

Hometown Advantage: Voter Preferences for Community Embeddedness in Local Contests

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Abstract

Every year, Americans elect hundreds of thousands of candidates to local public office, typically in low-attention, nonpartisan races. How do voters evaluate candidates in these sorts of elections? Previous research suggests that, absent party cues, voters rely on a set of heuristic shortcuts—including the candidate’s name, profession, and interest group endorsements—to decide whom to support. In this paper, we suggest that community embeddedness—a candidate’s roots and ties to the community—is particularly salient in these local contests. We present evidence from a conjoint survey experiment on a nationally representative sample of American voters. We estimate the marginal effect on vote share of candidate attributes such as gender, race, age, profession, interest group endorsements, and signals of community embeddedness—specifically homeownership and residency duration. We find that voters, regardless of political party, have strong preferences for community embeddedness. Strikingly, the magnitude of the residency duration effect rivals that of prior political experience.

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1 Introduction

There are approximately 90,000 local governments in the United States, for which citizens elect hundreds of thousands of public officials each year (Warshaw 2019). Yet most studies of candidate preferences focus on the national level.¹ This is problematic for our understanding of elections and candidate choice because local electoral contests differ from national elections in important ways (Oliver and Ha 2007). Local elections are characterized by non-partisan races (for example, 77% of city council races use non-partisan ballots (MacManus and Bullock III 2003)), as well as lower information and lower attention on the part of both voters and the media. Our understanding of candidate choice and the tradeoffs that voters make from national contexts may therefore provide limited insight into local electoral contests. This study therefore addresses the following question: Which candidate attributes do voters value most in local political contests?

To explore how individuals evaluate different candidate characteristics in local elections, we use a conjoint experiment embedded in the 2022 Cooperative Election Study, which asks 1,308 respondents to choose between two candidates in five hypothetical nonpartisan local elections. We include candidate attributes previously explored in the literature—name, age, career, prior political experience, family, and endorsements—as well as two additional attributes that may be especially important in local elections: homeownership and the length of time the candidate has lived in the community. This allows us not only to compare our results on local elections to prior findings about key attributes in state and national contests, but also to contribute new knowledge on the relative importance of “community embeddedness,” or a candidate’s roots and ties to a community.

We find that several candidate attributes are as important in local elections as they are in national and state elections. Voters are more likely to prefer younger candidates, those with previous political experience, business owners, and candidates with families. In addition, we find that attributes signaling “community embeddedness” are particularly attractive to

¹A few exceptions include Mares and Visconti (2020) and Berz and Jankowski (2022).

voters. Our respondents are 4.0 percentage points more likely to vote for a homeowner than a renter, and 7.6 percentage points more likely to vote for someone who has lived in the community for a decade (compared to the base category of 2 years). While Democrats and Republicans are split on the importance of homeownership (greater Republican preference for homeownership), there is bipartisan consensus on the value of being embedded in a community for a longer period of time. Moreover, the magnitude of the residency duration effect is on par with the prior political experience effect, an attribute shown to be considerably important in prior work. Overall, the results imply that voters prefer their local elected officials to have strong local roots, and future work should explore the mechanisms through which community embeddedness matters to voters.

2 Candidate Attributes and Voter Preferences

In an effort to combat the corruption and inefficiencies produced by party patronage that characterized many cities during the early part of the 20th century, Progressive reformers championed reforms that included the secret ballot, direct primaries, and the nonpartisan ballot. While the former – secret ballots and direct primaries – have been almost universally adopted by cities, the nonpartisan ballot characterizes only about 75 percent of municipal elections and roughly one-half of all elections in the United States (see discussion in Wright (2008)). Without party affiliation as a low-cost information cue, voters must turn to whatever information they have or can infer from the ballot.

2.1 Heuristics in Non-partisan Elections

One such source of information is incumbency status or prior political experience. Those who do show up to vote in local contests often rely on incumbency (Schaffner, Streb and Wright 2001, Squire and Smith 1988), especially as this information is frequently indicated directly on the ballot. Both incumbency and a candidate’s political history can signal job

experience or that a candidate is higher quality after successfully defeating challengers in a prior election. Prior work has documented incumbency advantages for mayors and city council members (Trounstine 2011, Ferreira and Gyourko 2014) and has shown that individuals use information about candidates’ political experience when party labels are absent (Kirkland and Coppock 2018).

Voters also draw on candidate demographics, including race and ethnicity (Pomper 1966), gender (Matson and Fine 2006), and age (Eshima and Smith 2022). While these characteristics are not indicated directly on the ballot, voters may be able to infer some of these characteristics from candidates’ names. Individuals may even interpret race and gender as party cues in non-partisan elections (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993, McDermott 1998), and there is evidence that voters prefer to elect women to “stereotype-congruent” positions like school boards (Anzia and Bernhard 2022).

Furthermore, voters use information that they gather about candidates from campaigns, endorsements, and media coverage prior to heading to the ballot box. Profession, career history, and private sector experience provide valuable cues (Kirkland and Coppock 2018, Schaffner, Streb and Wright 2001, Lim and Snyder Jr 2015).² Voters value candidate qualifications, relevant training, and functional competence for office and use cues in the form of candidate occupation to assess who is or is not fit for the job. For example, Atkeson and Hamel (2020) find that voters prefer candidates with careers in education for positions on local school boards. In general, voters also tend to favor business owners and executives for the position of mayor. Kirkland (2021) finds that business owners and executives “make up the largest occupational category among US mayors—both over time and across regions of the country.” Republican voters especially prefer candidates with job experience (Kirkland and Coppock 2018), business experience in particular (Adams, Lascher Jr and Martin 2021).

Endorsements are another effective way for voters to overcome informational deficits. Endorsements from interest groups (Lupia 1994, Gerber and Phillips 2003), co-ethnics (Ben-

²In California, candidates may list their occupational background directly on the ballot.

jamin 2017), and newspapers (Ansolabehere, Lessem and Snyder Jr 2006, Lieske 1989) all seem to influence voter preferences. For example, McDermott (2006) finds that endorsements from groups with a shared common interest—such as unions and union members—effectively improves ideologically and policy-aligned voting. Similarly, Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) find that endorsements can help the least informed make decisions in a relatively low information real-world setting.

Cultural stereotypes surrounding marriage and children also play an important role in shaping perceptions of candidates. Teele, Kalla and Rosenbluth (2018) find that voters and elites prefer candidates who are both married and have children. Moreover, candidates who are perceived as going against these traditional stereotypes are penalized. A large literature finds that these penalties are concentrated particularly among women as motherhood becomes more politicized (Deason, Greenlee and Langner 2015), uneven child-rearing responsibilities persist (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006), and women pursuing leadership roles are seen as too ambitious (Dittmar 2015, Jamieson 1995).

2.2 Community Embeddedness: Homeownership and Residency Duration

Despite featuring prominently in campaign ads, less is known about how voters use information about candidates’ community embeddedness—their roots and ties to the community expressed through attributes such as homeownership and residency duration—to make vote choices. We know that homeowners are significantly overrepresented among public officeholders at all levels of government (Einstein, Ornstein and Palmer 2022), but despite an extensive literature on how homeownership affects turnout and vote choice (Fischel 2002, Hall and Yoder 2022, Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2020, Einstein, Palmer and Glick 2019, Oliver and Ha 2007, Hankinson 2018), we know little about whether this overrepresentation of homeowners is driven by candidate self-selection or voter preferences.

Homeownership and residency duration may impact voter preferences in local elections

through three distinct mechanisms: as a signal of the candidate’s investment in the community, as a marker of a shared place-based identity, and through the web of personal relationships that candidates cultivate with their friends and neighbors.

First, these attributes may signal candidates’ investment of time and money into the community. Voters may prefer candidates with a stake in the long-term success of the community, and investments provide personal incentives to produce quality policies for the benefit of the community. Voters with large financial investments in a community tend to be more highly engaged in local politics (Fischel 2002); the same may be true for public officials as well.

Second, homeownership and residency duration may signal that a candidate shares the voters’ identity and policy preferences. Since voters themselves are more likely to be homeowners with strong ties to the community, they may prefer candidates with similar experiences and in-depth knowledge of concerns in the community (Mansbridge 1999). Community embeddedness involves symbolic or place-based identity (Munis 2021), where voters reward candidates for living near them and identifying as part of the group. Work by Schulte-Cloos and Bauer (2023) argue that “the local roots of political candidates act as social identity cues to voters” (pg. 695). Place-based social identity instills in voters confidence that their neighbors will represent them effectively, whether through substantive or descriptive representation (Campbell et al. 2019, Meredith 2013).

Finally, voters may prefer candidates with whom they have a personal relationship (Sinclair 2012, Panagopoulos, Leighley and Hamel 2017), and candidates embedded in their communities are able to form deep personal networks over many years. Long-term residents have greater name recognition and a deeper understanding of the community and its voters’ priorities (Hunt 2022). Furthermore, personal relationships play a significant role in politics, perhaps even more so in local contests than in statewide or congressional races due to the general lack of salient policy information. V. O. Key’s concept of friends and neighbor voting is based on candidates winning support not due to their political positions but because they

reside near voters (Key 1949). Voters tend to “back the home-town boy” (Key 1949, p. 41).

For these reasons, we expect that voters will be more likely to select candidates who are homeowners, and those who have lived in the community for a longer period of time, over renters and newer residents. A key feature of the conjoint design used in this study is that we are able to estimate the average marginal effect of these attributes on vote share, and compare the magnitude of these estimates with those of other candidate attributes with documented importance for voters’ preferences. Although this design cannot definitively identify *why* voters prefer candidates with these attributes, it can provide some suggestive evidence distinguishing the three mechanisms outlined above. Because our respondents are asked to evaluate fictional candidates, we can isolate the effect of community embeddedness from the effect of personal relationships. And by comparing preferences across different groups of respondents, we can assess whether our respondents are more likely to prefer candidates who share their attributes. For example, if homeowners and renters diverge on whether they prefer homeowner candidates, this would provide evidence in favor of the shared identity mechanism. But if *all* voters prefer homeowner candidates, it would provide suggestive evidence in favor of the investment mechanism.

3 Experimental Design

We surveyed 1,308 respondents from the post-election survey module of the 2022 Cooperative Election Study (CES).³ Of these respondents, 39% were men, 71% White, 12% Black, and 8% Hispanic. 27% live in urban areas, 40% live in suburbs, and 60% reported owning their own home. Our survey instrument is provided in Appendix Section A.1.

The survey included a conjoint choice task to assess the impact of candidate attributes on respondent’s preferences (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto 2014). Conjoint designs have been used to study candidate preferences in a variety of contexts (Carlson 2015, Franchino

³This “unmatched” sample is not constructed to be nationally representative, and does not include survey weights for 30% of the sample. All the results we present here are similar, albeit less precise, when using the nationally representative subsample. For details, see Supplementary Materials section A.3.4.

and Zucchini 2015, Horiuchi, Smith and Yamamoto 2020, Carnes and Lupu 2016, Kirkland and Coppock 2018, Sung 2022). In our survey, each respondent completed five pairwise comparisons between hypothetical candidates, like the example in Figure 1. Seven attributes were provided for each candidate, drawn uniformly from the distributions in Table 1 with no restrictions on combinations.⁴⁵ The bolded attribute—Community Ties—represents our “community embeddedness” variables of homeownership and residency duration, randomized independently. Note that homeownership is not a perfect measure of community embeddedness and may suffer from an information equivalence problem (Dafoe, Zhang and Caughey 2018) in that it can signal other information like socioeconomic status, race, or that a candidate “has their act together,” especially when combined with other attributes in the conjoint experiment. We expect that this is less of a concern for residency duration.

Table 1: Conjoint Task Attributes and Levels

Attribute	Levels
Name	123 names drawn from Butler and Homola (2017): 50% male and 50% female; 60% chance of a stereotypically White name, 20% chance of a stereotypically Black name, and 20% chance of a stereotypically Hispanic name
Political Experience	Previously elected to local office or no previous experience
Career History	High school teacher, construction worker, local attorney, police officer, real estate developer, business owner, not employed
Community Ties	Homeowner or renter; has lived in the community for 2 or 10 years
Family	Married with two children, married with no children, or single
Age	30, 45, or 60
Endorsed By	Association of local real estate developers, police union, teachers’ union, local newspaper, county chamber of commerce, no endorsements

⁴Gender and race are not explicitly listed in the conjoint profiles, but are instead signaled by a set of racially-distinct names developed by Butler and Homola (2017). We chose this design to reduce the number of attributes that respondents needed to read, and to limit potential social desirability effects (Abrajano, Elmendorf and Quinn 2018). Strictly speaking, readers should interpret the Race and Gender AMCEs presented in the next section as the estimated causal effects of racially-distinctive names and gender-specific names, not the causal effects of candidate race and gender. See the Appendix Section A.1 for the complete list of names used.

⁵While all factor combinations are technically possible in the real world, we do note that some combinations, such as 65-year-old renters, may be deemed unusual by some respondents.

Figure 1: Example Conjoint Choice



Candidate Profiles 1 of 5

	Candidate A	Candidate B
Name	Jasmine Joseph	Luke Phillips
Political Experience	Previously elected to local office	Previously elected to local office
Career History	High school teacher	Real estate developer
Community Ties	Has rented an apartment in your community for the past 10 years.	Has rented an apartment in your community for the past 2 years.
Family	Married with two children	Married with no children
Age	60	45
Endorsed By	No endorsements	The county chamber of commerce

Which candidate would you prefer to vote for?

- ☐ Candidate A
- ☐ Candidate B

Our analyses follow our pre-registration.⁶ For each attribute, we estimate the Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE), which in a forced-choice conjoint experiment has a straightforward, politically meaningful interpretation: it estimates the marginal effect of an attribute on a candidate’s vote share (Bansak et al. 2022). We also estimate conditional AMCEs by respondent homeownership and political party identification, discussed below, and by other respondent demographics (gender, race, and urban/suburban/rural place of residence), reported in Appendix Section A.3.

⁶The anonymized version of our pre-registration can be found at Wharton Credibility Lab’s AsPredicted repository under the project entitled ‘Local Candidate Conjoint (CES 2022)’ (#109549): https://aspredicted.org/43K_6MW.

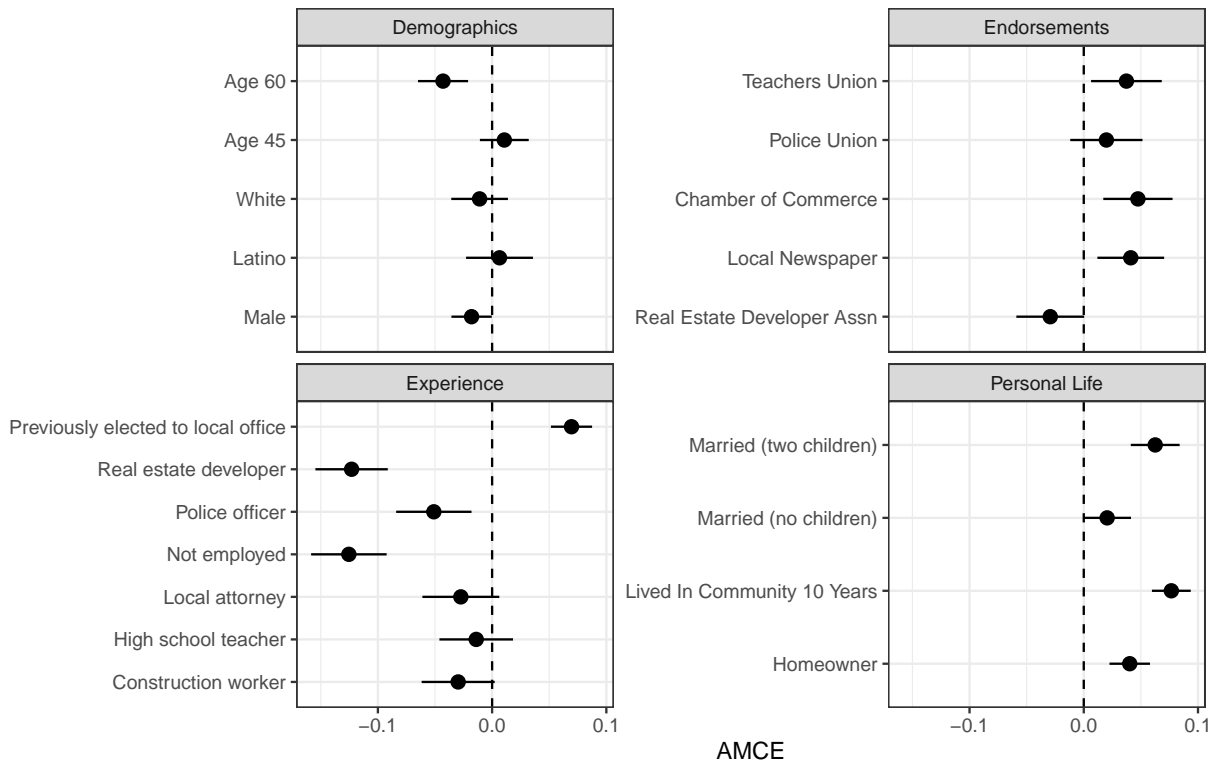
4 Results

4.1 Standard Candidate Attributes

Figure A5 displays the estimated AMCEs and 95% confidence intervals for each level of the candidate attributes. Many of the results are consistent with our expectations and prior research, with a few notable exceptions. Consistent with Kirkland and Coppock (2018), we find that voters are more likely to prefer candidates with previous political experience: respondents were 7.0 percentage points more likely to choose candidates that had previously been elected to political office than those with no prior political experience, all else equal. Respondents were also somewhat more likely to prefer younger candidates (4.3 percentage points less likely to choose a 60 year old candidate compared to the base category of 30, holding all else constant). Moreover, respondents preferred candidates who are married with children (+6.3 percentage points compared to single candidates), consistent with other candidate preference studies.

In line with previous research, we find that our respondents prefer candidates who are business owners more than any other career we included in the survey. Compared to the base category of business owner, respondents were less likely to choose unemployed candidates (-12.5 percentage points) and police officers (-5.1 percentage points), though we will see momentarily that there are large partisan differences in AMCE for these attributes. Notably, our respondents' preference for business owners does not extend to real estate developers, (-12.3pp compared to a generic business owner). Antipathy towards real estate developers—particularly among liberals (Manville 2021)—is an interesting recent development in US local politics (Monkkonen and Manville 2019), and we were surprised to find that it was one of the strongest estimated effects from our survey experiment, regardless of respondent's political party, homeownership status, and other demographic characteristics. These negative perceptions of real estate developers persist when looking at endorsements as well. Compared to no endorsement, respondents reacted negatively to an endorsement by an association of real

Figure 2: Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs) and 95% Confidence Intervals By Candidate Attribute



Notes: The figure displays estimated AMCEs with 95% confidence intervals. The reference categories for each attribute are: endorsement - no endorsements, family - single, political experience - no previous experience, age - 30, residency duration - 2 years, homeownership - renter, career history - business owner, race - Black, gender - Female

estate developers (-2.9pp), but positively to an endorsement by a teachers union (+3.7pp), chamber of commerce (+4.7pp), or local newspaper (+3.1pp). In the aggregate, we find no significant impact of a police union endorsement on hypothetical vote choice (although we will again see partisan differences below).

Finally, we find small and statistically insignificant differences in choices based on candidate race and gender. Though this could be the result of a weak signal (we did not explicitly list candidate race and gender, but included race and gender cues in the candidates' names), subgroup differences suggest that respondents are correctly identifying candidate race. For example, Black respondents are 7.6pp more likely to select Black candidates than White respondents (Figure A15). These results are broadly consistent with those from other

conjoint experiments on racial discrimination (Butler and Homola 2017). In all, we find little evidence that the average respondent is discriminating on the basis of race or gender when selecting candidates.

4.2 Community Embeddedness

For our novel “community embeddedness” attributes—homeownership and residency duration—we find large and statistically significant impacts. All else being equal, respondents were 4.0 percentage points more likely to choose a homeowner over a renter, and 7.7 percentage points more likely to choose a candidate who had lived in the community for a decade (compared to the base category of 2 years). Strikingly, the magnitude of the residency duration effect rivals that of prior political experience, and the effect of homeownership is similar in magnitude to an endorsement from a local newspaper. In fact, the magnitude of the residency duration effect was the third largest of all of the candidate attributes that we examined (exceeded only by our respondents’ distaste for real estate developers and the unemployed). This suggests that community embeddedness is quite important to voters in local elections, both in its own right and in comparison to other candidate features.

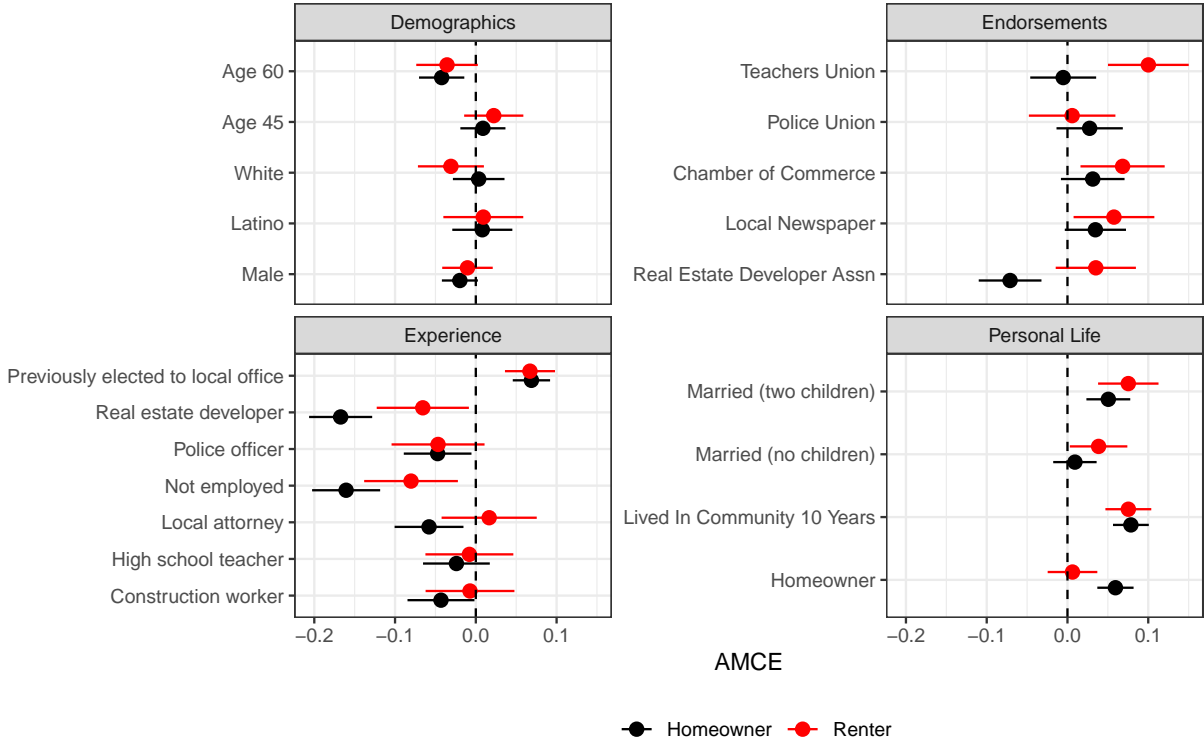
To examine the proposed investment and shared identity mechanisms, we estimate conditional AMCEs for homeowners and renters separately, as shown in Figure 3. These results provide suggestive evidence in favor of the shared identity mechanism—homeowner respondents prefer homeowner candidates, but respondents who are renters do not share this preference. It is notable, however, that renters do not appear to prefer renter candidates over homeowner candidates.⁷

When considering the residency duration attribute, we instead see suggestive evidence in favor of the investment mechanism—respondents of every kind prefer candidates who have

⁷Conditional AMCEs can be a misleading measure of subgroup preferences when there are multiple attribute levels and the reference category is chosen arbitrarily. For this reason, Leeper, Hobolt and Tilley (2020) recommend comparing subgroup effects by estimating the difference in conditional marginal means. We perform these hypothesis tests in the Supplementary Materials (A.2), confirming that the subgroup preferences we describe in the main text are robust to this alternative specification.

lived in their community for longer a longer period of time, one of the few estimated effects that holds regardless of the respondent’s political party, demographics, or homeownership status. The estimated effect is somewhat smaller among respondents who reported living in their community for less than one year (see Figures A4 and A17 in the Supplementary Materials), but these differences are not statistically distinguishable from zero. We acknowledge that these are imperfect tests of these mechanisms, and encourage future work to explore more directly why voters consider candidates who have lived in their community longer to be higher quality.

Figure 3: Conditional Effects by Homeownership



Notes: The figure displays estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) with 95% confidence intervals by respondent homeownership status.

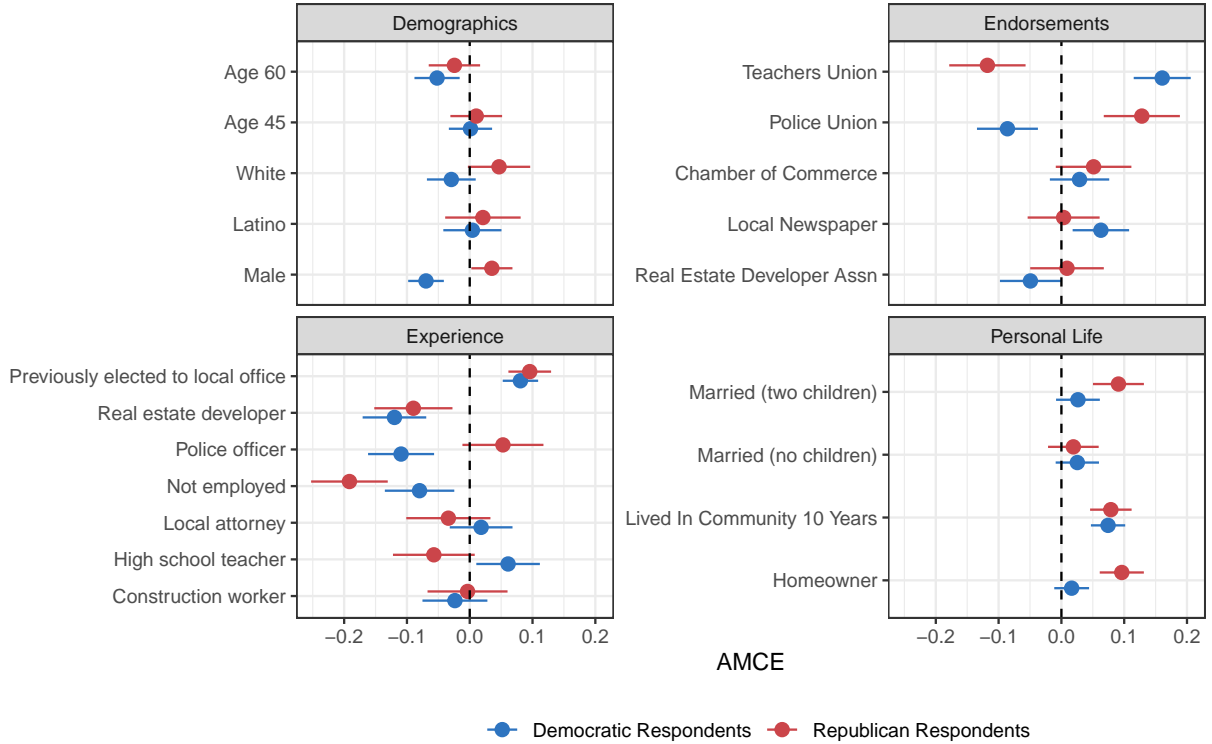
4.3 Conditional Effects By Respondent Characteristics

In Figure 4, we estimate conditional AMCEs by political party of the survey respondent. We find a few substantial differences when comparing Democratic and Republican respondents. For example, the relatively small average treatment effects for teachers union and police union endorsements in Figure A5 mask much larger conditional treatment effects by party. All else equal, Democratic respondents are 16 percentage points more likely to choose a candidate that has been endorsed by the teachers union (compared to no endorsement), while Republican respondents are 11.7 percentage points *less* likely. The reverse is true for endorsements by police unions: Republicans are 12.8 percentage points more likely to choose a police union-endorsed candidate (compared to no endorsement), while Democrats are 8.5 percentage points less likely. Similarly, Democrats are 10.9 percentage points less likely to choose a candidate who is a police officer (compared to a business owner).

Looking at the community embeddedness attributes, we find a strong difference between Democratic and Republican respondents in their attitudes towards homeowner candidates. All else equal, Republicans are 9.6 percentage points more likely to choose a homeowner, while Democrats are just as likely to choose a renter candidate. In contrast, there are no partisan difference in preferences to residency duration. Both Democrats and Republicans are more likely to choose a candidate who has lived longer in the community.

In Appendix Section A.3, we present conditional AMCEs and marginal means by respondent gender, race, place of residence, and residency duration. Though there is broad consensus among our respondents about most of these candidate attributes, there are a few notable subgroup differences. We find that women respondents have a stronger preference for both prior political experience and longer residency duration, and rural respondents are the most strongly opposed to candidates with real estate development backgrounds.

Figure 4: Conditional Effects by Political Party



Notes: The figure displays estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) with 95% confidence intervals by political party ID of the respondent.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Millions of voters cast ballots for local government representatives every year. These elections occur in highly-varied institutional, demographic, and political contexts, and have important consequences for the day-to-day lives of residents. In this study, we explored how individuals evaluate different candidate characteristics in local elections. Beyond previously studied demographic characteristics, career history, and endorsements, we examined the extent to which community embeddedness leads to greater support for local candidates.

We find that voters hold strong preferences for attributes that signal community embeddedness: living the community for an extended period of time, and to some extent, owning a home in the community. We argue that this in part reflects a desire for descriptive representation—homeowners prefer homeowner candidates while renters do not—but it

also reflects a desire for candidates who have invested significant amounts of time into their community—a preference that holds across all respondent subgroups.

We emphasize that this study cannot definitively explain why voters prefer candidates with these attributes. Like other studies in this area (Manville and Monkkonen 2024), our survey uses proxy measures of community embeddedness—residency duration and homeownership—and such measures may convey information about a multitude of candidate attributes. Therefore, future work should develop more extensive, validated measures of community embeddedness, including through employing careful survey, observational, and mixed-methods research. Moreover, we welcome future research on how the treatment effects from signaling community embeddedness differ across jurisdictional types and geographic context. We also encourage consideration of other theoretical mechanisms beyond signals of investment in the community and shared identity. We ultimately need a more comprehensive theory of community embeddedness, social ties, and deep roots in local politics.

In addition to our contribution to understanding the role of community embeddedness at the local level, our results confirm and bring additional nuance to existing insights in the literature on candidate choice. In line with prior findings, our results suggest that voters in local elections prefer candidates with previous political experience and do not favor candidates associated with real estate development. We also observe significant differences between Republicans and Democrats regarding candidate profession and local endorsements, comporting with recent research that finds attitudes toward the police vary by political ideology (Navarro and Hansen 2023). Our work is similar – in spirit – to that of Hunt (2022) and Hunt and Rouse (2023) who find that candidates with deep local roots have electoral advantages in Congress and state legislatures. We see our work as extending this argument, finding electoral advantages in more local contests as well. Altogether, the findings suggest that voters evaluate candidates in local elections similarly to those in national and state elections, with additional emphasis also placed on local roots and community ties.

Data Availability

Support for the 2022 Cooperative Election Study (CES) was provided by the National Science Foundation (Award no. 2148907). The data, code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available at the Journal of Experimental Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/PPMGWL> (Ornstein et al. 2024).

Competing Interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethics Statement

This study was approved with exempt status by the IRB at the University of Georgia (#00006053). This study adheres to APSA's Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research.

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A Supporting Information for: “Hometown Advantage: Voter Preferences for Community Embeddedness in Local Contests”

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A.1 Survey Instrument

This item is a preface screen that precedes a series of conjoint item questions. Respondents should not be able to go back after reaching this screen, and must click ahead to proceed. Participants will then advance to a new screen with a table similar to the one displayed below. Order of the attributes (column 1) should be randomized, except for Name, which should always appear first. Participants will see 5 profiles. Order of attributes should be the same for each profile (i.e., randomized across respondents but not within).

We are interested in what qualities you consider important for local political leaders, like your town’s mayor or councilmembers. On the next few screens, you will be shown a list of candidates and their qualifications, and will ask which candidate you would prefer to vote for.

Table A1: Candidate Profiles X of 5

	Candidate A	Candidate B
Name	HMOSName	HMOSName
Age	HMOSAge	HMOSAge
Family	HMOSFamily	HMOSFamily
Community Ties	HMOSCommunityTies	HMOSCommunityTies
Career History	HMOSCareerHistory	HMOSCareerHistory
Political Experience	HMOSPolitical	HMOSPolitical
Endorsed By	HMOSEndorsements	HMOSEndorsements

*The following are the attributes and levels for inclusion in the profiles. Each attribute level should have equal probability of being displayed, except for the Name attribute (**HMOSNAME**), which should be sampled with 65% probability from List A, 15% probability from List B, and 20% probability from List C. Additionally, no name should be repeated within a single profile (i.e. Candidate A should not have the same name as Candidate B in any profile). There are no other conditional randomizations or restrictions.*

Attributes and Levels

HMOSAge:

1. 30
2. 45
3. 60

HMOSCommunityTies:

1. Has owned a home in your community for the past 2 years.
2. Has rented an apartment in your community for the past 2 years.
3. Has owned a home in your community for the past 10 years.
4. Has rented an apartment in your community for the past 10 years.

HMOSCareerHistory:

1. High school teacher
2. Construction worker
3. Local attorney
4. Police officer
5. Real estate developer
6. Business owner
7. Not employed, taking care of home/family

HMOSPolitical:

1. Previously elected to local office
2. No previous political experience

HMOSFamily:

1. Married with two children
2. Married with no children
3. Single

HMOSEndorsements:

1. An association of local real estate developers
2. The police union
3. The teachers' union
4. Local newspaper
5. The county chamber of commerce
6. No endorsements

HMOSName:

List A

Katie Novak
 Logan Allen
 Sarah Miller
 Holly Schroeder
 Emily Schmidt
 Caitlin Schneider
 Greg Adams
 Luke Phillips
 Colin Smith
 Allison Nelson
 Maxwell Haas
 Katherine Adams
 Jack Evans
 Tanner Smith
 Molly Kruger
 Jay Allen
 Claire Schwartz
 Connor Schwartz
 Emma Clark
 Hunter Miller
 Bradley Schwartz
 Garrett Novak
 Matthew Anderson
 Anne Evans
 Carly Smith
 Kathryn Evans
 Carrie King
 Cody Anderson
 Brett Clark
 Jill Smith
 Katelyn Miller
 Amy Mueller
 Kristen Clark
 Jenna Anderson
 Wyatt Smith
 Geoffrey Martin
 Jake Clark
 Madeline Haas
 Cole Krueger
 Abigail Smith
 Dustin Nelson
 Heather Martin
 Todd Mueller
 Scott King
 Dylan Schwartz
 Hannah Phillips

List B

Tyrone Joseph
 Trevon Jackson
 Deja Mosley
 Latoya Rivers
 Precious Washington
 Ebony Washington
 Keisha Rivers
 Terrance Booker
 Rasheed Gaines
 Latonya Rivers
 Jada Mosley
 Kiara Jackson
 Darnell Banks
 DeAndre Jefferson
 Tyreke Washington
 DeShawn Korsey
 Shanice Booker
 Tyrone Booker
 Jamal Gaines
 Jazmine Jefferson
 Xavier Jackson
 Darius Joseph
 Alaliyah Booker
 Jamal Rivers
 Ebony Mosley
 LaShawn Washington
 Tremayne Joseph
 Dominique Mosley
 Jasmine Joseph
 Deja Jefferson
 LaShawn Banks
 Jermaine Gaines
 Alexis Banks
 Jasmin Jefferson

List C

Carola Huerta
 Margarita Velazquez
 Jose Sanchez
 Carmela Velazquez
 Carlos Torres
 Alfonso Gonzalez
 Carola Ibarra
 Eduardo Torres
 Eduardo Lopez
 Carlos Perez
 Carmen Barajas
 Cesar Zavala
 Maria Ramirez
 Rosa Orozco
 Beatriz Ibarra
 Enrique Huerta
 Rosa Perez
 Luis Vazquez
 Dolores Ramirez
 Jose Orozco
 Magdalena Perez
 Margarita Garcia
 Carlita Torres
 Teresa Jaurez
 Juan Barajas
 Maria Rodriguez
 Edgar Sanchez
 Edgar Zavala
 Beatriz Martinez
 Carmen Lopez
 Jose Martinez
 Cesar Vazquez
 Jorge Cervantes
 Dolores Sanchez
 Luis Hernandez
 Blanca Ramirez
 Pedro Rodriguez
 Juan Hernandez
 Catalina Jaurez
 Catalina Hernandez
 Hernan Garcia
 Javier Gonzalez

Each profile would include the following question. Include this question on the same page as the profile. A-E should be appended to end of each question depending on the round. E.g., round 1 is UGA800a and round 5 is UGA800e.

UGA500post_a-UGA500post_e:

Which candidate would you prefer to vote for?

1. Candidate A
2. Candidate B

UGA501post:

Did you vote in most recent local election for your town, city, or county?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

A.2 Ethics Description

Our survey experiment did not involve deception, and therefore did not require debriefing. Participants are YouGov panelists who consented to take the survey, and are compensated with points that can be redeemed for gift cards or other prizes. See the CES FAQ for more details.

A.3 Additional Tables and Figures

A.3.1 Conditional AMCEs

Figure A1: Estimated Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE) and 95% confidence intervals by respondent gender.

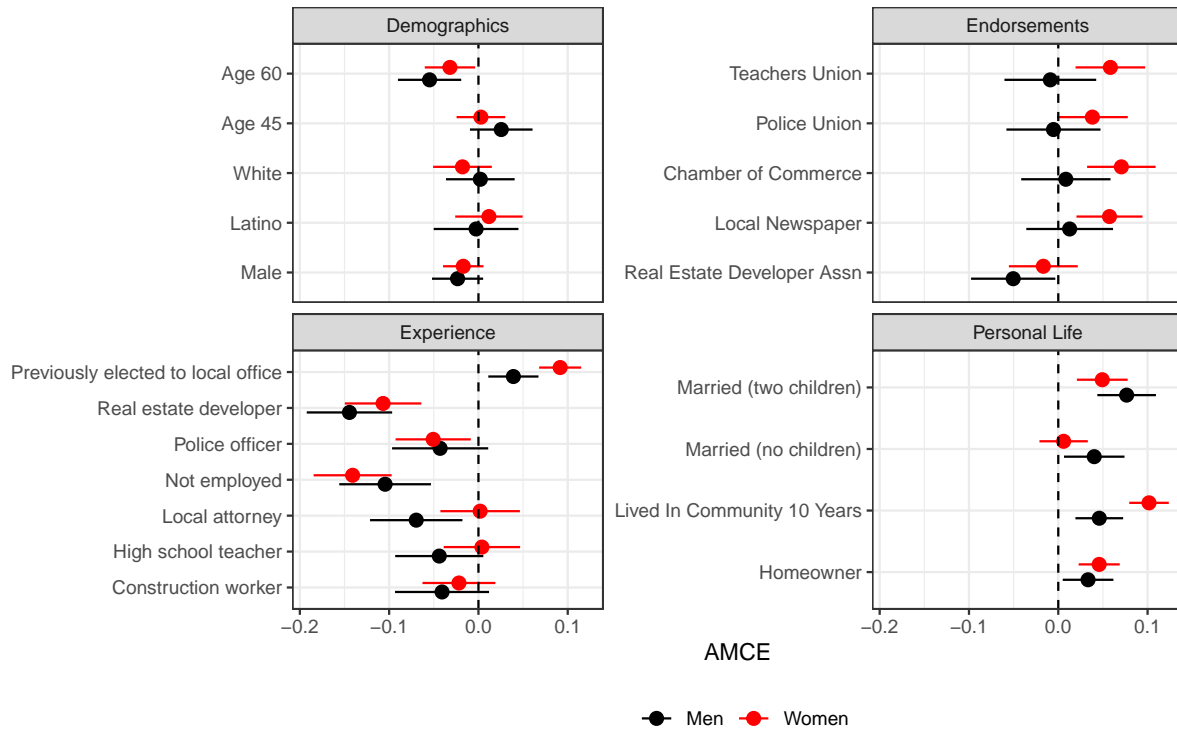


Figure A2: Estimated Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE) and 95% confidence intervals by respondent's race.

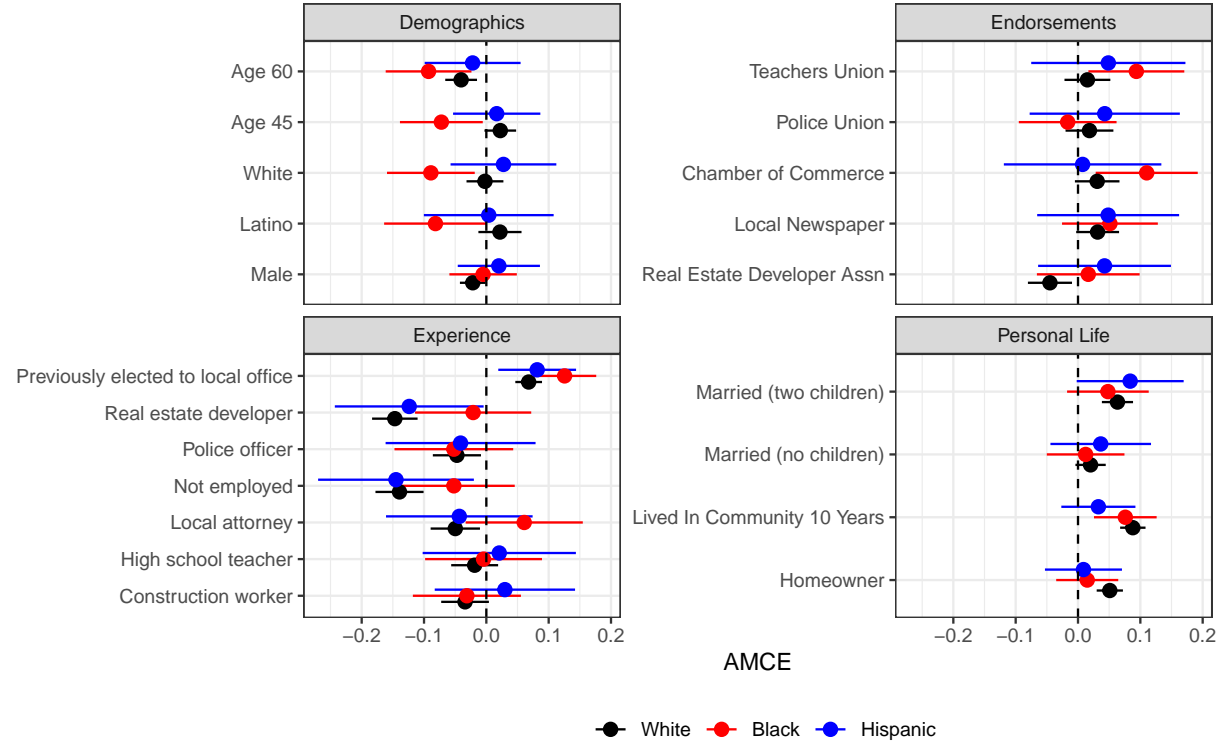


Figure A3: Estimated Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE) and 95% confidence intervals by respondent's place of residence.

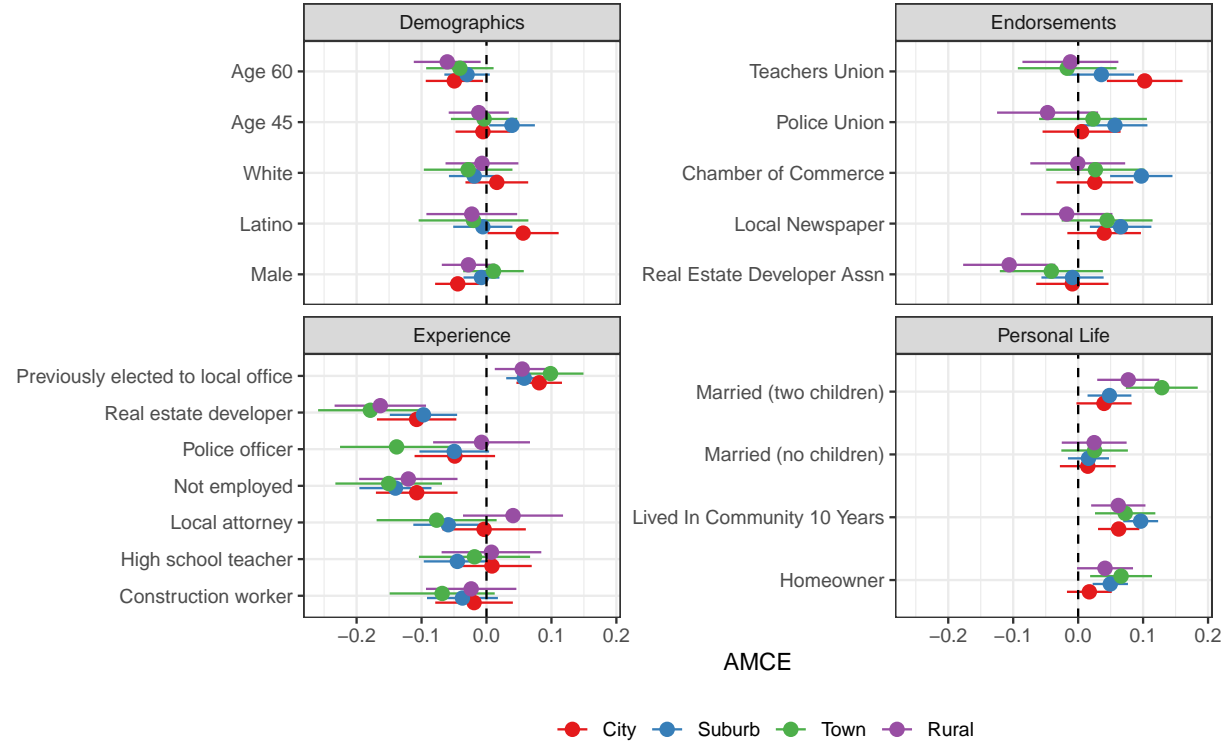
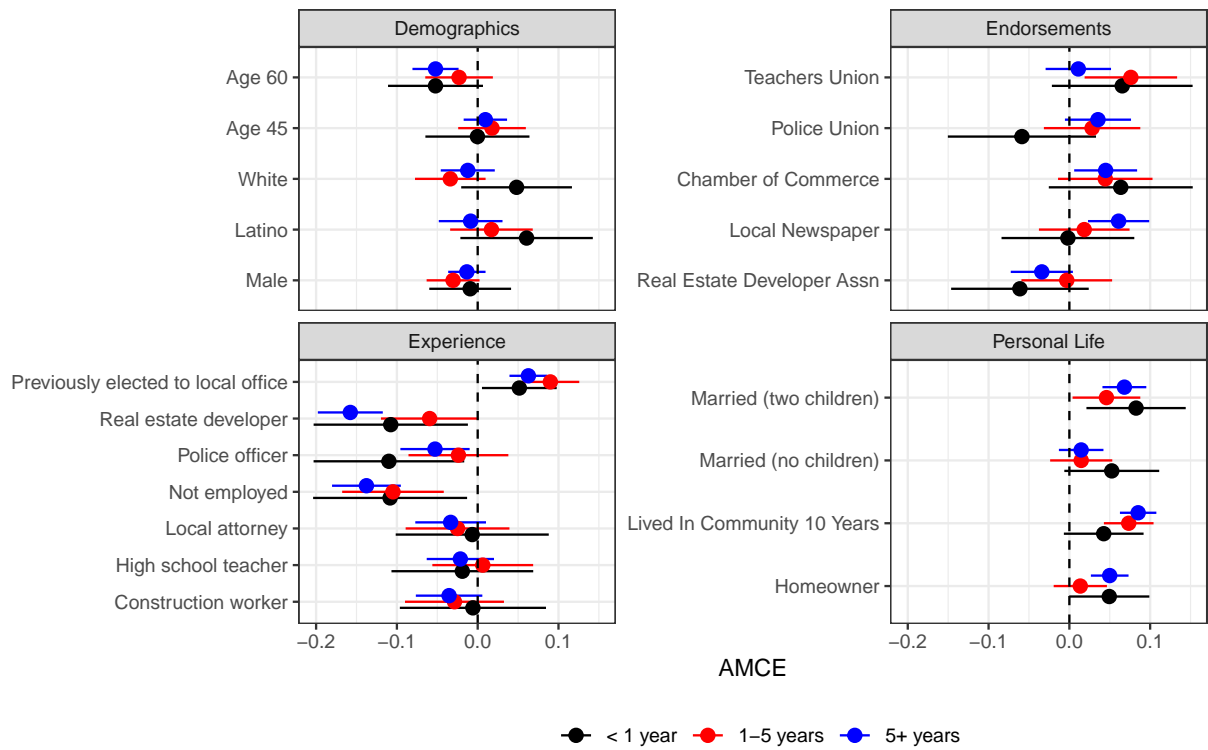


Figure A4: Estimated Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE) and 95% confidence intervals by respondent's duration of residence.



A.3.2 Conditional Marginal Means

Because the AMCE is defined relative to a reference category, conditional AMCEs can be a misleading measure of subgroup preferences if there are multiple categories for each attribute and the reference category is arbitrarily chosen (Leeper, Hobolt and Tilley 2020). To see why, suppose that we are estimating respondent preferences for Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and John Doe. If we choose Trump as the reference category, then the estimated AMCE for John Doe would be positive for Democratic respondents and negative for Republican respondents. But it would be erroneous to conclude from this evidence that Democrats like John Doe more than Republicans—particularly since one would come to the opposite conclusion if Obama were chosen as the reference category. A more reliable measure of subgroup preference is the conditional marginal mean: the percent of respondents from a subgroup who selected candidates with a given attribute. The difference between conditional marginal means better reflects each group’s relative preference for an attribute level.

Figures A5 through A11 plot marginal means for the respondent subgroups we analyze above—grouped by homeownership, partisanship, gender, race, place of residence, and duration of residence. Figures A12 through A17 plot the *difference* in marginal means between subgroups, testing whether the differences in preferences between subgroups is statistically distinguishable from zero. All conclusions in the main text drawn from conditional AMCE estimates are corroborated by these difference in marginal means tests.

Figure A5: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals

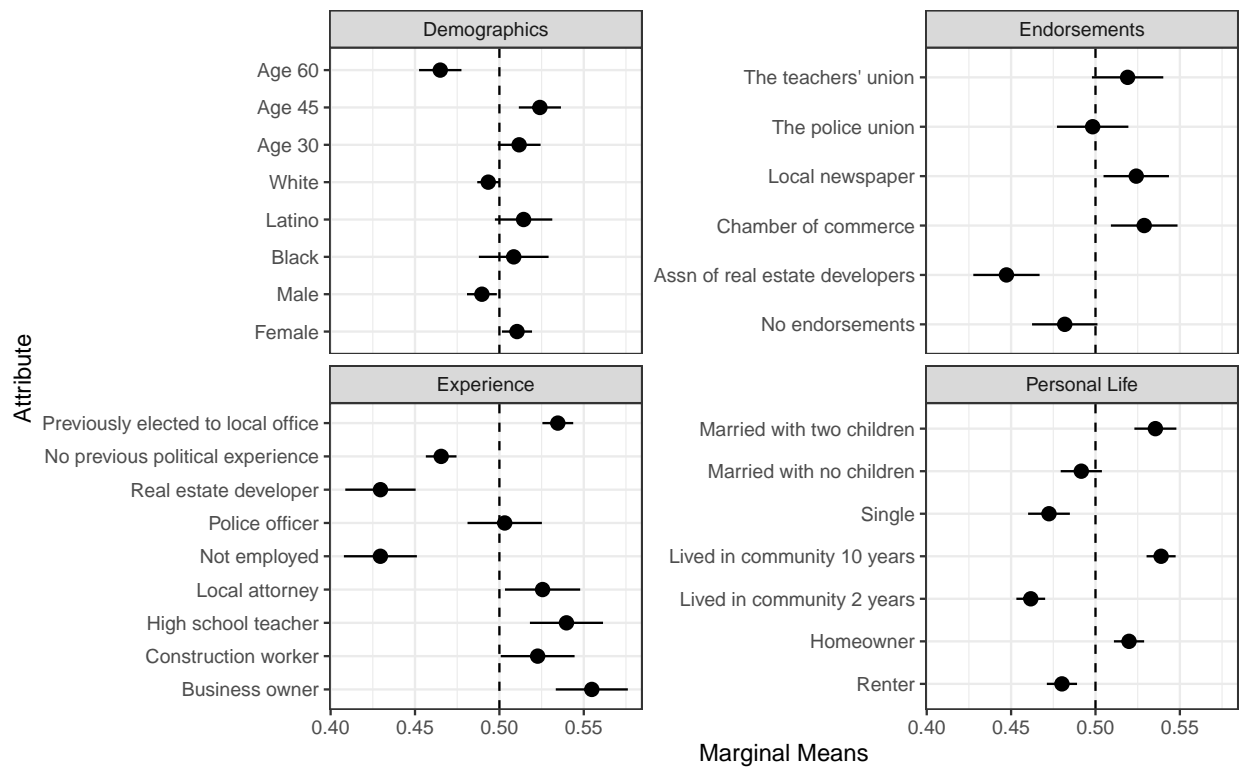


Figure A6: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's party

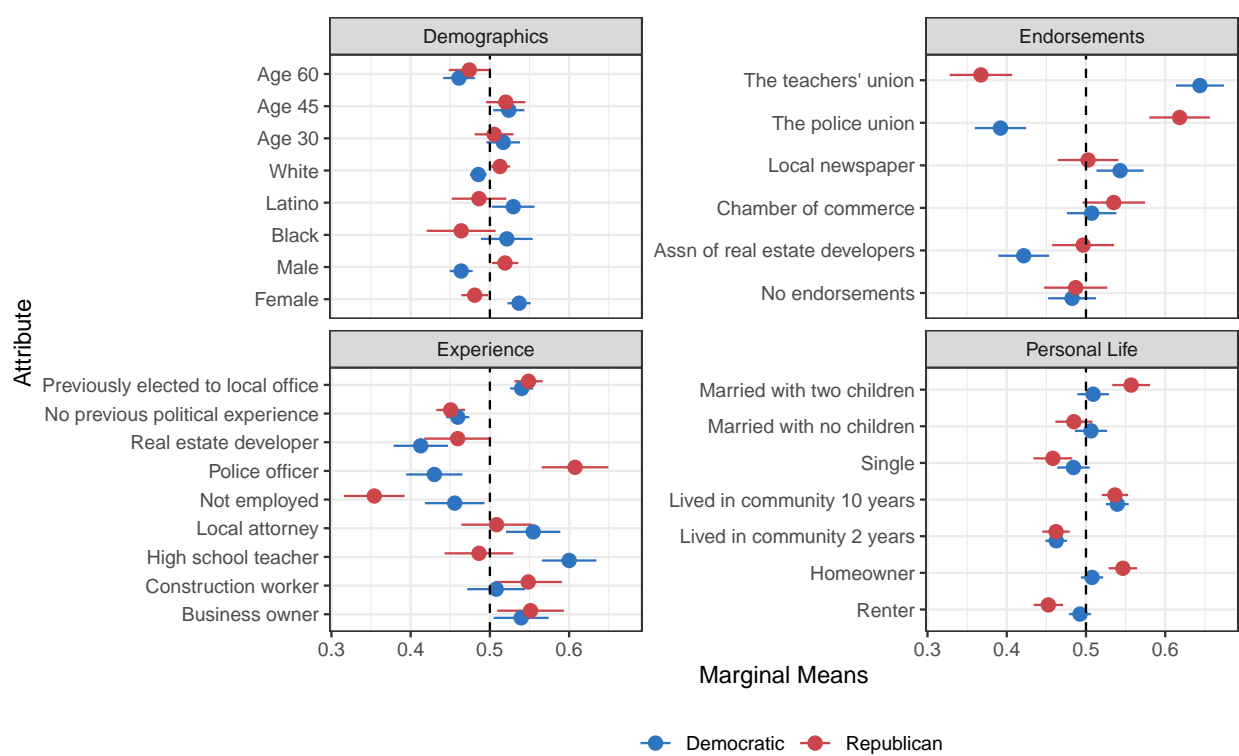


Figure A7: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's homeownership status

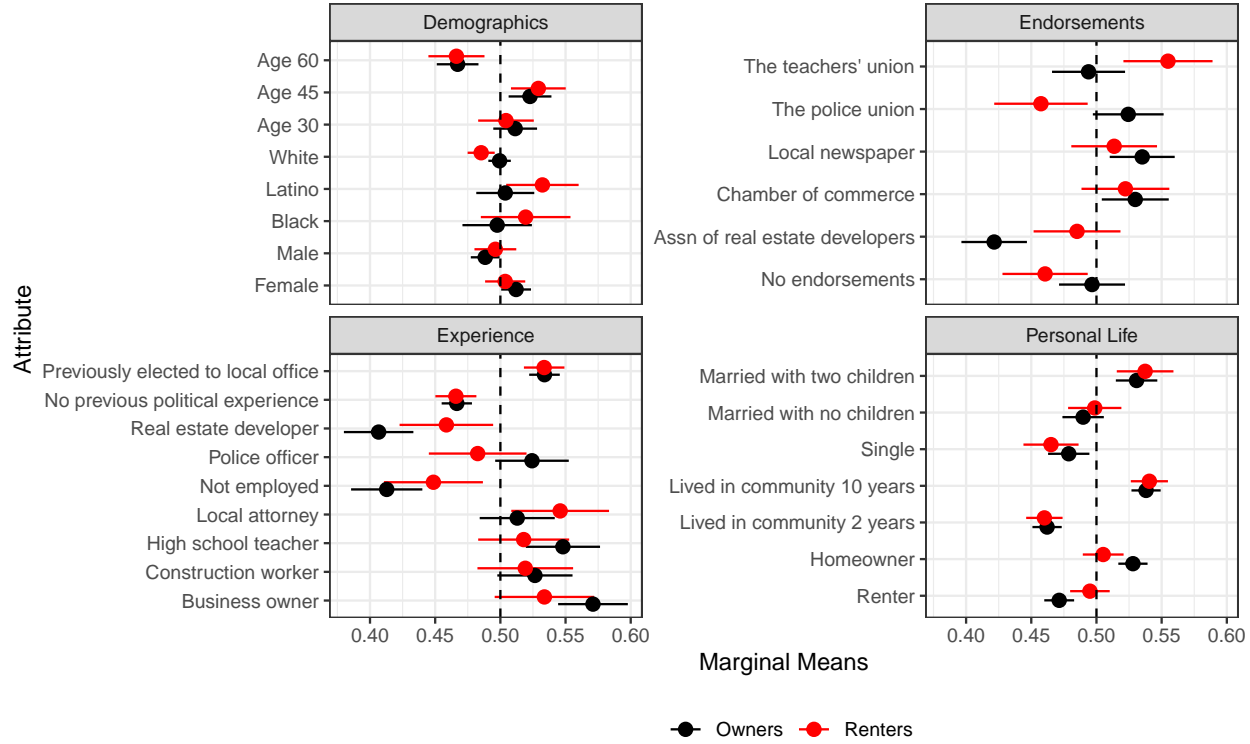


Figure A8: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's gender

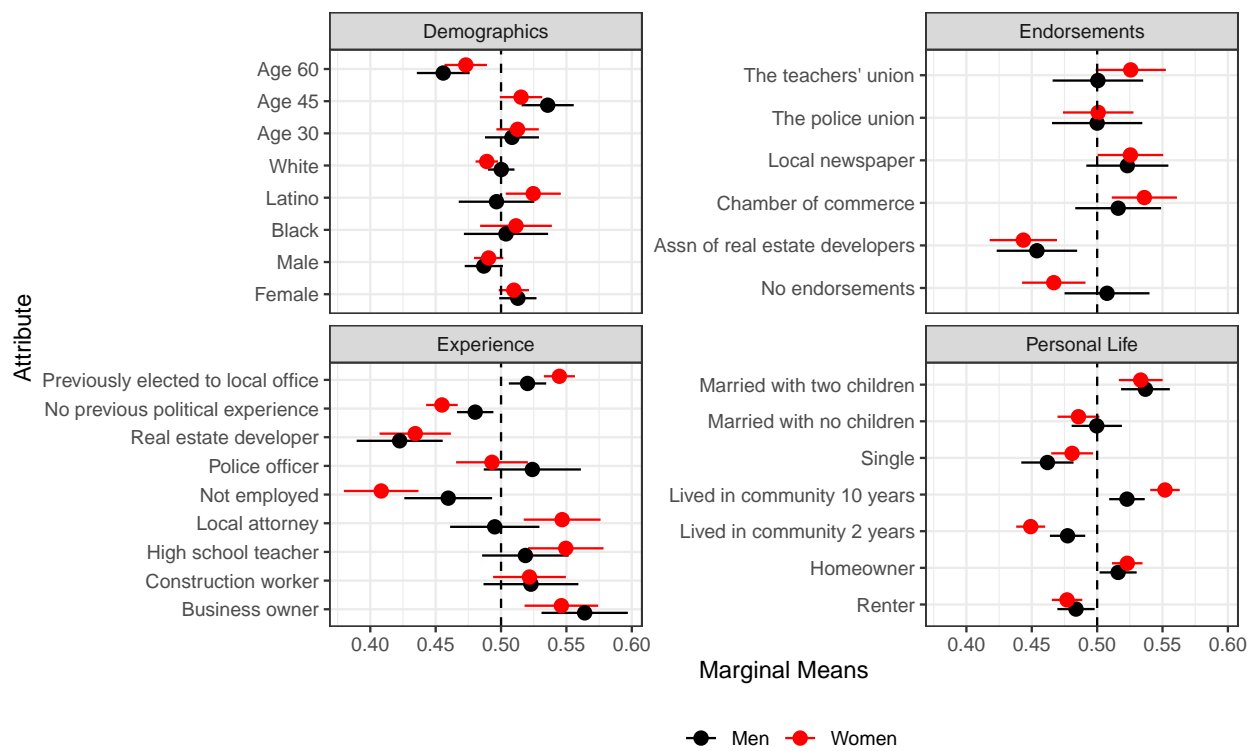


Figure A9: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's race

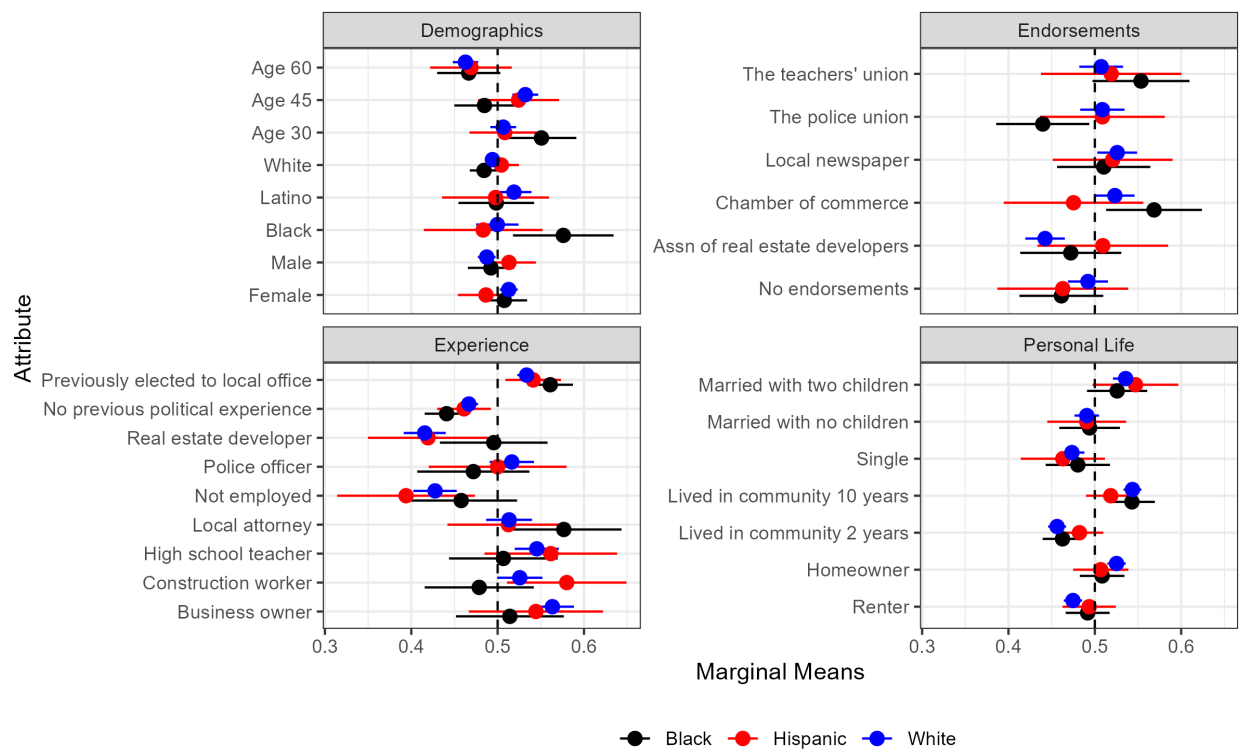


Figure A10: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's place of residence

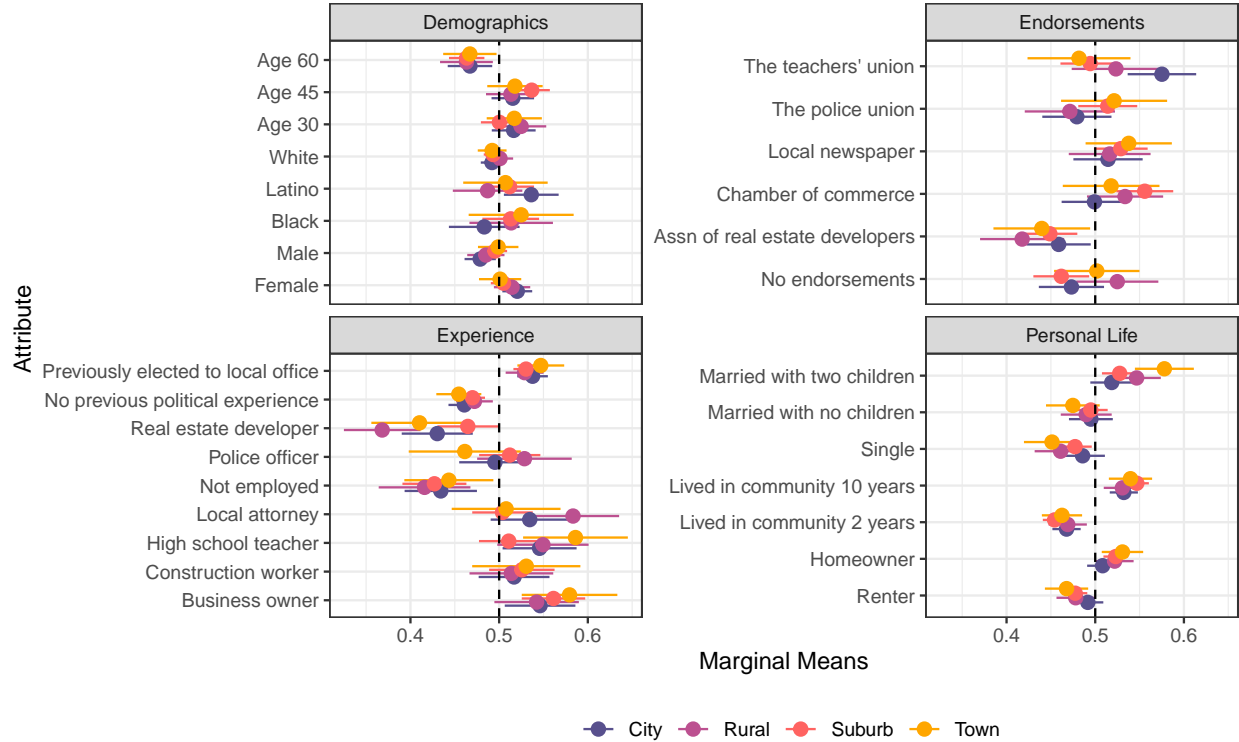


Figure A11: Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's duration of residency

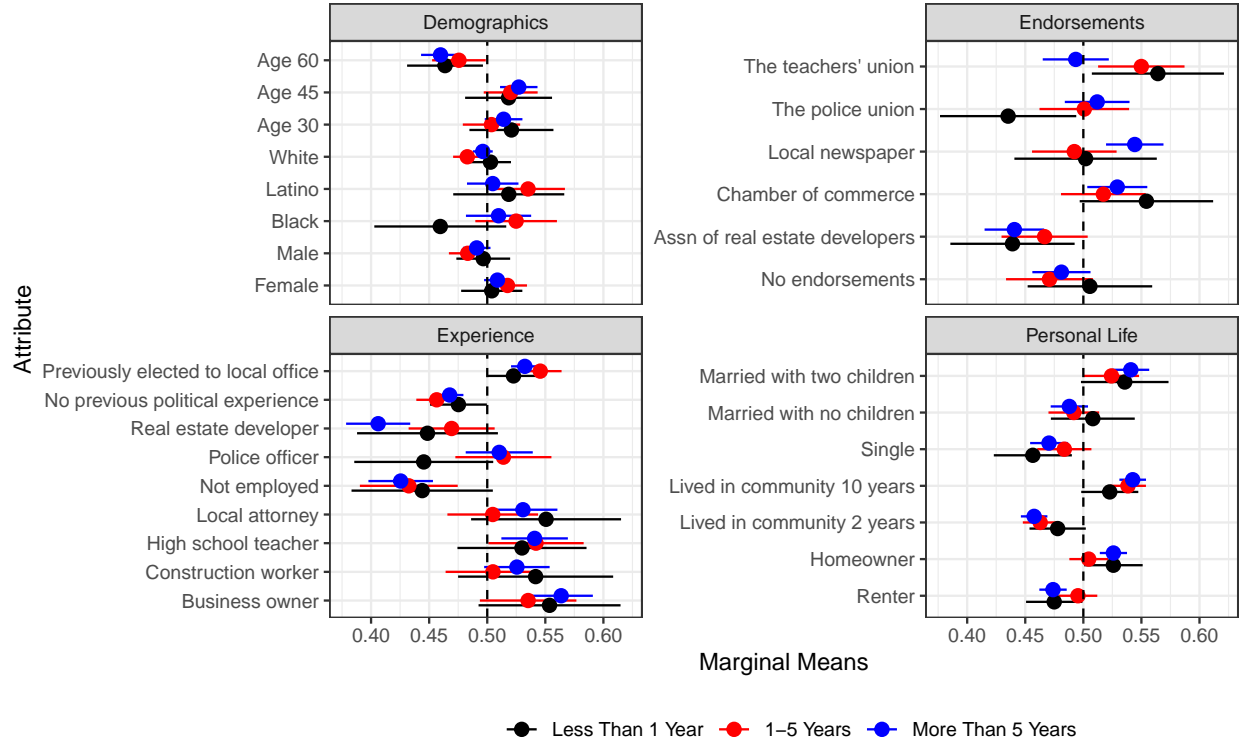


Figure A12: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's party



Figure A13: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's homeownership status

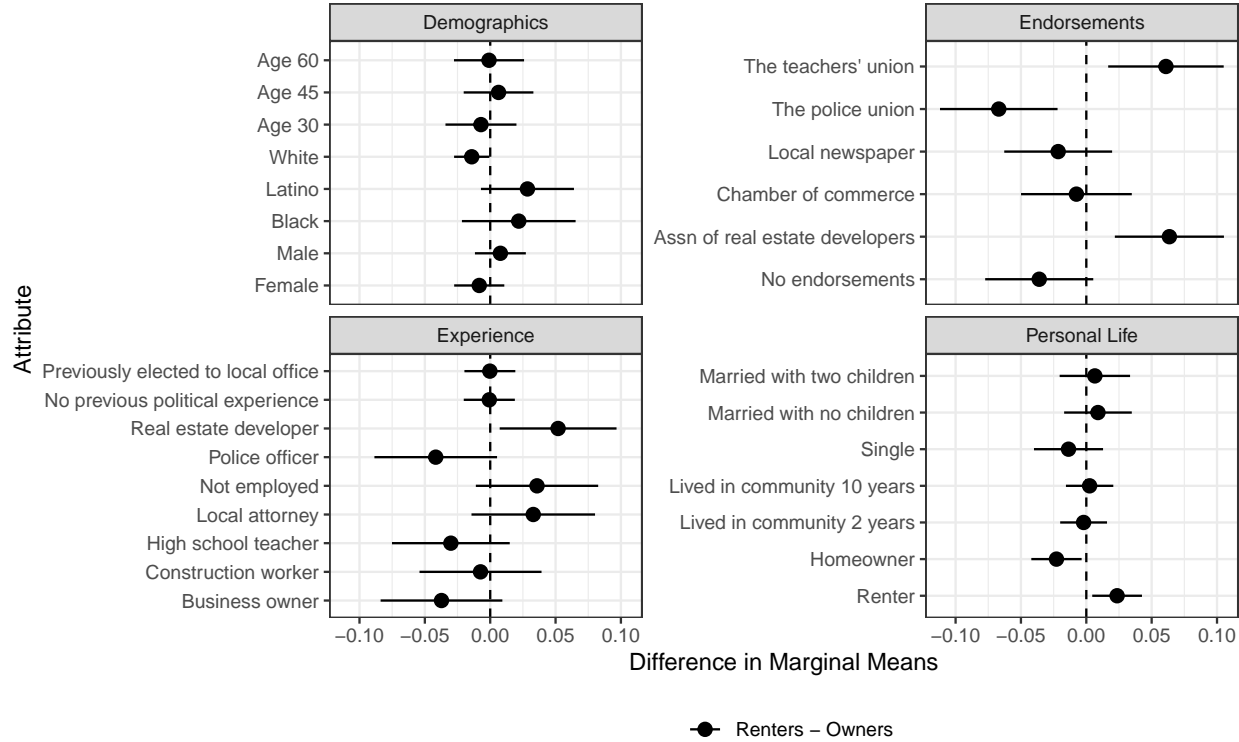


Figure A14: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's gender

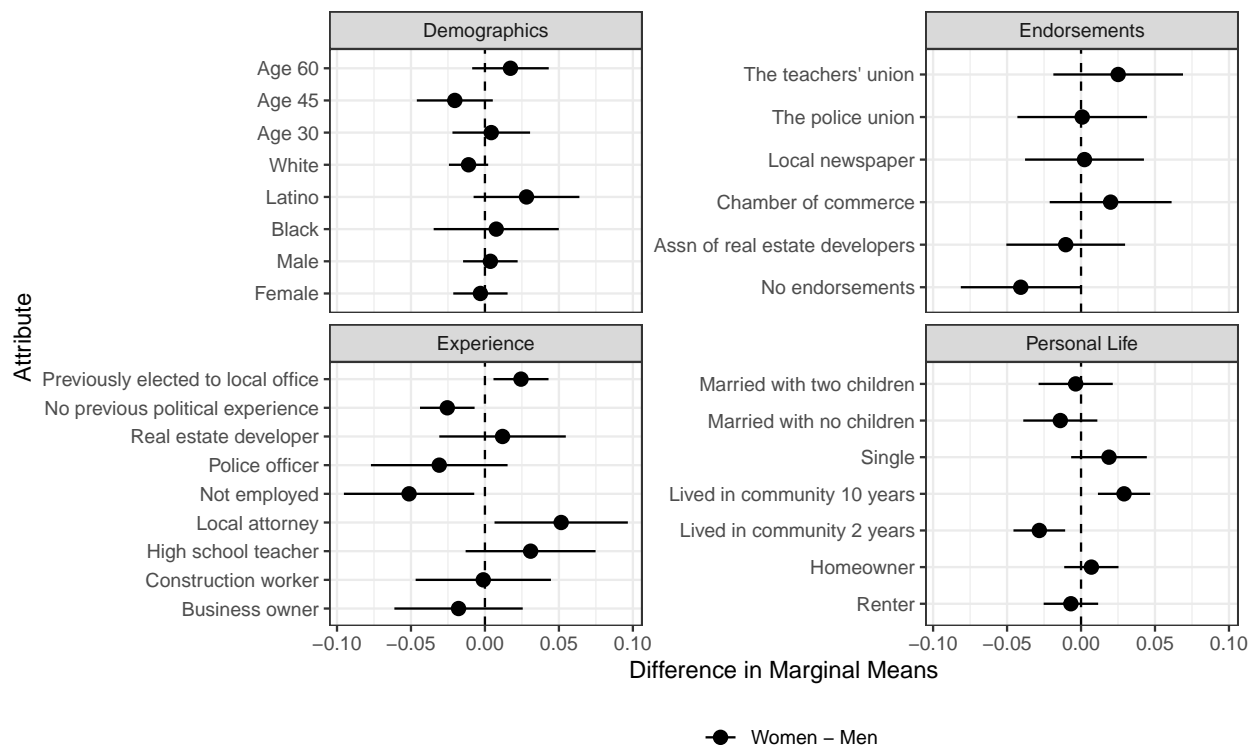


Figure A15: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's race

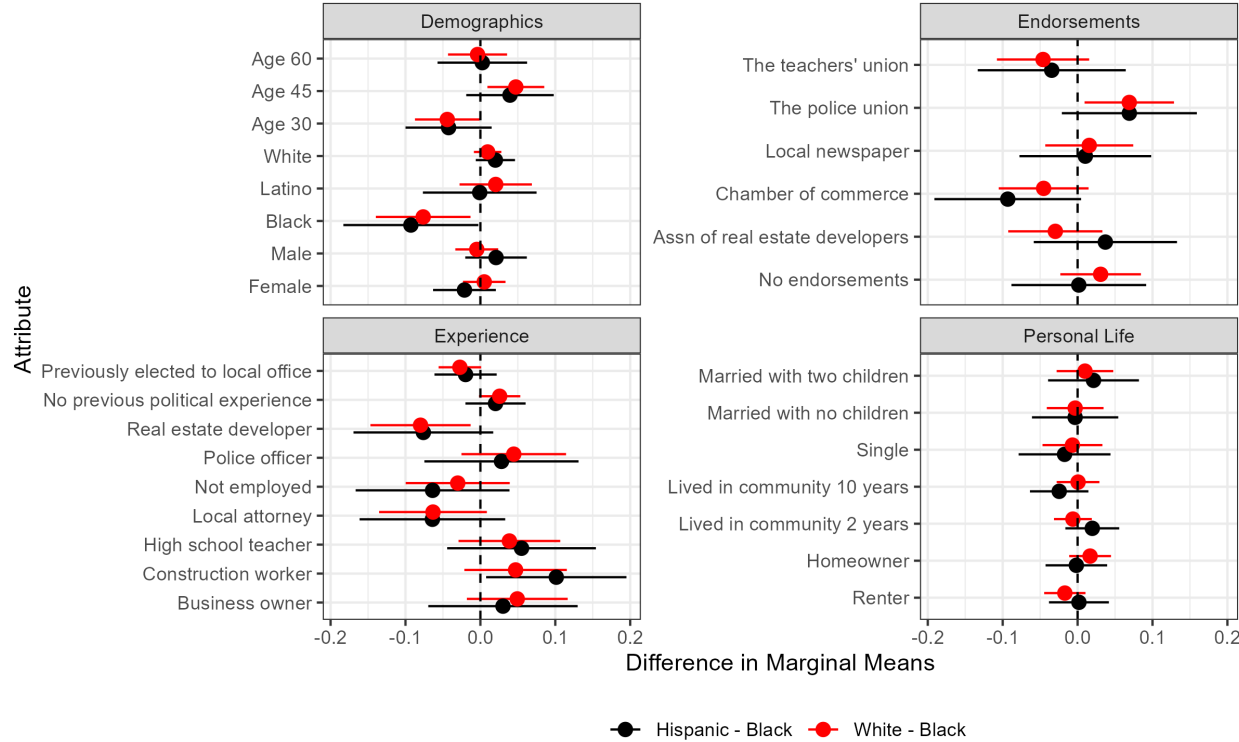


Figure A16: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's place of residence

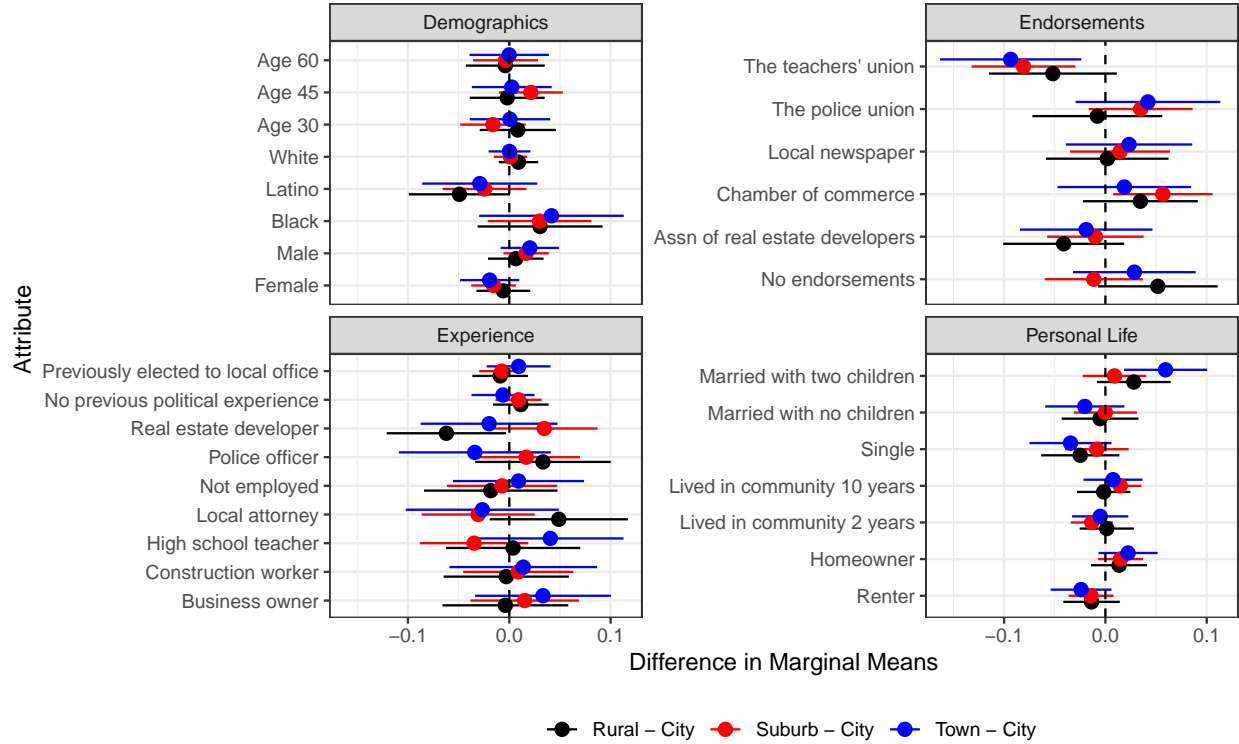
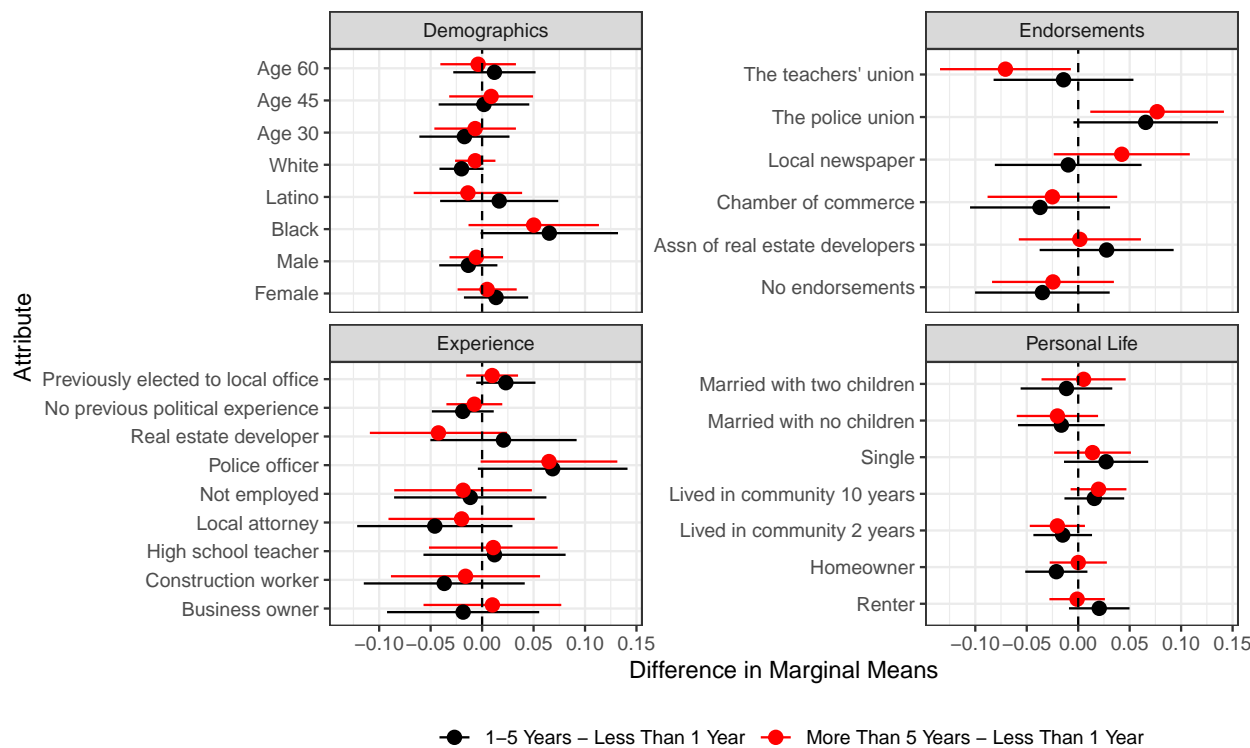


Figure A17: Difference in Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's duration of residency



A.3.3 Average Component Interaction Effects (ACIE)

Figure A18: Average Component Interaction Effects and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's age. Reference categories are Renter and Lived In Community for 2 Years.

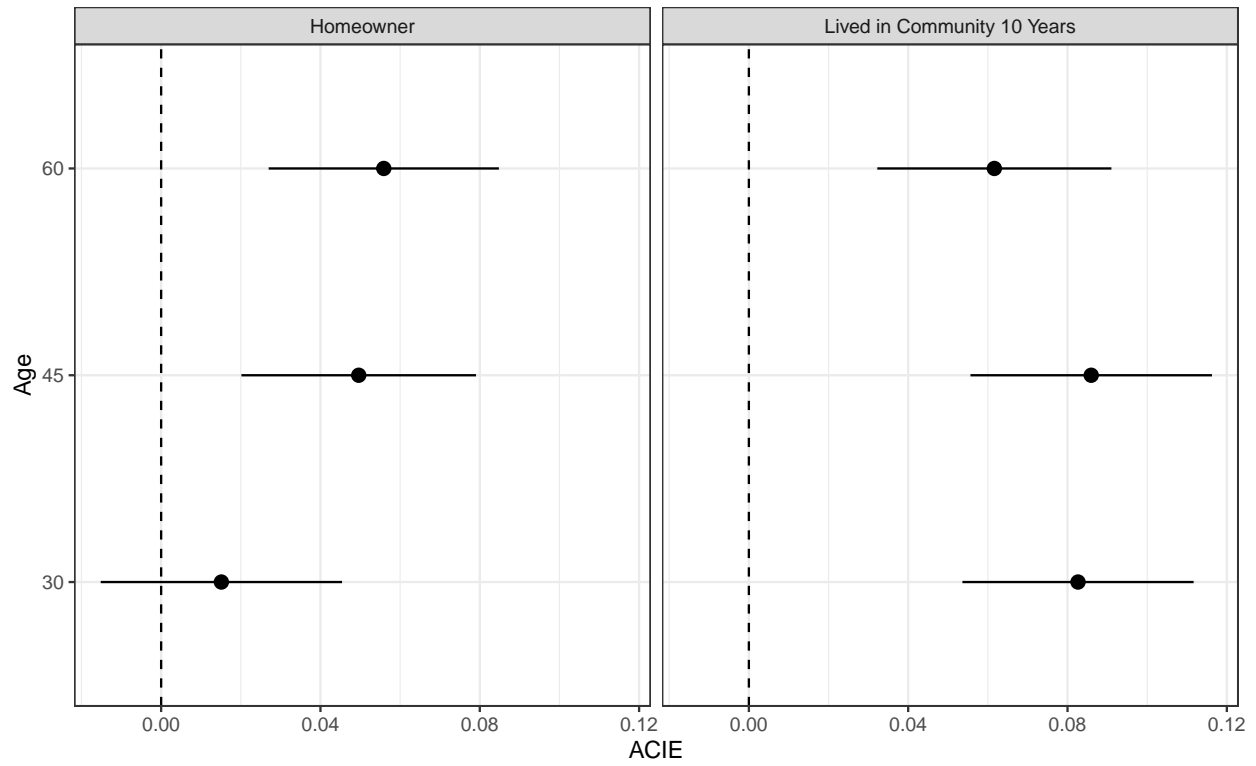
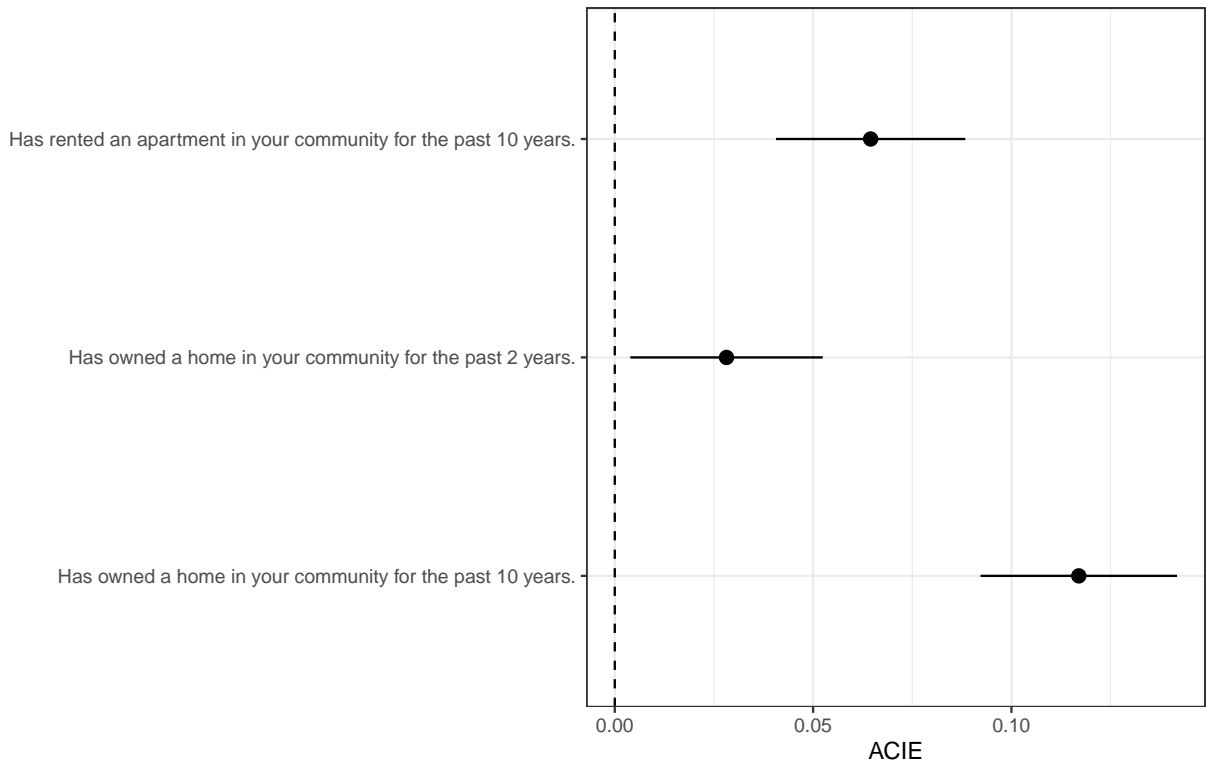


Figure A19: Average Component Interaction Effects and 95% Confidence Intervals for each level of the Community Ties variable. Reference category is “Has rented a home in your community for the past 2 years.”



A.3.4 Results from Nationally Representative Subsample

In the main text, we present results for the full sample of 1,308 CES respondents who were assigned to the conjoint experiment. In this section, we replicate these results for a smaller, nationally representative subsample of 1,000 CES respondents. All marginal means presented below are survey-weighted.

Figure A20: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for Respondents in Nationally Representative Subsample

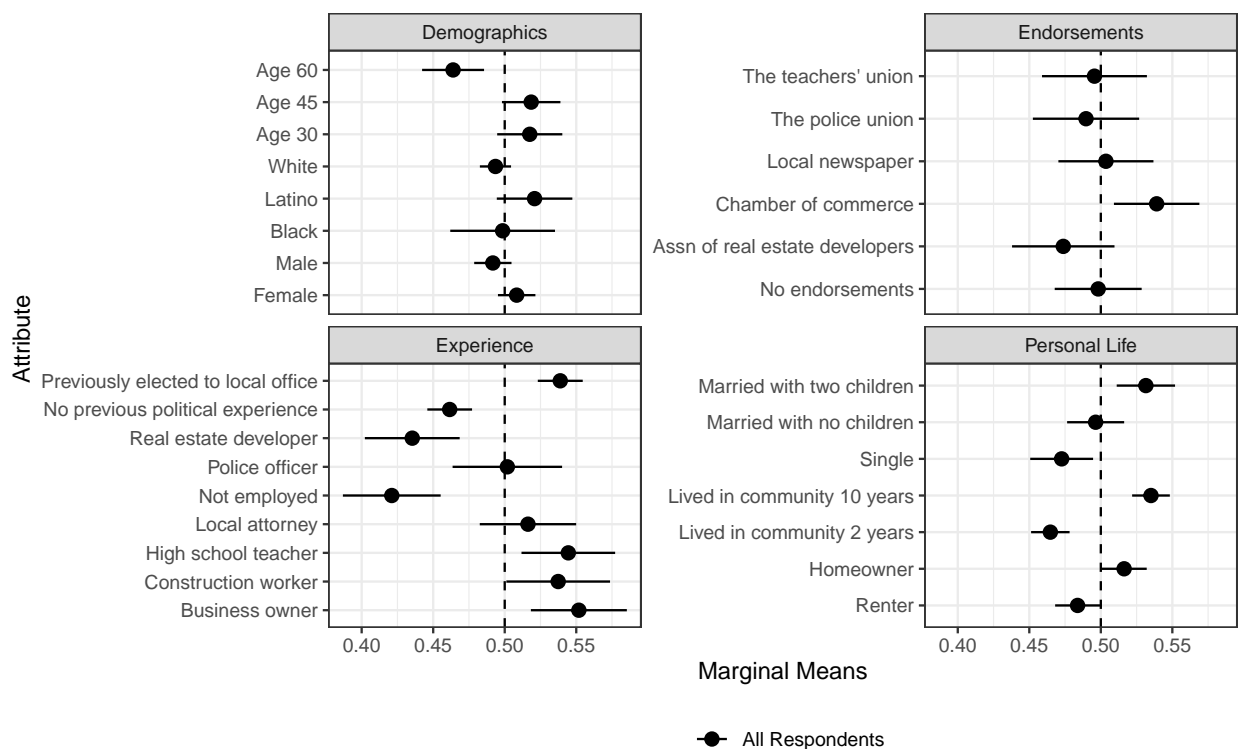


Figure A21: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's party

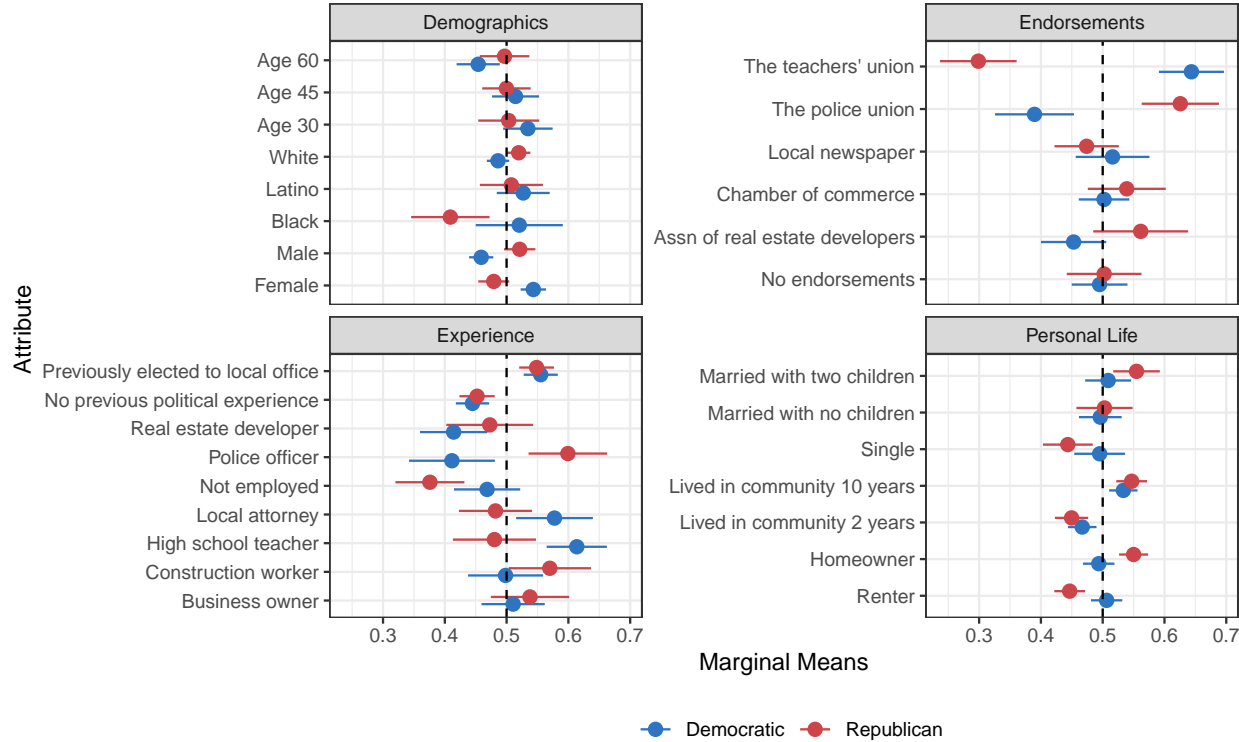


Figure A22: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's homeownership status

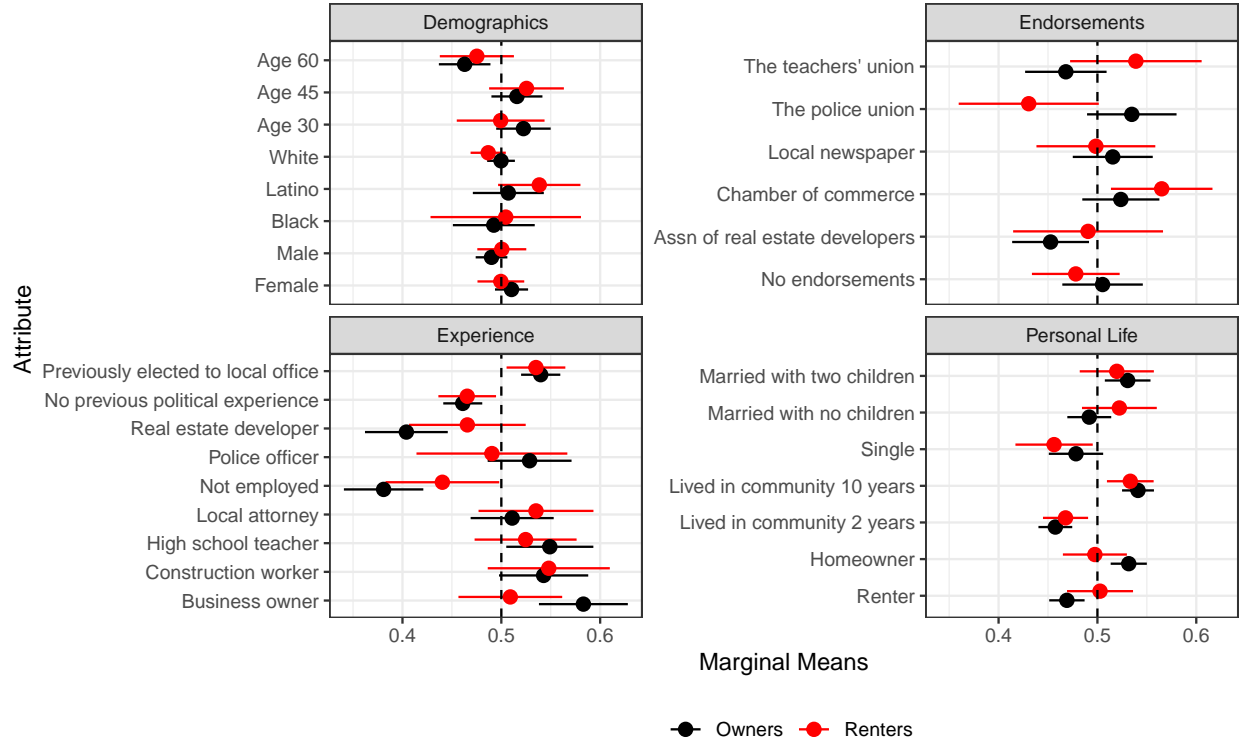


Figure A23: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's gender

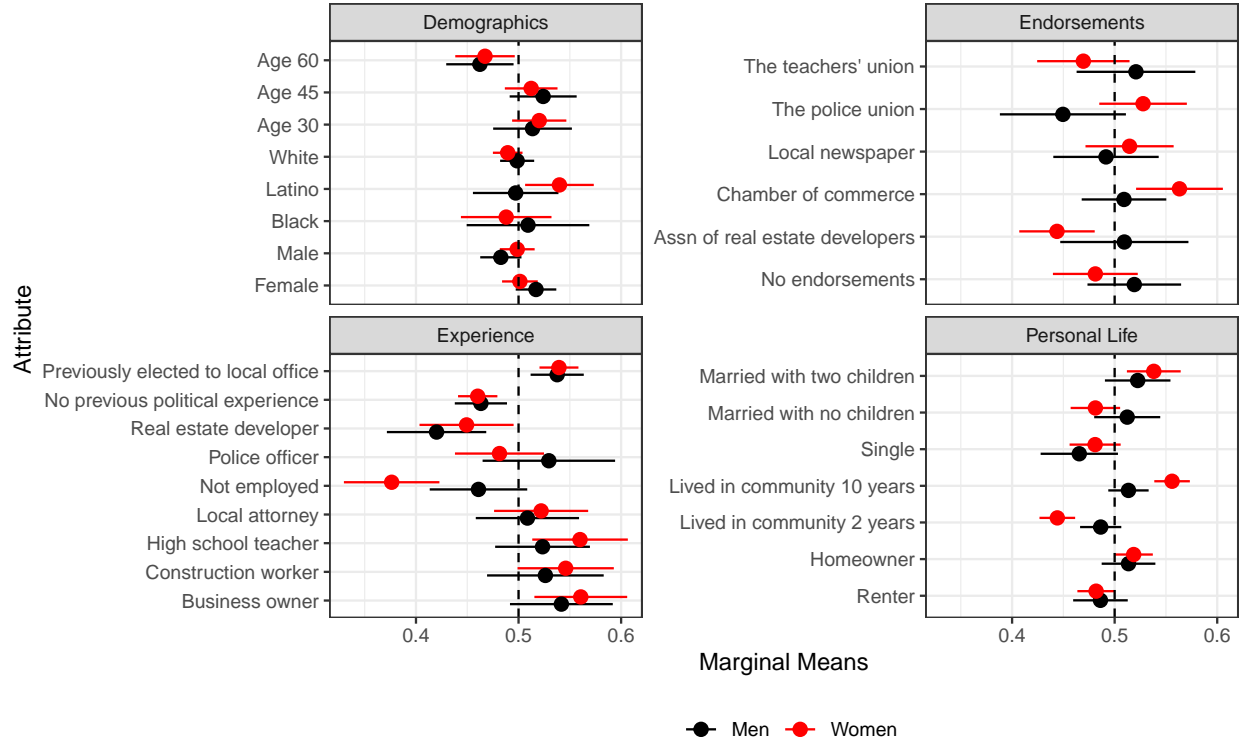


Figure A24: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's race

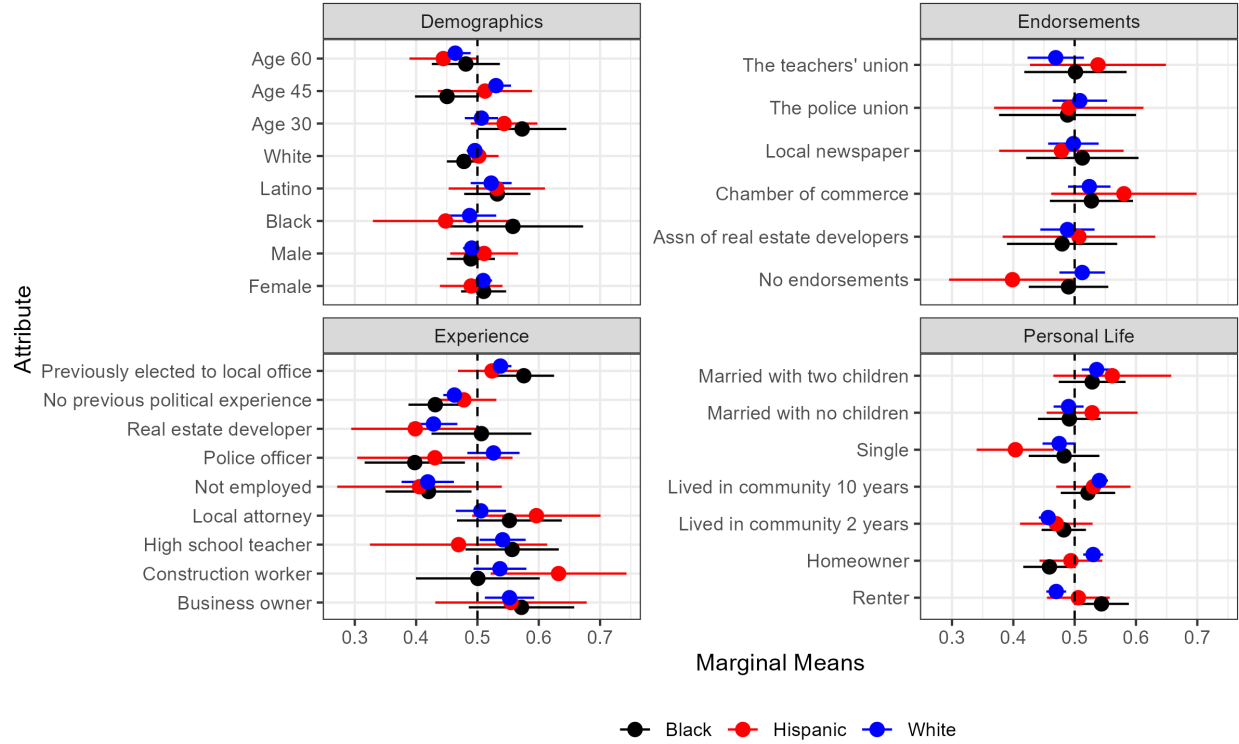


Figure A25: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's place of residence

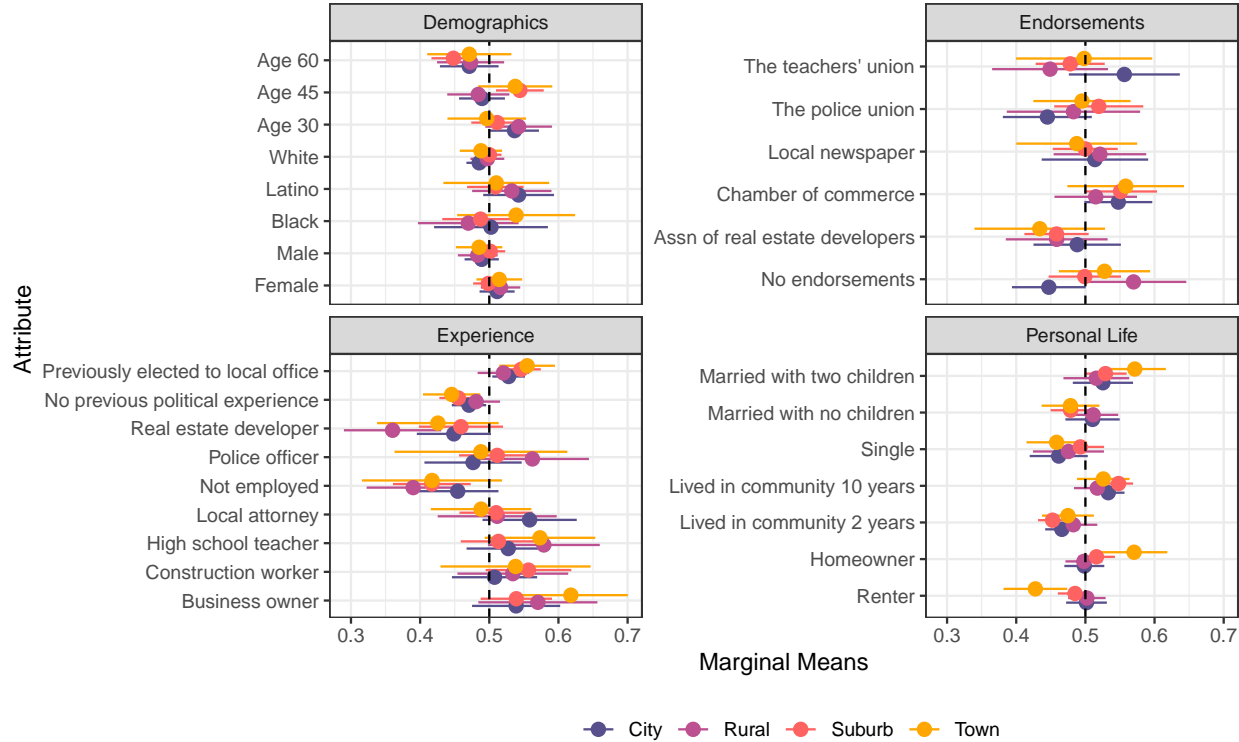


Figure A26: Survey-Weighted Marginal Means and 95% Confidence Intervals by respondent's duration of residency

