

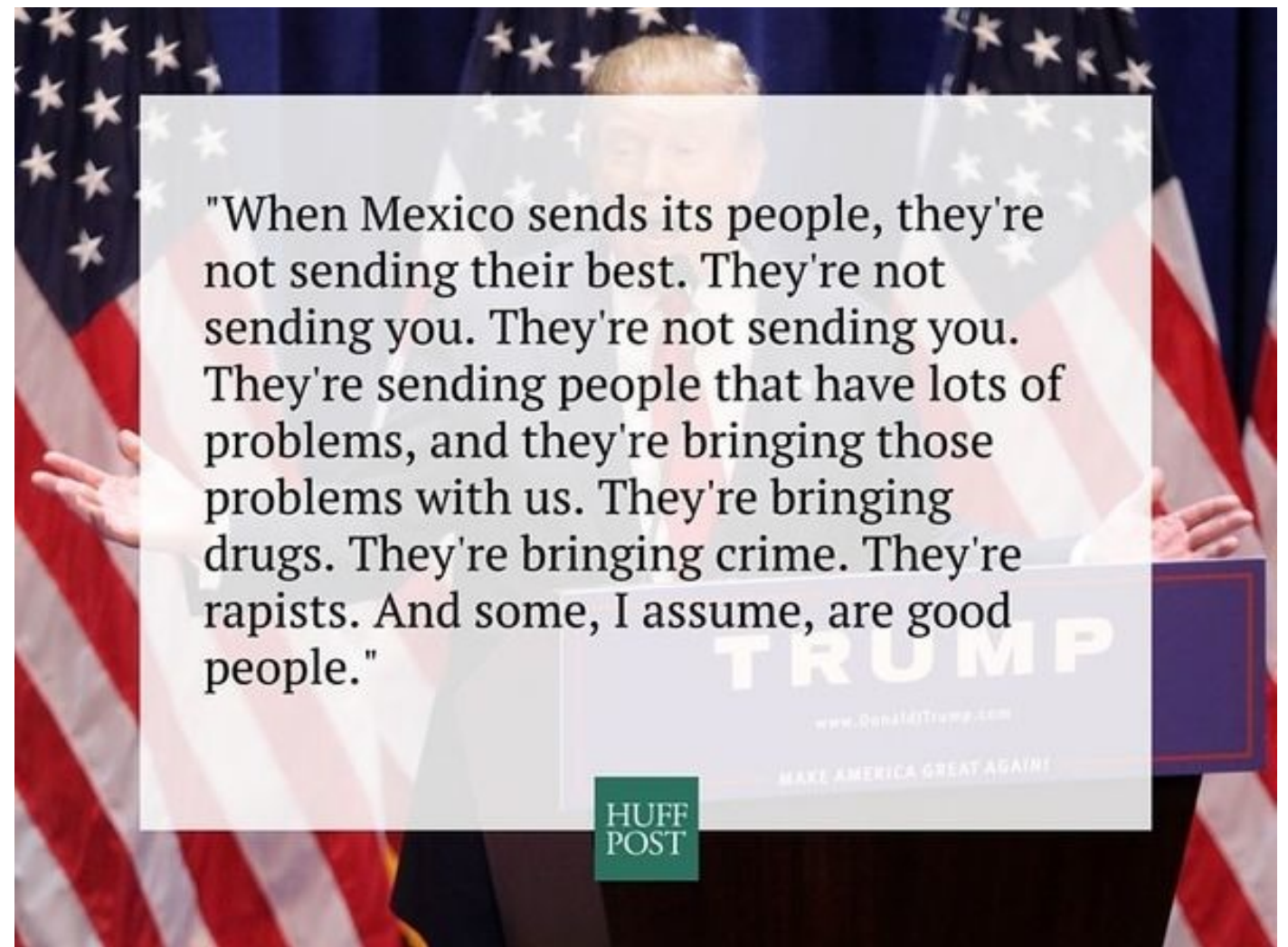
Tracking the Trump Effect: a long-term study of how political campaigns change the unsayable

Amalia Álvarez-Benjumea, Fabian Winter, Nan Zhang
Max-Planck-Institute for Research on Collective Goods



Motivation

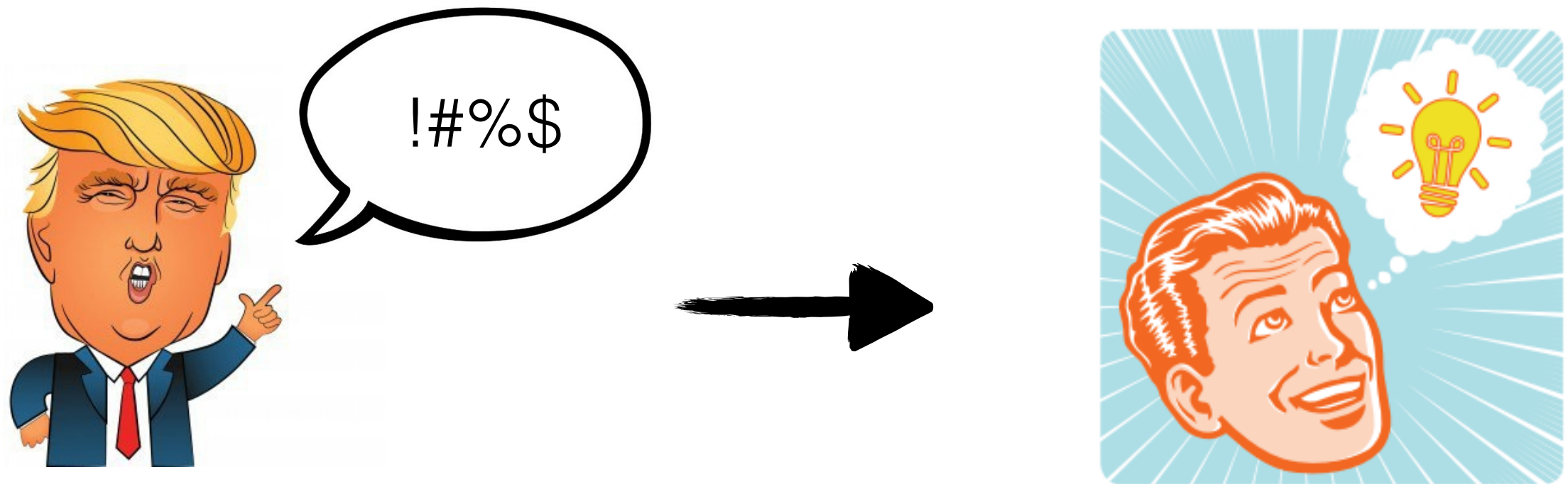
- ***Social norms*** inhibit the expression of racist, sexist, xenophobic sentiments
- Donald Trump's rhetoric directly challenges such longstanding taboos



Q. How has Trump reshaped the normative landscape in America?

Trump Effects 1.0

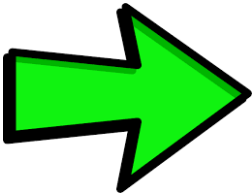
- Trump's norm violations go unpunished, or are even embraced
- Licenses or empowers others to also violate speech norms



Bursztyn et al. "From Extreme to Mainstream"
Schaffner "Follow the Racist?"
Crandall et al. (2018) *Soc Psych Pers Science*

Placing Trump's Rhetoric in Context

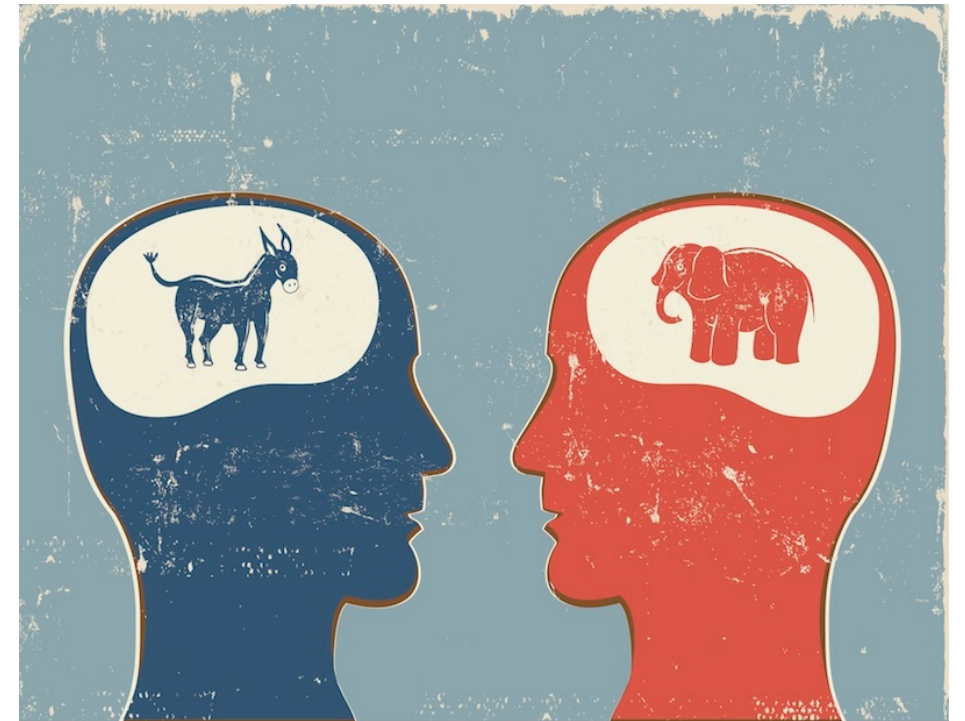
- D and R not only divided on policy...
- ...but also increasing inhabit different social worlds



	Democrats	Republicans
Race	Diverse	White
Religion	Non-religious	Evangelical
Sports	Soccer	Nascar
Cars	VW	Ford Pick-up
Alcohol	Wine	(Domestic) Beer
Music	Rap	Country
Norms?		

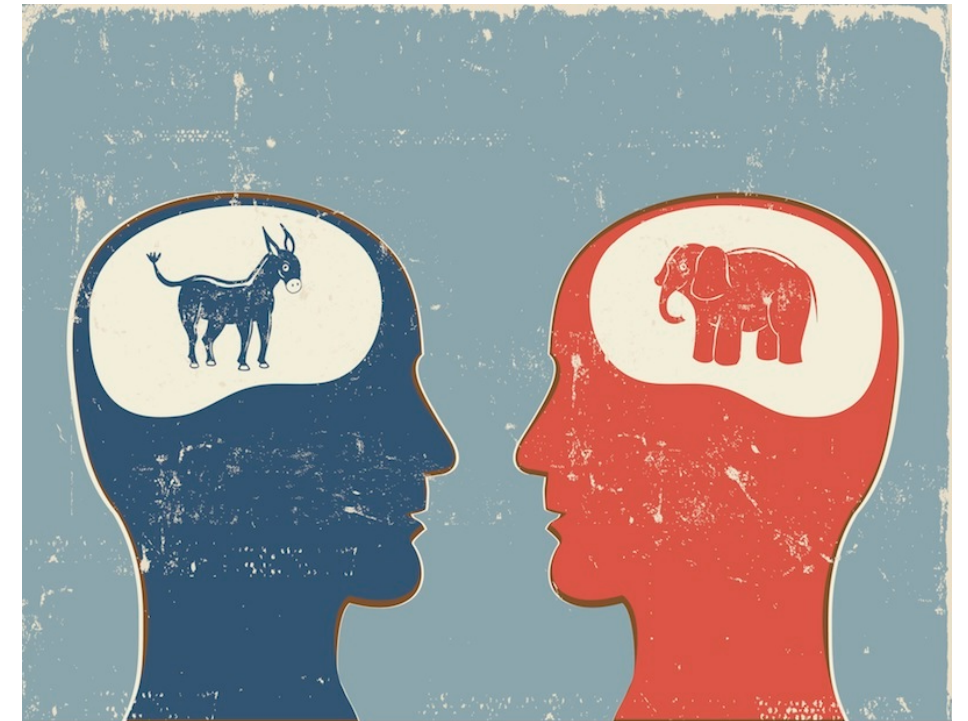
Affective Polarization

- Partisanship has increasingly become a “tribal” identity
- Reactions to Trump are filtered through a (biased) partisan lens



Affective Polarization

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- Reactions to Trump are filtered through a (biased) partisan lens



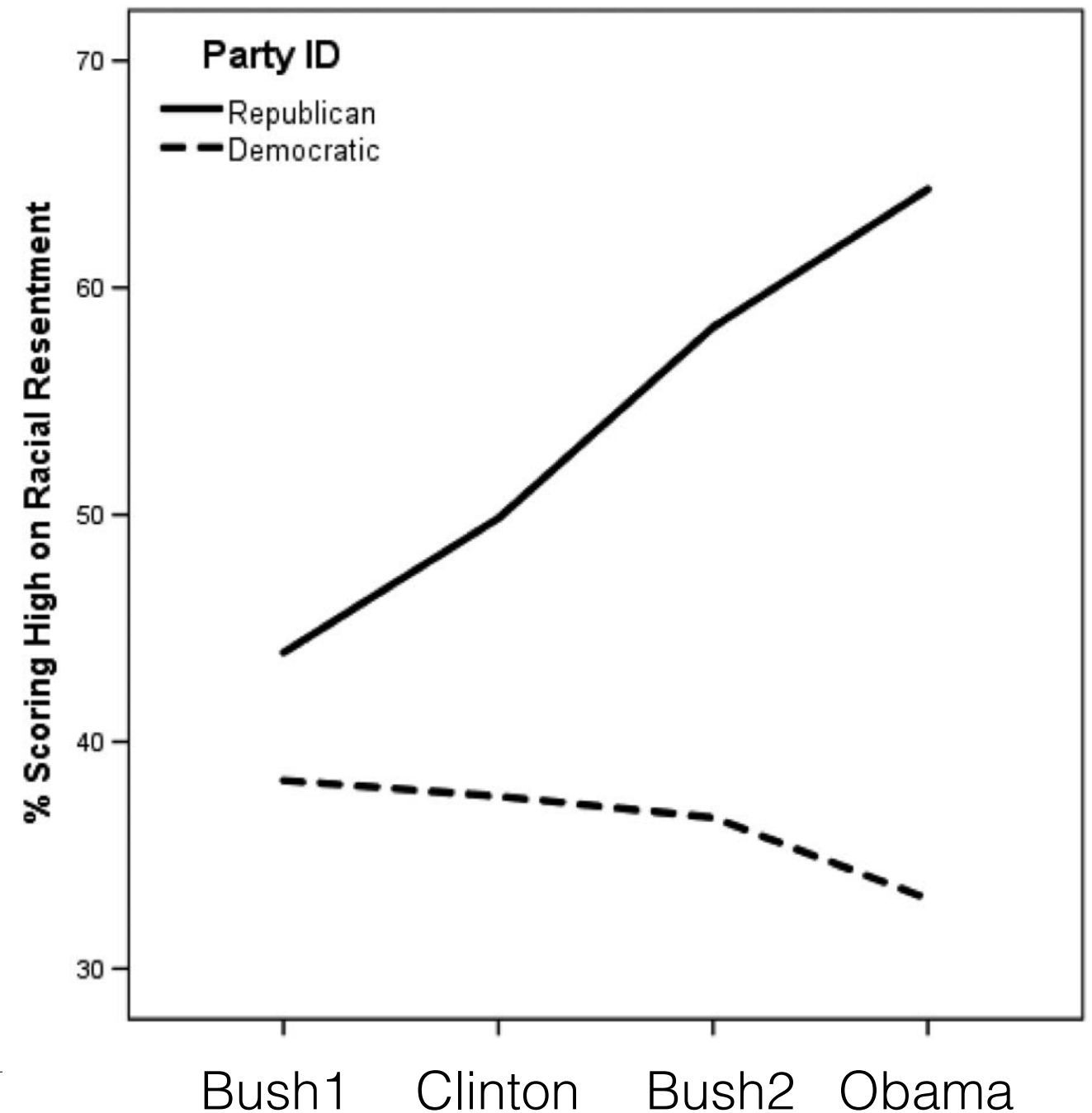
R: defend / downplay violations,
weakening norms

D: strongly condemn violations,
maintain or strengthen norms



Partisan “Sorting”

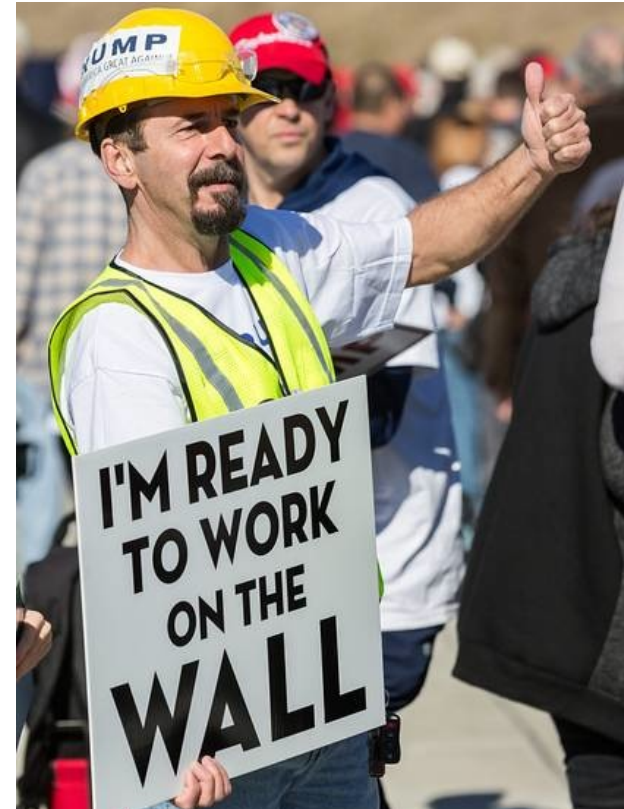
- Racial attitudes have increasingly sorted along party lines



Abramowitz and Webster (2018) *Advances Polit Psych*

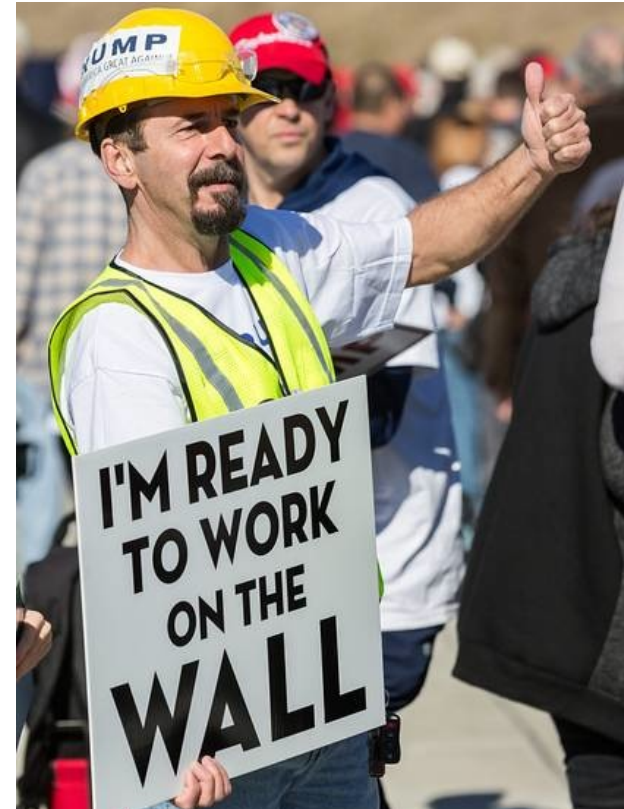
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Partisan “Sorting”

- Racial attitudes have increasingly sorted along party lines
- Partisan divisions over issues of race have only hardened under Trump
- Trump not only licenses racist expression (among Republicans)...
... but also *drives* those open to racist ideas into the Republican party

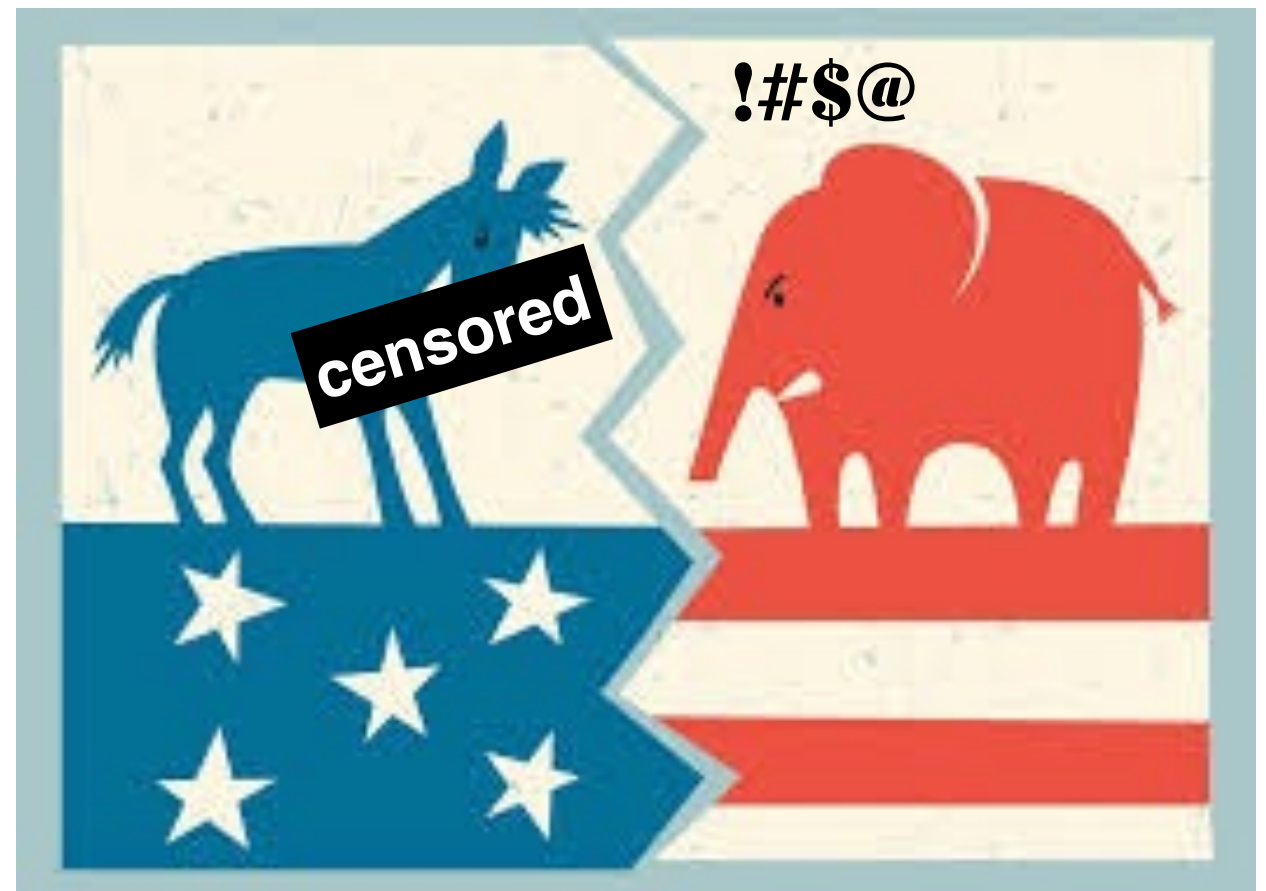


Trump Effects 2.0

To the extent that Trump's rhetoric **increases sorting** and **triggers partisan reactions**,

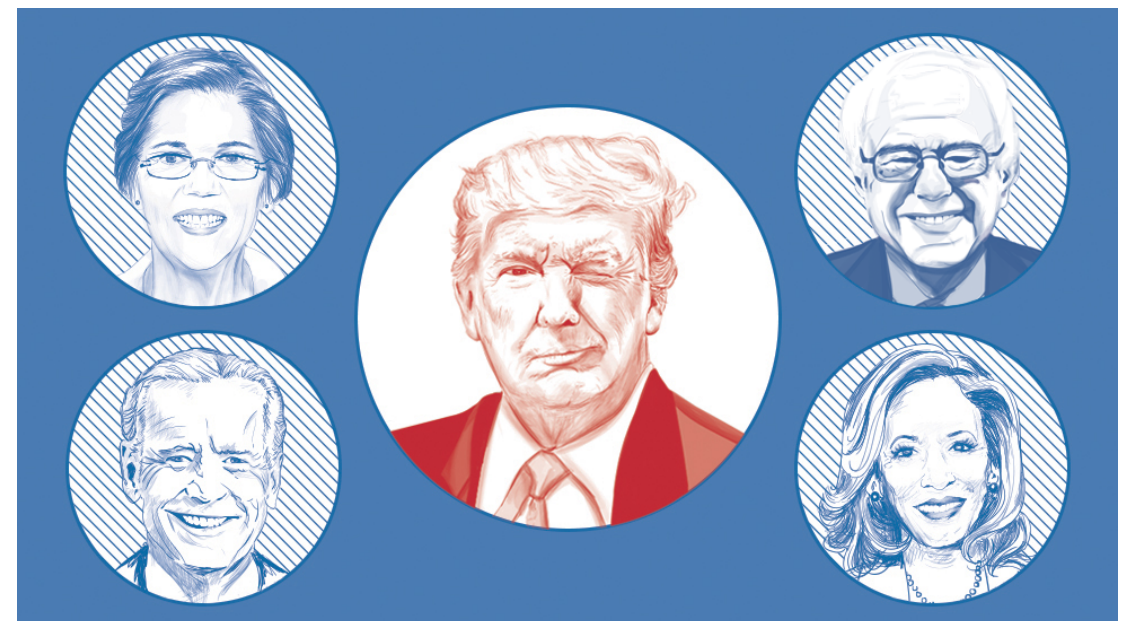
Trump has not so much changed what's *unsayable across America*...

... but rather contributed to **normative polarization** along partisan lines



Outline

1. Pilot data documenting (already existing) normative polarization
 - **individual** differences w.r.t. what is personally offensive
 - **geographic** differences w.r.t. beliefs about what is offensive to others
2. **Theory** and **Research Design** for long-term study of how the 2020 election campaign may further increase normative polarization



Normative Polarization:

What can(not) be said in the Age of Trump

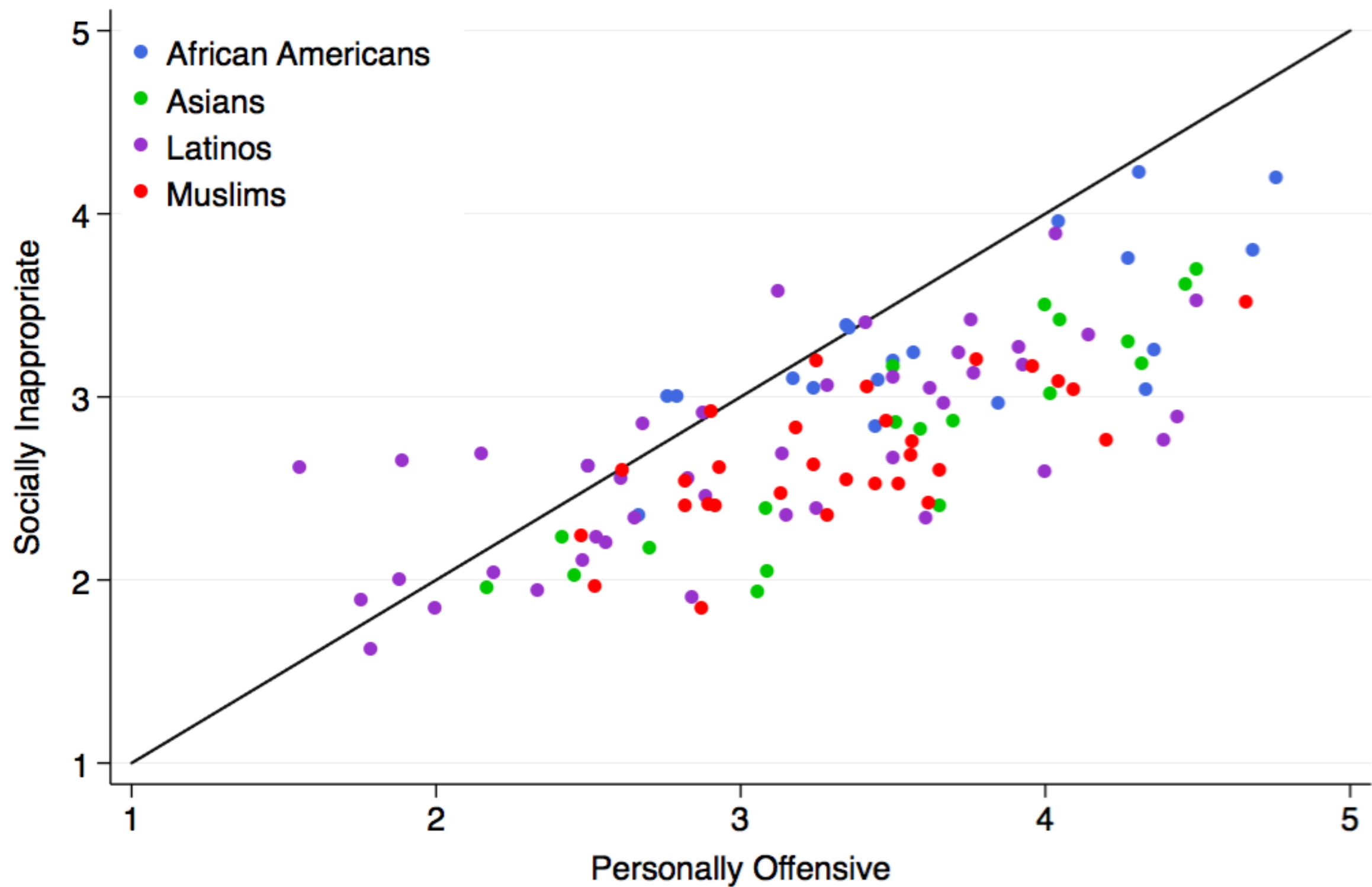
Pilot Study

- Test reactions to potentially offensive statements
- Recruited mTurkers to collect online statements about African Americans, Asians, (Latino) immigrants, and Muslims.
- Final “basket” of 111 statements at varying levels of offensiveness:
 - “Wow, he’s really smart for a black guy”
 - “I really want to meet Obama one day just so I can call him a n—r”

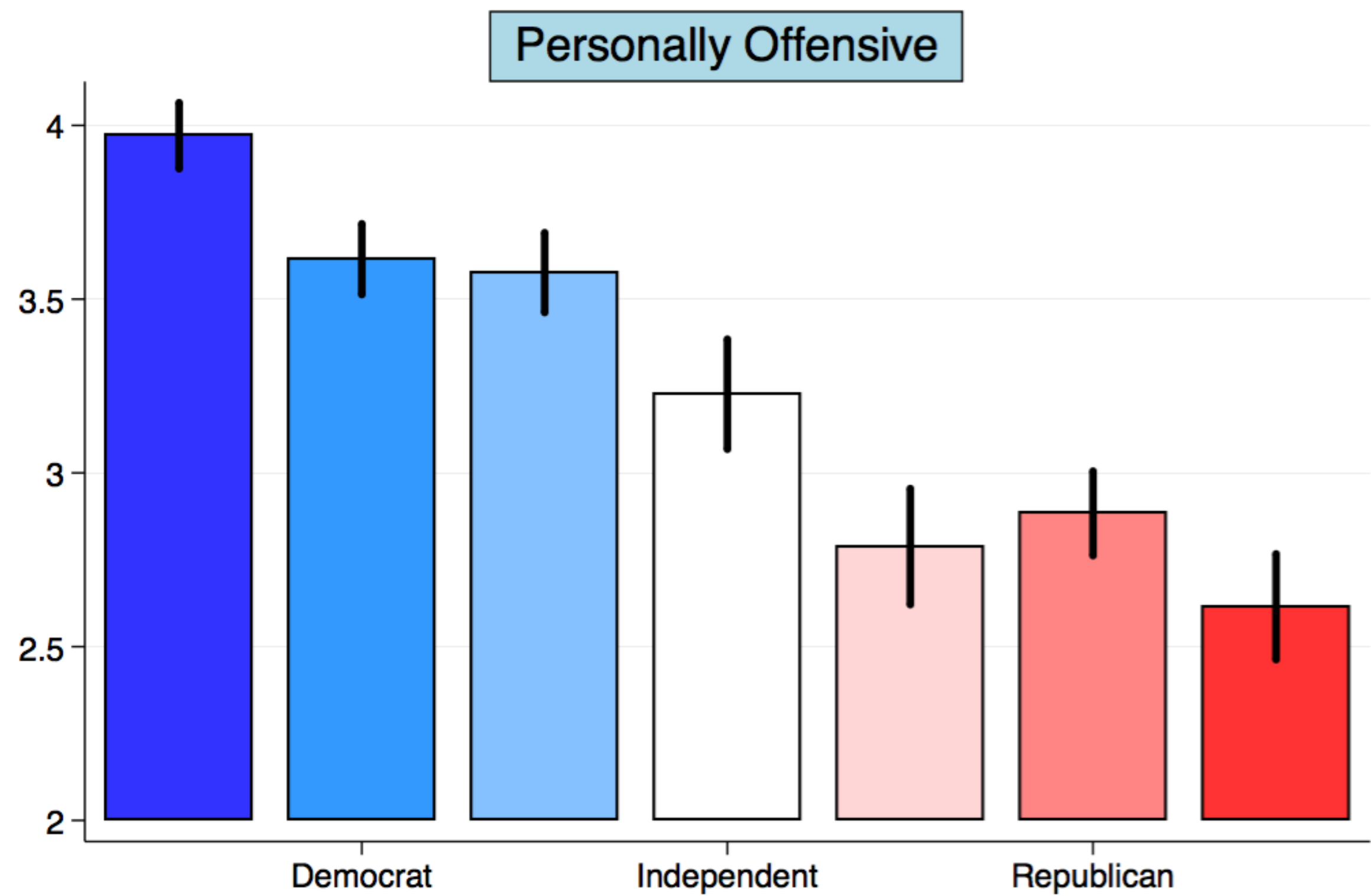
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- Different sample of 500 mTurkers rate 20 random statements:
 - (s1-s10): is the statement *personally* offensive / inappropriate?
 - (s11-s20): how would *other people* in R’s area react to the statement?

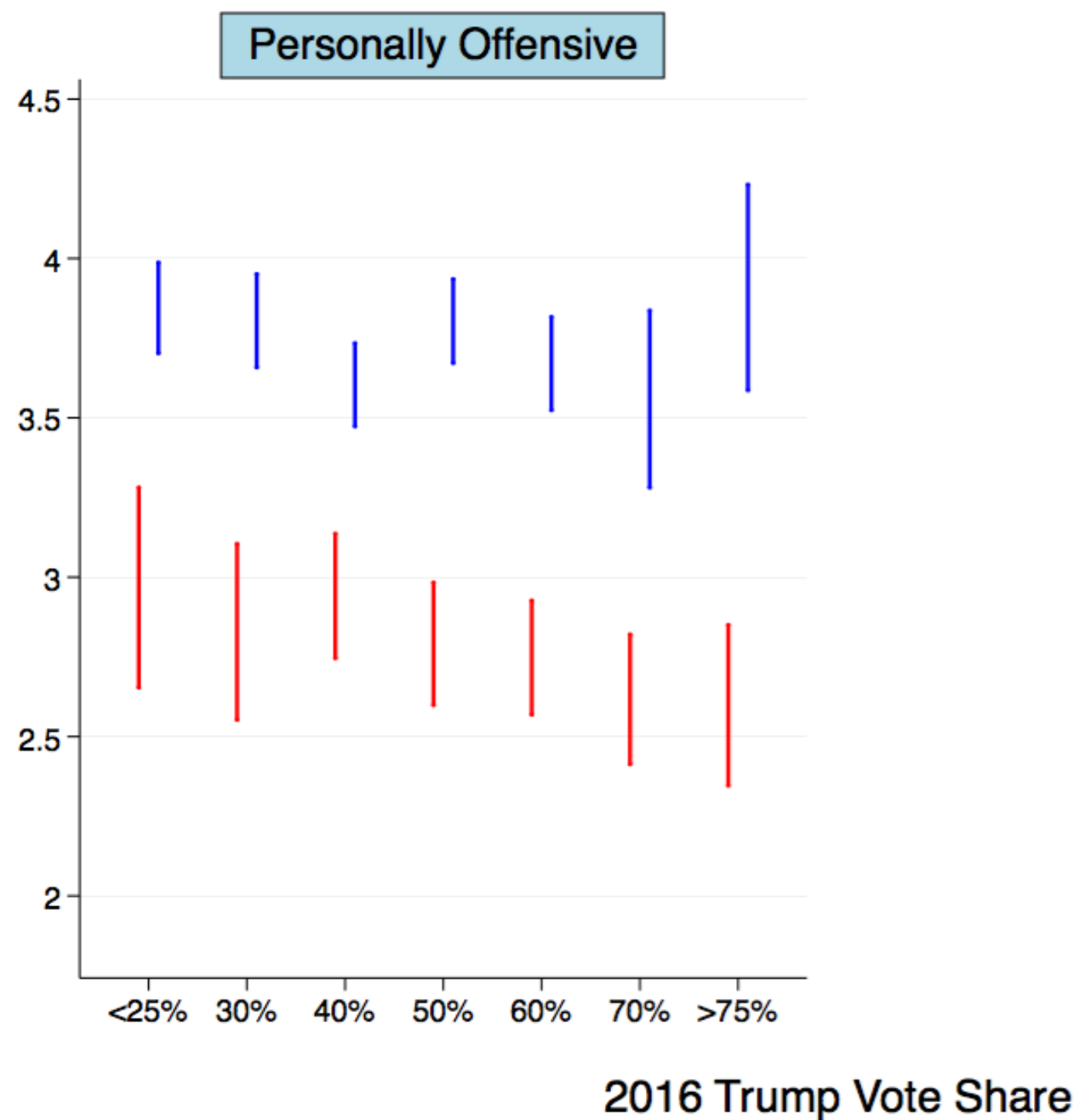
Distribution of Ratings



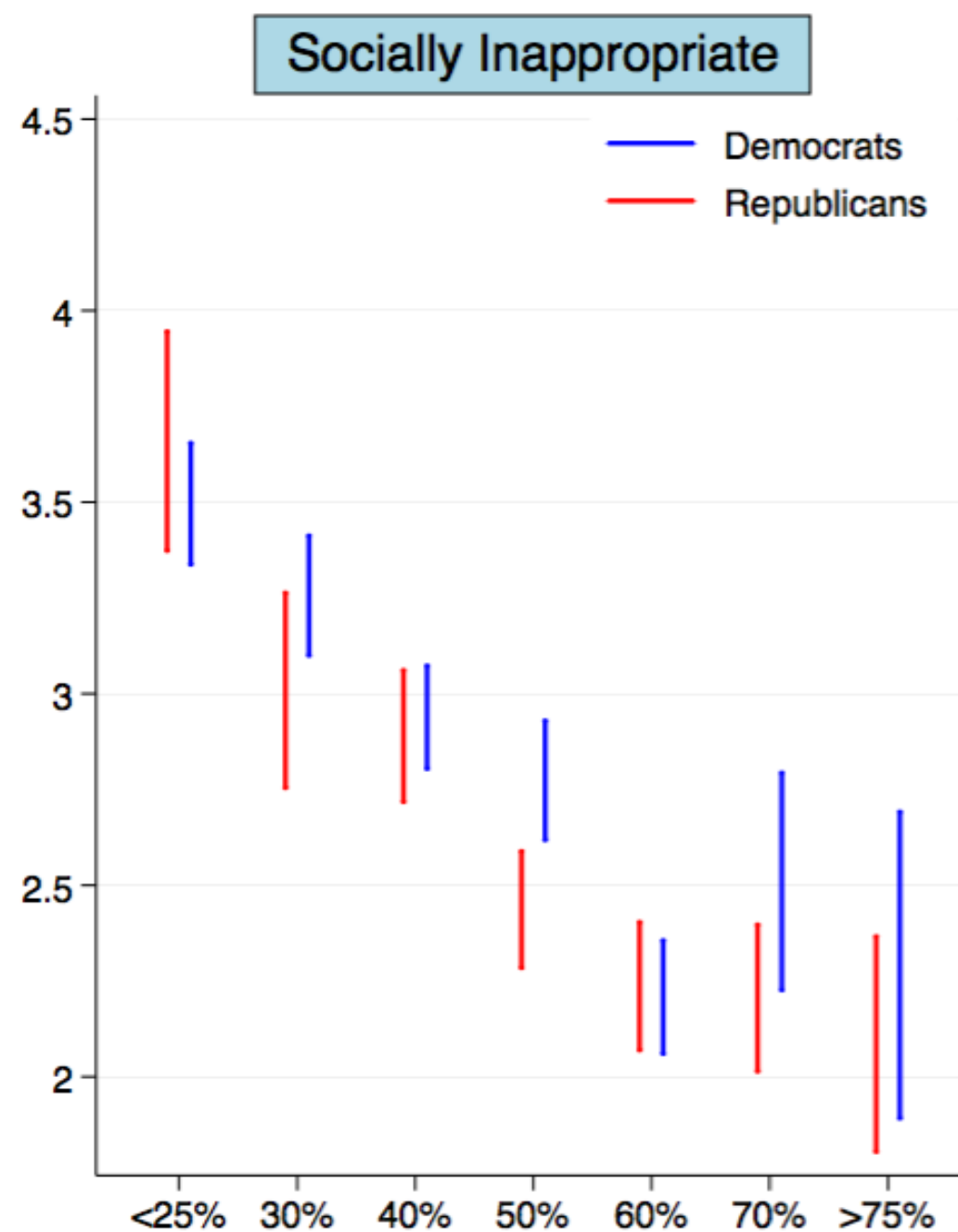
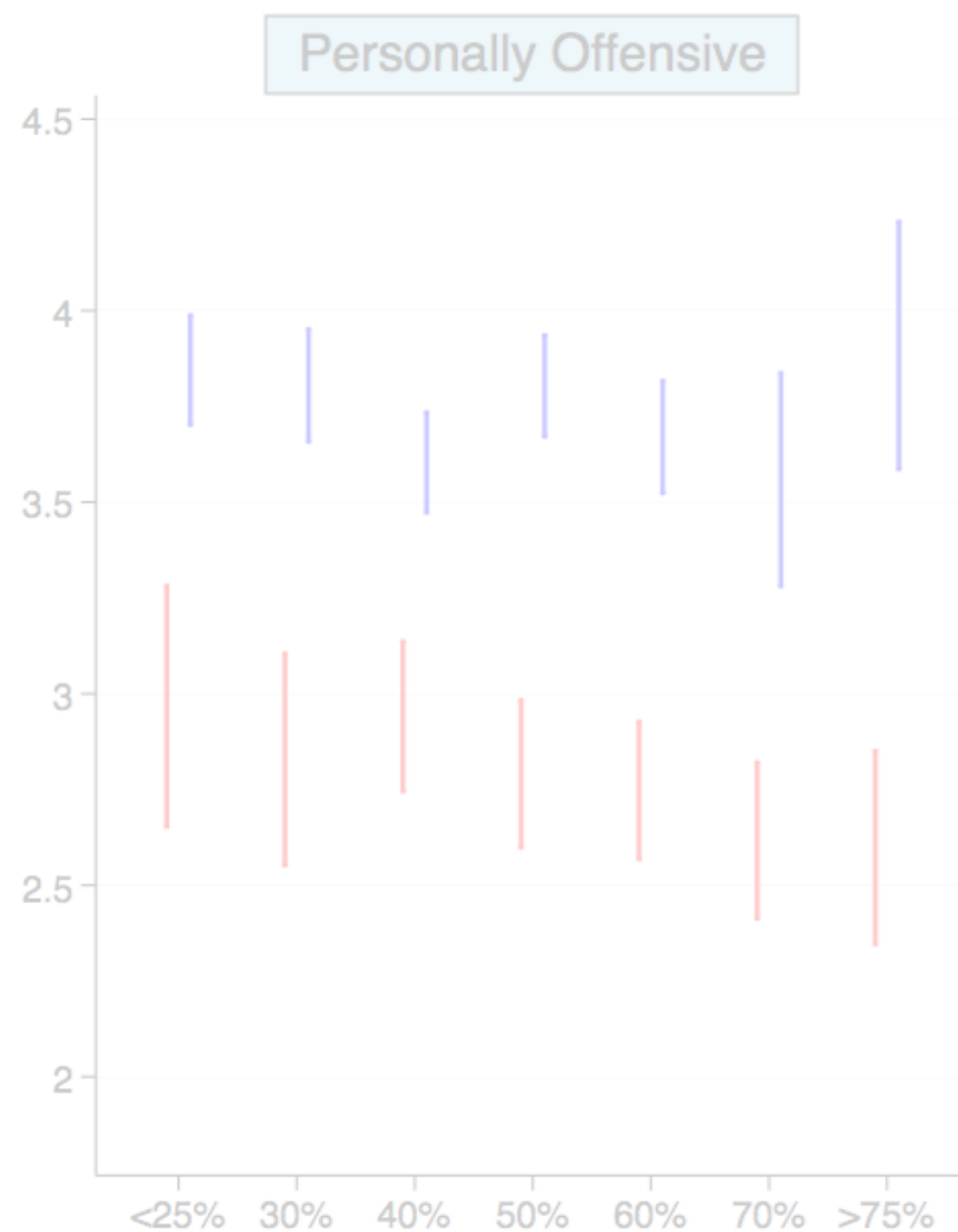
Partisanship and Ratings



Partisanship and Ratings

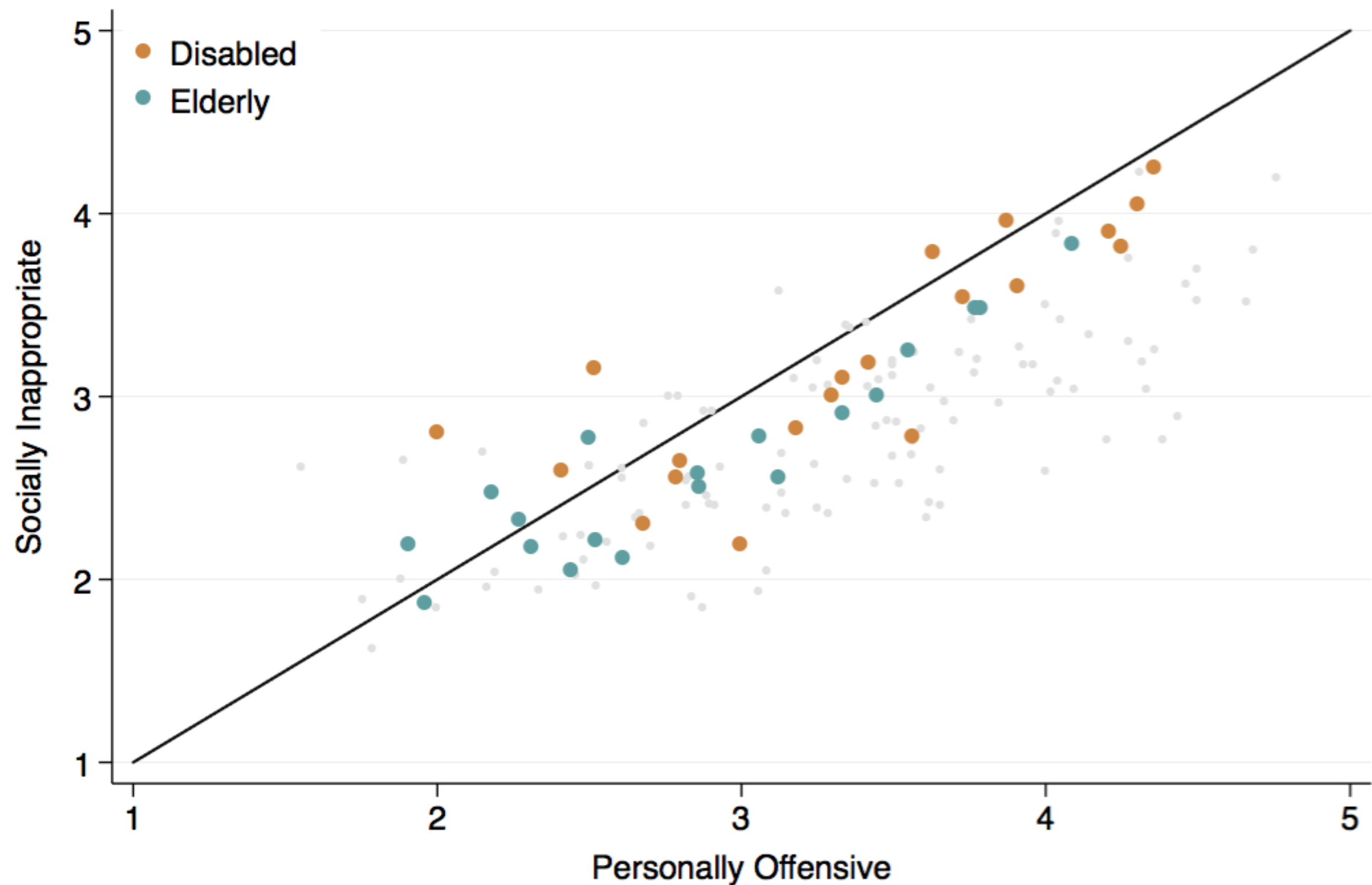


Partisanship and Ratings

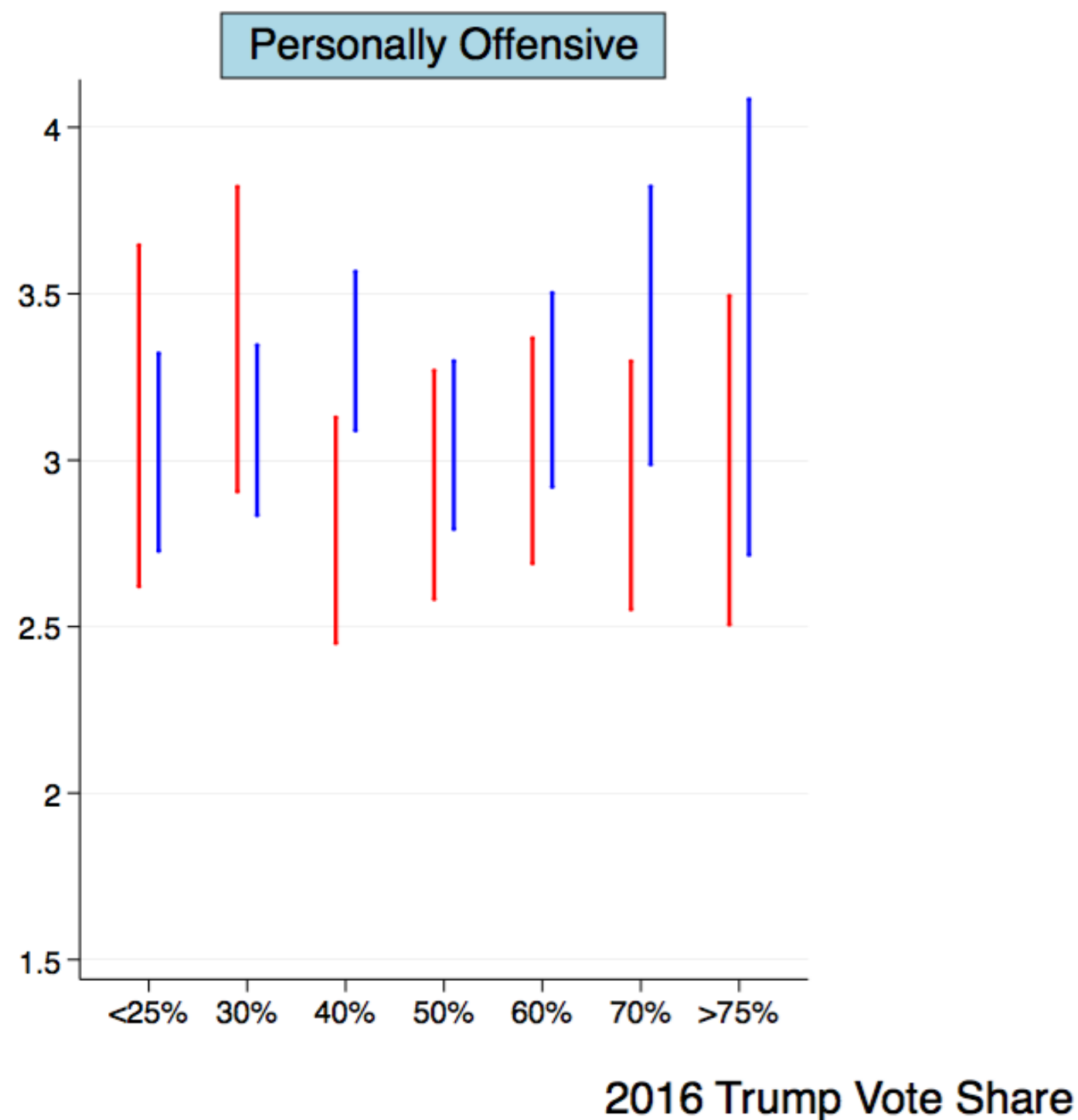


2016 Trump Vote Share

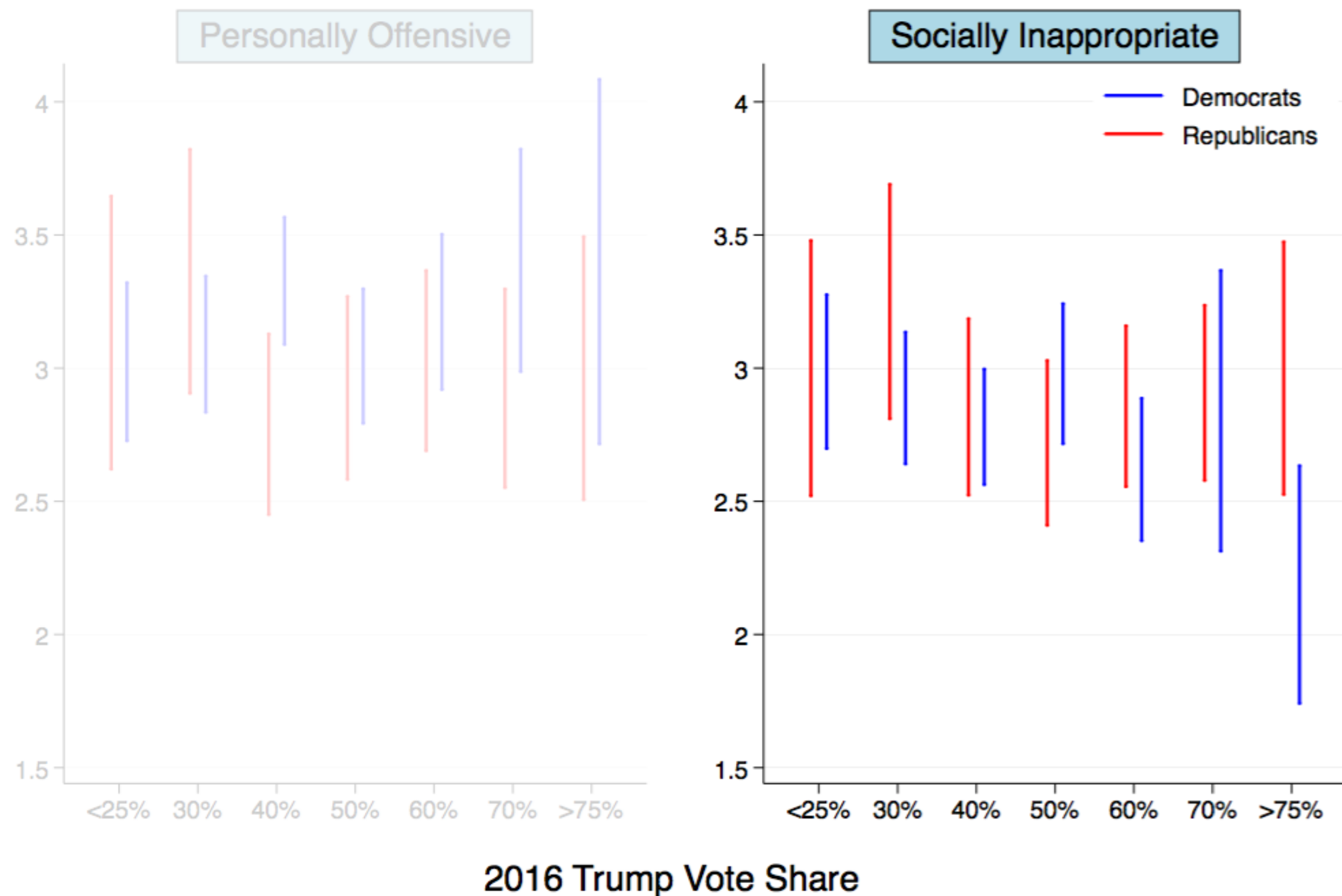
Placebo Test: Elderly and Disabled



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Placebo Test: Elderly and Disabled



Preliminary Takeaways

1. **D** and **R** differ in what they personally judge to be offensive w.r.t. immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities
➔ but not w.r.t. “placebo” groups
2. Geographic distribution of Trump voters predicts the local social norm
➔ on which **D** and **R** agree !!

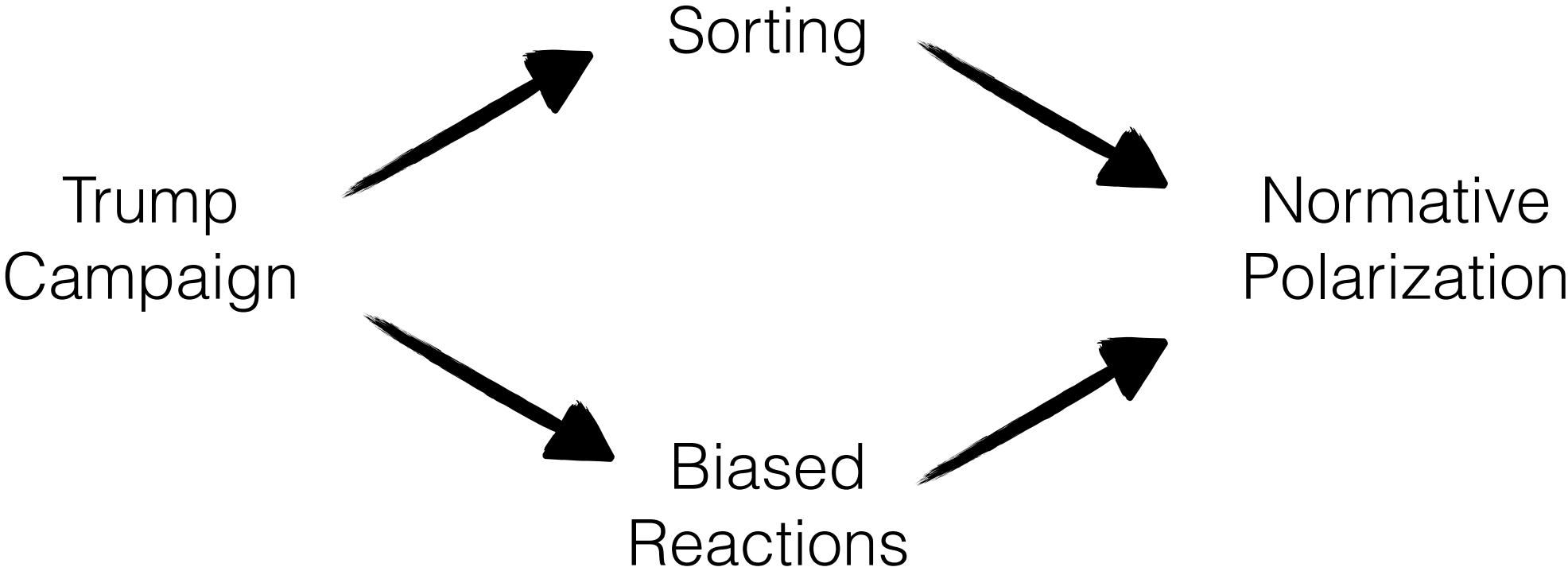
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➔ on which **D** and **R** agree !!
 - Suggestive “snapshot” of normative polarization
 - **Next steps:** track changes in polarization during the 2020 campaign with a “national representative” sample

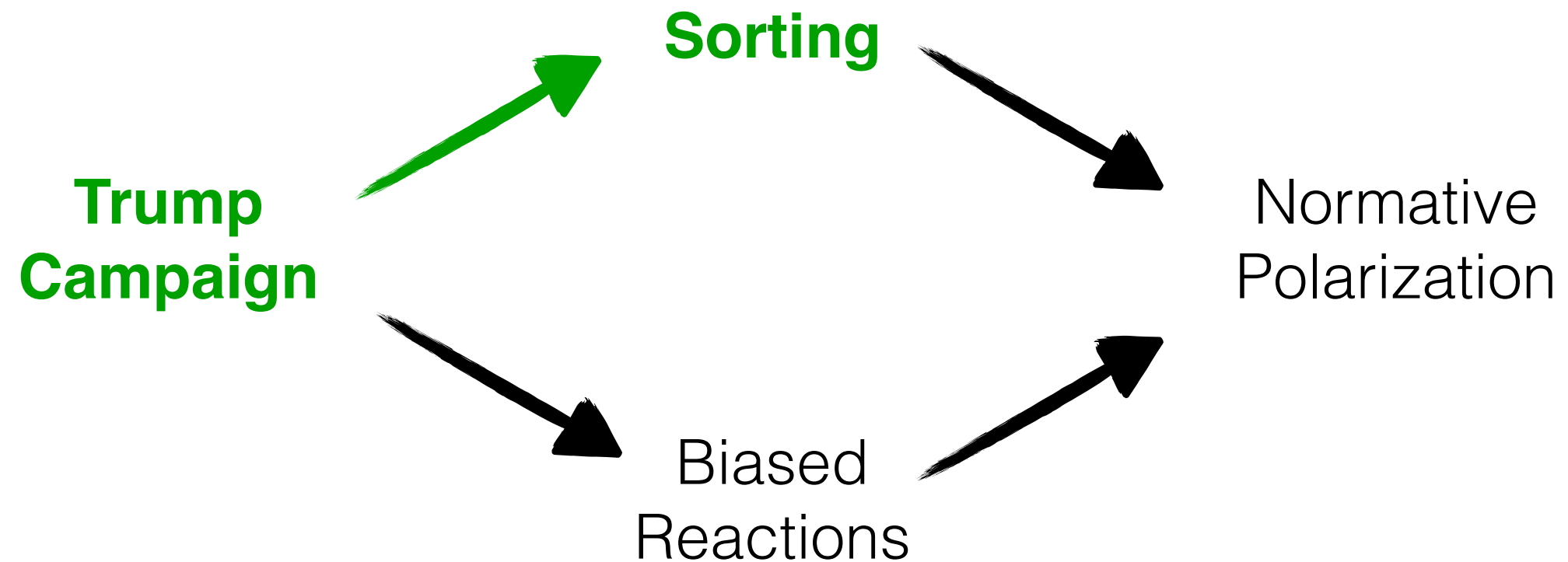
A Long-Term Tracking Study:

**Normative Polarization
during the 2020 Campaign**

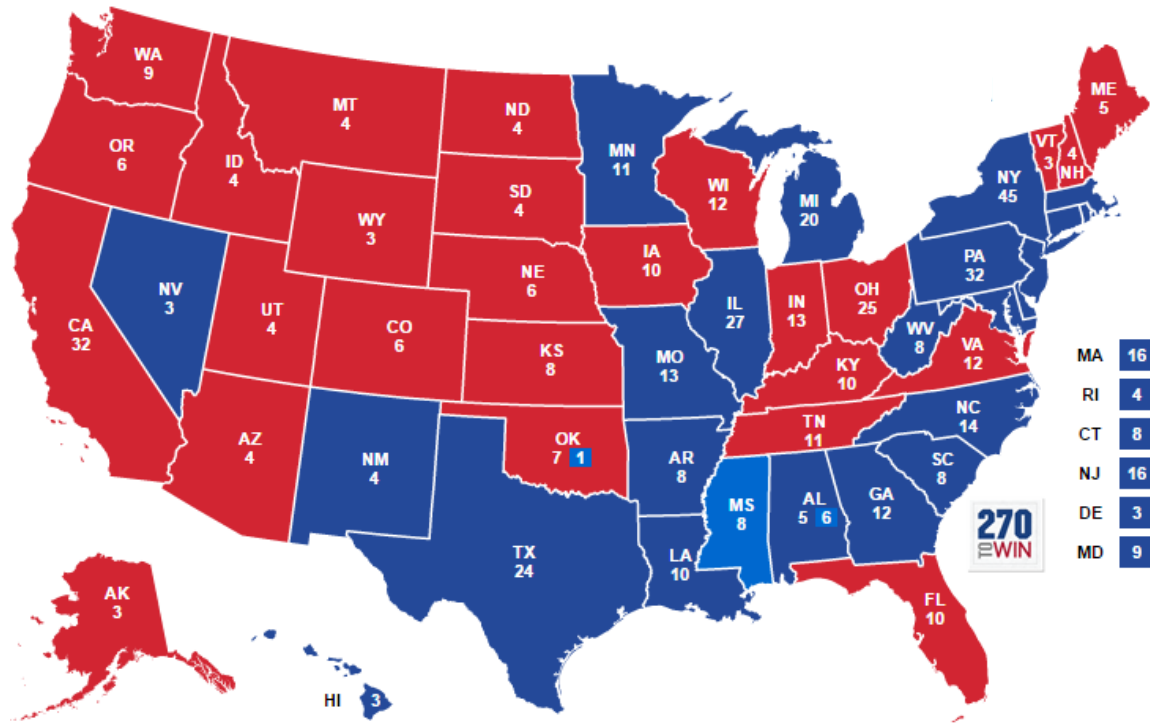
A Simple Model



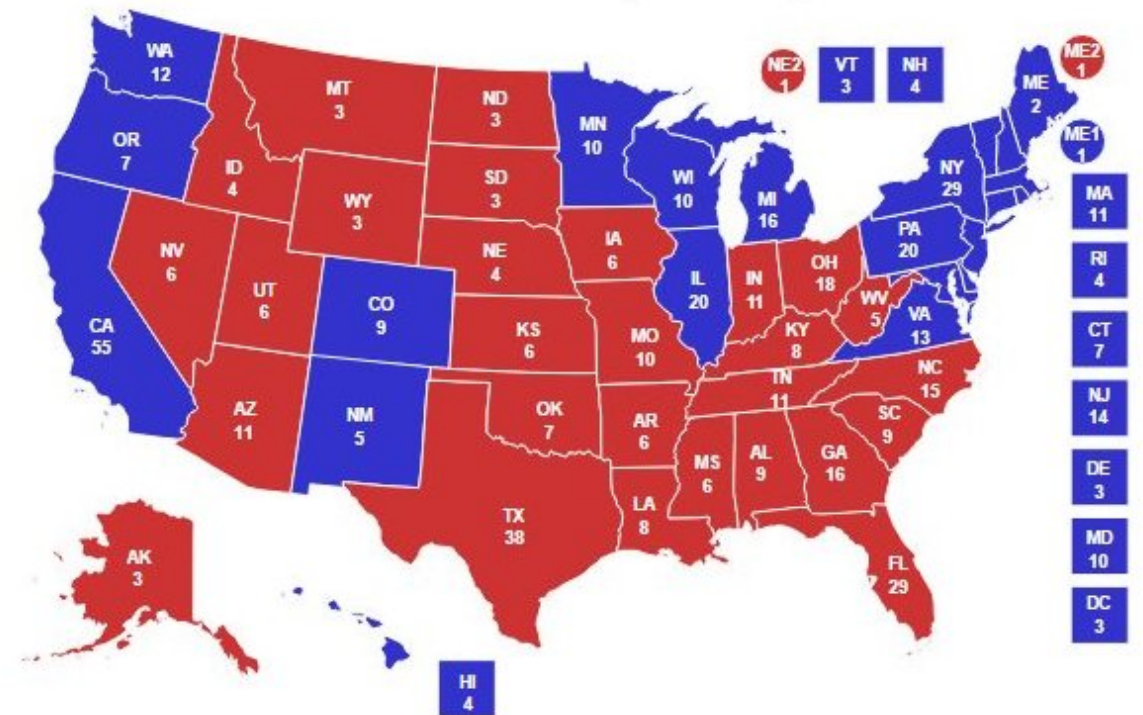
A Simple Model



Origins of Sorting



1960



2016

Racially conservative whites begin to move out the Democratic Party after the Civil Rights Movement

Elections and Sorting

Correlations of Racial Resentment Scale with Presidential Candidate Feeling
Thermometer Difference Ratings by Education among White Voters, 1988–2016

Year	All White Voters	College Grads	Not College Grads
1988	.205	.308	.175
1992	.275	.510	.157
2000	.247	.398	.154
2004	.398	.628	.261
2008	.485	.611	.416
2016	.636	.699	.549

Abramowitz and McCoy (2019) *Annals*

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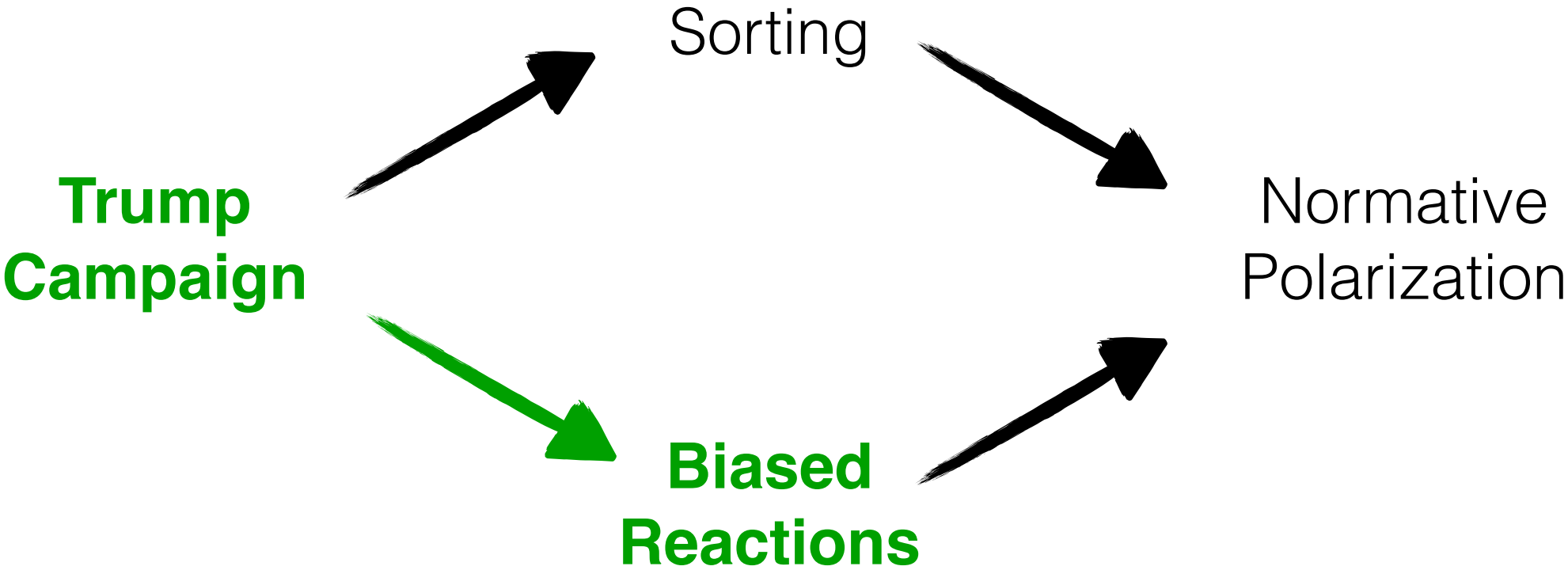
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2020



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A Simple Model



Partisan Identity During Campaigns

- Partisan reactions derive from “tribal” behavior
- Campaigns intensify partisan competition, leading to more “tribal” responses

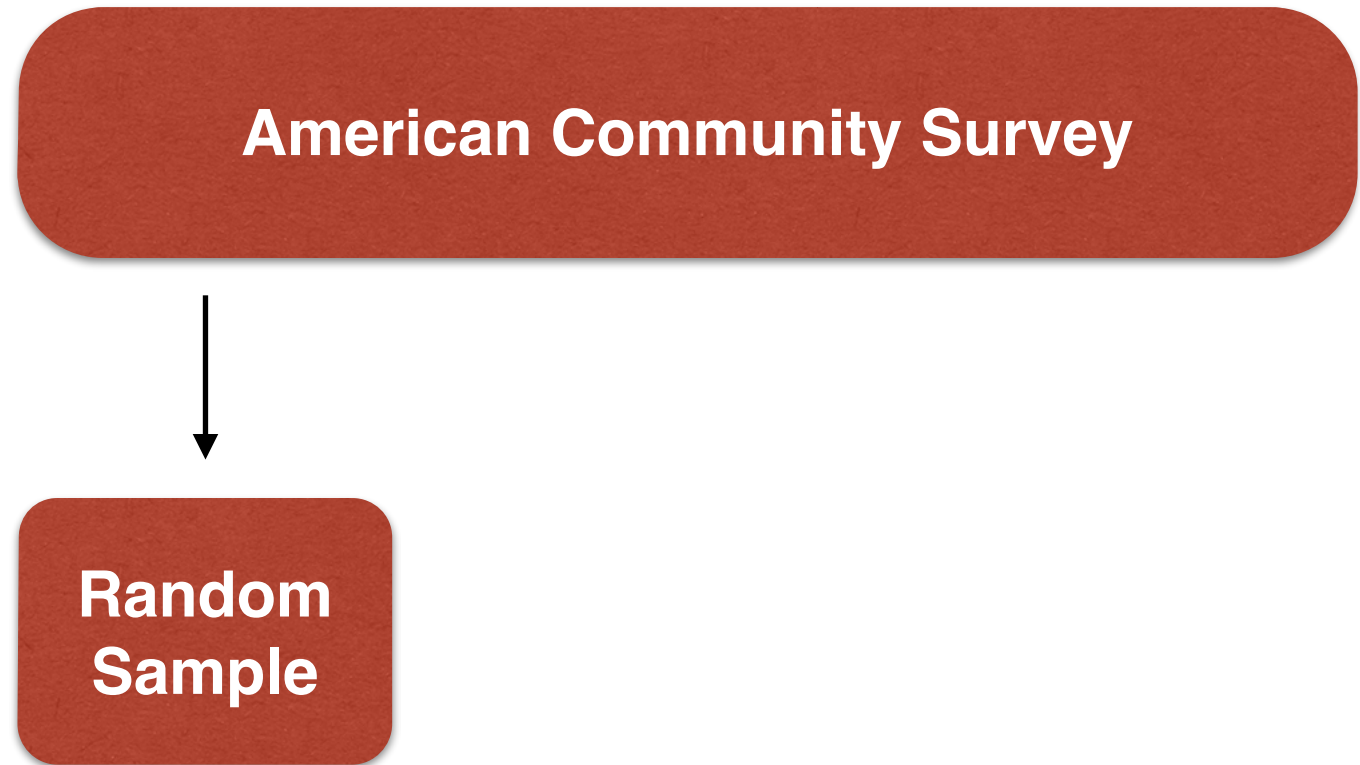
Predictors	In-party minus out-party favorability ratings
Battleground	-.01
Wave	.02*
Wave × Battleground	.02*
Republican	.06*
Strong identifier	.36*
Age	.00
Female	.00
Race: white	-.00
Education: high school	.02
Education: some college	.02
Education: college or higher	.01
Log likelihood	6,669
N	1,401



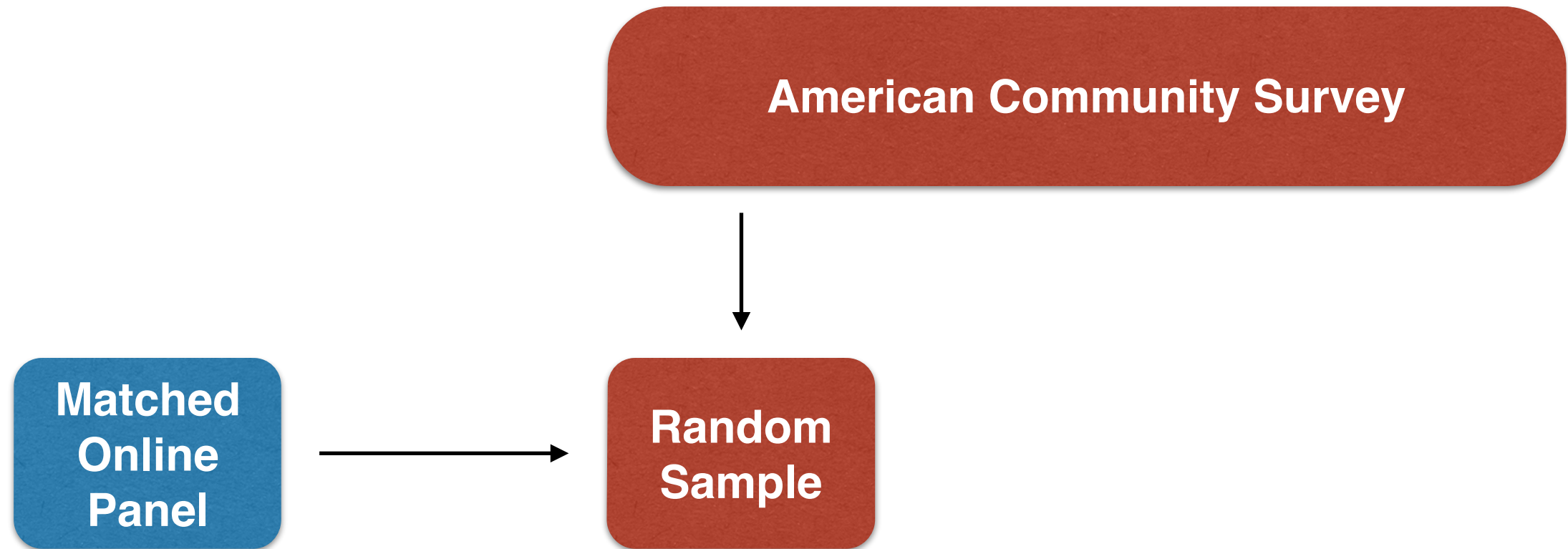
Research Design

American Community Survey

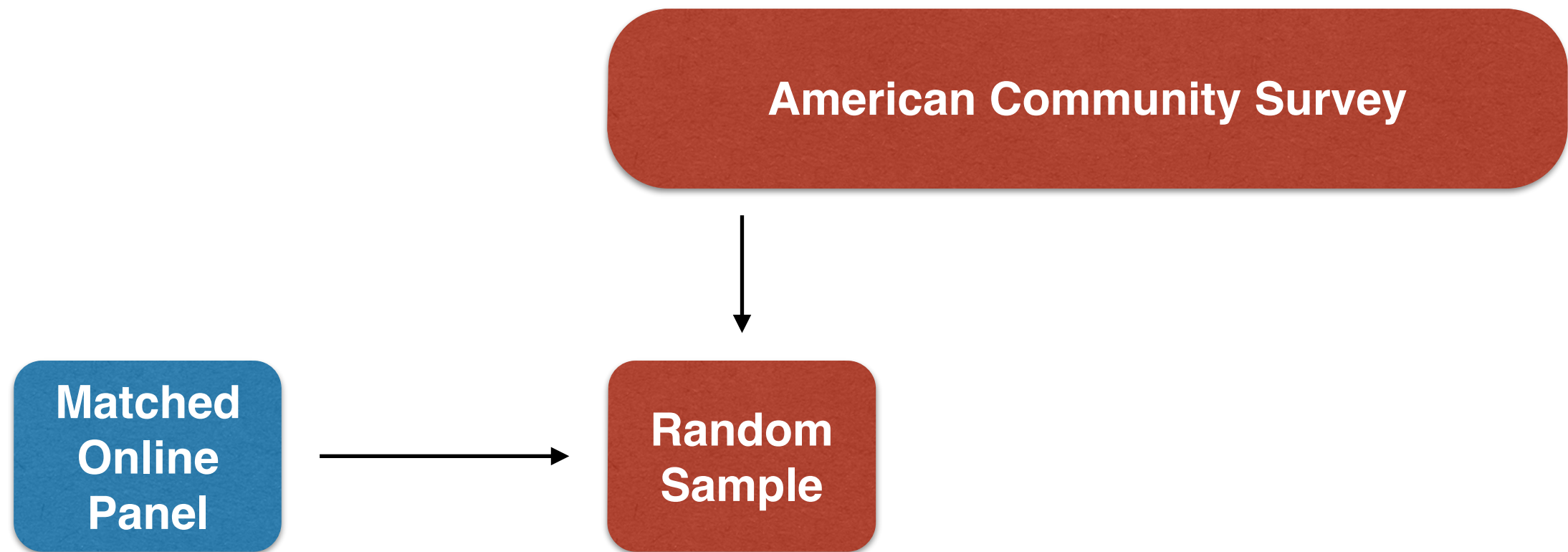
Research Design



Research Design



Research Design



- 15 cross sections, every 2 weeks, from **March - October 2020**
- N = 4000 in total
- Tracking measures of norms, party affiliation, racially conservative attitudes, and strength of partisan identity

