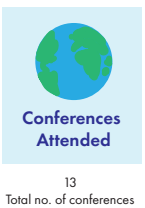
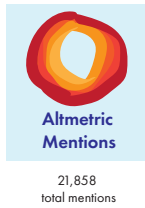


ASSOCIATION

discussions about appropriate use of social media to debate editorial decision making.

The APSA-run Political Science Now blog (www.politicalsciencenow.com) continues to feature PS content, especially symposia,

spotlights, and research about the profession. PS articles have been featured in news media and other publications including *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Washington Post's* "Monkey Cage," and National Public Radio, among others. ■



* Scores current as of August 15, 2021

Rank	Altmetric score	Title	Publication date
1	184	Supporting Junior Women: Strategies for Men Colleagues	4/29/21
2	95	Liberal Bias in the College Classroom: A Review of the Evidence (or Lack Thereof)	6/24/21
3	58	Journal Desk-Rejection Practices in Political Science: Bringing Data to Bear on What Journals Do	7/6/21
4	46	Collaboration for Designing, Conceptualizing, and (Possibly) Decolonizing Research in African Politics	4/19/21
5	37	Desk Rejecting: A Better Use of Your Time	7/6/21
6	33	Political Science Scholarship on the Middle East: A View from the Journals	2/23/21
7	33	Covid-19 and Fieldwork: Challenges and Solutions	1/19/21
8	32	Politically Invisible in America	6/28/21
9	31	Pay to Play? How Reducing APSA Division Fees Increases Graduate Student Participation	5/14/21
10	31	Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Academic Conferences by Online Participation: The Case of the 2020 Virtual European Consortium for Political Research General Conference	2/22/21
11	29	Single Conversations Expand Practitioners' Use of Research: Evidence from a Field Experiment	2/23/21
12	29	The Great Equalizer? Gender, Parenting, and Scholarly Productivity During the Global Pandemic	2/22/21
13	26	Snowball Sampling and Facebook: How Social Media Can Help Access Hard-to-Reach Populations	5/18/21
14	26	Are You Really About It? Developing a Critical Praxis for Men in the Discipline	4/29/21
15	23	Retaining Women Faculty: The Problem of Invisible Labor	4/29/21

In 2020, the total mentions recorded by Altmetric for all articles in the journal was 7,295, a 4.9% increase from 2019.

Year	Total mentions	News mentions	Blog mentions	Twitter mentions	Facebook mentions
2018	7,145	94	177	6,786	31
2019	6,953	133	148	6,537	11
2020	7,295	233	236	6,645	5

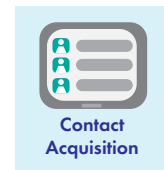
Mentions of all time: 21,858



Target: 10% increase in PS Views



Target: email open rate (30.1%)
Click through rate (3.3%)



Target: 12.6%

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Does Biased Media Coverage Affect Public Opinion? Liverpool's Boycott of a Eurosceptic Tabloid Suggests That It Can

FRANK WYER | UNIVERSITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

During the 1990s and 2000s, a popular British tabloid *The Sun* waged an intense editorial campaign against the European Union (EU). Not only did *The Sun* offer its readers consistently negative or "Eurosceptic" coverage of the EU, but it also spread viral myths about the organization, one of which asserted that the EU was even out to ban "bendy bananas." Did *The Sun* succeed in propagating negative perceptions of the EU among the British public? In a new article in *American Political Science Review*, Florian Foos and Daniel Bischof exploit a historical event that resulted in a local boycott of *The Sun* to identify the newspaper's effects on public opinion, finding that inhabitants of boycotting localities had significantly more favorable views of the EU and were less likely to support leaving the EU in the 2016 Brexit referendum. Their innovative study provides powerful evidence for the idea that the media plays an independent role in shaping public opinion.

It might seem intuitive that partisan or biased media coverage would influence audiences' beliefs or opinions. Critics of media outlets like Fox News in the United States, or tabloids like *The Sun* in the UK often make this argument. Yet testing this proposition empirically is challenging. After all, viewers and readers choose which television shows to watch or newspapers to buy, and they may just consume the media that best matches their preexisting opinions. This makes it difficult for researchers to determine whether attitudes are the cause or consequence of biased media consumption. In their UK-based

study, Foos and Bischof face this exact challenge: did *The Sun's* EU coverage generate anti-EU attitudes among readers, or were anti-EU readers simply more likely to choose *The Sun* than other newspapers?

To address this challenge, the authors exploit a historical event that caused a large and persistent decrease in readership of *The Sun* in Liverpool and the surrounding Merseyside region in the UK. In 1989, a human crush at a soccer stadium resulted in the tragic death of 97 fans of Liverpool's soccer team. *The Sun* slandered the Liverpool fans in its coverage of the tragedy, provoking a sustained boycott of the paper among both readers and newspaper stands across Merseyside. The authors argue that this incident, while entirely unrelated to the EU or Euroscepticism, nevertheless caused a dramatic decrease in the exposure of Merseyside residents to anti-EU media coverage in the ensuing years.

How did this reduction in anti-EU media affect public opinion? Using survey data, the authors estimate an 11 percentage-point decrease in Euroscepticism in Merseyside relative to other areas of Northern England. A similar analysis of votes in the 2016 Brexit referendum found 8-9 percentage point decrease in support for leaving the EU in Merseyside counting areas compared to control areas (for refer-



Above: Public scholar Frank Wyer.

ence, “Leave” beat “Remain” by 3.8 percentage points nationwide). The authors further verify these results by showing that the relative decrease in Euroscepticism in Merseyside was most pronounced among unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the core audience of newspapers like *The Sun*, and among residents who grew up during the boycott of *The Sun*.

Taken together, these results provide persuasive evidence that biased media coverage can have real and significant effects on public opinion. The study’s innovative design addresses a key problem

that often plagues empirical research on this topic by allowing the authors to isolate the consequences of biased media consumption from its causes. The dramatic results the study identifies from a single media outlet suggest that concerns about the effects of biased news coverage around the world are not unwarranted. ■

FOOS, FLORIAN, and DANIEL BISCHOF. 2021. “Tabloid Media Campaigns and Public Opinion: Quasi-Experimental Evidence on Euroscepticism in England.” *American Political Science Review*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305542100085X>

Partisan Polarization is Alive and Well but Is It Insurmountable?

DARA GAINES | NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

One of the greatest threats to American democracy is partisan polarization. In recent years, partisan polarization has fortified itself as a poignant characteristic of American politics. The salience of polarization is apparent in conversations regarding the response to the Coronavirus pandemic and evaluations of the January 6th Insurrection. If partisans refuse to find common ground during an international pandemic or in the wake of a deadly assault on the US Capitol, when can we hope to see it? In their new article published in the *American Political Science Review*, James Fishkin, Alice Siu, Larry Diamond, and Norman Bradburn demonstrate the depolarizing potential of informed deliberation. Their research finds that when people are presented with unbiased information and an opportunity to have genuine conversations, they are less likely to have extreme preferences.

This study evaluates the results of the “America in One Room” Deliberative Poll. Over four days in September 2019, more than 500 participants from across the United States with various backgrounds met in person in Dallas, Texas to discuss more than 40 policy proposals regarding immigration, economy, healthcare, environment, and foreign policy. All participants had access to accurate, unbiased information and expert opinion. At the beginning of their stay, each participant rated each proposal 0-10, from “strongly favor” to “strongly oppose.” A control group completed the survey but did not participate in the deliberative discussions so that the researchers could evaluate the effect of deliberations. The deliberative discussion participants were put into small groups for the entire weekend. Just like summer camp, the participants ate their meals with their small group and discussed the policies. The groups had to collaborate to submit questions to a panel of experts. At the close of the weekend, the discussion participants turned in a post-survey that reevaluated their perceptions of other partisans and the issues.

The authors argue that fact-based discussions reduce extreme polarization when they occur in an environment with balanced information and discussants make connections with people with different opinions, appealing to accuracy-based reasoning. Balanced information represents the range of evidence for and against the proposals, and the participants had access to a panel of experts for questioning. Their theory suggests that when there is space for respectful communication, equal access to unbiased information, and an incentive to find the logic in another person’s argument, people are much more likely to find common ground. Indeed, the authors demonstrate that deliberation significantly reduces the dif-

ferences between partisans’ evaluations of policy proposals.

The authors compared the survey responses to measure the effect of deliberation and found 26 proposals that were characterized as extreme polarization. They defined “extreme polarization” as an instance where at least 15% of responses indicate either a 0 or 10 and a majority of one party evaluates the position in the same direction. After the weekend of deliberation, Democrats and Republicans moved their positions closer to one another in 22 of 26 of the extremely polarized proposals. Interestingly, the respondents who were most likely to choose extreme positions (0 or 10) were more likely to be persuaded by the conversation and change their position. Further, the deliberations improved the perceptions of the opposing party, with Democrats rating Republicans 13 points more positively than at the beginning of the poll and with Republicans rating Democrats 14 points more positively.

The “America in One Room” poll created an ideal situation for deliberation. Unfortunately, real-world situations are rarely ideal. The authors suggest that future work should build on these findings by designing and implementing deliberation opportunities in everyday life. For example, they note the potential for deliberative exercises in schools, local-level policy review boards, and even scaling up to sub-national and national candidate evaluation. The move to online gatherings significantly decreased the cost of gathering large groups, which expanded opportunities for researchers to gather groups representing a range of different populations.

Overall, these results demonstrate that deliberation is a necessary process for healing the damage wrought by political extremism. On the one hand, it is comforting to remember that people have the potential to change. On the other hand, there are steep requirements to create the ideal information-sharing situation. But the authors suggest different ways to replicate this experiment on smaller-scaled populations and issues, which should make the situation more manageable. Further, the benefits of deliberative polls outweigh the risks by far. What’s the worst that could happen? People might argue? This country has overcome far worse. ■

FISHKIN, JAMES, ALICE SIU, LARRY DIAMOND, and NORMAN BRADBURN. 2021. “Is Deliberation an Antidote to Extreme Partisan Polarization? Reflections on ‘America in One Room.’” *American Political Science Review*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000642>



Above: Public scholar Dara Gaines evaluates the position in the same direction. After the weekend of deliberation, Democrats and Republicans moved their positions closer to one another in 22 of 26 of the extremely polarized proposals.