

Researchers discover strong correlation between partisanship and social mobility during COVID-19 pandemic

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According to many medical experts, reduced social mobility—defined here as social contact and travel within and among communities—is a

necessary factor to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Joshua Clinton, professor of political science at Vanderbilt University, led a team of researchers to analyze data from more than one million US adults, determining that partisanship is a stronger determinant of social mobility behaviors than the relative prevalence of COVID-19 cases in the community. The research, "Partisan Pandemic: How Partisanship and Public Health Concerns Affect Individuals' Social Mobility During COVID-19", will be published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in *Science Advances* on Dec 12, 2020.

Between March and April 2020—the first month of the pandemic—Democrats and Republicans both indicated increased concern about COVID-19 and a commitment to reduced social mobility. However, in April, the percentage of Republicans who indicated they were "very or somewhat worried about COVID-19" began to decline while remaining stable among Democrats. The reduced concern about the pandemic among Republicans correlated with a faster return to [social activities](#), regardless of the rate of infections in their communities.

By September, Republicans were engaged in nearly double the number of social activities per day than Democrats. Clinton asserts that stronger political leadership may help reduce [social mobility](#) among Republicans, considered by public health experts as a necessary step for reducing transmission and controlling the pandemic.

More information: Partisan pandemic: How partisanship and public health concerns affect individuals' social mobility during COVID-19, *Science Advances* 11 Dec 2020: eabd7204 , [DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abd7204](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abd7204)

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