

# An Experimental Investigation of Support for Visible Minority Candidates in Canada

## Need for Cognition and Social Desirability Bias

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### Research Questions

So far, there is essentially no evidence for prejudice against visible minority candidates in Canada, yet there is clear evidence of the effects of prejudice and racism on electoral politics in the United States and Europe.

- Is there lower support for visible minority candidates?
- If so, what influences and mediates that effect?
- What role do partisan cues play?

### Experimental Design

The experiment consisted of a fictional "election" with two candidate biographies. The "ethnicity" of the name and party label of candidates were experimentally manipulated.

	Candidate 2 – White	Candidate 2 - Visible Minority
Liberal/ Conservative	John Hawkes: 61% (39) Arthur Dorre: 39% (25)	John Hawkes: 59% (32) Satveer Chaudhary 41%(22)
Conservative/ Liberal	John Hawkes: 28% (17) Arthur Dorre: 72% (44)	John Hawkes: 28% (14) Satveer Chaudhary 72%(36)
No Party Labels	John Hawkes: 51% (17) Arthur Dorre: 49% (44)	John Hawkes: 32% (18) Satveer Chaudhary 68%(39)

### Example Biographies – six pairs in all

**Candidate 1**  
John Hawkes is an entrepreneur, founder of the local company Allsort Inc. Despite a busy schedule Mr. Hawkes still finds time to volunteer with a number of organizations, including Kids Help Phone, and served as Vice Chair of the Municipal Safety Committee. **John Hawkes is running for the Conservative Party**

**Candidate 2**  
**Arthur Dorre** is an active local businessman, who was recently honoured as the Businessman of the Year for his many contributions. A strong believer in volunteering, Mr. Chaudhary is a volunteer sports coach, and is the fundraising Chair for the Hospital Foundation. **Arthur Dorre running for the Liberal Party**

**Candidate 1**  
John Hawkes is an entrepreneur, founder of the local company Allsort Inc. Despite a busy schedule Mr. Hawkes still finds time to volunteer with a number of organizations, including Kids Help Phone, and served as Vice Chair of the Municipal Safety Committee. **John Hawkes is running for the Conservative Party**

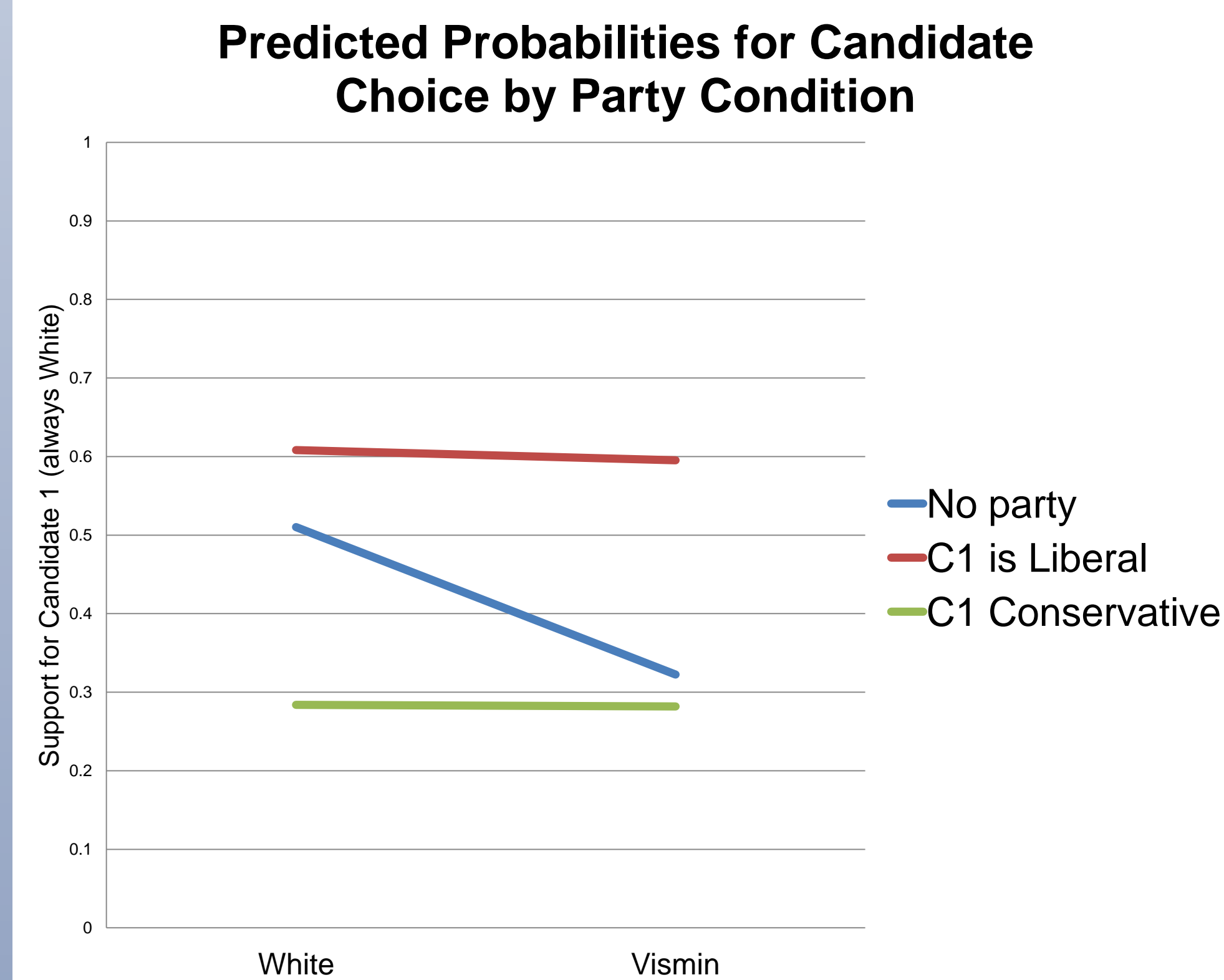
**Candidate 2**  
**Satveer Chaudhary** is an active local businessman, who was recently honoured as the Businessman of the Year for his many contributions. A strong believer in volunteering, Mr. Chaudhary is a volunteer sports coach, and is the fundraising Chair for the Hospital Foundation. **Satveer Chaudhary is running for the Liberal Party**

### Key Finding: Without Party Labels, Visible Minority Status Increases Support

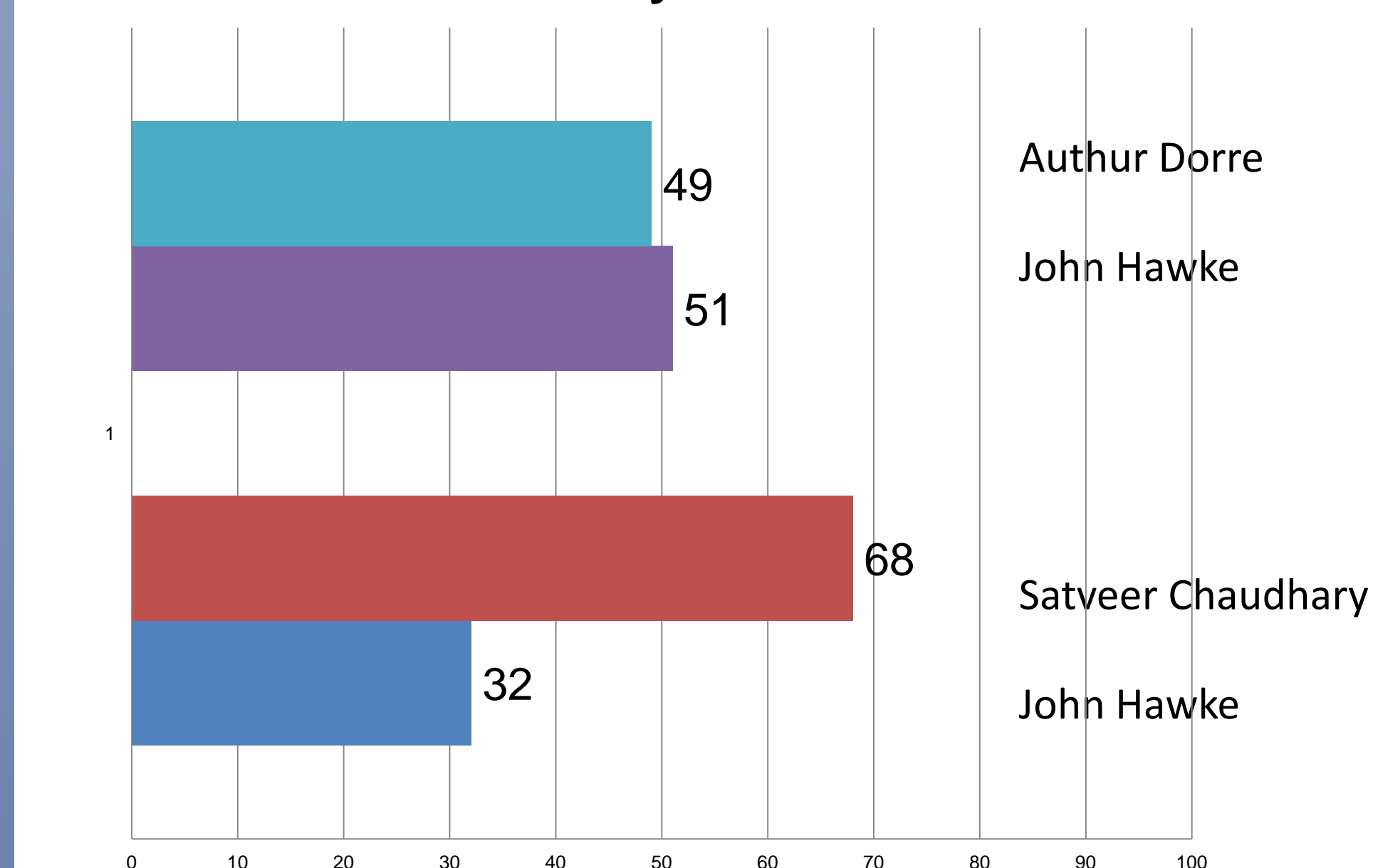
When candidates have a party affiliation, this accounts for almost all of the variance. Visible minority status is essentially unimportant.

However, without party labels, visible minority status actually *increases* the likelihood of support.

This effect is quite large – the marginal effect of visible minority status (.27) is almost as large as the marginal effects of changing parties (.32)



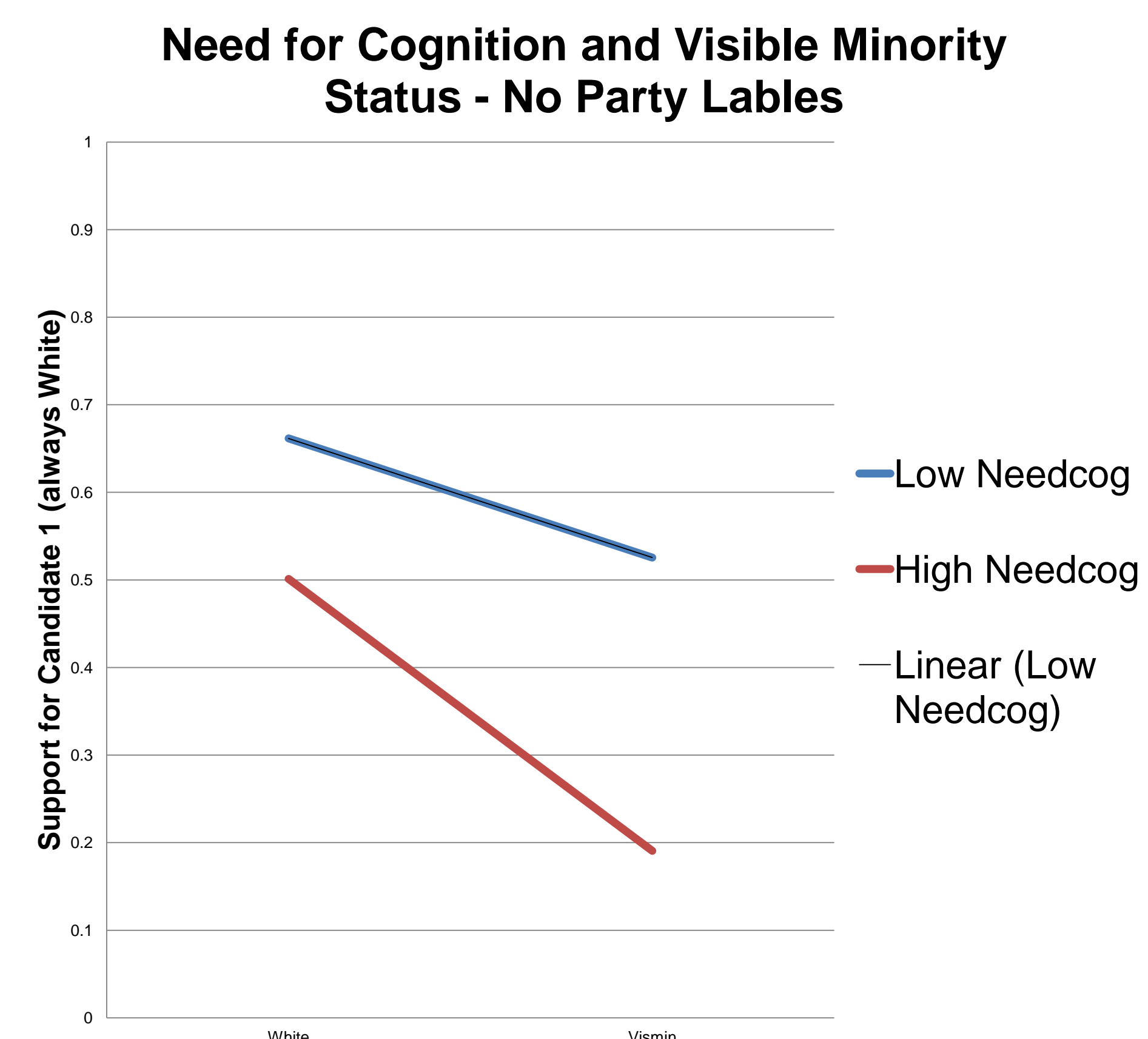
### Change in Visible Minority Status – No Party Labels



### Key Finding: Need for Cognition Strongly Correlated with Support for Visible Minority Candidate

**Need for cognition** measures how individuals vary in how much they enjoy or are motivated to think.

A socially desirable answer takes cognitive effort –thinking about the answer, what others will think about it, and what it says about you. This means it should be correlated with need for cognition.



### Logistic Regression: Likelihood of Vote for Candidate 1, Including Need for Cognition

Dependant Variables	Coef.	P>z
C1 Lib	0.1904411	0.592
C1 Con	-1.251716	0.001 ***
C2 Vismin	-1.073819	0.004 **
C1Con_vmcan	1.013983	0.076
C1Lib_Vismin	1.055238	0.049 *
Needcog	-1.887974	0.009 **
_cons	1.711738	0.003 **

### Summary:

- Visible minority status actually leads to higher support.
- Party labels eliminate the effect of visible minority status.
- No effects from partisan or ideological heuristics, political knowledge, or participant visible minority status.
- Need for cognition is strongly correlated with choosing the visible minority candidate.
- This suggests social desirability bias – participants are reflecting on their answers and what their answers symbolise.

### An Optimistic Interpretation: Which Kind of Social Desirability - Impression Management or Self-deception?

Research shows need for cognition is correlated with self-deception, but not impression management.

This suggests that in this study, participants are not "faking" tolerance. They believe they are tolerant, and are choosing the visible minority candidate to demonstrate their self-image.

### Effect Size in Context: Change in Party and Visible Minority Status

