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Essays On Democratic Erosion And Autocratic Consolidation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Shane Xinyang Xuan

Committee in charge:

Professor John Ahlquist, Co-Chair
Professor Stephan Haggard, Co-Chair
Professor Margaret Roberts, Co-Chair
Professor Simeon Nichter
Professor Nico Ravanilla
Professor Victor Shih

2022

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The dissertation of Shane Xinyang Xuan is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2022

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Chapter 2, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Xuan, Shane Xinyang; Xu, Yiqing. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this chapter.

Chapter 4, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Xuan, Shane Xinyang; Ravanilla, Nico. The dissertation author was the primary

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Essays On Democratic Erosion And Autocratic Consolidation

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California San Diego, 2022

Professor John Ahlquist, Co-Chair
Professor Stephan Haggard, Co-Chair
Professor Margaret Roberts, Co-Chair

The manuscript contains three essays on democratic erosion and autocratic consolidation. In the first paper, I propose a methodology to solicit preference over sensitive topics and validate it in a hard case (China). I show that policy preference in China is well configured, as I observe single peaked preferences over several policy domains. All else equal, citizens in China display a distaste toward recent autocratization within the country (e.g. removal of the President's term limits), and are willing to sacrifice their preferred policy in exchange for more constraints on the politicians. However, term limit

is a polarizing issue among the citizens. While removal of term limits for the President causes concerns for certain citizens, it is not a concern to regime hardliners.

In the second paper, I explore how citizens perceive democratic erosion in a developing democracy. I show that when events related to democratic erosion happen, citizens are more concerned if the event is immediately consequential to how democracy operates in the daily life. In the context of the Philippines, citizens are more concerned if the President endorses vote buying, or allows political dynasty. However, events such as court packing are less likely to raise the alarm bell for the public. I also find that proregime respondents display less concern over incidents related to democratic erosion, and citizens' decision to hold the incumbent accountable is moderated by contextual factors such as the unemployment rate.

The third paper zooms in on one particular anti-democratic practice, vote buying, because it is perhaps one of the more obvious attacks on democratic norms. Using a field experiment in the Philippine local elections, I show that an anti-vote buying campaign targeted at the politicians has limited effects on vote buying incidents, but it results in downstream impact on electoral outcomes and voter turnout. I couple this finding with a survey experiment, in which I find that citizens do not punish candidates who buy votes, so long as they can deliver public goods. Because citizens do not punish politicians who disrespect democratic norms, politicians have limited incentive to tie their hands and reduce vote buying.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Motivation

The election of Donald Trump sparked a growing interest in democratic backsliding in relatively consolidated democracies (Haggard and Kaufman, 2021; Kaufman and Haggard, 2018; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Mounk, 2018; Waldner and Lust, 2018; Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg, 2017; Norris, 2017). In fact, over 20 countries have experienced autocratization in the past decade, affecting about one third of the world's population (Lührmann et al., 2018). As cases of democratic backsliding increased in the past decade, some scholars argue that the world is in a "third wave of autocratization" (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019).

Since Viktor Orban won the 2010 Hungary election, the Fidesz party altered the procedure for vote-seat translation, and made it harder for the opposition to challenge the incumbent party (Ahlquist et al., 2018; for Democratic Institutions and Rights, 2014). What seems potentially disappointing for democracy is that Fidesz supporters displayed tolerance for the reform, and did not hold the party that diminished democratic quality in the country accountable in the subsequent election (Ahlquist et al., 2018).

In Turkey, as an attempt to strengthen power, the Erdogan government proposed to change the institution to a presidential system to supposedly make “a strong, leading and prosperous Turkey with unity, solidarity and integrity” (Anadolu Agency, 2017). The constitutional referendum took place in 2017 and passed with 51.4% of the public support. Despite criticism from the opposition parties and international organizations, Turkey became a presidential system that gave even stronger power to a president who already showed signs of personalism (Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey, 2017).

The rise of authoritarian leaning parties and politicians, to some extent, indicates growing dissatisfaction with democracy (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). In response, this manuscript intends to study how citizens perceive autocratization, as well as politicians who disrespect democratic norms in the context of developing countries. I argue that work that elicits political preference from citizens is limited, especially in the context of autocratic and semi-democratic settings. To address this limitation, I propose to use conjoint experiments to study political preference where incentive for misrepresentation might be lower. Finally, I show that when voters turn a blind eye towards anti-democratic practices, politicians have few incentives to respect democratic norms.

1.2 Autocratization

This manuscript is about preference for democracy in an age of increasing autocratization. And in this section, I define autocratization as any move away from Dahl’s concept of a polyarchy with free, fair and frequent elections, freedom of expression and association, access to independent information, and inclusive citizenship (Dahl, 1973).

Consistent with Lührmann and Lindberg (2019), I consider autocratization as a “superset” of three distinct processes: democratic erosion, democratic breakdown, and autocratic consolidation: (1) *democratic erosion* happens when a democratically elected

incumbent undermines democratic institutions; (2) when consequential democratic institutions are substantially removed, the regime experiences a *democratic breakdown* and steps into an autocracy, a phenomenon that has received extensive coverage in the literature (Stepan and Linz, 1978); (3) finally, *autocratic consolidation* happens when an already authoritarian regime experiences further decline in democratic attributes.

The autocratization episodes are listed in Figure 1.1. For the purpose of this manuscript, I study the public opinion on autocratic consolidation in Chapter 2, public opinion on democratic erosion in Chapter 3, and how public opinion interacts with democratic erosion in Chapter 4.



Figure 1.1: Episodes of autocratization.

1.3 Preference for Democracy in the Age of Autocratization

A long-running intellectual tradition holds that individual preferences have important implications for the functioning of a democracy (Almond and Verba, 1963; Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 1994). Where does individual support for democracy come from in the first place?

As the world becomes increasingly autocratized (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019), there is a growing literature that looks at how democratic backslides (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Kaufman and Haggard, 2018; Bermeo, 2016; Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg,

2017). It argues that incumbents can employ a menu of strategies to strengthen their power (Fish, 2001; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018), and they often slip through changes to entrench their power under “relatively unconstrained conditions” (Waldner and Lust, 2018, 97). In additions, scholars find that when voters respond to partisan cues, they might treat erosion of democracy as a secondary concern (Ahlquist et al., 2018; Svobik, 2017). This observation leads to a further question – is support for democracy as stable as we have thought conventionally? And how should scholars understand political preferences that might be at odds with democratic values at times?

Support for democracy might come from instrumental, economic considerations. The modernization literature argues that high income democracies are more likely to consolidate (Lipset, 1959). In this context, people do not have preferences over democracy per se. Rather, citizens have preferences over particular outcomes (e.g. higher income), which then induce a preference for or against democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006).

Political preferences can also be shaped by the political system itself (Fuchs-Schündeln and Schündeln, 2015). Exploiting the exogenous variation in Chile during the Pinochet rule (1973–1990), Bautista et al. (2019) demonstrates that exposure to state repression under dictatorship leads to stronger support for democracy. This is consistent with the larger empirical literature showing that preference for democracy can change in response to exposure to violence (Blattman, 2009; Lupu and Peisakhin, 2017), state repression (Rozenas and Zhukov, 2019), or experiences of democracy (Besley and Persson, 2019).

My manuscript joins in the growing literature on democratic values, and studies how citizens in developing countries understand democratic erosion and autocratic consolidation. In doing so, I argue that public support for democracy might not be as robust as expected, and it can be a polarized topic as regime becomes increasingly autocratized.

1.4 Citizens Are the Guardrails of Democracy

This manuscript studies political opinion and behavior primarily from the lens of the general public. Democratic erosion and autocratic consolidation are complex processes with multiple actors involved. In order to give a thorough treatment on one of the key moving parts, this manuscript narrows down the scope to the citizens in particular.

Democratic erosion oftentimes happens in an inconspicuous way (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018). But a vibrant, engaged society can check autocratization. In Niger, after Mamadou Tandja came to power, he intended to evade term limits through a popular referendum. Relatedly, Tandja dissolved the parliament and disbanded the Constitutional Court. In response, citizens took to the streets to protest against extension of Tandja's rule. Although Tandja's rule eventually ended with a coup d'etat, the engaged society provided a strong signal against the authoritarian leaning President.

In the final section of this chapter, I want to present some cross-national evidence that further explains why the manuscript focuses on the citizens and society. Data on democracy come from the V-Dem institute (Coppedge et al., 2018). The V-Dem dataset applies Bayesian item-response theory on individual ratings from 3,200 scholars to measure democracy. In particular, the electoral democracy index is the average of freedom of association, clean elections, freedom of expression, elected officials, suffrage, as well as the five-way interaction between the aforementioned indicators.

To measure autocratization in a country, I measure the change in electoral democracy index from the five-year average: $\Delta Dem_t = Dem_t - \bar{Dem}_{[t-5, t]}$, where a positive value indicates an improvement in democratic quality, and a negative value suggests a decline in democratic quality. To measure engaged society, I use the following question: "When important policy changes are being considered, how wide and how independent are public deliberations?" In Figure 1.2, I show the relationship between change in democracy index and engaged society. The correlation is weakly positive ($r = 0.13$), suggesting that a weak

civic society is correlated with *more* autocratization.

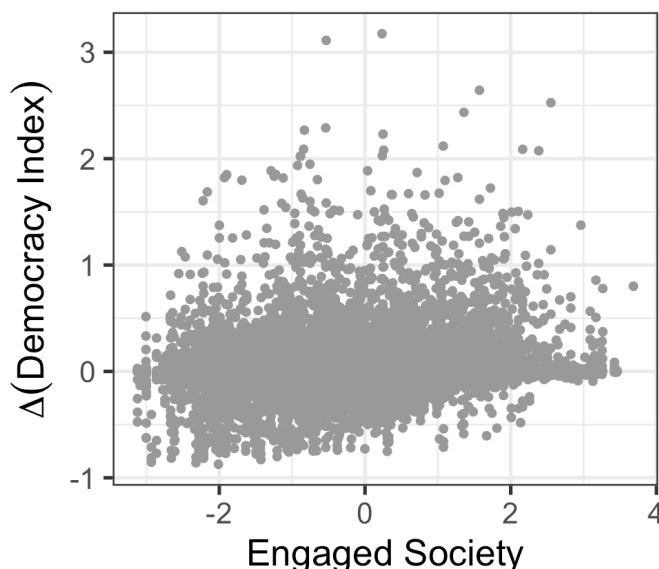


Figure 1.2: Relationship between change in democracy index and engaged society.

In addition, I also consider four particular “symptoms” of autocratization: court packing, censorship of the media, party ban, and diminishing fairness of elections. In particular, I estimate the relationship between these outcomes and engaged society. For all estimations, I control for macro-level socioeconomic variables (i.e. inequality, polarization, and logged GDP per capita), as well as time-unvarying characteristics at the country and year level. Robust standard errors are clustered at the country level.¹

The results from Figure 1.3 are alarming. In democracies, an engaged society is negatively correlated with court packing, censorship, party ban, and positively correlated with fair elections. In non-democracies, while the effect of an engaged society on these outcomes are directionally consistent, the relationship is not statistically significant in most cases. Moreover, the correlation between macro-level socioeconomic variables (namely, GDP per capita, inequality, and polarization) and autocratization is not statistically significant across all estimations.

¹Estimations are conducted using `lm_robust()` in R.

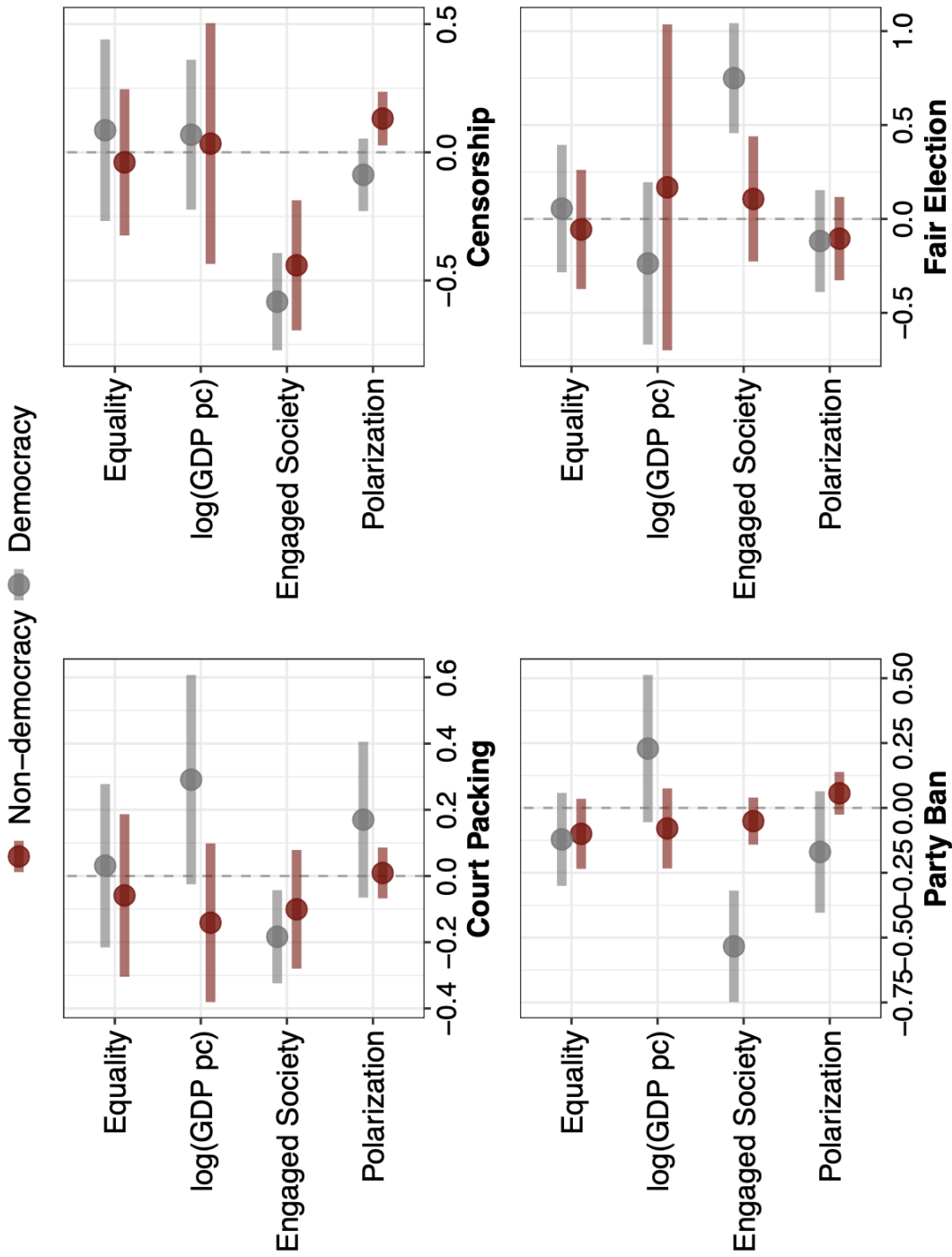


Figure 1.3: Variables related to democratic erosion. Twoway FEs, with robust SEs clustered at country level.

On the one hand, an engaged society that deliberates on policy changes within the country can safeguard democracy. On the other hand, the medium where many of the deliberations take place is potentially subject to elite capture. Incumbents with an authoritarian leaning can buy off the media, or at the very least, cast doubt on credibility of the actors that criticize the leader, hence leading to further erosion of the institutional bulwark that is supposed to check the executive.

It is thus the hope of this manuscript to draw empirical evidence from the Global South in order to better understand how citizens perceive autocratization, and to study how public opinion and politicians' behavior interact in an age of increasing autocratization.

1.5 Plan of the Manuscript

The manuscript contains three essays. First, I propose a methodology to solicit preference over sensitive topics and validate it in a hard case (China). Then, I explore how citizens understand democratic erosion in a developing democracy (Philippines). Finally, I explore how public opinion interacts with democratic erosion.

- Chapter 2 (*Political Preference in the Shadow of Authoritarian Consolidation*) proposes to use conjoint experiments to measure citizens' preference for democracy in the context of an authoritarian regime. I show that Chinese citizens' preference is single-peaked, and citizens display a distaste towards recent autocratization within the country (i.e. removal of the President's term limits). I also show that while some citizens sacrifice their preferred policy in exchange for more constraints on the leadership, political constraints such as term limits are not a concern to regime hardliners.
- Chapter 3 (*How Voters Perceive Democratic Erosion In a Developing Democracy*) uses a conjoint experiment to measure how citizens understand democratic erosion in

the Philippines. I find that when events related to democratic erosion happen, citizens are more concerned if the event directly affects their daily life. Moreover, proregime respondents display less concern over incidents related to democratic erosion, and citizens' decision to hold the incumbent accountable is moderated by contextual factors such as unemployment rate.

- Chapter 4 (*Politicians, Voters, and Democratic Norms*) uses evidence from two experiments to measure how citizens perceive actions against democratic norms, and how it interacts with politicians' behavior in a developing democracy. In the first study, I use a field experiment in the Philippine local elections to show the limited effectiveness of an anti-vote buying campaign, which invites more questions about the efficient way to reduce vote buying in the context of a patronage democracy. As a follow-up to the initial findings, I conduct a second study that investigates whether democratic values *under a clientelist equilibrium* can change in a survey setting. I find that citizens reward candidates who can provide public goods, but do *not* punish candidates who buy votes.

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Chapter 2

Political Preference in the Shadow of Authoritarian Consolidation

2.1 Citizens in an Increasingly Autocratized State

On March 11, 2018, China's National People's Congress voted to remove term limits for the President. While the institutional change raised concerns for increasing personalization of power in the Chinese leadership among international watchers (The New York Times, 2018; The Brookings Institution, 2018), we know little about what the Chinese public think of this institutional change. How do citizens in China perceive democracy? On the one hand, domestic support for the authoritarian regime can be quite high, possibly due to propaganda (Joshi and Xu, 2017), censorship (Roberts, 2018; Yang and Roberts, 2021), or connection with the state (Chen and Dickson, 2008). On the other hand, citizens might desire democracy, but choose not to reveal such preferences in fear of repression. When preference falsification is present (Kuran, 1997), researchers need to overcome several methodological challenges in order to understand citizens' preference on sensitive topics. As a result, empirical work on citizens' preference for democracy in authoritarian regimes

is limited. In this chapter, I present strategies to solicit preferences for sensitive questions, and measure political preferences in the context of a non-democracy.

A growing research has shown that public opinion may influence representation and governance even in the absence of elections (Truex, 2016; Weeks, 2008). Theoretically, there are several reasons why public opinion matters in an authoritarian regime that does not hold regular elections. First, the ruling party in authoritarian regimes can use public opinion to monitor and guard against coalition building by potential challengers. Second, in order to maintain stability, ruling elites need to respond to public opinion. Take authoritarian China as an example – in absence of competitive elections, deputies of the Chinese National People’s Congress frequently put forth motions that represent the interest of their “constituents” (Truex, 2016), and politicians closely monitor citizen engagement such as collective action (Chen, Pan and Xu, 2016; King, Pan and Roberts, 2013). The purpose of these arguments is not to say that public opinion can necessarily constrain an autocrat. Our goal is to motivate the readers and build convictions that studying the configuration of preferences under authoritarianism is important, because it can advance our understanding of opposition to and support for autocratic regimes.

Previous research on public opinion in non-democracies find that Chinese citizens’ policy preferences are highly multi-dimensional, and they do not simply split between a pro- or anti-regime cleavage (Pan and Xu, 2018). Moreover, policy preferences in China are stable and predictable over time, especially among the respondents with higher levels of education and political knowledge (Pan and Xu, 2020). Despite recent advances in the literature, the current work on political ideology in non-democracies is limited for three reasons. First, previous work relies heavily on direct questions in a survey setting, where intent to falsify preferences could be high. Second, although citizens in authoritarian regimes display multi-dimensional policy preferences (Pan and Xu, 2018), we do not know how intense such preferences are. Finally, we do not know how citizens in authoritarian

regimes evaluate the *trade-off* among different policy domains.

My contributions to the literature are both methodological and substantive. Methodologically, I propose a research design to measure preference over sensitive topics. Substantively, I provide one of the first empirical evidence on preference intensity in the context of a non-democracy. In particular, I show that policy preference in China is well configured, as I observe single peaked preferences over several policy domains. All else equal, citizens in China display a distaste toward recent autocratization within the country (i.e. removal of the President's term limits), and are willing to sacrifice their preferred policy in exchange for more constraints on the leadership. However, term limit is a polarizing issue among the citizens. While removal of term limits for the President causes concerns for certain citizens, it is not a concern to regime hardliners.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section discusses the methodology and research design to measure policy preference in non-democracies. Section 2.3 talks about the policy domains that we will study in this chapter. Section 2.4 presents the main results of the paper on preference intensity. It also discusses how term limit is a polarizing issue among Chinese citizens. Section 2.5 presents the main results on how citizens evaluate the trade-off between democracy and their preferred policies. The last section concludes the chapter.

2.2 Measuring Policy Preference in Non-Democracies

It is difficult to measure public opinion in non-democracies. Citizens in an increasingly autocratized state might falsify their level of regime support due to social desirability bias and fear of repression (Kuran, 1997). As a result, studying public opinion in an autocratic or semi-democratic context might be akin to "asking people to take a single-choice exam" (Huang 2013).

Chinese respondents display relatively high regime support in surveys. To see this, consider a recent survey that I launched in China. In February 2020, I recruited 892 online respondents through Dynata (formerly known as SSI) to gauge baseline regime support. Each respondent is asked six Likert scale questions, which are then combined into a single composite measure.¹ On average, 71.4% of the respondents (637 of 892) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed with at least half of the six statements, and the composite metric has a mean of 3.6 (Figure 2.1, Panel A). When directly asked about whether they intend to live under a different political system, only 10.2% of the respondents (91 out of 892) expressed intent to leave (Figure 2.1, Panel B). What appears from the direct surveys suggests that respondents trend towards moderate to strong support for the regime.

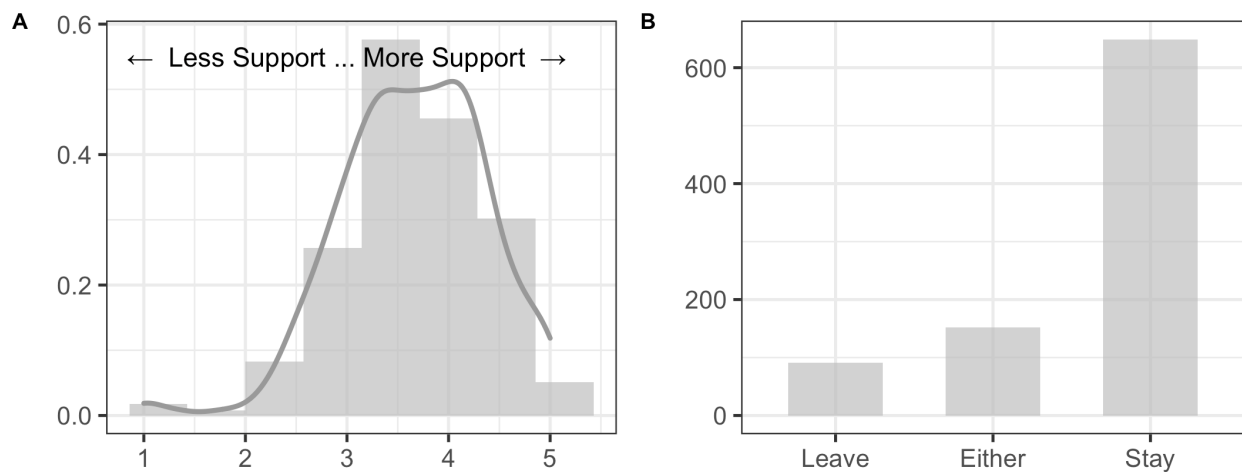


Figure 2.1: Distribution of regime support among Chinese respondents. Panel A shows the distribution of the composite score. Panel B shows the distribution of responses to the following question: “I’d rather live under a different political system in a different country”.

To address the problem of preference falsification, social scientists have developed a few techniques to reduce the social desirability bias. For example, list experiments randomly

¹The exact questions are: (1) *China’s political institutions will be able to solve the problems that China is facing*; (2) *I am proud of the political system in China*; (3) *People should support the political system in China even though it has its problems*; (4) *There are better political systems outside of China*; (5) *I’d rather live under a different political system in a different country*; and (6) *I think China is on the right path to reforms*.

assign respondents into a control condition and a treatment condition that includes a sensitive statement, and ask respondents to indicate the number of statements they agree on (Corstange, 2009; Blair and Imai, 2012). In the most simple case, researchers can compute the difference in means between the treatment and control groups to estimate the proportion of respondents who answer the sensitive item affirmatively.²

Indirect question techniques offer a promising avenue to study public opinion under authoritarianism, but they miss an opportunity to study preference in a multi-dimensional setting, and introduce little structure to guide the respondents to think about the trade-off in their choices (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014). One way to address this concern is to use quadratic voting to measure preference (Lalley and Weyl, 2018). Quadratic voting introduces a budget set that respondents can use to vote for (or against) a series of policy proposals. The pricing is quadratic – one vote costs one credit; two votes cost four credits; and so on. Emerging work in this space shows that quadratic voting is effective at soliciting preference intensity at the *individual* level (Cavaillé, Chen and Van Der Straeten, 2022), but applications of the methodology remain untested in the context in a non-democracy.³

Another recent technique to measure preference intensity is through conjoint experiments (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014; Abramson, Koçak and Magazinnik, 2022). Conjoint experiments can address the aforementioned problems in two ways. First, conjoint experiments introduce a principled way to measure citizen preferences in a multi-dimensional space (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014; Graham and Svobik, 2019). For example, scholars have used the conjoint design to measure voters' policy preferences (Horiuchi, Smith and Yamamoto, 2018) and attitudes toward immigrants (Hainmueller

²Blair and Imai (2012) provides more advanced estimators such as maximum likelihood estimators. See Ahlquist (2018) for a critique.

³It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a theoretical and empirical treatment on the synergies and differences between quadratic voting and conjoint experiments. However, it will be a fruitful area for future work.

and Hopkins, 2015). By design, respondents are forced to weigh policy statements against each other when they make the choice. As a result, researchers are able to measure respondents' within-domain preference, as well as the trade-off across different policy domains (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014).

Conjoint experiments can also potentially mitigate social desirability bias. Intuitively, since such designs only ask the respondents to choose one out of the two profiles (rather than asking direct questions on sensitive topics), it is reasonable to argue that social desirability bias is lower in a conjoint experiment. In Horiuchi, Markovich and Yamamoto (2021), the authors explored how conjoint designs can mitigate social desirability bias under two contexts. In both studies (attitudes about environmental conservation, and support for congressional candidates with sexual harassment scandals), the authors showed that conjoint designs can reduce social desirability bias by about two thirds, hence providing initial empirical evidence that conjoint designs can potentially reduce social desirability bias.

One of the most commonly used quantity of interests in conjoint designs is the average marginal component effect (AMCE). This quantity is the increase in probability that a candidate is chosen in response to a change in its ℓ -th component, averaged over all the possible values of the other components given the joint distribution of the profile attributes (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014). Formally, consider the following setup, where respondent i needs to make a forced choice between profiles qr and $q'r'$. Without loss of generality, assume that both attributes (Q and R) are binary attributes. $Y_i([qr], [q'r']) \in \{0, 1\}$ is the potential outcome for respondent i . Then, the AMCE for attribute Q is:

$$\mathbb{E} \left[Y_i \left([Q = 1, R], [Q'R'] \right) - Y_i \left([Q = 0, R], [Q'R'] \right) \right] \quad (2.1)$$

It is worth noting that AMCE captures both directionality and preference intensity (Abramson, Koçak and Magazinnik, 2022; Bansak et al., 2022). That is, the AMCE aggregates two aspects of preference: first, whether profile q is preferred compared to q' , and second, by how much. As a result, a minority of respondents with intense preferences might prevail during preference aggregation – a problem that has been theoretically observed in the Robert Dahl’s seminal *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Dahl, 1956).

In summary, the AMCE does not disaggregate preference directionality from preference intensity. This chapter welcomes this aspect of the AMCE as a feature, rather than a bug, to understand both the directionality and intensity of citizens’ policy preference in the context of a non-democracy.

Research design. I use a conjoint experiment with two policy profiles containing randomly varying policy and institutional positions. Within a hypothetical profile, there are three policy domains – (i) nationalist foreign policies, (ii) policy that concerns freedom of speech, and (iii) state control of the economy. In addition to the three policy domains, there are also two institutional statements – (iv) term limit for the President, and (v) mandatory retirement age requirement for local officials.⁴ After seeing the two policy profiles side by side, respondents are asked to choose the policy profile that they prefer. Each respondent is asked to perform 15 conjoint tasks. A sample of the conjoint task is in Table 2.1.

Embedding a randomized treatment within conjoint experiments. Similar to Graham and Svulik (2019), I embed a randomized treatment within the conjoint experiment. Along with the policy statements, citizens are presented with two additional pieces of information, namely term limit for the President, and age limit for the local officials. By coupling the institutional attributes with the policy statements, I am able to (potentially)

⁴Details about how I selected these policy domains and their corresponding attributes are in Section 2.3.

Table 2.1: Example of a Conjoint Task

Profile 1	Profile 2
Retirement age for local officials should be removed.	Retirement age for local officials should be strictly enforced.
Even if it will definitely lead to military conflicts, China should increase its military presence in disputed islands in the South China Sea.	China should try its best to maintain friendly relationships with neighboring countries, and reduce its military presence in the the South China Sea.
In most sectors, SOEs should be privatized completely.	The government should provide SOEs with additional support and policy benefits.
There is no need of a term limit for the President of China.	There is no need of a term limit for the President of China.
The government should forbid people to criticize the government online. Criticism should be deleted and those who severely violate this rule can be put into custody.	Even though it may lead to social instability, the government should allow people to criticize the government online, as long as the criticism is based on facts.

mitigate respondents’ social desirability bias, and measure how respondents weigh the trade-off between their preferred policy and a more democratic institution, in the context of an authoritarian regime.

It’s worth noting that the two institutional domains are not fully randomized, and I constrain the combination of the attributes to three treatment arms, each consisting of two of the three following sub-configurations:

1. The status quo, where there is an age limit for local officials, but *no* term limit for the President – I call this sub-configuration P_0 ;
2. A condition that imposes constraints on both the central and local leadership, where there is an age limit for local officials and a term limit for the President – I call this sub-configuration P_1 ; and
3. A condition that further removes constraints on the central leadership (compared to the status quo), where there is neither age limit, nor term limit – I refer to this sub-configuration as P_2 .

I then construct three treatment arms, where each arm consists of two of the three

aforementioned sub-configurations. With this setup, we can think of each conjoint task as a separate experiment – P_0 against P_0 (the *control* arm), P_1 against P_0 (the T1 arm), or P_2 against P_0 (the T2 arm). The configurations are designed in this way to increase statistical power.

In the control arm, the institutional sub-configurations are the same, and it allows us to establish a clear benchmark for respondents’ policy preference. In the T1 arm, the institutional sub-configurations are different. In particular, I compare P_0 (no term limit; age limit) to P_1 (term limit; age limit). By looking at the difference in support between P_0 and P_1 , I am able to estimate the effect of imposing term limit for the President, all else equal. In the T2 arm, I compare P_0 to P_2 (no term limit; no age limit). By looking at the difference in support between P_0 and P_2 , I am able to estimate the effect of removing age limit for local politicians.

Conjoint Design 1			Conjoint Design 2		
	Profile A	Profile B		Profile A	Profile B
South China Sea	<i>position 1a</i>	<i>position 1b</i>	South China Sea	<i>position 1a</i>	<i>position 1b</i>
Freedom of Speech	<i>position 2a</i>	<i>position 2b</i>	Freedom of Speech	<i>position 2a</i>	<i>position 2b</i>
State Ownership	<i>position 3a</i>	<i>position 3b</i>	State Ownership	<i>position 3a</i>	<i>position 3b</i>
Term Limit	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Term Limit	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Age Limit	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Age Limit	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
*Sub-configuration	P_0	P_0	*Sub-configuration	P_1	P_0

Conjoint Design 3		
	Profile A	Profile B
South China Sea	<i>position 1a</i>	<i>position 1b</i>
Freedom of Speech	<i>position 2a</i>	<i>position 2b</i>
State Ownership	<i>position 3a</i>	<i>position 3b</i>
Term Limit	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Age Limit	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
*Sub-configuration	P_2	P_0

Figure 2.2: Illustration of the research design of Chapter 2.

Consider Figure 2.2, in which I illustrate the experimental design.⁵ In the fig-

⁵Note that both the order of which each attribute is presented, and the position of the profile (i.e. either on the left or on the right) are randomized.

ure, I present all three possible arms, where each arm consists of two institutional sub-configurations. Conjoint Design 1 is the *control* configuration – it compares P_0 to P_0 , where there is no term limit for the President, but there is an age limit for local officials. Conjoint Design 2 is the T1 configuration – it compares P_0 to P_1 , where P_1 is the sub-configuration where there is both a term limit and an age limit. Conjoint Design 3 is the T2 configuration – it compares P_0 to P_2 , where P_2 is the sub-configuration where there is neither term limit nor age limit.

2.3 Policy Preference and Institutional Constraints

In this section, I will discuss how I measure citizens’ preference for policies, as well as institutional constraints in the context of a non-democracy. In particular, I am interested in citizens’ preference configurations in three domains: policy on freedom of speech, hawkishness in foreign policy, and preference over market economy. In addition, I also measures preference on more sensitive topics such as how ordinary Chinese think of term limits for the President, and the mandatory retirement age for local officials.

2.3.1 Nationalist Foreign Policy

China’s claim of sovereignty over multiple islands in the South China Sea has antagonized several of its neighboring countries in the past decade (Weiss, 2014; Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2019). Previously, the government has invoked nationalism among citizens in response to the international criticism, but there is limited empirical evidence documenting how different state narratives can affect citizens’ nationalist preference over disputed territories (c.f. Fang and Li 2019, Weiss and Dafoe 2019). In this chapter, I use territorial disputes in the South China Sea to capture the intensity of nationalism and militarism among Chinese citizens. In the survey, I present respondents with four policy

positions within the nationalism domain, each varying in the reputation and military cost of a hypothetical forced intervention. The most nationalist position in the four policies argues that China should increase its military presence in the South China Sea, even though it could lead to military conflicts (*position 1*). The second position supports forced interventions so long as they do not lead to military disputes (*position 2*). As we move toward the dovish direction, the positions are that China should maintain its military presence in disputed islands so long as it does not lead to military disputes (*position 3*), or even decrease its military presence in disputed islands (*position 4*). The exact wording of the positions is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Hypothetical Policies for Foreign Policy

1	Even if it will definitely lead to military conflicts, China should increase its military presence in disputed islands in the South China Sea.
2	Under the premise of no military conflicts, China should increase its military presence in disputed islands in the South China Sea.
3	Under the premise of no military conflicts, China should maintain its military presence in disputed islands in the South China Sea.
4	China should try its best to maintain friendly relationships with neighboring countries, and reduce its military presence in the the South China Sea.

2.3.2 Free Speech

The second policy domain that I study is freedom of speech. To capture respondents' preference intensity in policy on freedom of speech, I present respondents with four potential policies on government control of online speech. The policies vary in the conditions under which freedom of speech should be restricted, as well as the punishment for violating government restrictions on free speech. The position most in favor of the restriction on free speech argues that anyone who criticizes the government online should be put into custody (*position 1*). The second position argues that criticism of the government online should be allowed as long as it is based on facts and does *not* lead to social instability (*position 2*).

The third position argues that fact-based criticism should be allowed even though it can potentially lead to social instability (*position 3*). The position most in favor of freedom of speech states that there should be no restriction on free speech when it comes to criticism of the government (*position 4*). The exact wording of the positions is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Hypothetical Policies for Freedom of Speech

1	The government should forbid people from criticizing the government online. Criticism should be censored, and those who severely violate this rule can be put into custody.
2	The government should allow people to criticize the government online, as long as the criticism is based on facts and does not lead to social instability.
3	Even though it may lead to social instability, the government should allow people to criticize the government online, as long as the criticism is based on facts.
4	The government should not impose any restrictions when people criticize the government online.

2.3.3 Market Economy v. State Economy

The final policy domain of interest is citizens' preference for market economy. To capture citizens' preference intensity in this policy domain, I present respondents with four potential policies, varying from state ownership of most sectors, to complete privatization of the economy. The most state-oriented position argues that state owned enterprises (SOEs) should dominate the economy (*position 1*). The second position proposes that SOEs should receive additional subsidies (*position 2*). As we move toward positions in favor of the market economy, the third position argues that the government should decrease the support for SOEs (*position 3*). The fourth position favors complete privatization of the Chinese economy in most sectors (*position 4*). The exact wording of the positions is presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Hypothetical Policies for Market Economy

1	In most sectors, the government should help SOEs replace private enterprises.
2	The government should provide SOEs with additional support and policy benefits.
3	The government should cut subsidies to SOEs in order to reduce tax burdens for private enterprises.
4	In most sectors, SOEs should be privatized completely.

2.3.4 Political Constraints

Do ordinary Chinese consider constraints on the politicians (i.e. term limit for the President) effective? And how do they perceive institutional changes when the regime removes such constraints? In addition to the three policy issues, I also measure Chinese citizens' preference for political constraints. In particular, I measure people's views of term limit for the President, and the mandatory retirement age limit for local officials.

There are several reasons why I am interested in how citizens perceive political constraints in the context of a non-democracy. First, although institutions are "sticky," they can change quite unexpectedly in an authoritarian regime (Svolik, 2012, 15). Despite a growing interest to understand authoritarian institutions (Gandhi et al., 2008), we know little about how ordinary citizens perceive institutional changes when the regime becomes increasingly autocratized. Moreover, it is important to understand public opinion about institutions under authoritarianism (Nathan, 2020), and how citizens view the trade-off between institutions and other policy domains.

The exact wording of the institutional statements are presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Hypothetical Policies for Political Constraints

Term Limit	There should be a term limit for the President.
\neg Term Limit	There is no need of a term limit for the President.
Age Limit	The retirement age requirement for local officials should be strictly enforced.
\neg Age Limit	The retirement age requirement for local officials should be removed.

2.4 Data and Results

In February 2020, I recruited 892 online respondents through Dynata (formerly known as SSI), a US-based survey company. The recruiting process and data analysis closely follow the pre-registered analysis plan, registered and updated on EGAP in January 2020.⁶

In the conjoint experiment, I presented each respondent with a table containing two hypothetical policy profiles with positions on the three policy issues and two institutional issues (randomly ordered for each respondent).⁷ After seeing the two policy profiles side by side, respondents are asked to choose the policy profile that they prefer.⁸ Each respondent is asked to perform 15 conjoint tasks.⁹

My analyses primarily focus on the AMCE, and they closely follow the methods outlined in Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014).¹⁰ Throughout the analyses, I cluster the standard errors at the respondent level to account for confounders at the individual level (Horiuchi, Smith and Yamamoto, 2018).

To validate measurements from the conjoint experiment, I benchmark the conjoint results against direct questions. Prior to the conjoint experiment, I ask respondents direct questions on the policy statements to solicit their (pre-treatment) preference. I then use their answers to the direct questions to construct the respondents' baseline policy preference. In Appendix A, I show that across the three policy domains, respondents consistently display a higher value in estimated AMCE for a position that is consistent with their

⁶In particular, I set quotas for gender, age group, education, and respondents' geographic location to ensure diversity of the sample.

⁷Details of the design were described in Section 2.2.

⁸The exact wording of the question is as follows: "Comparing the following two policy profile combinations, which policy profile do you like more?".

⁹Following the preprocessing steps specified in the pre-analysis plan, I exclude the respondents who consistently give inconsistent answers in the conjoint experiment. I define a respondent as "inconsistent" if they claim to prefer policy profile A, but give profile A a lower rating compared to the competing profile for more than three times. I believe that these respondents either completely misunderstand the setup of the experiment, or do not pay sufficient attention to the questions.

¹⁰For subgroup analyses, I follow the recommendations by Leeper, Hobolt and Tilley (2019).

answers to the direct questions, indicating that conjoint experiments are a promising tool to study policy preference in the context of a non-democracy. ¹¹

2.4.1 Chinese Respondents Display Single-Peaked Preference

In Figure 2.3, I show that all of the policy preferences are single-peaked, and there are meaningful differences across different policy dimensions.

In terms of freedom of speech, the most popular choice is the policy that allows criticism of the government so long as it does *not* lead to social instability. The policy to allow criticism of the government so long as it does not lead to instability is estimated to increase the choice probability by about 14.0 percentage points (95% CI [11.8%, 16.2%]), compared to the baseline position of “censoring criticism of the government, and putting those who violate the rule into custody.” It is also worth noting that Chinese citizens punish the most liberal policy significantly. Compared to the baseline policy, the most liberal policy (“no restrictions on criticism of the government”) leads to a *decrease* in choice probability by around 3.2 percentage points (95% CI [−5.4%, −1.0%]).

In terms of foreign policy, Chinese citizens are nationalist but not hawkish – they are in favor of increasing military presence in disputed territories so long as it does not lead to military conflicts. In particular, compared to the baseline policy of “increasing military presence at the cost of war”, a policy that increases military presence at the premise of no conflict increases the choice probability by 8.6 percentage points (95% CI [6.5%, 10.7%]). At the same time, reducing military presence is punished by the citizens – the choice probability decreases by about 5.6 percentage points under this policy (95% CI [−7.8%, −3.4%]).

¹¹I repeat the same exercise for 16 times, and find that the result replicates 15 out of 16 times. This offers strong evidence that the conjoint experiment works relatively well at providing consistent and sensible measures of respondents’ preference intensity (Tausanovitch, 2019; Abramson, Koçak and Magazinnik, 2022; Bansak et al., 2022), even in the context of a non-democracy.

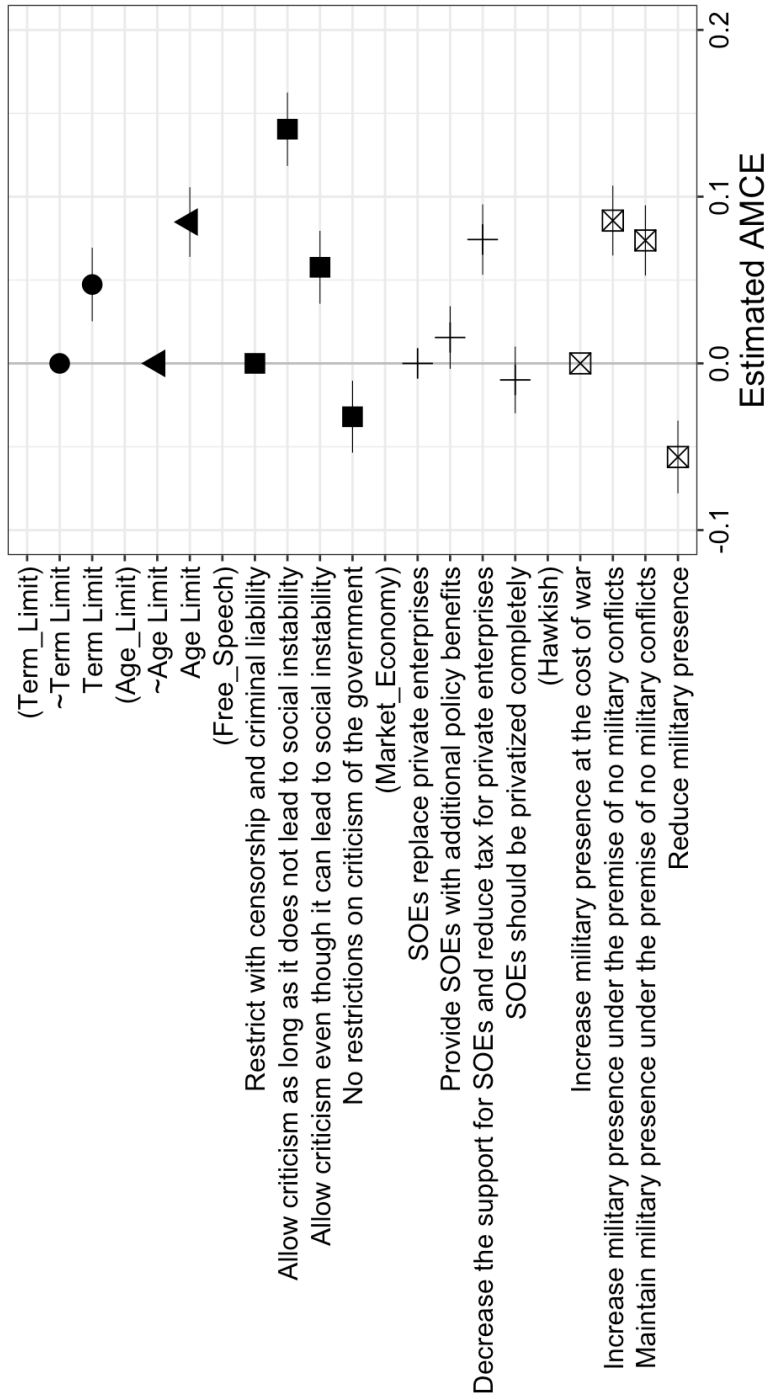


Figure 2.3: Estimated AMCE from the conjoint experiment in China.

Respondents have the least intense preference for market economy across policy domains. Compared to the baseline policy (complete nationalization of enterprises), the only policy that is statistically significant from the baseline is decrease in support for the state-owned enterprises (95% CI [5.3%,9.5%]).

Perhaps a more interesting pattern in Figure 2.3 is the impact of institutional constraints on respondents' choice function. The Chinese respondents display positive preference for more political constraints. Respondents are more likely to favor term limit for the President (95% CI [2.5%,6.9%]), and the retirement age limit for local officials (95% CI [6.4%,10.6%]). Surprisingly, citizens' preference intensity is stronger for local officials, compared to preference intensity for term limits for the President. This finding can be explained by higher trust in central institutions compared to local institutions, a finding that is well established in the Chinese political economy literature (Bernstein and Lü, 2003; Chen, 2004).

2.4.2 Heterogeneity in Support for Democracy

I now investigate whether there is heterogeneity in results based on the respondents' baseline regime support. Prior to the conjoint experiment, I ask a few baseline questions about regime support. I then combine the regime support questions into a composite metric.¹² In Figure 2.4, I show heterogeneity in the estimated marginal mean (MM) of policy positions along with 95% confidence intervals. In particular, I look at two subgroups – respondents who display below-median regime support in the composite score, and respondents who display above-median regime support in the composite score.

For most of the policy domains, I do not observe differences between the citizens who display more regime support and citizens who display less support. The only heterogeneous effect that is worth noting is within the freedom of speech domain. For a profile that restricts

¹²For details of the questions, please see Section 2.2.

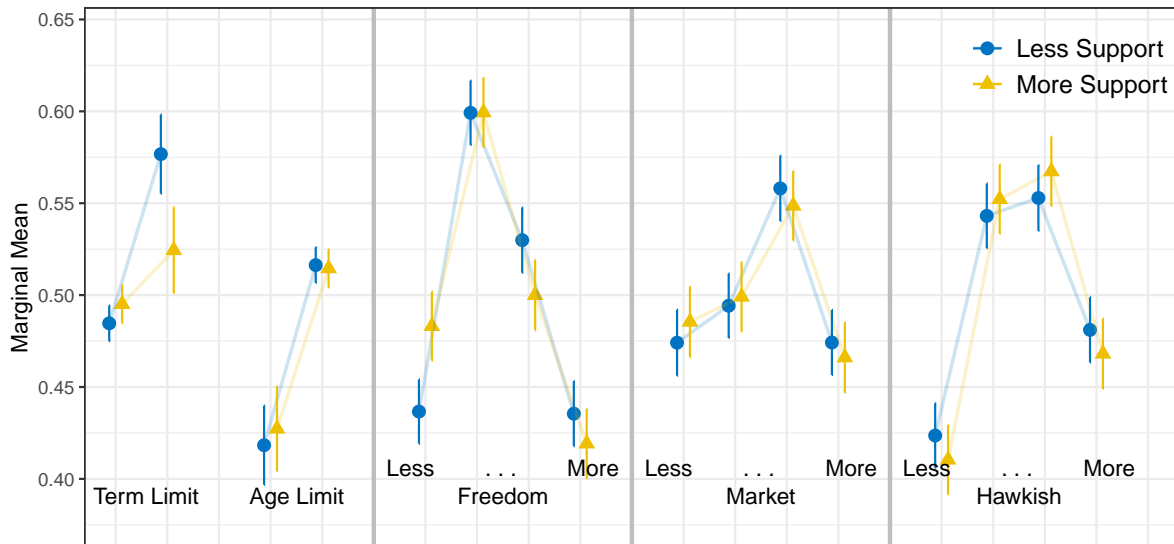


Figure 2.4: Heterogeneity in effects of policy positions by baseline regime support. Blue circle represents respondents with below-median regime support; yellow triangle represents respondents with above-median regime support.

freedom of speech and censors criticism of the government, respondents with above-median regime support select it with probability 48.3%, and respondents with below-median regime support select it with probability 43.7%. This 4.6 percentage point difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.001$).

The most striking finding from Figure 2.4 is that while pro-regime and anti-regime respondents display similar marginal means for age limit of the local officials, pro-regime respondents are *less* likely to punish a profile that removes constraints on the President. All else equal, respondents with above-median regime support select a profile with term limit with probability 52.4%, and respondents with below-median regime support select a profile with term limit with probability 57.5%. This 5.1 percentage point difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.005$).

While the removal of term limits for the President causes concerns for certain citizens, it is not a concern to regime hardliners. Although it is unlikely for democracy (or more specifically, term limit) to be the consequential issue that defines Chinese people’s identity,

it is possible that it has become an increasingly salient issue that results in polarization between regime hardliners and those who exhibit less support for the regime.

2.5 Sacrifice Preferred Policies for More Political Constraints

In the final section of this chapter, I look at how respondents' preference for a profile can change depending on the difference between one's ideal point and the profile they see in a conjoint task. I then look at whether this relationship is moderated by whether a profile contains term limits for the President, or age limits for the local officials.

In particular, I estimate the following model:

$$\mathbb{1}(\text{selected}) = g(\text{Term}, \text{Age}, \Delta_{ik}) \quad (2.2)$$

where **Term** captures the the difference in term limit between the two profiles in a conjoint task – a positive value indicates that the given policy profile has term limits, while the opposing profile does not have term limits, and vice versa. Similarly, **Age** captures the the difference in retirement age limit between the two profiles. Δ_{ik} 's capture the advantage of a profile against the opposing profile in terms of policy distance to one's ideal point.¹³

For function $g(\cdot)$, I fit the data using LOESS with smoothing parameter 0.8.¹⁴

Consider Figure 2.5, where I present the effect of difference in policy proximity on preference for the profile. Moreover, the yellow line traces the T1 treatment arm in which respondents encounter P_1 against P_0 , where P_1 imposes more constraints on the

¹³For each policy dimension k , I use the following formula to compute Δ_{ik} : $(x_{1k} - x_{ik})^2 - (x_{2k} - x_{ik})^2$, where x_{1k} is the policy position of the first profile in the conjoint task, x_{2k} is the policy position of the second profile, and x_{ik} is the ideal point of respondent i . That is, Δ_{ik} 's measure the *difference in proximity* between the first profile and the respondent's ideal point, and the second profile and the respondent's ideal point.

¹⁴Results hold when I try different smoothing parameters.

central leadership, and P_0 is the status quo. The red line traces the T2 treatment arm in which respondents encounter P_0 against P_2 , where P_2 removes constraints on the local leadership.¹⁵

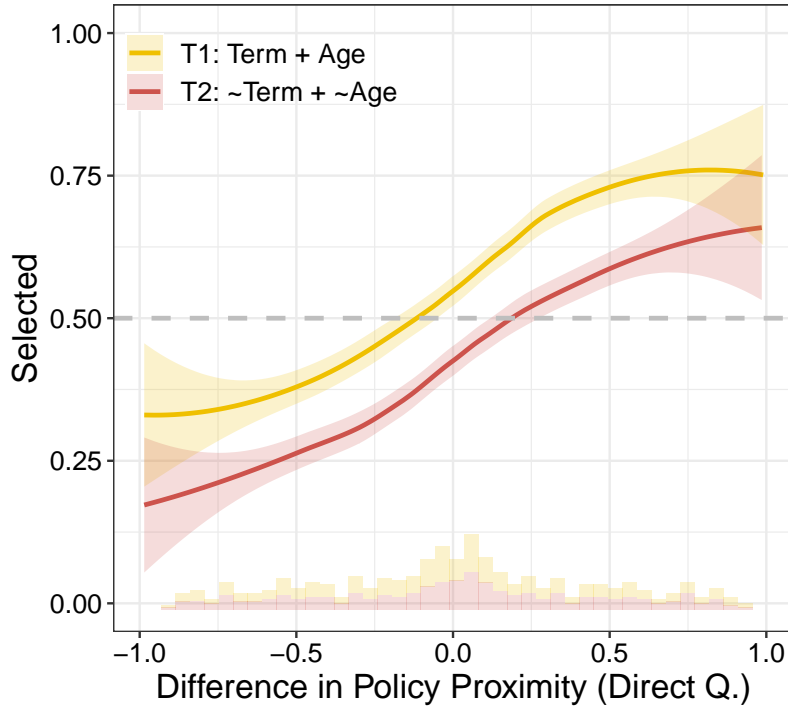


Figure 2.5: Effect of difference in policy proximity on probability of choosing a profile.

As difference in policy proximity increases in favor of a profile, respondents are more likely to select the profile, as indicated by the upward trend in the data. Moreover, respondents are more likely to choose the profile that constrains political leaders. For example, in the T1 treatment arm where we compare P_1 against P_0 , respondents are indifferent between the two profiles when difference in policy proximity is -0.12. That is, respondents are willing to sacrifice their preferred policies in favor of more constraints on the President. Similarly, in the T2 treatment arm where we compare P_0 against P_2 , respondents are indifferent between the two profiles when difference in policy proximity is 0.19. That is, although citizens might be willing to trade off their preferred policy for more

¹⁵Details of the design is in Section 2.2.

constraints on the local leaders, there is a threshold after which citizens can be co-opted.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I proposed a research design to measure multi-dimensional preference under a politically sensitive context. Methodologically, I validated the strategy to measure policy preference, and elicit preference for sensitive questions in an authoritarian regime.

Substantively, I provided one of the first empirical evidence on preference intensity in the context of a non-democracy. I showed that Chinese respondents are quite responsive to the policy statements that are far away from their ideal points, and they punish policy profiles that include such statements. In terms of preference intensity, Chinese citizens display intense preferences in freedom of speech, followed by nationalist policies, and then market economy.

I also showed that a median Chinese citizen exhibits a distaste against removing term limits for the President. Moreover, Chinese citizens do care about constraints on the politicians. All else equal, they are more likely to choose a policy profile that imposes term limits for the President, or age limits for local politicians. The effect of institutional constraints on “vote” choice is positive and statistically significant across several specifications. Lastly, term limit is a polarizing issue among the citizens. While the removal of term limits for the President causes concerns for certain citizens, it is not a concern to regime hardliners.

2.7 Acknowledgment

Chapter 2, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Xuan, Shane Xinyang; Xu, Yiqing. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this chapter.

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Chapter 3

How Voters Perceive Democratic Erosion in a Developing Democracy

Over 20 countries have experienced autocratization in the past decade, affecting about one third of the world's population. As cases of democratic backsliding increased in the past decade, some scholars argue that the world is in a "third wave of autocratization" (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019). In spite of the growing interest in the subject of democratic backsliding (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Mounk, 2018; Haggard and Kaufman, 2021), social scientists have little empirical evidence on how citizens perceive autocratization, especially in the context of developing countries in Asia.

In this chapter, I ask two questions about democratic erosion in the context of a developing democracy. First, does the nature of the backsliding action matter for how it is perceived by the citizens? And second, are there other conditions that might make citizens less likely to perceive a backsliding event as concerning?

I show that when events related to democratic erosion happen, citizens are more concerned if the event is immediately consequential to how democracy operates in the daily life. In the context of the Philippines, citizens are more concerned if the President endorses

vote buying, or allows political dynasty. However, events such as court packing are less likely to raise the alarm bell for the public. I also find that proregime respondents display less concern over incidents related to democratic erosion, and citizens' decision to hold the incumbent accountable is moderated by contextual factors such as the unemployment rate.

3.1 Conceptualization of Democratic Erosion

What is democratic erosion? Consistent with Waldner and Lust (2018), I define democratic erosion as “a deterioration of qualities associated with democratic governance, within any regime” (95).

In particular, this chapter joins in two lines of research on democratic erosion. The first strand of the research examines how incumbents employ a menu of strategies to strengthen their power (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018) – it mainly looks at how the agent slips through changes that entrench their power under “relatively unconstrained conditions” (Waldner and Lust, 2018, 97), but puts less emphasis on the role of the principal. For example, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) argues that when there lacks a single moment when “the regime obviously ‘crosses the line’ into dictatorship, nothing may set off society’s alarm bell” (6). As a result, democratic erosion can happen slowly, in “barely visible steps” (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018, 3). This literature also tends to be cross-national, and advances our understanding of democratic backsliding at the macro-level (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Kaufman and Haggard, 2018; Bermeo, 2016; Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg, 2017).

The other line of the research explores how partisan motivated reasoning can affect voters' perception of democratic erosion (Ahlquist et al., 2018; Svobik, 2017). Using a randomized experiment in a panel survey, Ahlquist et al. (2018) finds that Fidesz supporters displayed tolerance of the party's attempt to change the rules of the game, further suggesting that incumbents can exploit partisan attachment as a tool to erode democratic competition.

In a similar vein, Svobik (2017) finds that in a polarized society, voters are more likely to tolerate the incumbent's manipulation of democratic process – 32% of the Venezuelans view partisanship as a higher priority compared to democracy, and direct support for democracy as a concept is “no better at predicting the vote for the more democratic candidate than the flip of a coin” (Svobik, 2017, 8).

What seems limited, however, is research that systematically looks at the public opinion when a country becomes increasingly autocratized. Where does individual support for democracy come from in the first place? Central to the question of support for democracy is an extensive literature on opinion formation. Earlier literature argues that most citizens do not have fixed preferences (Converse, 1964), hence unable to make reasoned choices in a low information environment (Campbell et al., 1980; Schumpeter, 1942). Other scholars reject this conclusion, and argue that public opinion is shaped by one's exposure to elite discourse (Zaller, 1992), social class and family loyalty (Berelson et al., 1954), campaigns (Popkin, 1994), and learning from others (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998).

Support for democracy might also come from instrumental, economic considerations. The modernization literature argues that high income democracies are more likely to consolidate (Lipset, 1959). In this context, people do not have preferences over democracy per se. Rather, citizens have preferences over particular outcomes (e.g. higher income), which then induce a preference for or against democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006).

Under this framework, citizens might treat erosion of democracy as a secondary concern. For example, Schleiter and Tavits (2018) shows that even though voters react negatively to opportunistic election timing, they are less likely to punish incumbents' opportunistic behavior *under good economic performance*. When an incumbent strategically times opportunistic actions during a favorable time, voters might downplay the incumbent's disrespect of civic virtue,¹ and focus on more observable factors such as economic

¹We borrow this term from Svobik (2017). In a candidate choice experiment, Svobik (2017) shows that citizens are willing to tolerate disrespect of civic virtue for partisan interests.

performance (Palmer and Whitten, 2000; Kayser, 2005; Roy and Alcantara, 2012; Schleiter and Tavits, 2018), or partisan cues (Svolik, 2017; Ahlquist et al., 2018).

Towards a typology. In a seminal contribution to the literature on authoritarian institutions and personalization, Slater (2003) proposes three ways through which an incumbent with authoritarian tendency entrenches his power: packing,² rigging,³ and circumventing.⁴

Using Slater’s (2003) framework of personalization in a semi-democracy (or electoral authoritarian regime) as the point of departure, I argue that there are three common ways that democratic erosion happens – domestic interference, rigging, and curbing. When domestic interference happens, the incumbent either disproportionately allocates personnel and/or resources to the existing formal institutions, or bypasses the current constraints on his power. For example, when a president increases the size of supreme court and appoints several loyalists out of sync, he circumvents the conventional method to appoint a judge, and increases his power with no visible attack on the formal institution.

In contrast to domestic interference, rigging concerns actions related to modification of the existing formal institutions. The Hungarian case considered by Ahlquist et al. (2018) is one example of rigging – the incumbent party altered procedures for vote-seat translation, and made it harder for the opposition to challenge the incumbent party.

Lastly, I consider *curbing*. An engaged and deliberate society is the key to a functioning democracy. Curbing, in particular, restricts the issue space that the public is allowed to talk about, and lends authoritarians the leverage to erode democracy without “stirring the pot.” In Table 3.1, I present a summary of the definitions and examples of the

²Defined as “the appointment of personal loyalists to top party and government posts while purging rivals” (Slater, 2003, 88).

³Defined as “the strategic modification of institutional rules and procedures to forestall competition for leadership positions” (Slater, 2003, 89).

⁴Defined as “the creation of alternative policy channels to divert influence and resources away from rivals in mainline government departments and toward loyalists in packed institutions” (Slater, 2003, 90).

typology of democratic erosion.

Table 3.1: Typology of Democratic Erosion

Type	Definition	Example
Rigging	Modification of existing formal institutions	Change constitution to favor the incumbent party
Domestic interference	Existing formal institutions, but asymmetrical allocation of resources	Court packing
Curbing	No modification of existing institutions; but increasingly limited space for collective expression	Repression of the press

3.2 Determinants of Perception of Democratic Erosion

3.2.1 Nature of the Backsliding Matters

Does the nature of the backsliding action matter for how it is perceived? Incumbents can undermine democracy in several ways. Once elected, Orban appointed loyalists to lead the state-led TV stations (Reuters, 2018), and radically transformed the once autonomous electoral commission, state audit office, and Constitutional Court (Krekó and Enyedi, 2018). However, what seems concerning, is that there was no single step that “cleanly marked that the old political norms had been destroyed for good” (Mounk, 2018, 10). As a result, democratic erosion can take place in “piecemeal, often in baby steps” (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018, 77).

Elected authoritarians might also directly assault the institutions and change rule of the game. A striking example of this comes from the Reconstruction Era in the United States. In response to the mass enfranchisement of African Americans and passing of the Fifteenth Amendment, southern states passed a series of disenfranchisement reforms. For example, the Eight Box Law of 1882 sidestepped the Fifteenth Amendment, which

effectively resembled a literacy test to discriminate against African Americans in South Carolina. Black turnout, as a result, fell from 96% in 1876 to 11% in 1898 (Kousser, 1974, 92).

I hypothesize that nature of the backsliding event affects how voters perceive the event. Since certain changes can be difficult to understand and evaluate, citizens might be less likely to perceive actions such as domestic interference (i.e. no direct attack on the institutions) as concerning for democracy. For the same reason, voters might consider direct attacks on democratic institutions concerning because they are immediately consequential to citizens' everyday life.

H1a. When democratic backsliding happens in subtle ways (e.g. domestic interference), voters are less likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding.

H1b. When democratic backsliding happens in obvious ways that are immediately consequential to everyday lives, voters are more likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding.

3.2.2 Tactics

Another factor that may influence voters' perception of democratic backsliding is the tactic through which democratic erosion happens. Soon after Juan Peron was elected President of Argentina, he initiated a trial against three of the five Justices, and the fourth one resigned (Helmke, 2012). Once the executive packed the court, the judiciary provided few checks and balances on Peron's power entrenchment. Peron's government arrested the opposition leader (Ricardo Balbin) in 1950, and Balbin insisted on a trial (*Argentina: A Matter of Respect*, 1950). Because the court was packed with Peron's loyalists at the time, Balbin lost the trial, and was sentenced five years in jail. By leveraging a packed court along with presidential decrees, the autocrat hid their repression behind a veneer of legality.

What we have observed here, is that compared to the old school tactics such as

assassination of political rivals, power entrenchment through legal means affords the would-be authoritarians additional legitimacy. As a result, I hypothesize voters are less likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if it is introduced through legal means.

H2. Voters are more likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if it is introduced through extralegal means.

3.2.3 Perception of Incrementality

A third factor that we consider is the notion of incrementality. While a full democratic breakdown can result in public backlash, democratic erosion that happens in piecemeal steps might not set off the society's alarm bell. One way to conceptualize this argument is to think of the boiling frog metaphor, which refers to the proverbial frog that fails to perceive the danger and is boiled alive when placed in a pot of cold water that is brought to a boil gradually (Krugman, 2009).

Previous attempts that erode democracy might create a veneer of legitimacy, hence leading to more support for future attempts. As a result, it's also possible that citizens become less suspicious of an event if similar events have taken place in the past.

H3. Voters are less likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if there have been multiple similar events that happened in the past.

3.2.4 Socioeconomic Context

I also consider how socioeconomic context affects voters' perception of events related to democratic backsliding. Economic variables have been central to the study of democratic transitions. The canonical work from Przeworski and Limongi (1997) argues that lack of economic development leads to democratic breakdowns, but not democratization. This argument was later rejected by Boix and Stokes (2003), which shows that economic

development indeed increases the likelihood of democratic transition, once correcting the omitted variable bias and selection problems in Przeworski and Limongi (1997). Moreover, Schleiter and Tavits (2018) shows that although voters react negatively to opportunistic election timing, they are less likely to punish incumbents' opportunistic behavior under good economic performance. As a result, I hypothesize that priming respondents to think about positive socioeconomic contexts can increase regime support, which increases the probability to tolerate democratic erosion.

H4a. Voters are more likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if they receive information about bad economic performance.

Moreover, I also consider how inequality might moderate citizens' perception of democratic erosion. A large literature has established the relationship between inequality and democratization (Meltzer and Richard, 1981; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Bermeo and Yashar, 2016). When inequality is higher, democracy is a desirable outcome to the poorer half of citizens because it increases redistribution. As a result, support for democracy should be higher when the country experiences high inequality. It is with this assumption, that I develop the following hypothesis:

H4b. Voters are more likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if they receive information about increasing economic inequality.

The final socioeconomic condition that I consider is national security. The hypothesis is motivated by a large literature on performance voting (De Vries and Giger, 2014). The logic is quite similar to the economic voting literature, which argues that voters are more likely to support the incumbent under favorable economic conditions. In a similar vein, I hypothesize that voters are more likely to tolerate democratic erosion under improving security circumstances.

H4c. Voters are more likely to perceive an event as democratic backsliding if they receive information about worsening national security.

3.3 Research Design

Through a conjoint experiment, I uncover the underlying multidimensional preferences of citizens in order to understand how citizens understand democratic backsliding in the context of a developing democracy (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014; Horiuchi, Smith and Yamamoto, 2018, 194). Conjoint designs allow researchers to estimate the effect of particular attributes in one dimension, while holding the distribution of other dimensions constant.

In the survey, I present each respondent with various attributes related to a potential scenario of backsliding, such as the tactic through which the event took place, the general socioeconomic climate within the country, and whether events similar to the one of interest have happened before.⁵

I then ask the respondents whether the event causes concerns for democracy in the country, and the same exercise is repeated for ten times.⁶ In particular, I use a rating-based conjoint experimental design to measure how voters define democratic backsliding.⁷ This is because in real life situations, voters rarely have to compare two backsliding incidents back to back, and evaluate which is “less democratic” – instead, citizens oftentimes evaluate nature of the event that they are exposed to as a single (if not independent) event. My research design specifically replicates this real-world phenomenon. Specifically, I present respondents with a particular event of democratic backsliding, accompanied by the contextual conditions around the event, the number of previous attempts, whether the event took place through legal or extralegal means – all randomized – and ask respondents to rate whether they consider the event as concerning for democracy within the country.

Finally, as Huff and Kertzer (2018) points out, survey respondents might not be able

⁵I tell respondents that the events are all hypothetical. However, whenever possible, I find events that have already happened in the Philippines. Five of the six events in the vignette are real events.

⁶Exact wording of the statement is: “This event makes me worry how democracy works in the country.”

⁷A similar attempt can be seen in Huff and Kertzer (2018), in which the authors use a conjoint design to measure how American citizens define terrorism.

to follow the narrative if the vignette does not make lexical sense.⁸ As a result, I always fix the first dimension to be the particular event of democratic erosion, and randomize the order of the subsequent information that respondents receive. In this way, I can test whether the order of which specific attributes of the backsliding event is presented affects voters' perception of the event, while not violating the concerns of lexical interpretability.

A summary of the conjoint design is in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Conjoint Design for Democratic Erosion

Event	Typology
The President [removed a member from the supreme court who ruled against his policies].	Domestic interference
... [gave zero budget to the congressmen in the opposition group].	Domestic interference
... [endorsed the proposal to allow political dynasties].	Rigging
... [endorsed the proposal to allow vote buying].	Rigging
... [ordered the police to arrest an opposition leader critical of himself].	Curtailing
... [revoked the operating license of a media firm that is critical of himself].	Curtailing
Time	
In the past three years, [this is the first time an event similar to this happened].	
... [similar events have happened at least five times].	
... [similar events have happened at least ten times].	
Tactic	
The event took place [through legal procedures].	
... [outside legal procedures].	
Contextual condition	
Prior to the event, [crime rate has increased by 5%].	
... [the income difference between the rich and the poor has increased by 5%].	
... [unemployment rate has increased by 5%].	
... [crime rate has decreased by 2%].	
... [the income difference between the rich and the poor has decreased by 2%].	
... [unemployment rate has decreased by 2%].	

⁸For example, respondents might be less likely to understand the scenario if they see the criticism *before* they receive information about the event itself.

3.4 Data and Results

Between February 16–19 in 2020, I recruited 348 online respondents through ads campaigns on Facebook. The campaign reached 90,482 users, which yielded 4,243 clicks on the ad, and 348 completed surveys.⁹

My analyses primarily focus on the AMCE, and they closely follow the methods outlined in Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014). Throughout analyses, the outcome variable is respondents' perception of democratic erosion. To measure democratic erosion, I ask respondents whether they think the hypothetical event would worsen democratic quality in the country ("*This event makes me worry how democracy works in the country*"). Respondents rated each profile on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates no concern, and 5 indicates strong concerns about democratic erosion. I then rescale the ratings to vary from 0 to 1 to facilitate interpretations (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014).

In Figure 3.1, I present the estimated AMCEs along with 95% confidence intervals (thinner bars) and 90% confidence intervals (thicker bars), with standard errors clustered at the respondent level.

First, I investigate whether people's perception of democratic erosion varies by the type of the event at stake. Compared to the baseline event ("*The President revoked the operating license of a media firm that is critical of himself.*"), respondents are 5.8% more likely to consider vote buying as democratic erosion (95% CI [2.0%, 9.6%]), and 3.7% more likely to consider endorsement of political dynasty as democratic erosion (95% CI [0.2%, 7.1%]).¹⁰ Compared to the baseline event, the following two events are statistically significant at better than the 10% level: budget freeze for the opposition (90% CI

⁹The click through rate is 4.7%, and 0.4% completion rate at the respondent level. These statistics are within bounds of what is described in Rosenzweig et al. (2019). In particular, the authors report 5.5% click through rate and 1.2% completion rate at the respondent level in Mexico, and 2.6% click through rate and 0.4% completion rate at the respondent level in Kenya.

¹⁰Exact wordings are "*The President endorsed the proposal to allow vote buying*" and "*The President endorsed the proposal to allow political dynasties*", respectively.

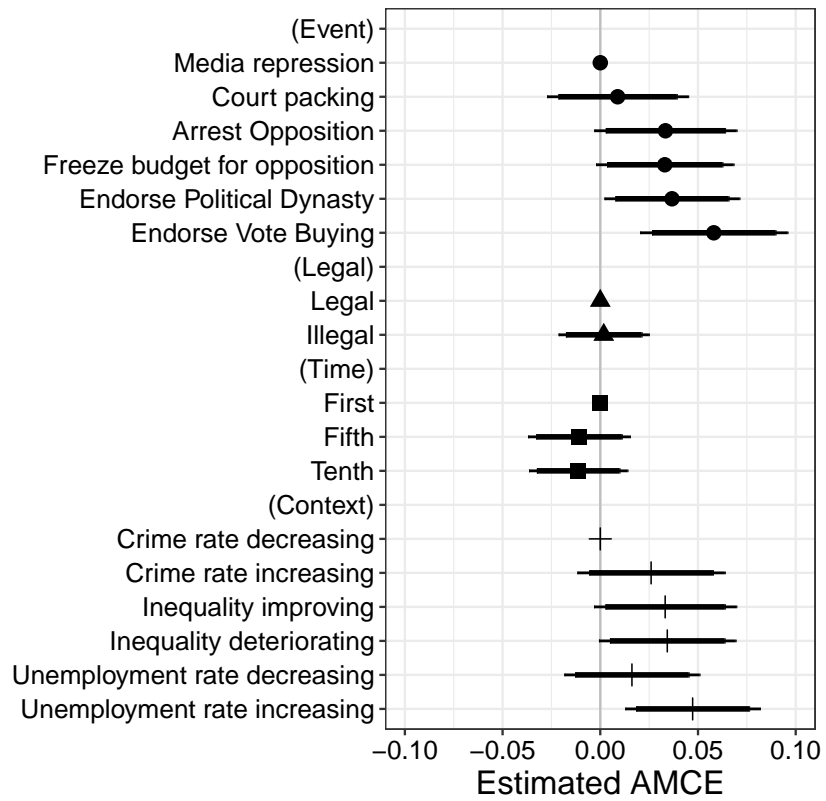


Figure 3.1: Estimated AMCE for democratic erosion estimated from the Philippine conjoint experiment.

[0.4%,6.3%]), and arrest of the opposition (90% CI [0.3%,6.4%]).¹¹ The difference between court packing and the baseline event are statistically indistinguishable to respondents in the Philippines ($p = 0.63$).

This finding suggests that people's decision to hold the incumbent accountable depends on type of the event. When the event is immediately consequential to how democracy operates in the daily life (e.g. vote buying), voters are more likely to perceive the President as anti-democratic when he violates the democratic norms. On the other hand, arcane action such as court packing is *less* likely to ring the alarm bell for the public.

In terms of the tactic through which the event took place, respondents do not seem to differentiate legal means from illegal means. Compared to the legal means, extralegal strategies increase respondents' perception of democratic erosion by 0.2%. The difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.88$).

Respondents are also slightly more concerned if an event happens for the first time. Compared to the baseline (no previous incident), respondents are 1.1% less likely consider the event as democratic erosion if there were previous incidents. However, this difference is not statistically significant.

In terms of socioeconomic contexts, compared to the baseline context (decreased crime rate), respondents are 4.7% more likely to consider an event as democratic erosion if the unemployment rate was high (95% CI [1.3%,8.2%]). Respondents do not seem to differentiate between high and low inequality. The findings here are broadly consistent with the economic voting literature, which states that voters reward incumbents under good economic performance.

¹¹Exact wordings are "*The President gave zero budget to the congressmen in the opposition group*" and "*The President ordered the police to arrest an opposition leader critical of himself*", respectively.

3.5 Regime Support Moderates Perception of Democratic Erosion

In this section, I explore whether there is heterogeneous treatment effects between respondents who are satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines and respondents who are less satisfied.

To measure respondents' baseline satisfaction with democracy, I ask the following question in the beginning of the survey (*How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the Philippines?*), and code the responses on a scale of 1–5. I then create a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent is “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with how democracy works in the Philippines, and 0 if the respondent is “very unsatisfied” or “somewhat unsatisfied”.

In Figure 3.2, I show the heterogeneous results. In particular, it includes heterogeneity in estimated AMCE for democratic erosion, where the red color represents the respondents who are satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines, and the gray color represents the respondents who are *not* satisfied. Horizontal bars represent 95% CI, and standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

Perception of democratic erosion seems to split between respondents who are satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines, and those who are not satisfied. One striking finding is that the effect of event type in Section 3.4 is driven by respondents who are less satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines. Among the respondents who are satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines, different event types do not result in any statistically significant difference in how people perceive democratic erosion. It is among the respondents who display less regime support, where we observed the effect of event type on perception of democratic erosion.

Proregime respondents are also 1.4% more likely to consider extralegal strategies as

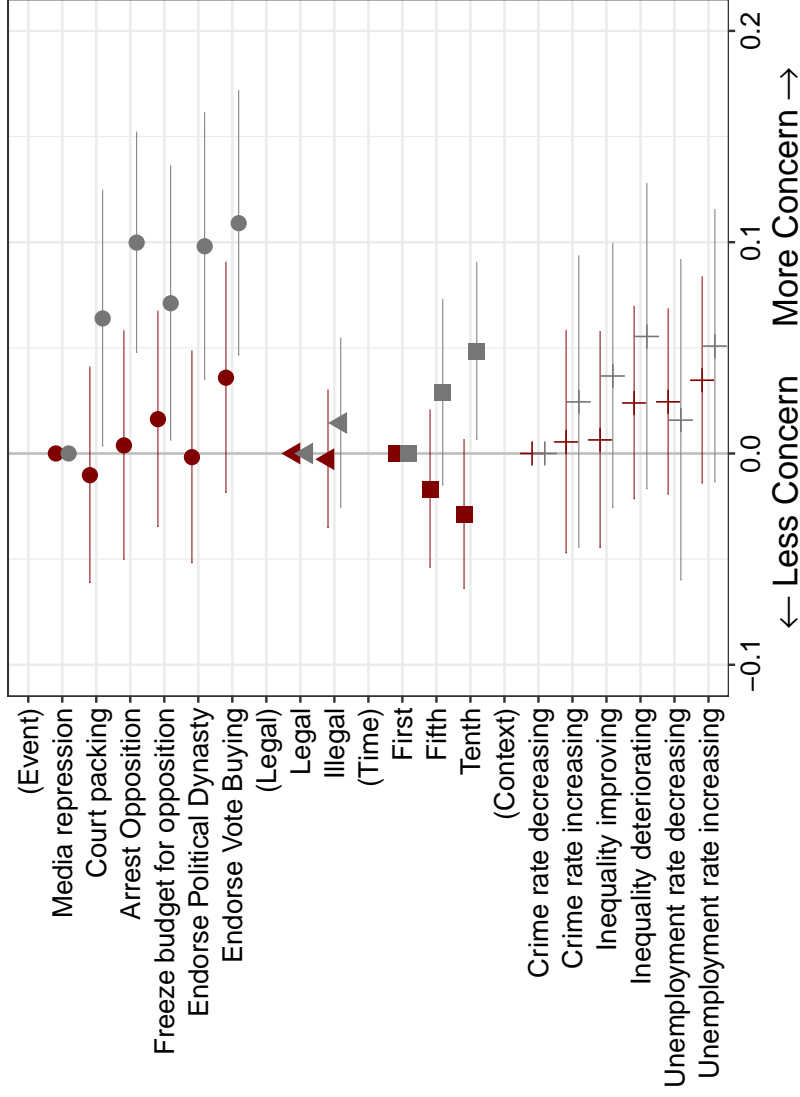


Figure 3.2: Heterogeneity in perception of democratic erosion by satisfaction with democracy in the Philippines. Red color represents respondents satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines, and gray color represents respondents *not* satisfied.

democratic erosion, although this effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.48$).

Compared to respondents who are satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines, respondents who are less satisfied show more concerns when similar events have happened in the past. In particular, respondents who are less satisfied are 2.9% more likely to consider a profile as backsliding if an event has happened five times before (95% CI of $[-1.5\%, 7.3\%]$), and 4.8% more likely to consider a profile as backsliding if an event has happened ten times before (95% CI of $[0.6\%, 9.0\%]$). Note that this subgroup analysis yields strikingly different results from what we observed in Section 3.4. First, for the subgroup with low regime satisfaction, effect for the attribute level that states ten previous offenses is statistically significant ($p = 0.02$). Moreover, this effect is of *opposite direction* compared to the pooled results.

These findings suggest a potential separating equilibrium between regime supporters and those who are less content. While proregime citizens might be willing to tolerate an authoritarian leaning President, citizens who are less satisfied on the baseline might be more likely to be alarmed by action against democratic norms.

Determinants of Satisfaction with Democracy. In previous sections, I showed that people's decision to hold the incumbent accountable depends on type of the event. When the event is immediately consequential to how democracy operates in the daily life (e.g. vote buying), voters are more likely to perceive the President as anti-democratic when he violates democratic norms. Respondents also respond to socioeconomic contexts quite well. Compared to the baseline context (decreased crime rate), respondents are 4.7% more likely to consider an event as democratic erosion if the unemployment rate was high.

I further showed that the effect of event type in Section 3.4 is mainly driven by respondents who are less satisfied with how democracy works in the Philippines. That is, perception of democratic erosion splits between respondents who are satisfied with how

democracy works in the Philippines, and those who are less satisfied.

A remaining question is to understand what determines satisfaction with how democracy works in the Philippines.¹² To answer this question, I regress regime support a series of covariates:

- Basic demographics, such as gender, age, education level, and whether the respondent is from an urban or rural region
- The extent to which the respondent believes the Philippines is polarized (“*The difference between the rich and the poor in the Philippines has become bigger*”)
- The extent to which the respondent believes that the President (or mayor) can represent the citizens (“*My President (mayor) can represent ordinary Filipinos*”)
- The extent to which the respondent believes in an improved economy (“*Economy in the Philippines will improve in the next five years*”)
- Respondent’s interest in politics (“*How interested are you in politics?*”)
- Frequency that the respondent attended community meetings (“*In the past year, how many times have you participated in community meetings?*”)
- Frequency that the respondent contacted a politician to ask for help (“*In the past year, how many times have you contacted a politician to ask for help for your family?*”)
- Whether the respondent voted in the 2019 election
- Whether the respondent was contacted to vote a particular candidate in the 2019 election (“*Did anyone come to your house to encourage you to vote for a particular candidate in 2019?*”)

Table 3.3 presents summary statistics of the aforementioned variables.

I then regress satisfaction with democracy on a series of covariates through three specifications. In Model 1, I regress satisfaction with democracy on the basic demographics.

¹²Note that the purpose of this section is to understand what affects baseline satisfaction with democracy. Because the attitudinal questions are asked prior to the experiment, they should not affect how we interpret the main results from the conjoint experiment in Section 3.4.

Table 3.3: Summary Statistics of the Survey

Statistic	Mean	Min	Max	St. Dev.
Male	0.23	0	1	0.42
Age	37.42	19	77	13.65
Finished College	0.44	0	1	0.50
Urban	0.54	0	1	0.50
Satisfied with Democracy	3.40	1	5	1.22
Perceived Polarization	4.04	1	5	1.03
Representative President	3.91	1	5	1.27
Representative Mayor	3.60	1	5	1.20
Better Economy	3.73	1	5	1.10
Interest in Politics	2.89	1	4	0.74
Community Meeting	2.28	1	4	0.95
Help from Politician	1.40	1	3	0.63
Voted in 2019	0.80	0	1	0.40
Contacted for Vote Buying	0.47	0	1	0.50

In Model 2, I add covariates related to attitudes such as perceived polarization. In Model 3, I further include controls related to political behavior. The results are presented in Table 3.4.

In terms of demographics, whether respondents finished college is negatively correlated with satisfaction with democracy in Model 1, but the relationship is only statistically significant better than the 10% level, and the effect disappears once we include additional controls in Models 2 and 3. The correlation between satisfaction with democracy and other demographics (i.e. gender, age, or whether the respondent lives in an urban area) is not statistically significant across model specifications.

Across all models, belief in a representative mayor is strongly correlated with satisfaction with democracy. All else equal, a one-unit increase in self-perception of representative mayors is correlated to a 0.15 unit increase in satisfaction with democracy in Model 2, and 0.18 unit increase in Model 3. Moreover, optimistic beliefs about economy, interest in politics overall, and previous voting behavior are also positively correlated with

Table 3.4: Correlates with Satisfaction with Democracy

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Male	0.10 (0.22)	0.19 (0.21)	0.30 (0.21)
Finished_College	-0.35* (0.19)	-0.21 (0.18)	-0.26 (0.18)
Urban	-0.07 (0.19)	-0.002 (0.17)	-0.06 (0.17)
Age	-0.004 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Perceived Polarization		-0.11 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.08)
Representative President		0.12 (0.09)	0.16* (0.09)
Representative Mayor		0.15** (0.07)	0.18** (0.08)
Better Economy		0.27** (0.11)	0.19* (0.11)
Community Meeting			0.01 (0.10)
Interest in Politics			0.25** (0.12)
Help from Politician			-0.18 (0.15)
Voted in 2019			0.50** (0.22)
Contacted for VB			-0.19 (0.18)
(Intercept)	3.70*** (0.30)	1.97*** (0.61)	1.23* (0.73)
Observations	171	171	171
R ²	0.03	0.20	0.26
Adjusted R ²	0.003	0.16	0.20
Residual Std. Error	1.22 (df = 166)	1.12 (df = 162)	1.09 (df = 157)
F Statistic	1.15 (df = 4; 166)	5.15*** (df = 8; 162)	4.25*** (df = 13; 157)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

respondents' satisfaction with democracy, and the correlation is statistically significant at better than the 5% level across model specifications.¹³

In the previous section, we learned that while proregime citizens might be willing to tolerate an authoritarian leaning President, citizens with lower baseline satisfaction with democracy are more likely to be alarmed by actions against democratic norms. As we showed in this section, respondents in the latter category also tend to feel less represented by the politicians, are less interested in politics, and are less likely to participate in civic behavior (e.g. voting). This observation poses a dilemma for many developing democracies – the people who can raise the fire alarm for the society are oftentimes alienated from the civic space at the same time.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I show that when events related to democratic erosion happen, citizens are more concerned if the event directly affects their daily life. In the context of the Philippines, citizens are more concerned about actions such as endorsement of vote buying. However, events such as court packing are less likely to raise the alarm bell for the public. I also find that proregime respondents display less concern over incidents related to democratic erosion, and citizens' decision to hold the incumbent accountable is moderated by contextual factors such as the unemployment rate.

What it means to the authoritarian leaning politicians, is that the art of co-optation has long-term implications to how a democracy backslides. Politicians can slip through changes that entrench their power under good economic conditions, especially if such reforms are inconspicuous, and not immediately consequential to how democracy operates

¹³The only exception is self-perception of economic performance. Once controlling for propensity for political participation (e.g. voting history), the effect of self-perception of economic performance becomes only statistically significant at better than the 10% level.

from day to day. Moreover, citizens who are satisfied with the regime are more likely to turn a blind eye toward actions that are at odds with democratic norms, further weakening the bulwark that supposedly provides accountability and constraints on the political leadership.

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Chapter 4

Politicians, Voters, and Democratic Norms: Lessons From an Anti-Vote Buying Campaign in the Philippines

4.1 Motivation

Why citizens support a corrupt candidate in a developing democracy can be puzzling. In Brazil, a well known saying – *rouba, mas faz* (“he steals, but he gets things done”) – is oftentimes used to explain voters’ support for a rent-extracting candidate (Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2013). In countries where vote buying is prevalent,¹ voters might perceive electoral clientelism as a signal that the candidate is a capable patron (Kramon, 2017). That is, some voters view vote buying as a *positive* candidate trait, because it signals that the candidate has enough wealth and power, which can in turn be beneficial to the community (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019). As a result, it might be helpful to think of vote buying as an “entry ticket” (Aspinall et al., 2015), as it is sometimes necessary for a

¹For example, in the Philippines, researchers report that around 60% of the voters have been approached for vote buying in local elections (Ravanilla, Haim and Hicken, 2017).

candidate to be considered seriously by voters.

In *Votes for Survival*, Nichter (2018) argues that voters can be motivated to “buttress the stability of ongoing exchange relationships” that underpin clientelism (176). In particular, citizens in Brazil oftentimes initiate the request for benefits from politicians, and when such requests get denied, voters decrease support for the politician as a result. Under this framework, voters infer politician’s type through requests for assistance, and cooptation through material benefits is not necessarily a negative trait in voters’ eyes (Fearon, 1999).

In this chapter, I ask two questions. First, how do voters perceive the potential trade-off between a politician who can deliver public goods, and a politician who respects democratic norms. Second, to what extent do voters’ attitudes and behavior entrench the clientelist equilibrium in a patronage democracy?

This chapter zooms in on one particular anti-democratic practice, vote buying, because it is perhaps one of the more obvious attacks on democratic norms. Practices of vote buying undermine several key features of a democracy, such as accountability (Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999; Stokes et al., 2013), trust in political institutions (Stokes, 2005; Desposato, 2007), and public goods provision (Hicken and Simmons, 2008; Khemani, 2013).²

Using a field experiment in the Philippine local elections, I show that an anti-vote buying campaign targeted at the politicians has limited effects on vote buying incidents, but it results in downstream impact on electoral outcomes and voter turnout. I couple this finding with a survey experiment, in which I find that citizens reward candidates who can provide public goods, but do not punish candidates who buy votes. Because citizens do not punish politicians who disrespect democratic norms, politicians have limited incentive to tie their hands and reduce vote buying.³

²When parties offer rewards to activate their passive constituencies, the implication of material handouts is more ambiguous. For more, see Nichter (2008).

³It is also possible that even though voters have strong norm against corruption, their real-world vote choice is governed by more pressing issues such as employment and other public goods (Boas, Hidalgo and

The chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 4.2, I conceptualize vote buying market as a two-sided market, and argue that the literature has been primarily focused on the sellers' market (e.g. voters). I then motivate the first study in this chapter to study the buyers' market (e.g. politicians). Section 4.3 presents the research design for the field experiment with politicians. Section 4.4 shows the results from the experiment with politicians, in which I find limited impact of the anti-vote buying campaign on vote buying incidents, but strong effects on electoral competition and voter turnout. Section 4.5 brings voters back to the big picture, and offers survey evidence to further explain the findings from previous sections. The last section concludes.

4.2 Targeting Politicians to Reduce Vote Buying

Vote-buying is prevalent in many developing democracies (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019; Hicken, 2011). While there are debates about the welfare effects of vote buying, political scientists agree that it undermines several key features of a democracy, such as accountability (Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999; Stokes et al., 2013), trust in political institutions (Stokes, 2005; Desposato, 2007), and public goods provision (Hicken and Simmons, 2008; Khemani, 2013). Because of the inimical effects that vote buying can have on the functioning of a democracy, scholars and donors have increasingly directed attention and resources toward voter-targeted informational campaigns to reduce the supply of votes available for purchase (Hicken et al., 2018).

In a world of incomplete information, uninformed voters might not observe politicians' behavior. As a result, a politician could exploit the information asymmetry, and shirk his duties while not being held accountable by the voters (Besley and Burgess, 2002). Mitigating this information asymmetry could potentially strengthen democratic

Melo, 2019).

accountability (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2012).

However, research on how information shapes voting behavior yields mixed results (Ashworth and De Mesquita, 2014). On the one hand, voters lack information to distinguish the good type from the bad type (Fearon, 1999; Ferraz and Finan, 2008). Under this assumption, information provision should be able to strengthen monitoring and lead to better governance. For example, Ferraz and Finan (2008) finds that disseminating the results of audits that identify local corruption decreases the rate of incumbency reelection in municipalities with higher levels of reported corruption. Moreover, Weitz-Shapiro (2014) finds that non-clients view clientelism as a negative signal of the quality of government performance, and decrease their support for the candidate as a result. That is, for every single vote that a politician wins from vote buying, she also bears the probability of losing support particularly due to vote buying.

On the other hand, a growing literature shows that information provision does not lead to behavioral changes (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2012; Lieberman, Posner and Tsai, 2014), and sometimes might even work in favor of the bad type (Arias et al., 2022). For example, Adida et al. (2019) argues that information alone is not sufficient to affect voters' behavior – in order for information to shift voting behavior, voters need to care about the information (that is, the information needs to be salient), and they need to believe that other citizens would coordinate on voting the bad type out of office (2-3). That is, there are a few variables that moderate the effect of information provision on voters' behavior – removing one of these conditions could render the impact of positive information on voter support for the incumbent to be null or “even negative” (Adida et al., 2019, 28).

I argue that while the literature has been primarily focused on the sellers' market (e.g. voters), there might be larger impact for interventions that directly engage with the buyers (e.g. politicians). That is, despite the growing interest in empowering the voters to strengthen democratic accountability in consolidating democracies, research that looks at

the “demand-side” remains limited (c.f. Fujiwara and Wantchekon 2013; Grossman and Michelitch 2018; Cruz, Keefer and Labonne 2017). If politicians do not face an incentive strong enough to change behavior, it could be potentially very difficult to change an equilibrium by simply giving information to the voters.

The first study of this chapter hence focuses on the politicians. In particular, I leverage a field experiment during the Philippine local elections in 2019 to understand the impact of an anti-vote buying campaign targeted at the politicians.

While mitigating the informational asymmetry can induce behavioral changes among politicians, how exactly anti-vote buying campaigns affect politicians’ behavior remains unclear. The anti-vote buying campaign can either generate a positive effect, or a negative effect on candidates’ behavior. For example, if candidates believe that the voters will punish politicians for buying votes, then they might reduce vote buying to mimic a good type (Fearon, 1999), and adopt alternative campaign strategies (Grossman and Michelitch, 2018).

I hypothesize that the anti-vote buying campaign should have the following effects on politicians’ behavior and electoral outcomes with intended effects:

H1a (Intended effect). If candidates respond positively to the intervention, then candidates who are aware of the anti-vote buying campaign are less likely to buy votes, compared to the politicians who are not aware of the anti-vote buying campaign.

H1b (Downstream outcome with intended effect). The anti-vote buying treatment results in more electoral competition. This is because incumbents have more resources than their challengers, and the anti-vote buying treatment disproportionately affects incumbents.

On the other hand, previous research shows that well-intended anti-vote buying campaigns might backfire, resulting in additional vote buying from challengers (Blattman et al., 2019). One mechanism behind the backfire is that it is more cost effective to buy

votes instead of implementing public goods projects (Cruz et al., 2018), especially in situations where vote buying is a common electoral strategy. Another mechanism is that politicians might increase vote buying to counteract the potential decrease in voter support (Cruz, Keefer and Labonne, 2017). In summary, candidates might respond negatively to the intervention by either ignoring the treatment, or even increasing their efforts in buying votes.

I hypothesize that the anti-vote buying campaign should have the following effects on politicians' behavior and electoral outcomes with unintended effects:

H2a (Unintended effect). If candidates respond negatively to the intervention, then candidates who are aware of the anti-vote buying campaign are more likely to buy votes, compared to the politicians who are not aware of the anti-vote buying campaign.

H2b (Downstream outcome with unintended effect). The anti-vote buying treatment results in more electoral competition. This is because challengers might believe that the treatment weakens reciprocity, which prompts them to enter markets previously dominated by the incumbents (Blattman et al., 2019).

I also consider how contents of the outreach message affect politicians' behavior. While acting to be a good type, a politician might mimic certain actions but not the others. Behaving like a good type does not come without costs – electoral payoff of tying one's hands and running a clean election is positive only if the cost of doing so is not too high. I expect that politicians are more likely to respond positively to the intervention if it incurs less cost. For example, promising not to buy votes potentially incurs a higher cost than endorsing the initiative that reduces vote buying.⁴ Since refraining from vote buying can incur higher cost for the future self, politicians are less likely to respond positively to the

⁴A similar analogy can be seen in Hicken et al. (2018), where the authors argue that vote-selling is a temptation good, “generating utility for the future self upon the vote-sale, but not for the present self who anticipates later selling his or her vote” (13).

intervention if they are explicitly asked to promise not to buy votes.

As a result, I hypothesize how expected costs of the anti-vote buying campaign affect politicians' behavior and electoral outcomes:

H3. Candidates are more likely to change behaviors if the anti-vote buying intervention incurs a lower cost. That is, intensity of the effect in Hypotheses 1 and 2 should be larger in the treatment groups with lower costs.

The literature on information and accountability has looked at voters' coordination dilemma – voters' decision to hold a politician accountable depends on their beliefs about other voters' behavior (Adida et al., 2019). When there lacks a focal point for voters to coordinate on voting the bad type out of office, information about the incumbent does not necessarily lead to change in voting behavior. Similarly, I argue that politicians likely also face a coordination dilemma.

In a seminal contribution to the literature on political reforms, Geddes (1994) argues that when patronage dominates the electoral market, legislators rely on clientelistic exchange, and win support from distributing jobs to citizens for political support. Under a civil service reform, legislators have to all give up their own patronage. Endorsement of the reform is unlikely unless everyone else also supports the reform. As a result, without knowing his competitor's strategy, the legislator is more likely to support the status quo instead of supporting the reform. When vote buying as an electoral strategy is commonly used by competitors, even civic-minded politicians lack a focal point to move themselves away from the clientelist equilibrium. Following this logic, a candidate is more likely to support a reform that curtails vote buying if the competitors would also potentially support the reform. As a result, making the intervention common knowledge can potentially mitigate the coordination problem.

However, it is also possible for the intervention to backfire in this situation. Common knowledge of the intervention increases stake of the election, which results in incentives to

cultivate support through other strategies. For example, Grossman and Michelitch (2018) and Cruz, Keefer and Labonne (2017) find that politicians strategically respond to voter-targeted interventions to counteract the consequence of potentially negative information. As a result, it is possible that our politician-targeted intervention can increase stake of the election, and result in incentive to cultivate additional support. When the anti-vote buying campaign is common knowledge, candidates might anticipate that their well-funded competitors are constrained by the intervention. As a result, our intervention can change challengers' belief about the incumbent, and prompt some candidates to change strategies and enter the vote buying market where they would have been deterred. That is, the common knowledge treatment might lead to some candidates' strategically buying more votes, or increasing efforts to mobilize their core supporters.

To understand how common knowledge affects politicians' campaign behavior, my intervention informs politicians in certain treated groups that all their competitors have been invited to participate in the same anti-vote buying campaign. And I hypothesize how common knowledge of the anti-vote buying campaign affects politicians' behavior and electoral outcomes:

H4. Candidates are more likely to change behaviors if the intervention is common knowledge. In particular, intensity of the effects in Hypotheses 1 and 2 should be stronger when candidates are explicitly told that their competitors have received the anti-vote buying intervention.

4.3 A Field Experiment with Politicians

Suppose that a reform against vote buying is available. Which candidates will support and participate in the initiative? And does it have downstream effects on electoral outcomes? To answer this question, I investigate the effect of an NGO-led, politician

targeted, anti-vote buying campaign in the context of 2019 Philippine local elections. In particular, I divided 1,739 mayoral and vice-mayoral candidates from 315 municipalities and cities into one control group and four treatment groups, and sent them letters that encouraged them to consider strategies other than vote buying in the upcoming election. Since contents of the letter vary across treatment groups, I am able to measure how variation in outreach contents affects campaign strategies, and downstream electoral outcomes.

The randomized intervention includes two stages. In the first stage, I divide the experimental sample into a control group and four treatment groups. There are few criteria for a municipality or city to be included in my experimental sample. Due to the limited staff at the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) prior to the election, I was only able to obtain candidates' addresses from the National Capital Region, Ilocos, Cagayan, Calabarzon, Northern Mindanao, and the Cordillera Administrative Region.⁵ I exclude non-competitive municipalities and cities,⁶ and municipalities or cities with very low human development index from my sample.⁷ The resulting sample includes 315 municipalities or cities, as well as 1,739 mayoral and vice-mayoral candidates that I randomly assign into the control and treatment groups.

During randomization, I block on historical competitiveness (in the 2016 election), the number of candidates in the race, and whether there is at least one female candidate in the race.⁸ I then use a blocked-and-clustered design to assign treatment municipalities or cities into one of the four treatment groups.⁹ Next, I invite mayoral and vice-mayoral

⁵The regions were selected at random.

⁶I define non-competitive localities as uncontested municipalities or cities with only one candidate.

⁷In particular, I only keep cities or municipalities where the income classification is the first (at least 400 million pesos average annual income), second (between 320 and 400 million pesos), or the third class (between 240 and 320 million pesos).

⁸Politicians who barely win their first election are about 5 times more likely to have a relative in office in the future than individuals who barely lose their first election (Querubin et al., 2016). And the presence of female candidates can be a proxy for dynastic candidates, since political dynasties are more likely to field a dynastic woman when the male incumbent is term limited (Labonne, Parsa and Querubin, 2021).

⁹Since the treatment is assigned at the municipality and city level, all politicians within the same race receive the same treatment. This design ensures that our treatment applies to all competitors in the same race equitably.

candidates to participate in an NGO-driven initiative that seeks to reduce vote buying. The intervention package has two elements: a cover letter and a self-administered survey.¹⁰ In the cover letter, I randomly assign candidates into one of the two groups – in the common knowledge group, I tell the candidate that other candidates in the same municipality or city have received the same invitation to participate in the program; in the non-common knowledge group, I do not explicitly tell the candidate this information. Within the survey, candidates are further randomly assigned to one of the two groups – in the *promise* group, candidates are asked to promise not to buy votes in the upcoming election; in the *endorse* group, candidates are asked to endorse the campaign that reduces vote-buying. I then evaluate effectiveness of the intervention by comparing the reported vote buying incidents and electoral outcomes across the control and treatment groups.

My intervention adopts a 2×2 factorial design with a pure control to test the conditions that are more likely to change politicians’ behaviors. My theory predicts that effectiveness of the intervention depends on two factors. First, whether the intervention is common knowledge matters. On the one hand, this information makes the anti-vote buying intervention common knowledge, and strengthens incentives to respond to the initiative. On the other hand, for candidates who have already committed to vote buying, being informed of the program might increase their efforts in buying votes to counteract the potentially negative consequence of non-participation in the initiative. To test how common knowledge affects politicians’ campaign calculus, half of the treatment groups are reminded that all other candidates in the same municipality or city have received the same invitation.

Moreover, candidates need to believe that a different campaign strategy is consistent with their electoral interest. When the cost of the alternative strategy is too high, there is less incentive to support the initiative. In order to test this hypothesis, I vary the outreach

¹⁰For sample letters, please see Figures C.1 and C.2.

message in the treatment. In particular, I either ask candidates to promise not to buy votes (which incurs a higher cost), or simply to endorse the initiative that combats vote buying (which incurs a lower cost). The treatment assignments are summarized in Table 4.1.¹¹ In Table C.1, I conduct a series of t-tests and ANOVA tests, and I do not identify any significant differences across the control group and treatment groups.

Table 4.1: Assignment to Treatment in the Field Experiment with Politicians

			Are candidates asked to endorse the campaign, or promise not to buy votes?	
			Endorse	Promise
		Control (154 clusters)		
Is the intervention common knowledge?	No		T_1 (41 clusters)	T_2 (40 clusters)
	Yes		T_3 (40 clusters)	T_4 (40 clusters)

I use an OLS estimator to estimate the effect of the treatment on reported vote buying incidents and electoral outcomes. Consider the following specification,

$$y_j = \beta Z_{ji} + \gamma \mathbf{X}_{ji} + \phi_j + \varepsilon_{ji},$$

where Z_{ji} is candidate i 's treatment assignment in municipality or city j , \mathbf{X}_{ji} is a vector of pretreatment covariates, ϕ_j are block fixed effects, and ε_{ji} is the error term. In terms of parameters, β is the average effect of the treatment compared to the pure control. In the main specification, \mathbf{X} includes candidate's gender, income class of the locality, as well as the number of registered voters in the locality. Robust standard errors are clustered at the municipality or city level at which the treatments are assigned. For the outcome variable, I investigate whether my intervention affects reported incidents of vote buying

¹¹Note that each city or municipality is a cluster, and cluster size is the number of mayoral candidates within the cluster.

from a citizen survey,¹² as well as electoral outcomes such as competitiveness and turnout rate.¹³ Because both the treatment and the outcomes are measured at the municipality or city level, rather than at the candidate level, I also run robustness checks after aggregating the data at the locality level. The main results remain similar.

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, it presents one of the first evidence on effectiveness of politician-targeted information interventions that reduce vote buying (see also, Blattman et al. 2019). Although there is a sizable literature on information and accountability through the lens of the voters (for example, see Dunning et al. 2019), research that examines ways to curb clientelism from the demand side (i.e. the politicians) is still limited. Second, I explicitly examine the mechanisms behind how varying outreach contents can change politicians' behaviors differently (Pande, 2011). Third, I show that the anti-vote buying campaign has limited effects on vote buying incidents, but it results in downstream impacts on electoral outcomes and voter turnout. Future work should explore interventions to counteract some of the mechanisms highlighted in this chapter.

4.4 Anti-Vote Buying Campaign Increases Electoral Competition

I present the main results from the intervention in Table 4.2. Being informed of the anti-vote buying campaign does not affect vote buying incidents, measured by the citizen survey and respondents' perceived amount of pesos used for vote buying (columns 1 and 2). The treatment results in more electoral competition, measured by the decrease in

¹²The survey was fielded by our implementation partner on Facebook after the election, and it ran for two weeks.

¹³This data is scraped from the COMELEC website: https://comelec.gov.ph/?r=2019NLE/ElectionResults_.

the Herfindahl index (HHI) of votes within a municipality or city (column 3),¹⁴ and the decrease in winning margin between the winner and the runner-up candidate (column 4). The coefficients are statistically significant ($p = 0.01$). Moreover, municipalities and cities in which the candidates are informed of the intervention see an increase of around 1.40% in voter turnout, and this effect is statistically significant ($p = 0.02$).

Table 4.2: Effect of Treatment on Outcomes of Interest

	Vote Buy	#(Peso)	HHI	Margin	Turnout
Treatment	-0.004 (0.157)	135.609* (65.428)	-0.055** (0.017)	-7.860* (3.128)	1.373* (0.595)
Gender	-0.216* (0.103)	-134.765** (48.702)	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.537 (1.829)	-0.141 (0.359)
#(Voters), logged	0.376* (0.155)	89.840 (51.891)	0.015 (0.013)	1.525 (2.538)	-3.012*** (0.427)
Income	-0.084 (0.111)	-28.746 (40.952)	-0.006 (0.009)	-1.484 (1.793)	0.081 (0.345)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.089	0.046	0.152	0.081	0.297
Adj. R ²	0.084	0.041	0.147	0.075	0.293
Num. obs.	1739	1739	1730	1730	1739
RMSE	1.315	587.160	0.144	26.116	4.584
N Clusters	315	315	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

The treatment does not change vote buying. Receiving the treatment increases vote buying incidents self reported by the citizens, although the effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.98$; Table 4.2, column 1). When the outcome variable is respondents' perceived amount of pesos used for vote buying, I observe a positive treatment effect

¹⁴Herfindahl-Hirschman index measures market concentration, and it is oftentimes used to determine competitiveness. For a market of three firms, each with market share s_1, s_2, s_3 , the Herfindahl index is computed as $HHI = s_1^2 + s_2^2 + s_3^2$. In a monopoly market, the Herfindahl index is high. In a market of perfect competition, the Herfindahl index approaches zero. That is, a decrease in Herfindahl index indicates increasing competition among the candidates.

that is statistically significant ($p = 0.04$, Table 4.2, column 2), although the magnitude is substantively small. This is suggestive evidence that the treatment has resulted in perception of additional vote buying, even though it does not result in additional self-reported vote buying incidents in the field.

In Figure 4.1, I present the mechanism through which the treatment affects vote buying. I ran a series of logit regressions where the outcome is whether there is at least one reported vote buying incident in the candidate's municipality or city. Compared to the control group, municipalities in which politicians are asked to promise not to buy votes have more reported incidents of vote buying, although this difference is only significant at better than the 10% level ($p = 0.07$). There is no statistically significant difference between the control group and the group in which politicians are simply asked to endorse the anti-vote buying campaign ($p = 0.86$). Moreover, I do not observe statistically significant difference between the control group and treatment group, no matter if the treatment is common knowledge or not ($p = 0.17$ and 0.52 , respectively). In Tables C.2 and C.3, I conduct several robustness checks, and the findings remain robust. I interpret these findings as suggestive evidence that although candidates might have responded to the intervention through alternative strategies to cultivate support, the treatment has *limited* effects on the actual outcome of vote buying.

The treatment increases turnout. Receiving the treatment increases voter turnout by about 1.5% (Table 4.2, column 5), and the effect is mainly driven by the group where the intervention incurs a low cost (Figure 4.2, left panel), or where the treatment is common knowledge (Figure 4.2, right panel).

These findings suggest that the treatment, especially when it is common knowledge, has a mobilizing effect. The pattern is consistent with the unintended effects hypothesis (H2b), indicating that the treatment has increased campaign activities, potentially in

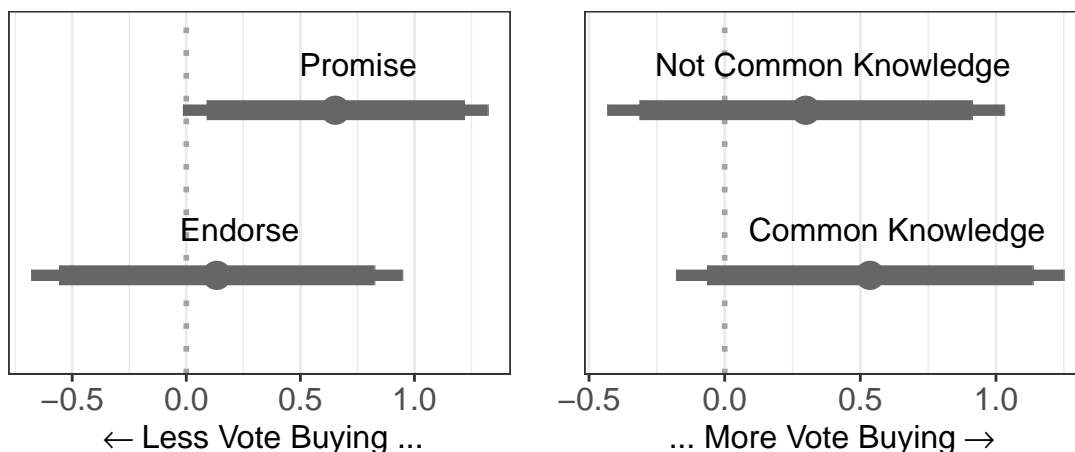


Figure 4.1: Effect of treatment on vote buying.

markets where the challengers were previously deterred from entering. In Figure C.5 and Table C.6, I conduct several robustness checks, and the findings remain robust.

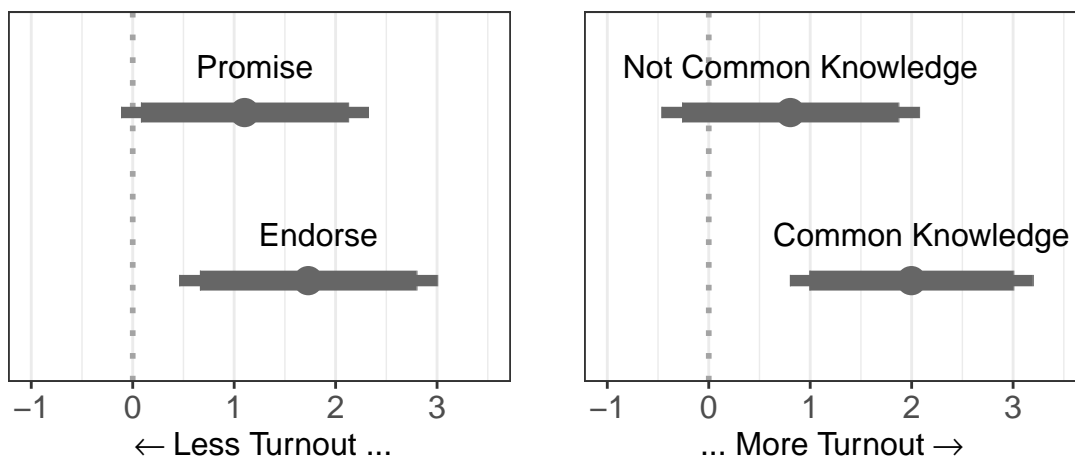


Figure 4.2: Effect of treatment on turnout.

The intervention increases competition. The intervention increases competitiveness of the race, measured by the vote margin between the first and the second candidate and the Herfindahl index among the candidates (Table 4.2, columns 3–4). That is, I see more electoral competition in municipalities and cities where politicians are aware of the anti-vote buying campaign.

The effect is mainly driven by the treatment group where the outreach incurs a low cost (e.g. asking candidates to endorse the campaign, rather than promising not to buy votes) (Figure 4.3, left panel). Furthermore, whether the intervention is common knowledge or not does not result in statistically significant difference in the treatment effect. In Figures C.3 and C.4, and Tables C.4 and C.5, I conduct several robustness checks, and the findings remain robust.

This finding suggests that the politician targeted anti-vote buying campaign has a strong effect when the intervention incurs a low cost. Being aware of the intervention induces politicians to adopt alternative strategies to campaign, which in turn increases electoral competition.

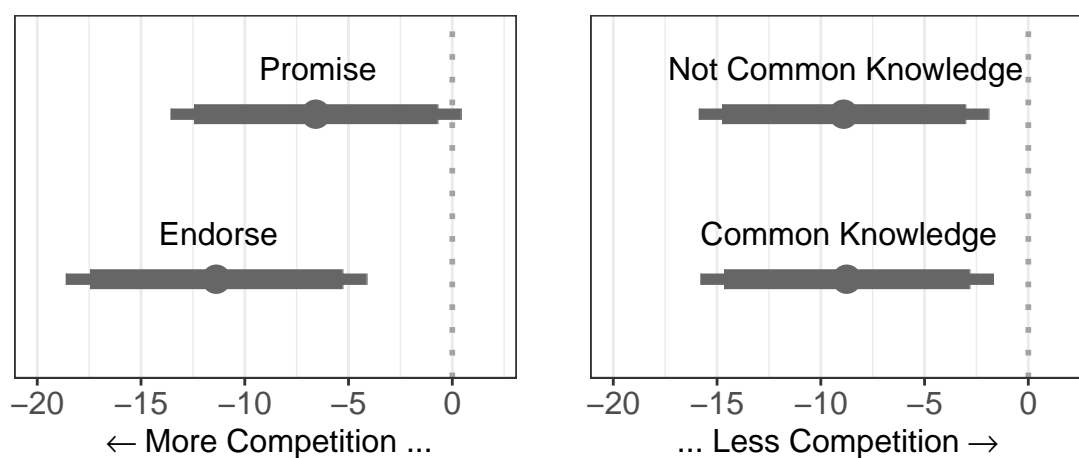


Figure 4.3: Effect of treatment on winning margin.

The treatment decreases the probability that incumbent wins. Earlier in this section, I find that the politician-targeted anti-vote buying campaign increases turnout, and shrinks the winning margin. Here, I explore whether the increase in turnout and competition favor the incumbent or challengers. In particular, I look at the races where incumbents competed, and explore whether the treatment affects incumbent's re-election. Figure 4.4 presents the findings.

In the control group, around 84.2% of the incumbents won the re-election. In contrast, around 79.1% of the treated municipalities or cities saw the incumbent winning the re-election. The difference is around 5.1%, but the effect is not statistically significant. This finding suggests that while there is more turnout and electoral competition in favor of challengers, the intervention did not sway election results significantly.

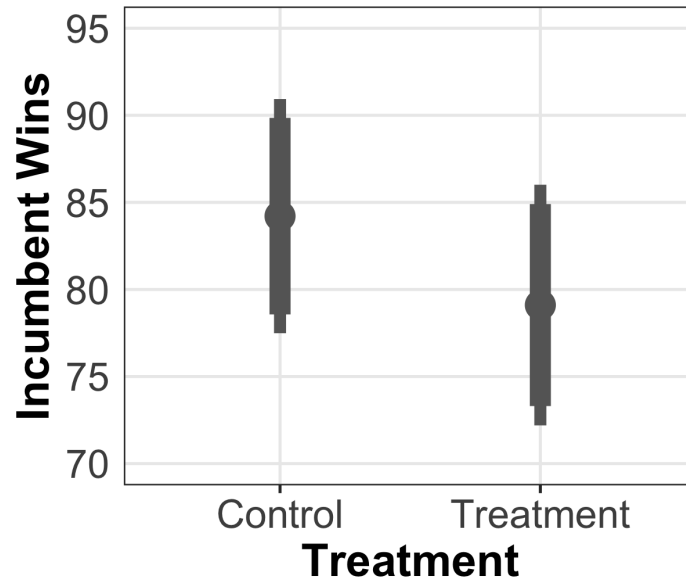


Figure 4.4: Incumbents are 5.1% less likely to win the election in treated municipalities or cities.

4.5 Why Voters Tolerate Candidates Who Disrespect Democratic Norms

In this chapter so far, I presented an anti-vote buying intervention that directly targeted at the politicians. I evaluated the effect of the intervention on vote buying incidents and electoral outcomes in the context of 2019 Philippine local elections. I showed that the anti-vote buying campaign increases voter turnout, as well as competitiveness of the race. The intervention does not have a significant effect on actual vote buying, which

suggests that candidates have invested in alternative campaign strategies in response to the intervention.

In the final section of this chapter, I bring voters back to the big picture, and offer survey evidence to further explain the findings from previous sections. I argue that the limited effect of the anti-vote buying campaign on vote buying incidents is related to how voters perceive politicians' malfeasance. If voters are tolerant of vote buying, then politicians have few incentives to stop doing it, even in the presence of the anti-vote buying campaign.

As a follow-up study, I fielded a survey experiment in January 2020 to measure the baseline support for politicians who commit to (or refrain from) vote buying. In particular, I am interested in how voters make the trade-off between a clean politician (i.e. a candidate who refrains from vote buying) and a politician who can provide public goods.

In the experiment, I assign respondents to one of the four treatment groups. In the first treatment, respondents are told to think of either a hypothetical mayoral candidate who completes many public goods projects, but at the same time gives voters money in exchange for votes prior to elections. The second treatment arm asks respondents to think of a candidate who completes many projects and never buys votes. The third treatment arm asks respondents to think of a candidate who neither completes many projects nor buys votes. The last treatment arm asks respondents to think of a candidate who does not complete many projects, and gives voters money in exchange for votes prior to elections. I then ask respondents the likelihood that they will vote for the candidate.¹⁵

I then run the following OLS regression:

$$Y = \mu + \alpha VB + \beta PG + \gamma (VB \cdot PG) + \varepsilon,$$

¹⁵The answers are on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely".

where Y is respondent's evaluation of the candidate, $VB = \{0,1\}$ indicates whether the candidate has bought votes, $PG = \{0,1\}$ indicates whether the candidate can deliver public goods projects, and $VB \cdot PG$ is the interaction term.

The marginal effect of the vote buying treatment on Y is:

$$\frac{\partial Y}{\partial VB} = \alpha + \gamma PG,$$

which is a linear function of the candidate's public goods status.¹⁶ In Figure 4.5, I plot the predicted value of support for candidates under all four cases.

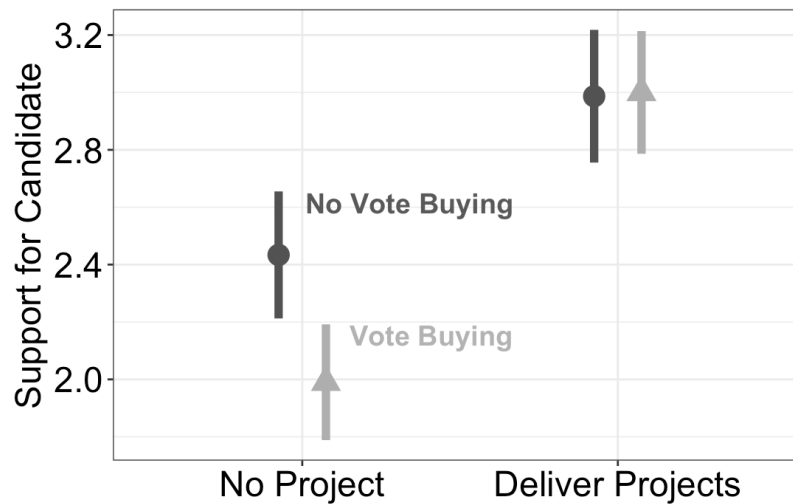


Figure 4.5: Effect of vote buying and public goods provision on vote choice.

It is worth noting that respondents reward candidates who can provide public goods, irrespective of the vote buying status. Although support for candidates who buy votes is slightly higher, the difference is not statistically significant.¹⁷ Relatedly, respondents punish candidates who are known to buy votes *only if* the candidate cannot deliver public goods. When the candidate does not deliver public goods projects, vote buying decreases

¹⁶Marginal effect of the public goods treatment follows the same computation.

¹⁷Predicted support for candidates who deliver projects and buy votes is 3.00 (95% CI of [2.79, 3.21]). Predicted support for candidates who deliver projects but do not buy votes is 2.99 (95% CI of [2.76, 3.22]).

candidate support by about 0.44, and the difference is statistically significant.¹⁸

What this followup study suggests is that citizens have strong support for candidates who can bring public goods to their constituents in a patronage democracy. And such preference trumps concerns over practice of democratic norms. That is, vote buying is only concerning to voters when politicians have nothing else to show. Under this equilibrium, candidates who can deliver goods have no incentive to run a clean election, because buying votes brings neutral to possibly positive impact to their campaigns. For politicians who cannot deliver public goods, their optimal strategy is to credit claim and mimic the type who can deliver public goods, or make promises to deliver projects once elected hoping that their constituents are prospective voters.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I look at the connection between voters and politicians, and how it affects democratic erosion in the context of a patronage democracy. This chapter zooms in on one particular anti-democratic practice, vote buying, because it is perhaps one of the more obvious attacks on democratic norms. In the context of the Philippines, some voters perceive electoral clientelism as a positive signal for potential candidates. That is, voters tolerate actions against democratic norms so long as the candidates can deliver public goods. As a result, politicians have little incentive to tie their hands in a vote-buying equilibrium, even with our nudge intervention.

This chapter views the vote buying market as a two-sided market, and deliberately looks at the dynamics between politicians and voters in order to understand politicians' behavior under a clientelist equilibrium. In particular, politicians strategically responded to

¹⁸Predicted support for candidates who do not deliver projects and buy votes is 1.99 (95% CI of [1.79, 2.19]). Predicted support for candidates who do not deliver projects and do not buy votes is 2.43 (95% CI of [2.21, 2.66]).

a well intended anti-vote buying campaign, which results in higher turnout, more electoral competition, and a moderate amount of increase in vote buying within one of the four treatment arms (albeit only statistically significant at better than the 10% level). Future research that targets at the politicians should consider the trade-off that politicians face when they consider alternative campaign strategies in the context of a patronage democracy.

This chapter further complicates the implications of democratic erosion and behaviors associated with it. When voters turn a blind eye towards anti-democratic practices, we observe a suboptimal equilibrium in which politicians spend significant resources to distribute handouts, and one key component of the democratic guardrail – voters – have little incentive to hold anti-democratic politicians accountable.

4.7 Acknowledgment

Chapter 4, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Xuan, Shane Xinyang; Ravanilla, Nico. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this chapter.

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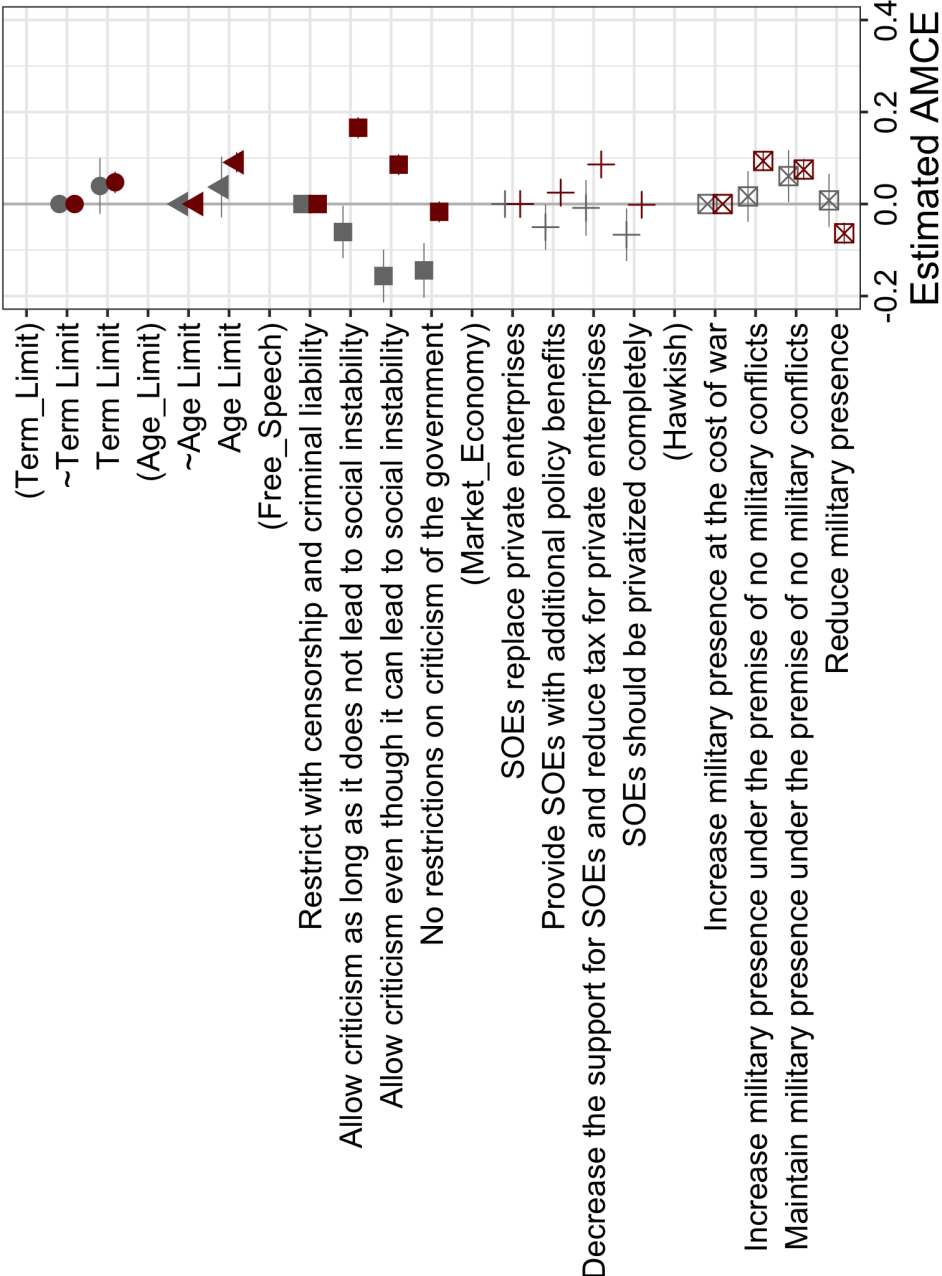
Appendix A

Appendix for Chapter 2

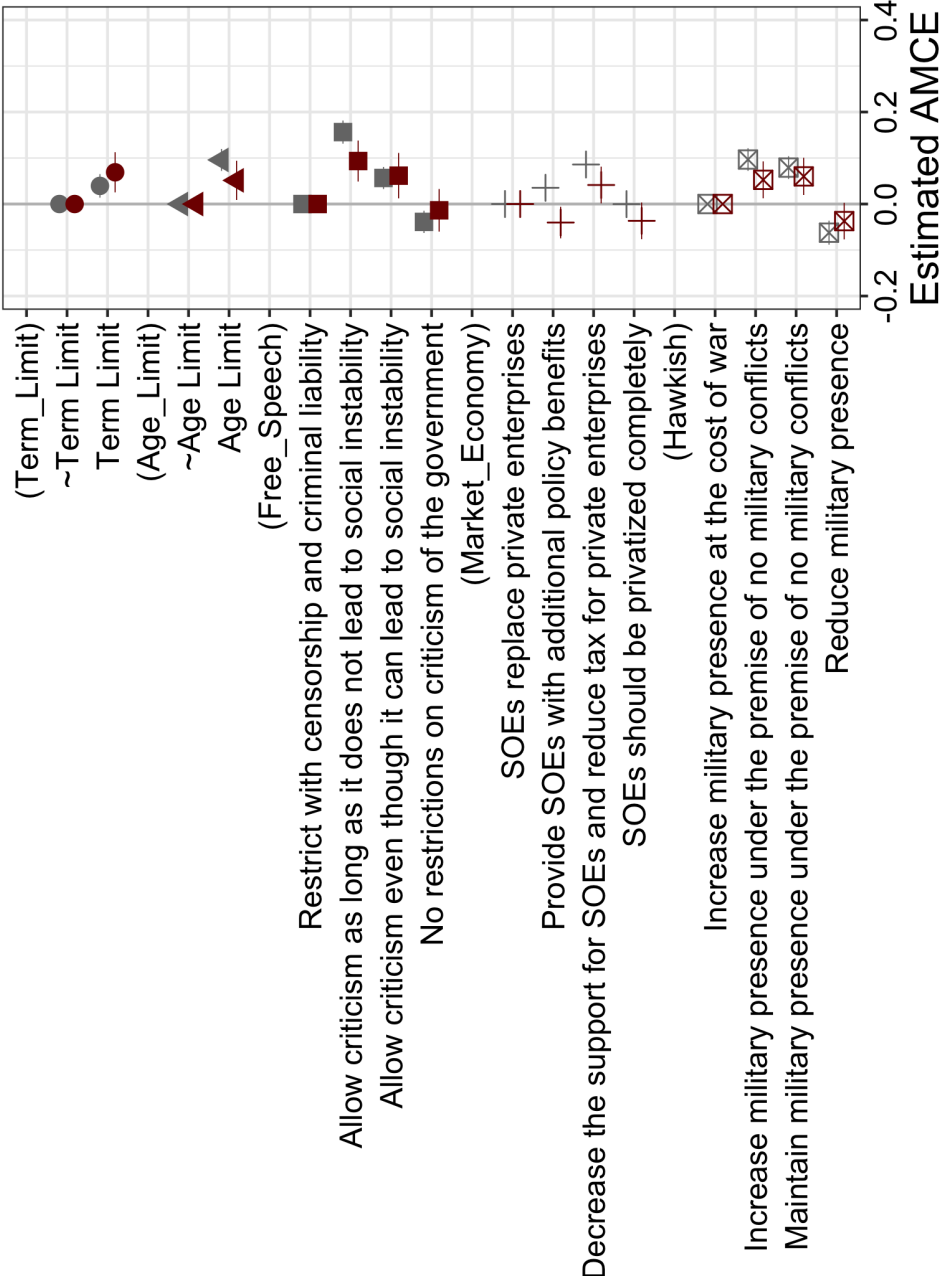
For all of the figures in this appendix, we compare the AMCE between respondents who preferred a particular position in direct questions (grey), to those who didn't choose the policy position as their preferred position (red).

The goal is to look at whether conjoint experiments reflect respondents' self-reported policy preference as a validity check.

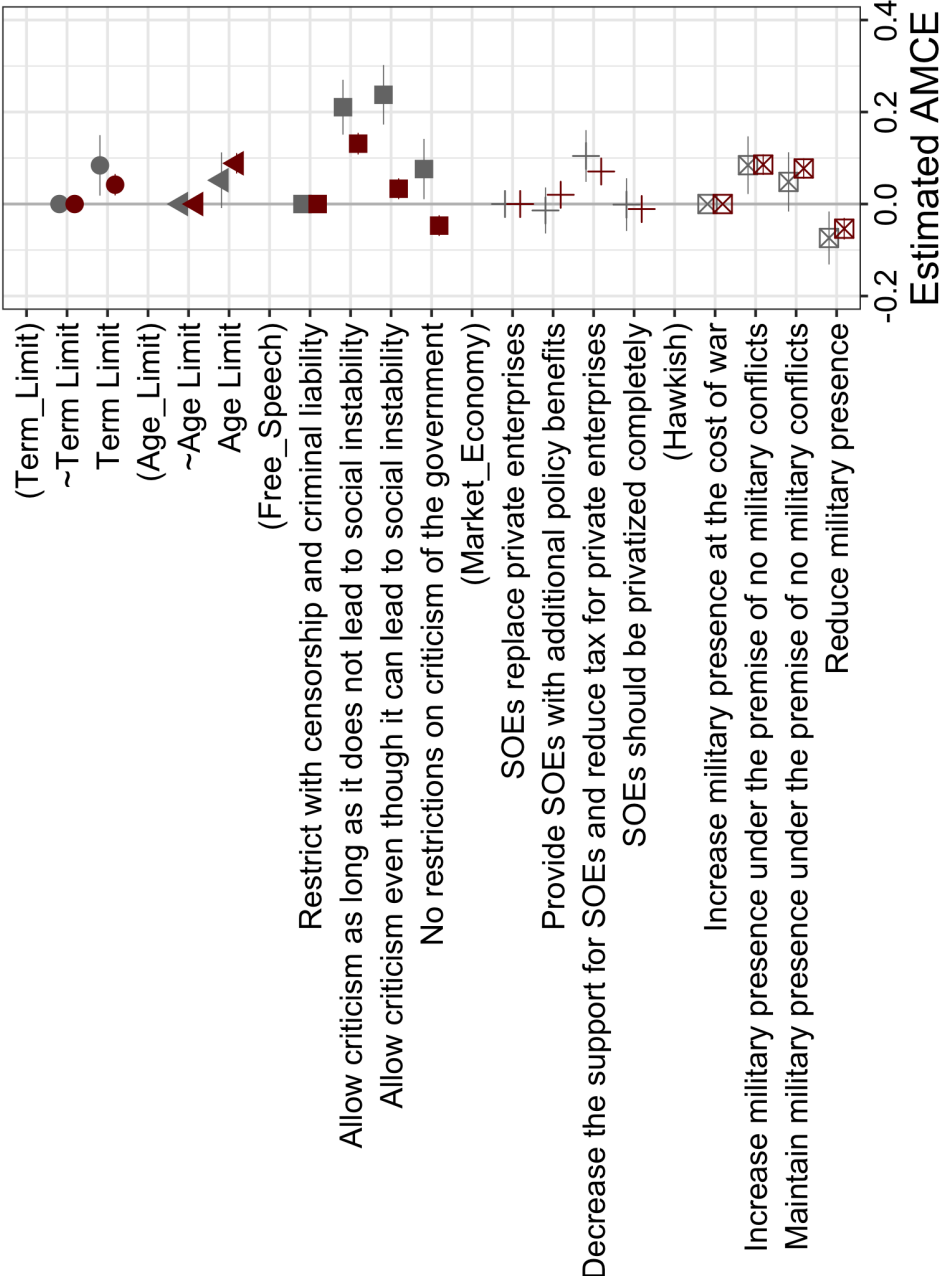
A.1 Respondents Who Choose Position 1 for Direct Questions on Free Speech



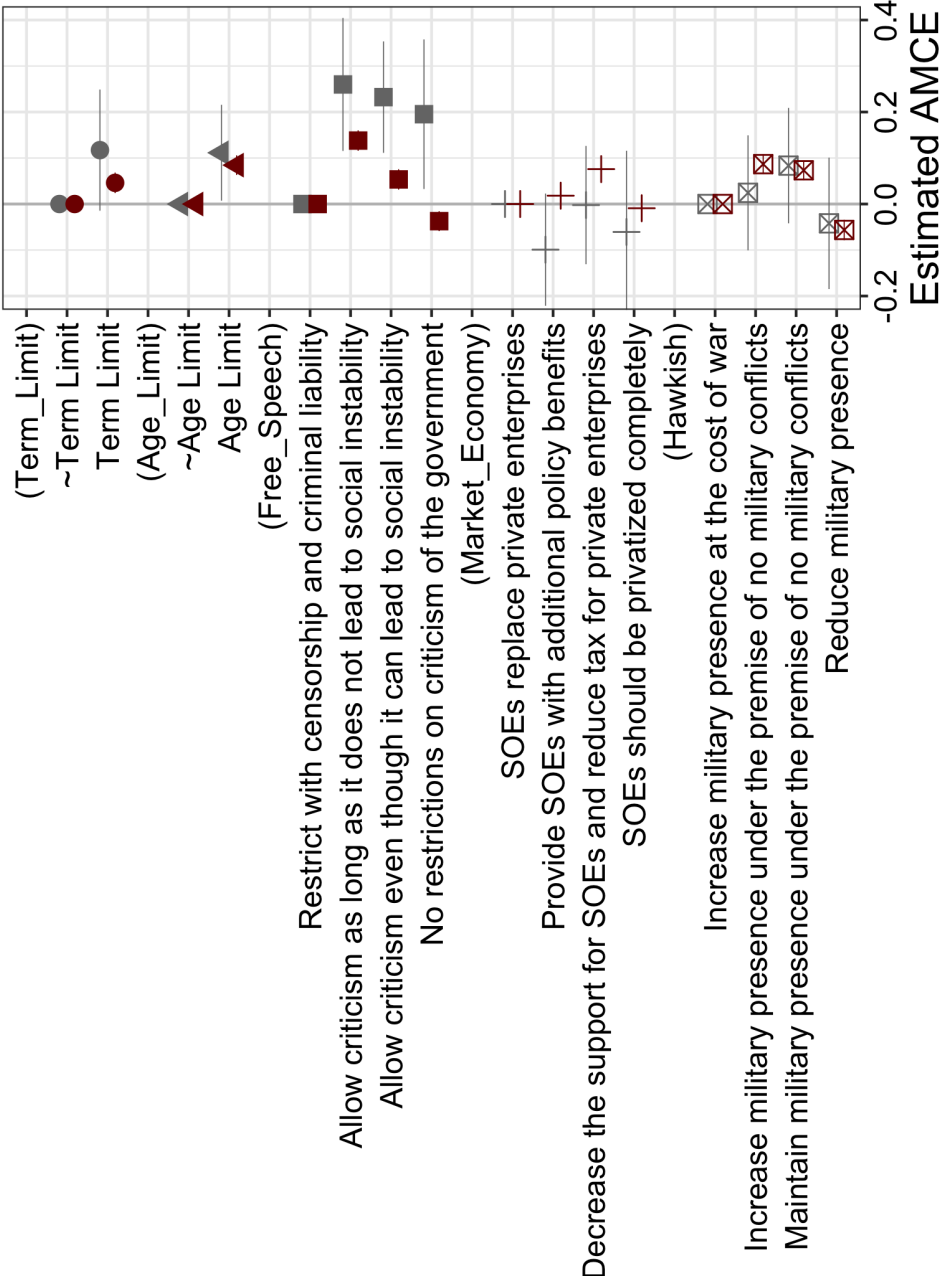
A.2 Respondents Who Choose Position 2 for Direct Questions on Free Speech



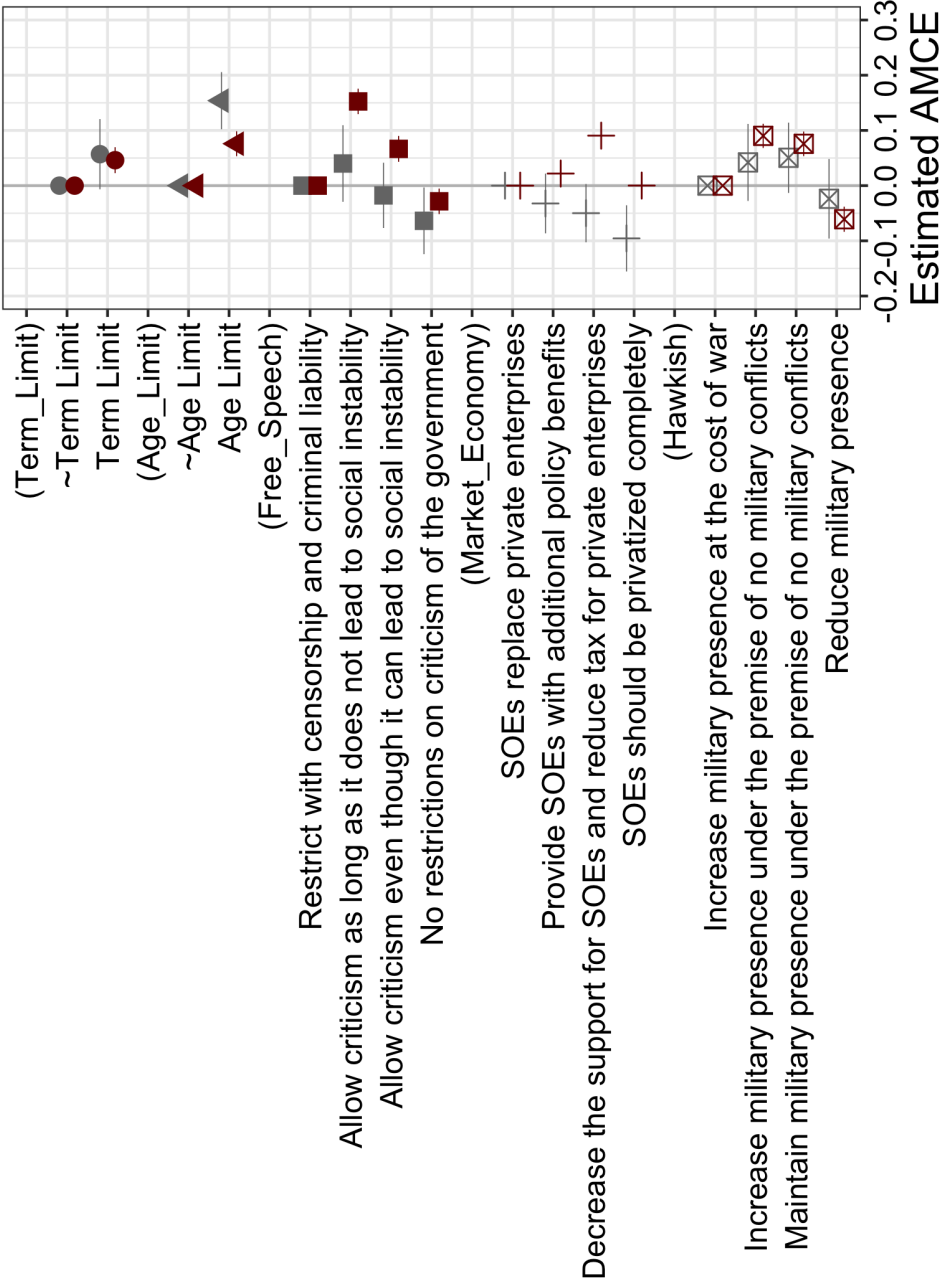
A.3 Respondents Who Choose Position 3 for Direct Questions on Free Speech



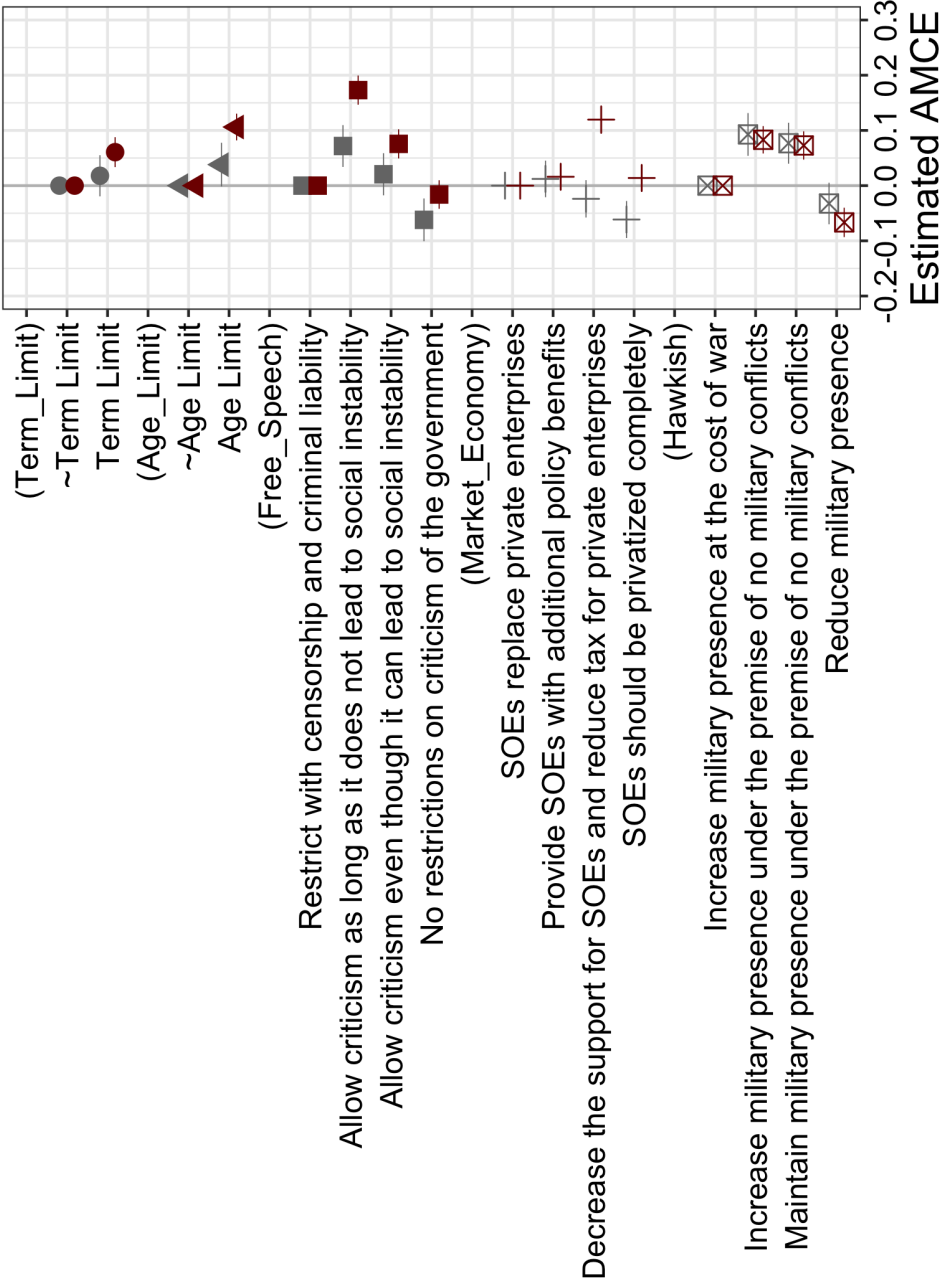
A.4 Respondents Who Choose Position 4 for Direct Questions on Free Speech



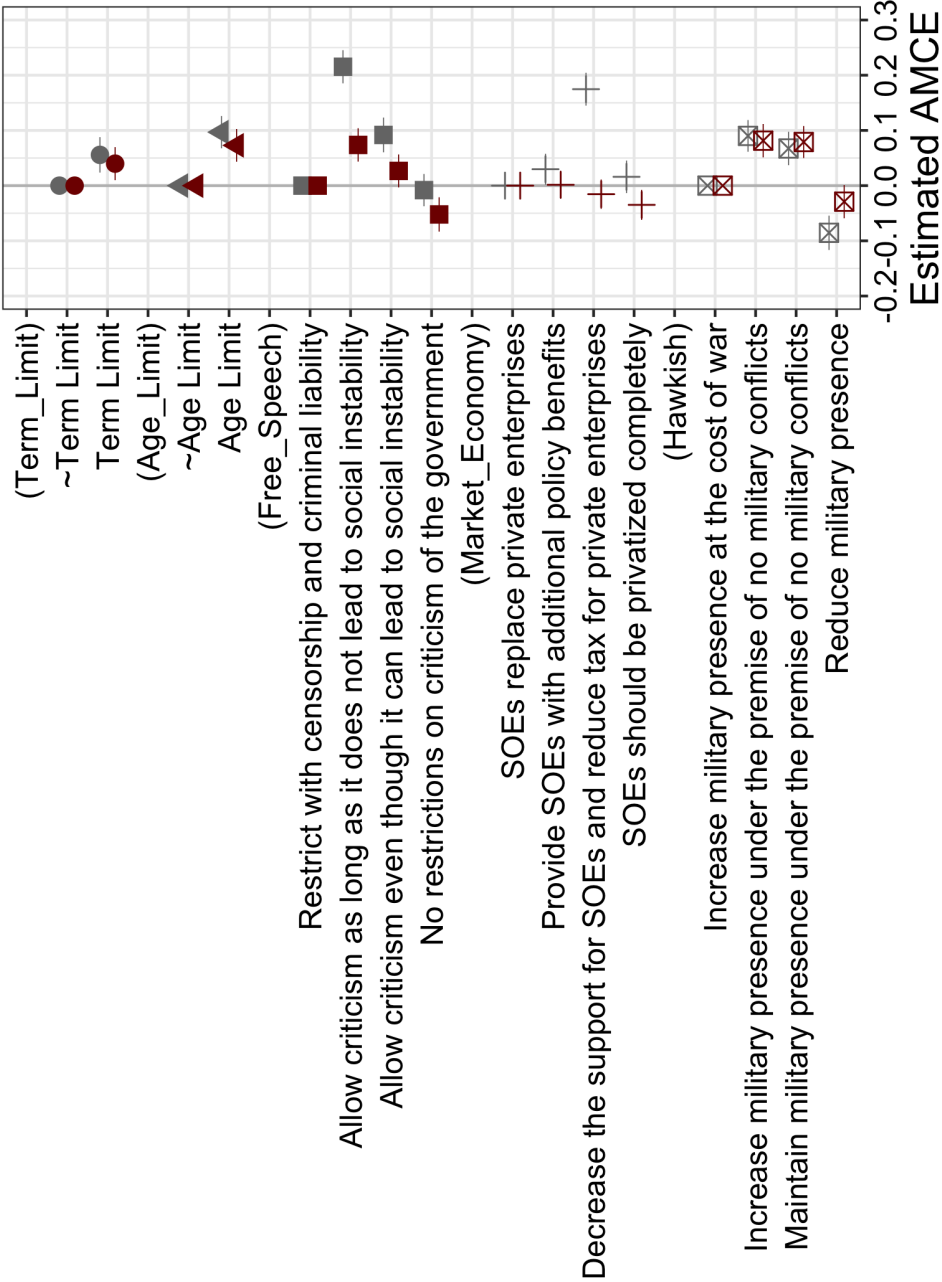
A.5 Respondents Who Choose Position 1 for Direct Questions on Free Market



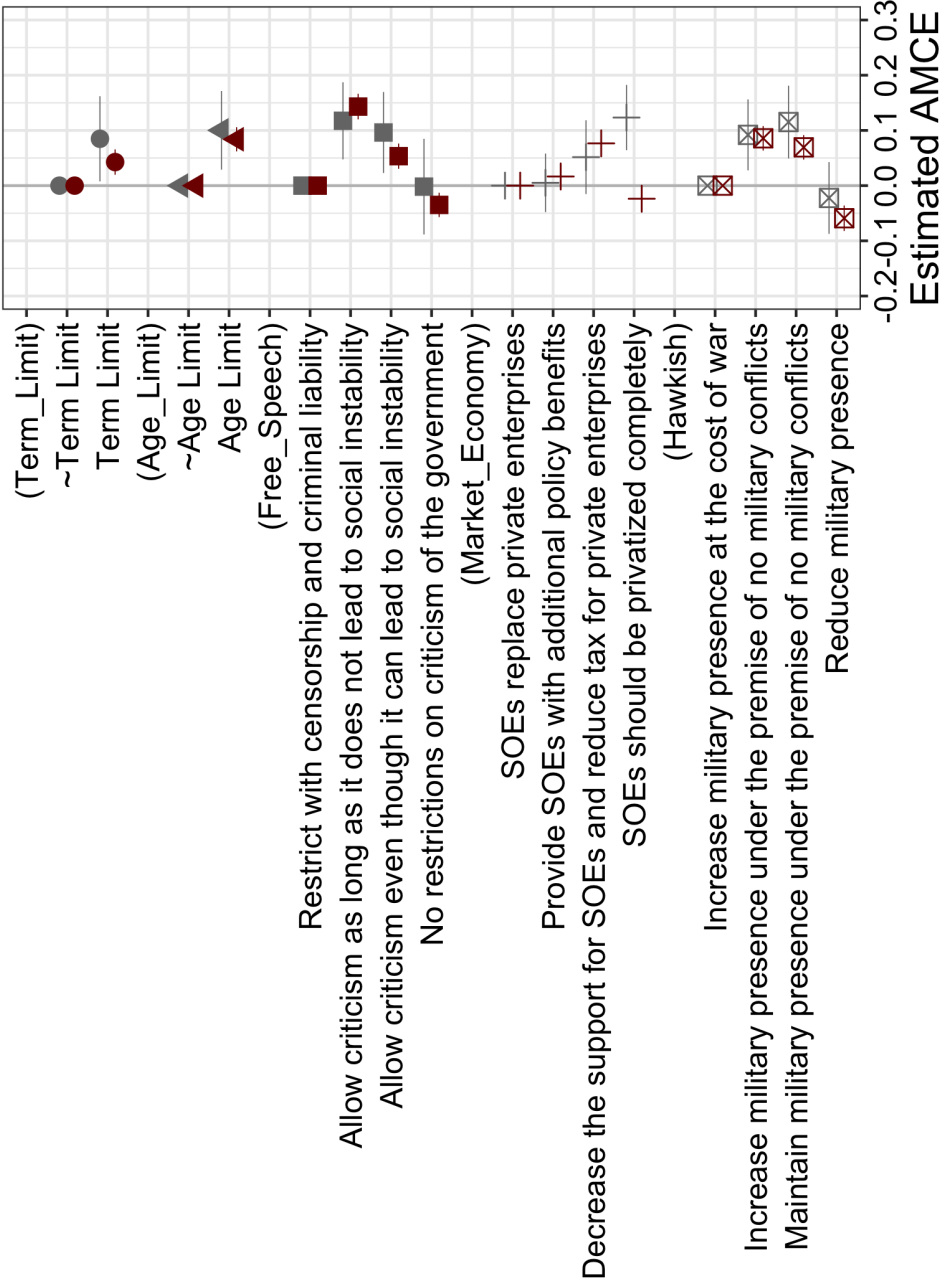
A.6 Respondents Who Choose Position 2 for Direct Questions on Free Market



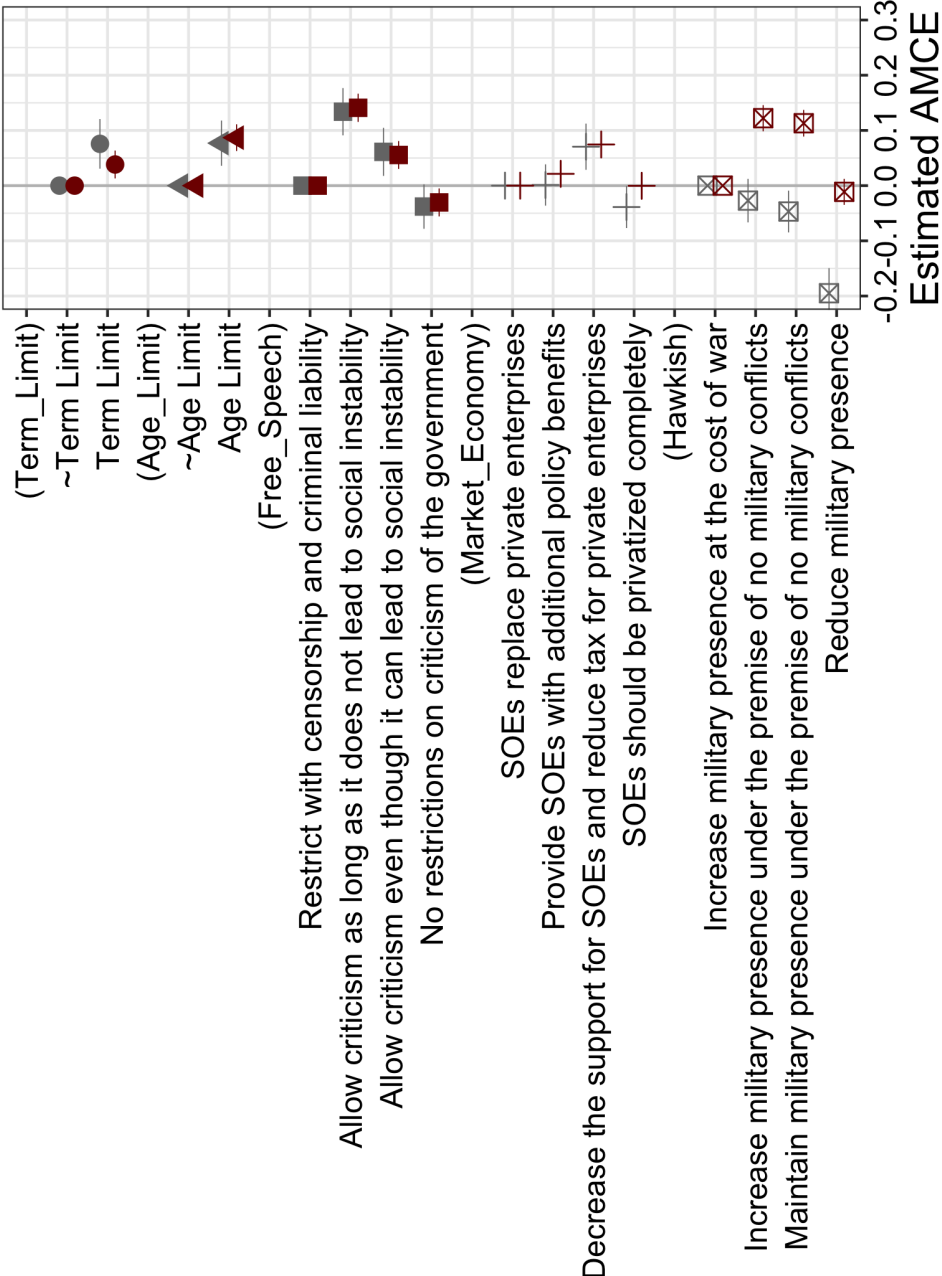
A.7 Respondents Who Choose Position 3 for Direct Questions on Free Market



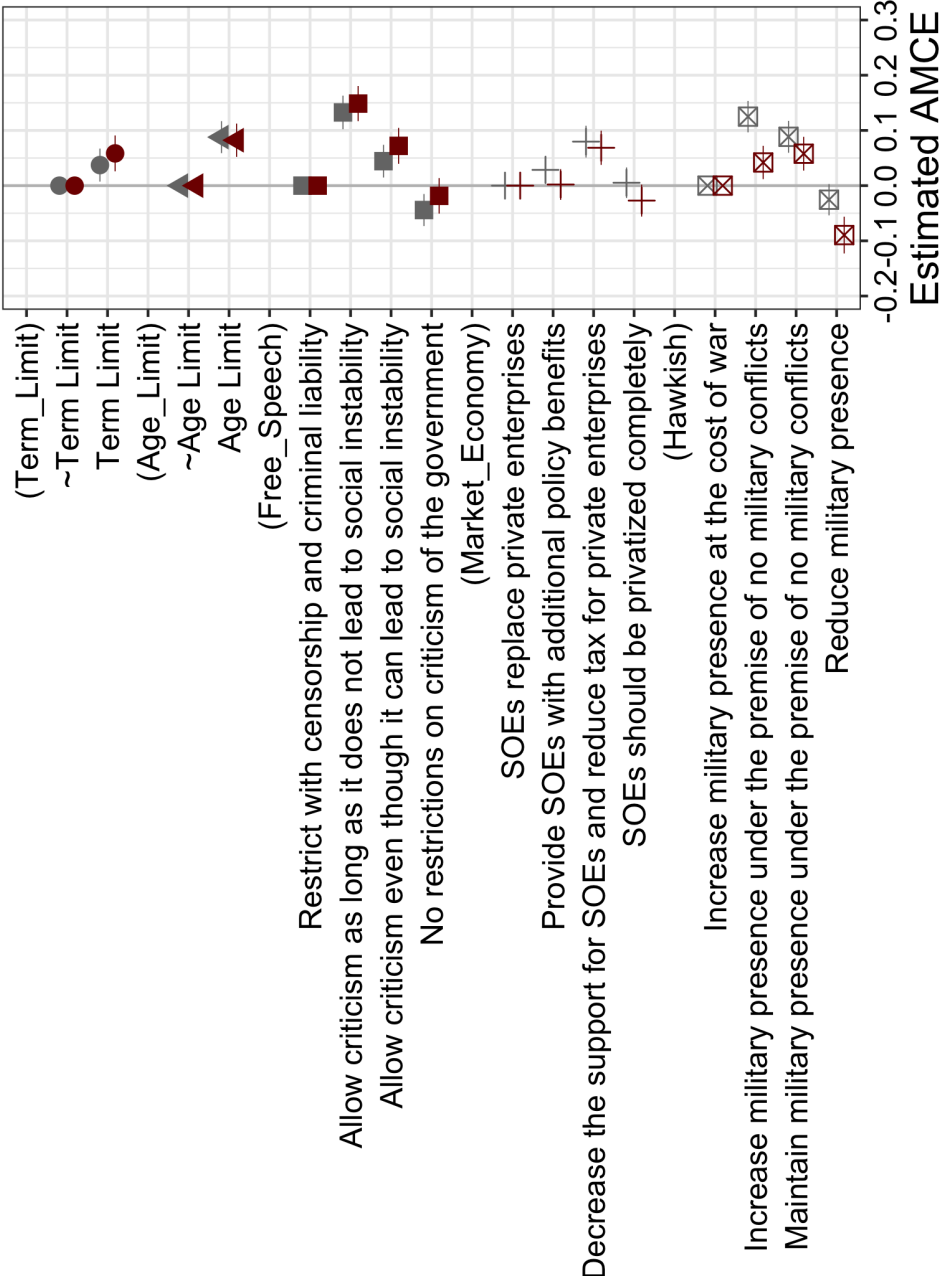
A.8 Respondents Who Choose Position 4 for Direct Questions on Free Market



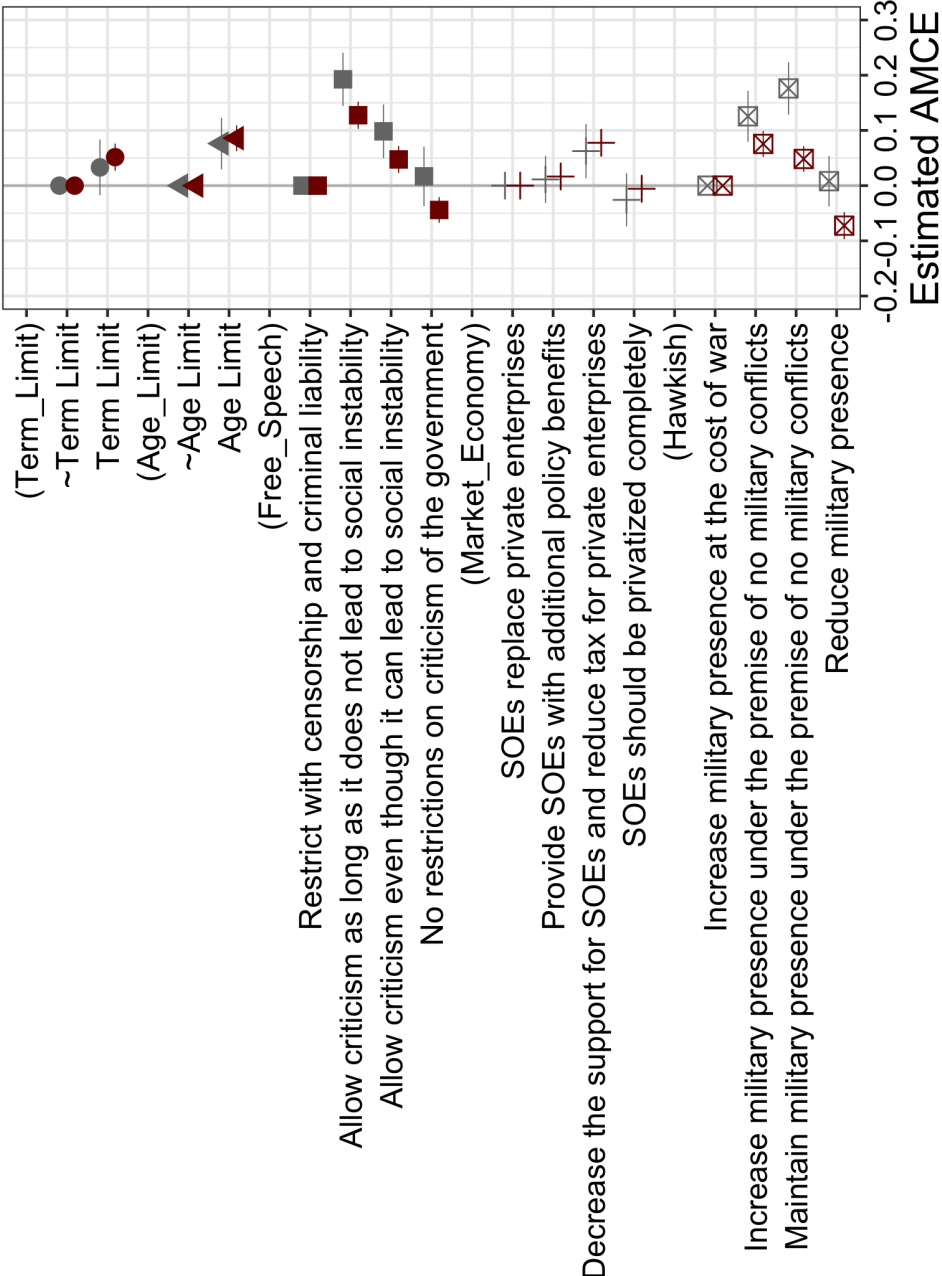
A.9 Respondents Who Choose Position 1 for Direct Questions on Nationalist Market



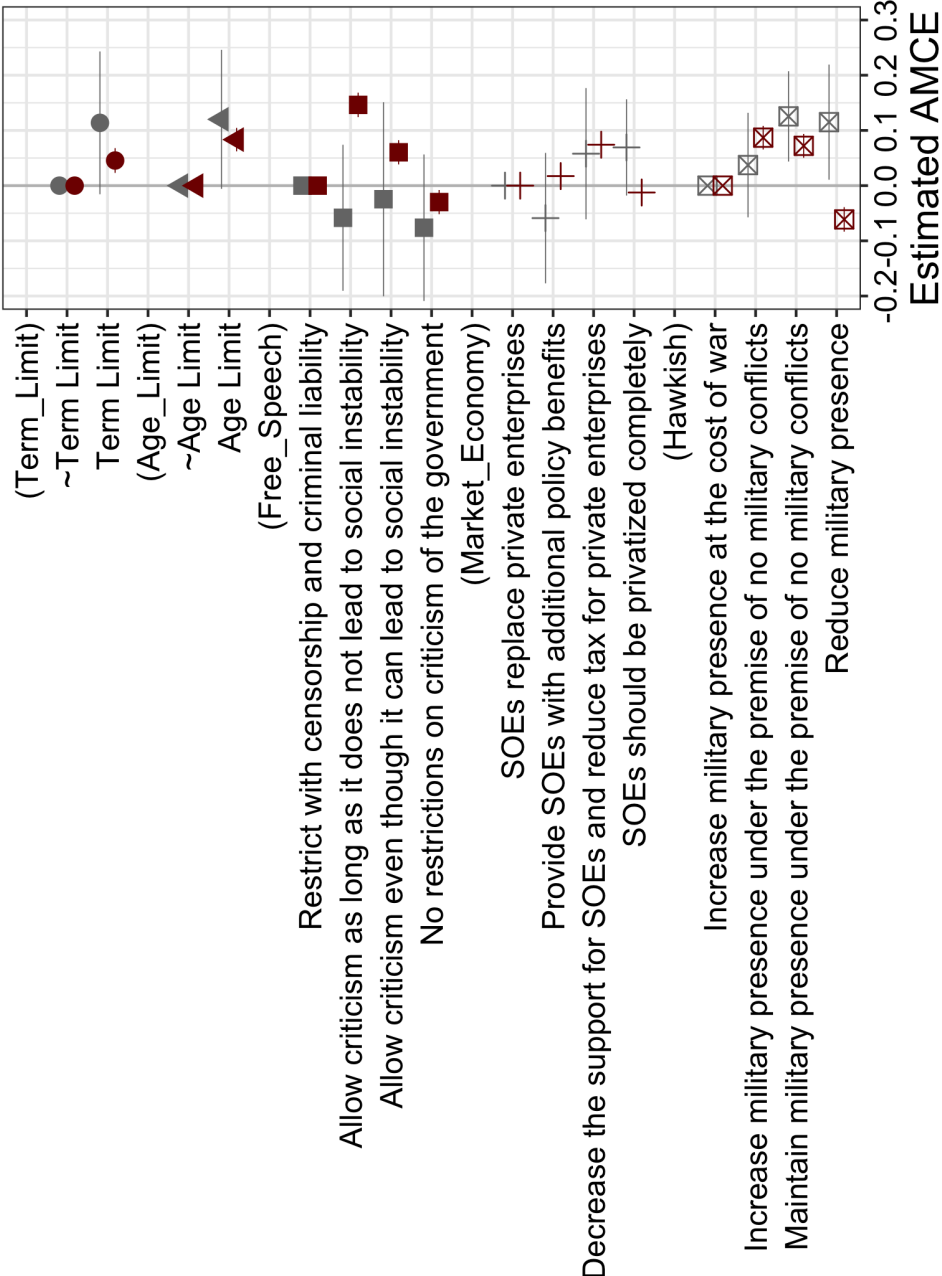
A.10 Respondents Who Choose Position 2 for Direct Questions on Nationalist Market



A.11 Respondents Who Choose Position 3 for Direct Questions on Nationalist Market



A.12 Respondents Who Choose Position 4 for Direct Questions on Nationalist Market



Appendix B

Appendix for Chapter 3

B.1 Survey Instrument

Consent

This survey is part of a scientific study to understand voters' preference in the Philippines. Your response will be used for research purpose at the University of California, San Diego. Your decision to complete the study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Your answers will be completely anonymous. We work on strict procedures for how the data will be stored and disposed. You may contact us at

redacted

if you have any questions. If you are a Philippine citizen, are at least 18 years old, and would like to participate in the survey, please click "I agree," followed by the "Next" button at the bottom of this page to continue.

I agree I do not agree

Demographics

1. What is your year of birth: _____
2. What is your gender: _____
3. In which province do you live right now? _____
4. In which municipality or city do you live right now? _____
5. What is your marital status:
 - Single (never married)
 - Married

- Widowed
- Divorced

6. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Did not finish primary school (*paaralang elementarya*)
- Primary school completed (*Tapos ng elementarya*)
- Some secondary school (*Nakapag sekundaya*)
- Secondary school completed (*Tapos ng sekundaya*)
- Some university (*Nakapag kolehiyo*)
- University completed (*Tapos ng kolehiyo*)
- Higher than university (*Mas mataas pa sa kolehiyo*)

7. How would you describe the neighborhood in which you live?

- Highly urban
- Generally urban
- About mixed
- Generally rural
- Highly rural

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means the best, and 1 means the worst, how would you rate your economic standing compared to the following people?

8a. Compared to all Filipinos

5 ———— 1

8b. Compared to people in my municipality or city

5 ———— 1

8c. Compared to people in Indonesia

5 ———— 1

9. Does your family have access to running water inside the house?

- Yes
- No

10. Does your household own the following things? (Please click all that apply.)

- Television
- Radio
- Computer/Laptop
- Mobile phone
- Refrigerator
- Bicycle
- 2 or 3-wheeled motor vehicle
- 4-wheeled motor vehicle

Candidate Traits

When you vote for a mayor, do you care about the following characters in a candidate?

11a. Approachable

- Strongly care
- Somewhat care
- Neither care nor not care
- Somewhat not care
- Strongly not care

11b. Honest

- Strongly care
- Somewhat care
- Neither care nor not care
- Somewhat not care
- Strongly not care

11c. Tough

- Strongly care
- Somewhat care
- Neither care nor not care
- Somewhat not care
- Strongly not care

11d. Compassionate

- Strongly care
- Somewhat care
- Neither care nor not care
- Somewhat not care
- Strongly not care

11e. Popular

- Strongly care
- Somewhat care
- Neither care nor not care
- Somewhat not care
- Strongly not care

Randomization (1 out of the 4 blocks will be presented)

- 12a.** Imagine Christian, a Filipino like you who lives in a different municipality or city. The mayor of the municipality or city is running for reelection. In their municipality, it is well known that the mayor **never gives money** to citizens for votes during elections. However, the mayor also **does not complete** many public works projects during his term in office.
- 12b.** Imagine Christian, a Filipino like you who lives in a different municipality or city. The mayor of the municipality or city is running for reelection. In their municipality, it is well known that the mayor **frequently gives money** to citizens for votes during elections. However, the mayor also **does not complete** many public works projects during his term in office.
- 12c.** Imagine Christian, a Filipino like you who lives in a different municipality or city. The mayor of the municipality or city is running for reelection. In their municipality, it is well known that the mayor **never gives money** to citizens for votes during elections. Moreover, the mayor also **completes** many public works projects during his term in office.
- 12d.** Imagine Christian, a Filipino like you who lives in a different municipality or city. The mayor of the municipality or city is running for reelection. In their municipality, it is well known that the mayor **frequently gives money** to citizens for votes during elections. However, the mayor also **completes** many public works projects during his term in office.
- 13. In your opinion, what is the likelihood that Christian will vote for this mayor in the election?**
- Very likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Somewhat unlikely
 - Very unlikely
- 14. When you vote for a mayor, what are you looking for in a candidate?**
- _____

Ideology

- 15. How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the Philippines?**
- Very satisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
 - Somewhat unsatisfied
 - Very unsatisfied

- 16. How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your municipality or city?**
- Very satisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Nether satisfied nor unsatisfied
 - Somewhat unsatisfied
 - Very unsatisfied
- 17. In the past year, how many times have you participated in community meetings?**
- Always
 - Attend more than absent
 - Absent more than attend
 - Never
- 18. In the past year, how many times have you contacted a politician to ask for help for your local community?**
- Often
 - Several times a year
 - Once or twice a year
 - Never
- 19. In the past year, how many times have you contacted a politician to ask for help for your family?**
- Often
 - Several times a year
 - Once or twice a year
 - Never
- 20. In the past year, how many times have you participated in a demonstration or protest?**
- Often
 - Several times a year
 - Once or twice a year
 - Never
- 21. Who did you support for President in the November 2016 election?**
- Duterte
 - Roxas
 - Poe

- Binay
- Santiago2019
- Others: _____

22. How interested are you in politics?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Somewhat uninterested
- Very uninterested

23. How would you describe your political views?

- Very liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Very conservative

24. How often do you discuss politics with friends or family?

- Often
- Several times a year
- Once or twice a year
- Never

25. A lot of citizens accept money and other gifts from the politicians in the Philippines. Do you know a friend who has accepted gifts from the politicians?

- Yes
- No

26. In your opinion, what is the three most important issues in the Philippines?

- Management of the economy
- Unemployment
- Inequality between the rich and the poor
- Poverty
- Local violence
- Health system
- Roads and transportation
- Vote buying in elections

- Corruption
- Others: _____

What do you think of the following statements?

27a. The difference between the rich and the poor in the Philippines has become bigger.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

27b. We have a president who can represent ordinary Filipinos.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

27c. My mayor can represent ordinary Filipinos.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

27d. Economy in the Philippines will improve in the next five years.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

27e. Security in the Philippines will improve in the next five years.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Vote Choice in 2019

28. Did you vote in the 2019 local elections?

- Yes
- No
 - Too young to vote
 - Did not register to vote
 - Did not have time to vote
 - Decided not to vote
 - Others: _____

29. Did anyone come to your house to encourage you to vote for a particular candidate?

- Yes
- No

30. Who approached you?

- The incumbent
- The challenger
- Both incumbent and challenger

31. Did they offer you any gifts?

- Yes
- No

32. What is the gift being offered?

- Money
- Food
- Souvenir (i.e. calendar)
- Others: _____

33. Have the candidates in your municipality or city organized a rally or other public event before the election?

- Yes
- No

34. Have you accepted any gift from politicians prior to the 2019 elections?

- Yes
- No
 - Why did you not accept the gift? _____

Appendix C

Appendix for Chapter 4

C.1 Intervention Letter

Translation: Greetings! The Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), in partnership with the University of California - San Diego, has recently launched a new initiative called Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP). You are selected to participate in this initiative because you are running for office in the upcoming election. At the heart of this initiative is our desire to strengthen democratic accountability and institutions in our country. Part of the initiative is that your response will be used for research purpose by the principal investigators, [redacted], so that we can better understand electoral politics in the Philippines. Our hope is that with this initiative, together with the full commitment and support of local candidates like you, we will make a meaningful and lasting change.

We understand that challenges associated with running a campaign for local office are deep and systematic. Unfortunately, and perhaps unduly, local candidates often bear the brunt of the blame for the prevalence of vote-buying and the absence of policy-based discourse during elections. However, we believe that candidates like you can be an instrumental part of the solution. In this regard, we would like to invite you to partner with us in our joint efforts to achieve free and fair elections. To be part of this initiative, we would like to request that you respond to the attached "Policy Stance Survey", which would allow us to gather information on your policy stances across a wide array of political and economic issues. Once we receive your response, we will generate a poster containing your name and policy stances that we will publish on our official Facebook page, so that voters from your municipality/city will be informed of your policy stances, and be guided to vote accordingly.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation in the initiative is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without loss of benefits. Your personal information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. We work on strict procedures for how the data will be stored and disposed. You may contact our office at [redacted] if you have any questions. You can either complete the survey online or on paper. If you decide to complete the survey online, please enter [redacted] in a web browser and complete the survey no later than April 19. If you decide

HON. [REDACTED]

Dear Hon. [REDACTED]

Magandang araw! Naglunsad ang Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), kasama ang University of California-San Diego (UCSD), ng isang bagong inisyatiba na tinatawag na Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP). Ikaw ay pinili upang lumahok sa inisyatibang ito bilang ikaw ay kakandidato sa darating na eleksyon. Layon ng inisyatibang ito na palakasin ang mga institusyon at ang demokratikong pananagutan sa ating bansa. Bahagi ng inisyatiba ang pagnanais na magamit ang iyong tugon para sa pananaliksik ng mga punong imbestigador, [REDACTED] upang mas maunawaan namin ang pulitika ng eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Umaasa kami na sa inisyatibang ito, kasama ang suporta ng mga lokal na kandidato na katulad mo, magkakalikha tayo ng makahulugan at pangmatagalang pagbabago.

Nauunawaan namin na ang mga hamon na nauugnay sa pagpapatakbo ng isang kampanya para sa lokal na tanggapan ay malalim at sistematiko. Sa kasamaang palad, at marahil pagmamalabis, binibitbit ng mga lokal na kandidato ang sisi sa paglaganap ng vote-buying at kawalan ng diskursong batay sa patakaran sa panahon ng halalan. Gayunman, naniniwala kami na ang mga kandidato na tulad mo ay maaaring maging bahagi ng solusyon. Kaugnay nito, inaanyayahan ka naming makibahagi sa pagsisikap na makamit ang malaya at patas na eleksyon. Upang maging bahagi ng inisyatiba na ito, tumugon lamang sa nakalakip na "Sarbey sa Polisiya", na magpapahintulot sa amin na kumalap ng impormasyon sa iyong mga polisiya sa malawak na hanay ng mga isyung pampulitika at pang-ekonomiya. Kapag natanggap namin ang iyong tugon, bubuo kami ng isang poster na naglalaman ng iyong pangalan at mga polisiya na ipapaskil sa aming opisyal na Facebook page, upang magbigay-alam sa mga botante ng iyong munisipalidad/lungsod tungkol sa iyong mga polisiya, at magabayan din nang maayos sa pagboto.

Ang sarbey ay tatagal ng humigit-kumulang 20 minuto upang makumpleto. Boluntaryo ang paglahok sa inisyatiba, at maaari kang tumanggi o umurong ano mang oras nang hindi nawawalan ng benepisyo. Ang iyong personal na impormasyon ay panananatilihing kompidensyal sa antas na ayon sa batas. Mahigpit ang pamamaraan namin sa pag-iimbak at paglalaan ng datos. Maaari kang makipag-ugnayan sa aming tanggapan sa [REDACTED] kung mayroon kang katanungan. Maaari mong kumpletuhin ang sarbey sa online o sa papel. Kung nagpasya kang kumpletuhin ang sarbey online, mangyaring magtungo sa [REDACTED] sa isang web browser at kumpletuhin ang sarbey hanggang Abril 26. Kung nagpasya kang kumpletuhin ang sarbey sa papel, ipadala nang hindi lalampas sa Abril 26 sa address na ito:

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Project Manager, BMDP Initiative [REDACTED]

Figure C.1: Intervention letter in the non-common knowledge group.

to complete the survey on paper, please mail your survey to the following address no later than April 19, by stamp date.

HON. [REDACTED]

Dear Hon. [REDACTED]

Magandang araw! Naglunsad ang Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), kasama ang University of California-San Diego (UCSD), ng isang bagong inisyatiba na tinatawag na Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP). Ikaw ay pinili upang lumahok sa inisyatibang ito bilang ikaw ay kakandidato sa darating na eleksyon. Layon ng inisyatibang ito na palakasin ang mga institusyon at ang demokratikong pananagutan sa ating bansa. Bahagi ng inisyatiba ang pagnanais na magamit ang iyong tugon para sa pananaliksik ng mga punong imbestigador, [REDACTED] – upang mas maunawaan namin ang pulitika ng eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Umaasa kami na sa inisyatibang ito, kasama ang suporta ng mga lokal na kandidato na katulad mo, magkakatulag tayo ng makahulugan at pangmatagalang pagbabago.

Nauunawaan namin na ang mga hamon na nauugnay sa pagpapatakbo ng isang kampanya para sa lokal na tanggapan ay malalim at sistematiko. Sa kasamaang palad, at marahil pagmamalabis, binibitbit ng mga lokal na kandidato ang sisi sa paglaganap ng vote-buying at kawalan ng diskursong batay sa patakaran sa panahon ng halalan. Gayunman, naniniwala kami na ang mga kandidato na tulad mo ay maaaring maging bahagi ng solusyon. Kaugnay nito, inaanyayahan ka naming makibahagi sa pagsisikap na makamit ang malaya at patas na eleksyon. Upang maging bahagi ng inisyatiba na ito, tumugon lamang sa nakalalapat na "Sarbey sa Polisiya", na magpapahintulot sa amin na kumalap ng impormasyon sa iyong mga polisiya sa malawak na hanay ng mga isyung pampulitika at pang-ekonomiya. Kapag natanggap namin ang iyong tugon, bubuo kami ng isang poster na naglalaman ng iyong pangalan at mga polisiya na ipapaskil sa aming opisyal na Facebook page, upang magbigay-alam sa mga botante ng iyong munisipalidad/lungsod tungkol sa iyong mga polisiya, at magabayan din nang maayos sa pagboto.

Gayundin, magpapadala kami ng imbitasyon sa lahat ng kandidato sa iyong munisipalidad/lungsod. Bubuo at magpapaskil kami sa social media ng kanilang mga poster sa kampanya ano man ang iyong magiging desisyon ukol sa paglahok.

Ang sarbey ay tatagal ng 20 minuto upang makumpleto. Boluntaryo ang paglahok sa inisyatiba, at maaari kang tumanggi ano mang oras nang hindi nawawalan ng benepisyo. Ang iyong personal na impormasyon ay pananatiliing kompidensyal sa antas na ayon sa batas. Mahigpit ang pamamaraan namin sa pag-iimbak at paglalaan ng datos. Maaari kang makipag-ugnayan sa aming tanggapan sa [REDACTED] kung mayroon kang katanungan. Maaari mong kumpletuhin ang sarbey sa online o sa papel. Kung nagpasya kang kumpletuhin ang sarbey online, mangyaring magtungo sa [REDACTED] sa isang web browser at kumpletuhin ang sarbey hanggang Abril 26. Kung nagpasya kang kumpletuhin ang sarbey sa papel, ipadala nang hindi lalampas sa Abril 26 sa address na ito:

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Project Manager, BMDP Initiative [REDACTED]

Figure C.2: Intervention letter in the common knowledge group.

Translation: Greetings! The Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), in partnership with the University of California - San Diego, has recently launched a new initiative called

Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP). You are selected to participate in this initiative because you are running for office in the upcoming election. At the heart of this initiative is our desire to strengthen democratic accountability and institutions in our country. Part of the initiative is that your response will be used for research purpose by the principal investigators, [redacted], so that we can better understand electoral politics in the Philippines. Our hope is that with this initiative, together with the full commitment and support of local candidates like you, we will make a meaningful and lasting change.

We understand that challenges associated with running a campaign for local office are deep and systematic. Unfortunately, and perhaps unduly, local candidates often bear the brunt of the blame for the prevalence of vote-buying and the absence of policy-based discourse during elections. However, we believe that candidates like you can be an instrumental part of the solution. In this regard, we would like to invite you to partner with us in our joint efforts to achieve free and fair elections. To be part of this initiative, we would like to request that you respond to the attached "Policy Stance Survey", which would allow us to gather information on your policy stances across a wide array of political and economic issues. Once we receive your response, we will generate a poster containing your name and policy stances that we will publish on our official Facebook page, so that voters from your municipality/city will be informed of your policy stances, and be guided to vote accordingly.

Please also note that we are sending this invitation to all candidates in your municipality/city. We will generate and post their campaign posters on social media regardless of your participation.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation in the initiative is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without loss of benefits. Your personal information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. We work on strict procedures for how the data will be stored and disposed. You may contact our office at [redacted] if you have any questions. You can either complete the survey online or on paper. If you decide to complete the survey online, please enter [redacted] in a web browser and complete the survey no later than April 19. If you decide to complete the survey on paper, please mail your survey to the following address no later than April 19, by stamp date.

C.2 Ethics

There are increasing concerns over ethics in field experiments. Our intervention has taken several important considerations into account:

1. We obtained the IRB approval both from our home institution, as well as the enumerators' institution.
2. Our intervention follows the principle of equity. All politicians within the same municipality receive the same treatment. Our clustered treatment assignment reduces power of the study, but ensures that all competitors receive the same intervention, and that our treatment does not benefit one candidate over another within the same municipality or city.
3. Although our intervention has changed several downstream outcomes such as voter turnout and competitiveness of the race, it does not sway the electoral landscape at a large scale. The intervention only reaches 315 (out of 1,488) municipalities or cities within the Philippines. Our intervention has increased the probability of non-incumbents winning the election (see Figure 4.4), but this effect is not statistically significant.

C.3 Balance Table

Table C.1: Covariate balance across treatment groups. The t statistic and corresponding p -values are computed using t tests. The F statistic and corresponding p -values are computed using ANOVA tests.

	Ctrl.	T_1	T_2	T_3	T_4	t stat	p -val.	F stat	p -val.
Competition in 2016	1.92 (0.86)	2.05 (0.86)	1.80 (0.79)	1.85 (0.80)	1.92 (0.89)	0.16	0.87	0.60	0.66
%(Female)	0.82 (0.20)	0.83 (0.17)	0.84 (0.16)	0.82 (0.17)	0.82 (0.16)	-0.47	0.64	0.15	0.96
#(Mayor)	2.48 (1.14)	2.37 (0.80)	2.65 (1.05)	2.38 (0.87)	2.83 (1.52)	-0.57	0.57	1.50	0.20
#(Vice Mayor)	2.26 (0.93)	2.25 (0.49)	2.48 (0.72)	2.38 (0.67)	2.65 (0.92)	-1.89	0.06	2.14	0.08
Income Class	1.68 (0.85)	1.78 (0.88)	1.80 (0.88)	1.80 (0.91)	1.82 (0.87)	-1.23	0.22	0.41	0.80

C.4 Different operations of vote buying

Table C.2: Effect of Treatment on Vote Buying (Dependent Variable: Number of Incidents)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Treatment (Binary)	-0.004 (0.157)		
Promise		0.155 (0.193)	
Endorse		-0.181 (0.162)	
\neg (Common Knowledge)			-0.071 (0.168)
Common Knowledge			0.060 (0.193)
Gender	-0.216** (0.103)	-0.220** (0.102)	-0.217** (0.103)
#(Voters), logged	0.376** (0.155)	0.373** (0.154)	0.377** (0.155)
Income	-0.084 (0.111)	-0.084 (0.111)	-0.083 (0.111)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.089	0.097	0.090
Adj. R ²	0.084	0.091	0.084
Num. obs.	1739	1739	1739
RMSE	1.315	1.309	1.314
N Clusters	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

Table C.3: Effect of Treatment on Vote Buying (Dependent Variable: Amount Used)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Treatment (Binary)	135.609** (65.428)		
Promise		190.424** (75.223)	
Endorse		74.916 (99.373)	
\neg (Common Knowledge)			109.903 (73.307)
Common Knowledge			160.314 (98.694)
Gender	-134.765*** (48.702)	-136.076*** (48.232)	-135.105*** (48.950)
#(Voters), logged	89.840* (51.891)	88.709* (50.834)	90.222* (51.536)
Income	-28.746 (40.952)	-28.829 (40.483)	-28.476 (41.087)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.046	0.051	0.047
Adj. R ²	0.041	0.045	0.041
Num. obs.	1739	1739	1739
RMSE	587.160	585.790	587.032
N Clusters	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

C.5 Robustness Check on Electoral Competition

C.5.1 Vote Margin

Table C.4: Effect of Treatment on Winning Margin

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Treatment (Binary)	-7.860** (3.128)		
Promise		-5.700 (3.637)	
Endorse		-10.316*** (3.790)	
-(Common Knowledge)			-7.940** (3.673)
Common Knowledge			-7.785** (3.649)
Gender	-0.537 (1.829)	-0.582 (1.816)	-0.537 (1.829)
#(Voters), logged	1.525 (2.538)	1.456 (2.538)	1.525 (2.537)
Income	-1.484 (1.793)	-1.490 (1.775)	-1.483 (1.794)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.081	0.084	0.081
Adj. R ²	0.075	0.079	0.075
Num. obs.	1730	1730	1730
RMSE	26.116	26.069	26.124
N Clusters	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

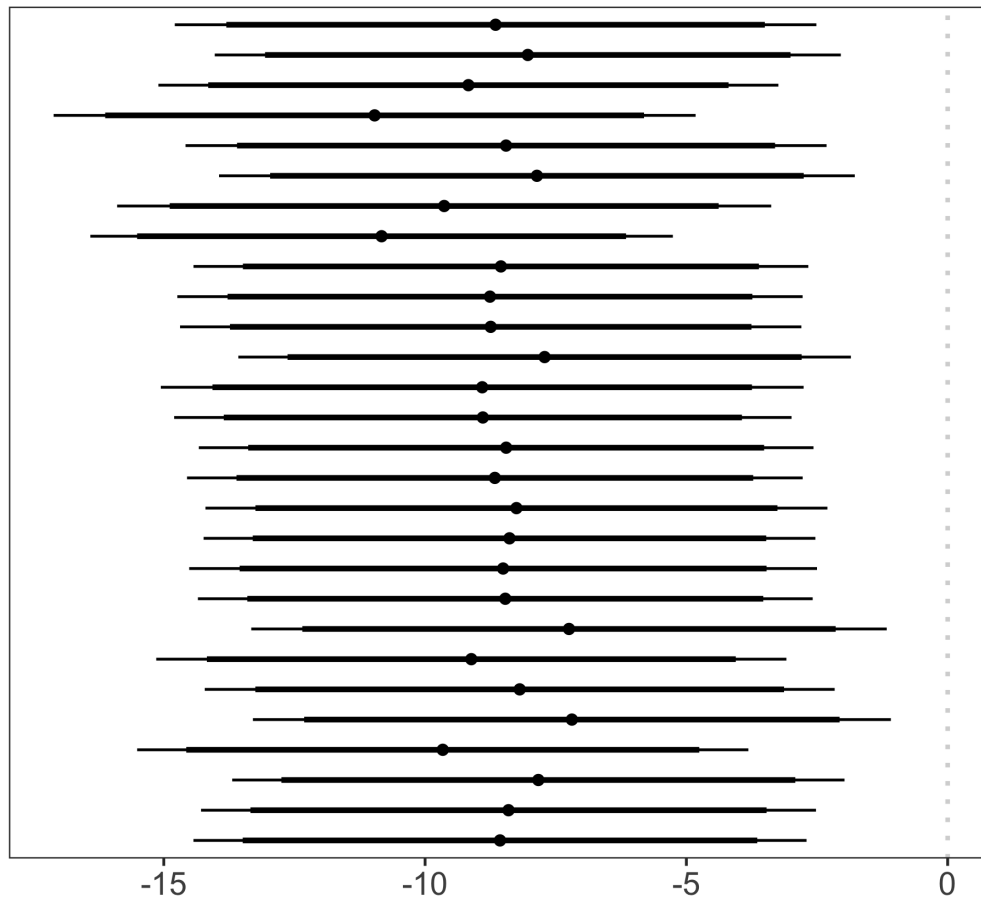


Figure C.3: Effect of treatment on vote margin.

To assess whether the effect is driven by outliers, we drop all samples in a given province one at a time. The effect of treatment on vote margin is consistently significant across all specifications. This suggests that the effect is not driven by a particular province.

C.5.2 HHI Index

Table C.5: Effect of Treatment on HHI Index

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Treatment (Binary)	-0.055*** (0.017)		
Promise		-0.050** (0.021)	
Endorse		-0.061*** (0.021)	
¬(Common Knowledge)			-0.056*** (0.020)
Common Knowledge			-0.055*** (0.021)
Gender	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.000 (0.010)
#(Voters), logged	0.015 (0.013)	0.014 (0.013)	0.015 (0.013)
Income	-0.006 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.009)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.152	0.152	0.152
Adj. R ²	0.147	0.147	0.146
Num. obs.	1730	1730	1730
RMSE	0.144	0.144	0.144
N Clusters	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

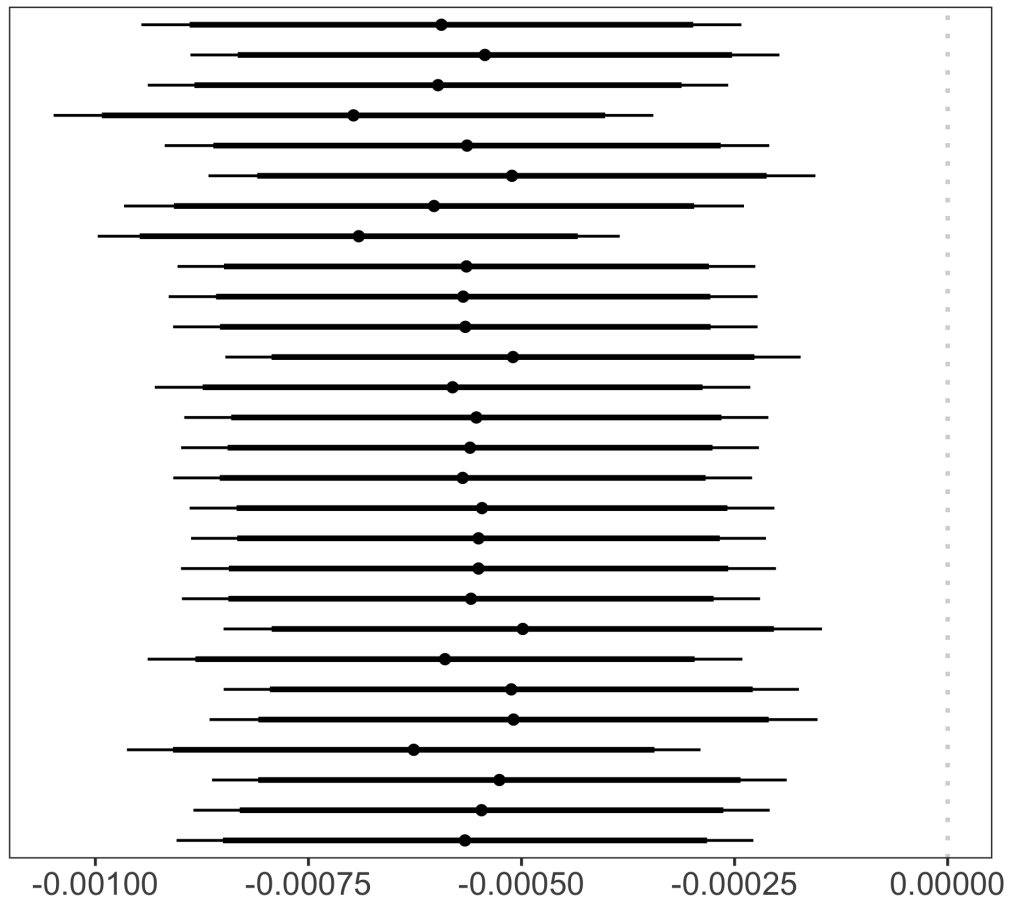


Figure C.4: Effect of treatment on HHI Index.

To assess whether the effect is driven by outliers, we drop all samples in a given province one at a time. The effect of treatment on HHI index is consistently significant across all specifications. This suggests that the effect is not driven by a particular province.

C.6 Robustness Check on Turnout Rate

Table C.6: Effect of Treatment on Turnout

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Treatment (Binary)	1.373** (0.595)		
Promise		1.043 (0.679)	
Endorse		1.739** (0.686)	
\neg (Common Knowledge)			0.750 (0.700)
Common Knowledge			1.973*** (0.649)
Gender	-0.141 (0.359)	-0.133 (0.356)	-0.149 (0.357)
#(Voters), logged	-3.012*** (0.427)	-3.006*** (0.425)	-3.003*** (0.423)
Income	0.081 (0.345)	0.082 (0.343)	0.088 (0.343)
Clustered SE	✓	✓	✓
Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
R ²	0.297	0.299	0.304
Adj. R ²	0.293	0.295	0.299
Num. obs.	1739	1739	1739
RMSE	4.584	4.578	4.563
N Clusters	315	315	315

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

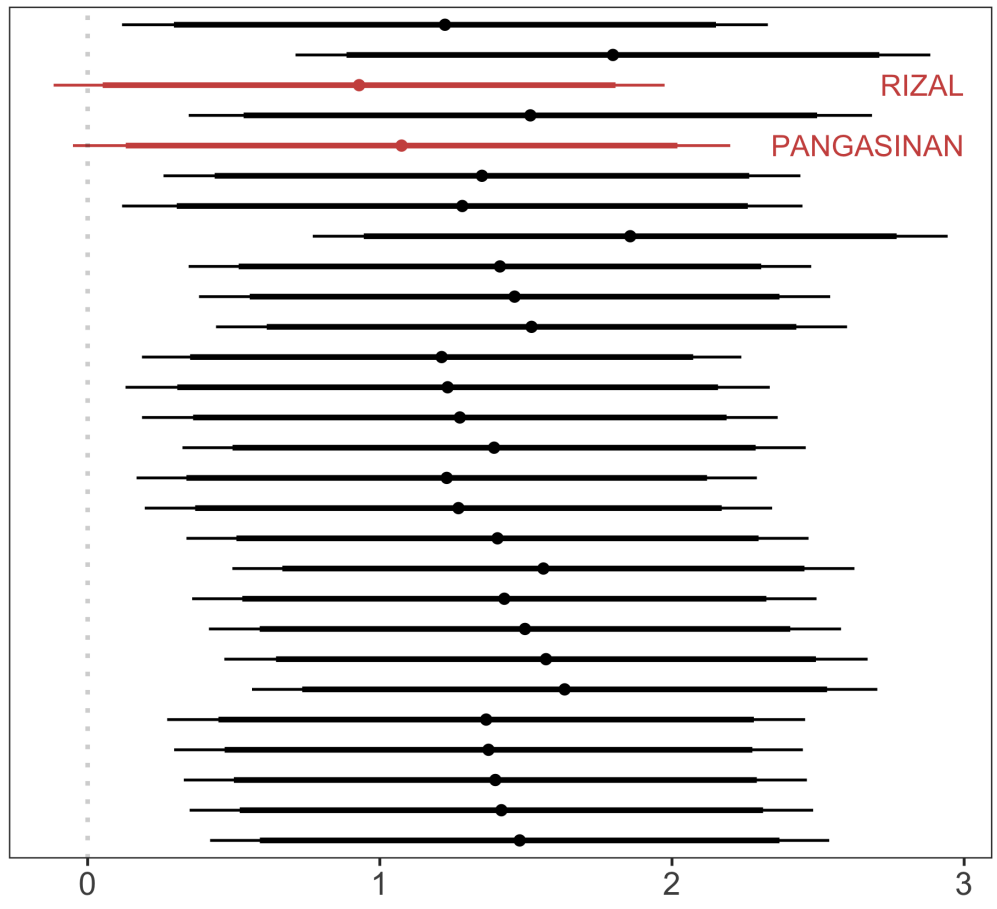


Figure C.5: Effect of treatment on turnout.

To assess whether the effect is driven by outliers, we drop all samples in a given province one at a time. The effect of treatment on turnout is consistently significant across all specifications, with the exception of Rizal and Pangasinan. This suggests that the effect is not driven by a particular province.

C.7 Threats to Validity

Throughout the paper, we argue that effect of the intervention on downstream outcomes is driven by the politicians' behavioral change. However, it is possible that the changes are driven by the researchers.

Although it is possible that the intervention made voters more willing to vote, we believe it is unlikely the case. First, politicians' participation in the initiative was not made publicly available until the morning of the election. Although the public information of politicians' participation (or non-participation) might incentivize some voters to go out to the polling booth at the last minute, we believe it is likely not the case.

It is also possible that citizens were unaware of the election, and our intervention had an informational effect on the voters such that they become aware of the election. We argue that it is also unlikely to be the case, since citizens' awareness of the election is already quite high. The turnout rate in the control group is 76.4% (see also, Figure C.6).

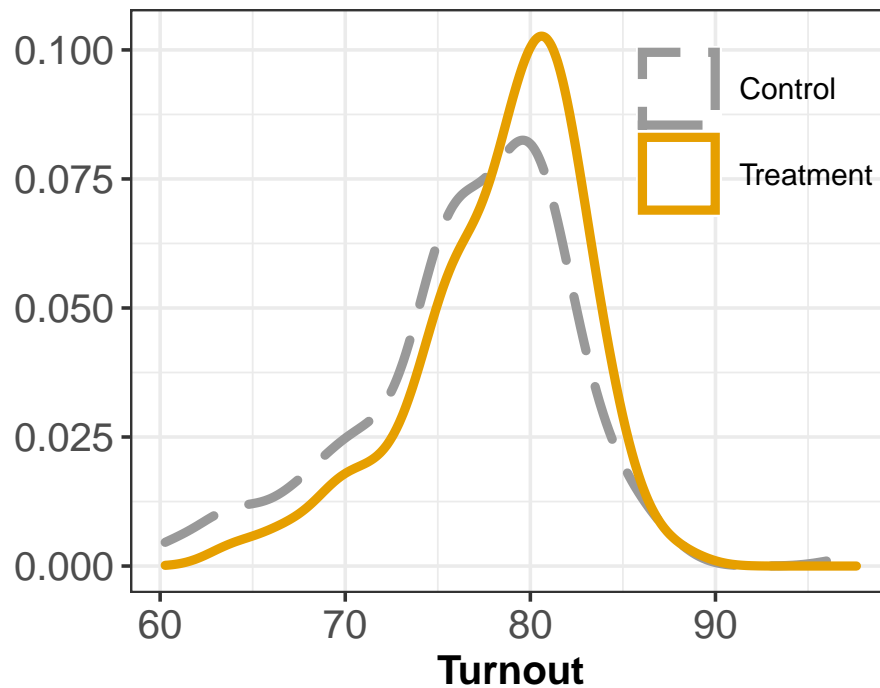


Figure C.6: Distribution of turnout rate.

C.8 Politician Survey

MODULE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY, I

- 35. What is your last name (surname)?
- 36. What is your first name?
- 37. In what province are you running for office?
- 38. In what municipality or city are you running for office?
- 39. Do you have a Facebook account?:
 - Yes
 - No
- 40. If you have a Facebook account, what do you use it for most of the time?

MODULE 2: POLICY STANCE SURVEY

- 41. The Philippines should take a firmer stance against China's building of artificial islands on South China Sea.
5 ———— 1
- 42. The Philippines should allow the United States to establish a military base in the country again.
5 ———— 1
- 43. A Philippine Space Agency should be created.
5 ———— 1
- 44. The Philippines should assert its sovereignty over the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).
5 ———— 1
- 45. The Philippines should shift its strategic orientation away from the United States and towards China.
5 ———— 1
- 46. The government should make cuts to education spending in order to reduce the national debt.
5 ———— 1
- 47. The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act (TRAIN Tax Law) should be repealed.
5 ———— 1
- 48. The government should make cuts to the minimum wage to reduce the national debt.
5 ———— 1

49. The government should increase funding for mental and rehabilitation units.
5 ———— 1
50. The Philippines would be better off economically under federalism.
5 ———— 1
51. The Philippines will experience more conflicts under federalism.
5 ———— 1
52. I support the government’s War on Drugs.
5 ———— 1
53. Women should be allowed to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
5 ———— 1
54. Same sex marriage should be legalized.
5 ———— 1
55. The Philippines should ban new mining explorations.
5 ———— 1
56. The Philippines should ban the use of plastic bags.
5 ———— 1
57. The government should subsidize and promote condom use among the youth.
5 ———— 1
58. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) should be abolished.
5 ———— 1
59. The death penalty should be re-imposed.
5 ———— 1
60. The government should increase funding for mental and rehabilitation units.
5 ———— 1
61. The K-12 education should be repealed.
5 ———— 1

MODULE 3A: GENERAL CLIMATE SURVEY, I

In this module, we will ask you a few questions related to the Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP) initiative. If you participate in this initiative, we will generate a campaign leaflet for you, and publish the leaflet on our official Facebook page, so voters from your municipality/city will be informed of your policy stances, and be guided to vote accordingly. You may skip the questions that you do not wish to answer.

62. Have you thought about using social media to help with campaigns before?
- Yes
 - No
63. In support of the Ateneo School of Government's Building a More Democratic Philippines (BMDP) initiative, I endorse the efforts to combat vote buying in the upcoming election.
- Yes
 - No

MODULE 3B: GENERAL CLIMATE SURVEY, II

64. One way that people talk about politics in the Philippines is in terms of liberal, conservative, and moderate. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 being very liberal, and 10 being very conservative, where would you place yourself on that spectrum?
65. If you were elected as a local politician today, what would be your flagship program for the people in your municipality or city? (Example: promotion of small and medium enterprises, or, increased efforts in local tax collection, etc.)
66. If you were elected as the local politician, and you need to allocate a budget of 100 points across different sectors, how would you do it? Please make sure that the allocations add up to 100. For example, you can allocate 50 to "Education", 25 to "Health", 20 to "Roads", and 5 to "Help for Needy."
- Agricultural Assistance
 - Community Facilities
 - Education
 - Gov't Transparency
 - Health
 - Help for Needy
 - Peace and Security
 - Roads
 - Water and Sanitation
67. Please rank the qualities that are most important to you in a candidate, where 1 is the most important quality, and 11 is the least important quality.
- Charisma

- Commitment
- Compassion
- Effectiveness
- Foreign Policy Experience
- Honesty
- Intelligence
- Leadership
- Military Experience
- Patriotism
- Toughness

C.9 Citizen Survey

- 68. Which province are you from?**
- 69. Which municipality or city are you from?**
- 70. Do you observe any candidates distributing gifts?**
 - Yes
 - No
- 71. What is the gift that the candidates distributes to the voters?**
- 72. If the candidate is distributing money, what is your estimated amount?**
- 73. In your estimate, what percentage of the voters in your municipality or city has received money from the candidate?**
- 74. How long did you wait at the polling station before you voted?**