

1) Title

Discrimination and Identity: Using Dictator Games to Gauge Political Preferences

2) Name of Author, Department, Year in Program

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4) Introduction

We use a laboratory experiment to measure the effects of group identity on participant's social preferences in the context of the 2016 presidential election in the United States. Using participant's self-reported political party identification and candidate preferences, we assess whether levels of discrimination in three rounds of allocations differ between partisans in in-group/out-group allocations and if these levels of discrimination change when an observer is present. We find that Democrats and Republicans both discriminate against out-group members and that Democrats discriminate less when an observer is present. We also find evidence for intra-party discrimination, with partisans discriminating against co-partisans who have different candidate preferences.

5) Empirical Model and or Methodology

We designed a between-subject experiment with three treatments: No monitor, Democratic monitor, and Republican monitor. In all three treatments, subjects made other-other allocation decisions, where they allocated a fixed amount of tokens (200 tokens) between two other anonymous participants. Participants in our experiment made two rounds of other-other allocations. In round 1, everyone decided how to allocate tokens between another two participants under three scenarios: if both of them came from his/her own political party, if both came from the other party, or if one from his/her own party and the other from a different party. In round 2, participants were asked to allocate tokens between another two people under three extra scenarios: if both of them supported the same candidate as the allocator, if both supported other candidates; or if one has the same candidate preference but the other doesn't. The only difference across three treatments was the choice of monitor. In Democratic monitor or Republican monitor treatment, a democratic or a republican was chosen

as a monitor to evaluate the decisions of all other participants at the end of the experiment. The monitor did not make any allocation decisions. There was no monitor in No monitor treatment.

We also collected data on subjects' demographics, their resource for news, and their attitudes toward certain economic and political issues in the exit survey.

6) Description of Data

Data collected in the lab including all participants' other-other allocation decisions and their answers to survey questions about their demographics, resource for news, and attitudes toward economic and political issues.

7) Preliminary Findings or Expected Results

We found that Democrats and Republicans both discriminate against out-group members and that Democrats discriminate less when an observer is present. We also find evidence for intra-party discrimination, with partisans discriminating against co-partisans who have different candidate preferences.

8) How the Presentation will Initiate Conversation.

Economists are increasingly using experiments to study discrimination between groups. In this project, we use dictator game decisions made either privately or under observation to measure out-group discrimination when the group identity is political party affiliation. To our knowledge, our paper is the first to compare out-group discrimination behavior made privately and under observation. We hope presenting the findings of our paper will generate more discussions on discrimination and advance our understanding of it.