

Partisanship Differences in Social Distancing May Originate in Norms and Beliefs: Results from Novel Data

Jennifer D. Wu
Yale University, New Haven, CT 06511
jennifer.wu@yale.edu

Gregory A. Huber
Yale University, New Haven, CT 06511
gregory.yale@yale.edu

Abstract

Objective: Recent academic work on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has established a persistent difference between Democrats and Republicans in social distancing behaviors. We uncover a potential explanation for this difference – social norms and beliefs.

Methods: We use a series of OLS regression specifications on novel survey data collected in April through June of 2020.

Results: We find that Democrats are more likely to report social distancing than are Republicans, even after controlling for a range of demographic variables that might otherwise account for differences in social distancing and that these differences are found in partisans' norms and beliefs around social distancing. Our main analysis shows that the partisan difference in social distancing disappears when we control for social norms and beliefs, suggesting their salience in changing social distancing behaviors.

Conclusion: Our results contribute to current research focused on mitigating the spread of COVID-19 by highlighting a mechanism, norms and beliefs, for interventions to target.

Keywords

Social distancing, social norms, COVID-19, partisanship, polarization

Introduction

Social distancing, encompassing restrictions on close interpersonal interactions among individuals, mask wearing, etc., is an important practice to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19, Anderson et al., 2020) and minimize the burden on critical care centers (Kissler et al., 2020). Recent work uncovers a number of empirical patterns that help social researchers better understand the socioeconomic and political climate shaping individual-level the responses to the pandemic. A recent Gallup survey found that only 30% of US adults report still going to public places, suggesting that a majority of individuals, but not all, are social distancing to some degree (Saad, 2020). Analysis from Papageorge et al. (2020) suggest that social distancing varies based on socio-demographic factors (e.g. race, age, gender, etc.). Notably, there are surprising partisan differences in social distancing. Behavioral data show people from more Republican places are less likely to social distance than people from Democratic places, a difference that remains even after accounting for many other potential explanations for these behaviors (Allcott et al., 2020; Barrios and Hochberg, 2020). This partisan gap also appears in individual-level survey data about reported social distancing practices (Allcott et al., 2020; Gadarian et al., 2020, Gollwitzer et al., 2020). Grossman, Kim, Rexer, and Thirumurthy (2020) find evidence that this partisan gap exists not just in social distancing, but also in responses to messages from state governors advocating for social distancing. Republican-leaning counties were less likely to follow recommendations from their state governors to socially distance than were Democratic-leaning counties. The question of why this gap exists is particularly important given the recent politicization of preventative behaviors intended to minimize the spread of COVID-19 (Clinton, Cohen, Lapinski, and Trussler, 2020) and the likely effectiveness of persuasive messaging aimed at promoting adherence to such behaviors.

In this paper we examine one potential explanation for individual and partisan differences in social distancing practices: social norms. In a large number of domains, the power of peer expectations about appropriate behavior and the fear of social disapprobation for deviating from those expectations have been shown to shape behaviors (see Bicchieri and Dimant, 2019, in particular). For example, expectations of peer judgement have been shown to increase the likelihood of voting (Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling, 2014; Rolfe, 2012). Social expectations are also a salient factor in explaining partisanship, particularly among Black Americans (White et al., 2014; White and Laird, 2020). Outside of politics, social pressure has been shown to increase likelihood of pro-environment behaviors, such as recycling and reducing energy consumption (Nolan et al. 2008; Schultz, 1999), as well as affect health-related behaviors such as smoking cessation (Putte, Yzer, and Brunstring, 2005) and weight loss (Leahey, LaRose, Fava, and Wing, 2012). Relevant to our study, social psychologists have found that messages that focus on pro-social consequences of preventative measures during the pandemic increases individuals' willingness to comply with these measures (Everett et al., 2020; Goldberg et al., 2020; Heffner et al., 2020; Jordan et al., 2020; Pfattheicher et al, 2020).

In the case of social distancing, it may be that who social distances, both across places and parties, differs because of community-level differences in peer behavior and expectations. Moreover, if partisan differences originate in social norms where those who live in more Republican places are social distancing at lower rates, this may reinforce existing partisan differences. Others who are unsure about how to behave may be less inclined to practice social distance than if they were in a community where most others were engaging in social distancing.

This is where social norms and beliefs about the benefits of social distancing can be very important. If norms are indeed a salient factor in driving the partisan difference, then subsequent efforts focused on promoting spread-minimizing behaviors can target these norms and beliefs.

We contribute to recent work about the COVID-19 pandemic by analyzing novel data we gathered about social distancing behaviors and different dimensions of social norms about those practices. We gathered survey data from approximately 1,000 individuals each week between April and June 2020 to form a sample of 11,008 respondents and use these data to examine the relationship between dimensions of norm endorsement and reports of social distancing. We have three main findings. The first is that while the proportion of respondents from either party reporting social distancing is relatively high, Democrats are nonetheless more likely than Republicans to report practicing social distancing. As we will discuss, the magnitude of this gap is about 0.042, which is comparable to estimated differences in reported social distancing by gender or by age. This partisan difference holds even after we account for a range of demographic and geographic covariates that correlate with partisanship and might also explain those behaviors. The second is that there are partisan differences in endorsements of different types of norms that correlate with reported social distancing. The partisan difference is largest for feeling of internal pressure if not social distancing but also manifests for measures like beliefs about family and friends' behavior and expected judgment by family and friends for failing to social distance. Finally, we find that the estimated correlation between partisanship and social distancing disappears when we account for these norms and beliefs measures in predicting social distancing behavior.

In the next section, we present an overview of the construction of our norms and beliefs measures and of our data collection more generally. We then describe in detail the main findings. We conclude with a discussion of the results, limitations of our approach, and implications for future research.

Material and Methods

Data are from the Yale Collaborative Lucid Survey (YCLS), a weekly survey fielded from April 13, 2020 to June 2, 2020 using the survey vendor Lucid. Lucid recruits subjects online to match Census benchmarks in an attempt to achieve nationally representative samples. Each week, approximately 1,000 new respondents were recruited to answer questions about their backgrounds and our novel items about COVID-related social norms and social distancing behaviors. In addition to the main COVID-related outcomes described below, we also collect the following demographic data for each respondent: partisanship, age, race and ethnicity, household income, education, gender, region, and neighborhood population density.¹ (See Appendix A for all question wording, survey design details, and coding details).

Construction of the COVID-related norms measures is based on similar measures used in the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) to measure voting behavior and social norms about voting. We use those measures as our template because they have been shown to correlate with individual- and geographic-level differences in voter participation (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling, 2014) but modify them to references expectations about social distancing

¹ Partisanship is measured by asking respondents if they identify with the Democrat or Republican Party, or as an Independent. For the main analysis, Democrat and Republican will include Independents who report leaning towards either party. Supplementary tables in the appendix report results for specifications using alternative partisanship measures.

rather than voting. We additionally supplement these items with novel questions we wrote about beliefs about the instrumental efficacy of social distancing for protecting oneself and others.² Prior to answering the norms measures, we provided respondents with a description of social distancing to minimize variation across respondents in what the term means. Respondents are then asked the extent to which they agree with each item using five-point Likert scales ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Responses to these norms items are measured on a five-point scale that is subsequently rescaled from 0 to 1.³

We organized our COVID-behaviors and beliefs measures into four categories. First, we measure individuals' own reported behavior by asking respondents the extent to which they agree with the statement: "I am social distancing."⁴ Second, we measure individuals' perceptions of others' behaviors related to social distancing, a measure of descriptive norms. We ask respondents the extent to which they agree that: (1) "My friends and family are practicing social distancing" and (2) "People in my community are social distancing." These two measures help in understanding respondents' perceptions of the prevalence of social distancing in their personal networks and community at large.

Third, we measure individuals' expectations about sanctions for norm violations. These are measures of injunctive norms. We ask the extent to which they agree with: (1) "My friends and family would be disappointed if I did not practice social distancing", (2) "People in my community would be disappointed if I did not practice social distancing", (3) "I would feel guilty if I did not practice social distancing", and (4) "I would feel less American if I did not practice social distancing." These first two items measure external (social) pressure to comply with social distancing behavior, while the latter two items measure internal pressures, which may become internalized due to external pressure.

Finally, we measure individuals' beliefs about the instrumental benefits to complying with social distancing. We capture this by asking respondents the extent to which they agree that "practicing social distancing is important": (1) "so that I do not get sick," and (2) "so that I do not risk infecting others or pose a burden on the health system." Notably, we distinguish between the instrumental benefits of compliance that is self- rather than other-regarding, either of which may be more relevant for understanding individual behavior and social pressure. Such beliefs may, of course, be influenced by peer and community expectations and social pressure.

Our analytic approach is to begin by examining individual-level differences in social distancing practices and the correlation between those behaviors and different demographic and political correlates. We then test whether the partisan differences in social distancing that we find persist after including measures of social norms and social distancing beliefs in a model predicting social distancing behavior.

² Of note, we also fielded the NAES voting measures in this survey, which offers two advantages. First, it allows us to understand the distinction, if any, between political and COVID-related norms. Second, because individual-level beliefs about voting norms are likely static over time, we should not expect much variation across weeks in responses to these items. Appendix Figure S1 shows that the over-time trend for responses to the political norms is flat, mitigating a gain concern about changing sample composition.

³ The possible outcome values are: Strongly Disagree = 0, Somewhat Disagree = 0.25, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 0.5, Somewhat Agree = 0.75, Strongly Agree = 1.

⁴ One concern with behavioral reports is whether they are valid proxies for actual behavior. While survey respondents about social distancing may be prone to social desirability bias (e.g. see Daoust et al., 2020), a recent study by (Gollwitzer et al., 2020) shows that our reported social distancing measure is (negatively) correlated with an actual measure of a failure to social distance, step counts.

Results

We present results in this section using survey data collected from 11,008 respondents.⁵ We begin by examining partisan differences in individual-level self-reported social distancing practice and show that partisan differences persist even after adjusting for a series of covariates. Table 1 reports OLS estimates from a series of model specifications in which reported social distancing is the dependent variable. In Column (1), we regress reported social distancing on respondent's partisanship and week of survey.⁶ As expected in light of prior research, Democrats are more likely to report social distancing than Republicans. This effect is about 0.030 units ($p < 0.01$), or about 13% of the observed standard deviation of this measure. Independents are less likely than either Democrats or Republicans to report social distancing, by a slightly larger amount.

[Table 1 about here]

In Column (2), we add covariates to control for respondents' race, gender, age, education, income, employment status, region, as well as the estimated local population density (based on the respondent's zip code). Complete model results are reported in Table S3 in the appendix and show that Black and Hispanic respondents are less likely than White respondents to report social distancing, women are more likely to do so, and social distancing is increasing in age, education, and income. Those who are working are less likely to report social distancing. There are clear regional differences, and social distancing is non-monotonically related to population density: As density increases, social distancing increases, except in the densest places (top 5% of population density). However, controlling for all of these covariates only increases the difference in reported social distancing between Democrats and Republicans, to 0.042 units ($p < 0.01$), an increase of about 40% relative to Column (1).

In Column (3), we include sample weights. Weights are constructed to match CPS distributions based on age, education, income, and race (see appendix for more details). With weights, we find the earlier estimated partisan difference is largely unchanged. In Column (4) we repeat the Column (2) specification for those respondents interviewed in week 4 and later when we began asking whether the respondent was required to work outside of their home. In Column (5) we add the additional work from home question. In both columns, the estimated effect of partisanship remains—Democrats are more likely to report social distancing than Republicans. We note that the baseline rates of reported social distancing, as given by the constant coefficient, is relatively high, e.g. 0.87 on a five-point scale from 0 to 1 in Column (1) and do not change by much across columns with subsequently added variables. Nonetheless, the partisan differences in reported social distancing are significant and remain so even after accounting for relevant geographic and demographic variables.

To further understand the robustness of this pattern, we run the following specifications, all of which are found in the appendix. Table S4 reports the partisan differences by week, with Republicans in week 1 being the reference category. In Column (1) of Table S4, we see that

⁵ We apply the follow sample restrictions for consistency. We drop respondents who do not answer all of the social distancing measures and who do not respond to the items on race and partisanship. We drop nine observations from duplicate respondent IDs. All covariates are coded as categorical variables (e.g. ages are binned). For age, education, and household income, the omitted categories are those that contain the modal survey respondent (see Appendix A2 for more details). For region and race, we use South and White, respectively, as the reference categories.

⁶ Coefficients for the week indicators are provided in Table S3.

Democrats' level of reported social distancing is increasing over time, relative to week 1 Republicans, whereas Republicans in later weeks have lower levels of social distancing, consistent with our data collection spanning the end of the strict lockdowns in many states. Together, this suggests that the partisan difference between Democrats and Republicans in reported social distancing is not simply an artifact of later adoption of social distancing by Republicans; instead, partisan differences are generally increasing over the ten-week period of the survey. In Table S5, we report specifications in which we add various fixed effects. In Column (1), we present OLS estimates of the main specification including zip code fixed effects, restricting the sample to zip codes that have at least one Democrat and one Republican respondent. We see that the estimated partisan difference is slightly larger at 0.045 ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, when we add state fixed effects in Column (2), the estimated difference is only slightly smaller at 0.041 ($p < 0.01$). One concern about using online survey pools is sample representativeness. Table S1 reports the distribution of respondents across various demographic categories, which approximate U.S. population statistics according to Census data. As a robustness check, we also include specifications in the analysis below that include covariate adjustment and that reweight the survey sample to the U.S. population. (See Appendix C for weighting details.)

Given this persistent pattern of partisan differences, the next question is whether norms and beliefs about COVID can attenuate or these patterns. To answer this question, we begin by examining overall levels and partisan subgroup differences on our different measures. Column (1) of Table 2 presents overall sample means for each of our nine social distancing measures. Columns (3) and (5) present means separately for Democrats and Republicans using the same definition of partisanship used in the Table 1 analysis, while Column (7) reports covariate-adjusted test of the differences across parties.⁷ In addition to showing clear differences in social distancing behaviors similar to those reported in Table 1, we see that in all but two cases Democrats report statistically significant higher scores on each item. [Table 2 about here]

Beginning at the top of the table, the descriptive norms items suggest that Democrats are less likely than Republicans to report that members of their community are social distancing. However, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to report that their friends and family are social distancing. That partisans perceive a community environment different from their personal environment is consistent with analysis reported in Table S5. Even holding constant the zip code in which someone lives, which arguably holds community behavior constant, there are partisan differences in social distancing.

Our next set of norm measures are about individuals' perception of external and internal pressures. As with the descriptive norms items about their general community, Democrats and Republicans do not perceive large differences in their likelihood of being judged negatively by members of their community. However, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to report external pressure from one's friends and family to social distance. While this measure of external family pressure reveals partisan differences, the largest partisan differences in the table are for reported guilt if one does not social distance. Democrats are significantly more likely to feel guilty for not social distancing relative to Republicans. Finally, there are more modest partisan differences in endorsements of the statement that failing to social distance would make one feel

⁷ The covariates used to estimate the partisan differences in Column (7) of Table 2 are the same covariates used in Table 1. For a description of the covariates, please refer to A2 in the appendix.

less American. Turning from norms to beliefs, Democrats are more likely to endorse both self- and other-regarding reasons for the importance of social distancing. Overall, Table 2 suggests that differences between Democrats and Republicans are not limited only to reported social distancing, but also extend to the norms and beliefs about social distancing as well.

Our data also allow us to examine over time trends. Figure S2 in the appendix plots the regression-adjusted means of the main outcomes for each week of the survey, broken out by party. The overall trend for most of the norms and beliefs outcomes decreases over time—away from taking action to reduce the spread of COVID or supporting those who do so. This likely reflects the period of the study coinciding with the reopening of parts of the country hard hit by the earliest wave of the domestic COVID-19 pandemic and the relaxation of preventive measures in places that would not experience their largest disease burden until summer 2020. At the same time, the partisan gap actually widens over time, particularly after week six of the survey, with Democrats becoming increasingly more likely than Republicans to take and support anti-COVID measures. Week six corresponds to late spring, when partisan differences in public messaging about social distancing and stay at home precautions emerge (e.g., Grossman et al., 2020), as well as when partisan polarization in measures to support voting during the pandemic become pronounced (e.g., preference for vote by mail, as identified in Lockhart et al. (2020)). Interestingly, independents' decline in social distancing behavior and norms follows a pattern more similar to that of Republicans than Democrats.

We bring results from Tables 1 and 2 together in the analysis reported in Table 3, which allows us to understand if accounting for the different norms and beliefs measures reported in Table 2 can explain the estimated partisan differences in social distancing behavior in Table 1. We enter each set of measures separately, and then estimate a fully saturated model with all of the measures from Table 2 used as predictors.⁸ For reference, Table S8 in the appendix provides bivariate regression estimates between reported social distancing and each norm measure. We find that all the norms items are significantly correlated with reported social distancing, regardless of partisanship.

[Table 3 about here]

As a reminder, Democrats are 0.042 units more likely to report social distancing per the Table 1, Column (2) specification. When we add descriptive norms to that specification, the Column (1) specification of Table 3, the estimated partisan divide shrinks by about 25% to 0.032 units. In this specification there is a much larger effect of the measure of family and friend behavior than of members of the community (ratio of coefficients approximately 5 to 1). In Column (2) we include the measures of both external and internal pressures and the estimated partisan gaps shrinks to 0.010, or by about 75%. In this specification, internal feelings of guilt and external expectations about social pressure from friends and family have the largest effects, with the latter coefficient about half as large as the effect of internal feelings of guilt.

Finally, accounting for the measures of beliefs about the instrumental benefits of social distancing in Column (3) shrinks the estimated partisan difference to 0. The model gives equal weight to beliefs about the importance of social distancing for protecting oneself and others. In Column (4) we include all the measures of norms and beliefs simultaneously. Unsurprisingly in light of the results in Columns (1)-(3), the estimated partisan difference in social distancing after accounting for all of these measures is near zero and far from statistically significant.

⁸ Coefficients for the covariates are reported in the appendix in Table S7.

We also consider the sensitivity of this result to different measures of partisanship. In particular, we run specifications with and without the norms and beliefs measures using three alternative measures of partisanship: 2016 vote choice, a 7-point partisanship scale, and by partisan strength. As reported in Table S6 in the appendix, regardless of which measure of partisanship we use, the estimated partisan difference (in Columns (1), (3), and (5)) are reduced to near zero when we include the norms and beliefs measures.

One final question is whether norms and beliefs can also account for observed differences in social distancing for other groups. Relative to Column (2) of Table S3, Column (4) of Table S7 shows that in models including the norms and beliefs measures, the estimates for Hispanic respondents, population density, certain age, income and education groups, and being in the Midwest are no longer significant.⁹ Table S7 also shows that, even after controlling for party identification, Black respondents are less likely and female respondents are more likely to agree with the norm and belief measures. Do these static differences mask different dynamics over time? We examine time trends for group differences in the appendix. Figure S3 shows Black respondents are less likely to agree with the behavior and norms outcome measures than are white respondents, with this difference relatively consistent across time for most items (though this gap increases in the self-reported social distancing measure). This suggests that the racial variation we see in the main specification cannot fully be accounted for by variation in partisanship or time. Figure S4 considers a similar gap between female and male respondents. As with race, the gender difference persists across the period of the survey, with female respondents being more likely to agree with our measures than male respondents.

To summarize, our analysis finds that there are partisan differences in both reported social distancing and norms around social distancing. The difference in reported social distancing between Democrats and Republicans persists when we add in range of covariates but attenuates substantially when we account for social distancing norms. While this analysis provides suggestive evidence that social distancing norms can explain the partisan differences in reported social distancing, this evidence is not strongly causal. For example, we are unable to identify whether reported social distancing is driven by respondents' beliefs about norms or whether respondents have these beliefs about social distancing because they are practicing it (or not) in the first place. Nonetheless, that our norm measures are able to attenuate the partisan difference when demographic and geographic covariates does speak to their potential importance in understanding the causes of social distancing behaviors.

Discussion

There is a burgeoning literature on the social and political aspects of individual-level response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One recurring result is that Democrats and Republicans differ in their social distancing behaviors and beliefs about the virus. An important factor that has been overlooked in prior research is the role of social norms in contributing to this partisan difference. In this study, we measure reported social distancing and norms pertinent to social distancing. We first present evidence that this documented partisan gap persists even after accounting for demographic covariates and local population density. We subsequently consider the relationship between social norms and reported social distancing. Here we find that Democrats score

⁹ Additionally, we also show in the appendix that the partisan norm differences we measure extend to voting norms, albeit to a lesser degree. As shown in Table S9, while the initial partisan difference in reported voting is about 0.0189 ($p < 0.01$), including similar measures of political norms decreases it about 3.8% to 0.012.

marginally higher on our norm measures than Republicans, signifying greater agreement with beliefs about pro-social benefits of and expectations around social distancing. Importantly, we find that estimated partisan differences disappear when we include our norm measures in models predicting social distancing behavior. All of the norms reduce the observed differences to some degree.

There are a number of potential limitations of our analysis. The first concerns issues of data quality and respondent attentiveness. If inattentiveness implies increased random measurement error, it would likely tend to attenuate estimated partisan differences and weaken the relationship between measured norms and reported behavior. In the appendix, we present parallel analyses restricted to more attentive samples and continue to find that accounting for norms minimizes the direct correlation between partisanship and reported social distancing. In Table S9, we drop respondents who give the same responses to each of the individual political norm measures previously discussed (“straight-lining”) and see that the estimated partisan difference is slightly smaller (e.g. from 0.032 in Table 3 Col. 1 to 0.029 in Table S9 Col. 1) when we include the norm and belief measures. In Table S11, we exclude respondents who took the survey on a mobile device and see similar estimates to Table 3. For both robustness specifications, including the norms and beliefs measures in the last column of either table reduces the estimated partisan difference to near zero. While the estimates are persistent, we nonetheless make the caveat that any extrapolation to those whose reported behaviors and attitudes we cannot reliably measure is necessarily speculative.

Second, as is the case with most observational approaches, because we cannot account for all omitted factors that potentially explain both behavior and norms or the potential endogeneity of norms perceptions, our results are at best speculative about whether norms and beliefs drive the partisan differences. While the analysis is not causal, it is nonetheless suggestive of underlying explanations for the differences we observe. A necessary step to isolate the causal effect of norms on behaviors is to design interventions that perturb those norms, or to identify exogenous variation in norms that can be used to assess whether those changes induced downstream behavioral changes. Similarly, we do not investigate other factors that may account for partisan differences. While our analysis suggests that the differences in reported social distancing decrease when norms and beliefs are accounted for, it is not necessarily the case that norms and beliefs are solely what drives the difference. As a recent example, Pedersen and Favero (2020) show that individuals who follow COVID-related news are more likely to social distance, and controlling for this decreases partisan differences in social distancing. Thus, individuals may be taking cues from their news outlets in a way that is both partisan and reinforces attitudes around social distancing norms. Indeed, Kim, Shepherd, and Clinton (2020) finds evidence that media markets matter; residents in rural areas are more likely to social distance if their local news is produced in cities with greater numbers of COVID-19 cases. These patterns are compatible either with norms-based accounts—descriptions of what other people are doing may chance one’s own beliefs about what is correct—or more instrumental explanations, if for example media coverage shapes beliefs about the efficacy of social distancing for preventing disease.

Regardless of what other factors may explain norm endorsements, we believe norms to be a promising mechanism to target in attempting to promote social distancing behavior. Norms have been established as mechanism that changes behavior in many other contexts. Given the particularly crucial time as businesses and local economies seek to reopen, understanding the relationship between norms and social distancing practices is important for thinking about the

types of interventions that may be effective in increasing compliance with social distancing practices. If partisan differences in norms originate in partisan communication, a promising next step is field-experimental efforts to test if messages that advocate social distancing from co-partisan sources are more effective than persuasion efforts disconnected from partisan labels altogether.

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Tables

Table 1: Reported Social Distancing

DV: I am practicing social distancing	PID (1)	PID + Covariates (2)	Reweightd + Covariates (3)	PID + Covariates (Week 4+) (4)	PID + Covariates + WFH (5)
Democrat	0.0302*** (0.00477)	0.0418*** (0.00482)	0.0445*** (0.00984)	0.0479*** (0.00582)	0.0479*** (0.00582)
Independent	-0.0450*** (0.00749)	-0.0212*** (0.00741)	-0.0124 (0.0128)	-0.0190** (0.00886)	-0.0189** (0.00886)
Pop Density 25th-50th pctile		0.0125** (0.00626)	0.0162 (0.0102)	0.00957 (0.00754)	0.00944 (0.00754)
Pop Density 50th-75th pctile		0.0185*** (0.00637)	0.0162 (0.0102)	0.0117 (0.00780)	0.0116 (0.00780)
Pop Density 75th-90th pctile		0.0208*** (0.00736)	0.0246** (0.0111)	0.0162* (0.00894)	0.0161* (0.00894)
Pop Density 90th-95th pctile		0.0336*** (0.0109)	0.00488 (0.0293)	0.0280** (0.0131)	0.0278** (0.0131)
Pop Density 95th+ (N/A)		-0.00351 (0.0124)	0.00522 (0.0192)	-0.00347 (0.0147)	-0.00393 (0.0148)
Northeast		-0.00816 (0.0206)	0.00526 (0.0332)	-0.00436 (0.0233)	-0.00464 (0.0233)
Midwest		0.00947 (0.00598)	0.00677 (0.0120)	0.00541 (0.00721)	0.00537 (0.00721)
West		-0.0123** (0.00616)	-0.00656 (0.0120)	-0.0139* (0.00737)	-0.0138* (0.00737)
Employed		-0.00383 (0.00623)	0.00885 (0.0101)	-0.00733 (0.00764)	-0.00740 (0.00764)
Works from Home, Not by Choice		-0.0237*** (0.00516)	-0.0312*** (0.00926)	-0.0228*** (0.00636)	-0.0208*** (0.00752)
Constant	0.878*** (0.00711)	0.864*** (0.0121)	0.872*** (0.0199)	0.855*** (0.0141)	0.855*** (0.0141)
N	11,008	11,008	11,008	7,956	7,956
R-squared	0.026	0.117	0.143	0.119	0.119
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. The dependent variable is scaled 0 to 1, with Strongly Disagree = 0, Strongly Agree = 1. Additional covariates include: race, age group, household income, gender, and education level (coefficients omitted). The reference categories for the additional covariates are the categories that contain the modal respondent.

Table 2. Social Distancing Norms, Means

	<u>All Respondents</u>		<u>Democrats</u>		<u>Republicans</u>		Partisan Difference (D-R) (7)
	Means	Std. Dev.	Means	Std. Dev.	Means	Std. Dev.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	
<i>Behavioral</i>							
I am practicing social distancing	0.856	0.238	0.880	0.223	0.849	0.242	0.0431***
<i>Descriptive</i>							
Friends/Family are social distancing	0.809	0.257	0.821	0.254	0.812	0.255	0.024***
People in community are social distancing	0.729	0.261	0.728	0.264	0.751	0.250	-0.0116**
<i>Expected Sanction/Injunctive</i>							
Friends/Family disappointed if I didn't SD	0.731	0.287	0.758	0.280	0.723	0.290	0.0444***
People in comm. disappointed if I didn't SD	0.685	0.279	0.697	0.278	0.695	0.274	0.0081
I'd feel guilty if I did not social distance	0.774	0.283	0.813	0.263	0.757	0.293	0.0662***
I'd feel less American if I did not social distance	0.647	0.323	0.667	0.319	0.657	0.323	0.0274***
<i>Instrumental Benefit</i>							
Practicing SD is important so I do not get sick	0.827	0.258	0.860	0.238	0.810	0.266	0.0591***
Practicing SD is important so I do not get others sick	0.828	0.257	0.859	0.241	0.813	0.263	0.0595***

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Week 1 data are excluded from analysis. Column (4) is the covariate adjusted difference between Democrats – Republicans. Covariates include: race, age group, household income, gender, region, zip code population density, employment status, and education level.

Table 3: Reported Social Distancing Regressed on Norms

DV: I am practicing social distancing	Descriptive	Expected Sanction	Instrumental Benefit	All the Norms
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democrat	0.0323*** (0.00399)	0.00990*** (0.00384)	0.000623 (0.00349)	0.00170 (0.00330)
Independent	-0.00725 (0.00590)	-0.00405 (0.00568)	-0.0116** (0.00482)	-0.00538 (0.00458)
Friends/Family are social distancing	0.477*** (0.0132)			0.181*** (0.0126)
People in community are social distancing	0.0921*** (0.0103)			0.0379*** (0.00922)
Friends/Family disappointed if I didn't SD		0.169*** (0.0106)		0.0361*** (0.00957)
People in comm. disappointed if I didn't SD		0.0438*** (0.00906)		-0.0147 (0.00925)
I'd feel guilty if I did not social distance		0.374*** (0.0120)		0.123*** (0.0122)
I'd feel less American if I did not social distance		0.00354 (0.00716)		0.00772 (0.00638)
SD is important so I do not get sick			0.369*** (0.0149)	0.254*** (0.0154)
SD is important so I do not get others sick			0.343*** (0.0145)	0.211*** (0.0152)
Constant	0.408*** (0.0150)	0.435*** (0.0133)	0.272*** (0.0130)	0.190*** (0.0124)
N	11,008	11,008	11,008	11,008
R-squared	0.407	0.459	0.570	0.618
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1. The dependent variable is scaled 0 to 1, with Strongly Disagree = 0, Strongly Agree = 1. Additional covariates include: race, age group, household income, gender, and education level (coefficients omitted). The reference categories for the covariates are the categories that contain the modal respondent (except in the cases of region and population density, where the references are the South and the bottom 25th percentile).