Youth Partisanship: Can Social Desirability Shape Partisan Strength

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Abstract: Undercover partisanship is used to describe behaviors of some independent learners who want to distance themselves from the negative connotations associated with party labels. A growing body of literature attributes this behavior to Social Desirability Bias (SDB). However, research has yet to extend this bias to individuals who identify as partisans. This thesis argues that when self-identified partisans are given the choice to identify as strong vs. not very strong partisan, younger individuals are more likely to select the latter due to the social stigma surrounding strong partisan labels. I test this through a two-study framework. Study 1 analyzes observational data from the 2020 ANES, using the folded PID7 scale as a dependent variable. I find evidence that allows me to test whether increases in partisan strength by age is linked to willingness to express strong partisan attachments. Study 2 builds on these findings using a survey experiment that manipulates the wording of partisan identity questions. I do not find evidence that softening the wording led to an increased reporting of strong partisanship. However, I do find meaningful evidence that suggests that the interaction between the treatment group and high self-monitoring scores is associated with higher probabilities of identifying with strong partisans. Thus, while the evidence may reassure researchers that social desirability bias is not a major concern among reported partisans, I still urge caution when working with demographic groups, such as age cohorts, where self-monitoring levels may vary.

Keywords: Younger voters, partisan strength, party identification, ANES 2020, social desirability bias, self-monitoring.

Word Count: 4505

Introduction

Age and partisanship are both very important predictors of a whole host of political behaviors that are crucial to American politics (Green et al., 2002; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). It is also known that age and partisanship themselves are related, with those of more advanced age tending to self-identify at higher levels of partisanship than younger individuals (Kaid et al., 2007; Highton & Wolfinger, 2001; Green et al., 2002). This is at least in part likely explained by socialization and motivations to pay attention to politics, as well as the resources to meaningfully engage in politics (Hobbs, 2019; Green et al., 2002; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008).

While this is very intuitive and in line with the existing models of political behavior, the relationship between age and self-reported partisan strength could also be driven by other factors, such as social desirability bias (SDB). Given underreporting partisanship has been partially attributed to SDB (Klar et al. 2016), in addition to younger individuals being more likely to engage in self-monitoring-which by extension makes them more sensitive to SDB (Reifman et. al. 1989)-it is plausible that younger individuals partisanship strengths may be shaped by it as well. I hypothesize that when self-identified partisans are given the choice to identify as strong vs. not very strong partisan, younger individuals are more likely to select the latter due to the social stigma surrounding strong partisan labels.

To examine this association, I utilize a two-study framework. Study 1 uses observational data from the 2020 ANES, with a folded form of the PID7 scale as a dependent variable. This folded version removes the direction of their partisanship and allows me to measure partisan strength alone. I find evidence that of those who identify as strong partisans, there is a strong positive association with the age of the respondent. However, this growth does not coincide with a reduction at all levels. Rather, I find evidence that of those who identify as weak partisans,

there is a strong negative association with the age of the respondent. In other words, as each age group gets older, the likelihood of identifying as a strong partisan increases, while the likelihood of identifying as a weak partisan decrease. This dynamic reveals an opportunity for me to specifically test whether increases in partisan strength could be driven by increased willingness to openly reveal strong partisan attachments with age.

Study 2 builds on the findings of study 1, by relying on a survey experiment that manipulates the wording of self-reported partisan identity questions from the ANES. Specifically, at random, half of the respondents have the partisan strength branch of the traditional battery replaced with softer phrasing, a method commonly used to reduce the effects of social desirability (Yanon, 2020). I am interested in seeing if partisans who receive the softened wording report higher probabilities of identifying strongly. Additionally, I assess if this relationship is more prominent among those who are high self-monitors, also extending this interaction to include age. I find preliminary evidence that supports a core assumption of this paper: that age and self-monitoring are negatively associated. Although there is no evidence that the softened wording alone leads to an increase in reporting partisan strength, I do find meaningful evidence that suggests that the interaction between the treatment group and high self-monitoring scores is associated with higher probabilities of identifying strongly. However, the results show that SDB does not extend onto self-identified partisans, therefore suggesting this is not an issue researchers need to be concerned with.

My thesis is the first to my knowledge, that extends what we know about the influence of SDB beyond Independent identity. Rather, it looks at the influence SDB has on self-identified partisans. Additionally, I pay particular attention to younger individuals and their political attitudes, an area, I argue, that is in its infancy. If my expectations were correct, it would have

provided evidence that SDB is not just leading to underreporting as Independents but also applies to self-identified partisans. Additionally, it would call into question our ability to compare partisan strength between groups, especially when the groups have different levels of sensitivity to SDB.

Literature Review

Why that Label?

Responses to the partisan strength question are often understood to reflect either a sincere self-identity or a strategic choice shaped by social and political context (Green et al., 2002; Klar et al., 2014; Klar et al., 2022; Keith et al., 1992; Theodoridis, 2017). One group that has received attention in this literature is Independents, particularly those labeled as Independent leaners. Independents were originally thought to be inconsistent or disengaged voters who did not feel aligned with a particular party (Reily, 2023; Campbell, 1960), however, current research has shown many Independent Leaners align more closely with one of the major parties than initially assumed (Klar et. al, 2022; Theodoridis, 2017). Their political behaviors and preferences mirror those of weak partisans, exhibiting similar levels of party loyalty despite their reluctance to claim a partisan identity (Keith et al., 1992; Theodoridis, 2017; Klar et al., 2022).

An explanation for why Independents Leaners engage in partisan behavior while remaining reluctant to identify as partisans, has been partially attributed to social desirability bias (Lascher & Korey, 2011; Magleby, Nelson, & Westlye, 2011). In *Independent Politics,* Klar and Krupnikov argue many Independent Leaners adopt this identity as a form of "undercover partisanship," to distance themselves from the negative connotations associated with partisan

labels. Furthermore, they suggest this tendency may be driven by the heightened political polarization and disagreement in the current environment. Thus, the framework of undercover partisanship helps explain why some individuals choose to identify as Independent while leaning toward a major party. Although both leaners and weak partisans often exhibit similar political behaviors, the decision to adopt one label over the other may reflect a strategic decision due to differences in self-presentation concerns.

While the role of SDB on the lower levels of partisan strength is well understood and widely accepted, up to this point, it has yet to be considered as playing a role on higher levels of partisan strength. If SDB plays an important role for lower levels of partisan strength, why would it not for higher levels? This is the gap my thesis aims to address.

If my hypothesis was confirmed, it could have had some important implications for the well-established relationships in partisanship. For example, we know that increased partisan strength can be explained by components of the Political Socialization theory. Partisan affiliations often form in childhood and early adolescence, influenced by family, educational settings, peer groups, and media, where older adults tend to form more intense attachments to political parties, likely due to cumulative age-related experiences that reinforce partisan bonds (Hobbs, 2019; Green et al., 2002; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). However, research has yet to explore whether increases in partisan strength may also be a result from a decrease in sensitivity to social pressure - also known as self-monitoring - that coincided with an increase in willingness to reveal their identity. Given that younger individuals are more likely to be high self-monitors (Riefman et al.1989), it is possible their self-reported partisan strength may be influenced by SDB.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring refers to the extent to which individuals regulate their behavior in response to social norms, often manifested as sensitivity to social desirability bias. To measure self-monitoring, researchers commonly use questions based on Snyder's (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale. The scale includes statements assessing social appropriateness, self-presentation control, and adaptability. However, more recent studies have created shortened versions of this scale that include a few statements to improve efficiency (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016; Berinsky & Lavine, 2012). This scale reports the degree an individual adjusts their behavior in response to social cues. Individuals who are more responsive to social cues are labeled as high self-monitors. They are attuned to their social environment and tend to adjust their self-presentation to align with social expectations. In contrast, low self-monitors behave more consistently with their internal attitudes and beliefs, regardless of external influences (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Lavine & Snyder, 1996).

Numerous studies have used these scales with other factors in both psychological and political research (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016; Gangestad and Snyder, 2000), while also extending to age (Reifman et al., 1989). For example, research by Klar and Krupnikov (2016) has shown self-monitoring is associated with willingness to reveal political party. When given negative information about politics, high self-monitors are less likely to identify with a political party, while still holding partisan views. This suggests self-monitoring may be associated with how individuals navigate environments with negative information or high social pressure.

Other studies have considered self-monitoring and political attitudes, particularly in the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. This election was argued to have candidates who

were at the time viewed as socially undesirable. Research found that individuals who are high self-monitors were less likely to support candidates who were viewed negatively (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016). Here, self-monitoring is associated with how respondents engage with candidates when negative perceptions are attached to political figures.

Research on the relationship between self-monitoring and age has been limited, with few studies directly exploring this connection. An earlier study of the association between age and self-monitoring was carried out by Riefman et al. (1989) which found a negative correlation between age and self-monitoring. The study involved two separate survey samples, both included a 18-item self-monitoring scale. The results suggest younger individuals are more likely to engage in self-monitoring compared to older individuals. This view is supported by other research that examined the connection between age and self-monitoring through the lens of social conformity, finding middle-aged adults struggle to resist social pressure (Castrellon, 2024).

Taken together, the literature on self-monitoring highlights how individuals differ in their responsiveness to social cues and in how they manage their behavior in sensitive situations. These differences can shape how people present themselves in a range of contexts, including politics. I argue younger individuals are less likely to identify with the strong party labels, not only because they don't feel attached to a party, but because it helps them avoid the social stigma that can come with affiliating with one. Given the effects of today's polarized political climate (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016; Huber & Malhotra, 2017; Chopik & Motyl, 2016), it is possible strong partisan identities may be viewed negatively, leading younger individuals to adopt weak partisan or Independent labels. In these cases, younger individuals are less likely to identify with the strong party labels, not necessarily because they do not feel attached to a party, but because it

could help them avoid the social stigma that follows when affiliating with one. Thus, the choice to identify may partially be attributed to avoiding social consequences of attachment and high self-monitoring tendencies. As a result, traditional partisan strength scales may underestimate younger individuals' political strength.

Study 1

Methods and Data

This paper is divided into two studies to assess the association between age and partisanship strength. In study one, I use the 2020 American National Election Survey (ANES). The ANES surveys have been conducted since 1948. These surveys are dispersed both online and face-to-face, using samples that are representative of the American population of voting age citizens. Questions within the survey cover a wide range of topics, from basic demographics (gender, age, education, and income) to political behaviors, interests and identities. The 2020 ANES dataset has been used to investigate topics including politization, public opinions, elections and partisanship.

The dependent variable for this study is party identification strength (categorized as strong, weak, leaning, or independent), while the main independent variable is age group (17-24, 25-34, 35-44, etc.).[1] To analyze these relationships, I employ a multinomial logistic regression to evaluate the predictive relationship between age and party identification strength while controlling for race, gender, income, and education. Additionally, I control alternative

[1]Respondents who were 17 at the time of the Pre-election wave were considered eligible because they turned 18 by the start of the Post-election (see ANES User's Guide, p. 14).

explanations by including a variable that measures political interest. I expect to find that younger age groups will be less likely to identify as strong partisans compared to older groups. Additionally, I expect younger age groups to show a higher probability of identifying as weak or leaning partisans than their older counterparts. Evidence of this relationship allows me to test whether the increase in partisan strength is associated with increased willingness to reveal strong partisan attachments with age.

Results

In this first study I modeled the probability of partisan strength by age using a multinomial regression model. This approach allowed me to compare how likely each age group is to identify with different levels of partisan strength. The results are presented in Figure 1 (Table 2a in appendix).

Figure 1: Predicted Party Strength by Age (2020)

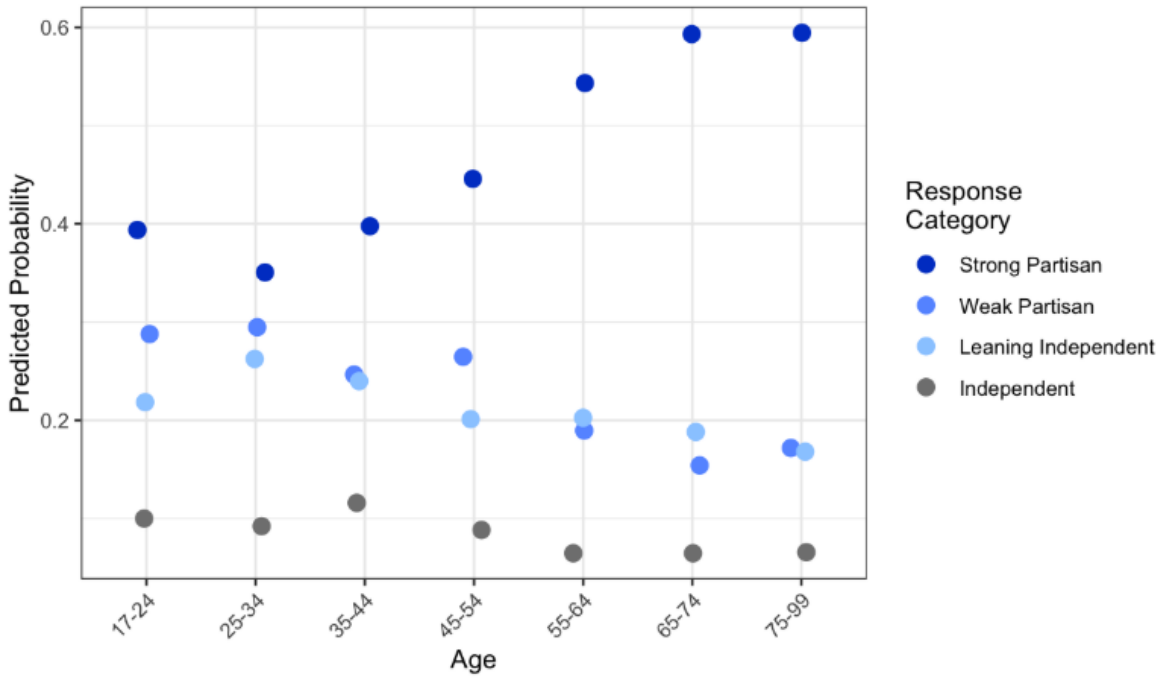

Figure 1 provides a visualization of each age group's predicted probabilities of identifying with different levels of party strength. It demonstrates that an overwhelming number of older individuals identify as strong partisans; however, a smaller proportion identify as weak or leaning. Younger adults display a higher probability of identifying with a strong partisan label, but it is not quite higher than the probability of identifying with weak partisans. This comparison reveals the gap between the predicted probability between partisan labels grows as age increases. The age group between 65 and 74, alongside 75 and up, the difference between strong partisan and weak partisan is about 0.43, compared to a difference of just over 0.1 for 17–24, and 0.06 for 25–34 years olds (See table 2c in appendix). Thus, figure 1 provides meaningful insight into the association between age and partisan strength; the older each age groups get, the probability of identifying with strong partisans grows, while the probability of identifying with as a weak partisan decreases.

Discussion

The results of this study provide meaningful evidence of the movement of partisan strength when associated with age. With more advanced ages, we see an increase in self-reported strong partisans, although this coincides with a decrease in self-reported weak partisans. This supports existing literature on political development across the life cycle. Research has revealed young adults tend to show lower levels of political interest, engagement, and consistent voting behavior (Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). In these cases, they are still developing politically,

and their partisan identities are not yet fully formed, thus may make them less predictable in terms of party strength.[2]

Although, what research has yet to consider is if this dynamic can be attributed to an increase in willingness to reveal identities. Furthermore, it seems plausible that as younger individuals advance in their political development, they also become more comfortable and more willing to reveal these identities. The findings of this study provide a gateway into testing whether this dynamic is a result of partisan's willingness to reveal their identity.

Study 2

Methods and Data

Data was taken from an online survey distributed through Lucid, with a total of 1013 participants. Of those respondents, 77% were self-reported partisans. 6% of the self-reported partisans were under the age of 24, while 9% were above the age of 75. Of those respondents, % were self-reported partisans.

To tease out the effect of SDB in self-reported partisan strengths, I included an experimental design within the survey, looking at the effects of soft wording compared to an

[2] It is important to note these associations do not imply younger individuals will adopt stronger partisan identities as they age. The data does not allow me to track changes within the same individuals over time. This limits our ability to make causal claims about how political identities change over a person's life. These findings should be interpreted as age-based associations rather than age-dependent developments. To assess if and how political identities evolve with age, future research could benefit from a longitudinal approach that follows individuals across time periods.

original format. All respondents are exposed to the ANES questions asking which party they identify with:

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

Respondents then were randomly assigned to either receive the standard ANES question format or a modified version with softened wording (shown in table 3). Those within the control group received the standard ANES partisan strength question:[3]

Would you call yourself a strong __or a not very strong __?

Those within the treatment group receive a similar question, although the wording is softened:[4]

Some people feel strongly about their party, while others not so much. Both are very normal. Given this would you call yourself a strong __ or a not very strong __?

Reframing the question with soft wording has been shown to reduce the effect of this SDB (Yan, 2020). Specifically, Perrson (2015) found that the inclusion of phrases such as "I have done this" and "I have not done this but will consider it in the future" resulted in a decrease in reported political participation compared to the standard wording of "I have (not)". Therefore,

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[3] Those that identify as Independent or other received:

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Parry, Republican Party, or neither?

[4] Those that identify as Independent or other received:

Even among those who don't self-identify as Democrat or Republican, it is very normal for people to feel like they lean towards a certain party. Would you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or neither?

this approach gives me the ability to directly assess the effects of soft wording as a mechanism that reduces SDB in self-reported partisan strength questions. Furthermore, it allows me to create a survey environment that reduces the social pressure and social stigma I hypothesized surrounds strong partisan identities.

Additionally, this survey includes questions that measure respondents self-monitoring tendencies. The questions include: 1) When you are with other people, how often do you put on a show to impress or entertain them? 2) When you are in a group of people, how often are you the center of attention? 3) How good or poor of an actor would you be? Including these questions allows me to provide further evidence of the association between age and self-monitoring.[5] Additionally, I can test whether high self-monitors are more likely to identify with strong partisan identities when exposed to the soft-wording treatment.

Table 3. Experiment Condition Questions

Branch	Control (ANES)	Experimental (Soft-Wording)
Party (ANES)	*Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?*	*(Same as control)*
Strength	*Would you call yourself a strong __or a not very strong __?*	*Some people feel strongly about their party, while others not so much. Both are very normal. Given this would you call yourself a strong __ or a not very strong __?*
Independents	*Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Parry, Republican Party, or neither?*	*Even among those who don't self-identify as Democrat or Republican, it is very normal for people to feel like they lean towards a certain party. Would you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or neither?*

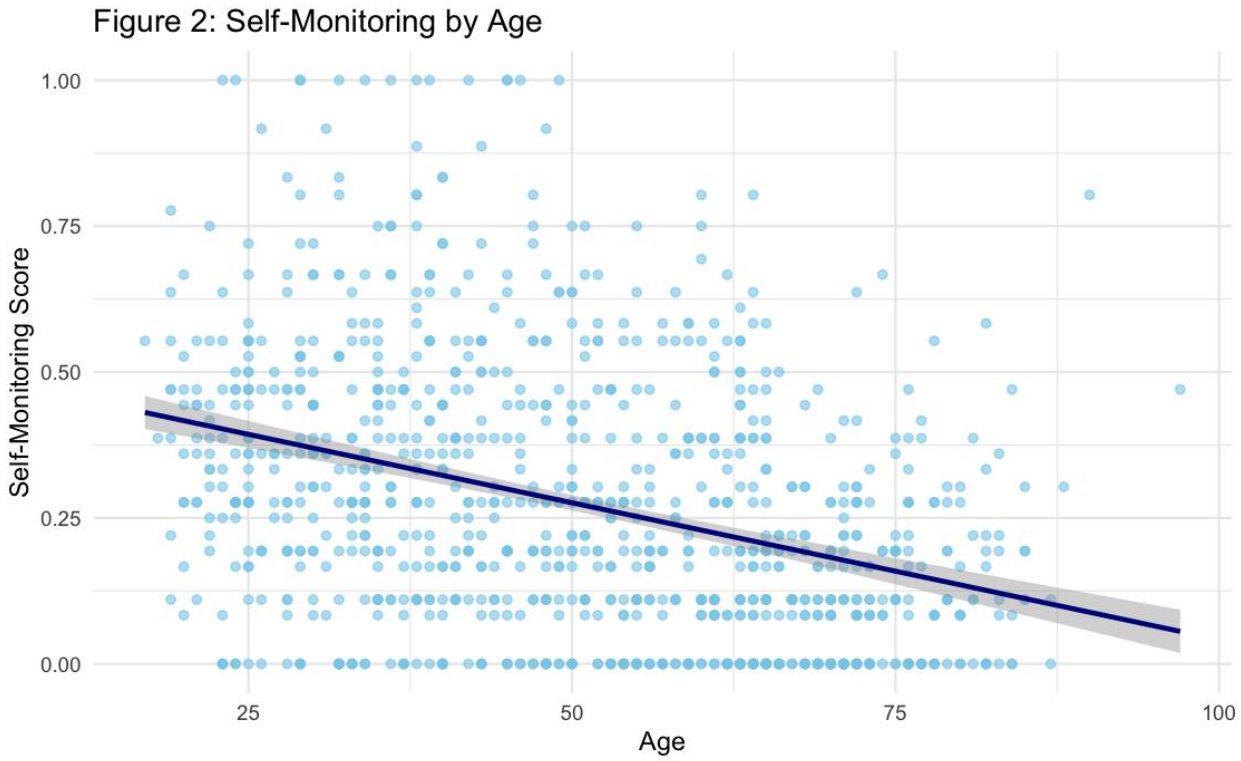
[5] This battery of self monitoring questions is taken directly from Klar et al (2016).

I expect to find that respondents exposed to softer wording will be more likely to report strong partisan identification compared to those exposed to standard wording. I expect this difference to be more distinct among those that are high self-monitors. Additionally, I expect younger self-reported partisans in the experimental condition to be more likely to report strong partisan identification than younger respondents in the control condition.

Results

Figure 2 demonstrates the distribution of age among self-monitoring. There appears to be a moderately negative correlation between the two. As age increases, self-monitoring scores decrease. This correlation is statistically significant.[6] This finding is consistent with Reifman et al. (1978) and supports a core assumption of this paper: that younger individuals are more likely to exhibit high self-monitoring tendencies. Additionally, I find that age and partisan strength have a very weak positive association, therefore I cannot conclude confidently that there is a linear association. Between self-monitoring and partisan strength there is a small positive correlation, although given the minimal strength of this relationship it's difficult to draw robust conclusions about this association.[7]

[6] -0.36, $p < 0.001$
[7] 0.1, $p = 0.001$



The results from the general associations provide an initial step in understanding the relationships between age, self-monitoring, and partisan strength within the survey data. Having demonstrated that age and self-monitoring have a negative association, I now look further into the association between these variables and partisan strength. Figure 5 presents the predicted probabilities of identifying as a strong partisan for both the experimental and control groups. While the point estimate for the treatment group is slightly higher, the confidence intervals overlap substantially, limiting the ability to draw robust conclusions.

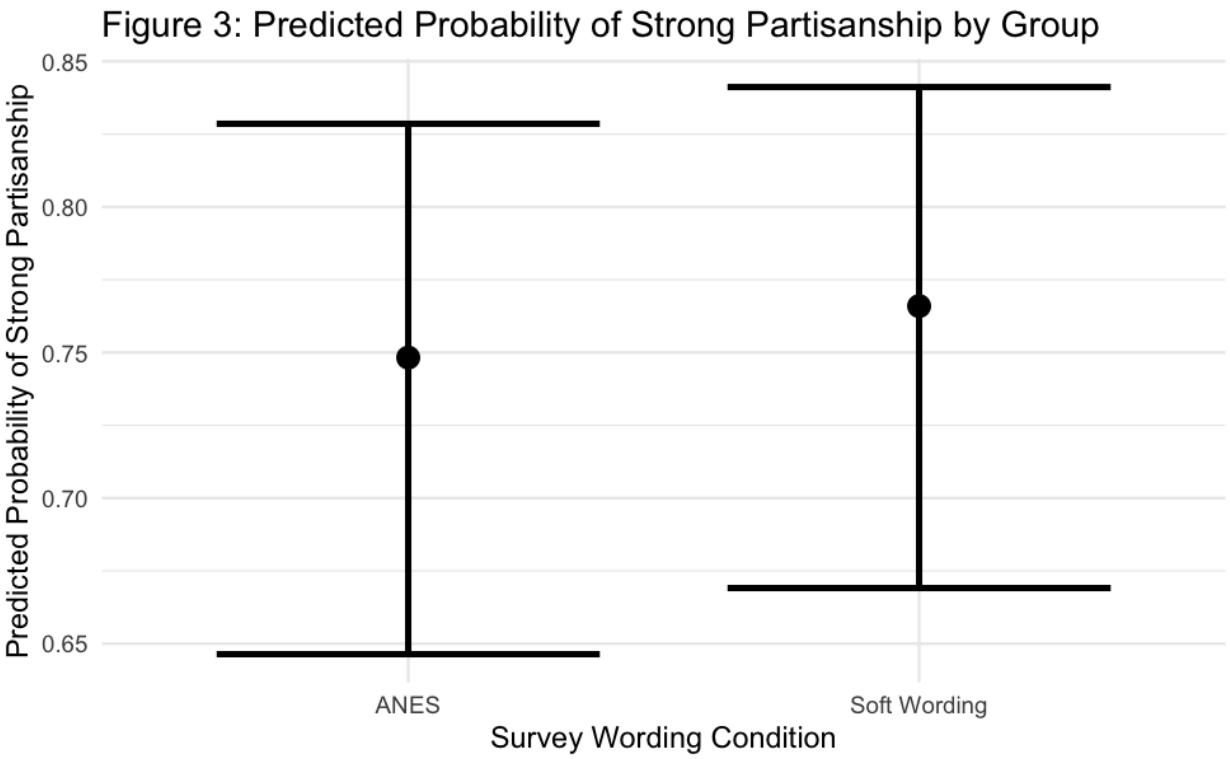
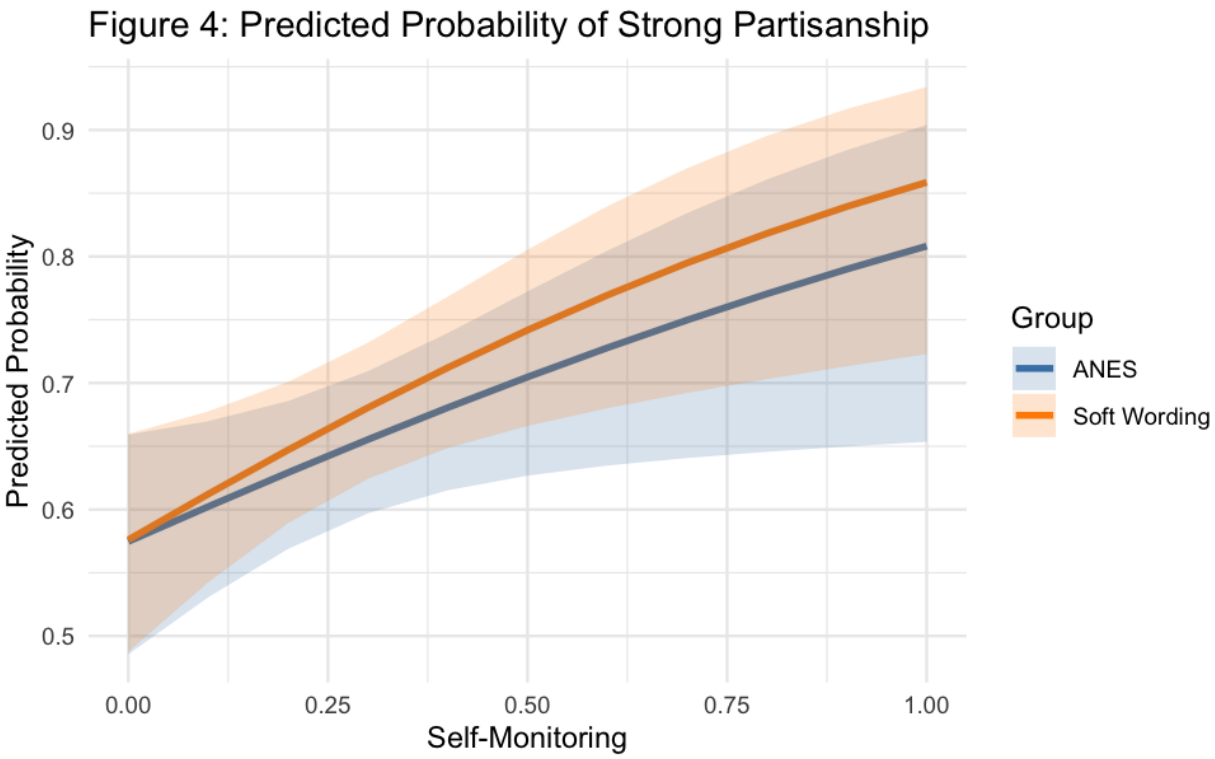


Table 4 presents the results of a logistic regression conducted on a subset including only self-reported partisans from the survey. Additionally, the model incorporates a two-way interaction among self-monitoring and treatment group. Interestingly, no association with age and identifying as a strong partisan was found. This may be due to the small sample size of younger individuals within the dataset, which was further reduced through subsetting. The interaction between self-monitoring and the treatment group is not statistically significant. However, the direction of the effect suggests that individuals who are higher in self-monitoring and exposed to soft wording, are 1.43 times more likely of identifying as strong partisans. Although not statistically significant, this effect is meaningfully important. It suggests that softening the wording resulted in high self-monitors to be more willing to reveal strong partisan identity. This is further supported by figure 5 as the predicted probability of the experimental group is consistently higher than the control group across all levels of self-monitoring.

Additionally, we see the gap increase between the two groups as self-monitoring scores rise. In sum, this suggests a meaningful difference between the soft-wording and ANES wording conditions in how individuals reveal the strength of their partisanship.

Table 4: Partisan Strength Outcomes

	Model 1		
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*
(Intercept)	1.73	0.73 – 4.17	0.216
Age	1.00	0.99 – 1.01	0.495
Race: Hispanic or Latino	0.94	0.41 – 2.22	0.880
Race: Native American	0.42	0.09 – 2.28	0.282
Race: Two or More	1.31	0.65 – 2.69	0.453
Race: White	0.63	0.37 – 1.02	0.066
Gender	1.03	0.74 – 1.44	0.844
Income	0.91	0.80 – 1.03	0.136
Education	1.56	1.12 – 2.20	**0.010**
Political Knowledge	1.24	0.60 – 2.58	0.558
Self-Monitoring	3.12	1.14 – 8.94	**0.030**
Group	1.01	0.63 – 1.61	0.982
Self-Monitoring × Group	1.43	0.35 – 5.93	0.618
Observations	779		
R^2 Tjur	0.039		



Finally, I look at the interaction between self-monitoring and age in predicting partisan strength. Table 5 presents the results of a model that incorporates this interaction. This suggests the effect of age on the likelihood of identifying as a strong partisan may depend on the level of self-monitoring. As both age and self-monitoring increase, the odds of identifying as a strong partisan decrease, contradicting my theoretical expectations.

Table 5: Partisan Strength Outcomes

	Model 2		
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*
(Intercept)	0.52	0.19 – 1.47	0.217
Age	0.87	0.38 – 2.11	0.759
Race: Hispanic or Latino	0.38	0.08 – 2.05	0.226
Race: Native American	1.28	0.63 – 2.65	0.503
Race: Two or More	0.60	0.36 – 0.99	**0.049**
Race: White	1.03	0.74 – 1.44	0.868
Gender	0.89	0.78 – 1.01	0.073
Income	1.66	1.18 – 2.35	**0.004**
Education	1.27	0.61 – 2.67	0.523
Political Knowledge	389.72	33.45 – 5117.04	**<0.001**
Self-Monitoring	1.03	1.01 – 1.04	**0.001**
Group	1.06	0.77 – 1.45	0.732
Self-Monitoring × Age	0.91	0.87 – 0.95	**<0.001**
Observations	779		
R^2 Tjur	0.056		

Discussion

Study 2 aimed to extend our understanding of SDB beyond Independent leaners and focused on self-reported partisans. Preliminary results provide evidence supporting the association between age and self-monitoring: younger individuals are more likely to exhibit high self-monitoring tendencies. Using an experimental design, I tested whether reducing SDB leads to an increase in reporting stronger partisan strengths. Additionally, I examined how individuals

with higher sensitivity-high self-monitors- to SDB responded to the experimental condition. While I did not find evidence that soft wording alone influenced reports of partisan strength, the directional effect of the interaction between self-monitoring and exposure to soft wording aligned with my hypothesis. Specifically, partisans with higher self-monitoring who were exposed to the soft-wording condition were 1.4 times more likely to identify as strongly.

While I found meaningful estimates and directional effects, the lack of statistically significant results may be due to two main factors; the sample size and distribution, and the failure to reduce SDB. Of the survey respondents, only 6% were under the age of 24, and 9% above 75. The low proportions on the younger and older ends of age serves as a problem because it limits the variation within these age groups across all variables. As I further subset the population by self-monitoring and partisanship, the sample size diminishes even more. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of respondents identify as strong partisans. For example, among partisans under 24, only 12 identify as weak, compared to 34 who identify as strong. Ultimately, the small sample size combined with subsetting likely contributes to the lack of statistically significant results.

The second factor may stem from the failure to meaningfully reduce SDB via the social stigma associated with strong partisanship. This can be attributed to both the mode of the survey and the wording itself. Regarding the mode, research on reducing social desirability bias in surveys suggests that online surveys are more effective than face-to-face surveys (Yan, 2020). However, it is possible that the online format triggered the floor effect, where social desirability bias was already so low that it was difficult to mitigate it further. It is also possible that social desirability bias simply does not extend onto self-reported partisan strengths. Future research

could re-evaluate this association by conducting face-to-face surveys, where social pressure may be higher, potentially influencing respondents' answers differently and avoiding this effect.

With experimental designs, a major limitation is external validity. Experimental settings are artificially designed and do not represent real world political situations. Additionally, a major assumption of this paper is that there is a negative association with partisan labels. The experimental design does not directly test and account for this. Further research could investigate the effects of creating a more distinct negative association with partisanship strength and see how it impacts younger adults.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I hypothesized that when self-identified partisans are given the choice to identify as strong vs. not very strong partisan, younger individuals are more likely to select the latter due to the social stigma surrounding strong partisan labels. In order to test this, I conducted two studies. First, using data from the 2020 ANES, I was able to provide meaningful insight into the association between age and partisanship. Specifically, I found that the gap between the predicted probability of being a Strong Partisan and Weak/Leaning grows as age increases. In study two, I rely on a survey experiment that replaces at random, half of the respondents wording of the self-reported partisan identity questions with softer phrasing—a method commonly used to reduce the effects of social desirability. The lack of statistically significant results may provide reassurance to researchers, suggesting that social desirability bias does not substantially influence self-reported partisan strength. Therefore, researchers are further justified in continuing with current measurement approaches when studying self-identified partisans.

To my knowledge, this thesis is the first to extend our understanding of the influence of SDB beyond Independent identification and look at its potential role in self-identified partisans. While the results may reassure researchers that social desirability bias is not a significant concern for partisans overall, I still urge caution when working with demographic groups such as age cohorts, where self-monitoring levels may vary. If the directional effects observed in this study hold true, it raises concerns about our ability to compare partisan strength across groups, especially when those groups differ in their levels of self-monitoring. When the expression of each level of partisan strength varies based on individual self-monitoring tendencies, then our understanding of partisan identity may be misleading. Partisans who report as weak may, in fact, be closeted strong partisans but are not willing to reveal it. This underscores the importance of recognizing how different groups are influenced by SDB when evaluating all political identification.

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Appendix:

ANES Tables:

Table 2a: Party Strength by Age Group (2020)

		Party Strength		
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*	*Response*
Intercept	6.74	3.34 – 13.63	**<0.001**	Independent
Age 25-34	0.90	0.62 – 1.32	0.592	Independent
Age 35-44	1.35	0.93 – 1.97	0.114	Independent
Age 45-54	0.96	0.65 – 1.42	0.843	Independent
Age 55-64	0.98	0.66 – 1.46	0.930	Independent
Age 65-74	1.21	0.81 – 1.81	0.358	Independent
Age 75-99	1.10	0.70 – 1.73	0.678	Independent
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.32	0.17 – 0.62	**0.001**	Independent
Black	0.22	0.12 – 0.42	**<0.001**	Independent
Hispanic	0.31	0.17 – 0.55	**<0.001**	Independent
Non-white and Non-black	0.41	0.21 – 0.80	**0.009**	Independent
White	0.24	0.14 – 0.41	**<0.001**	Independent
Male	1.30	1.10 – 1.55	**0.003**	Independent
Family Income	0.72	0.67 – 0.78	**<0.001**	Independent
Education	0.63	0.52 – 0.76	**<0.001**	Independent
PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.711	Independent
Interest	0.90	0.83 – 0.98	**0.011**	Independent
Intercept	1.61	0.82 – 3.13	0.164	Leaning Independent
Age 25-34	1.17	0.84 – 1.63	0.342	Leaning Independent

Age 35-44	1.28	0.92 – 1.78	0.141	Leaning Independent
Age 45-54	1.00	0.71 – 1.41	0.993	Leaning Independent
Age 55-64	1.41	1.00 – 1.97	**0.047**	Leaning Independent
Age 65-74	1.61	1.14 – 2.27	**0.007**	Leaning Independent
Age 75-99	1.29	0.88 – 1.90	0.199	Leaning Independent
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.37	0.19 – 0.69	**0.002**	Leaning Independent
Black	0.58	0.32 – 1.05	0.071	Leaning Independent
Hispanic	0.52	0.29 – 0.93	**0.026**	Leaning Independent
Non-white and Non-black	0.89	0.47 – 1.69	0.724	Leaning Independent
White	0.61	0.35 – 1.04	0.071	Leaning Independent
Male	1.33	1.16 – 1.53	**<0.001**	Leaning Independent
Family Income	0.96	0.90 – 1.02	0.158	Leaning Independent
Education	1.09	0.94 – 1.26	0.275	Leaning Independent
PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.473	Leaning Independent
Interest	0.96	0.90 – 1.02	0.198	Leaning Independent
Intercept	1.53	0.81 – 2.90	0.192	Strong Partisan
Age 25-34	0.87	0.64 – 1.17	0.358	Strong Partisan
Age 35-44	1.18	0.88 – 1.59	0.279	Strong Partisan
Age 45-54	1.23	0.91 – 1.66	0.174	Strong Partisan
Age 55-64	2.09	1.55 – 2.82	**<0.001**	Strong Partisan
Age 65-74	2.81	2.07 – 3.82	**<0.001**	Strong Partisan
Age 75-99	2.53	1.81 – 3.53	**<0.001**	Strong Partisan
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.62	0.34 – 1.15	0.131	Strong Partisan

Black	1.88	1.06 – 3.33	**0.031**	Strong Partisan
Hispanic	0.95	0.54 – 1.67	0.858	Strong Partisan
Non-white and Non-black	1.03	0.54 – 1.94	0.935	Strong Partisan
White	1.10	0.65 – 1.88	0.727	Strong Partisan
Male	0.98	0.86 – 1.11	0.718	Strong Partisan
Family Income	0.96	0.91 – 1.02	0.157	Strong Partisan
Education	0.98	0.86 – 1.12	0.818	Strong Partisan
PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.761	Strong Partisan
Interest	0.98	0.92 – 1.04	0.451	Strong Partisan
Observations	7458			
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.034 / 0.034			

Table 2b: Party Strength by Age (2020)

		Party Strength		
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*	*Response*
Intercept	6.53	3.36 – 12.70	**<0.001**	Independent
Age	1.02	0.97 – 1.07	0.410	Independent
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.32	0.17 – 0.62	**0.001**	Independent
Black	0.22	0.12 – 0.42	**<0.001**	Independent
Hispanic	0.31	0.17 – 0.55	**<0.001**	Independent
Non-white and Non-black	0.41	0.21 – 0.80	**0.009**	Independent
White	0.24	0.14 – 0.41	**<0.001**	Independent
Male	1.30	1.09 – 1.55	**0.003**	Independent
Family Income	0.73	0.67 – 0.78	**<0.001**	Independent
Education	0.63	0.52 – 0.76	**<0.001**	Independent

PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.660	Independent
Interest	0.90	0.83 – 0.97	**0.010**	Independent
Intercept	1.64	0.87 – 3.08	0.123	Leaning Independent
Age	1.06	1.01 – 1.10	**0.010**	Leaning Independent
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.36	0.19 – 0.68	**0.002**	Leaning Independent
Black	0.57	0.32 – 1.04	0.067	Leaning Independent
Hispanic	0.52	0.29 – 0.92	**0.025**	Leaning Independent
Non-white and Non-black	0.89	0.47 – 1.70	0.734	Leaning Independent
White	0.61	0.36 – 1.05	0.073	Leaning Independent
Male	1.33	1.16 – 1.53	**<0.001**	Leaning Independent
Family Income	0.95	0.90 – 1.02	0.139	Leaning Independent
Education	1.09	0.94 – 1.27	0.250	Leaning Independent
PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.420	Leaning Independent
Interest	0.96	0.89 – 1.02	0.181	Leaning Independent
Intercept	0.92	0.50 – 1.68	0.776	Strong Partisan
Age	1.27	1.22 – 1.31	**<0.001**	Strong Partisan
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.61	0.33 – 1.12	0.113	Strong Partisan
Black	1.82	1.03 – 3.23	**0.039**	Strong Partisan
Hispanic	0.94	0.53 – 1.65	0.823	Strong Partisan
Non-white and Non-black	1.01	0.53 – 1.91	0.980	Strong Partisan
White	1.09	0.64 – 1.85	0.754	Strong Partisan
Male	0.98	0.87 – 1.11	0.767	Strong Partisan
Family Income	0.96	0.91 – 1.01	0.137	Strong Partisan
Education	0.97	0.85 – 1.10	0.597	Strong Partisan

PID9	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.906	Strong Partisan
Interest	0.98	0.92 – 1.04	0.435	Strong Partisan
Observations	7458			
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.031 / 0.031			

Table 2c. Predicted Probability Differences by Age Group and Partisan Strength

Age	Strong vs Weak	Strong vs Leaning	Strong vs Independent	Weak vs Leaning	Weak vs Independent	Leaning vs Independent
17-24	0.11	0.17	0.28	0.06	0.17	0.11
25-34	0.06	0.09	0.26	0.03	0.20	0.17
35-44	0.15	0.16	0.28	0.01	0.13	0.12
45-54	0.18	0.24	0.35	0.07	0.17	0.11
55-64	0.35	0.34	0.47	-0.01	0.12	0.13
65-74	0.43	0.40	0.52	-0.03	0.09	0.12
75-99	0.42	0.43	0.53	0.01	0.11	0.10

Survey Tables:

Predicted Probability Differences by Age Group

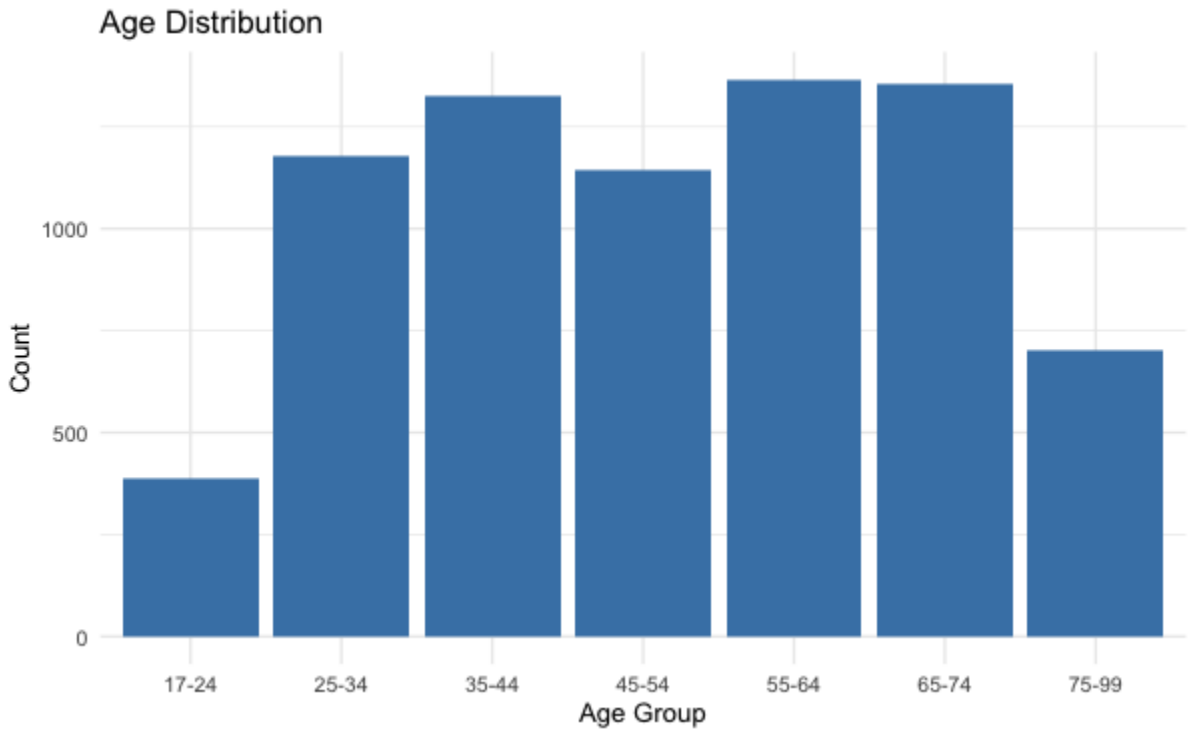
Age	Strong vs Weak	Strong vs Leaning	Strong vs Independent	Weak vs Leaning	Weak vs Independent	Leaning vs Independent
17-24	0.28	0.33	0.32	0.05	0.04	-0.01
25-34	0.23	0.43	0.34	0.20	0.11	-0.09
35-44	0.33	0.45	0.35	0.12	0.02	-0.10
45-54	0.27	0.39	0.34	0.12	0.07	-0.05
55-64	0.10	0.33	0.32	0.23	0.22	0.00
65-74	0.21	0.43	0.39	0.22	0.18	-0.04
75-99	0.36	0.50	0.43	0.13	0.07	-0.07

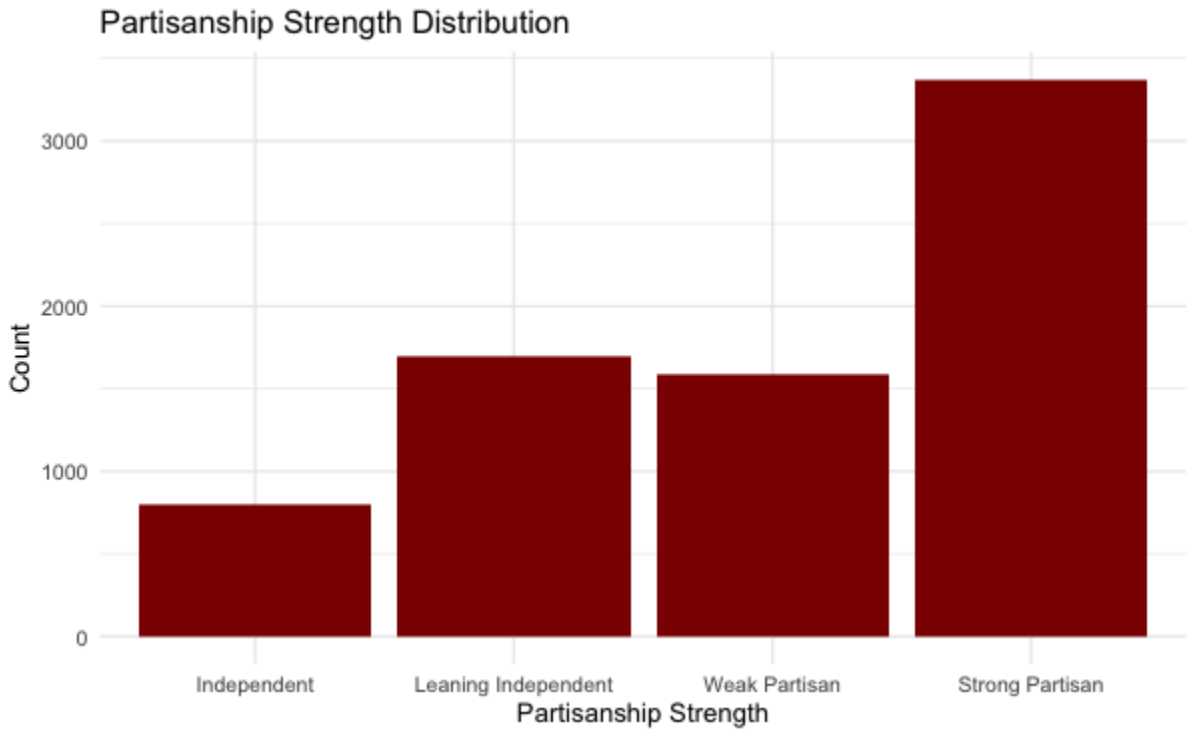
Model Summary

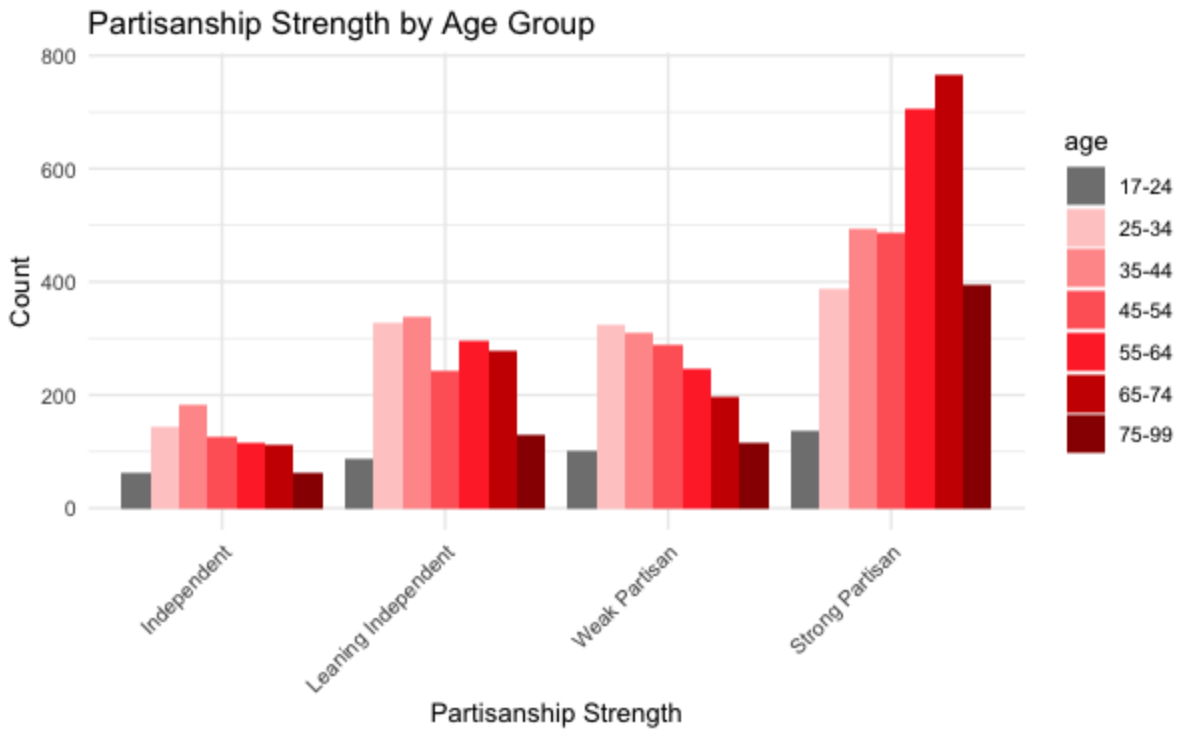
	Model 1			**Model 2**			**Model 3**		
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*
(Intercept)	1.73	0.73 – 4.17	0.216	0.52	0.19 – 1.47	0.217	0.84	0.23 – 3.03	0.793
Age	1.00	0.99 – 1.01	0.495	1.03	1.01 – 1.04	**0.001**	1.02	1.00 – 1.04	0.059
Race: Hispanic or Latino	0.94	0.41 – 2.22	0.880	0.87	0.38 – 2.11	0.759	0.85	0.36 – 2.06	0.709
Race: Native American	0.42	0.09 – 2.28	0.282	0.38	0.08 – 2.05	0.226	0.37	0.07 – 2.02	0.220
Race: Two or More	1.31	0.65 – 2.69	0.453	1.28	0.63 – 2.65	0.503	1.24	0.61 – 2.57	0.564
Race: White	0.63	0.37 – 1.02	0.066	0.60	0.36 – 0.99	**0.049**	0.59	0.35 – 0.97	**0.042**
Gender	1.03	0.74 – 1.44	0.844	1.03	0.74 – 1.44	0.868	1.03	0.74 – 1.44	0.861

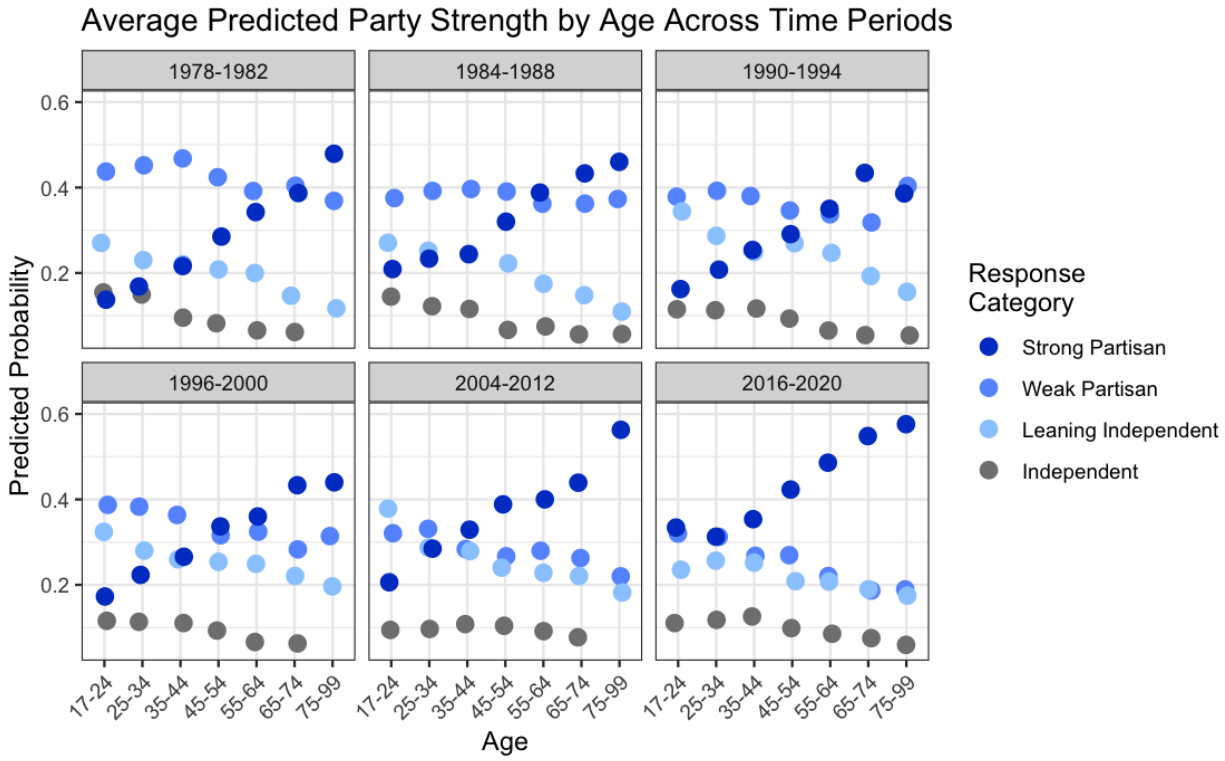
Income	0.91	0.80 – 1.03	0.136	0.89	0.78 – 1.01	0.073	0.89	0.78 – 1.01	0.071
Education	1.56	1.12 – 2.20	**0.010**	1.66	1.18 – 2.35	**0.004**	1.65	1.17 – 2.34	**0.004**
Political Knowledge	1.24	0.60 – 2.58	0.558	1.27	0.61 – 2.67	0.523	1.26	0.60 – 2.65	0.543
Self-Monitoring	3.12	1.14 – 8.94	**0.030**	389.72	33.45 – 5117.04	**<0.001**	183.06	7.56 – 5485.72	**0.002**
Group	1.01	0.63 – 1.61	0.982	1.06	0.77 – 1.45	0.732	0.37	0.06 – 2.11	0.264
Self-Monitoring × Group	1.43	0.35 – 5.93	0.618				6.28	0.04 – 1012.52	0.474
Self-Monitoring × Age				0.91	0.87 – 0.95	**<0.001**	0.92	0.86 – 0.98	**0.007**
Age x Group							1.02	0.99 – 1.05	0.294
Self-Monitoring × Age x Group							0.98	0.89 – 1.08	0.669
Observations	779			779			779		
R^2 Tjur	0.039			0.056			0.058		

ANES Plots:

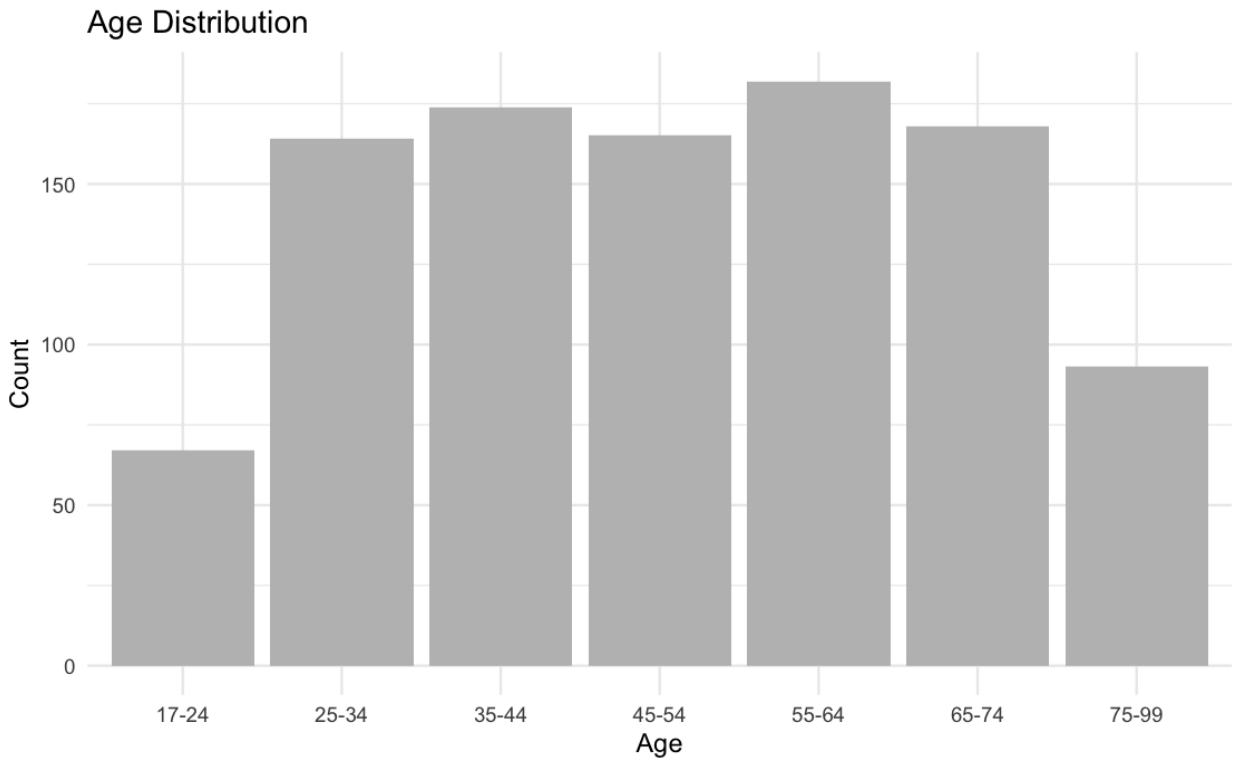

Age Distribution
Count
1000
500
0
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-99
Age Group

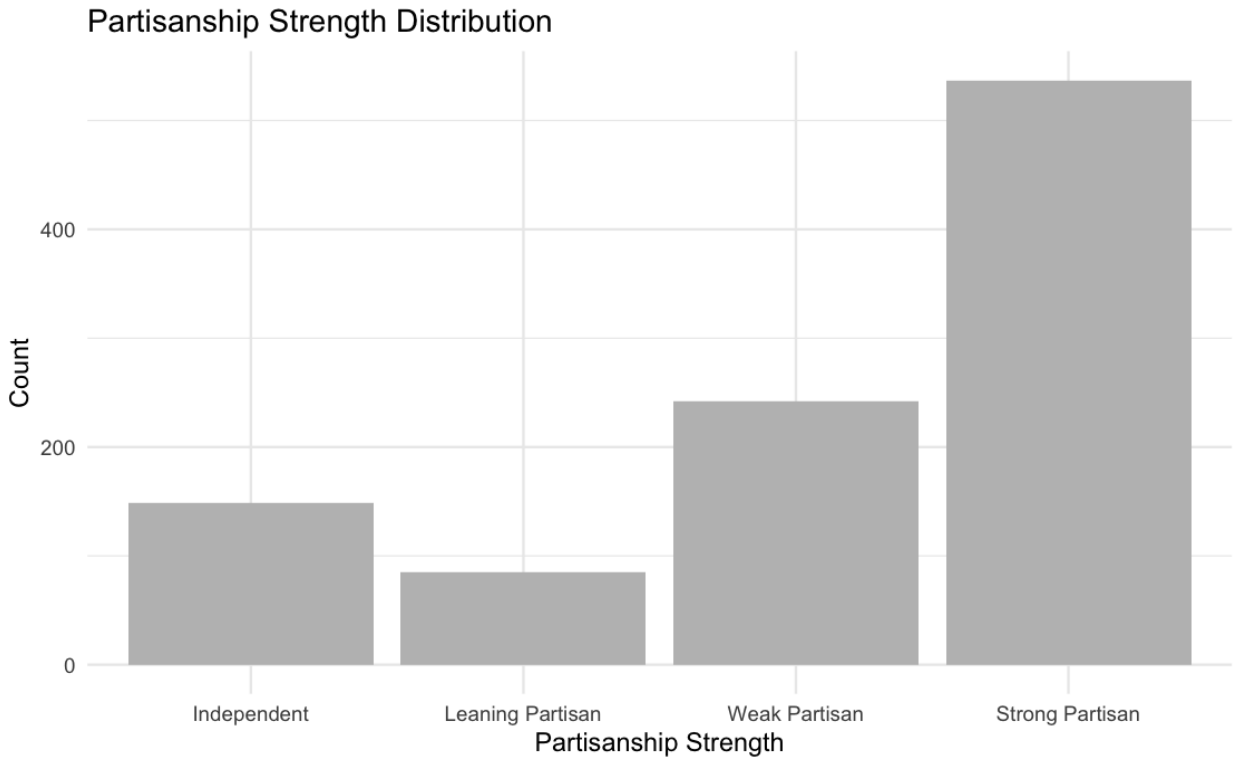

Partisanship Strength Distribution
Count
3000
2000
1000
0
Independent
Leaning Independent
Weak Partisan
Strong Partisan
Partisanship Strength

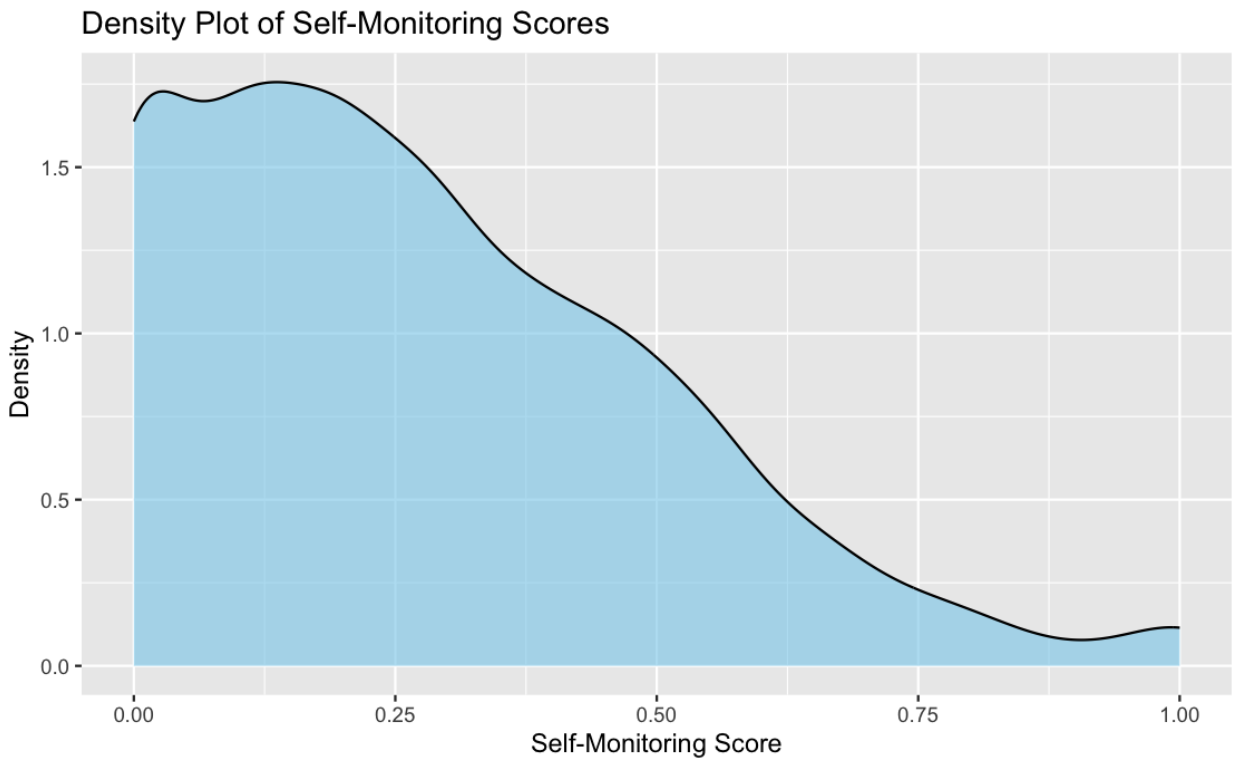

Partisanship Strength by Age Group
800
600
400
200
0
Count
Independent
Leaning Independent
Weak Partisan
Strong Partisan
Partisanship Strength
age
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-99

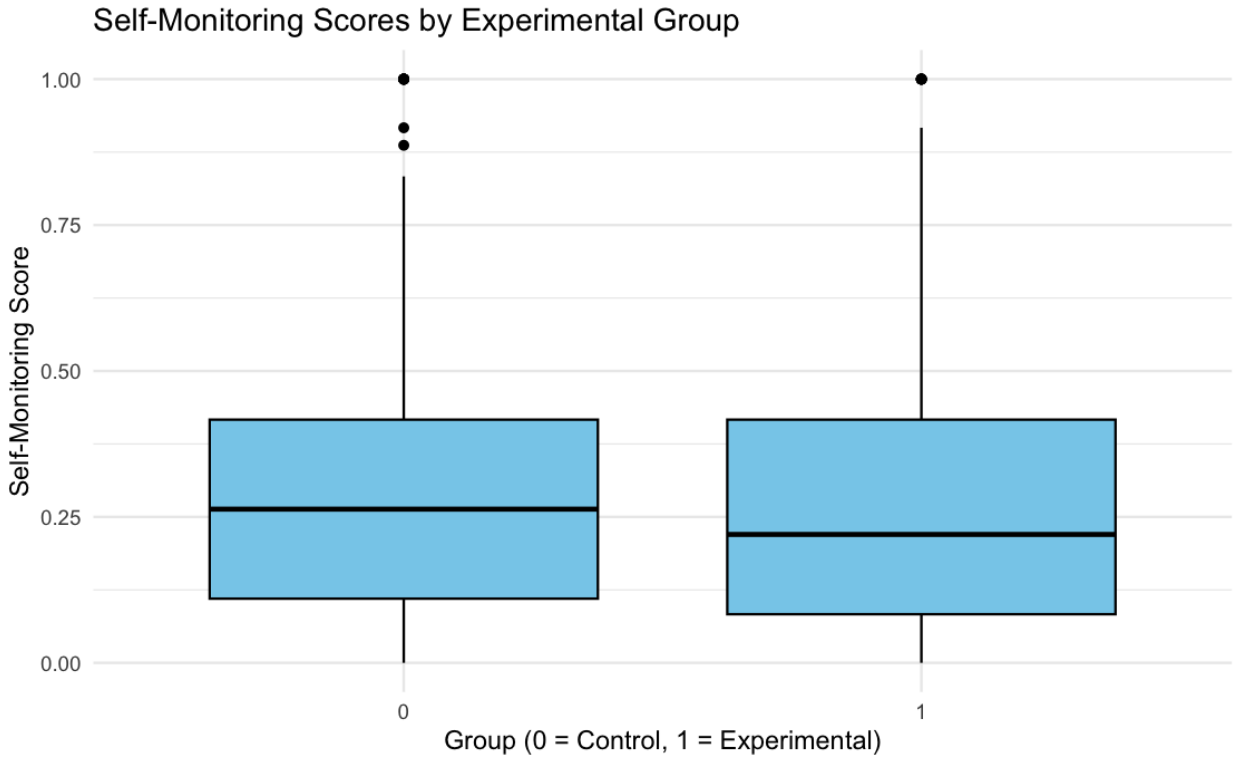

Average Predicted Party Strength by Age Across Time Periods
1978-1982
1984-1988
1990-1994
1996-2000
2004-2012
2016-2020
Predicted Probability
0.6
0.4
0.2
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-99
Age
Response Category
Strong Partisan
Weak Partisan
Leaning Independent
Independent

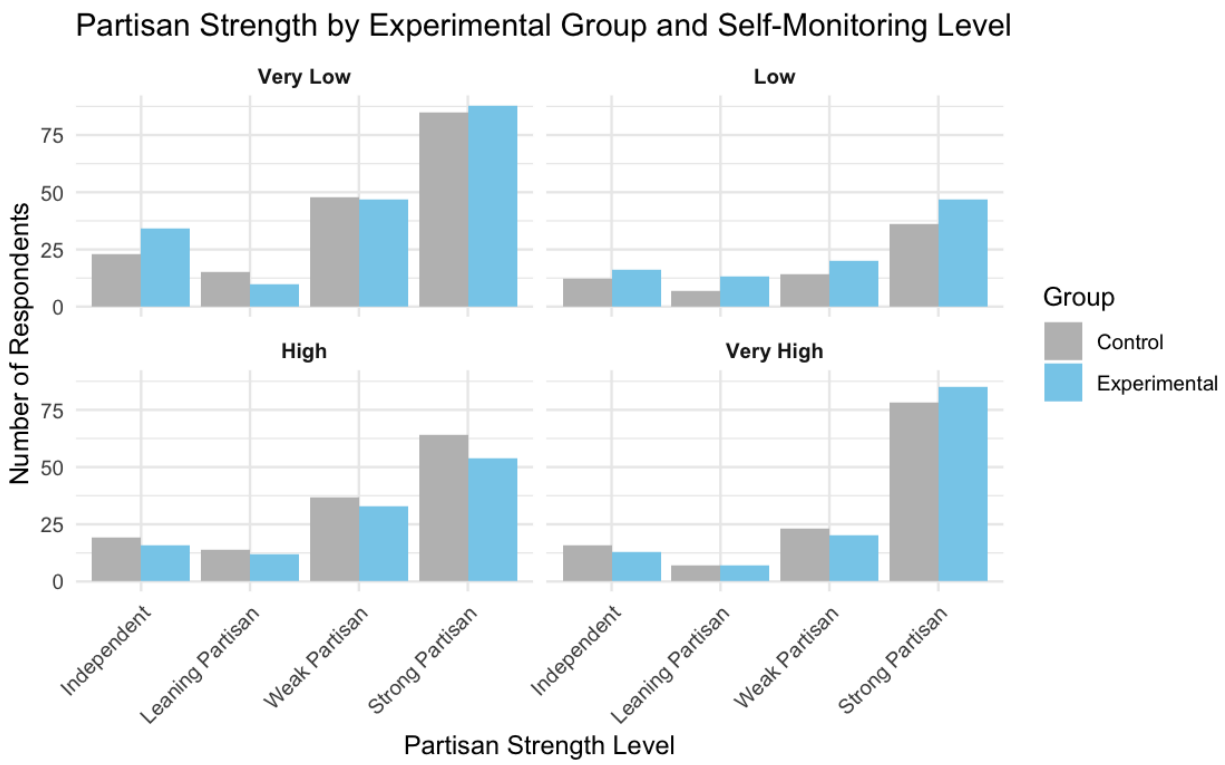
Survey Plots:

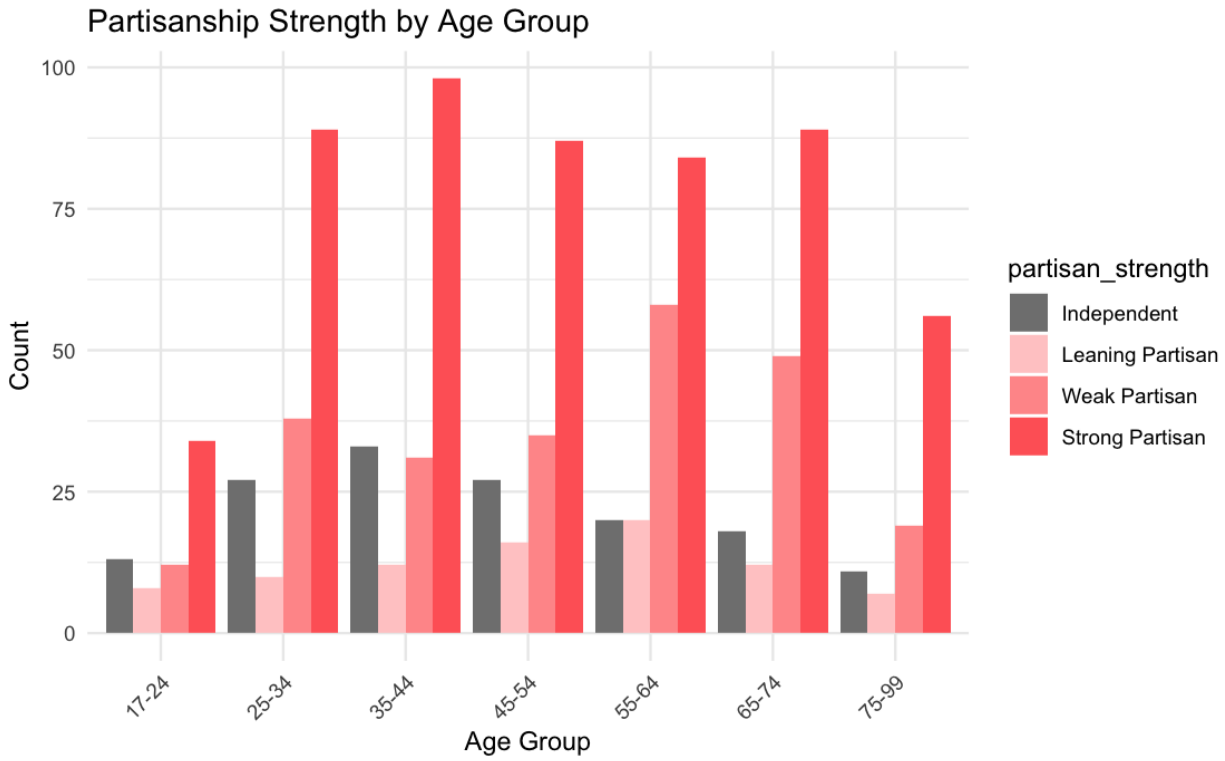


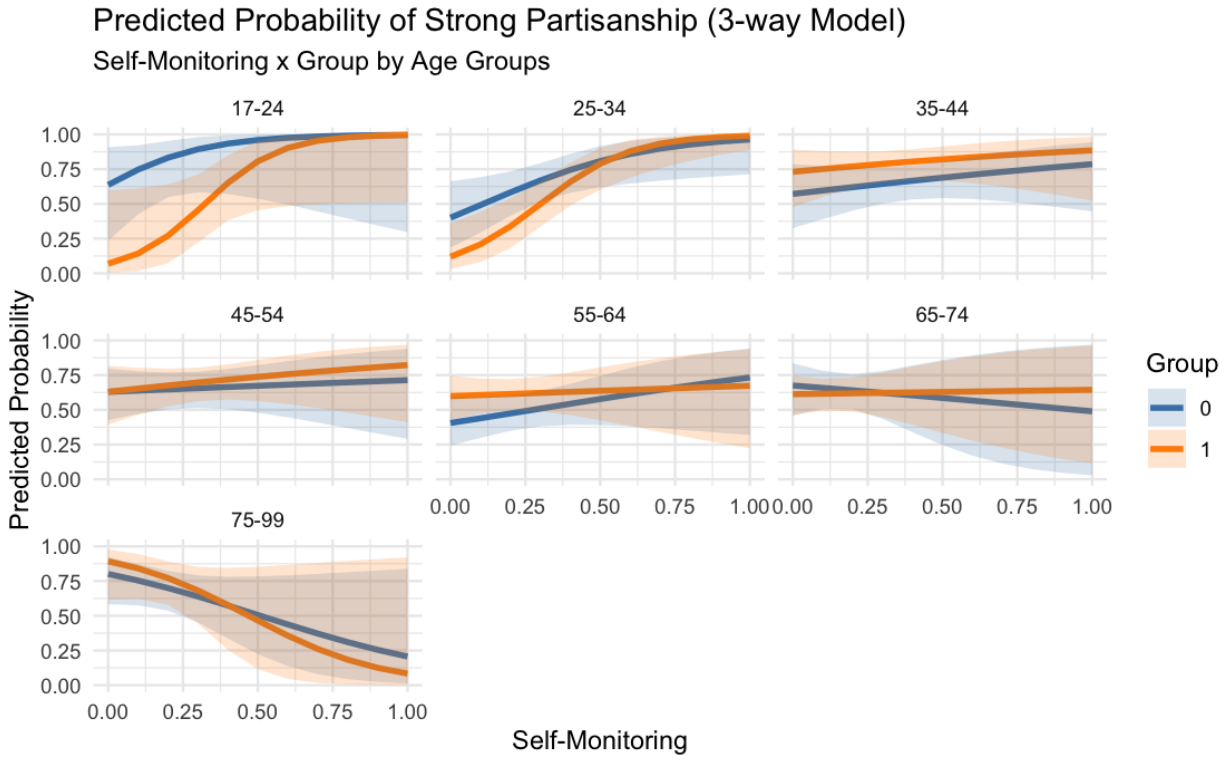



Density Plot of Self-Monitoring Scores
Density
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0
0.00
0.25
0.50
0.75
1.00
Self-Monitoring Score


Self-Monitoring Scores by Experimental Group
Self-Monitoring Score
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.00
0
1
Group (0 = Control, 1 = Experimental)


Partisan Strength by Experimental Group and Self-Monitoring Level
Very Low
Low
High
Very High
Number of Respondents
0
25
50
75
Independent
Leaning Partisan
Weak Partisan
Strong Partisan
Partisan Strength Level
Group
Control
Experimental


Partisanship Strength by Age Group
Count
100
75
50
25
0
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-99
Age Group
partisan_strength
Independent
Leaning Partisan
Weak Partisan
Strong Partisan


Predicted Probability of Strong Partisanship (3-way Model)
Self-Monitoring x Group by Age Groups
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-99
Predicted Probability
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.00
Self-Monitoring
Group
0
1