A Ride on the Trump Train: Using Affective Intelligence Theory to Understand how Source

Cues Effect Emotional Responses to Policy Positions

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## ABSTRACT

To what effect does Donald Trump have on emotions and opinion formation? Emotions have been shown to strongly influence an individual's thoughts, actions, and evaluation. Elite cues have been increasingly used by the masses to make and form judgements on political issues, which can influence how an individual reacts, emotionally, to a situation. The theory of Affective Intelligence proposes that the emotions of anger, anxiety (fear) and enthusiasm predict how an individual will act in a political situation. Using this theory, and these emotions, I conduct a survey with an experimental manipulation to examine how people react differently, emotionally to a quote that is attributed to Donald Trump, versus when it is attributed to a politician. I find that Trump has little effect on overall emotional responses, which I attribute to his lack of current formal political power. Yet, I do find some support for my hypothesis that stronger partisans will feel more strongly towards a quote than weaker partisans on one single quote, which I attribute to a secondary source cue in the quote.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Elite Cues and Partisanship

There is an assumption that within the United States electorate individuals are not informed well enough to make their own decisions, an attitude that has been held since the founding of the United States and is supported by modern scholars as well, arguing that the current political landscape is "awash in ignorance", especially in the context of policy issues (Kinder 1998, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Thus, it is assumed that most individuals must rely on elite cues, or party cues, to make their decisions. A cue can be defined as a message that people

use to infer other information and base their decision on (Bullock 2011). There are two forms of party cues: the first links an individual to a party, and the second links the party to a certain policy position. These two forms can be used in conjunction with each other, or individually. For example, it can be stated "Trump is a Republican", and then stated, "Republicans support the expansion of gun rights". Thus, it could be assumed that Trump supports the expansion of gun rights because he is a Republican.

There is literature supporting the hypothesis that individuals rely mostly on party cues and elite cues. It has been found that without an elite cue both conservatives and liberals alike depended on the content of the policy presented to them to make decisions and were more likely to make decisions consistent with their own partisanship as a result. However, when provided an elite cue they were both more likely to base their decisions on the elite's own support, even if that policy position went against the subject's party identity (Cohen 2003). However, it has also been found that any sort of cue does not affect different policy areas the same. In the context of a highly publicized and controversial policy area, like abortion, there has been found to be much less reliance on source cues when compared to a less controversial policy area, like environmental policy (Arceneaux 2008).

While elite cues have considerable influence some scholars argue that their effect is much less than previously thought. Specifically, there are consistent limitations elite cues have over public opinion. They are found to be less effective when communication about a group benefit is presented, along with a source cue. This may suggest that a group's loyalty to their particular party identity is not the strongest predictor of political action or vote choice, but group or individual benefit is, but only when it is properly presented to the group or individual (Nicholson 2011). However, in the same study it was found that source cues are very effective when they

present information about an extremely disliked outgroup. This can provide some context for many elite political figures. Trump, most notably, utilized this tactic often in his campaigns and speeches to rally his followers in supporter for his controversial policies, even if those policies held not explicit benefit for the groups he was appealing too.

In an increasingly polarized environment, it would been a fallacy to think that this may not affect vote choice among the electorate. Indeed, it has been found that a polarized political landscape contributes to an overreliance on elite cures by the majority of the American public (Druckman et al., 2013). Not only was it found in the same study that the increasing partisan nature among the elites increased partisanship in the mass public, but they also found that it also increased the confidence the mass public felt in the opinions the elites had.

Scholars agree that any sort of party or elite cue can hold considerable influence over the mass public's political decision, this is not up for debate. The debate is over the extent to which elites hold over the public's opinions. This reliance on cues correlates directly with the increase in partisanship in the United States.

Though this is an assumption that has been supported by numerous studies there are still some scholars that argue that there is no direct evidence that mass polarization has occurred in the last couple of decades in the mass of the U.S. population. In order to properly conduct my study this area of literature must be addressed, and debunked. Fiorina and Abrams argued that mass polarization has not explicitly occurred simply because there has been evidence of elite polarization in the last couple of decades (Fiorina 2008). They cite a study they conducted where they show that citizens' policy positions appear to have not changed in the last few decades.

Though, if one were to consider the definition of political polarization, the extent of opposing values and ideas, it would seem from simple individual experiences that this theory from Fiorina and Abrams would not be true. Though they are arguing that mass polarization has not increased but elite polarization certainly has. However, if the mass public bases their political opinions and actions on the elite then it would be true that the mass public has also become increasingly polarized if they tend to mirror the elites.

Indeed, this theory is supported by most literature. In 2000, a research study by Larry Bartels shows the extent to which polarization has increased since 1952. He found that when looking at the presidential election's reliance on party line voting and party loyalty has increased significantly. In 1996 the increase in party line voting increased 80% from that in 1972 while also being higher than every other presidential election in the 50 years prior to this analysis. While Congressional elections have increased in polarization at a similar rate, he found that they were slightly less polarized (Bartels 2000).

Moreso, it has been shown by Noam Lupu in their 2014 study that individuals tend to become more partisan, and increase their own party loyalties and dependence, when they perceive that polarization is increasing in the mass population (Lupu 2014). Not only do individuals perceive polarization in the mass, according to Lupu, but this causes them to perceive polarization within their own party as well, as a result. While this shows have individuals may perceive polarization within the political system, it also supports the theory that partisanship has been increasing not just within the elite, but also the mass public as well. For if an individual perceives polarization and then acts in accordance with the polarization, they perceive then they are also increasing their own partisan attitudes.

This is supported by a study conducted in 2012 by Edwards Carmines. Using panel data from the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project and the American National Election Studies he finds that individuals that hold values consistent with liberal or conservative views across social and economic issues were more likely to mirror elite partisanship (Carmines 2012). However, those individuals that do not consistently hold partisan views across different policy areas were less likely to do so. Instead, they were more likely to change their party affiliation in the short term, but not so in the long term.

There should be little contention as to the hypothesis that polarization and partisanship has increased in the last few decades in American politics. Whether this occurs in the elite and translates to the public or whether they have done so independently of each other, is another discussion altogether. The effects of this increased partisanship have been increasingly studied.

In a simplification of what has become known as the Michigan Model, partisan loyalties are established early on in life, usually through one's parents or guardians, which impacts how one tends to vote throughout the rest of their lifetime. Usually, this loyalty does not waiver throughout an individual's lifetime and grows stronger with age (Chandler 1988). Using this model Bartels studied how long–term partisanship can impact the perception of seemingly neutral political events. He found that despite the neutral nature of these events Republicans and Democrats perceived them differently than each other (Bartels 2002).

This suggests that long – term partisanship is not simply a system that allows the mass of voters to make easy, less thought consuming, decisions but is a persuasive force that can alter how an individual sees political events. The repercussions for this can mean that one can

drastically view the political world in a totally different way than another individual, which in turn can contribute to the polarizing effects of long – term partisanship.

This effect has translated over to U.S. elections as well. As a result, there has been an increase in the literature that defines party identification with social identity. Even if most are not totally aware of this the increase in relating party identification to social identity has only become more spotlighted in recent years. With the rise in this correlation emotions have only been increasing in usage in U.S. politics. Nowhere is this seen more in the campaigns and rallies of Donald Trump. This relationship is exemplified by his outlandish use of emotions in his campaigns, making his platform a particularly interesting one to study.

Social identity produces thoughts and actions that are meant to protect a group's image and can lead to in – group favoritism and out – group hostilities (Brown 2000). In the context of political parties and elections this means that campaigns and elections can start to turn into what one would perceive more as a sporting event than a function of a thriving democracy (Miller 2015). This effect is only amplified by stronger partisan identities. Using this reasoning, supposedly, an individual who identifies as a strong Democrat would produce more hostile attitudes to a candidate who identities as a Republican, and vice versa.

While it has been established that mass polarization is increasing along with polarization of the elite some scholars also point out the partisan – ideological sorting which has occurred in the last 50 years (Abramowitz 1998, 2010, Baldassarri 2008). The study of this issue has brought to light the stark difference that social polarization and ideological polarization has experienced over the last few decades. Social polarization, in recent years, has been characterized by

increased levels of partisan bias, activism, and anger, which has been driven by an increased experience of relating partisan identity with social identity (Brewer 2005, Dawes 2009).

While social polarization has certainly increased in recent years, it has been shown that issue polarization has not increased at the same rates (Mason 2015). While it has increased, it has done so at much smaller rates. The results of which may be dependent on an increase in social politics, and the increasing practice of correlating social identity with partisan identity within both the American electorate and amongst the elites. One need not look farther than Trump rallies to witness this theory in motion. It is this high level of polarization that Trump causes which attracted me to the idea to conduct a survey using his cue.

**Emotions and Politics**

Emotions are a staple of United States politics. Donald Trump himself is no stranger to this, as he constantly uses phrases and ideas meant to elicit fear within his support base. As partisanship has been increasing in recent decades and more people in the U.S. correlate political identity with social identity, emotions have crept further and further into the world of politics (Brewer 2005). As such, emotions are being increasingly used in political campaigns. Hiliary Clinton's "3AM" ad, and Lyndon Johnson's "Daisy Girl" ad are prominent examples of how politicians utilize emotions to make the masses take action (Brader 2006).

There are some researchers who argue that emotions are meant to be prevalent in politics to spur action, and swiftness, while others argue that emotions make the democratic process rash and unreasonable (Kern 1997, Perloff & Kinsey 1992). Either way, both ends of this argument

agree on one thing; emotions are very much prevalent in every aspect of politics (Kamber 1997, Artherton 1992).

Political scientists and psychologists have recently argued that emotions open the doorway for reasonableness and play a fundamental role in being able to promote rationality in politics. While this seems hopeful, research has also shown that emotions can promote rationality just as easily as they can dissuade it (Damasio 2000, Kinder 1994, Marcus 2000).

In the study of emotions and politics many researchers have focused their research on political campaigns. Researchers have found that emotions can trigger different actions when used in campaigns (Brader 2005). This can be easily done by manipulating the images, or words in a campaign.

Fear especially has been shown to be one of the most effective emotions at triggering action in politics, especially in public health campaigns (Brader 2005). Though this research is consistent, there are still some areas of literature that dispute this, basing their argument on the argument that there is no single explanation for why fear does this (Eagly & Chaiken 1993). This is consistent throughout much of the literature, researchers agree on the prevalence of emotions, but disagree as to their actual effects. As such, there are many theories surrounding emotions and politics in circulation. Yet, perhaps one of the most well-known is Affective Intelligence Theory.

**Affective Intelligence Theory**

The theory of Affective Intelligence was first proposed by George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman, and Michael MacKuen in the 1980s. In it, they borrow from Downs hypothesis that political judgment depends on citizens informational incentives, or the extent to which citizens accept information from politicians, in this context (Downs 1957). Using neuroscience, they

attempt to pinpoint where political reasoning and motivation come from and argue that political reasoning lies in human emotion (Damasio 1994). This developed into their theory of Affective Intelligence. Using three primary emotions – anxiety, anger, and enthusiasm – which are a part of the bio-behavioral regulatory systems of the human body, they argue that these three emotions can predict how an individual will go about making political judgments.

Specifically, they argue that each of these three emotions can be used to predict how an individual will rate a certain person in a certain environment. Anger, they argue, is triggered by a familiar environment but is perceived as threatening. Enthusiasm is triggered by a familiar environment that is seen as rewarding. Anxiety (or fear) is triggered by an unfamiliar environment that is seen as threatening (Marcus 1988).

Anger and enthusiasm are argued to increase political participation and increase reliance on individuals' current political beliefs. Anxiety, by contrast, is expected to encourage voters to think more independently from their political habits. The unfamiliar environment is argued to increase the need to think more specifically about an environment or scenario in the context it is in and increase decision-making apart from their political habits.

**AIT: Anxiety**

Marcus et al. use neuroscience to argue that people have active use over two emotional systems in the limbic system of the brain: the disposition and surveillance areas. Both systems are preconscious systems of evaluation that express these evaluations as emotions, and thus have a substantial impact on how one acts and thinks. For typical events that regularly occur in an

individual's life, people use the disposition system to rely on already formed habits to make evaluations and actions.

When something novel, or out of the ordinary occurs in an individual's timeline they can no longer rely on the disposition system to form an action or a thought. So, they must use a different system that allows them to form an action or thought independently of their already pre-formed habits, since these habits no longer adjust properly to the situation in front of them. The surveillance system does just that, it makes people stop and think about what they are seeing and helps them form an action of thought based on the information presented to them (Armony, J. L. & LeDoux, J. E. 1997).

Affective Intelligence Theory uses these systems of judgement but creates an emphasis on the surveillance system when discussing anxiety. Anxiety, they argue, is the primary emotion that causes an individual to switch from their reliance on their disposition system to using their surveillance system (Marcus et al. 2005). When anxiety is high an individual will tend to switch from their disposition system to the surveillance system, since high anxiety signals that the environment is unsafe or threatening.

When anxiety lessens, or decreases, the brain tends to switch back to the disposition system since low anxiety signals that the current environment of an individual is safe, or unthreatening.

Through their literature Marcus and his colleagues have discovered a couple things about individuals who feel high levels of anxiety in political situations. They tend to pay more attention to the environment around them and thus pay more attention to candidates, or politicians, policy positions. They also tend to rely less on partisanship affiliations and more on policy information

and candidates' direct stances to make judgments and evaluations. As a result of this, those who experience high levels of anxiety tend to defect at higher rates during presidential elections, it has been studied (Marcus & Mackuen 1993).

Tedd Brader conducted a study to understand how anxiety-based political ads effected individuals. By comparing an emotionally placid ad with one meant to invoke anxiety he found that the anxiety-inducing ad led to more attentiveness and content-based attention, as well (Brader 2006). Additionally, not only has anxiety been shown to increase overall attentiveness, but it has also been shown to increase to quality of attention as well, as well as the want for compromise and balance in individuals with high levels of anxiety (Mackuen et al. 2010, Valentino 2008).

As George Marcus summed up, "anxiety is the central emotion on which reason and democratic politics rests" (Marcus 2006). Without anxiety, compromise and balance in democratic politics would not be possible, he argues. In a sense, we should strive to create an anxious political environment if we are to aim for a less polarized social environment. However, to do this, first, we must first understand what causes people to feel anxious. The research that I intended to conduct attempts to bridge this gap and apply emotions to this polarized environment, to understand how people respond, emotionally, to Donald Trump.

**AIT: Anger and Enthusiasm**

Anger and enthusiasm are two emotions cut from the same cloth under Affective Intelligence Theory. While they are triggered by different things, and different environments, they both very much result in the same things.

As discussed before, anger is the emotion under Affective Intelligence Theory that is triggered by environments where an individual feels familiar but threatened. Enthusiasm is similarly triggered by a familiar environment, but it is seen as rewarding instead of threatening. It is the familiar environment that individuals are in that allows them to stay dependent on their disposition system of evaluation. Familiarity, whether threatening or rewarding, means that an individual feels comfortable relying on pre-formed habits to deal with the situation. With no new information, that individual does not feel the need to process any new information since all the information they need to make an evaluation, or judgement, is already familiar to them (Armony, J. L. & LeDoux, J. E. 1997).

When applied to the masses, anger and enthusiasm alike have been shown to increase reliance on pre-established political habits. This can encompass voting behaviors, partisanship, and any sort of political activity. In a sense, anger and enthusiasm cause an individual to increase dependance on their habits since they have nothing to fear by using these habits, as they have already been shown to work in a similar situation (Marcus & Mackuen 1993).

Marcus et al. argue that anger and enthusiasm are both distinctly different from anxiety, not just based on their similarities in outcomes, but also in how directly they affect vote choice. Anxiety does not directly affect voting choice, but instead allows individuals to explore different options than their already pre-formed habits. In their 1993 experiment, Marcus and Mackuen found that when individuals feel anxiety it does not directly reflect on their voting data. Since anger and enthusiasm enforce the reliance that individuals already use to base their decisions on, they do directly affect the vote choice. The more angry or enthusiastic an individual feels in a situation, the more likely this emotion directly correlates to their vote choice (Marcus & Mackuen 1993).

**Donald Trump**

Donald Trump has been one of the most polarizing figures to date. This is, in part, due to his undeniable ability to create a varying array of emotions across the masses. He accomplishes this in a couple of ways, perhaps one of the most prevalent being his ability to address the stark differences between in supporters and his opponents. In the quote listed below he addresses supporters at a rally:

> "We are one movement, one people, one family, and one glorious nation under God… Together we will make America wealthy again, we will make America strong again, we will make America proud again, we will make America safe again, and we will make America great again" (Trump 2017).

Compared to the expressions he uses to describe those in opposition to him, he creates large, and extreme emotions. In a recent 2022 study research found that during Donald Trump's presidency threats, actual violence, and hate speech increased greatly in the United States (Nacos 2022). While this is cause for concern in general, even more concerning is the subject of these actions. In the same study, researchers found that the majority of this increase in hate action and speech was directed at minority groups, many of whom were directly attacked by Donald Trump during his presidency and campaign (Nacos 2022). The study concluded that Trump's words had a direct effect on the actions of his followers. He increased anger directed at these minority groups within his support base and this, in turn, had a direct effect on hate speech and action towards these groups. Additionally, as a result of this increased anger towards minority groups emotions were shown to have spiked without his opposition base as well.

It is because of Donald Trump's undeniable ability to polarize both ends of the political spectrum that he remains the topic of my research. Since polarization has become increasingly connected to social identity and emotions my research should focus on how Donald Trump effects individuals' emotional reactions to his source cue. My research question "How does attributing quotes to former President Donald Trump affect the emotional responses of participants?" attempts to formally bridge the gap between the literature about source cues, and emotions in politics by connecting them to Donald Trump.

## METHODOLOGY

### Survey Experiment

To examine the effect source cues have on emotional responses, I conducted a survey with experimental manipulation. The survey first consisted of basic demographic questions like age, gender, religion, and partisanship. Since I only intended to look at those responses provided by self – identified Democrats and Independents I programmed the survey to end after this question for anyone who identified as any form of Republican on the questionnaire.

From there, the survey presented one of two independent variables to participants; the first (condition 1) asked them to read a series of quotes made by a politician and consider how it makes them feel. The second (condition 2) asked them to read a series of quotes made by former President Donald Trump and consider how it makes them feel. These conditions were assigned randomly to respondents by the Qualtrics system. From there, respondents read a series of five quotes and asked to rate how fearful, angry, and enthusiastic they made them feel on a scale from

one to five. They were also asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the quotes presented on a scale of one to five, one being strongly agree and five being strongly disagree.

Five quotes were used in the survey, each meant to elicit a specific emotion. Each quote was an actual quote from former President Donald Trump, taken from transcripts of various interviews and speeches.

Quote 1: "The radical left cannot protect your family and they cannot protect our country, nor do they want to", and was meant to elicit anger.

Quote 2: "Drug cartels and human traffickers are back in business. Like they've never been before. They're doing numbers that they've never even thought possible. And just a few short months ago, drugs were way down", and was meant to elicit fear.

Quote 3: "Proud citizens like you helped build this country, and together we are taking back our country. We are returning power to you, the American people", and was meant to elicit enthusiasm.

Quote 4: "If Kamala Harris became the first woman president, I think it would be a terrible thing for our country. I think it would be a terrible thing for women. I look forward to the first woman president, but I don't look… I wouldn't look forward to her being that person" and was meant to elicit anger.

Quote 5: "On this special occasion we are renewing our strong national commitment on conserving the wonders of God's creation. One of the most important ways we uphold this tradition is by protecting our priceless national parks and our public lands" and was meant to elicit enthusiasm.

**Participants**

I conducted my survey using a snowball sample initiated through social media. Overall, I received 198 responses in March of 2022, 145 of which identified as any sort of Democrat or Independent (figure 4). Of that sample, 140 completed the questionnaire, 71 received the politician variable (condition 1), and 69 received the Trump variable (condition 2). All participants read an informed consent form prior to beginning the survey and were also provided with an email should they have any questions.

The demographics of the survey did not mirror that of the United States. It was a very young sample, with 104 of the total respondents being between the ages of 18 –24. The second largest group was the 55- 64 age range, with 43 respondents identifying in the age range. Overall, these two groups made up a little under 75% of the age of respondents. This can be seen in figure 1, as well as other percentages.

This sample was also very Caucasian. As seen in figure 2 the majority of participants were white, while only about 20% identified as either not fully white or some ethnic minority. Similarly, women made up the majority of the sample as well, as seen in figure 3. Women made up about 80% of the total sample, while men and those who preferred not to answer made up only 20%.

Of those who took the survey, the majority identified themselves as either Democrat or Independent, and thus moved onto the second part of the survey (figure 4.1). Of those, there were two majorities, at about 33% each. 33.7% identified themselves as Democrat, and 33.1% identified themselves as Independent (figure 4.2).

**Hypotheses**

Based on the previous literature I test two hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Those who receive the Trump cue, condition 2, will elicit stronger emotional responses to the quote than those who received the politician cue, condition 1.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *Those who identify as a stronger Democrat will elicit higher emotional responses to the quotes than those who consider themselves to be less partisan.*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Data**

In my data analysis I found little difference between the emotional responses of those who received the politician cue, condition 1, and those who received the Trump cue, condition 2. My data suggested that former President Donald Trump had little effect on emotional responses. When looking at my data I found little statistically significant relationships, which are usually defined as having a p-value below 0.1, to support that he had a significant effect on emotional response.

Looking at the first quote, about the radical left, the little effect that Trump had on emotions can be seen. Charts 5.1 through 5.4 show that Trump did not have a significant impact on emotional response, and these are representative of the rest of the sample as well. Though some trends can be seen. When looking at the anger chart overall levels of anger increased slightly when the quote was attributed to former President Donald Trump. Though anger seems

to have increased with Trump the relationship was not statistically significant. So, it cannot be reasonable said that Donald Trump had a significant impact on anger. This finding characterizes the anger charts for both the conditions, as well.

A similar finding could be said for enthusiasm. In contrast to anger, enthusiasm seemed to have decreased when the first quote was attributed to Donald Trump. Neutrality also seemed to increase slightly when the quote was attributed to Donald Trump, as well. Overall, the p-value remained at 0.554 and the relationship could not be considered statistically significant. Similar findings were found for all enthusiasm questions when conditions were compared.

When looking at the fear question for the first quote there was slightly more variation. Neutrality seemed to have shot up when the quote was attributed to former President Donald Trump, and the levels of "somewhat fearful" decreased significantly when attributed to former President Donald Trump. However, the relationship was still not statistically significant. While the degree of variation was different for each quote, this finding was repeated for the remainder of the fear questions when comparing conditions.

The agree and disagree question mirrored the findings of the rest of the questions. While this particular quote had the lowest p-value at 0.325 it still was not statistically significant. Though, it is of note to mention that under the first condition, the politician condition, there was some agreement with the quote. However, there was none under the second condition, the Trump condition, but there were some strongly agree. Despite these outliers, overall agreement decreased steadily with the Trump cue, and agreement increased with the politician cue. These results mirrored those of the remaining quotes as well.

When looking at the impact of partisanship on reactions to the quotes most of the results mirrored those of the experimental data, they were mostly not statistically significant. When looking at the same quote but based on partisans the anger graph is approaching statistical significance yet has some clear patterns. Somewhat angry has a clear spike among strong Democrats, and neutrality is clearly increasing with a decrease in partisans. However, with a p-value of 0.151 it is still not statistically significant. This is representative of most other quotes as well.

When looking at the enthusiasm graph the p-value also seems to be approaching statistical significance, at 0.188. Yet, patterns are also seen, similarly to the anger. "not very enthusiastic" spikes with strong Democrats and continues to go down with a decrease in partisanship as well. Additionally, neutrality creeps in and increases with a decrease in partisanship as well. While it is not statistically significant, it is representative of most of the other quotes as well.

Fear has the highest p-value at 0.959 of this quote. When looking at the graph there does not appear to have a lot of patterns, indicative of the high p-value. Similar to all the other questions neutrality increases with a decrease in partisanship, but this was expected. This pattern is repeated for most of the remaining questions as well. Despite this, the levels of fear vary too greatly to indicate any sort of pattern. While this high of a p-value is not representative of the rest of the sample, the lack of statistical significance is for most quotes.

The agreement graph shows a rare statically significant relationship from the data. With a p-value of 0.0446 the relationship between this question and partisanship is clearly significant. Disagreement clearly goes down when the partisanship decreases, and the neutrality pattern is

clearly present as well. It is important to note, however, that this question is not representative of the rest of the sample.

The only quote to have a majority of statistically significant relationships was the fourth quote about Kamala Harris. Anger was the closest it could be to be considered statistically significant with a p-value of 0.101 so it is included in this. Anger clearly spikes with strong Democrats and decreases as partisanship goes down. The neutrality pattern is present, as well as the levels of "not very angry", which goes up with a decrease in partisanship.

Enthusiasm is the most statistically significant with a p-value of 0.0337. Strong Democrats almost exclusively answered with "not very enthusiastic", save for a few outliers. Enthusiasm levels vary slightly, but they are not very present at all in the graph. The neutrality pattern is once again present as well.

The agreement graph was significant with a p-value of 0.0443. Similarly, to the other graphs for this quote disagreement levels spiked with with strong Democrats and decreased as partisanship went down. "Disagree" remained relatively steady throughout the entire graph, dropping slightly at Independant's.

The only graph not to be statistically significant for this quote was the fear graph. With a p-value of 0.248 it is not the highest p-value of the entire data set, but it still is not approaching statistical significance. Neutrality spikes much higher than it had before in Independant's, and the typical neutrality pattern is not present.

**Discussion**

My first hypothesis was not supported by the data. I found little statistically significant relationships that would indicate that Donald Trump had a strong effect on emotional responses. This does not go to say that elite cues are not significant enough to invoke specific emotions, this fact has been proven true by scholars for decades. Elite cues do have a strong effect on individuals and the masses. Donald Trump himself would be considered an elite due to his high social positions, and former political office. However, the results of my data suggest he does not hold as much of a sway as most current elites do, according to researchers. This can mean a couple things, but I would argue that Donald Trump, specifically, does not hold the sway he once did.

This conclusion would be supported by the data. When Donald Trump was in high office, he certainly held an immense amount of political power, which undoubtably contributed to his immense sway over the masses and overall political emotion. This would also contribute to his ability to use his elite cues to ensure the masses would follow his cues. However, I would suggest that his attribution to these quotes did not change emotions significantly simply because he is no longer as relevant as he once was. When he was in office he had the sway over the masses, as many elites do. Yet now he is not in office, which may contribute to the presented data. Because he is no longer in office and does not hold the power he once did, he is simply no longer as influential as he once was. To put it plainly, Donald Trump is no longer relevant enough to cause Democrats and Independant's to react strongly towards him

While my first hypothesis received little support, my second hypothesis received somewhat mixed results. Most of the quotes I looked at also did not have statistically significant results, much like my first hypothesis. However, I did receive considerably strong support for my

hypothesis that stronger partisanships would react stronger than weaker partisans in the single Kamala Harris quote, which read:

> "If Kamala Harris became the first woman president, I think it would be a terrible thing for our country. I think it would be a terrible thing for women. I look forward to the first woman president, but I don't look… I wouldn't look forward to her being that person".

Simply because there was one quote that had a majority of statically significant relationships does not mean that my second hypothesis was fully supported. Instead, I would argue that the support for this quote says more about the power of indirect elite cues and relevancy than it does support my hypothesis.

While I did not intend it, this quote had a secondary elite cue by mentioning Kamala Harris. It is because of this that the demographics of the survey must be taken into considerable account. The majority of participants were, in fact, women, almost 80%. Additionally, everyone who made it to this part of the survey self-identified themselves as some sort of either Democrat, or Independent. It would, therefore, make sense that these demographics had such a strong reaction to this quote. By being on the left of the partisanship scale these participants are likely to hold some sort of strong feelings towards Kamala Harris. By being a woman, they are likely to react strongly when Kamala Harris is spoken about in a quote, whether it is attributed to Donald Trump or not. If there is any group of people that would react strongly to this quote, it would be this demographic group.

Additionally, just as I argued that Donald Trump had lost his sway because he has lost his relevancy, I would argue that Kamala Harris has considerably more sway because she is currently in higher office, and thus has more formal political power and relevancy. This would

make her elite cue much more persuasive than Donald Trump's, accounting for the support for this quote.

**Future Research**

The beauty of this survey is that it can be easily replicated with a different figure, political or not. Future research may want to look into the literature that supports elite cues' persuasive power and reach and replicate this survey with a different, relevant, political figure to inquire about the power of elite cues on emotional responses, and to see whether they influence emotional responses. For this survey, a researcher may use a different figure in the Republica party, like Mitch McConnell, and use the same sample I utilized. Or perhaps, a researcher could see how people on the right of the partisanship scale would react to a Democratic figure, instead.

Future researchers may also want to look into how different emotions may fall under, and work, under Affective Intelligence Theory. Using different emotions may have results in different results from the data I collected. As such, future research may benefit from replicating the results of this survey with different results to understand the validity of Affective Intelligence.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper I aimed to understand the effect that Donald Trump had on emotional responses when a quote is attributed to him, versus to a politician. I found little support for my first hypothesis which theorized that those who received the Trump cue would have higher emotional responses than those who received the politician cue. The results of my data indicate that he had little impact on the emotional responses of those who received his cue. I argue that this is not because elite cues no longer work, as most of the literature argues that they have

considerable sway, but that Donald Trump himself no longer hold as much influence as he once did. As he no longer holds political office, he no longer holds to influence he once did, making his cue much less effective than hypothesized.

There were mixed results for my second hypothesis which argued that those who hold a stronger partisan will react stronger than those with a weaker partisanship. Most quotes were similar to the first hypothesis's results. However, the fourth quote about Kamala Harris had significant results. I argue this is due to a secondary elite cue in the mentioning of Kamala Harris, that I did not originally account for. The demographics of the study play a significant role as well, mostly women and all on the left of the partisanship scale. The relevancy of the political figure also plays a significant role in invoking high emotional responses.

While my hypotheses were not all supported fully, I did find that there is significant room for future research in the area. I recommend those future researchers replicate this survey with a current, and relevant, political figure to examine the extent of the power that elite cues hold over the masses. I also recommend that future researchers test the validity of Affective Intelligence Theory by utilizing different emotions in their studies.

**AKNOWEDLEGMENTS**

Firstly, I'd like to thank Dr. Robinson for serving as my faculty advisor and guiding me through this process. I could not have completed this project without her support and encouragement, even when I continually pushed deadlines and probably tested her patience with that. She has been supportive and encouraging from the start and I am honored to have been her student for four years and to have worked with her on this project. I also want to thank Dr. Robideck and Professor Goldenbach for agreeing to be on my committee. Lastly, I'd like to thank my friends and family for their continued support, whether that be taking dozens of drafts of this survey (special shoutout to Kim Castellano for taking the survey probably more than 100 times) or simply offering words of encouragement. I could not have done this without all of you. Thank you, and I love you all.

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**APPENDIX**

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about emotions and politics. We require that participants in this study be at least 18 years old. The study is being conducted for the purpose of completing a departmental honors project at Hood College. It should take around 5 to 10 minutes to complete

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. By submitting this survey, you are consenting to participate. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships. The researcher conducting this study is Shea Jakubowski. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at emotionsandpolitics@gmail.com. The records of this study will be kept private. Questions asking private information will not be asked, names will not be taken, and all information will be stored within the Qualtrics system. In any written summary or presentation, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher, you may contact Dr. Jolene Sanders, Institutional Review Board Chair, Hood College, 401 Rosemont Ave., Frederick, MD 21701, sandersj@hood.edu.

What is your age?

- ▫ Under 18
- ▫ 18 – 24
- ▫ 25 – 34
- ▫ 35 – 44

- 45 – 54

- 55 – 64

- 65 – 74

- 75 – 84

- Over 85

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, the

highest degree received.

- Some high school, no diploma

- High school graduate, diploma or equivalent

- Some college, no degree

- Trade/technical/vocational training

- Associate degree

- Bachelor's degree

- Master's degree

- Professional degree

- Doctorate degree

What is your ethnic background?

- White/Caucasian

- Asian – East

- Asian – Indian

▫ Hispanic

▫ African American

▫ Native American

▫ Mixed Race

▫ Other (please specify in the space below)

▫ Prefer not to say

What is your religious affiliation, if any?

▫ Protestant

▫ Roman Catholic

▫ Morman

▫ Jewish

▫ Orthodox

▫ Muslim

▫ Buddhist

▫ Hindu

▫ Atheist

▫ Agnostic

▫ Other (please specify in the space below)

▫ Prefer not to say

What is your current gender identity?

- ▫ Male

- ▫ Female

- ▫ Other (please specify in the space below)

- ▫ Prefer not to say

Generally speaking, which of the following do you most closely affiliate with?

- ▫ Strong Democrat

- ▫ Democrat

- ▫ Lean Democrat

- ▫ Independent

- ▫ Lean Republican

- ▫ Republican

- ▫ Strong Republican

Select any (check all that apply) of the following sources that you consulted in the last week for information about current events.

- ▫ Local TV news

- ▫ National network TV news

- ▫ Social Media

- ▫ Cable TV news

- ▫ Talk radio

- ▫ Public radio

\*Participants were given one of these instructions, not both.

Condition 1: Next, you will read and respond to a series of quotes made by a **politician**. Please read the quotes in their entirety and consider how they make you feel.

Condition 2: Next, you will read and respond to a series of quotes made by **Former President Donald Trump**. Please read the quotes in their entirety and consider how they make you feel.

"The radical left cannot protect your family and they cannot protect our country, nor do they want too."

Rate how **angry** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- ▫ 1 – not very angry
- ▫ 2 – somewhat angry
- ▫ 3 – neutral
- ▫ 4 – angry
- ▫ 5 – very angry

Rate how **enthusiastic** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- ▫ 1 – not very enthusiastic
- ▫ 2 – somewhat enthusiastic
- ▫ 3 – neutral
- ▫ 4 – angry
- ▫ 5 – very angry

Rate how **fearful** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- □   1 – not very fearful

- □   2 – somewhat fearful

- □   3 – neutral

- □   4 – fearful

- □   5 – very fearful

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much do you agree or disagree with the previous quote?

- □   1 – strongly agree

- □   2 – agree

- □   3 – neither agree or disagree

- □   4 – disagree

- □   5 – strongly disagree

"Drug cartels and human traffickers are back in business. Like they've never been before. They're doing numbers that they've never even thought possible. And just a few short months ago, drugs were way down."

Rate how **angry** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- □   1 – not very angry

- □   2 – somewhat angry

- □   3 – neutral

- □   4 – angry

- □   5 – very angry

Rate how **enthusiastic** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- 1 – not very enthusiastic

- 2 – somewhat enthusiastic

- 3 – neutral

- 4 – angry

- 5 – very angry

Rate how **fearful** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- 1 – not very fearful

- 2 – somewhat fearful

- 3 – neutral

- 4 – fearful

- 5 – very fearful

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much do you agree or disagree with the previous quote?

- 1 – strongly agree

- 2 – agree

- 3 – neither agree or disagree

- 4 – disagree

- 5 – strongly disagree

"Proud citizens like you helped build this country, and together we are taking back our country.

We are returning power to you, the American people."

Rate how **angry** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- 1 – not very angry

- 2 – somewhat angry

- 3 – neutral

- 4 – angry

- 5 – very angry

Rate how **enthusiastic** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- 1 – not very enthusiastic

- 2 – somewhat enthusiastic

- 3 – neutral

- 4 – angry

- 5 – very angry

Rate how **fearful** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

- 1 – not very fearful

- 2 – somewhat fearful

- 3 – neutral

- 4 – fearful

- 5 – very fearful

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much do you agree or disagree with the previous quote?

- 1 – strongly agree

- 2 – agree

- 3 – neither agree or disagree

- 4 – disagree

▫ 5 – strongly disagree

"If Kamala Harris became the first woman president, I think it would be a terrible thing for our country. I think it would be a terrible thing for women. I look forward to the first woman president, but I don't look… I wouldn't look forward to her being that person."

Rate how **angry** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

▫ 1 – not very angry

▫ 2 – somewhat angry

▫ 3 – neutral

▫ 4 – angry

▫ 5 – very angry

Rate how **enthusiastic** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

▫ 1 – not very enthusiastic

▫ 2 – somewhat enthusiastic

▫ 3 – neutral

▫ 4 – angry

▫ 5 – very angry

Rate how **fearful** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

▫ 1 – not very fearful

▫ 2 – somewhat fearful

▫ 3 – neutral

▫ 4 – fearful

▫ 5 – very fearful

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much do you agree or disagree with the previous quote?

▫ 1 – strongly agree

▫ 2 – agree

▫ 3 – neither agree or disagree

▫ 4 – disagree

▫ 5 – strongly disagree

"On this special occasion we are renewing our strong national commitment on conserving the wonders of God's creation. One of the most important ways we uphold this tradition is by protecting our priceless national parks and our public lands."

Rate how **angry** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

▫ 1 – not very angry

▫ 2 – somewhat angry

▫ 3 – neutral

▫ 4 – angry

▫ 5 – very angry

Rate how **enthusiastic** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

▫ 1 – not very enthusiastic

▫ 2 – somewhat enthusiastic

▫ 3 – neutral

▫ 4 – angry

    ▫   5 – very angry

Rate how **fearful** this quote makes you on a scale from 1 to 5.

    ▫   1 – not very fearful

    ▫   2 – somewhat fearful

    ▫   3 – neutral

    ▫   4 – fearful

    ▫   5 – very fearful

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much do you agree or disagree with the previous quote?

    ▫   1 – strongly agree

    ▫   2 – agree

    ▫   3 – neither agree or disagree

    ▫   4 – disagree

    ▫   5 – strongly disagree

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

**TABLES AND FIGURES**

**Figure 1:** Age Breakdown
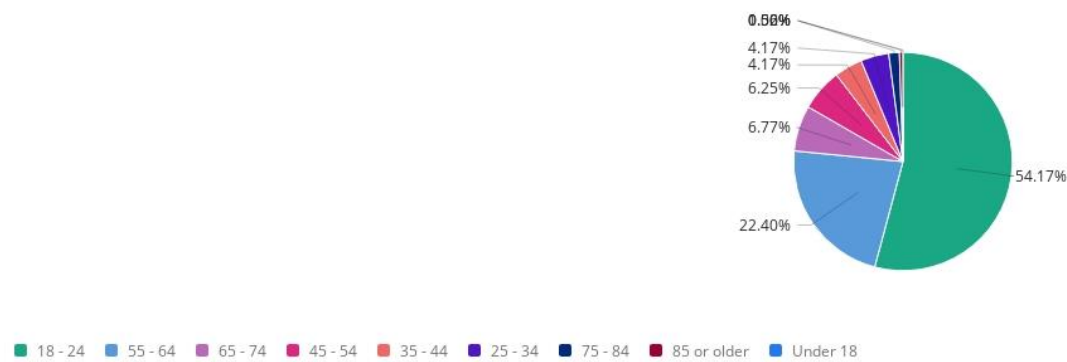


**Figure 2:** Ethnic Breakdown
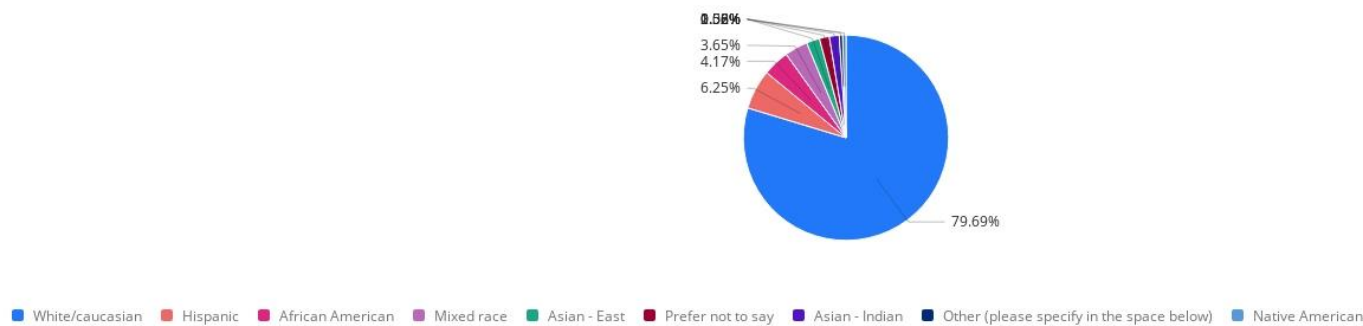


**Figure 3:** Gender Breakdown

Female　Male　Prefer not to say　Other (please specify in the space below)

**Figure 4:** Partisanship Breakdown



Democrat　Independant　Lean Democrat　Lean Republican　Republican　Strong Democrat　Strong Republican

**Figure 4.1:** Partisanship Breakdown Numbers

*Those highlighted indicate those who moved onto the second part of the survey.

| Political Ideology | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strong Democrat | 14 | 7.4% |
| Democrat | 49 | 26% |
| Lean Democrat | 34 | 18% |
| Independent | 48 | 25.5% |
| Lean Republican | 22 | 11.7% |
| Republican | 18 | 9.5% |
| Strong Republican | 3 | 1.5% |

**Figure 4.2:** Partisanship Breakdown Numbers of Those Moving onto the Second Part of the

Survey

| Political Ideology | Number | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strong Democrat | 14 | 9.6% |
| Democrat | 49 | 33.7% |
| Lean Democrat | 34 | 23.4% |
| Independent | 48 | 33.1% |

**Figure 5.1:** Breakdown of Anger by Condition to Quote #1

P-value: 0.654
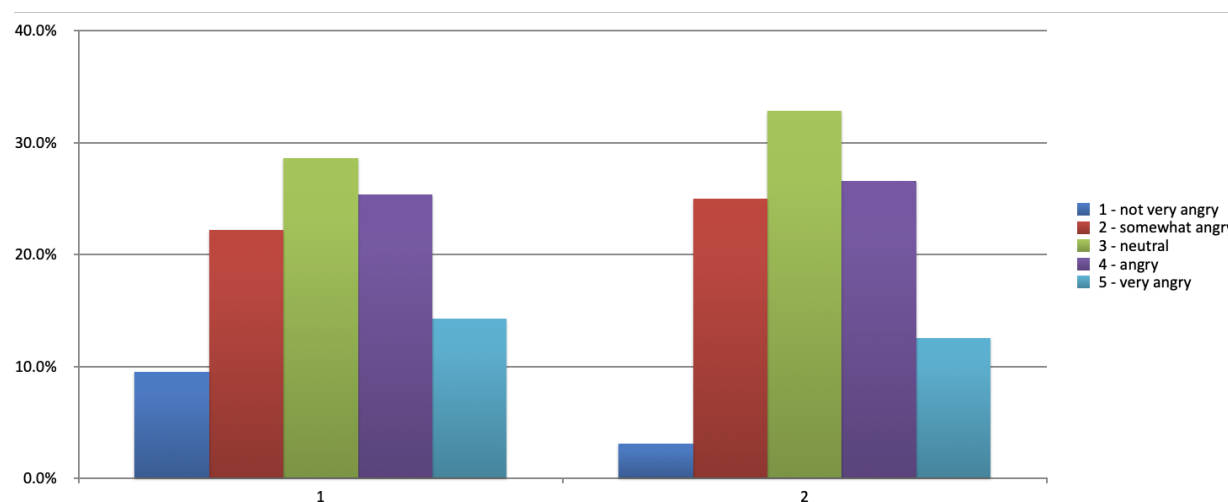


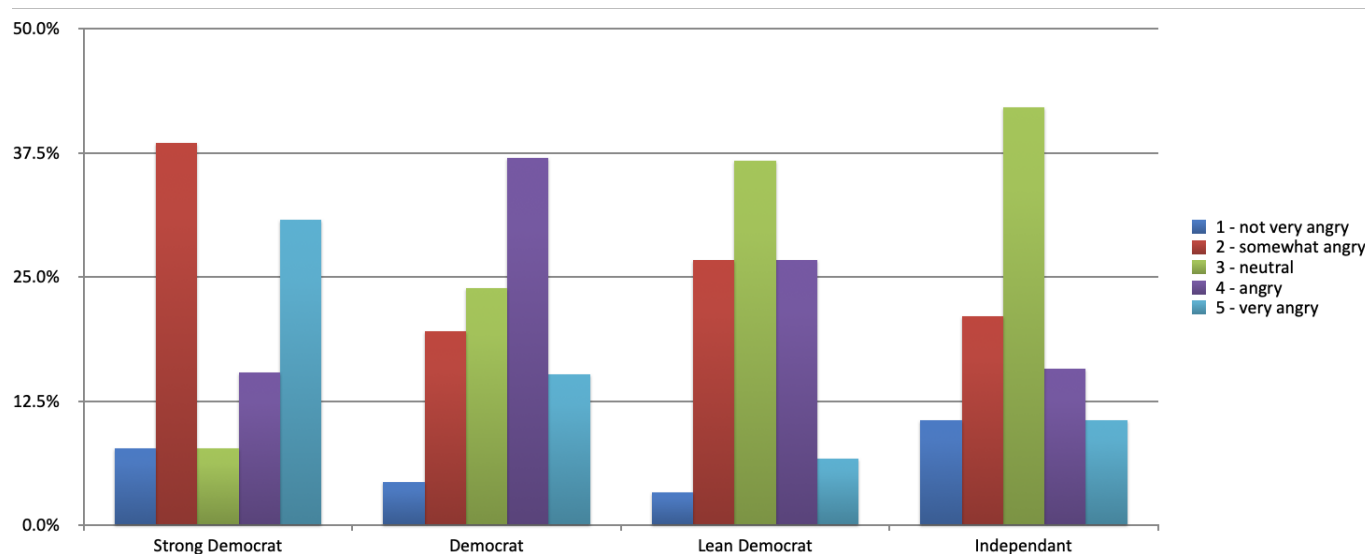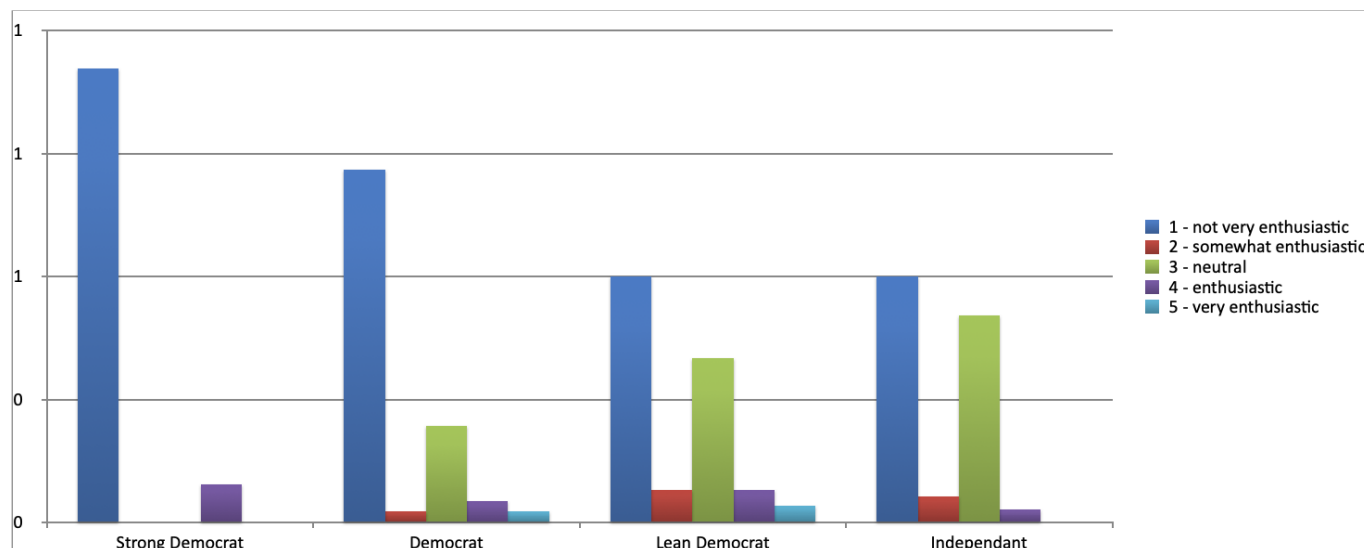**Figure 5.2:** Breakdown of Enthusiasm by Condition to Quote #1

P-value: 0.554
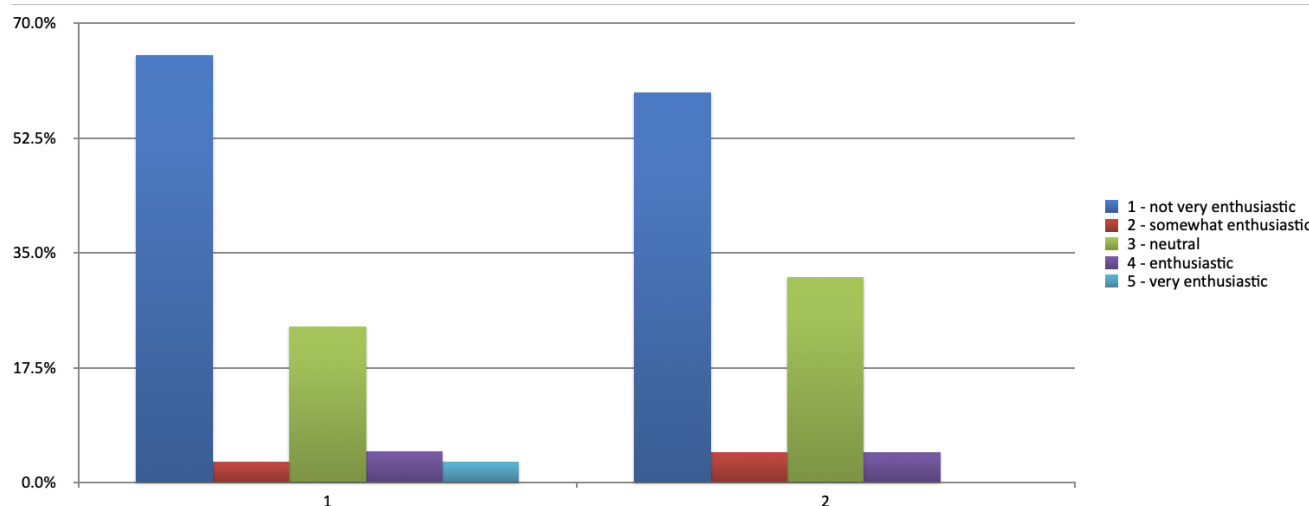
**Figure 5.3:** Breakdown of Fear by Condition to Quote #1

P-value: 0.513
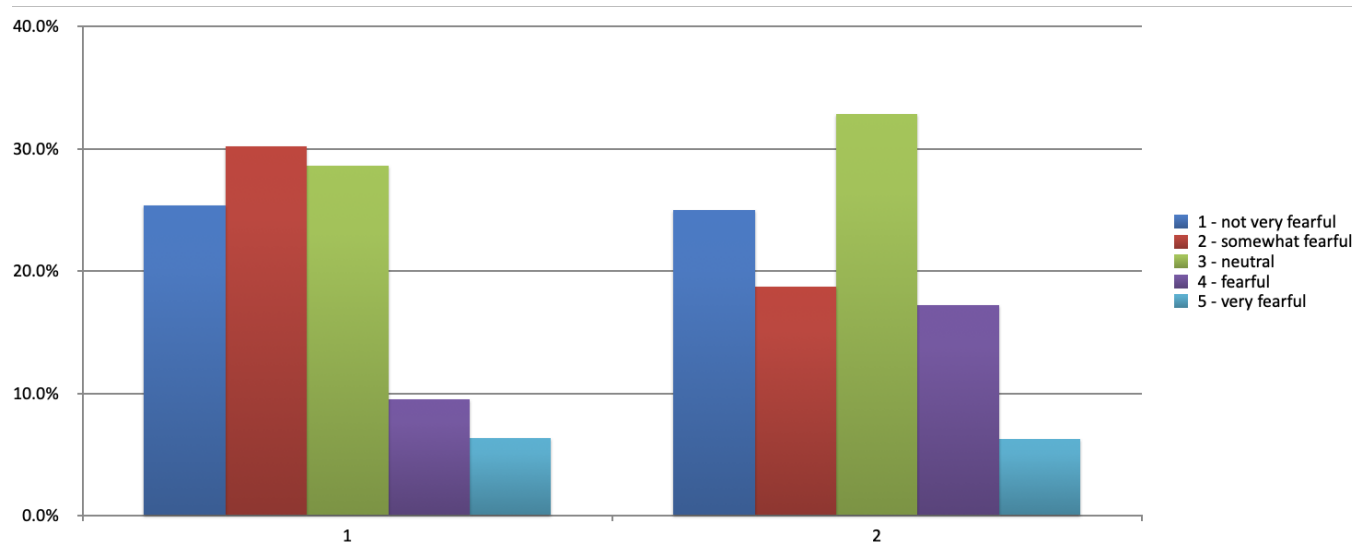


**Figure 5.4:** Breakdown of Agreement by Condition to Quote #1

P-value: 0.325
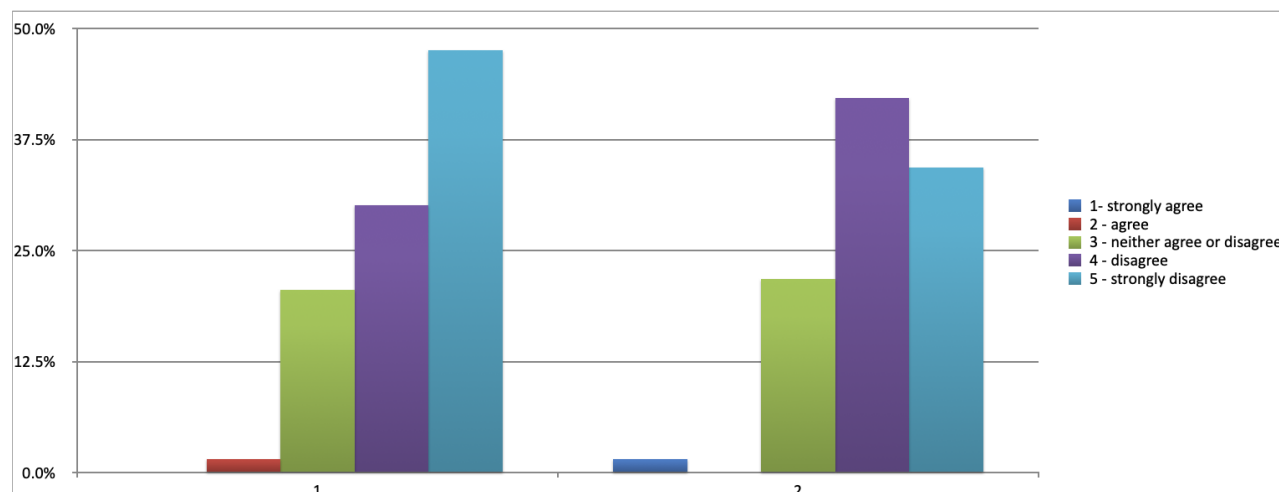
**Figure 6.1:** Breakdown of Anger by Partisanship for Quote #1

P-value: 0.151



**Figure 6.2:** Breakdown of Enthusiasm by Partisanship for Quote #1

P-value: 0.188

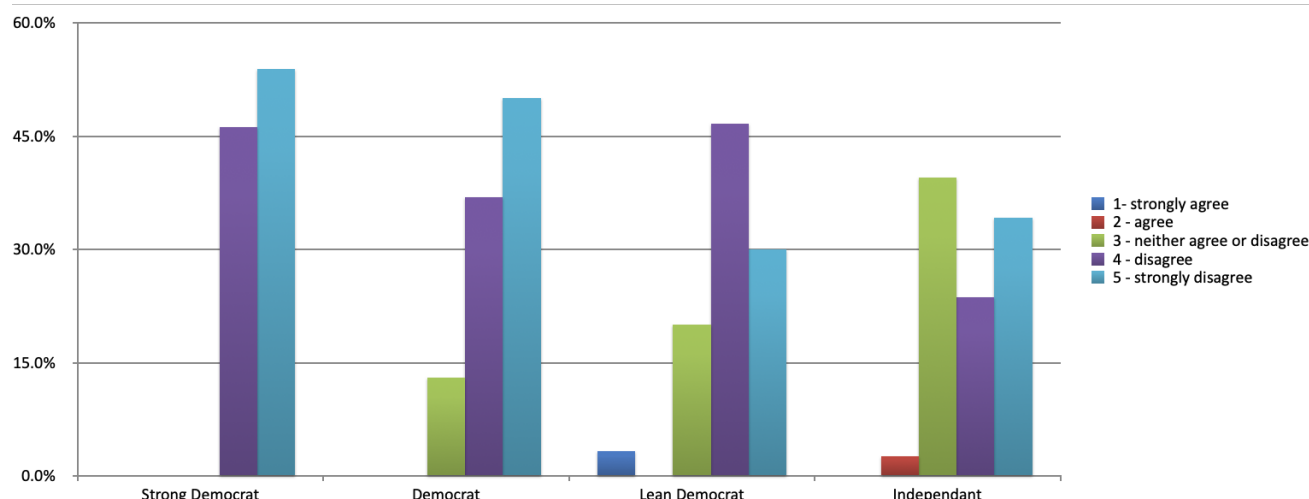**Figure 6.3:** Breakdown of Fear by Partisanship for Quote #1

P-value: 0.959
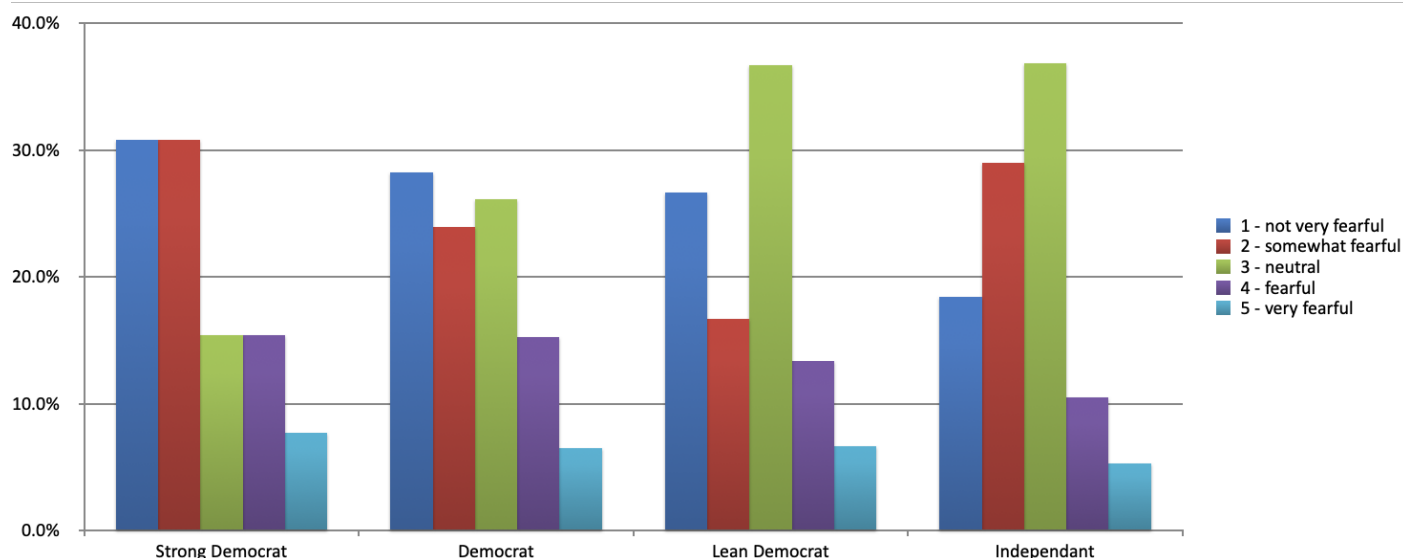


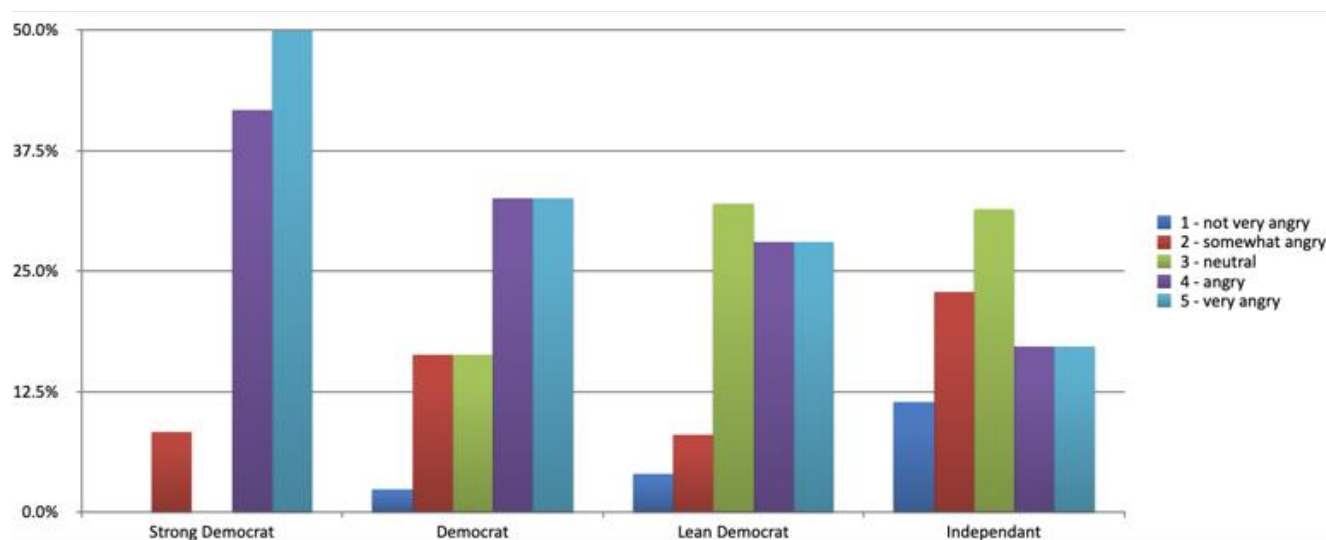**Figure 6.4:** Breakdown of Agreement by Partisanship for Quote #1
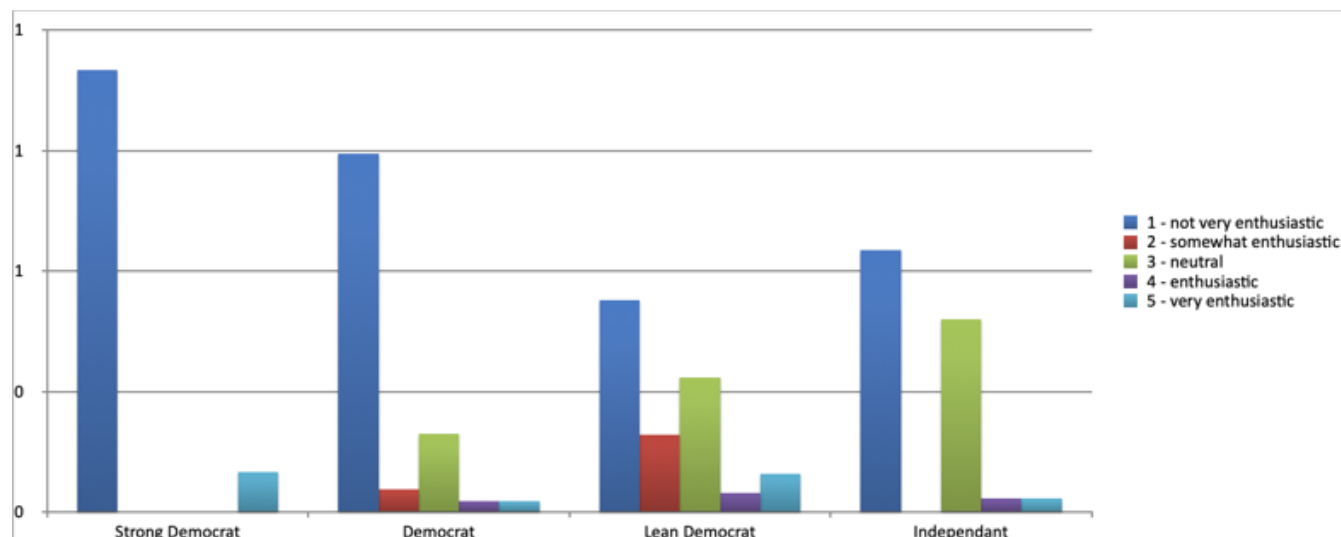
P-value: 0.0446

**Figure 7.1:** Breakdown of Anger by Partisanship for Quote #4
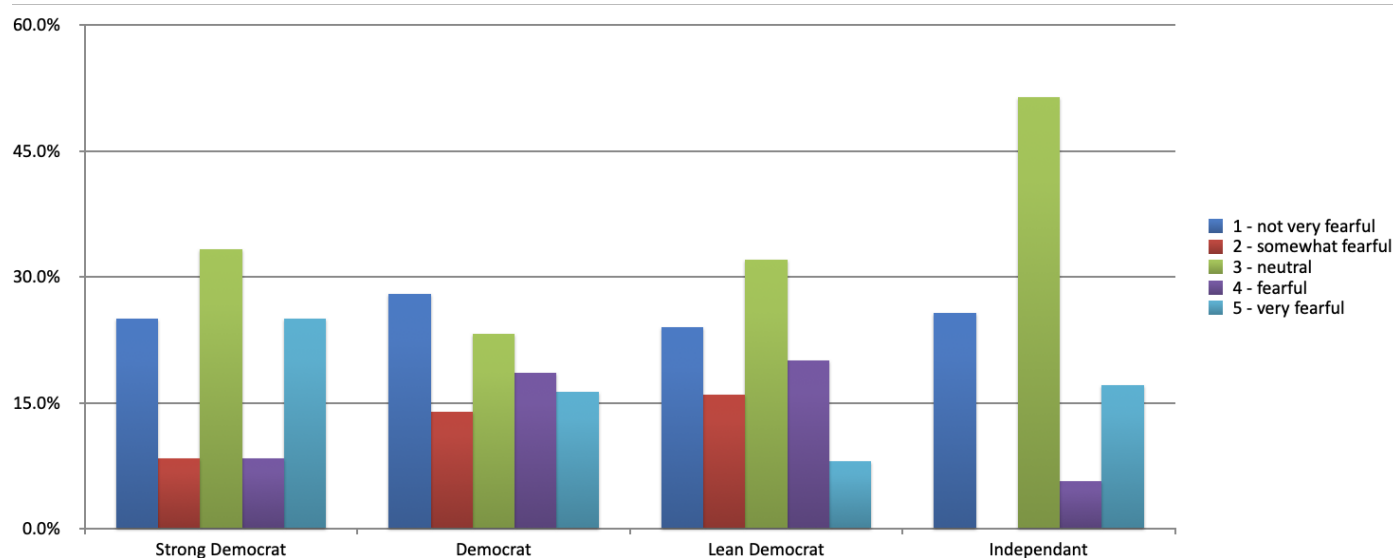
P-value: 0.101



**Figure 7.2:** Breakdown of Enthusiasm by Partisanship for Quote #4

P-value: 0.0337

**Figure 7.3:** Breakdown of Fear by Partisanship for Quote #4

P-value: 0.248



**Figure 7.4:** Breakdown for Agreement by Partisanship for Quote #4

P-value: 0.0443