DC On My Mind: National Considerations in State and Local Political Decisions

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Abstract

Recent research suggests that national, state, and local election outcomes have become more closely correlated. Some scholars suggest this "nationalization" stems from less access to local political information, while others emphasize greater national orientations in attention and partisan preference. Using conjoint experiments, we identify the relative emphasis voters place on national versus state and local issue positions in federal, state, and municipal elections. We find voters use policy positions associated with all levels of government in their evaluations of candidates, irrespective of whether those candidates are contesting federal, state, or municipal elections. These results persist even when respondents have access to the party identification of candidates. Additionally, we find the stronger a policy signal is associated with a particular party, the stronger the effect on candidate selection. Our results have implications for discussions of quality representation in subnational government as the ideological dimensions of politics across federal institutions converge.

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Introduction

A growing body of research suggests state and local elections have become "nationalized." That is, national political actors and issues increasingly influence state and local political activity, evidenced by an increasing correlation between Presidential and down-ballot election results since the 1970s (Hopkins 2018; Jacobson 2015; Sievert and McKee 2019; Weinschenk et al. 2020; Zingher and Richman 2019). These findings may be worrisome for the quality of local democratic representation. Federal institutions are designed to divide power and responsibility between the national, state, and local governments, so if voters lacking relevant policy information treat state and local elections simply as extensions of national elections, their ability to hold state and local officials accountable for actions pertinent to state and local government may be strained. However, if a "liberal" ("conservative") position on an state or local issue means a candidate is a Democrat (Republican), and voters can determine who is a Democrat (Republican) by their national policy positions, this threat to accountability is mitigated.

Observational measurement strategies, like those often used to show increasing "nationalized" correlations, obscure heterogeneity in individual-level behavior.[1] If the partisan contours of national, state, and local policy debates are highly correlated (i.e. people who prefer one party's platform at the national level also prefer the party's state and/or local platform), nationalized political outcomes pose little threat to quality representation. In this case, apparent aggregate measures of nationalization reflect the genuine state- and local-level preferences of informed voters rather than being the byproduct of national-level preferences of uninformed voters. And to the extent national, state, and local political dimensions aren't independent, national-level issues position can provide voters with useful signals for determining ideological similarity.

We contend a homogenization of individual preferences over issue dimensions across levels

[1]See Kuriwaki (2019), however, for an example of ballot-level data on nationalization in state and local elections.

of office is in part responsible for the nationalization of electoral results. Specifically, because voters see issue positions across jurisdictions as connected, every issue position taken by a candidate acts as an informative signal of candidate type. Crucially, this is true even when candidates take issue positions on policy domains outside of their jurisdictional responsibilities.

In this paper, we use an experimental approach to measure directly how voters use information in national, state, and local political contests. We ask respondents to choose between a pair of hypothetical candidates running in a national- or state/municipal-level election. Each candidate is represented by a battery of policy positions, which are also drawn from a pool of national- or state/municipal-level issues. Because some policy positions are ostensibly irrelevant to the jurisdiction of the candidate, any effect of their inclusion necessarily comes from the respondent's interpretation of that position as indicative of candidate type. We find the office of the candidate has almost no effect on the preference of voters over candidates; regardless of whether candidates take issue positions on policies inside or outside of their jurisdiction, voters in agreement (disagreement) with their policy stance are more (less) likely to select them as their preferred candidate. The size of a policy's effect on candidate selection does not vary by the office of the candidate. However, we find national-level policies have a larger effect on candidate selection in both state/municipal and national-level contests. This effect persists whether voters are given access to labels specifying the partisan affiliation of candidates, regardless of office. However, when policies themselves have clearer associations with different parties, such policies have greater effects on candidate selection.

Our findings provide some of the first individual-level causal effects in the nationalization literature and provide more detail on the potential mechanisms behind nationalized political behavior in the U.S. While national issue positions certainly sway voters in state and local elections, they do not do so at the complete expense of state and local issue positions. Indeed, even state/local issue positions have effects on candidates for national office. Our results are consistent with information-seeking behavior in national, state, and local domains where the

ideological dimensions are correlated.

Nationalized Behavior, Federal System

Researchers studying the nationalization of elections have found an increasing correlation between presidential and state/local partisan vote shares in elections. From 1968 to 2012, the correlation between Democratic two-party vote shares in presidential and gubernatorial midterm elections (measured at the county level) has risen from less than 0.3 to around 0.7 (Hopkins 2018). Sievert and McKee (2019) similarly find the rate at which the same party won both the Presidential and Senatorial contests in a given state rose from 52% in 1980 to 84% in 2012, with Jacobson (2015) finding similar trends in U.S. House elections. Examining state Supreme Court elections, Weinschenk et al. (2020) find a nearly 1-to-1 relationship between county-level Democratic Presidential and state Supreme Court vote shares from 2000 to 2018 in partisan elections.

The nationalization of U.S. politics extends beyond election results as well, as many scholars note the behavioral alignment of state and local political elites with their national counterparts. For example, state party platforms have become increasingly homogeneous across state boundaries (Hopkins 2018). State legislative agendas also display signs of homogenization (Burke 2021). In as local a venue as school board elections, Reckhow et al. (2017) find that national funding networks play a significant role. Das et al. (2022) find striking semantic similarity between the public communications (Tweets) of Governors and Congressional representatives.

Popular media portrayals of gubernatorial campaigns also stress nationalization. During the 2019 gubernatorial contests in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi, multiple outlets highlighted Donald Trump's personal involvement in the contests, with Trump's impeachment being a particularly salient campaign issue (Manchester 2019; J. Martin 2019; Rojas and Alford 2019). Such nationalized appraisals extend to gubernatorial races in Washington, West Virginia, and Texas in 2016, 2011, and 2011, respectively (Brunner 2016; Catanese

2011; McKinley Jr. 2010). Governors themselves use nationalized rhetoric, including when Governor Gavin Newsom of California characterized supporters of the 2021 gubernatorial recall election as "a partisan, Republican coalition of national Republicans, anti-vaxxers, Q-Anon conspiracy theorists and anti-immigrant Trump supporters." At a minimum, candidates for state offices do not feel bound to engage in policy debates or address controversies exclusive to their own jurisdictions. Candidates for local office increasingly appear and speak at national rallies, like when Joe Arpaio (former Sheriff of Maricopa County, Arizona), would appear at Trump campaign rallies. National politicians also bring local issues into the national spotlight, as Joe Biden did when he called for the resignation of three Los Angeles City Council members after they were recorded making disparaging and racist comments about a colleague's family.

Nationalized rhetoric is accompanied by nationalized behavior: state politicians, particularly Attorneys General, take their mandate as spanning both state and federal issue portfolios. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued multiple battleground states won by Joe Biden in the 2020 Presidential election for "exploit[ing] the COVID-19 pandemic to justify ignoring federal and state election laws." Hawaii Attorney General Doug Chin sued the Trump administration in 2017 after the implementation of a travel ban on refugees and travelers from certain Muslim-majority countries. In these cases and others, states are not merely defending their federally designated roles, they are actively weighing into inherently national issues.

We turn our attention from political elites to the American electorate. Scholars have proposed a number of mechanisms by which the electorate could become nationalized. We categorize them as belonging to two (non-mutually exclusive) categories: identity and information. The *identity mechanism* views nationalization as an extension of partisanship and polarization; that is, partisanship is an affective, expressive identity, so we should expect voters to vote according to their party ID (either for their preferred party, or against their non-preferred party) in any context, as an expression of in-group solidarity and/or

out-group antipathy (Huddy and Bankert 2017; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012). For example, Abramowitz and Webster (2016) note an association between high levels of out-party antipathy and an increase in straight-ticket party voting. Webster (2020) finds a similar association between straight-ticket voting and personal anger. Although strong, the extent to which voters are willing to make voting decisions based purely on party identification may be bounded. Using a conjoint design similar to our own, Mummolo, Peterson, and Westwood (2021) find voters punish excessive deviation from preferred positions on salient policies by co-partisan candidates. Costa (2021) also uses a conjoint design to find voters prefer candidates who provide substantive representation and constituency service over partisan affect. So, while party labels convey information about a candidate's ideology, they do so only partially in the eyes of votes.

Information mechanisms propose that voters operate in an environment of limited information, and given a lack of meaningful information about state and local political contests (or the costliness of obtaining information that exists), voters use national information as a shortcut, defaulting to the candidate of their preferred party. With access to state- and local-specific information declining and such declines being associated with more "nationalized" voting behavior, voter reliance on party cues and national policy positions has likely increased (Abernathy 2018; Hayes and Lawless 2018; G. J. Martin and McCrain 2019; Moskowitz 2021).

Both of these proposed mechanisms stress the importance of any available signal, including partisanship and policy stances, to form judgments on candidates. Party platforms have homogenized and national and state parties are seen as more singular than separate (Caughey, Dunham, and Warshaw 2018; Hopkins 2018). The dimensions of state politics now also largely mirror the left-right contours of national politics (Caughey and Warshaw 2016; Shor and McCarty 2011). Given this, it stands to reason that nationalized signals convey real, not just illusory, information about state and local contexts.[2]

[2]Still, the more divorced the voter's landscape is from the national one, the less informa-

Previous research on behavior in federal systems is inconclusive regarding voters' abilities to assign functional responsibility to the appropriate level of government. Arceneaux (2005) is optimistic, concluding from survey data that voters do tend to expect policy solutions from the level of government they deem responsible for an issue. Arceneaux (2006) also finds that voters are significantly more likely to sanction officials who deviate from their preferred policy positions over which they are functionally responsible, but this effect is constrained to the most prominent policy issues. Brown (2010) finds that voters evaluate the state economy through a partisan lens, leading them to attribute responsibility to state officials accordingly. If the state economy is doing well (poorly) and the governor is a co-partisan (non-co-partisan), they attribute the success (failure) to the governor, but not otherwise.

In summary, previous research suggests state political outcomes are now more likely to mirror national political outcomes; and voters and officials alike are more likely to invoke national contexts. Voters seem to use the best signals of candidate type available to them in order to make their decisions, whether that information is partisan identification of a candidate or the policy positions they take. Voters have displayed an inconsistent ability to correctly attribute credit or blame to offices for their areas of responsibility.

Given these findings, we argue that electoral nationalization is driven in part by the homogenization of preferences over issue dimensions spanning national, state, and local politics. Because these issue positions are correlated in the minds of voters, information that appears irrelevant in a state contest because it speaks to an issue which is a national responsibility is actually quite useful in making decisions according to one's state and local preferences. This implies ubiquitous importance of *all* issues: if national signals are useful to voters in state and local contests, so too are state and local signals useful in national contexts. Our

tive the signal. Jensen et al. (2021) note many local development policies seem to defy the partisan sorting and polarization seen in national politics, and Bucchianeri et al. (2021) find that city council voting has displays a more complex (higher dimensional) spatial structure than state and national contexts.

conception of nationalization, then, is not a top-down force that dominates lower levels of government. Instead, we view it as a homogenizing force which impacts all levels of politics.

Design

We conduct a series of survey experiments consisting of nationally representative and weighted samples.[3] Each respondent to one of our surveys is given a series of 10 conjoint (forced-choice) prompts, which ask them to choose between two hypothetical candidates for office whose attributes are varied randomly. Respondents are assigned to one of two *level conditions* (comparing national issues to either state or local issues) and one of two *partisan label conditions* (revealing or hiding the party label of the candidate), yielding four distinct analysis groups, shown in Figure 1.

Within each experiment, every respondent takes part in two *candidate office conditions*: respondents are given five conjoint prompts in which they are asked to choose their preferred candidate for the federal House of Representatives and five conjoint prompts where they are asked to choose their preferred candidate for the relevant lower-level election (either state assembly or city council depending on the level condition). Before answering, respondents

[3]The survey was fielded online in two waves. The pilot wave, consisting of the state level, no party ID condition, was conducted August 25-27, 2021. The remaining wave, consisting of the other three conditions, was conducted October 10-17, 2022. The survey was conducted on the Qualtrics survey platform. All respondents were weighted to reflect a nationally representative sample, the parameters of which are described in Supplementary Appendix 6.1 (page 15). We discuss theoretical concerns about the inferential impact of our weighting scheme in Supplementary Appendix 6.3 (page 17). Our core result is robust to alternate weighting schemes or to dropping weights entirely (results presented in Supplementary Appendix 6.4, page 18). The 2022 survey wave is pre-registered with the Center for Open Science (DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/ASVMN). We observe no major deviations from our pre-registration. The 2021 survey wave, which served as a pilot, was not pre-registered.

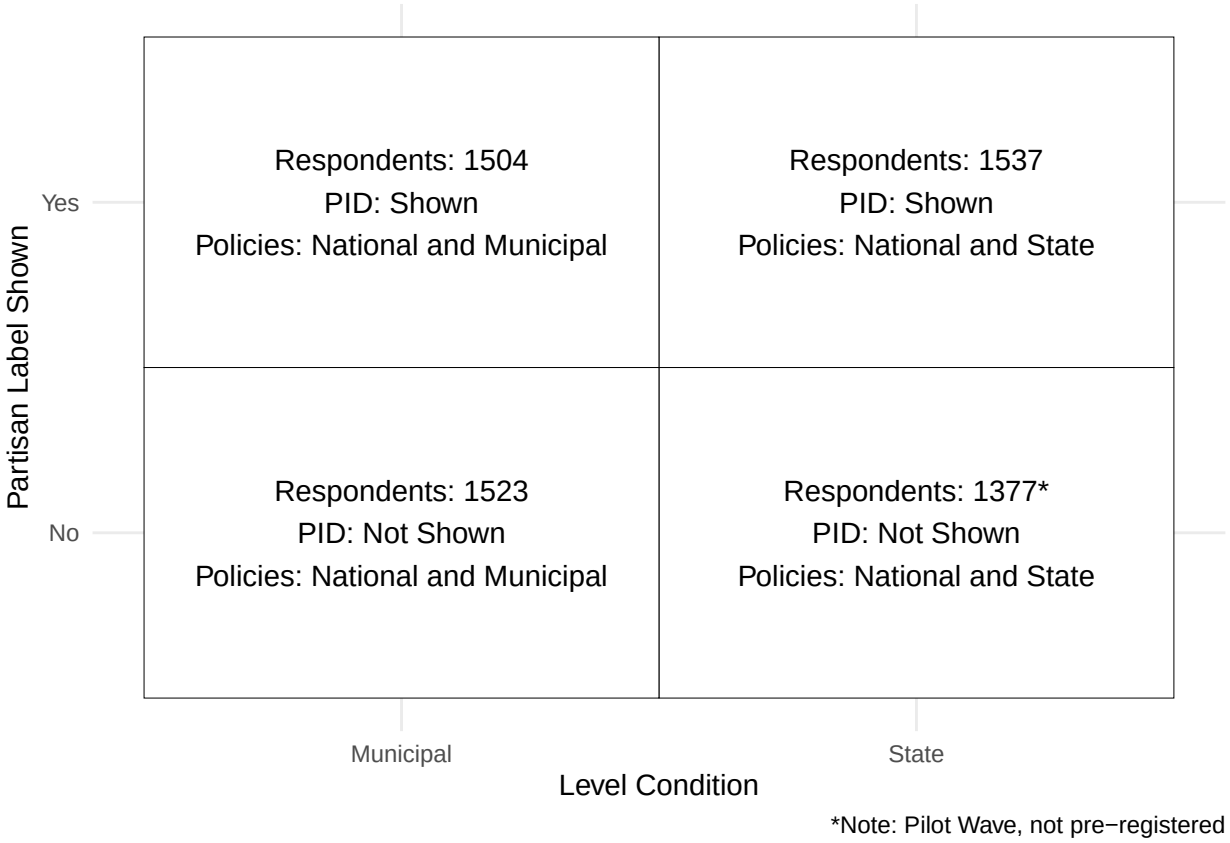

Figure 1: Details of survey design

are given the following preamble to consider:

> Candidates for political offices often have opinions on policies at all levels of government. Below are two sets of policy positions held by two candidates, A and B, running for the [**federal House of Representatives/state assembly/city council**]. Some policies are able to be enacted by the [**state government/municipal government**], and others are able to be enacted by the federal government (given in parentheses next to each policy). Please choose the candidate you would prefer if the candidates were running for the [**federal House of Representatives/state assembly/city council**].
>
> Neither set may perfectly reflect your preferences. If this happens, just pick the candidate set you most prefer even if it isn't perfect.

Each conjoint prompt offers a respondent two hypothetical candidates whose platforms are represented by four randomly chosen policies. The four policies are chosen from a list of 29: 10 where the primary responsibility for the policy domain rests with the federal government; 10 where the primary responsibility rests with the state government; and 9 where the primary responsibility rests with the municipal government. The set of policies chosen from depends on the level condition (i.e. respondents assigned to the state level condition have policies chosen from national and state issues, while respondents assigned to the municipal level condition have policies chosen from national/municipal issues). Each policy has one of two settings: an affirmative and a negative setting, for instance "Mandate the use of body cameras for state police" and "Do not mandate the use of body cameras for state police." Both candidates are assigned the same four policies, but they vary with respect to the settings chosen for each policy, simulating the kind of comparisons real voters make.

Thus, if the body camera policy is chosen, both candidates may support mandating body cameras; both may oppose mandating body cameras; or candidates may have opposing

positions. The set of all policies was selected to cover a number of salient issues, and include policies for which the affirmative wording is liberal, conservative, or not obviously ideological. A full list of policies and settings are given in Table 1.[4] Respondents assigned to the partisan label condition are given a fifth piece of information: a party label for each candidate, randomly assigned to be "Democrat" or "Republican".

Table 1: Conjoint Policies

Policy	Category	Level	Positive Setting	Negative Setting
Military size	Military	National	Substantially reduce the size of the U.S. military	Not substantially reduce the size of the U.S. military
Israel support	Israel	National	Withdraw military support from the state of Israel	Not withdraw military support from the state of Israel
Path to citizenship	Immigration	National	Create a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants	Not create a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants
DREAMers	Immigration	National	Create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought here as children	Not create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought here as children
Deportation	Immigration	National	Deport all undocumented immigrants	Not deport all undocumented immigrants
China tariffs	Trade	National	Substantially increase tariffs on imports from China	Not substantially increase tariffs on imports from China
EU tariffs	Trade	National	Substantially increase tariffs on imports from the European Union	Not substantially increase tariffs on imports from the European Union
Saudi Arabia weapons	Weapons	National	Stop the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia	Not stop the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia
Medicare for all	Healthcare	National	Provide government-run health insurance to all Americans	Not provide government-run health insurance to all Americans
Public option	Healthcare	National	Provide the option to purchase government-run health insurance to all Americans	Not provide the option to purchase government-run health insurance to all Americans
Teacher pay	Education	State	Mandate a substantial pay raise for state public school teachers	Not mandate a substantial pay raise for state public school teachers
State pre-k	Education	State	Create a state-run pre-kindergarten program	Not create a state-run pre-kindergarten program
Charter schools	Education	State	Substantially increase state funding of public charter schools	Not substantially increase funding of public charter schools
Private prisons	Corrections	State	Ban the use of privately operated prisons	Not ban the use of privately operated prisons

[4]The national policy items are adapted from survey items in the Democracy Fund + UCLA Nationscape Survey. A number of the state and local items are adapted from randomized policy items in Jensen et al. (2021).

Court fees	Courts	State	Eliminate state court fees for defendants	Keep state court fees for defendants
Body Cameras	Police	State	Mandate the use of body cameras for state police	Not mandate the use of body cameras for state police
Use of Force	Police	State	Substantially increase funding for use-of-force trainings for state police	Not substantially increase funding for use-of-force trainings for state police
Highways	Transportation	State	Fund major state highway improvements with additional toll revenue	Not fund major state highway improvements with additional toll revenue
Redistricting	Elections	State	Create a non-partisan state redistricting commission for the drawing of electoral boundaries	Not create a non-partisan state redistricting commission for the drawing of electoral boundaries
Occupational licensing	Licensing	State	Substantially reduce state occupational licensing requirements for non-medical occupations	Not substantially reduce state occupational licensing requirements for non-medical occupations
Affordable housing	Housing	Municipal	Substantially increase spending on affordable housing	Not substantially increase spending on affordable housing
Public transit	Transit	Municipal	Substantially increase spending on public transportation projects	Not substantially increase spending on public transportation projects
Public safety	Police	Municipal	Substantially increase spending on policing	Not substantially increase spending on policing
Business tax breaks	Development	Municipal	Use tax breaks and subsidies to attract new businesses	Not use tax breaks and subsidies to attract new businesses
Housing loans	Housing	Municipal	Make grants or loans available to buy, build, or renovate multi-family housing in the area	Not make grants or loans available to buy, build, or renovate multi-family housing in the area
Height restriction	Height	Municipal	Implement a height restriction on new residential and commercial development in the area	Not implement a height restriction on new residential and commercial development in the area
Population limit	Population	Municipal	Establish a population ceiling to maintain neighborhood character	Not establish a population ceiling to maintain neighborhood character
Parking minimums	Parking	Municipal	Eliminate minimum parking space requirements for new businesses	Not eliminate minimum parking spaces requirements for new businesses
Sanctuary cities	Immigration	Municipal	Enact a 'Sanctuary City' policy forbidding local authorities from cooperating with federal agents on immigration issues	Do not enact a 'Sanctuary City' policy forbidding local authorities from cooperating with federal agents on immigration issues

Results from conjoint experiments are often presented as average marginal component effects (AMCE) Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014). Given the random assignment of policies, settings, and partisanship to candidates, these are interpreted as the average causal effect of including a given policy/party alternative in a candidate profile on voter selection (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). Because conjoint experiments capture

effects for a variety of simultaneously randomized treatments, they are efficient and externally valid ways to measure candidate choice: real candidates present baskets of policies, and real elections involve the forced choice between those candidates.

We apply three basic constraints to the random selection of policies and settings. First, every candidate pair must be assigned at least one federal policy and at least one state/local policy (according to level condition). Thus, every choice set includes at least one position on an issue relevant to the candidate office condition, and at least one position that is not ostensibly relevant to their candidate office condition. Second, candidates must differ by at least one setting among federal policies, and at least one setting among state/local policies. For example, respondents could never receive two profiles with identical federal policy positions but different local policy positions. These constraints ensure that every respondent contributes at least some information towards our estimation.[5] Third, some policy pairs would create mutual contradiction (e.g. "Deport all undocumented immigrants" and "Create a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants"); when this occurs, only one policy is chosen.[6]

For respondents who are not assigned to the partisan label condition, our design is purposely built to be a "hard" test for nationalization: those respondents are not given party labels, demographic attributes, or any information other than the office being sought, the policies the candidates advocate for, and the level of government responsible for enacting the

[5]In a conjoint setting, offering respondents the choice between two identical candidates (thus forcing the respondent to choose at random between "left" and "right") would simply attenuate the regression model's estimated coefficients on each selected policy.

[6]We do allow for highly improbable combinations of policies, just not directly contradictory ones. While such improbable combinations may pose a threat to the external validity of our design, we show in Supplementary Appendix 7 (page 20) that limiting our analysis to *only* choices involving policy settings consistent with regard to partisanship does not change our main results. We place no constraints on the random assignment of party identifications.

policy. If nationalization is really caused primarily by the information gleaned from party labels, then these respondents are not given the precursor required to make nationalized vote choices. On one hand, the absence of partisan labels limits the external validity (real-world generalizability) of our results to the typical two-party contest setting seen in many U.S. state and national elections. But this design is important analytically and still has clear real-world analogues. Primaries, top-two general elections, and certain runoff elections can all involve candidates of the same party with differences in policy positions. By contrast, respondents assigned to the partisan label condition do see party labels, which allow us to estimate the effects of policy nationalization *net of partisanship*. Put differently, do policy positions taken by candidates have any additional influence on behavior when respondents already have access to the candidates' partisanship (Barber and Pope 2019)?

After excluding respondents who failed a simple attention check, respondents who completed the entire survey module in less than 30 seconds, and those for whom demographic information was incomplete or insufficient to weight to our preferred population targets (n = 1,470, 19.8% of our total sample), our survey yields 58,750 completed conjoint responses (117,500 choice sets).[7]

By answering the question of how voters make state- and local-level decisions in nationalized contexts, our design fills gaps in the extant literature. Namely, our understanding of nationalized political behavior has been limited largely to either aggregated voting outcomes or surveys without causal effect attribution due to biases in self-reported preferences. The mechanisms of nationalization should occur at the individual voter level, so we view it as an

[7]Because inattentive survey respondents provide lower-quality responses and bias the resulting distribution of political attitudes (Alvarez et al. 2019), we ask the following question prior to our conjoint prompts: "Please select your favorite color. Paying attention and reading the instructions carefully is critical for our survey. If you are paying attention to the survey, please choose Silver below." Respondents are given a list of 5 colors, including silver. Those who do not select silver are dropped from our analysis.

important tasks to conduct experiments using individuals as the unit of analysis.

Theoretical Expectations

We previously noted that the nationalization of U.S. politics leaves open a range of possibilities with regard to its effect on the quality of democratic representation. Here, we describe three potential results which are consistent with these theoretical mechanisms:

The first potential result is that *only national policy positions affect candidate selection* (or else that national policy positions completely dominate state and local ones). This is most consistent with identity-driven nationalization wherein national policy positions offer the strongest signal as to the status of the candidate as an in-group or out-group member. Only state policies with similar levels of polarization would be significant.

The second potential result is that of *the responsible federalist*: both the national and state/municipal policy effects are significant and comparably large in magnitude, but only for the candidate office condition that matches the responsible level of government. Because respondents are given access to policy information germane to the office they must make a decision for, they are able to, if they prefer, discard the non-germane policy information. If respondents understand and prioritize the functional responsibility of the office the candidate seeks on certain policy areas, this result will occur.

The final potential result lies somewhere in between the two previously mentioned; *both the national and state/municipal policy effects are significant, but there is no difference in effects by candidate office.* This would occur if voters treat all information as valuable signals of type. There is variance in effect magnitude still, as some policy stances may be stronger signals of type than others, but the value of those signals is not limited to the ones with high polarization. Respondents act not as blind partisans but as information-seekers making decisions with limited resources.[8]

[8]Other results are theoretically possible: perhaps no policy positions have any effect on candidate choice at all, or perhaps state or local policies dominate national policies, or

Analysis and Results

We estimate the average marginal component effect (AMCE) split by office condition. Rather than recording whether the respondent selected the candidate with the affirmative or negative policy setting, we rely on the respondent's preferred position when asked outright (which we collect prior to the conjoint items) to determine whether the candidate's position accords with the respondent's and condition on this accord. AMCE are estimated using ordinary least squares regression with standard errors clustered at the respondent level. An AMCE represents the average change in probability of selecting a candidate when that candidate holds that policy position. Positive (negative) coefficients indicate that respondents are more (less) likely to select candidates. AMCE are bounded between -1 and 1.[9] If respondents randomly chose between the two candidates, the model intercept coefficient would equal 0.5 and the coefficient estimate would be 0 for each policy. In the case of perfect separation, i.e. respondents *always* pick the side with a particular attribute level, the intercept coefficient would equal 0 and the coefficient estimate would be 1 for that policy.

We condition our AMCE on shared policy stance because unconditional effects may (mechanically) reflect either respondent indifference to the issue or else the existence of a bimodal preference distribution, where respondents are highly animated by the presence of

respondents care more about policies for which the candidate office condition makes explicit the candidate has no power over (i.e. "exactly wrong" voting). These would be inconsistent with previous theory and results in a dramatic way, and we choose not to give them detailed consideration in our text.

[9]These are the absolute theoretical limits of the AMCE. In practice, however, the limits attenuate toward zero because of (a) cases where both choice sets contain the same attribute level: in these cases, the selected candidate and the rejected candidate both contribute in opposite directions, bounding the effect, and (b) the cumulative total of the effects of other included attributes. In effect, then, the true bounding of an AMCE coefficient is design specific, but smaller than the above -1 to 1.

the issue position but in opposite directions.[10] We can disambiguate between these two causes by measuring a respondent's baseline position on an issue and measuring accord of the candidate's position with the respondent's (Hanretty, Lauderdale, and Vivyan 2020). Suppose the respondent sample is split evenly between people who believe all undocumented immigrants should be deported and those who believe undocumented immigrants should not be deported such that every respondent always chooses the candidate with their preferred position on the matter (regardless of other positions). In this case, an AMCE estimate that does not condition on accord would be 0 *despite* there being highly intense preferences on the policy. Because this is frequently the case for real-world political items, some researchers condition conjoint results on party identification. Our preferred approach improves on this by directly measuring respondent preference.[11] We expect the improvement will be most salient for issues where parties do not display polarization, which is likely the case for several of our state and local policy items.

The results of the non-partisan label condition, where no candidate party identification is provided, are given in Figure 2. The top row shows the AMCE from the state government level condition, while the bottom row shows the AMCE from the municipal government level condition. Because AMCE are calculated over the joint distribution of attributes in the design, the AMCE of the national policies must be calculated separately in the state and municipal conditions.

The initial results indicate that many policies across federal, state, and municipal levels are significant drivers of candidate selection. For example, respondents who agreed with a candidate's position on mandating the use of body cameras by police officers were roughly

[10]We provide pooled AMCE estimates in Supplementary Appendix 2 (page 7). We also present results in Supplementary Appendix 3.2 (page 11) which condition on agreeing with the affirmative setting of the policy (rather than accord between candidate and respondent).

[11]See Supplementary Appendix 3.1 (page 8) for additional analyses conditioning on party identification rather than direct policy preferences.

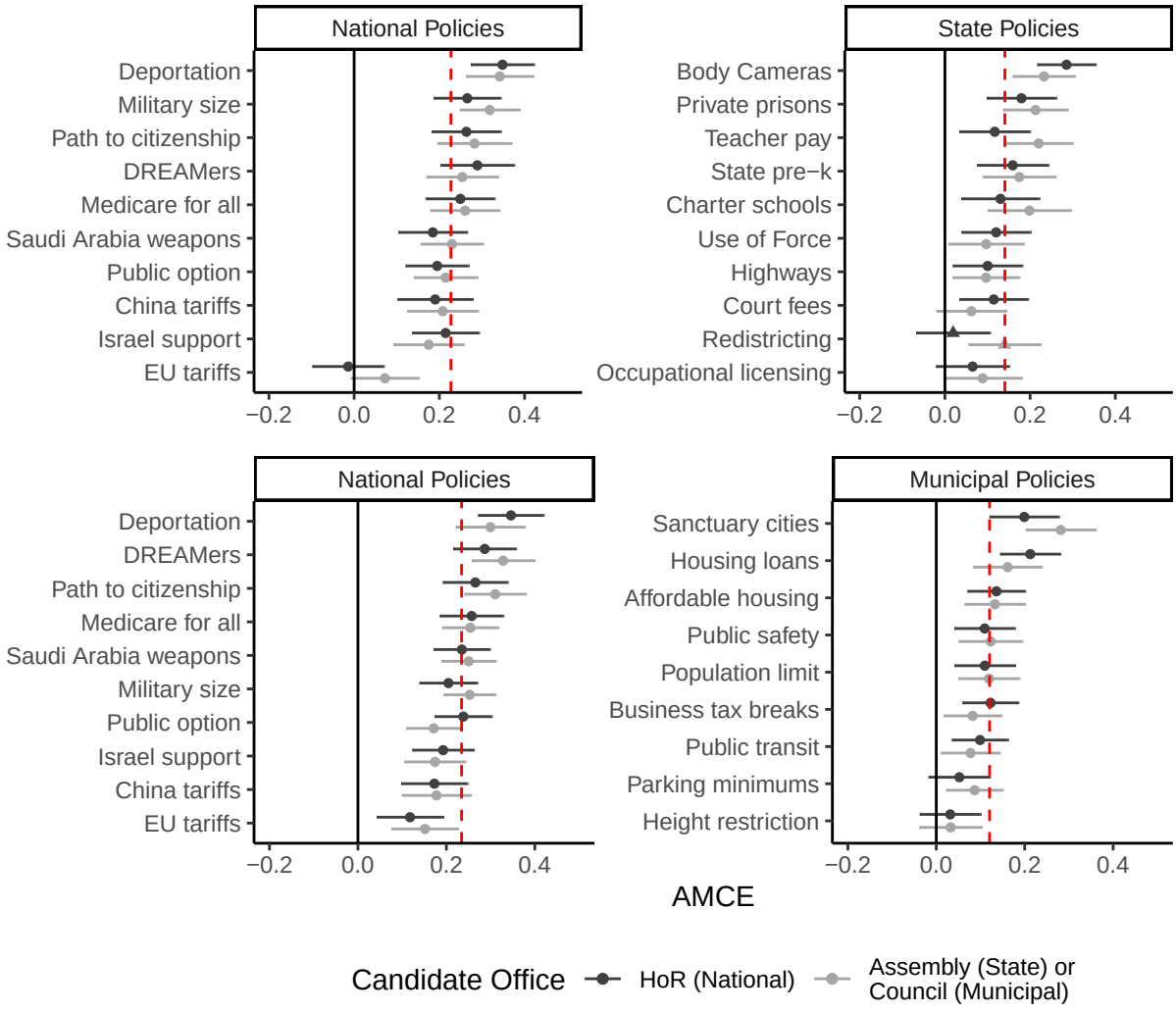

Figure 2: Conditional AMCE of Non-Partisan Waves

25% more likely to select that candidate. Put differently, candidates who share a respondent's position on body cameras are selected about 62.5% of the time, whereas candidates who do not are selected roughly 37.5% of the time.[12] Many of the national policy AMCEs are larger in magnitude than the state policy AMCEs, with the deportation of undocumented immigrants as the largest national effect across both government level conditions.[13]

In all but one case (creating a non-partisan redistricting commission, conditioned on agreement), there is no significant difference in the policy AMCE by candidate office. Substantively speaking, it does not matter whether the policy position taken by the candidate is under that candidate's potential jurisdiction. Instead, respondents seem to treat *all* policy information as useful when making decisions between candidates. While this supports the "all politics is national" findings from previous research, it also leads to the surprising conclusion that many state and municipal policy stances also drive voter behavior when selecting candidates for national office. National, state, and municipal politics are not clearly divided in the minds of voters: if an issue matters for one office, it matters for them all.

However, we also observe that national policies have larger average AMCE than state and municipal policies. So while voters may not have different evaluations for candidates competing for state and municipal versus national offices for any given policy, the effect of a national policy on voter decision making is greater than the effect of state and municipal policies. Another potential explanation for the difference in AMCE is simply that national

[12]This is the "marginal mean" interpretation of AMCE, which is possible to use in this conjoint design because each attribute (policy) has only two settings (positive/negative), so the reference category being used in the regression for each policy position is the setting of the policy that disagrees with the respondent's preferred setting (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley 2020).

[13]Note the survey fielding period of the pilot wave (August 25-27, 2021) overlapped with the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, which may have created an ephemeral exogenous uptick in the salience of this issue.

policy issues are more salient, familiar, or exciting for voters. While we attempt to select from the most important policies in the exclusive domains of state and national policy making, we are unable to evaluate if we successfully did so without an exhaustive inclusion of all potential policies.[14]

Next, we consider whether the inclusion of candidate party labels alters respondents' use of policy information in candidate selection. In the partisan label condition, we conduct the same forced choice survey experiment, but include randomized party labels (Democrat, Republican) above the series of policy positions taken by candidates. If respondents were using policy positions only to triangulate the partisanship of candidates but had no substantive preferences over the policies themselves, we should expect all policy AMCE to attenuate toward zero while the party identification effect remains large. Previous work suggests this should not occur: respondents have substantive preferences over policies and infer more than just partisanship from policy position-taking (Costa 2021; Mummolo, Peterson, and Westwood 2021). Regardless, this formulation of our design allows us to determine the effects of policy positions *net of partisanship*.

Results of our partisan condition are given in Figure 3, and are almost identical to those of the non-partisan condition. The effect of party identification itself (shown under the national policies) is small in comparison to national policies, but roughly similar to the state and municipal policy effects.[15] Across all conditions, we see an average decline in AMCE

[14]We also note that the institutions our candidates are being elected to differ. While the federal House of Representatives is common to all respondents, respondents exist in states whose state houses have different purviews, and municipal councils vary substantially across setting. The degree of deference granted to bureaucrats, the strictures of state constitutions, and many other institutional features differ across our sample. We consider this a case of comparing tangerines and oranges.

[15]Note the precision of the point estimate for partisan identification is greater than that of policy effects due to its inclusion in *all* conjoint profiles under the partisan condition.

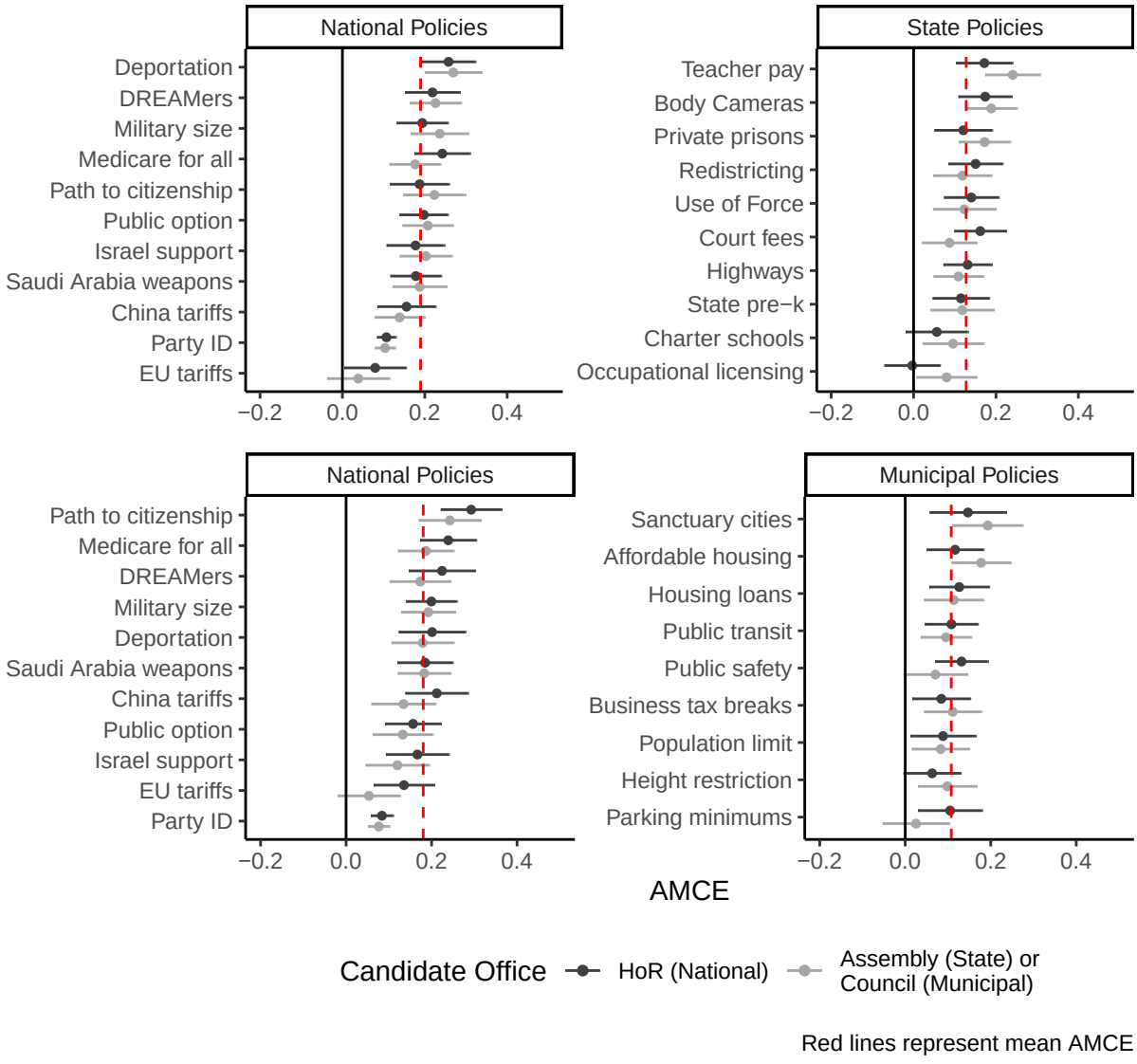

Figure 3: Conditional AMCE of Partisan Waves

of just 0.03. This difference is driven mostly by national policies, with an average decrease of 0.046 (compared to state and municipal policies, which both have an average decrease of about 0.01).[16] Again, these decreases do not change the similarity of effects across office conditions or the significance of the AMCE. These results indicate that respondents may use policy positions as indicators of party, but their behavior is still mostly driven by preferences over those policies instead of shared partisanship with a candidate, as the policy effects are both larger than and robust to the inclusion of candidate party identification.

The absence of difference between office conditions is a result of substantive interest, but it is important to note our statistical tests are statistically "conservative" in the sense they are weighted toward finding null results. To more directly test the equivalence of the point estimates, we can invert our understanding of significance. Instead of assuming a null where there is no difference between office conditions, we can instead assume there *is* a difference between the offices conditions and quantify how large that difference could be given our result. Hartman and Hidalgo (2018) offer a formal statistical equivalence test that does precisely this.[17]

The full results of the equivalence test are given in the Supplementary Appendix 8 (page 22), but we note here that most of our results lay within an equivalence range of -0.05 and 0.05, with a maximum range for redistricting (an effect where we did observe a significant difference) being just between -0.1 and 0.1. While these ranges temper claims of exact

[16]All differences are reported in full in Supplementary Appendix 4 (page 13).

[17]Their formulation is meant to evaluate balance and placebo tests in causal inference. We implement their framework but use our estimated effects between office conditions as the two values being evaluated for equivalence, using the default equivalence ranges suggested by Hartman and Hidalgo (2018) due to a lack of prior benchmark. Per the authors, resulting equivalence confidence intervals can be interpreted as "the smallest equivalence range supported by the observed data." The maximum values are the points at which we can reject the null of difference at $\alpha = 0.05$.

equivalence between estimates, it is critical to compare this range to the overall size of the policy effects. Almost all AMCE were greater than 0.1, including half of the national policy effects being greater than 0.2. Even if the differences in effects *are* at the limits of their equivalence ranges, the individual AMCEs are still significant. In sum, policy positions held by candidates that aren't germane to the candidate's jurisdiction are still used by respondents to make voting decision.

Our results thusfar suggest that almost any policy signal is useful to those who hold opinions on that policy, regardless of the level of government at which that policy is implemented or if the candidates contesting the office have jurisdiction. The question remains what the content of that signal is. If the nationalization literature is correct that politics at all levels of government are contested over the same single-dimensional policy space, then signals that better position a candidate in that policy space are likely to be more informative and persuasive to voters. That is, the more clearly a policy can be associated with the left or right of the political spectrum, especially through associations with the Democratic and Republican parties, the stronger the effect of that policy will be in determining vote choice. This should be true *even when* we give information to respondents on which jurisdiction each policy "belongs" in.

We investigate this conjecture in Figure 4. Using data we collect prior to the conjoint portion of the survey, where respondents are directly asked their policy preferences, we construct a measure of partisan signal intensity by taking the absolute value of the difference in the percentage of Democrats and Republicans who agree with the policy's affirmative setting.[18] The greater the difference, the more partisan polarization exists for this policy and the more clearly respondents can identify the policy with its position on the ideological

[18]We gather party identification using the standard 7-point scale and then collapse it to a 3-point scale by collapsing leaners into the party they lean towards. The resulting party identification can take the values "Democrat", "Republican", or "Independent" in our sample.

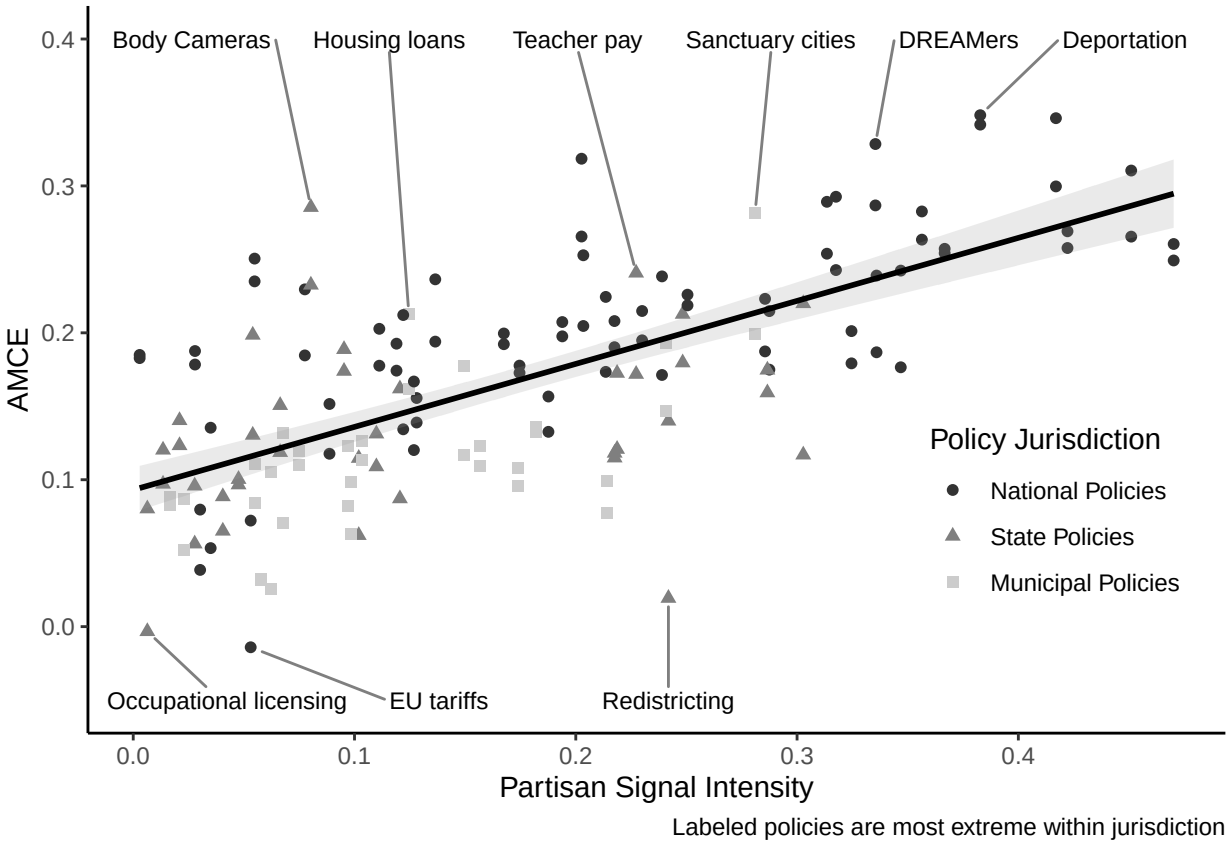

Figure 4: AMCE versus Partisan Signal Intensity

spectrum. We then plot the partisan signal intensity against the AMCE from Figures 2 and 3. To account for differences across government level and partisanship conditions, we estimate partisan signal intensity separately within each condition, yielding 156 point estimates (equal to the total number of AMCE).[19]

The results of our analysis in Figure 4 suggest that the stronger the partisan signal, the greater effect the policy has on candidate selection, supporting the hypothesis that strong signals of type are particularly useful to voters. This pattern persists even when splitting the data by either *office condition* or *policy type*; regardless of whether candidates are contesting national, state, or municipal office or if the policies are national, state, or municipal in nature, partisan signal intensity is positively associated with candidate selection.[20]

Discussion

In combination, our results suggest a different picture of nationalized behavior than has previously been articulated by the nationalization literature, which is made possible by our ability to analyze individual-level preferences leveraging an experimental design. Almost all policy signals, regardless of jurisdiction or functional relevance to the office being contested, are useful to voters. Our results suggest voters leverage whatever information they have to better triangulate the type of the candidates they are evaluating. This casts doubt on the "responsible federalist" view of voters who see distinctions between offices insofar as distinguishing information is available to them.

[19]In Supplementary Appendix 5.1 (page 14), we consider an alternative estimation strategy where we created a pooled estimate of partisan signal intensity ($n = 29$) and average the AMCE of each policy item within each government level condition. The results are identical.

[20]If we condition further by both the government level and partisanship conditions, 7 of the 8 estimated relationships are positive and significant. Only for state policy AMCE estimated without partisanship is the relationship is significance "lost". Full results are given in Supplementary Appendix 5.2 (page 14).

On average, national policy positions have greater effects on voter behavior than state and local policy positions. We interpret this as national policy signals likely being better indicators of type. This conclusion is supported by the positive relationship between policy effect and the strength of the partisan signal attached to the policy. Voters do not necessarily behave as blind, tribal partisans, but partisanship *does* provide compelling information as to the type of candidate they are willing to vote for.

Our design is not without limitations. Our list of policy positions is not exhaustive, and there may be plausible overlap in jurisdiction between some of the policy areas (which we attempt to mitigate through the explicit labeling of policies as either being of state or national jurisdiction): we invite further experimentation with different baskets of policies. Additionally, particular policy bundles may present apparently incongruous policies, and although we limit explicitly contradictory policies through the category constraint, not all candidates might be candidates that we could plausibly expect people to see in real elections – though we assess a version of this criticism in Supplementary Appendix 7 (page 20) and find little evidence that it drives our results (de la Cuesta, Egami, and Imai 2022).

Our results are important for future discussions of representation in a nationalized context. We tend to think of accountability as a two-step process of (1) understanding what elected officials have done and are responsible for and (2) acting upon relevant information. This is complicated when voters have access to "nationalized" information that acts as an important but imperfect signal of candidate type. In this sense, accountability can be loosely achieved even with limited information, but the quality of such representation is opaque. Thus, our results speak to a larger literature of state and local government responsiveness, namely how sub-national government can be responsive without voters having access to high-quality state-level information (Tausanovitch 2019). Further work is needed to more deeply understand the nature of the accountability structure and what pressures nationalization puts on the future of representation.

Why should political scientists care about nationalized vote behavior? Because it puts

real pressure on political representation in a federal system. While local, state, and national institutions often overlap and trade jurisdiction over policies areas from year to year, there still remain areas of functional responsibility unique to each (Beer 1978; Kousser 2014). Democracy requires that voters can hold officials accountable for their actions in office. If the contours of local, state, and national politics are truly highly correlated in a given election, then nationalized voting may be rational and informed. But to the extent politics diverges across venues, nationalized voters may attribute credit or blame to the wrong elected officials.

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Supplementary Appendix for DC On My Mind: National Considerations in State and Local Political Decisions

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June 11, 2023

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1 Policy item agreement and disagreement

Below we list the weighted proportion of respondents indicating they agree, disagree, or "Don't Know" in response to being asked the affirmative setting of each of the policies which were incorporated into the conjoints. Responses are broken down by respondent party ID and wave (e.g. interaction of *partisan label condition* and *government level condition*).

Table 1: Policy Agreement/Disagreement by Partisan and Government Level Conditions

Policy	Party Label Shown?	Government Level Condition	PID	Agree	Disagree	DK
Body Cameras	No	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Charter schools	No	state	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Court fees	No	state	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Deportation	No	state	Democrat	0.3	0.6	0.1
DREAMers	No	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Highways	No	state	Democrat	0.6	0.3	0.1
Israel support	No	state	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Medicare for all	No	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Military size	No	state	Democrat	0.3	0.5	0.1
Occupational licensing	No	state	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Path to citizenship	No	state	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Private prisons	No	state	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.2
Public option	No	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Redistricting	No	state	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.3
Saudi Arabia weapons	No	state	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.1
State pre-k	No	state	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.2
China tariffs	No	state	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.3
EU tariffs	No	state	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Teacher pay	No	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Use of Force	No	state	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
Body Cameras	No	state	Republican	0.8	0.2	0.1
Charter schools	No	state	Republican	0.5	0.3	0.2
Court fees	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Deportation	No	state	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
DREAMers	No	state	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Highways	No	state	Republican	0.5	0.3	0.1
Israel support	No	state	Republican	0.2	0.6	0.2
Medicare for all	No	state	Republican	0.3	0.6	0.1
Military size	No	state	Republican	0.1	0.8	0.1
Occupational licensing	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.3
Path to citizenship	No	state	Republican	0.3	0.6	0.1
Private prisons	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.2
Public option	No	state	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
Redistricting	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.3
Saudi Arabia weapons	No	state	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
State pre-k	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.5	0.2
China tariffs	No	state	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	No	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.2
Teacher pay	No	state	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Use of Force	No	state	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1

Body Cameras	Yes	state	Democrat	0.9	0.1	0.0
Charter schools	Yes	state	Democrat	0.6	0.3	0.1
Court fees	Yes	state	Democrat	0.5	0.2	0.2
Deportation	Yes	state	Democrat	0.3	0.6	0.1
DREAMers	Yes	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Highways	Yes	state	Democrat	0.6	0.3	0.1
Israel support	Yes	state	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Medicare for all	Yes	state	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.1
Military size	Yes	state	Democrat	0.3	0.5	0.2
Occupational licensing	Yes	state	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Path to citizenship	Yes	state	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.1
Private prisons	Yes	state	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
Public option	Yes	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Redistricting	Yes	state	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.3
Saudi Arabia weapons	Yes	state	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.2
State pre-k	Yes	state	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
China tariffs	Yes	state	Democrat	0.5	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	Yes	state	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Teacher pay	Yes	state	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Use of Force	Yes	state	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Body Cameras	Yes	state	Republican	0.8	0.1	0.1
Charter schools	Yes	state	Republican	0.5	0.3	0.2
Court fees	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Deportation	Yes	state	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
DREAMers	Yes	state	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Highways	Yes	state	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Israel support	Yes	state	Republican	0.3	0.5	0.2
Medicare for all	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.5	0.1
Military size	Yes	state	Republican	0.2	0.8	0.1
Occupational licensing	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.3
Path to citizenship	Yes	state	Republican	0.3	0.5	0.1
Private prisons	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.3
Public option	Yes	state	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
Redistricting	Yes	state	Republican	0.5	0.2	0.3
Saudi Arabia weapons	Yes	state	Republican	0.7	0.1	0.2
State pre-k	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.1
China tariffs	Yes	state	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	Yes	state	Republican	0.4	0.3	0.3
Teacher pay	Yes	state	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
Use of Force	Yes	state	Republican	0.6	0.2	0.2
Affordable housing	No	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Business tax breaks	No	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
Deportation	No	municipal	Democrat	0.2	0.6	0.2
DREAMers	No	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Height restriction	No	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Housing loans	No	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.1
Israel support	No	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3
Medicare for all	No	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Military size	No	municipal	Democrat	0.3	0.5	0.2
Parking minimums	No	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.4	0.3
Path to citizenship	No	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Population limit	No	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.3

Public option	No	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Public safety	No	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Public transit	No	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
Sanctuary cities	No	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.3
Saudi Arabia weapons	No	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.1	0.2
China tariffs	No	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.2	0.3
EU tariffs	No	municipal	Democrat	0.3	0.4	0.3
Affordable housing	No	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Business tax breaks	No	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
Deportation	No	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
DREAMers	No	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.1
Height restriction	No	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Housing loans	No	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.2	0.2
Israel support	No	municipal	Republican	0.3	0.6	0.2
Medicare for all	No	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.5	0.1
Military size	No	municipal	Republican	0.1	0.8	0.1
Parking minimums	No	municipal	Republican	0.3	0.4	0.3
Path to citizenship	No	municipal	Republican	0.2	0.6	0.1
Population limit	No	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.2
Public option	No	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
Public safety	No	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.2	0.1
Public transit	No	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Sanctuary cities	No	municipal	Republican	0.2	0.6	0.2
Saudi Arabia weapons	No	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.1	0.2
China tariffs	No	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	No	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Affordable housing	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Business tax breaks	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
Deportation	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.3	0.6	0.1
DREAMers	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.2	0.1
Height restriction	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Housing loans	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Israel support	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.4	0.2
Medicare for all	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Military size	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.3	0.5	0.2
Parking minimums	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.2
Path to citizenship	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.7	0.2	0.1
Population limit	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.4	0.2
Public option	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.8	0.1	0.1
Public safety	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.5	0.3	0.2
Public transit	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.1
Sanctuary cities	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.4	0.3	0.2
Saudi Arabia weapons	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
China tariffs	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.6	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	Yes	municipal	Democrat	0.3	0.4	0.3
Affordable housing	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.3	0.2
Business tax breaks	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.1
Deportation	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
DREAMers	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.3	0.1
Height restriction	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Housing loans	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.2	0.1
Israel support	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.3	0.5	0.2

Medicare for all	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.1
Military size	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.1	0.8	0.1
Parking minimums	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Path to citizenship	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.5	0.1
Population limit	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2
Public option	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.1
Public safety	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.3	0.2
Public transit	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.5	0.4	0.2
Sanctuary cities	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.2	0.7	0.1
Saudi Arabia weapons	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.6	0.2	0.2
China tariffs	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.7	0.2	0.2
EU tariffs	Yes	municipal	Republican	0.4	0.4	0.2

2 Unconditional AMCE

Below we show the unconditional AMCE results. As we discuss in the main paper, our preferred results condition on a candidate's position according with a respondent's, rather than the raw position in the affirmative or the negative on the policy as stated. We report the results in the more classical manner (affirmative vs. negative) here, but caution that policies which high a bimodal preference profile, but are nevertheless highly salient, create cross-cutting negative and positive effects which can cancel out. Thus, we provide these unconditional effects primarily in the interest of transparency.

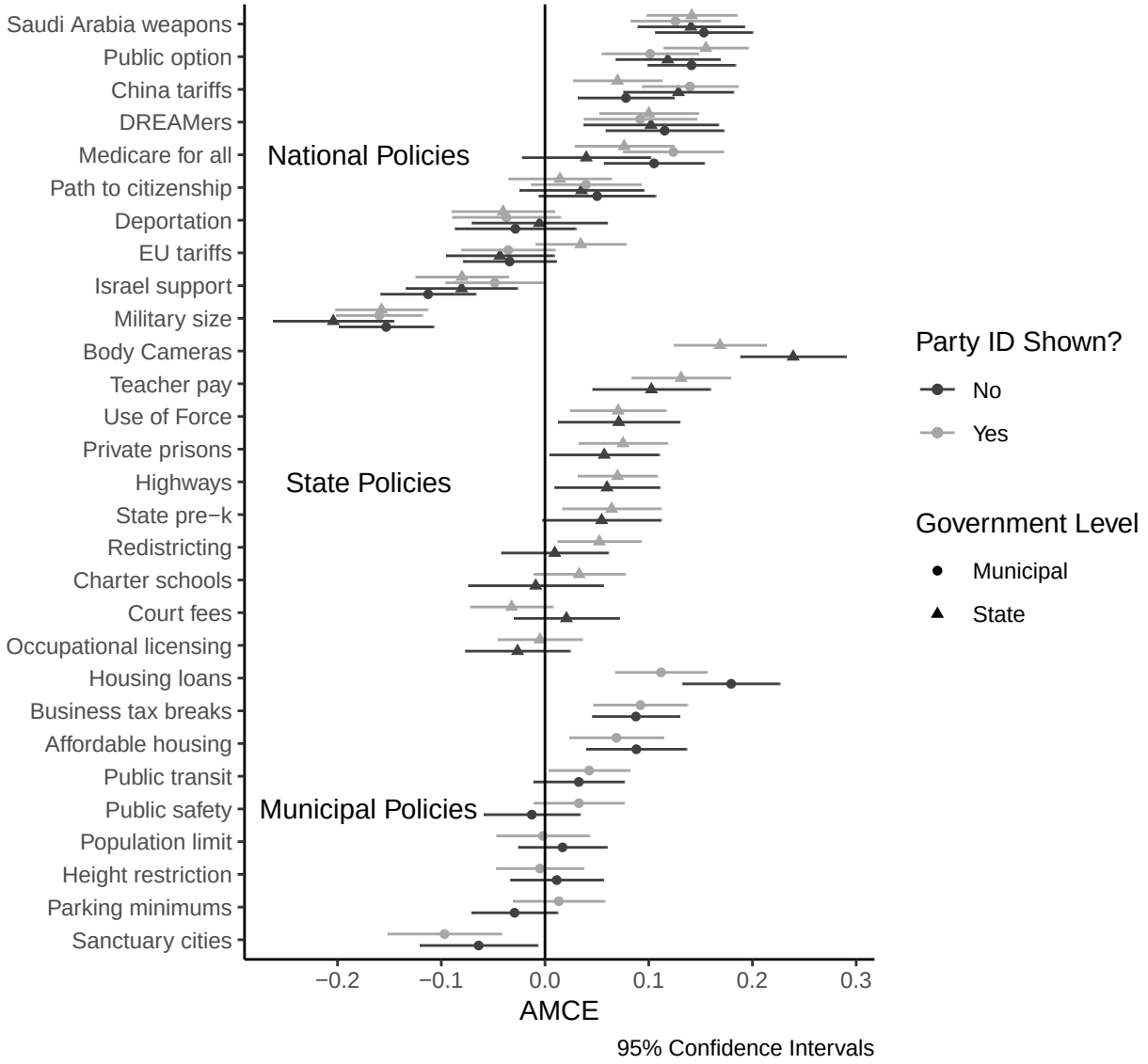

Figure 1: AMCE by Party Condition

3 AMCE conditional on other features

3.1 Party ID

In this section we investigate the AMCE of each policy while subsetting only to respondents with a particular party ID. In effect, this design deals with the concern raised by bimodal preference profiles by recognizing that most bimodal preference profiles emerge when the Democratic and Republican parties have opposite preferences. We present two plots for each party: in order plots for the non-partisan label and partisan label conditions for each of Democrats and Republicans. In all AMCE plots, red lines represent mean AMCE and triangles denote statistical significant ($\alpha = 0.05$) differences between office conditions.

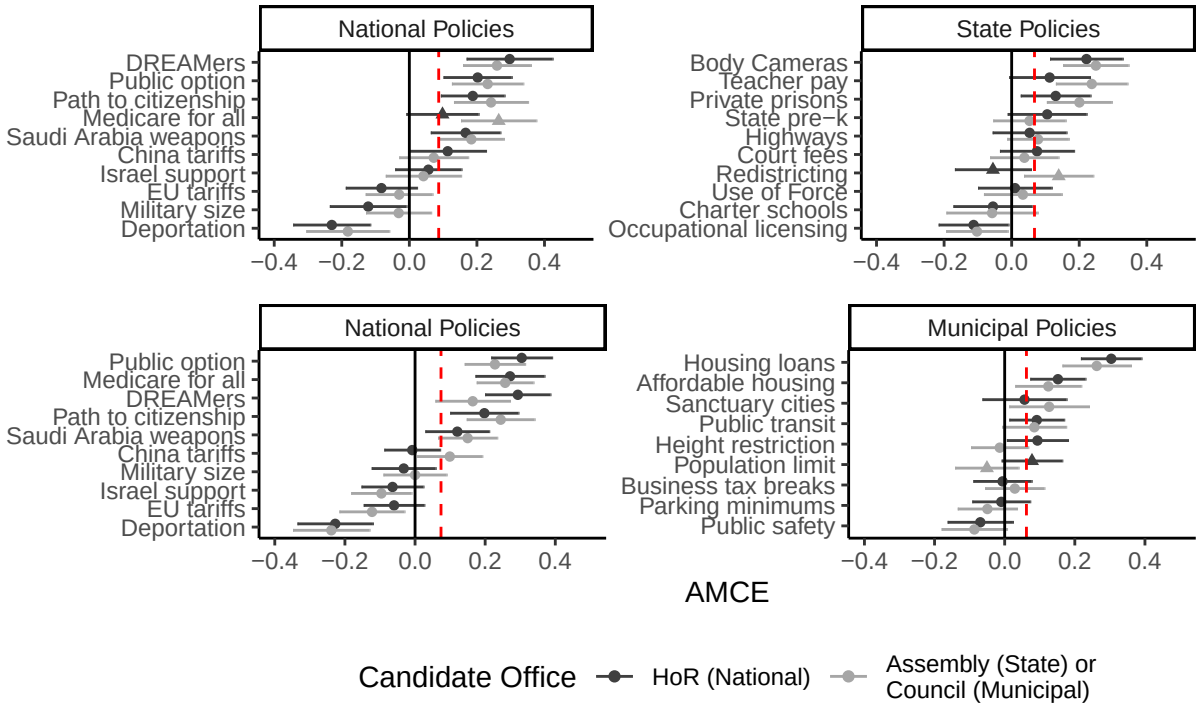

Figure 2: AMCE for Democratic Respondents, No Party Label

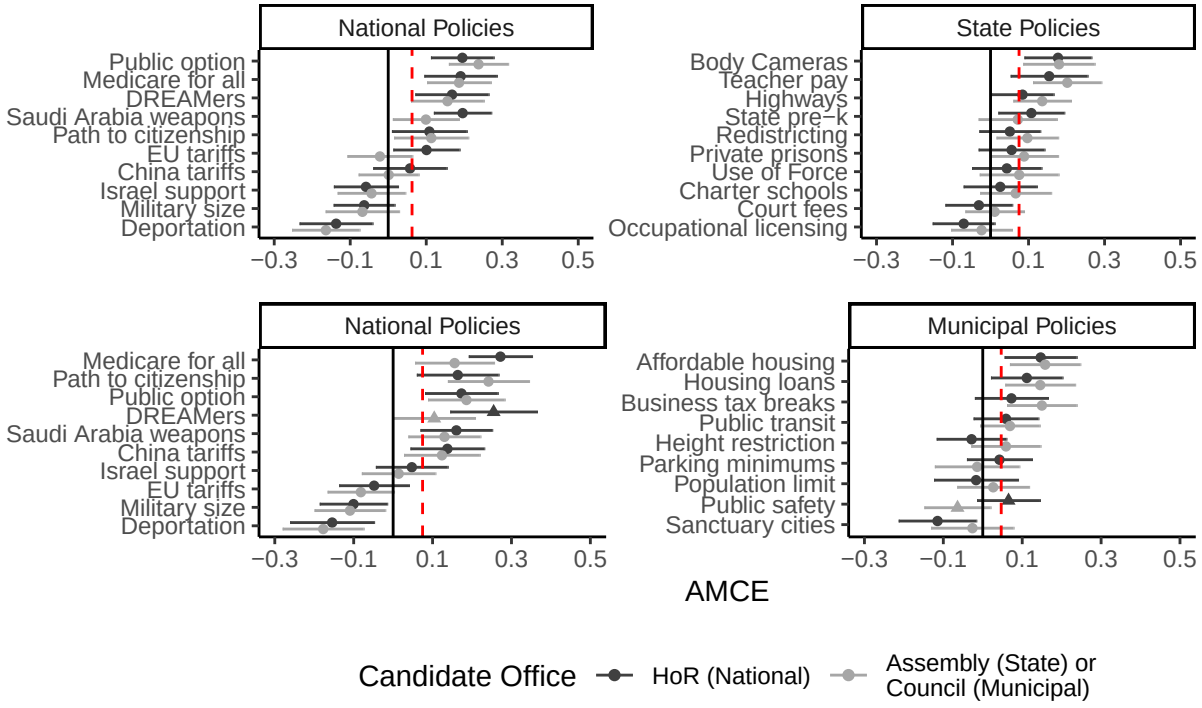

Figure 3: AMCE for Democratic Respondents, Party Label

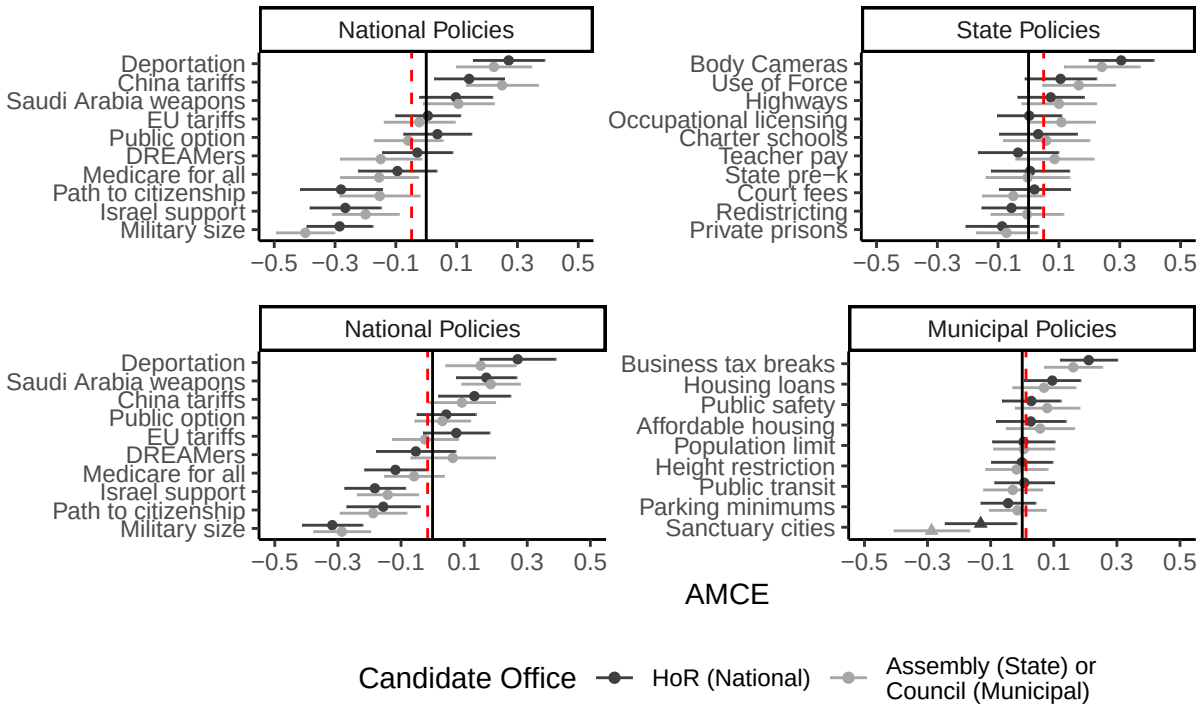

Figure 4: AMCE for Republican Respondents, No Party Label

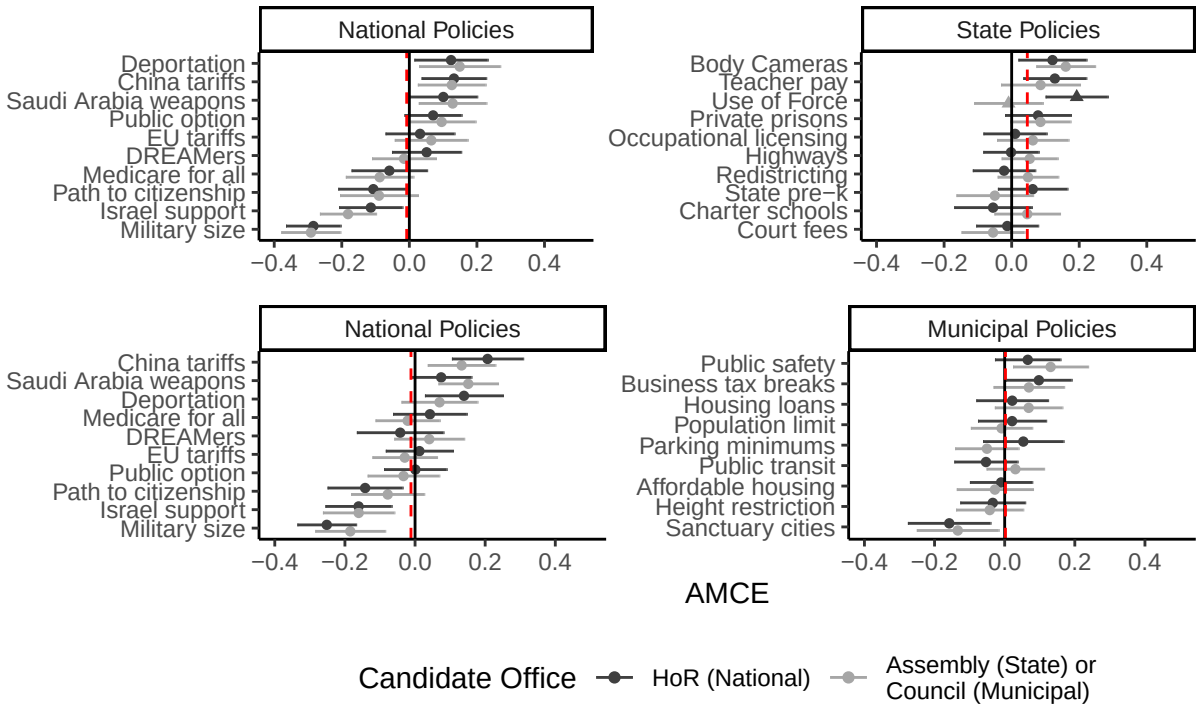

Figure 5: AMCE for Republican Respondents, Party Label

3.2 Agreement and Disagreement

Instead of conditioning AMCE based on whether respondents agree with the setting shown in the conjoint, here we show the AMCE conditional on agreeing with the positive setting of the policy (which can be either conservative or liberal in ideological terms). Similar results occur when conditioning on policy disagreement, but we omit such results here for brevity.

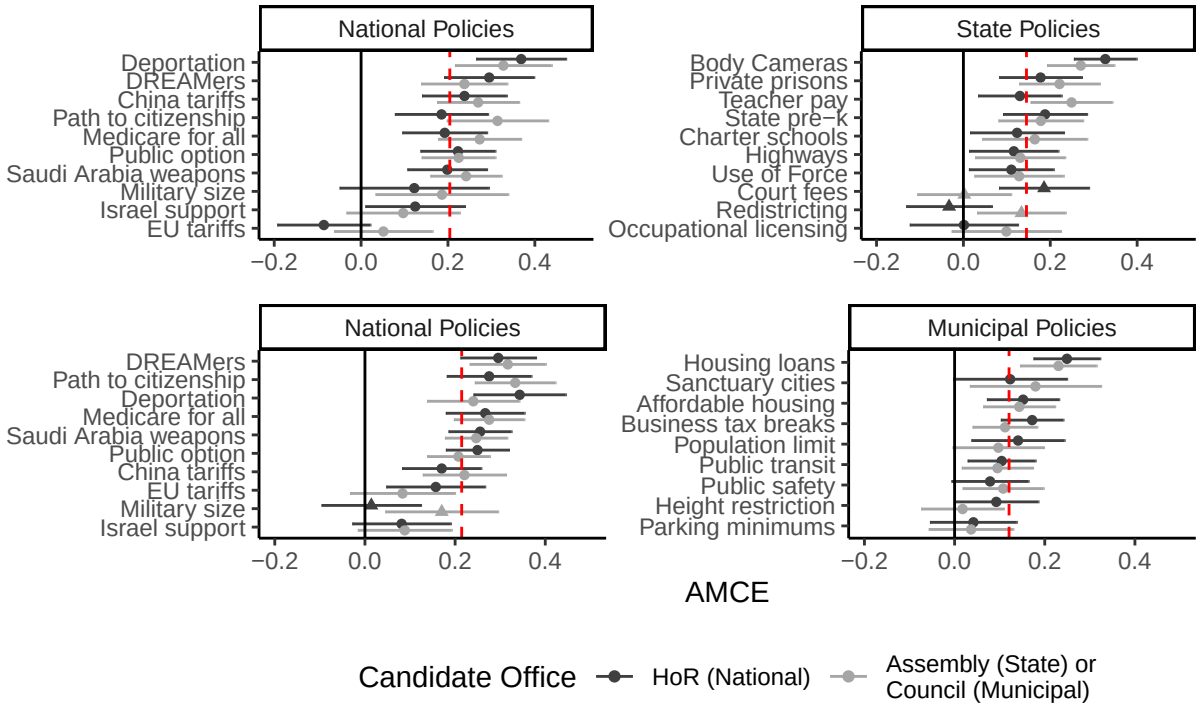

Figure 6: AMCE Conditional on Policy Agreement, No Party Label

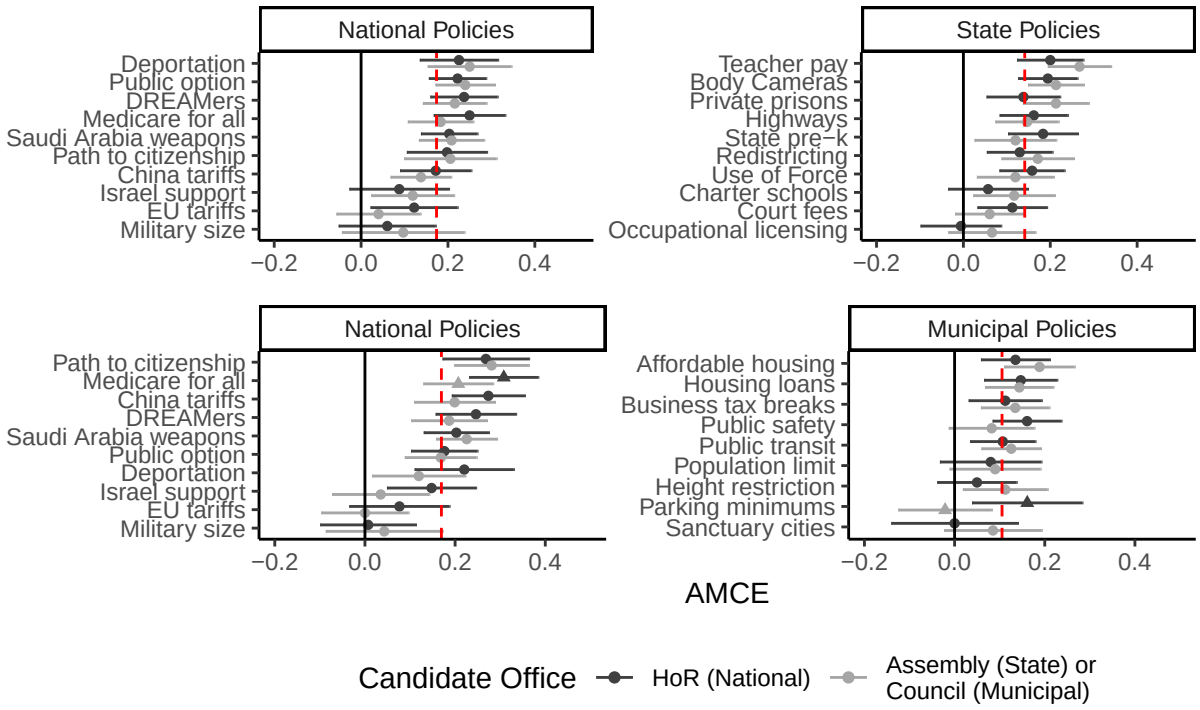

Figure 7: AMCE Conditional on Policy Agreement, Party Label

4 Partisan Attenuation of Policy Effects

In this section we assess how the magnitude of AMCEs change in in the partisan label conditions that reveal a party label to the respondent. In effect, if showing a party label attenuates the effect of the policy, then the policy is serving primarily as a partisan cue for the respondent rather than independent information.

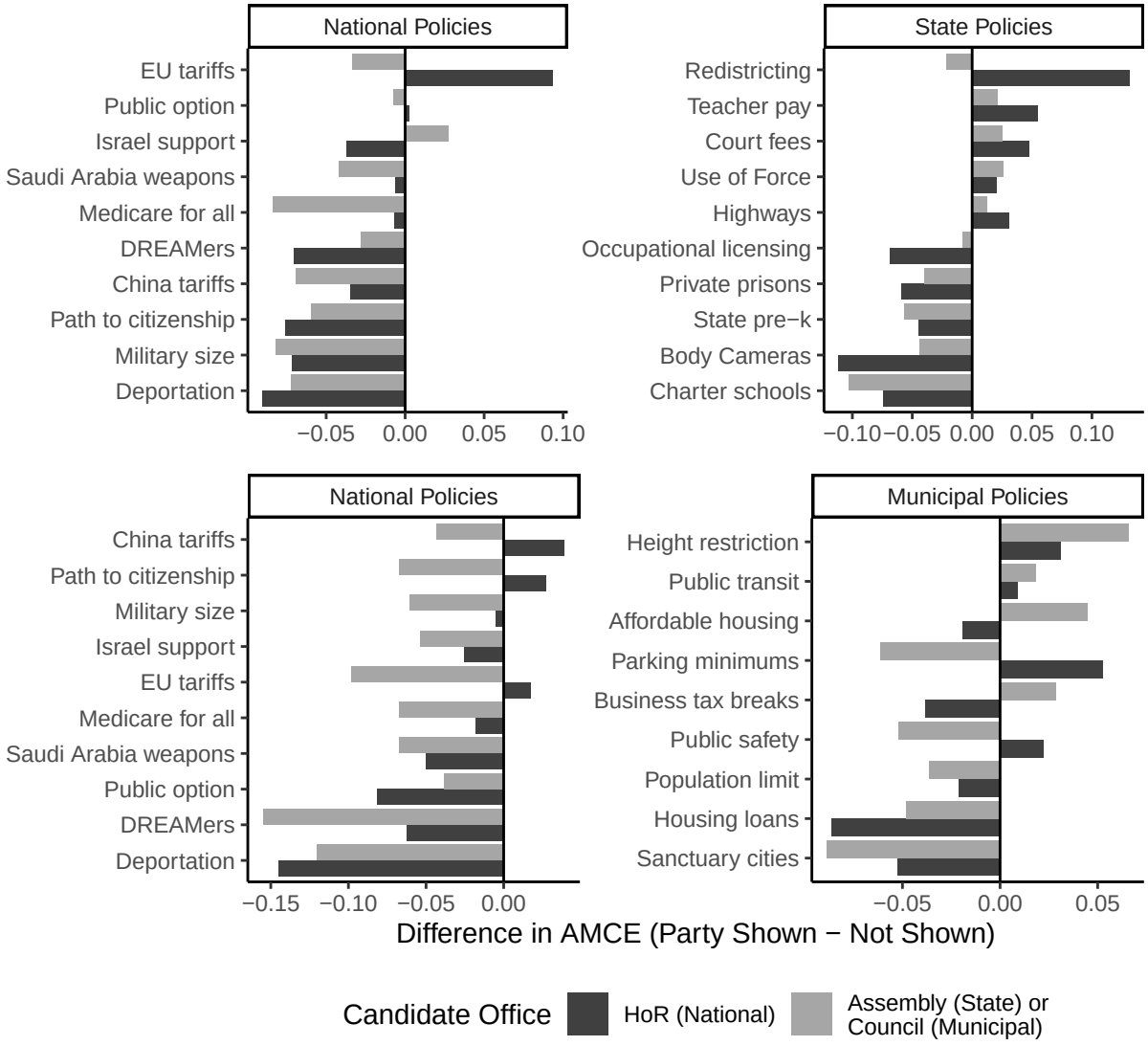

Figure 8: Change in AMCE with Party Label Inclusion

5 Partisan Signal Intensity

5.1 Pooled Results

Here we present a version of Figure 4 where the partisan signal intensity is pooled across conditions, resulting in one estimate per policy rather than one estimate per policy-condition. The results are substantively similar to our preferred specification.

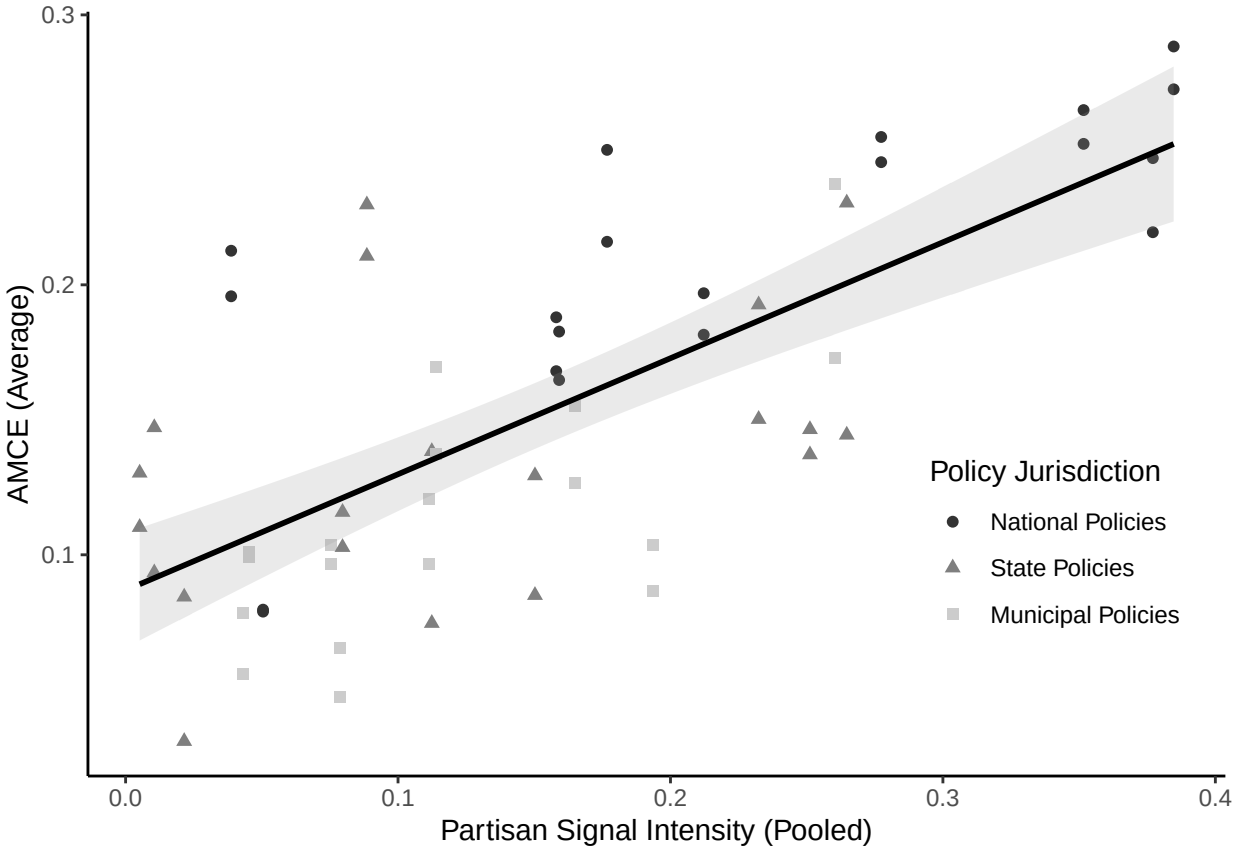

Figure 9: AMCE versus Partisan Signal Intensity, Pooled

5.2 Results by Level and Partisan Conditions

Table 2: Effect of Partisan Signal Intensity on AMCE, by Party and Level Conditions

Party ID Shown?	Government Level Condition	Policy Type	Slope Estimate	Standard Error	p-value
No	state	National Policies	0.4471	0.1172	0.0013
No	state	State Policies	0.1314	0.1377	0.3524
No	municipal	National Policies	0.3394	0.0720	0.0002
No	municipal	Municipal Policies	0.5263	0.1488	0.0027
Yes	state	National Policies	0.3008	0.0739	0.0007
Yes	state	State Policies	0.3407	0.1266	0.0149
Yes	municipal	National Policies	0.2651	0.0865	0.0067
Yes	municipal	Municipal Policies	0.3732	0.1132	0.0046

6 Weighting

6.1 Population Target Weights

LUCID Theorem, our sample provider, uses quota sampling (a non-random sampling procedure) to construct a sample whose marginal attributes match a target population. We further weight respondents to approximate a nationally representative sample (both to eliminate chance imbalances in LUCID's quota filling and to incorporate targets that cannot be supplied as a quota via LUCID's interface). We weight respondents using iterative proportional fitting (raking) (Rudkin 2021). Our population target is the one used in the UCLA + Democracy Fund Nationscape survey, which is based on 2017 ACS 5-year data. These targets in combination with LUCID's sample have been shown to perform comparably to Pew and other national surveys (Holliday et al. 2021). The survey targets are reproduced below, along with a histogram of actual assigned weights.

The choice to adopt such a robust set of weight targets presents a bias-variance tradeoff. In general, including fewer population targets will increase bias (because the resulting sample will differ systematically from the population of interest) while decreasing variance (because weights will be less extreme). The design effect (degree to which variance is inflated) of our the chosen weighting scheme is 2.44 (Kish 1965). A visual diagnostic of extreme weights can be found in Appendix Figure 10 in Supplementary Appendix 6.2. We offer versions of our main result with unweighted respondents in Appendix Figure 11 and note that our findings are unchanged.

Table 3: Respondent Weight Assignment Targets

variable	level	proportion
gender	Male	0.48
gender	Female	0.52
region	Midwest	0.21
region	Northeast	0.18
region	South	0.38
region	West	0.24
hispanic	Not Hispanic	0.84
hispanic	Mexican	0.10
hispanic	Other Hispanic	0.06
race	White	0.74
race	Black	0.12
race	AAPI	0.07
race	Other race	0.07
household_income	$19,999 or less	0.11
household_income	$20,000-$34,999	0.12
household_income	$35,000-$49,999	0.12
household_income	$50,000-$64,999	0.11
household_income	$65,000-$79,999	0.10
household_income	$80,000-$99,999	0.11
household_income	$100,000-$124,999	0.10
household_income	$125,000-$199,999	0.15
household_income	$200,000 and above	0.09
education	No high school diploma	0.12
education	High school diploma	0.27

education	Some college	0.22
education	Associate's degree	0.08
education	Bachelor's degree	0.19
education	Graduate degree	0.11
age	18-23	0.10
age	24-29	0.11
age	30-39	0.17
age	40-49	0.16
age	50-59	0.17
age	60-69	0.15
age	70+	0.13
education_x_gender	Associate's degree x Female	0.05
education_x_gender	Associate's degree x Male	0.04
education_x_gender	Bachelor's degree x Female	0.10
education_x_gender	Bachelor's degree x Male	0.09
education_x_gender	Graduate degree x Female	0.06
education_x_gender	Graduate degree x Male	0.05
education_x_gender	High school diploma x Female	0.14
education_x_gender	High school diploma x Male	0.14
education_x_gender	No high school diploma x Female	0.06
education_x_gender	No high school diploma x Male	0.06
education_x_gender	Some college x Female	0.12
education_x_gender	Some college x Male	0.11
gender_x_race	Female x AAPI	0.04
gender_x_race	Female x Black	0.07
gender_x_race	Female x Other race	0.03
gender_x_race	Female x White	0.38
gender_x_race	Male x AAPI	0.03
gender_x_race	Male x Black	0.05
gender_x_race	Male x Other race	0.03
gender_x_race	Male x White	0.36
race_x_hispanic	AAPI x Mexican	0.00
race_x_hispanic	AAPI x Not Hispanic	0.07
race_x_hispanic	AAPI x Other Hispanic	0.00
race_x_hispanic	Black x Mexican	0.00
race_x_hispanic	Black x Not Hispanic	0.12
race_x_hispanic	Black x Other Hispanic	0.00
race_x_hispanic	Other race x Mexican	0.03
race_x_hispanic	Other race x Not Hispanic	0.02
race_x_hispanic	Other race x Other Hispanic	0.02
race_x_hispanic	White x Mexican	0.06
race_x_hispanic	White x Not Hispanic	0.64
race_x_hispanic	White x Other Hispanic	0.04
race_x_education	AAPI x Associate's degree	0.00
race_x_education	AAPI x Bachelor's degree	0.02
race_x_education	AAPI x Graduate degree	0.01
race_x_education	AAPI x High school diploma	0.01
race_x_education	AAPI x No high school diploma	0.01
race_x_education	AAPI x Some college	0.01
race_x_education	Black x Associate's degree	0.01
race_x_education	Black x Bachelor's degree	0.02
race_x_education	Black x Graduate degree	0.01

race_x_education	Black x High school diploma	0.04
race_x_education	Black x No high school diploma	0.02
race_x_education	Black x Some college	0.03
race_x_education	Other race x Associate's degree	0.00
race_x_education	Other race x Bachelor's degree	0.01
race_x_education	Other race x Graduate degree	0.00
race_x_education	Other race x High school diploma	0.02
race_x_education	Other race x No high school diploma	0.02
race_x_education	Other race x Some college	0.02
race_x_education	White x Associate's degree	0.06
race_x_education	White x Bachelor's degree	0.15
race_x_education	White x Graduate degree	0.09
race_x_education	White x High school diploma	0.20
race_x_education	White x No high school diploma	0.08
race_x_education	White x Some college	0.16
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x Associate's degree	0.01
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x Bachelor's degree	0.01
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x Graduate degree	0.00
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x High school diploma	0.03
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x No high school diploma	0.03
hispanic_x_education	Mexican x Some college	0.02
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x Associate's degree	0.07
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x Bachelor's degree	0.17
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x Graduate degree	0.10
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x High school diploma	0.23
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x No high school diploma	0.07
hispanic_x_education	Not Hispanic x Some college	0.19
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x Associate's degree	0.00
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x Bachelor's degree	0.01
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x Graduate degree	0.00
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x High school diploma	0.02
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x No high school diploma	0.01
hispanic_x_education	Other Hispanic x Some college	0.01

6.2 Distribution of Respondent Weights

Our raked weights are constrained such that the average weight is 1 and the maximum respondent weight is 5. As a result, respondents whose initial inclusion probability is highly divergent from population targets can be forced to high (near-or-at 5) or low (< 0.01) weights.

6.3 Inferential Impact of Weighting Decisions

To what extent, if any, do our results depend on the population targets and methodological choices described above? Hardly at all. Our primary results describe the AMCE of agreeing with *a candidate's randomly assigned position* on vote choice, not on having a particular position. We do not require that both sides of an issue be precisely or accurately measured, only that the error in measuring raw support does not correlate with a respondent's tendency toward nationalization. Confounding would exist if, say, opponents of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants nationalized the issue more than proponents and their weights were mis-estimated in a way that correlates with their opposition or support. Doubtless there

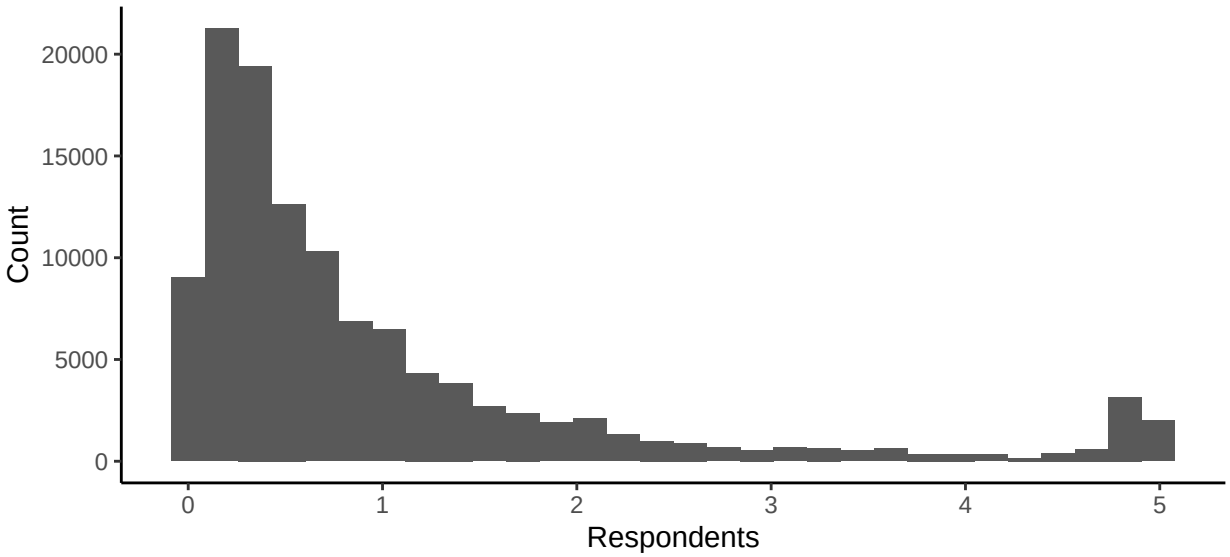

Figure 10: Respondent Weight Assignments

are such imbalances across our sample and the population at large, but we have no *a priori* belief about which direction the asymmetry cuts. Even then, our findings do not rely on any one assigned issue: we would only be vulnerable if national, state, or municipal issues were systematically mis-estimated in this manner. Were that so, an overestimation of national issue salience would exaggerate nationalization hypotheses, and an overestimation of state or local issue salience would attentuate nationalization hypotheses.

Our results which rely on partisan signal intensity, likewise, do not depend on accurate weighting across political parties, only within: to the extent Democrats are weighted too highly in the overall sample but intra-Democratic weights are correct relative to one another, the estimate of the gap between parties will remain accurate because we depend only on relative divisiveness of issues between parties.

Finally, our results place no significance on the exact size of particular AMCEs. As we note in the main text, the exact effect sizes are a function of our design because AMCEs are constrained by the joint distribution of all other AMCEs and the number of attributes varied in the conjoint, since exactly half of all candidates are selected and exactly half are rejected. Rather, our results depend primarily on ordinal comparisons between types of policies.

6.4 Key Result, Unweighted

In this section we provide versions of our key results estimated without survey weights. Because our sample is still a product of a quota-based sampling process, sample characteristics remain close to the target population. We observe that the substantive and statistical significance of the results are unchanged; the results also hold using a reduced set of weight targets which exclude interaction terms (omitted here for brevity).

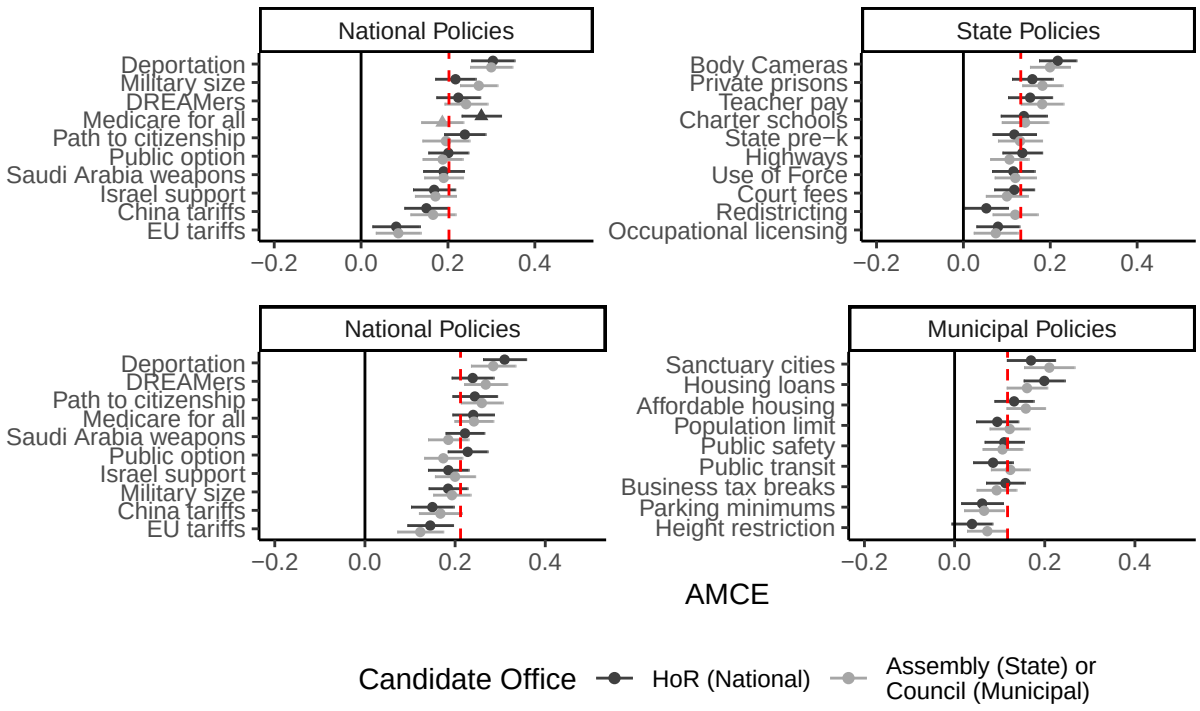

Figure 11: Unweighted version of main AMCE resultl, No Party Labels

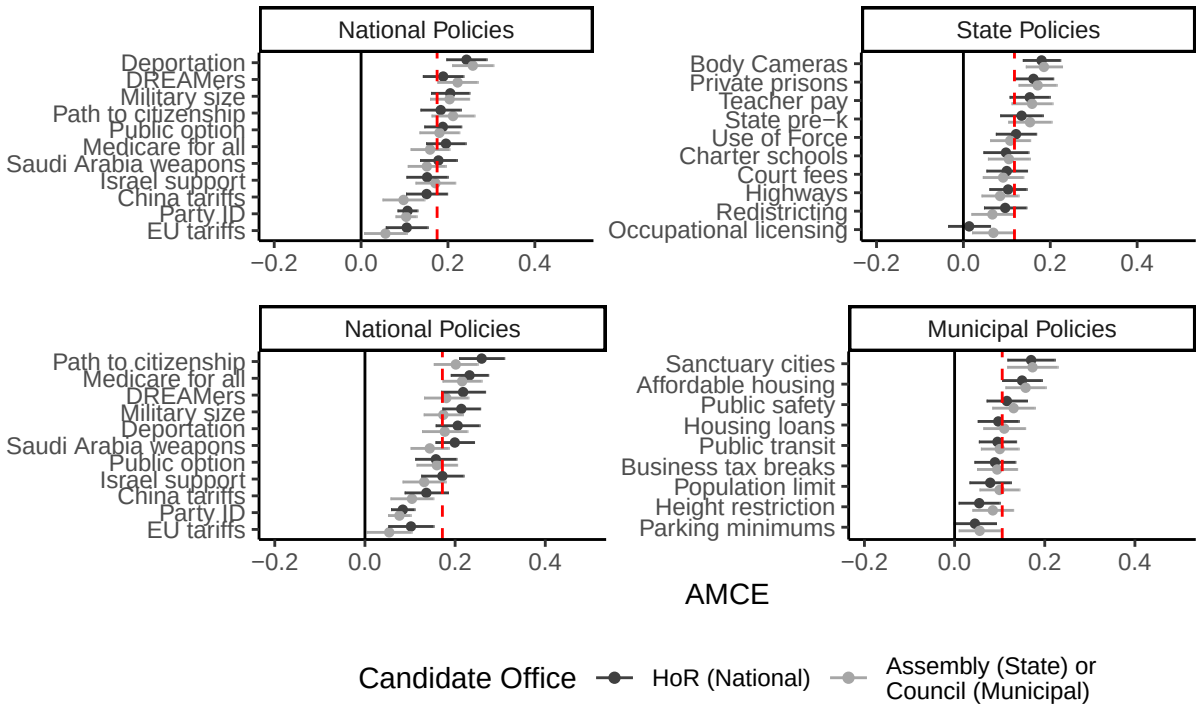

Figure 12: Unweighted version of main AMCE result, Party Labels

7 Conjoint Believability

One concern with conjoint designs is the randomization of attributes creates improbable choice profiles for respondents, which are weighted equally with more externally valid choice profiles (de la Cuesta, Egami, and Imai 2022). While we mitigate the threat of *impossible* combination of policies by restricting randomization such that only one policy per policy area is shown in a choice profile, the improbability of certain attribute combinations poses a threat to our external validity.

We assuage external validity concerns in two ways. First, in the non-partisan condition, we eliminate conjoints where policy settings are preferred by opposite partisan majorities (e.g. where a candidate has one policy position supported by Republicans and not Democrats, and another policy position supported by Democrats and not Republicans) and where those policies are a point of disagreement between candidates. We call this "policy coherence" and explore it in Appendix Figure 13. We measure the partisan leaning of a policy using the reported policy preferences of our full sample.

Second, in waves where the partisan label condition is assigned to show the party ID of the candidate, we eliminate conjoints where the partisan identification of the candidate conflicts with one of the candidate's preferred policy positions; in effect, demanding that all presented candidates have policy positions that reflect their real-world party's preferences. We call this partisan coherence and explore it in Appendix Figure14.

The results remain substantively identical to the main results presented in the paper, though the sharply reduced sample size reduces our statistical power considerably.

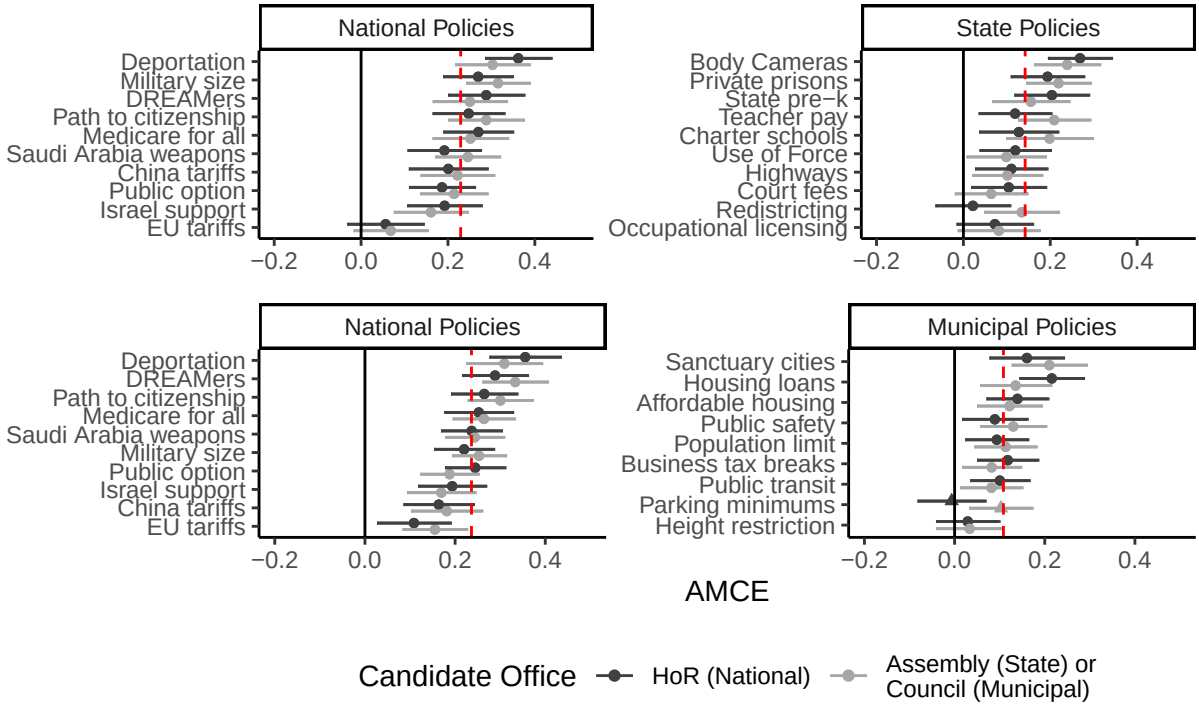

Figure 13: Conditional AMCE, No Policy Mismatch, No Party Label

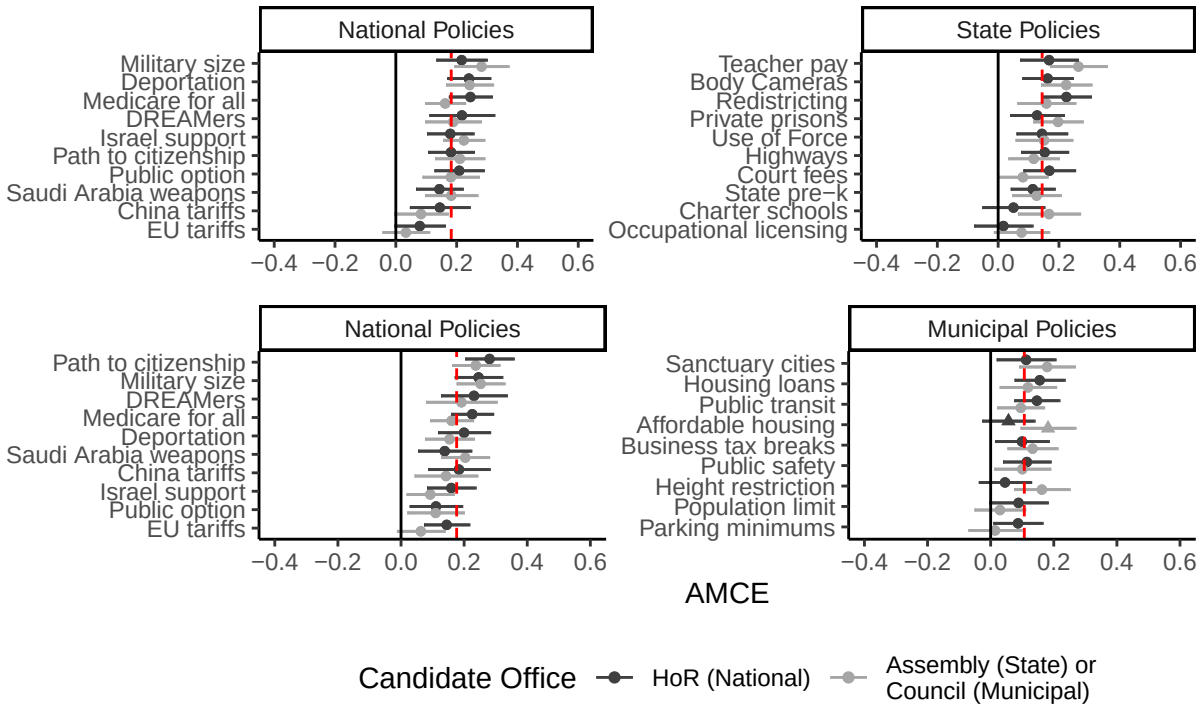

Figure 14: Conditional AMCE, No Party Mismatch, Party Label

8 Equivalence Testing

In this section, we conduct equivalence testing. As discussed in the main paper and in (Hartman and Hidalgo 2018), equivalence testing "inverts" the direction of a traditional null hypothesis test. While a traditional hypothesis test assumes no difference between office conditions, equivalence testing assumes there *is* a difference. Given that assumption, we can determine how large the difference could be given our data. The equivalence ranges shown below give the range of possible difference by office condition for each policy given our results. For example, while our original formulation of the results shows no significant difference between the state and national office conditions for use-of-force training policy, the equivalence testing formulation supports a maximum difference in AMCE of about 0.04. We plot the actual observed differences inside the ranges.[1]

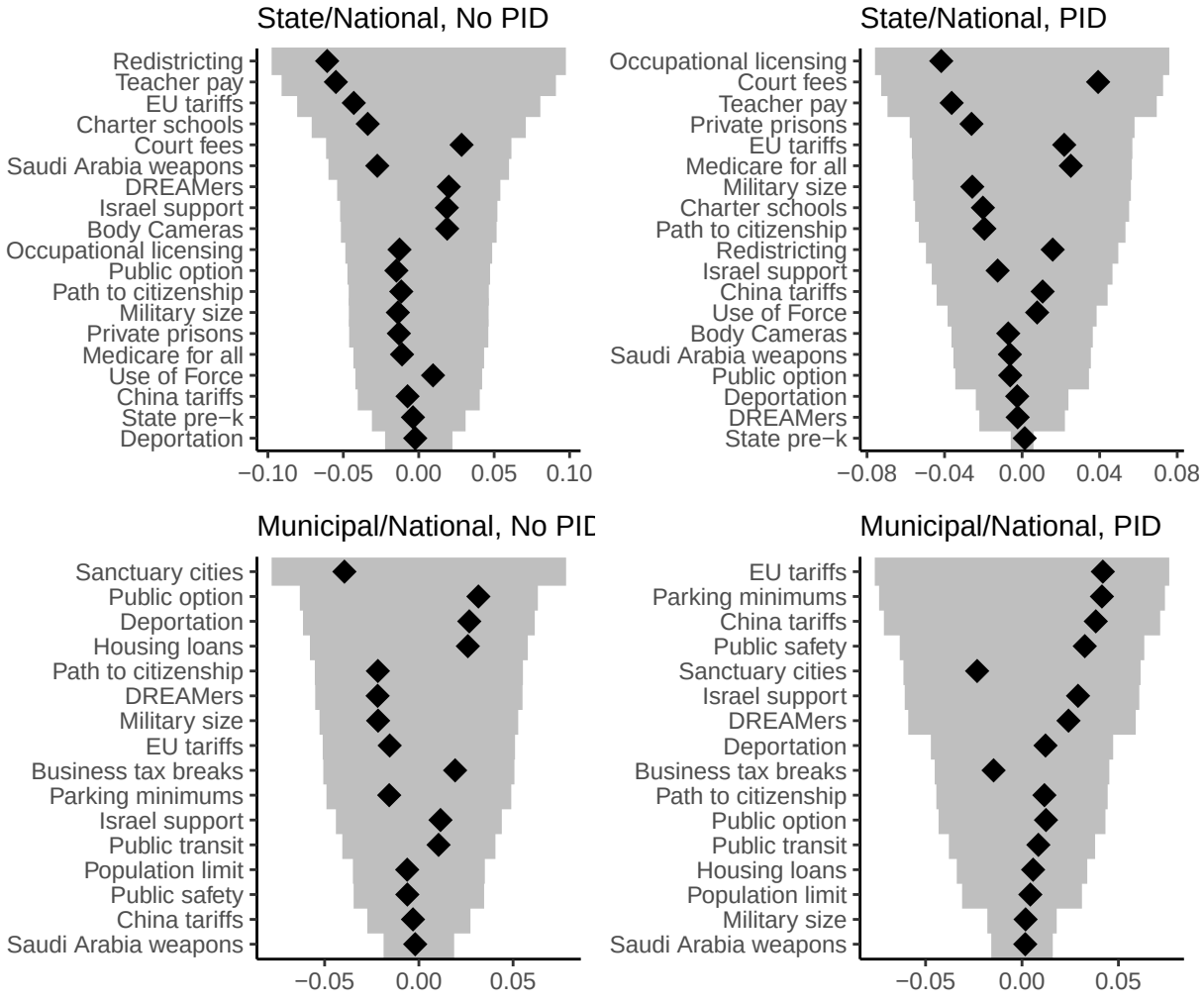

Figure 15: Equivalence Tests of AMCE by Office Condition

[1]Note that some policies (highways, medicare for all, affordable housing, and height restriction) demonstrated such close equivalence that our equivalence testing was unable to estimate any upper bound for an effect. These policies were omitted from the plot.

9 References

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