

Wei-hao HUANG

Institute of Political Science

National Sun-Yat-San University

Tsung-han TSAI

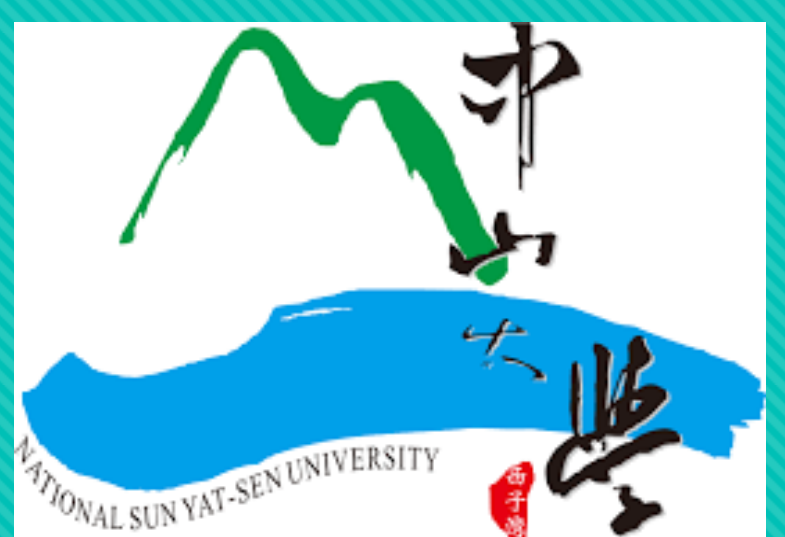
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Nien-chung CHANG-LIAO

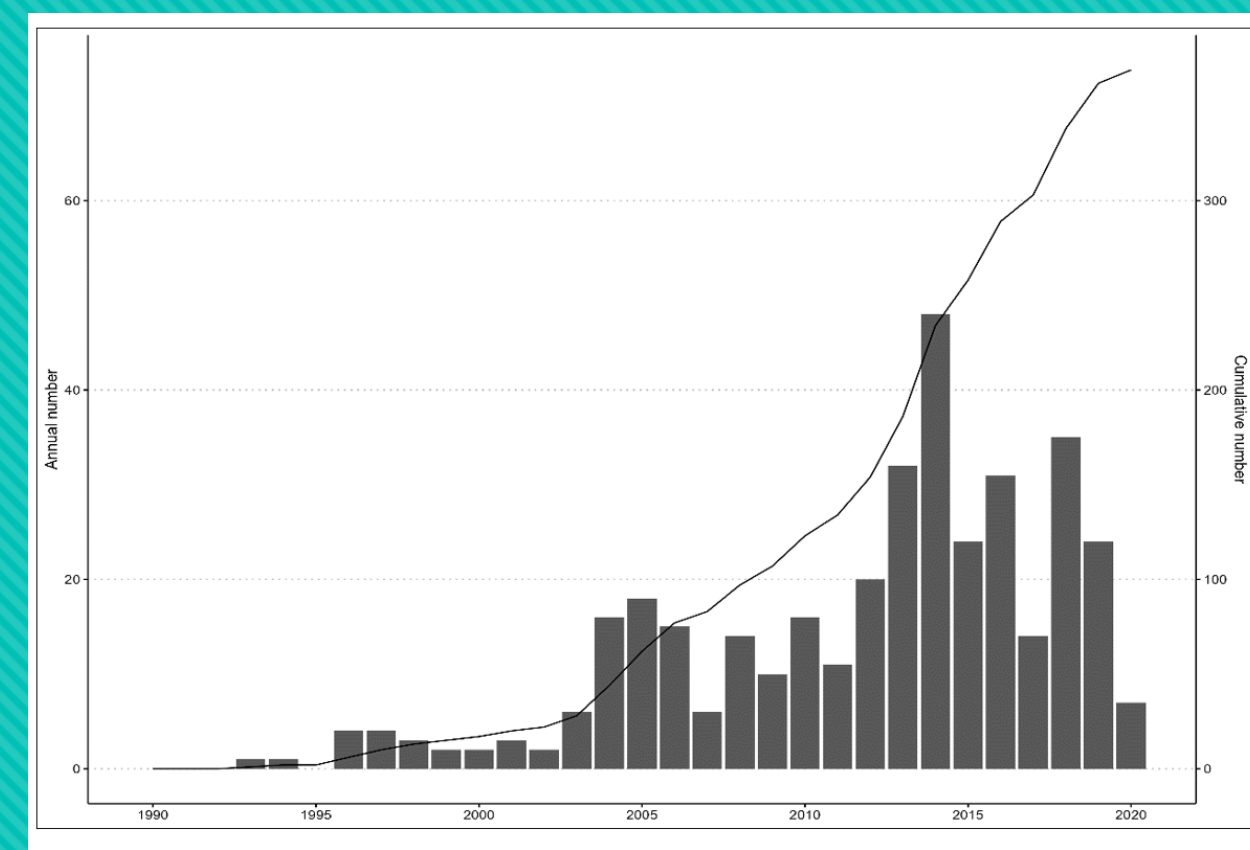
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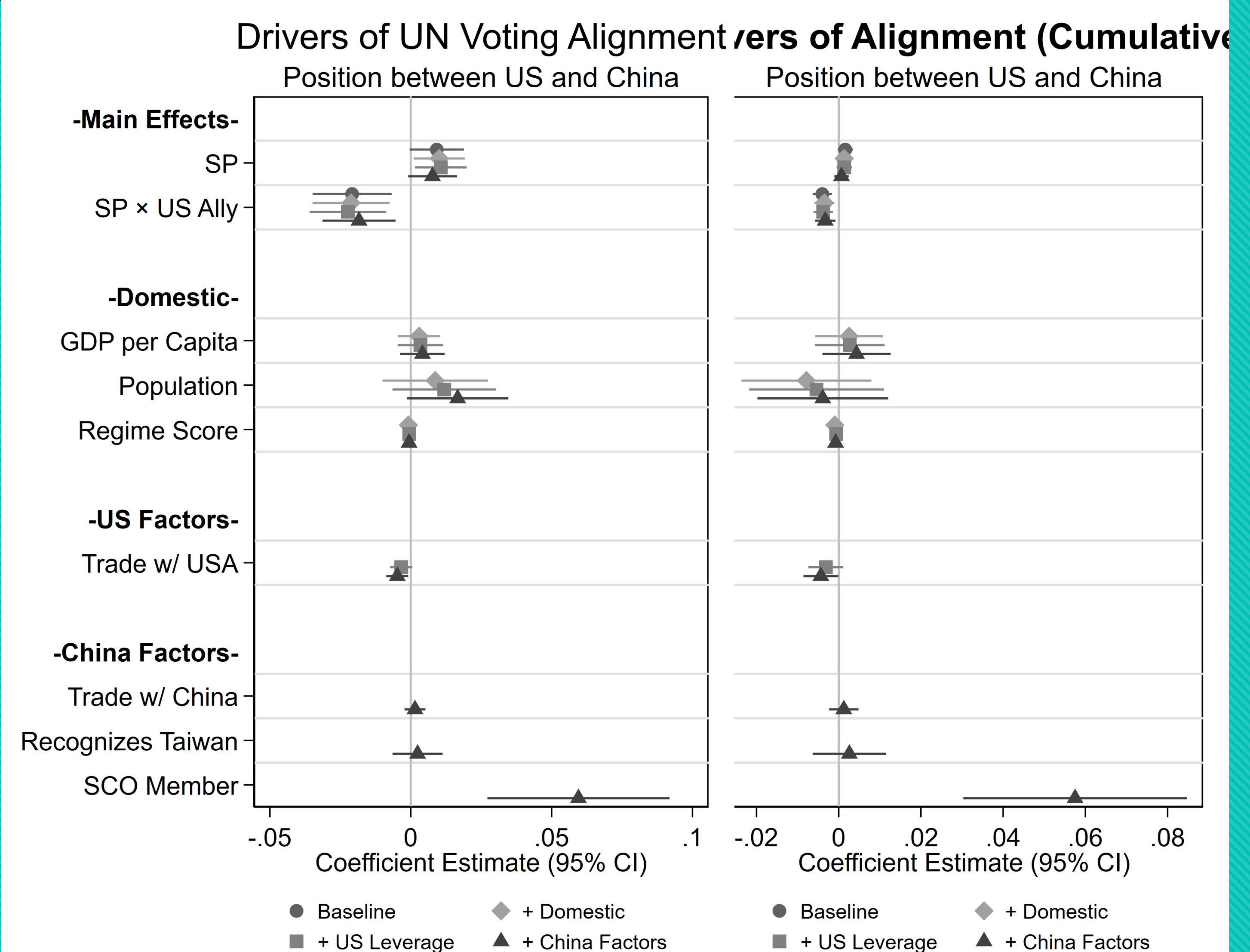
Intro

- Mixed empirical results on effects of China's SP
- SP is an effective instrument for expanding Chinese market access and exports (Liu et al. 2022 ; Abu-Haltam 2025).
- Despite economic or military ties, partnerships **do not** produce significant alignment on core UN voting issues, military, and cultural presence (Strüver 2017; Abu-Haltam 2025).
- Strategic partnerships – a new form of alignment that allows states to harness economic and security cooperation – have proliferated globally since the end of the Cold War (Envall & Hall, 2016; Parameswaran, 2014; Wilkins, 2008, 2012).



Empirical Findings

Main Finding



Research Question

- Why Mixed Results?
- Existing studies mostly ignore the difference between US and non-US allies. China does not expand into a vacuum; it enters a system defined by US security hierarchy.
- Countries in the EU are economic partners of China but simultaneously defensive allies of the United States (Qi 2023).

$$UN\ Position_{it} = \beta_1 (SP_{it-1}) + \beta_2 (US\ Ally_{it-1}) + \beta_3 (SP_{it-1} * US\ Ally_{it-1}) + \mu_{it-1} + \epsilon$$

- Theoretical Expectations
- The Influence Hypothesis ($\beta_1 > 0$):
 - For a standard country (Non-US Ally), establishing a partnership should pull their UN voting record closer to China.
- The Constraint Hypothesis ($\beta_3 < 0$):
 - US security guarantees act as a "political firewall." If β_3 is negative and significant, it implies that China's diplomatic tools lose their effectiveness when applied to US treaty allies.

Research Design

Dependent Variable: Relative Voting Position (ideal point) ($UN\ Position_{it}$)

We construct a spatial measure of alignment relative to the US-China dyad:

$$UN\ Position_{it} = \frac{UN\ voting_{it} - UN\ voting_{USA,t}}{UN\ voting_{CHN,t} - UN\ voting_{USA,t}}$$

- When Value closer to 0, country's voting preference aligned with the **United States**.
- When value closer to 1, country's voting preference aligned with **China**

Difference measures on UN voting position.

- Final Passage (FP)
- All Votes Includes amendments & paragraph votes

Independent Variables

- Strategic Partnership (1990 to 2020)
 - 1 = The specific year a partnership is established.
 - 0 = All other years.
- Alternative measure of "upgrading" SP (Cumulative)
 - Integer scale increasing with every new agreement.

Moderator

- US Defensive Allies (ATOP)
 - 1 = Defense Pacts (ATOP type 1)
 - 0 = others

Controls

Example (Argentina):

- 2001 (Est.) → 1
- 2004 (Strategic) → 2
- 2014 (Comprehensive) → 3

1. Domestic

- Regime Type: (Polity IV)
- GDP p.c.
- Population

2. US Factors

- Trade dependence with U.S.
- US arms sales

3. China Factors

- Trade dependence with China
- Taiwan Recognition
- SCO Membership:

Estimation Strategy

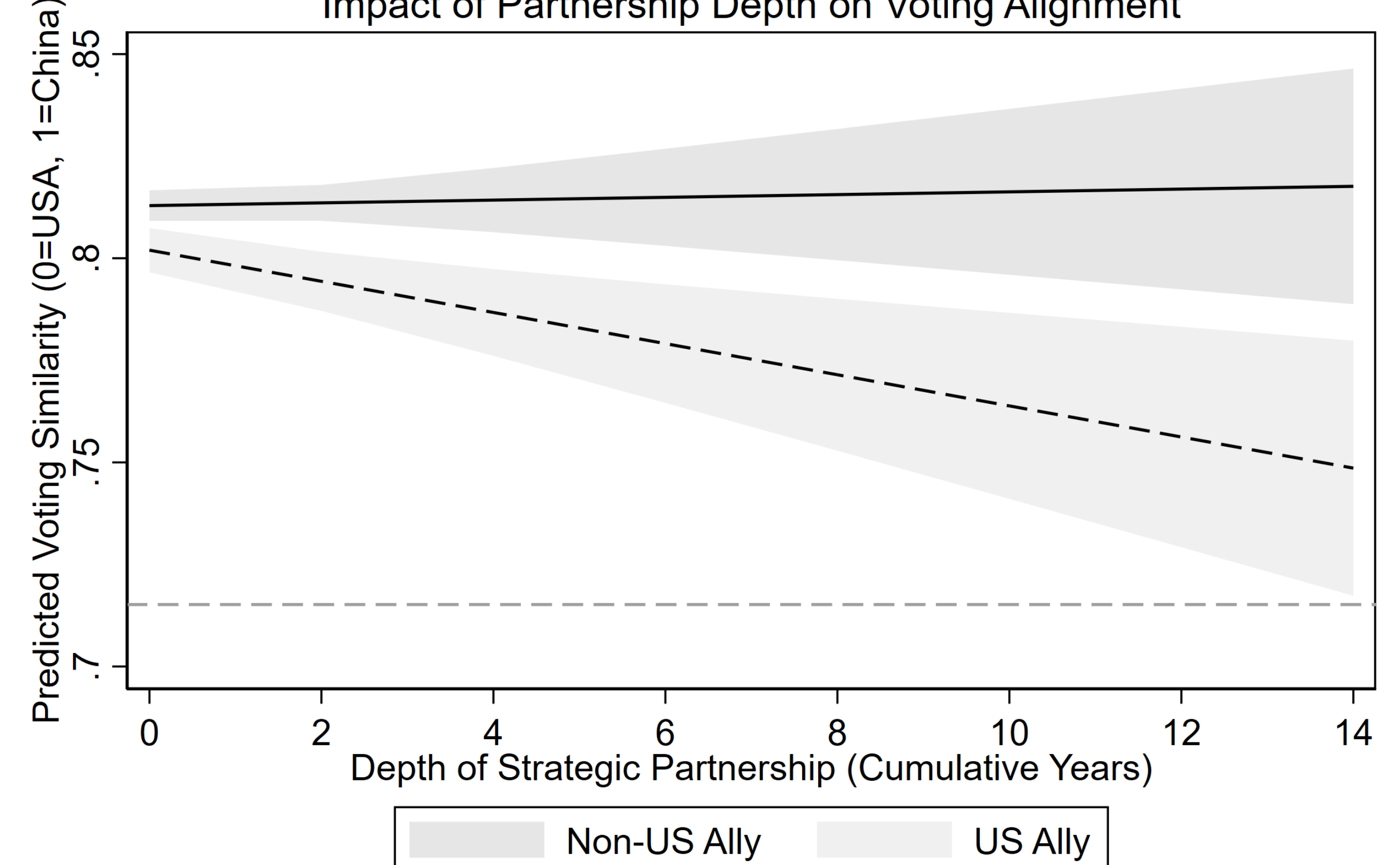
- Two-way fixed effect with robust standard error
- Cross-Lagged Panel Model (CLPM)

$$Vote_t = \alpha_1 Vote_{t-1} + \beta_1 SP_{t-1} + \dots \quad (\text{Influence})$$

$$SP_t = \alpha_2 SP_{t-1} + \beta_2 Vote_{t-1} + \dots \quad (\text{Selection})$$

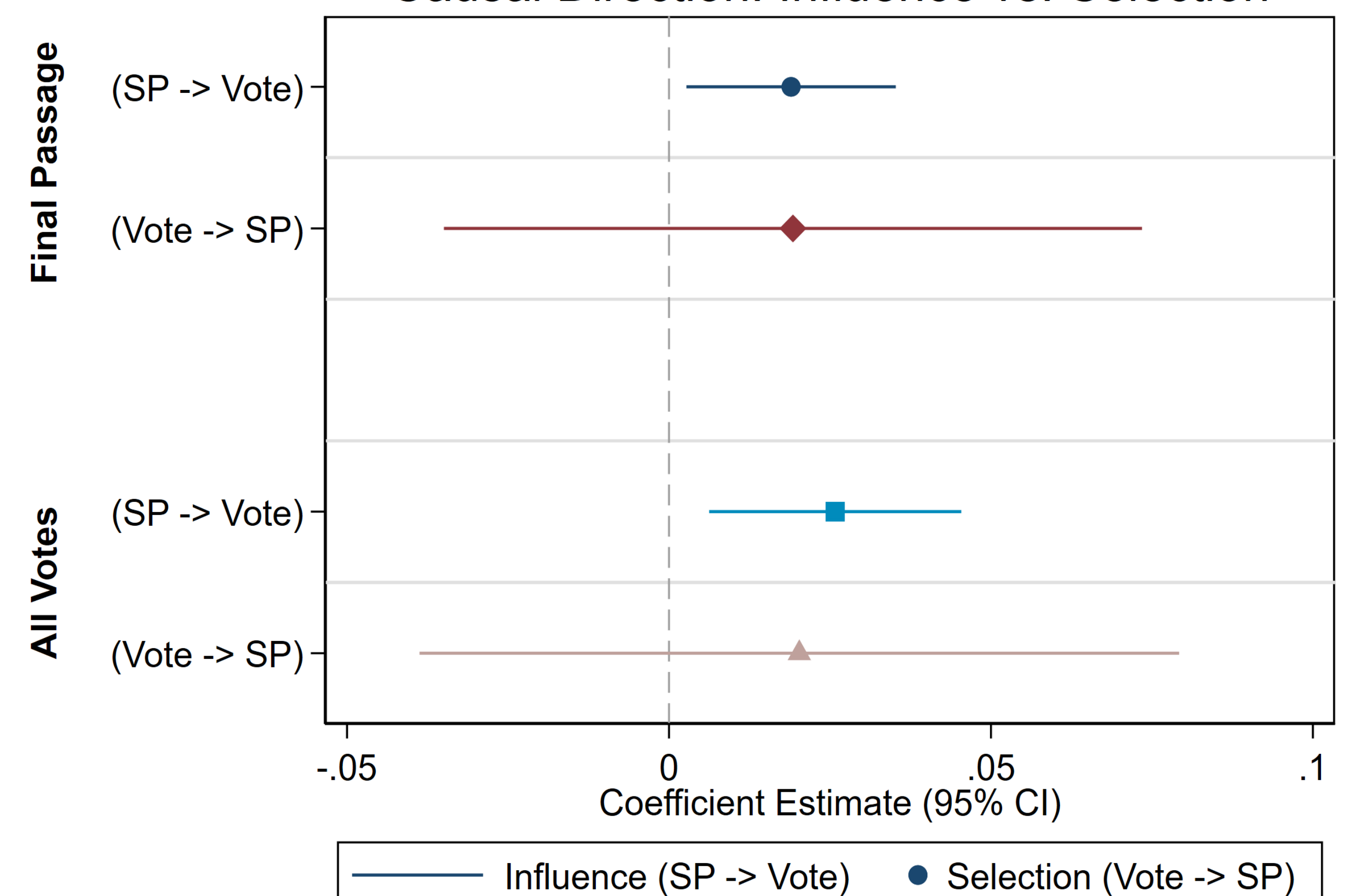
The Divergence Effect

Impact of Partnership Depth on Voting Alignment



CLPM Models

Causal Direction: Influence vs. Selection



Conclusion and Implications

- Effects of SPs are real but conditioned.
- SPs move countries' voting alignment to China than the U.S.
- However, this positive effect is nullified among US defensive allies. The interaction term (SP x US Ally) is consistently negative and significant across all models.
- "Upgrading" SP do not affect the influence of U.S. security promising.
- For Washington, traditional defensive alliances act as effective political "firewalls," inoculating partners against diplomatic pivoting despite economic engagement.
- The Failure of the "Wedge Strategy."