Models of Partisanship & The Role of Partisanship in Behavior

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Teaching Agenda

1. What Models Explain Partisanship?
2. What Effects does Partisanship Exert?
3. Does Partisanship Change?
4. Relationship between Ideology & Partisanship?

Where does Partisanship Come From?

Motivating Question

Where do you think a person's partisan preference (i.e, their partisan identification) comes from? What do you think the role of partisanship is in American political life?

Situating Role of *Parties* in the Political System

Political Parties and Problems of Collective Action

Arena:	Collective Action Problems	Parties Help Solve by:
Electorate	Free riding • Rational abstention • Rational ignorance	Branding • Focus of collective responsibility • Heuristic; party id. Mobilization
Organization	• Coordination of politicians' ambition • Getting elected to office	• Nomination (agenda setting) • Mobilization • Fundraising
Government	• Transaction costs for making policy. • Coalition maintenance	"Long" coalition; ready-made support for party policy. • Agenda control and the problem of cycling. • Imagine a President Perot or Blumberg…or Trump?

Cutting Information Costs with Political Heuristics

Models of Electoral Control

Heuristic	Vote-Choice Model	Implications for Representatives	Analytical Purposes
Ideology	Spatial/Proximity Voting	Responsive to Median Voter	Representation & Candidate Positioning
Partisanship	Michigan Model	Responsive to Partisan Base	Explaining vote choice/partisan bias
Valence	Retrospective Model/Valence Rule	Develop reputation, (honesty/integrity), monitor economy	Explaining electoral outcomes, pres. forecasting

Note: Partisanship & ideology are generally prospective models.

Differing Models of Partisanship

Socialization Models of Partisanship

- Columbia Researchers of 1940s suggested that electoral choices based on upon strong "brand loyalties" rooted in religion and social class and reinforced by face- to-face interactions with like-minded acquaintances
- *American Voter* team at the University Michigan extrapolate on the model: "attitudes toward the objects of politics, varying through time, can explain short-term fluctuations in partisan division of the vote, whereas party loyalties and social characteristics, which are relatively inert through time, account but poorly for these shifts."
- Model predicated on *durability* of partisanship... why do you think partisanship may be a "durable" political concept?

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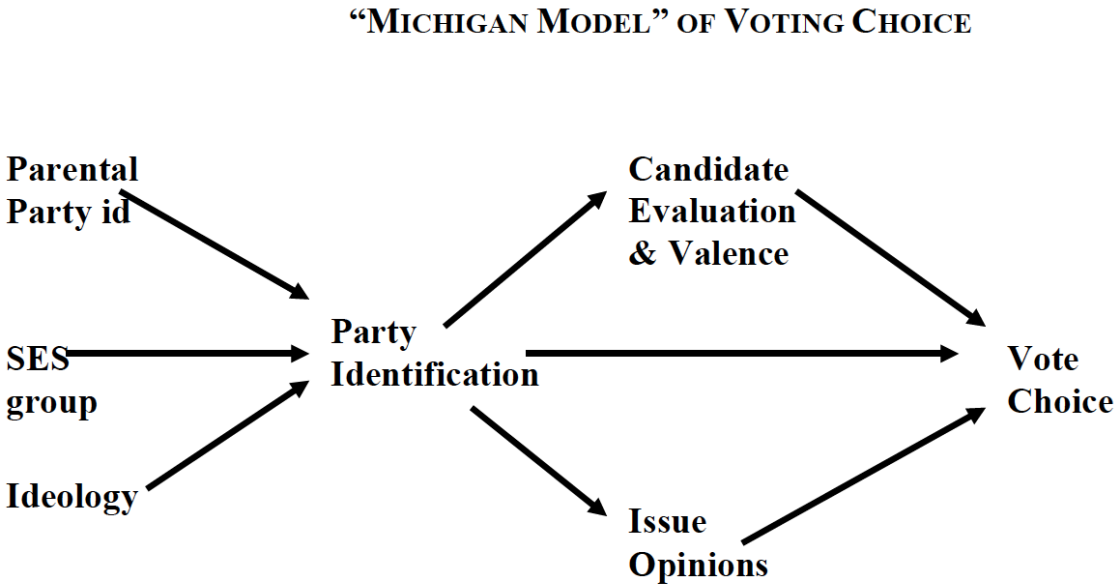
Michigan Model of Partisanship



- "The first & perhaps most important political heuristic is relying on a candidate's party affiliation." (Lau & Redlawsk)
- Partisanship influenced by socialization, resources, & ideology
- Important heuristic for voting, valence evaluations (economy, candidates) & issue opinions

Implications of the Michigan Model: PID as *Identity*

- "A social identity involves a subjective sense of belonging to a group, which is internalized to varying degrees, resulting in individual differences in identity strength, a desire to positively distinguish the group from others, and the development of in-group bias." (Tajfel, 1981)
- Key emphasis on this need among group members "to differentiate their own groups positively from others to achieve a positive social identity"
- Fundamental *internalize* sense of partisan identity given certain considerations. . . what social identities do you think is rooted in partisan identity?

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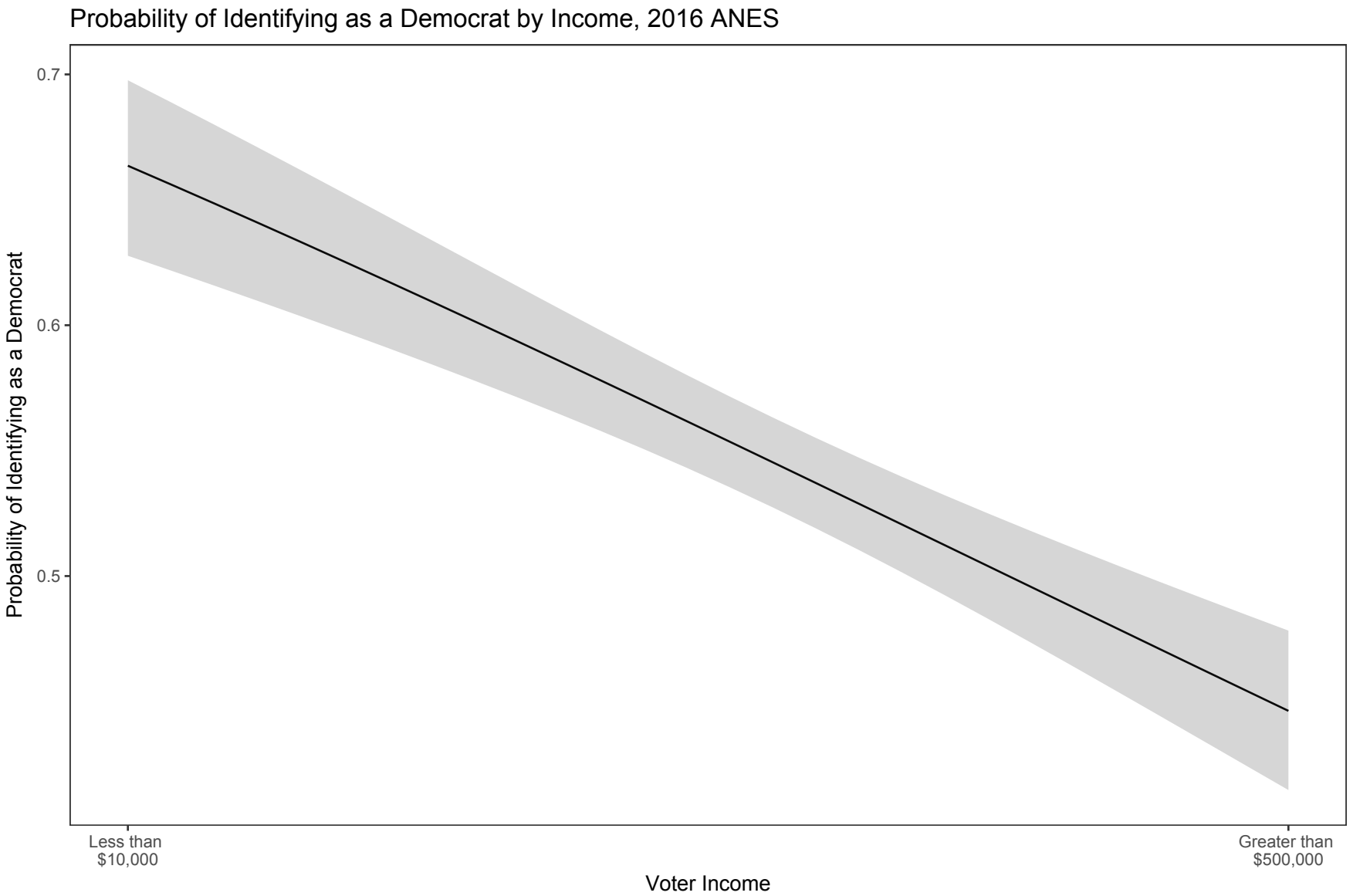
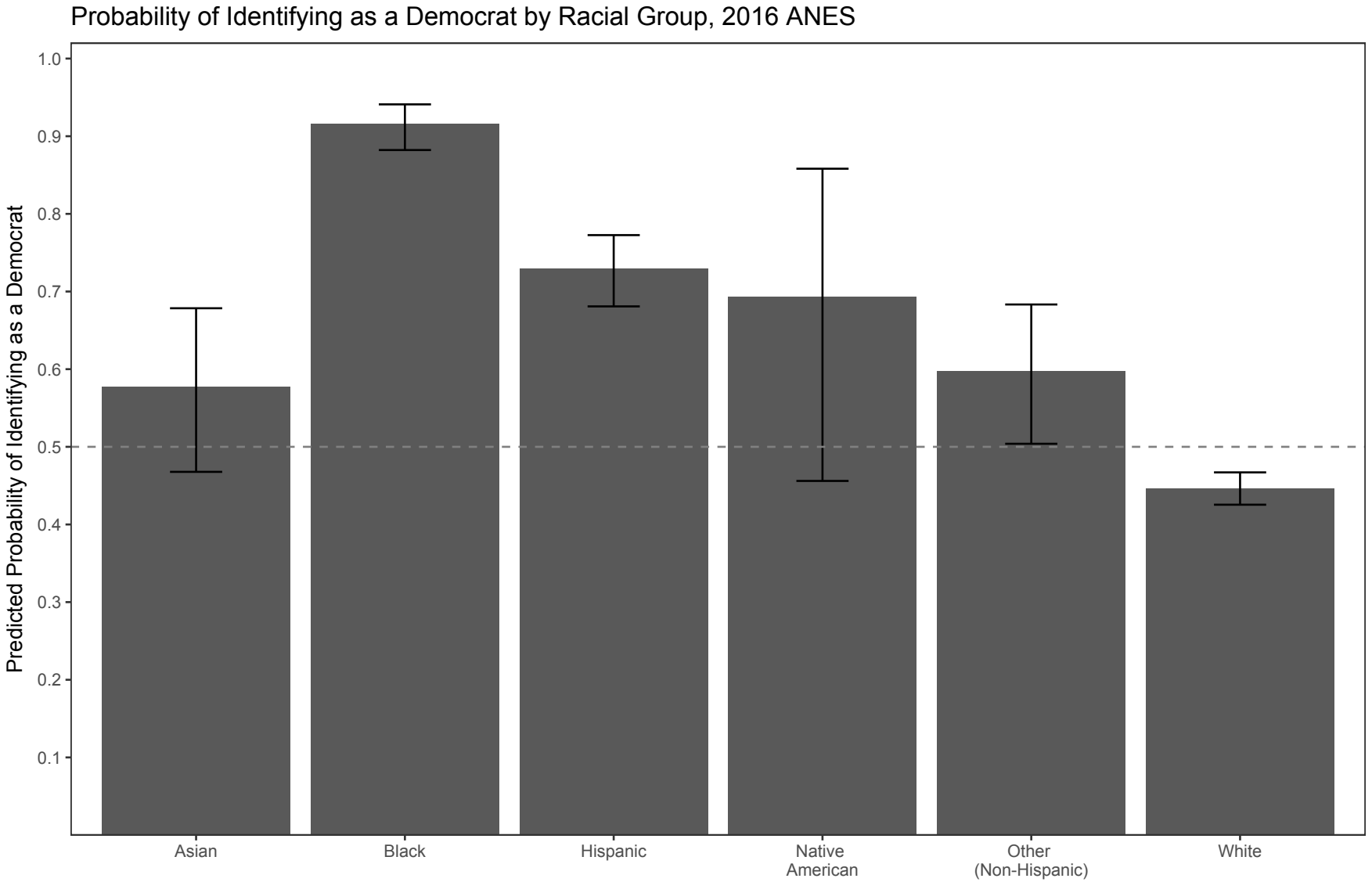
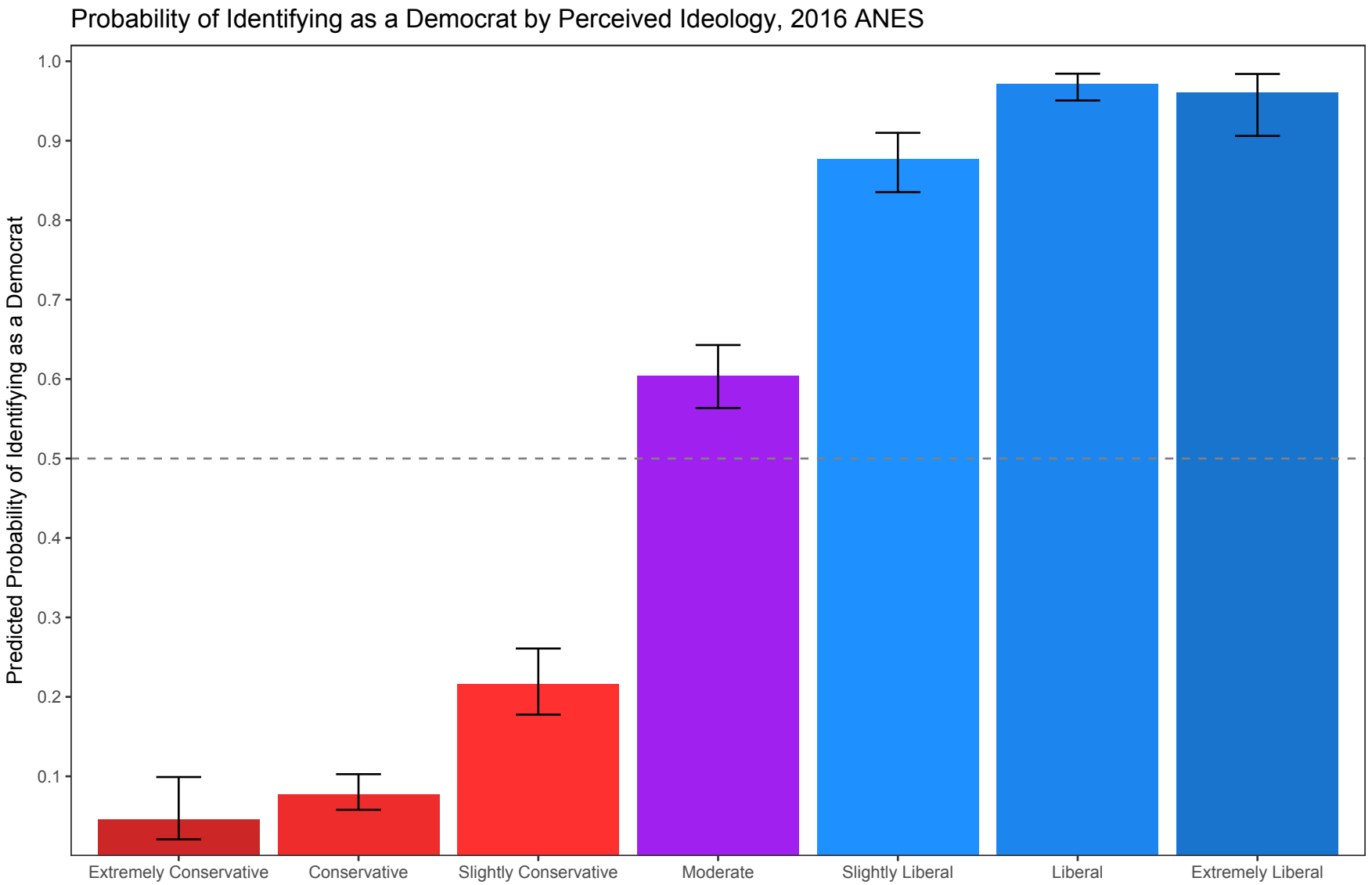
Evidence of the Michigan Model? Role of SES Status



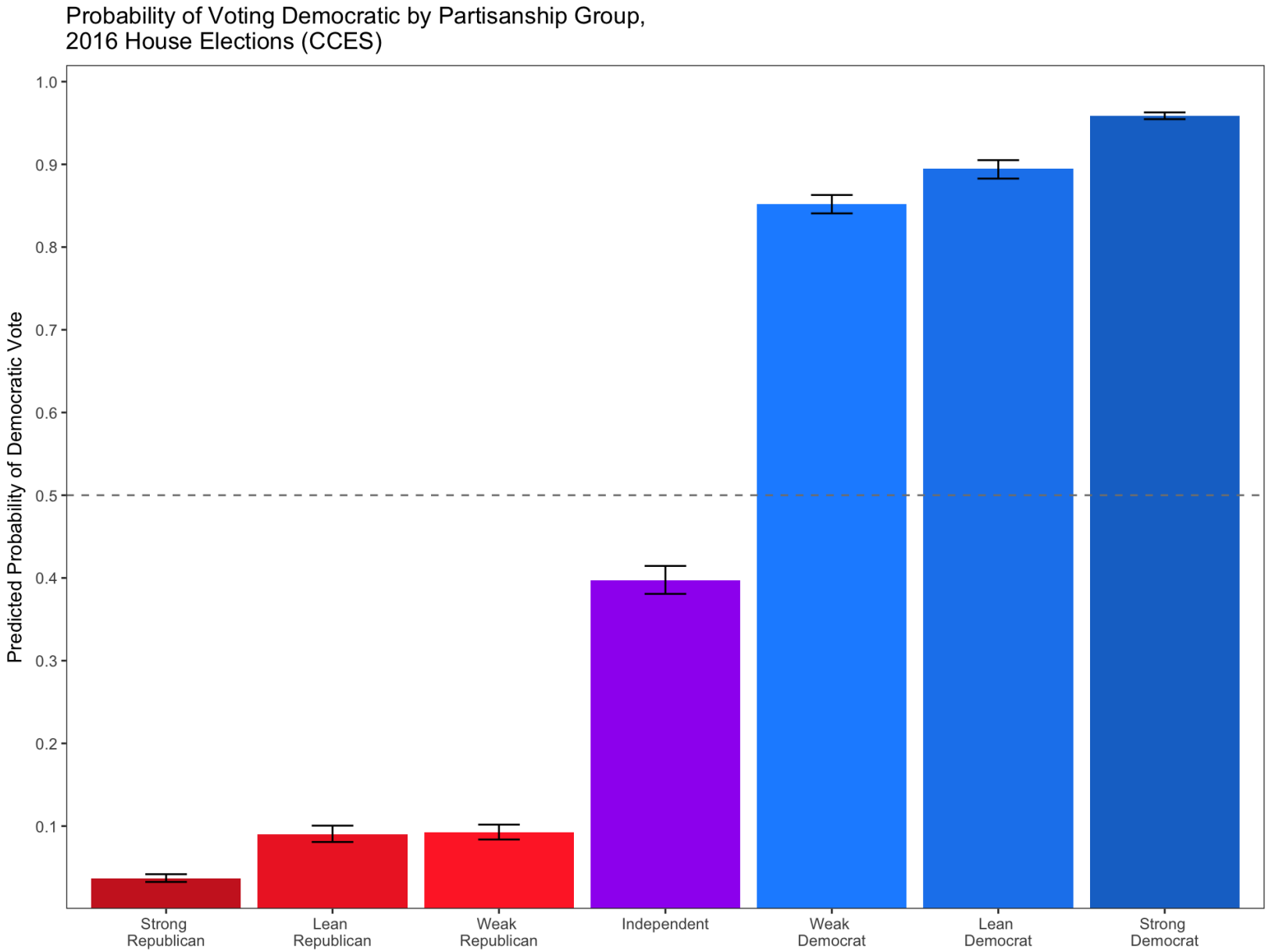
Evidence of the Michigan Model? Role of Race



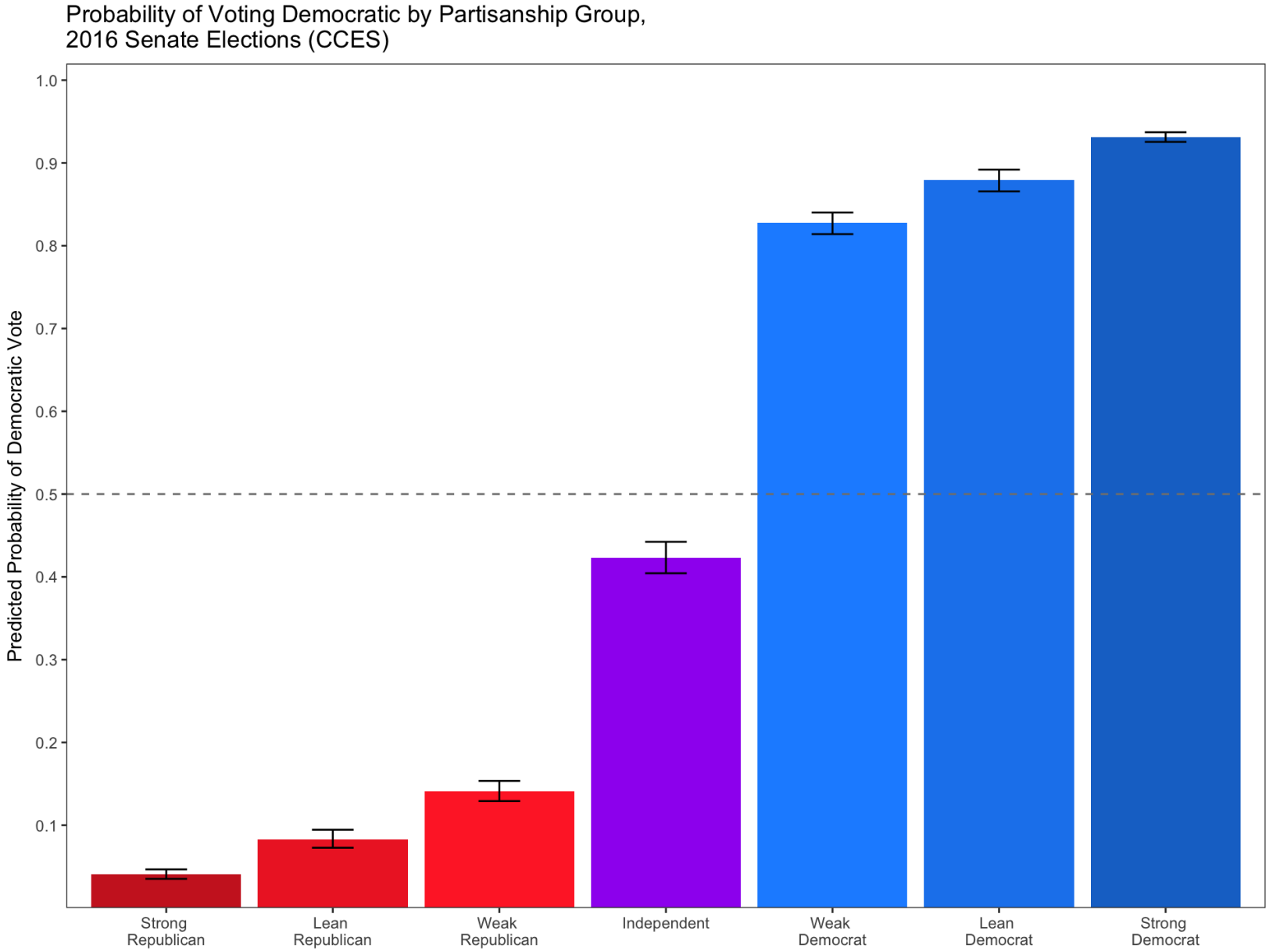
Role of Ideological Identity



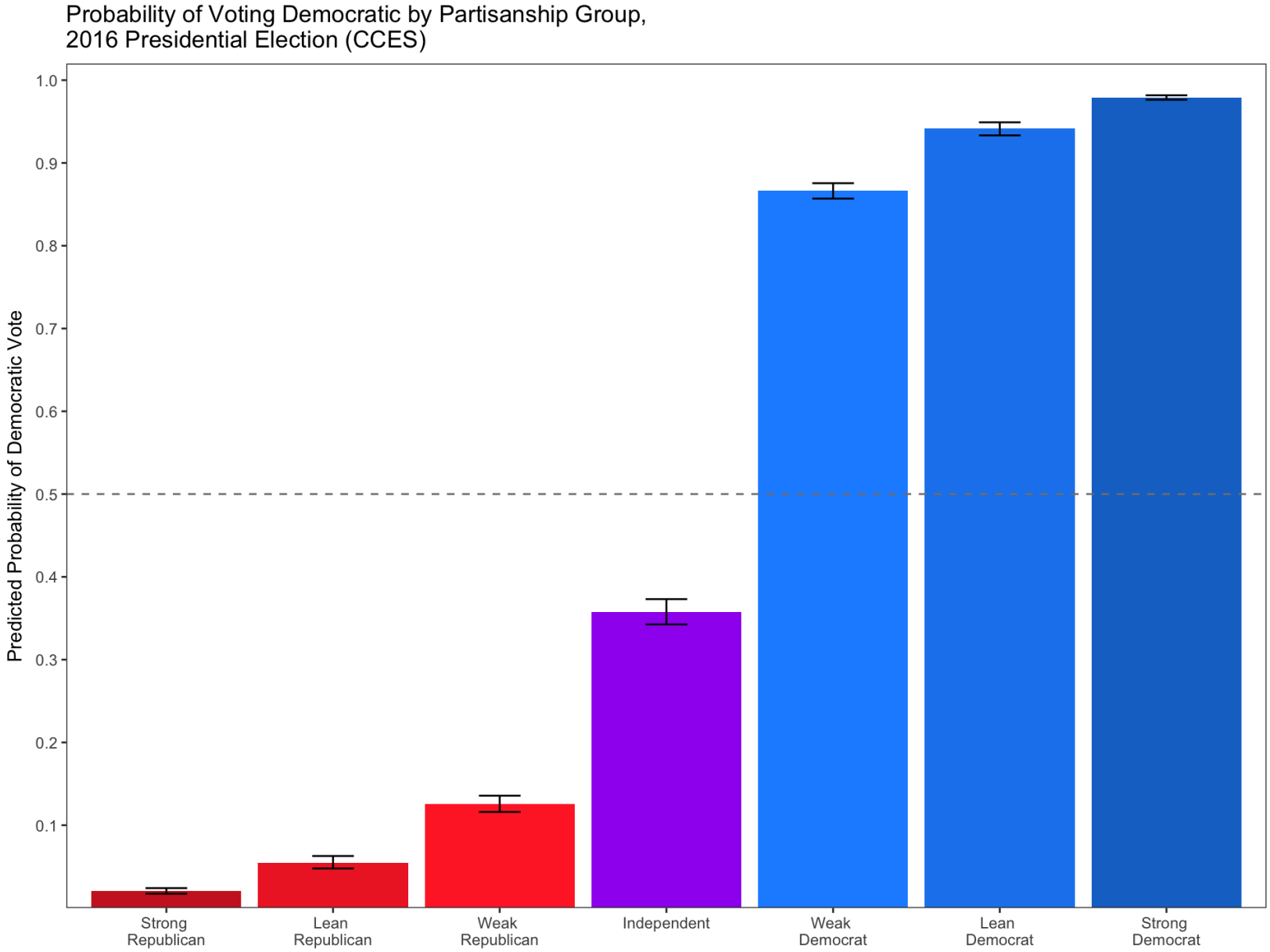
Voting in U.S. House Elections



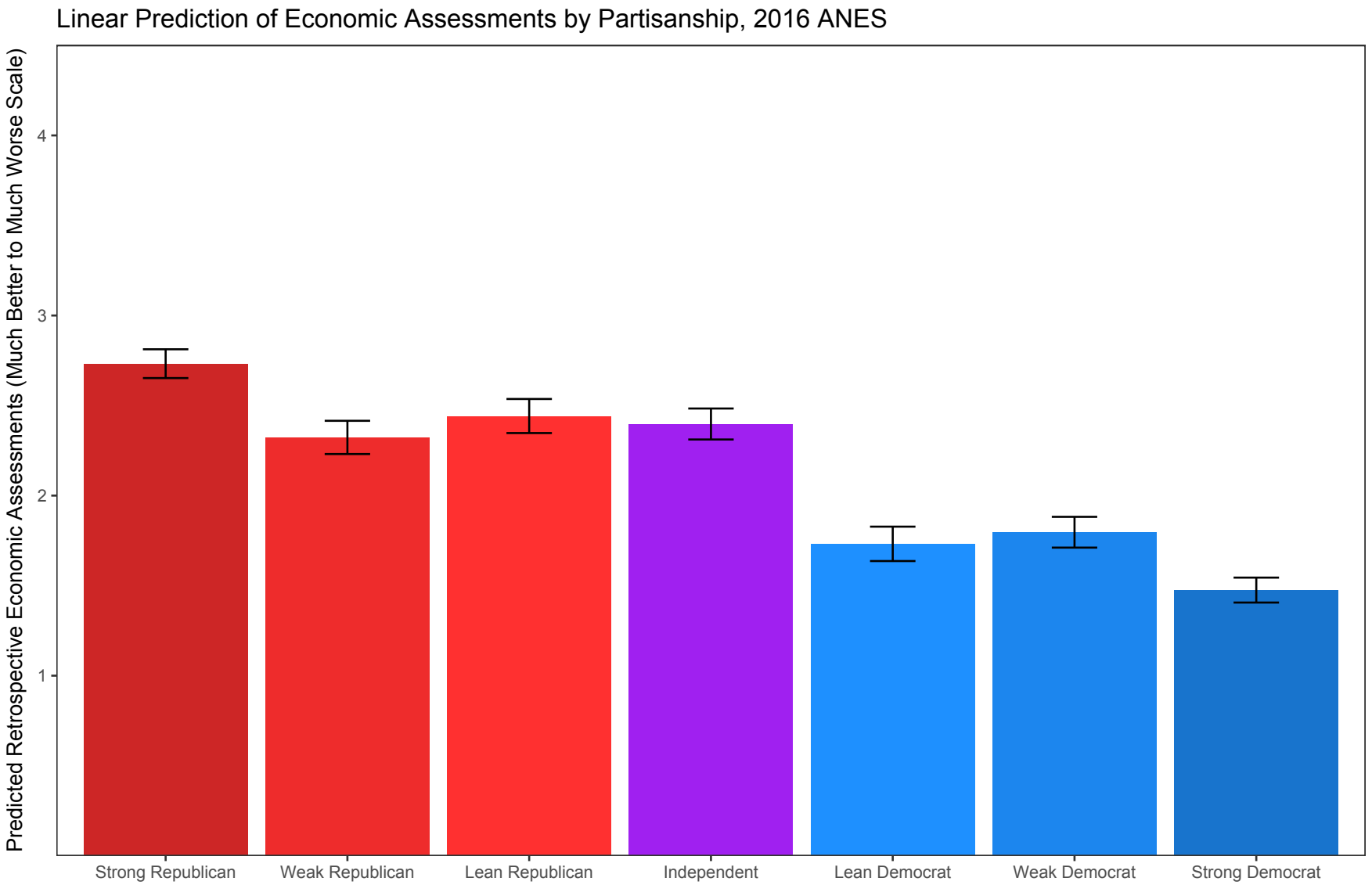
Voting in U.S. Senate Elections



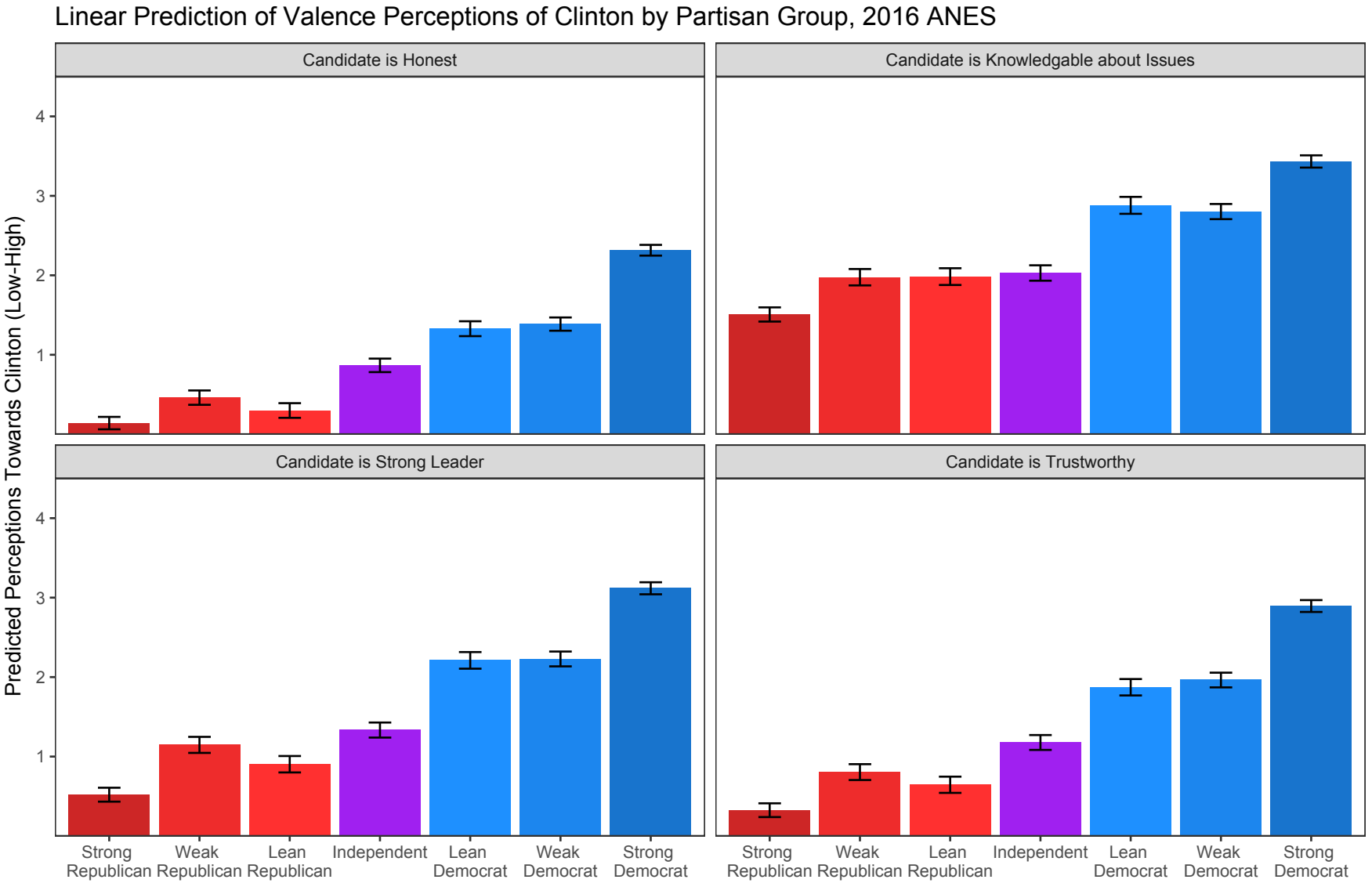
Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections



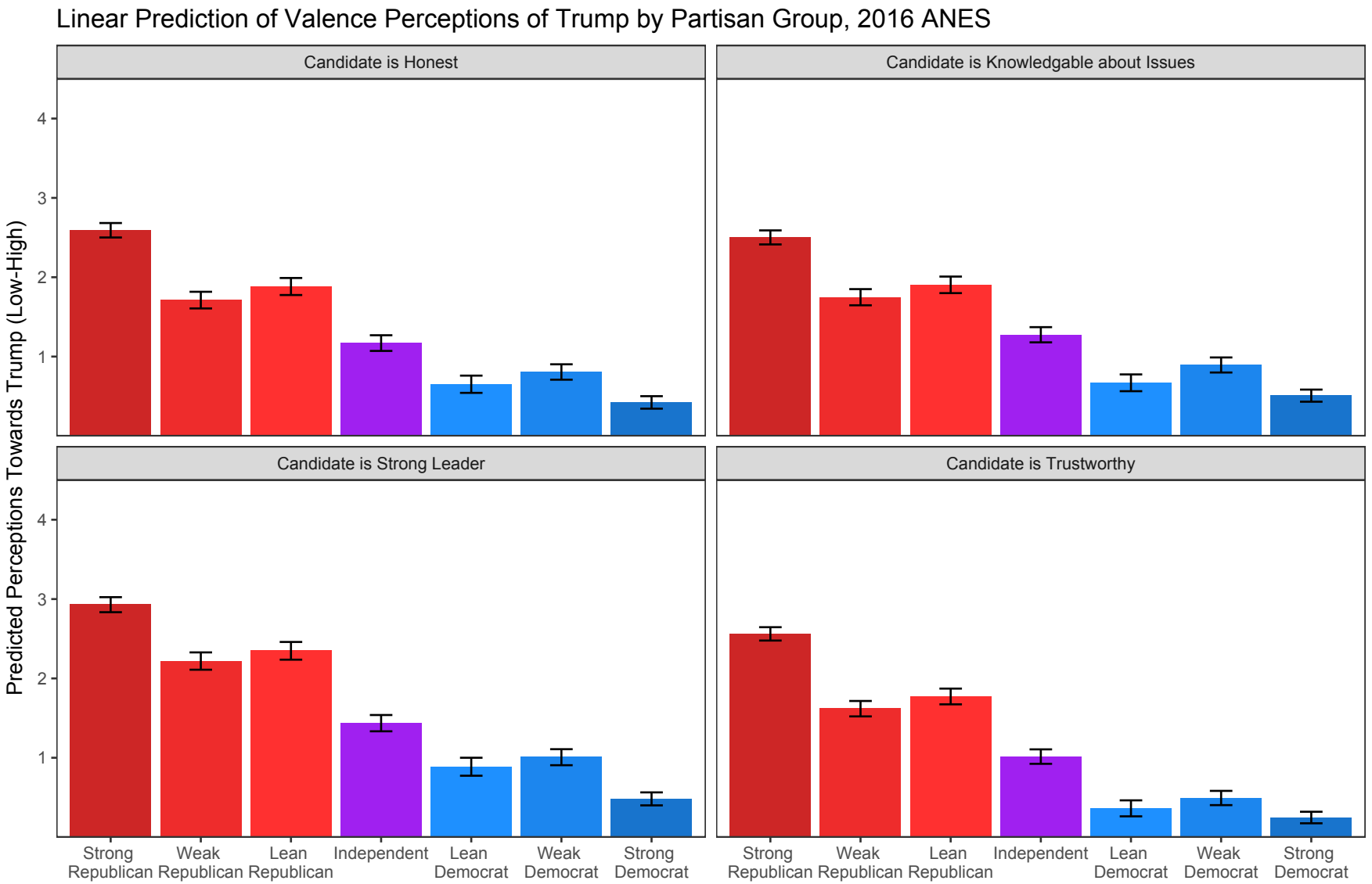
Economic Evaluations



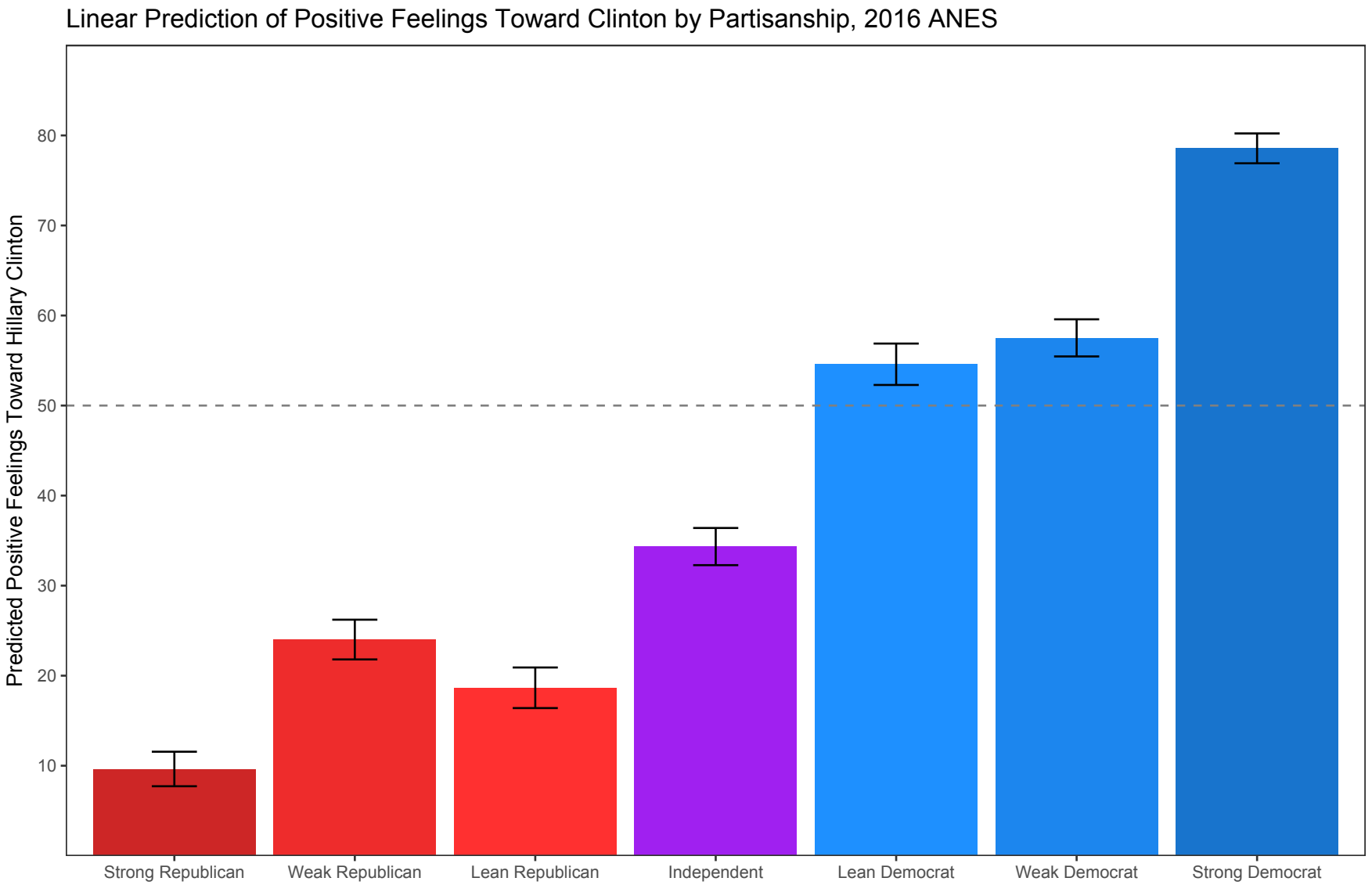
Candidate Valence Characteristics: HRC



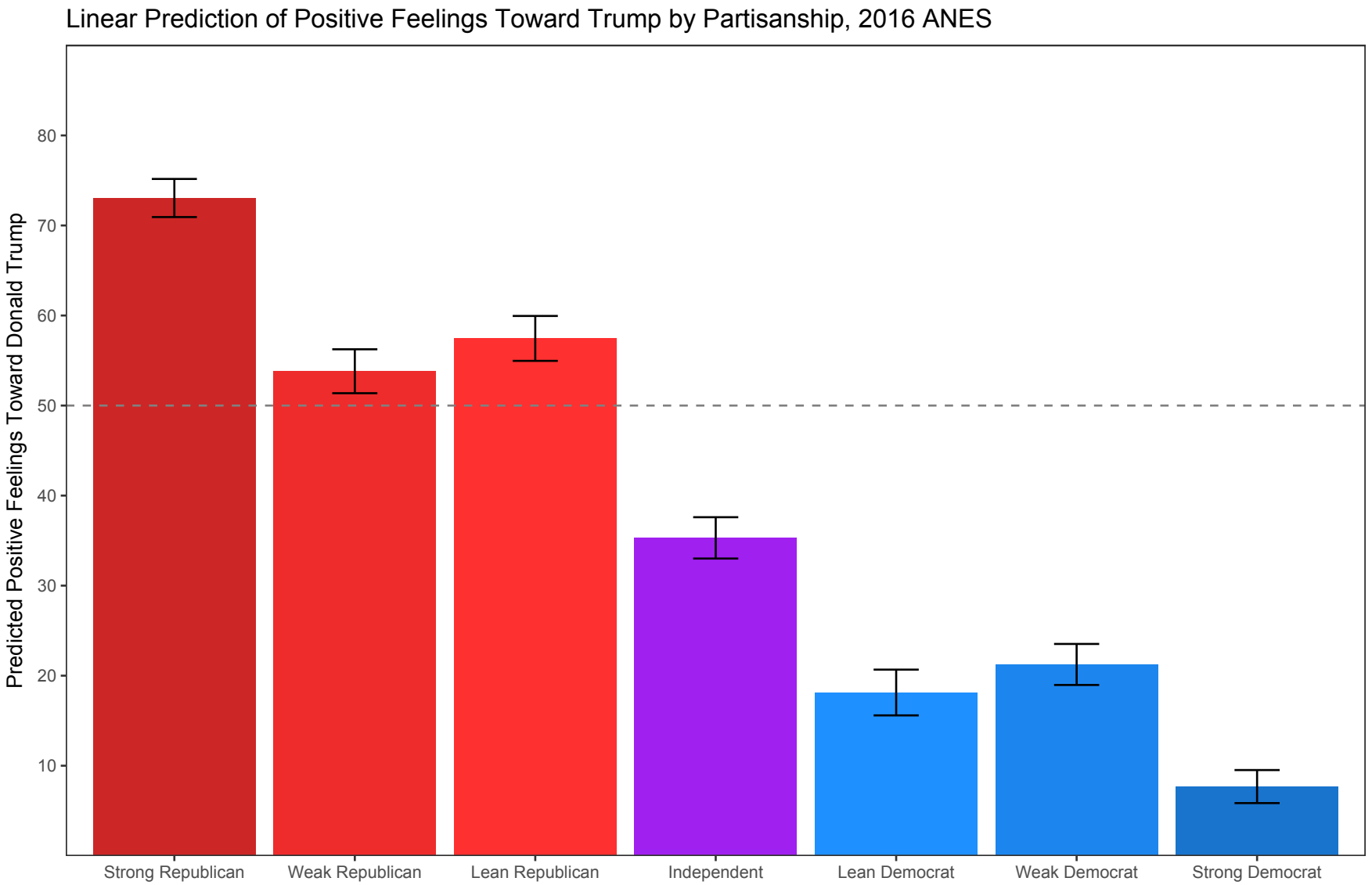
Candidate Valence Characteristics: Trump



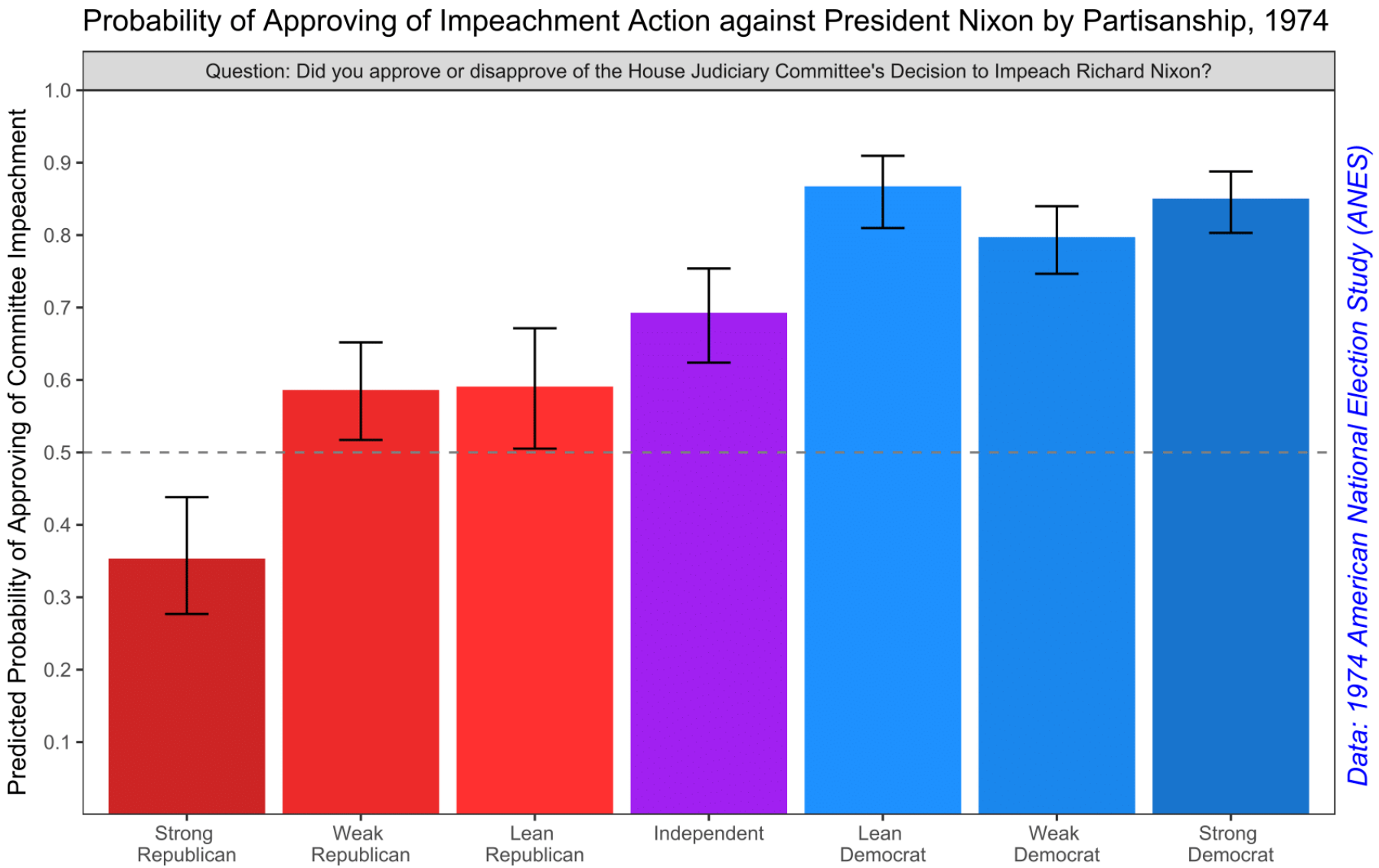
Candidate Thermometer Feeling: HRC



Candidate Thermometer Feeling: Trump



Special Case: Nixon Impeachment



Probabilities estimated from bivariate logistic regression model. Confidence intervals estimated with Huber-White Robust standard errors.

The Case of the American Whites: Zingher 2018

- What does Zingher argue are the mechanisms causing the shift in support for the Democratic Party among whites?
- Two Key Mechanisms:
  1. ***Ideological Sorting:*** Key loses among white conservatives as partisanship, voting behavior, & policy orientations have strengthened
  2. ***Demographic Changes:*** Growth of liberal minority populations shifted median position on economic issues, to the detriment of the Democratic Party
- Why would changing & growing coalitions with the parties change issue positions?
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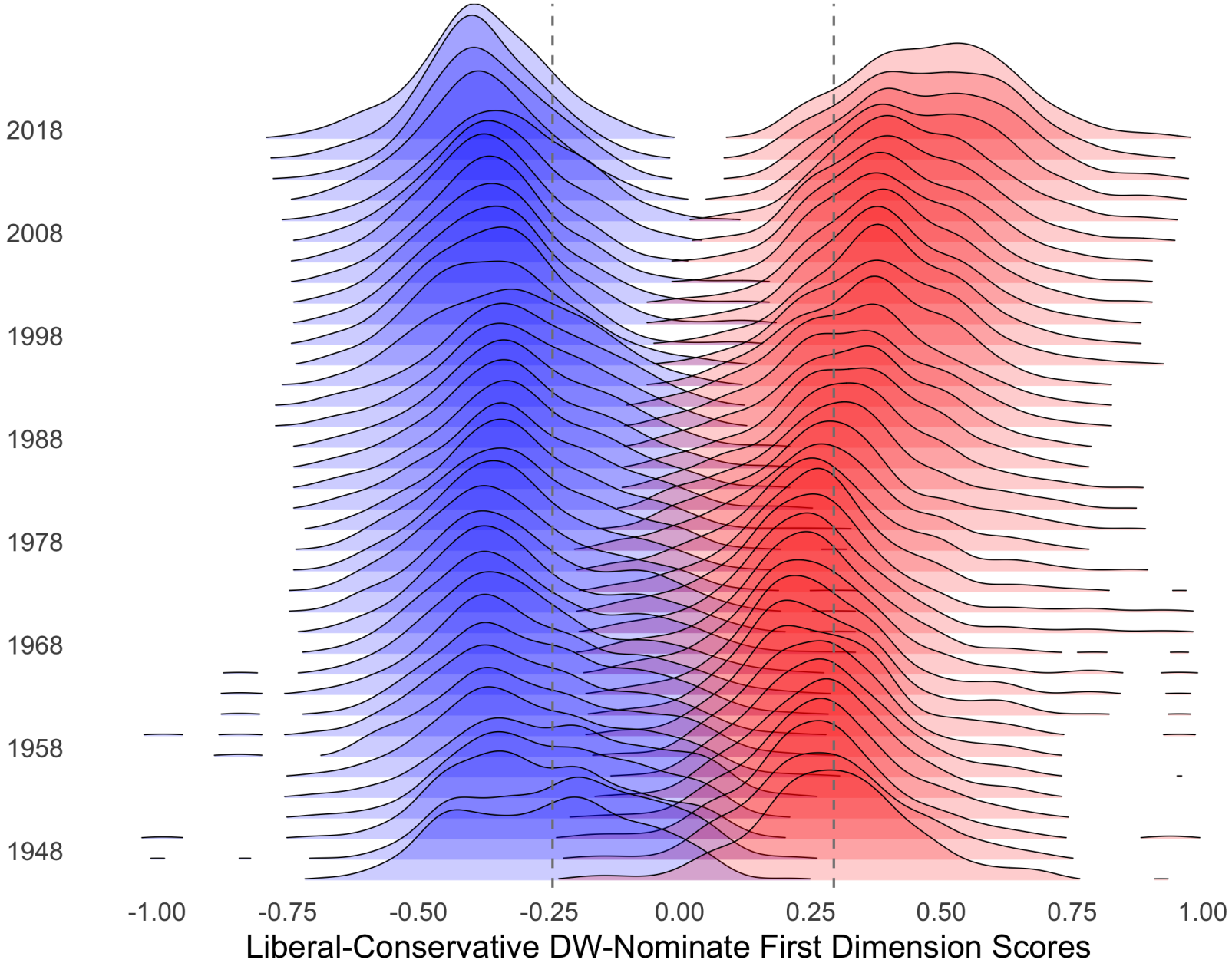
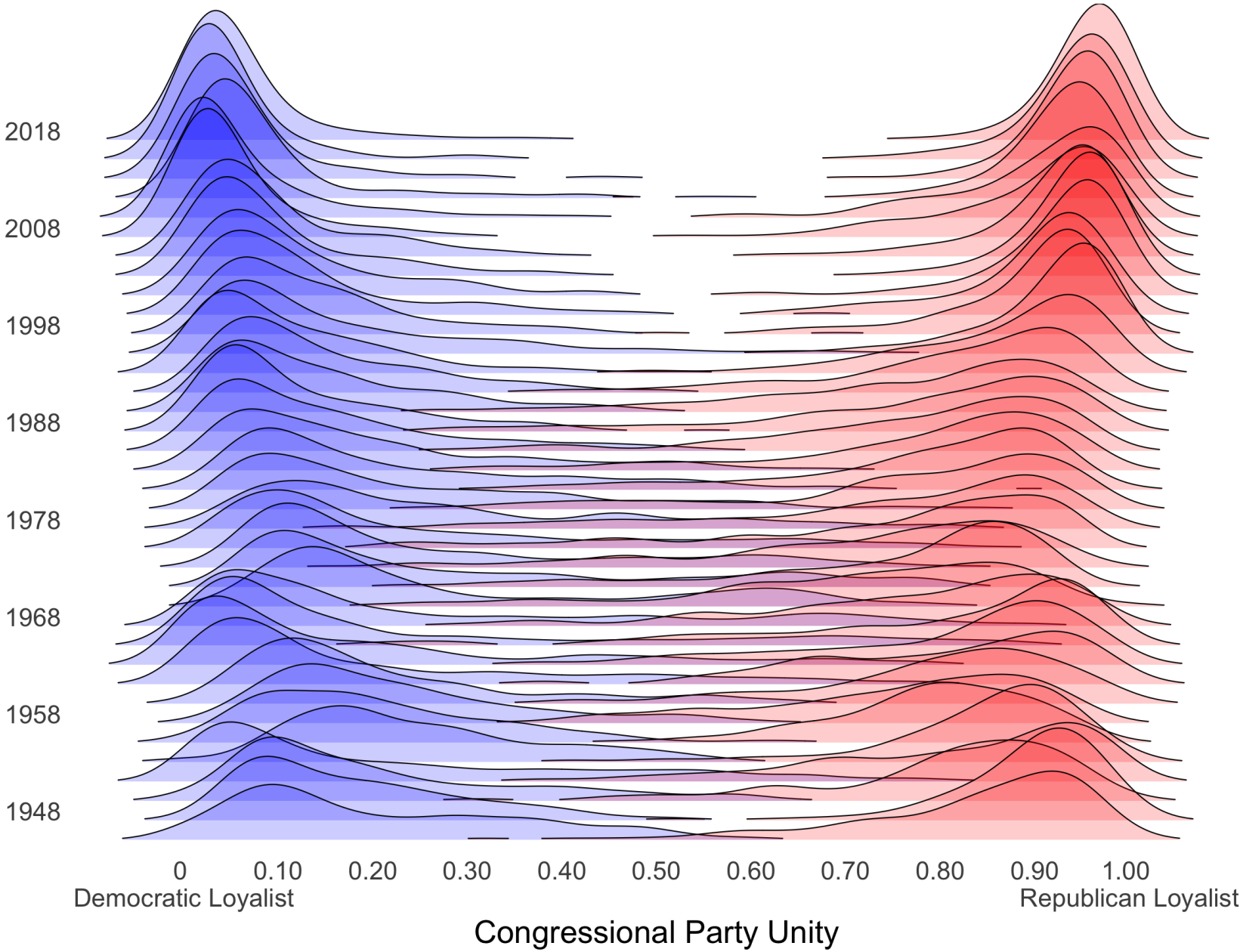
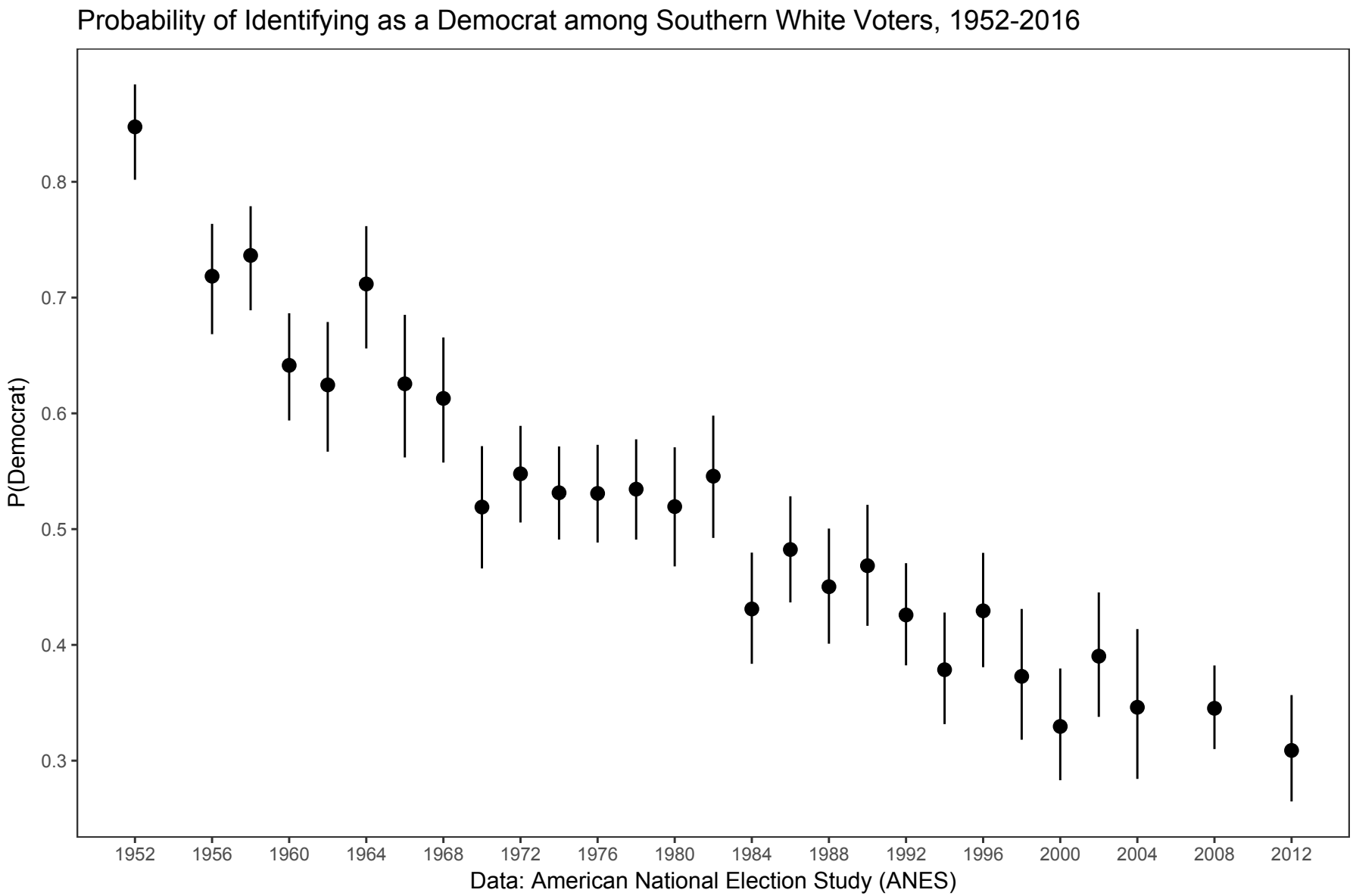
Polarization in the American Parties



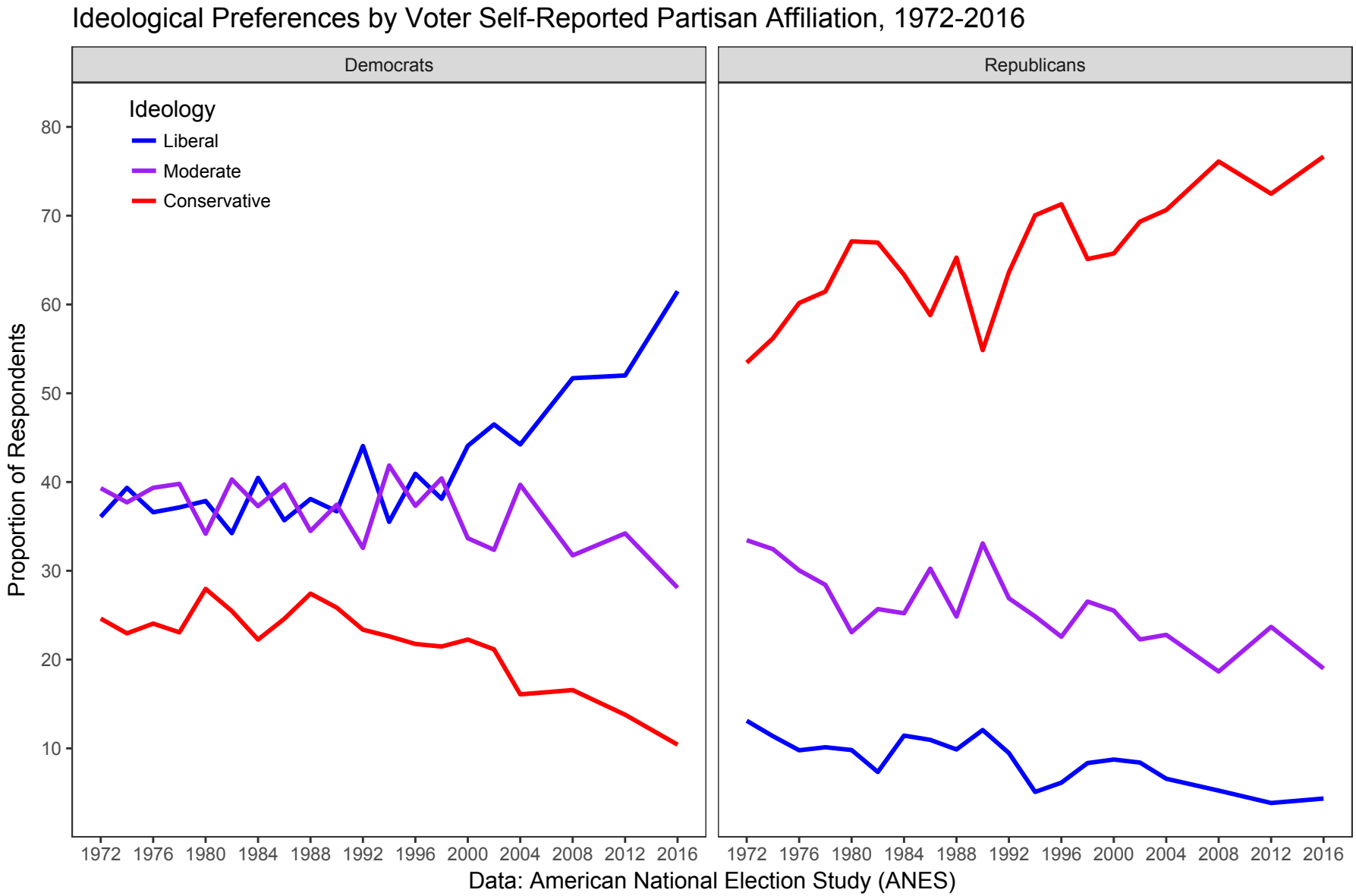
More Responsible American Parties



Decline of Southern White Democrats



Greater Sorting within the Parties



Decline of Split-Ticket Voting? Implication

PARTISAN OFFICES

STRAIGHT PARTY VOTING

To vote for all candidates from a single party mark the arrow next to the party name.

Not all parties have nominated candidates for all offices. Marking a straight party vote does not include votes for nonpartisan offices or judges.

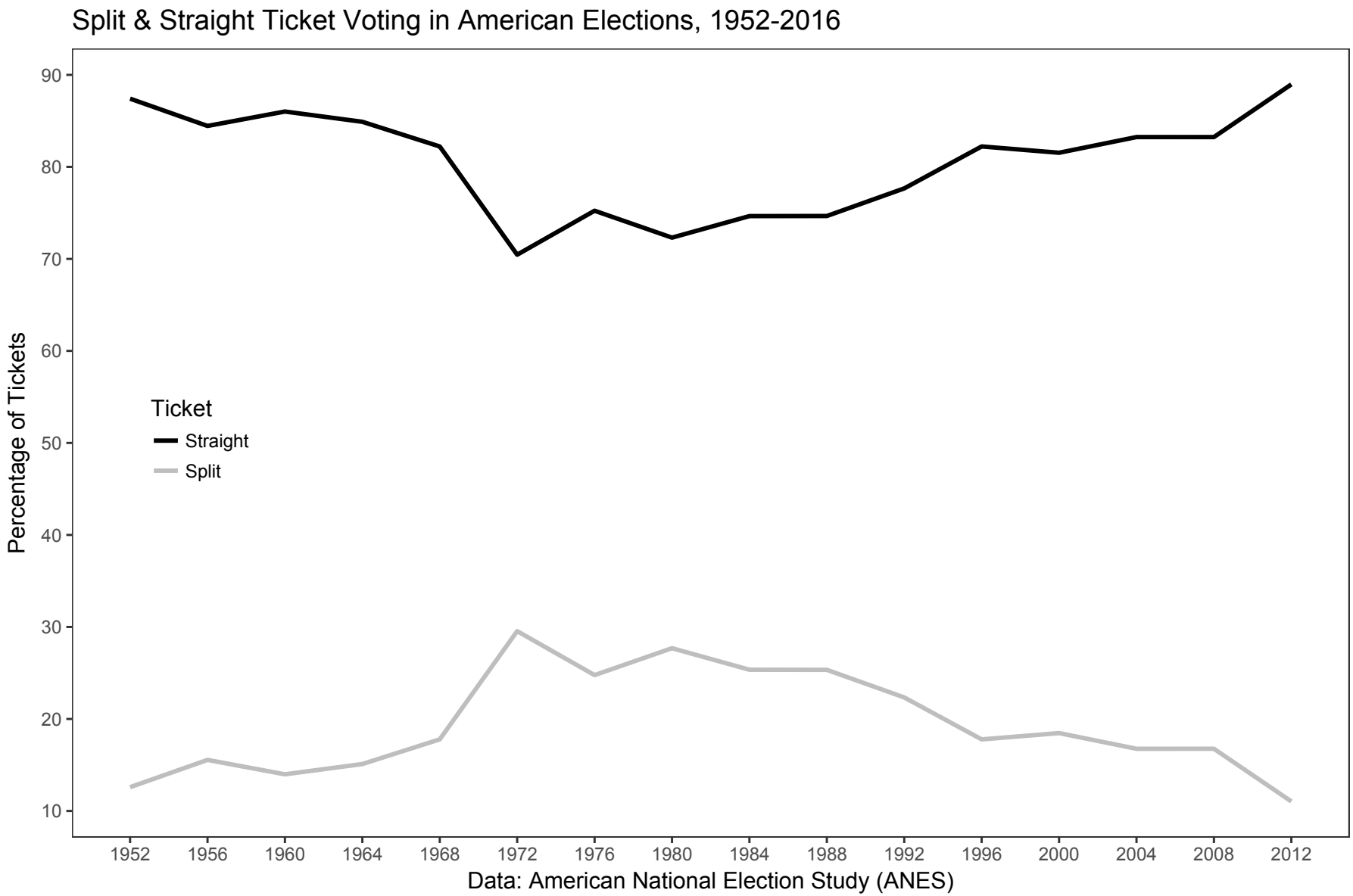
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

REPUBLICAN PARTY

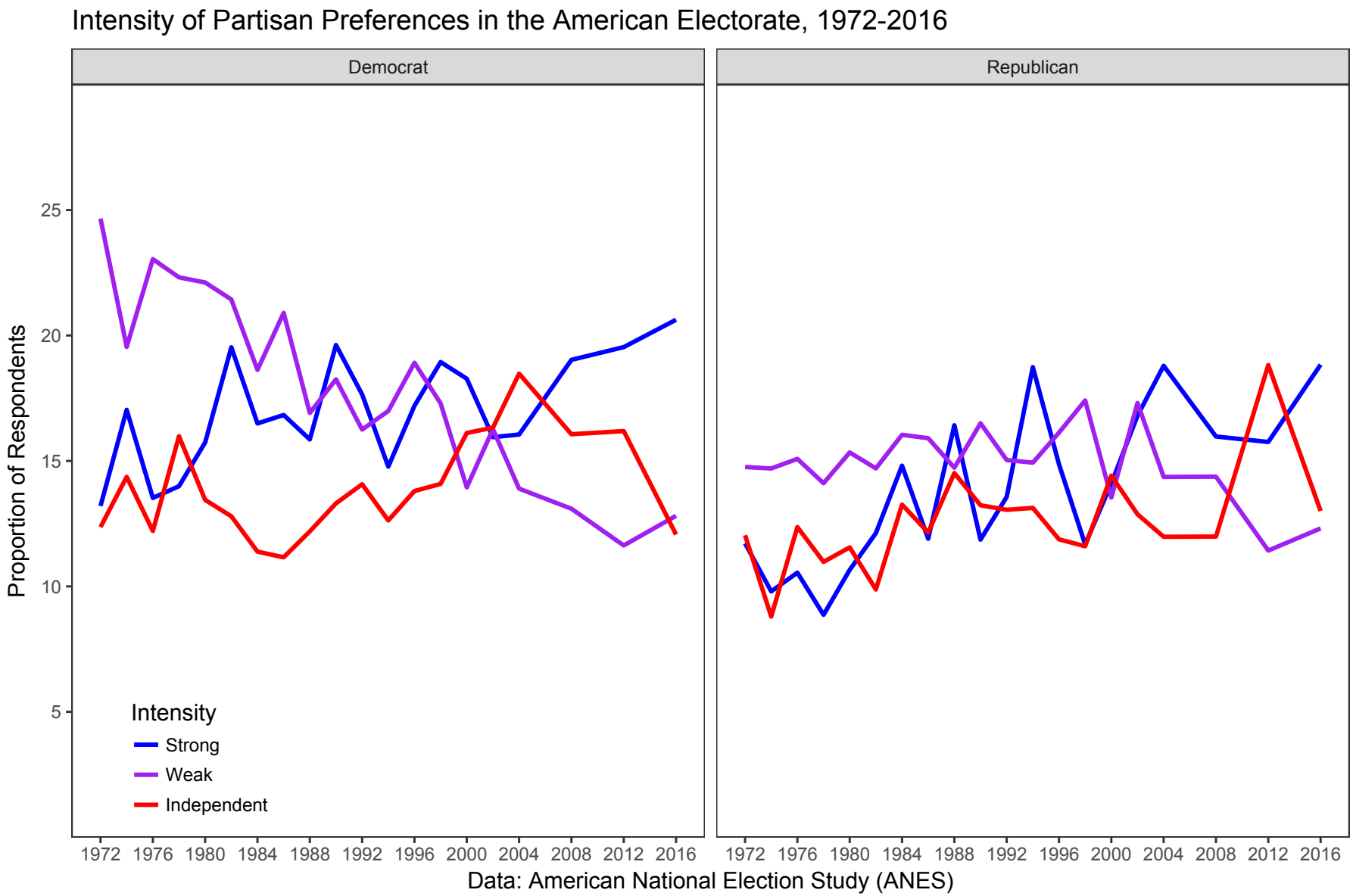
IOWA GREEN PARTY

LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Decline of Split-Ticket Voting



Changing Partisan Intensities



Partisanship or Ideology? Barber & Pope Study

- Why would scholars be concerned about disentangling partisan & ideological preferences?
- As Barber & Pope articulate: "Another way of putting this question of party versus ideology is to ask how sincerely held are expressed political and policy opinions and are these opinions based on ideological convictions or group loyalty? If issue positions are deeply held, then people's views on those issues should be far less likely to move as a result of any stimuli."
- Why would Trump provide a unique opportunity to disentangle partisanship & ideology?
- Unconventional politician with unorthodox policy views. . . shifting partisan loyalties. Example of unorthodox policy view held by Trump?

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Does Party Trump Ideology?

- 10 policy issues... Example: To increase the minimum wage to over $10 an hour. Do you support or oppose increasing the minimum wage to over $10 an hour?
- ***Treatment Effects:***
  1. Trump **supports** the minimum wage increase
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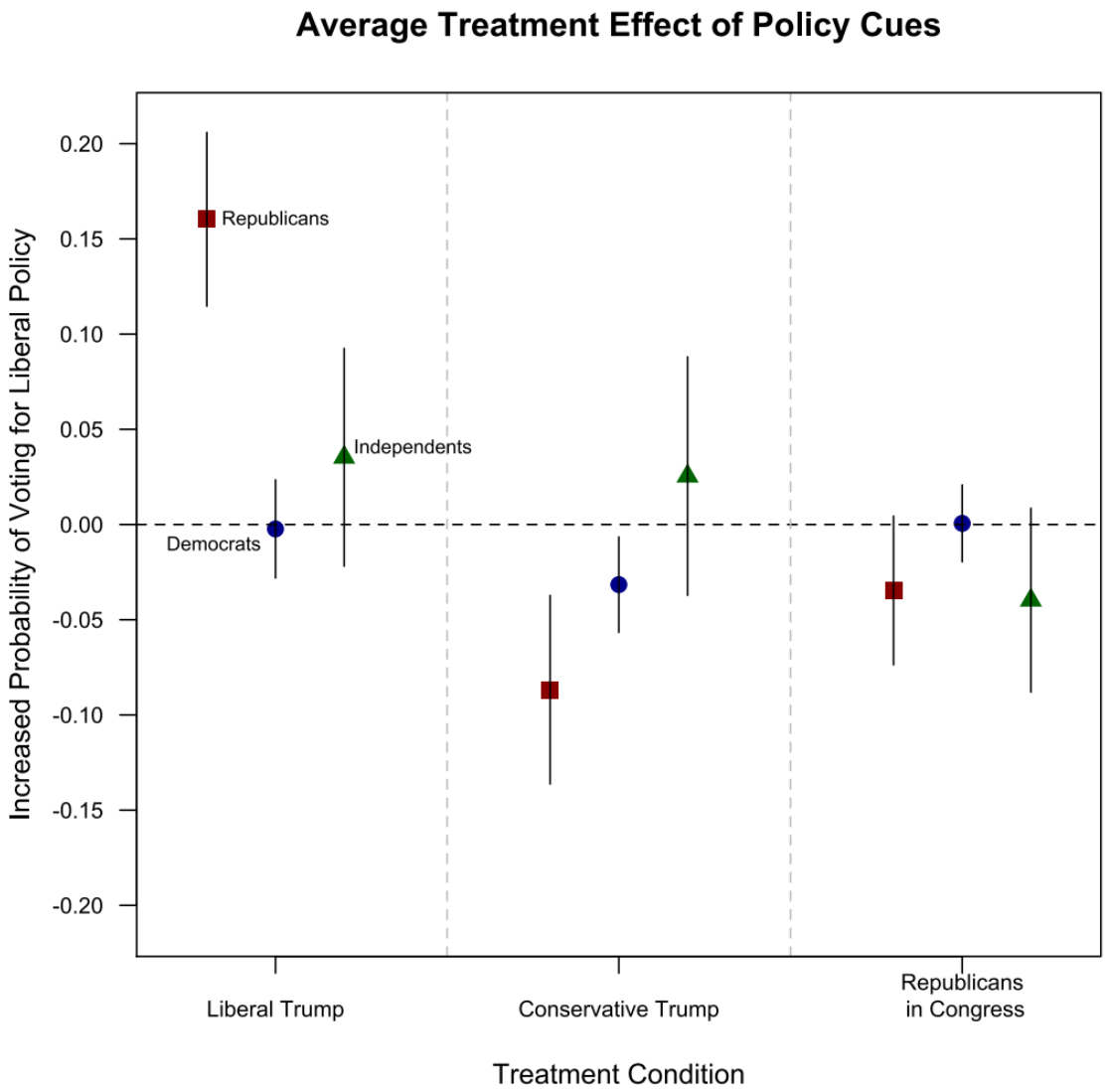
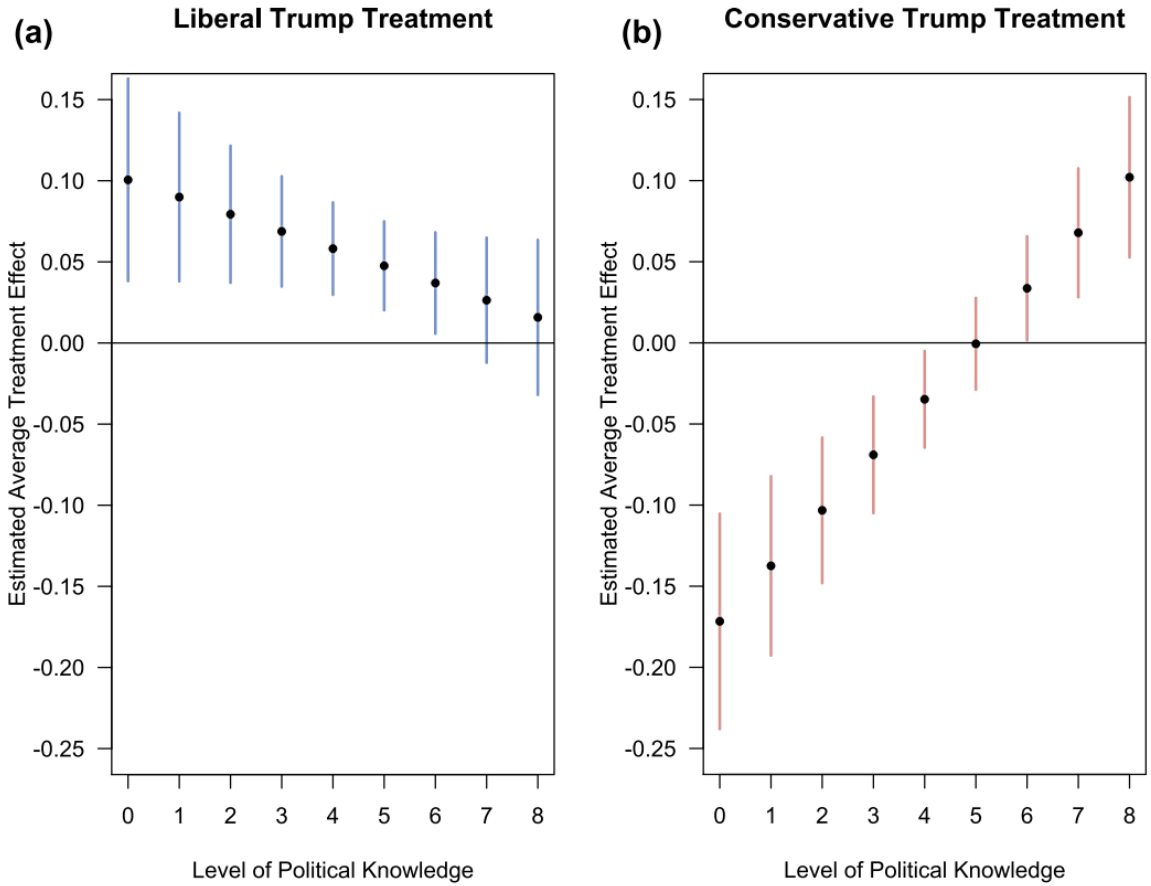
FIGURE 1. Average Treatment Effect Across Issues



Note: The effects indicate the average movement within groups and by treatment condition. Republicans are the only group that seems to shift positions significantly, and only in relation to Donald Trump cues. But it is true that they react in both a liberal and a conservative direction depending upon the cue.

FIGURE 2. Average Treatment Effect by Political Knowledge



Note: This figure displays the estimated treatment effect by levels of political knowledge. The left panel shows the effects of the liberal Trump treatment across levels of political knowledge. Higher values indicate a movement in a more liberal direction. The right panel shows the effects of the conservative Trump treatment across levels of political knowledge. Lower values indicate movement in a more conservative direction. Knowledge is clearly correlated with the treatment effect—higher knowledge respondents are less likely to respond to the cue, in either direction.

Key Points

1. Parties help solve collective action problems by providing the basis of *collective accountability* and *strong branding* as a key electoral heuristic

2. Major models of partisanship underpinned by *social identity* and loyalty to the party brand

3. Socialization reinforces partisanship... group identities are strong predictors of partisan preference
   - Contemporary politics defined by explanatory power of partisanship on voting behavior & evaluations

4. Partisanship *durable* and more intense, but changes slowly...see post-war change in Democratic partisanship among white southerners

5. Evidence that partisanship trumps ideological preferences–evidence from Barber & Pope