



The Relationship Between Abortion Views and Opinions on U.S. Government Spending

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Introduction

- As abortion has long been a key issue among the Christian Right, the topic has become increasingly prevalent in the Republican party's agenda over the last 3 years and in US politics more broadly (Wilson, 2020)
- Support for abortion amongst Conservatives has steadily declines since 1972 (Hout et al., 2022)
- Studies exist that assess the relationship political and religious affiliation and abortion opinions; those who identify as Democrats are more likely to support abortion rights than those who identify as Republicans or Independents (Cutler et al. 2021)
- Identification as Catholic, Evangelical or Protestant and Republican are associated with objection against abortion and decreased support for policies that support abortion care (Cutler et al. 2021)
- Recent studies that address the relationship between abortion opinion and specific attitudes towards government spending have been limited in their samples and in their assessment of different areas of government spending

Research Questions

- Are Pro-choice and Pro-life agreement levels associated with opinions on government spending on childcare, education, welfare, and health?
- Does the political party affiliation confound the association between pro-choice agreement and desire to see increases in government spending?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=4,032) were drawn from the 2021 General Social Survey (GSS), a national sample collected through interviews and questionnaires

Measures

- Abortion opinion was measured based on agreement level with two prompts: "I consider myself pro-choice" and "I consider myself pro-life." Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
- Opinions on government spending were assessed using the prompt "Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on..." for each for each separate category: childcare, education, welfare, and healthcare.
- Political party affiliation was measured based on participants' response to the prompt: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?"

Results

Univariate

- 9.6% of respondents "Strongly Disagreed" that they identified as Pro-choice, 9.4% "Disagreed", 18.1% "Neither Agreed nor Disagreed", 24.9% "Agreed", and 26.1% "Strongly Agreed"
- 56.3% of respondents wished to see an increase in government childcare spending, 75.4% wished to see increase in education spending, 65.8% wished to see an increase in health spending, and 68.3% wished to see an increase in welfare spending

Bivariate

- Chi-squared tests of independence showed that there are associations between higher levels of Pro-choice agreement and desire to see an increase in childcare spending ($X^2=206.2$, $p<0.001$), education spending ($X^2=99.1$, $p<0.001$), health spending ($X^2=114.4$, $p<0.001$), and welfare spending ($X^2=109.4$, $p<0.001$).
- Across all levels of pro-choice agreement, higher proportions of individuals wished to see increases in education spending than in other categories.

Figure 1. Pro-choice Agreement and Opinions on Government Spending by Category

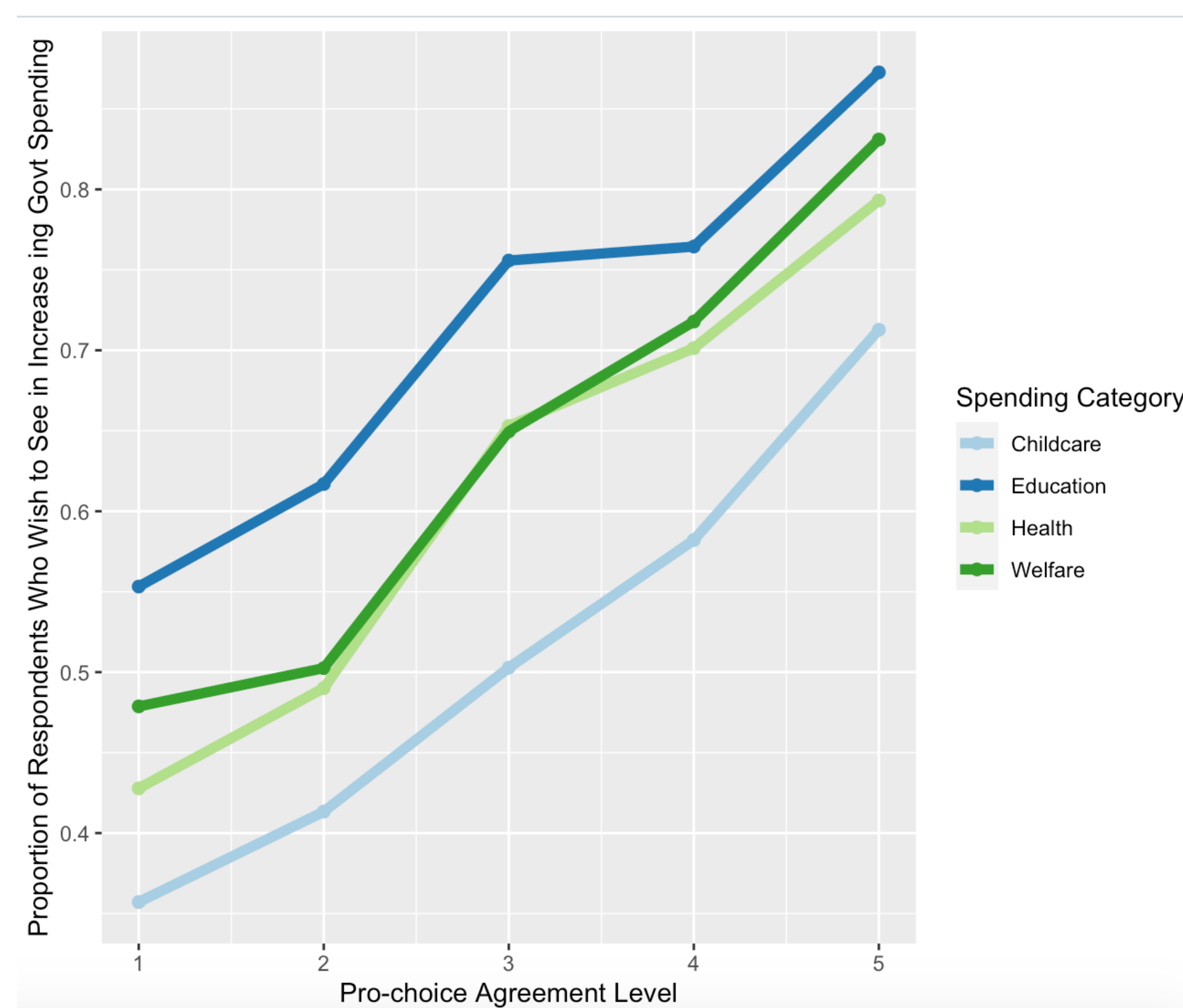
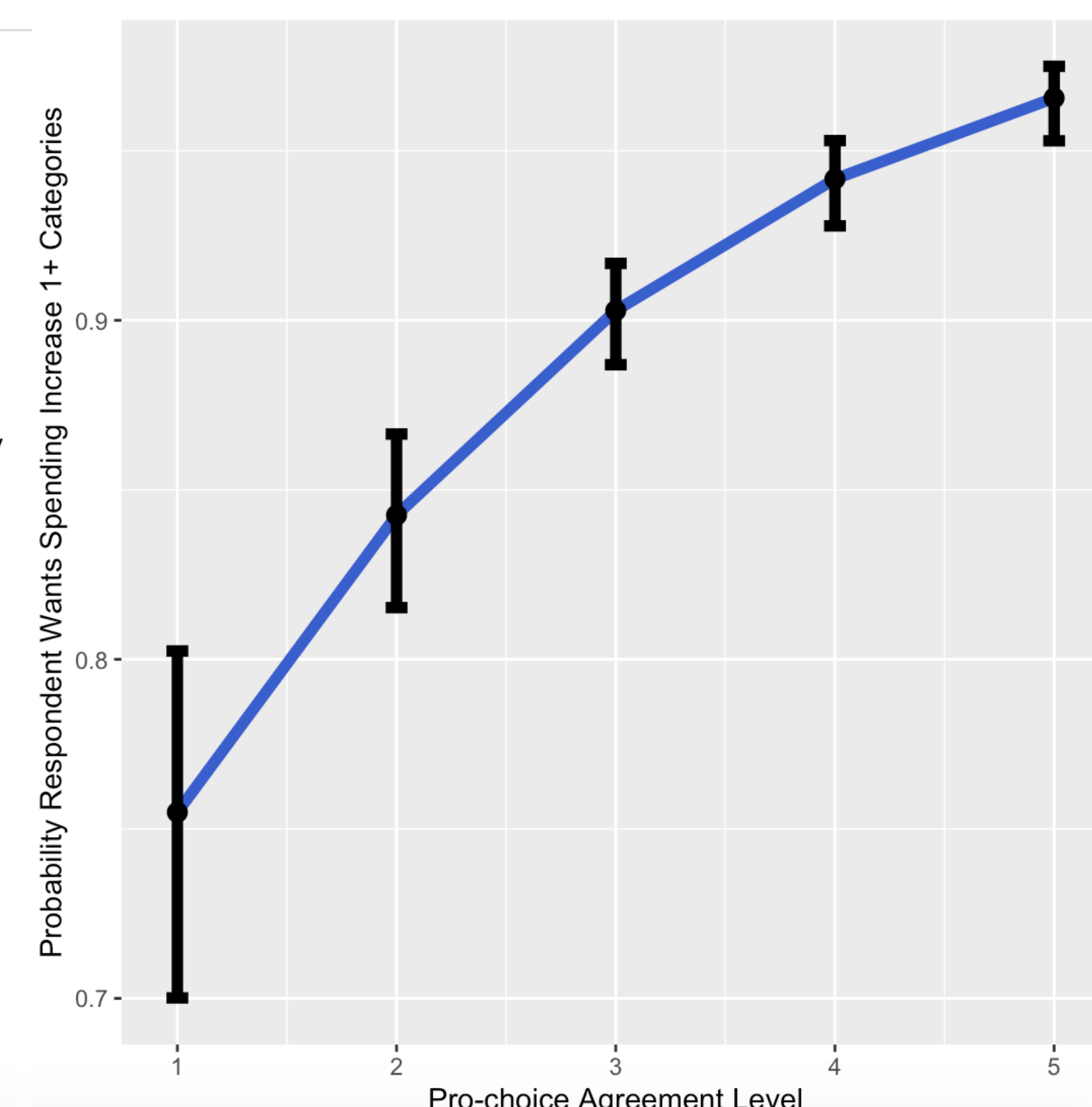


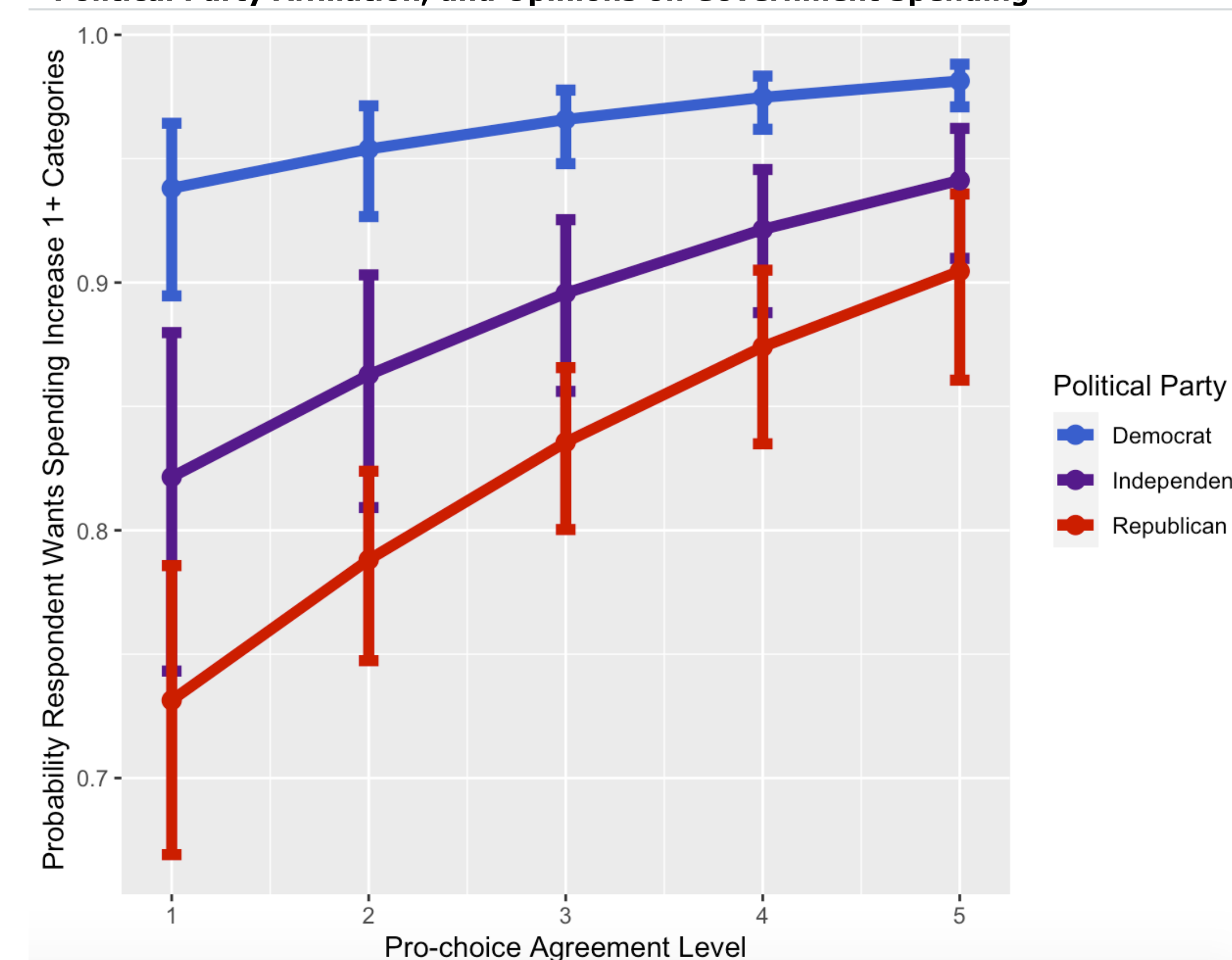
Figure 2. Bivariate Logistic Regression for Pro-choice Agreement Level and Opinions on Government Spending



Multivariate

- Political party affiliation is not a confounder for the association between Pro-choice agreement vs. opinions on increasing government spending.
- After controlling for political party affiliation, Pro-choice agreement (O.R. 1.4, CI 1.2-1.6) is still significantly and positively associated with desire to see an increase in government spending within one or more categories: childcare, education, health, and welfare.

Figure 3. Multivariate Logistic Regression for Pro-choice Agreement, Political Party Affiliation, and Opinions on Government Spending



Discussion

- Higher levels of Pro-choice agreement are significantly associated with desire to see increases in government spending in childcare, education, health, and welfare when controlling political party affiliation
- Political party affiliation is significantly associated with government spending opinions when controlling for Pro-choice agreement level
- Those who identify as Democrats are more likely than Independents or Republicans to want to see increases in government spending in childcare, education, health, and welfare at each level of pro-choice agreement
- Further research is needed to conclude a causal relationship between pro-choice agreement and support for government spending within the categories studied