

A Supplementary Appendix: Sample Details and Extensions

Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics

Category	Proportion	Category	Proportion
Gender		Education	
Male	.465	No high school degree	.042
Female	.535	High school graduate	.361
		Some college	.228
		Two-year degree	.095
		Four-year degree	.180
		Postgraduate degree	.094
Race		Income	
White	.773	Under \$20,000	.180
Black	.092	\$20,000 to \$39,999	.226
Latina/o	.078	\$40,000 to \$59,999	.164
Asian American	.020	\$60,000 to \$79,999	.118
Other racial group	.036	\$80,000 to \$99,999	.078
		\$100,000 to \$149,999	.075
		\$150,000 or more	.036
		Prefer not to say	.129
Partisanship		Ideology	
Democrat	.344	Very liberal	.096
Republican	.260	Liberal	.186
Independent	.299	Moderate	.328
Other	.045	Conservative	.240
Not sure	.053	Very conservative	.072
		Not sure	.076

Cell entries indicate unweighted sample proportions for each demographic and political category. $N = 2,500$. Overall, the unweighted sample characteristics match Census data from July 1, 2016 fairly well, according to which women comprised 50.8% of the population; the population was 76.9% white, 13.3% Black, 5.7% Asian American, and 4.9% other racial group (Hispanic background is treated separately from race); 30.3% had completed at least a four-year college degree; and the median household income was approximately \$55,000.

Table A.2: Dependent variables: Summary statistics

Support nominee	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat support	Strongly support	NA
On a scale from strongly oppose to strongly support, where would you place your level of support for this potential nominee?	.158	.179	.334	.219	.103	.008
Legitimacy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	NA
If the U.S. Supreme Court started making a lot of decisions that most people disagree with, it might be better to do away with the Supreme Court altogether.	.248	.246	.305	.152	.048	.002
I would support removing judges from their position on the U.S. Supreme Court if they consistently made decisions at odds with what a majority of the people want.	.103	.232	.327	.187	.138	.014
The U.S. Supreme Court will have become too independent and should be seriously reigned in.	.056	.192	.418	.202	.106	.027
The U.S. Supreme Court will have become too mixed up in politics.	.093	.288	.416	.134	.048	.021

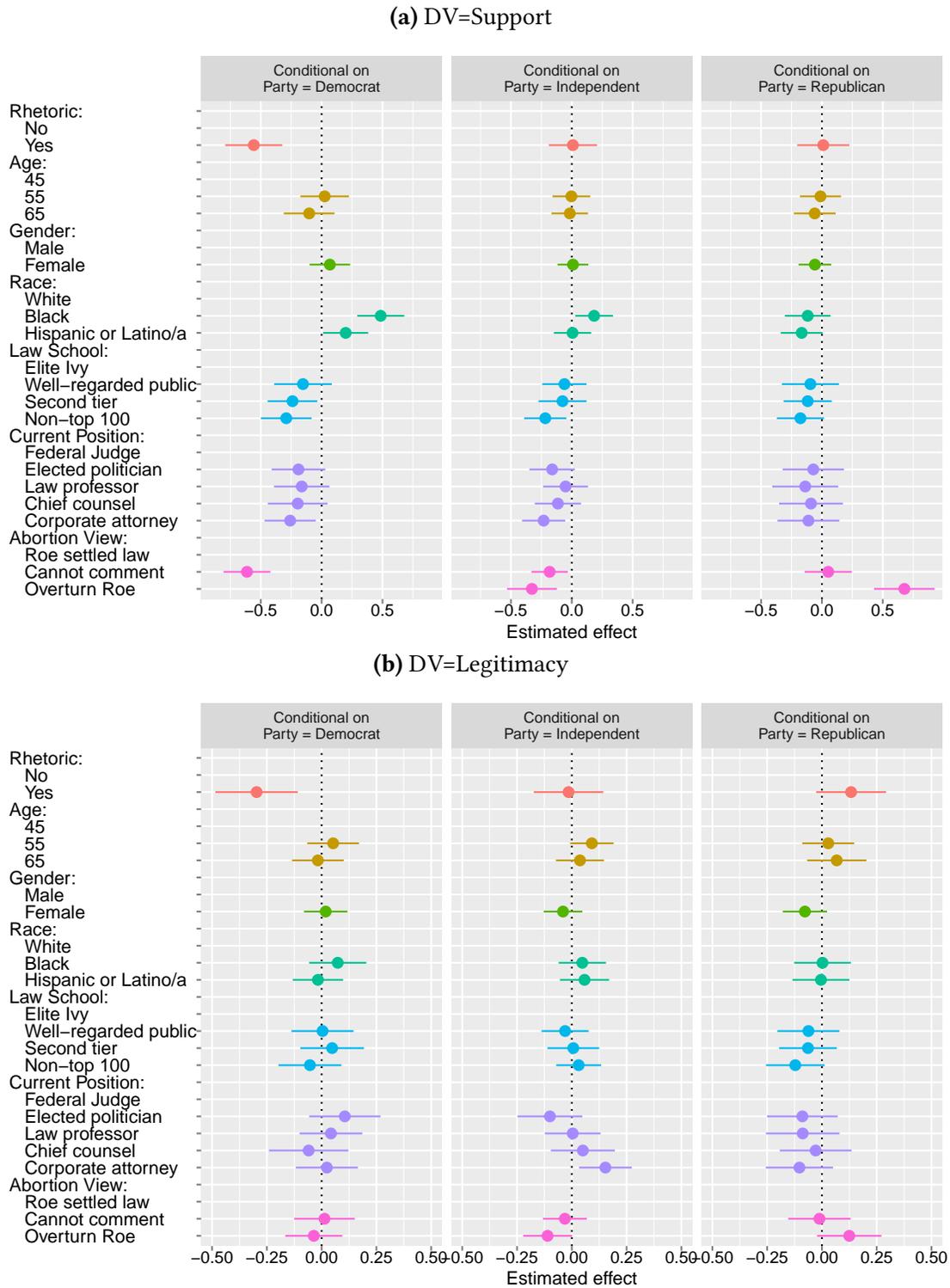
Cell entries indicate sample proportions for each variable. $N = 10,000$.

Table A.3: Judicial knowledge questions

Question wording	% Correct	% Incorrect
“Some judges in the U.S. are elected; others are appointed to the bench. Do you happen to know if the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court are elected or appointed to the bench?”	76.4	23.6
“Some judges in the U.S. serve for a set number of years; others serve a life term. Do you happen to know whether the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court serve for a set number of years or whether they serve a life term?”	72.6	27.4
“Do you happen to know who has the last say when there is a conflict over the meaning of the U.S. Constitution—the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Congress, or the President?”	67.8	32.2
“Please select the name of the current Chief Justice of the United States from the choices below: a. William Rehnquist, b. Stephen Breyer, c. Antonin Scalia, d. John Roberts, e. Anthony Kennedy”	47.0	53.0
“Please select the name of the Justice who most recently joined the U.S. Supreme Court from the choices below: a. Samuel Alito, b. Elena Kagan, c. Sonia Sotomayor, d. John Roberts, e. Sandra Day O’Connor”	22.5	77.5

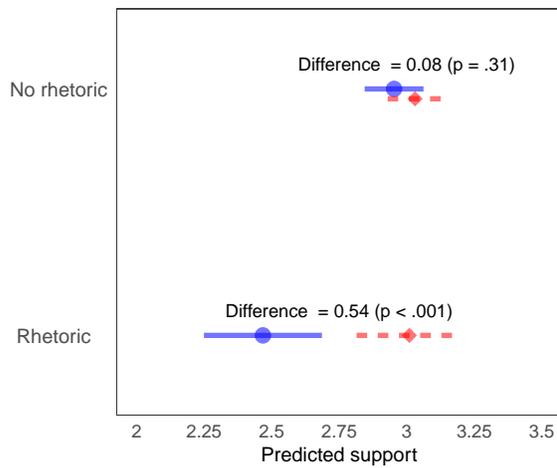
Cell entries indicate sample proportions for each variable. $N = 2,500$.

Figure A.1: Political Contestation and the Polarization of Partisan Attitudes (“Balanced” Statements Only)

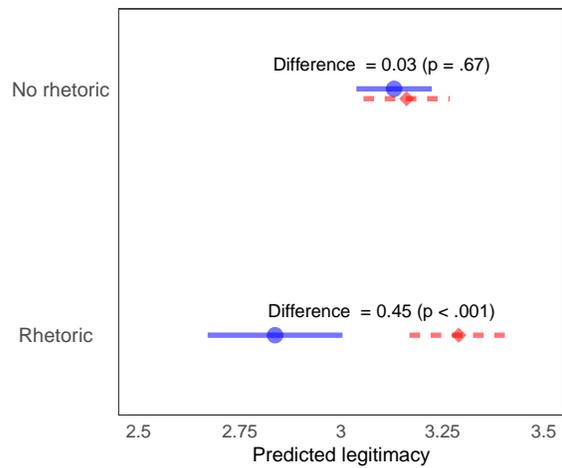


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Respondents in the *Rhetoric* condition include only those who received statements attributed to Trump and Senate Democrats that evoked the same attribute of the potential nominee (i.e., the nominee’s training/credentials, ethics/character, or ideology/personal beliefs). Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee

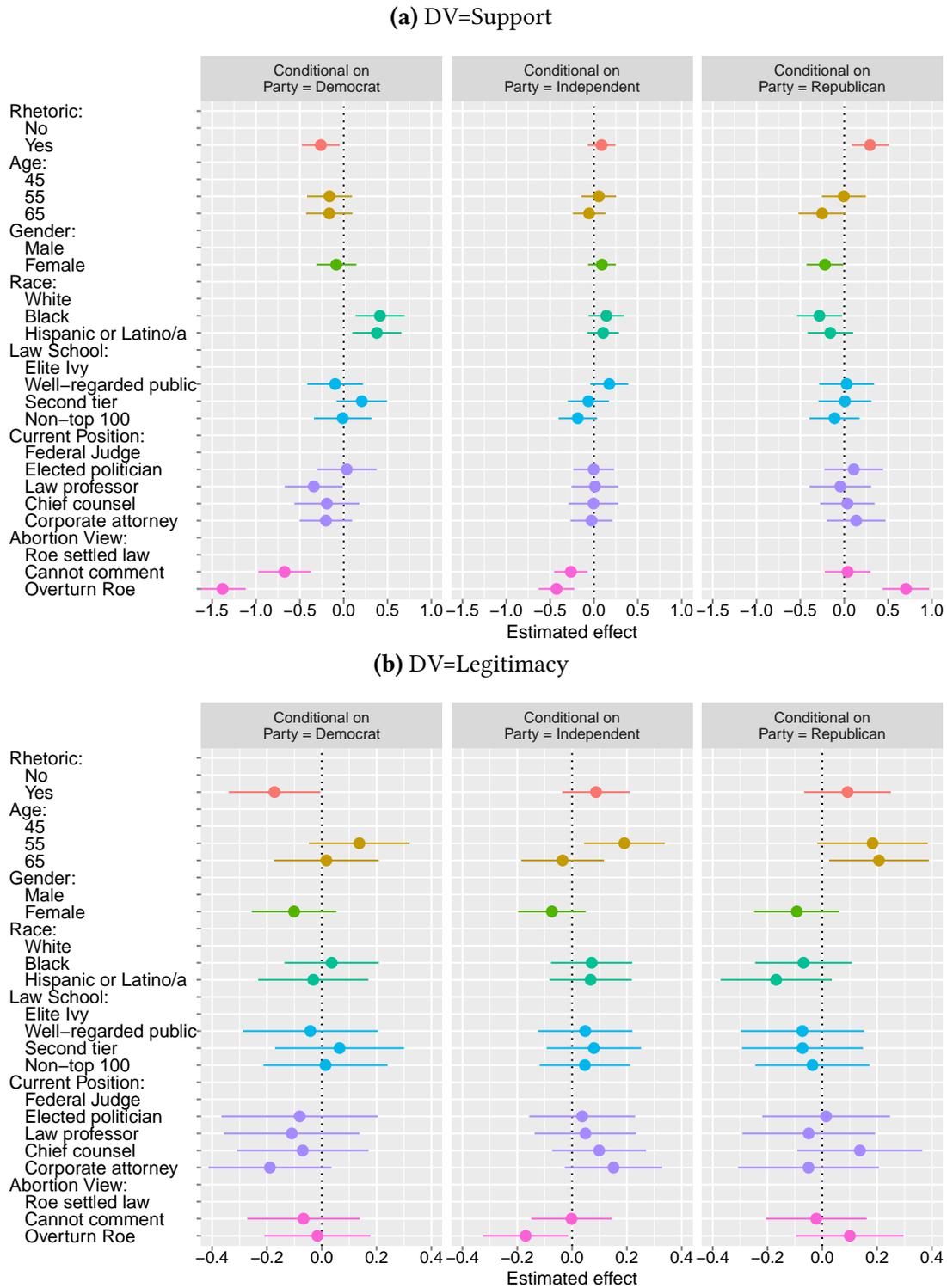


(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



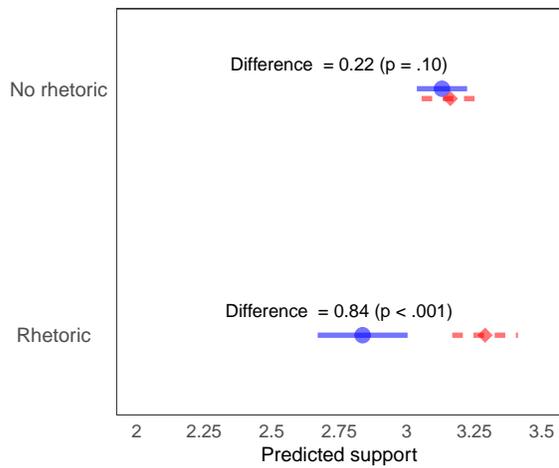
Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Respondents in the *Rhetoric* condition include only those who received statements attributed to Trump and Senate Democrats that evoked the same attribute of the potential nominee (i.e., the nominee’s training/credentials, ethics/character, or ideology/personal beliefs). Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.2: Political Contestation and the Polarization of Partisan Attitudes (Evaluations of First Nominee Only)

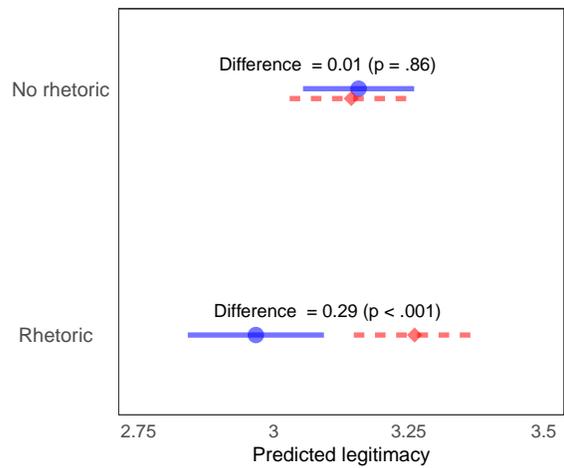


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee

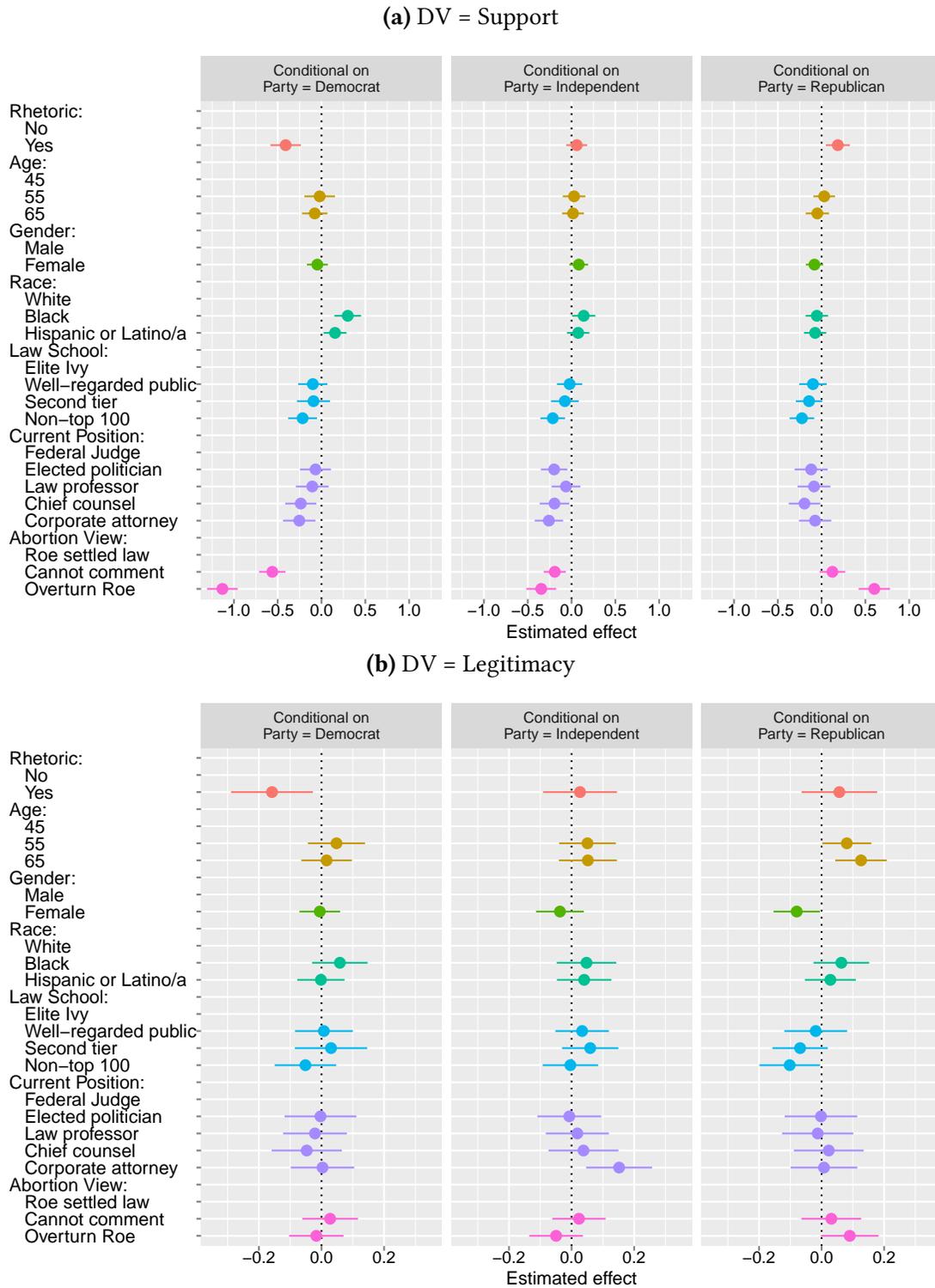


(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



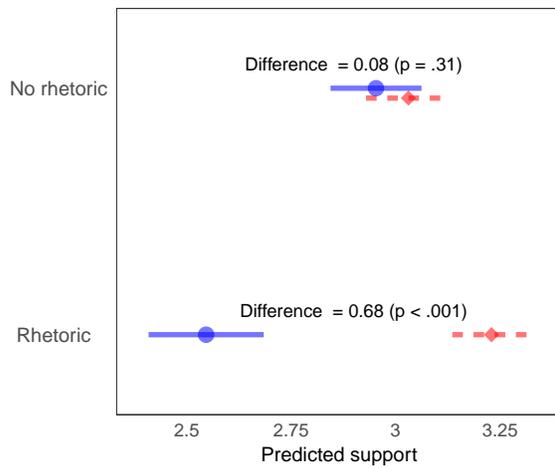
Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. The analysis is limited to only the first nominee profile a respondent was exposed to. Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.3: Political Contestation and the Polarization of Partisan Attitudes (Excluding Nonpartisans)

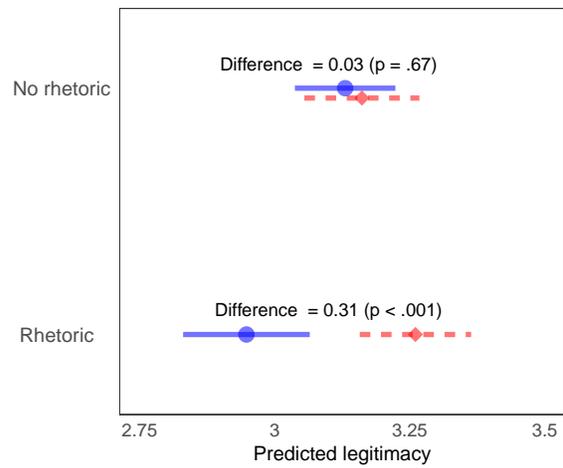


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively. Respondents who do not identify as either Democratic, Independent, or Republican are excluded. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee

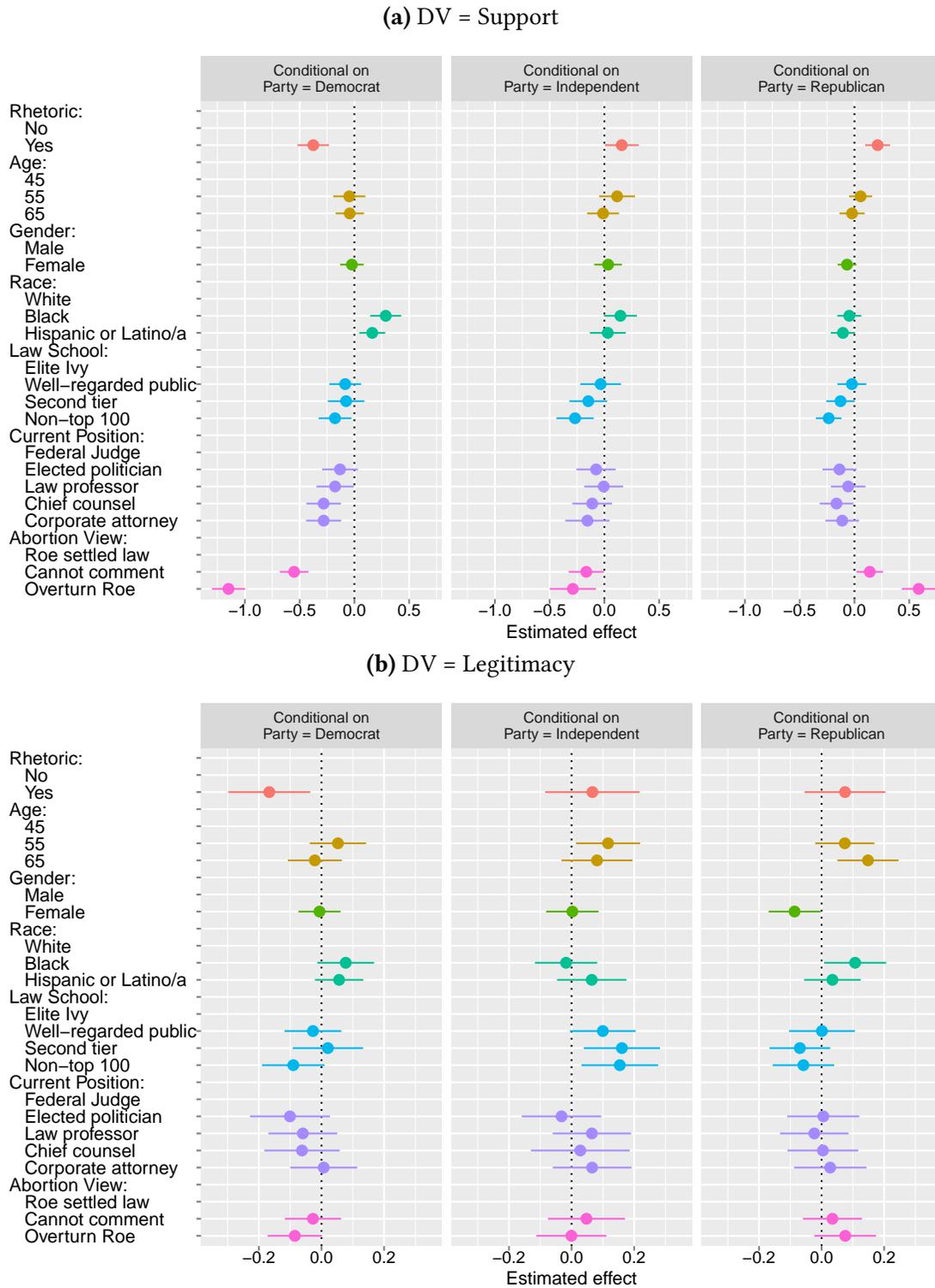


(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



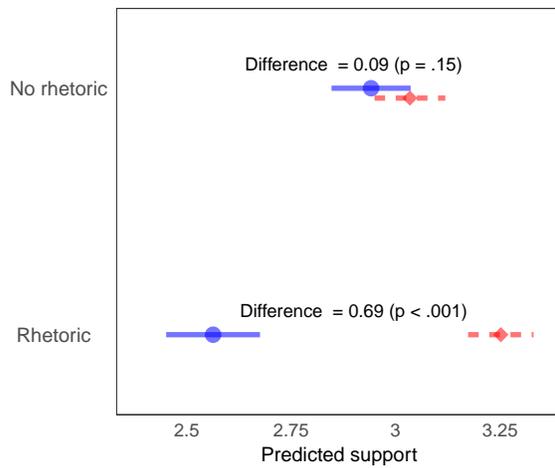
Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Respondents who do not identify as either Democratic, Independent, or Republican are excluded. Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.4: Political Contestation and the Polarization of Partisan Attitudes (Classifying “Leaners” as Partisans)

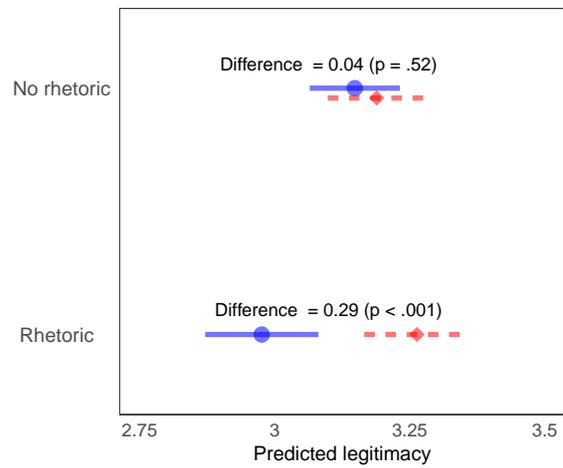


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively, with respondents who “lean” toward one of the major parties classified as partisans rather than as Independents. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee



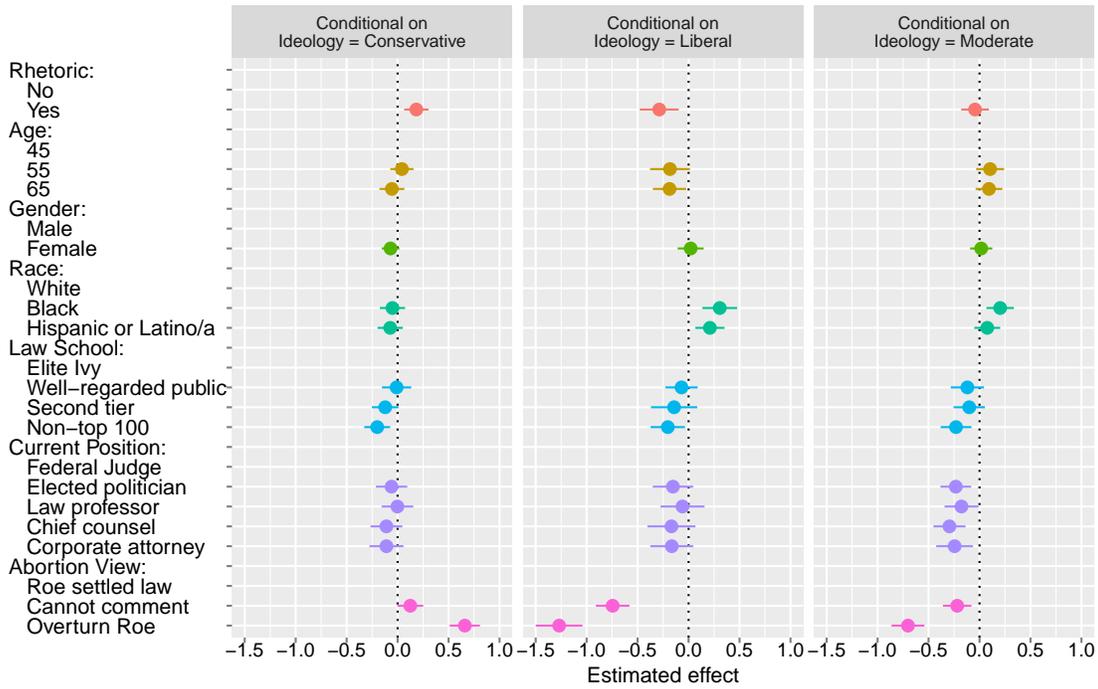
(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



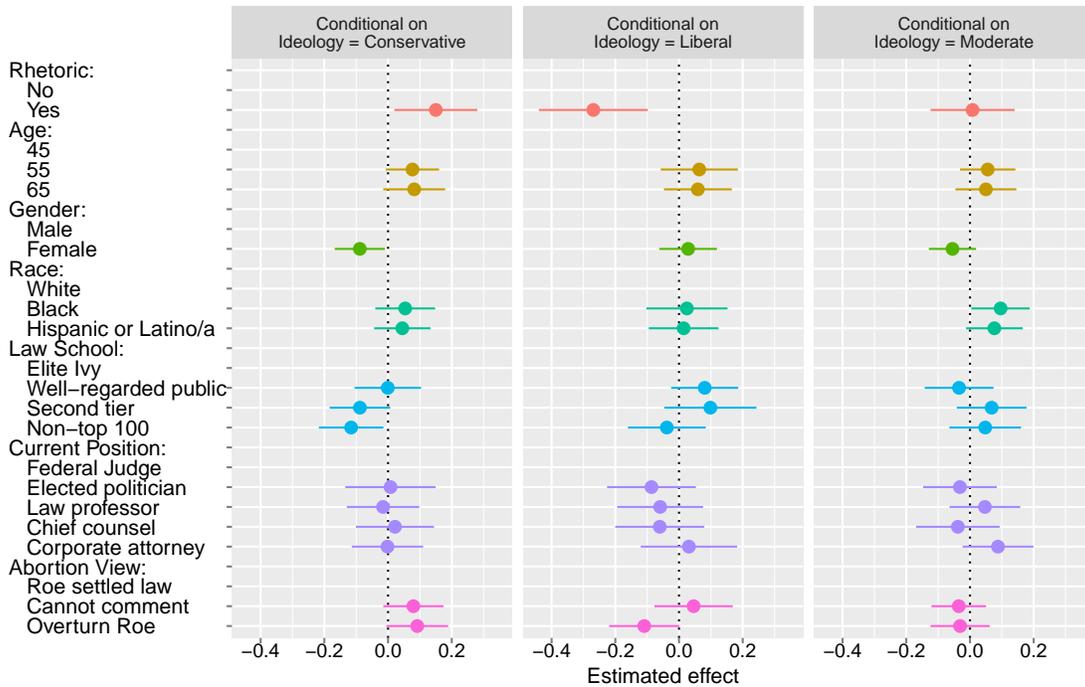
Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Respondents who “lean” toward one of the major parties are classified as partisans rather than as Independents. Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.5: Political Contestation and the Polarization of Ideological Attitudes

(a) DV = Support

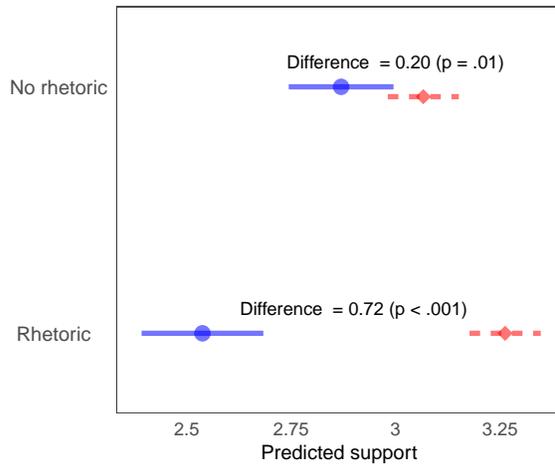


(b) DV = Legitimacy

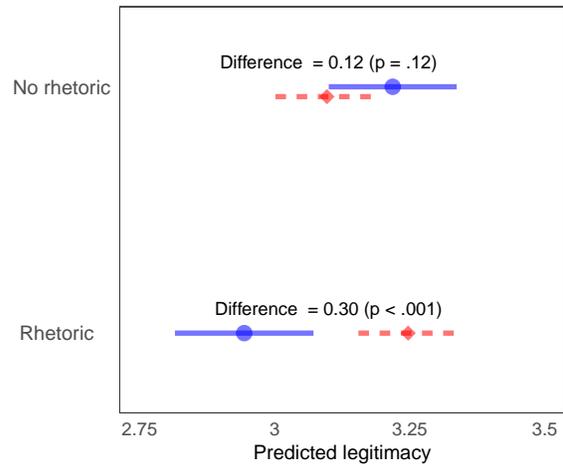


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for conservative, liberals, and moderates are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively. Respondents who did not indicate an ideology are excluded. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee



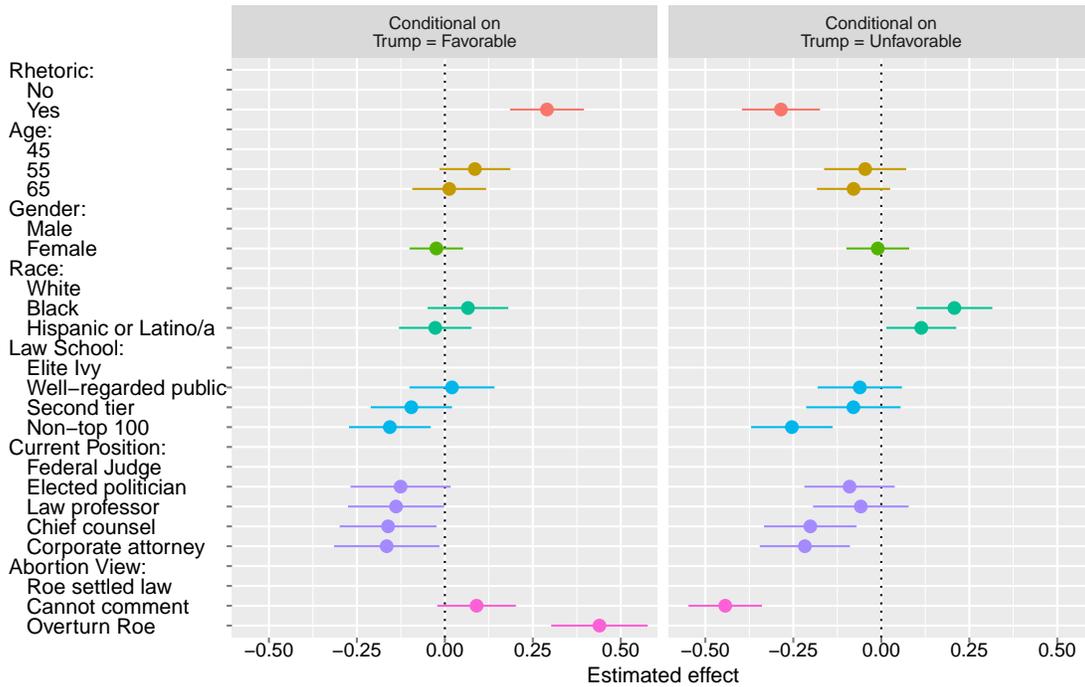
(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



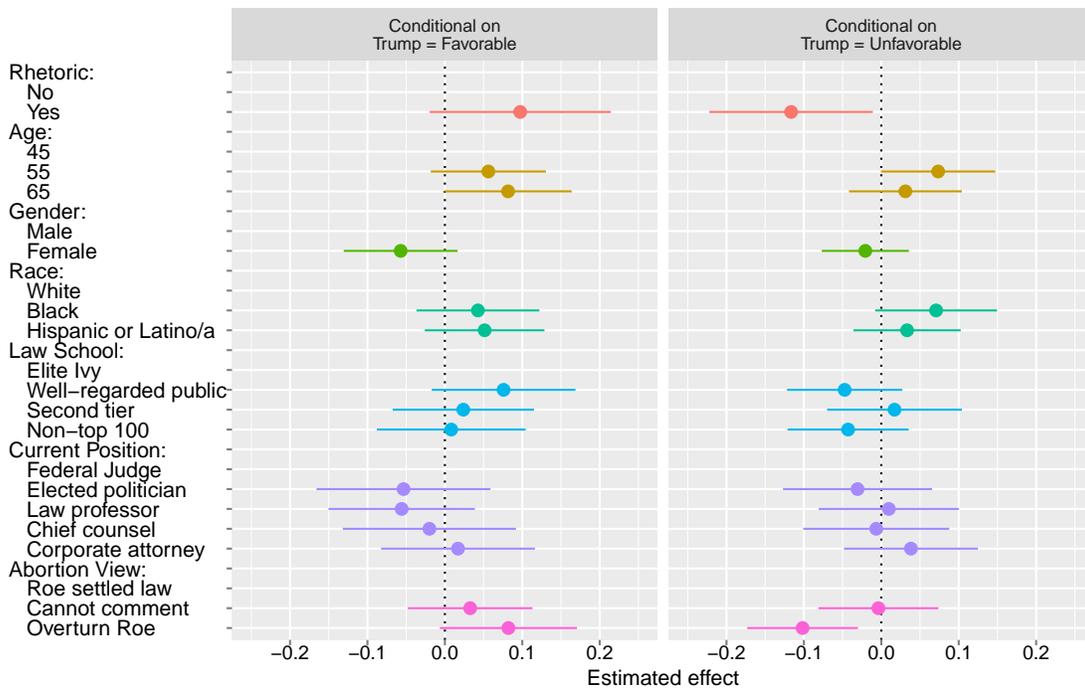
Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent ideology (liberal and conservative) and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Liberals are shown in blue (solid lines) and conservatives are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.6: Political Contestation, Attitudes toward Trump and Polarization

(a) DV = Support

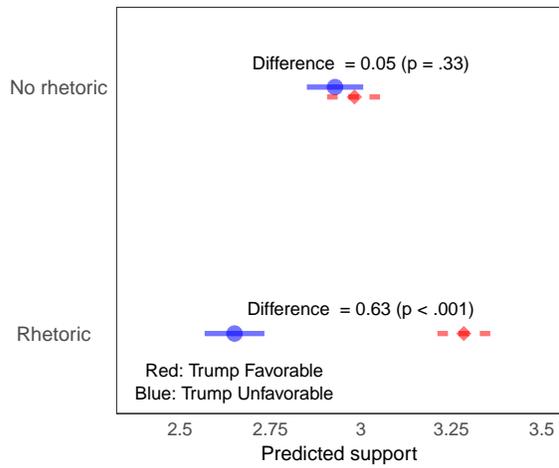


(b) DV = Legitimacy

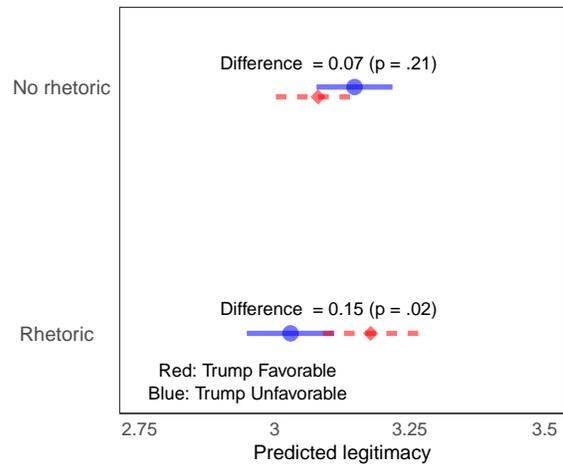


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for individuals who report favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward President Trump are shown in the left and right panels, respectively, of each plot. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs. The dependent variables are listed above each plot.

(c) Support for the nominee

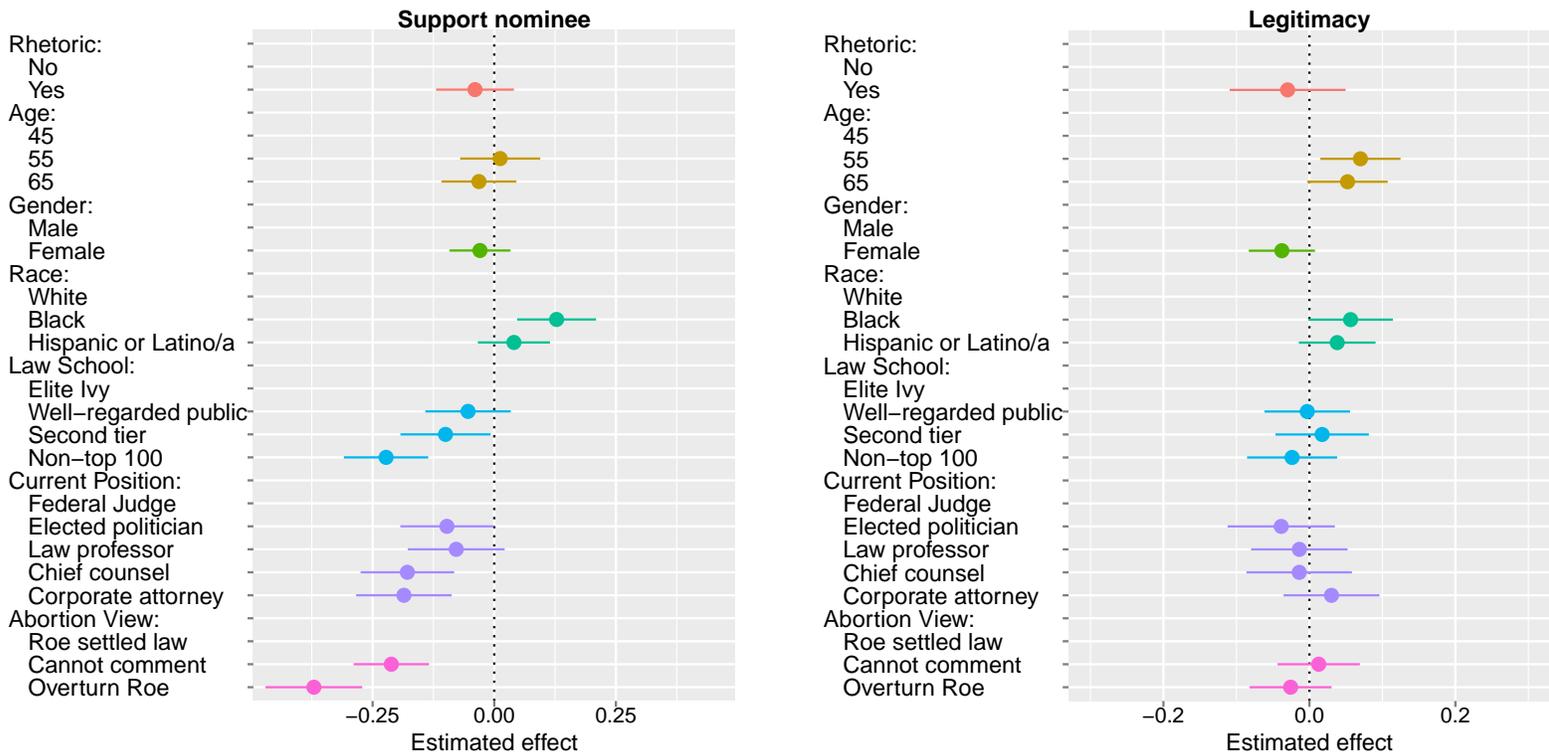


(d) Perceptions of legitimacy



Note: Plots show the predicted values of the two dependent values based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Trump supporters are shown in red (dashed lines) and Trump opponents are shown in blue (solid lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

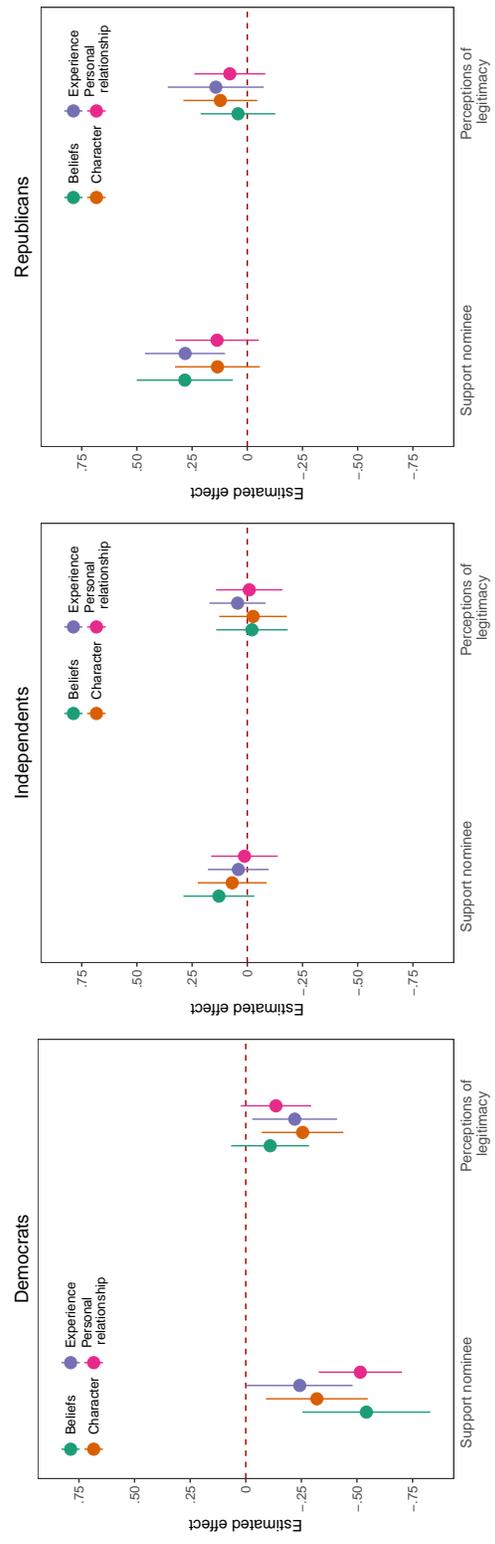
Figure A.7: Aggregate Effects of Political Contestation on Support for Court Nominees and Perceptions of Judicial Legitimacy



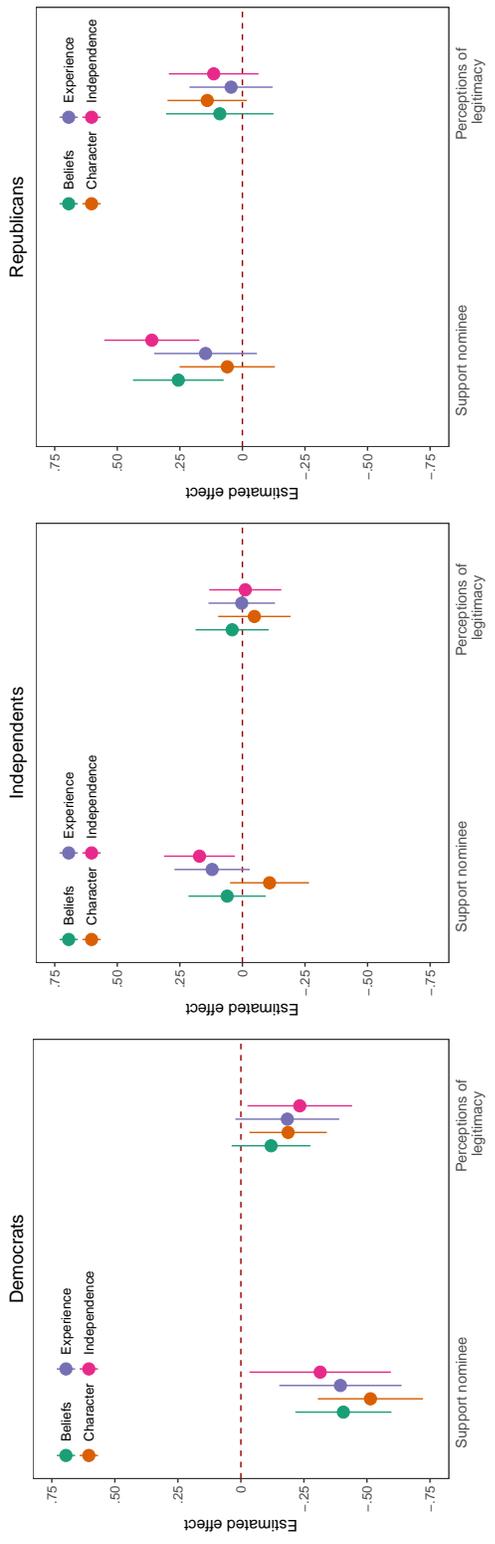
Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic. The plotted points are the AMCE estimates and the horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals. The AMCEs are estimated relative to the baseline values of each attribute. The left panel shows results for respondents' level of support for the nominee and the right panel shows results for perceptions of judicial legitimacy.

Figure A.8: Message Content and the Effect of Political Contestation across Partisans

(a) Effects of Rhetoric from the President



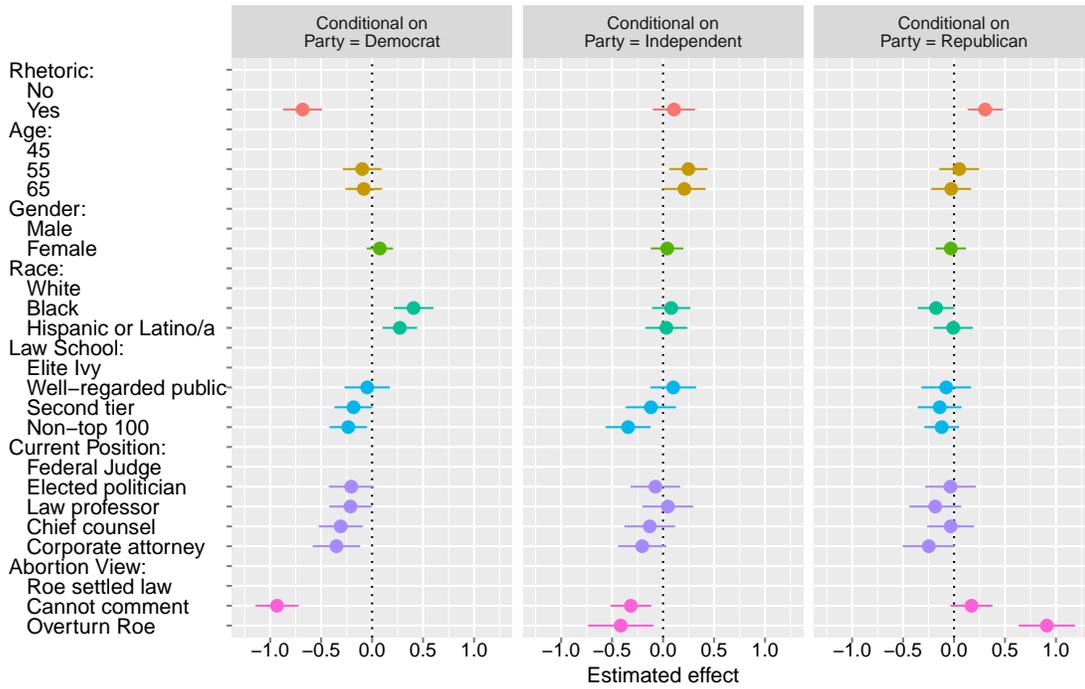
(b) Effects of Rhetoric from Senate Opposition



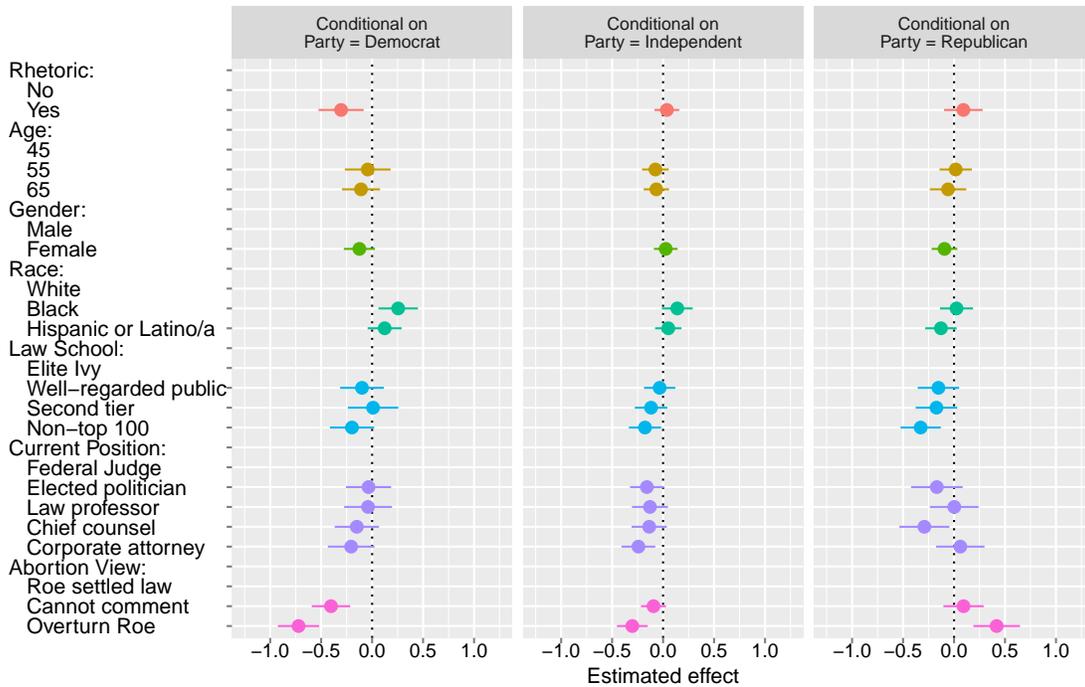
Note: Plots show the average marginal interaction effect of different messages for respondents who identify as Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, as indicated along the x-axis. The content of the messages is distinguished with the various colors of the filled circles. The vertical lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the effects. Positive values along the y-axis indicate increased support and legitimacy while negative values indicate decreased support and legitimacy. The dashed horizontal line at zero shows the null hypothesis of no effect.

Figure A.9: Judicial Knowledge and the Effects of Political Contestation on Support

(a) High knowledge

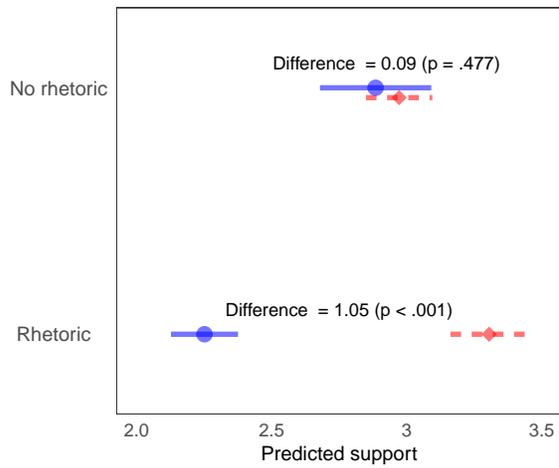


(b) Low knowledge

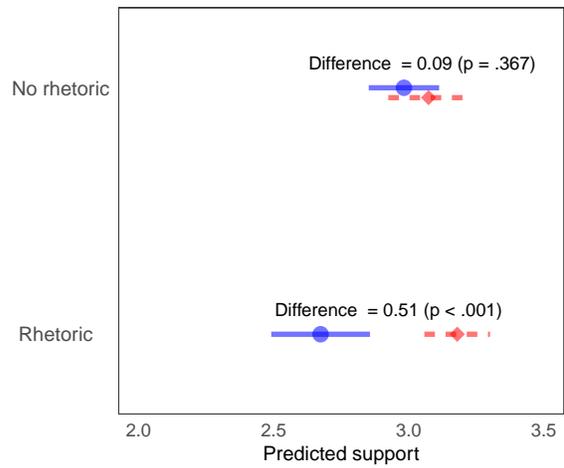


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively, of each plot. Respondents with high levels of judicial knowledge are shown in the top plot and respondents with low judicial knowledge are shown in the bottom plot. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs.

(c) High knowledge



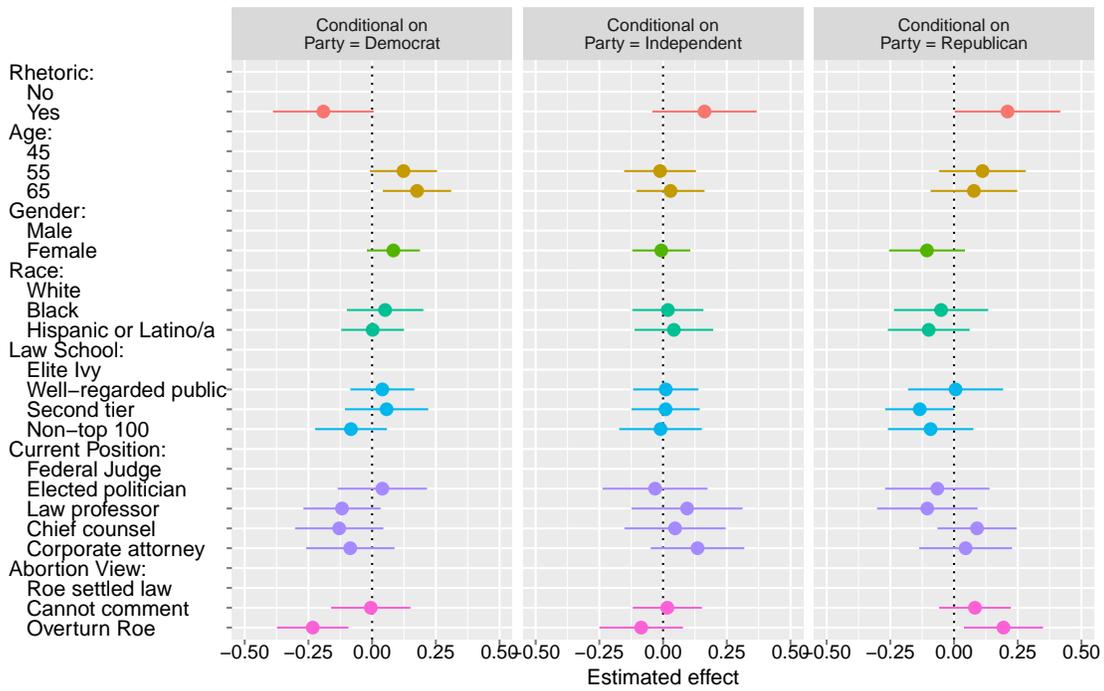
(d) Low knowledge



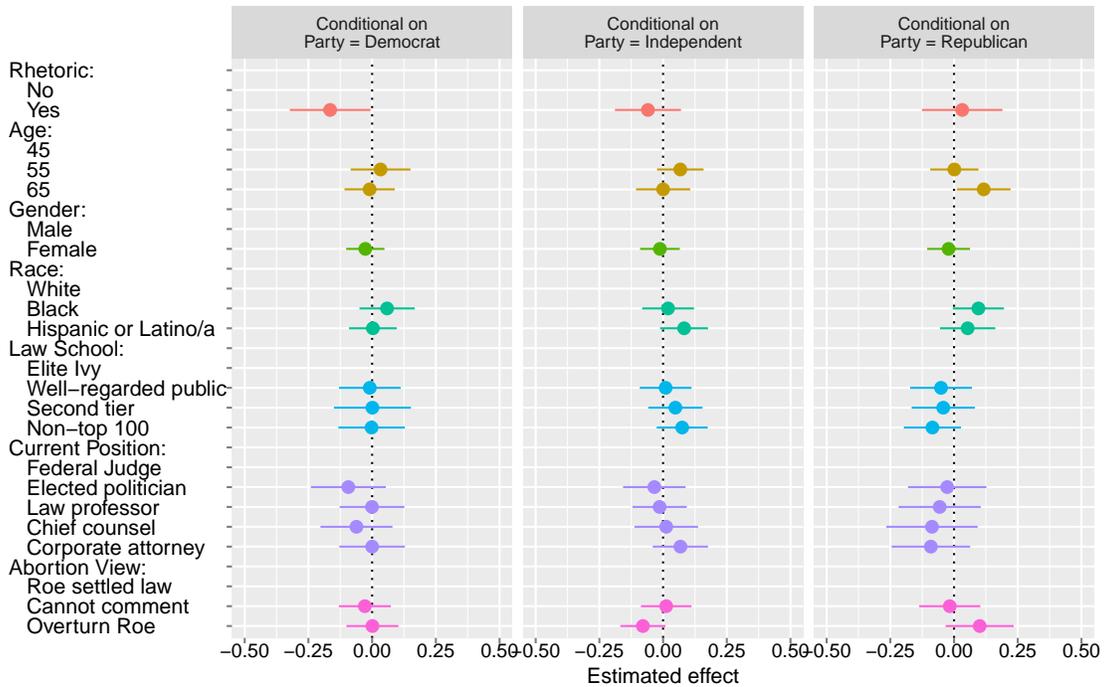
Note: Plots show the predicted values for support based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Respondents with high levels of judicial knowledge are shown in the left panel and respondents with low judicial knowledge are shown in the right panel. Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.10: Judicial Knowledge and the Effects of Political Contestation on Legitimacy

(a) High knowledge

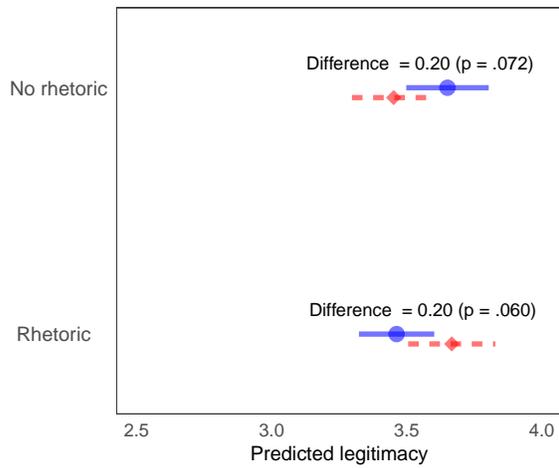


(b) Low knowledge

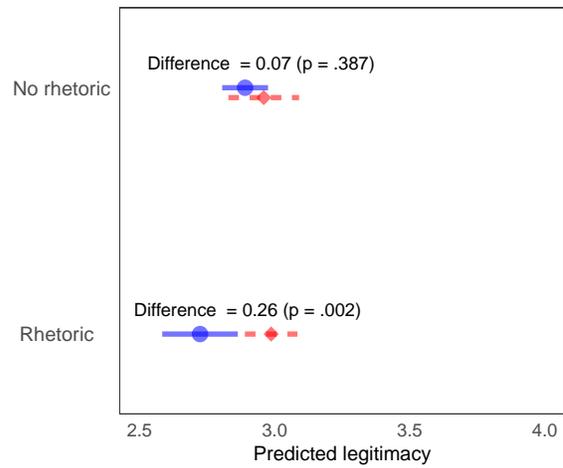


Note: Plots show the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each profile characteristic by respondent partisanship. Results for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are shown in the left, center, and right panels, respectively, of each plot. Respondents with high levels of judicial knowledge are shown in the top plot and respondents with low judicial knowledge are shown in the bottom plot. The horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals associated with the estimated AMCEs.

(c) High knowledge



(d) Low knowledge



Note: Plots show the predicted values for legitimacy based on respondent partisanship and whether they were assigned to the *Rhetoric* condition. Respondents with high levels of judicial knowledge are shown in the left panel and respondents with low judicial knowledge are shown in the right panel. Democrats are shown in blue (solid lines) and Republicans are shown in red (dashed lines). The horizontal lines are the 95% confidence intervals.