

**Title:** The Extent of Political Polarization in College Students  
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Political polarization has increased dramatically in the U.S over the last two decades (Pew Research Center, 2014). A national survey of college freshmen found students to represent the most politically polarized cohort than ever before (Eagan et al., 2016). In addition, research suggests that people prefer to arrange themselves to be closer in proximity to those who are like-minded (Pew Research Center, 2014). The partisan divide instigates bias in employee evaluation (Gift & Gift, 2015), scholarship recommendations (Iyenger & Westwood, 2015), and even choice of romantic partner (Huber & Malhotra, 2016). The current study examined whether community college students' willingness to choose a roommate is affected by the potential roommate's political affiliation. We hypothesized that not only would political prejudice exist, but that students would also prefer a Democrat over a Republican roommate. Forty college students (19 males and 21 females) read a scenario in which 'Sean' was either a Democrat or Republican applying to be a roommate. Participants then indicated their agreement with statements about Sean making a good roommate, their willingness to be friends with Sean, and whether Sean was trustworthy. Results indicate that the potential roommate's political affiliation had no significant effect on the students' evaluation or choice of the roommate. The participants' race, political indifference, and social desirability may have influenced the findings. Interestingly, results imply a lower level of polarization than expected, which suggests a greater societal acceptance of others regardless of political affiliation.

## References

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