DC On My Mind: National Considerations in State Political Decisions*

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Abstract

Recent research suggests national-level politics inform state-level voting behavior. To what extent is this process driven by the costs of accessing state-level political information or the relative dominance of national partisan identity? If voters have state-level information, what is that information's relative effect on voting behavior against national-level information? Utilizing conjoint experiments, we identify the relative emphasis voters place on national versus state issue positions in federal and state elections. We find voters use both state and national policy positions in their evaluations of candidates in both state and national contests. The stronger the partisan signal of the policy, the stronger the effect on candidate selection. Our results weigh heavily on discussions of quality representation at the state level as the ideological dimensions of state and national politics converge.

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Introduction

Do voters make state-level electoral decisions based on national political information? An growing body of research suggests state-level elections have become "nationalized." That is, national political actors and issues increasingly influence state and local political activity, a claim supported by an increasing correlation between Presidential and Congressional, Senatorial, and Gubernatorial election results since the 1970s (Hopkins 2018; Sievert and McKee 2019). These findings put substantial pressure on voters' expectations for quality representation in a federal system. Federal institutions are designed to divide power and responsibility between the national and state governments, so if voters treat state elections simply as extensions of national elections, their ability to hold state officials accountable for actions pertinent to state government is strained.

Observational evidence for nationalized political behavior is often measured using correlations in electoral performance between national and state-level candidates of the same party, typically at the county or or state level[1]. These measurement strategies obscure heterogeneity in individual-level behavior. If the partisan contours of state and national policy debates are highly correlated (i.e. people who prefer one party's platform at the national level also prefer the party's state platform), nationalized political outcomes bear little risk for quality representation. In this case, apparent aggregate measures of nationalization reflect the genuine state-level preferences of informed voters rather than from the byproduct of national-level preferences of uninformed voters. To the extent state and national political dimensions aren't independent, national-level issues position can provide voters with useful signals for determining ideological similarity.

In this paper, we use an experimental approach to directly measure how voters make decisions in state and national political contests. We ask respondents to choose between a pair of hypothetical candidates running in a national- or state-level election. Each candidate is represented by a battery of policy positions, which are drawn from national- or state-level issues. Because some policy positions are ostensibly irrelevant to the jurisdiction of the candidate, any effect of their inclusion necessarily come's 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; 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. We find national-level policies have a larger effect on candidate selection in both state and national-level contests. Additionally, the clearer the partisan signal associated with each policy, the greater the effect.

Our findings provide some of the first individual-level causal effects in the nationalization literature and provide more nuance to the potential mechanisms behind nationalized political behavior in the U.S. While

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

nationalized issue positions certainly sway voters, they do not do so at the complete expense of state issue positions. Indeed, even state issue positions have effects for candidates for national office. Our results are consistent with information-seeking behavior in state/national domains where the ideological dimensions are correlated, and are consequential for how we frame discussions of quality representation at the state level.

Nationalized Behavior, Federal System

Research on the nationalization of U.S. politics finds an increasing correlation between presidential and state/local partisan vote shares. 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 has extends beyond election results as well, as many scholars note the behavioral alignment of state and local political elites with their national counterparts. State party platforms have become increasingly homogeneous across state boundaries (Hopkins 2018). State legislative agendas also display signs of homogenization (Burke 2021). Even in local school board elections, Reckhow et al. (2017) find that funding networks have increasingly extended well beyond district and state boundaries. Finally, Das et al. (2021) find striking semantic similarity between tweets from Governors and Congressional representatives.

Media portrayals of gubernatorial campaigns have stressed their "nationalized" content. For example, national media outlets characterized the 2019 gubernatorial races in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi as being nationalized due to Donald Trump's personal involvement in some of the races and an emphasis on impeachment of Trump as a campaign issue (Manchester 2019; J. Martin 2019; Rojas and Alford 2019). Other outlets gave similar appraisals of other races, including Washington in 2016 ("Inslee... was happy to nationalize the governor's race, sounding at many events like he was running against Trump"), West Virginia in 2011 (where the Republican Governor's Association spend $3.5 million in ad buys in an attempt to link the democratic candidate to Obamacare), and Texas in 2010 ("Mr. Perry turned the race into a referendum on federal spending") (Brunner 2016; Catanese 2011; McKinley Jr. 2010). Some Governors have engaged in nationalized rhetoric themselves, with Governor Gavin Newsom of California characterizing supporters of the 2021 recall election as "a partisan, Republican coalition of national Republicans, anti-vaxxers, Q-Anon

conspiracy theorists and anti-immigrant Trump supporters." At the very least, candidates for state office do not feel bound only address or espouse policies, individuals, and organizations exclusive to their own states.

Additionally, behavior-based examples exist of the apparent belief that issue portfolios now span state-federal levels that typically didn't before include. Multiple state Attorneys General have sued the federal government or other states. 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.

A number of mechanisms have been theorized regarding the nationalization of the American electorate, which roughly fall under two (non-mutually exclusive) categories: identity and information. The identity mechanism explains nationalization as an extension of partisanship and polarization; that is, partisanship is an affective, expressive identity, so we should expect voters to vote for their preferred party (or against their non-preferred party) in any context (national, state, or local) 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 the increase in straight-ticket party voting is associated with high levels of out-party antipathy, also known as negative partisanship. Webster (2020) finds a similar association between straight-ticket voting and anger. However, the extent to which voters are willing to make voting decisions purely on party identification may be bounded. Using a conjoint design, 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 partisanship contains information about ideology, it is not a substitute for ideology in the eyes of voters.

The information mechanism proposes that decreasing access to meaningful information about state and local political contests drives increased nationalization. Without specific policy information to evaluate the candidates, voters simply default to the candidate of their preferred party. Hayes and Lawless (2018) note the steep decline in access to local news in the last decade, with a 10% reduction in issue coverage and a 33% reduction in the coverage of candidate traits in U.S. House of Representatives contests between 2010 and 2014. Since 2004, one in five newspapers has closed (Abernathy 2018). This decline in access to local news is associated with increase in nationalized news content and voting behavior (G. J. Martin and McCrain 2019; Moskowitz 2021). The more information voters have besides the party identification of the candidates, the more likely they are to make split-ticket decisions.

Both the identity and information hypotheses stress the importance of voters using available signals, including partisanship and policy stances, to make a judgment on candidate type. Even in the state context,

nationalized signals are not devoid of information on candidate type. 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 largely mirror the left-right contours of national politics (Caughey and Warshaw 2016; Shor and McCarty 2011). Still, nationalized ideological signals may be far from perfect within the sub-national context. 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. (n.d.) find that city council voting has a more multidimensional structure than state and national contexts.

The core concern of the nationalization literature is the pressure the phenomenon puts on political representation under a federal system. While national and state 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). The threat to representation occurs when voters make state-level decisions based on national-level criteria or information, potentially struggling to hold state officials accountable for functions of their offices. If the contours of state and national politics are highly correlated, of course, then voters may be making entirely rational and informed state-level decisions based on national cues. Using aggregated observational data, however, we are unable to distinguish such potentially rational behavior with more uninformed behavior. This means current research falls short of determining whether nationalization has led to greater accountability or misplaced blame.

Previous research on behavior in federal systems is inconclusive regarding voters' abilities to assign functional responsibility to the appropriate level of government. Arceneaux (2005) uses survey data to find that voters do tend to expect policy solutions from the level of government they deem functionally responsible for an issue. Arceneaux (2006) also finds that voters are significantly more likely sanction officials who deviate from their preferred policy positions over which they are functionally responsible, but this effect is constrained to issue attitudes that are publicly prominent. 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. This evaluation of responsibility through a partisan lens extends to disaster relief as well, with partisans blaming failures on non-co-partisans and successes on partisans, regardless of level of government or functional responsibility (Maestas et al. 2008). While this pattern is consistent, it is not entirely fixed; both Democrats and Republicans update their attitudes when given objective information about economic conditions (Malhotra 2008).

To summarize, state political outcomes are now more likely to mirror national political outcomes. Voters seem to use the best signals of candidate type available to them in order to make their decisions, whether that be simply the partisan identification of the candidates or the policy positions they take. Meanwhile,

candidates themselves give nationalized signals to voters. Although these dimensions are correlated, previous research has been unable to determine whether this correlation is sufficient for voters to hold state officials accountable. Add to that the inconsistent ability of voters to correctly attribute blame to offices for their areas of responsibility, and a substantial question arises: how do voters make state-level political decisions in a nationalized context? More specifically, what information do voters use and prioritize when making such decisions?

In answering this question, 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. Because the mechanisms of nationalization occur largely at the individual level, it is important to conduct causal research using individuals as the unit of analysis.

Design

We conduct a survey experiment consisting of a nationally representative and weighted sample (n = 1,377)[2]. Each respondent to the survey is given a series of 10 conjoint (forced-choice) prompts, asking them to choose between two hypothetical candidates for office. In the first 5 conjoint prompts, respondents are asked to choose their preferred candidate for the federal House of Representatives, while in the other 5, respondents are asked to choose their preferred candidate for state assembly. We call these the candidate office condition. Before answering, respondents are prompted with the following preamble:

> 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**]. Some policies are able to be enacted by the state 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**].
>
> 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 20: 10 where the primary responsibility for the policy domain rests with the state government; and 10 where the primary responsibility for the policy domain rests with the federal government. Each policy has one of two settings: an affirmative

[2]The survey was fielded online from August 25-27, 2021. All respondents were recruited via LUCID Theorem, a non-probabilistic quota sample provider. The survey was conducted on the Qualtrics survey platform. All respondents are weighted to reflect a nationally representative sample, the parameters of which are described in Appendix A3.

and a negative setting, for instance "Mandate the use of body cameras for state police" or "Do not mandate the use of body cameras for state police." Both candidates are given the same four policies, but permitted to vary with respect to the setting chosen. 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. A full list of policies and settings are given in Table 1.

Given the random assignment of policies and settings to candidates, a conjoint design allows for a causal interpretation of respondent choice. Model coefficients in these settings are interpretable as the effect of including a given policy alternative in a candidate profile on voter selection (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014).

Three basic constraints are applied to the random selection of policies and attributes: first, every candidate pair must have at least one state policy and at least one federal policy. Thus, every choice set includes a position on an issue relevant to the candidate office condition, and a position that is not ostensibly relevant to the candidate office condition. Second, the candidates must differ by at least one attribute among state policies, and at least one attribute among federal policies. Third, when two policies may create mutual contradiction (e.g. "Deport all undocumented immigrants" and "Create a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants"), only one policy can be chosen.

Our design is purposely built to be a "hard" test for nationalization: respondents are not given party labels, demographic attributes, or any information other than the office the candidates are seeking, their policy positions, and the primary level of government responsible for enacting the relevant policy. We examine how respondents interpret and utilize these signals to select a vote choice.

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, our survey yields 13,642 completed conjoints (27,284 choice sets).

Theoretical Expectations

We previously noted that the nationalization of U.S. politics leaves open a range of possibilities with regard to the quality of representation being achieved. Our design yields a number of potential results consistent with the theoretical mechanisms discussed.

The first potential result is that only national policy positions affect candidate selection, and do so for both office conditions. 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.

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	israel	National	Withdraw military support from the state of Israel	Not withdraw military support from the state of Israel
path_to_citizen	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
tariffs_china	trade	National	Substantially increase tariffs on imports from China	Not substantially increase tariffs on imports from China
tariffs_eu	trade	National	Substantially increase tariffs on imports from the European Union	Not substantially increase tariffs on imports from the European Union
saudi_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
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
occ_licensing	licensing	State	Substantially reduce state occupational licensing requirements for non-medical occupations	Not substantially reduce state occupational licensing requirements for non-medical occupations

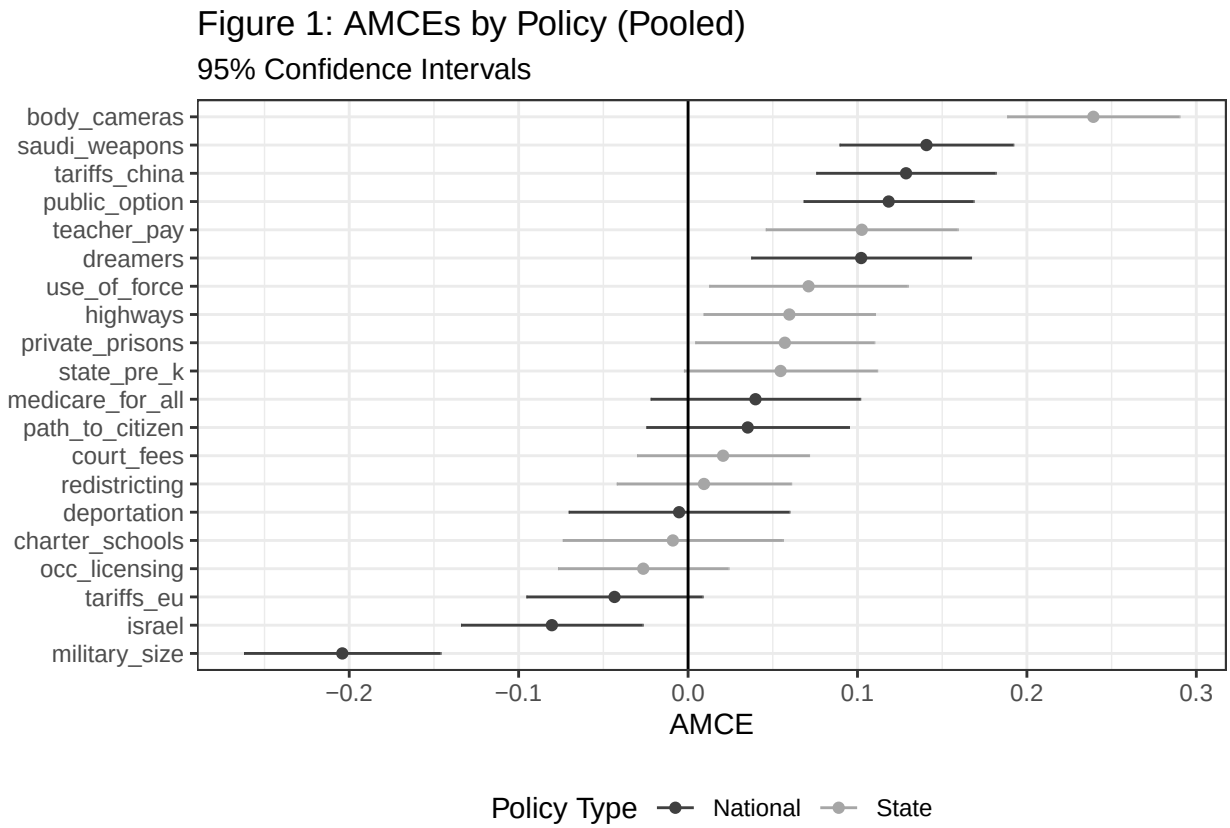
The second potential result is that of the responsible federalist; both the national and state policy effects are significant and comparably large in magnitude, but only for the office condition that matches the origin of the policy. Because respondents are given access to policy information germane to the office they must make a decision for, they are able to discard the non-germane policy information. This would occur if respondents understand and prioritize the functional responsibility of the candidates over certain policy areas.

The final potential result lies somewhere in between the two previously mentioned; both the national and state 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.

Results

We first estimate the average marginal component effect (AMCE) pooled over both candidate office conditions in Figure 1. AMCE are estimated using ordinary least squares regression with standard errors clustered at the respondent level, where AMCE represent the average change in probability of selecting a candidate when that candidate holds that policy position. Positive coefficients indicate respondents are more likely to select candidates with the associated policy position, whereas negative coefficients indicate respondents are less likely to do so. AMCE are bounded between -1 and 1[3]. If respondents randomly chose between the two candidates, the model intercept coefficient would equal 0.5 and the coefficient estimate would be 0. 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.

[3]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, making the probability of not selecting an attribute level greater than 0, and (b) the cumulative total of the effects of other included attributes.



The initial results indicate many policies at both the state and federal level are significant drivers of candidate selection. Mandating the use of body cameras by police officers, for example, is associated with almost a 25% increase in the chance of selecting a candidate with that position. Put differently, candidates who agree that body cameras should be mandated for police officers are selected about 62.5% of the time, whereas candidates that do not are selected roughly 37.5% of the time[4]. Many of the national policy AMCEs are slightly larger in magnitude than the state policy AMCEs, with reducing the size of the U.S. military as the largest national effect[5].

The pooled AMCE hide two important nuances, however. First, do the state and national policies have different effects conditional on the office the hypothetical candidates were contesting? Second, do effects close to zero reflect respondent indifference to the issue or the existence of a bimodal preference distribution, where respondents are highly animated by the presence of the issue position but in opposite directions? We need can disambiguate between these conditions 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

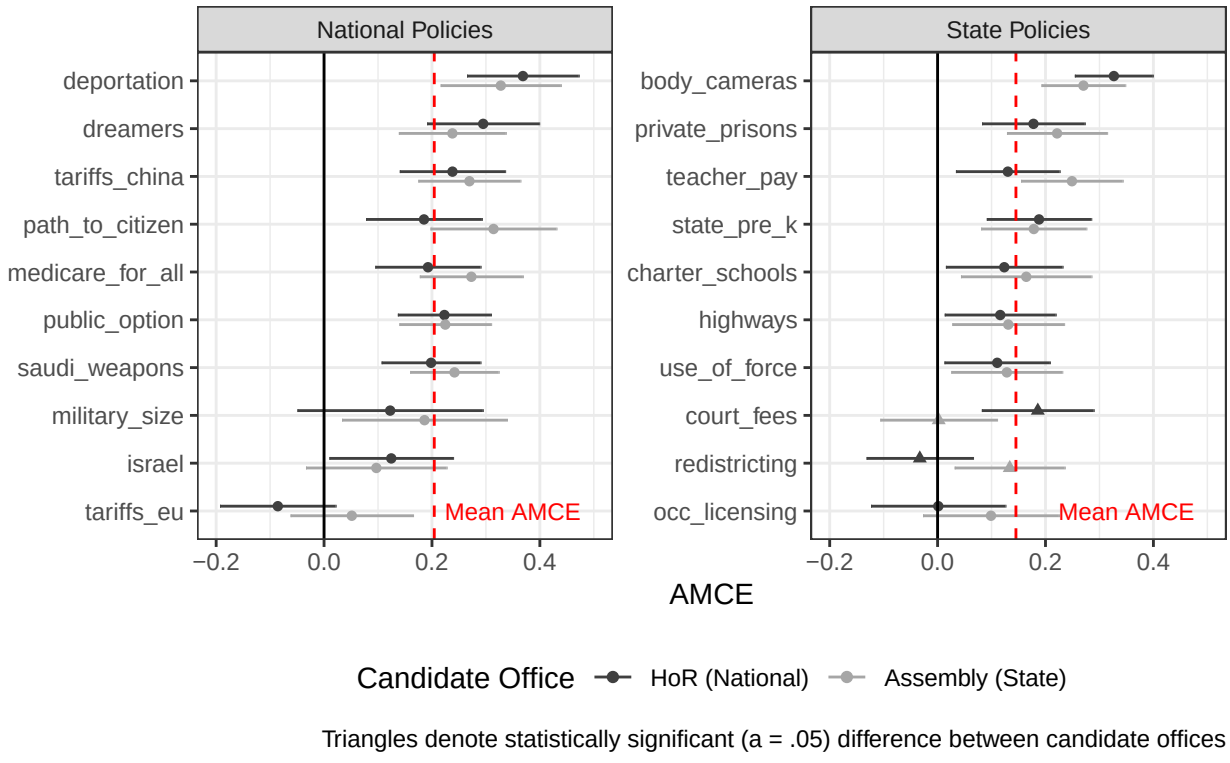
[4]This is the "marginal mean" interpretation of AMCE, which is possible to use in this conjoint design because each attribute (policy) has only two settings (positive/negative), so the reference category being used in the regression for each policy position is the negative setting of the policy (Leeper,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

[5]Note the survey fielding period (August 25-27, 2021) overlapped with the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, which could influence the magnitude of the effect of military size.

Vivyan 2020). Say, for example, 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, our AMCE estimate would be 0 *despite* there being highly intense preferences on the policy. Because this is frequently the case for political items, some researchers condition conjoint results on party identification. Our preferred approach improves on this by directly measuring respondent preference[6]. 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 policy items.

Figure 2: AMCE Conditional on Policy Agreement

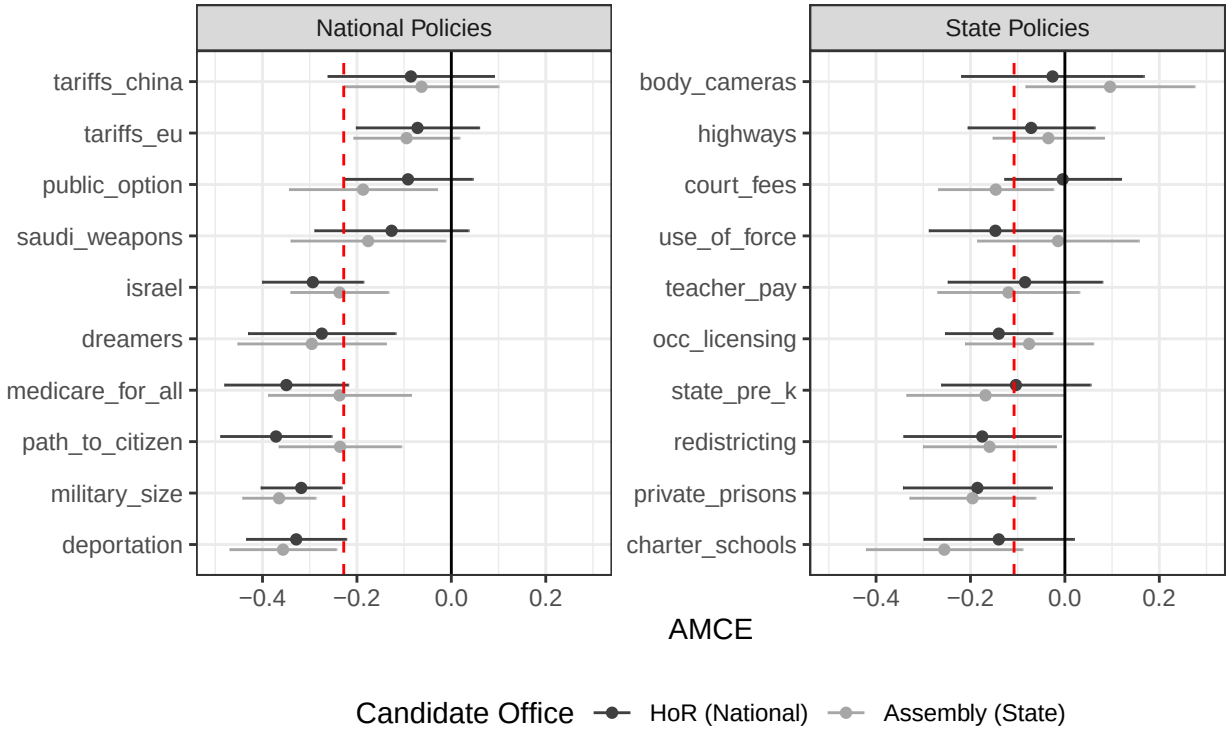
95% Confidence Intervals



[6]See appendix A2 for additional analyses conditioning on party identification rather than direct policy preferences.

Figure 3: AMCE Conditional on Policy Disagreement

95% Confidence Intervals



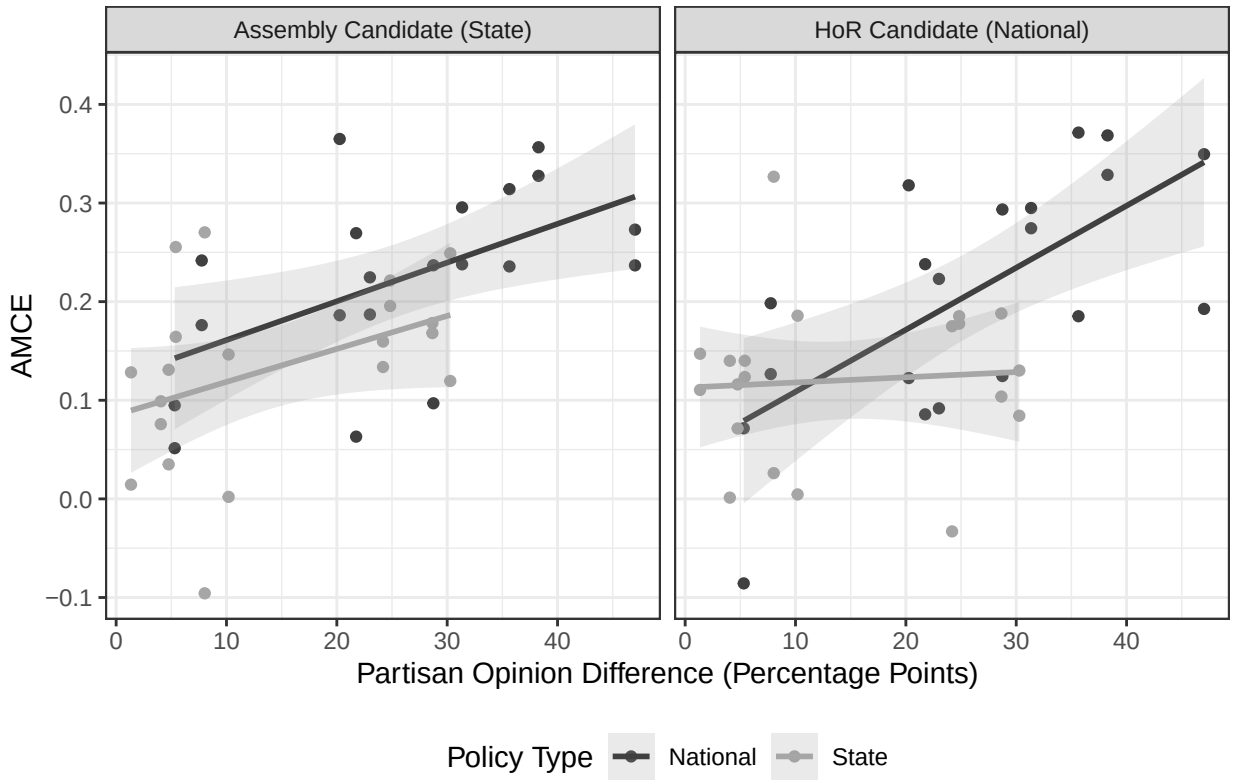
The results of conditioning AMCE on agreement and disagreement while splitting the effect by candidate office are shown in Figures 2 and 3. In all but two cases (eliminating state court fees and creating a non-partisan redistricting commission, conditioned on agreement), there is no significant difference 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 in previous work done on nationalization in U.S. politics, it also leads to a surprising conclusion that many state policy stances also drive voter behavior when selecting candidates for national office. National and state politics are not clearly divided in the minds of voters.

However, we also observe that national policies have larger average AMCE than state policies (indicated by the red dashed lines in Figures 2 and 3). So while voters may not have different evaluations for candidates competing for state versus national offices for any given policy, the effect of a national policy on voter decision-making is greater than the effect of state policy. This is especially clear when conditioning on policy disagreement. The AMCE for state policies in Figure 3 are often small and/or insignificant, while the AMCE for national policies are often twice as large. Another potential explanation for the difference in AMCE is simply that national policy issues are more salient, familiar, or exciting for voters. While we

attempt to select 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.

Our results thus far suggest 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 on 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.

Figure 4: AMCE by Partisan Opinion Difference



We investigate this conjecture in Figure 4. Using our data on simple policy agreement collected prior to the conjoint portion of the survey, we construct a measure of partisan signal intensity by taking the absolute value of the difference in the percentage of Democrats and Republicans that agree with the policy[7]. The greater the difference, the more polarized partisans are on the policy and the more easily respondents are to identify the policy with its position on the ideological spectrum. We then plot the partisan signal intensity

[7]We gather 7-point respondent party-identification and collapse to 3-point to identify Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in our sample.

against the AMCE from Figures 3 and 4 (inverting the sign of the AMCE conditional on disagreement), splitting by candidate office.

The results of our analysis in Figure 4 suggest the stronger the partisan signal, the greater effect the policy has on candidate selection, supporting the nationalization hypothesis. This pattern persists across both candidate offices manipulated in the conjoint experiment, suggesting the partisan signal is no less useful in the state context as it is in the national contest. We also see a slight difference in the relationship between partisan signal and AMCE conditional on the policy type. For candidates contesting national office, the partisan intensity of the signal from state policies had no impact on the effect of the policy on candidate choice. However, for candidates contesting state office, there is a slight positive effect of partisan intensity on AMCE. In future work, we hope to test a wider battery of policies on a larger sample to resolve this uncertainty. Provisionally, the results indicate respondents may rely more on partisan signaling from all policy types in the state context but get sufficient information from national policies in the national context.

Discussion

In combination, our results suggest a more nuanced picture of nationalized behavior than has previously been articulated by the nationalization literature, which is made possible with our ability to leverage an experimental design at the individual level. Almost all policy signals, regardless of jurisdictional providence 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.

On average, national policy positions have greater effects on voter behavior than state 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. We purposefully omit explicit party identification in our design to test the strength of policy signals in isolation, but voters often do have access to party labels when making decisions at the state level[8]. Additionally, 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). Further experimentation with the

[8]There are exceptions, however, where party labels are either not available or not distinguishing information, such as primary elections, non-partisan state offices, or run-offs between candidates of the same party.

randomization of different attributes is necessary. Finally, 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 (Cuesta, Egami, and Imai forthcoming). We need to evaluate this possibility further in our data.

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 which 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 dubious. Thus, our results speak to a larger literature of state 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.

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Appendix

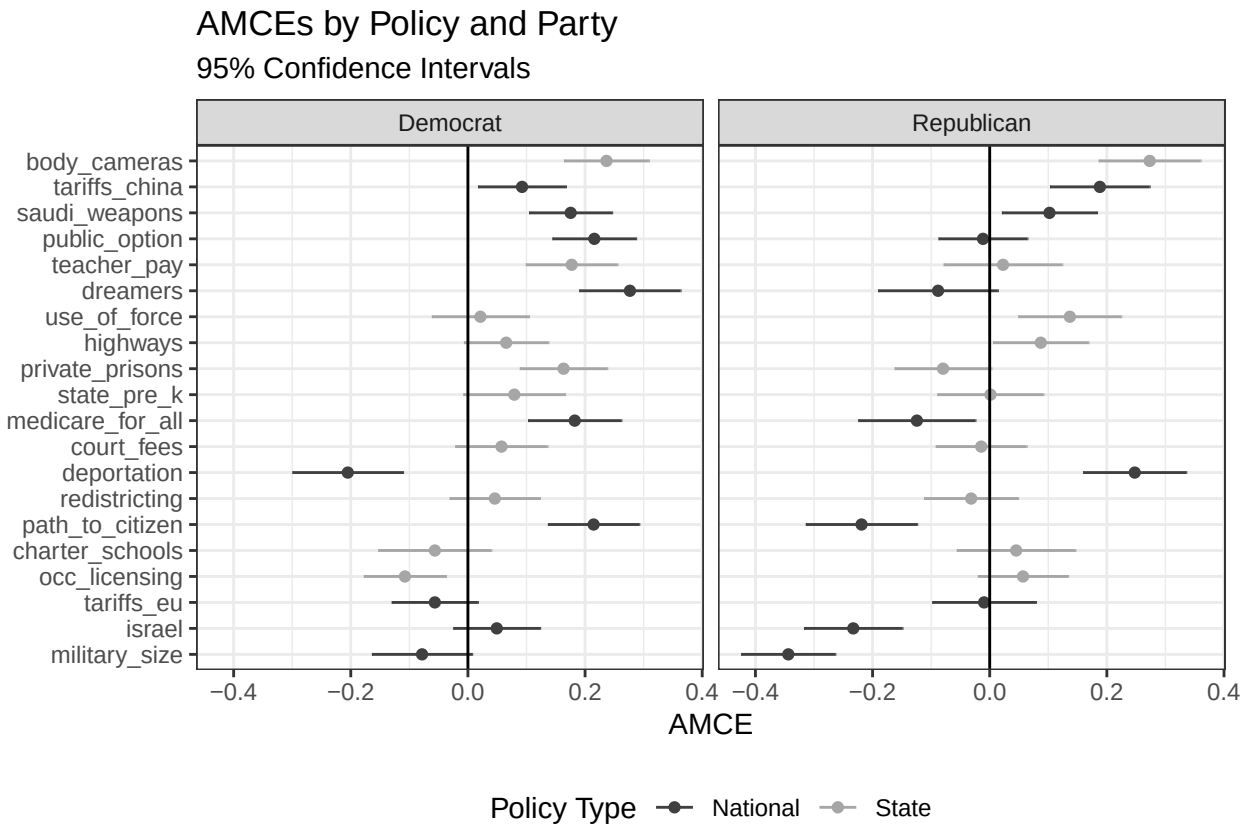
A1: Policy Item Agreement/Disagreement

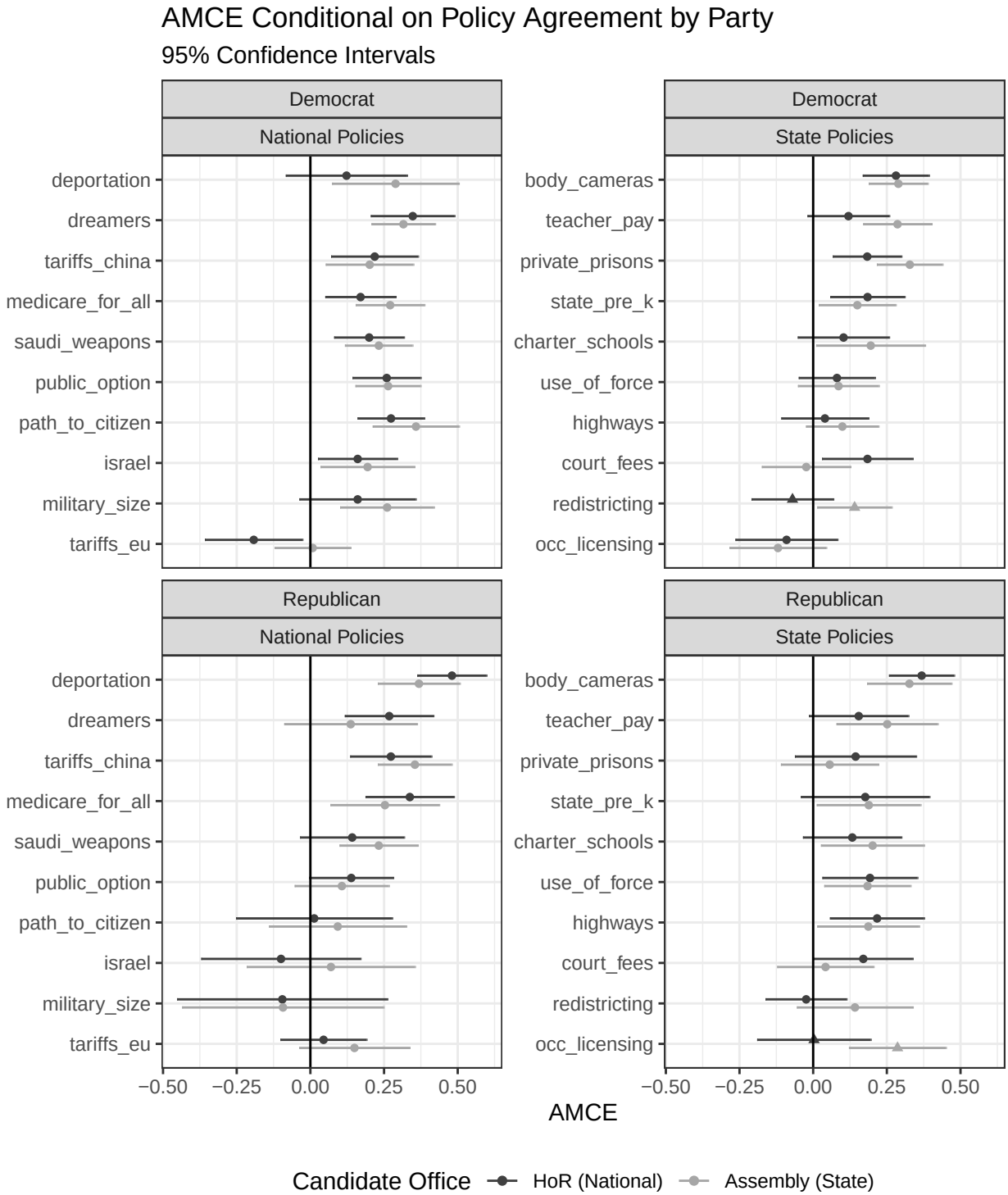
Table 2: Policy Agreement/Disagreement

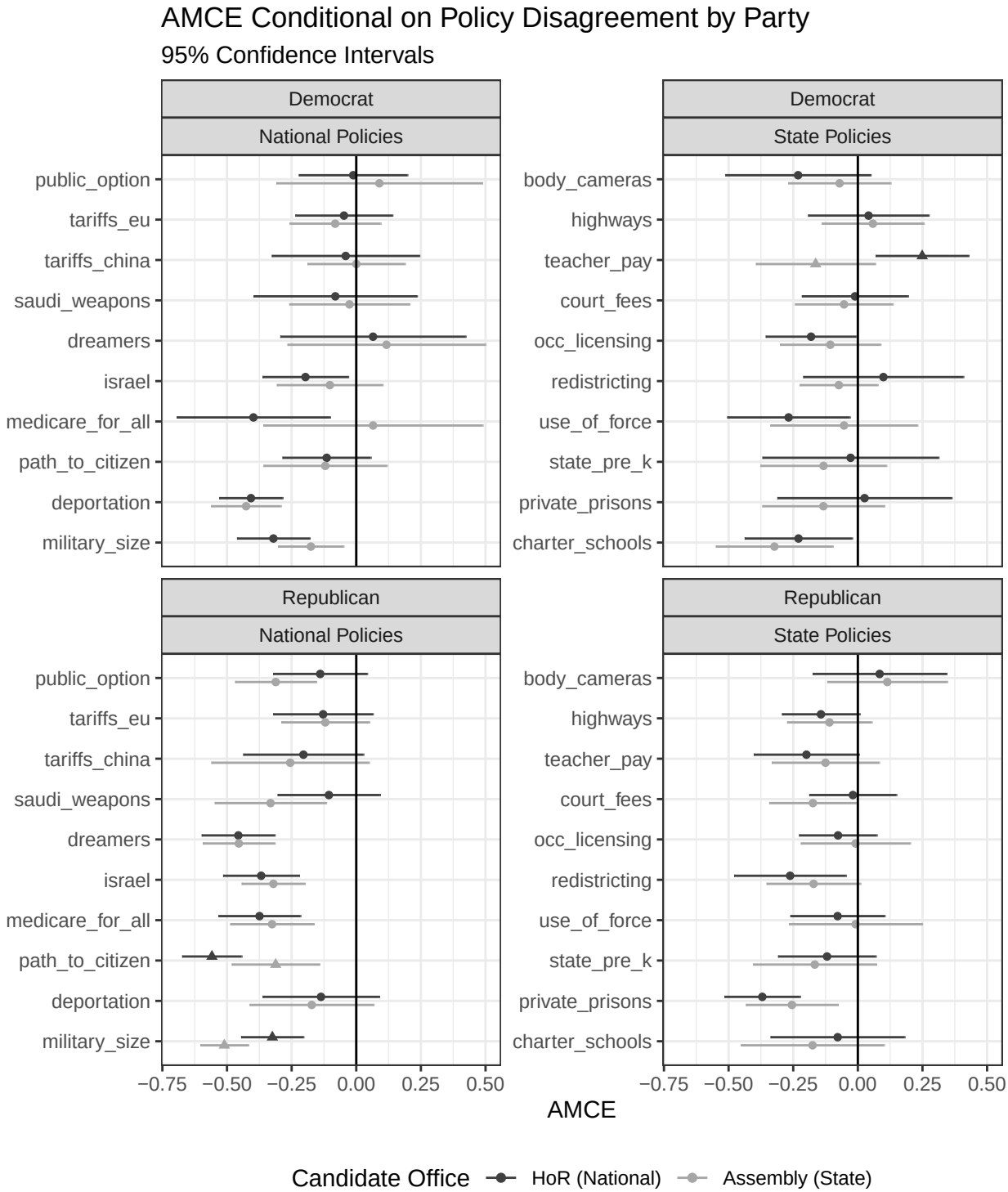
Policy (National)	PID	Agree	Disagree	DK	Policy (State)	PID	Agree	Disagree	DK
military_size	Overall	23.6	62.1	14.3	teacher_pay	Overall	64.5	21.6	13.9
military_size	Democrat	33.5	52.8	13.8	teacher_pay	Democrat	78.9	11.2	9.8
military_size	Independent	19.1	47.7	33.1	teacher_pay	Independent	61.0	11.9	27.1
military_size	Republican	13.2	77.7	9.0	teacher_pay	Republican	48.7	36.9	14.4
israel	Overall	35.8	39.8	24.4	state_pre_k	Overall	54.5	28.3	17.2
israel	Democrat	49.3	26.8	23.9	state_pre_k	Democrat	67.6	17.2	15.3
israel	Independent	33.2	27.6	39.3	state_pre_k	Independent	54.2	17.4	28.5
israel	Republican	20.5	59.0	20.4	state_pre_k	Republican	38.9	45.2	15.9
path_to_citizen	Overall	50.7	35.1	14.3	charter_schools	Overall	48.9	31.2	19.9
path_to_citizen	Democrat	69.1	18.0	13.0	charter_schools	Democrat	47.4	33.9	18.8
path_to_citizen	Independent	36.0	34.0	30.0	charter_schools	Independent	42.3	28.9	28.8
path_to_citizen	Republican	33.4	55.9	10.7	charter_schools	Republican	52.8	28.7	18.5
dreamers	Overall	64.6	25.7	9.7	private_prisons	Overall	53.5	22.9	23.6
dreamers	Democrat	80.0	11.7	8.3	private_prisons	Democrat	66.9	14.6	18.5
dreamers	Independent	56.7	23.1	20.1	private_prisons	Independent	38.6	19.4	42.0
dreamers	Republican	48.7	43.2	8.1	private_prisons	Republican	42.1	33.9	23.9
deportation	Overall	43.7	41.2	15.2	court_fees	Overall	44.2	31.8	24.0
deportation	Democrat	27.2	60.1	12.6	court_fees	Democrat	49.2	26.5	24.4
deportation	Independent	36.7	30.6	32.7	court_fees	Independent	42.0	27.0	31.0
deportation	Republican	65.5	21.8	12.6	court_fees	Republican	39.0	39.6	21.4
tariffs_china	Overall	53.5	22.3	24.2	body_cameras	Overall	77.9	13.1	9.1
tariffs_china	Democrat	45.3	27.7	27.0	body_cameras	Democrat	83.3	9.0	7.7
tariffs_china	Independent	41.6	17.0	41.4	body_cameras	Independent	65.8	9.1	25.2
tariffs_china	Republican	67.0	17.5	15.5	body_cameras	Republican	75.3	19.2	5.5
tariffs_eu	Overall	37.7	32.1	30.2	use_of_force	Overall	60.2	23.6	16.2
tariffs_eu	Democrat	36.4	31.7	31.9	use_of_force	Democrat	61.2	22.5	16.3
tariffs_eu	Independent	30.2	24.3	45.6	use_of_force	Independent	49.7	16.3	34.0
tariffs_eu	Republican	41.7	34.9	23.4	use_of_force	Republican	62.5	27.2	10.2
saudi_weapons	Overall	68.7	15.7	15.7	highways	Overall	53.9	29.4	16.7
saudi_weapons	Democrat	73.8	14.2	12.0	highways	Democrat	57.5	27.8	14.6
saudi_weapons	Independent	57.6	8.1	34.2	highways	Independent	43.9	26.0	30.1
saudi_weapons	Republican	66.0	19.8	14.2	highways	Republican	52.8	32.3	14.9

medicare_for_all	Overall	57.2	29.5	13.2	redistricting	Overall	52.4	18.5	29.1
medicare_for_all	Democrat	80.5	9.0	10.6	redistricting	Democrat	65.5	8.8	25.6
medicare_for_all	Independent	44.6	25.5	29.9	redistricting	Independent	37.8	18.3	44.0
medicare_for_all	Republican	33.4	55.4	11.1	redistricting	Republican	41.3	30.1	28.5
public_option	Overall	66.1	19.9	14.0	occ_licensing	Overall	36.6	31.2	32.3
public_option	Democrat	78.2	11.7	10.1	occ_licensing	Democrat	35.7	32.0	32.3
public_option	Independent	54.4	13.2	32.4	occ_licensing	Independent	29.6	26.0	44.4
public_option	Republican	55.2	31.8	13.0	occ_licensing	Republican	39.8	31.8	28.4

A2: Effects by Party Identification




AMCE Conditional on Policy Agreement by Party
95% Confidence Intervals
Democrat
National Policies
deportation
dreamers
tariffs_china
medicare_for_all
saudi_weapons
public_option
path_to_citizen
israel
military_size
tariffs_eu
Democrat
State Policies
body_cameras
teacher_pay
private_prisons
state_pre_k
charter_schools
use_of_force
highways
court_fees
redistricting
occ_licensing
Republican
National Policies
deportation
dreamers
tariffs_china
medicare_for_all
saudi_weapons
public_option
path_to_citizen
israel
military_size
tariffs_eu
Republican
State Policies
body_cameras
teacher_pay
private_prisons
state_pre_k
charter_schools
use_of_force
highways
court_fees
redistricting
occ_licensing
−0.50
−0.25
0.00
0.25
0.50
AMCE
Candidate Office
HoR (National)
Assembly (State)
Triangles denote statistically significant (a = .05) difference between candidate offices


AMCE Conditional on Policy Disagreement by Party
95% Confidence Intervals
Democrat
National Policies
public_option
tariffs_eu
tariffs_china
saudi_weapons
dreamers
israel
medicare_for_all
path_to_citizen
deportation
military_size
Democrat
State Policies
body_cameras
highways
teacher_pay
court_fees
occ_licensing
redistricting
use_of_force
state_pre_k
private_prisons
charter_schools
Republican
National Policies
Republican
State Policies
−0.75
−0.50
−0.25
0.00
0.25
0.50
AMCE
Candidate Office
HoR (National)
Assembly (State)
Triangles denote statistically significant (a = .05) difference between candidate offices

A3: Survey Weighting

UCID Theorem 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, using iterative proportional fitting (raking) (Rudkin 2021). We target the population benchmark 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 (Tausanovitch et al. 2019). The survey targets are reproduced below, along with a histogram of survey weight assignments.

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