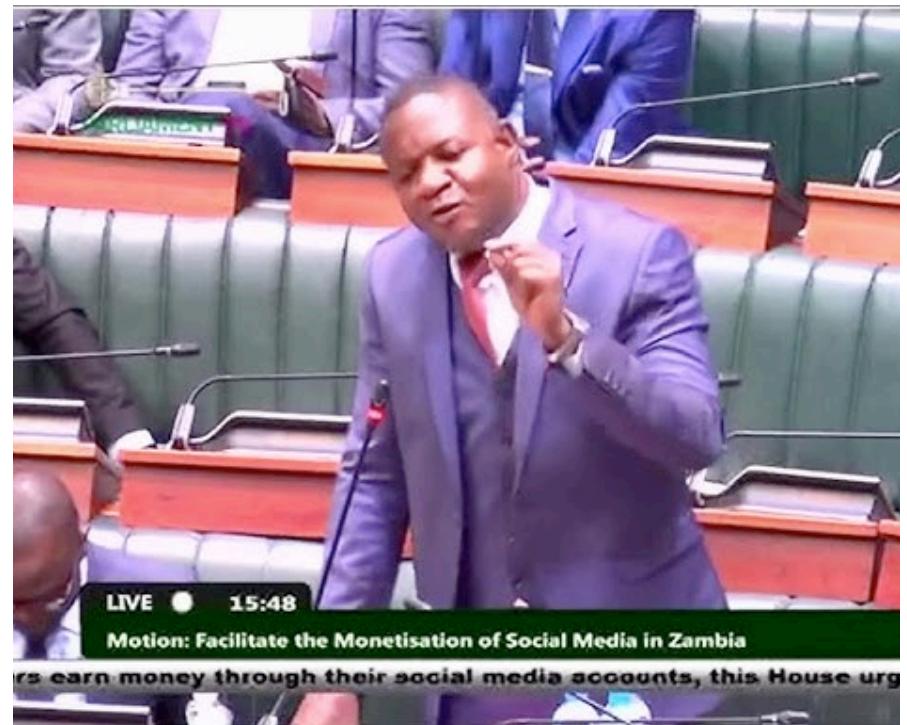


Loaded Questions

Global Liquidity and the Legislative Agenda in Zambia



Jacob Winter, February 2025

“Parliamentary questions discern the true preferences and interests of individual members”

Martin, 2011

Tracking Attention: Parliamentary Questions

Mr Kapyanga (Mpika) - to ask the **Minister of Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development:**

- A. When the construction of Phase II of the Michael Chilufya Sata Hospital in Mpika District will be completed;
- B. what the cause of the delay in completing the project, is;
- C. what the cost of the project is; and
- D. what the time frame for the completion of the project is.



Context

Delivering Development

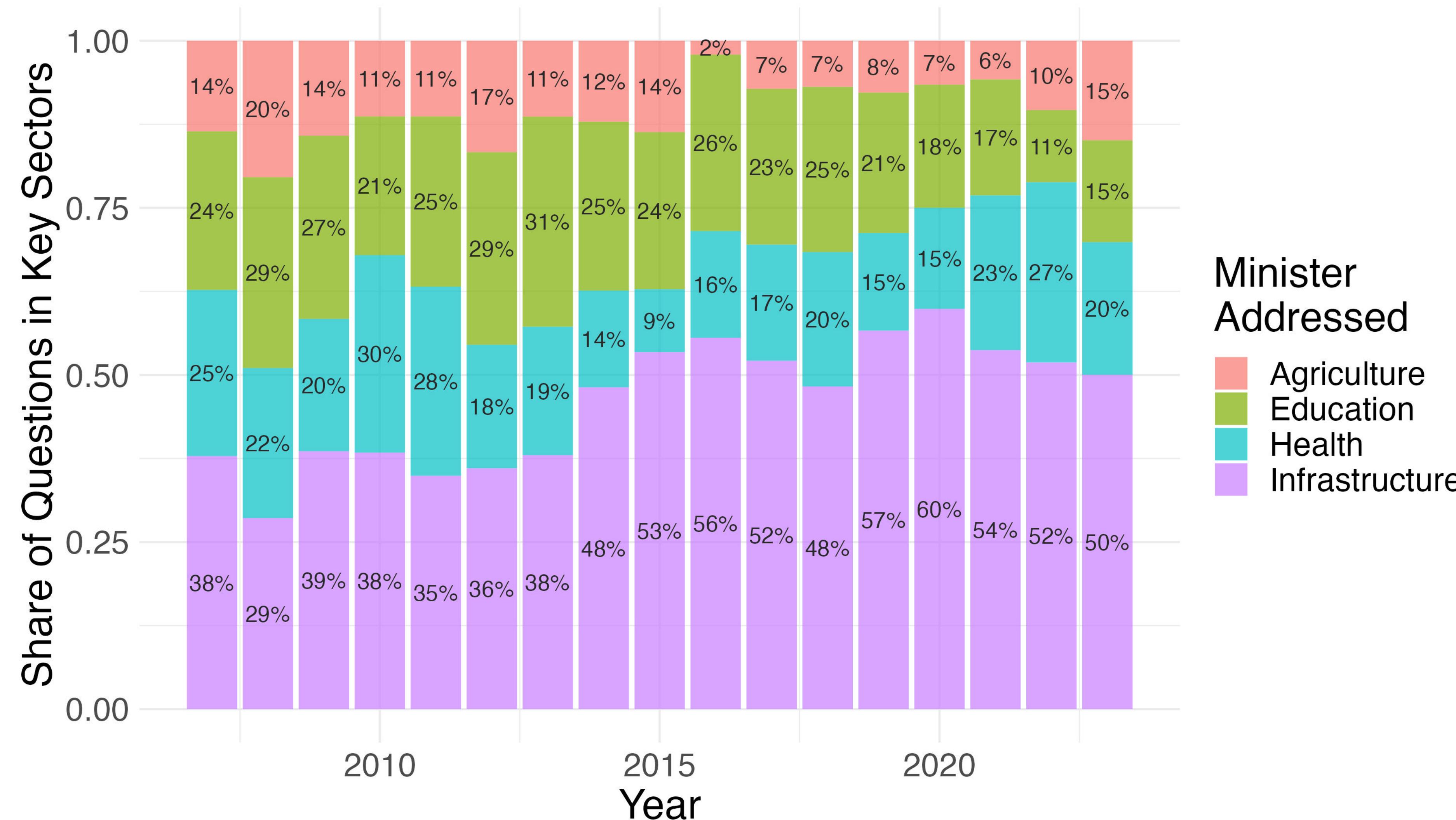
- MPs can't differentiate themselves on policy. Without historic class cleavages, parties compete on competence, not substance (Bleck and van de Walle, 2013, Lupu and Riedl, 2013, Hern, 2019).
- MPs face extremely competitive elections. Regionally, only 33% of incumbent MPs return to office (Bowles and Marx, 2023).
- Infrastructure is attractive because it is **geographically particular** and **directly attributed** to the MP (Opalo, 2019).

Sector Types

Delivering Development

	Broad Attribution	Local Attribution
Geographically Particular	Routine Maintenance	New Infrastructure (Roads, bridges, dams, wells)
Nationally Shared	Teacher Recruitment Health Supplies	Constituency Development Funds Agricultural Inputs (FISP)

Changing Focus in Zambia's Parliament



Source: Hansard and Order Papers, National Assembly, 2001-2024

Context

Expectations

- Infrastructure isn't always realistic. Government fiscal constraint shifts with changes in resource prices and borrowing costs (Wibbels, 2006).
- MPs balance need for re-election and re-adoption.
 - In party strongholds, MPs are guaranteed re-election, but party leaders control candidate nomination. Parties limit ascent of rivals (Choi, 2018).

Sector Types

Delivering Development

Geographically
Particular

Nationally
Shared

Broad Attributability

Routine Maintenance
**Weak MPs,
Cheap Finance**

Teacher Recruitment
**Weak MPs,
Expensive Finance**

Local Attributability

New Infrastructure (Roads,
bridges, buildings, wells)
**Strong MPs,
Cheap Finance**

Constituency Development
Funds
**Strong MPs,
Expensive Finance**
Agricultural Inputs (FISP)

Hypotheses

- When borrowing costs rise, MPs will ask for more shared spending (health, education).
- Strong MPs will make more demands for attributable sectors (infrastructure).
- These will interact, such that strong MPs will be less sensitive to changes in the government's fiscal constraint.

Setup: Multinomial Logit

- **Unit of Analysis:** Question (9,362 questions from 2001-2024)
- **Dependent variable:** Minister to which the question is addressed:
Infrastructure, Social (Health, Education), Agriculture
- **Explanatory Variables:** Borrowing Cost, Electoral Margin
- **Controls:** Constituency Nightlight Values

$$\ln \left(\frac{P \text{ Category}_{ijp}}{P \text{ Category}_{Base \; jp}} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Margin}_p + \beta_2 \text{Interest}_j + \beta_3 \text{Lights}_j + \epsilon_{ij}$$

Results

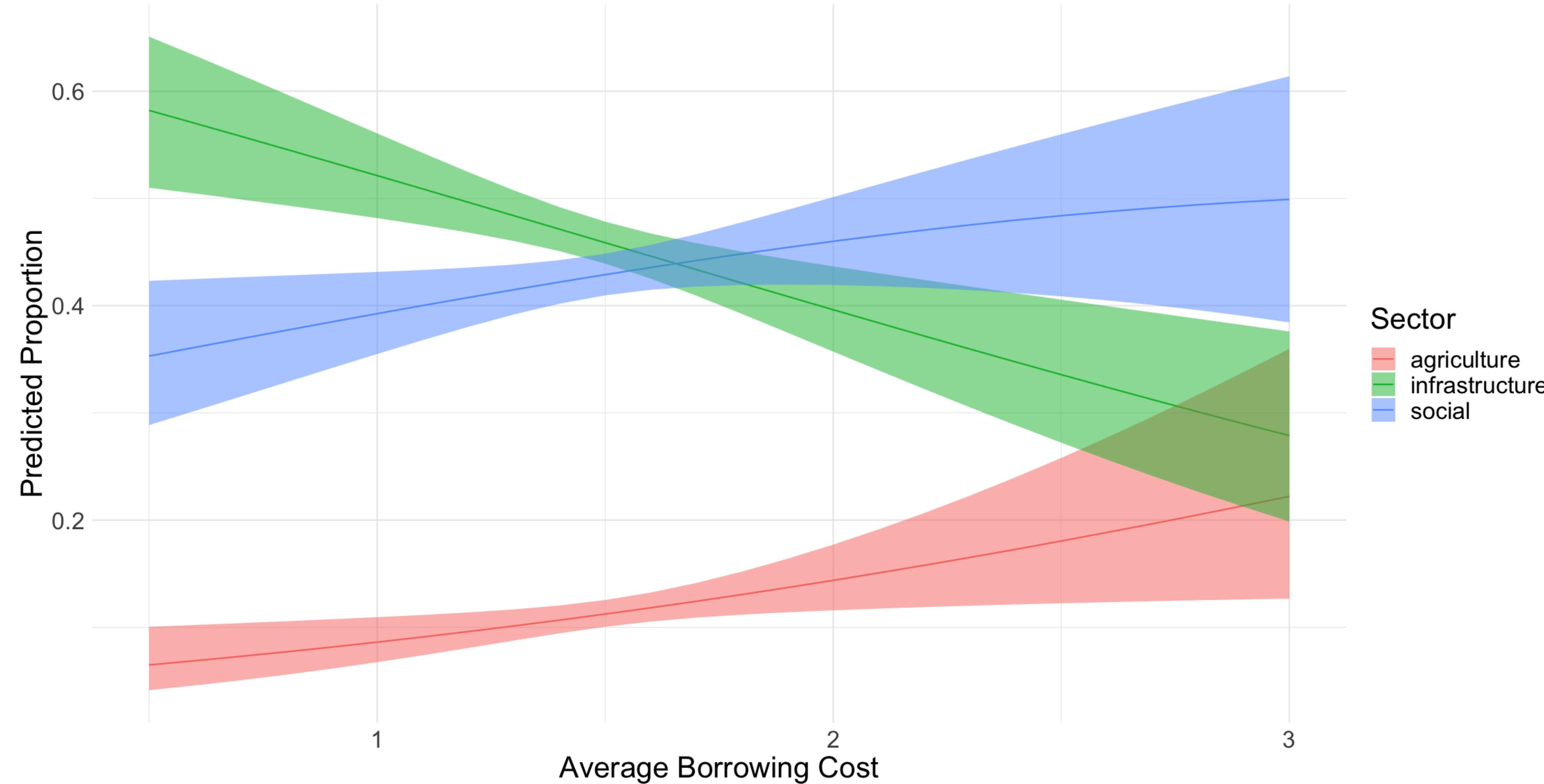
	Model 1		Model 2	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Infrastructure/ Agriculture	Social/ Agriculture	Infrastructure/ Agriculture	Social/ Agriculture
Ruling Margin	0.491*** (0.190)	0.130 (0.192)	0.749** (0.367)	-0.335 (0.371)
Africa Interest	-0.786*** (0.241)	-0.353 (0.241)	-0.517* (0.287)	-0.243 (0.290)
Light Value	0.021* (0.011)	0.016 (0.012)	0.215*** (0.048)	0.127*** (0.049)
Constant	2.577*** (0.375)	1.828*** (0.377)	2.154** (0.957)	1.284 (0.985)
FEs	N	N	Y	Y
Observations	2354	2354	2354	2354
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,885.632	4,885.632	4,987.954	4,987.954

Note:

Base Category: Agriculture
 * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

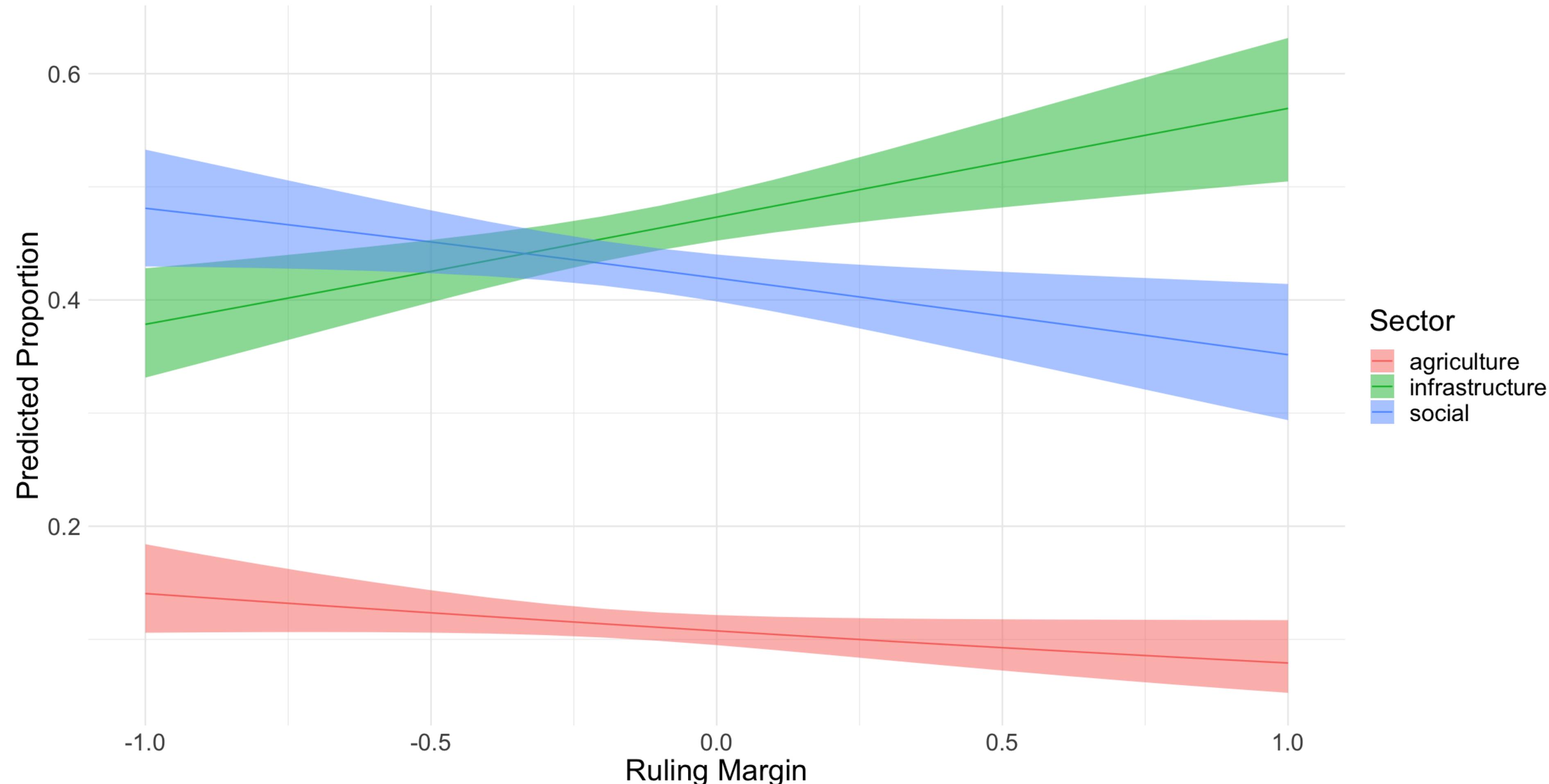
Results: Borrowing

As borrowing costs rise, questions shift to social sector



Results: Margin

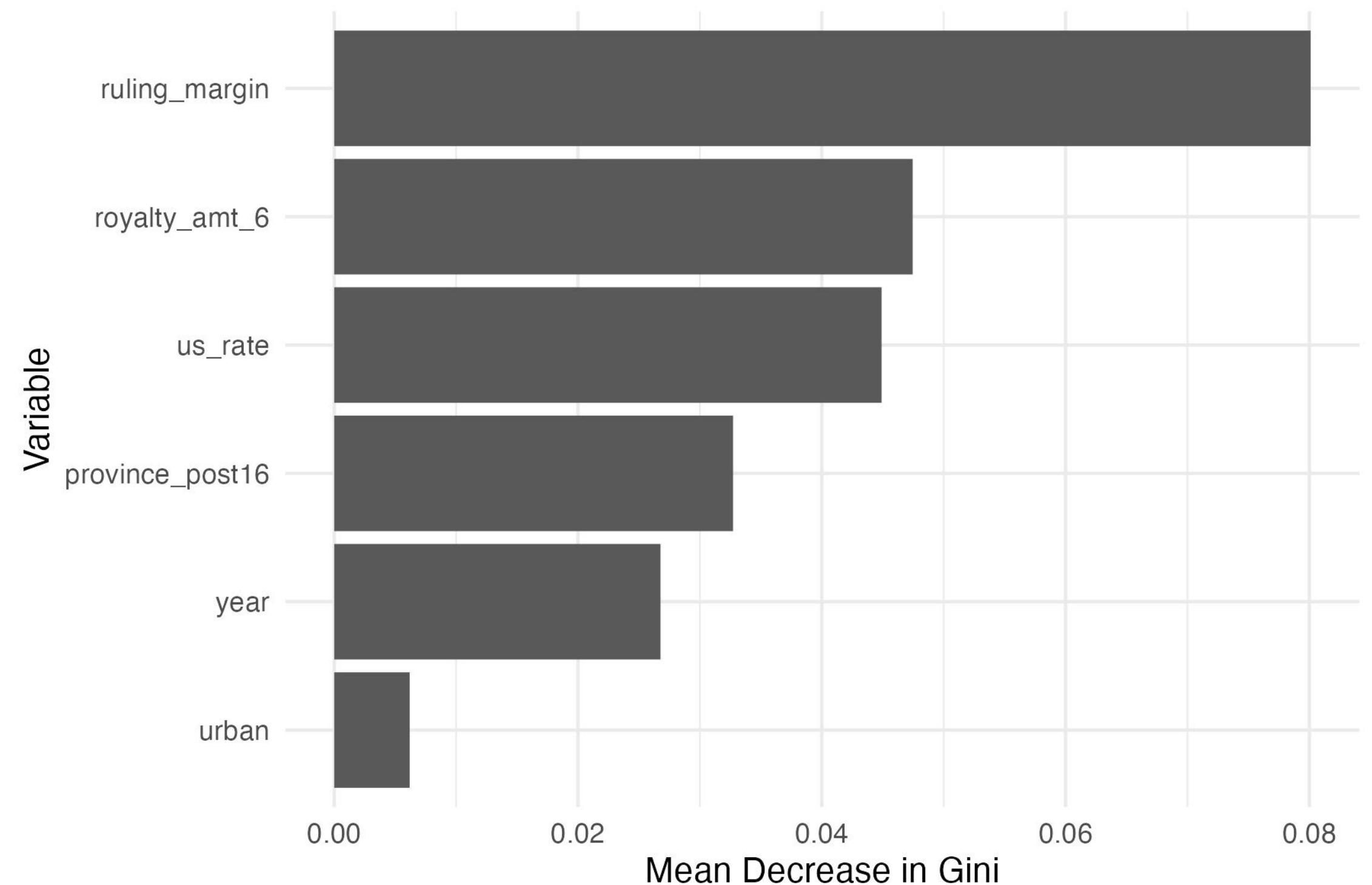
As electoral margins rise, questions shift to infrastructure



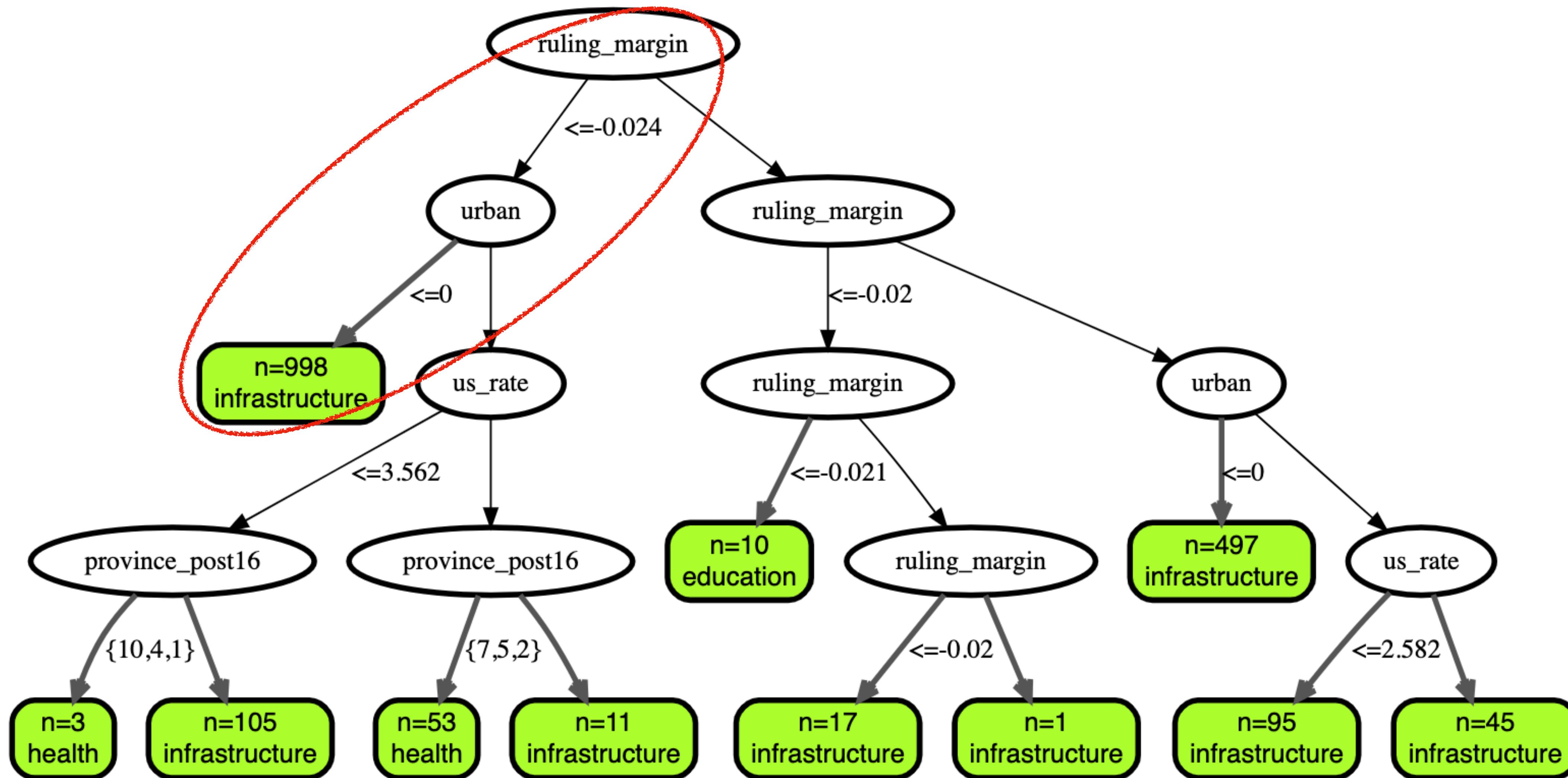
Setup: Random Forest

Modelling Nonlinear Interactive Effects

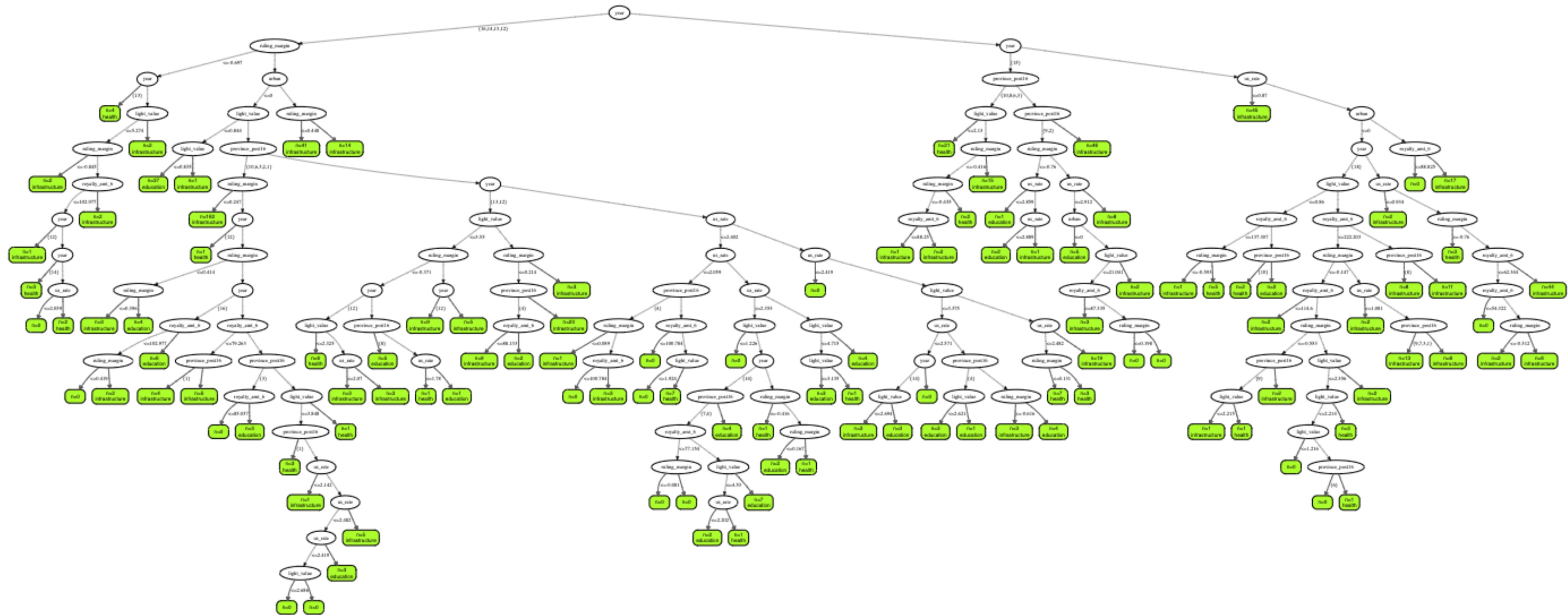
- **Unit of Analysis:** Question
- **Dependent variable:** Minister to which the question is addressed: Infrastructure, Health, Education
- **Explanatory Variables:** Electoral Margin, Borrowing Cost, Royalties
- **Controls:** Province, Year, Urban



Sample Classification Tree

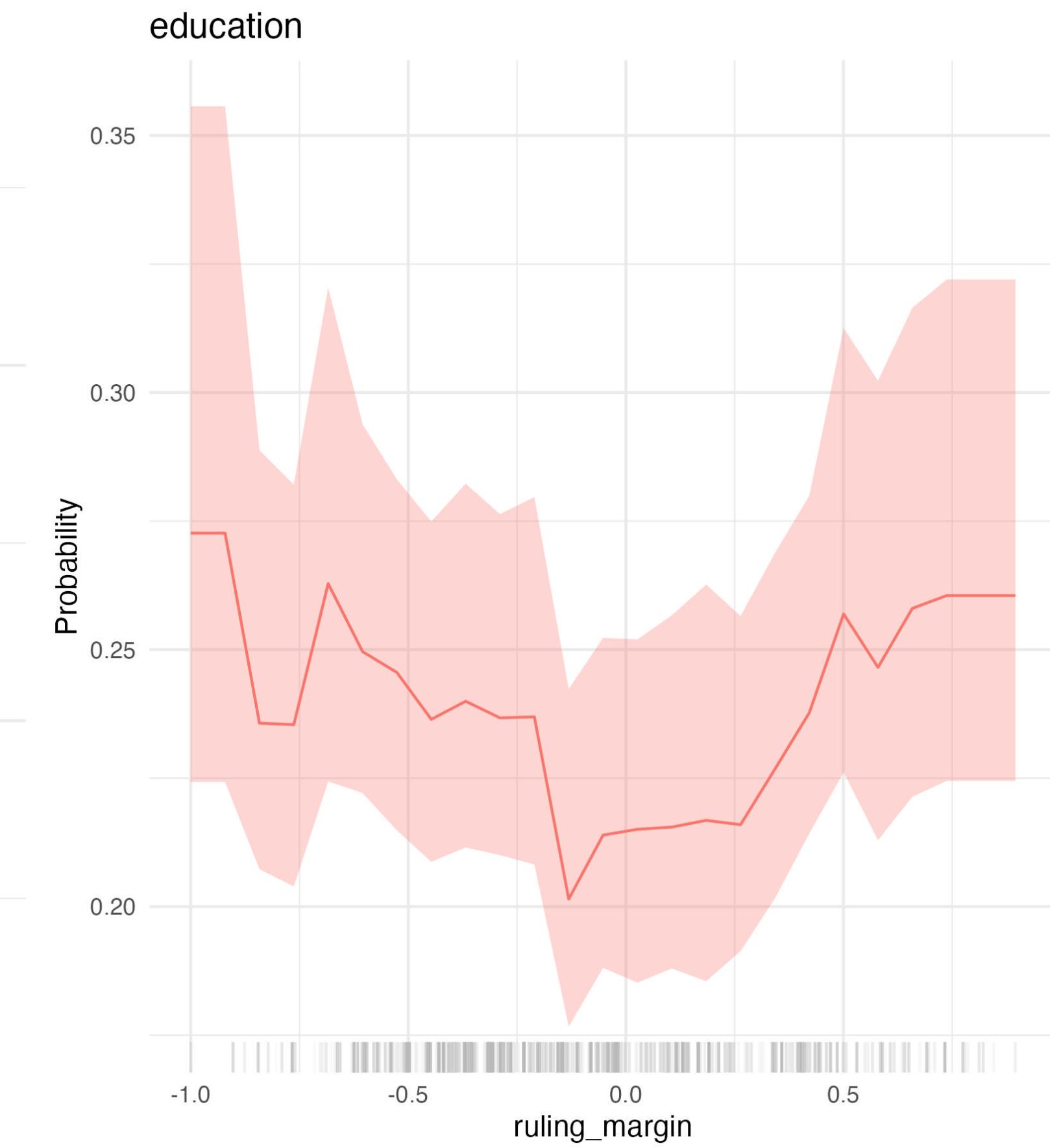
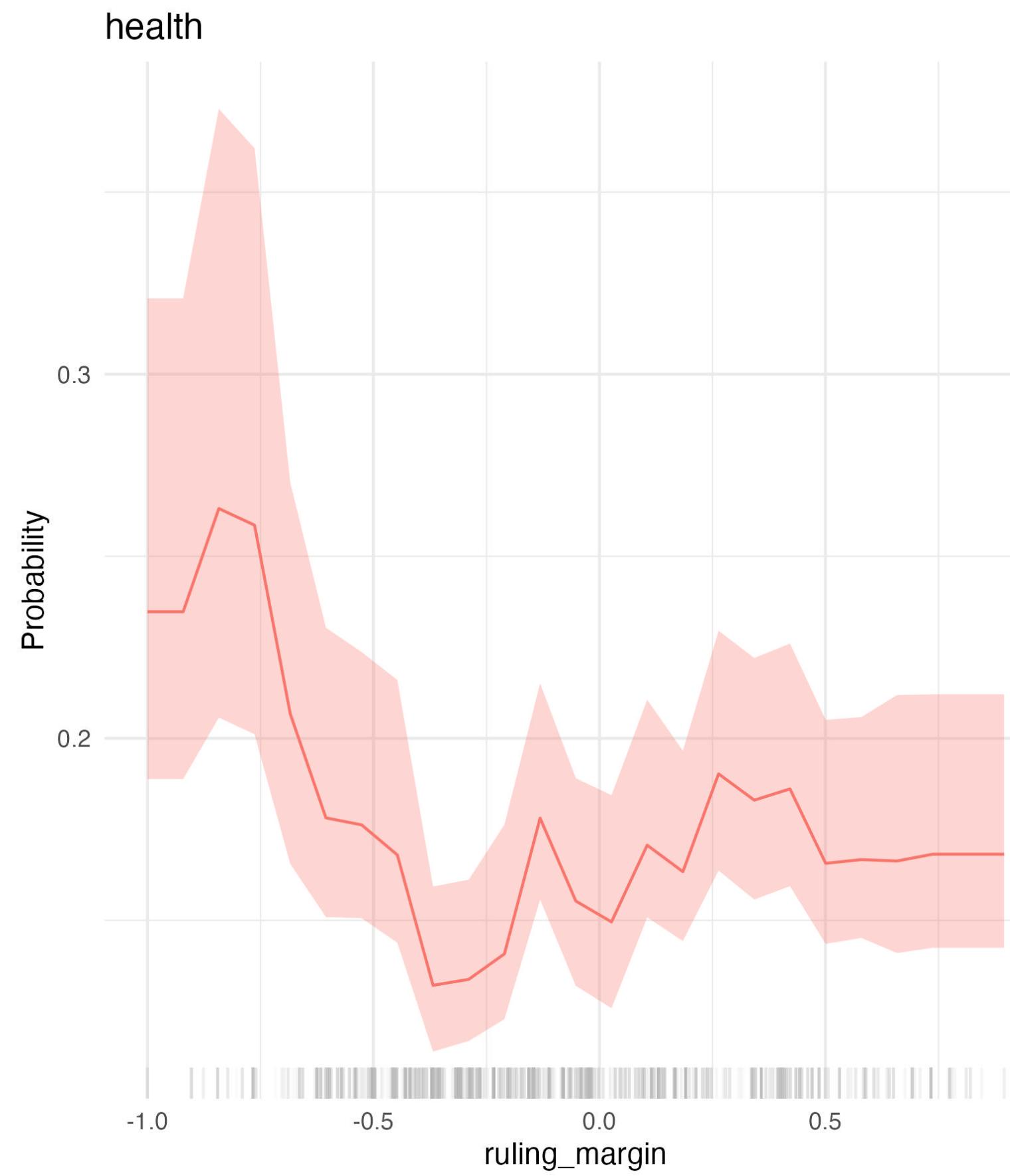
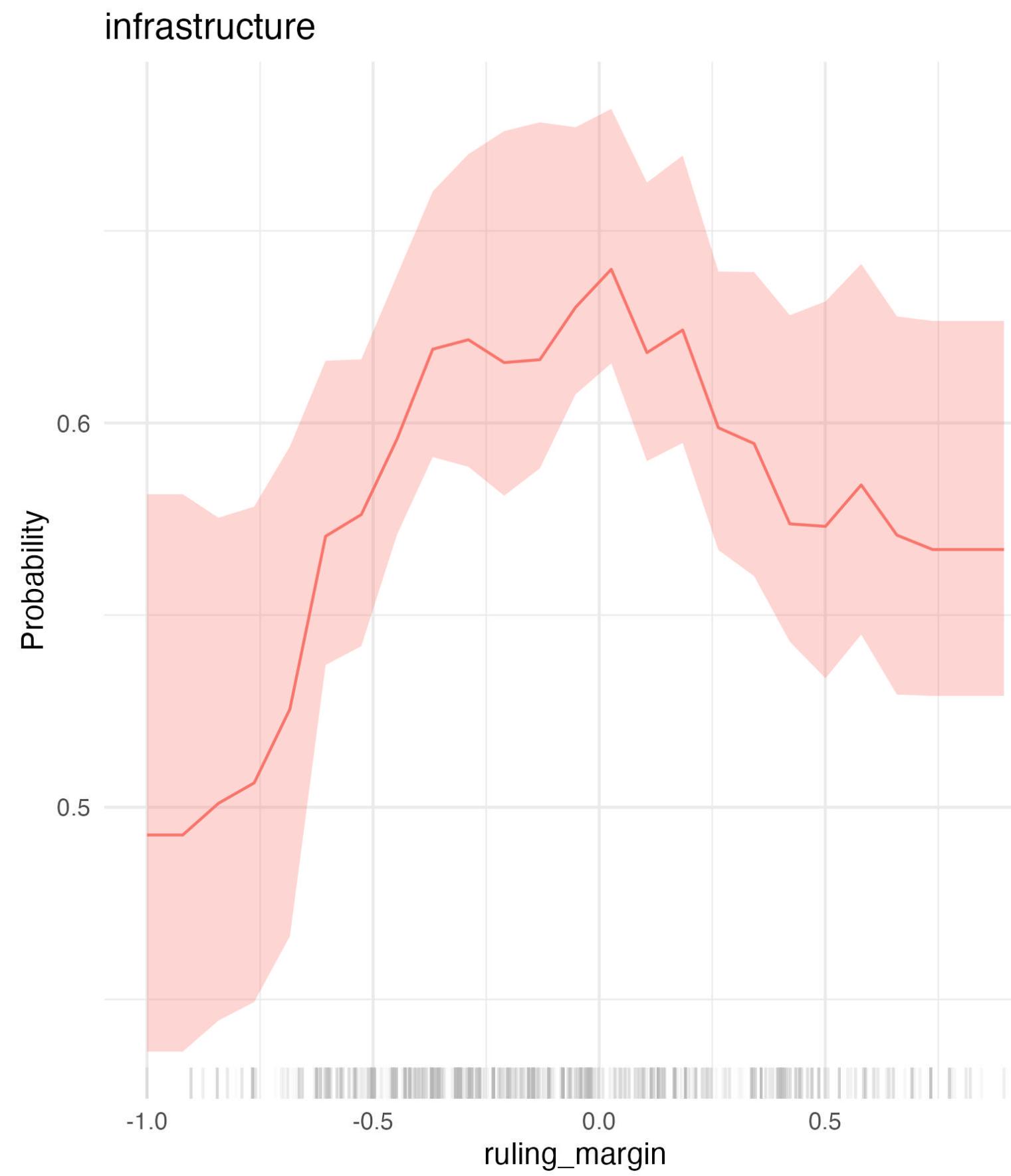


Actual Classification Tree



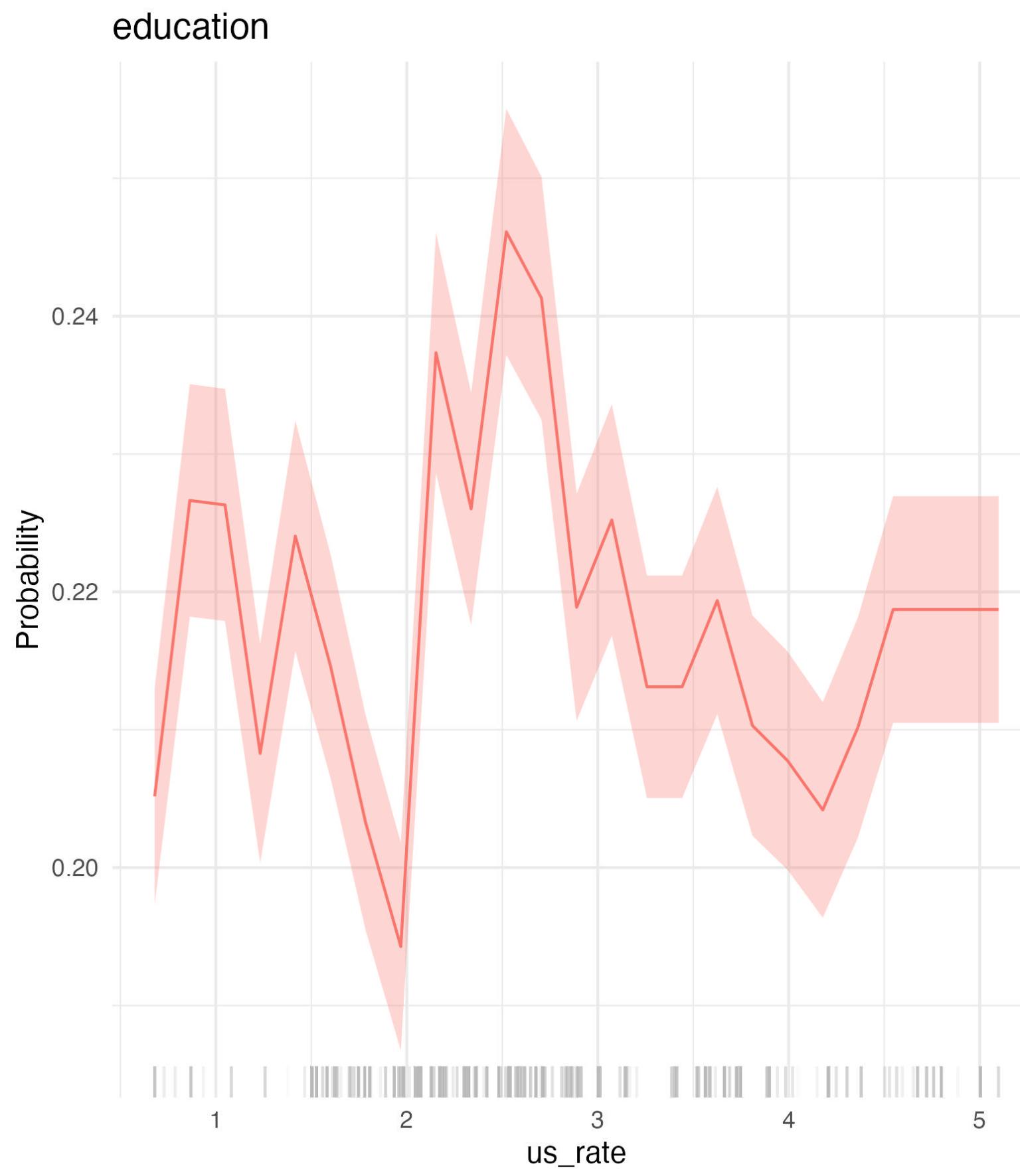
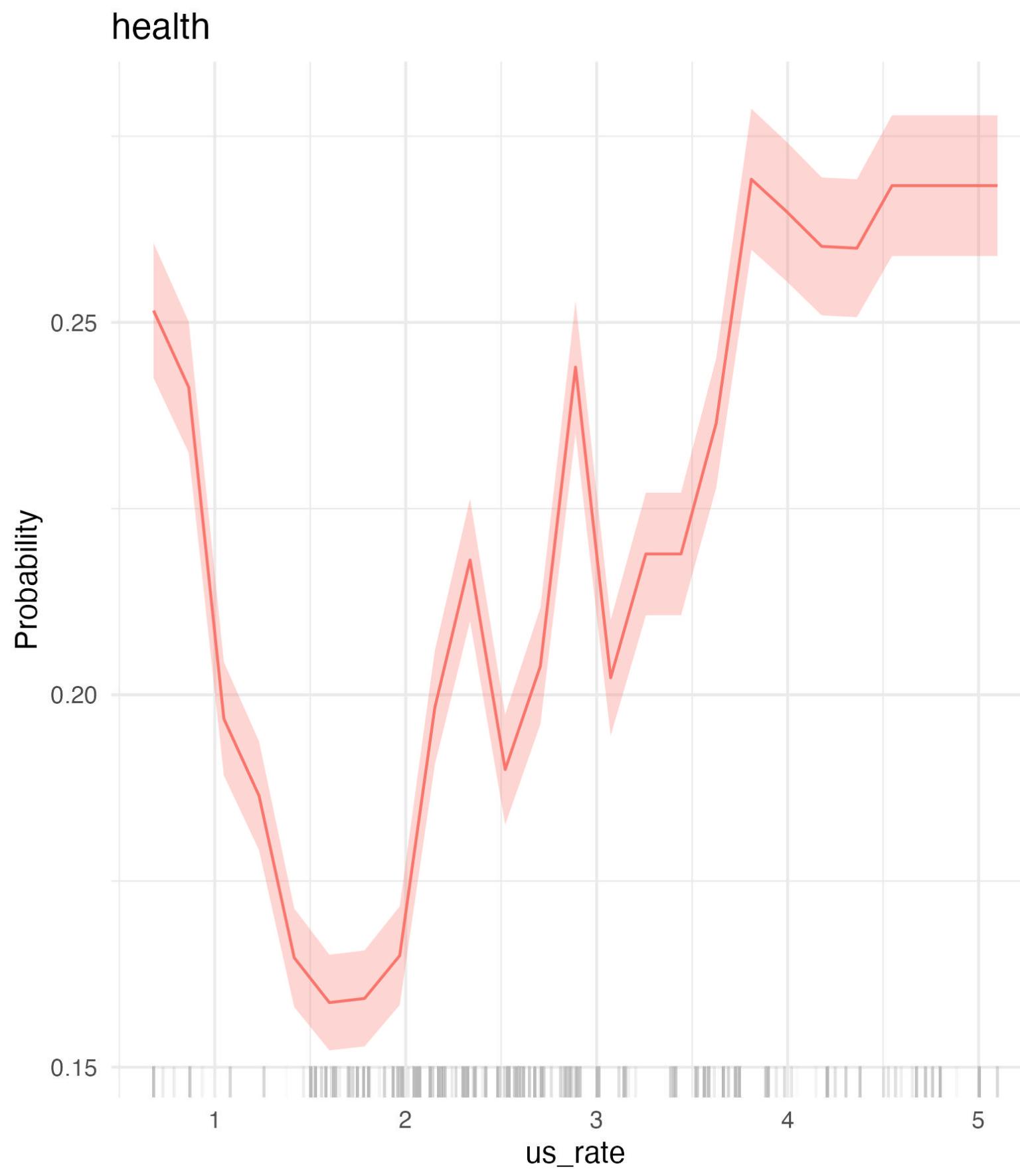
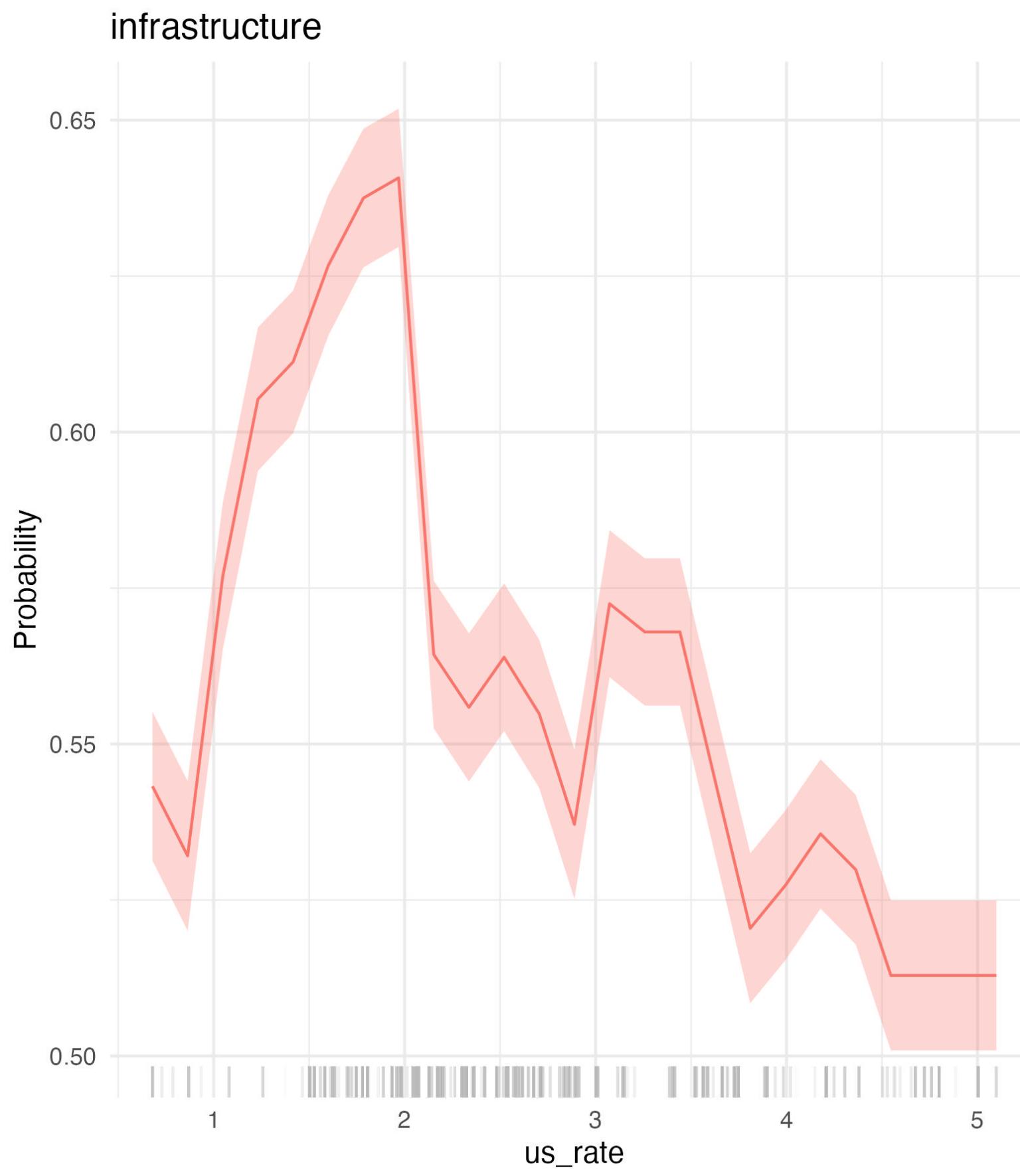
Results: Ruling Margin

Partial dependence plots with bootstrapped intervals



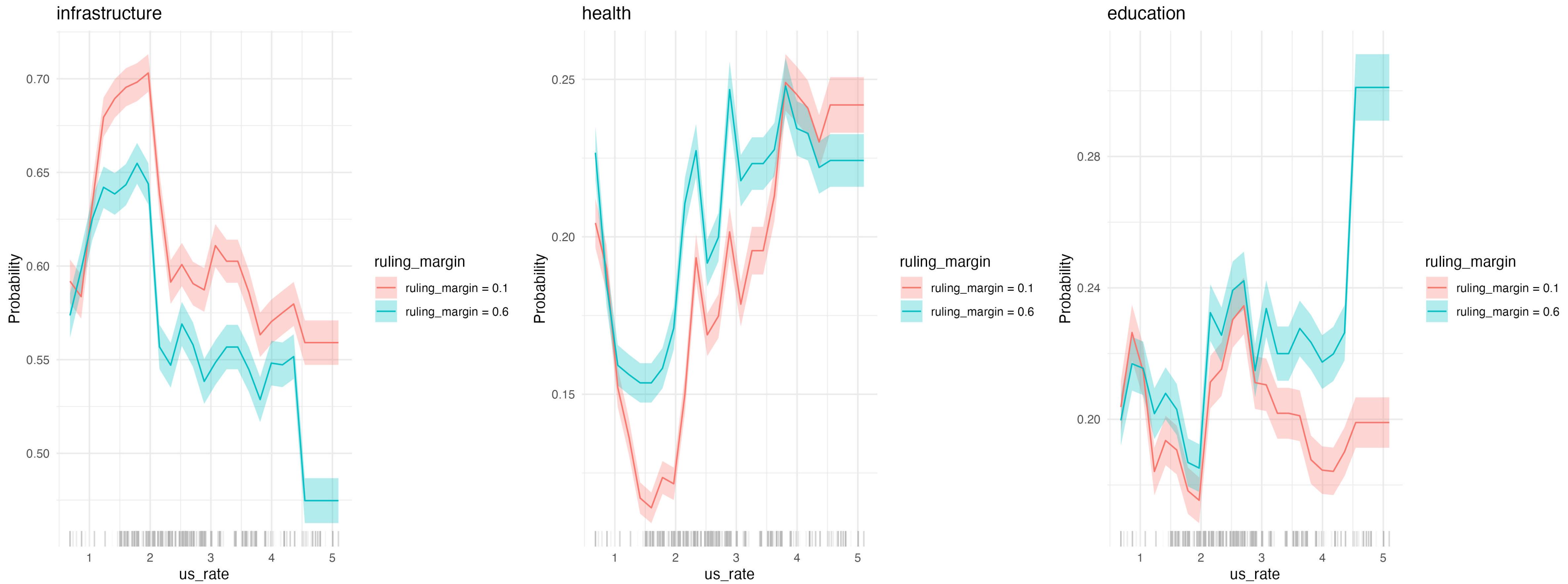
Results: Borrowing Costs

Partial dependence plots



Results: Borrowing Costs

Partial dependence plots



Wrapping Up



Summary

- Zambian MPs adjust their policy attention based on domestic electoral concerns and international economic conditions.
- MPs with higher re-election concerns focus on attributable spending.
- When borrowing costs rise, MPs shift toward shared spending- especially health.

Next steps

- Align model categories and controls
- Code executive response. Committee on Government Assurances publishes reports on progress each sitting noting progress. Which questions get answered?

Report of the Committee on Government Assurances

- Code
- Project Status
- Executive Response

16/16 - Mbala/Nsumbu Road in Nsama

On 16th April, 2016, the Deputy Minister of Works and Supply made the following assurance:

Mr Speaker, works on Lot I will cover 33 km of the Mbala/Nsumbu Road and will commence in the second quarter of 2016. Works under Lot I will also cover 26 km of the road to Chief Tafuna's Palace and 36 km of the access road to Chief Mphande's Palace. However, these roads are not along the Mbala/Nsumbu Road.

Sir, the construction of a bridge on Lufubu River will not be part of the Mbala/Nsumbu Road contract as it is being procured separately as a stand-alone project.

Mr Speaker, we are happy that Hon. Chansa has accepted our assurance and will definitely make sure that works under Lot I of the Mbala/Nsumbu Road commence in the second quarter of this year."

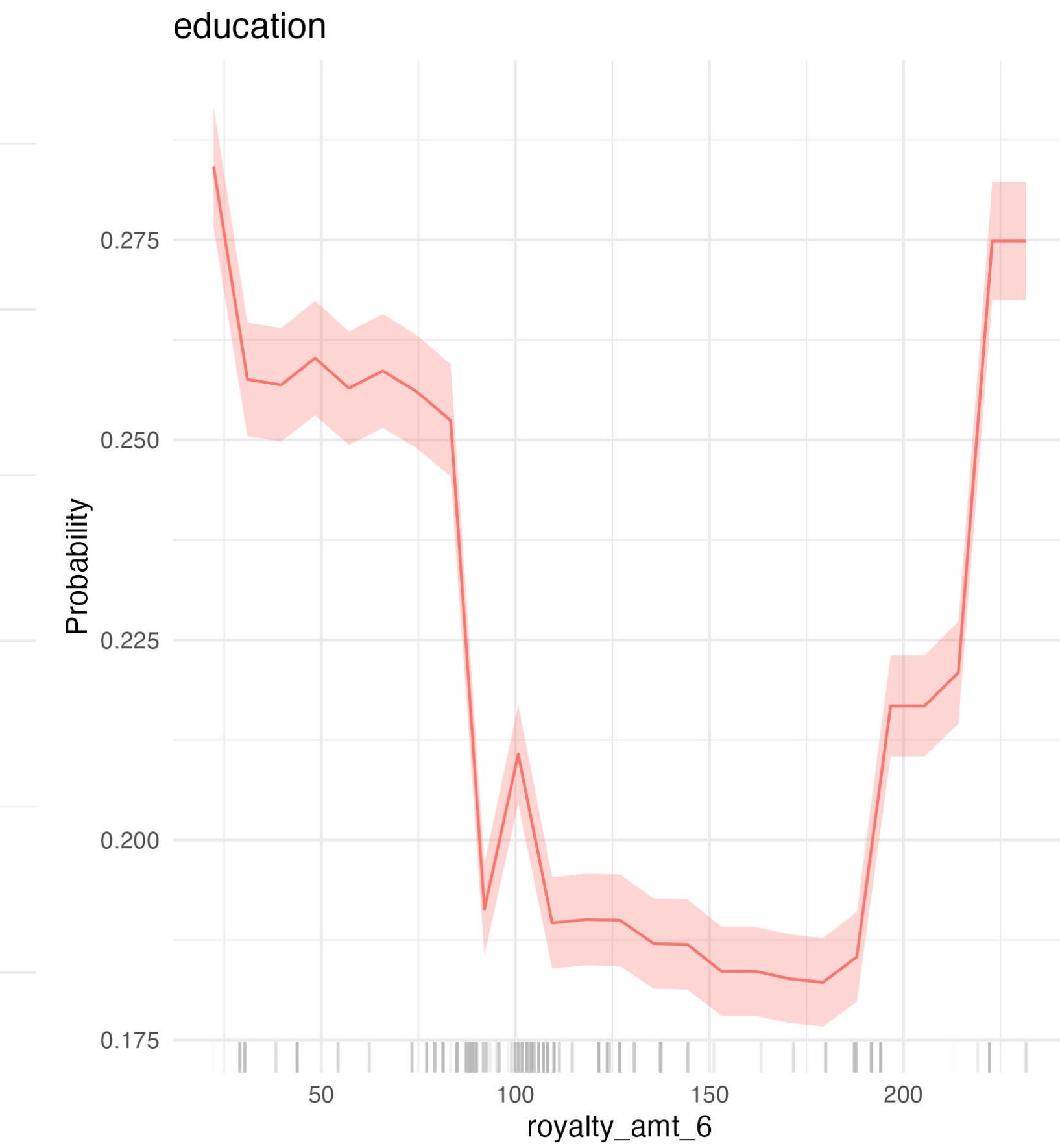
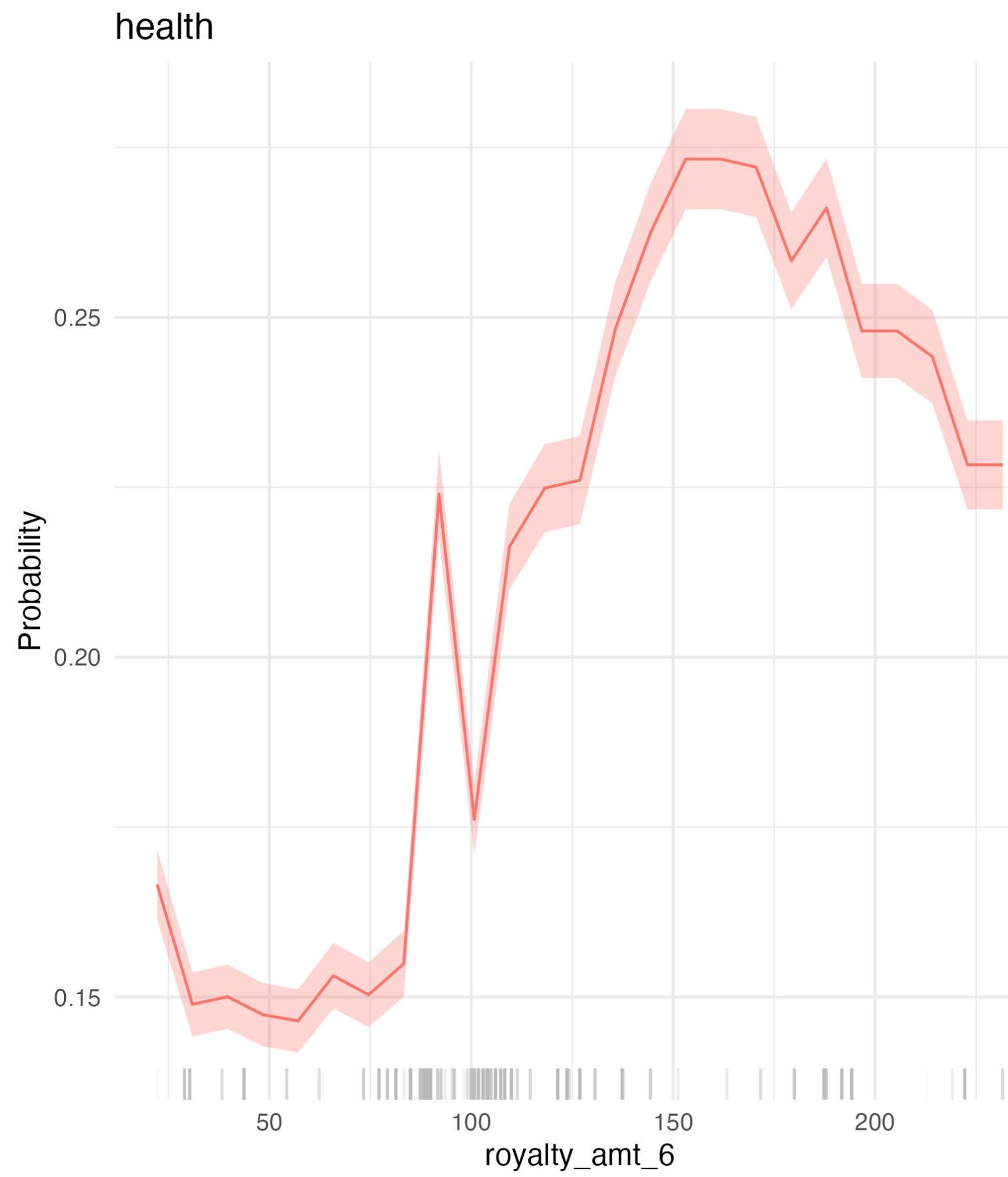
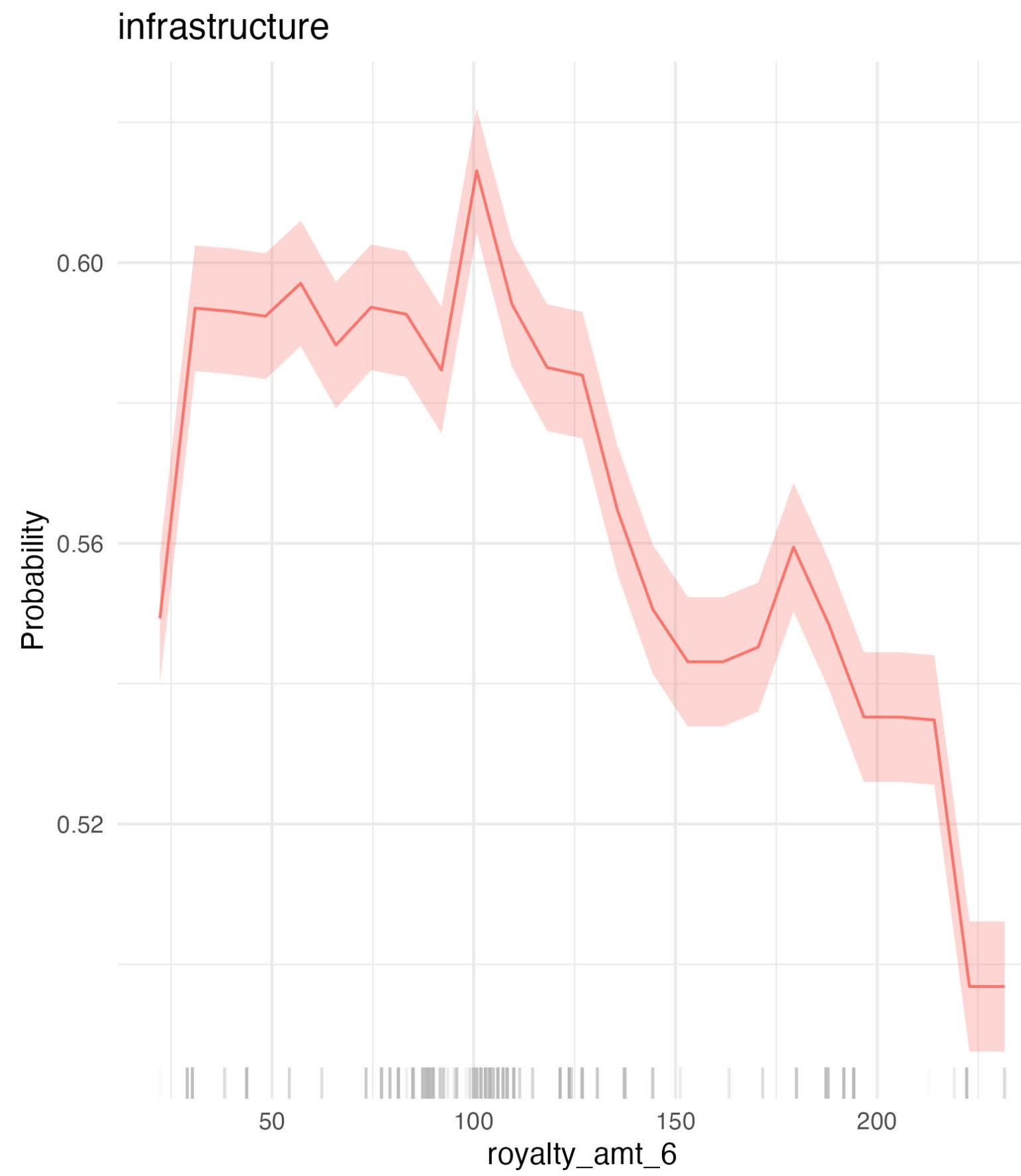
Your previous Committee had noted the submission and urged the Government to ensure that financing arrangements were concluded expeditiously for the works to commence. Your previous Committee had resolved to await a progress report on the matter.

Response by the Executive

In its update to your Committee, the Executive indicated that the 33km stretch of the Mbala to Nsumbu Road would be covered under the project for upgrading to bituminous standard of the Mbala to Kasaba Bay Road. The contract was signed on July 21, 2016 for a contract value of K798, 514,088.60 and duration of twenty four months. Works would commence upon finalisation of the financing agreement.

Results: Mining Royalties

Partial dependence plots



Results: Mining Royalties

Partial dependence plots

Dependent Variable: Infrastructure

