



The Association between Age, Voting Behavior, and Care for Climate

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Introduction

- Natural disasters can permanently shape political beliefs on climate (Paserman 2019).
- Compared to people born in 1960, children born in 2020 will experience a two to sevenfold increase in climate change-related events (Thiery et al., 2021)
- Fluctuations in partisan politics show there are better and worse times to push for climate policies, but more research is needed to study how voting behavior influences climate change skepticism during election cycles (McCrea 2016).
- Older citizens turn out at a rate twice as high as younger voters (Mo 2022).

Research Questions

- Is voting behavior related to personal care for climate change?
- How do respondents' age affect this relationship?
- Do voters over 65 list a higher care for climate change than younger voters?

Methods

Sample

- Adults (ages 18 to 80) who reported their care for climate change (n=7,383) were drawn from the 2020 American National Election Studies
- ANES is funded by National Science Foundation, a U.S. government agency

Measures

- Voting behavior was measured separately across Presidential elections of 2012, 2016, and 2020 to assess patterns in climate importance ratings.
- Voting behavior was measured with the question “did R vote for President in x year?”
- Respondents' care for the climate was measured with the question “how important is issue of climate change to R?” Possible responses ranged from 1 (not at all important) to 5, (extremely important).
- Respondents were grouped into 4 age groups

Results

Univariate

- 64% of respondents rated climate as 3 or higher (moderately important—extremely important)

Bivariate

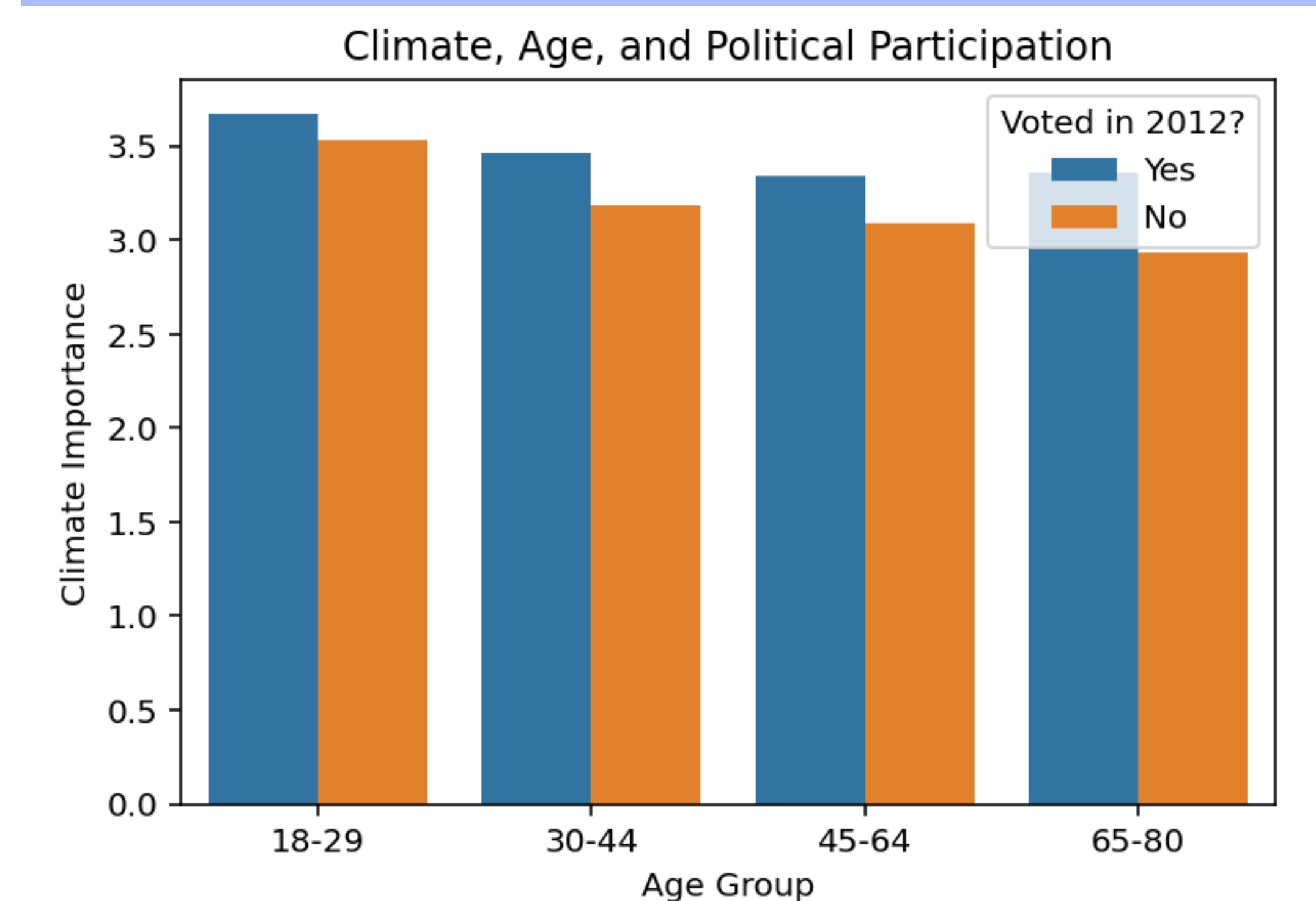
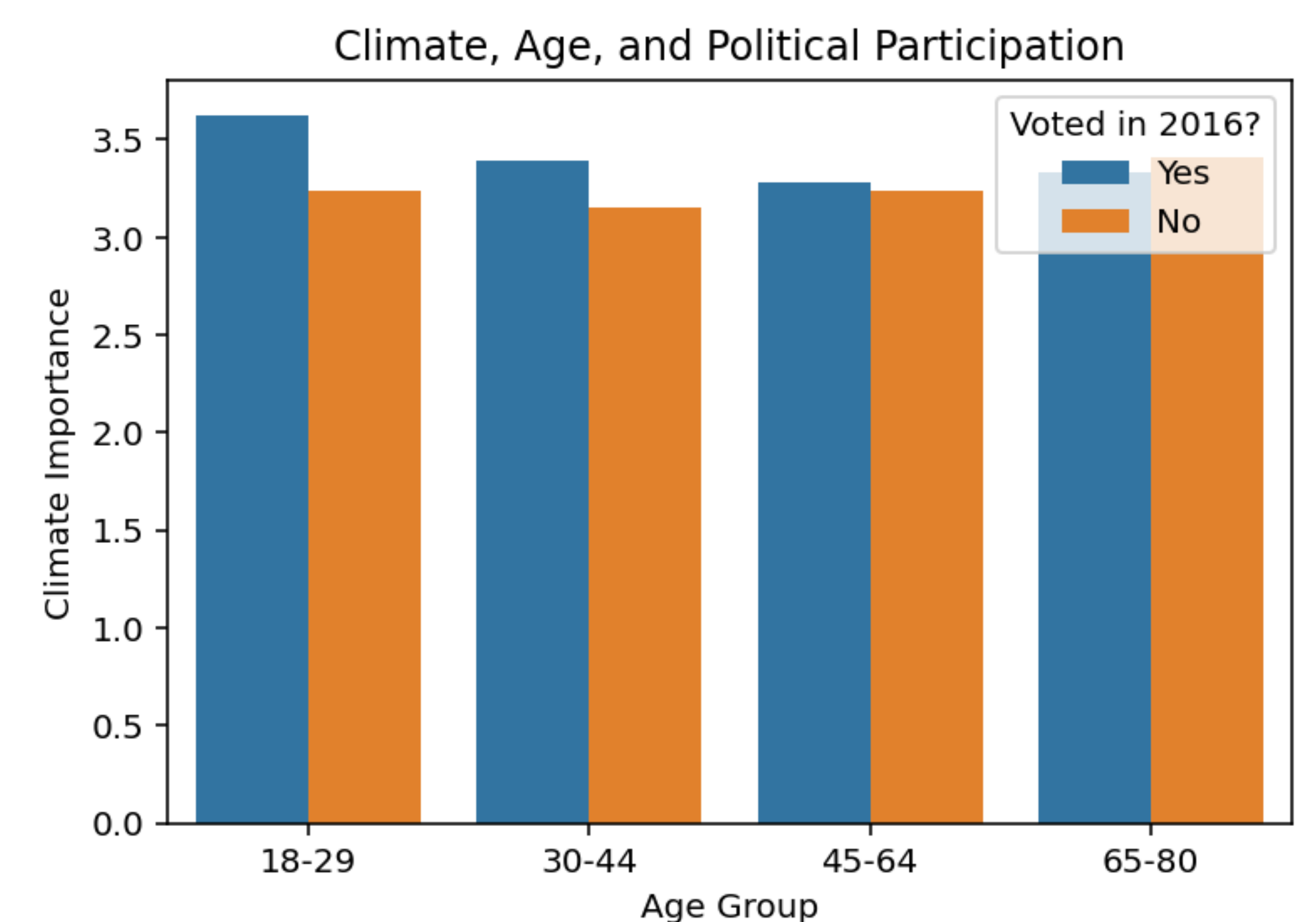
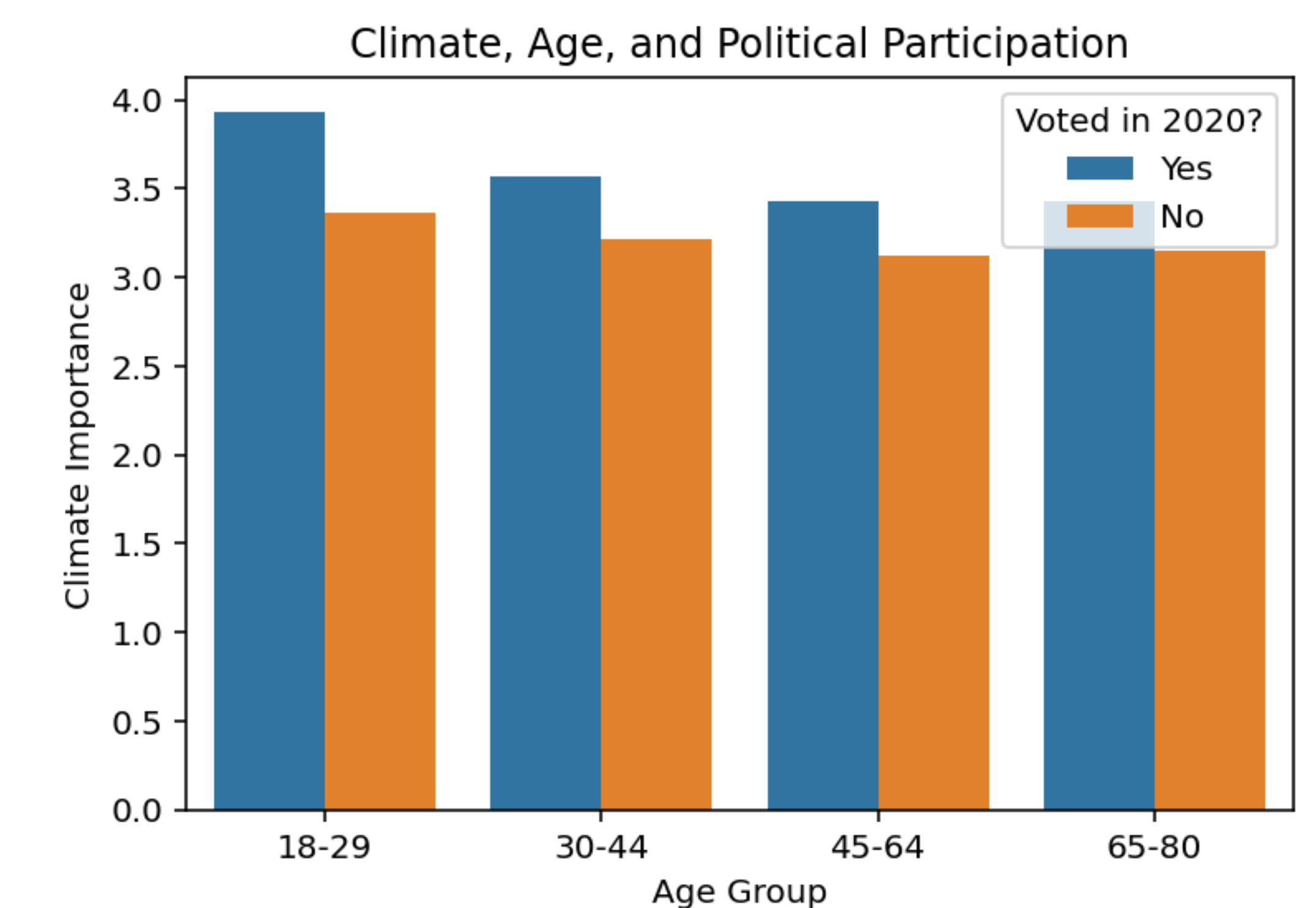
- 55% voters in the 2020 Presidential Election rated climate importance as 4-5, compared to 42% of non-voters
- 50% voters vs 41% non-voters rated climate 4-5 in 2016 election
- 51% voters in 2012 vs 42% non-voters rated 4-5
- Subsetting the data, Chi-Square analysis showed a significant association between voting and high response values 4-5, $\chi^2(1) = 26.51, p < 0.001$

Multivariate

- A multiple linear regression test shows that when controlling for age, the positive effect of voting on Importance ratings diminishes with age, varying by group.
- 2020 Voters, grouped by age, ranked by Importance:
 - Group 30-44: Coef=-0.2142 (p = 0.065, not significant).
 - Group 45-64: Coef: -0.2646 (p = 0.017, significant).
 - Group 65-80: Coef: -0.2921 (p = 0.011, significant).
- In all election years, 65-80 have higher ratings than 45-64
 - Post-hoc shows mean difference of +0.0385 between 45-64 and 65-80 age groups for ratings on Climate Importance, however this relationship is not significant (p=0.7781)

Discussion

- Voters have markedly higher ratings for climate importance across elections 2020, 2016, 2012 than non-voters
- Climate ratings for 18-29 age group differ significantly from all other age groups, however there are no significant differences among the 30-44, 45-64, and 65-80 groups.
- Younger voters (18-29) rank climate as more important than all older age groups do.



References

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