Political Ideology and US Electric Vehicle Adoption

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Abstract: The prospect for electric vehicles (EVs) as a climate change solution hinges on their widespread adoption across political lines. This study uses county-level data to show that from 2012 to 2023 about half of all new EV registrations in the United States went to the 10% most Democratic counties, and about one-third went to the top 5%. This correlation is largely stable over time and remains after controlling for household income, gasoline prices, and other observables. EV trucks are a small share of the EV market but show a lower correlation than other EV types. We also conducted a survey, finding little difference in the ability of Democrats and Republicans to answer questions about EVs.

JEL Codes: D12, H23, Q48, Q50

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THE PROSPECT FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVS) as a climate change solution hinges on their widespread adoption by households across the political spectrum. Ambitious targets for US decarbonization have EVs reaching 50%+ of new vehicle sales by the early 2030s

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(Larson et al. 2021; National Academies 2021), so even ubiquitous adoption in left-leaning areas will simply not be enough.

In this study, we examine the correlation between political ideology and US EV adoption. Using detailed county-level data on new US vehicle registrations from 2012 to 2023, we measure the degree to which EV adoption is concentrated in the most left-leaning counties and how this concentration has changed over time.

The results point to a remarkably strong correlation. During this time period, about half of all new EVs in the United States went to the 10% most Democratic counties, and about one-third went to the top 5%. The most Democratic counties tend to have large populations. Looking at all new vehicles, 30% go to the top 10% most Democratic counties, and 18% go to the top 5%. Thus, the concentration of EVs goes well beyond what would be expected based on population. Counties with affluent left-leaning cities like Cambridge, MA, San Francisco, and Seattle play a disproportionate role, with EV shares several times the national average.

These are associations, not causal relationships. At least in theory, one could imagine randomly varying household income or gasoline prices, for example, and then testing for differences in EV adoption. But what would it mean to randomly assign political ideology? We have no such randomized experiment, so the patterns here should be interpreted as purely descriptive.

That said, when we control for household income, gasoline prices, and other observables, the correlation remains strong and statistically significant. While we cannot rule out that there are additional omitted variables, the role of political ideology appears to be separate and distinct, above and beyond the role played by other observable factors.

The correlation between political ideology and EV adoption remains largely stable over time. The overall scale of the EV market expands dramatically over our sample period, but even by the end of our sample period, 45% of EVs still went to the 10% most Democratic counties, and 32% still went to the top 5%. Thus, overall, we find little evidence of a broadening across the political spectrum, at least during the period 2012–23.

An important exception is trucks and vans. A valuable feature of our analysis is that we can look separately by vehicle type. The EV market during our sample period is dominated by cars and SUVs, and the pattern is very similar for these two vehicle types, with both highly concentrated among the most Democratic counties. Electric trucks and vans, in contrast, are significantly less concentrated in Democratic counties, though these represent a small share of the EV market. The weaker but still positive correlation between EV truck adoption and political ideology is particularly notable given that trucks are a much higher share of registrations in Republican counties.

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We also conduct an online survey, showing images of various vehicle models and asking respondents to distinguish between EVs and non-EVs. Accuracy varies widely across vehicle models, for example, 95% for Tesla Model Y versus 53% for Volkswagen ID.4, but Democrats and Republicans were equally accurate. We also find that Democrats have on average only slightly higher general understanding of EVs. It is hard to draw definitive conclusions from this type of survey, but the results suggest that information differences cannot explain the large and persistent gap in EV adoption.

Our study is related to a small literature in economics on political ideology and "green" vehicle adoption. In one of the first papers on this topic, Kahn (2007) finds that census tracts in Los Angeles county with more registered Green Party voters are more likely to have hybrid vehicles.[1] While most previous studies focus on conventional hybrid vehicles like the original Toyota Prius (Kahn 2007; Kahn and Vaughn 2009; Sexton and Sexton 2014), EVs are of significant independent interest due to their higher media profile, potential for large-scale decarbonization, and requirements for charging.

Our study also complements recent papers on EV adoption, beliefs about climate change, and Elon Musk. Archsmith et al. (2022) uses survey data from 2017 and 2018 to show that EV purchases as a share of sedan sales were higher in states where more people believe climate change is happening.[2] Gillingham et al. (2025) use US vehicle registrations 2020–25 to document declining Tesla vehicle registrations in Democratic counties starting in October 2022 when Musk acquired Twitter. Pallottini and Shchukina (2025) use vehicle registration data from Texas and a discrete choice model to estimate that willingness to pay for Tesla vehicles fell by $12,000 in Democratic zip codes between 2021 and 2025.

These studies suggest that EV adoption in the United States reflects both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, modulated by political ideology. For intrinsic motivations, this could mean households deriving utility from reducing carbon emissions akin to the "warm glow" from other forms of public good provision (Andreoni 1989, 1990; Fried

1. Kahn and Vaughn (2009) show that zip codes in California with more registered Green Party voters are more likely to have hybrid vehicles, controlling for income and other household characteristics. Sexton and Sexton (2014) find that zip codes in Colorado and Washington with more Democratic voters are more likely to have the Toyota Prius relative to less conspicuous hybrids like the Toyota Camry hybrid, consistent with what they call "conspicuous conservation." Further afield, Costa and Kahn (2013) find that Democrats are more responsive than Republicans to energy-related peer comparisons.

2. Archsmith et al. (2022) use data from a survey of US new vehicle purchasers conducted by MaritzCX (now Ipsos) in 2017 and 2018. In addition to examining beliefs about climate change, the paper shows that EV purchases are correlated with household income, education, age, and race. The paper also documents large differences in the geographic pattern of purchases for gasoline-powered sedans and trucks, which they argue points to "the importance of viable electric vehicle alternatives to conventional light trucks."

et al. 2025), but with Democrats deriving more utility than Republicans.[3] For extrinsic motivations, this could mean signaling to others with the value of signaling, in part, depending on the political ideology of the community where the EV is driven.[4]

Our study is also related to a broader literature on the economic determinants of EV adoption. Previous studies have examined charging stations (Li et al. 2017; Springel 2021; Li 2023), subsidies (Muehlegger and Rapson 2022; Allcott et al. 2024; Haan et al. 2025), high-occupancy vehicle lanes (Sheldon and DeShazo 2017; Avis et al. 2025), household income (Borenstein and Davis 2016, 2025; Gillingham et al. 2023), gasoline prices (Bushnell et al., forthcoming), and peer effects (Tebbe 2025).[5]

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 discusses data sources. Section 2 describes the correlation between political ideology and US EV adoption and how this correlation has changed over time. Section 3 presents regression evidence, testing to see how the correlation changes after controlling for household income and other factors. Section 4 describes our online survey. Section 5 concludes.

1. DATA

The core dataset for our analysis is the Experian North American Vehicle Database. This proprietary dataset was compiled by Experian using data from the state department of motor vehicle offices and other sources, and describes the universe of US new vehicle registrations. Our primary measure of EV adoption is the EV Share, which we define as the share of all new vehicle registrations that are EVs. We define EVs as

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3. Andreoni (1989, 1990) makes a distinction between pure altruism and warm glow. With pure altruism an individual would value improvements to the global environment regardless of how that improvement comes about. With "warm glow," however, it is important to the individual that these improvements come from actions taken by the individuals themselves. Fried et al. (2025) conduct a US nationally representative survey on clean technology adoption, finding that 44% of the 156 respondents who purchased an EV ranked "reduce carbon emissions" as either the first or second most important factor for their decision. Interestingly, this same number for solar panels and heat pumps was only 27% and 17%, respectively, suggesting more "warm glow" from EVs.

4. Economists for decades have hypothesized that signaling to others plays an important role in motivating charitable giving and other prosocial behaviors (Glazer and Konrad 1996; Bénabou and Tirole 2006). Unlike with warm glow, a household does not derive utility from the action itself. Instead, utility is derived from being seen taking this action by others. For example, an EV adopter might derive utility from signaling to Democrats but not from signaling to Republicans.

5. There is also an analogous literature examining the role that many of these same factors played in driving the adoption of conventional hybrid vehicles. See, e.g., Gallagher and Muehlegger (2011), Sallee (2011), Heutel and Muehlegger (2015). Further afield, there are also papers about what an EV replaces (Xing et al. 2021), how much EVs are driven (Burlig et al. 2021), and the environmental impact of EVs (Holland et al. 2016, 2020).

including battery EVs (like all Tesla models), plug-in hybrid EVs (like the Prius plug-in hybrid), and fuel cell EVs (like the Toyota Mirai), though this last category is very small. We observe shares at both the state and county level over the period 2012–23.

A valuable feature of the Experian data is that they include both sales and leases. Vehicle leasing is common in the United States and varies across years and across vehicle types, so this feature makes the data more complete and representative. Another valuable feature of the Experian data is that they record the state and county where the vehicle was initially registered, even if the vehicle was purchased or leased elsewhere. It is common in the United States to cross state and county lines to purchase or lease a vehicle, so this allows us to correlate adoption with the political ideology and demographic characteristics of households' location of residence.

Our primary measure of political ideology is Democratic vote share from the 2012 US presidential election, using data from state and county voting records compiled by the MIT Election Lab. We use 2012 because this is the beginning of our sample period, but results are very similar using vote shares from 2016 or 2020. In some results we control for household income, population density, gasoline prices, and other covariates. See the appendix (available online) for the complete set of data sources, descriptive statistics, and additional details.

2. POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND EV ADOPTION

This section describes the correlation between political ideology and US EV adoption and how this correlation has changed over time. We start in section 2.1 looking at the more aggregated state-level data before turning to the county-level data in section 2.2.

2.1. State-Level Scatterplots

Figure 1 shows the correlation between political ideology and EV adoption, separately by vehicle type. In each scatterplot, there are 51 observations, one for each state plus Washington, DC. The x-axis is the Democratic vote share, ranging from near 25% in Utah and Wyoming to more than 65% in Vermont, Hawaii, and Washington, DC. The y-axis is EVs as a share of all new vehicles registered in that vehicle type. For example, in California, 23% of all new SUVs were EVs. For this figure, we restrict the dataset to 2021–23 because there were virtually no electric trucks before 2021 and very few electric vans.

This figure reveals a pronounced positive correlation between Democratic vote share and EV adoption. Washington, DC, and West Coast states (CA, WA, and OR) stand out for having high Democratic vote shares and particularly high levels of EV adoption, but the positive correlation is not driven solely by these cases. Even excluding those four observations, there is still a strong positive correlation with households in majority Democratic states about twice as likely on average to adopt an EV than households in majority Republican states.

The positive correlation is observed for all four vehicle types. The EV market during this period was dominated by cars and SUVs, and the pattern for these two types is

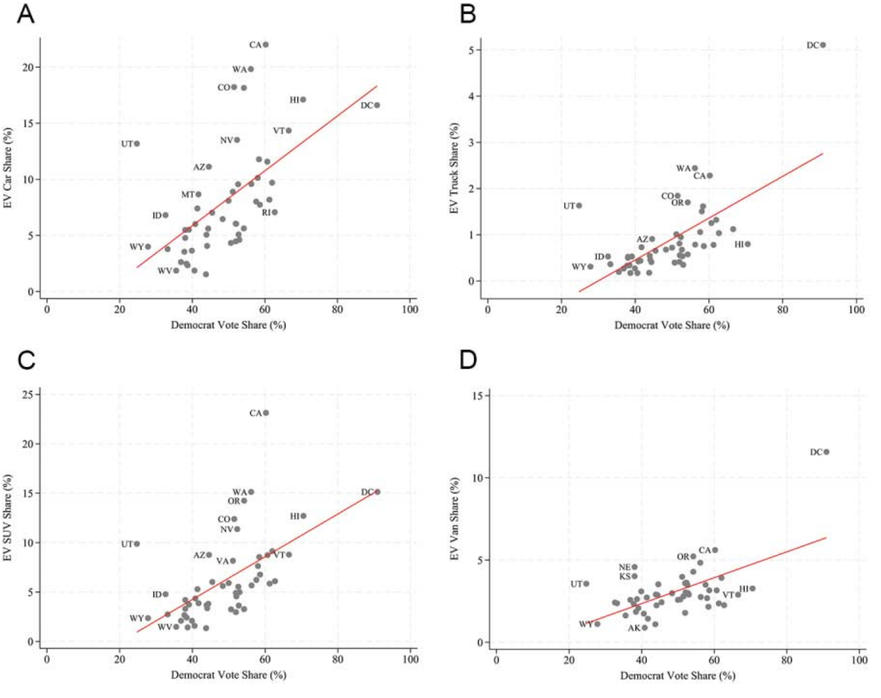

Figure 1. Political ideology and electric vehicle (EV) adoption, by vehicle type. *A*, Cars; *B*, trucks; *C*, SUVs; *D*, vans. Each scatterplot has 51 observations, one for each state and one for Washington, DC. The *x*-axis is the share of voters in the 2012 US presidential election who voted for Barack Obama. The *y*-axis is EV cars, trucks, SUVs, and vans as a share of all new vehicles registered in that vehicle type from 2021 to 2023, ranging from 0% to 100%. We also plot least squares linear regression lines.

quite similar, with a pronounced positive correlation for both types. EV trucks and vans were introduced to the market more recently and may appeal to a broader or different consumer group. Indeed, the EV shares for trucks and vans are much lower, but again, there is a pronounced positive correlation between Democratic vote share and EV adoption.

We also examined the state-level correlation for the entire sample period 2012–23 as well as the state-level correlation year by year. The EV market grows dramatically during our sample period, but there is an enduring correlation throughout between political ideology and EV adoption. In the early years of the sample, EV shares are near 0% in most states and below 5% everywhere. Adoption increases sharply year after year, but there is a pronounced positive correlation in all years. By the end of the period, EVs represent more than 5% of the market for new vehicles in most Democratic states, while still less than 5% in most Republican states. See the appendix for details.

In the next section, we turn to county-level data. The state-level patterns provide an intuitive starting point for the analysis, but they also obscure rich variation within states that can shed additional light on this relationship.

2.2. County-Level Concentration

Table 1 reports for 2012–23 the share of US EV registrations that went to the top 5% and 10% of counties with the highest Democratic vote share, as well as for all counties with a Democratic majority. The table reveals a high degree of concentration in all

Table 1. EV Adoption in the Most Democratic Counties

	Top 5% Most Democratic Counties	Top 10% Most Democratic Counties	Counties with a Democratic Majority
	A. Share of Registered EVs by Year		
2012	.377	.481	.700
2013	.414	.521	.728
2014	.438	.541	.717
2015	.469	.566	.744
2016	.450	.548	.749
2017	.450	.547	.748
2018	.420	.529	.733
2019	.394	.507	.720
2020	.356	.478	.700
2021	.325	.452	.681
2022	.317	.443	.673
2023	.317	.446	.679
Slope	−.011	−.008	−.005
p-value	.010	.019	.041
	B. Share of Registered EVs by Type, 2021–23		
Cars	.334	.466	.685
SUVs	.316	.443	.679
Vans	.240	.357	.604
Trucks	.218	.334	.576

Note. This table describes the concentration of newly registered EVs in counties with the highest Democratic vote shares (cols. 1 and 2) and in counties with a Democratic majority (col. 3). Panel A shows how this concentration has changed over time. The slope at the bottom of the panel comes from a regression with 12 observations, one for each year. We regress each statistic on a linear time trend and report the slope as well as a *p*-value from a test where the null hypothesis is that the slope is zero. Panel B shows how this concentration varies across vehicle type. EV vans and trucks are uncommon early in our sample period, so we restrict this to registrations 2021–23. For example, 33.4% of EV cars went to the top 5% most Democratic counties during this period, while only 21.8% of EV trucks went to those same counties. During 2021–23, the percentage of newly registered EVs in each type was 30%, 66%, 1%, and 2% for cars, SUVs, vans, and trucks, respectively.

years. During this time period about one-third of all new EVs went to the top 5% most Democratic counties, about half went to the 10% most Democratic counties, and more than two-thirds went to counties with a Democratic majority.

Looking more closely at the data, the top US counties for EVs are urban, high-income, and in Democratic states. The top five counties are all in California's Bay Area, and California more generally has eight of the top 10 counties.[6] Top counties from outside California tend to include urban, high-income, left-leaning cities. This includes King County, WA (Seattle), Multnomah County, OR (Portland), and Middlesex County, MA (Cambridge).

The correlation between political ideology and EV adoption remains largely stable over time. The table also reports the slope for each statistic across years. The slopes indicate a decreasing concentration over time, but they are small in magnitude. Concentrations tend to increase during the first half of the sample and then decrease during the second half. Even by 2023, however, 45% of new EV registrations were still in the top 10% most Democratic counties, while 32% were in the top 5%.

The second panel in table 1 reports concentrations by vehicle type. EV vans and trucks were uncommon early in our sample period, so for these calculations, we restrict registrations to 2021–23. EV cars and SUVs have a very similar pattern, with about one-third of EVs in the top 5% most Democratic counties and close to half in the top 10%. EV vans and trucks, in contrast, are much less concentrated, with less than one-fourth in the top 5% and about one-third in the top 10%. During 2021–23, EV vans and trucks represented only 3% of the EV market, but this lower concentration is notable because researchers have long postulated that these other vehicle types would be important for broadening the EV market (e.g., Archsmith et al. 2022).

3. REGRESSION EVIDENCE

The previous section documents a strong and enduring correlation between political ideology and US EV adoption. However, the most Democratic counties tend to have high household incomes, high population densities, and high gasoline prices. As discussed in the introductory section and documented in the literature, all three of these factors are positively associated with EV adoption.[7] Thus one might reasonably ask whether the

6. The Bay Area is one of the primary "green" clusters shown by Kahn and Vaughn (2009) to have a disproportionate number of conventional hybrid vehicles, and this pattern clearly continues with EVs.

7. Previous research has shown that gasoline prices impact adoption decisions for gasoline-powered vehicles (Bento et al. 2009; Busse et al. 2013; Allcott and Wozny 2014; Sallee et al. 2016), so it would make sense that gasoline prices would also matter for households choosing between gasoline-powered vehicles and EVs. Indeed, Bushnell et al. (forthcoming) finds that EV adopters are highly sensitive to gasoline prices, though almost completely insensitive to electricity prices. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2026) find that EV adopters in four Nordic countries are highly sensitive to gasoline prices but with no evidence of sensitivity to electricity prices.

patterns in the previous section reflect these other factors—rather than political ideology itself.

Table 2 reports estimates from five separate least squares regressions, adding control variables progressively. These regressions are estimated using county-by-year data from 2012 to 2023, and standard errors are clustered by state. In column 1, without any controls, a one percentage point increase in Democratic vote share (e.g., going from 45% to 46%) is associated with a 0.033 percentage point increase in EV adoption (e.g., from 1.0% to 1.033%). Mean EV share is less than 1%, so this is a large effect. The coefficient attenuates as controls are added—county-level median household income (col. 2), county-level population density (col. 3), state-level gasoline prices (col. 4), state-by-year fixed effects (col. 5)—but remains large in magnitude and statistically significant. The estimate in column 5 implies that a one percentage point increase in Democratic vote share is associated with a 0.026 percentage point increase in EV adoption.

Thus, the correlation between political ideology and EV adoption remains strong and statistically significant even after controlling for household income, population density, and gasoline prices. These other factors matter but do not explain the correlations described in the previous section. While we cannot rule out that there are additional omitted variables, the role of political ideology appears to be separate and distinct, above and beyond the role played by income, population density, and gasoline prices.

Table 2. Political Ideology and EV Adoption, Regression Estimates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Democratic vote share	.033**	.030**	.029**	.027**	.026**
	(.010)	(.008)	(.008)	(.007)	(.006)
County median household income		.055**	.054**	.050**	.053**
		(.010)	(.010)	(.009)	(.009)
County population density			.005	.005	.004
			(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
State-level gasoline prices				.969**	
				(.243)	
State-by-year fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	37,344	37,344	37,344	37,344	37,332
R-squared	.062	.165	.166	.255	.673

Note. This table reports coefficient estimates and standard errors from five separate least squares regressions. All regressions are estimated using county-by-year observations for 2012 to 2023. In all regressions the dependent variable is the share of all new registered vehicles that are EVs. The mean EV share in the sample is 0.84, i.e., a bit less than 1%. There are no additional controls other than the controls listed in the row headings. Standard errors are clustered by state. The number of observations is smaller in col. 5 because Washington, DC, is a single county, so those observations are dropped when state-by-year fixed effects are included.

* Significant at the 5% level.

** Significant at the 1% level.

It is worth emphasizing also that state-by-year fixed effects control for a wide variety of state-level policies and other confounders. State-level policies can directly affect both the supply and demand for EVs by altering automakers' incentives to market EVs in particular states and by changing the effective purchase and lease prices. For example, during our sample period, California and 10 other states had a zero emissions vehicle (ZEV) mandate that required automakers to sell a quota of "zero emissions" vehicles. See McConnell and Leard (2021) and Armitage and Pinter (2025) for details. In addition, California, New York, Maryland, and other states offered at various times direct subsidies, state income tax credits, state sales tax exemptions, state registration fee reductions, and other state-level incentives (Sheldon 2022). Many states have also gone the other way and imposed additional registration fees for EVs, in part to make up for the forgone revenue from gasoline taxes (Davis and Sallee 2020). The state-by-year fixed effects control flexibly for these state-level policies.

We also examined a variety of alternative models. Population weights increase the size of the point estimates, with little change in statistical significance. Adding controls for education, electricity prices, charging stations, and heating degree days further attenuates the estimates, but the coefficient on Democratic vote share remains strong and statistically significant. We prefer our baseline estimates in table 2 because these are the most frequently discussed confounders, but it is reassuring that the results are qualitatively similar in these alternative specifications. See the appendix for details.

We do not try to estimate models with county fixed effects. In theory, it would be possible to include separate fixed effects for all 3,000+ US counties and to estimate the effect of political ideology on EV adoption using variation in political ideology over time. However, this would require a reliable measure of how political ideology varies over time, and we do not believe that such a measure exists. Democratic vote shares for US presidential elections vary between the 2012, 2016, and 2020 elections, but this reflects preferences for particular individual candidates, differences in voting turnout between elections, and other idiosyncratic factors that mostly do not reflect true changes in political ideology.

4. ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY

In this section, we describe the results from an online survey that we conducted in 2025. We wanted to find out whether Democrats know more than Republicans about EVs. The previous sections document a strong and enduring correlation between political ideology and EV adoption, and we wanted to shed light on whether these differences could potentially be related to Democrats and Republicans having different information.

We acknowledge up front that it is hard to draw strong conclusions from this type of survey. Democrats and Republicans are different in many ways. In addition, there are always reasonable questions to ask about how seriously respondents take a survey like this and about other factors that could influence participant responses.

Consequently, we interpret the findings from the survey with caution and are careful to avoid interpreting these patterns as causal relationships.

In the survey, we showed images of various vehicle models to the respondents and asked them to identify each as an EV or non-EV. We focused on the highest-selling sedans and crossover vehicles from 2020 and 2023 and included approximately an equal mix of EVs and non-EVs. We also asked respondents three multiple-choice questions about general EV knowledge (e.g., What is level-2 charging?) and three multiple-choice questions about general automotive knowledge (e.g., What is an alternator?).

Table 3 summarizes the results of the survey. Overall, Democrats and Republicans were equally able to distinguish EVs from non-EVs. Republicans were a bit better able to identify the Ford Mach-E, and Democrats were a bit better able to identify the Volkswagen ID.4, but the differences are small in magnitude and not statistically significant at conventional levels (p-value .06 and .11, respectively).

The ability of the respondents to accurately distinguish EVs from non-EVs varies widely between vehicle models. The conspicuous Tesla Model Y was most accurately identified, with 95% for both Democrats and Republicans. The hardest to identify was the Volkswagen ID.4, with 56% and 51% for Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Among non-EVs, both Democrats and Republicans struggled somewhat to correctly identify the Honda Civic Hatchback as a non-EV, with 69% and 67%, respectively.

We also find that Democrats have only somewhat higher general understanding of EVs. The difference is statistically significant (p-value .01) but small in magnitude, with 67% of questions answered correctly versus 62%. Democrats did better, in particular, answering questions about EV charging. This does not seem to reflect stronger overall automotive knowledge, with Democrats doing a bit worse than Republicans on questions about general automotive knowledge (p-value .12).

Despite the concerns mentioned previously, the survey suggests that informational differences cannot explain the large differences in EV adoption. Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to adopt EVs, yet both groups were approximately equally accurate at identifying EVs and in answering basic knowledge questions.

5. CONCLUSION

Many new technologies start off as niche products that appeal only to a relatively small subset of households. But it has now been 16 years since Nissan introduced the Leaf, and 18 years since Tesla introduced the original Roadster. Moreover, there are now over 100 different EV models for sale in the United States. Enough time has passed—one might have thought—for the US EV market to have broadened considerably.

Yet, we find a strong and enduring correlation between political ideology and US EV adoption. Despite dramatic growth in the overall size of the market, 45% of EVs still go to the 10% most-Democratic counties, and 32% go to the 5% most-Democratic counties. We also find that the correlation remains even after controlling for income, population density, gasoline prices, and state-by-year fixed effects. Finally, we conducted

Table 3. Do Democrats Know More Than Republicans About EVs?

	Democrats (%) $n = 499$ (1)	Republicans (%) $n = 498$ (2)	p-Value (1) vs. (2) (3)
	A. Distinguishing EVs from Non-EVs		
Overall percentage correct	79	78	.98
Correctly identified EVs as EVs	79	78	.75
Tesla Model Y 2023	95	95	.88
Ford Mach-E 2023	76	81	.06
Volkswagen ID.4 2023	56	51	.11
Nissan Leaf 2020	85	83	.33
Chevrolet Bolt 2020	82	82	.88
Correctly identified non-EVs as non-EVs	78	79	.76
Toyota Rav 4 2023	84	84	.92
Honda CRV 2023	80	84	.19
Toyota Camry 2020	79	81	.59
Honda Civic Hatchback 2020	69	67	.44
	B. Knowledge About EVs		
Overall percentage correct	67	62	.01
Correct understanding charging time	41	36	.05
Correct understanding level 2 charging	72	64	.01
Correct understanding batteries	86	87	.65
	C. General Automotive Knowledge		
Overall percentage correct	69	72	.12
Correct understanding alternator	60	67	.04
Correct understanding wheel alignment	77	79	.33
Correct understanding odometer	69	69	.96

Note. This table reports results from the survey we conducted in January 2025 with 1,000 participants on Prolific. This lack of evidence of a difference between Democrats and Republicans in distinguishing EVs from non-EVs remains after controlling for respondent gender, educational attainment, household income, and age. See the appendix for additional details about the survey, including the survey instrument, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis.

a survey finding that Democrats and Republicans are approximately equally accurate at answering questions about EVs.

Throughout, we have emphasized that these correlations are purely descriptive, and we are careful not to draw causal conclusions. Future work could build on these findings in several directions. One promising avenue is exploring how brand-specific dynamics interact with political ideology, as illustrated by recent work documenting declining Tesla registrations in Democratic counties following Elon Musk's political activities

(Gillingham et al. 2025; Pallottini and Shchukina 2025). Another avenue concerns the underlying motivations for EV adoption, including whether the patterns we document reflect intrinsic differences in environmental values, extrinsic signaling motivations, or some combination of both.

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