Do Polarized Issues Hold Greater Importance in Voters' Electoral Choices? Empirical Evidence from a Novel Measurement Approach

Online Appendix

R. Michael Alvarez and Jacob Morrier

Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences

California Institute of Technology

October 2023

Ethical Considerations

Our study fully adheres to the American Political Science Association's Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. The survey project was rigorously reviewed by our institution's Committee for the Protection and Human Subjects and deemed exempt, considering that: (i) the data was collected by a third party in a way that protects participants' anonymity, and (ii) the disclosure of participants' responses outside the research's context would not reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation. The voluntary and informed consent of participants was sought and obtained. Participants could skip over one or many questions. Our study did not involve any deception. Also, it did not interfere with the political process since it was fielded after the 2022 Congressional midterm elections. Finally, participants were compensated with points they could eventually redeem for cash, gift certificates, or other rewards on YouGov's portal.

Detailed Results

Table S1: Issue Importance by Policy Issue

	Dependent Variable:			
	Whether the Voter Votes for the Candidate			
	Constant	Agreeing with the Candidate	Voter is Neutral	N
Abortion	0.320***	0.354***	0.180***	2658
	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.010)	
Climate Change I	0.358***	0.289***	0.142***	2674
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	
Climate Change II	0.374***	0.247***	0.126***	2620
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.012)	
Climate Change III	0.369***	0.271***	0.131***	2684
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	
Climate Change IV	0.371***	0.258***	0.129***	2620
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.012)	
Climate Change V	0.372***	0.248***	0.128***	2642
	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.012)	
Defense	0.380***	0.239***	0.120***	2650
	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.011)	
Deficit	0.365***	0.269***	0.135***	2686
	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.012)	
Democracy	0.314***	0.357***	0.186***	2758
	(0.011)	(0.019)	(0.011)	
Education	0.347***	0.305***	0.153***	2658
	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.011)	
Gun Control	0.351***	0.305***	0.149***	2694
	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.010)	
Health Care	0.346***	0.322***	0.154***	2730
	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.010)	
Higher Education	0.343***	0.307***	0.157***	2676
	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.011)	
Immigration	0.341***	0.329***	0.159***	2766
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	
Marijuana	0.358***	0.293***	0.142***	2610
	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.011)	
Minimum Wage	0.356***	0.282***	0.144***	2606
	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.012)	
Racial Equality	0.331***	0.331***	0.169***	2616
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	
Social Security	0.348***	0.309***	0.152***	2650
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	
Taxes	0.431***	0.141***	0.069***	2510
	(0.013)	(0.026)	(0.013)	

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table S2: Adjusted Issue Importance by Policy Issue

|	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement	N
Abortion	0.6	0.123	0.277	1329
Climate Change I	0.537	0.155	0.308	1337
Climate Change II	0.514	0.19	0.297	1310
Climate Change III	0.506	0.183	0.311	1342
Climate Change IV	0.501	0.203	0.296	1310
Climate Change V	0.489	0.235	0.277	1321
Defense	0.483	0.223	0.294	1325
Deficit	0.463	0.272	0.265	1343
Democracy	0.592	0.153	0.254	1379
Education	0.543	0.168	0.289	1329
Gun Control	0.547	0.146	0.306	1347
Health Care	0.527	0.176	0.297	1365
Higher Education	0.552	0.17	0.278	1338
Immigration	0.55	0.149	0.301	1383
Marijuana	0.519	0.176	0.305	1305
Minimum Wage	0.558	0.145	0.296	1303
Racial Equality	0.571	0.156	0.273	1308
Social Security	0.545	0.156	0.299	1325
Taxes	0.355	0.365	0.281	1255

Additional Figures

Figure S1: Distribution of the Policy Positions of Voters by Policy Issue

Figure S2: Distribution of the Policy Positions of Voters by Policy Issue and Party Identification
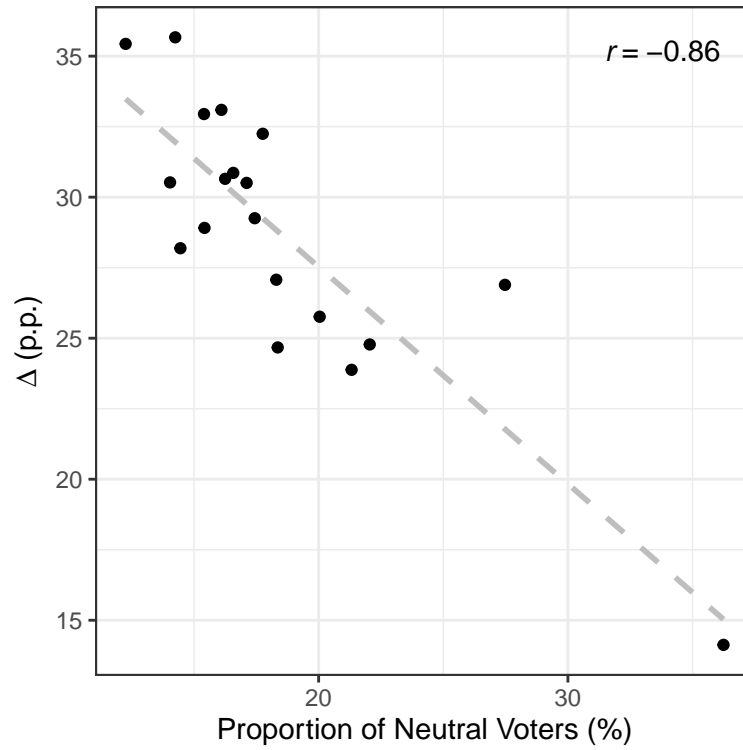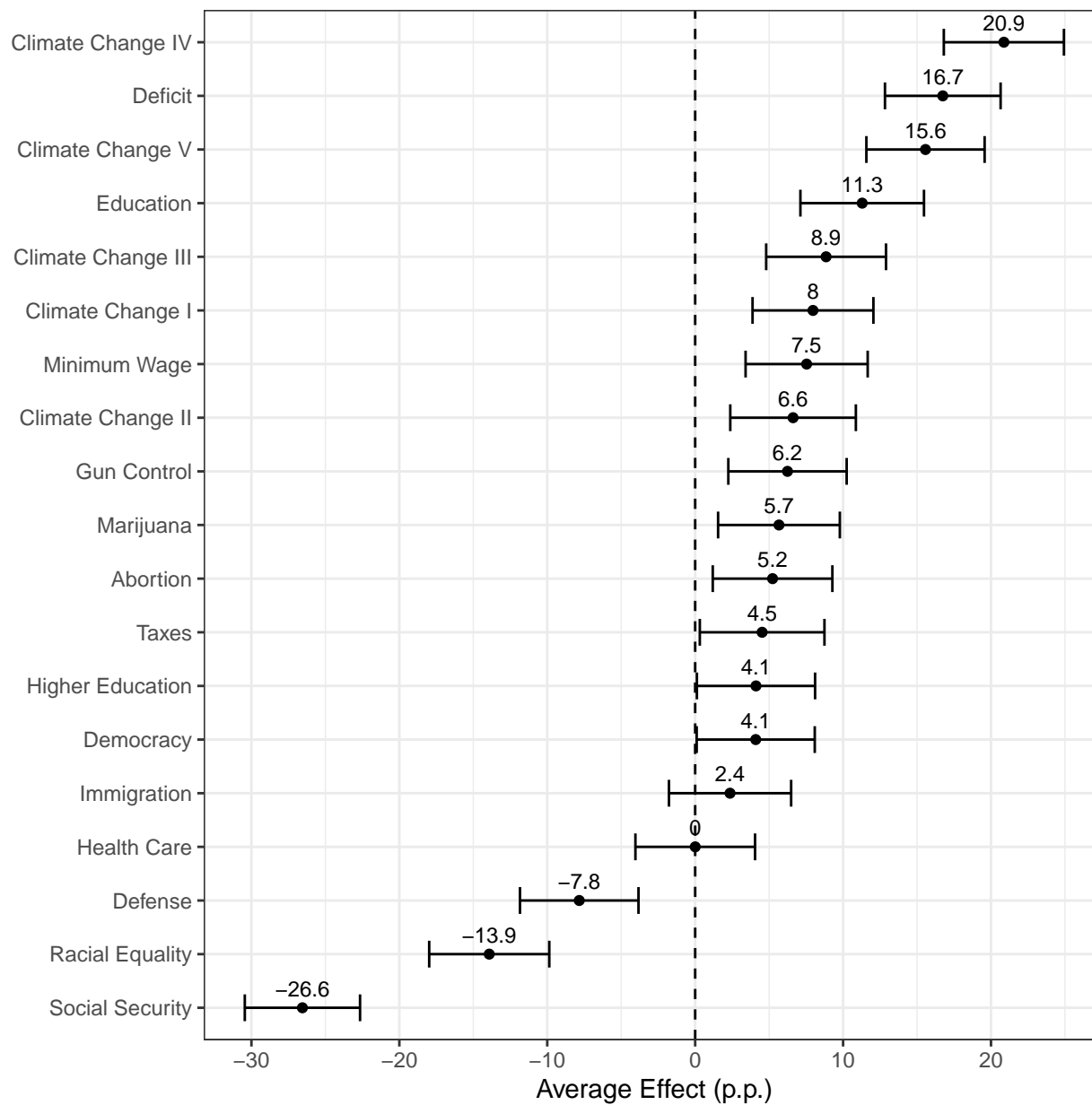
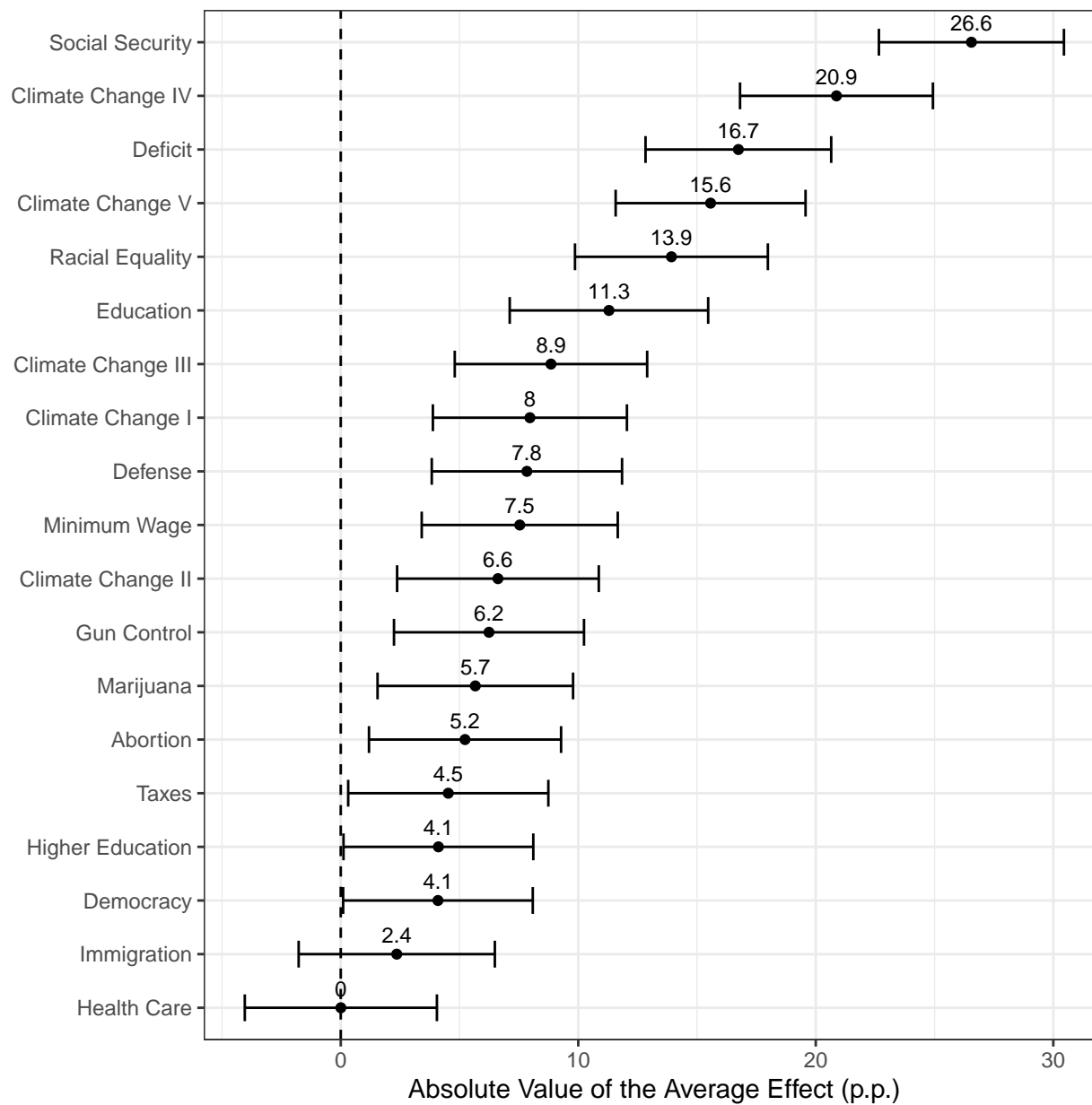**Figure S3:** Relationship between Issue Importance and the Proportion of Neutral Voters
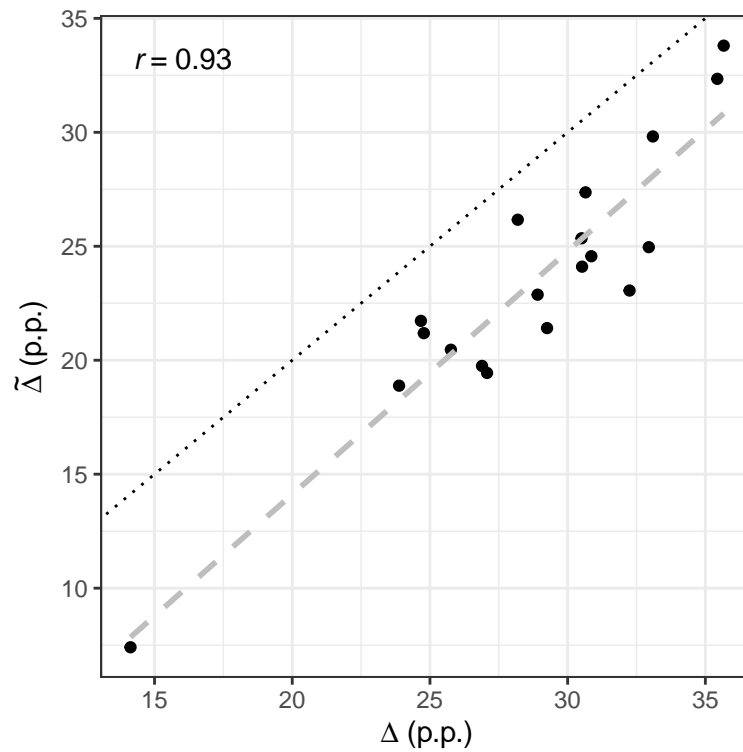
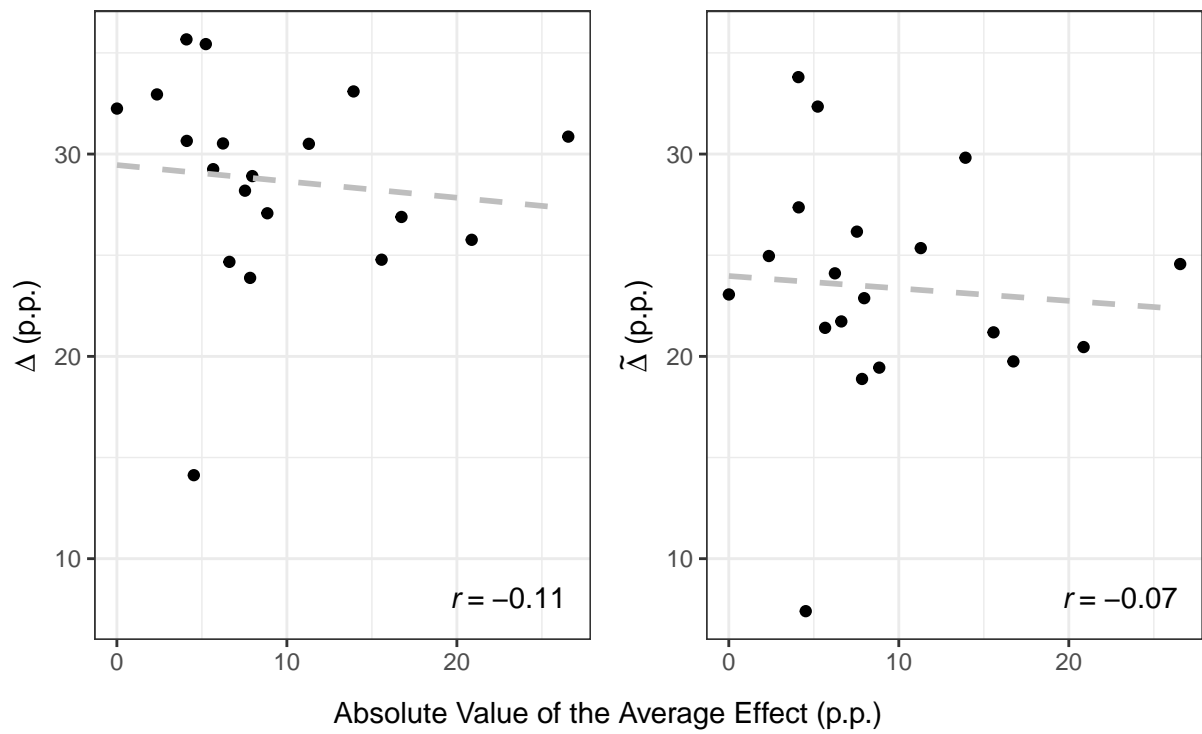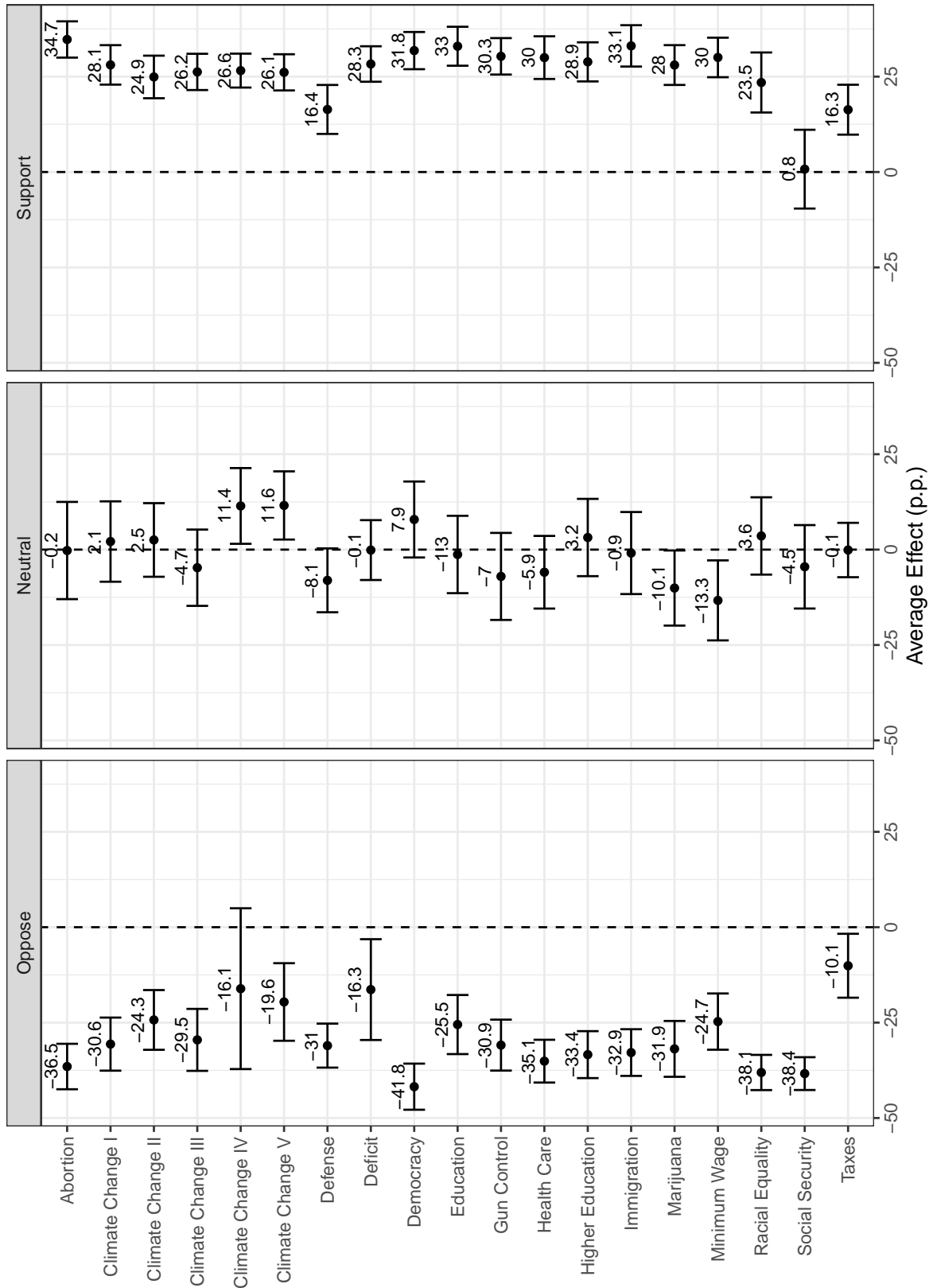**Figure S4:** Relationship between Issue Importance and Adjusted Issue Importance

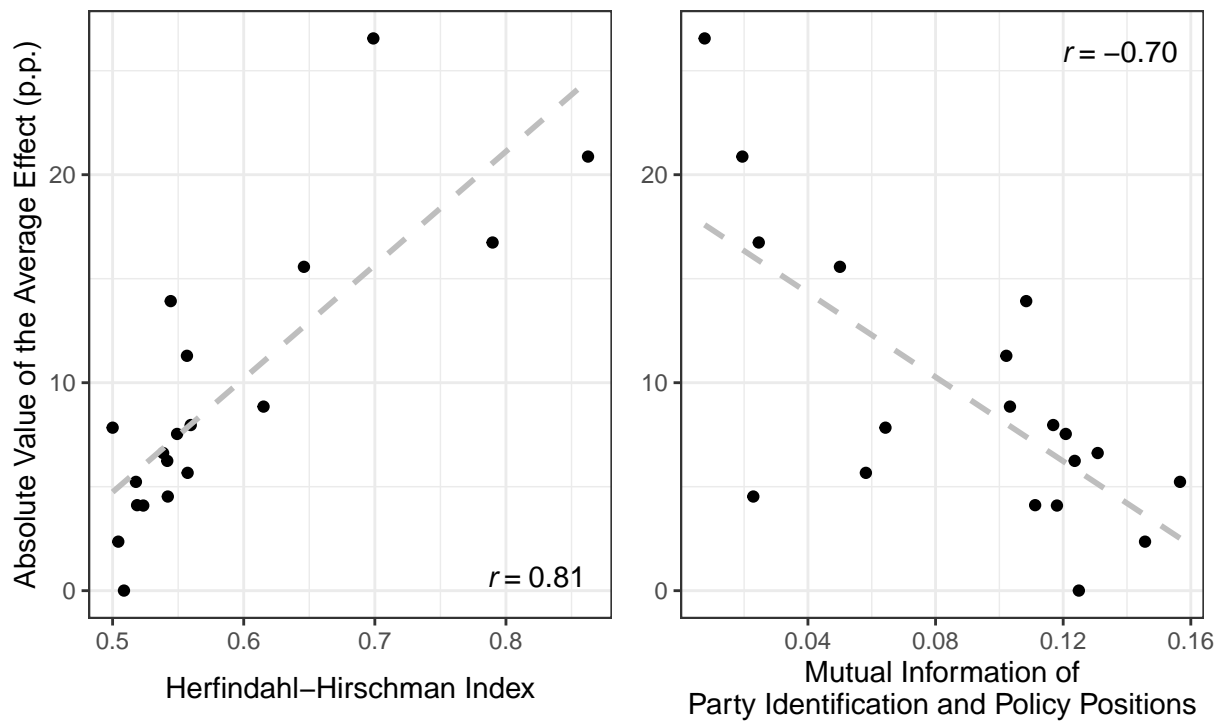**Figure S5:** Effect of the Policy Positions of Candidates on their Probability of Being Chosen by Policy Issue

Figure S6: Absolute Value of the Effect of the Policy Positions of Candidates on their Probability of Being Chosen by Policy Issue
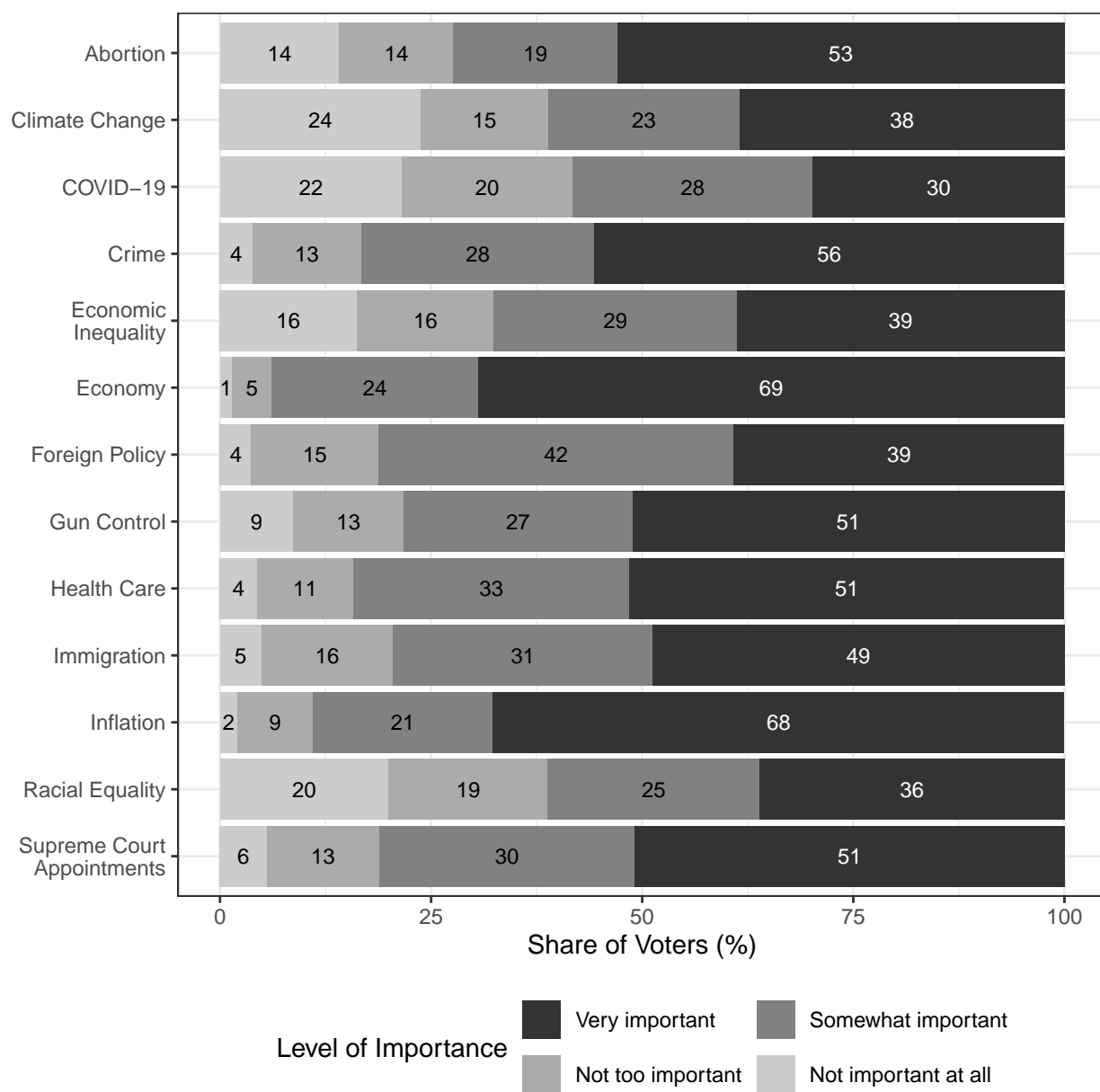
Figure S7: Relationship between Issue Importance and the Effect of the Policy Positions of Candidates on their Probability of Being Chosen by Policy Issue

Figure S8: Effect of the Policy Positions of Candidates on their Probability of Being Chosen by Policy Issue and the Preferred Position of Voters
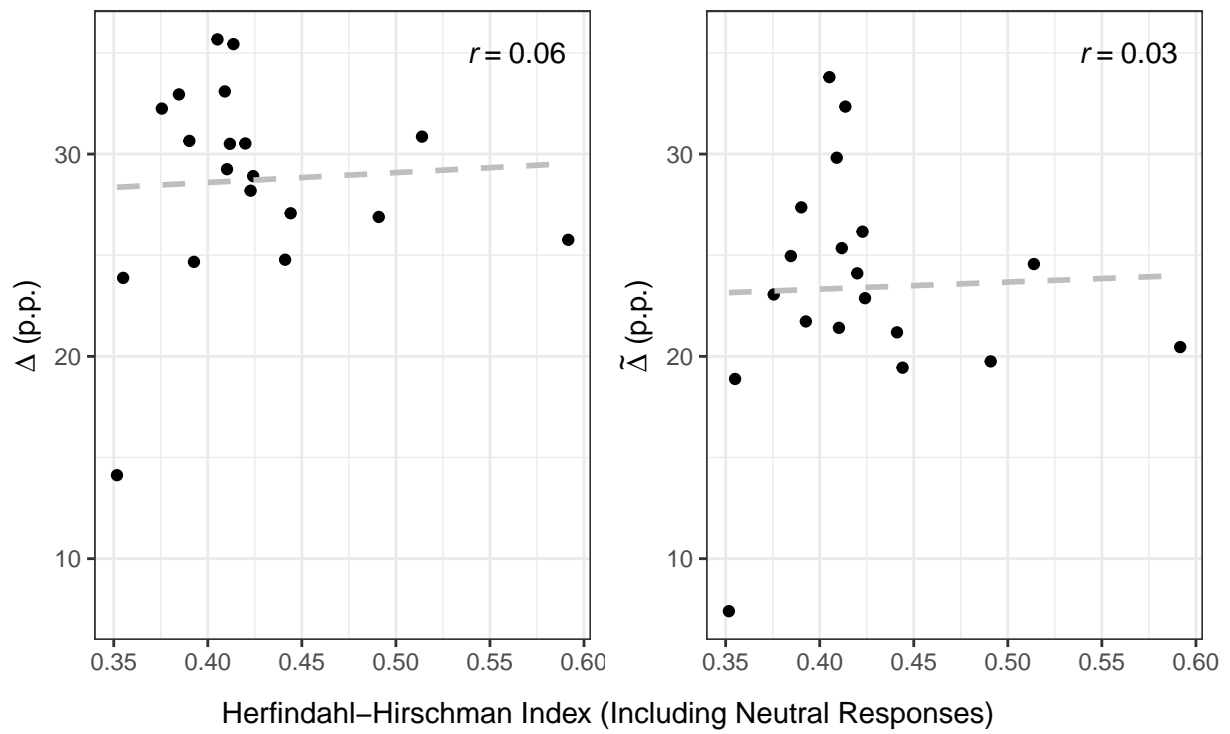
Figure S9: Relationship between Measures of Polarization and the Absolute Value of the Effect of the Policy Positions of Candidates on their Probability of Being Chosen

Figure S10: Distribution of Self-Reported Levels of Issue Importance by Policy Issue
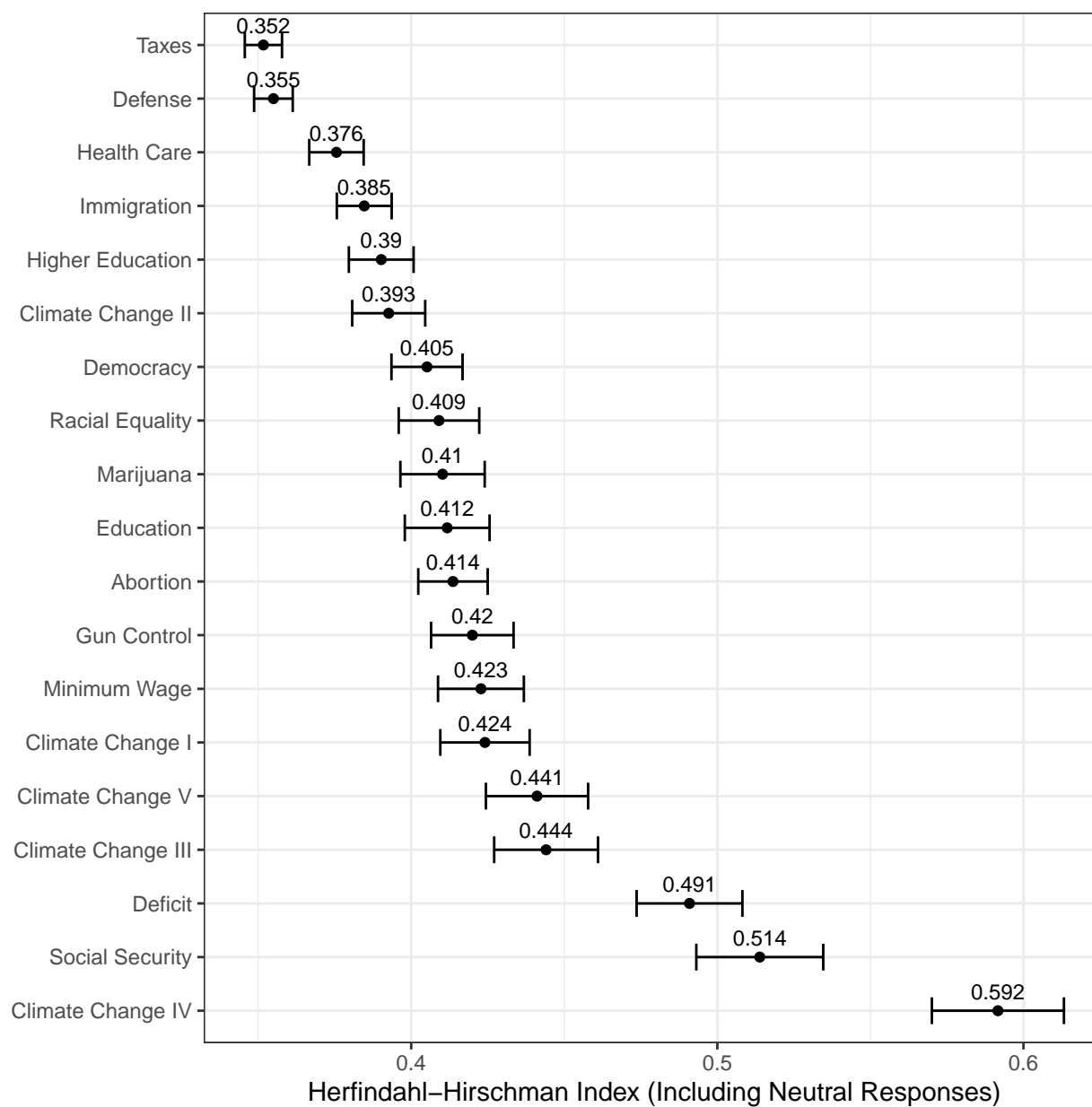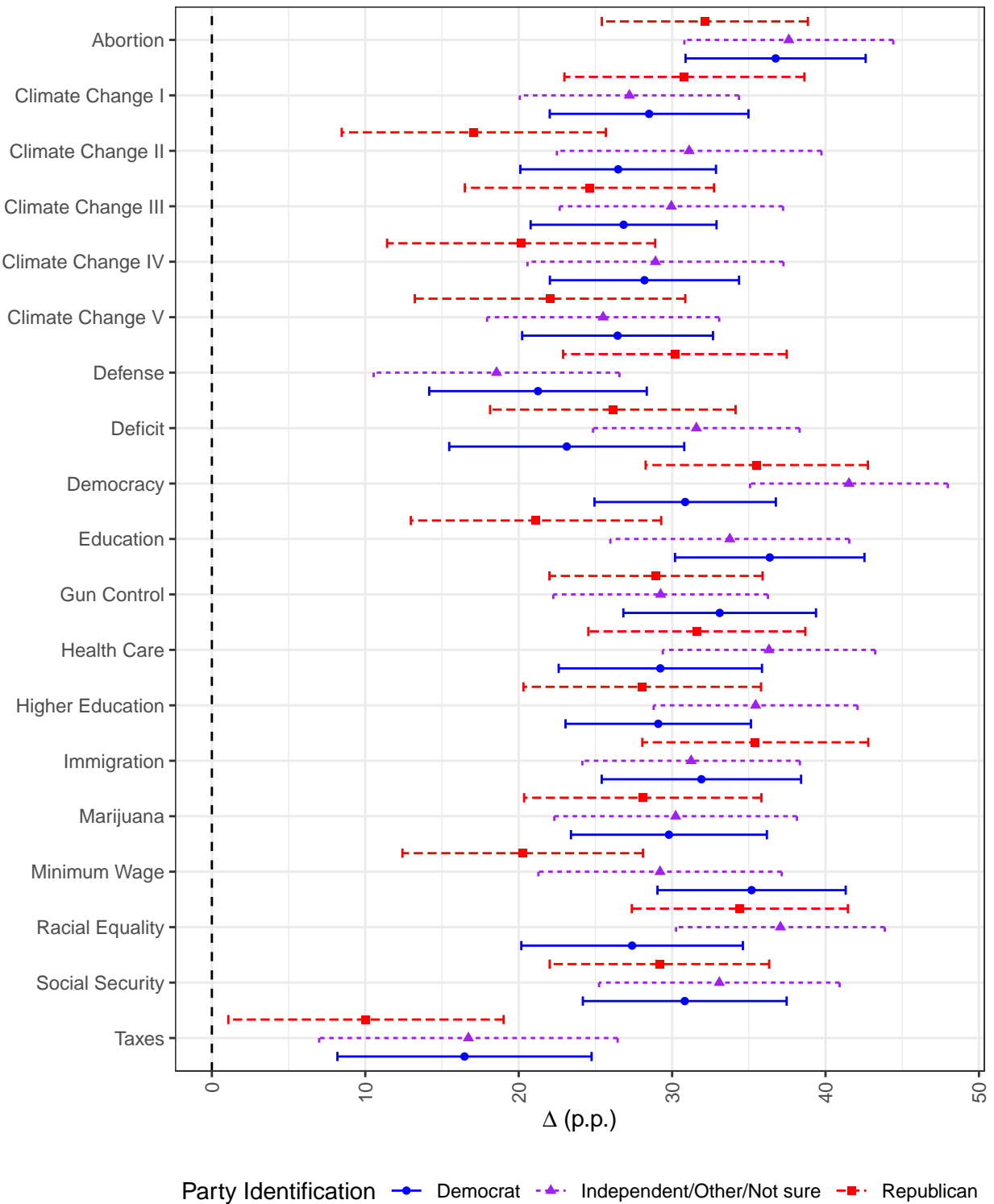
Figure S11: Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (Including Neutral Responses) by Policy Issue
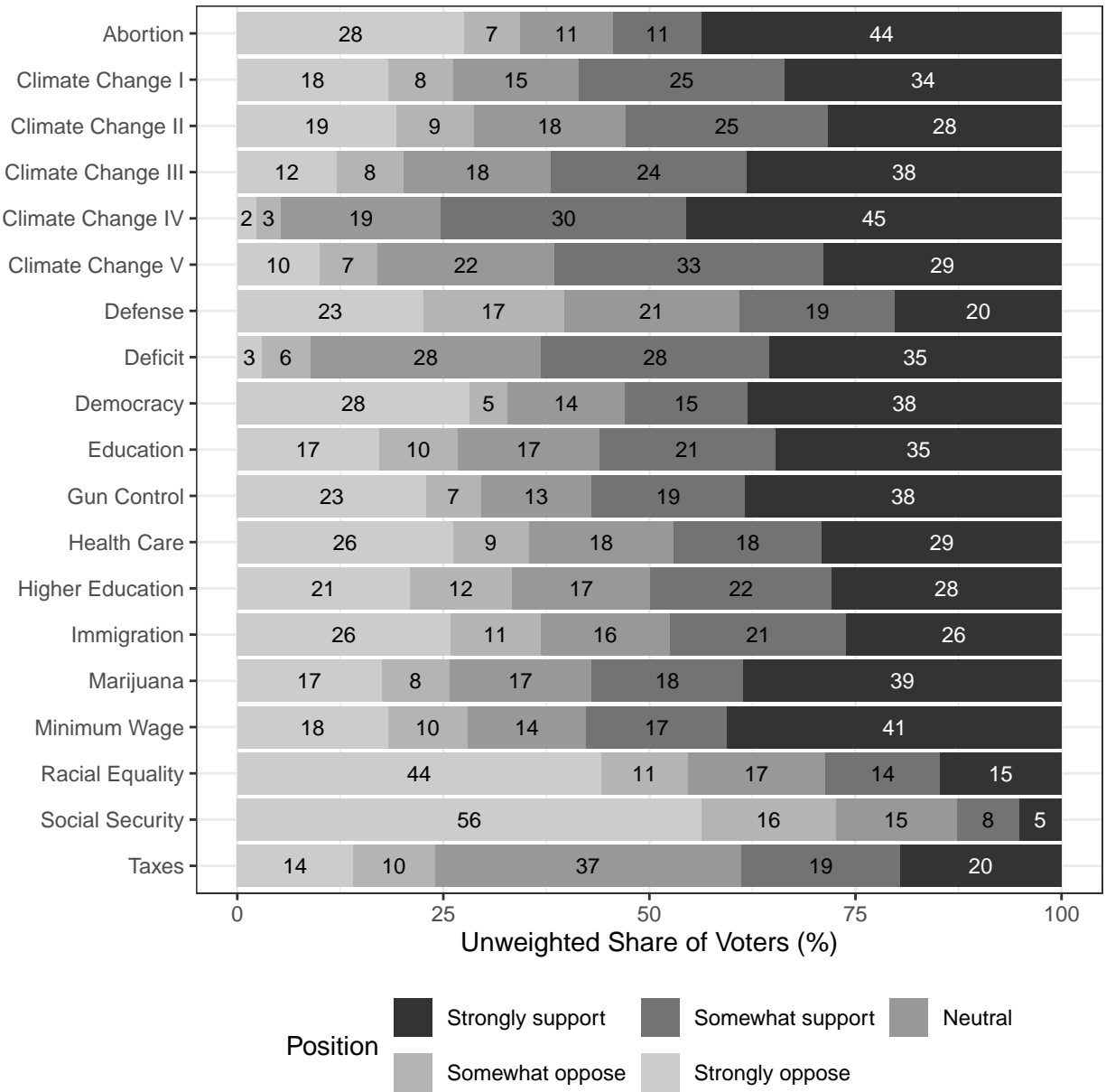
Figure S12: Relationship between Issue Importance and the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (Including Neutral Responses)
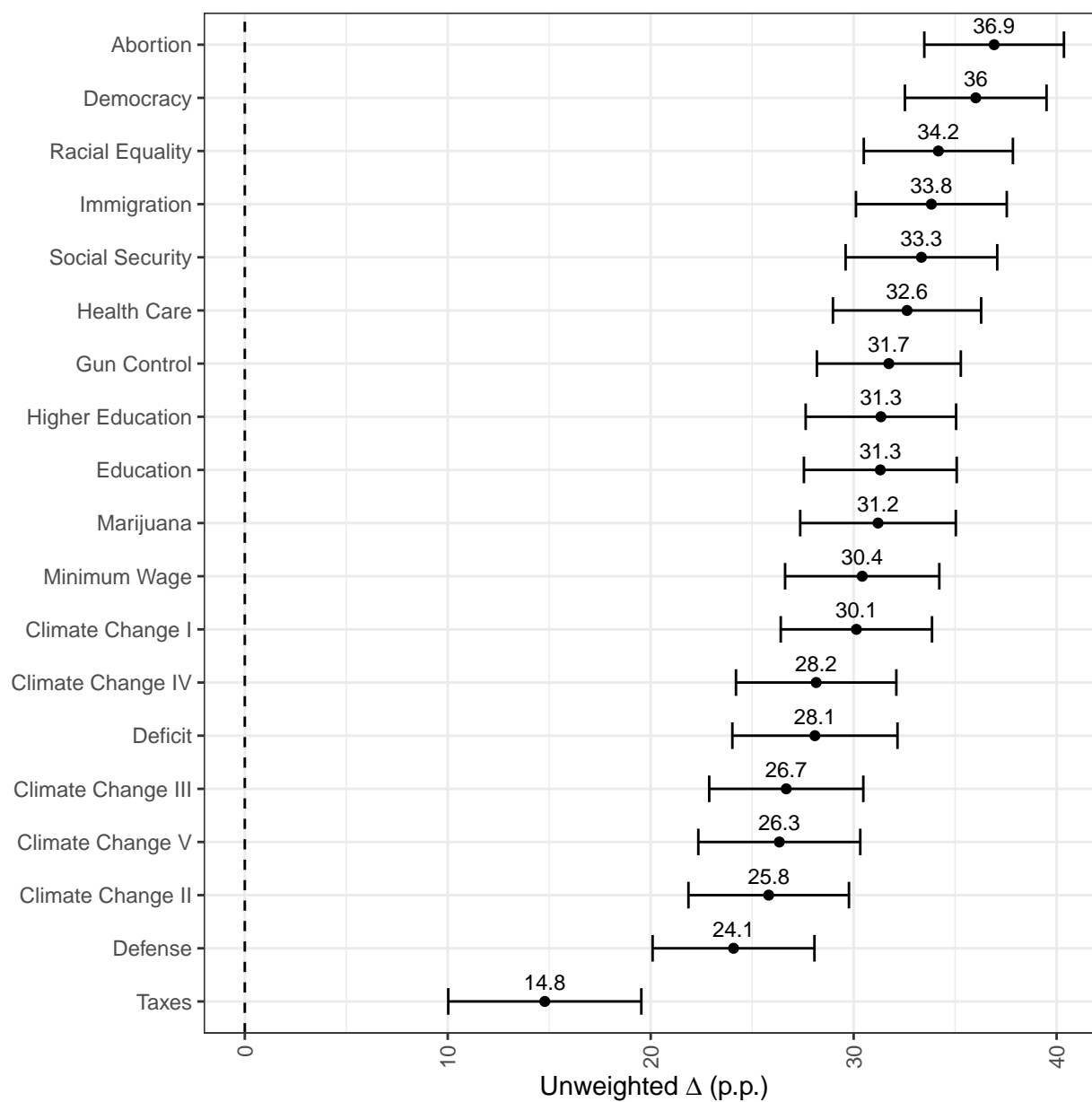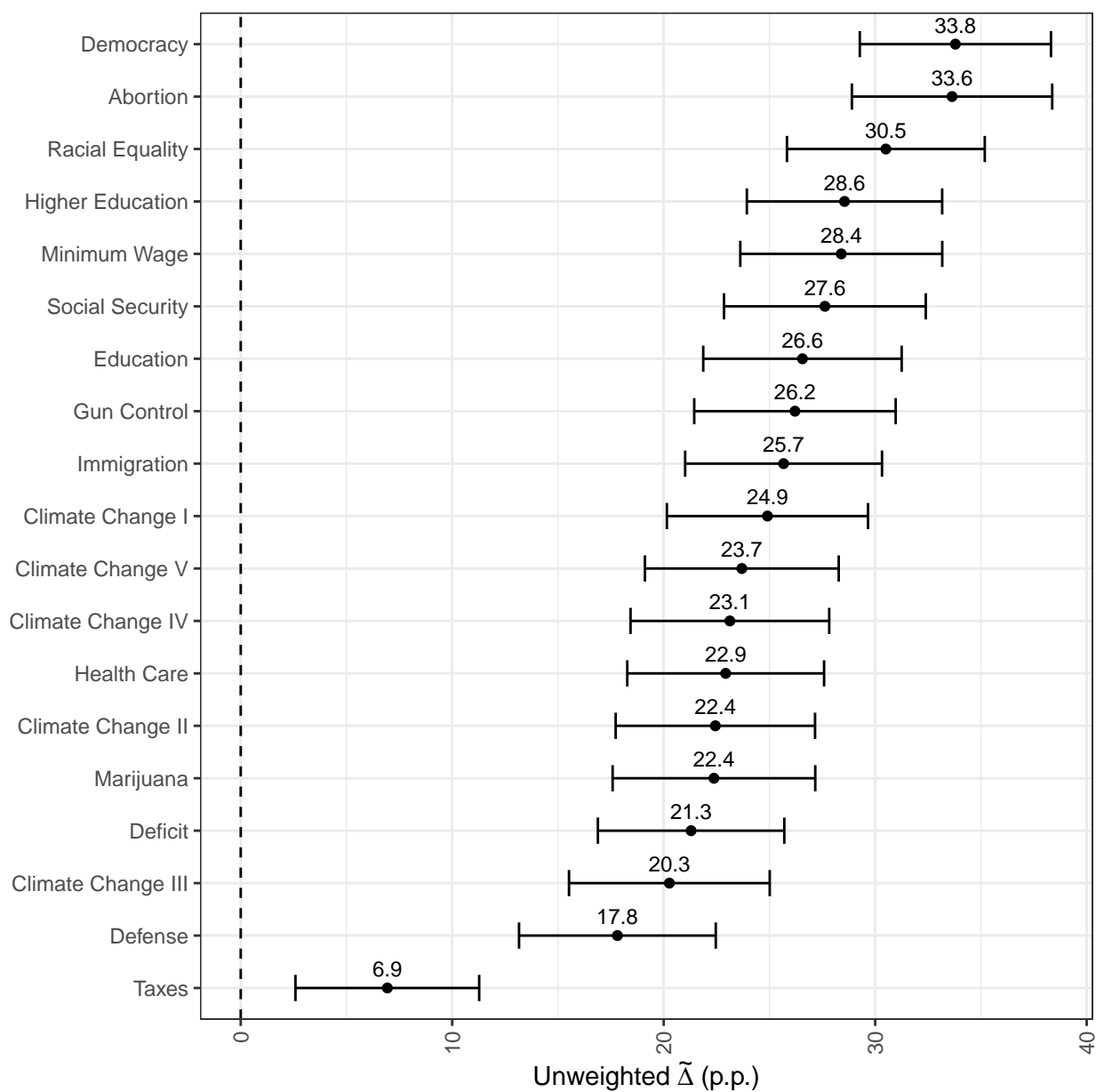
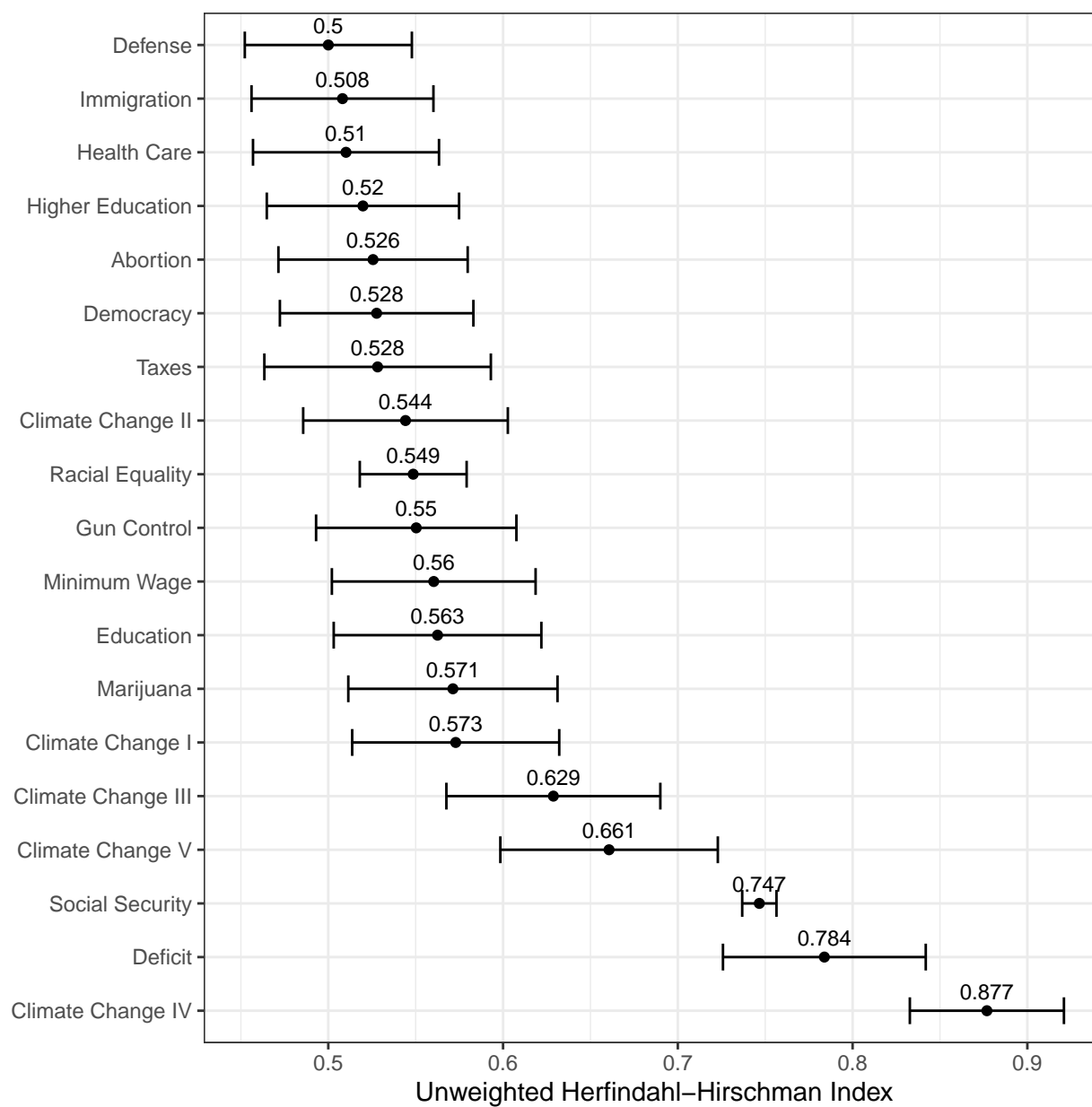**Figure S13:** Issue Importance by Policy Issue and Party Identification

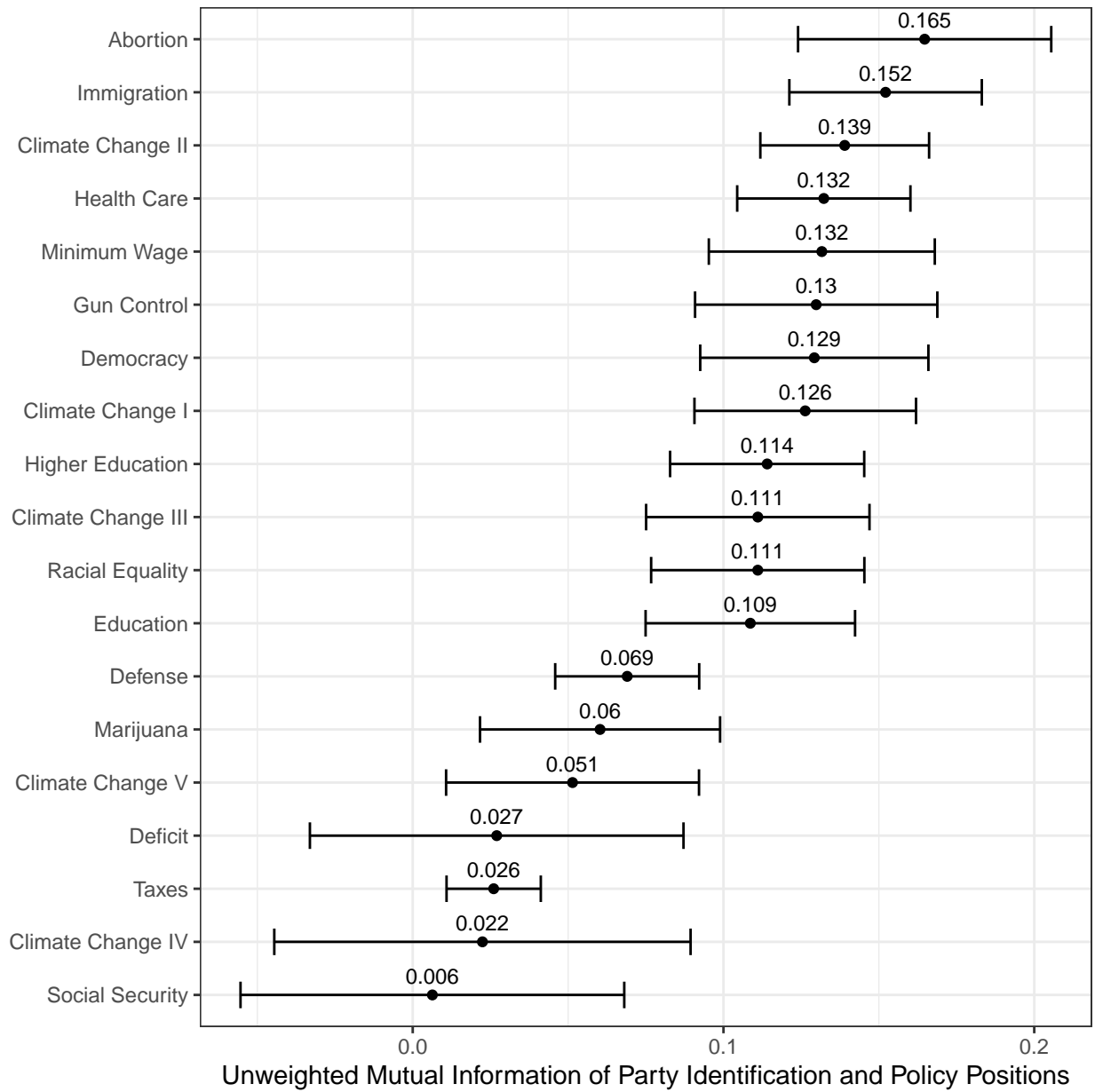**Figure S14:** Unweighted Distribution of Policy Positions by Policy Issue

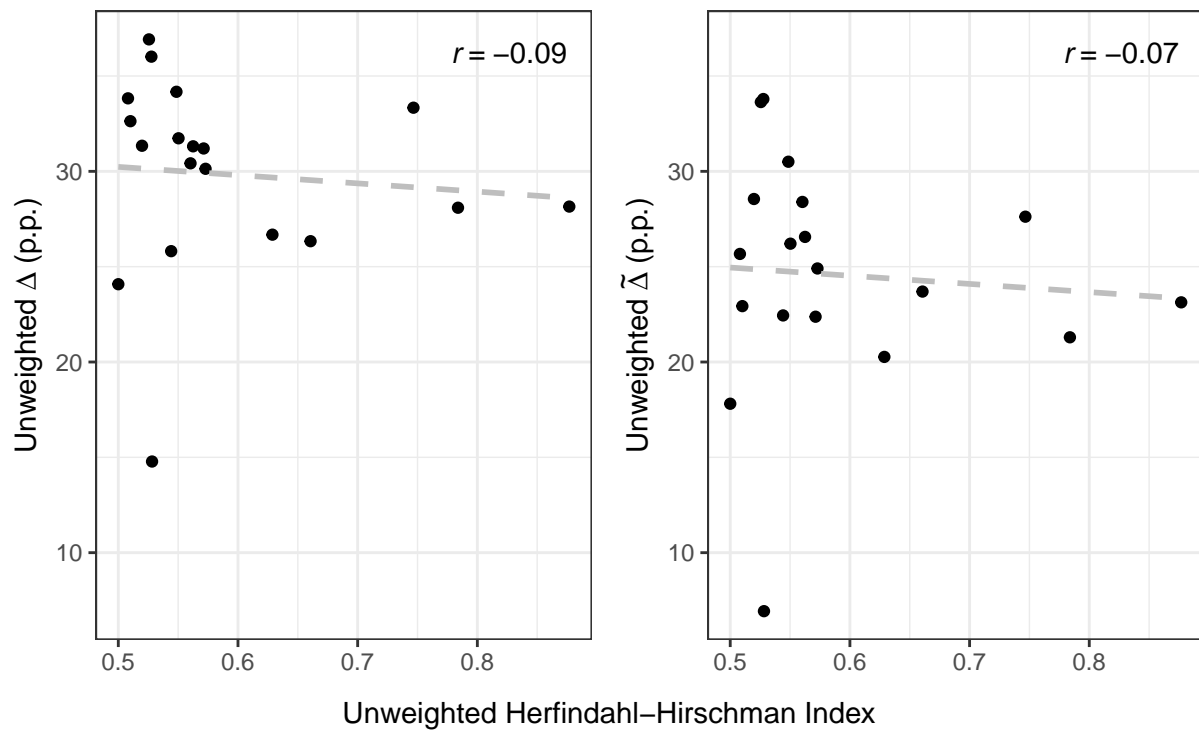**Figure S15:** Unweighted Issue Importance by Policy Issue

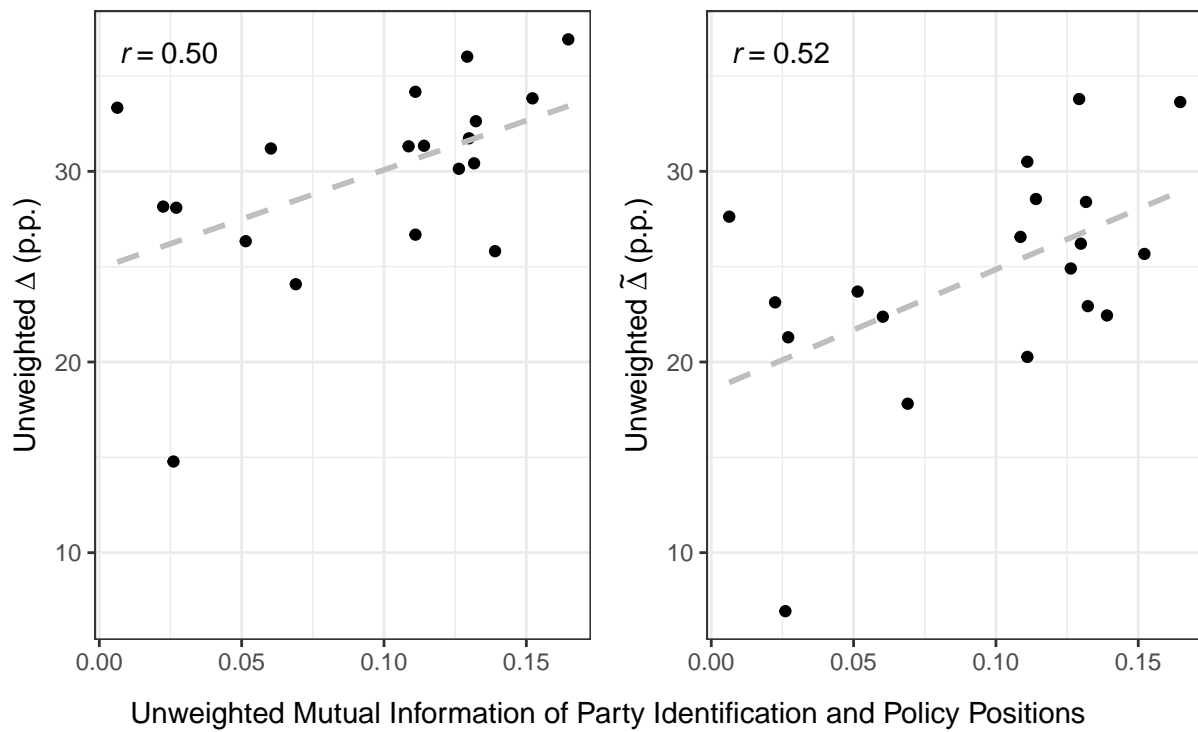**Figure S16:** Unweighted Adjusted Issue Importance by Policy Issue

Figure S17: Unweighted Herfindahl–Hirschmann Index by Policy Issue

Figure S18: Unweighted Mutual Information of Party Identification and Policy Positions by Policy Issue

Figure S19: Relationship between Unweighted Issue Importance and the Unweighted Herfindahl–Hirschman Index

Figure S20: Relationship between Unweighted Issue Importance and the Unweighted Mutual Information of Party Identification and Policy Positions