Replication Project

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Contents

1 Abstract

Barber and Pope (2018) show that the electorate is more influenced by party position than real ideology. The results of the paper and the replication indicate that party loyalists vote in line with their leader, regarless of the political content of their leader's cues. More specifically, voters with low political knowledge, high partisanship, and high approval of their leader are more likely to support their leader's cues, regardless of the true ideological implications, even if they are not in line with the party's traditional views. I looked at Barber and Pope's regressions testing the causal effect of conservative and liberal cues from President Trump on Republican, Democrats, and Independents with varying levels of political knowledge, partisanship, approval of Trump, and political ideology. I took the regression on partisanship and knowledge as well as the overall regression of average cue response among all political identities and ran a more robust binomial regression as well as corrected for a mistake in the first figure of the paper. I found that party loyalists are not necessarily ideological loyalists and, more specifically, that many Republican Trump supporters respond positively to liberal or conservative cues from Trump but not necessarily from others. This finding forces Americans to rethink the importance of parties and the ideological strength of their positions.

2 Introduction

My replication paper will be looking at Michael Barber and Jeremy C. Pope's paper, "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America" which was published in the American Political Science Review in 2018. The paper tests whether citizens truly use their policy views to choose a partisan affiliation and if they see partisanship as more of a social identity. The paper asks: "how sincerely held are expressed political and policy opinions and are these opinions based on ideological convictions, or group loyalty?."[1] The authors use Trump's unusual presidency to answer these questions. Since President Trump is both the leader of the GOP as well as a president that endorses both liberal and conservative views, the authors test the effect of Trump's political stances on voters' political stances.

The authors' main hypothesis asserts that the influence of President Trump will demonstrate the existence of a large bloc of party loyalists in the electorate when his influence moves opinion in either a liberal or conservative direction based on his political cue. Those who are most likely to be party loyalists have a lack of knowledge about the party's traditional views and a lack of self-proclaimed "symbolic ideological commitment." Their null hypothesis is that Trump's cue haas no effect on subgroups. They have four specific hypotheses that fall under their main hypothesis: 1. **Knowledge Hypothesis:** Only the those with less knowledge should react to the cue and behave as party loyalists presumably because the knowledgeable gain little from the treatment (political cue). 2. **Partisan Hypothesis:** Strong party affiliates that share party with the cue-giver are more likely to be party loyalists. 3. **Approval Hypothesis:** Those who approve of the cue-giver should be more likely to be party loyalists. 4. **Symbolic Ideology Hypothesis:** Self-described conservatives should hold firm to their presumed beliefs and are less likely to be party loyalists because they stick with their self-described policy tenets.

These hypotheses are tested by running a variety of regressions on data collected from surveys. Subjects were split into two groups, control and treatment, and asked about 10 political issues with clear partisan positions. The authors chose questions that capture policy issues in which Trump has taken either a conservative stance or a liberal stance. The control group was asked if they agree with a policy. The treatment group was asked if they agree with a policy after being prompted that Trump endorses this policy. Using this data, the authors ran linear regressions, which I replicated using R, that explained subjects' support of policies using their partisanship, approval of the president, political knowledge, and symbolic ideology.[2] The authors conclude, and I confirm, that all of their hypotheses hold true except the symbolic ideology hypothesis. They found that people who most strongly described themselves as conservative most strongly answered the Trump cues (both liberal and conservative). I extend this analysis by running binomial regressions which demonstrate more robust relationships. I also correct a mistake in one of the figures from the published paper.

I find that the authors' first three hypotheses are indeed correct - those with lower political knowledge, higher partisanship, and higher approval tend to respond more strongly to a cue-giver, regardless of the ideological basis of the cue. Like the authors, I also conclude that those with higher ideological levels are actually more partisan in their response to cue-givers: even if a fellow partisan cue-giver demonstrates a nontraditional policy position, those with strong self-identfied ideologies are more likely to respond to the cue. These conclusions all point to the fact that parties are becoming more of a social identity and that ideology is being displaced by partisan affinity. This has major implications for the future of the party system and the way that candidates campaign. It seems that they are catering to a social cohort rather than an ideological community.

All analysis for this paper is available at my Git hub profile and the original data is available on Data verse.[3]

[1] 1, Barber and Pope

[2] R

[3] https://github.com/carine-h/milestone_5, https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/38BFML

3 Literature Review

There is an increasing amount of discussion around the legitimacy of partisan identification in terms of its ideological significance. Barber and Pope are just two of many authors noticing the decline of the ideological salience of partisanship and the populations more susceptible to this phenomenon. Zaller and Feldman (1992), for instance, discuss the weakness of voters' ideological preferences: "Most citizens, we argue, simply do not possess preformed attitudes at the level of specificity demanded in surveys. Rather, they carry around in their heads a mix of only partially consistent ideas and consideration." Rather, they feel that voters operate based on pre-conceived judgements and generalizations. With respect to Barber and Pope's findings, this means that the American electorate uses partisanship and ideology as masks for their own personal notions and prejudices.

Iyengar and Westwood (2015) mark the rise of party identity in American life, making Barber and Pope's conclusions ever more salient. According to their study, partisan polarization is as strong as racial polarization and has implications on nonpolitical judgements about members of the opposite party.[4] Taken with the Barber and Pope results, this could mean that cue-givers are merely partisan symbols, decreasing the importance of the actual content of their cues. This also reinforces the idea that partisanship.

4 Replication

I was able to replicate the Interactions Models table (Table 1) and Figures 1-5 which test each of the hypotheses in the paper. The only issue I ran into was in Figure 1: Average Treatment Effect of Policy Cues. This table claims that cues from GOP leaders on Republicans make Republicans about 3% less likely to vote liberal. This is not consistent with the outcome of the authors' regression which shows that Republicans were slightly more likely to vote liberally. I believe that this may be a small mistake on the part of the authors.

5 Extension

In the extension, I will be addressing a plotting issue in Figure 1, adding sigma and stan_glm to the Figure 1, expanding the test of partisanship to Democrats as well as Republicans on Figure 3, and using stan_glm and its associate prediction functions on Figure 3 as opposed to a linear regression and its linear prediction function.

5.1 Figure 1: Mistake

To begin, I will address the issue with Figure 1, which I describe above. I have actually already addressed it in the replication done above. Essentially, the regression result is not consisten with the outcome plotted in the graph. This could be an important addition to the findings in the paper - Republicans actually have a very slight aversion to cues from GOP leaders. This deepends the authors' findings that partisan identity may be more of a group identity rather than an ideological marker.

[4] Iyengar

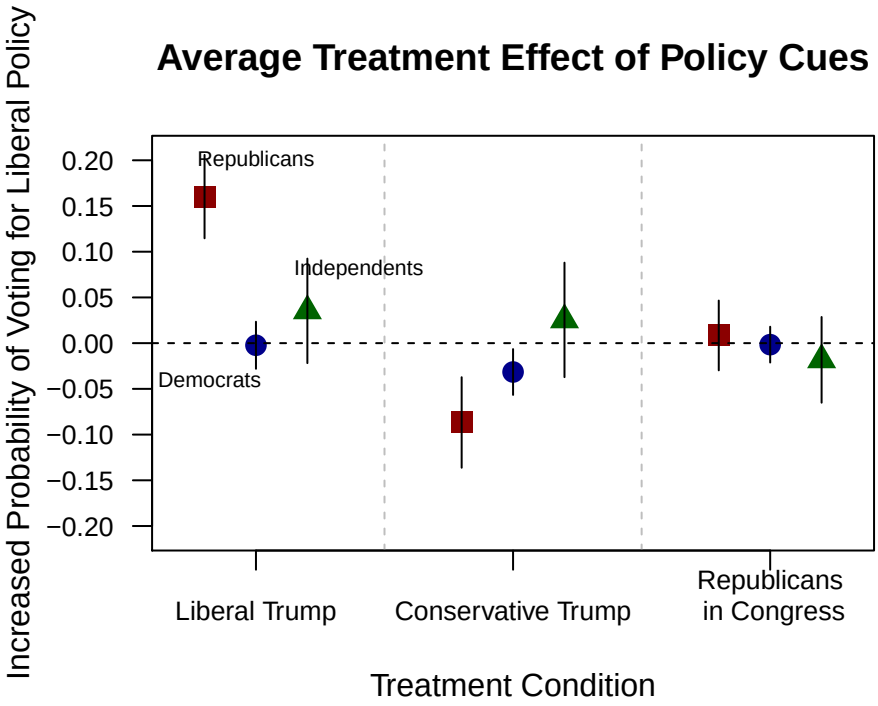
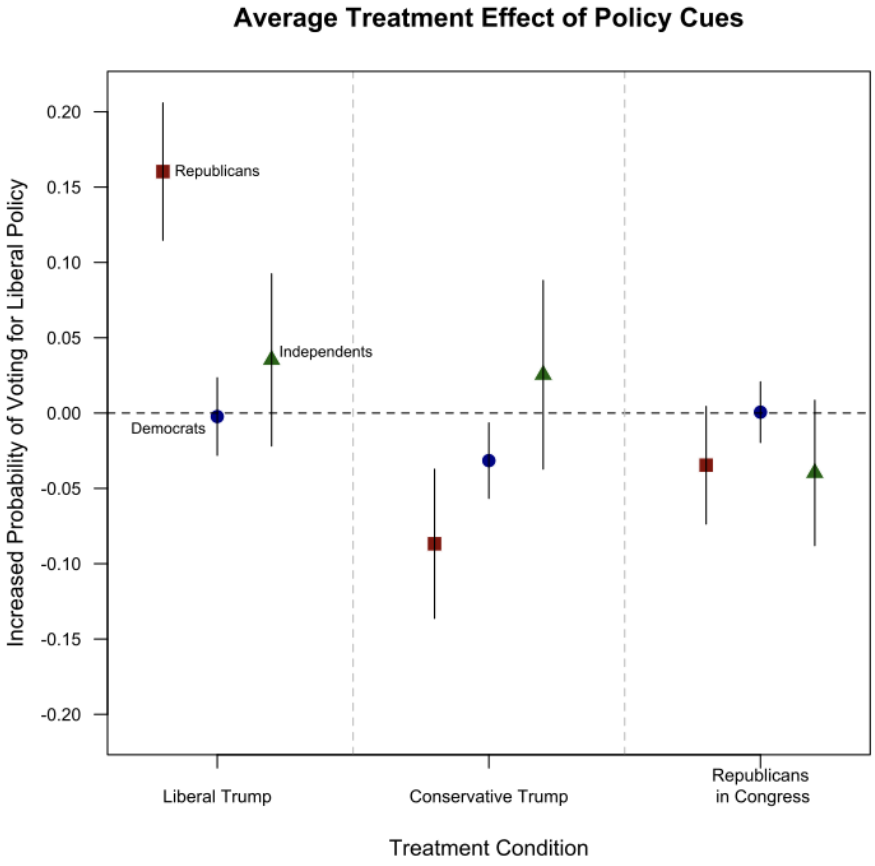

Average Treatment Effect of Policy Cues
Increased Probability of Voting for Liberal Policy
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
−0.05
−0.10
−0.15
−0.20
Republicans
Independents
Democrats
Liberal Trump
Conservative Trump
Republicans in Congress
Treatment Condition

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.

I found one mistake - the cofficient for Republicans in Congress on the Republican subset is displayed as about -0.03 probability of voting for liberal policy while the regression tells us that it is actually about 0.008. I correct this in my figure.

5.2 Figure 3: Average Treatment Effect by Party Strength Among Democrats

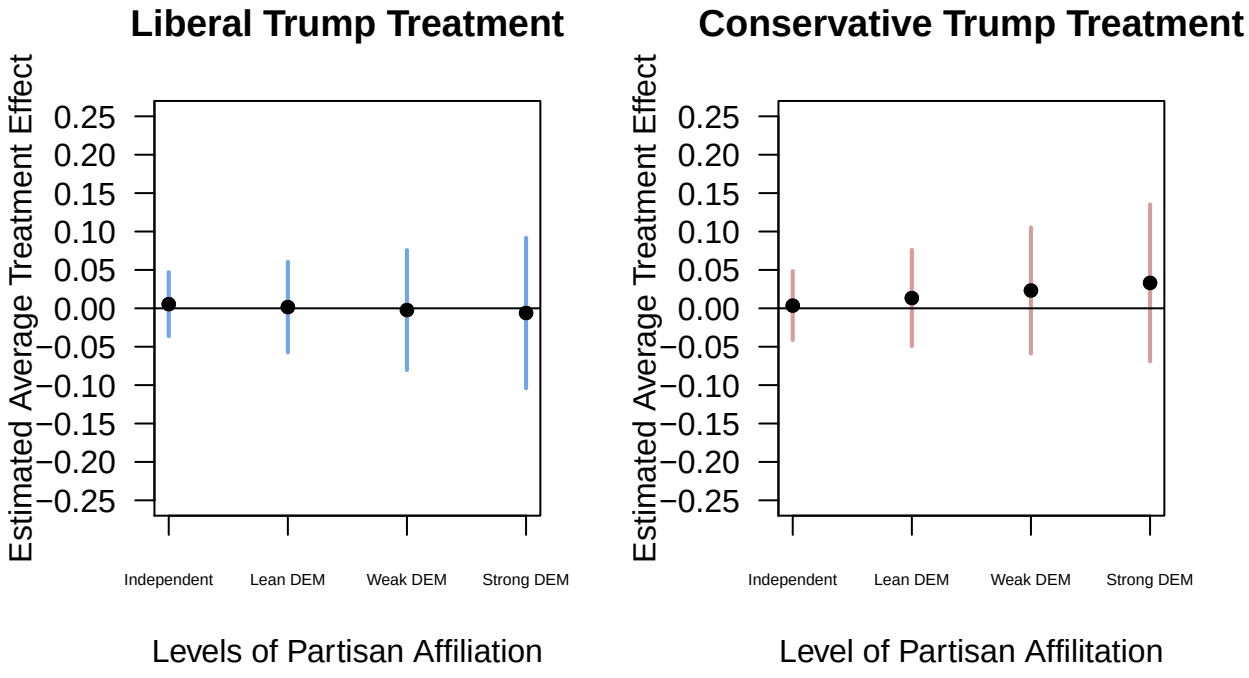
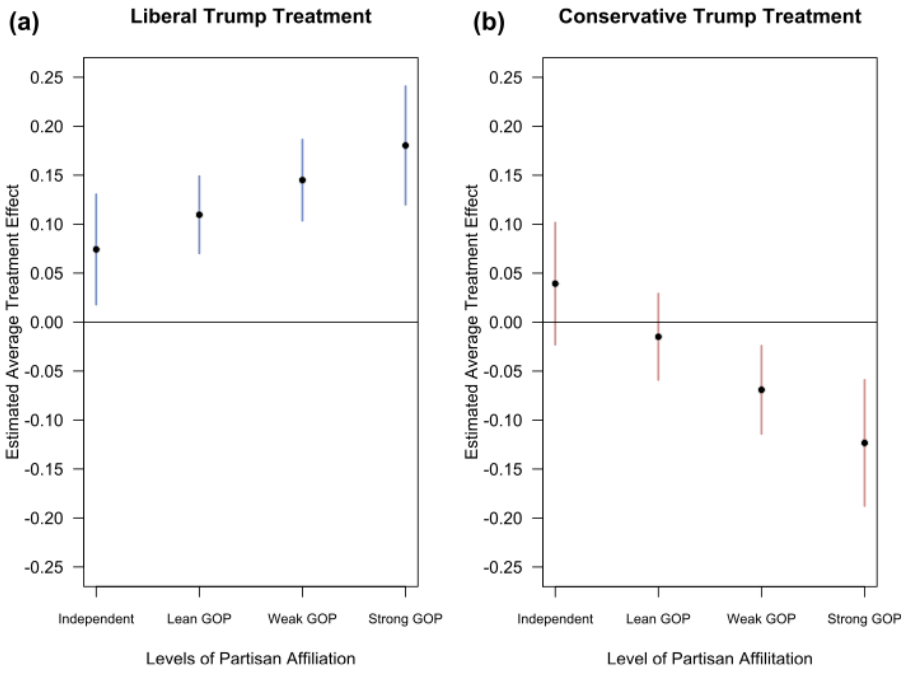


FIGURE 3. Average Treatment Effect by Republican Party Strength



Note: Those who identify strongly with the Republican Party exhibit stronger treatment effects in a liberal direction for the liberal Trump treatment, and in a conservative direction for the conservative Trump treatment.

In order to see if the relationship between political cues and partisanship is only exclusive to Republicans, I would like to run a similar model on partisanship levels among Democrats. This would mean repeating the steps done in Figure 3, but testing the cue's effects on partisanship levels from 1-4 (very Democrat to

Independent). I predict that there will be a different effect given the fact that Democrats would be answering cues from Trump. Therefore, I expect there to be some sort of aversionary effect: even if Trump advocates a liberal policy, they will support it less than their Republican counterpoints at the same level of partisanship just because the cue is from the a Republican leader (especially one as polarizing as Trump).

The results show that Democrats of different partisan levels (Independent to strong Democrat) do not respond significantly to conservative or liberal Trump cues. There is an interesting trend among different levels of Democrats when given a conservative cue: as partisanship becomes more Democrat, Democrats are more and more likely to vote liberally when given a conservative cue. It is important to note, however, that uncertainty is greatest at the strongest lebel of Democrat. Liberal cues, however, have almost no effect on different levels of partisanship to the left.

5.3 Figure 2: Binomial Regression instead of Linear

Finally, I want to take figure 2 and see if I can create a more robust model. These regression models are currently linear and use interactions to predict the outcome of a cue given something like partisanship, ideology, etc. The authors then use the predict function to predict support of a policy and to find the causal effect of recieving a cue by subtracting the response outcome for the treated from a fake data set of untreated individuals. I believe that by using a binomial regression and the posterior_linpred function, I could create a more robust model and prediction, thus achieving a more accurate causal effect. (I would compare these two models with LOO as well as using standard errors and sigma.)

The only downside of this method is the fact that posterior_linpred does not give an uncertainty measure for each of its estimates while predict yields standard error. That is the reason there are no uncertainty measures on the graph.

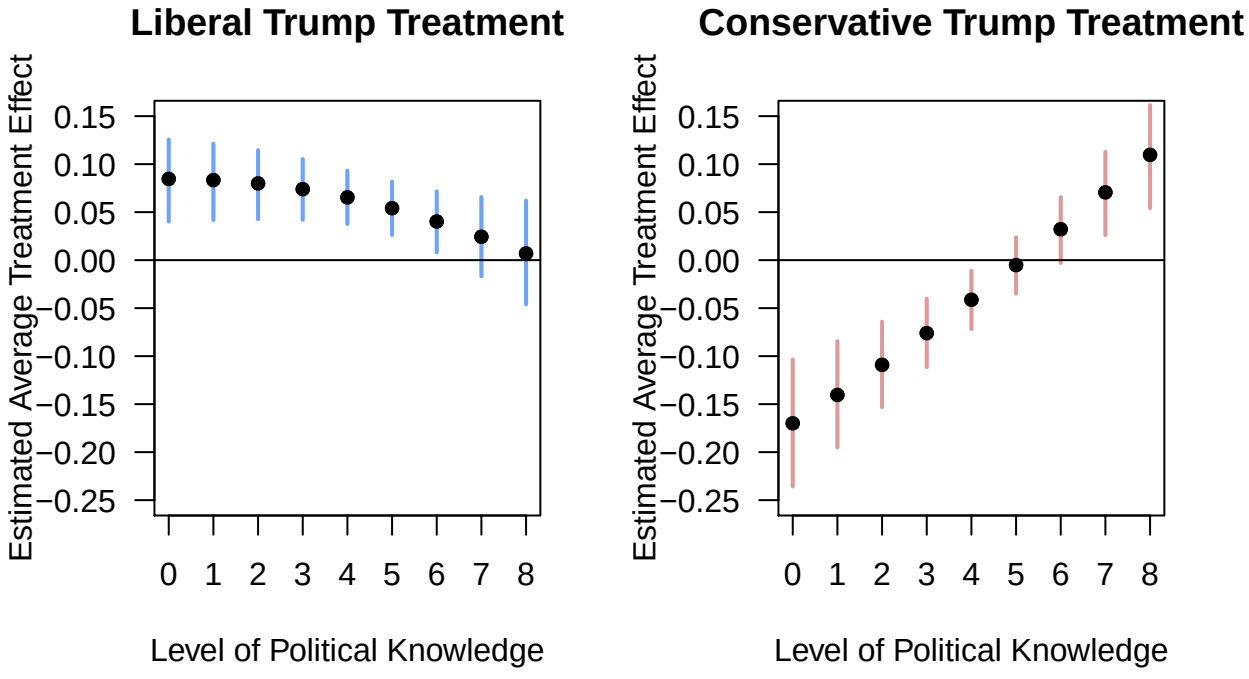
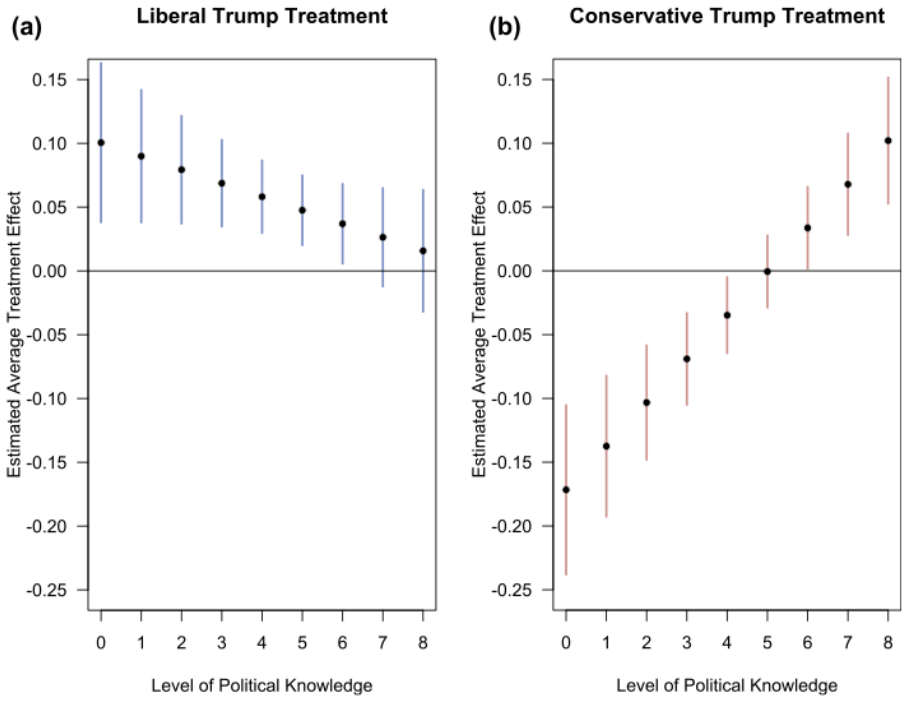


FIGURE 2. Average Treatment Effect by Political Knowledge



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.

Table 1: Interaction Models, Including Control Variables

	Dependent variable:			
	Support			
	Knowledge	Party Strength	Trump Approval	Ideology
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Liberal Treatment	0.130^{***}	0.055	-0.038^{*}	-0.018
	(0.028)	(0.038)	(0.023)	(0.033)
Knowledge	-0.029^{***}	-0.049^{***}	-0.028^{***}	-0.028^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Conservative Treatment	-0.116^{***}	0.125^{***}	0.041^{*}	0.070^{**}
	(0.030)	(0.042)	(0.022)	(0.032)
Trump Approval	-0.075^{***}	-0.070^{***}	-0.078^{***}	-0.075^{***}
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Ideology	-0.087^{***}	-0.111^{***}	-0.087^{***}	-0.088^{***}
	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Republican	-0.128^{***}	-0.090^{***}	-0.132^{***}	-0.129^{***}
	(0.015)	(0.029)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Party Strength	0.035^{***}	0.050^{***}	0.036^{***}	0.035^{***}
	(0.004)	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.004)
White	0.042^{***}	0.026	0.044^{***}	0.042^{***}
	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Liberal treat * Knowledge	-0.011^{**}			
	(0.005)			
Conservative treat * Knowledge	0.019^{***}			
	(0.006)			
Liberal treat * Party Strength		0.028^{**}		
		(0.014)		
Conservative treat * Party Strength		-0.066^{***}		
		(0.015)		
Liberal treat * Trump Approval			0.041^{***}	
			(0.007)	
Conservative treat * Trump Approval			-0.026^{***}	
			(0.007)	
Liberal treat * Ideology				0.031^{***}
				(0.010)
Conservative treat * Ideology				-0.033^{***}
				(0.010)
Constant	1.183^{***}	1.282^{***}	1.183^{***}	1.182^{***}
	(0.026)	(0.037)	(0.026)	(0.027)
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

6 Appendix

6.1 Table 1

TABLE 1. Interaction Models, Including Control Variables

	Knowledge	Party strength	Trump approval	Ideology
Liberal treat × knowledge	−0.01*			
	(0.005)			
Conservative treat × knowledge	0.02**			
	(0.006)			
Liberal treat × party strength		0.03*		
		(0.01)		
Conservative treat × party strength		−0.07**		
		(0.02)		
Liberal treat × Trump approval			0.04**	
			(0.01)	
Conservative treat × Trump approval			−0.03**	
			(0.01)	
Liberal treat × ideology				0.03**
				(0.01)
Conservative treat × ideology				−0.03**
				(0.01)
Liberal treatment	0.13**	0.05	−0.04	−0.02**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Conservative treatment	−0.12**	0.12**	0.04	0.07**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Knowledge	−0.03**	−0.05**	−0.03**	−0.03**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Trump Approval	−0.08**	−0.07**	−0.08**	−0.07**
	(0.004)	(0.01)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Ideology	−0.09**	−0.11**	−0.09**	−0.09**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican	−0.13**	−0.09**	−0.13**	−0.13**
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Party strength	0.04**	0.05**	0.04**	0.04**
	(0.004)	(0.01)	(0.004)	(0.01)
White	0.04**	0.03	0.04	0.04**
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
N	7,173	3,867	7,173	7,173

Coefficients reported from ordinary least squares regression model, with standard errors in parentheses. In each model the dependent variable is coded 1 if the respondent indicated supporting the liberal policy option and 0 if they supported the conservative policy option. In Model 2 we are testing the strength of Republican partisanship, so we exclude those who identify with the Democratic Party. Significance codes: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, two-tailed tests.

6.2 Figure 1: Average Treatment Effect by Party Affiliation

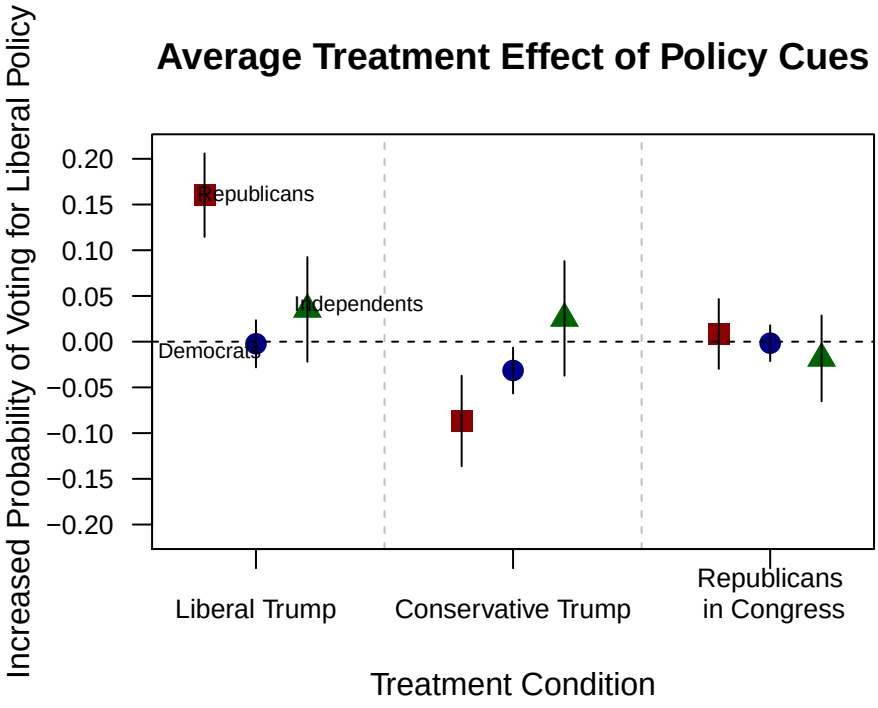
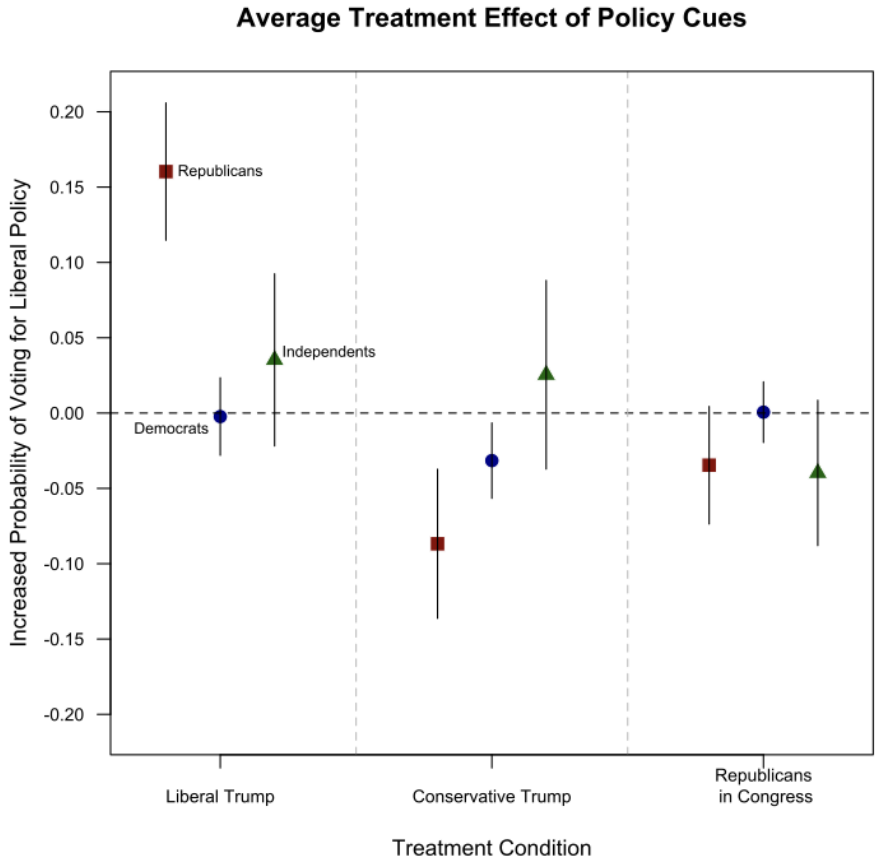


FIGURE 1. Average Treatment Effect Across Issues



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.

It is important to note that what is being plotted is the coefficient of cues (contrump, libtrump, gopleader). I found one mistake - the cofficient for Republicans in Congress on the Republican subset is displayed as about -0.03 probability of voting for liberal policy while the regression tells us that it is actually about 0.008.

6.3 Figure 2: Average Treatment Effect by Knowledge

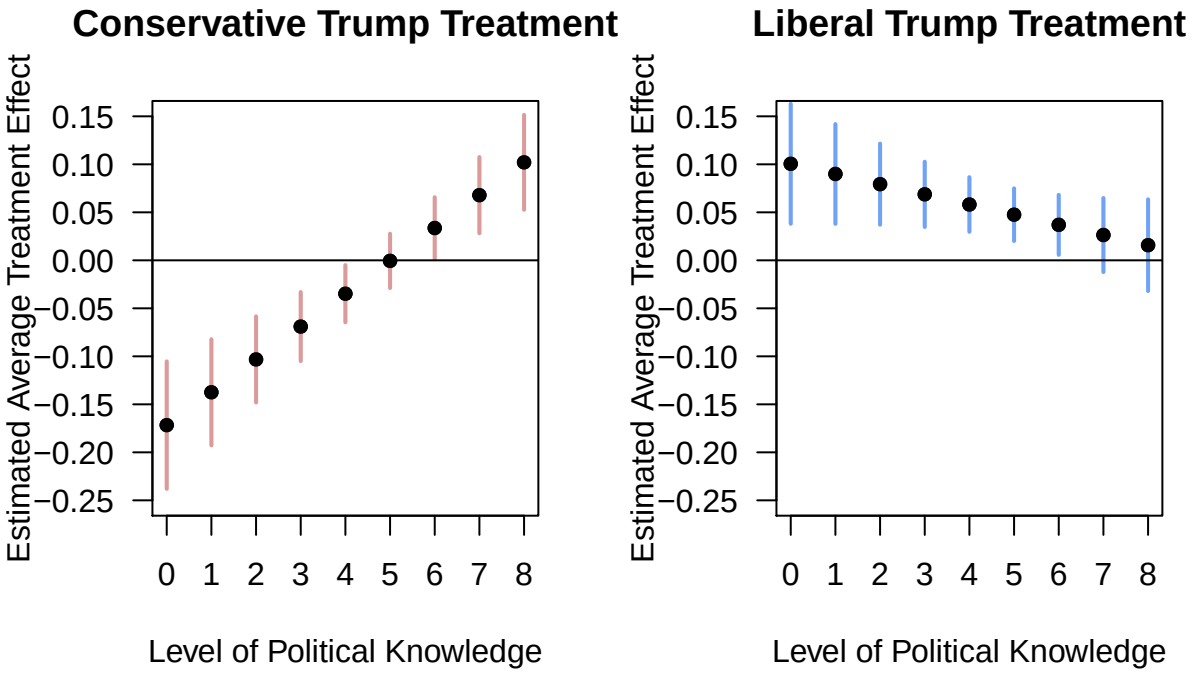
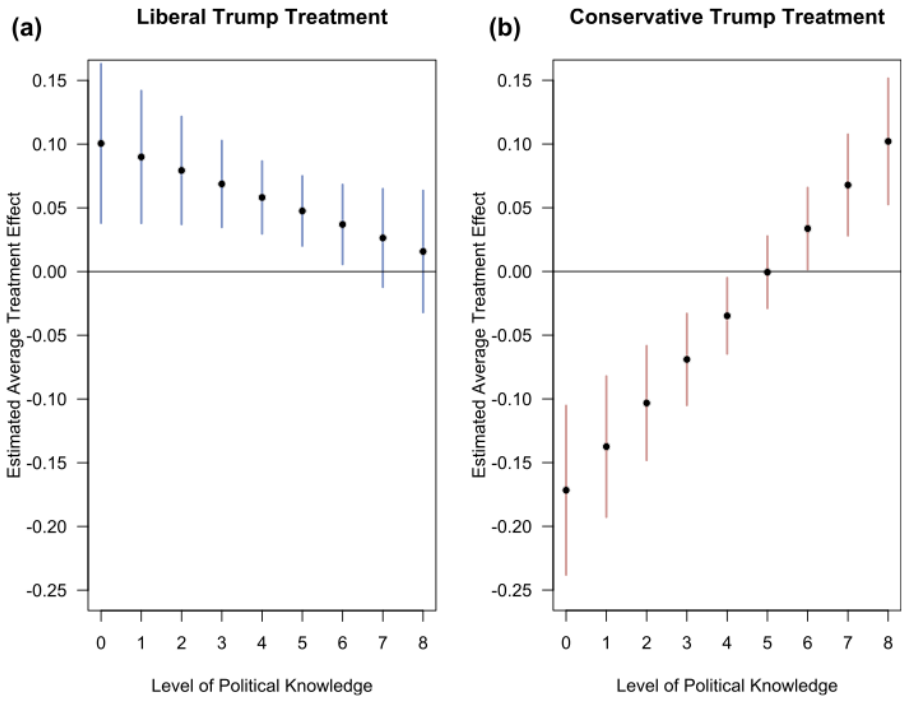


FIGURE 2. Average Treatment Effect by Political Knowledge



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.

6.4 Figure 3: Average Treatment Effect by Party strength

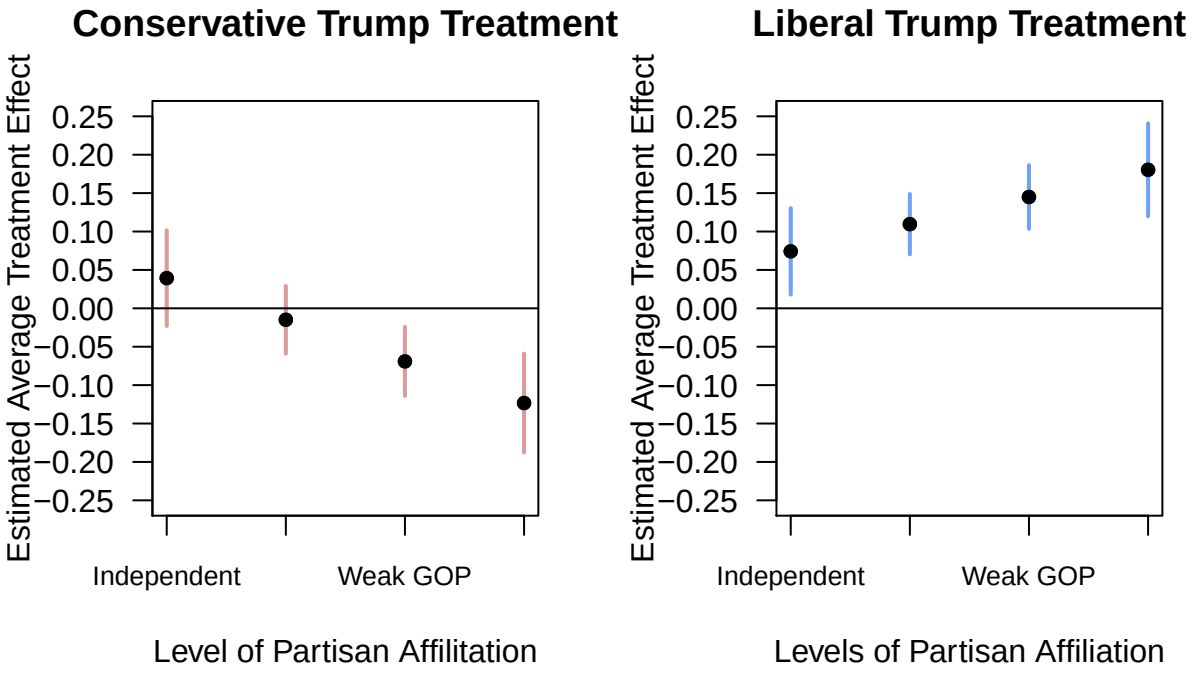
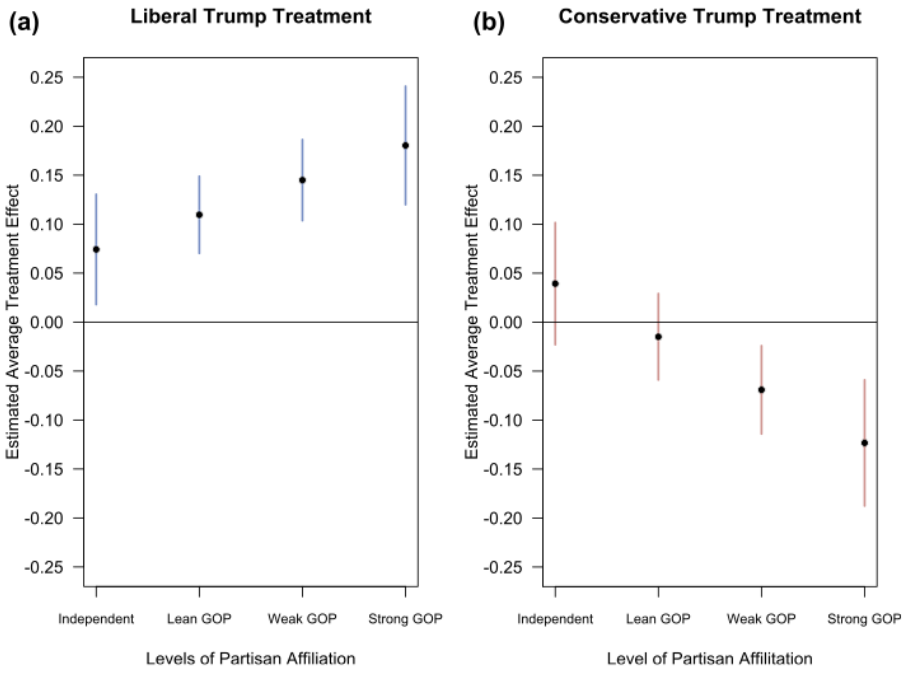


FIGURE 3. Average Treatment Effect by Republican Party Strength



Note: Those who identify strongly with the Republican Party exhibit stronger treatment effects in a liberal direction for the liberal Trump treatment, and in a conservative direction for the conservative Trump treatment.

6.5 Figure 4: Average Treatment Effect by Trump Approval

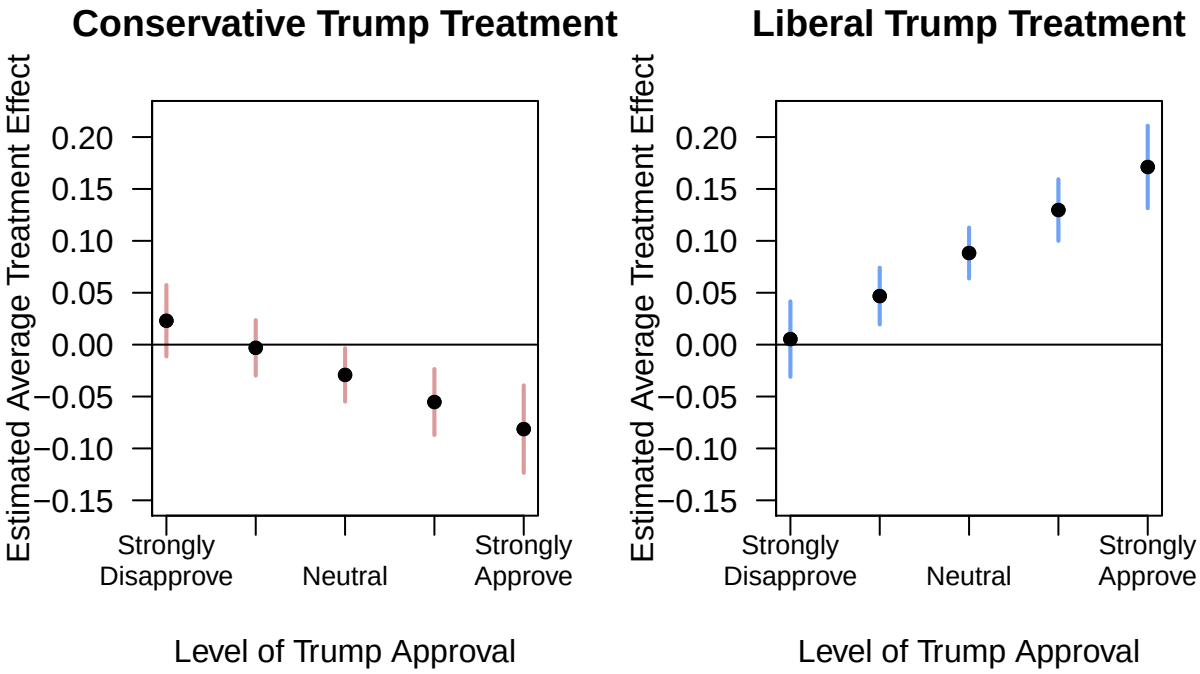
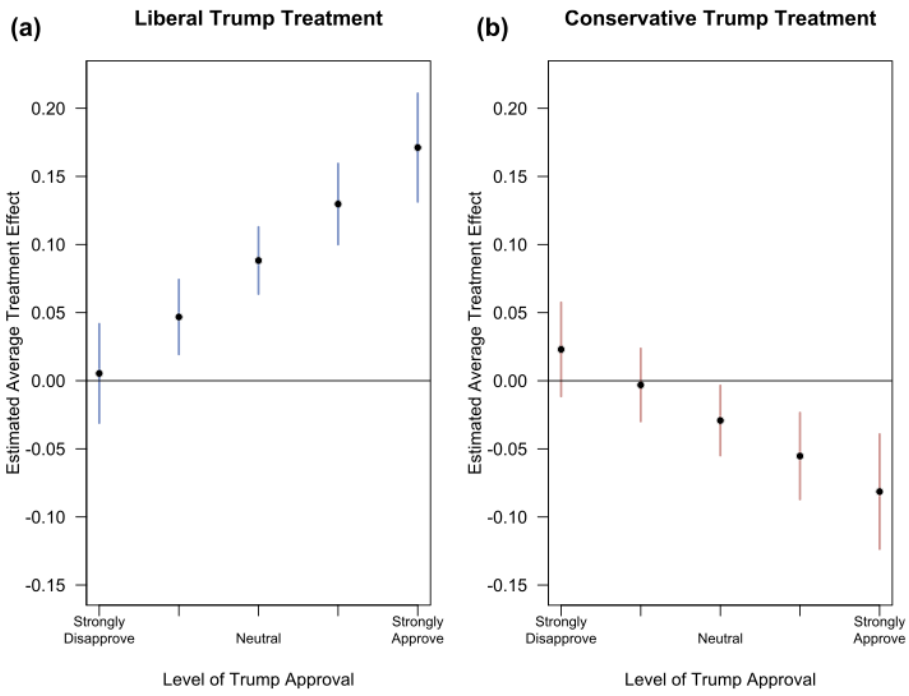


FIGURE 4. Average Treatment Effect by Approval of Trump



Note: Those who approve of Trump exhibit stronger treatment effects in a liberal direction for the liberal Trump treatment, and in a conservative direction for the conservative Trump treatment.

6.6 Figure 5: Average Treatment Effect by Self-Described Ideology

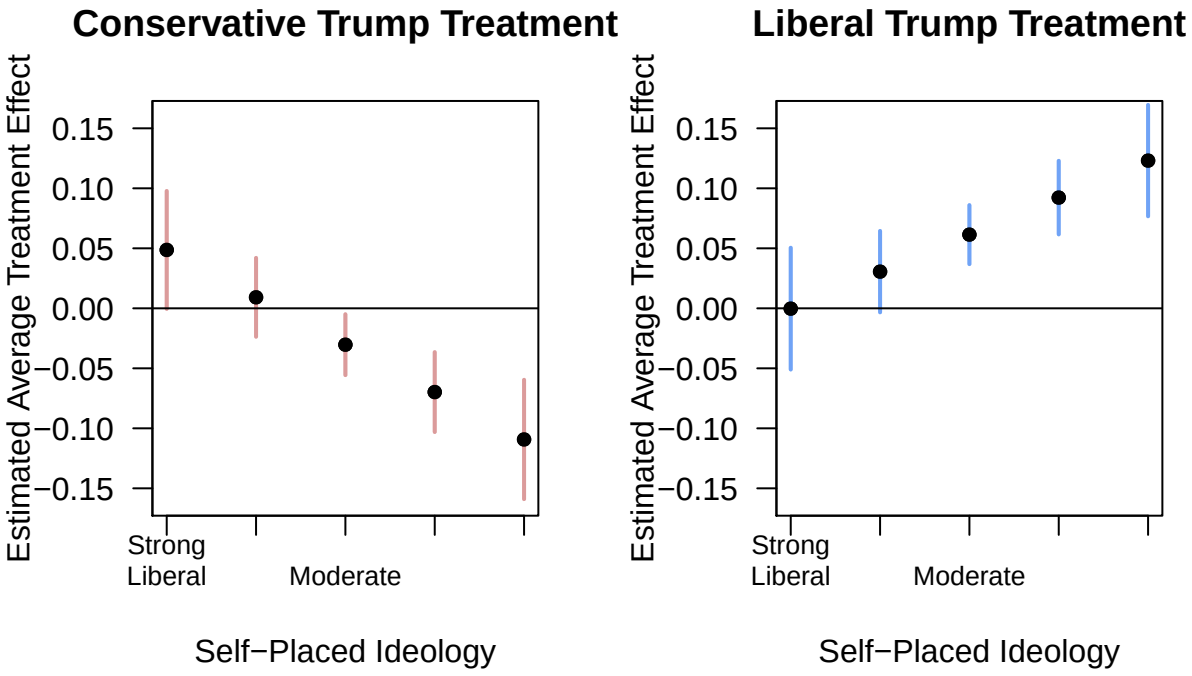
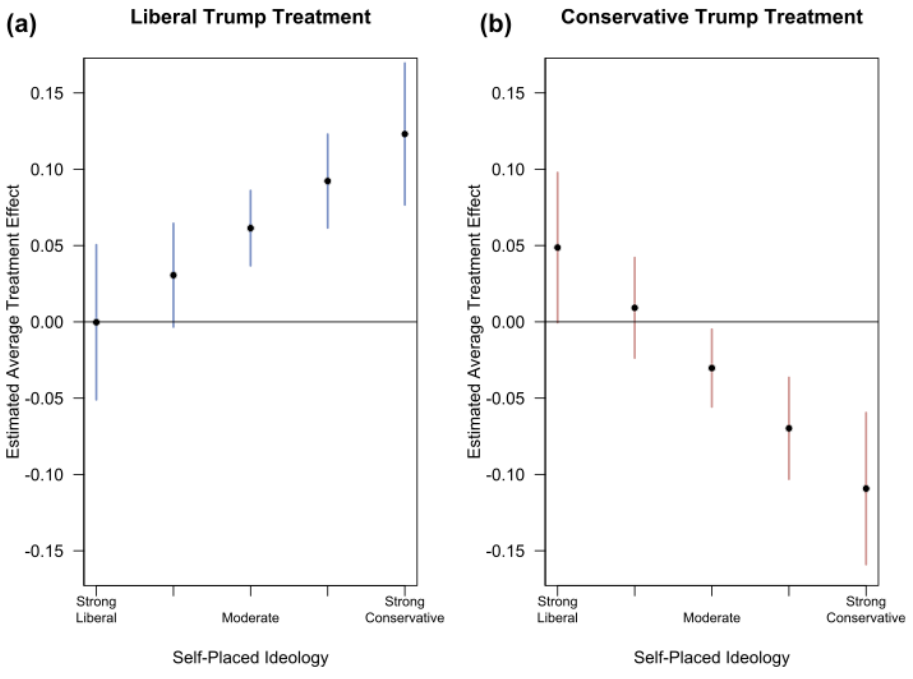


FIGURE 5. Average Treatment Effect by Self-Described Ideology



Note: Republicans at higher levels of conservatism exhibit stronger treatment effects for both the liberal Trump and the conservative Trump.

7 Bibliography

The Github repo for this milestone in online.[5] Here is an in text citation for the paper I am replicating as well as its Dataverse data: Michael Barber (2018a) and Michael Barber (2018b). Here is an in text citation for the stargazer package I use: Hlavac (2018). I used this paper for supplementary information: Gary King (2000). Finally, I use many techniques from our textbook: Andrew Gelma (2019).

Andrew Gelma, Aki Vehtai, Jennifer Hill. 2019. *Regression and Other Stories.*

Gary King, Jason Wittenberg, Michael Tomz. 2000. *Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2669316.pdf.

Hlavac, Marek. 2018. *Well-Formatted Regression and Summary Statistics Tables.* https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/stargazer/stargazer.pdf.

Michael Barber, Jeremy C. Pope. 2018a. *Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America.* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51841c73e4b04fc5ce6e8f15/t/5c1924c2562fa7f0c0e90e08/1545151689089/Does_Party_Trump_Ideology_APSR.pdf.

———. 2018b. *Repicaltion Data for: Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America.* https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/38BFML.

[5] "https://github.com/carine-h/milestone_6"