Conflicted Partisans: When One's Political Identity is Accompanied by Discontent

Abstract: Interparty conflict has long been a source of interest for political science scholars; however, with an increasingly polarized political system, it is important to examine sources of intraparty conflict and discontentment. This article makes the distinction between consistent partisans (partisans who share party-consistent attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors) and conflicted partisans (people who identify as partisan yet fail to resemble the party which with they identify). Using the Trump administration as a case study, we use 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) data to examine the ways in which conflicted partisans differ from consistent partisans. We find that conflicted partisans tend to share different demographic characteristics, policy positions, and voting behaviors than their consistent partisan counterparts.

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What factors allow partisans to become conflicted between loyalty to their party and their approval of a president from that same party? How do these conflicted partisans differ from their more consistent counterparts? Conflicted partisans are people who self-identify as either Republican or Democrat, yet they fail to approve of their own party's president. Consistent partisans are their opposite, as they are both loyal to their party and support their own party's president.   By using the first two years of the Donald Trump presidency as a case study, we examine what factors lead Democrats to approve of the job he is doing as president and Republicans to disapprove of the job he is doing. In so doing, several key differences between conflicted partisans and consistent partisans are highlighted.

Using Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) data from 2018, we examine a number of differences between conflicted partisans and consistent partisans. In this case, self-identified Republicans who approve of the job Trump is doing as President of the United States act as consistent Republicans, and those who disapprove of Trump act as conflicted Republicans. Likewise, Democrats who approve of Trump are acting as conflicted Democrats, while those who disapprove are consistent Democrats. For our analyses, we focus on conflicted partisans, which include Republicans who disapprove of Trump and Democrats who approve of Trump, as both run counter to expected manifestations of party loyalty. We find that conflicted partisans tend to diverge from consistent partisans in a few fundamental ways. First, they differ from consistent partisans on a number of demographic characteristics, such as race, religion, age and gender. Second, conflicted partisans differ from consistent partisans on a number of policy issues, specifically immigration and trade. Third, conflicted partisans differ from consistent partisans in the expression of their displeasure in down-ballot races. By comparing voting

behavior in midterm election votes for House members, a pattern emerges suggesting that conflicted partisans may be especially ripe for electoral targeting by the opposing party.

Literature

The relationship between ideology and partisanship has continued to increase dramatically, with Republicans leading the charge since the 1970's, resulting in higher levels of party loyalty and more consistent partisan voting behavior (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006). The influence of the social groups to which a person belongs are likely to shape party identification, rather than a rational evaluation of issues, candidate characteristics, and party successes or failures (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). This theory of social identity is rooted in the belief that party identification consists of an emotional attachment to a political party, rather than deliberate decisions on policy or personal characteristics. Political parties provide individuals with more than just an easy heuristic at the ballot box, as they provide individuals with a sense of comradery and belonging to a network or community. Group attachment and group identity are the building blocks of partisanship (Green et al., 2002; Huddy & Mason, 2008). As there is likely to be an emotional attachment to a political party, partisan identity should be stable at both the individual and the aggregate level.

Group membership is accompanied by the presence of group norms, an expectation of loyalty, increased attachment to the group, and set boundaries that determine who is and is not part of the group. When individuals feel like they belong to a social group, their social perceptions and attitudes are more likely to shift in such a way that they align with the group and that they are acting in accordance with the group's norms and expectations (Greene, 1999). This creation of a partisan identity allows individuals to find solidarity and political purpose, while

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providing information on what attitudes and beliefs a *good* Republican or a *good* Democrat should have.

Within the political domain, this process of perception and attitude assimilation allows for individuals to quickly distinguish between in-group and out-group members (Greene, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), as out-group members have different political perceptions and attitudes. The distinction between and in-group member and an out-group member is made more pronounced as group members coalesce around how a prototypical member of the group look, act, or think (Greene, 1999; Theiss-Morse, 2009). With the bipolar nature of partisan politics in America (Stanga & Sheffield, 1987), it becomes easy for individuals who identify with either the Republican or Democratic parties to quickly sort in-group members from out-group members. The two-party system within the United States provides the perfect dynamic for individuals to engage in an "us versus them" mentality.

Research has demonstrated that a sense of national pride and American identity stems from a collective self-esteem – similar to that which is found in sports – where people with strong identification with a group react to the group's accomplishments (and failures) and seem to absorb them into their own personal self-esteem (Theiss-Morse, 2009). Similarly, when individuals identify with a political party, they may reflect similar characteristics to sports fans. For anyone who has watched professional or college sports in America, it becomes clear that there are many die-hard fans who paint their chests, wear specific gear like cheese wedge or corn cob hats, and who riot after major wins (or losses). These super fans are loyal to sports teams that have become *their* team, and a part of their identity is derived from the group. Even in the case of poor performing sports teams, true fans remain loyal and continue to support the team

regardless of the number of wins and losses each season. Even if several winless seasons go by, it is difficult – if not impossible - for these sports fans to drop the moniker of their team.

Naturally, there is variation in the degree to which individuals identify as partisans, just as not all sports fans paint their chests to attend the big game.   This variation is often captured by a large portion of research that partitions self-identified Republicans and Democrats into a scale ranging from weak to strong party affiliation. Despite a few decades where citizen partisanship seemed to be weakening (Wattenberg, 2009), political polarization among the electorate has been on the rise for the first two decades of the 21st Century (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016). The increasing polarization in Congress (Bafumi & Herron, 2010; Kraushaar, 2014; Mann & Ornstein, 2013) has seemingly bled over into the electorate, with increased partisan identity. The increase in party loyalty, which is an important part of group membership, has been linked to more consistent party voting (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006), and an increase in straight-ticket voting (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016). Yet what happens when there are members of the in-group that do not share the same values, beliefs, loyalty, or attachment to the group that other partisans share? This question is at the crux of our research surrounding consistent versus conflicted partisans.

If political identity is rooted in an emotional attachment to the group, then short-term issues, such as presidential popularity or party shortcomings, should not lead to a shift in the degree to which people exhibit party loyalty (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). Even when sports fans experience winless seasons and crushing defeats, they support their team. Similarly, having a strong partisan identity should have the same outcome, with individuals identifying as Republican or Democrat despite losing elections, experiencing policy failures, or even electing a polarizing president of their same party.

Partisan identity may not rest solely on a preference of one party over the other. The number of people who are willing to take upon themselves the moniker of Republican and Democrat has consistently decreased over time, with more people preferring to be labeled as Independent (Jones, 2015; Twenge, Honeycutt, Prislin, & Sherman, 2016). Political scientists have long realized that the term Independent comes with it a certain degree of social desirability (Petrocik, 1974; Keith et al., 1992), so there may be some social desirability effect leading people who are truly partisan to eschew the party label. It is also possible that some individuals have chosen to espouse partisan labels out of hatred for the opposing party, as there has been an increase in the degree to which people view the opposing party more negatively (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Mason, 2013; Mason, 2015; Abramowitz & Webster, 2016). In the context of the 2016 election, Abramowitz & Webster (2018) find that citizens engage in negative partisanship because they are no longer voting because they like their candidate, but they are voting for their candidate because they hate the other side.

Negative partisanship and its effects on the American political system are likely to lead to conflict, both between groups and within group ranks. The strength of partisan attachment and party loyalty also amplifies intergroup hate and conflict (Glaeser, 2005). Even within the ranks of the in-group partisans, any defection from the group norms can be seen as problematic, as it is a deviation from the prototypical group behavior. When group members fall outside of those norms (particularly on things deemed as important), they are often marginalized and their voices, opinions, and especially criticisms are often attacked (Theiss-Morse, 2007).

Often, in-group critics are the most dangerous to the group because they know the most about the group; thus, they know the group's innerworkings, the group's flaws, and they know what will do the most damage (Theiss-Morse, 2007). Therefore, any in-group discord should be

remedied quickly and any disparities in perception, attitude, or opinions should be resolved for the good of the group. When rigid power structures and high relational stakes are present, all dissent from group members is silenced (Hinderaker, 2015).

We believe that there are factions within political parties, and this subset of self-identified partisans diverge from consistent partisans in a number of ways. Conflicted partisans are individuals who derive social identity from their belonging to a political party; however, if they were to consider their issue preferences and candidate evaluations, then they would find themselves not reflected in the party when it comes to demographic characteristics, policy positions, and issue preferences. Despite not seeing themselves reflected in their political party, these conflicted partisans cling to their party.

Severing ties with a group with far-reaching ties to a person's identity and lifestyle is extraordinarily difficult. Research examining the exit process from a totalistic religion has demonstrated that exiting a group is often accompanied by a long period of contemplation and disenchantment and a history of negative pre-exit experiences (Hinderaker, 2015). Like religion, party identification is closely tied with the values one endorses in life (Goren, 2005), and the separation of one's self from their previously held beliefs and values is difficult. Therefore, these conflicted partisans are not likely to change political parties haphazardly, as exiting totalistic groups is more of a fluid process that takes time and may never fully culminate in a complete exit (Hinderaker, 2015). Therefore, these conflicted partisans remain members of a group where they are not adequately reflected.

To measure individual levels of contentment with their party, we use the approval of President Trump as a measure of how closely partisans hew to the expected behavior of their respective parties. In this manner, conflicted partisans consist of Republicans who disapprove of

Trump and Democrats who approve of Trump. Consistent partisans would, therefore, reflect the opposite and be in line with the expected attitudes and behaviors of their parties. Therefore, we expect that conflicted partisans differ from consistent partisans in a number of ways. First, we hypothesize that conflicted partisans differ in their demographic makeup from their self-identified group. Second, we hypothesize that conflicted partisans will espouse policy positions that do not align with the expected positions that consistent partisans hold. Finally, we hypothesize that conflicted partisans have voting behavior that differs from consistent partisans.

Methods

In to quantify the number of conflicted Republicans, the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) was utilized. The CCES offers two significant advantages to us in this analysis. First, it has been conducted biannually since 2006 and therefore has the ability to track recent changes in the Never Trump phenomenon using the 2018 data. Additionally, it has a tremendous sample size – 60,000 respondents in the most recent wave of the survey. That allows researchers to cut the sample into a very small percentage of the population, while retaining a good deal of statistical power.

Results

To begin, we calculated a cross tabulation of the seven-point party identification scale (ranging from Strong Democrat to Strong Republican) along with a President Trump job approval question with four response options from "strongly disapprove" to "strongly approve." The results of this analysis are displayed in the heatmap in Figure 1. As has been previously described there is a great deal of congruence between partisan identification and job approval. Consistent Republicans evince strong levels of support for the President. Trump's support among

Strong Republicans is a robust 95.6%, however that support drops to 75.4% among "not strong Republicans" but then rebounds to 85.3% among "lean Republicans." This provides some evidence that if one is looking for conflicted anti-Trump Republicans, the best place to look may be among those in the middle of the partisan spectrum on the Republican side. Expectedly, there is widespread opposition to Trump among Democrats – just 4% of "strong Democrats" approve of the President's job performance, that number increases to 12.8% among "not strong Democrats" but then declines to 4.9% of "lean Democrats." The pattern of "not strong" partisans is carried through here, with both Democrats and Republicans in this category being most willing to cross party lines in expressing their approval or disapproval of the President.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

This gives us an opportunity to assess just how large the contingent conflicted Republicans were in 2018. In total, of the 60,000 respondents in the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study there were 2,475 Republicans who disapproved of President Trump's job performance. In total, 11.4% of all Republicans in the sample could be classified as conflicted partisans. If the sample includes people who identify as Democrats but also approve of Trump's job performance, then the share of Americans who are conflicted partisans sit at 7.1% of the population. Clearly, this is a very small portion of the electorate, no matter how the figures are calculated, yet conflicted partisans are important to understand.

Demographics

Having established the overall size of the Republican coalition that disapproves of Donald Trump's job performance, we turn now to some possible factors that could drive this disapproval. The Republican party has seen consistent support from white Americans, while

Democrats have traditionally seen a more racially diverse set of voters (Abramowitz, 2013). This is evident in the 2018 CCES sample. While the Democrat sample was 67.1% white, the Republican subgroup was 88.1% white. Given the findings regarding the strength of group theory, we would expect to see non-white Republicans be more likely to express disapproval of Trump and white Democrats to express approval. To test this, partisans were divided into five racial groups: white, African-American, Hispanic, Asian and all other races including Middle Eastern and mixed race. Figure 2 visualizes the percent of Republicans in each racial group that disapprove of President Trump in the left panel and the share of Democrats of each racial group who approve of his job performance, with 95% confidence intervals indicated by capped lines.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Cleary, white Republicans are the least likely to disapprove of Donald Trump, with 91.9% approving of his job performance. However, disapproval is much higher in a number of minority racial groups. For instance, nearly a quarter of Hispanic Republicans do not like the job that Trump is doing, and that share jumps to three in 10 African-American Republicans. If one is looking for a conflicted Republican, they are far more likely to be found in persons of color than white members of the GOP. Democrats of all racial groups indicate a greater reluctance to express approval of President Trump. Four of the five racial groups (Hispanic, all others, white, and Asian) express approve in the 6-8% range that, with the differences between those groups not being statistically significant. African-American Democrats express very low levels of approval with approximately one in twenty believing that the President is doing a good job.

Along with race, gender may also influence some Republicans' disapproval of President Trump. The "gender gap" is a well-researched phenomenon in political science, with women being more likely to vote for Democrats, while men favor Republicans. This also bears out in the

partisanship of the sample with women making up 55.8% of Democrats, but just 47.2% of Republicans. Conservatism has been shown to increase with age (Truett, 1993); therefore, as women age, it should be expected that they will become more politically conservative and endorse the Republican party. The age-conservatism relationship may be tied to life experiences (Delli Carpini, 1989). Regardless of partisan identification, the partisan gap tends to narrow with age, as older partisans tend to be more conservative in nature (Cornelis et al., 2009). To test the relationship between gender and age, the percent of Republicans who disapproved of Donald Trump was calculated for each gender at each age ranging from 18 to 80 years old, with the same analysis being conducted among Democrats who approve of Donald Trump. Given the sheer size of the CCES, the samples for each individual age range from 100 respondents to nearly 300 respondents, therefore statistical power remains reasonable. However, this uncertainty is visualized in Figure 3 with shaded ribbons surrounding each estimate.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

For both genders, there is clearly a negative relationship between age and disapproving of Trump among Republicans. This downward trend seems to slow considerably for both genders around the age of 40 and declines more slowly as Republicans move into retirement age. Turning now to gender, it is clear from these findings that younger female Republicans are more likely to be conflicted Republicans than their male counterparts. For instance, while 15.3% of Republican men between 18 and 22 disapprove of Trump (CI = 11.9%, 18.7%), 32.7% of young Republican women disapprove (CI = 29.0%, 36.4%). That is both a statistically and substantively significant difference between the two groups. The finding that female Republicans are more likely to disapprove of the President persists into those ages 30-39, however that nearly disappears when looking at those between the ages of 40 and 80. These results provide support for both a gender

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gap as well as a lifecycle effect occurring among idiosyncratic Republicans in 2018. The approval lines for the Democrat sample indicates that young male Democrats are slightly more likely to approve the President - a mirror image of the top panel. However, for Democrats above the age of 40 the level of overall approval stays relatively constant and consistent between men and women. Note that the trend for Republicans was a downward slope, among the Democrats the lines are essentially flat across most of the age distribution. This suggests that gender plays a role in being a conflicted partisan, but this is especially true of young, female Republicans.

A final factor that may influence conflicted partisans to espouse views of the president that run counter to their respective party's position is that of religion. The most religious Americans are likely to be Republicans (Putnam & Campbell, 2010), as the number of religious communities have been closely aligned with the Republican party in recent years. Roughly 81% of white evangelicals supported Trump in the 2016 presidential election (Smith & Martinez, 2016). However, one has to wonder if these types of voters might be the ones who would sour on Trump's presidency given a number of policy positions and scandals that have emerged over the first two years in the White House, as only 69% express approval with the job Trump is doing as president (Schwadel & Smith, 2019). In the same manner, it seems possible that as the devoutly religious have become more Republican over time and that even Democrats who attend church frequently would be conflicted due to their religious community. To test this an interaction was specified with disapproval of Trump as the dependent variable. The model looked at four different Christian subsamples: evangelicals, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons. The interaction included controls for education, age of the respondent, and a dummy variable for white respondents. The Democrat sample is indicated by the blue dashed line, while the Republicans are displayed in the solid red line in Figure 4.

[Insert Figure 4 here]

The lines, generally, are relatively flat - indicating that church attendance, it most cases, has little to no impact on disapproval of Trump. For evangelicals, Democrats who attend more frequently are slightly less likely to disapprove of the Trump presidency. Moving from the lowest part of the attendance scale to the highest drives down disapproval by approximately ten percentage points. The same is true for Republican evangelicals, however the y-intercept is obviously lower. The pattern for evangelicals is mirrored among mainline Protestants and Catholics almost exactly - higher levels of attendance predicts lower levels of disapproval, but the differences are not substantively large. However, Democrat Catholics who attend multiple times a week have predicted disapproval levels of President Trump that are just 3% lower than the same Catholics who never attend. The outlier here is Republican Mormons. For this group there is a clear positive relationship between attending church more and growing disapproval of Donald Trump. A high attending Republican Mormon is twice as likely to disapprove of Donald Trump than a Republican Mormon who never attends services. This may be due, in part, to the fact that Mormons were lukewarm for the GOP nominee in 2016 - just 51.5% of them voted for Trump, when three quarters had gone for the Republican candidate in the prior two presidential elections (Bailey, 2016).

Taken together, several demographic factors seem to point to a Republican opposing President Trump. Racial minorities who identify with the GOP are more likely to express disapproval surrounding President Trump. This is especially strong among African-American and Hispanic Republicans. Women, on average, seem to be more likely to disapprove of his job performance and this is especially pronounced among younger Republican women. When looking at the impact of religion, it appears that for most Christian groups, those who attend

church with the least frequency are more likely to be conflicted Republicans, however Mormons are an outlier in this case. For Democrats, the factors that seem to drive up approval for President Trump were more modest. It seems that no racial group was clearly more likely to express approval for the President. However, the results seem to indicate that younger Democrat men gave Trump some lukewarm support. Finally, the religion models seem to provide tepid support of the idea that higher levels of religious behavior translate to stronger approval of President Trump among Democrats. It seems, at least in this case, it is easier to find a conflicted partisan among Republicans than the more unified Democrats.

Policy

While it is impossible to know without the benefit of hindsight two areas of public policy that Donald Trump will be remembered for, from our current perspective these areas will likely be immigration and trade. While the modern Republican Party has consistently opposed programs and policies that would allow for illegal immigrants to be granted amnesty, President Ronald Reagan famously signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which allowed nearly 3 million immigrants to become permanent residents of the United States (Laham, 2000). However, Donald Trump made restricting immigration to the United States a centerpiece of his campaign. His focus on the issue has resonated with his base. According to a Pew poll in October of 2018, three quarters of Republicans indicated that illegal immigration was the most important problem facing the nation (Pew, 2018). It seems possible, however, that some Republicans may disapprove of Trump's job performance because of how his administration has handled the issue of immigration. On the other hand, there may be some respondents who identify as Democrats who support Trump's immigration approach. It might be the case that strongly pro-immigration Democrats may express disapproval for Trump at similar

levels of anti-immigration Republicans. This would provide support for the hypothesis that policy may be the cause of partisans to rate the President in contradictory ways.

The CCES asked respondents about five different components of Donald Trump's immigration policy. They were prefaced with this statement: "What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following?" with questions detailing 1) a spending increase on border security by $25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico, 2) providing legal status to children of immigrants already in the United States and were brought to the United States by their parents. Provide these children the option of citizenship in 10 years if they meet citizenship requirements and commit no crimes (reverse coded), 3) reducing legal immigration by eliminating the visa lottery and ending family-based migration, 4) withholding federal funds from any local police department that does not report to the federal government anyone they identify as an illegal immigrant, and 5) send to prison any person who has been deported from the United States and reenters..

The responses to these five statements were combined into an additive index where higher scores equated to greater support for Donald Trump's immigration policy. An OLS regression model was specified with disapproval of Trump as the dependent variable. This model contained an interaction of the immigration index, a dichotomous variable for white and non-white respondents (as immigration support has a racial component), as well as a dichotomous variable for Republicans and Democrats. Also included were controls for education, age, gender, and church attendance. The results of this interaction are visualized below in Figure 5.

[Insert Figure 5 here]

There is an unmistakable downward slope to each of the lines indicating that the more each group were in favor immigration restrictions, the less likely they were to disapprove of the job President Trump is doing. However, there are some significant differences between Democrats and Republicans. For Democrats who were strongly opposed to immigration restrictions, the disapproval of Trump is nearly 100% for both white and non-white samples. However, as one moves from the left side of the scale to the right side (indicating more support for immigration restriction), a divide begins to widen between white and non-white Democrats. Non-white Democrats who favor of all five immigration proposals are just as likely to approve of Donald Trump as disapprove of his job performance. However, for white Democrats the results are much different. According to this model, white Democrats who have policy congruence on immigration with President Trump has a predicted disapproval rate of 13%. This seems to provide support for the conclusion that partisans who approval goes against their party identification may do so because of policy differences.

On the Republican side, the same trend is evident, however the y-intercept is lower. For those Republicans who are completely opposed to those five immigration restrictions, still only one in four approves of Donald Trump's job performance. However, the downward slope is much steeper for Republicans than Democrats, indicating that disapproval disappears much more rapidly for members of the GOP. Once a score of 3 is achieved among Republicans, disapproval of Trump's performance is clearly below 20%, and drops to close to zero among those who agree with all five immigration proposals. Note, that for Republicans, the differences between the white and non-white groups stays relative consistently across the scale, and eventually converges on the right side. This indicates that the relationship between race and immigration looks much different for Republicans and Democrats.

The other policy area that may generate conflicted partisans is that of Trump's approach to free trade. The typical Republican position on economic issues has traditionally been an emphasis on free markets with few regulations and lower levels of taxation and tariffs. The 2000 Republican Party platform indicated that: "Tariffs should be cut further." (Republican Party Platform, 2000). However, Donald Trump's administration has implemented a number of tariffs including imported steel and aluminum, which were eventually lifted (Tausche & Pramuk, 2019). Additionally, the Trump White House instituted $50 billion in tariffs to goods imported from China which the President said was retaliation for Chinese intellectual property theft (Diamond, 2018). These decisions on trade policy would be an ideal place to determine if some Republicans were swayed from supporting the President because of his stance on free trade.

The CCES posed questions to respondents that gauged support for steel tariffs (both including and excluding Canada, Mexico, and Europe) as well as tariffs specifically against goods imported from China. Figure 6 is the mean level of support for each of those three trade scenarios, along with an additive index of the tariff questions, broken down by partisanship and approval of President Trump. Again, 95% confidence intervals are indicated by capped lines for each calculation.

[Insert Figure 6 here]

The clear indication here is that approval of Donald Trump is the most important determinant of support for his trade policies. Conflicted Democrats (those who support the Trump presidency) indicate majority support for tariffs in each of the three scenarios, in fact that support is approximately two thirds for steel tariffs that exclude some countries as well as those that target Chinese imports. On the other hand, conflicted Republicans are less supportive of restrictions on free trade. For instance, just a quarter of Republicans who disapprove of Trump

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believe that the Trump administration should implement wide ranging steel tariffs, that is just ten points higher than Democrats who disapprove of Donald Trump. In fact, the gap in support for tariffs between Republicans and Democrats who disapprove of the President is relatively small in each of the scenarios, peaking at eighteen points of difference on tariffing Chinese goods. The conclusion here, however, is that conflicted Democrats look a lot more like consistent Republicans on trade policy than conflicted Republicans resemble consistent Democrats. The overall difference between the two "approve" groups is 7.9%, while the divergence is 15.2% among the "disapprove" groups. In the area of trade, it would appear that Trump's policies have turned off some Republican voters, but their support for tariffs does not fall to the level of consistent Democrats.

Voting

While conflicted partisans can largely skirt around their contradictory opinions when it comes to policy issues like immigration and trade, there is a place where their true feelings about the political parties must be made manifest: the voting booth. If a Republican is truly upset with the direction of his or her party after the election of Donald Trump that individual was faced with a difficult choice in November of 2018 - to continue supporting their party by voting for the Republican House candidate or vote for someone else (either the Democrat or a third-party candidate). They could also register their discontent by merely staying home on election day. It seems prudent to see if conflicted partisans were less likely to turn out in 2018. The CCES poses a question to respondents to assess their voting behavior in the midterms, the sample was broken into Republicans and Democrats as well as those who approved of President Trump's job performance as well as those who disapproved. The results of this are displayed in Figure 7.

[Insert figure 7 here]

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Large majorities of each of the four groups indicated that they did turn out to vote in 2018. However, there are important differences in turnout. Note that the non-conflicted partisans voted at essentially the same rate (~88%). However, there was a lower levels of turnout for those who were conflicted. Just under three quarters of Pro-Trump Democrats (73.7%) indicated that they definitely voted, compared to 78% of anti-Trump Republicans. When one observers the other response options it becomes clear that conflicted partisans were more likely to choose these items. For instance conflicted partisans were twice as likely to say that they did not vote than consistent partisans. The same pattern is evident for those voters who "thought about (voting) but didn't" and "usually vote but didn't this time." These results provide some support for the assertion that conflicted partisans are less likely to vote in House elections regardless of party.

Setting aside those who did not vote, we now turn to just those who indicated that they cast a ballot in the midterm elections. Figure 8 includes how partisans voted in the 2018 midterms, but also how Democrats and Republicans voted in the 2010 midterms based on their approval of President Obama. This comparison provides a good test, as this was the first chance that conflicted partisans would have to change course after the election of the President. We should expect to see Democrats that disapprove of President Obama to be less likely to support Democrat House candidates. In the same manner conflicted Republican would be less likely to vote for Republicans in the 2018 midterms.

[Insert Figure 8 here]

The results indicate that this is exactly what happened in both the 2010 and 2018 midterms. Nearly nine in ten consistent partisans voted for their party's House candidates in the first midterm election after a new president. The differences in third party and other party votes for consistent partisans is negligible between 2010 and 2018. However, there are some

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differences for conflicted partisans. In 2010, nearly six in ten anti-Obama Democrats still voted with their partisan affiliation in the House midterms, while a third voted for the Republican candidate and about ten percent cast a third-party vote. In 2018, conflicted partisans had slightly different voting patterns. Instead of 58% of them still voting with their party as they did in 2010, just half of conflicted Republicans voted for the GOP in House races in 2018. Of the conflicted Republican voters who did not support the Republican House candidate, 40% cast their ballots for Democrats. This suggests that anti-Trump Republican sentiment was slightly stronger in 2018 than the anti-Obama feeling among Democrats in the 2010 midterms.

Discussion

This study presented data-driven evidence for the existence of two kinds of partisans: consistent partisans and conflicted partisans. Consistent partisans are individuals who self-identify as a partisan and hold attitudes and beliefs that are consistent with their espoused party. Conflicted partisans are individuals who self-identify as a partisan, yet do not have party-specific congruent attitudes and behavior. Using 2018 CCES data and positions on the Trump administration as a case study, we find that conflicted partisans differ from consistent partisans on a number of dimensions. Conflicted partisans tend to look different from consistent partisans on a number of demographic characteristics, such as race, age, and gender. Conflicted partisans also tend to espouse policy positions that run contrary to that of their party, particularly on the issues of immigration and tariffs. When it comes to voting behavior, we found that conflicted partisans were less likely to vote in the midterm elections than consistent partisans. Furthermore, there is evidence that conflicted partisans are more likely to vote for the opposing party in midterm elections, likely as a mechanism of expressing their disapproval.

It is clear that conflicted partisans still identify as partisans, which indicates that some degree of party loyalty still exists. This identification with a political party, despite being different on demographic traits, policy preferences, and voting behavior is a clear indicator that there is something within conflicted partisans that attach them to their respective political parties. Future research should examine the extent to which party identification is experienced by conflicted partisans.

Additionally, these findings present an opportunity for political science practitioners, as conflicted partisans may be prime targets for candidate and issue-based campaigns looking for swing voters. This study has provided a number of characteristics that can be used to help identify conflicted partisans from consistent partisans. The degree to which conflicted partisans can be swayed by targeted ads or messages should be further examined. Future research should also examine other patterns of participatory behavior between conflicted and consistent partisans. While we found that conflicted partisans are less likely to vote, other forms of political participation should be examined. Conflicted partisans may be less likely to participate in other forms of participation like volunteering on campaigns or attending party meetings. However, conflicted partisans may be more likely to write their elected officials or attend protests to express their dissatisfaction. Future research should explore all variation in participatory behavior for conflicted partisans.

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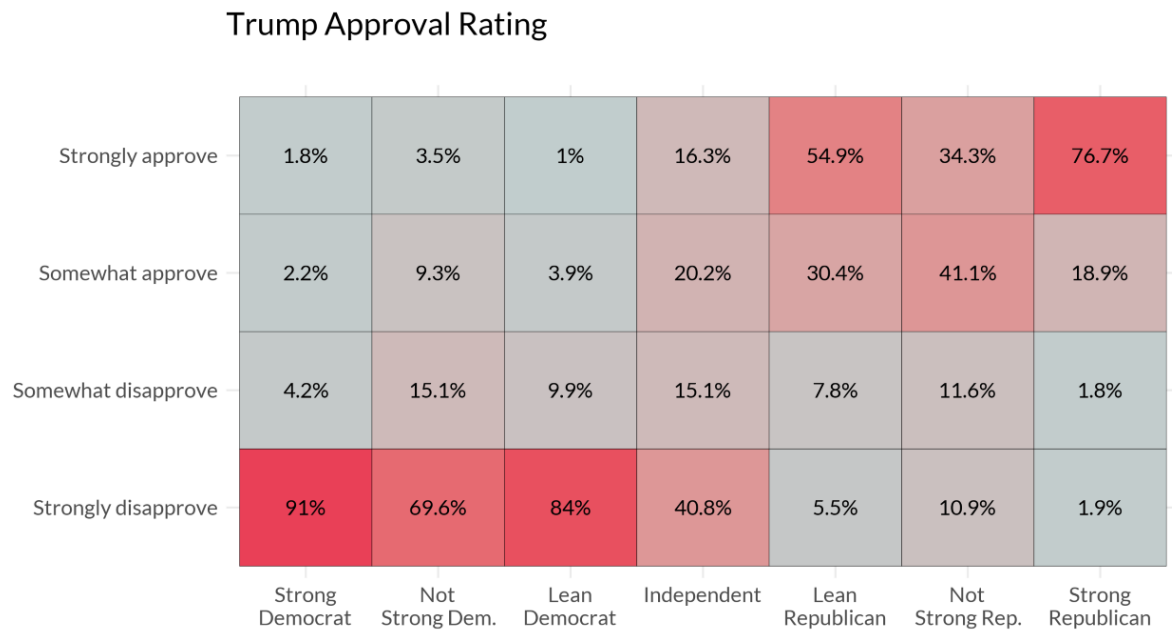polarization. American Journal of Political Science, 59(3), 690-707.

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Figure 1: Trump approval rating by partisan identification

Trump Approval Rating

	Strong Democrat	Not Strong Dem.	Lean Democrat	Independent	Lean Republican	Not Strong Rep.	Strong Republican
Strongly approve	1.8%	3.5%	1%	16.3%	54.9%	34.3%	76.7%
Somewhat approve	2.2%	9.3%	3.9%	20.2%	30.4%	41.1%	18.9%
Somewhat disapprove	4.2%	15.1%	9.9%	15.1%	7.8%	11.6%	1.8%
Strongly disapprove	91%	69.6%	84%	40.8%	5.5%	10.9%	1.9%

Data: CCES 2018

Figure 2: Disapproval of Trump by Party Identification and Race

Percent Who Disapprove of Donald Trump
Among Republicans

Black	29.9%
Hispanic	23.7%
Asian	21.4%
All Others	12.1%
White	8.1%

Data: CCES 2018

Percent Who Approve of Donald Trump
Among Democrats

Hispanic	8.8%
All Others	8%
White	7.8%
Asian	6.9%
Black	5.8%

Data: CCES 2018
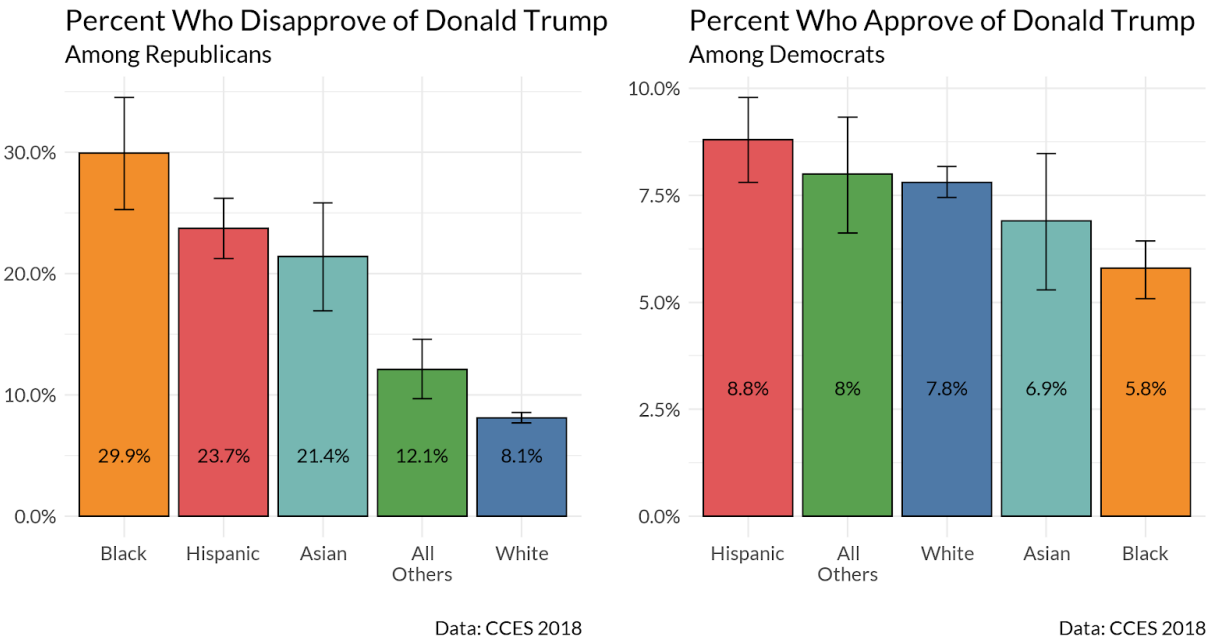
Figure 3: Disapproval of Trump by Age and Gender

Disapproval of Trump by Age and Gender
Among Republicans

Data: CCES 2018

Approval of Trump by Age and Gender
Among Democrats

Data: CCES 2018
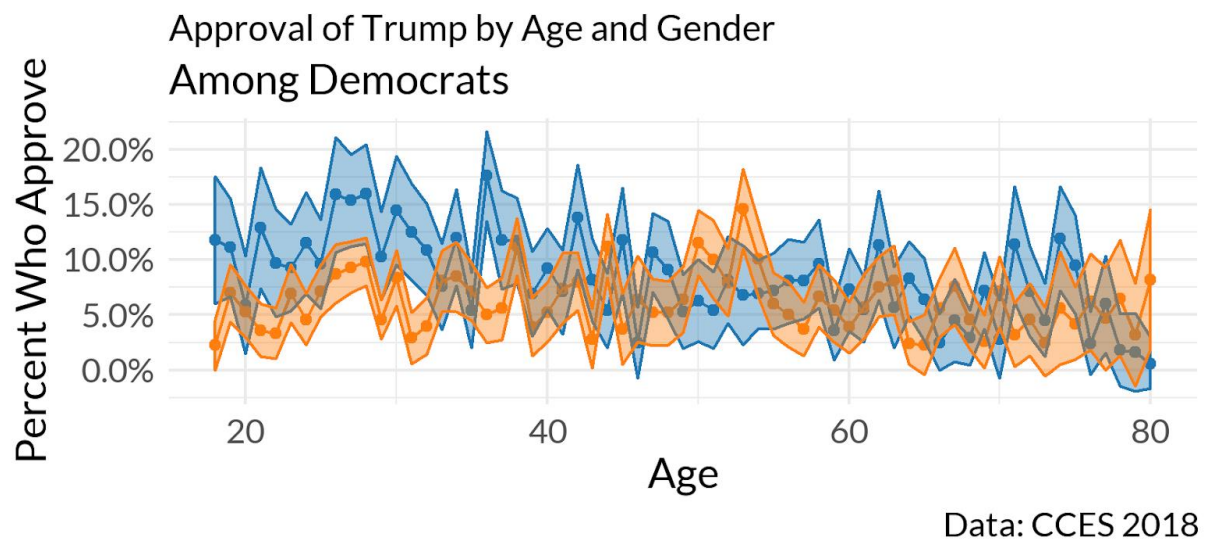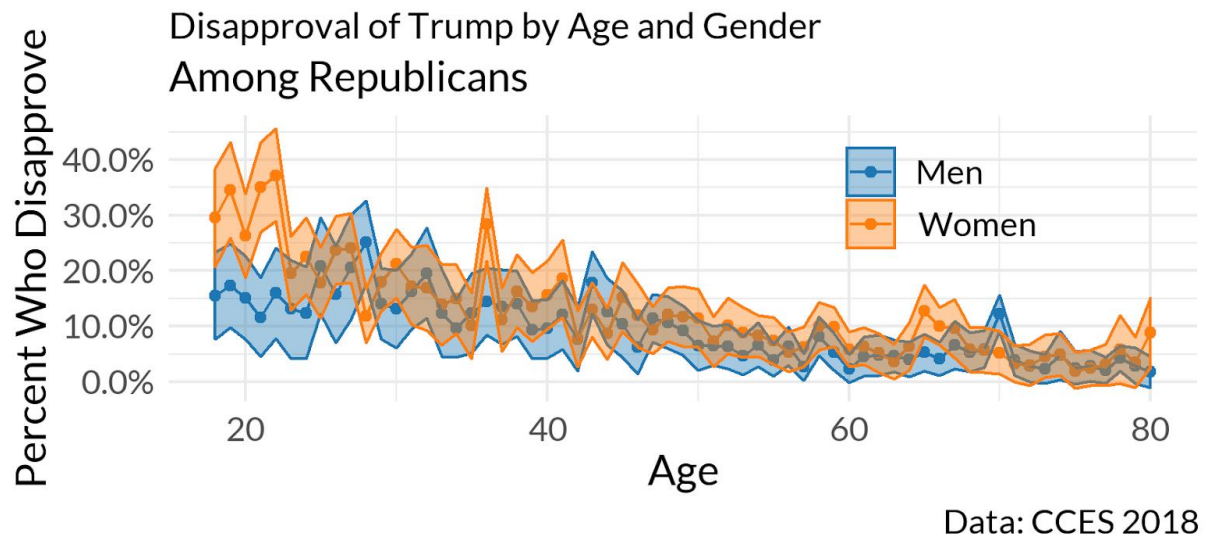
Figure 4: Effect of Religious Attendance on Approval of Trump

Interaction of Attendance and Gender on Trump Approval
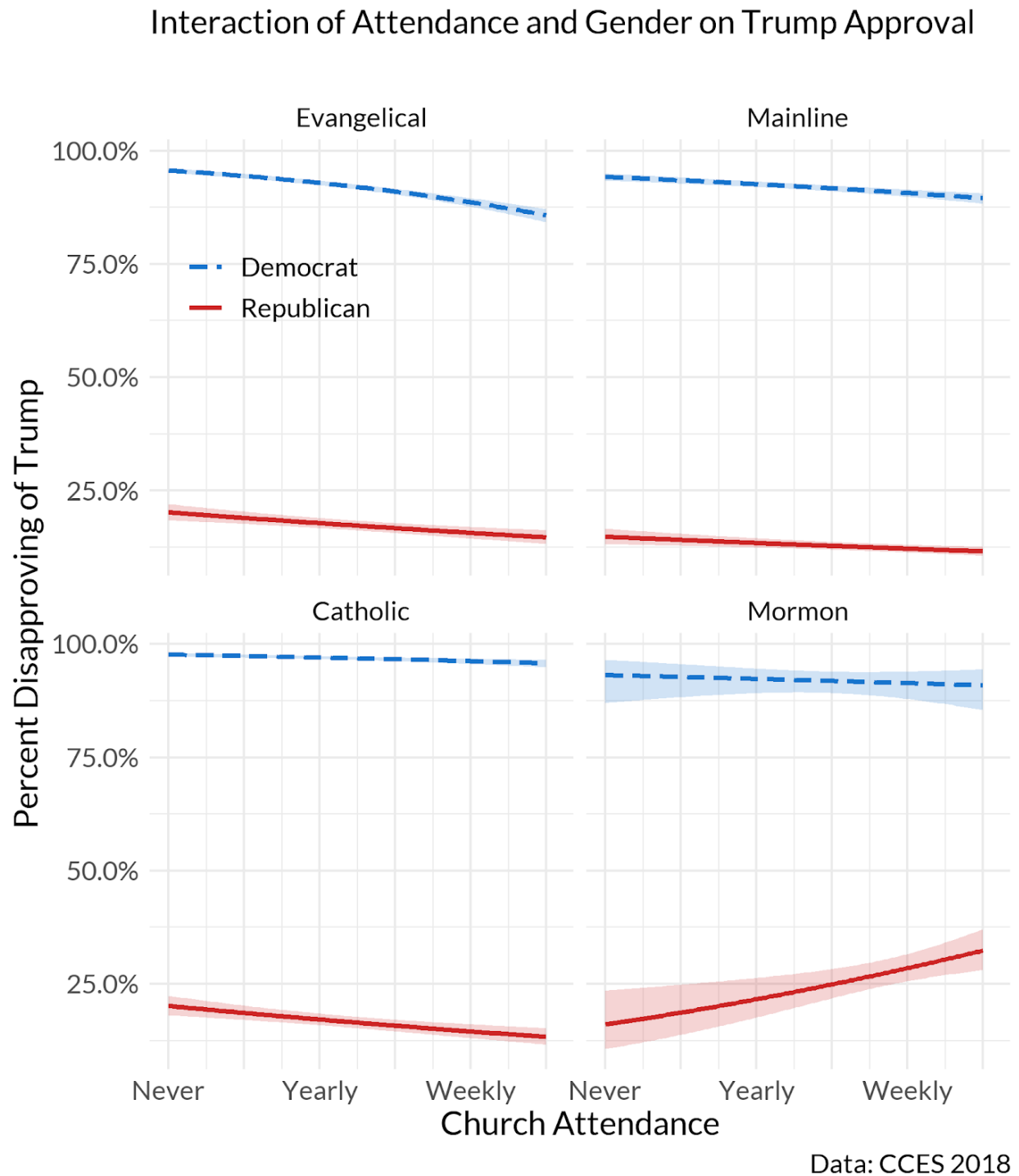
Figure 5: Views on Immigration Policy by Race and Trump Approval

Interaction of Immigration Views and Race on Trump Approval
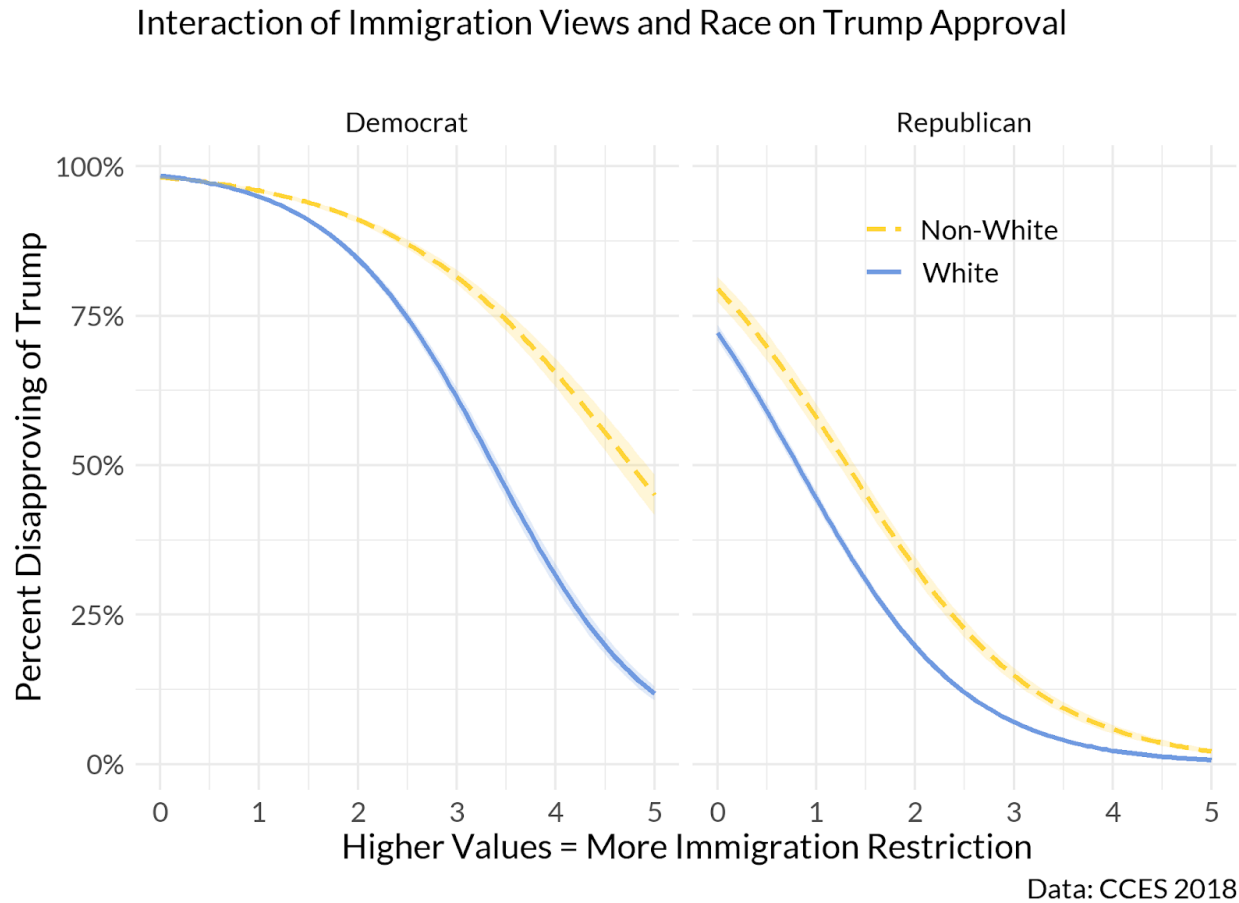
Support for Tariffs by Party and Approval Status

Scale of Overall Tariff Support

Steel Tariffs Excluding Canada, Europe, and Mexico

Steel Tariffs Including Canada, Europe, and Mexico

Tariffs on China

Trump Approval Status

Democrat   Republican
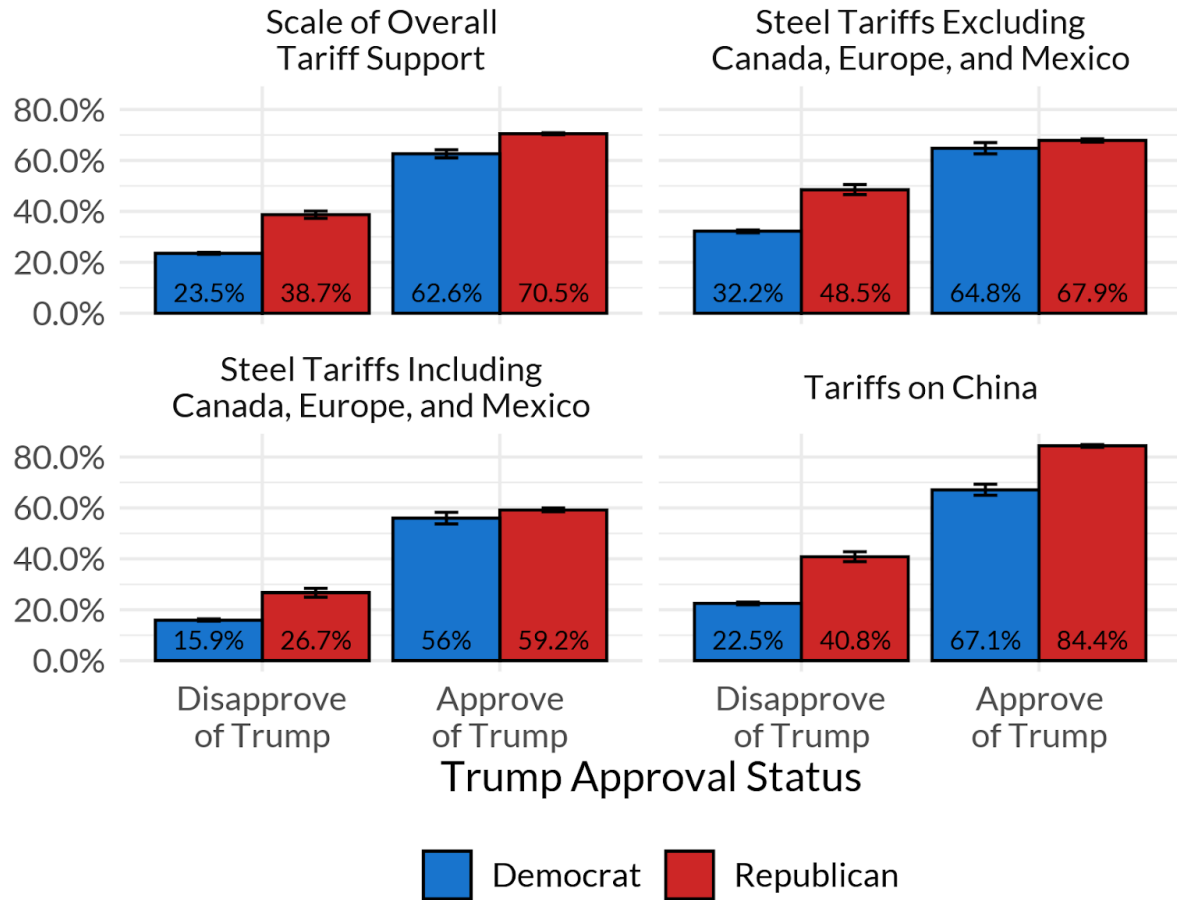
Data: CCES 2018

Figure 7: Voting Status in 2018 Midterm by Party Identification

Voting Status in 2018 Midterms
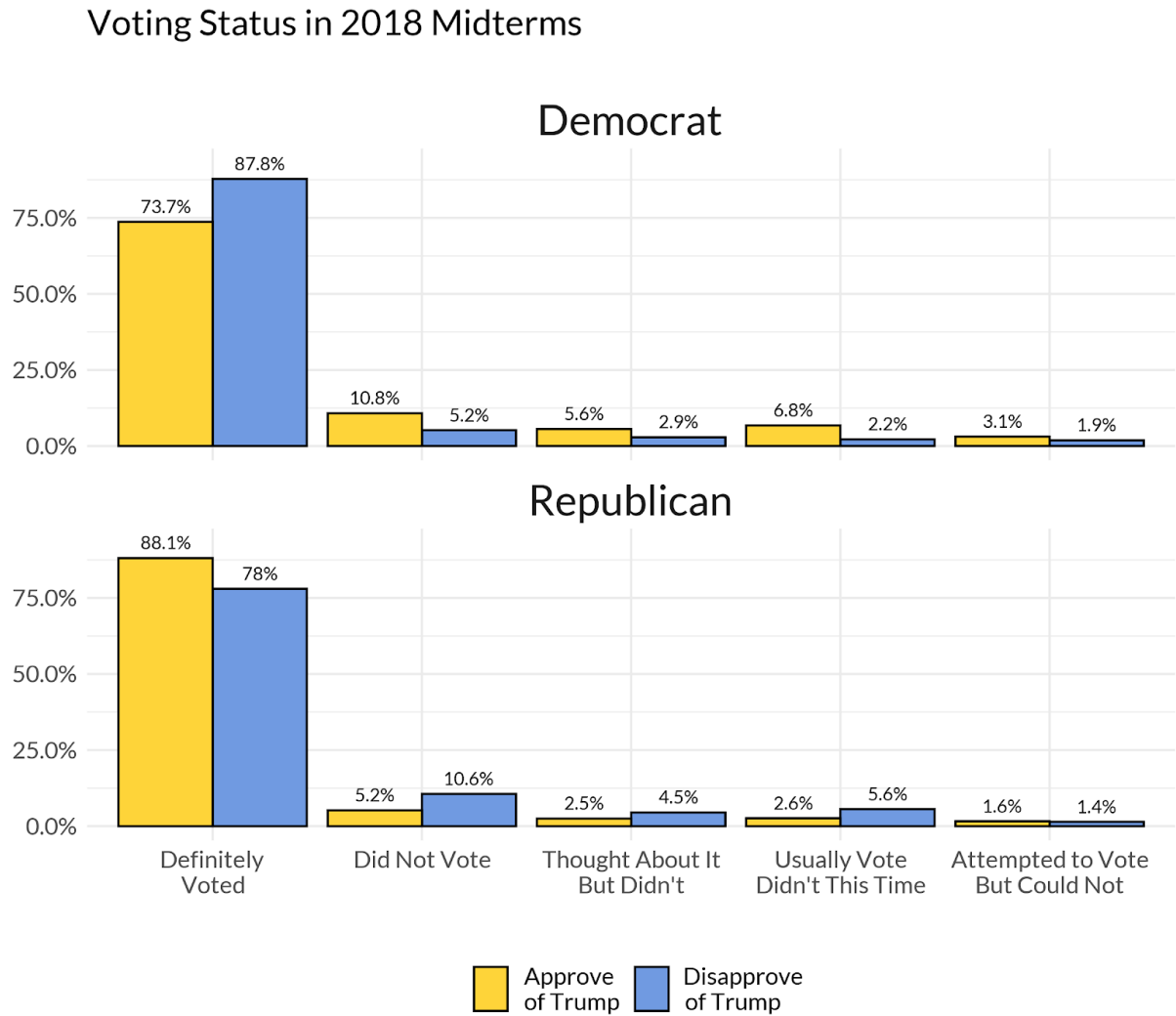
Data: CCES 2018

Figure 8: House Votes in 2018 Midterm Election by Partisan Identity & Approval