Appendix to

An Outbreak of Selective Attribution: Partisanship and Blame in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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A Time Series

A.1 Survey information

Platform: Lucid.

Dates: March 8-April 12, 2020.

Screeners: Captcha verification.

Consent: Subjects read an IRB-approved consent form, then voluntarily consented to participate in a research study.

Refusal rate: 1.6 percent.

Compensation: $1 (waves 1-4 and 6) or $0.75 (wave 5), excluding a service fee of $0.25 per respondent. These amounts were chosen to meet or exceed prevailing rates set by the vendor, which typically charges $1 inclusive of all fees.

Sample size: 3,794 (total), 662 (wave 1), 633 (wave 2), 638 (wave 3), 625 (wave 4), 639 (wave 5), 597 (wave 6).

A.2 Regression analysis

The main text presents a graphical analysis of time series data (Figure 2). To statistically test our claims, we specify a linear model of the time trends in all of these areas. We subset our data to Democrats and Republicans only, then use ordinary least squares (OLS) to estimate the parameters in

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Wave-1})_i + \beta_2\text{Republican}_i + \beta_3(\text{Wave-1})_i \times \text{Republican}_i + \epsilon_i, \tag{3}$$

where Y_i is one of the variables appearing on the y-axis in the graphical analysis, α is the average on March 8 among Democrats, β_1 is the average weekly change among Democrats, β_2 is the difference between Democrats and Republicans on March 8, and β_3 is the average weekly change in the difference between Democrats and Republicans. The key parameters are β_2 and β_3. If partisans update in parallel, β_3 should be close to 0. If partisans diverge, β_2 and β_3 should take the same sign. If partisans converge, β_2 and β_3 should take opposite signs. We also estimate a version of this model that splits the estimate of β_1 into five intercept shifts, which relaxes the assumption of a linear time trend.

In the tables below, the parameter estimates are consistent with the hypothesis of parallel updating. Of the thirteen estimates of β_3 in these categories, we can only detect a statistical difference from zero in three cases (see Tables A.1, A.3, and A.5). In all three of these—contact with others, hand-washing, and changing travel plan—the estimate takes the opposite sign of β_2, indicating partisan convergence over time. This supports our claim that over this period Democrats and Republicans updated their perceptions in the same direction, usually by about the same magnitude, and occasionally in a way that narrowed partisan perceptual differences.

In contrast to this, we find growing partisan divergence in attributions of political responsibility. Consistent with the graphical analysis (Figure 2), this divergence was most evident in attributions of responsibility to President Trump. Each week, Democrats assigned 0.044 units more blame to Trump on a 0 to 1 scale, compared with 0.016 for Republicans. As a result, the partisan difference increased by 0.028 scale units each week ($\beta_3 = 0.028$, s.e.$= 0.007$; see Table A.7). A comparable divergence emerges while attributing blame to Republicans ($\beta_3 = 0.026$, s.e. $= 0.007$). The regression-based estimates also suggest partisan divergence in blaming China, and of no divergence with respect to other entities or factors.

Table A.1: Regression estimate of time trends in objective perceptions.

	State cases	State deaths	National cases	National deaths
α Baseline	0.134**	0.016**	0.261**	0.092**
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.003)
β_1 Wave (0-5)	0.063**	0.029**	0.051**	0.041**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
β_2 Republican	−0.000	0.002	−0.011	−0.005
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.004)
β_3 Republican × wave	−0.001	−0.002	0.002	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Adj. R^2	0.467	0.410	0.404	0.524
Num. obs.	3161	3159	3114	3151

Table A.2: Robustness check on Table A.1: non-linear time trend.

	State cases	State deaths	National cases	National deaths
α Baseline	0.111**	0.022**	0.239**	0.090**
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.003)
Wave 2	0.077**	0.015**	0.066**	0.035**
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Wave 3	0.178**	0.048**	0.148**	0.088**
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Wave 4	0.245**	0.088**	0.206**	0.139**
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Wave 5	0.277**	0.119**	0.233**	0.173**
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.005)
Wave 6	0.308**	0.135**	0.240**	0.192**
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.005)
β_2 Republican	0.001	0.003	−0.012	−0.005
	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.005)
β_3 Republican × wave	−0.002	−0.002	0.002	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Adj. R^2	0.489	0.417	0.433	0.533
Num. obs.	3161	3159	3114	3151

Table A.3: Regression estimate of time trends in threat perceptions.

	National	State
α Baseline	0.736^{**}	0.699^{**}
	(0.011)	(0.012)
β_1 Wave (0-5)	0.034^{**}	0.036^{**}
	(0.003)	(0.004)
β_2 Republican	-0.102^{**}	-0.087^{**}
	(0.017)	(0.018)
β_3 Republican $\times$ wave	0.006	0.005
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Adj. R^2	0.085	0.072
Num. obs.	3264	3264

Table A.4: Robustness check on Table A.3: non-linear time trend

	National	State
α Baseline	0.701^{**}	0.647^{**}
	(0.014)	(0.015)
Wave 2	0.062^{**}	0.102^{**}
	(0.017)	(0.018)
Wave 3	0.155^{**}	0.173^{**}
	(0.016)	(0.018)
Wave 4	0.146^{**}	0.178^{**}
	(0.017)	(0.018)
Wave 5	0.183^{**}	0.208^{**}
	(0.018)	(0.019)
Wave 6	0.163^{**}	0.185^{**}
	(0.019)	(0.021)
β_2 Republican	-0.107^{**}	-0.088^{**}
	(0.021)	(0.023)
β_3 Republican $\times$ wave	0.005	0.005
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Adj. R^2	0.098	0.089
Num. obs.	3264	3264

Table A.5: Regression table of time trends in behavioral changes.

	Avoid contact	Isolate ¿24h	Mask/PPE	School	Travel	Wash hands	Work at home
α Baseline	0.714**	0.663**	0.195**	0.471**	0.472**	0.871**	0.408**
	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.019)	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.026)
β_1 Wave (0-5)	0.062**	0.060**	0.077**	0.122**	0.077**	0.020**	0.067**
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.009)
β_2 Republican	−0.089**	−0.117**	−0.043	−0.067	−0.110**	−0.084**	−0.106**
	(0.027)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.048)	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.037)
β_3 Republican × wave	0.020**	0.015	−0.003	0.009	0.022*	0.017**	0.015
	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.012)
Adj. R^2	0.121	0.064	0.074	0.259	0.101	0.032	0.066
Num. obs.	3269	2699	3268	1114	3265	3269	2038

Table A.6: Robustness check on Table A.5: non-linear time trend

	Avoid contact	Isolate ¿24h	Mask/PPE	School	Travel	Wash hands	Work at home
α Baseline	0.580**	0.633**	0.240**	0.236**	0.357**	0.822**	0.310**
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.038)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.030)
Wave 2	0.271**		0.046	0.425**	0.218**	0.104**	0.185**
	(0.027)		(0.026)	(0.048)	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.037)
Wave 3	0.348**	0.238**	0.067*	0.688**	0.392**	0.118**	0.323**
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.040)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.038)
Wave 4	0.369**	0.266**	0.114**	0.718**	0.405**	0.124**	0.337**
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.039)	(0.031)	(0.022)	(0.040)
Wave 5	0.368**	0.281**	0.244**	0.719**	0.421**	0.117**	0.372**
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.044)	(0.032)	(0.023)	(0.042)
Wave 6	0.371**	0.270**	0.413**	0.682**	0.413**	0.131**	0.358**
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.035)	(0.049)	(0.035)	(0.022)	(0.046)
β_2 Republican	−0.097**	−0.148**	−0.042	−0.034	−0.125**	−0.097**	−0.111*
	(0.034)	(0.051)	(0.034)	(0.056)	(0.037)	(0.028)	(0.047)
β_3 Republican × wave	0.018*	0.018	−0.002	0.001	0.021*	0.017*	0.013
	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.012)
Adj. R^2	0.172	0.092	0.083	0.386	0.129	0.041	0.082
Num. obs.	3269	2699	3268	1114	3265	3269	2038

Table A.7: Regression table of time trends in blame attributions.

	Bad luck	China	Democrats	Immigrants	Nature	Republicans	Trump	U.S. gov't agencies
α Baseline	0.389**	0.623**	0.175**	0.233**	0.545**	0.336**	0.505**	0.443**
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.015)
β_1 Wave (0-5)	0.002	−0.011*	0.026**	−0.001	−0.009	0.045**	0.044**	0.022**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)
β_2 Republican	0.014	0.111**	0.066**	0.156**	0.023	−0.187**	−0.333**	−0.175**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)
β_3 Republican × wave	−0.003	0.018*	0.010	−0.001	0.005	−0.026**	−0.028**	−0.005
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Adj. R^2	−0.001	0.049	0.041	0.046	0.003	0.133	0.250	0.079
Num. obs.	3211	3213	3212	3213	3212	3213	3213	3213

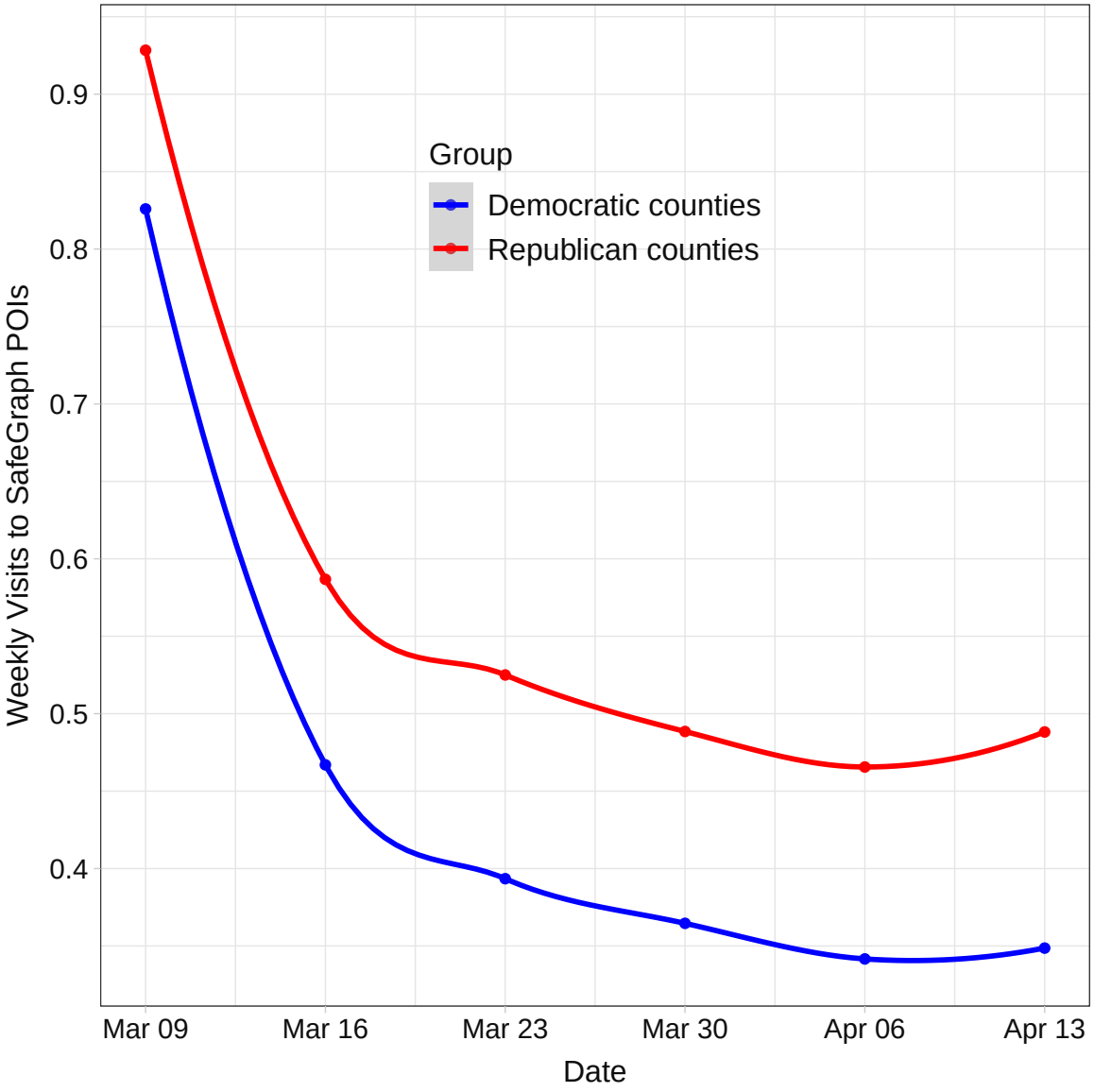
Table A.8: Robustness check on Table A.7: non-linear time trend

	Bad luck	China	Democrats	Immigrants	Nature	Republicans	Trump	U.S. gov't agencies
α Baseline	0.391**	0.634**	0.181**	0.246**	0.529**	0.331**	0.487**	0.450**
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Wave 2	0.001	−0.044*	0.007	−0.039	0.002	0.056**	0.080**	0.011
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.021)
Wave 3	−0.011	−0.026	0.052*	−0.016	0.030	0.103**	0.111**	0.046*
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Wave 4	0.015	−0.025	0.062**	0.001	−0.001	0.124**	0.151**	0.031
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.023)
Wave 5	0.001	−0.074**	0.118**	−0.005	−0.028	0.189**	0.206**	0.107**
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.025)
Wave 6	0.009	−0.059*	0.110**	−0.030	−0.037	0.231**	0.226**	0.103**
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.027)
β_2 Republican	0.016	0.091**	0.054*	0.155**	0.018	−0.160**	−0.302**	−0.170**
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.028)
β_3 Republican × wave	−0.002	0.019**	0.010	−0.001	0.005	−0.026**	−0.029**	−0.005
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Adj. R^2	−0.002	0.050	0.041	0.046	0.004	0.132	0.250	0.080
Num. obs.	3211	3213	3212	3213	3212	3213	3213	3213

A.3 Benchmarking

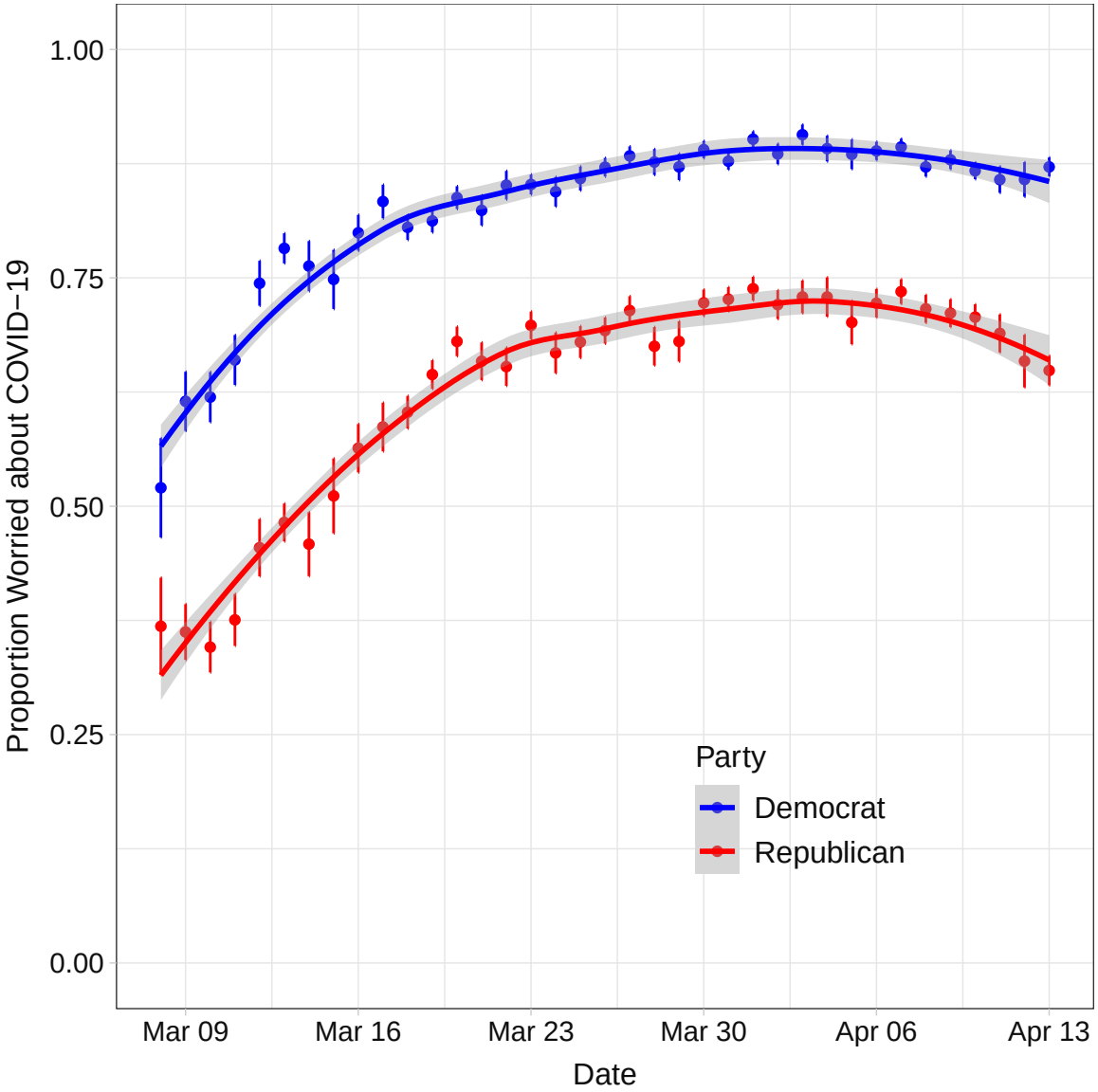
Relative to existing research on partisanship's relationship to responses to the pandemic, our emphasis on parallel changes in perception between Democrats and Republicans is unusual. This section shows that similar patterns are observed in two previously published studies using data from this time period (Allcott et al. 2020; Clinton et al. 2021).

Figure A.1: Replicating Allcott et al. (2020)'s Figure 3A (mobility changes).



Note: This is a replication of Figure 3, Panel A in Allcott et al. (2020) for the time period March 8 to April 15, 2020. The x-axis plots the date, the y-axis plots the number of visits each week (normalized to one) to SafeGraph's places of interest (POIs). The data are separately plotted for Democratic counties (in blue) and Republican counties (in red). Exactly following Allcott et al. (2020), Republican counties are "defined to be those whose 2016 Republican vote share is greater than the median vote share (66.4 percent) across the counties in [their] sample" (25).

Figure A.2: Replicating Clinton et al. (2021)'s Figure 1A (subjective threat perceptions).



Note: This is a replication of Figure 1A in Clinton et al. (2021) for the time period March 8 to April 13, 2020. The x-axis plots the date, the y-axis plots "the weighted (to the adult U.S. population) daily [proportion] of respondents who are "very" or "somewhat" worried about catching COVID-19". The data are separately plotted for Democrats (in blue) and Republicans (in red). The figure includes a LOESS fit (solid line) along with a 95% confidence interval (gray shaded area).

A.4 Tables of estimates plotted in Figure 2

Table A.9: Estimates plotted in Figure 2a (cases and deaths).

				Percentile					
Variable	Party	Date	Wave	2.5	25	50	75	97.5	Actual
State cases	D	3/8	1	0	1	4	13	120	26
		3/15	2	1	11	30	100	4000	191
		3/22	3	5	100	250	866	10775	2027
		3/29	4	36	500	1200	4150	57750	8033
		4/5	5	44	900	2000	10200	113787	17805
		4/12	6	55	1200	5000	15000	150000	23033
	I	3/8	1	0	1	3	12	83	18
		3/15	2	1	12	30	100	3186	184
		3/22	3	3	56	200	782	103125	1114
		3/29	4	12	364	1200	4000	347500	5311
		4/5	5	100	1000	2100	6500	108400	14560
		4/12	6	94	1222	4750	19648	33750	22861
	R	3/8	1	0	1	4	10	112	25
		3/15	2	1	10	30	100	1140	129
		3/22	3	10	100	248	707	12975	1356
		3/29	4	12	300	1000	4200	84250	6876
		4/5	5	52	650	2000	7885	82750	15448
		4/12	6	91	1425	4000	14500	188500	30208
State deaths	D	3/8	1	0	0	0	1	100	0
		3/15	2	0	0	1	5	134	3
		3/22	3	0	2	8	30	375	24
		3/29	4	1	13	50	150	2388	153
		4/5	5	4	50	200	800	11500	611
		4/12	6	2	100	400	1500	20000	1033
	I	3/8	1	0	0	0	1	7	0
		3/15	2	0	0	1	3	36	4
		3/22	3	0	2	4	14	2624	13
		3/29	4	0	8	29	130	2525	100
		4/5	5	4	35	100	400	2480	490
		4/12	6	11	94	475	1275	8125	1075
	R	3/8	1	0	0	0	1	13	1
		3/15	2	0	0	1	4	85	1
		3/22	3	0	2	6	25	400	17
		3/29	4	1	7	32	100	1065	130
		4/5	5	3	41	130	400	3992	533
		4/12	6	2	81	295	1000	18413	1514
National cases	D	3/8	1	10	100	300	600	7725000	547
		3/15	2	53	1000	2732	5000	192525	3600
		3/22	3	162	3800	18000	31000	925000	33073
		3/29	4	1831	42500	100000	134000	932500	142486
		4/5	5	1729	60000	200000	300000	9500000	338141
		4/12	6	1860	90000	200000	500000	14000000	558249
	I	3/8	1	13	89	250	500	23325	547
		3/15	2	36	300	1500	3500	775000	3600
		3/22	3	281	3000	15500	31500	36250000	33073
		3/29	4	2000	32500	100000	146000	1000000	142486
		4/5	5	5649	40000	200000	300000	1252000	338141
		4/12	6	10547	100000	397500	542500	67000000	558249
	R	3/8	1	11	100	300	1000	85000	547

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Percentile					Actual
				2.5	25	50	75	97.5	
		3/15	2	50	600	1700	3000	85000	3600
		3/22	3	386	4750	17500	40000	425500	33073
		3/29	4	573	29500	100000	140000	899550	142486
		4/5	5	1575	100000	200000	300000	2745000	338141
		4/12	6	5017	92500	200000	500000	1977246	558249
National deaths	D	3/8	1	1	9	16	26	4077	22
		3/15	2	4	21	50	100	10000	68
		3/22	3	10	150	328	600	14750	458
		3/29	4	75	1000	2000	3000	100000	2707
		4/5	5	184	4000	8000	10000	377775	10856
		4/12	6	100	9000	19000	22000	220000	24849
	I	3/8	1	2	10	16	20	295	22
		3/15	2	1	15	54	100	5000	68
		3/22	3	11	148	300	430	56250	458
		3/29	4	66	800	2000	5000	64750	2707
		4/5	5	245	2000	4000	9500	100000	10856
		4/12	6	250	5000	15000	20250	193750	24849
	R	3/8	1	1	5	12	20	625	22
		3/15	2	1	20	50	97	6960	68
		3/22	3	10	150	300	500	15975	458
		3/29	4	29	700	2000	2424	43000	2707
		4/5	5	222	2250	6300	10000	556500	10856
		4/12	6	512	6000	20000	25000	131125	24849

Table A.10: Estimates plotted in Figure 2b (threat).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
State	D	3/8	1	0.659	0.017	(0.625, 0.693)	289
		3/15	2	0.754	0.015	(0.724, 0.784)	305
		3/22	3	0.799	0.015	(0.769, 0.829)	287
		3/29	4	0.820	0.014	(0.792, 0.847)	280
		4/5	5	0.855	0.014	(0.829, 0.882)	278
		4/12	6	0.845	0.014	(0.817, 0.872)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.588	0.034	(0.521, 0.655)	91
		3/15	2	0.699	0.030	(0.640, 0.759)	94
		3/22	3	0.747	0.028	(0.691, 0.803)	85
		3/29	4	0.801	0.027	(0.748, 0.853)	89
		4/5	5	0.763	0.028	(0.706, 0.819)	78
		4/12	6	0.760	0.032	(0.696, 0.824)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.552	0.018	(0.516, 0.587)	281
		3/15	2	0.665	0.019	(0.628, 0.702)	232
		3/22	3	0.770	0.017	(0.737, 0.803)	262
		3/29	4	0.762	0.017	(0.729, 0.795)	253
		4/5	5	0.791	0.016	(0.761, 0.822)	278
		4/12	6	0.758	0.017	(0.724, 0.792)	247
National	D	3/8	1	0.712	0.016	(0.681, 0.743)	289
		3/15	2	0.766	0.015	(0.737, 0.795)	305
		3/22	3	0.835	0.013	(0.810, 0.861)	287
		3/29	4	0.848	0.012	(0.823, 0.872)	281
		4/5	5	0.885	0.012	(0.862, 0.908)	278
		4/12	6	0.871	0.012	(0.847, 0.896)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.624	0.031	(0.561, 0.686)	91
		3/15	2	0.707	0.029	(0.650, 0.765)	94
		3/22	3	0.744	0.028	(0.688, 0.801)	86
		3/29	4	0.820	0.026	(0.769, 0.871)	89
		4/5	5	0.794	0.026	(0.742, 0.846)	79
		4/12	6	0.756	0.029	(0.698, 0.815)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.589	0.018	(0.554, 0.624)	281
		3/15	2	0.665	0.018	(0.629, 0.701)	232
		3/22	3	0.788	0.015	(0.758, 0.818)	262
		3/29	4	0.761	0.017	(0.728, 0.794)	252
		4/5	5	0.802	0.015	(0.773, 0.832)	278
		4/12	6	0.780	0.016	(0.749, 0.811)	247

Table A.11: Estimates plotted in Figure 2c (behavior).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
Avoid contact	D	3/8	1	0.578	0.029	(0.521, 0.635)	289
		3/15	2	0.873	0.019	(0.835, 0.910)	306
		3/22	3	0.916	0.016	(0.884, 0.949)	287
		3/29	4	0.929	0.015	(0.899, 0.959)	283
		4/5	5	0.950	0.013	(0.924, 0.976)	278
		4/12	6	0.963	0.011	(0.941, 0.986)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.527	0.053	(0.423, 0.632)	91
		3/15	2	0.702	0.047	(0.608, 0.796)	94
		3/22	3	0.802	0.043	(0.716, 0.888)	86
		3/29	4	0.966	0.019	(0.928, 1.005)	89
		4/5	5	0.938	0.027	(0.885, 0.992)	81
		4/12	6	0.909	0.033	(0.843, 0.975)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.504	0.030	(0.445, 0.562)	280
		3/15	2	0.763	0.028	(0.708, 0.818)	232
		3/22	3	0.898	0.019	(0.861, 0.935)	264
		3/29	4	0.945	0.014	(0.916, 0.973)	253
		4/5	5	0.939	0.014	(0.911, 0.967)	279
		4/12	6	0.947	0.014	(0.919, 0.975)	246
Wash hands	D	3/8	1	0.834	0.022	(0.791, 0.877)	289
		3/15	2	0.928	0.015	(0.899, 0.957)	306
		3/22	3	0.934	0.015	(0.905, 0.963)	287
		3/29	4	0.922	0.016	(0.891, 0.954)	283
		4/5	5	0.928	0.016	(0.897, 0.959)	278
		4/12	6	0.978	0.009	(0.960, 0.996)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.747	0.046	(0.656, 0.838)	91
		3/15	2	0.753	0.045	(0.663, 0.842)	93
		3/22	3	0.837	0.040	(0.758, 0.917)	86
		3/29	4	0.955	0.022	(0.911, 0.999)	89
		4/5	5	0.901	0.033	(0.835, 0.968)	81
		4/12	6	0.857	0.040	(0.777, 0.937)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.729	0.027	(0.676, 0.781)	280
		3/15	2	0.858	0.023	(0.812, 0.903)	232
		3/22	3	0.898	0.019	(0.861, 0.935)	264
		3/29	4	0.941	0.015	(0.911, 0.970)	253
		4/5	5	0.935	0.015	(0.906, 0.964)	279
		4/12	6	0.927	0.017	(0.894, 0.960)	246
Isolate >24h	D	3/15	2	0.649	0.027	(0.595, 0.703)	305
		3/22	3	0.861	0.020	(0.820, 0.901)	287
		3/29	4	0.887	0.019	(0.850, 0.924)	283
		4/5	5	0.899	0.018	(0.864, 0.935)	278
		4/12	6	0.923	0.016	(0.891, 0.955)	272
	I	3/15	2	0.500	0.052	(0.397, 0.603)	94
		3/22	3	0.756	0.047	(0.663, 0.848)	86
		3/29	4	0.820	0.041	(0.739, 0.902)	89
		4/5	5	0.827	0.042	(0.743, 0.911)	81
		4/12	6	0.818	0.044	(0.730, 0.906)	77
	R	3/15	2	0.500	0.033	(0.435, 0.565)	232
		3/22	3	0.788	0.025	(0.738, 0.838)	264
		3/29	4	0.838	0.023	(0.792, 0.884)	253
		4/5	5	0.871	0.020	(0.831, 0.911)	279
		4/12	6	0.841	0.023	(0.796, 0.887)	246
Mask/PPE	D	3/8	1	0.232	0.025	(0.183, 0.281)	289
		3/15	2	0.304	0.026	(0.252, 0.356)	306

Table A.11: Estimates plotted in Figure 2c (behavior, continued).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
		3/22	3	0.307	0.027	(0.253, 0.360)	287
		3/29	4	0.343	0.028	(0.287, 0.398)	283
		4/5	5	0.468	0.030	(0.409, 0.527)	278
		4/12	6	0.669	0.029	(0.613, 0.725)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.121	0.034	(0.053, 0.189)	91
		3/15	2	0.149	0.037	(0.076, 0.222)	94
		3/22	3	0.267	0.048	(0.172, 0.363)	86
		3/29	4	0.326	0.050	(0.227, 0.425)	89
		4/5	5	0.432	0.055	(0.322, 0.542)	81
		4/12	6	0.532	0.057	(0.418, 0.646)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.204	0.024	(0.156, 0.251)	280
		3/15	2	0.216	0.027	(0.162, 0.269)	232
		3/22	3	0.258	0.027	(0.204, 0.311)	264
		3/29	4	0.316	0.029	(0.259, 0.374)	253
		4/5	5	0.448	0.030	(0.389, 0.507)	279
		4/12	6	0.580	0.032	(0.517, 0.642)	245
Kid's school*	D	3/8	1	0.211	0.043	(0.125, 0.297)	90
		3/15	2	0.695	0.045	(0.606, 0.785)	105
		3/22	3	0.907	0.032	(0.844, 0.970)	86
		3/29	4	0.961	0.019	(0.923, 0.999)	103
		4/5	5	0.949	0.025	(0.900, 0.999)	79
		4/12	6	0.915	0.029	(0.857, 0.972)	94
	I	3/8	1	0.083	0.058	(-0.036, 0.203)	24
		3/15	2	0.609	0.104	(0.393, 0.824)	23
		3/22	3	0.875	0.069	(0.732, 1.018)	24
		3/29	4	1.000	0.000	(1.000, 1.000)	22
		4/5	5	0.870	0.072	(0.721, 1.018)	23
		4/12	6	0.840	0.075	(0.686, 0.994)	25
	R	3/8	1	0.224	0.041	(0.144, 0.305)	107
		3/15	2	0.581	0.058	(0.466, 0.696)	74
		3/22	3	0.912	0.032	(0.849, 0.976)	80
		3/29	4	0.918	0.028	(0.862, 0.973)	97
		4/5	5	0.933	0.025	(0.884, 0.982)	104
		4/12	6	0.895	0.032	(0.832, 0.958)	95
Travel	D	3/8	1	0.339	0.028	(0.284, 0.394)	289
		3/15	2	0.585	0.028	(0.529, 0.640)	306
		3/22	3	0.770	0.025	(0.721, 0.819)	287
		3/29	4	0.755	0.026	(0.705, 0.806)	282
		4/5	5	0.776	0.025	(0.727, 0.826)	277
		4/12	6	0.765	0.026	(0.714, 0.815)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.209	0.043	(0.124, 0.294)	91
		3/15	2	0.340	0.049	(0.243, 0.438)	94
		3/22	3	0.558	0.054	(0.451, 0.665)	86
		3/29	4	0.629	0.051	(0.527, 0.732)	89
		4/5	5	0.741	0.049	(0.643, 0.838)	81
		4/12	6	0.688	0.053	(0.582, 0.794)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.271	0.027	(0.219, 0.324)	280
		3/15	2	0.478	0.033	(0.414, 0.543)	232
		3/22	3	0.663	0.029	(0.605, 0.720)	264
		3/29	4	0.727	0.028	(0.672, 0.783)	253
		4/5	5	0.759	0.026	(0.708, 0.810)	278
		4/12	6	0.776	0.027	(0.723, 0.828)	245
Work at home*	D	3/8	1	0.274	0.034	(0.208, 0.341)	175

Table A.11: Estimates plotted in Figure 2c (behavior, continued).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
		3/15	2	0.535	0.036	(0.465, 0.605)	198
		3/22	3	0.600	0.035	(0.531, 0.669)	195
		3/29	4	0.684	0.034	(0.617, 0.752)	187
		4/5	5	0.713	0.034	(0.646, 0.779)	181
		4/12	6	0.626	0.036	(0.554, 0.697)	179
	I	3/8	1	0.233	0.065	(0.101, 0.364)	43
		3/15	2	0.340	0.066	(0.208, 0.471)	53
		3/22	3	0.552	0.066	(0.420, 0.684)	58
		3/29	4	0.533	0.065	(0.403, 0.663)	60
		4/5	5	0.452	0.078	(0.295, 0.609)	42
		4/12	6	0.529	0.071	(0.388, 0.671)	51
	R	3/8	1	0.252	0.035	(0.183, 0.320)	159
		3/15	2	0.355	0.040	(0.275, 0.435)	141
		3/22	3	0.605	0.040	(0.525, 0.685)	147
		3/29	4	0.544	0.040	(0.466, 0.623)	158
		4/5	5	0.602	0.038	(0.527, 0.678)	166
		4/12	6	0.684	0.038	(0.609, 0.759)	152

Note: * indicates that the school and work at home questions were only asked of respondents who reported having a school-aged child or being employed.

Table A.12: Estimates plotted in Figure 2d (blame).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
China	D	3/8	1	0.636	0.022	(0.593, 0.680)	287
		3/15	2	0.613	0.022	(0.570, 0.655)	297
		3/22	3	0.578	0.022	(0.534, 0.621)	281
		3/29	4	0.601	0.022	(0.558, 0.643)	274
		4/5	5	0.555	0.022	(0.511, 0.599)	272
		4/12	6	0.591	0.022	(0.547, 0.634)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.629	0.043	(0.544, 0.715)	89
		3/15	2	0.562	0.042	(0.478, 0.645)	92
		3/22	3	0.632	0.041	(0.552, 0.713)	78
		3/29	4	0.647	0.040	(0.569, 0.726)	86
		4/5	5	0.611	0.040	(0.531, 0.691)	78
		4/12	6	0.636	0.042	(0.552, 0.721)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.741	0.019	(0.703, 0.779)	279
		3/15	2	0.687	0.023	(0.642, 0.732)	226
		3/22	3	0.788	0.019	(0.751, 0.825)	256
		3/29	4	0.784	0.019	(0.746, 0.821)	248
		4/5	5	0.749	0.020	(0.711, 0.788)	274
		4/12	6	0.760	0.021	(0.719, 0.801)	247
Democrats	D	3/8	1	0.185	0.018	(0.149, 0.221)	287
		3/15	2	0.184	0.016	(0.152, 0.216)	297
		3/22	3	0.236	0.018	(0.201, 0.271)	281
		3/29	4	0.247	0.019	(0.210, 0.284)	274
		4/5	5	0.282	0.020	(0.243, 0.321)	272
		4/12	6	0.303	0.020	(0.264, 0.341)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.169	0.031	(0.108, 0.229)	89
		3/15	2	0.236	0.032	(0.173, 0.298)	92
		3/22	3	0.291	0.036	(0.219, 0.363)	78
		3/29	4	0.353	0.040	(0.274, 0.431)	86
		4/5	5	0.372	0.041	(0.291, 0.453)	78
		4/12	6	0.342	0.041	(0.261, 0.423)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.243	0.022	(0.200, 0.285)	279
		3/15	2	0.268	0.024	(0.222, 0.315)	226
		3/22	3	0.315	0.023	(0.271, 0.360)	256
		3/29	4	0.335	0.023	(0.289, 0.380)	247
		4/5	5	0.423	0.023	(0.377, 0.470)	274
		4/12	6	0.395	0.024	(0.347, 0.444)	247
Immigrants	D	3/8	1	0.238	0.019	(0.201, 0.275)	287
		3/15	2	0.222	0.019	(0.186, 0.259)	297
		3/22	3	0.238	0.019	(0.201, 0.276)	281
		3/29	4	0.235	0.020	(0.195, 0.274)	274
		4/5	5	0.219	0.020	(0.181, 0.258)	272
		4/12	6	0.235	0.020	(0.195, 0.276)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.273	0.038	(0.197, 0.349)	89
		3/15	2	0.286	0.035	(0.216, 0.356)	92
		3/22	3	0.286	0.035	(0.216, 0.357)	78
		3/29	4	0.295	0.036	(0.223, 0.366)	86
		4/5	5	0.329	0.038	(0.254, 0.404)	78
		4/12	6	0.229	0.036	(0.158, 0.301)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.409	0.023	(0.363, 0.454)	279
		3/15	2	0.341	0.022	(0.298, 0.383)	226
		3/22	3	0.375	0.023	(0.329, 0.421)	256
		3/29	4	0.414	0.024	(0.366, 0.462)	248
		4/5	5	0.415	0.023	(0.369, 0.460)	274

Table A.12: Estimates plotted in Figure 2d (blame, continued).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
		4/12	6	0.347	0.022	(0.303, 0.391)	247
Bad luck	D	3/8	1	0.401	0.022	(0.357, 0.444)	287
		3/15	2	0.386	0.021	(0.345, 0.427)	297
		3/22	3	0.367	0.021	(0.326, 0.408)	281
		3/29	4	0.427	0.021	(0.385, 0.469)	274
		4/5	5	0.370	0.022	(0.327, 0.413)	272
		4/12	6	0.413	0.022	(0.370, 0.456)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.352	0.035	(0.283, 0.421)	89
		3/15	2	0.380	0.036	(0.308, 0.452)	92
		3/22	3	0.376	0.036	(0.304, 0.448)	78
		3/29	4	0.357	0.036	(0.285, 0.428)	86
		4/5	5	0.359	0.038	(0.284, 0.434)	78
		4/12	6	0.329	0.039	(0.251, 0.407)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.395	0.021	(0.354, 0.437)	279
		3/15	2	0.412	0.024	(0.364, 0.460)	225
		3/22	3	0.404	0.023	(0.359, 0.448)	256
		3/29	4	0.390	0.024	(0.344, 0.436)	247
		4/5	5	0.418	0.024	(0.372, 0.465)	274
		4/12	6	0.389	0.023	(0.343, 0.434)	247
Nature	D	3/8	1	0.542	0.021	(0.502, 0.583)	287
		3/15	2	0.523	0.020	(0.483, 0.563)	297
		3/22	3	0.552	0.020	(0.512, 0.591)	281
		3/29	4	0.523	0.021	(0.482, 0.564)	274
		4/5	5	0.499	0.020	(0.459, 0.539)	272
		4/12	6	0.501	0.021	(0.460, 0.542)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.479	0.037	(0.407, 0.552)	89
		3/15	2	0.493	0.039	(0.416, 0.570)	92
		3/22	3	0.513	0.041	(0.432, 0.594)	78
		3/29	4	0.465	0.035	(0.395, 0.536)	86
		4/5	5	0.455	0.037	(0.381, 0.528)	77
		4/12	6	0.450	0.037	(0.376, 0.525)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.539	0.021	(0.497, 0.581)	279
		3/15	2	0.569	0.022	(0.526, 0.613)	226
		3/22	3	0.602	0.020	(0.561, 0.642)	256
		3/29	4	0.571	0.021	(0.529, 0.613)	248
		4/5	5	0.546	0.022	(0.504, 0.589)	274
		4/12	6	0.530	0.022	(0.486, 0.573)	246
Republicans	D	3/8	1	0.331	0.022	(0.287, 0.375)	287
		3/15	2	0.389	0.022	(0.346, 0.433)	297
		3/22	3	0.438	0.023	(0.393, 0.483)	281
		3/29	4	0.454	0.024	(0.406, 0.501)	274
		4/5	5	0.505	0.023	(0.459, 0.551)	272
		4/12	6	0.574	0.023	(0.528, 0.619)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.195	0.034	(0.128, 0.262)	89
		3/15	2	0.293	0.036	(0.221, 0.366)	92
		3/22	3	0.282	0.040	(0.203, 0.362)	78
		3/29	4	0.376	0.040	(0.296, 0.456)	86
		4/5	5	0.368	0.040	(0.288, 0.447)	78
		4/12	6	0.359	0.041	(0.277, 0.441)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.146	0.018	(0.110, 0.181)	279
		3/15	2	0.173	0.020	(0.133, 0.212)	226
		3/22	3	0.193	0.020	(0.154, 0.231)	256
		3/29	4	0.194	0.019	(0.157, 0.230)	248

Table A.12: Estimates plotted in Figure 2d (blame, continued).

Variable	Party	Date	Wave	Estimate	SE	CI	N
		4/5	5	0.246	0.020	(0.207, 0.285)	274
		4/12	6	0.235	0.021	(0.194, 0.276)	247
Trump	D	3/8	1	0.477	0.024	(0.430, 0.525)	287
		3/15	2	0.575	0.023	(0.530, 0.620)	297
		3/22	3	0.604	0.023	(0.559, 0.648)	281
		3/29	4	0.640	0.023	(0.594, 0.685)	274
		4/5	5	0.687	0.023	(0.642, 0.733)	272
		4/12	6	0.712	0.022	(0.668, 0.756)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.281	0.041	(0.200, 0.361)	89
		3/15	2	0.341	0.041	(0.259, 0.422)	92
		3/22	3	0.350	0.041	(0.269, 0.432)	78
		3/29	4	0.465	0.044	(0.378, 0.552)	86
		4/5	5	0.474	0.046	(0.382, 0.566)	78
		4/12	6	0.429	0.042	(0.345, 0.513)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.166	0.019	(0.128, 0.204)	279
		3/15	2	0.198	0.022	(0.154, 0.241)	226
		3/22	3	0.203	0.020	(0.164, 0.243)	256
		3/29	4	0.219	0.021	(0.177, 0.261)	248
		4/5	5	0.252	0.021	(0.211, 0.292)	274
		4/12	6	0.240	0.022	(0.198, 0.283)	247
Gov. agencies	D	3/8	1	0.448	0.021	(0.406, 0.490)	287
		3/15	2	0.460	0.020	(0.421, 0.500)	297
		3/22	3	0.497	0.021	(0.456, 0.538)	281
		3/29	4	0.489	0.020	(0.450, 0.528)	274
		4/5	5	0.543	0.021	(0.501, 0.585)	272
		4/12	6	0.558	0.021	(0.517, 0.598)	272
	I	3/8	1	0.315	0.038	(0.239, 0.390)	89
		3/15	2	0.315	0.034	(0.249, 0.382)	92
		3/22	3	0.363	0.039	(0.286, 0.441)	78
		3/29	4	0.407	0.037	(0.333, 0.481)	86
		4/5	5	0.440	0.040	(0.361, 0.519)	78
		4/12	6	0.446	0.038	(0.371, 0.521)	77
	R	3/8	1	0.276	0.021	(0.234, 0.318)	279
		3/15	2	0.280	0.021	(0.239, 0.321)	226
		3/22	3	0.309	0.020	(0.269, 0.348)	256
		3/29	4	0.281	0.020	(0.241, 0.321)	248
		4/5	5	0.375	0.020	(0.336, 0.414)	274
		4/12	6	0.347	0.020	(0.307, 0.387)	247

B Experiment 1

B.1 Survey information

Platform: MTurk.

Dates: May 15-16, 2020.

Sample size: 1,059.

Screeners: Captcha verification.

Consent: Subjects read an IRB-approved consent form, then voluntarily consented to participate in a research study.

Refusal rate: 0 percent.

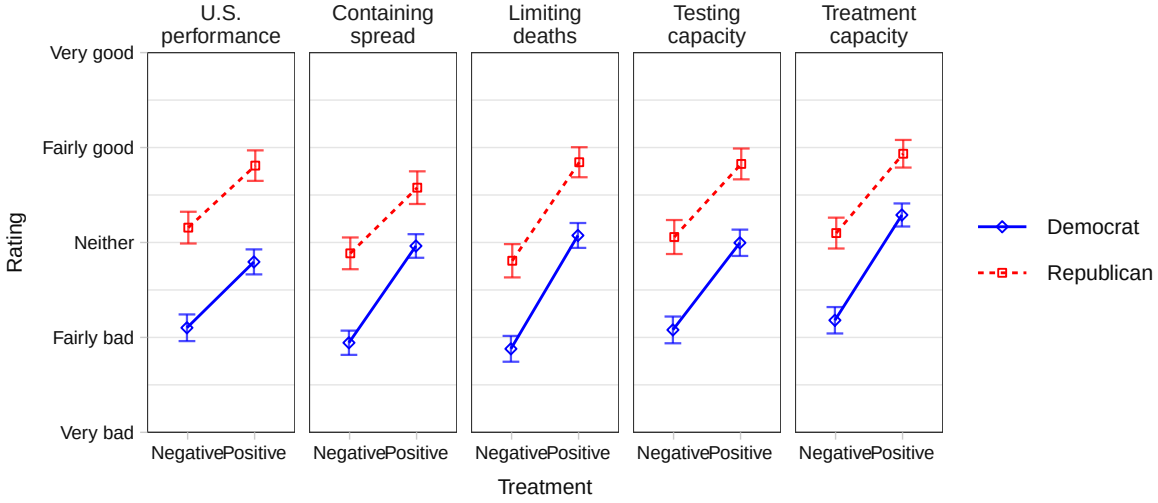
Compensation: $0.50. As the vendor does not set any standard rate, this amount was chosen to exceed the hourly minimum wage in the United States.

Treatments and outcomes: See Appendix G.

No deception: As indicated in the approved IRB application, the experimental treatments did not involve deception.

B.2 Manipulation check

Figure B.1: Experiment 1, Manipulation Checks



Note: This figure plots the average response among Democrats (in blue) and Republicans (in red) when they read positively and negatively framed performance information. The point estimate is accompanied by a 95% confidence interval constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust HC2 standard errors. We measure perceptions of U.S. performance, separately for each dimension, using the question: Would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of [controlling the spread of COVID-19/ limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19/ testing for COVID-19/ improving the health care system's ability to care for COVID-19 patients]? (Very bad, fairly bad, neither good nor bad, fairly good, very good).

Table B.1: Experiment 1: Data for Supplemental Figure B.1

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Performance Assessments				
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Negative	0.220	0.017
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Positive	0.518	0.017
Limiting deaths	Republican	Negative	0.452	0.022
Limiting deaths	Republican	Positive	0.711	0.020
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.275	0.018
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.449	0.017
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.539	0.021
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.702	0.020
Containing spread	Democrat	Negative	0.236	0.016
Containing spread	Democrat	Positive	0.491	0.016
Containing spread	Republican	Negative	0.471	0.021
Containing spread	Republican	Positive	0.644	0.022
Testing capacity	Democrat	Negative	0.270	0.018
Testing capacity	Democrat	Positive	0.499	0.018
Testing capacity	Republican	Negative	0.514	0.023
Testing capacity	Republican	Positive	0.707	0.021
Treatment capacity	Democrat	Negative	0.295	0.018
Treatment capacity	Democrat	Positive	0.572	0.015
Treatment capacity	Republican	Negative	0.525	0.021
Treatment capacity	Republican	Positive	0.734	0.018

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

B.3 Randomization check

Table B.2: Randomization Check, Experiment 1

	Group Means						
Variable	Z=0	Z=1	Diff	SD	Std. Diff	z	p
age	38.705	36.608	-2.098	0.796	-0.162	-2.634	0.008
white	0.798	0.721	-0.077	0.026	-0.181	-2.928	0.003
black	0.085	0.130	0.045	0.019	0.146	2.368	0.018
asian	0.106	0.138	0.032	0.020	0.097	1.585	0.113
hispanic	0.106	0.142	0.036	0.020	0.108	1.761	0.078
female	0.495	0.500	0.005	0.031	0.009	0.154	0.878
partyID	3.720	3.392	-0.328	0.134	-0.150	-2.438	0.015
age(missing)	0.000	0.008	0.008	0.004	0.123	2.001	0.045
hispanic(missing)	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.087	1.414	0.157
female(missing)	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.087	1.414	0.157
partyID(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.061	0.999	0.318

Overall: Chi-squared statistic= 25.3(df=10,p=0.005)

Note: Diff refers to the difference in means for a covariate. SD denotes the standard deviation of the difference in means. Std. Diff refers to the standardized difference in means.

B.4 Table of estimates plotted in Figure 3

Table B.3: Experiment 1: Data for Figure 3

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Perceptions of				
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.275	0.018
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.449	0.017
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.539	0.021
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.702	0.020
Responsibility				
Trump responsibility	Democrat	Negative	0.710	0.016
Trump responsibility	Democrat	Positive	0.639	0.017
Trump responsibility	Republican	Negative	0.573	0.018
Trump responsibility	Republican	Positive	0.632	0.018
Trump responsible (text)	Democrat	Negative	0.409	0.030
Trump responsible (text)	Democrat	Positive	0.314	0.027
Trump responsible (text)	Republican	Negative	0.198	0.029
Trump responsible (text)	Republican	Positive	0.206	0.032

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

C Experiment 1B

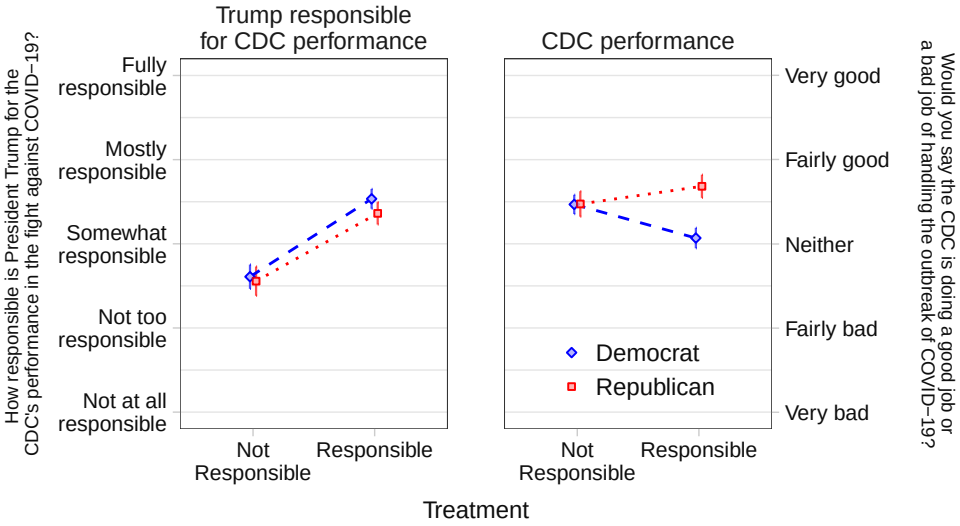
C.1 Description and results

A version of the following text appeared in previous versions of the manuscript under the header, "Testing a Novel Prediction." It supports our account but did not prove essential to it. We include our full results here for transparency and completeness.

In the formal statement of our competence beliefs account (Appendix F.1), voters respond to the same information by attributing responsibility differently because they have different beliefs about who can deliver good performance. We looked for evidence of such beliefs by conducting a second experiment that estimates the quantity on the right-hand side of (8), $\mu_{G|R=1} - \mu_{G|R=0}$. If randomly-assigned information about responsibility ($R = 1$ versus $R = 0$) does not induce Democrats and Republicans to make opposite inferences about performance, our account is unlikely to hold the key to understanding selective attribution.

For this study, we recruited another diverse sample on MTurk ($n = 1099$) in May 2020. Each participant read three short vignettes about how much control the president has over the CDC's budget, personnel, and the degree to which the CDC collaborated with the White House on pandemic-related guidance. Within these topic areas, the experiment introduced exogenous variation in presidential control, and through it perceptions of responsibility for the CDC. Half of the respondents were randomly assigned to see information that emphasized presidential control, while the other half saw information that minimized it. Following the treatment, respondents answered two closed-ended questions, one on how much Trump was responsible for the CDC's performance and another on the CDC's performance fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure C.1: Experiment 1B



Note: See note to Figure 3.

The experiment successfully manipulated perceptions of presidential responsibility for the CDC's performance, among both Republicans and Democrats (Figure C.1, left). Compared with Republicans who read information that understated presidential control, Republicans who read information that emphasized presidential control thought Trump was more responsible for the CDC's performance ($\widehat{\text{CATE}}_R = 0.201$, s.e. $= 0.028$). Democrats responded similarly to the treatment ($\widehat{\text{CATE}}_D = 0.231$, s.e. $= 0.024$). In both cases, the treatment effect was equal to about 20 percent of the scale. The difference in conditional average treatment effects is statistically insignificant ($\widehat{\text{CATE}_R - \text{CATE}_D}$ = -0.0299, s.e. $= 0.0364$). In section C.3, we show that the treatment moved perceptions of presidential responsibility on each of the three dimensions, for both Democrats and Republicans (see Figure C.2).

Even as Democrats and Republicans made the same inference about presidential control over the CDC, they made opposite inferences about the agency's performance. Compared with Republicans who read facts that minimized presidential control over the CDC, those who read facts emphasizing it inferred better CDC performance ($\widehat{\text{CATE}}_R = 0.0525$, s.e. $=$ 0.0259). Democrats responded in the opposite way, rating the CDC's performance as better when presidential control was low and worse when presidential control was high ($\widehat{\text{CATE}}_D$ $= -0.0999$, s.e. $= 0.0212$). The difference between these treatment effects is statistically significant ($\widehat{\text{CATE}_R - \text{CATE}_D} = 0.1524$, s.e. $= 0.0334$).

Combined with our first experiment, these results provide further evidence of the performance-based account's plausibility. Democrats and Republicans use performance information to make inferences about responsibility (Experiment 1, left-hand side of (7)) and responsibility information to make opposite inferences about performance (Experiment 1b, right-hand side of (7)). Though existing accounts do not predict the latter result, we suspect that a rationale for identity-protective inferences about the performance of federal agencies could be developed *ex post*. Accordingly, we interpret this result mainly as an encouraging sign for our account's ability to generate testable, accurate predictions.

C.2 Survey information

Platform: MTurk.

Dates: May 24-25, 2020.

Sample size: 1,099.

Consent: Subjects read an IRB-approved consent form, then voluntarily consented to participate in a research study.

Refusal rate: 0 percent.

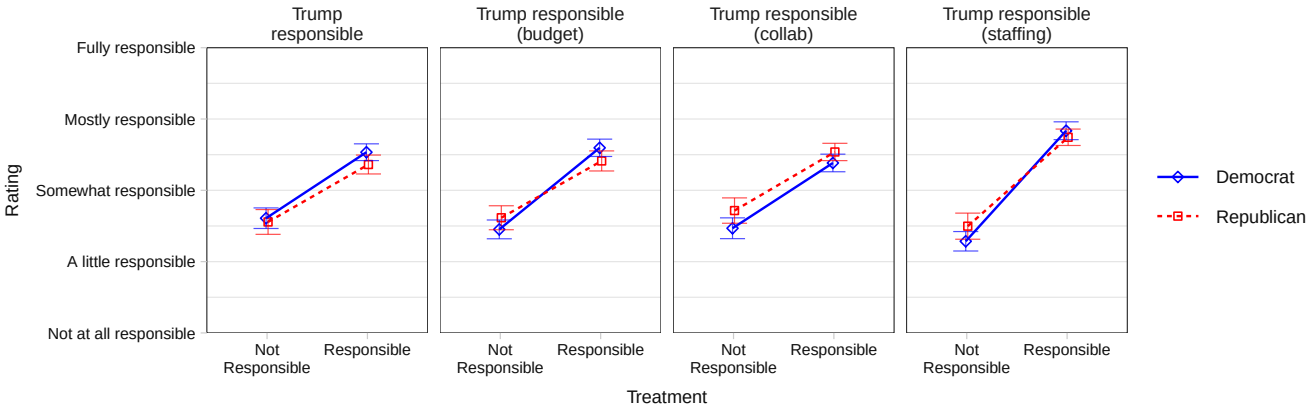
Compensation: $0.30. As the vendor does not set any standard rate, this amount was chosen to exceed the hourly minimum wage in the United States.

Treatments and outcomes: See Appendix G.

No deception: As indicated in the approved IRB application, the experimental treatments did not involve deception.

C.3 Manipulation check

Figure C.2: Experiment 2, Manipulation Checks



Note: This figure plots the average response among Democrats (in blue) and Republicans (in red) when they were told presidential control over the CDC was high ("responsible") and low ("not responsible"). The point estimate is accompanied by a 95% confidence interval constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust HC2 standard errors. We measure presidential responsibility separately for each dimension using the question: How responsible would you say the President is for [how CDC spends its money/ the quality of leadership at the CDC/ the CDC's strategies for fighting the COVID-19 outbreak]? (Not at all responsible, a little responsible, somewhat responsible, mostly responsible, fully responsible).

Table C.1: Experiment 1B: Data for Supplemental Figure C.2

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Trump responsible for				
CDC's overall performance	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.402	0.018
CDC's overall performance	Democrat	Responsible	0.634	0.015
CDC's overall performance	Republican	Not Responsible	0.389	0.022
CDC's overall performance	Republican	Responsible	0.590	0.017
Budget	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.363	0.017
Budget	Democrat	Responsible	0.649	0.015
Budget	Republican	Not Responsible	0.404	0.021
Budget	Republican	Responsible	0.603	0.018
Collaboration with White House	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.367	0.019
Collaboration with White House	Democrat	Responsible	0.596	0.016
Collaboration with White House	Republican	Not Responsible	0.429	0.023
Collaboration with White House	Republican	Responsible	0.634	0.015
Staffing	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.321	0.017
Staffing	Democrat	Responsible	0.709	0.016
Staffing	Republican	Not Responsible	0.374	0.023
Staffing	Republican	Responsible	0.686	0.015

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

C.4 Randomization check

Table C.2: Randomization Check, Experiment 1B

	Group Means						
Variable	Z=0	Z=1	Diff	SD	Std. Diff	z	p
age	38.375	38.982	0.607	0.801	0.046	0.757	0.449
white	0.756	0.765	0.010	0.026	0.022	0.370	0.711
black	0.107	0.104	-0.004	0.019	-0.012	-0.207	0.836
asian	0.120	0.127	0.007	0.020	0.021	0.355	0.723
hispanic	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	NaN	0.000	1.000
female	0.534	0.538	0.004	0.030	0.009	0.149	0.882
partyID	3.370	3.607	0.238	0.132	0.109	1.805	0.071
age(missing)	0.007	0.002	-0.005	0.004	-0.081	-1.346	0.178
hispanic(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.060	0.999	0.318
female(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.060	0.999	0.318
partyID(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.060	0.999	0.318

Overall: Chi-squared statistic= 10.217(df=8,p=0.25)

Note: Diff refers to the difference in means for a covariate. SD denotes the standard deviation of the difference in means. Std. Diff refers to the standardized difference in means.

C.5 Table of estimates plotted in Figure C.1

Table C.3: Experiment 1B: Data for Figure C.1

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Perceptions of				
CDC performance	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.617	0.015
CDC performance	Democrat	Responsible	0.517	0.015
CDC performance	Republican	Not Responsible	0.618	0.019
CDC performance	Republican	Responsible	0.671	0.017
Trump responsible for				
CDC's overall performance	Democrat	Not Responsible	0.402	0.018
CDC's overall performance	Democrat	Responsible	0.634	0.015
CDC's overall performance	Republican	Not Responsible	0.389	0.022
CDC's overall performance	Republican	Responsible	0.590	0.017

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

D Experiment 2

D.1 Survey information

Platform: MTurk.

Dates: October 23-26, 2020 (wave 1); October 25-28, 2020 (wave 2)

Sample size: 3,572 (wave 1), 2,524 (wave 2).

Consent: Subjects read an IRB-approved consent form, then voluntarily consented to participate in a research study.

Refusal rate: 0 percent.

Compensation: $0.60. As the vendor does not set any standard rate, this amount was chosen to exceed the hourly minimum wage in the United States.

Treatments and outcomes: See Appendix G.

No deception: As indicated in the approved IRB application, the experimental treatments did not involve deception.

Real-world impact: As the experiment was conducted shortly before a presidential election, the design (1) examined the intervention's effect on preference between the major party candidates and (2) excluded political independents, among whom our theory predicted the strongest effect on candidate preference. We find no evidence that the treatment affected candidate preferences (see Appendix D.5).

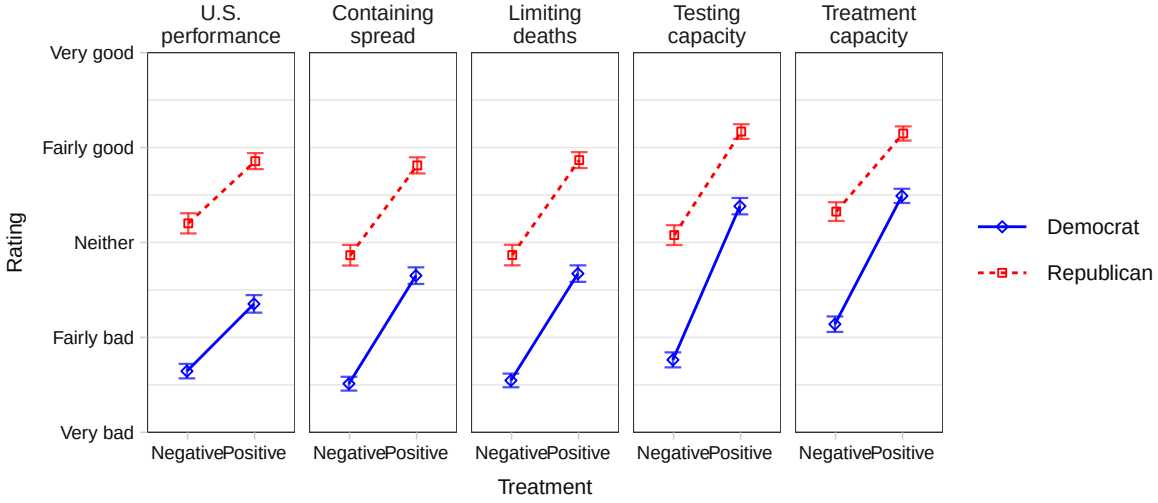
Recontact: In wave 1, 3,234 respondents identified themselves as a partisan or independent leaner. We invited all of these respondents to complete the wave 2 survey. Of these, 2,524 completed the wave 2 survey (78 percent). This table displays the dated on which respondents completed the surveys. In total, 101 respondents took the wave 2 survey on the same day as wave 1; 800, one day later; 956, two days later; 443, three days later; 183, four days later; and 40, five days later.

Wave 1 start date	Wave 2 start date			
	2020-10-25	2020-10-26	2020-10-27	2020-10-28
2020-10-23	627	326	173	40
2020-10-24	174	82	68	10
2020-10-25	30	296	204	49
2020-10-26	0	71	330	43

Preregistration: https://osf.io/eyg4p

D.2 Manipulation check

Figure D.1: Experiment 2, Manipulation Checks



Note: This figure plots the average response among Democrats (in blue) and Republicans (in red) when they read positively and negatively framed performance information. The point estimate is accompanied by a 95% confidence interval constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust HC2 standard errors. We measure perceptions of U.S. performance, separately for each dimension, using the question: Would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of [controlling the spread of COVID-19/ limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19/ testing for COVID-19/ developing treatments and vaccines for COVID-19]? (Very bad, fairly bad, neither good nor bad, fairly good, very good).

Table D.1: Experiment 2: Data for Supplemental Figure D.1

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Performance Assessments				
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Negative	0.137	0.009
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Positive	0.418	0.011
Limiting deaths	Republican	Negative	0.467	0.014
Limiting deaths	Republican	Positive	0.717	0.011
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.161	0.010
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.338	0.012
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.550	0.014
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.714	0.011
Containing spread	Democrat	Negative	0.128	0.009
Containing spread	Democrat	Positive	0.413	0.011
Containing spread	Republican	Negative	0.466	0.014
Containing spread	Republican	Positive	0.703	0.011
Testing capacity	Democrat	Negative	0.191	0.010
Testing capacity	Democrat	Positive	0.596	0.011
Testing capacity	Republican	Negative	0.519	0.013
Testing capacity	Republican	Positive	0.792	0.010
Treatment capacity	Democrat	Negative	0.285	0.010
Treatment capacity	Democrat	Positive	0.623	0.010
Treatment capacity	Republican	Negative	0.581	0.013
Treatment capacity	Republican	Positive	0.787	0.010

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

D.3 Randomization check

Table D.2: Randomization Check, Experiment 2

	Group Means						
Variable	Z=0	Z=1	Diff	SD	Std. Diff	z	p
age	39.095	39.965	0.870	0.502	0.069	1.732	0.083
white	0.806	0.784	-0.022	0.016	-0.054	-1.362	0.173
black	0.095	0.108	0.013	0.012	0.043	1.075	0.282
asian	0.088	0.095	0.007	0.011	0.023	0.572	0.567
hispanic	0.128	0.131	0.003	0.013	0.008	0.201	0.841
female	0.514	0.522	0.008	0.020	0.017	0.421	0.674
partyID	3.642	3.687	0.044	0.096	0.018	0.464	0.643
education	4.437	4.502	0.065	0.048	0.054	1.352	0.176
trump responsible	0.653	0.646	-0.007	0.012	-0.024	-0.607	0.544
voted for trump	0.411	0.423	0.012	0.019	0.025	0.636	0.525
performance beliefs index	0.391	0.396	0.005	0.014	0.014	0.348	0.728
social partisanship index	0.463	0.469	0.006	0.013	0.019	0.484	0.628
age(missing)	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.999
hispanic(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.069	1.735	0.083
female(missing)	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.999
partyID(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.040	1.001	0.317
education(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.040	1.001	0.317
trump responsible(missing)	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.056	1.416	0.157
voted for trump(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.040	1.001	0.317
performance beliefs index(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.040	1.001	0.317
social partisanship index(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.040	1.001	0.317

Overall: Chi-squared statistic= 14.915(df=17,p=0.602)

Note: Diff refers to the difference in means for a covariate. SD denotes the standard deviation of the difference in means. Std. Diff refers to the standardized difference in means.

D.4 Table of estimates plotted in Figure 4

Table D.3: Experiment 2: Data for Figure 4

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Perceptions of				
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.161	0.010
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.338	0.012
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.550	0.014
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.714	0.011
Responsibility				
Trump responsibility	Democrat	Negative	0.747	0.010
Trump responsibility	Democrat	Positive	0.693	0.011
Trump responsibility	Republican	Negative	0.528	0.013
Trump responsibility	Republican	Positive	0.612	0.011
Voted Trump	Democrat	Negative	0.089	0.010
Voted Trump	Democrat	Positive	0.099	0.011
Voted Trump	Republican	Negative	0.843	0.014
Voted Trump	Republican	Positive	0.847	0.014

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

D.5 Presidential vote choice

Table D.4: Treatment effect on presidential vote choice.

	All	Democrat	Republican
Constant	0.032**	0.029**	0.112**
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.027)
Treatment (1 = positive)	0.010	0.003	0.018
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Pre-treatment DV	0.911**	0.796**	0.839**
	(0.008)	(0.038)	(0.028)
Adj. R^2	0.833	0.539	0.630
Num. obs.	2504	1426	1078

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table D.5: Treatment effect on presidential vote choice, independent leaners.

	All	Democrat	Republican
Constant	0.019	0.013	0.056*
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.028)
Treatment (1 = positive)	0.030	0.035	0.019
	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.028)
Pre-treatment DV	0.907**	0.827**	0.884**
	(0.021)	(0.081)	(0.032)
Adj. R^2	0.826	0.586	0.708
Num. obs.	472	258	214

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table D.6: Treatment effect on presidential vote choice, weak partisans.

	All	Democrat	Republican
Constant	0.028**	0.035**	0.040
	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.025)
Treatment (1 = positive)	0.006	−0.014	0.033*
	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Pre-treatment DV	0.942**	0.887**	0.921**
	(0.011)	(0.043)	(0.028)
Adj. R^2	0.887	0.626	0.848
Num. obs.	802	459	343

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table D.7: Treatment effect on presidential vote choice, strong partisans.

	All	Democrat	Republican
Constant	0.040**	0.030**	0.403**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.105)
Treatment (1 = positive)	0.005	0.003	0.005
	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.019)
Pre-treatment DV	0.895**	0.737**	0.549**
	(0.013)	(0.061)	(0.105)
Adj. R^2	0.804	0.479	0.197
Num. obs.	1230	709	521

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table D.8: Treatment effect on presidential vote choice, partisan differences.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
α Constant	0.027**	0.017	0.014
	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.014)
β_1 Z	0.003	0.030	0.036
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.022)
β_2 Republican	0.102**		0.097**
	(0.024)		(0.031)
β_3 Weak		0.022	0.026
		(0.015)	(0.019)
β_9 Strong		0.016	0.010
		(0.015)	(0.018)
β_6 Weak × Republican			−0.014
			(0.031)
β_{10} Strong × Republican			0.027
			(0.032)
β_4 Z × Republican	0.014		−0.020
	(0.016)		(0.036)
β_5 Z × Weak		−0.023	−0.049
		(0.021)	(0.027)
β_{11} Z × Strong		−0.025	−0.034
		(0.021)	(0.027)
β_7 Z × Weak × Republican			0.067
			(0.042)
β_{12} Z × Strong × Republican			0.026
			(0.043)
β_8 Pre-treatment DV	0.819**	0.911**	0.814**
	(0.023)	(0.008)	(0.024)
Adj. R^2	0.838	0.833	0.838
Num. obs.	2504	2504	2504

D.6 Crosswalk to pre-analysis plan

This section is designed to aid readers who wish to assess the consistency between the analysis and the pre-analysis plan, which is available at https://osf.io/eyg4p.

The pre-analysis plan specified seven hypotheses that would replicate results from the time series data and the first two experiments:

- *Hypothesis 1: parallel updating in response to information.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 2. See Figure 4 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 2: selective attribution by Democrats.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 2. See Figure 4 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 3: selective attribution by Republicans.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 2. See Figure 4 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 4: weak partisans identify more strongly with a party than do independents leaning toward a party.* Tested in the appendix on group identity and selective attribution. See the left set of columns in Table F.4.
- *Hypothesis 5: partisan differences in competence beliefs are more pronounced among leaners than among weak partisans.* Tested in the appendix on group identity and selective attribution. See the right set of columns in Table F.4.

  Note that due to a typographical or proofing error, the preregistration document reads "partisan differences in selective attributions of responsibility" rather than "partisan differences in competence beliefs." The pre-specified statistical test of this hypothesis makes the document's intent clear, as does the redundancy that that the error creates between hypotheses 5 and 6.
- *Hypothesis 6: selective attributions of responsibility are more pronounced among leaners.* Tested in the appendix item on group identity and selective attribution. See Figure F.1 and Table F.3.
- *Hypothesis 7: same treatment effect on presidential vote choice.* See section D.5.

We supplemented this with four hypotheses that were generated entirely by our theory, and were not designed to replicate any previous result.

- *Hypothesis S1: competence beliefs moderate the treatment effect.* See column 3 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis S2: partisan identity moderates the treatment effect.* See column 2 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis S3: independent of partisan identity, competence beliefs moderate the treatment effect.* See column 4 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis S4: randomization check.* See Appendix D.3.

E Experiment 3

E.1 Survey information

Platform: MTurk.

Dates: December 29-30, 2021.

Sample size: 4,484.

Consent: Subjects read an IRB-approved consent form, then voluntarily consented to participate in a research study.

Refusal rate: 0.1 percent.

Additional screening: All respondents who left the survey at least twice during the pre-treatment questions were dropped. This was pre-registered.

Compensation: $0.60. As the vendor does not set any standard rate, this amount was chosen to exceed the hourly minimum wage in the United States.

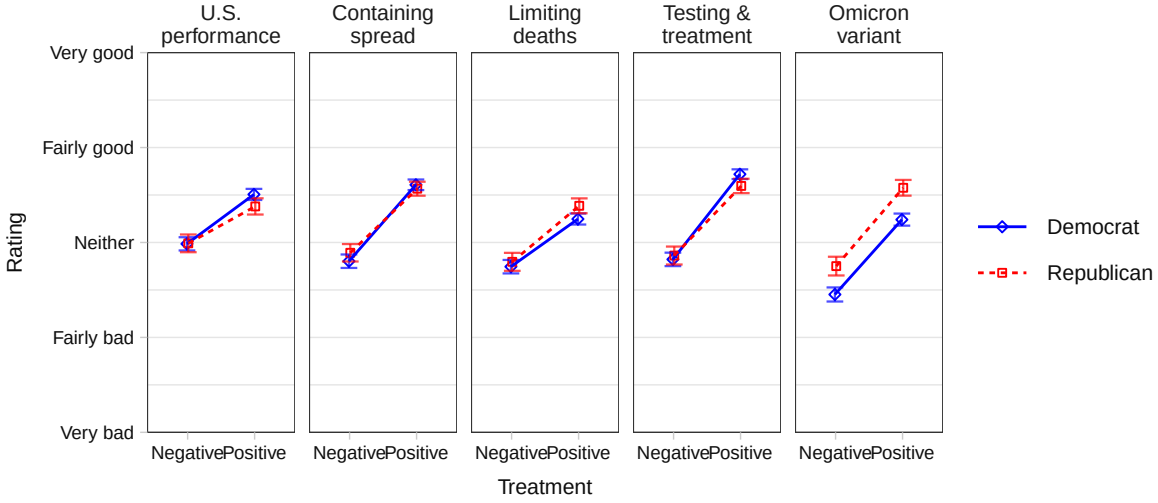
Treatments and outcomes: See Appendix G.

No deception: As indicated in the approved IRB application, the experimental treatments did not involve deception.

Preregistration: https://osf.io/s3u5m

E.2 Manipulation check

Figure E.1: Experiment 3, Manipulation Checks



Note: This figure plots the average response among Democrats (in blue) and Republicans (in red) when they read positively and negatively framed performance information. The point estimate is accompanied by a 95% confidence interval constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust HC2 standard errors. We measure perceptions of U.S. performance, separately for each dimension, using the questions: Would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of [controlling the spread of COVID-19/ limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19/ handling new COVID-19 cases once they emerge]? Would you say that the emergence of the Omicron variant is good news or bad news? (Very bad, fairly bad, neither good nor bad, fairly good, very good).

Table E.1: Experiment 3: Data for Supplemental Figure E.1

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Performance Assessments				
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Negative	0.436	0.009
Limiting deaths	Democrat	Positive	0.562	0.007
Limiting deaths	Republican	Negative	0.449	0.012
Limiting deaths	Republican	Positive	0.597	0.010
Omicron variant	Democrat	Negative	0.363	0.009
Omicron variant	Democrat	Positive	0.560	0.008
Omicron variant	Republican	Negative	0.438	0.013
Omicron variant	Republican	Positive	0.644	0.011
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.496	0.009
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.627	0.007
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.498	0.012
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.595	0.011
Containing spread	Democrat	Negative	0.451	0.009
Containing spread	Democrat	Positive	0.652	0.007
Containing spread	Republican	Negative	0.473	0.012
Containing spread	Republican	Positive	0.642	0.009
Testing & treatment	Democrat	Negative	0.455	0.009
Testing & treatment	Democrat	Positive	0.680	0.007
Testing & treatment	Republican	Negative	0.466	0.012
Testing & treatment	Republican	Positive	0.649	0.010

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance.

E.3 Randomization check

Table E.2: Randomization Check (Performance Information), Experiment 3

	Group Means						
Variable	Z=0	Z=1	Diff	SD	Std. Diff	z	p
age	38.762	38.226	-0.536	0.373	-0.043	-1.437	0.151
white	0.835	0.823	-0.011	0.011	-0.030	-1.015	0.310
black	0.090	0.097	0.007	0.009	0.025	0.833	0.405
asian	0.063	0.066	0.004	0.007	0.016	0.524	0.600
hispanic	0.162	0.191	0.029	0.011	0.077	2.582	0.010
female	0.462	0.453	-0.009	0.015	-0.017	-0.581	0.561
partyID	3.328	3.325	-0.003	0.069	-0.001	-0.037	0.970
education	4.517	4.547	0.030	0.036	0.025	0.832	0.405
performance beliefs index	0.620	0.612	-0.009	0.008	-0.031	-1.033	0.302
social partisanship index	0.397	0.395	-0.002	0.010	-0.005	-0.175	0.861
biden responsible	0.626	0.615	-0.012	0.008	-0.045	-1.503	0.133
age(missing)	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.025	0.980
hispanic(missing)	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.014	0.475	0.634
female(missing)	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	-0.017	-0.556	0.578
partyID(missing)	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	-0.017	-0.556	0.578
education(missing)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.018	0.986
performance beliefs index(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.018	0.599	0.549
social partisanship index(missing)	0.091	0.092	0.001	0.009	0.003	0.110	0.913
biden responsible(missing)	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.011	0.371	0.710

Overall: Chi-squared statistic= 24.728(df=19,p=0.17)

Note: Diff refers to the difference in means for a covariate. SD denotes the standard deviation of the difference in means. Std. Diff refers to the standardized difference in means.

Table E.3: Randomization Check (Accuracy Prime), Experiment 3

	Group Means						
Variable	Z=0	Z=1	Diff	SD	Std. Diff	z	p
age	38.374	38.624	0.250	0.373	0.020	0.672	0.502
white	0.830	0.828	-0.003	0.011	-0.007	-0.231	0.818
black	0.093	0.094	0.002	0.009	0.006	0.214	0.830
asian	0.065	0.064	0.000	0.007	-0.001	-0.049	0.961
hispanic	0.169	0.184	0.015	0.011	0.040	1.333	0.183
female	0.455	0.460	0.005	0.015	0.009	0.317	0.751
partyID	3.316	3.337	0.021	0.069	0.009	0.307	0.759
education	4.529	4.535	0.006	0.036	0.005	0.163	0.870
performance beliefs index	0.617	0.615	-0.002	0.008	-0.007	-0.241	0.809
social partisanship index	0.396	0.395	-0.001	0.010	-0.002	-0.076	0.940
biden responsible	0.623	0.618	-0.004	0.008	-0.017	-0.558	0.577
age(missing)	0.001	0.000	-0.001	0.001	-0.029	-0.985	0.325
hispanic(missing)	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.014	0.464	0.642
female(missing)	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	-0.017	-0.564	0.573
partyID(missing)	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	-0.017	-0.564	0.573
education(missing)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.011	0.991
performance beliefs index(missing)	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.018	0.591	0.555
social partisanship index(missing)	0.083	0.099	0.016	0.009	0.056	1.873	0.061
biden responsible(missing)	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.001	-0.009	-0.311	0.756

Overall: Chi-squared statistic= 13.272(df=19,p=0.824)

Note: Diff refers to the difference in means for a covariate. SD denotes the standard deviation of the difference in means. Std. Diff refers to the standardized difference in means.

E.4 Table of estimates plotted in Figure 5

Table E.4: Experiment 3: Data for Figure 5

Variable	Party	Z	Mean	SE
Perceptions of				
U.S. performance	Democrat	Negative	0.496	0.009
U.S. performance	Democrat	Positive	0.627	0.007
U.S. performance	Republican	Negative	0.498	0.012
U.S. performance	Republican	Positive	0.595	0.011
Responsibility				
Biden responsibility	Democrat	Negative	0.614	0.007
Biden responsibility	Democrat	Positive	0.632	0.007
Biden responsibility	Republican	Negative	0.682	0.009
Biden responsibility	Republican	Positive	0.633	0.011

Note: All variables measured on a [0-1] scale. Higher values indicate better performance or greater responsibility

E.5 Accuracy prime manipulation check

To verify that the accuracy prime was administered properly, we examined whether our subjects could recall its presence. After the dependent variables were measured, all subjects were asked, "Before you reached this page, did the survey warn you that you would have to justify your answers?" with the response options "Yes" and "No."

To estimate the treatment's effect on this question, we used OLS to estimate

$$\mathbb{1}(\text{Yes})_i \sim \alpha + \beta \text{Accuracy treatment}_i + \epsilon, \tag{4}$$

where $\mathbb{1}$(Yes) is an indicator for saying "Yes" and Accuracy treatment$_i$ is an indicator for the accuracy motivation treatment. Table E.5 displays the results. We estimate $\beta = 0.40$, a large positive effect.

Table E.5: Manipulation check, accuracy motivation treatment.

	Model 1
Constant	0.424**
	(0.011)
Accuracy treatment	0.398**
	(0.013)
Adj. R^2	0.168
Num. obs.	4365

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Our estimate of α, 0.42, indicates that many untreated respondents reported that they remembered the treatment. We do not find this discouraging, as respondents who did not see the treatment could not possibly have been affected by it. Our best guess is that such respondents were worried that failing to notice an instruction would result in non-payment, which is a common practice among some requestors on the survey platform.

E.6 Crosswalk to pre-analysis plan

This section is designed to aid readers who wish to assess the consistency between the analysis and the pre-analysis plan, available at https://osf.io/s3u5m.

The pre-analysis plan specified seven hypotheses that would replicate results from the time series data and the first two experiments:

- *Hypothesis 1: parallel updating in response to information.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 3. See Figure 5 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 2a: selective attribution by Democrats.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 3. See Figure 5 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 2b: selective attribution by Republicans.* Tested in the main text subsection on Experiment 3. See Figure 5 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 3: accuracy motivation.* Tested in the main text section "Altering the Motivational Context." See Table 4 and surrounding text.
- *Hypothesis 4: competence beliefs moderate the treatment effect.* See column 6 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis 5: partisan identity moderates the treatment effect.* See column 7 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis 6: independent of partisan identity, competence beliefs moderate the treatment effect.* See column 8 of Tables 3, F.1, and F.2.
- *Hypothesis 7: randomization check.* See Appendix D.3.
- *Hypothesis 8: accuracy prime manipulation check.* See Appendix E.5.

F Supplemental Results

F.1 Formal statement of the competence beliefs explanation

Detailed Explanation

Classic accounts of democratic accountability note that voters overwhelmingly view their preferred candidate as more able to deliver good performance (Key 1966*a*; Sigelman and Knight 1985). In this section, we examine how Bayes' rule predicts that a voter with *competence beliefs* of this kind would use them to make inferences about responsibility for events and social conditions. Though we do not have any expectation that voters actually follow Bayes' rule, its roots in the laws of probability make it a convenient model of how one might reason absent any directional motivation (e.g., Gerber and Green 1999; Little 2019). In this section, we present a brief exposition of our analytic results. The next section provides more detailed proofs.

We begin by mathematically expressing the phenomenon of interest: that the state of the world appears to affect voters' perceptions of the government's responsibility for creating those conditions. To do so, we consider the probabilistic beliefs of a representative voter in each of two possible two states of the world, good (G) and bad ($\neg G$). Let $R = 1$ indicate that the incumbent is responsible and $R = 0$ indicate the opposite. According to Bayes' rule, the voter's belief that the incumbent is responsible, $P(R = 1|\cdot)$, should equal

$$P(R = 1|G) = \frac{P(G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1)}{P(G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1) + P(G|R = 0) \cdot P(R = 0)} \tag{5}$$

in the good state of the world, and

$$P(R = 1|\neg G) = \frac{P(\neg G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1)}{P(\neg G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1) + P(\neg G|R = 0) \cdot P(R = 0)} \tag{6}$$

in the bad state of the world. Subtracting (6) from (5) expresses a key result from the selective attribution literature: voters' attributions of responsibility depend on how well they think things are going.[13] Substituting and rearranging terms yields our key analytic result,

$$P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G) \propto P(G|R = 1) - P(G|R = 0). \tag{7}$$

The left-hand side is simply the difference between (6) and (5), implying that voters' attributions of responsibility depend on how well things are going. The right-hand side indicates that any such tendency should emerge in proportion to the voter's beliefs about the incumbent's ability to deliver good performance. To see this, consider that the first term,

[13] More specifically, subtracting (6) from (5) expresses the relationship between attributions of responsibility and the state of the world using potential outcomes notation, where G is the treatment variable and R is the outcome variable (Rubin 1974).

$P(G|R = 1)$, is the probability of good performance when the incumbent is responsible; the second term, $P(G|R = 0)$, is this probability when the incumbent is not responsible. The difference between these two terms is the voter's belief about the incumbent's effect on performance. The proportionality symbol, $\propto$, indicates that the two sides are equal up to a constant factor. This means that a Bayesian agent's competence beliefs and attributions of responsibility always take the same sign and covary steadily as functions of one another.

To grasp the key implication of equation (7), consider a Bayesian voter who believes good outcomes are likely under the incumbent (i.e., $P(G|R = 1) - P(G|R = 0) > 0$). When such a voter observes good outcomes, that voter will think it is more likely that the incumbent is responsible for performance in that area (i.e., $P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G) > 0$). In contrast, for a Bayesian voter who believes that good outcomes are unlikely under the incumbent, the right-hand side takes the opposite sign (i.e., $P(G|R = 1) - P(G|R = 0) < 0$). When such a voter observes good outcomes, they should be less likely to attribute responsibility to the incumbent (i.e., $P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G) < 0$).

We show below in the proof statement that this same principle holds for population averages, implying that

$$\mu_{R|G} - \mu_{R|\neg G} \propto \mu_{G|R=1} - \mu_{G|R=0}. \tag{8}$$

This means that when two groups of people have oppositely-signed beliefs about the incumbent's effect on performance (right side), they should respond to the same changes in the state of the world by making opposite inferences about whether the incumbent is responsible for performance (left side).

Existing research establishes that in many cases, the left-hand side of expression (8) takes opposite signs for Democrats and Republicans.[14] We have shown that Bayes' rule implies that the right-hand side, which is aptly described as a competence belief, should take the same sign as the left-hand side, which expresses selective attribution. This implies that selective attribution can emerge as a function of differences in competence beliefs, which are documented in classic work on democratic accountability (Key 1966*a*; Sigelman and Knight 1985).

[14]That is, most of the studies in Table 2 suggest in one way or another that when the state of the world becomes better or worse, partisans make opposite inferences about whether the incumbent is responsible.

Proof Statement

Start with the estimand: $P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G)$.

Apply Bayes' rule, and re-write it as:

$$\Big(\frac{P(G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1)}{P(G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1) + P(G|R = 0) \cdot P(R = 0)}\Big)$$
$$-\Big(\frac{P(\neg G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1)}{P(\neg G|R = 1) \cdot P(R = 1) + P(\neg G|R = 0) \cdot P(R = 0)}\Big)$$

Multiply through by the product of the denominators, which is equal to $P(G)P(\neg G)$

$$\Big(P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G)\Big)P(G)P(\neg G) =$$
$$P(G|R = 1)P(R = 1)\Big(P(\neg G|R = 1)P(R = 1) + P(\neg G|R = 0)P(R = 0)\Big)$$
$$-P(\neg G|R = 1)P(R = 1)\Big(P(G|R = 1)P(R = 1) + P(G|R = 0)P(R = 0)\Big)$$

Note that the right hand side can be rewritten as $A(B + C) - B(A + D)$, which reduces to $AC - BD$

$$\Big(P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G)\Big)P(G)P(\neg G) =$$
$$P(G|R = 1)P(R = 1)P(\neg G|R = 0)P(R = 0) - P(\neg G|R = 1)P(R = 1)P(G|R = 0)P(R = 0)$$

Divide through by $P(R = 1)P(R = 0)$

$$\Big(P(R = 1|G) - P(R = 1|\neg G)\Big)\frac{P(G)P(\neg G)}{P(R = 1)P(R = 0)} =$$
$$P(G|R = 1)P(\neg G|R = 0) - P(\neg G|R = 1)P(G|R = 0)$$

Note that $\frac{P(G)P(\neg G)}{P(R=1)P(R=0)}$ is always positive. Drop this term from the left side and be satisfied that for any individual, the two sides are proportional

$$\Big(P(R=1|G) - P(R=1|\neg G)\Big) \propto P(G|R=1)P(\neg G|R=0) - P(\neg G|R=1)P(G|R=0)$$

Now on the right side, substitute $P(\neg G|R=\cdot) = 1 - P(G|R=\cdot)$

$$\Big(P(R=1|G) - P(R=1|\neg G)\Big) \propto P(G|R=1)[1 - P(G|R=0)] - [1 - P(G|R=1)]P(G|R=0)$$

Solve on the right-hand side to get:

$$\Big(P(R=1|G) - P(R=1|\neg G)\Big)$$
$$\propto P(G|R=1) - [P(G|R=1)P(G|R=0)] - P(G|R=0) + [P(G|R=1)P(G|R=0)]$$

$$\Big(P(R=1|G) - P(R=1|\neg G)\Big) \propto P(G|R=1) - P(G|R=0)$$

If we average over all individuals in a population, this relationship can be expressed as a population quantity or estimand. Let there be k voters in the population, then the above relationship can be expressed as:

$$\mathrm{E}_k[\mathrm{E}(R=1|G)] - \mathrm{E}_k[\mathrm{E}(R=1|\neg G)] \propto \mathrm{E}_k[\mathrm{E}(G|R=1)] - \mathrm{E}_k[\mathrm{E}(G|R=0)] \tag{9}$$

Where the expectation operator $E_k[\cdot]$ averages over k individuals, and $E(\cdot)$ is one individual's conditional expectation about presidential responsibility or performance. An equivalent way to describe these population means is:

$$\mu_{R|G} - \mu_{R|\neg G} \propto \mu_{G|R=1} - \mu_{G|R=0} \tag{10}$$

F.2 Within-party horse race

This section presents the equivalent of main text Table 3 using only variation within each party.

Table F.1: Treatment effect heterogeneity, Democrats only, experiments 2 and 3.

	Experiment 2 (Trump)				Experiment 3 (Biden)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
α Constant	0.407**	0.409**	0.471**	0.479**	0.154**	0.217**	0.152**	0.262**
	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.024)	(0.035)
β_1 Partisan identity		−0.005		−0.026		−0.213**		−0.247**
		(0.071)		(0.070)		(0.042)		(0.049)
β_2 Competence beliefs			−0.251**	−0.253**			0.009	−0.054
			(0.042)	(0.042)			(0.031)	(0.035)
β_3 Treatment (1 = positive)	−0.059**	−0.040	−0.080**	−0.060*	0.027**	0.033**	−0.056	−0.069
	(0.013)	(0.026)	(0.016)	(0.029)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.032)	(0.042)
β_4 Treatment × partisan ID		−0.095		−0.098		−0.029		0.044
		(0.105)		(0.105)		(0.050)		(0.058)
β_5 Treatment × comp. beliefs			0.136*	0.130*			0.111**	0.121**
			(0.056)	(0.056)			(0.042)	(0.047)
β_6 Presidential responsibility, wave 1	0.481**	0.480**	0.447**	0.444**	0.740**	0.699**	0.734**	0.700**
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.016)
Adj. R^2	0.262	0.262	0.282	0.282	0.570	0.580	0.573	0.581
Num. obs.	1426	1426	1426	1426	2595	2595	2595	2595

Table F.2: Treatment effect heterogeneity, Republicans only, experiments 2 and 3.

	Experiment 2 (Trump)				Experiment 3 (Biden)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
α Constant	0.187**	0.144	0.396**	0.131	0.188**	0.018	0.216**	−0.010
	(0.019)	(0.075)	(0.037)	(0.068)	(0.018)	(0.045)	(0.021)	(0.047)
β_1 Partisan identity		0.064		0.443**		0.238**		0.316**
		(0.093)		(0.093)		(0.060)		(0.068)
β_2 Competence beliefs			−0.291**	−0.394**			−0.029	−0.065**
			(0.043)	(0.047)			(0.018)	(0.021)
β_3 Treatment (1 = positive)	0.098**	−0.039	−0.084*	−0.009	−0.040**	−0.063	−0.114**	0.016
	(0.014)	(0.099)	(0.042)	(0.093)	(0.009)	(0.061)	(0.017)	(0.065)
β_4 Treatment × partisan ID		0.168		−0.130		0.026		−0.172*
		(0.120)		(0.122)		(0.074)		(0.087)
β_5 Treatment × comp. beliefs			0.258**	0.304**			0.170**	0.194**
			(0.059)	(0.064)			(0.028)	(0.032)
β_6 Presidential responsibility, wave 1	0.590**	0.572**	0.584**	0.538**	0.745**	0.707**	0.723**	0.696**
	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Adj. R^2	0.366	0.370	0.394	0.412	0.558	0.568	0.573	0.581
Num. obs.	1077	1077	1077	1077	1470	1470	1470	1470

F.3 Selective attribution and the traditional partisan identity scale

Our initial doubts about partisan-motivated reasoning's ability to explain selective attribution were raised in large part by the traditional 7-point partisan identity scale's inconsistent relationship to variation in the phenomenon. Experiment 2 included pre-registered tests for this pattern as well as the regression-based horse race. The results of the latter rendered the former redundant; as we explain in the main text, within-party variation in identity strength also fails to predict selective attribution in the horse race. Consequently, we focused on the horse race in the main text and our design for Experiment 3. This section presents our analysis using the traditional scale.

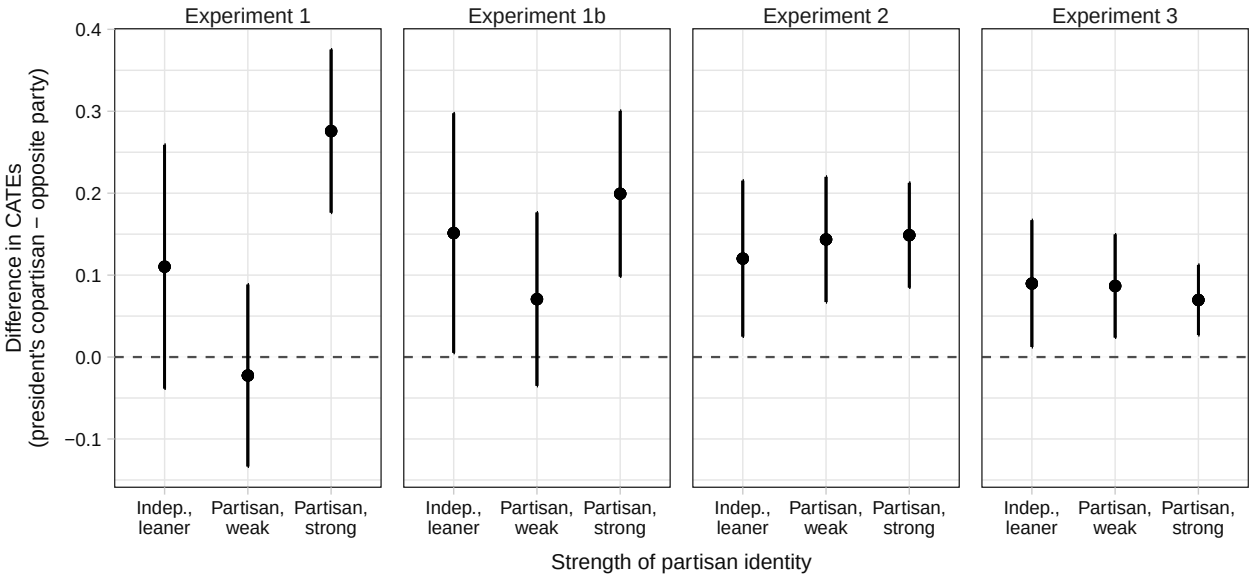
Figure F.1 displays selective attribution separately for three groups: respondents who think of themselves as strong partisans, respondents who think of themselves as partisans but not strongly so (henceforth, weak partisans), and respondents who do not think of themselves as partisans but lean toward one party or the other (henceforth, independent leaners or leaners). This is equivalent to the difference in CATEs described in the main text's "The Causal Effect of Performance Information" section. For greater comparability, between studies, we estimate the difference between presidential copartisans and the opposing party. In Experiments 1, 1b, and 2, this is $\text{CATE}_R - \text{CATE}_D$; in Experiment 3, $\text{CATE}_D - \text{CATE}_R$.

In Experiments 1 and 1b, selective attribution appears to be non-monotonic in strength of partisanship: weak partisans appear to attribute responsibility less selectively than independents leaning toward a party (Figure F.1, left and center-left panels). We pre-registered a test for this pattern in Experiment 2, which focused in particular on the difference between weak partisan identifiers and leaners. We instead find a flat relationship, with no meaningful differences between strong partisans, weak partisans, and independents who lean toward a party. We replicated this pattern again in Experiment 3.

To statistically test for subgroup differences in selective attribution, we use regression. Table F.3 presents results for hypothesis 6 from the Experiment 2 PAP, regarding subgroup differences between leaners and weak partisan identifiers. The reference group is respondents who do not identify with a political party, but lean toward Democrats ("Democrat leaners"). The coefficient of interest, β_7, suggests that relative to leaners, weak partisan identifiers have an equal or slightly lesser tendency to selectively attribute responsibility. The equivalent coefficient for comparing leaners and strong partisans, β_{12}, provides almost no evidence that strong partisans attribute responsibility more selectively than do leaners.

In sum, our analysis of the traditional party identity scale suggests that strength of partisan identity is a weak and inconsistent predictor of selective attribution. This is consistent with our conclusion in the main text that partisan identity predicts selective attribution primarily due to group differences between Democrats and Republicans, not due to differences in identity strength within the parties.

Figure F.1: Selective attribution by strength of partisan identity.



Note: Each point estimate is the difference in attributions of responsibility Vertical bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals. For numerical tables and difference-in-means estimates, see the appendix.

Table F.3: Regression test for identity-based differences in selective attribution.

Term	Exp. 1	Exp. 1b	Exp. 2	Exp. 3	Pooled
α Constant	0.684^{**}	0.618^{**}	0.394^{**}	0.180^{**}	0.692^{**}
	(0.034)	(0.032)	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.028)
β_1 Z	-0.040	-0.115^{*}	-0.071^{**}	-0.027	-0.057^{**}
	(0.057)	(0.045)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.019)
β_2 Copartisan	-0.184^{**}	-0.030	-0.184^{**}	-0.043^{*}	-0.183^{**}
	(0.049)	(0.055)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.039)
β_3 Weak	-0.036	-0.033	-0.025	-0.002	-0.018
	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.035)
β_9 Strong	0.085^{*}	0.020	-0.003	0.046^{**}	0.045
	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.034)
β_6 Weak $\times$ Copartisan	0.111	0.025	0.038	0.016	0.055
	(0.063)	(0.066)	(0.037)	(0.023)	(0.049)
β_{10} Strong $\times$ Copartisan	0.013	0.062	0.036	-0.007	0.084
	(0.060)	(0.067)	(0.034)	(0.022)	(0.047)
β_4 Z $\times$ Copartisan	0.110	0.151^{*}	0.149^{**}	0.069^{**}	0.110^{**}
	(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.026)
β_5 Z $\times$ Weak	0.025	0.087	-0.032	-0.031	-0.004
	(0.069)	(0.057)	(0.035)	(0.026)	(0.024)
β_{11} Z $\times$ Strong	-0.087	-0.027	0.045	-0.015	-0.010
	(0.066)	(0.056)	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.022)
β_7 Z $\times$ Weak $\times$ Copartisan	-0.133	-0.081	0.033	0.004	-0.028
	(0.094)	(0.092)	(0.052)	(0.033)	(0.033)
β_{12} Z $\times$ Strong $\times$ Copartisan	0.166	0.048	-0.005	0.003	0.009
	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.049)	(0.031)	(0.031)
β_8 Pre-treatment DV			0.513^{**}	0.724^{**}	
			(0.022)	(0.013)	
Survey-specific intercepts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
Adj. R^2	0.060	0.056	0.357	0.572	0.081
Num. obs.	924	972	2503	4065	8470

F.4 Comparison to traditional partisan identity scale

In this section, we compare the partisan identity and competence beliefs scales examined in the main text to the traditional, 7-point partisan identity scale used in the American National Election Studies and elsewhere. For clarity, we refer to the scale from the main text as the Greene-Huddy scale.

To begin, we report the correlations between the scales. The traditional and Greene-Huddy measures of partisan identity are highly correlated: 0.96 in Experiment 2 and 0.95 in Experiment 3. The traditional scale's correlation with competence beliefs is weaker: 0.75 in Experiment 2 and 0.48 in Experiment 3. These latter figures are similar to the correlations between the Greene-Huddy scale and the competence belief scales, which we report in the main text.

To take a closer look at the sources of each scale's similarities and differences to the traditional partisan identity scale, Tables F.4 and F.5 display each scale's conditional average for each category of partisanship. Both tables show a monotonic relationship between the Greene-Huddy and traditional measures of partisan identity.

By contrast, there is a non-monotonic relationship between competence beliefs and the traditional partisan identity scale; just as in the main text, the non-monotonicity appears in the opposition party. Under Trump, weak Democrats have a more positive view of Trump's competence than do strong Democrats or Democrat leaners (Table F.4). Under Biden, strong Republicans have a more positive view of Biden's competence than do weak Republicans or Republican leaners (Table F.5).

Table F.4: Partisan identity and competence scales by traditional party identity scale, Experiment 2.

			Partisan social ID		Competence beliefs	
Party	Identity	N	Mean	Diff.	Mean	Diff.
Democrat	Strong partisan	715	0.130	-0.097	0.149	-0.035
			(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.013)
	Weak partisan	462	0.227		0.184	
			(0.005)		(0.009)	
	Indep. leaner	259	0.334	0.108	0.149	-0.035
			(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Republican	Indep. leaner	216	0.703	-0.071	0.626	-0.011
			(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.018)	(0.023)
	Weak partisan	345	0.774		0.637	
			(0.005)		(0.014)	
	Strong partisan	526	0.898	0.125	0.777	0.140
			(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.016)

Note: Table displays respondents' average partisan social identity (middle columns) and competence beliefs (right columns), conditional on the traditional partisan identity scale (left columns). The "mean" column is the group mean. The "diff." column displays the difference from weak partisans. HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table F.5: Partisan identity and competence scales by traditional party identity scale, Experiment 3.

			Partisan social ID		Competence beliefs	
Party	Identity	N	Mean	Diff.	Mean	Diff.
Democrat	Strong partisan	1536	0.120	-0.109	0.779	0.090
			(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.008)
	Weak partisan	698	0.230		0.689	
			(0.004)		(0.007)	
	Indep. leaner	365	0.305	0.075	0.663	-0.026
			(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Republican	Indep. leaner	338	0.743	-0.031	0.437	0.107
			(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.018)	(0.022)
	Weak partisan	386	0.774		0.330	
			(0.005)		(0.013)	
	Strong partisan	748	0.887	0.114	0.508	0.178
			(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.019)

Note: Table duplicates Table F.4, but for Experiment 3.

F.5 Data quality audit of partisan identity and competence scales

In the main text, we report an inverse relationship between Republicans' partisan identity and perceptions of Biden's competence: weak identifiers view Biden as incompetent on average, while stronger partisans take a neutral view on average (Figure 6 and surrounding text). This relationship emerges because relative to Republicans with weak partisan identities, those with strong partisan identities are more likely to have neutral or modestly positive views of Biden's competence (e.g., Biden has no effect or a slightly positive effect on government performance).

Given that this relationship is not anticipated by prevailing accounts of partisan identity, we conducted three of checks to ensure that this relationship was not an artifact of poor data quality. We focus in particular on the possibility that stronger partisans' neutral perception is actually due to inattention. We begin by briefly considering the relationship between the two scales and other key variables in our survey. These relationships would have been unlikely to realize in the face of substantial inattention. Next, we conduct checks for speeding or straightlining, two response patterns that are commonly associated with inattentive respondents. We find no evidence that the observed relationships are contaminated by these factors.

First, we reexamined the relationship between the two scales and other measures in the survey in light of the concern that poor data quality is afoot. We note in the previous section that the Greene-Huddy partisan identity scale is highly correlated with the traditional seven-point partisan identity scale (0.96 and 0.95). Such high correlations would be unlikely to obtain in the face of substantial inattention. Further, note that the Biden competence scale is strongly predictive of selective attribution. By contrast, inattention tends to weaken treatment effects (because inattentive respondents do not pay attention to treatments). The relationships we report in Table 3 would be unlikely to obtain in the face of substantial inattention.

Second, we examined how response time moderates the relationship between partisan identity and competence beliefs among Republicans. If the relationship were an artifact of poor data quality, we might expect it to be concentrated among respondents who speed through the survey, filling out the scales too quickly to fully comprehend them.

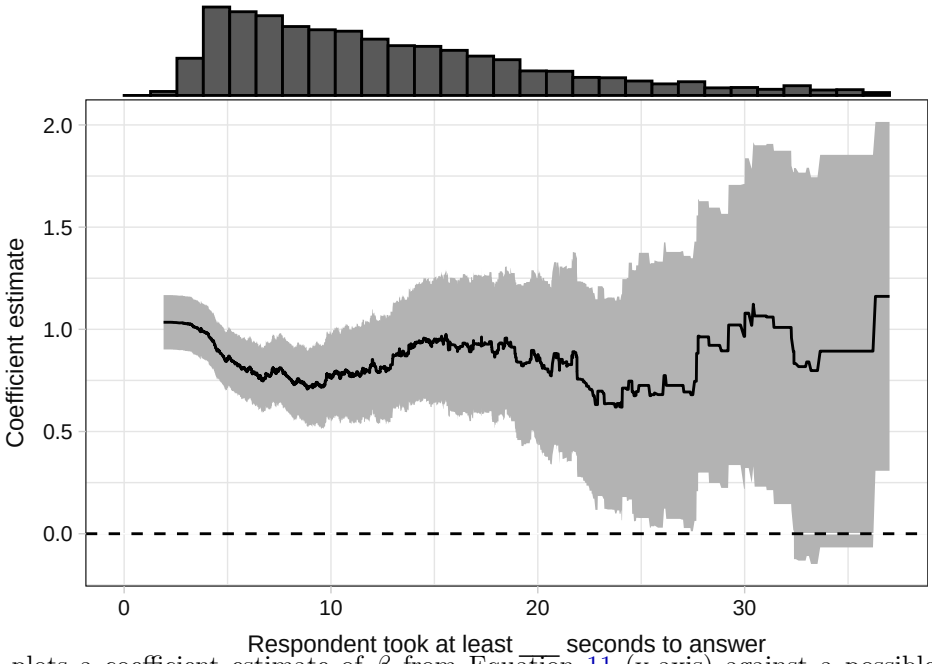
To summarize the relationship between competence beliefs and partisan identity, we subset the Experiment 3 data to Republicans only, then used OLS to estimate

$$\text{Competence belief}_i \sim \alpha + \beta \text{Partisan identity}_i + \epsilon. \tag{11}$$

Here, β is a linear approximation of the relationship between competence beliefs and partisan identity; the puzzle at hand is that whereas conventional wisdom holds that β should be negative, Figure 6 shows that it is positive.

To examine whether this relationship is an artifact of poor data quality, we calculated a series of estimates of β, each based on a different definition of speeding through the questions. To do so, we collected every unique value of response times on the two scales. For each unique

Figure F.2: Relationship between partisan identity and Biden competence scales among Republicans by speeding cutoff.



Note: Figure plots a coefficient estimate of β from Equation 11 (y-axis) against a possible definition of speeding (x-axis). All respondents who completed at least one of the two scales more quickly than the time specified on the x-axis were dropped. Shaded area represents 95 percent confidence intervals based on HC2 robust standard errors. Above the plot, a histogram displays the distribution of response time cutoffs (i.e., the distribution of the x variable).

value x, we dropped all respondents who took less than x seconds to fill out at least one of the two scales. This yielded 2,731 estimates of β. Because 95 percent of respondents responded in 37 seconds or less, we report estimates for all response time cutoffs below 37 seconds.

We find no evidence that the relationship between competence beliefs and partisan identity is an artifact of speeding (Figure F.2). Regardless of the speeding cutoff, the estimate of β is positive and retains approximately the same magnitude. It retains statistical significance until a threshold of 32.4 seconds is imposed, which is the 93rd percentile value (i.e., only 7 percent of the data are retained at this point).

Third, we look for evidence of straightlining, i.e. the practice of selecting the same response option for every item in a scale. This can happen either because this is the best reflection of the respondent's beliefs or because the respondent is going quickly and not really paying attention.

To check for straightlining, Figures F.3 and F.4 display the distributions of the Biden competence and partisan identity scales separately for Democrats and Republicans. Respondents who may have straightlined (i.e., who chose the same response for every scale item) are high-

lighted in grey. highlighted in grey. Two features of the distributions suggest an absence of straightlining. First, there are no noticeable spikes at the scale scores that can be afflicted by straightlining. If anything, removing possible instances of straightlining would create more discontinuous distributions. Second, the possibly straightlined responses does not contribute disproportionately to conflicts between competence beliefs and partisan identity. For example, Republicans who give Biden the worst possible rating make up the largest group of possible straightliners. Meanwhile, almost no Republicans give Biden the best possible rating, which one would expect if positive Republican perceptions of Biden's competence were in fact artifacts of straightlining.

Figure F.3: Distribution of Biden competence scale, Experiment 3.

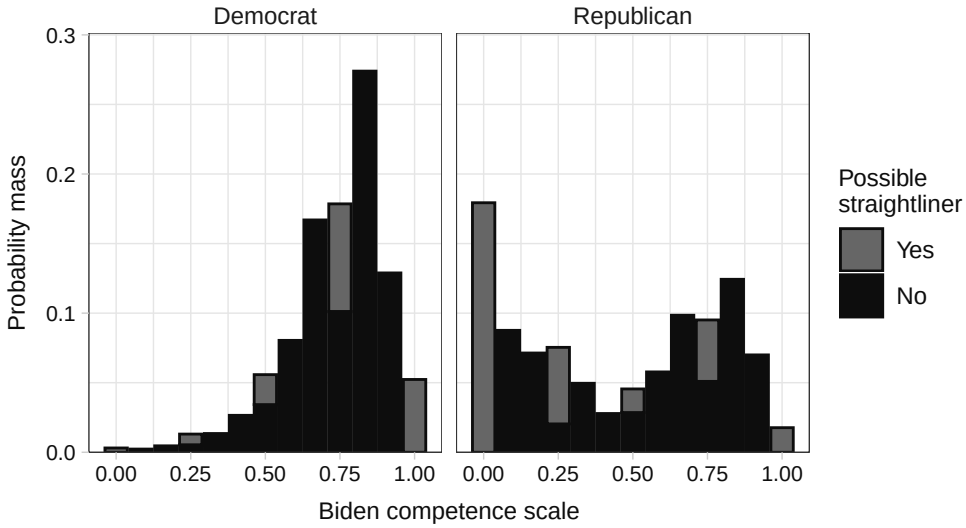
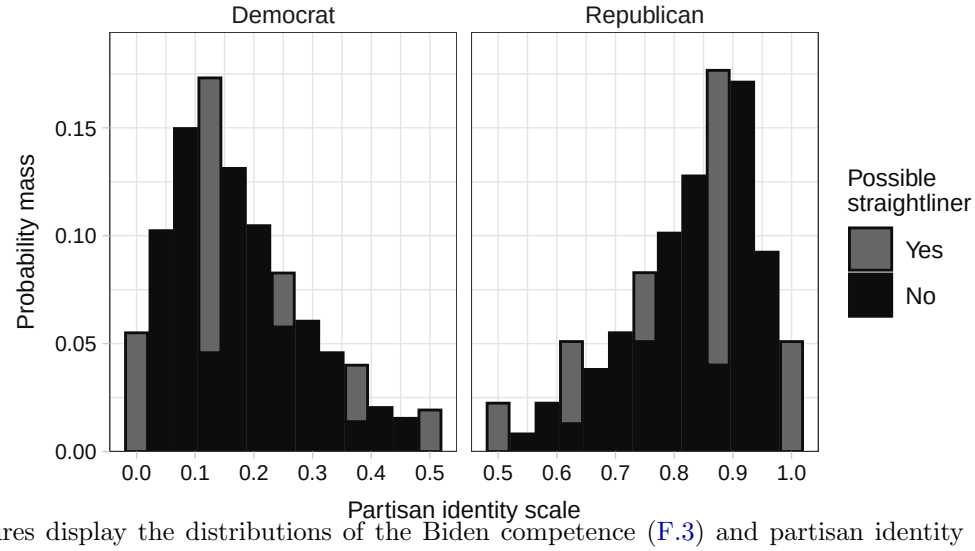


Figure F.4: Distribution of partisan identity scale, Experiment 3.



Note: Figures display the distributions of the Biden competence (F.3) and partisan identity (F.4) scales. Grey shading represents respondents who chose the same scale point for each scale item (i.e., possible straightliners).

G Survey Text

The following pages contain the survey treatments, outcome measures, and relevant covariates used in the paper.

Measures and Treatments

Experiment 1

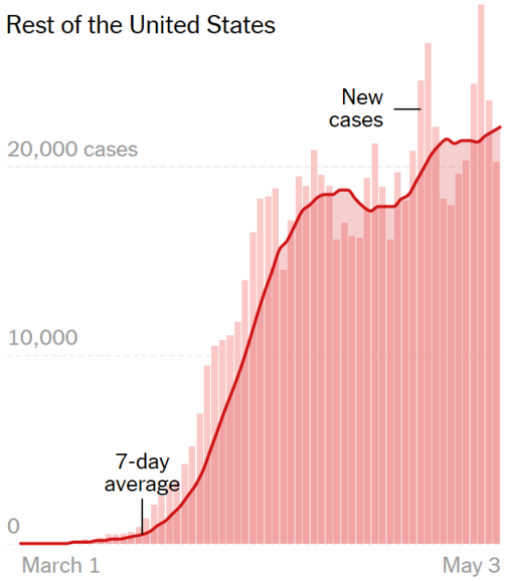
Treatments

Introduction
On each of the next four pages, you will read a short informational message about the coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, then answer a question about each one.
Please read the messages carefully. On each page, the "next" button will appear after 10 seconds.

Cases
If z = Negative

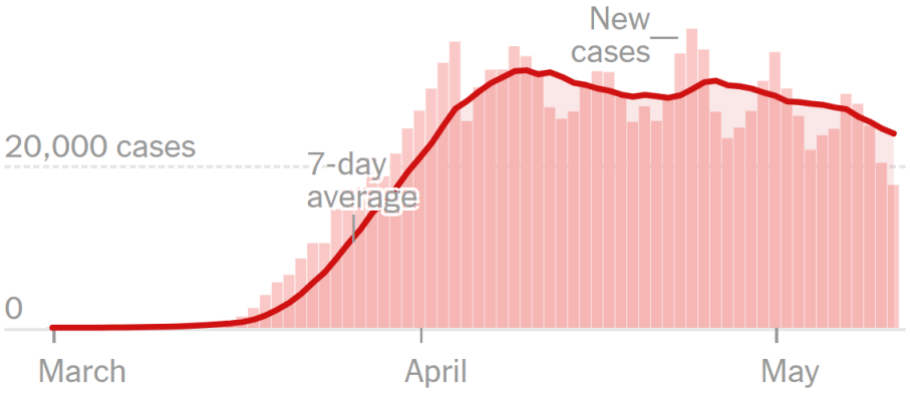
Outside of New York City, the number of new cases of COVID-19 reported each day has continued to rise despite the continuing shortage of tests. Experts expect the virus to spread even faster now that many states have begun to reopen.

This chart shows the number of new cases per day in the whole United States, excluding the New York City metro area.



If z = Positive
Over the past several weeks, the number of new cases of COVID-19 reported each day in the United States has steadily declined despite increases in testing capacity. According to the CDC, the number new cases reported on May 11 was the lowest number since March.

This chart shows the number of new cases per day in the whole United States.



(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of controlling the spread of COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Testing Capacity
If z = Positive
Since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. has dramatically increased its capacity to test for COVID-19. So far, the U.S. has tested about 9 million people for COVID-19, more than any other country in the world.

If z = Negative
Since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. has struggled to increase its capacity to test for COVID-19. So far, the U.S. has tested about 9 million people for COVID-19, which is less than 3 percent of the country's population.

(Both): Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of testing for COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)

- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Deaths
If z = Positive
So far during the coronavirus outbreak, the United States has had 179 deaths for every million people living in the country. This is much lower than many other countries, including France, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

If z = Negative
More than 85,000 people have died of COVID-19 in the United States, the most of any country in the world. Though the U.S. has a large population, it also has a large number of deaths per person. According to some estimates, the U.S. death rate is five times the global average.

(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19?
- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

COVID-19 Treatments
If z = Positive
The United States has taken important steps to improve its capacity to treat patients with COVID-19. In a recent clinical trial, the anti-viral drug remdesivir helped shorten the recovery time for people who were seriously ill. The outbreak has slowed enough that the U.S. has been able to send medical equipment and other assistance to other countries to help with their outbreaks.

If z = Negative
The United States has struggled to increase its capacity to treat patients with COVID-19. In a recent clinical trial, the anti-viral drug remdesivir did not improve patient survival rates. The outbreak has overwhelmed the medical system, forcing the U.S. to accept assistance from other countries to meet its needs for protective equipment for health care workers.

(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of improving the health care system's ability to care for COVID-19 patients?
- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)

- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Outcomes

1. All things considered, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of handling the outbreak of COVID-19?
    - Very bad (1)
    - Fairly bad (2)
    - Neither good nor bad (3)
    - Fairly good (4)
    - Very good (5)
2. Many people have a role to play in the fight against the pandemic, from ordinary people to leaders in communities, business, and government.
   Who would you say is most responsible for the United States' performance in the fight against COVID-19? Please write a sentence or two. (Open-ended)
3. How responsible is President Trump for the United States' performance in the fight against COVID-19?
    - Not at all responsible (1)
    - A little responsible (2)
    - Somewhat responsible (3)
    - Mostly responsible (4)
    - Fully responsible (5)

Experiment 1B

Treatments

Introduction
On each of the next three pages, you will read a short informational message about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), then answer a question about each message.
Please read the messages carefully. On each page, the "next" button will appear after 10 seconds.

CDC Budget
If z = responsible
The President influences the activities and priorities of the CDC through his annual budget proposal. The President's budget specifies how much money should go to each of CDC's programs and directorates. Each year during his term, President Trump's budget has included over a dozen major changes to the CDC's budget.

If z = not_responsible
The President has little influence over the activities and priorities of the CDC. Though the President submits an annual budget proposal, this is regarded as a political document that has little influence over Congress' final decision. Each year during his term, President Trump has proposed substantial cuts to the CDC's budget, but Congress mostly rejected these proposals.

(Both) Given this, how responsible would you say the President is for how the CDC spends its money?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)
- Fully responsible (5)

Staffing
If z = responsible
The President's appointment power gives him a lot of influence over the CDC. The President has the power to appoint political allies to the CDC's 25 leadership positions. This includes Director of the CDC, Robert Redfield, as well as top leaders in the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, the Office of Infectious Diseases, and the Center for Global Health.

If z = not_responsible
The President does not exercise much control over the CDC's staffing. The vast majority of CDC employees, who make crucial decisions, are career civil servants not

selected by the President. Even the current director of the CDC, Robert Redfield, was not directly appointed by the President. He was chosen by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Alex Azar.

(Both) Given this, how responsible would you say the President is for the quality of leadership at the CDC?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)
- Fully responsible (5)

Coordination with White House

If z = responsible

During the outbreak of COVID-19, the White House and the CDC have worked together to combat the virus. President Trump made the CDC director, Robert Redfield, one of the highest-ranking leaders serving on the White House Coronavirus Task Force. As the U.S. moved to reopen its economy, the CDC and the White House jointly developed guidelines for schools, businesses, and state governments.

If z = not_responsible

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the White House and the CDC have largely worked separately to combat the virus. The CDC director, Robert Redfield, plays a minor role on the White House Coronavirus Task Force. As the U.S. moved to reopen its economy, the CDC and the White House separately developed their own guidelines for schools, businesses, and state governments.

(Both) Given this, how responsible would you say the President is for the CDC's strategies for fighting the COVID-19 outbreak?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)
- Fully responsible (5)

Outcomes

1. All things considered, how responsible is President Trump for the CDC's performance in the fight against COVID-19?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)

- Fully responsible (5)

2. How good or bad of a job has the CDC done in the fight against COVID-19?
   - Very bad (1)
   - Fairly bad (2)
   - Neither good nor bad (3)
   - Fairly good (4)
   - Very good (5)

Experiment 2

Covariates

1. Social Partisanship: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
a) When I talk about [Republicans / Democrats], I say "we" rather than "they."
b) I think of myself as a [Republican / Democrat].
c) Being a [Republican / Democrat] is important to me.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

2. Performance beliefs
a) What effect would you say President Trump has on the government's ability to solve problems?

- Completely negative (1)
- Mostly negative (2)
- Neither negative nor positive (3)
- Mostly positive (4)
- Completely positive (5)

b) When President Trump is running the government, do you expect government performance to get better or worse?

- Definitely worse (1)
- Probably worse (2)
- Makes no difference (3)
- Probably better (4)
- Definitely better (5)

c) Who would you say is more competent: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden or Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump?

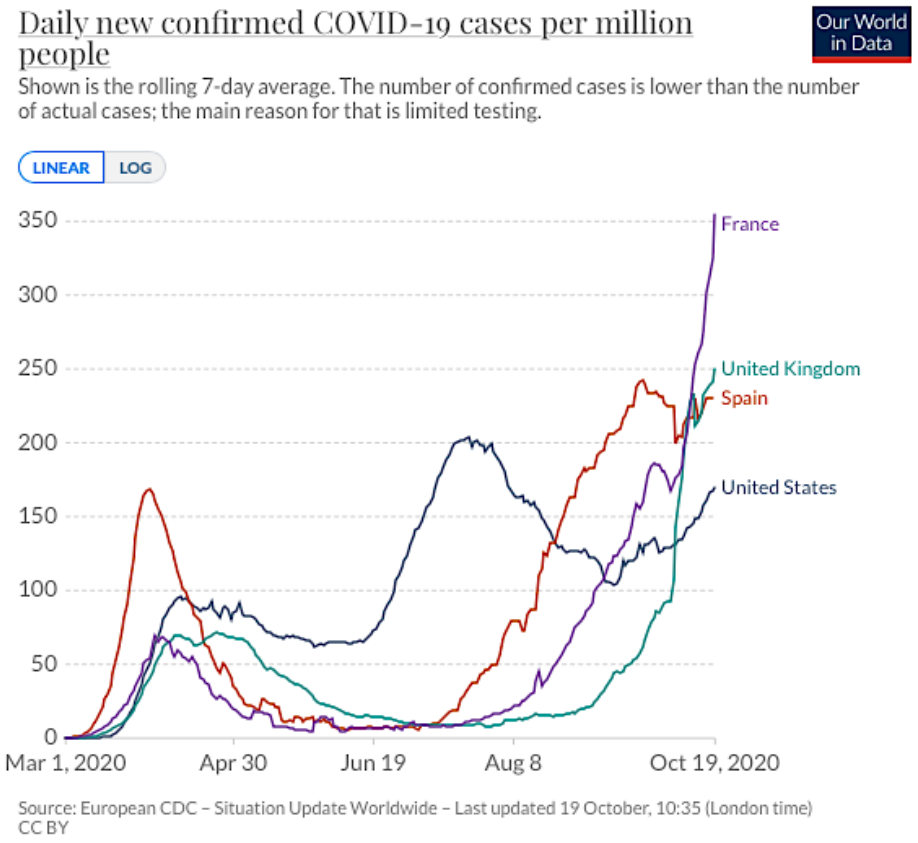
- Definitely Trump (1)
- Probably Trump (2)
- Equally competent (3)
- Probably Biden (4)
- Definitely Biden (5)

Treatments

On each of the next four pages, you will read a short informational message about the coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, then answer a question about each one.
Please read the messages carefully. On each page, the "next" button will appear after 10 seconds.

Cases
If z = Positive
Few countries have managed to control the spread of COVID-19. In fact, many countries that seemed to be doing better than the U.S. at first have seen rapid increases in case counts in recent weeks.

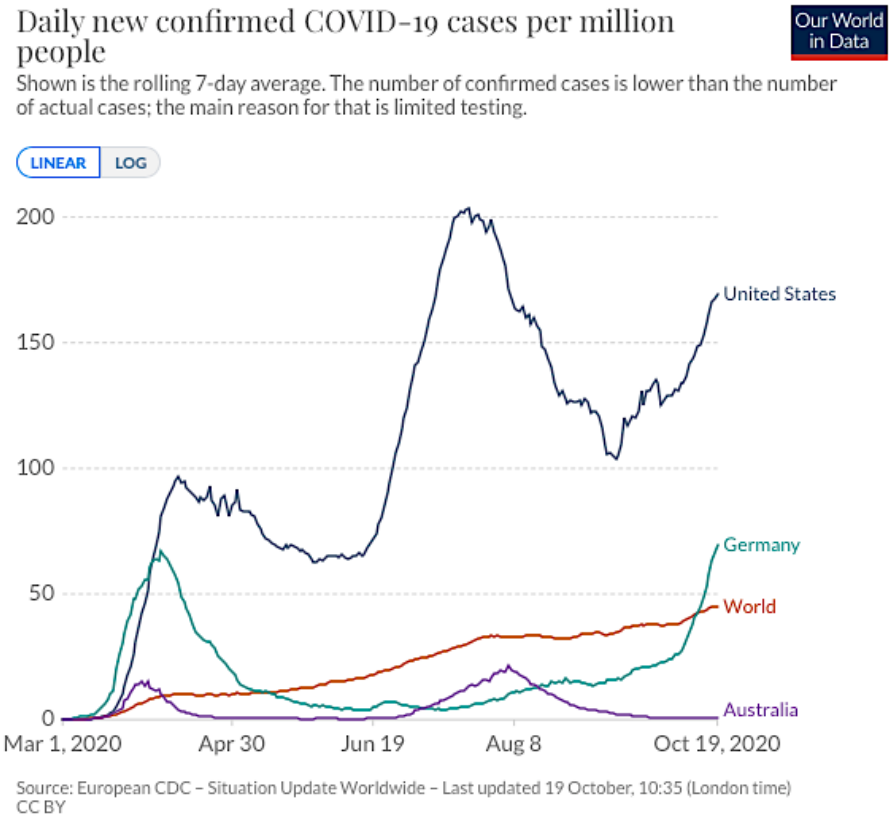
The graphic below shows that COVID-19 is now spreading faster in France, Spain, and the United Kingdom than it is in the U.S. On average over the past seven days, the U.S. reported 169 new cases per million people, compared with 355 new cases per million in France, 231 per million in Spain, and 250 per million in the United Kingdom.



If z = Negative
Because the United States did not manage to control the spread of COVID-19 in the spring and summer, it is seeing a larger surge in the fall than in many other countries.

On Friday and Saturday, the U.S. recorded more than 83,000 new cases, the highest single-day totals so far during the pandemic.

The graphic below shows that in Australia and Germany, the number of new cases per person has consistently been lower than in the U.S. On average over the past seven days, the U.S. reported more than twice as many cases per person as Germany, more than 100 times as many cases per person as Australia, and more than four times as many cases per person as the average country worldwide.



(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of controlling the spread of COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Testing Capacity

If z = Positive

Since the start of the pandemic, the United States has dramatically increased its capacity to test for COVID-19. So far, the U.S. has conducted about 132 million tests,

more than any other country in the world. In the past week, the U.S. conducted over 1 million tests per day.

If z = Negative
Since the start of the pandemic, the United States has failed to increase testing capacity as quickly as the virus has spread. According to researchers at the Harvard Global Health Institute, the U.S. only conducts a bit more than half of the 1.9 million daily tests it would need to help reduce the spread of the virus. Only eight U.S. states have met their testing targets.

(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of testing for COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Death Count
If z = Positive
So far during the pandemic, the United States has had 67 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 for every 100,000 people living in the country. This is lower than many other countries that are doing less testing than the U.S., including Belgium, Brazil, Mexico, and Spain.

If z = Negative
More than 220,000 people have died of COVID-19 in the United States, the most of any country in the world. Though the U.S. has a large population, it also has a large number of deaths per person. According to some estimates, the U.S. death rate is four times the global average.

(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

COVID-19 Treatments
If z = Positive
Since the beginning of the pandemic, the United States has made significant progress on treating COVID-19. Over the summer, remdesvir and dexamethasone became

available as treatments for COVID-19 patients. These treatments reduce death rates substantially.
Meanwhile, the U.S. and other countries are developing vaccines at an unprecedented pace. Just seven months into the pandemic, four American vaccines have advanced to phase three trials, which is the final stage of testing before approval.

If z = Negative
The U.S. is not playing a leading role in the global effort to develop treatments and vaccines for COVID-19. The U.S. has not joined COVAX, a global partnership between 164 countries that is working to develop and distribute a vaccine to all of its members.

The U.S. effort to develop a vaccine is lagging behind the global effort. Of the eleven vaccines that have reached phase three trials, the final step before regulators approve their use, only three are American. There are four Chinese vaccines and one Russian vaccine that are in phase 3 trials and approved for early use.

(Both) Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of developing treatments and vaccines for COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Outcomes

1. All things considered, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of handling the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

2. How responsible is President Trump for the United States' performance in the fight against COVID-19?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)
- Fully responsible (5)

3. In the November 3 election for President of the United States, which candidate do you prefer?

- Donald Trump (Republican) (1)
- Joe Biden (Democrat) (2)
- Other (3)
- Not sure (4)

Experiment 3

Covariates

1. Social Partisanship: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
a) When I talk about [Republicans / Democrats], I say "we" rather than "they."
b) I think of myself as a [Republican / Democrat].
c) Being a [Republican / Democrat] is important to me.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

2. Performance beliefs
a) What effect would you say President Biden has on the government's ability to solve problems?

- Completely negative (1)
- Mostly negative (2)
- Neither negative nor positive (3)
- Mostly positive (4)
- Completely positive (5)

b) When President Biden is running the government, do you expect government performance to get better or worse?

- Definitely worse (1)
- Probably worse (2)
- Makes no difference (3)
- Probably better (4)
- Definitely better (5)

c) Who would you say is more competent: President Biden or former President Trump?

- Definitely Trump (1)
- Probably Trump (2)
- Equally competent (3)
- Probably Biden (4)
- Definitely Biden (5)

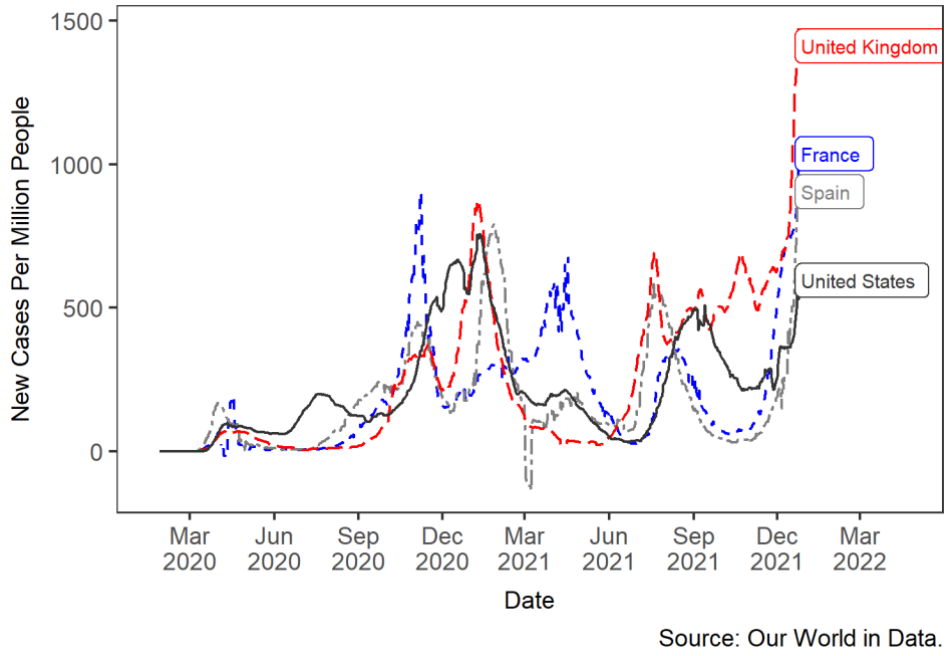
Performance Treatments

COVID-19 Cases

If Z = Positive

So far in 2021 the United States has done a better job of controlling the spread of COVID-19 than many countries. For example, the United Kingdom recently surpassed its all-time record number of COVID-19 cases in a single day.

The plot below shows that the United States is currently experiencing fewer COVID-19 cases per million people than European countries like France, Spain and the United Kingdom. On average over the past seven days, the U.S. reported 549 new cases per million people, compared with 907 new cases per million in France, 904 per million in Spain, and 1411 per million in the United Kingdom.

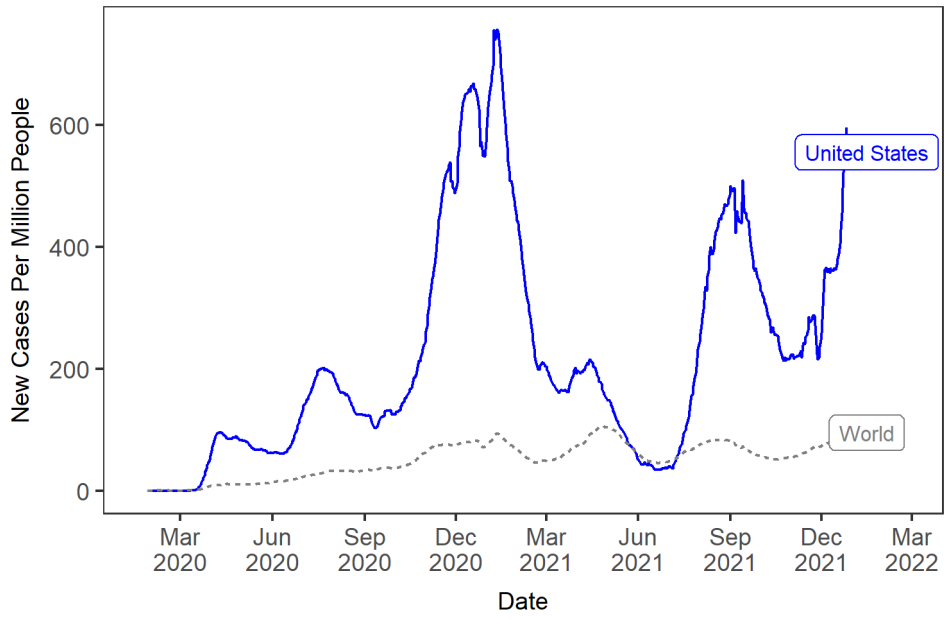


If Z= Negative

The United States is currently seeing one of the largest surges of new COVID-19 cases in the world. On December 28, the U.S. recorded 267,000 new cases, which is its highest single-day total so far during the pandemic.

The plot below shows that the United States is has consistently seen far more COVID-19 cases per million people than most other countries around the world. On average

over the past seven days, the U.S. reported 549 new cases per million people, compared with 94 per million in the world as a whole.



Source: Our World in Data.

(Both): Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of controlling the spread of COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

COVID-19 Treatments and Testing Capacity

If Z = Positive
COVID-19 has become less of a threat in the United States due to the widespread availability of protective equipment, testing, and effective treatments. Initially, even doctors and nurses had trouble finding masks. Now, front-line workers and ordinary people have easy access to protective equipment. Meanwhile, new treatments have been developed that are highly effective at preventing severe illness and death among people who already have COVID-19.

If Z= Negative
The United States still suffers from critical shortfalls in COVID-19 testing, protective equipment, and treatment. In Europe, rapid tests are abundant and are either free or

cheap. In the United States, rapid tests are more expensive and harder to obtain. Meanwhile, hospitals all over the country are suffering from shortages of nurses and critical supplies like oxygen, making it harder to prevent severe illness and death among people who already have COVID-19.

(Both): Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of handling new COVID-19 cases once they emerge?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

COVID-19 Deaths and Severe Illness

If Z = Positive
Although the United States has experienced about 800,000 deaths from COVID-19, the death rate does not seem as high after accounting for the country's large population. For example, current daily death rate in Europe is 4.35 deaths per million people, compared with 4.27 deaths per million people in the United States.

If Z= Negative
Little progress has been made in slowing the COVID-19 death toll. In fact, more Americans died of COVID-19 in 2021 than in 2020. In total, about 800,000 Americans have died of COVID-19, equal to 1 out of every 300 people in the country. Currently, more than 1,000 additional Americans are dying of COVID-19 every day.

(Both): Given this, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of limiting the number of deaths from COVID-19?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

COVID-19 Variants

If Z= Positive
Many experts believe that viruses tend to become less deadly over time. Early data on the new Omicron variant suggests that this is happening to COVID-19. Although Omicron has rapidly become the dominant COVID-19 variant in many places around the

world, early data suggest that people who are infected with the new variant are much less likely to become seriously ill.

If Z= Negative
Efforts to fight COVID-19 have been undermined by new variants. The new Omicron variant has an alarming number of mutations relative to the original version of COVID-19. Omicron spreads faster and vaccines are less effective against it. Experts worry that the virus may continue to mutate too quickly for us to successfully reduce its spread.

(Both): Given this, would you say that the emergence of the Omicron variant is good news or bad news?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

Accuracy Treatments

If Z = Receive Accuracy Prime

In the last part of the survey, you will answer two more questions about the outbreak of coronavirus / COVID-19.

When thinking about your opinion, please try to view the questions in an evenhanded way and from various perspectives. We will later ask that you justify the reasons for your responses.

If Z = Not Receive Accuracy Prime

control In the last part of the survey, you will answer two more questions about the outbreak of coronavirus / COVID-19.

(Both):

You said that the United States is doing a (respondent's response) job of handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Why?

You said that President Biden is (respondent's response) for the country's performance. Why?

Outcomes

1. All things considered, would you say the U.S. is doing a good job or a bad job of handling the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Very bad (1)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Fairly good (4)
- Very good (5)

2. How responsible is President Biden for the United States' performance in the fight against COVID-19?

- Not at all responsible (1)
- A little responsible (2)
- Somewhat responsible (3)
- Mostly responsible (4)
- Fully responsible (5)