Undue hate: a behavioral economic analysis of affective polarization

Dan Stone

Associate Professor of Economics, Bowdoin College

Amherst Economics Seminar, 9/15/22

What are the biggest issues in the US right now?

POLITICS

Poll: Abortion and inflation collide as top issues in midterm elections

September 8, 2022 · 5:01 AM ET

DOMENICO MONTANARO

Political polarization is really our biggest problem

- Because it prevents us from solving other problems (climate change, healthcare, Covid) ...

- *and* causes new problems (big and small)

bakedbyrylie

ABC15 ARIZONA | AT 10

FIGHT BREAKS OUT ON VALLEY FLIGHT
AFTER PASSENGER REFUSES TO WEAR MASK

abc15 ARIZONA

CAMPAIGN

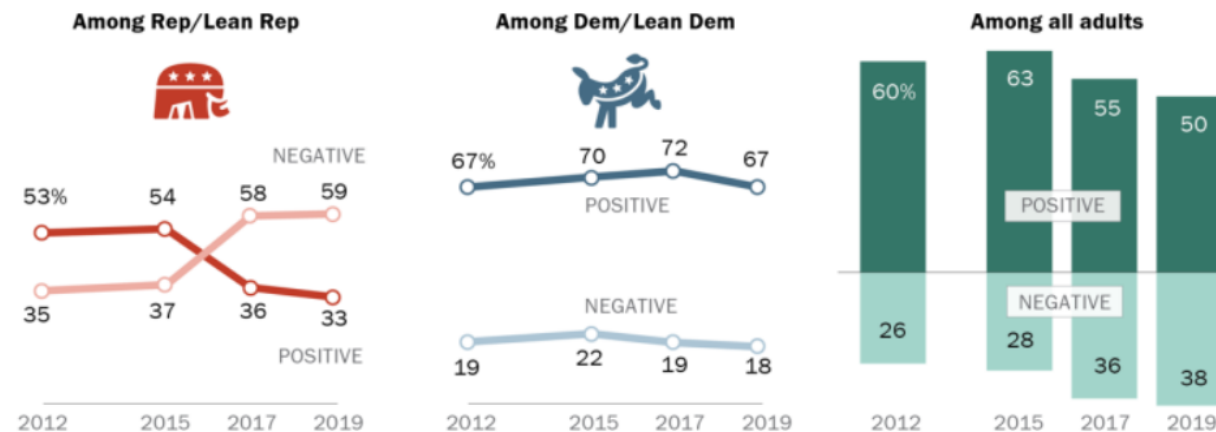**Threats to democracy top list of issues facing US: poll**

BY ZACH SCHONFELD - 08/22/22 9:54 AM ET

SHARE   TWEET

Higher education is not immune

Increase in the share of Americans saying colleges have a negative effect on the U.S. is driven by Republicans' changing views

% saying colleges and universities have a positive/negative effect on the way things are going in the country

Among Rep/Lean Rep

NEGATIVE
53%   54   58   59

POSITIVE
35   37   36   33

2012   2015   2017   2019

Among Dem/Lean Dem

POSITIVE
67%   70   72   67

NEGATIVE
19   22   19   18

2012   2015   2017   2019

Among all adults

POSITIVE
60%   63   55   50

NEGATIVE
26   28   36   38

2012   2015   2017   2019

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center surveys of U.S. adults conducted by telephone July 10-15, 2019, June 8-18, 2017, Sept. 16-Oct. 4, 2015, and Feb. 8-12, 2012.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

University System of Georgia Eviscerates Tenure

In an unprecedented action, the board of regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) in October voted to adopt changes to its post-tenure review policy that make it possible to fire

How are we polarized?

- Not so much policy views/ideologies. 2 other types of polarization are better documented

- 1. Sorting (we used to have liberal Rs and conservative Ds…)

- *2. Affective polarization*: polarization in feelings

- Growth in *dislike* of 'out-party' especially

Cold feelings toward the 'out-party' have doubled since 1980
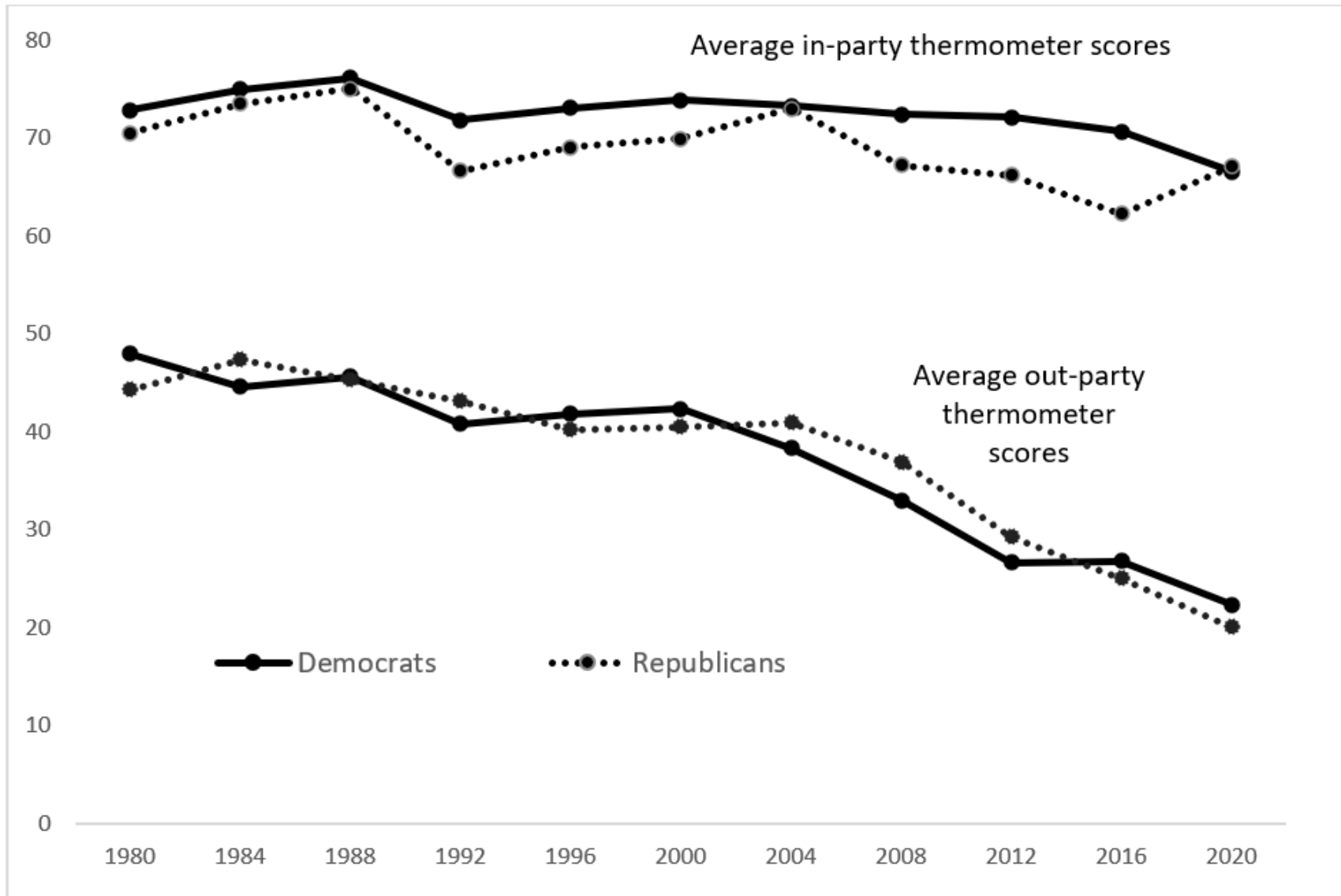
0 = coldest feelings; 100 = warmest

Are we *too* affectively polarized?

- What would that even mean? And how to show it? And why would it be true?

- I've been working in this area for a while now - so I wrote a book! (out May 2023, MIT Press)

- On how cognitive biases make us feel *too much* dislike toward those we disagree with

(Why a book?)

- Hoping to have broader impact – 'academic-trade crossover' – no pre-reqs to read it
- (So this talk will be relatively informal too)
- Fewer 'referee constraints' (still peer-reviewed but much less intense)

Analisa Packham @analisapackham · 5h

Sorry I broke down over after five hours of trying to write that footnote that R2 wanted, that wasn't very girl boss in STEM of me

Why is an economist writing about feelings?

- "Feelings as beliefs" (that can be wrong) new and hopefully useful new angle on the topic

- And affective polarization is inefficient!

- Wastes a ton of time, energy, prevents a lot of Pareto improvements

Prior lit
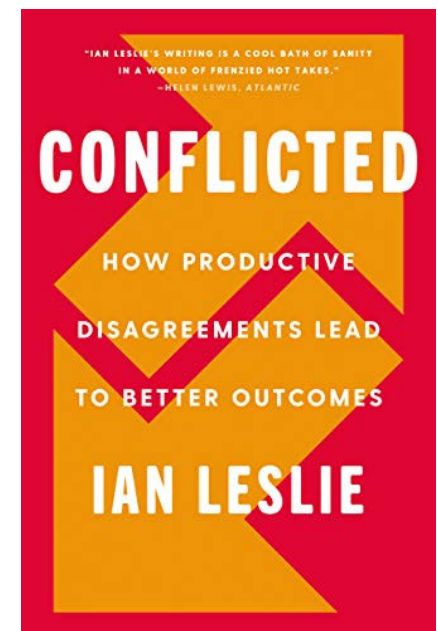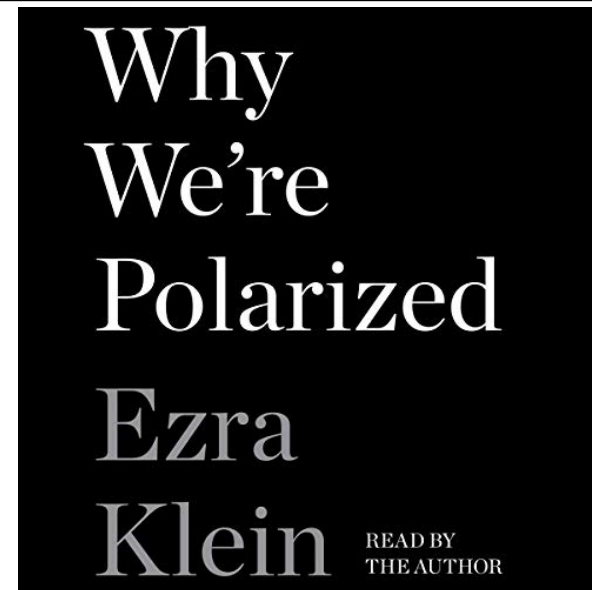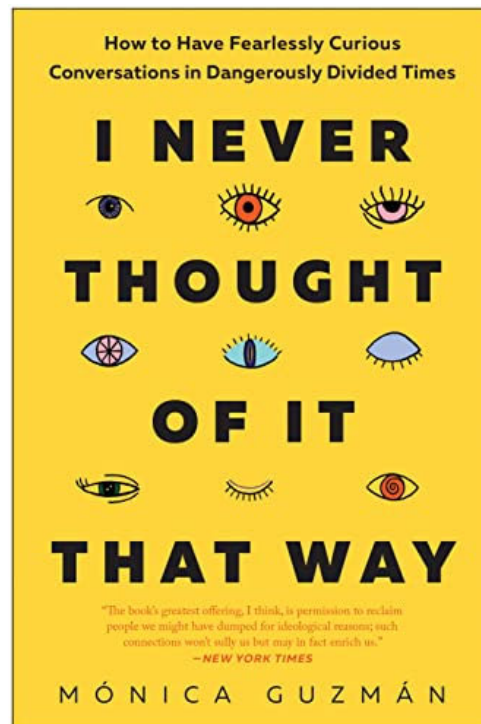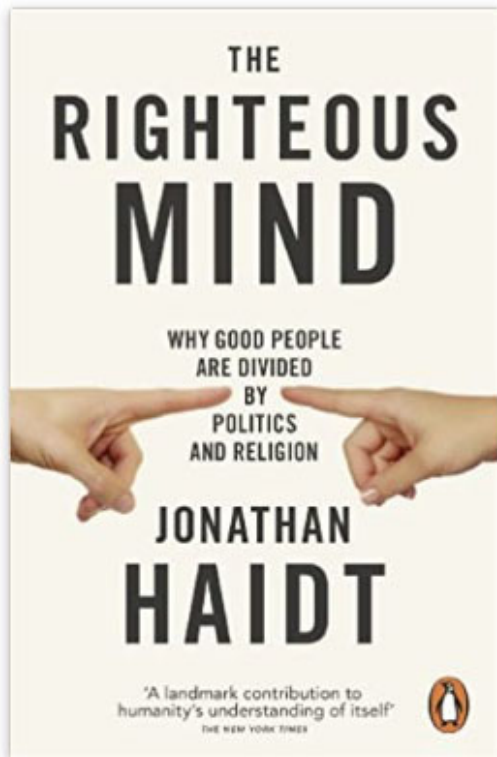
- Chs 1-2: Theory and evidence

- Chs 3-6: Explanations

- Ch 7: Implications

Ch 1: Theory

- Why do people sometimes dislike other people?

- Usually: beliefs they have 'bad' character traits

- Traits = unobserved features that have some causal effect on past & future actions

- (Yes, informal – there will be a couple definitions but they don't rely on formal definition of trait)

- We form beliefs about these traits based on our observations of their past actions

- And we like people better who we think have "good" traits because we think they're more likely to take "good" actions in the future

- "good" in quotes because I'll be completely agnostic about what this is

But do we form accurate (Bayesian) beliefs?)

- Super simple illustrative model:
- You only care about 2 actions: giving or not giving to charity
- 2 types: Generous (G), Ungenerous (U), 50-50 prior
- G people give 75% of the time
- U people give 10% of the time
- Like/dislike = thermometer score 'warmth' feeling [0-100] = your belief that they are G (could be belief they give in future)

- Bayesian Pr(Generous|Give once) = 0.88

- So: if your therm score > 88 after seeing them give once: you like them too much

- If your therm score < 88: you like them too little

- Your feelings can be *objectively* wrong even with *subjective* criteria

Definition: Person P is subject to *biased dislike* toward person Q if P's thermometer score for Q would increase if P were to hold Bayesian beliefs about Q's action probabilities given P's information and priors.

- Simple - but that's the point

- Pros: agnostic about good/bad actions and which actions even matter

- Cons: What's Bayesian? (How can P even know? How can anyone know?) Any empirical content here?

What's non-Bayesian?

- 2 (informal) tell-tale signs:

- Strong reactions to limited info
- (hating someone after observing them for 5 minutes)

- Substantial inaccuracies in beliefs despite lots of info
- (since Bayesian beliefs – usually? ☺ - converge to truth)

Definition: A person is subject to *affective polarization bias* if they experience biased dislike toward another person, or members of a group, as a direct or indirect result of disagreement with the other person or group.

- Anytime two groups or individuals dislike each more than they should due to disagreement – more than a Bayesian would given the info conveyed by the disagreement — they are *too affectively polarized*

- 'Disagreement' here is admittedly not formalized… I am hoping for 'common sense interpretation'

Ch 2: Evidence of APB

- Empirical strategy: look at accuracy of partisans' beliefs about out-party (relative to accuracy for in-party)

- Yes it's possible inaccuracy is due to Bayesian/rational interpretation of available info – but I doubt it!
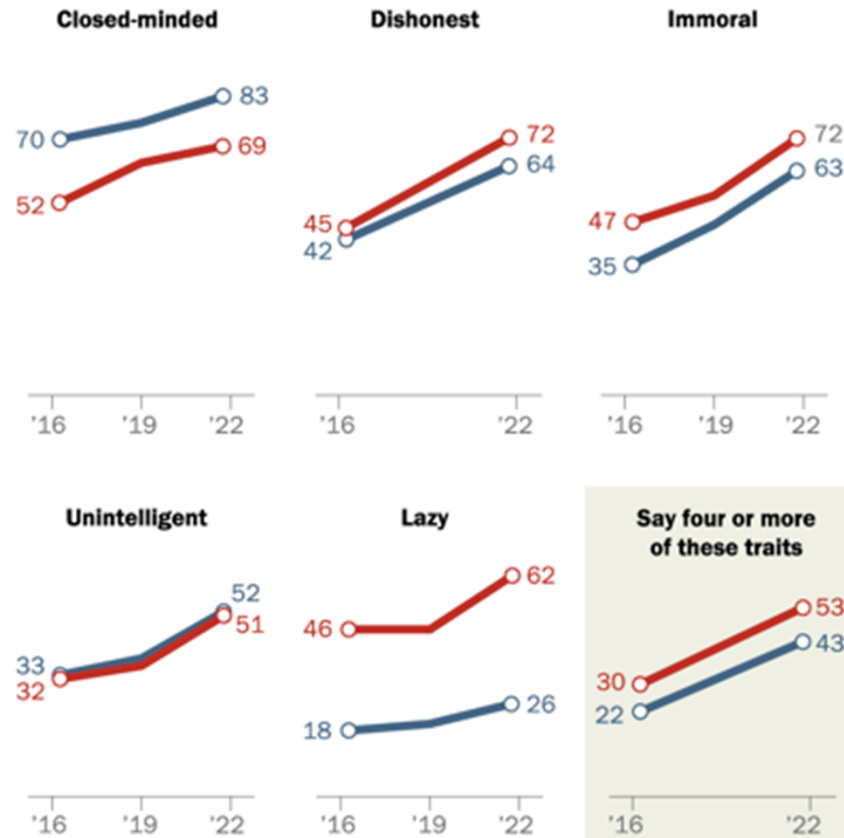
5 types of evidence

- 1. Stated beliefs about traits
- 2. Over-estimation of polarization on issues ('false polarization')
- 3. Over-estimation of demographic differences
- 4. Over-estimation of out-party's dislike toward in-party ('false meta-perceptions')
- 5. Over-estimation of "bad" actions in experiments

1. Changes in stated beliefs about traits

Growing shares of both Republicans and Democrats say members of the other party are more immoral, dishonest, closed-minded than other Americans

*% who say members of the **other** party are a lot/somewhat more ____ compared to other Americans*

━ Republicans say Democrats are more ...
━ Democrats say Republicans are more ...

Closed-minded

83
70
69
52

'16   '19   '22

Dishonest

72
64
45
42

'16   '22

Immoral

72
63
47
35

'16   '19   '22

Unintelligent

52
51
33
32

'16   '19   '22

Lazy

62
46
26
18

'16   '19   '22

**Say four or more of these traits**

53
43
30
22

'16   '22

Note: Partisans do not include those who lean to each party.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 27-July 4, 2022.
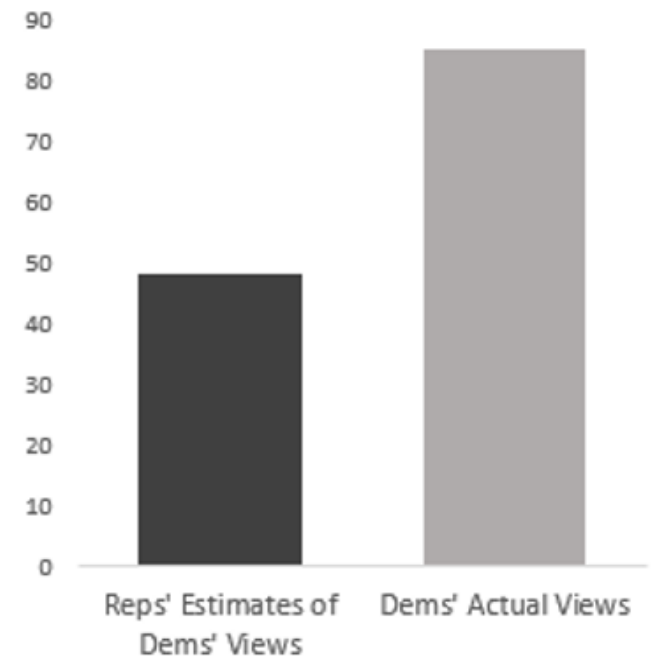
2. False polarization: we think their policy views are more extreme than they are

"I think President Obama is the most radical president this nation's ever seen." —Ted Cruz

"Racism still exists in America"

Dems' Estimates of Reps' Views | Reps' Actual Views
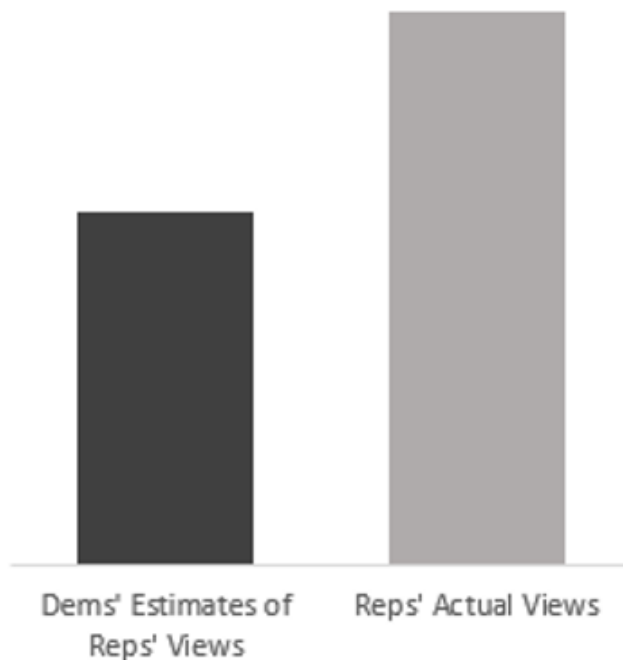
"Most police are bad people" (disagree)

Reps' Estimates of Dems' Views | Dems' Actual Views

Many psych and political sci papers showing this...

- From econ:

Issue Salience and Political Stereotypes
Pedro Bordalo, Marco Tabellini, and David Y. Yang
NBER Working Paper No. 27194
May 2020, Revised March 2021
JEL No. D03,D8,D91

ABSTRACT

US voters exaggerate the differences in attitudes held by Republicans and Democrats on a range of socioeconomic and political issues, and greater perceived polarization is associated with greater political engagement and affective polarization. In this paper, we examine the drivers of such perceived partisan differences. We find that a model of stereotypes, where distortions are stronger for issues that are more salient to voters, captures important features of the data. First, perceived partisan differences are predictable from the actual differences across parties, in particular from the relative prevalence of extreme attitudes. Second, perceived partisan differences are larger on issues that individuals consider more important. Third, issue salience

3. False stereotypes

This type of stereotyping was indeed shown by Ahler and Sood (2018), who found that partisans on both sides unduly stereotype both sides—especially the other side. For example, Republicans estimated that 35.7% of Democrats identify as atheist or agnostic while Democrats estimated this figure to be 24.5% (the correct figure was 8.7%). Democrats estimated that over 44.1% of Republicans earn over $250,000 per year, while Republicans estimated this to be 33.3%. The correct figure here was 2.2%. Ahler and Sood show these errors are robust to providing respondents with monetary incentives for accuracy, and that respondents who make larger errors tend to feel greater negative affect toward the out-party.

4. False meta-perceptions: we think they dislike us more than they really do

"Hatred of liberals is all that's left of conservatism." – headline from *The Washington Post*

The general fault in our fault lines

Kai Ruggeri ✉, Bojana Većkalov, Lana Bojanić, Thomas L. Andersen, Sarah Ashcroft-Jones, Nélida Ayacaxli, Paula Barea-Arroyo, Mari Louise Berge, Ludvig D. Bjørndal, Aslı Bursalıoğlu, Vanessa Bühler, Martin Čadek, Melis Çetinçelik, Georgia Clay, Anna Cortijos-Bernabeu, Kaja Damnjanović, Tatianna M. Dugue, Maya Esberg, Celia Esteban-Serna, Ezra N. Felder, Maja Friedemann, Darianna I. Frontera-Villanueva, Patricia Gale, Eduardo Garcia-Garzon, … Tomas Folke   + Show authors

Abstract

Pervading global narratives suggest that political polarization is increasing, yet the accuracy of such group meta-perceptions has been drawn into question. A recent US study suggests that these beliefs are inaccurate and drive polarized beliefs about out-groups. However, it also found that informing people of inaccuracies reduces those negative beliefs. In this work, we explore whether these results generalize to other countries. To achieve this, we replicate two of the original experiments with 10,207 participants across 26 countries. We focus on local group divisions, which we refer to as fault lines. We find broad generalizability for both inaccurate meta-perceptions and reduced negative motive attribution through a simple disclosure intervention. We conclude that inaccurate and negative group meta-perceptions are exhibited in myriad contexts and that informing individuals of their misperceptions can yield positive benefits for intergroup relations. Such generalizability highlights a robust

5. False beliefs about actions in lab studies: we think they act more selfishly than they really do

- And most affectively polarized people have most biased beliefs

Tappin and McKay (2019)

- Variant of social dilemma ...

- ~59% of Ds and Rs chose Option 3 = "collective interest" (summer 2016, yes Mturk)

Beliefs about % choosing Option 3 ("Collective interest")

Democratic participants' beliefs about other Democrats' choices	47.3%
Democratic participants' beliefs about Republicans' choices	29.6%
Republican participants' beliefs about other Republicans' choices	37.3%
Republican participants' beliefs about Democrats' choices	42.9%

Beliefs about % choosing Option 3 ("Collective interest")

	Participants who played collective interest themselves	
Democratic participants' beliefs about other Democrats' choices	69.2%	
Democratic participants' beliefs about Republicans' choices	35.4%	
Republican participants' beliefs about other Republicans' choices	58.6%	
Republican participants' beliefs about Democrats' choices	49.3%	

Beliefs about % choosing Option 3 ("Collective interest")

	Participants who played collective interest themselves	
Democratic participants' beliefs about other Democrats' choices	69.2%	
Democratic participants' beliefs about Republicans' choices	35.4%	
Republican participants' beliefs about other Republicans' choices	58.6%	
Republican participants' beliefs about Democrats' choices	49.3%	

Tappin and McKay also asked about which moral values...

- Participants found most important *and* asked for opinions on each party's

Beliefs about % choosing Option 3 ("Collective interest")

	Participants who played collective interest themselves and were morally polarized
Democratic participants' beliefs about other Democrats' choices	71.1%
Democratic participants' beliefs about Republicans' choices	28.9%
Republican participants' beliefs about other Republicans' choices	70.1%
Republican participants' beliefs about Democrats' choices	38.7%

Dimant (r & r, Mgmt Science)

Trump Haters

Beliefs About Other's Contribution (%)

Trump Lovers

Beliefs About Other's Contribution (%)

Matched with partner who has a contrary opinion about Trump
Matched with partner who has an aligned opinion about Trump

The political trolley problem (Barber and Davis, 2019)

- Hypothetical – but more intense - stakes

- ~90% of respondents flip switch ("kill 1 to save 5") without partisan identities
- ~60% (of both parties) flip to save out-partisans

- Barber and Davis didn't look at beliefs... I incentivized Prolific participants to guess:
- Ds predictions of who'd flip to save out-partisans: 58% of Ds, 48% of Rs
- Rs: predicted 53% of Rs flip, 48% of Ds

- Of those who said they'd flip *and* in top half of polarization distribution:
- Ds predicted 66% of Ds flip, 53% of Rs
- Rs predicted 64% of Rs flip, 53% of Ds

Asymmetry?

- A lot of evidence is pretty symmetric... but I'm not denying asymmetries

Evidence from non-political settings?

- Friends, couples, colleagues—good people do reconcile

- Fictional conflict so often driven by misunderstanding

Chs 3-6: Explanations

- Ch 3: general biases
- Ch 4: general disagreements
- Ch 5: strategy and repeated interaction
- Ch 6: information

Ch 3: General biases

- Social identity/anti-out group bias (focus of prior lit)
- Motivated reasoning
- Confirmation bias (motivated)
- Confirmation bias (unmotivated)
- Naïve realism (overestimation of objectivity)
- WYSIATI (neglect of unobserved info)
- Lack of intellectual humility (aversion to admitting being wrong or even just uncertain)
- Coarse/binary thinking (complexity/nuance neglect)
- Overprecision (overconfidence in beliefs)

Ch 3: General biases
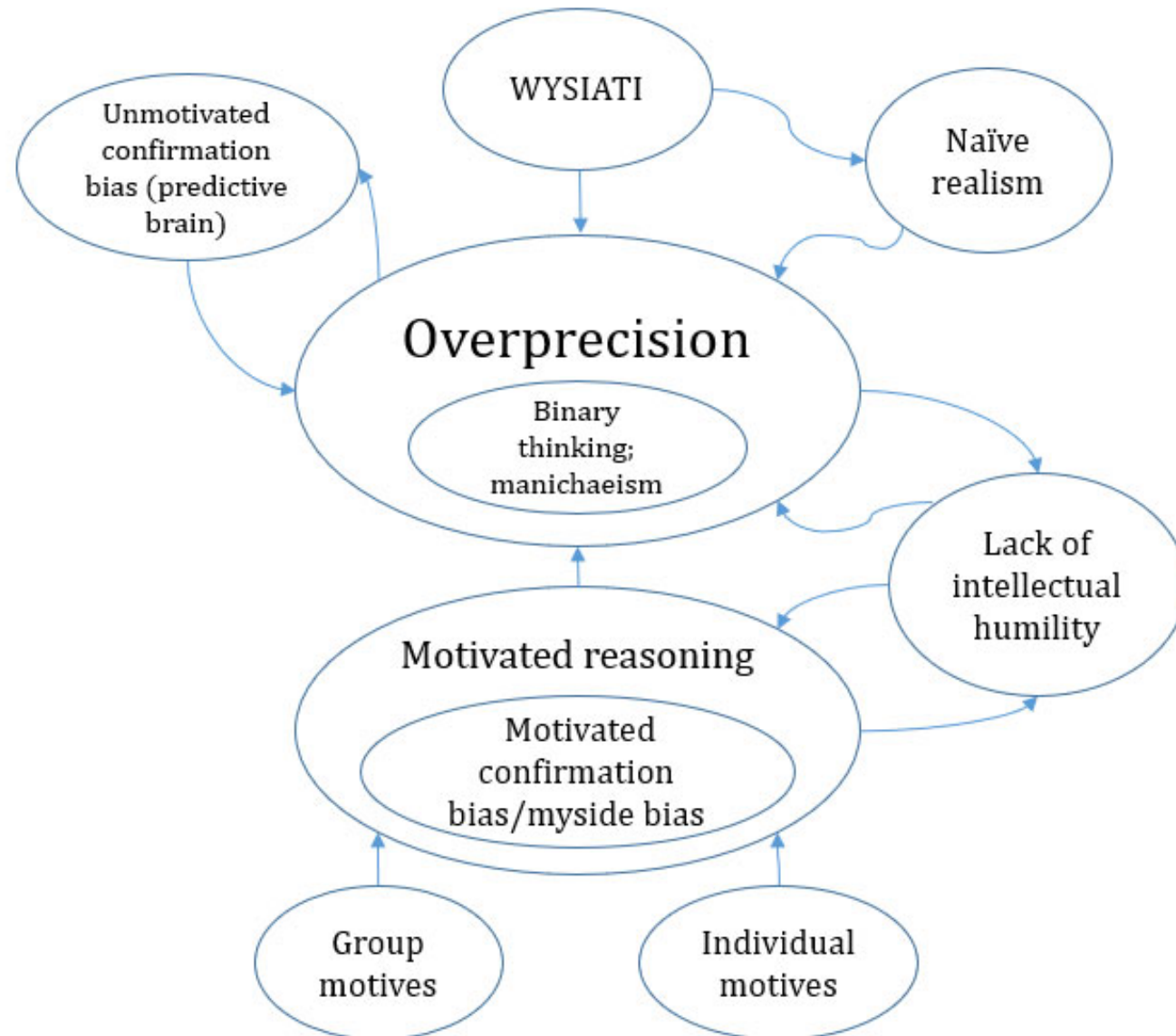
Ch 4: Tastes and truth

- Why do disagreements of all types tend to be disagreeable? (too disagreeable?)

- 1. Naïve realism

- 2. False consensus

1. Naïve realism

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From the Fundamental Attribution Error to the Truly Fundamental Attribution Error and Beyond: My Research Journey

Lee Ross

relevance to creation of such enmity and mistrust. The result has been a series of articles on "naive realism," and what I now consider the *truly fundamental* attribution error—the illusion of personal objectivity.

Naïve realism (overconfidence in our objectivity)

- Makes us think our tastes & beliefs are universal truths

- When disagreement is due to different beliefs: we'll over-infer others have wrong beliefs

- And thus over-infer that they have poor judgment

- And when it's unclear if disagreement is due to different beliefs or different tastes –

- we'll over-infer that it's due to different beliefs…

- and again, then over-infer poor judgment on their part

Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) famously refers to "moral taste buds"
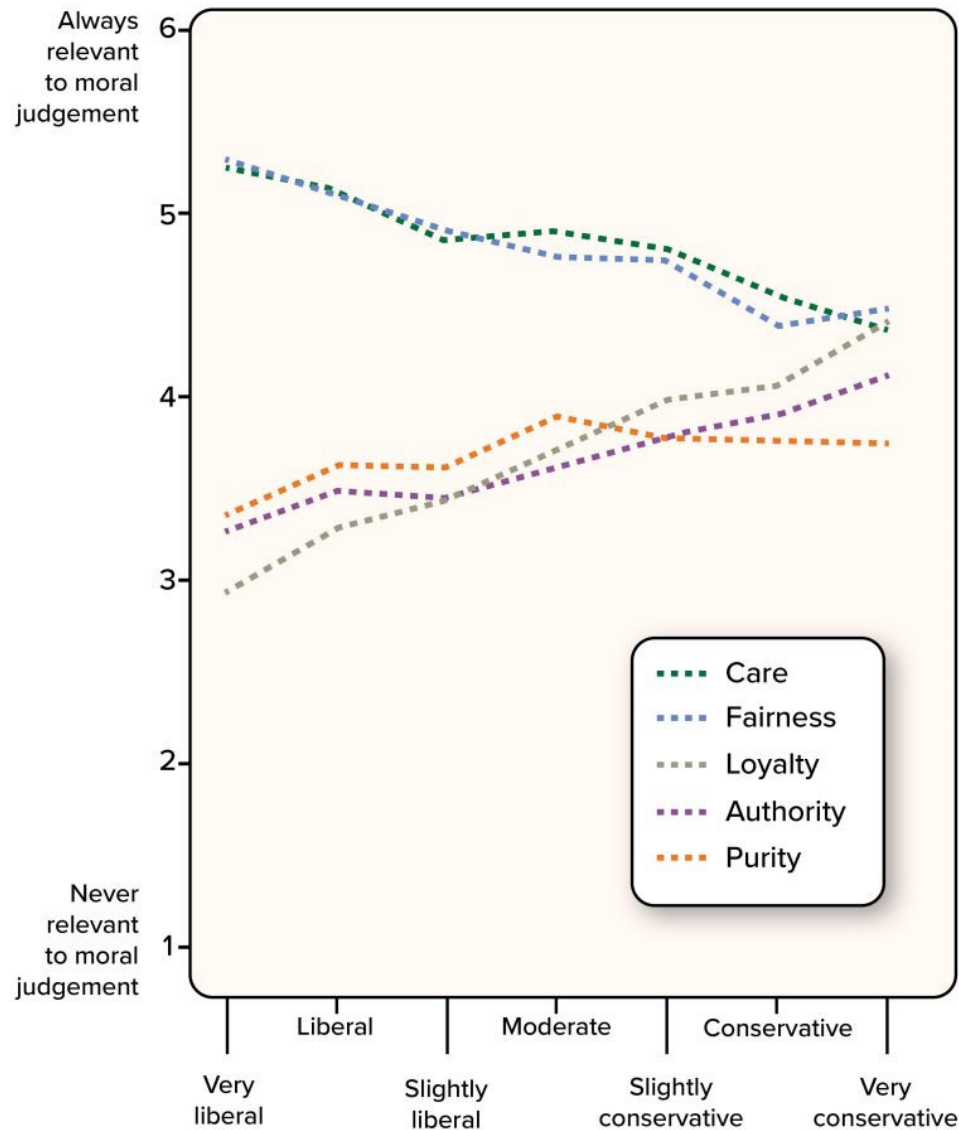
Support for MFT from econ

Moral Values and Voting

Benjamin Enke

PDF | PDF PLUS | Abstract | Full Text | Supplemental Material

Abstract

This paper studies the supply of and demand for moral values in recent US presidential elections. Using a combination of large-scale survey data and text analyses, I find support for the hypothesis that both voters and politicians exhibit heterogeneity in their emphasis on universalist relative to communal moral values and that politicians' vote shares partly reflect the extent to which their moral appeal matches the values of the electorate. Over the last decade, Americans' values have become increasingly communal—especially in rural areas—which generated increased moral polarization and is associated with changes in voting patterns across space.

2. False consensus bias

Tom Nichols ✓ @RadioFreeTom · Nov 23, 2019
Indian food is terrible and we pretend it isn't.

Ben Domenech ✔ @bdomenech · Jan 16

I feel like Australia underestimates how this Novak Djokovic incident is going to tar the entire nation as fundamentally anti-freedom, and a place you should not visit, for a long time to come.

Show this thread

Nicholas Grossman @NGrossman81 · Jan 16

Dear Mr. Domenech,
Thank you for your concern, but Australians are aware of their own COVID policies. Over 90% of Australians are vaccinated, and polls show over 70% support the Djokovic decision. If this means you never come here, we'll find a way to survive.
Regards,
Australia

> **Ben Domenech** ✔ @bdomenech · Jan 16
>
> I feel like Australia underestimates how this Novak Djokovic incident is going to tar the entire nation as fundamentally anti-freedom, and a place you should not visit, for a long time to come.
>
> Show this thread

People who get it

Jane Coaston ✓
@janecoaston

"If only my political party did what I wanted it to do,
other people would support it" is generally a fallacy

2:04 PM · Apr 18, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Spencer Greenberg 🔍
@SpencrGreenberg

A mistake I see lots of smart people make even though, on some level, they must know it's an error: assuming that what worked for them (a supplement, routine, diet, therapy, self-help technique, etc.) will work for others.

People and situations differ tremendously. Results vary!

3:31 PM · Aug 29, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

If we overestimate the similarity of our true beliefs and tastes…

- If others express different beliefs – you might not believe them

- If you don't believe them… You'll think they're being dishonest …
- and might even have a hidden, ulterior motive

- "We both *know* a larger safety net is truly best for society—so if you argue for smaller govt, must be for tax cut for yourself"

Simplified version of model of Stone (IER, 2020)

$$X = T + \frac{1}{C} - 1$$

- X = publicly observable action chosen by Left (WLOG)
- Left privately benefits from larger X (think 'size of government')
- T = Left's true tastes for what is socially best
- C = Left's character (higher is better)

Simplified version of model of Stone (IER, 2020)

$$X = T + \frac{1}{C} - 1$$

- X = publicly observable action chosen by Left (WLOG)
- Left privately benefits from larger X (think 'size of government')
- T = Left's true tastes for what is socially best
- C = Left's character (higher is better), in (0,1)
- As $C \rightarrow 1$, $X \rightarrow T$

- Suppose the Right has taste (or belief) for social optimum of $T_R < T$

- (Tastes are correlated with private interests due to selection. If you think 'big govt' is good you are more likely to work for govt agency and then benefit from bigger govt)

- False consensus bias b means Right thinks Left's taste = $t = T - b$

- Then the Right will infer from X that Left's character C is:

$$C^I = \frac{1}{X+1-t} = \frac{1}{X+1-T+b}$$

- Then inferred C is strictly less than C for b > 0:

$$C^I = C / (1 + bC)$$

- As true partisan tastes have diverged due to sorting, undue dislike driven by differences in tastes has likely grown

Ch 5: Strategy and repeated interactions

- Game theory says: yes, you should punish non-cooperators in repeated games

- But biases make us fail to see our own failures in the past

- And make us imagine the other side's failures

- Ex: wood-stacking …

Even in the absence of bias…

- Tit for tat doesn't perform as well as you'd think

- Little known fact: Tit for two tats would have won the original Axelrod tournament!

- With noise, leniency and forgiveness are even more important (Axelrod 1997 among others)

Slow to Anger and Fast to Forgive: Cooperation in an Uncertain World

Drew Fudenberg

David G. Rand

Anna Dreber

Download Full Text PDF

Article Information

Abstract

We study the experimental play of the repeated prisoner's dilemma when intended actions are implemented with noise. In treatments where cooperation is an equilibrium, subjects cooperate substantially more than in treatments without cooperative equilibria. In all settings there was considerable strategic diversity, indicating that subjects had not fully learned the distribution of play. Furthermore, cooperative strategies yielded higher payoffs than uncooperative strategies in the treatments with cooperative equilibria. In these treatments successful strategies were "lenient" in not retaliating for the first defection, and many were "forgiving" in trying to return to cooperation after inflicting a punishment. (JEL C72, C73, D81)

Other factors

- Limited strategic thinking (also modeled in Stone, 2020)

- Salience/limited memory

Ezra Klein ✔
@ezraklein

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I cannot emphasize enough how much McConnell's actions on Garland and Barrett have radicalized Democratic senators.

As I've argued before, McConnell's single most consequential legacy may be what he convinces Senate Democrats to do: vox.com/policy-and-pol...

Erick Erickson ✔
@EWErickson

I cannot emphasize enough how much Democrats's actions on Bork, Thomas, Roberts, Alito, Estrada, Gorsuch, and especially Kavanaugh have radicalized Republican senators.
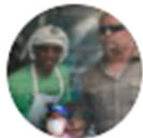
Scott Lemieux
@LemieuxLGM

Five if them got up-or-down votes, four were
confirmed, and one was rejected by an overwhelming
bipartisan majority -- what "actions"? Nor is it obvious
why it's the fault of Democratic Party if Republican
nominees are accused by third parties of sexual
harassment or assault.

> **Erick Erickson** ✔
> @EWErickson
>
> I cannot emphasize enough how much Democrats's
> actions on Bork, Thomas, Roberts, Alito, Estrada,
> Gorsuch, and especially Kavanaugh have radicalized
> Republican senators.

4:56 PM · Oct 26, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Scott Lemieux @LemieuxLGM · Oct 26
Replying to @LemieuxLGM
Sorry, that's *6 of 7* got up-and-down votes. The bad faith of these
ridiculous attempts to pretend Dems started a cycle which in fact started
with the filibuster/removal of Fortas is blindingly transparent.

💬 6   🔁 16   ♡ 108   ⬆

- Lots of lit on conflict cycles/spirals… (especially outside econ but also some in econ Acemoglu and Wolitsky, AER, 2014)

- Not that much that on effects of cognitive biases or on American polarization

- (Illustrative toy model in chapter)

Ch 6: Information

- Academics have spent a lot of time debating existence/prevalence of echo chambers
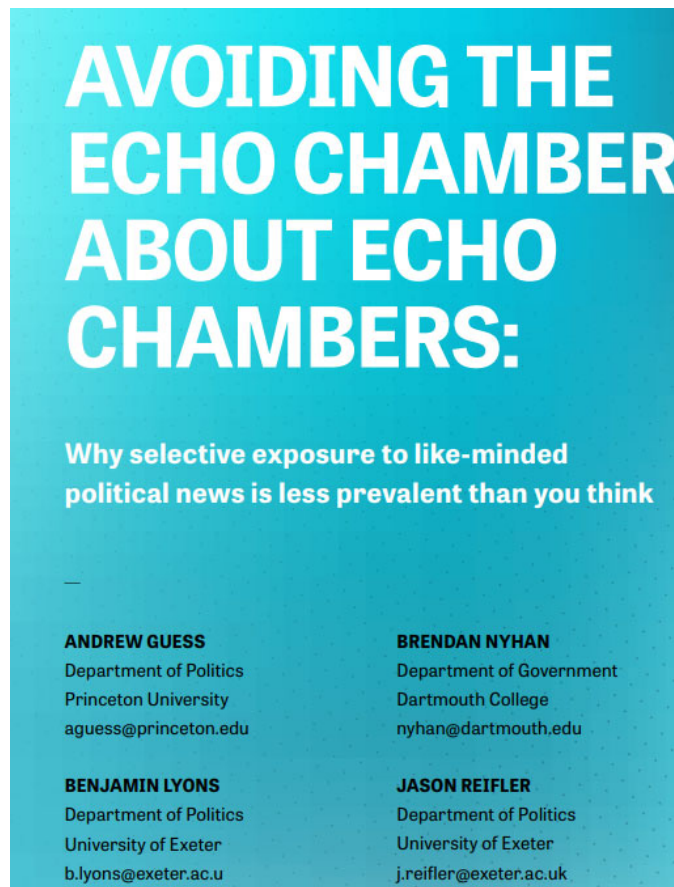
Maybe it's true that true echo chambers are rare...

- But (I claim) clearly true that we have become increasingly exposed to ideologically aligned information ('partisan selective exposure')
- Due to:
- 1. Polarization/differentiation of mainstream news
- 2. Wider availability of ideological fringe media
- 3. Social media
- 4. Offline social networks

Gentzkow and Shapiro (QJE, 2011)

- Widely interpreted as evidence against the online echo chambers hypothesis...

- But actually shows how we are typically in echo chambers offline?

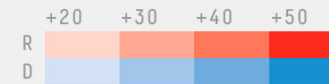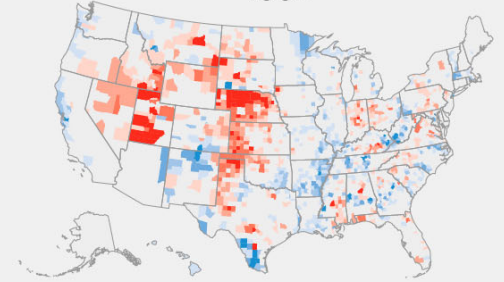| Setting	Ideological segregation
Offline media	4.1
Internet	7.5
Work, neighborhood, family	15–25
Trusted friends and political discussants	> 30

Geographic sorting
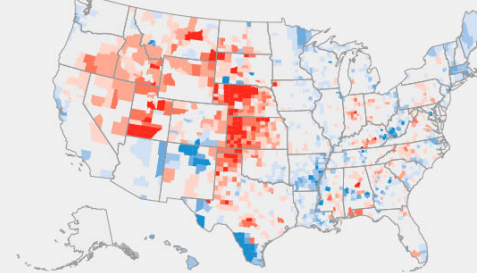

More and more counties are uncompetitive

Counties where presidential candidates won the two-party popular vote by more than 20 percentage points
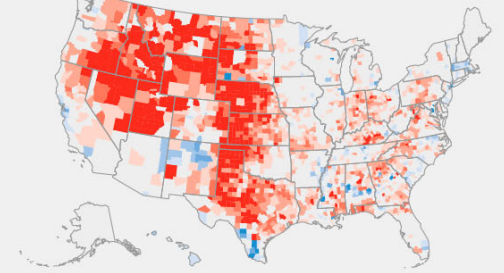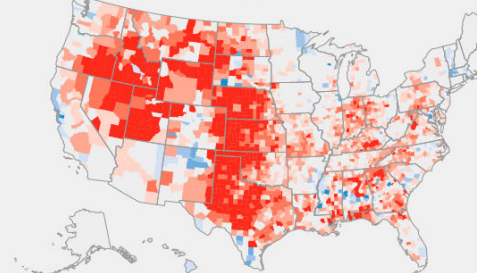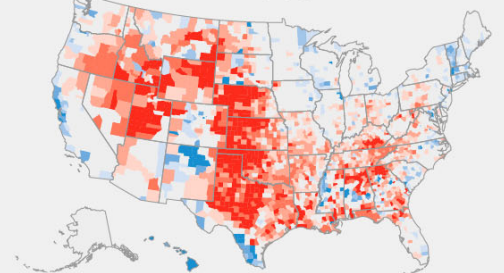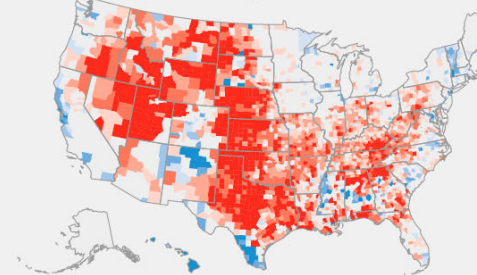
1992

1996   2000

2004   2008

2012   2016

FiveThirtyEight   SOURCE: COOK POLITICAL REPORT
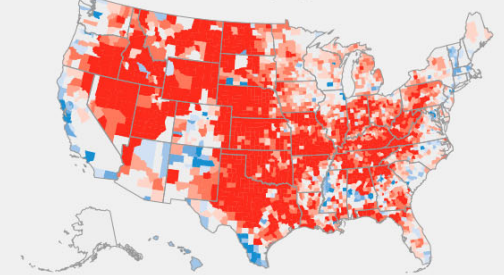
Within cities

NEW YORK

5 mi

"Sort Selling": Political Polarization and Residential Choice[*]

W. Ben McCartney, John Orellana, and Calvin Zhang[†]

This Version: *March 2, 2021*

Abstract

Partisanship and political polarization are salient features of today's society. We merge deeds records with voter rolls and show that political polarization is more than just "political cheerleading." Descriptively, homeowners are more likely to sell their homes and move when their next-door neighbors are affiliated with the opposite political party. We use a novel, new-next-door-neighbor identification strategy along with rich demographic control variables and time-by-geography fixed effects to confirm causality. Consistent with a partisanship mechanism, our results are strongest when new next-door neighbors (i) are more likely to be partisan and (ii) live especially close by. Our findings help explain increases in political segregation, improve our understanding of residential choice, and illustrate the importance of political polarization for economic decision-making.

Also: the (social) media prism

- When we do see the other side, we see them at their worst
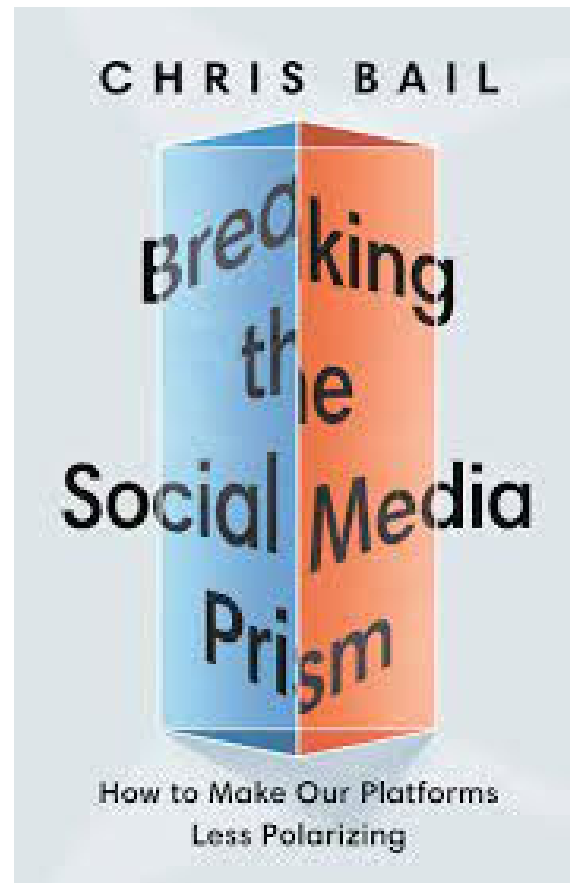
Ok: our info sets are more skewed toward anti-out-party information than ever before (post war era at least). So what?

- Maybe people filter the biases of who they get info from?

Well, first of all: quality and partisan slant are negatively correlated

The Media Bias Chart ®
Version 7.0 January 2021

Interactive version with more sources at adfontesmedia.com
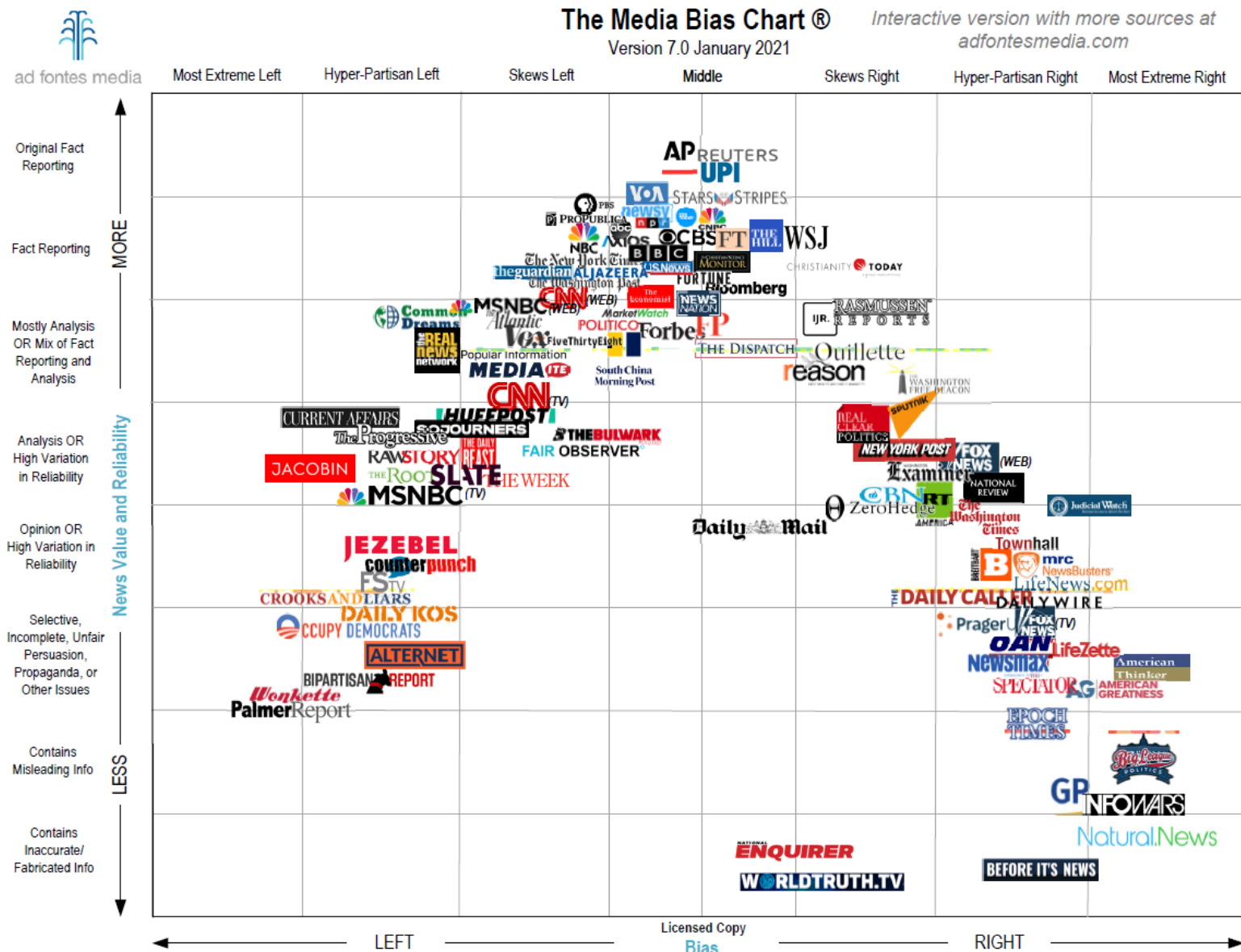
And plenty of (*indirect)* evidence we are unduly influenced by skewed info

- Factors discussed in Ch 3. Also:
- Gullibility
- Selection neglect (Little et al, WP, 2022)
- Limited strategic thinking

2 other types of indirect evidence

- "Law of group polarization" (Sunstein): when like-minded individuals talk to each other as group, they become more extreme

- Contact theory: personal contact with out-groups reduces hostility toward them (non-competitive conditions)

These 526 Voters Represent All of America. And They Spent a Weekend Together.

By Emily Badger and Kevin Quealy

Photographs by Chad Batka and Celeste Sloman

Oct. 2, 2019

Abstract

This paper is positioned at the intersection of two literatures: partisan polarization and deliberative democracy. It analyzes results from a national field experiment in which more than 500 registered voters were brought together from around the country to deliberate in depth over a long weekend on five major issues facing the country. A pre–post control group was also asked the same questions. The deliberators showed large, depolarizing changes in their policy attitudes and large decreases in affective polarization. The paper develops the rationale for hypotheses explaining these decreases and contrasts them with a literature that would have expected the opposite. The paper briefly concludes with a discussion of how elements of this "antidote" can be scaled.

Ch 7: the last chapter ☺

- Summary of chs 1-6:
- We can, in theory, dislike others more than we should
- There is a lot of evidence that partisans dislike out-partisans more than they should
- There are a lot of plausible mechanisms and reasons why affective polarization bias may have grown over time in the US

Open questions

- What about politicians? Do we feel undue hate toward them? Do they toward each other?

- Evidence of mechanisms discussed in chs 4, 5, 6

- Solutions?

Solutions (undoing hate?)

- First, you might ask…

- Why should I reduce my bias if the other side is worse?

- Their bias makes them overreact to your bias!

- The more biased they are – the more important it is to not give them ammunition

For the long-term…

- Education in cognitive biases (for politicians especially?)

- Norms against bias and overconfidence in discourse?

- Make humility cool! Make partisan overconfidence and anti-out-party bias uncool!

More out-party contact

American Exchange Project

The American Exchange Project empowers high school seniors to experience their country for FREE. Click on communities on the map below to learn more about the

The solution

A free national domestic exchange program that allows high school seniors to live in an American community very different from the one in which they grew up.

Be friendliest (not least friendly!) to neighbors, plumbers etc w different political views!

- Your country needs you to do this!

Structural/institutional changes

- Better primaries (lots of cool reform ideas out there)

- More parties? (Multi-member House districts?)

Improvements by social media platforms are good...

SAN FRANCISCO — Twitter is stepping up its fight against misinformation with a new policy cracking down on posts that spread potentially dangerous false stories. The change is part of a broader effort to promote accurate information during times of conflict or crisis.

Starting Thursday, the platform will no longer automatically recommend or emphasize posts that make misleading claims about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including material that mischaracterizes conditions in conflict zones or makes false allegations of war crimes or atrocities against civilians.

Under its new "crisis misinformation policy," Twitter will also add warning labels to debunked claims about ongoing humanitarian crises, the San Francisco-based company said. Users won't be able to like, forward or respond to posts that violate the new rules.
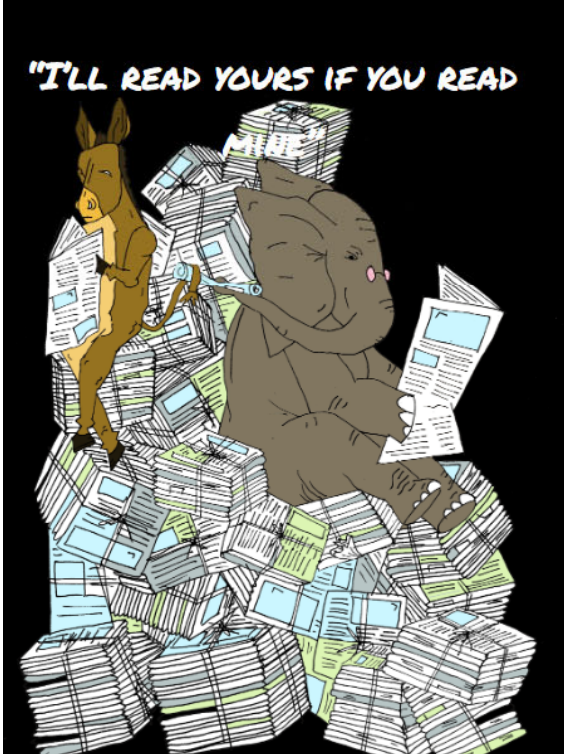
from
◯ Meta

TECHNOLOGY

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter remove disinformation targeting Ukraine

But we need more. How about active efforts to *depolarize*?

- E.g. fighting selective exposure?

Media Trades

"I'LL READ YOURS IF YOU READ MINE"

Media Trades is a simple, free, and non-profit tool that allows people from the left and right sides of the political spectrum to trade media content

Submit a story that you think someone on the "other side" should see and you will receive a story back to re from the other side.

It's a square deal. You'll help someone on the other side learn more about a topic important to you. And you might be surprised by what you learn yourself.

Users have the option to be completely anonymous or to share links to their profiles with their trading partn and others.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 5 *LEFT-LEANING* ARTICLES AWAITING TRADING PARTNERS!

It's actually kind of easy to reduce partisan animosity

Megastudy identifying successful interventions to

strengthen Americans' democratic attitudes

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(which shows how much of it is misguided?)

Abstract

Deep partisan conflict in the mass public threatens the stability of American democracy. We conducted a megastudy on a national sample of American partisans ($n = 32{,}059$) testing 25 interventions designed to reduce anti-democratic attitudes and partisan animosity. These interventions were selected from a pool of 252 interventions submitted by social scientists, practitioners, and activists as part of the Strengthening Democracy Challenge. Contrary to the expectations of expert forecasters, we find that nearly every selected intervention (23 out of 25) significantly reduced partisan animosity. We also identify several interventions that successfully

Tom Nichols: I said I couldn't stand Indian food. Then a Twitter friend took me to dinner.

This is a story about the internet, the spontaneous generosity of thousands of people and the healing power of food. Or, the healing power of lamb.

Still – for large-scale improvement in the short run, we likely need top-down action

- E.g. an anti-polarization Manhattan project...
- Perhaps with third-party mediation?

April 09, 2018

Kaine suggests Congress should consider formal mediation to settle some disputes

In the meantime – next time you're feeling affectively polarized...

- Remember it's probably at least somewhat 'undue'

- That's it – thanks! ☺