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Voting Preference, Religion and Ethnicity's Impact on Party Identification

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Voting Preference, Religion and Ethnicity's Impact on Party Identification

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Introduction to Research

- The present study explores how ethnic and religious values affect a voter's party identification.
- People form opinions based off of social conditions and ethnic affiliations, family tradition, personal associations, attitudes on the issues at the time, and from membership in formal organizations (Berelson et al., 1954; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944).
- Media's Affect on Opinion Formation
 - People with higher education will be able to throw out views they see in the media that do not agree with the view they hold (Zaller, 1992).
- Rational Choice Theory
 - People make choices based off a cost-benefit analysis (Downs, 1957).
- Group Mobilization
 - People belong to many different groups and organizations and these groups incite participatory behavior amongst its members (Rosentstone & Hansen, 1993).
- Voter Information
 - The voter is not very informed and if a candidate wants to be heard or get their message across then they need it to be very visible (Campbell, 1960).
 - Highly educated voters are able to determine what knowledge is worth consumption (Campbell, 1960).

Religion and Ethnicity

- Religion:
 - Religiosity has become a more superior form of predictive and explanatory powers in determining presidential elections in modern elections (Plotkin, 2010).
 - Religious identity is crucial in an individual's vote choice (Campbell, 1960).
 - Both Republicans and Democrats target Jew people, Protestants, and Catholics, but they create distance between Islam (Barreto & Dana, 2010).
 - Protestants tend to lean to the Republican party while Catholics tend to lean toward the Democrat Party (Kelly & Kelly, 2005).
 - Interest groups promote group mobilization through pamphlets placed in churches (Wilcox & Sigelman, 2001).
- Ethnicity
 - Ethnic groups are defined as members that share a social and cultural heritage that is passed through generations (Rose, 1964).
 - Ethnicity is a stronger factor than party affiliation in determining the candidate a voter chooses, all other things constant (Carlson, 1984).
 - Sense of belongingness to a person's group is determined by how the majority group of society perceives that group (Rose, 1964).

Hypotheses:

- H 1: Religious groups will tend to vote for candidates that hold the same religious values.
- H 2: Ethnic groups will tend to vote for candidates that share the same ethnic background.
- H 3: Religion is a more reliable indicator of partisanship than ethnic values that voters hold.

Data

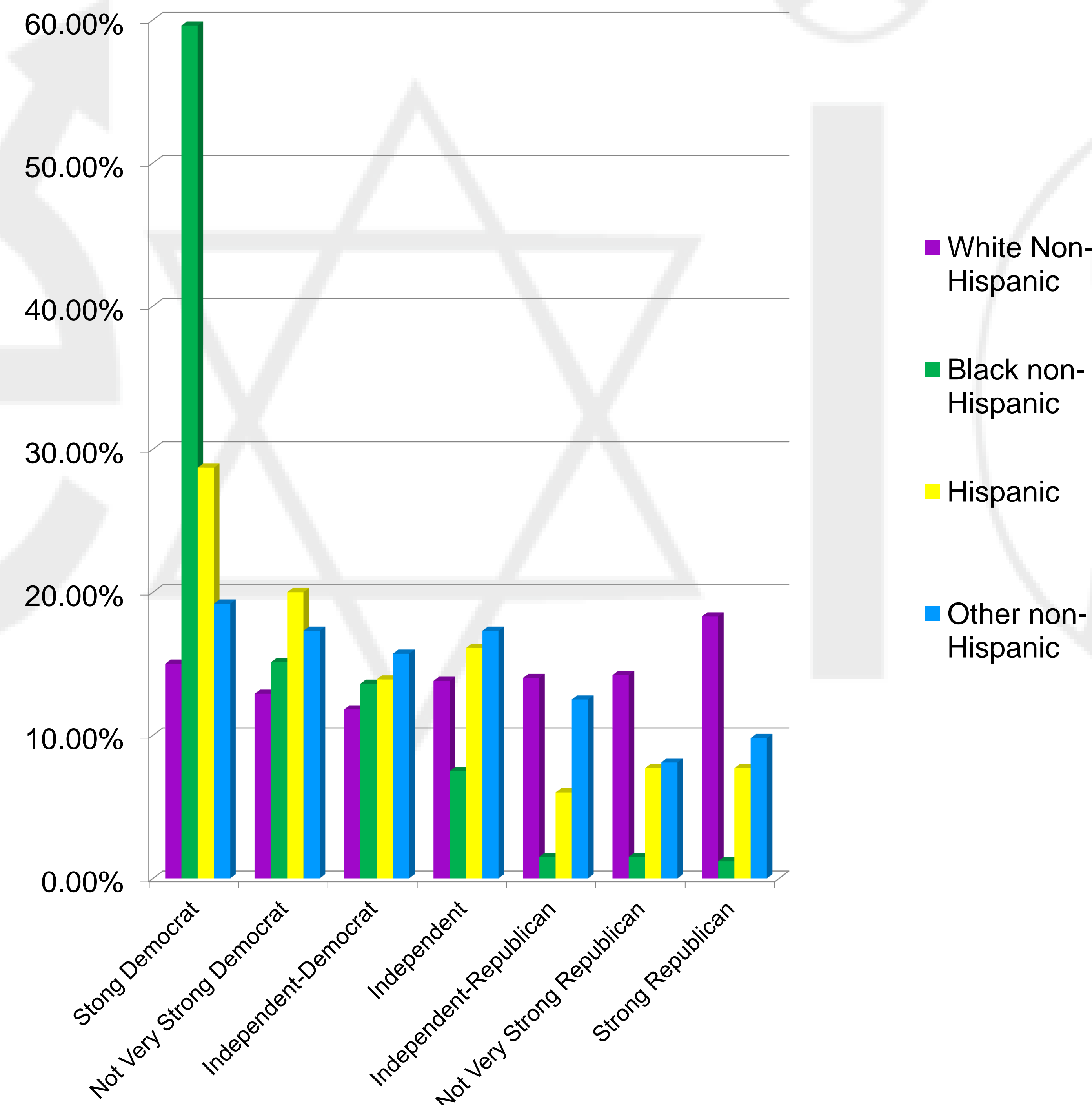
H 1: Religion's Influence on Voter Affiliation

Cross Tabulation Results:

- Strong Democrat
 - Religion is important: 26.2%
 - Religion is not important: 22.9%
- Not Very Strong Democrat
 - Religion is important: 13.6%
 - Religion is not important: 17.5%
- Independent -Democrat
 - Religion is important: 10.4%
 - Religion is not important: 17.9%
- Independent
 - Religion is important: 12.3%
 - Religion is not important: 15.8%
- Independent-Republican
 - Religion is important: 10.7%
 - Religion is not important: 9.5%
- Not Very Strong Republican
 - Religion is important: 11.1%
 - Religion is not important: 9.4%
- Strong Republican
 - Religion is important: 15.6%
 - Religion is not important: 7.0%

H 2: Ethnic Groups' Influence on Voter Affiliation

Ethnicity and Party Affiliation



H 3: Religious values are more impactful than ethnic values when choosing partisanship

Table 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Significance
Constant	5.002		.000
Race and Ethnicity Group	-0.513	-0.234	.000
Religion is an important part of life	-0.464	-0.101	.000

*Significant at <.05
R-Square for this model is .060

Table Interpretation

- The table measures how the effects of race and ethnicity groups and religious importance have on a voter's party identification
- Race and ethnicity is significant with a level of significance at .000 indicating that race and ethnic values are factors in determining the voter's party choice
- When religion is an important part of a person's life it is seen as significant at a level of .000 indicating, like race and ethnic values, religion has a factor in determining voter's party choice

Findings

H 1: Religion's Influence on Voter Affiliation

The results show that there is a heavy lean toward the Democratic party. It illustrates that people who find religion to be important are strong Democrats 26.2% of the time, but it is important to note that people who do not find religion to be important are still strong Democrats 22.9% of the time. It is comparable to the other end of the spectrum with people who are strong Republicans to find religion to be important 15.6% of the time as well as people who do not find religion to be important are Republican 7.0% of the time.

H 2: Ethnic Groups' Influence on Voter Affiliation

Black non-Hispanics are 59.8% of the time strong Democrats and in total only 4.2% affiliate with the Republican party in any way. White non-Hispanic are around 15% across the board with party affiliation while Hispanics and other non-Hispanic lean more toward the Democratic party.

H 3: Religious values are more impactful than ethnic values when choosing partisanship

Both race and ethnicity and religiosity have significant effects on party affiliation. Race and ethnicity, however have a 23.4% effect on the decision while religiosity only has a 10.1% effect, indicating that race and ethnicity are better indicators for party affiliation than religion.

Conclusions

- There are many different factors that contribute to a voter's party affiliation.
- Religious gatherings are important to group mobilization to the polls.
- People who are religious are stronger in their views of partisanship with the Democratic party.
- Black non-Hispanics, and Hispanics are overwhelmingly strong Democrats.
- When comparing race and ethnicity to religious importance, race and ethnicity are leading indicators to party affiliation.

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