

Abstracts

Temanummer: Politisk polarisering i Danmark

Political Partisan Prejudice: A Survey Experiment of Affective Polarization among Danish Partisans

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Studies show that partisan affective polarization, i.e. the difference in affect towards co-partisans and opposing partisans, is pervasive among American voters, while there is almost no knowledge on affective polarization among Danish voters. We conduct a survey experiment to study affective polarization and its behavioral consequences in terms of differential treatment of co-partisans and opposing partisans in a Danish context. In the experiment, respondents were asked to choose one of two candidates for a scholarship, where one of the candidates had a partisan affiliation. The results show that respondents have less sympathy for and less often award the partisan candidate the scholarship. However, the discriminatory preference is amplified, when the partisan candidate is from an opposing party. The findings indicate that partisanship also is a relevant group identity in Denmark, affecting the relationship between voters – even in nonpolitical contexts.

Affective Polarization in Denmark: A List Experiment on Social Distance to Political Opponents

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A string of recent studies from the American context demonstrates high levels of “affective polarization” – the tendency for citizens to express negative affect towards citizens with opposing political views, especially towards those affiliated with other parties (“out-partisans”). This article presents experimental evidence regarding affective polarization in Denmark in terms of social distance towards political opponents (both in partisan and ideological terms). It gauges social distance using a list experiment, which is effective for measuring attitudes towards sensitive issues. We find that approximately a fourth of Danes would dislike having an out-partisan as neighbor. The level of negative political affect is higher than a comparable measure of social distance towards immigrants. Finally, we find that social distance towards political out-groups is relatively equally distributed across parties.

Beliefs in Conspiracy Theories among Danes: The relationship between political ideology and conspiracy theories in Denmark

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We examine Danes' beliefs in conspiracy theories about Danish politicians and political groups. Earlier work has examined the causes and effects of conspiracy theories in the United States. Despite important country differences, we find that results from the United States generally travel to the Danish context. Many Danes believe in political conspiracy theories that put political opponents in a negative light, but not those that target politicians and political groups from their "own side." The results demonstrate that political polarization and hatred across political divides are key drivers of such beliefs. At the same time, the results show that Danes who identify strongly with the political right believe in a broader range of conspiracies than others do. These individuals carry hostile feelings towards the broader political system and, hence, believe in conspiracy theories involving both left-wing and right-wing elites.

Party over Pocketbook? Public Opinion on Public Employees' Collective Bargaining in 2018

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Citizens tend to support a policy simply because it comes from their party. However, we know little about the limits of parties' influence on opinion. Do citizens follow their party, even when the

party's policy contradicts their economic self-interest? We use the public employees' collective bargaining in spring 2018 as a case to investigate this issue. Survey data shows that, in line with their self-interest, public employees strongly supported the public employees' collective agreement requirements, far more than the private employees and across party lines. A survey experiment, however, shows that public employees were willing to go against their self-interest and curb their backing of public employees' demands if their party – the Social Democrats or the Liberals – took the employers' side. Political parties can influence citizens' opinions even when clear self-interest is at stake. The party has some weight over the pocketbook.

Polarization of Danish Legislative Votes

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Non-centrist parties have won strength in more of the recent general elections to the Danish Parliament. It could indicate ideological polarization. The article argues that it matters whether the majority in parliaments in votes faces opposition primarily from non-centrist parties. To uncover whether that is the case, the article draws on Dalton (2008) in developing a polarization measure and test it using expert and roll call data. Against expectations, with the exception of 'value politics', the results do now show an increase in the polarization of the Danish party system. Furthermore, it shows a decline in the polarization of legislative votes. This reflects an increase in inclusion of the non-centrist parties in parliamentary work.

Review Article: Unconscious bias – the making of a myth

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This article demonstrates how the myth about unconscious bias in academia was created. Un-

surprisingly, the preferred strategies include invalid argumentation and misrepresentation of research. Answering a different question than the one being posed, by referencing papers about conscious bias as if they were about unconscious bias, is the method most frequently employed. Telling a different story than is supported by the data is also popular. Other strategies are ad hoc hypotheses being deployed without justification, and overt misinformation. The same collection of papers which do not show what they are being cited for are exploited, and a consensus about their interpretation is being propelled without critical examination.

It is difficult to call this fraud since every error and misrepresentation could be a result of sluggishness as well as intent. The sheer amount does, however, point to this being a strategy. What on the surface looks like scientific reports and publications are propaganda in a scientific guise.

One report is of particular importance, for two reasons: firstly, it is in itself the total debacle of all scientific standards, secondly it originates from the organization of universities that in their own regard are the finest in Europe, LERU. The scientific integrity of the universities are being dealt a blow – by the universities themselves. This is indeed concerning. In the end, I am not primarily after the lack of evidence for unconscious bias in academia. What is really worrisome is the academic auto-destruction that results from the propagation of the myth.