Detailed Erratum: "The Economic Consequences of Partisanship in a Polarized Era"

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UPDATE (12/24/20): In Study 2, there was a typo in the nonpartisan email sent to participants. While the two partisan conditions read correctly, the non-partisan email said we had worked with "volunteers on volunteers of a non-profit organization."

This erratum corrects errors in the published version of our article "The Economic Consequences of Partisanship in a Polarized Era" (McConnell et al. 2018). While conducting a review of our code, we identified a mistake in a filtering condition in Study 1. After we recognized this issue, we decided to conduct a full audit of our study from the original source files to search for further problems. This process led us to identify some additional errors in the coding of variables, merging of data files, and filtering of observations. We have posted an updated replication file with additional data, code, and documentation that generate the updated results contained in this erratum. These mistakes generally did not affect our statistical results and changed none of our substantive conclusions. Nonetheless, we deeply regret these errors.

Study 1

In our first study, a filtering condition meant to remove cases where the editing task had not been displayed properly to the participants inadvertently removed 27 subjects who had seen the task but had not submitted any corrections. This was the error we originally discovered while conducting the review of our code. While investigating this mistake, we identified four additional problems. First, the company perception variables that we reported in the Online Appendix were reverse-coded for wave one. The corrected tables are included and discussed

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below. Second, we had been inconsistent in how subjects were filtered between waves one and two. In wave two, only responses we had verified through MTurk had been included, whereas in wave one, we had instead removed only those subjects who had not completed the assignment, whether verified or not. Enforcing the standard for wave two across both recruitment samples removes 5 observations from wave one. Third, the construction of the total corrections outcome was incorrect. Rather than counting all submitted answers, our code identified the number of unique lines of the task for which a correction had been submitted, which led to an undercount when workers submitted multiple corrections for the same line. We provide corrected summary statistics below. Fourth, the formatting of the company perception variables inadvertently resulted in recording two missing values as zeros, and a similar error led to one individual with missing gender data being classified as female.

The corrected data includes 1,254 subjects (original: 1,232 subjects) who completed the task in an average of 14.9 minutes (original: 15.1 minutes), requested an average wage of $3.33 (original: $3.34), properly corrected 5.48 errors (original: 5.60) and submitted 7.27 corrections (original: 6.85). The number of participants in the first wave becomes 294 (original: 299), while the number of participants in the second wave becomes 960 (original: 933).

These changes did not affect the substantive conclusions of the research. Participants in the co-partisan condition requested future payment that was $0.23 (p = .02) lower than the average in the non-partisan condition (original: $0.22, p = .02), while participants in the counter-partisan condition requested payment that was $0.01 higher (original: $0.01), a statistically insignificant difference. The difference between the co-partisan and counter-partisan conditions is $0.24 (p = .01) (original: $0.23, p=.02).

We find that workers in the co-partisan condition on average submitted 0.86 fewer total corrections (p = 0.02) (original: 0.58; p = .05) and caught 0.28 fewer errors (p = .18) (original: 0.29; p = .15). Relative to the counter-partisan group, the effect is 0.46 fewer total edits (p = .20) (original: 0.45; p = .12) and 0.32 fewer errors caught (p = .11) (original: 0.34; p = .09). The corrected table is included in this erratum. Therefore, we continue to conclude that workers displayed favoritism towards same-party employers but did not penalize those from the out-party.

The covariates we collected on workers also continue to have the expected signs. Moving from the low end of the education scale to the high end is associated with a $0.31 increase in the requested wage (original: $0.30), while moving from the low end of the experience scale to the high end is associated with a $0.47 increase (original: $0.48). Therefore, in the model with controls, the effect of having a co-partisan boss on requested wage (relative to an opposite-party boss) is 68% of the effect of moving the length of the education scale (original: 70%) and 45% of the effect of a similar move on the experience scale (original: 44%). For our task performance measures, a full move on the education scale is associated with an increase of 2.5 errors caught (original: 2.4) while the effect of a corresponding difference in experience is 0.66 errors caught (original: 0.66). In the model with these controls, the effect of the co-partisan treatment on errors caught is 9% of the effect of education (original: 9%) and 33% the effect of experience (original: 33%). In the original paper, we computed these percentages by using the estimated treatment effect in the model without controls; in this erratum, we have changed this to use the estimate from the model with controls.

When we correct the coding for the company perception variables, we find that the pattern of the effects on these outcomes is consistent with those for the task performance

variables. The updated results are in the corrected version of Table A5. Workers in the co-partisan condition rated the company 0.15 scale points higher for integrity and 0.19 scale points on their willingness to work for this company (on 5-point scales), both statistically significant effects ($p = .01$ and $p < .01$, respectively), while workers in the counter-partisan condition did not provide significantly lower ratings for either metric (-0.03 scale points and -0.04 scale points, respectively; $p = 0.55$ and $p = 0.52$). The effects for the question on the benefit to customers have the same signs but do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance, similar to the originally reported results.

Finally, the original publication stated that the first wave of respondents was recruited in February of 2015. In fact, it was recruited in August of 2015.

Study 2

In Study 2, a merging error led us to link 75 subjects to incorrect partisan identification. This was due to a difference in how a merge key was formatted for the survey from which we obtained these respondents. When we drop these individuals from our analysis, we have 1582 remaining participants whom we can accurately link to previously provided partisanship. Of these 1582, 40 responded to our email (original: 44) and 34 indicated they wished to purchase a gift card (original: 37). This means 2.5% of individuals responded (original: 2.7%) and 85% of those who replied asked to purchase the card. Additionally, we misclassified the race of some multiracial individuals. This variable was only used to assess covariate balance in the experiment; the study remains balanced across conditions.

The updated results are presented in the corrected version of Table 2. The response rate in the co-partisan condition is 1.8 percentage points higher than in the neutral group ($p = .06$; original: 1.8 p.p. higher, $p = .07$) and 1.4 percentage points higher than in the counter-partisan

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condition (p = .16; original: 1.7 p.p. higher, p = .09). As before, the response in the co-partisan condition is roughly double the response in the neutral condition. Conversely, the response in the counter-partisan condition is similar to that in the baseline (0.4 p.p. higher, p = .65; original: 0.1 p.p. higher, p = .92).

These effects remain concentrated among strong partisans. In the co-partisan condition, these individuals responded at a rate 3.2 percentage points higher than in the neutral baseline (p = .02; original: 3.1 p.p. higher, p = .03) and 2.3 p.p. higher than those in the counter-partisan group (p = .11; original, 2.9 p.p. higher, p = .05). Among weak and leaning partisans, the response rates across all three conditions is approximately the same, which corresponds with our original findings. As before, the results are weaker when examining the purchase request outcome. For that outcome, individuals assigned to the co-partisan arm were 1.6 p.p. more likely to ask to purchase than the control (p = .08; original: 1.3 p.p. higher, p = .13), while the effect among strong partisans was 2.8 p.p. (p = .04; original: 2.3 p.p., p = .10). Compared to the counter-partisan condition, the co-partisan group was 0.9 p.p. more likely to request to purchase (p = .29; original: 1.1 p.p. higher, p = .22), with an effect of 1.9 p.p. among strong partisans (p = .18; original: 2.2 p.p. higher, p = .13).

Our findings remain that participants appear to have responded positively to the co-partisan condition but did not respond negatively to the counter-partisan condition, and that the results are concentrated among the strongest partisans in the sample.

Additional Corrections

In the text accompanying Study 3, we reported a supplemental analysis which measured whether subjects would choose the partisan condition when the donation was made to the subject's own party. The analysis data set contained 11 entries (out of 269 observations) which

were from survey tests we conducted prior to the experiment. Removing these cases changes the estimate from 85% of respondents picking the donation (95% CI: 81%-90%) to 87% (95% CI: 83% - 91%). Our conclusions are the same: participants avoid donations to the other party, not political donations in general. Finally, in the Appendix (pp. 88-89), we incorrectly reported the sample size for Republicans in the priming study. There are 249 Republican respondents, not 248. Additionally, the rate at which individuals selected option A in the primed condition was 47.6%, not 47.4%. (In the unprimed condition, the rate was correctly reported as 47.4%, and the p-value for the difference between the conditions was correctly reported as 0.96)

References

McConnell, Christopher, Yotam Margalit, Neil Malhotra, and Matthew Levendusky. 2018. "The Economic Consequences of Partisanship in a Polarized Era." *American Journal of Political Science*. 62(1): 5-18.

	Dependent variable:					
	Wage	Errors Caught	Total Edits	Wage	Errors Caught	Total Edits
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Co-partisan	-0.23*	-0.28	-0.86*	-0.21*	-0.22	-0.76*
	(0.10)	(0.21)	(0.36)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.35)
Counter-partisan	0.01	0.05	-0.39	0.01	0.07	-0.36
	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.35)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.35)
Education	——	——	——	0.06	0.49**	0.72**
				(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.12)
Experience	——	——	——	0.16**	0.22*	0.45**
				(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.16)
Constant	3.40**	5.56**	7.68**	2.79**	3.03**	3.70**
	(0.07)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.17)	(0.35)	(0.61)
Co-partisan minus	-0.24*	-0.32	-0.46	-0.22*	-0.28	-0.39
Counter-partisan	(0.10)	(0.21)	(0.36)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.35)
Observations	1254	1254	1254	1254	1254	1254
R^2	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.022	0.053	0.044

Table 1 (Corrected): The Effect of Employer Partisanship on Employee Behavior (Study 1)
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions. Education is measured on a six-point scale ranging from less than a high school diploma (1) to a graduate degree (6). Experience is measured on a four-point scale ranging from "no experience" (1) to "substantial experience" (4).
* = $p<0.05$, ** = $p<0.01$ (two-tailed).

	Dependent variable:					
	Wage	Errors Caught	Total Edits	Wage	Errors Caught	Total Edits
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Co-partisan	-0.22*	-0.29	-0.58*	-0.21*	-0.22	-0.48
	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.28)
Counter-partisan	0.01	0.05	-0.12	0.01	0.05	-0.11
	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.28)
Education	——	——	——	0.06	0.48**	0.63**
				(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.10)
Experience	——	——	——	0.16**	0.22*	0.36**
				(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.13)
Constant	3.41**	5.68**	7.09**	2.80**	3.18**	3.66**
	(0.07)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.34)	(0.49)
Co-partisan minus	-0.23*	-0.34	-0.45	-0.22*	-0.28	-0.37
Counter-partisan	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.28)
Observations	1232	1232	1232	1232	1232	1232
R^2	0.006	0.003	0.004	0.022	0.055	0.050

Table 1 (Original): The Effect of Employer Partisanship on Employee Behavior (Study 1)
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions. Education is measured on a six-point scale ranging from less than a high school diploma (1) to a graduate degree (6). Experience is measured on a four-point scale ranging from "no experience" (1) to "substantial experience" (4).
* = $p<0.05$, ** = $p<0.01$ (two-tailed).

	Dependent variable:		
	Integrity (1)	Benefit Customers (2)	Work for Company (3)
Co-partisan	0.15^*	0.07	0.19^{**}
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Counter-partisan	-0.03	-0.01	-0.04
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Constant	3.88^{**}	3.86^{**}	3.72^{**}
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Co-partisan minus	0.18^{**}	0.07	0.23^{**}
Counter-partisan	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Observations	1251	1253	1254
R^2	0.009	0.002	0.011

Table A5 (Corrected): Employee Perceptions of the Firm, Study 1
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions.
$* = p < 0.05$, $** = p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

	Dependent variable:		
	Integrity (1)	Benefit Customers (2)	Work for Company (3)
Co-partisan	-0.02	0.08	0.08
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Counter-partisan	-0.09	0.03	-0.07
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Constant	3.52**	3.45**	3.42**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Co-partisan minus	0.07	0.06	0.14
Counter-partisan	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Observations	1229	1231	1231
R^2	0.001	0.001	0.003

Table A5 (Original): Employee Perceptions of the Firm, Study 1
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions.
$* = p < 0.05$, $** = p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

	Dependent Variable:					
	Responded To Email	Responded to Email	Responded To Email	Completed Transaction	Completed Transaction	Completed Transaction
	Full Sample	Strong Partisans	Weak/Lean Partisans	Full Sample	Strong Partisans	Weak/Lean Partisans
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Co-partisan	0.018	0.032[*]	0.005	0.016	0.028[*]	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.012)
Counter-partisan	0.004	0.009	0.0003	0.006	0.009	0.004
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Constant	0.018[**]	0.012	0.023[**]	0.015[*]	0.012	0.017[*]
	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Co-partisan minus	0.014	0.023	0.005	0.009	0.019	0.000
Counter-partisan	(0.01)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.012)
Observations	1,582	735	847	1,582	735	847
R^2	0.002	0.007	0.0002	0.002	0.006	0.0002

Table 2 (Corrected): The Effect of Seller Partisanship on Buyer Behavior (Study 2)
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions.
$* = p<0.05$, $** = p<0.01$ (two-tailed).

	Dependent Variable:					
	Responded To Email	Responded to Email	Responded To Email	Completed Transaction	Completed Transaction	Completed Transaction
	Full Sample	Strong Partisans	Weak/Lean Partisans	Full Sample	Strong Partisans	Weak/Lean Partisans
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Co-partisan	0.018	0.031*	0.005	0.013	0.023	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Counter-partisan	0.001	0.002	0.0003	0.003	0.002	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Constant	0.021**	0.019	0.022**	0.017**	0.019	0.016*
	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Co-partisan minus	0.017	0.029	0.004	0.011	0.022	0.000
Counter-partisan	(0.01)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Observations	1,657	775	882	1,657	775	882
R^2	0.002	0.007	0.0002	0.002	0.004	0.0001

Table 2 (Original): The Effect of Seller Partisanship on Buyer Behavior (Study 2)
Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. "Co-partisan" and "Counter-partisan" are dummy variables representing the experimental conditions.
$* = p<0.05$, $** = p<0.01$ (two-tailed)