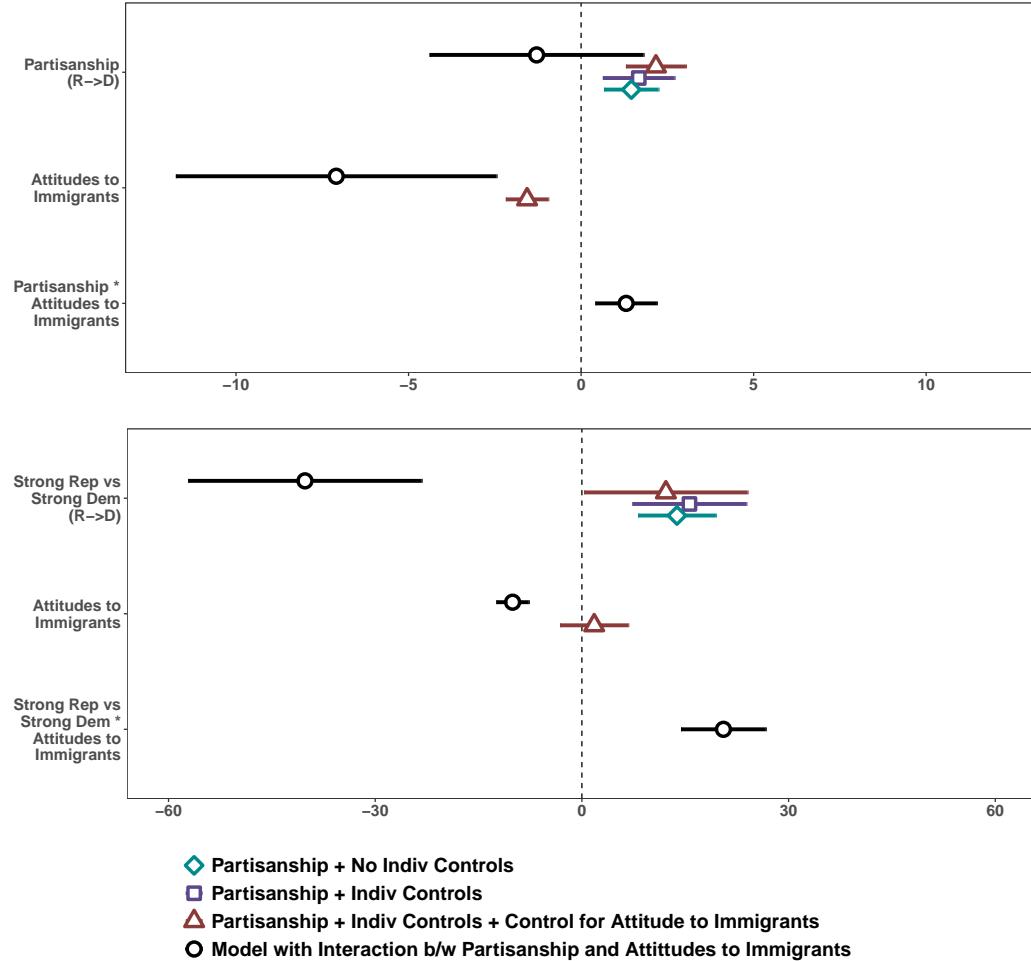
an emotionally heightened state (48), while positive emotions increase focus on preferred stimuli, allowing individuals to sustain pleasurable experiences (49, 50). Leong et al. (36) have further shown that risk-related and moral-emotional language drives greater neural polarization between conservatives and liberals. This can be explained either by conservatives and liberals differing in their sensitivity to threats or by the fact that they use distinct moral frameworks to "see" the world. These differences lead to divergent interpretations of threats and moral issues, accounting for the heightened neural polarization when such language is present. Taken together, we expect that partisanship, opposing attitudes toward the depicted

topic, and the strength of those attitudes should influence how partisans visually process and interpret politically salient information, with a more pronounced divide between strong partisans.

The results reported in Figure 2 show a strong positive association between being more Democratic (*Partisanship (R-D)*) and focusing more on politically sensitive images ($b = 1.671$, $SE = 0.531$, $P = 0.0017$) (in green in Figure 2). The effect is larger for strong partisans: Strong Democrats, on average, fixate on immigration images for 12 ms longer than Strong Republicans. Importantly, partisanship explains a unique variation in AFD, even when controlled for *Attitudes to immigrants* (shown in red in Figure 2). *Attitudes to immigrants* has either a negative effect on AFD (upper plot of Figure 2 in red for *Partisanship (R-D)*) or a statistically insignificant effect (bottom plot of Figure 2 in red for *Strong Rep vs Strong Dem (R-D)*), even when partisanship is not controlled for (see Table F.11 in Appendix). However, in the model with an interaction term between partisanship and attitudes to immigrants (in black in Figure 2), we show that as positive attitudes towards immigrants increase, the effect of being more Democratic on average fixation duration also amplifies (with Democrats having longer average fixations duration than Republicans, $b = 1.305$, $SE = 0.455$, $P = 0.004$). The interaction effect is even larger for Strong Democrats compared to Strong Republicans ($b = 20.543$, $SE = 3.140$, $P < 0.0001$). We conduct Lasso regularization for the model with *Partisanship (R-D)* and *Attitudes toward immigrants*, as well as for the model with their interaction term. The results show that both variables are retained, which suggests that they explain meaningful variation in AFD (see Appendix Tables I.22-I.23).

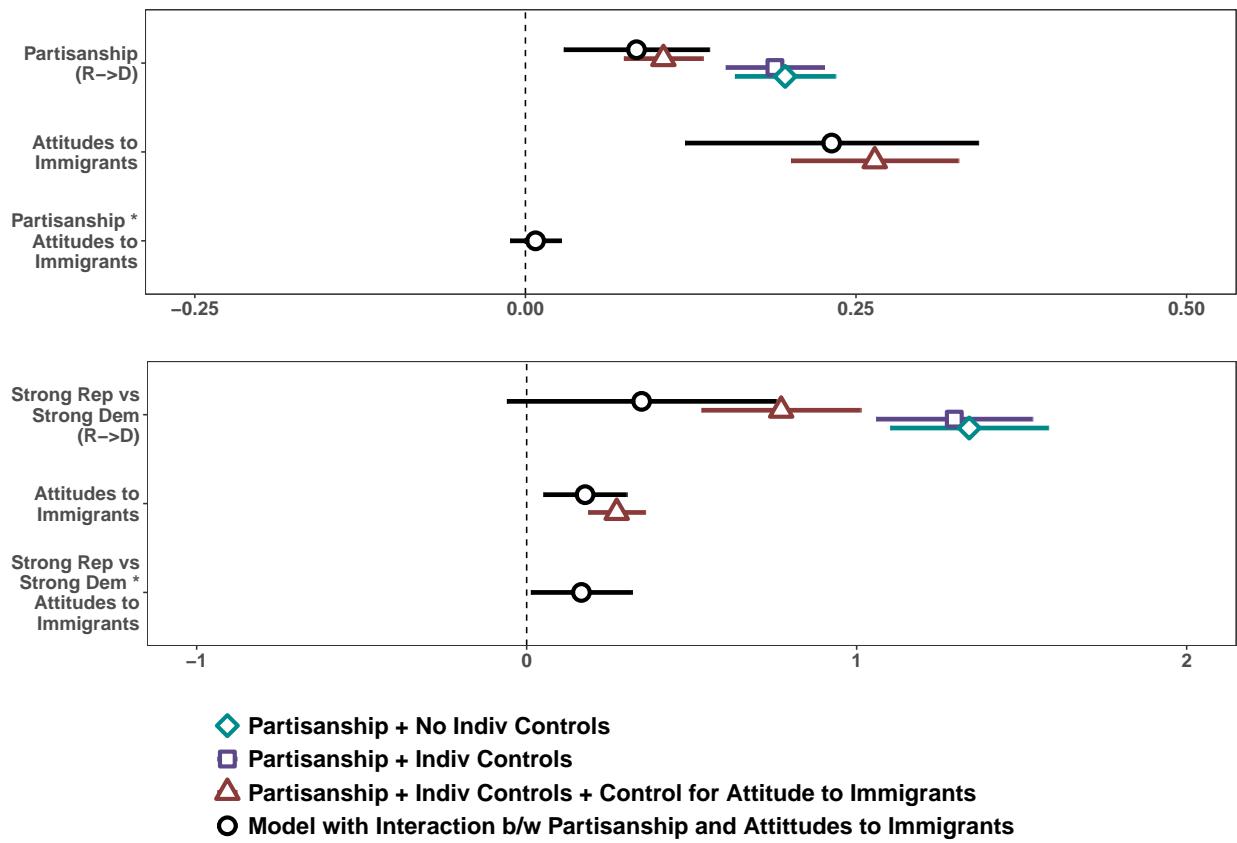
While earlier research has emphasized ideological differences in cognitive processing between liberals and conservatives (19, 21, 25–27, 35), our study shows that partisanship—not ideology—plays the key role in visual engagement (see Tables F.11-F.13 in Appendix F). In models that include the interaction term of ideology and attitudes toward immigrants (Tables F.11-F.12 in the Appendix), ideology alone has no statistically significant effect (in Appendix F we show model specifications with different operationalization of ideology). While the

Figure 2: The Effect of Partisanship on Average Fixation Duration (m/s)



Note: Plots report coefficients for the main predictors of interest (Partisanship, Attitudes to Immigrants, and interaction between Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants). DVs are Average Fixation Duration (in ms), AFD. Eye trackers identify fixations by detecting periods when the gaze remains within a predefined visual angle for a certain minimum duration. A ‘fixation’ typically starts from 80 milliseconds (see e.g., 51). In our baseline results, we use a smaller lower bound of 60 ms and report thresholds of 80 and 100 ms in Figure D.2 in the Appendix. We set the upper bound for the average fixation duration at 800 ms, as duration beyond this may indicate the viewer’s “confusion, boredom, frustration,” or loss of attention (42). Model “Partisanship + No indiv Controls” (with a diamond-shaped point) is estimated with OLS and only includes controls for device, participant quality, survey wave, and fixed effects for an image. Model “Partisanship + Indiv Controls” (with a square-shaped point) is estimated with OLS with a full set of control variables that include age, gender, education, income, interest in politics, Hispanic ethnicity, participants’ quality in the eye tracking task, participants’ devices, a control for the survey wave, and image-level fixed effects. Model “Partisanship + Indiv Controls + Control for Attitude to Immigrants” (with a triangle-shaped point) is estimated with OLS with a full set of controls and an additional control for attitudes towards immigrants. Model “with Interaction b/w Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants” (with a circle-shaped point) is estimated with OLS, a full set of control variables, and includes an interaction term between partisanship and attitudes to immigrants. Reported CI are 95%. Standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. See full regression table in the Appendix B.

Figure 3: The Effect of Partisanship on Attitudes to Images



Note: Plots report coefficients for the main predictors of interest (Partisanship, Attitudes to Immigrants, and interaction between Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants). Dependent variables are attitudes towards images and are measured on a 7-point scale from very negative to very positive. Model "Partisanship + No indiv Controls" (with a diamond-shaped point) is estimated with OLS and only includes controls for device, participant quality, survey wave, and fixed effects for an image. Model "Partisanship + Indiv Controls" (with a square-shaped point) is estimated with OLS with a full set of control variables that include age, gender, education, income, interest in politics, Hispanic ethnicity, participants' quality in the eye tracking task, participants' devices, a control for the survey wave, and image-level fixed effects. Model "Partisanship + Indiv Controls + Control for Attitude to Immigrants" (with a triangle-shaped point) is estimated with OLS with a full set of controls and an additional control for attitudes towards immigrants. Model "with Interaction b/w Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants" (with a circle-shaped point) is estimated with OLS, a full set of control variables, and includes an interaction term between partisanship and attitudes to immigrants. Reported CI are 95%. Standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. See full regression table in the Appendix B.

effect of attitudes toward immigrants is negative, the interaction term between ideology and these attitudes is positive and statistically significant. Notably, Leong et al. (36) use attitudes toward immigrants as a proxy for ideology. However, our results suggest that specific attitudes toward this polarizing issue have a stronger influence on visual engagement than ideology alone. This pattern holds across all of our ideology measures, including the conservative-liberal scale and the composite index.

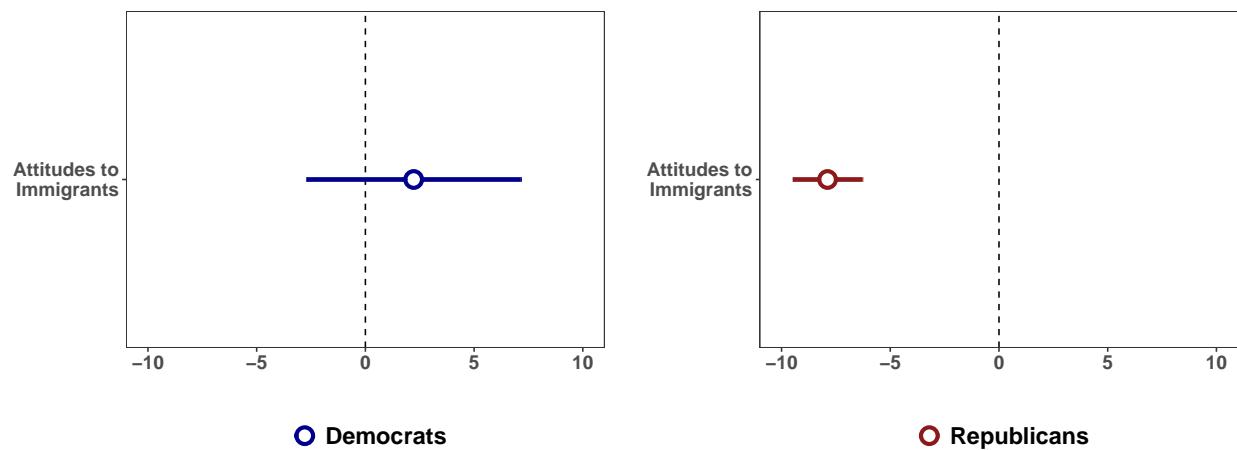
These results point to a substantial impact of partisanship on how people approach naturalistic political visuals without any partisan cues. These findings are consistent across different model specifications (Table D.2) and visual engagement metrics (Table C.1) such as Total Fixation Duration (TFD) and focal versus ambient processing (FP). TFD sums the time spent fixating on the image, while FP captures the depth of attention to specific areas of the visual, considering both fixations duration and saccades (jerky eye movements).

Figure 3 shows that partisanship significantly modulates attitudes toward the depicted objects: Democrats exhibit more positive attitudes, with the strongest effect observed among strong partisans. Lasso regularization confirms that both *Partisanship (R-D)* and *Attitudes toward immigrants*, as well as their interaction term, explain meaningful variation in *Respondents' Attitudes* (see Appendix Tables I.24-I.25).

2. The Effect of Partisanship on Visual Processing is Mainly Driven by Republicans

We now look into the partisan groups to explore the heterogeneous effects of attitudes toward immigration (Figure 4). Within the Democrats group (comprised of “Strong” and “Not so strong Democrats” on a 7-point scale of the *Partisanship (R-D)* variable), the attitude toward immigration has a positive but not statistically significant effect on AFD. Conversely, within the Republican group (comprised of “Strong” and “Not so strong Republicans”), the attitude toward immigrants has a substantial and negative effect on Republicans’ visual attention. On average, for each one-point increase in a Republican’s positive attitude towards immigrants,

Figure 4: Attitudes to Immigrants Influence Average Fixation Duration (m/s) by Partisan Subgroups



Note: Plots report coefficient for the main predictor of interest: Attitudes to Immigrants. Partisan subgroups are based on self-reported partisanship information, where Democrats subgroup includes both Strong and Not Strong Democrats and Republicans subgroup includes both Strong Republicans and Not Strong Republicans. The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device. Reported CI are 95%. See full regression table in the Appendix B.

they spend 7.8 milliseconds less visually engaging with these images.

3. About 1% of Attitudinal Changes is Mediated by Visual Processing

To what extent does the way people look at images influence their evaluations of the scenes and objects depicted? We, first, analyze this by conducting a causal mediation analysis (CMA) (52, 53) to determine whether people's attitudes about the portrayed objects are influenced by their partisanship, with average fixation duration (AFD) serving as the mediator (see DAG in Figure 5). The model specifications use the same set of predictors and control variables as the baseline models. Figure 6 shows the results of the CMA, which unsurprisingly indicates that the largest impact is in the direct effect of partisanship on evaluations. Nevertheless, the mediation effect of average fixation duration is also robust and statistically significant, with a p-value of <0.00001.

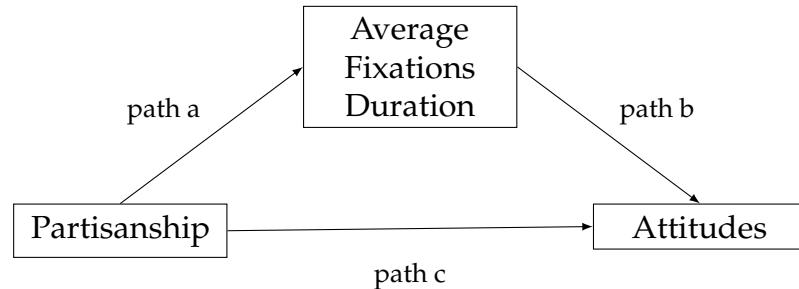
While the mediated effect constitutes about 1%-an expected outcome given the nature of the data-it importantly suggests that how people visually process political images modulates their attitudes, at least to some extent. This suggests that visual processing not only reflects underlying biases but can also actively contribute to reinforcing or modifying political attitudes.

4. Partisanship modulates both visual processing and attitudes, with both Democrats and Republicans focusing more on positive representations and less on negative ones

We have shown that partisanship substantially shapes how people look at politically sensitive visuals, modulating their subsequent evaluations. But do partisans focus differently on objects that exploit positive and negative stereotypes about immigration?

Studies have shown that negative associations with immigration are often reinforced by emphasizing immigrants' "otherness," "dangerousness," and "illegal" behavior (54, 55).

Figure 5: Directed Acyclic Graph for Causal Mediation

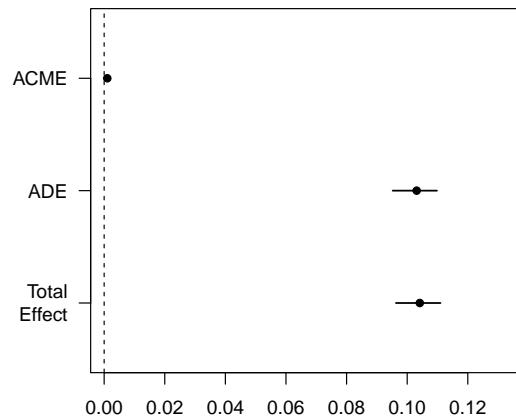


ACME/Indirect Effect (a+b): $b = 0.001$, se= 0.000014, p < 0.00001

ADE/Direct Effect(c): $b = 0.103$, se= 0.018, p < 0.00001

Total Effect: $b = 0.104$, se=0.018, p< 0.00001

Figure 6: Results for Causal Mediation Analysis



Note: ACME indicates average causal mediation effect or indirect effect of Partisanship on Attitudes through Fixations Duration as a mediator. ADE indicates the average direct effect of partisanship on attitudes. The total effect is comprised of both ADE and ACME. The effects are statistically significant with reported CI at 95% level. Models are estimated with robust standard errors clustered multi-way at participant, image, and participant's device level.

Depicting immigrants as groups (crowds, camps, flocks, or caravans) strips them of individuality, reducing them to faceless masses rather than individuals with unique needs and stories. This framing dehumanizes immigrants while portraying their actions as illegal fosters negative connotations about their intentions. In contrast, "humanistic" frames—focusing on "children," "families," and "victims"—offer more positive portrayals, emphasizing that immigrants are human beings with families and children (56–58).

Figure 7: Examples of Areas of Interest (AOI)



(a) Area of Interest: Child

(b) Area of Interest: Crowd

Exploring how Democrats and Republicans view positive and negative representations of immigrants allows us to test two key mechanisms that likely explain partisan differences in visual information processing. One mechanism suggests that partisan leanings influence visual attention and attitudes reporting (25, 36, 59). In this view, political leanings shape what individuals focus on, with people literally “seeing” sensitive objects that align more readily with their pre-existing preferences (60, 61), quite similarly as with textual frames (62–64). For instance, Democrats might exhibit stronger gaze-cuing and empathetic responses, focusing more on ‘women and children’ and “overlooking” crowds, while Republicans may concentrate more on threat-associated objects, such as crowds.

In contrast, partisan leanings may only affect how people report their evaluations (65, 66), not how they actually process visual information. Here, initial visual perception remains

unbiased, leading to no significant difference in how individuals fixate on images or specific objects. Motivational influences would only emerge later in interpretation and judgment, not during early visual processing.

To address this question, we used several approaches. In waves 1 and 2, we focused on images depicting two key objects: "crowds" and "women and children". These images were used to identify meaningful visual elements, known as Areas of Interest (AOIs) (67). AOIs are specific regions within a visual display that allow for detailed analysis of participants' visual focus during eye-tracking sessions, capturing metrics like time spent on each AOI, the number of fixations, and fixation duration. Figure 7 shows examples of AOIs, with polygons marking two types: "women and children" (left) and "crowds" (right).

To evaluate the effect of partisanship on average fixation duration within the areas of interest, we analyzed images in two subgroups: those depicting crowds and those featuring women and/or children. Average fixation duration was measured specifically within these AOI polygons, not across the entire image. We separately tested the impact of partisanship on each AOI type (crowds vs. women and children), controlling for image-specific factors by including image-level fixed effects (see Table G.15). Additionally, for images containing both types of AOIs, we looked at how partisanship affected AFD (see Table G.16) and participants' attitudes toward the images (see Table G.18), based on the AOI type. AFD was measured for specific AOIs, while attitudes were measured for the entire image.

Overall, we observe a strong positive effect of both partisanship and being a Strong Democrat (vs Strong Republican) on average fixation duration (in Models 1, 2, and 4 of Table G.16 in the Appendix), indicating that Democrats consistently have longer fixation periods than Republicans across all polygons and different images. In Model 4, strong Democrats, on average, spend 5.8 milliseconds longer than strong Republicans fixating on polygons featuring women and children. On polygons featuring crowds, strong Democrats fixate about 4 milliseconds longer than strong Republicans. While the fixation duration is longer for polygons with women and children than for those with crowds, the interaction term is negative

and statistically insignificant suggesting that the difference in partisanship on the average fixation duration across AOI types is not statistically significant. Therefore, Democrats always focus on immigration images longer than Republicans, with no heterogeneous effect based on the kind of objects depicted.

On average, Democrats evaluate images with both types of AOIs (crowds and women and children) more positively than Republicans (see Table G.17 in the Appendix). An interaction term between partisanship and average fixation duration (AFD) shows a significant positive effect for AOIs featuring crowds: the longer partisans focus on these objects, the wider the gap in evaluations between Democrats and Republicans. For AOIs featuring women and children, similar effects are observed, but the interaction terms are not significant, indicating little change in evaluation differences with increased fixation time. Results from the triple interaction (partisanship, AFD, and AOI type) in Models 3 and 6 (in Table G.18 in the Appendix) confirm that the partisan gap in attitudes grows with increased focus on crowds.

Altogether, the results from the two waves suggest that the difference in attention leads to stronger differences in partisans' attitudes toward the topic of the image (e.g., immigration). In other words, the more Democrats or Republicans focus on the image, the more their political attitudes are reinforced. However, the lack of a substantial difference in how long people look at different types of objects (like women and children versus crowds) suggests that it is primarily the partisan lens, rather than the object itself, driving these attention patterns.

In wave 3, we addressed the limitations of the previous waves by presenting participants with 15 new images, each depicting both "women and children" and "crowds" within the same frame. This approach allowed for more direct comparisons, overcoming the scarcity of images featuring both objects together in earlier waves. Results shown in Table H.19 in the Appendix indicate that fixation on AOIs featuring crowds yields a negative β coefficient. However, this effect is not statistically significant, suggesting that "crowds" do not have a direct impact on average fixation duration. In contrast, the β coefficient for *Strong Dem vs.*

Strong Rep is 19.325 in Model 3—positive and statistically significant: On average, strong Democrats spend approximately 19 milliseconds longer fixating on the images compared to strong Republicans across all AOIs.

In Model 4 of Table H.19, the β coefficient for *Strong Dem vs. Strong Rep* is 29.275, while β for the interaction term for *Strong Dem vs. Strong Rep*AOI with Crowds* is -17.106; both coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. Strong Democrats spend 29 milliseconds more than strong Republicans looking at areas containing women and children, and approximately 12 milliseconds more (29 - 17) on areas with crowds.

Although both groups show a slight preference for fixating on women and children over crowds, the primary distinction is in how Democrats and Republicans engage with immigration images as holistic representations of a polarizing issue, rather than distinctly prioritizing positive or negative portrayals of the topic.

Finally, the effects of partisanship on attitudes toward images in wave 3 are consistent with our baseline findings, even when participants view images that contain both positive and negative representations of immigration within the same frame. Partisans express clearly distinct attitudes toward these images, with Democrats consistently displaying more positive attitudes than Republicans—a trend that mirrors the patterns observed in waves 1 and 2 (see Tables H.20-H.21 in the Appendix).

Discussion

How do partisan leanings shape people’s engagement with divisive political images, and can this engagement explain the attitudes they form toward what they see? Our study reveals that partisan differences run indeed very deep, defining the visual engagement mode at a fundamental perceptual level, with strong partisans showing the most pronounced contrasts.

We show that while both groups may linger on positive portrayals of politically charged topics and overlook negative ones, this shared tendency only masks a deeper divide: their

interpretations, shaped by partisan perspectives from the outset, diverge dramatically. These perspectives not only guide how each group visually engages with content but also reinforce their preexisting attitudes, potentially hardening them over time. In this way, our findings suggest that partisan viewing patterns do more than mirror existing polarization; they actively intensify it.

Earlier research showed that people fixate on political ads containing clear ideological cues or stereotype-consistent information (see e.g., 32, 41, 68, 69). We push this understanding further. Even without explicit ideological markers, partisans interpret images through perceptual and evaluative filters shaped by their political beliefs. As we show, these inherent filters are responsible for amplifying ideological divides in attitudes.

Our findings reveal that subtle differences in how individuals engage with images significantly influence their judgments of polarizing content. This dimension of attitudinal polarization—driven by visual engagement and interpretation—has been largely overlooked in discussions the factors that shape and deepen political divisions.

What drives these perceptual divides? It appears that the broader context individuals decode—gleaning cues from specific objects and the overall composition of an image (70, 71)—plays a more pivotal role than the salient objects themselves. While certain objects help craft a narrative that partisans evaluate similarly (prioritizing or ignoring the same areas of interest), it is the larger context these objects reconstruct that intensifies perceptual differences (72–75).

This study supports a key insight from the literature on visual information processing: individuals interpret visuals not by isolating elements but by perceiving them as cohesive narratives conveying collective meaning (76–78). This has significant implications for analyzing political visuals and suggests that our efforts to understand their role in political outcomes should shift focus to how the overall narrative of an image influences attitudinal differences, rather than dissecting isolated components or objects.

Broadly, with this study, we contribute to the expanding field of political neuroscience—which

delves into the biological and cognitive underpinnings of how liberals and conservatives process sensitive information (see e.g., 19, 21, 26, 27, 35, 79)—by shifting the focus to how political leanings influence visual processing of politically sensitive content and how these engagement patterns translate into attitudes toward images, using a large and diverse sample of partisans.

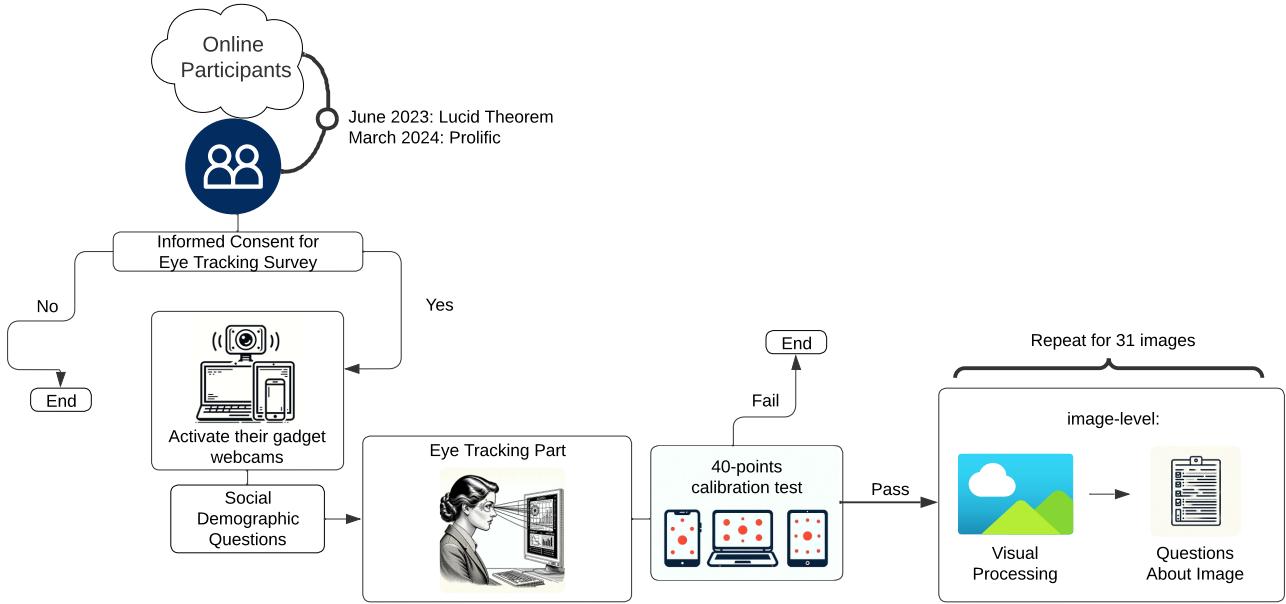
In practical terms, our findings suggest that the rise of visual media platforms distributing political content—like Instagram, TikTok, and X—especially on polarizing topics such as immigration, may have a greater and underexplored capacity to reinforce political polarization. This effect might stem from frequent exposure to polarizing visuals or subtle visual biases within these platforms (Author; year), which may inadvertently steer viewers toward content that deepens partisan divides.

Materials and Methods

Context and Study Participants

We conducted the study in three waves. In waves 1 and 2 (as illustrated in Figure 8), participants were recruited through the Lucid Theorem (Cint) and Prolific crowdsourcing platforms (Lucid (N=1,082, June 2023), Prolific (N=924, March 2024); for wave 3, we used only Prolific (N=631, September 2024) Participants provided two separate informed consents: the first outlined the study process and participation requirements (U.S. residency and being over 18), and the second covered GDPR compliance for the eye-tracking portion of the study, explaining that no images or videos from participants' cameras were stored by the eye-tracking platform. If participants' cameras met the technical requirements, they proceeded to the main study. Data collection, including facial and eye position tracking, took place entirely within the browser without recording or storing videos or images. The camera was deactivated immediately after the test.

Figure 8: Study Flow Scheme



Note: The scheme illustrates the study flow, beginning with participant selection, obtaining informed consent, proceeding to the survey in Qualtrics with questions about social demographics and political preferences, and then moving to the eye-tracking phase of the study.

Survey Materials

Our study methods have been approved by the Institution Review Boards at the authors' corresponding institutions. All participants consented for both survey taking as well as participating in the eye tracking study. After providing an informed consent, participants completed a Qualtrics survey covering social demographics, political orientation, and attitudes toward political issues (e.g., immigration, abortion, same-sex marriage; see Appendix J for the full questionnaire). They were then redirected to an eye-tracking platform for a 1-minute, 40-point calibration. The calibration points covered the entire screen for optimal accuracy. If their cameras met the platform's requirements, participants in wave 1 viewed 16 images, and in wave 2, they saw these same 16 images plus 15 additional ones. In wave 3, they viewed 15 different images. Each image was displayed for exactly 5 seconds (see e.g., 67, 80), followed by a 1-second black screen. After each image, they answered two

questions about their attitudes toward the image and the perceived attitude it conveyed, on a 7-point scale from 'extremely negative' to 'extremely positive,' with questions presented in a randomized order. Following the study, participants were redirected to a completion screen and were compensated.

The primary difference between waves 1 and 2 and wave 3 is the selection of images used for manipulation. Waves 1 and 2 feature a diverse representation of immigration in news outlets, including close-ups of men, women, children, crowds, camps, and border crossings, reflecting the full range of how immigration is portrayed by US media (Author, Year). Wave 3 included only images depicting crowds alongside women and children in the same scene. In waves one and two, participants were explicitly informed that the images depicted immigration; in wave three, the topic was not revealed.

In Waves 1 and 2, participants used laptops/desktops (n=990), mobile phones (n=573), and tablets (n=443). In Wave 3, participants used only laptops (n=432) and tablets (n=199). While the use of different devices may have introduced some noise, it also enhanced ecological validity by better reflecting real-world patterns of viewing online visuals.

In all three waves, our sample was diverse, representing all 50 U.S. states, with participants ranging from 18 to over 85 years old, the largest group being aged 35–44. Gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 56% female participants in the waves 1 and 2 and 67% female participants in wave 3. Most participants had some college education or an associate degree, and the peak income range was \$50,000 to \$59,999. The sample included approximately 10% of Hispanic participants. Political affiliation was loosely balanced: 832 Democrats, 774 Republicans, and 970 Independents, including 458 Strong Democrats and 388 Strong Republicans across the three waves. Attitudes toward immigration were relatively balanced, with a mean score of 2.81 in waves 1 and 2 and 2.73 in wave 3 (see Summary Statistics in Table A.2 in Appendix A).

Eye-Tracking Component

For the eye-tracking part of the study, we used webcam-based eye-tracking technology that leverages deep learning and AI to analyze webcam images. This technology complies with privacy regulations by storing only gaze point predictions as text data, without recording images or audio. Participants consented to use the technology and activated their webcams. After completing a calibration task, participants viewed images one by one (each shown for 5 seconds) while the technology recorded gaze behavior. Fixation points were identified as points where gaze duration exceeded 60 milliseconds. The primary measure was average fixation duration, calculated across all fixation points per image. Fixation durations exceeding 800 milliseconds were excluded, as they are typically associated with inattention or staring (42).

Measurement and Estimation

Our primary predictors of interest, reported in the main text, include *Partisanship (R-D)* on a 7-point scale, where 1 represents partisans who identify themselves as "Strong Republican," 4 denotes "Independent," and 7 stands for "Strong Democrat." *Strong Rep vs. Strong Dem* is a binary variable derived by subsetting only Strong Republicans and Strong Democrats from the *Partisanship (R-D)* variable, where 0 indicates "Strong Republican" and 1 indicates "Strong Democrat." *Attitudes to immigrants* is a 5-point scale variable where 1 represents advocating for deporting illegal immigrants and 5 stands for being against this measure. Since our images specifically portray migrant caravans from Central America traveling through Mexico to the U.S.-Mexico border, we determined that this question on immigration attitudes would best capture respondents' views on this particular issue. Main outcomes of interest are average fixations duration (AFD) measured in m/s of fixating time and image evaluations measured by survey question about participants' attitudes towards the image. All regression models in the empirical part of the study are estimated with OLS. They use partisanship (either at a

7-point scale or binary for strong Democrats vs strong Republicans) as a main predictor and control for participants' demographics (age, gender, education, income, interest in politics, and belonging to the Hispanic ethnicity), device type which they used to participate in a survey, eye tracking performance quality measure as well as fixed effects on images. For all the models we report multi-way clustered standard errors.

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Author contributions:

Conceptualization: OG, ES

Research Design: ES

Methodology: OG, ES

Investigation: OG, ES

Visualization: OG

Data analysis: OG

Writing—original draft: ES

Competing interests:

The authors declare no competing interests.

Data and materials availability:

All data, code, and materials used in the analyses will be available on Dataverse as part of the replication files upon publication.

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**Vision and Division: Political Leanings Shape Visual
Attention and Attitudes Toward Political Imagery**

Supplementary Materials

A Descriptive Statistics

Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics for Waves 1 and 2

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pct(25)	Pct(75)	Max
N of participants	2006						
Age (by age group)	2006	4.50	1.55	2.00	3.00	6.00	9.00
1- Under 18							
2- 18 - 24							
3- 25 - 34							
4- 35 - 44							
5- 45 - 54							
6- 55 - 64							
7- 65 - 74							
8- 75 - 84							
9- 85 or older							
Gender	2006	0.56	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
0-Male							
1-Female							
Education	2005	4.01	1.46	1.00	3.00	5.00	7.00
1-Less than high school							
2-High school graduate							
3-Some college but no degree							
4-Associate's degree in college (2-year)							
5-Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)							
6-Master's degree							
7-Doctoral degree							
Income	2005	6.55	3.40	1.00	4.00	10.00	12.00
1-Less than \$10,000							
2-\$10,000 - \$19,999							
3-\$20,000 - \$29,999							
4-\$30,000 - \$39,999							
5-\$40,000 - \$49,999							
6-\$50,000 - \$59,999							
7-\$60,000 - \$69,999							
8-\$70,000 - \$79,999							
9-\$80,000 - \$89,999							
10-\$90,000 - \$99,999							
11-\$100,000 - \$149,999							
12-More than \$150,000							
Interest	2006	3.83	1.14	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
1-Not interested at all							
5-Strongly interested							
Hispanic Ethnicity	2006	0.10	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
0-Not Hispanic							
1-Hispanic							
Democratic Thermometer	1936	49.92	30.77	0.00	23.75	75.00	100.00
Republican Thermometer	1926	42.88	31.66	0.00	12.00	70.00	100.00
Ideology	2006	4.07	1.84	1.00	3.00	6.00	7.00
1-Very Conservative							
7-Very Liberal							
Attitudes to Immigration	2006	2.81	1.40	1.00	2.00	4.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Affirmative Actions	2006	3.18	1.38	1.00	2.00	4.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Same Sex Marriage	2006	3.67	1.47	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Abortions	2006	3.85	1.44	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00

1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Sponsored Education Programs	2006	4.09	1.07	1.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Partisanship (7 point scale)	1957	4.14	2.14	1.00	2.00	6.00	7.00
1-Strong Republican							
7-Strong Democrat							
Strong Dem vs Strong Rep	712	0.56	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
0-Strong Republican							
1-Strong Democrat							
Average Fixations Duration (in m/s)	45679	312.33	181.25	61.00	152.81	427.27	988.80
Total Fixations Duration (in m/s)	45679	3687.86	1204.53	61.00	3081.00	4581.50	4944.00
Respondent's Attitudes	45679	3.88	1.78	1.00	3.00	5.00	7.00
1-Extremely Negative							
7-Extremely Positive							

Note: Descriptive statistics are provided for all respondents. Age is a categorical variable structured based on age ranges. Strong Democrats vs. Strong Republicans is a binary variable that takes 1 when respondents identified themselves as Strong Democrats and 0 when respondents identified themselves as Strong Republicans. 7 point partisan scale includes Strong Republicans (takes value 1), Not Strong Republicans, Leaning Republicans, Independent, Leaning Democrats, Not Strong Democrats, and Strong Democrats (takes value 7). Ideology measures self-identified ideological positions of respondents on a 7 point scale from Very Conservative (1) to Very Liberal (7). Respondents' Attitudes are measured for each respondent per images. Fixation Duration metrics are averaged at the respondents' level.

Table A.2: Descriptive Statistics for Waves 3

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pct(25)	Pct(75)	Max
N of participants	620						
Age (by age group)	620	4.11	1.26	2.00	3.00	5.00	8.00
1- Under 18							
2- 18 - 24							
3- 25 - 34							
4- 35 - 44							
5- 45 - 54							
6- 55 - 64							
7- 65 - 74							
8- 75 - 84							
9- 85 or older							
Gender	620	0.67	0.47	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
0-Male							
1-Female							
Education	620	4.20	1.35	1.00	3.00	5.00	7.00
1-Less than high school							
2-High school graduate							
3-Some college but no degree							
4-Associate's degree in college (2-year)							
5-Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)							
6-Master's degree							
7-Doctoral degree							
Income	620	7.37	3.40	1.00	4.00	11.00	12.00
1-Less than \$10,000							
2-\$10,000 - \$19,999							
3-\$20,000 - \$29,999							
4-\$30,000 - \$39,999							
5-\$40,000 - \$49,999							
6-\$50,000 - \$59,999							
7-\$60,000 - \$69,999							
8-\$70,000 - \$79,999							

9-\$80,000 - \$89,999							
10-\$90,000 - \$99,999							
11-\$100,000 - \$149,999							
12-More than \$150,000							
Interest	620	3.98	0.93	1.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
1-Not interested at all							
5-Strongly interested							
Hispanic Ethnicity	620	0.07	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
0-Not Hispanic							
1-Hispanic							
Democratic Thermometer	617	50.61	27.97	0.00	30.00	72.00	100.00
Republican Thermometer	614	43.67	29.69	0.00	19.00	68.00	100.00
Ideology	620	4.11	1.69	1.00	3.00	5.00	7.00
1-Very Conservative							
7-Very Liberal							
Attitudes to Immigration	620	2.73	1.35	1.00	2.00	4.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Affirmative Actions	620	3.30	1.32	1.00	2.00	4.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Same Sex Marriage	620	3.77	1.48	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Abortions	620	3.88	1.38	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Attitudes to Sponsored Education Programs	620	4.24	0.95	1.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
1-Strongly Opposing							
5-Strongly Supporting							
Partisanship (7 point scale)	619	4.05	1.90	1.00	2.00	6.00	7.00
1-Strong Republican							
7-Strong Democrat							
Strong Dem vs Strong Rep	134	0.45	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
0-Strong Republican							
1-Strong Democrat							
Average Fixations Duration (in m/s)	9721	522.68	224.16	60.00	348.40	679.67	999.00
Total Fixations Duration (in m/s)	9721	3391.27	817.77	60.00	3205.00	3882.00	4400.00
Respondent's Attitudes	9721	4.13	1.43	1.00	3.00	5.00	7.00
1-Extremely Negative							
7-Extremely Positive							

Note: Descriptive statistics are provided for all respondents. Age is a categorical variable structured based on age ranges. Strong Democrats vs. Strong Republicans is a binary variable that takes 1 when respondents identified themselves as Strong Democrats and 0 when respondents identified themselves as Strong Republicans. 7 point partisan scale includes Strong Republicans (takes value 1), Not Strong Republicans, Leaning Republicans, Independent, Leaning Democrats, Not Strong Democrats, and Strong Democrats (takes value 7). Ideology measures self-identified ideological positions of respondents on a 7 point scale from Very Conservative (1) to Very Liberal (7). Respondents' Attitudes are measured for each respondent per images. Fixation Duration metrics are averaged at the respondents' level.

Table A.3: Individual-level Covariates

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Partisanship (7 point scale)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age	-0.066** (0.031)					
Gender (Female=1)		0.293*** (0.097)				
Education			0.103*** (0.033)			
Income				-0.053*** (0.014)		
Hispanic					0.235 (0.165)	
Ideology (7 point scale)						0.856*** (0.018)
Constant	4.437*** (0.149)	3.979*** (0.072)	3.729*** (0.142)	4.491*** (0.106)	4.120*** (0.051)	0.662*** (0.079)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓			
Image FE	✓	✓	✓			
Observations	1,957	1,957	1,957	1,956	1,957	1,957

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Binary OLS regressions reporting socio-demographic differences between partisans.

B Regression Tables with Main Results

Table B.4: The Effect of Partisanship (measured on a 7-point scale) on Average Fixation Duration (m/s)

	Dependent variable:			
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship	1.671*** (0.531)	2.169*** (0.443)	-1.289 (1.582)	1.455*** (0.403)
Attitudes to Immigrants		-1.565*** (0.314)	-7.096*** (2.371)	
Female	-10.910*** (3.512)	-10.726*** (3.525)	-11.047*** (3.560)	
Age	-2.361** (1.021)	-2.543** (1.023)	-2.580** (1.011)	
Education	-0.856 (1.472)	-0.742 (1.448)	-0.773 (1.483)	
Income	1.171* (0.602)	1.156* (0.596)	1.140* (0.606)	
Interest	1.645 (1.958)	1.632 (1.950)	1.087 (1.733)	
Hispanic	1.315 (6.098)	1.856 (5.846)	1.805 (5.758)	
Participant Quality Category 2	34.553 (24.377)	35.462 (24.732)	36.013 (25.051)	37.012 (25.574)
Participant Quality Category 3	44.059** (17.541)	44.643** (17.610)	44.323** (17.299)	46.691** (19.170)
Participant Quality Category 4	54.631** (26.954)	55.236** (26.728)	54.901** (27.011)	57.314** (28.024)
Participant Quality Category 5	95.396** (42.084)	95.920** (41.707)	95.196** (41.735)	97.957** (43.438)
Participant Quality Category 6	139.442*** (47.815)	140.190*** (47.388)	139.513*** (47.487)	142.346*** (49.001)
Participant Device - Smartphone	-167.740*** (5.852)	-167.818*** (5.877)	-167.471*** (5.844)	-167.598*** (6.182)
Participant Device - Tablet	-40.709	-40.811	-41.035	-41.920
Second Wave	48.158*** (12.227)	47.925*** (12.143)	48.134*** (12.024)	51.341*** (11.278)
Partisanship*Attitudes to Immigrants			1.305*** (0.455)	
Constant	207,051*** (35.805)	209,277*** (35.981)	225,124*** (37.551)	198,004*** (34.918)
Image FE Observations	✓ 44,140	✓ 44,140	✓ 44,140	✓ 44,156

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs are Average Fixation Duration (in ms.), AFD. The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale from Strong Republican (1) to String Democrat (7).

Table B.5: The Effect of Strong Republicans (vs Strong Democrats) on Average Fixation Duration (m/s)

	Dependent variable:			
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Str Rep vs Str Dem	15.612*** (4.223)	12.192** (6.054)	-40.192*** (8.643)	13.799*** (2.881)
Attitudes to Immigrants		1.785 (2.525)	-10.057*** (1.202)	
Female	-16.022*** (4.190)	-16.146*** (4.124)	-17.636*** (3.998)	
Age	-0.687 (1.634)	-0.525 (1.351)	-0.138 (1.455)	
Education	-0.017 (2.064)	-0.081 (2.127)	-0.551 (2.249)	
Income	0.072 (0.618)	0.081 (0.603)	0.314 (0.655)	
Interest	-1.202 (1.962)	-1.186 (2.034)	-1.918 (1.749)	
Hispanic	7.614 (9.324)	7.049 (9.862)	5.574 (8.309)	
Participant Quality Category 2	46.512 (83.194)	45.072 (80.605)	46.191 (75.660)	48.661 (88.765)
Participant Quality Category 3	89.432 (58.734)	88.420 (56.074)	86.850* (52.519)	89.462 (63.396)
Participant Quality Category 4	72.034 (48.405)	70.765 (45.366)	68.859 (42.392)	71.321 (53.368)
Participant Quality Category 5	119.140** (56.668)	117.941** (53.721)	114.028** (50.559)	118.012* (61.498)
Participant Quality Category 6	160.311*** (47.694)	158.934*** (44.994)	154.458*** (43.216)	160.436*** (51.458)
Participant Device - Smartphone	-174.341*** (10.654)	-174.109*** (10.511)	-171.863*** (11.486)	-175.840*** (9.042)
Participant Device - Tablet	-38.831	-38.855	-40.730	-40.399
Second Wave	37.964*** (4.629)	37.989*** (4.698)	38.335*** (4.946)	37.299*** (4.287)
Str Rep vs Str Dem*Attitudes to Immigrants			20.543*** (3.140)	
Constant	193.817*** (43.076)	191.279*** (45.572)	217.208*** (38.793)	180.042*** (53.735)
Image FE Observations	✓ 15,333	✓ 15,333	✓ 15,333	✓ 15,333

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs are Average Fixation Duration (in ms.), AFD. The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. Strong Republicans vs Strong Democrats is a binary variable with Strong Democrats taking value of 1 and Strong Republicans - 0.

Table B.6: The Effect of Partisanship (measured on a 7-point scale) on Attitudes to Images

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Respondents' Attitudes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship	0.189*** (0.019)	0.104*** (0.015)	0.084*** (0.028)	0.196*** (0.019)
Attitudes to Immigrants		0.264*** (0.032)	0.232*** (0.057)	
Female	0.048 (0.049)	0.018 (0.047)	0.016 (0.047)	
Age	-0.037* (0.021)	-0.007 (0.020)	-0.007 (0.020)	
Education	0.047** (0.019)	0.028 (0.018)	0.028 (0.018)	
Income	-0.014* (0.007)	-0.011 (0.007)	-0.011 (0.007)	
Interest	0.011 (0.023)	0.013 (0.022)	0.010 (0.023)	
Hispanic	0.179** (0.082)	0.087 (0.076)	0.086 (0.076)	
Participant Quality Category 2	0.110 (0.205)	-0.044 (0.190)	-0.041 (0.189)	0.128 (0.212)
Participant Quality Category 3	0.020 (0.204)	-0.080 (0.191)	-0.082 (0.191)	0.024 (0.209)
Participant Quality Category 4	0.007 (0.192)	-0.095 (0.179)	-0.097 (0.179)	0.021 (0.199)
Participant Quality Category 5	0.062 (0.186)	-0.027 (0.173)	-0.032 (0.173)	0.069 (0.193)
Participant Quality Category 6	0.120 (0.188)	-0.005 (0.175)	-0.009 (0.174)	0.123 (0.195)
Participant Device - Smartphone	0.070 (0.084)	0.083 (0.081)	0.085 (0.081)	0.098 (0.088)
Participant Device - Tablet	-0.032 (0.056)	-0.016 (0.052)	-0.017 (0.051)	-0.045 (0.056)
Second Wave	0.164** (0.083)	0.203** (0.080)	0.204** (0.080)	0.203*** (0.077)
Partisanship* Attitudes to Immigrants			0.008 (0.010)	
Constant	3.151*** (0.244)	2.776*** (0.235)	2.870*** (0.269)	3.101*** (0.212)
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	44,804	44,804	44,804	44,820

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs is a response to a question "What are your attitudes towards the subjects portrayed on this image", measured on a 7-point scale from Extremely Negative (1) to Extremely Positive (7). The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered two-way on respondent and image level. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale from Strong Republican (1) to Strong Democrat (7).

Table B.7: The Effect of Strong Democrats (vs Strong Republicans) on Attitudes to Images

	Dependent variable:					
	Respondents' Attitudes					
	All Devices	Only Desktops	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Str Dem vs Str Rep	1.296*** (0.121)	0.771*** (0.123)	0.348* (0.208)	1.341*** (0.122)		
Attitudes to Immigrants		0.273*** (0.044)	0.177*** (0.064)			
Female	0.117 (0.090)	0.098 (0.087)	0.086 (0.086)			
Age	-0.058* (0.033)	-0.033 (0.032)	-0.030 (0.031)			
Education	0.013 (0.033)	0.003 (0.032)	-0.0004 (0.032)			
Income	-0.015 (0.015)	-0.013 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.014)			
Interest	0.013 (0.045)	0.015 (0.042)	0.010 (0.043)			
Hispanic	0.103 (0.172)	0.014 (0.162)	0.002 (0.161)			
Participant Quality Category 2	-0.348 (0.363)	-0.570* (0.333)	-0.561* (0.326)	-0.399 (0.364)		
Participant Quality Category 3	-0.087 (0.376)	-0.243 (0.343)	-0.255 (0.340)	-0.142 (0.375)		
Participant Quality Category 4	-0.474 (0.340)	-0.670** (0.310)	-0.685** (0.306)	-0.512 (0.342)		
Participant Quality Category 5	-0.215 (0.319)	-0.400 (0.291)	-0.432 (0.288)	-0.251 (0.322)		
Participant Quality Category 6	-0.196 (0.325)	-0.406 (0.298)	-0.443 (0.295)	-0.246 (0.328)		
Participant Device - Smartphone	-0.024 (0.134)	0.012 (0.128)	0.030 (0.128)	0.053 (0.135)		
Participant Device - Tablet	-0.087 (0.101)	-0.092 (0.093)	-0.107 (0.092)	-0.086 (0.101)		
Second Wave	0.051 (0.126)	0.056 (0.121)	0.058 (0.120)	0.089 (0.123)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep* Attitudes to Immigrants			0.166** (0.078)			
Constant	3.873*** (0.406)	3.486*** (0.376)	3.695*** (0.392)	3.654*** (0.341)		
Image FE Observations	✓ 15,506	✓ 15,506	✓ 15,506	✓ 15,506		

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs is a response to a question "What are your attitudes towards the subjects portrayed on this image", measured on a 7-point scale from Extremely Negative (1) to Extremely Positive (7). The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered two-way on respondent and image level. Strong Republicans vs Strong Democrats is a binary variable with Strong Democrats taking value of 1 and Strong Republicans - 0.

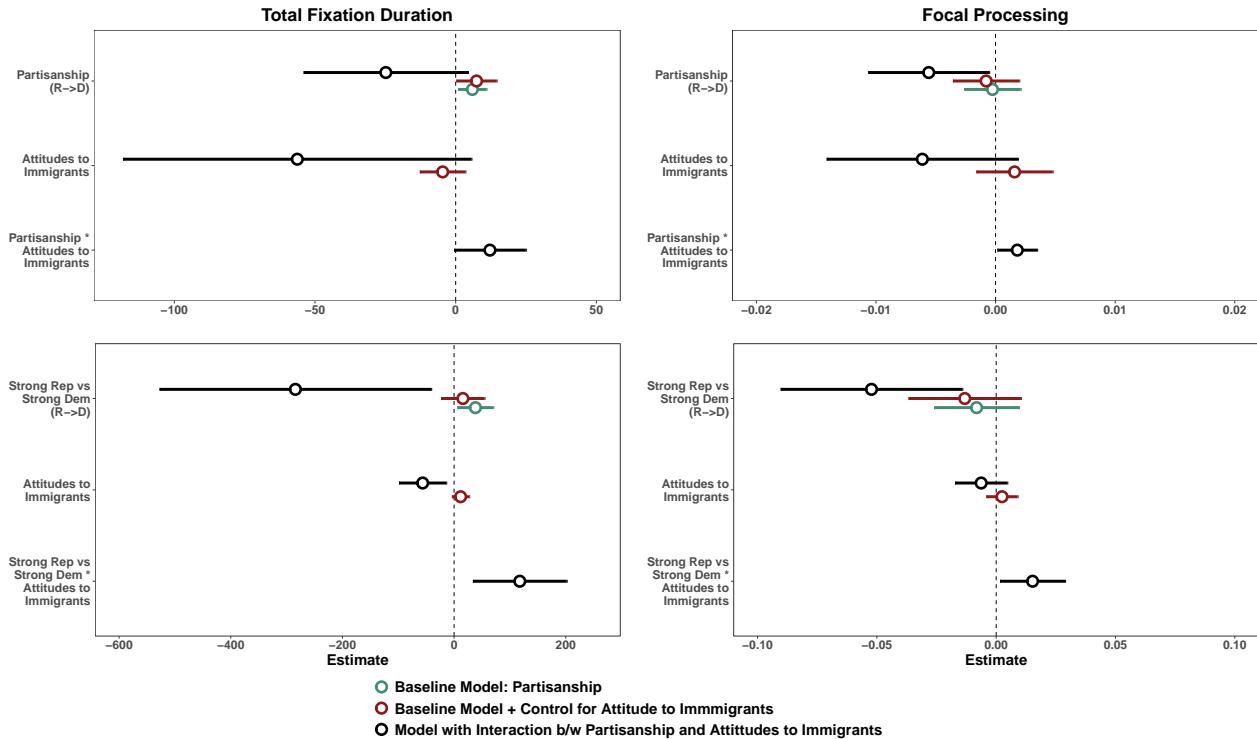
Table B.8: The Effects of Attitudes to Immigrants on Average Fixation Duration (m/s) by Partisan Subgroups

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS	
	Democrats	Republicans
	(1)	(2)
Attitudes to Immigrants	2.221 (2.515)	-7.884*** (0.816)
Female	-20.216*** (6.707)	-14.161** (6.249)
Age	1.617 (2.749)	-2.796 (2.932)
Education	-4.035 (3.240)	2.317 (3.315)
Income	0.727 (0.521)	-0.518*** (0.183)
Interest	2.404 (3.613)	-2.307 (3.684)
Hispanic	2.746 (17.689)	13.287** (6.023)
Participant Quality Category 2	22.381 (50.830)	46.275 (59.973)
Participant Quality Category 3	34.439 (26.424)	55.215 (61.827)
Participant Quality Category 4	49.515*** (10.936)	52.039 (65.700)
Participant Quality Category 5	95.004*** (31.620)	101.758 (82.199)
Participant Quality Category 6	126.854*** (32.666)	155.781* (91.130)
Participant Device - Smartphone	-176.488*** (9.057)	-158.798*** (5.788)
Participant Device - Tablet	-44.392	-35.348*** (2.146)
Second Wave	37.486*** (8.205)	44.399*** (9.764)
Constant	217.278*** (28.004)	230.544*** (71.876)
Additional Controls	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓
Observations	14,145	13,614

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs are Average Fixation Duration (in ms.), AFD. The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. Partisan subgroups are based on self-reported partisanship information, where Democrats subgroup includes both Strong and Not Strong Democrats and Republicans subgroup includes both Strong Republicans and Not Strong Republicans.

C Alternative Outcomes

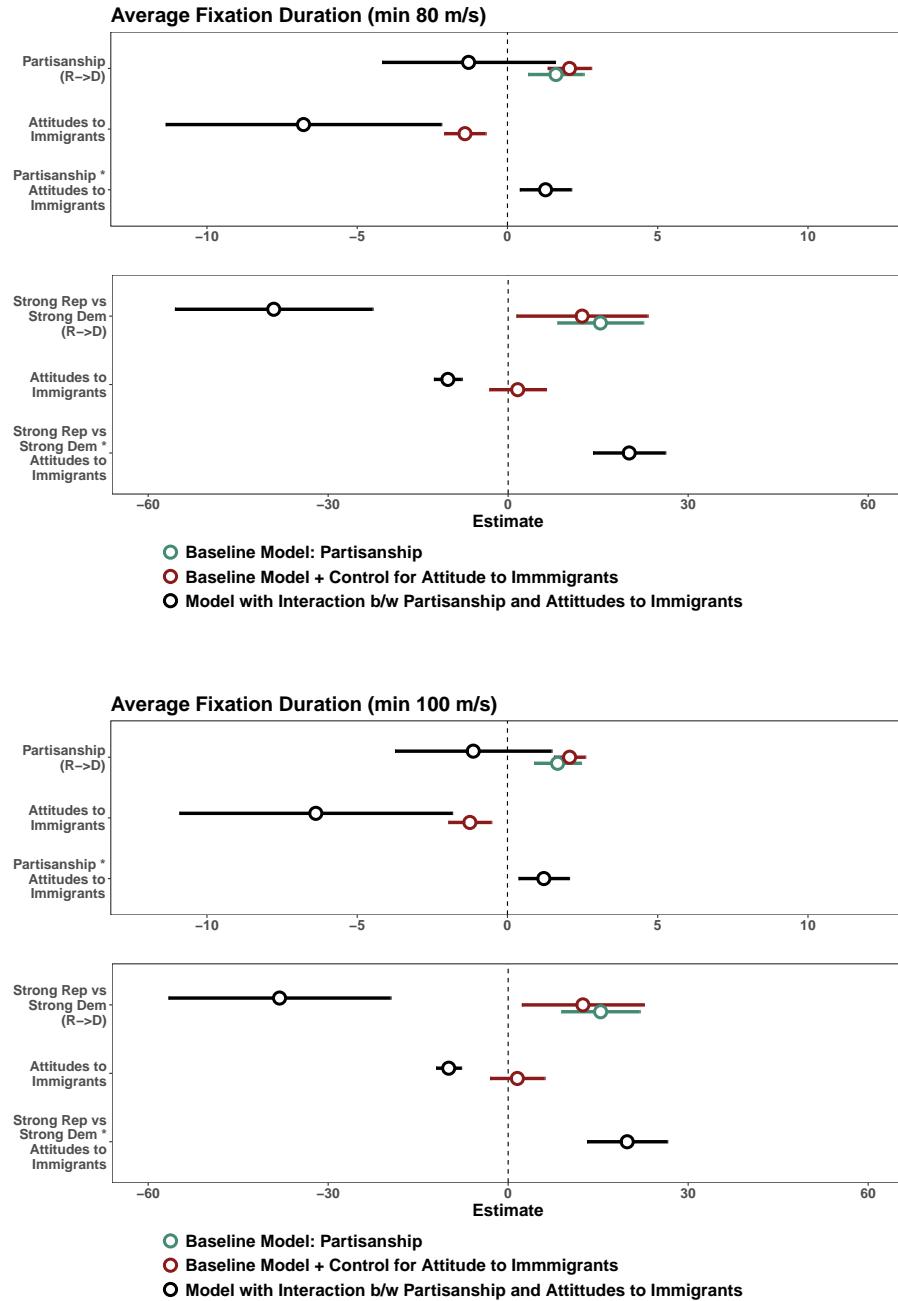
Figure C.1: Partisanship Effects on Total Fixation Duration (m/s) and Focal Processing



Note: The plots display coefficients for the main predictors of interest (Partisanship, Attitudes Toward Immigrants, and the interaction between Partisanship and Attitudes Toward Immigrants). Focal processing is measured as a binary variable, where 1 indicates focal processing of an image and 0 indicates ambient processing. The reported coefficients are estimated using OLS models with a full set of control variables. Standard errors are clustered multi-way at the respondent x image x participant device level for the total fixation duration outcome, and at the respondent x image level for the focal processing outcome. Reported confidence intervals (CIs) are 95%.

D Alternative Minimal Fixation Duration Thresholds

Figure D.2: Partisanship Affects Average Fixation Duration (m/s)



Note: Plots report coefficients for the main predictors of interest (Partisanship, Attitudes to Immigrants, and interaction between Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants). DVs are Average Fixation Duration (in ms.), AFD. The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered multi-way on respondent, image, and participant device level. Reported CI are 95%.

E Visual Attention and Feelings Toward the Democratic and Republican Parties

Table E.9: People with Warmer Feelings Toward the Democratic Party Have Longer Average Fixation Duration (ms)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Average Fixation Duration in ms, OLS		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic Thermometer	0.046*** (0.016)	0.052*** (0.017)	-0.038 (0.106)
Attitudes to Immigrants		-0.324 (0.414)	-2.160 (1.680)
Female	-7.703*** (1.911)	-7.682*** (1.929)	-7.802*** (2.034)
Age	-2.732*** (0.924)	-2.780*** (0.886)	-2.848*** (0.945)
Education	-0.854 (0.736)	-0.828 (0.721)	-0.823 (0.716)
Income	1.267 (0.835)	1.259 (0.840)	1.253 (0.850)
Interest	0.147 (1.013)	0.151 (1.021)	-0.036 (0.869)
Hispanic	1.006 (6.291)	1.105 (6.176)	1.127 (6.142)
Democratic Thermometer*Attitudes to Immigrants			0.035 (0.034)
Constant	224.394*** (25.055)	225.117*** (25.902)	230.567*** (24.989)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	106,148	106,148	106,148

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. Democratic Thermometer varies from 0 to 100.

Table E.10: People with Warmer Feelings Toward the Republican Party Have Longer Average Fixation Duration (ms)

	Dependent variable:		
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Republican Thermometer	-0.134*** (0.029)	-0.163*** (0.028)	0.0002 (0.112)
Attitudes to Immigrants		-1.407*** (0.191)	1.107 (1.254)
Female	-6.889*** (2.020)	-6.548*** (2.040)	-6.491*** (1.986)
Age	-2.364** (0.950)	-2.542*** (0.943)	-2.558*** (0.953)
Education	-1.154 (0.773)	-1.068 (0.776)	-1.127 (0.811)
Income	1.393 (0.925)	1.374 (0.916)	1.406 (0.900)
Interest	0.343 (0.696)	0.364 (0.686)	0.027 (0.509)
Hispanic	-0.220 (5.737)	0.215 (5.461)	0.475 (5.132)
Republican Thermometer*Attitudes to Immigrants			-0.062* (0.034)
Constant	228.293*** (23.749)	233.753*** (23.768)	227.096*** (23.041)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	105,741	105,741	105,741

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. Republican Thermometer varies from 0 to 100.

F Results for Ideology

Table F.11: Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants Increase Average Fixation Duration (ms) Among More Liberal People

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ideology (Cons -> Libs)	1.605 (1.493)	2.219 (1.691)	-1.751 (1.518)
Attitudes to Immigrants		-1.542*** (0.554)	-7.616*** (0.825)
Female	-11.039*** (3.621)	-10.861*** (3.669)	-11.099*** (3.532)
Age	-2.318** (1.025)	-2.473** (1.007)	-2.461** (0.973)
Education	-0.846 (1.477)	-0.747 (1.528)	-0.813 (1.599)
Income	0.914 (0.782)	0.898 (0.766)	0.910 (0.755)
Interest	1.592 (1.911)	1.571 (1.903)	0.843 (1.867)
Hispanic	-0.558 (7.212)	-0.109 (7.164)	-0.105 (6.923)
Ideology*Attitudes to Immigrants			1.444*** (0.064)
Constant	214.718*** (39.060)	216.706*** (38.690)	234.882*** (37.502)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	44,982	44,982	44,982

*Note:**p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. Ideology (Cons -> Libs) is on a 5-point scale.

Table F.12: Strong Liberals (vs. Strong Conservatives) Show Higher Average Fixation Duration (ms) with More Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants

	Dependent variable:		
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Strong Libs vs Cons	4.554 (8.626)	-1.863 (8.560)	-55.694*** (4.634)
Attitudes to Immigrants		2.773** (1.090)	-8.391*** (1.511)
Female	-13.605** (5.310)	-14.004*** (5.301)	-14.472*** (4.559)
Age	-4.689*** (1.132)	-4.357*** (1.052)	-4.138*** (1.309)
Education	0.428 (1.539)	0.514 (1.509)	-0.300 (1.849)
Income	-0.016 (0.137)	-0.035 (0.126)	0.187 (0.117)
Interest	-0.108 (2.695)	-0.175 (2.817)	-2.395 (3.746)
Hispanic	5.444 (8.796)	4.968 (9.085)	1.851 (8.395)
Strong Liberals*Attitudes to Immigrants			20.169*** (4.152)
Constant	278.027*** (43.250)	274.627*** (42.715)	307.902*** (38.290)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	10,412	10,412	10,412

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. "Strong Liberals" and "Strong Conservatives" refer to individuals who selected the respective extreme options on a 5-point conservative-liberal orientation scale.

Apart from using the standard self-reported measure of ideology, we also construct an aggregated index of ideological preferences of our participants. To do so, we ask respondents to assess five statements on the 5-points Likert scale (from Strongly oppose to Strongly support) “Do you oppose or support... 1. ... sending unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States back to their home country; 2. ... race-based affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of African American and Hispanic students on college; 3. ... same-sex marriage; 4. ... when the government restricts right to an abortion; 5. ... more state-sponsored programs that improve access to college education”. We transform each question responses for a categorical scale from 1 to 5, where 1 maps to a very conservative position, and 5 maps to a very liberal one. We then aggregate responses for each of these five questions based on a simple averaging. Note that Table F.13 does not include Attitudes to immigrants as one of the predictors, because that question is already being incorporated in the integral index. In Table F.14 we aim to disentangle the effects of the five questions as separate proxies of ideology to pinpoint which of the questions were the most impactful in the aggregated index. The effects are consistently non-significant across all ideology proxy questions, except for support for state sponsored education programs, where strong supporters (proxing stronger liberals) show longer average fixation duration.

Table F.13: There is No Direct Association of Being More Liberal (Aggregated Measure) with Average Fixation Duration (ms)

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS	
Ideology (Aggregated)	1.869 (2.120)
Female	-11.161*** (3.553)
Age	-2.327** (1.036)
Education	-0.755 (1.507)
Income	0.877 (0.763)
Interest	1.720 (1.866)
Hispanic	-0.677 (7.116)
Constant	214.540*** (39.235)
Additional Controls	✓
Image FE	✓
Observations	44,982

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task.

Table F.14: Sponsored Education Is the Only Ideology Measure (of Aggregated Measure) Positively Associated with Higher Average Fixation Duration (m/s)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Abortions	0.229 (0.939)				
Affirmative Actions		−0.530 (1.642)			
Same Sex Marriage			2.855 (1.794)		
Immigration				−0.008 (0.636)	
Sponsored Education					3.029*** (0.729)
Female	−10.628*** (3.891)	−10.314*** (3.565)	−11.351*** (3.719)	−10.580*** (3.970)	−11.626*** (3.947)
Age	−2.533** (1.026)	−2.614*** (1.010)	−2.037** (0.979)	−2.556** (0.992)	−2.369** (0.963)
Education	−0.618 (1.638)	−0.571 (1.538)	−0.845 (1.585)	−0.612 (1.584)	−0.832 (1.658)
Income	0.819 (0.695)	0.786 (0.759)	0.868 (0.736)	0.814 (0.700)	0.938 (0.740)
Interest	1.792 (1.817)	1.818 (1.834)	1.570 (1.857)	1.798 (1.814)	1.711 (1.865)
Hispanic	−0.229 (7.447)	−0.002 (7.059)	−0.724 (7.063)	−0.180 (7.381)	−0.804 (7.745)
Constant	220.499*** (35.922)	223.366*** (38.051)	210.710*** (39.903)	221.479*** (36.510)	209.362*** (38.680)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	44,982	44,982	44,982	44,982	44,982

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the participant-per-image level, with robust standard errors clustered multiway at the participant, image, and participant device levels. Additional controls include the survey wave, respondents' devices, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task.

G Analysis at Object-Level (AOI)

In this section, we examine the differences in how partisans focus on areas of interest (AOIs) within each image, starting by analyzing the impact of partisanship on average fixation duration at the object level. Specifically, we looked at AOIs depicting crowds and those depicting women and children and calculated the average fixation duration (in milliseconds) for each type of AOI.

Table G.15 presents two blocks of regression results (estimated using OLS): one for AOIs depicting crowds and another for AOIs depicting women and children. The findings align with the baseline results from the main text, showing that Democrats, on average, have longer fixation durations for both types of AOIs.

We then compared the two AOI types to assess their impact on average fixation duration. Table G.16 shows a negative but statistically insignificant effect for AOIs depicting crowds, compared to those showing women and children. Despite this, partisanship continues to have a significant effect, with Democrats consistently displaying longer fixation durations on average. The interaction terms between partisanship and AOI type are also insignificant, reinforcing the conclusion that partisans do not distinguish between AOI types and exhibit similar gazing patterns across different visual representations of immigration.

Table G.15: More Democratic People Have Higher Average Fixation Duration (ms) looking at "Women and Children" AOI, No Direct Partisan Effect on "Crowds"

	Dependent variable:											
	AOI with Crowds						Average Fixation Duration (m/s)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Partisanship	1.372 (0.956)	1.235 (0.963)	-3.153 (2.106)				1.417*** (0.177)	1.743*** (0.209)	-1.768* (1.064)			
Attitudes to Immigrants		0.428 (0.749)	-6.577*** (2.092)		5.554** (2.352)	-6.683*** (0.671)		-0.953 (0.583)	-6.554*** (2.245)		5.979** (2.869)	-6.852*** (0.702)
Str Dem vs Str Rep				14.095*** (4.689)	3.322 (8.094)	-50.575*** (15.900)				17.866*** (4.697)	5.604** (2.297)	-52.614*** (12.373)
Female	-9.717*** (2.354)	-9.753*** (2.371)	-10.159*** (2.408)	-12.238*** (3.753)	-12.382*** (4.066)	-13.848*** (4.353)	-6.023* (3.495)	-5.923* (3.486)	-6.198* (3.421)	-16.853*** (1.625)	-17.144*** (1.888)	-18.404*** (3.108)
Age	-3.174*** (1.048)	-3.125*** (0.976)	-3.215*** (0.933)	-1.355 (2.179)	-0.949 (1.850)	-0.781 (1.757)	-3.919*** (1.269)	-4.007*** (1.267)	-4.034*** (1.277)	-1.832 (2.237)	-1.695 (1.992)	-1.000 (1.875)
Education	-2.143*** (0.262)	-2.172*** (0.275)	-2.225*** (0.253)	-1.567 (1.583)	-1.809 (1.612)	-2.268 (1.611)	-2.091 (1.518)	-2.016 (1.483)	-2.033 (1.501)	-1.800 (3.459)	-2.074 (3.518)	-2.309 (3.638)
Income	1.284 (1.241)	1.287 (1.248)	1.276 (1.254)	0.288 (0.557)	0.323 (0.508)	0.593 (0.477)	1.688*** (0.551)	1.681*** (0.545)	1.666*** (0.555)	1.159 (1.334)	1.161 (1.229)	1.408 (1.396)
Interest	1.831 (2.320)	1.831 (2.319)	1.143 (2.039)	0.459 (5.146)	0.520 (5.330)	-0.165 (5.045)	1.900 (2.230)	1.884 (2.226)	1.261 (1.955)	-1.931 (4.348)	-1.730 (4.579)	-2.865 (3.798)
Hispanic	-3.710 (7.267)	-3.853 (7.263)	-3.977 (7.000)	9.225 (19.524)	7.273 (20.190)	6.298 (18.598)	-3.148 (6.760)	-2.840 (6.557)	-2.904 (6.393)	-5.761 (10.890)	-8.192 (11.951)	-9.666 (9.799)
Partisanship*Att's to Immigr			1.655*** (0.442)							1.327*** (0.399)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep*Att's to Immigr						21.197*** (4.393)						22.699*** (4.256)
Constant	217.209*** (34.006)	216.607*** (35.024)	237.246*** (35.533)	208.367*** (42.815)	201.107*** (42.020)	228.338*** (34.630)	274.346*** (29.208)	275.461*** (29.833)	291.188*** (29.535)	284.192*** (38.890)	278.905*** (38.110)	304.793*** (28.677)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15,542	15,542	15,542	5,425	5,425	5,425	14,835	14,835	14,835	4,949	4,949	4,949

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Robust standard errors clustered multiway at participant, image, and participants' device level. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale (from Strong Republican - 1 to Strong Democrat - 7). Models are estimated with OLS at the level of areas of interest (AOI) per image per participant. Additional controls include controls for survey wave, survey respondents' device, participants' quality in the eye tracking task.

Table G.16: There is a Direct Effect of being More Democratic on Average Fixation Duration (ms) with No Heterogeneous Effect of AOI Type ("Women with Children" vs. "Crowds")

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Average Fixation Duration (m/s)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship	1.487*** (0.562)	1.487*** (0.398)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep			4.851 (5.357)	5.849** (2.314)
AOI with Crowds	−8.573 (10.649)	−8.569 (11.614)	−6.838 (10.343)	−5.800 (11.099)
Attitudes to Immigrants	−0.327 (0.506)	−0.327 (0.510)	5.534** (2.631)	5.526** (2.612)
Female	−7.772*** (2.759)	−7.772*** (2.766)	−14.257*** (2.826)	−14.265*** (2.812)
Age	−3.540*** (1.071)	−3.540*** (1.071)	−1.364 (1.740)	−1.362 (1.737)
Education	−2.070*** (0.688)	−2.070*** (0.686)	−1.967 (2.390)	−1.966 (2.390)
Income	1.480* (0.892)	1.480* (0.892)	0.703 (0.660)	0.705 (0.663)
Interest	1.920 (2.161)	1.920 (2.161)	−0.490 (4.820)	−0.494 (4.805)
Hispanic	−3.618 (6.606)	−3.618 (6.602)	0.017 (14.922)	0.022 (14.895)
Partisanship*AOI w/Crowds		−0.001 (0.459)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep*AOI w/Crowds			−1.875 (6.077)	
Constant	207.936*** (30.006)	207.934*** (29.839)	194.954*** (42.101)	194.401*** (43.582)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	30,377	30,377	10,374	10,374

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) at the level of areas of interest (AOI) per image, per participant. The standard errors are robust and multiway clustered by participant, image, and device used. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (Strong Republican) to 7 (Strong Democrat). The models also control for survey wave, respondents' device type, and the quality of participants' performance in the eye-tracking task. The variable "Images with Crowds" indicates whether the image depicts migrant caravans as large crowds of people, compared to close-up shots of women and children, with the latter serving as the reference category.

We found that the type of object (AOI, in our case) is not a strong predictor of AFD, nor does it predict differences in gazing behavior. But partisanship influences strongly how

people engage visually: when comparing two distinct depictions of the same topic (crowds versus women and children), partisans do not exhibit differing gazing patterns. This suggests that gazing behavior is largely determined by the topic itself and driven by individuals' attitudes toward the subject.

Next, we examine the effects of partisanship on evaluations while controlling for AFD and considering it as a mediating variable. Table G.17 presents regression models for two types of areas of interest (AOI). Models 1, 3, 5, and 7 show that both partisanship and AFD have a statistically significant influence on respondents' attitudes toward the images. In the models with the interaction term (2, 4, 6, and 8), we observe consistent positive effects, suggesting that the effect of partisanship increases with longer AFD, and this expands the difference in attitudes towards objects depicted. These effects are statistically significant only for AOIs featuring crowds.

We then combine both AOI types and assess the effect of partisanship on attitudes, factoring in fixation duration and AOI type (Table G.18). First, we observe that AFD has a different effect on evaluations, depending on the AOI type. The interaction term's negative, significant coefficient suggests that the effect of AFD on evaluations is weaker for AOIs with crowds than for those depicting women and children. The positive, significant triple interaction term in models 3 and 6 indicates that longer AFD on AOIs with crowds increases the influence of partisanship on respondents' attitudes.

Table G.17: More Democratic Individuals Have More Positive Attitudes About Immigrants, and the Longer Democrats' Average Fixation Duration (ms), the More Positive Their Attitudes Are

	Dependent variable:							
	AOI with Crowds				Respondent's Attitudes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Partisanship	0.125*** (0.015)	0.065*** (0.021)			0.117*** (0.020)	0.094*** (0.030)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep			0.829*** (0.125)	0.399** (0.157)			0.894*** (0.162)	0.723*** (0.211)
AFD	0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0004 (0.0003)	0.001*** (0.0003)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	0.0004** (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0003)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.001 (0.0004)
Attitudes to Immigrants	0.329*** (0.028)	0.322*** (0.028)	0.343*** (0.044)	0.326*** (0.044)	0.258*** (0.036)	0.256*** (0.037)	0.253*** (0.055)	0.248*** (0.055)
Female	-0.024 (0.052)	-0.026 (0.052)	0.034 (0.094)	0.028 (0.093)	0.085 (0.062)	0.084 (0.062)	0.275*** (0.105)	0.272*** (0.105)
Age	-0.057*** (0.021)	-0.058*** (0.021)	-0.091*** (0.033)	-0.093*** (0.033)	0.040 (0.028)	0.039 (0.028)	-0.006 (0.044)	-0.006 (0.044)
Education	0.020 (0.018)	0.022 (0.018)	0.004 (0.033)	0.008 (0.033)	0.052** (0.022)	0.053** (0.022)	0.027 (0.040)	0.028 (0.041)
Income	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.020 (0.015)	-0.018 (0.015)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.017)	-0.015 (0.017)
Interest	-0.013 (0.026)	-0.014 (0.026)	0.060 (0.048)	0.055 (0.048)	0.027 (0.028)	0.027 (0.028)	0.005 (0.058)	0.005 (0.058)
Hispanic	0.123 (0.088)	0.126 (0.088)	-0.014 (0.187)	-0.011 (0.184)	0.138 (0.096)	0.138 (0.096)	0.157 (0.200)	0.152 (0.199)
Partisanship*AFD		0.0002*** (0.0001)				0.0001 (0.0001)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep*AFD				0.002*** (0.0004)				0.001 (0.0005)
Constant	2.707*** (0.226)	2.983*** (0.228)	2.882*** (0.441)	3.185*** (0.429)	2.102*** (0.292)	2.206*** (0.282)	2.502*** (0.534)	2.618*** (0.520)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15,542	15,542	5,425	5,425	14,835	14,835	4,949	4,949

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the level of areas of interest (AOI) per image per participant. Robust standard errors are clustered two-way at the participant and image level. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale (from Strong Republican = 1 to Strong Democrat = 7). Additional controls include survey wave, respondents' device, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. AFD refers to average fixation duration (in ms).

Table G.18: Effects of Partisanship on Average Fixation Duration (ms) by Type of Area of Interest (AOI)

Partisanship	Dependent variable:					
	Respondent's Attitudes					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Partisanship	0.120*** (0.016)	0.120*** (0.016)	0.079** (0.033)			
Str Dem vs Str Rep				0.857*** (0.135)	0.857*** (0.135)	0.623*** (0.223)
AFD	0.0003 (0.0003)	0.001* (0.0003)	0.0004 (0.001)	0.001** (0.0003)	0.001** (0.0005)	0.001 (0.001)
AOI with Crowds	-0.691*** (0.204)	-0.423 (0.258)	-0.397 (0.328)	-0.654*** (0.202)	-0.362 (0.282)	-0.256 (0.341)
Attitudes to Immigrants	0.295*** (0.028)	0.296*** (0.028)	0.292*** (0.028)	0.302*** (0.046)	0.302*** (0.046)	0.290*** (0.046)
Female	0.028 (0.052)	0.027 (0.052)	0.026 (0.052)	0.149 (0.097)	0.149 (0.097)	0.146 (0.096)
Age	-0.011 (0.024)	-0.011 (0.024)	-0.012 (0.024)	-0.053 (0.038)	-0.053 (0.038)	-0.055 (0.038)
Education	0.034* (0.019)	0.033* (0.019)	0.034* (0.019)	0.012 (0.034)	0.011 (0.034)	0.014 (0.034)
Income	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.019 (0.015)	-0.019 (0.015)	-0.018 (0.015)
Interest	0.006 (0.025)	0.007 (0.025)	0.006 (0.025)	0.034 (0.051)	0.035 (0.051)	0.032 (0.051)
Hispanic	0.127 (0.084)	0.127 (0.083)	0.129 (0.083)	0.062 (0.176)	0.067 (0.176)	0.066 (0.174)
Partisanship*AFD			0.0001 (0.0001)			
Partisanship*Image w/Crowds			-0.006 (0.032)			
Str Dem vs Str Rep*AFD					0.001 (0.0005)	
Str Dem vs Str Rep*Image w/Crowds						-0.178 (0.199)
AFD*Images w/Crowds		-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001*** (0.0005)		-0.001** (0.0005)	-0.002*** (0.001)
Partisanship*AFD*Images w/Crowds			0.0002** (0.0001)			
Str Dem vs Str Rep*AFD*Images w/Crowds					0.001** (0.0004)	
Constant	2.486*** (0.323)	2.360*** (0.332)	2.545*** (0.373)	2.769*** (0.463)	2.646*** (0.478)	2.815*** (0.487)
Additional Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	30,377	30,377	30,377	10,374	10,374	10,374

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Models are estimated using OLS at the level of areas of interest (AOI) per image per participant. Robust standard errors are clustered two-way at the participant and image level. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale (from Strong Republican = 1 to Strong Democrat = 7). Additional controls include survey wave, respondents' device, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task. AFD refers to average fixation duration (in ms).

H Attention Split: AOIs with women and children vs. AOIs with crowds

In this section, we examine the mechanism behind the difference between partisans in how they look at political images. Specifically, we investigate whether viewers divide their attention equally between two important objects—women and children and crowds—when both are present in the same image. To explore this, we conducted a third wave of the study using eye-tracking, where participants viewed and evaluated 15 images. Each image contained AOI (Area of Interest) polygons (a "polygon" refers to a defined Area of Interest (AOI) that outlines a specific region of the visual stimulus) highlighting both women and children and crowds.

The size of these polygons typically varied: crowd polygons were generally larger, often covering more background, while women and children polygons were smaller and more centrally located. The images also differed in how the two polygons were positioned. In some cases, the polygons complemented each other, while in others, the women and children polygons were enclosed within the crowd polygons. Figure H.3 illustrates examples of these different co-locations.

Figure H.3: Collocation of Women and Children and Crowds Areas of Interest (AOI) Polygons



Note: The first row shows polygon AOIs of women and children and the second row is polygon AOIs of crowds on the same images. Yellow-shaded areas mark the regions of interest.

Table H.19 shows that, on average, respondents fixate on crowds for longer than on

women and children. This effect could be influenced by the size of the polygons representing these areas of interest (AOIs), which is why we control for the proportion of the image each AOI covers. Even after accounting for this, we find that polygons depicting crowds still receive more attention (as measured by longer average fixation duration) than those showing women and children.

When interaction terms are included in the models (models 2 and 4), we find that Democrats and Republicans focus differently on crowds compared to women and children. Specifically, the strong negative interaction effect suggests that partisanship influences the Average Fixation Duration (AFD) less for crowds than it does for women and children, even when accounting for the size of the Areas of Interest (AOIs). In other words, partisanship has a greater effect on how long individuals focus on women and children than on crowds in the same image.

Table H.19: Strong Democrats (vs. Strong Republicans) Show Higher Average Fixation Duration and Focus More on Women and Children Than Crowds When Both AOIs Are Present in the Same Image

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Average Fixation Duration in m/s, OLS			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship	−2.109 (2.183)	−1.879 (2.355)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep			19.325*** (7.273)	29.275*** (5.173)
Attitudes to Immigrants	4.716 (3.743)	4.714 (3.739)	−6.710 (8.075)	−6.807 (8.008)
Female	7.548 (6.511)	7.551 (6.509)	31.470 (21.285)	31.621 (21.229)
Age	1.527 (3.573)	1.525 (3.574)	−2.182 (5.666)	−2.224 (5.676)
Education	−2.296** (1.068)	−2.291** (1.074)	−4.326 (7.494)	−4.226 (7.566)
Income	3.546*** (0.412)	3.546*** (0.413)	5.212** (2.201)	5.207** (2.215)
Interest	−3.908*** (0.624)	−3.910*** (0.624)	−13.412 (18.429)	−13.442 (18.480)
Hispanic	15.850 (13.740)	15.854 (13.734)	6.859 (30.453)	7.035 (30.353)
AOI with Crowds	−1.405 (4.010)	0.217 (5.201)	−8.917 (10.030)	−1.204 (7.667)
AOI size	1.048*** (0.003)	1.048*** (0.003)	1.225*** (0.056)	1.223*** (0.055)
Partisanship*AOI w/Crowds		−0.402 (0.298)		
Str Dem vs Str Rep*AOI w/Crowds				−17.106*** (3.540)
Constant	2.284 (23.588)	1.392 (24.266)	17.029 (124.506)	13.367 (125.893)
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	12,759	12,759	2,714	2,714

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. The models are estimated using OLS at the level of areas of interest (AOI) per image per participant, with robust standard errors clustered two ways—at the participant and participant device levels. Partisanship is measured on a 7-point scale (from Strong Republican = 1 to Strong Democrat = 7). Additional controls include survey wave, respondents' device, and participants' quality in the eye-tracking task.

Table H.20: Effect of Partisanship (measured on a 7-point scale) on Attitudes to Images that Have Both AOI with Women and/or Children and AOI with Crowds (Wave 3 Study)

	Dependent variable: Respondents' Attitudes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship	0.166*** (0.022)	0.063*** (0.023)	0.095** (0.045)	0.174*** (0.022)
Attitudes to Immigrants		0.282*** (0.036)	0.336*** (0.088)	
Female	-0.156* (0.081)	-0.170** (0.076)	-0.164** (0.076)	
Age	-0.024 (0.032)	0.001 (0.030)	0.0003 (0.030)	
Education	0.070** (0.033)	0.048 (0.031)	0.049 (0.031)	
Income	-0.020 (0.012)	-0.016 (0.011)	-0.016 (0.011)	
Interest	-0.009 (0.038)	-0.004 (0.035)	-0.0001 (0.036)	
Hispanic	-0.229 (0.150)	-0.221 (0.138)	-0.224 (0.138)	
Participant Quality Category 2	-0.136 (0.294)	-0.132 (0.241)	-0.127 (0.246)	-0.098 (0.277)
Participant Quality Category 3	-0.064 (0.307)	-0.024 (0.258)	-0.032 (0.262)	-0.034 (0.288)
Participant Quality Category 4	-0.222 (0.284)	-0.196 (0.228)	-0.202 (0.234)	-0.188 (0.264)
Participant Quality Category 5	-0.216 (0.274)	-0.229 (0.219)	-0.233 (0.225)	-0.161 (0.254)
Participant Quality Category 6	-0.423 (0.285)	-0.429* (0.230)	-0.432* (0.235)	-0.370 (0.266)
Participant Device - Tablet	0.010 (0.080)	-0.024 (0.076)	-0.025 (0.076)	-0.007 (0.081)
Partisanship* Attitudes to Immigrants			-0.013 (0.017)	
Constant	3.752*** (0.322)	3.370*** (0.284)	3.230*** (0.342)	3.573*** (0.263)
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	9,102	9,102	9,102	9,102

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs is a response to a question "What are your attitudes towards the subjects portrayed on this image", measured on a 7-point scale from Extremely Negative (1) to Extremely Positive (7). The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered two-way on respondent and image level. Strong Republicans vs Strong Democrats is a binary variable with Strong Democrats taking value of 1 and Strong Republicans - 0.

Table H.21: Effect of String Democrats (vs Strong Republicans) on Attitudes to Images that Have Both AOI with Women and/or Children and AOI with Crowds (Wave 3 Study)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Respondents' Attitudes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Str Dem vs Str Rep	0.851*** (0.177)	−0.080 (0.270)	0.334 (0.505)	0.913*** (0.178)
Attitudes to Immigrants		0.368*** (0.082)	0.462*** (0.147)	
Female	0.055 (0.190)	0.176 (0.186)	0.186 (0.186)	
Age	−0.010 (0.068)	0.005 (0.061)	0.005 (0.060)	
Education	0.072 (0.073)	0.066 (0.067)	0.068 (0.067)	
Income	−0.025 (0.030)	−0.030 (0.027)	−0.024 (0.027)	
Interest	0.096 (0.108)	0.101 (0.101)	0.097 (0.101)	
Hispanic	0.051 (0.350)	−0.056 (0.305)	−0.061 (0.305)	
Participant Quality Category 2	0.049 (0.686)	−0.075 (0.485)	−0.104 (0.513)	0.012 (0.700)
Participant Quality Category 3	0.207 (0.763)	−0.031 (0.538)	−0.108 (0.556)	0.191 (0.774)
Participant Quality Category 4	−0.200 (0.679)	−0.315 (0.482)	−0.329 (0.505)	−0.173 (0.691)
Participant Quality Category 5	−0.224 (0.654)	−0.247 (0.444)	−0.277 (0.471)	−0.249 (0.663)
Participant Quality Category 6	−0.815 (0.668)	−0.767* (0.454)	−0.784 (0.482)	−0.806 (0.683)
Participant Device - Tablet	−0.049 (0.187)	−0.042 (0.179)	−0.050 (0.179)	−0.093 (0.162)
Str Dem vs Str Rep* Attitudes to Immigrants			−0.162 (0.184)	
Constant	3.355*** (0.888)	2.742*** (0.745)	2.586*** (0.803)	3.895*** (0.658)
Image FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,966	1,966	1,966	1,966

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table reports coefficients for all the predictors that have been included in the regression models. DVs is a response to a question "What are your attitudes towards the subjects portrayed on this image", measured on a 7-point scale from Extremely Negative (1) to Extremely Positive (7). The reported coefficients are estimated with OLS models with a full set of control variables, standard errors are clustered two-way on respondent and image level. Strong Republicans vs Strong Democrats is a binary variable with Strong Democrats taking value of 1 and Strong Republicans - 0.

I Lasso Regularization

Lasso regression is known for shrinking coefficients of less important variables towards zero, effectively performing variable selection. When a coefficient is close to or exactly zero, it suggests the variable does not contribute significantly to predicting the outcome.

Table I.22: Influential Variables from Lasso Model. DV: AFD

Variable	Coefficient
(Intercept)	217.66
Partisanship	2.11
Attitudes to Immigrants	-1.48
Gender	-10.69
Age	-2.54
Education	-0.69
Income	1.15
Interest	1.59
Hispanic	1.69

Note: The coefficients vector contains the named variables with their coefficient values. The fact that Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants have non-zero coefficients means that Lasso has retained these variables, indicating they are likely influential in predicting AFD

Table I.23: Influential Variables from Lasso Model. DV: AFD

Variable	Coefficient
(Intercept)	231.76
Partisanship	-0.96
Attitudes to Immigrants	-6.49
Gender	-10.99
Age	-2.57
Education	-0.72
Income	1.13
Interest	1.10
Hispanic	1.65
Partisanship*Attitudes to Immigrants	1.18

Note: The coefficients vector contains the named variables with their coefficient values. The fact that Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants and their interaction term have non-zero coefficients means that Lasso has retained these variables, indicating they are likely influential in predicting AFD

Table I.24: Influential Variables from Lasso Model. DV: Respondents' Attitudes

Variable	Coefficient
(Intercept)	2.72
Partisanship	0.10
Attitudes to Immigrants	0.26
Gender	0.02
Age	-0.01
Education	0.03
Income	-0.01
Interest	0.01
Hispanic	0.09

Note: The coefficients vector contains the named variables with their coefficient values. The fact that Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants have non-zero coefficients means that Lasso has retained these variables, indicating they are likely influential in predicting Respondents' Attitudes

Table I.25: Influential Variables from Lasso Model. DV: Respondents' Attitudes

Variable	Coefficient
(Intercept)	2.81
Partisanship	0.08
Attitudes to Immigrants	0.23
Gender	0.02
Age	-0.01
Education	0.03
Income	-0.01
Interest	0.01
Hispanic	0.09
Partisanship*Attitudes to Immigrants	0.01

Note: The coefficients vector contains the named variables with their coefficient values. The fact that Partisanship and Attitudes to Immigrants as well as their interaction term have non-zero coefficients means that Lasso has retained these variables, indicating they are likely influential in predicting Respondents' Attitudes

J Full Questionnaire

Consent Form I

The purpose of this research study, titled XXX aims to explore how individuals visually perceive images that depict political issues. You are being invited to participate in this research study based on the following criteria: you are over 18 years old, reside in the United States, and possess fluency in written and spoken English.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the option to decline participation if you choose to do so. Alternatively, you may initially agree to participate and later change your mind. Additionally, you have the flexibility to discontinue filling out the questionnaire at any time. Please note that if you decide to withdraw from the survey, none of your answers will be recorded. You retain the right to withdraw from participation even after providing consent.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be requested to complete an online survey. Following that, you will be redirected to an eye-tracking platform where you will view several images and respond to related questions. Your involvement in this study is estimated to require approximately 15 minutes of your time.

You have the option to decline to answer any question that you do not wish to respond to. Moreover, you may choose to stop participating in the survey at any point. Please be aware that only individuals aged 18 or older are eligible to participate. If you are under 18 years old, we kindly ask you to discontinue your participation at this time.

The potential risks associated with your participation in this research primarily involve a breach of confidentiality. To safeguard participants against the risk of breach of confidentiality, all opinions expressed during the survey will be used in a generalized form and only after undergoing computer processing. All information will be stored in an anonymized format without any identifying details.

To protect your confidentiality, no questions will require you to provide information that

could be used to identify you. The risk of disclosing personal information is minimal and is no greater than when using the Internet. Anonymous responses will be securely stored on a password-protected computer in a password-protected location. No identifiable information will be collected, and the research data will not be associated with your name. Furthermore, the researcher(s) will not share your information with any third party. Your name or any other private information will not be utilized in any publications pertaining to this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, please reach out to XXX (project principal investigator) at XXX or XXX. This study has received approval from XXX. If you have any inquiries or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, please contact the IRB office. The IRB administration can be reached at XXX or XXX.

You will be able to participate in the survey if you use a desktop device such as a laptop/PC/Macbook or a tablet!

The IRB Exempt XXX.

Consent Form II on Eye Tracking

There will be an eye-tracking component to this study, which will be conducted on a separate platform.

You will be redirected to the eye-tracking platform after completing the survey part.

The eye-tracking platform doesn't record any visual data (videos, images, sound) while the webcam is on. The platform doesn't need to send any video or images to external servers, as everything happens in a participant's web browser. The calibration process system learns what a participant's face looks like while she is looking at certain parts of the screen. The algorithms that the platform uses can predict gaze point position just by observing your face, and it all happens live in the web browser. No data is being sent anywhere else.

Since we are testing a new eye-tracking tool, it is important for participants to adhere strictly to the platform usability requirements to ensure accurate gazing results.

In this study, we'll ask you to participate in an eye-tracking session using your webcam.

Please:

- use a **desktop device** like a **laptop/PC/Mac(book)** or a **Tablet**,
- use **Chrome web browser**,
- make sure you have a **good quality, working webcam plugged in**,
- make a **webcam very steady** and below your eyes level,
- make sure you're in **good lighting conditions** - the light source is in front of you and illuminates your face evenly,
- don't rush through the calibration process,
- if you wear glasses, make sure there are no reflections on them,
- try to **keep your head still** during the whole test,
- if you're using a laptop, make sure it's **plugged in**.
- (for website testing) please, **share your screen or browser window** (NOT a tab) when asked.

It is crucial to follow the platform's requirements, otherwise, your results will not be valid and you will not be paid.

By clicking "I consent", you confirm that you agree with the conditions and are ready to proceed.

General Questionnaire

1. What is your current age?

- Under 18 (excluded)
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

2. In which state of the United States do you live? [Drop-down list with all the US states]

3. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a DEMOCRAT, a REPUBLICAN, an INDEPENDENT, or other?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party (specify)

4. In the survey flow, if DEMOCRAT: Would you call yourself a STRONG Democrat or a NOT VERY STRONG Democrat?

- Strong Democrat
- Not very strong Democrat

5. In the survey flow, if REPUBLICAN: Would you call yourself a STRONG Republican or a NOT VERY STRONG Republican?

- Strong Republican
- Not very strong Republican

6. In the survey flow, if INDEPENDENT: Would you call yourself a LEANING DEMOCRAT, LEANING REPUBLICAN or INDEPENDENT?

- Leaning Democrat
- Leaning Republican
- Independent

7. How would you describe your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other

8. Please check one or more categories below to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Multi-racial
- Other

9. Please indicate your annual household income

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$70,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 or \$149,000
- More than \$150,000

10. Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin or descent?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

11. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate's degree in college (2-year)

- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

12. How interested are you in what is going on in the government and politics?

- Not interested at all
- Somewhat not interested
- Indifferent
- Somewhat interested
- Strongly interested

13. We'd like you to rate how you feel towards both Democrats and Republicans on a scale of 0 to 100, which we call a "feeling thermometer." On this feeling thermometer scale, ratings between 0 and 49 degrees mean that you feel unfavorable and cold (with 0 being the most unfavorable/coldest). Ratings between 51 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm (with 100 being the most favorable/warmest). A rating of 50 means you have no feelings one way or the other.

- Democrats - sliding scale from 0 to 100
- Republicans - sliding scale from 0 to 100

14. When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as liberal, conservative, or neither liberal nor conservative?

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Slightly conservative
- Moderate; middle of the road

- Slightly liberal
 - Somewhat liberal
 - Very liberal
15. Do you oppose or support [the following statements]... ? (grid question with a 5-point: Strongly oppose, Somewhat oppose, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat support, Strongly support):
- Sending unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States back to their home country
 - Race-based affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of African American and Hispanic students on college
 - Same-sex marriage
 - When the government restricts right to an abortion
 - More state-sponsored programs that improve access to college education

Attention Check

Please click NEXT to proceed to the next part of the survey.

We will now show you a series of images that were used in different news stories. We ask you to answer a few questions regarding your perceptions of each of those photos.

Now we will show you some pictures. For each picture, you need to select ALL the objects shown in it. [Three test images follow here]

Redirect to the Eye Tracking Session Prompt

Please click on the link to proceed to the next part of the survey: [CONTINUE SURVEY](#)

We will now show you a series of images that were used in different news stories about immigration. We ask you to answer a few questions regarding your perceptions of each of those photos.

Eye Tracking Task

[Each Respondent receives 16/31/15 (depending on the wave of the study) images. Each respondent is given 5 seconds to gaze on the image, followed by 1 second break and redirect to a questionnaire about that image. Each image evaluation has the same structure and is presented in the following way]

1. Would you say that this image portrays the subject(s) in this picture in a negative or positive light?
 - 1 - Extremely Negative
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 - Neither positive nor negative
 - 5
 - 6
 - 7 - Extremely positive
 - Don't know / Not applicable