

Partisan Vision? Do Partisans See Differently?

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Abstract

Partisanship tints our worldview sharply in the US. But do our priors cause us to *see* things differently (Chabris and Simons 2010)? We test the hypotheses in three different experiments and find consistently that partisanship at worst mildly colors our view.

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1 Data and Research Design

(Chabris and Simons 2010)

To assess how partisans ‘see’, we surveyed a nationally representative sample of people selected by YouGov (Rivers 2007) as part of a Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) module. We used a small vignette to check whether partisans prefer a Pareto optimal policy or not. In particular, we showed Democrats Figure 2 and Republicans 4 and asked them: "Which plan do you support? — Smith Plan or Williams Plan." We randomized the order of responses. We expect most people to choose the Pareto optimal policy—the Smith Plan.

2 Results

As Table ?? shows, two-third of the Democrats and three-fourths of the Republicans choose the Williams Plan rather than the Smith Plan.

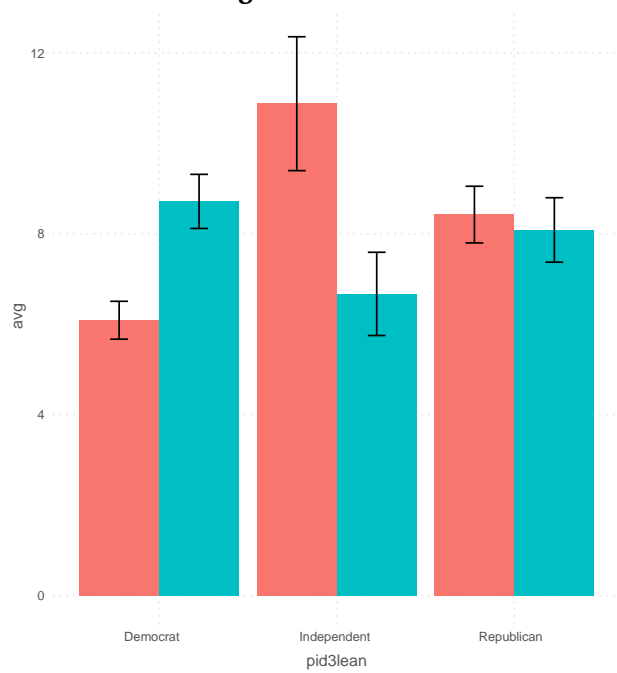
pid3lean	Error_split	avg	med	n
Democrat	DEM	9.7	10.0	334
Democrat	REP	9.9	10.0	324
Independent	DEM	9.7	10.0	94
Independent	REP	9.2	9.0	110
Republican	DEM	8.4	8.0	253
Republican	REP	8.1	8.0	252

Table 1: Average Number of Errors

pid3lean	UCMParking_split	avg	med	n
Democrat	Democratic Party	6.1	5.0	211
Democrat	Republican Party	8.7	6.0	212
Independent	Democratic Party	10.9	7.0	57
Independent	Republican Party	6.7	5.0	61
Republican	Democratic Party	8.4	6.0	181
Republican	Republican Party	8.1	5.0	163

Table 2: Average Number of Errors

Figure 1: Mistakes



References

Chabris, Christopher F and Daniel J Simons. 2010. *The invisible gorilla: And other ways our intuitions deceive us*. Harmony.

Rivers, Douglas. 2007. Sampling for web surveys. In *Joint Statistical Meetings*.

Figure 2: Share of Black Criminals in Law & Order and the Real World

YouGov

We want to see how good people are at catching mistakes. Please read the following text and tell us how many errors you find.

"Together we are the democratic party. Were fighting for a better, farer, and brighter future for every Americans: rolling up our sleeves, empowering grassroots voters, and organizing everywhere to take our country back. Its more important then ever that we continue our work of electing democrats up and down the ballott. We believe in the American people and the promise of America. Their is nothing America can't do if we all works together. If you love this country, please tell your friends and family to go out and vote in this election. The future is brite! Lets go!!! We are in the final count down."

How many errors did you count?



Figure 3: Mistakes

YouGov

We want to see how good people are at catching mistakes. Please read the following text and tell us how many errors you find.

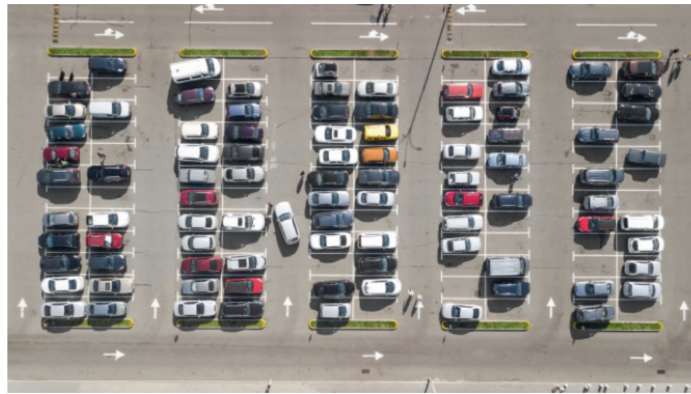
"Together we are the republican party. Were fighting for a better, farer, and brighter future for every Americans: rolling up our sleeves, empowering grassroots voters, and organizing everywhere to take our country back. Its more important then ever that we continue our work of electing republicans up and down the ballott. We believe in the American people and the promise of America. Their is nothing America can't do if we all works together. If you love this country, please tell your friends and family to go out and vote in this election. The future is brite! Lets go!!! We are in the final count down."

How many errors did you count?



Figure 4: Parking Lot

YouGov



We want to see how much attention people are paying in answering questions. How many cars would you say are poorly parked in this picture of the parking lot outside a Democratic Party meeting last year?

