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American Identity and Party Affiliation

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ὁ χριστὸς καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία
1861

Introduction to Research

▪The face of the United States is changing. In a nation where the majority of the population belongs to a minority group, defining the national American identity has become a complex task. This study explores how the correlation between the degree of attachment to the American identity and how it affects dictating party affiliation.

▪Political culture is defined as the shared beliefs and values as to how citizens and the government relate to one another.

▪Individual American identify is formed by a person's ethnicity, gender, ideology, and socio-economic status.

▪Examining these factors shows the variation in political culture. Individuals who prefer government officials who follow the American public's wishes when making decisions tend to be liberal. In contrast, those who prefer government officials who ignore public opinion in policy making tend to be conservative.

What dictates party affiliation?

▪The major markers of party affiliation are:

▪Psychological: An individual's reaction to negative life experiences can cause them to dislike one party and move to associate themselves to another.

▪History: The nation's historical relationship with certain groups has caused individuals to be more likely to associate themselves with the party that has benefitted them background. These groups are based on ethnicity, religion, and a family's social status.

▪Gender: Women and men hold issues such as social welfare, racial equality, and defense spending at different degrees of importance.

▪Religion: Religious individuals are more conservative and seek different political action than those who prefer a secular state.

▪Core Values: These are anything from the right to liberty, approval of free-market capitalism, to the role of religion.

▪Result: All of these factors heavily influence an individual's self-ascribed party affiliation.
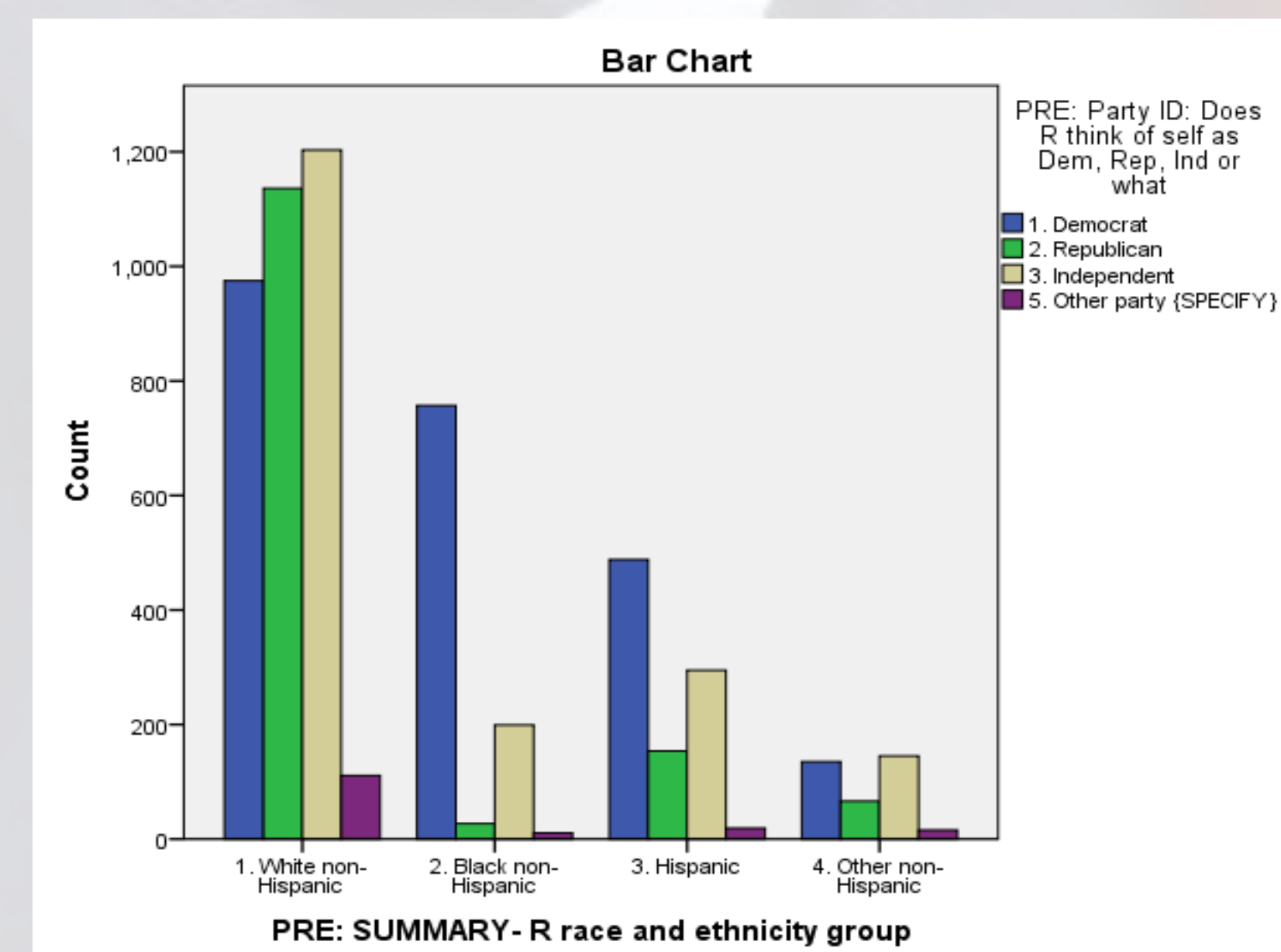
Hypotheses:

H 1: Minorities are more likely to be liberal than conservative whereas whites are more likely to be conservative than liberal.

H 2: Women are more likely than men to favor liberal ideals.

H 3: The higher a family's income the more likely they are to be conservative.

Data

H 1: Race

Bar Chart

PRE: Party ID: Does R think of self as Dem, Rep, Ind or what
1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
5. Other party (SPECIFY)

PRE: SUMMARY- R race and ethnicity group

SUMMARY- R race and ethnicity group * PRE: Party ID: Does R think of self as Dem, Rep, Ind or what Crosstabulation

		PRE: Party ID: Does R think of self as Dem, Rep, Ind or what				Total
		1. Democrat	2. Republican	3. Independent	5. Other party (SPECIFY)	
SUMMARY- R race and	1. White non-Hispanic	975	1136	1203	111	3425
	2. Black non-Hispanic	757	27	199	11	994
	3. Hispanic	488	154	295	19	956
	4. Other non-Hispanic	135	66	145	16	362
		2355	1383	1842	157	5737

H 2: The Role of Gender

Social Welfare   Racial Equality   Moral Values
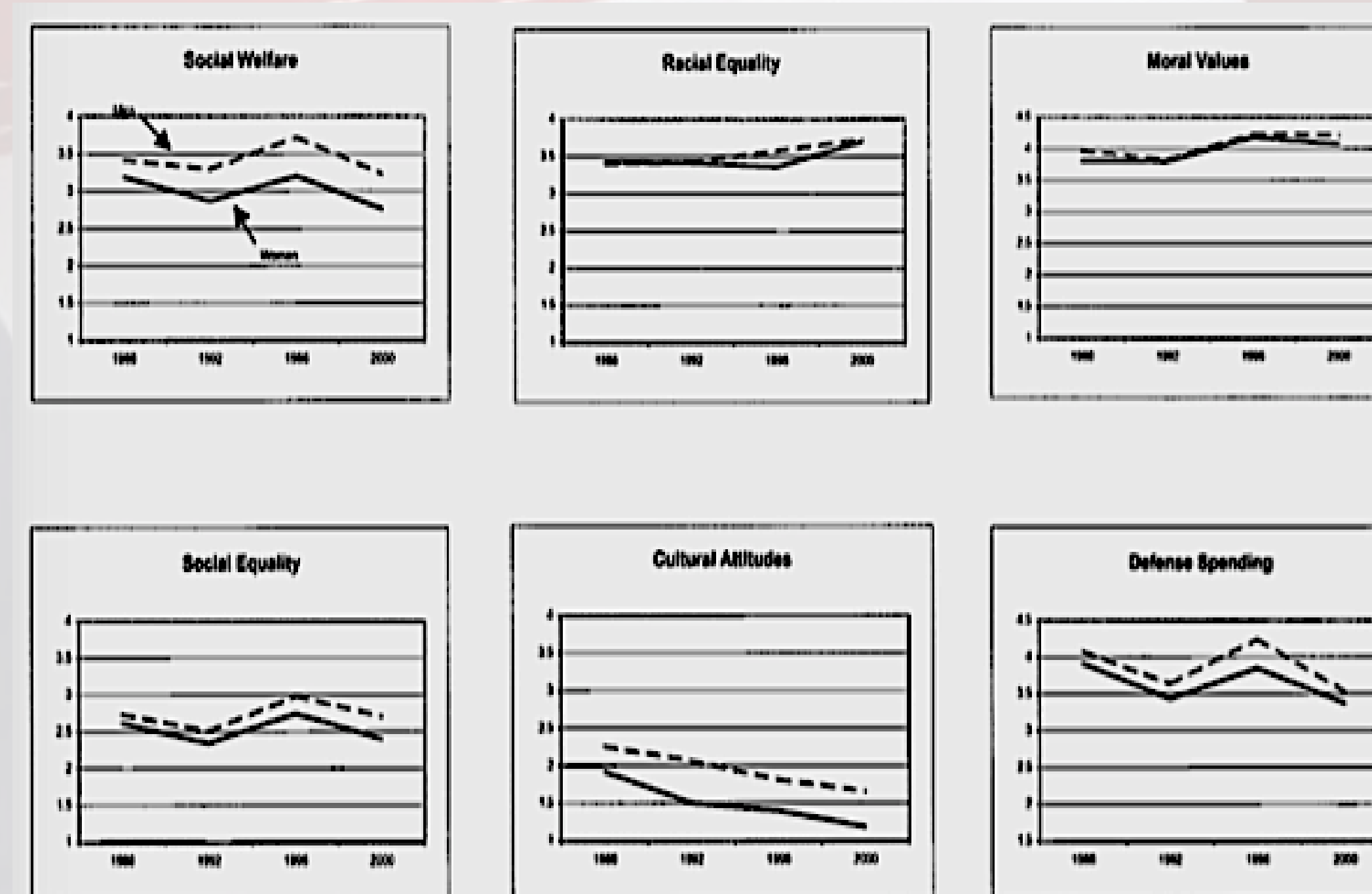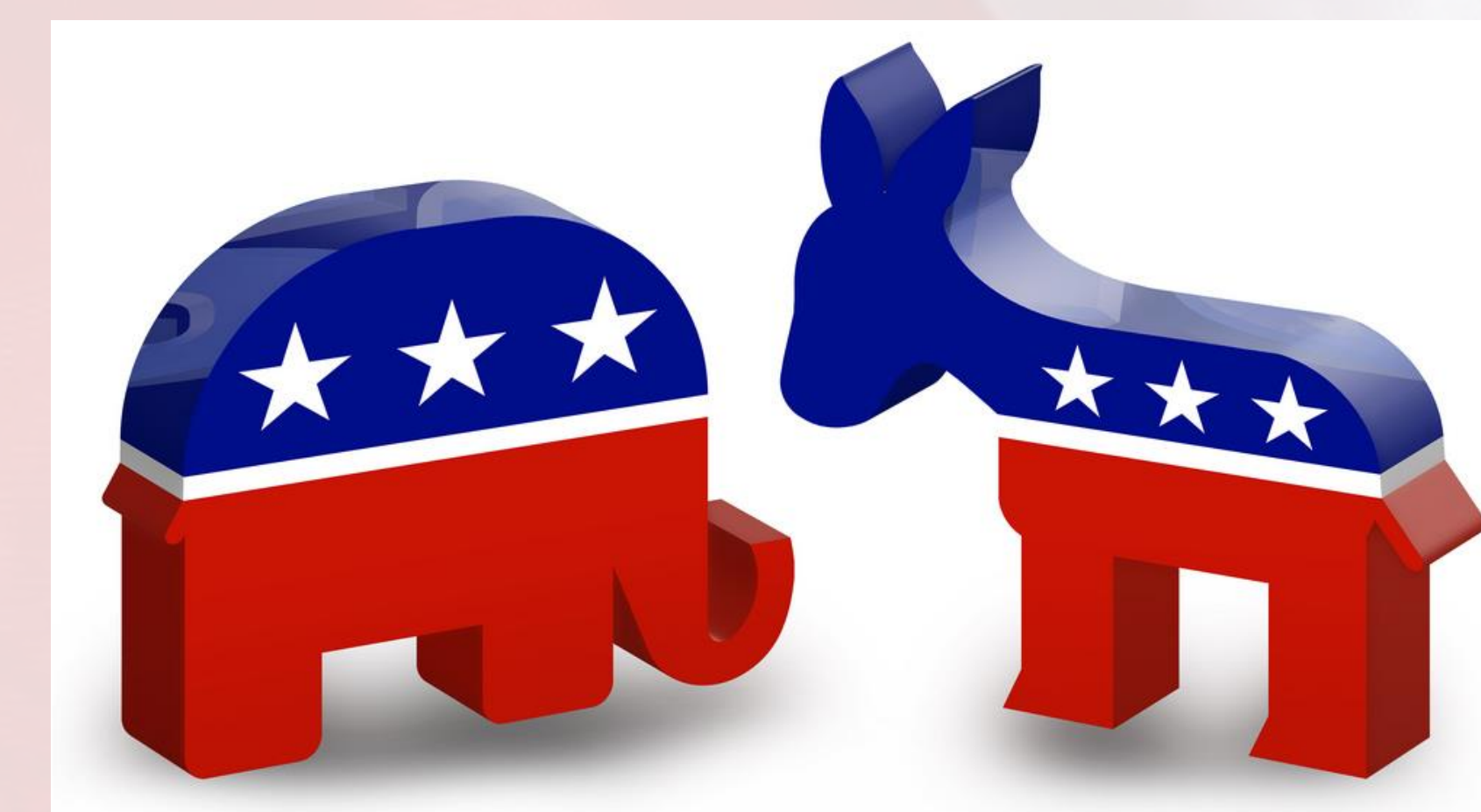Social Equality   Cultural Attitudes   Defense Spending

FIG. 2. Changes in the difference between male and female attitudes—1988 to 2000.
Note: Data points equal mean scale values for men (broken line) and for women (solid line). Higher values are more conservative across all measures.
Source: American National Election Studies from 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000.

H 3: Income
Data from the 2008 Presidential Election

Demographics		Voters	2008 USA Presidential Election Result				Obama Swing
			McCain	Obama	Other	Obama Lead	
Income	Under $15,000	6	25	73	2	48	10.5
	$15-30,000	12	37	60	3	23	4.0
	$30-50,000	19	43	55	2	12	5.5
	$50-75,000	21	49	48	3	-1	6.0
	$75-100,000	15	48	51	1	3	6.5
	$100-150,000	14	51	48	1	-3	6.0
	$150-200,000	6	50	48	2	-2	7.0
	$200,000 or More	6	46	52	2	6	17.0

Findings

H 1: Race
As shown in the graph, individuals belonging to a minority group (in this case meaning all those belonging to an ethnic group other than white) where more likely to identify themselves as Democrats. The majority of whites self-identified with the Republican party but not at drastic level to those that identified themselves as Democrats. The data uphold the hypothesis.

H 2: The Role of Gender
The graphs show that on all issues, men favor a more conservative approach than women. This also shows that men are more likely to favor an increase in military spending than women. Women are more concerned with social issues than men. Because women seek a government whose main focus is social issues, they are more likely to be Democrats than men are.

H 3: Income
Post-election data gathered from the 2008 Presidential Election shows that the Democratic Presidential candidate (Barack Obama) receive the most voter support from voters who were in the three lowest income brackets. This shows that those with a lower income are more likely to be supporters of the Democratic party.

Conclusions

▪A stronger attachment to the American identity tends to correlate with the an affiliation with the Republican Party whereas a weaker attachment to the American identity tends to correlate with an affiliation with the Democratic Party.

▪The goal of political parties is to identify with the masses in order to gain their support.

▪It is important to recognize the importance of American identity due to the large role it plays in dictating party affiliation.

▪By analyzing an individual's background, predicting their party preference becomes more foreseeable. This would also allow political parties to campaign in a more efficient way that would decrease the total number of independent voters and better serve the American public.

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