Online Appendix

What State Housing Policies Do Voters Want? Evidence from a Platform-Choice Experiment

A Respondent Demographics & Demographic Benchmarks

Table 1: Survey Demographics and Comparison Data from 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

		Survey	U.S. Census	
		Percent	Census Category	Percent
	Male	46.00		49.41
	Homeowner	49.00		63.06
	Has B.A. or Above	37.00		35.83
Age	18-29	10.63		16.70
	30-44	32.88		20.14
	45-64	39.63		24.95
	65 plus	16.87		16.08
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	3.63		6.48
	Black	14.96		13.25
	Hispanic	13.20		21.35
	Multi/Other	5.30		10.43
	White	62.91		54.92
Yearly Income	Less Than $30,000	24.80		19.27
	$30,000 – 39,999	12.15		7.06
	$40,000 – 49,999	9.03		6.98
	$50,000 – 59,999	10.30		6.77
	$60,000 – 69,999	7.06	$60,000 - $74,000	9.01
	$70,000 – 79,999	7.59		
	$80,000 – 89,999	4.56	$75,000 - $99,000	12.61
	$90,000 – 99,999	5.27		
	$100,000 – 109,999	6.22	$100,000 - $124,000	9.87
	$110,000 – 119,999	6.83		
	More than $120,000	6.06	$124,000 or more	28.42
	NA	0.14		
Monthly Housing Costs	Less than $250	11.43	Less than $300	3.85
	$500	11.76	$300 - $499	7.07
	$750	14.47	$500 - $999	22.03
	$1,000	16.85	$1,000 - $1,499	22.57
	$1,500	19.21	$1,500 - $1,999	16.71
	$2,000	11.33	$2,000 - $2,499	10.23
	$2,500	5.99	$2,500 - $2,999	5.94
	$3,000	3.82	$3,000 or more	10.01
	$4,000	2.26		
	$5,000	1.29		
	$7,500	0.53		
	$10,000	0.41		
	$15,000	0.16		
	More than $20,000	0.41		
	NA	0.10	No cash rent	1.58

Table 2: Survey Demographics and Comparison Data from 2022 Cooperative Election Survey.

Category	Survey	CES
Pct. Aged 18 to 29	10.63	21.54
Pct. Aged 30 to 44	32.88	24.60
Pct. Aged 45 to 64	39.63	32.38
Pct. Aged 65 and Above	16.87	21.48
Pct. Democrat	51.29	42.92
Pct. GOP	32.30	36.30
Pct. Other Party	16.41	20.79
Pct. White	62.91	66.33

Pct. Black	14.96	14.16
Pct. Latino	13.20	10.05
Pct. Asian	3.63	5.31
Pct. Other Race	5.30	4.16
Pct. Male	46.00	48.56
Pct. BA or Above	37.00	36.14
Pct. Family Income Less than $30,000	24.80	24.92
Pct. Family Income $30,000-$39,999	12.15	8.90
Pct. Family Income $40,000-$49,999	9.03	7.69
Pct. Family Income $50,000-$59,999	10.30	8.01
Pct. Family Income $60,000-$69,999	7.06	5.78
Pct. Family Income $70,000-$79,999	7.59	6.66
Pct. Family Income $80,000-$89,999	4.56	7.86
Pct. Family Income $100,000-$119,999	13.05	5.94
Pct. Family Income $120,000 and Above	6.06	24.23

B Free-Text and Closed-Form Measurement of the Housing "Issue Public"

We classify respondents as belonging (or not) to a self-identified housing "issue public" (Ryan and Ehlinger, 2023) in two ways. For the closed-form measure, we use responses to the survey question that instructed, "Considering just the following issues in {state name} today, choose up to three that you care about the most." The response options, presented in random order, were: "Cost of housing," "Abortion," "Availability of jobs," "Inflation," "Crime," "Education," "Environment," "Taxes," "Health care," "Immigration," "Racism," "Homelessness," and "I don't care about any of these issues." Respondents are deemed to belong to the housing issue public (closed-form) if and only if "Cost of housing" was one of their responses. Figure B.1 shows the distribution of responses in the full sample, and Figure B.2 provides a disaggregation by tenure.

Prior to the closed-form issue importance question, we gave respondents a free-text question adapted from Ryan and Ehlinger (2023). Approximately 67 percent of respondents affirmed that, thinking about problems in their state today, there is a "political issue that they care about more than most other issues." Those who did were asked to describe it "in a short phrase or a sentence or two."

Unsure of what we would receive, we did not commit in our pre-analysis plan to a specific routine for classifying answers to this free-text question. Instead, we downloaded and read the first 200 non-empty responses, and on this basis developed a codebook (Table B) with categories that roughly match the "choose up to three" closed-form question.

Based on our hand-coding of the first 200 entries, we developed a trial "bag of words" classifier each category. We also asked ChatGPT to code a sample of responses, and it proposed a somewhat different bag-of-words classifier. Next, we exported a random subset ($N = 200$) of the remaining responses, and coded them 5 different ways: (1) Elmendorf hand coding, using the codebook; (2) Nall hand coding, using the codebook; Oklobdzija hand coding, using the codebook; (4) automated coding in R, using our original bag-of-words classifier; (5) automated coding in R, using a modified bag-of-words classifier that included ChatGPT suggestions with which we agreed. We then calculated intercoder reliability (Cohen's kappa) for each pair of coders (whether human or automated) and each priority issue. On the housing issue, intercoder reliability between human pairs averaged 0.93, dropping to 0.81 and 0.82 for human-machine pairs. We then constructed the final bag-of-words classifier by choosing (as between the two machine algorithms), for each issue, the bag of words that had the highest average intercoder reliability with the human coders on that issue. The resulting classifier named a respondent as belonging to the housing issue public if their free-text response

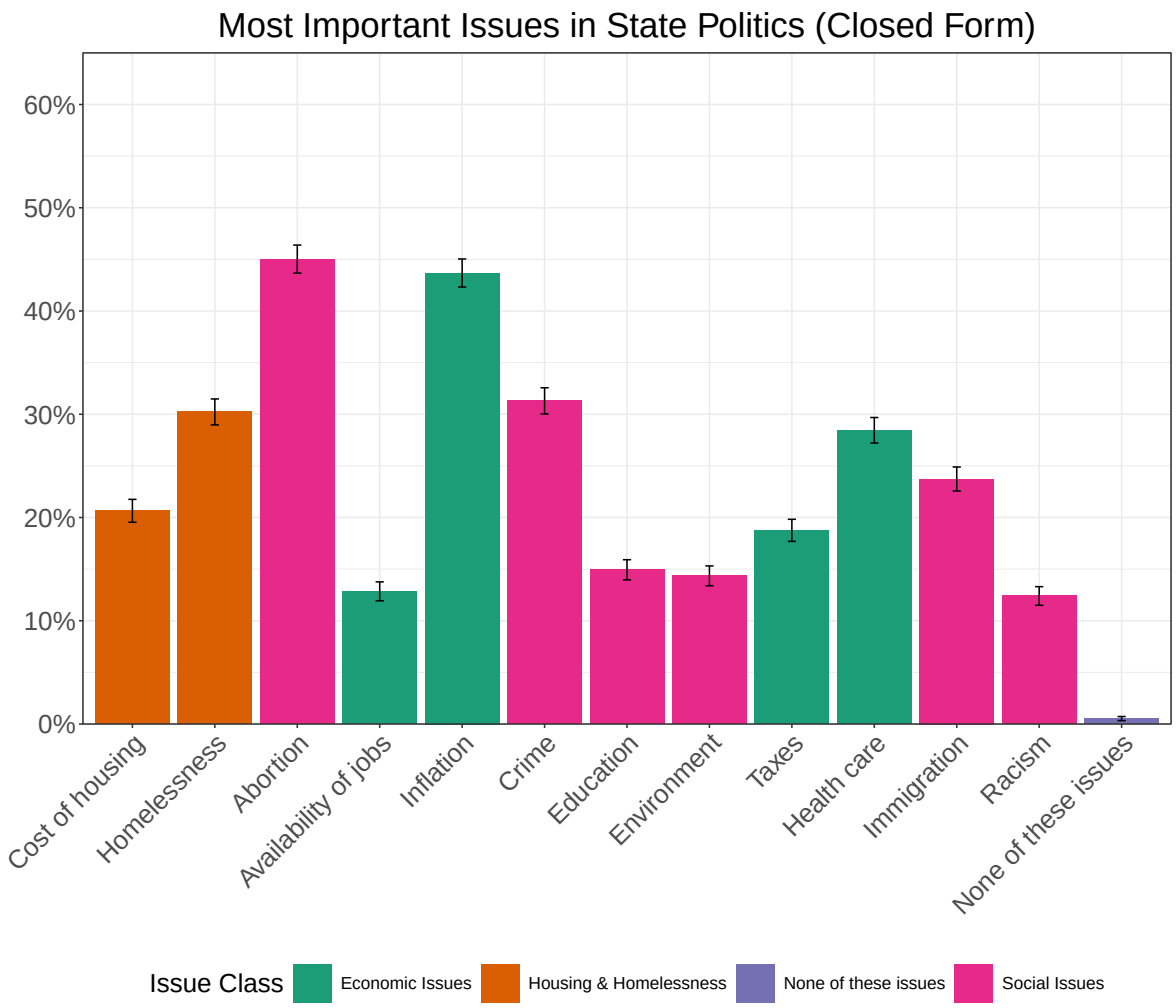

Figure B.1: Distribution of responses to closed-form question about the most important issues in the respondent's state.

included one or more of the following words or word fragments: "hous," "rent," "homes," "property tax."

Table 3: Codebook for Free-Text Most Important Issue Question

Issue Category	Coding Instruction
Cost of housing	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the high cost or difficulty of affording rent, mortgage payments, the price of a new house, property taxes, home insurance or other costs of shelter.
Abortion	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to abortion services, restrictions on abortion rights, problems of too many abortions, or another topic about abortion.
Availability or quality of jobs	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about employment opportunities, working conditions, or wages.

Inflation	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the rising cost of goods and services generally, or about the rising cost of two or more types of goods or services. (Do not choose this category if the respondent complained about the price of just one type of good or service.)
Crime	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about crime, social disorder, illegal drugs, violence, etc. Statements demanding "gun control" are also coded in this category.
Education	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to education, quality of education, cost of education, or content of education—anything from college debt to complaints about "woke" instruction.
Environment	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about nature, climate change, global warming, endangered species, pollution, etc.
Taxes	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about reducing or increasing taxes.
Health care	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to health care, quality of care, cost of health care, etc.
Immigration	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about immigration, border walls, visas, sanctuary cities, or another topic bearing on whether persons who were not born in the United States are able to live or work here.
Racism	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about racial justice, discrimination, reparations for slavery or past discrimination, race relations, or bias against any group defined by race or ethnicity (including whites). Explicitly racist statements are also coded in this category, as expressions of concern about race relations.
Homelessness	Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the homeless, people camping on streets/sidewalks, or non-criminal behaviors by people who are commonly thought to be homeless (e.g., panhandling, sleeping on park benches, urinating in public, leaving trash behind). Do not assign responses to this category if the respondent wrote about the cost or affordability of housing without mentioning homelessness.
Other	Choose this category if the respondent named a political issue that doesn't fit into any of the above categories. (Generic statements about the economy should be coded as "other" b/c we can't infer from them whether the respondent is concerned about inflation, jobs or something else.)
None	Choose this category if the respondent wrote that there isn't a political issue that they care about more than most others.
Nonresponsive	Choose this category if the respondent gave a nonresponsive or flippant answer, e.g., a a string of gibberish or "what I ate for breakfast"

The overarching coding instruction was: "Using your best judgment, assign each entry in the field, $imp.open.text, to up to three of the following categories. If the respondent named more than three issues, encode just the first three."

Figures B.3 and B.4 display the upshot of our coding of the free-text question about whether any political issue in the state is especially important to the respondent. The most commonly mentioned issue was immigration (about 9% of respondents). Housing, homelessness, inflation and crime come next, each mentioned by about 6% of respondents. As Figure B.4 shows, tenants flagged housing almost twice as frequently as homeowners did, while homeowners were relatively more likely to mention immigration or taxes.

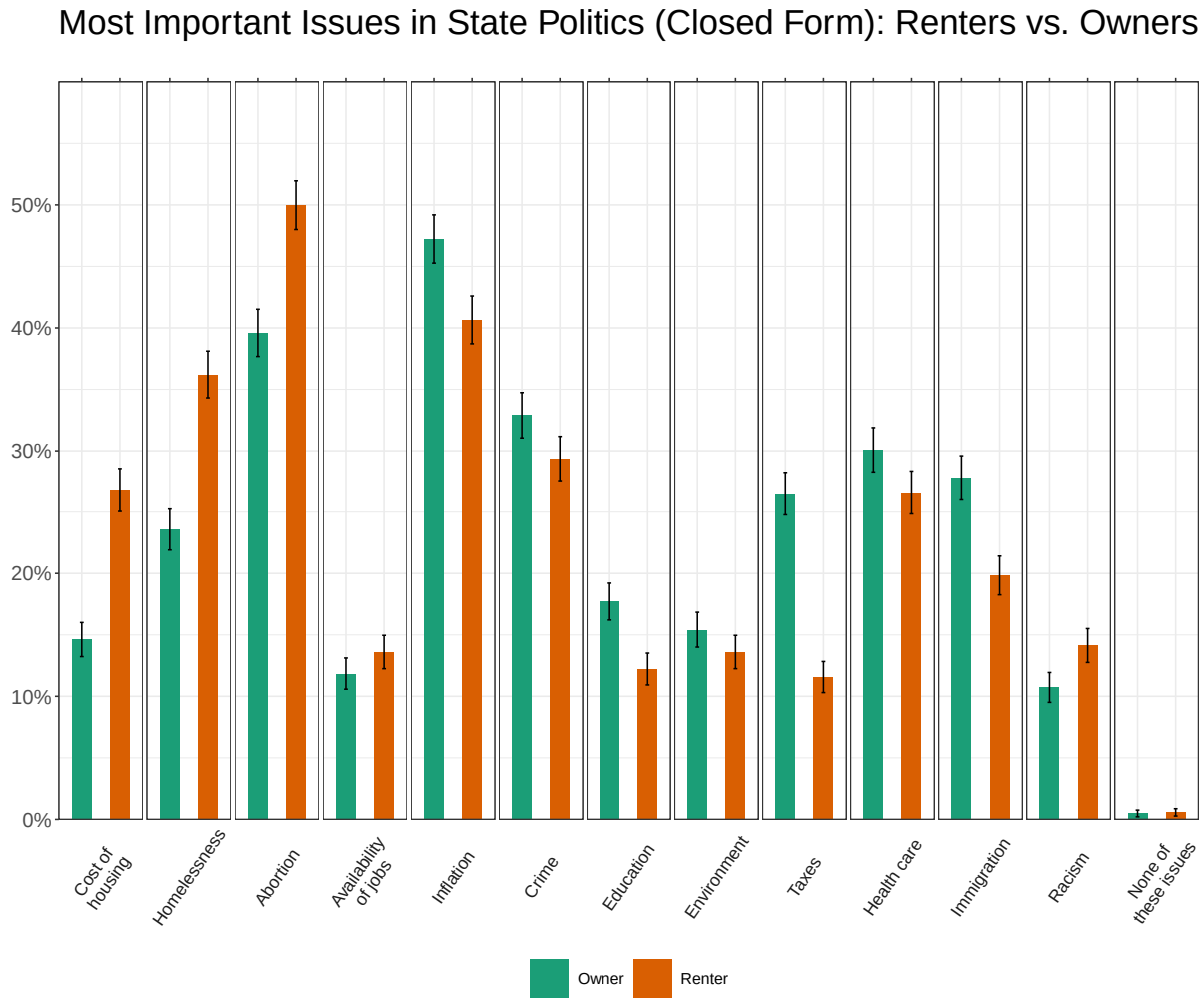

Figure B.2: Distribution of responses to closed-form question about the most important issues in the respondent's state, by tenure.

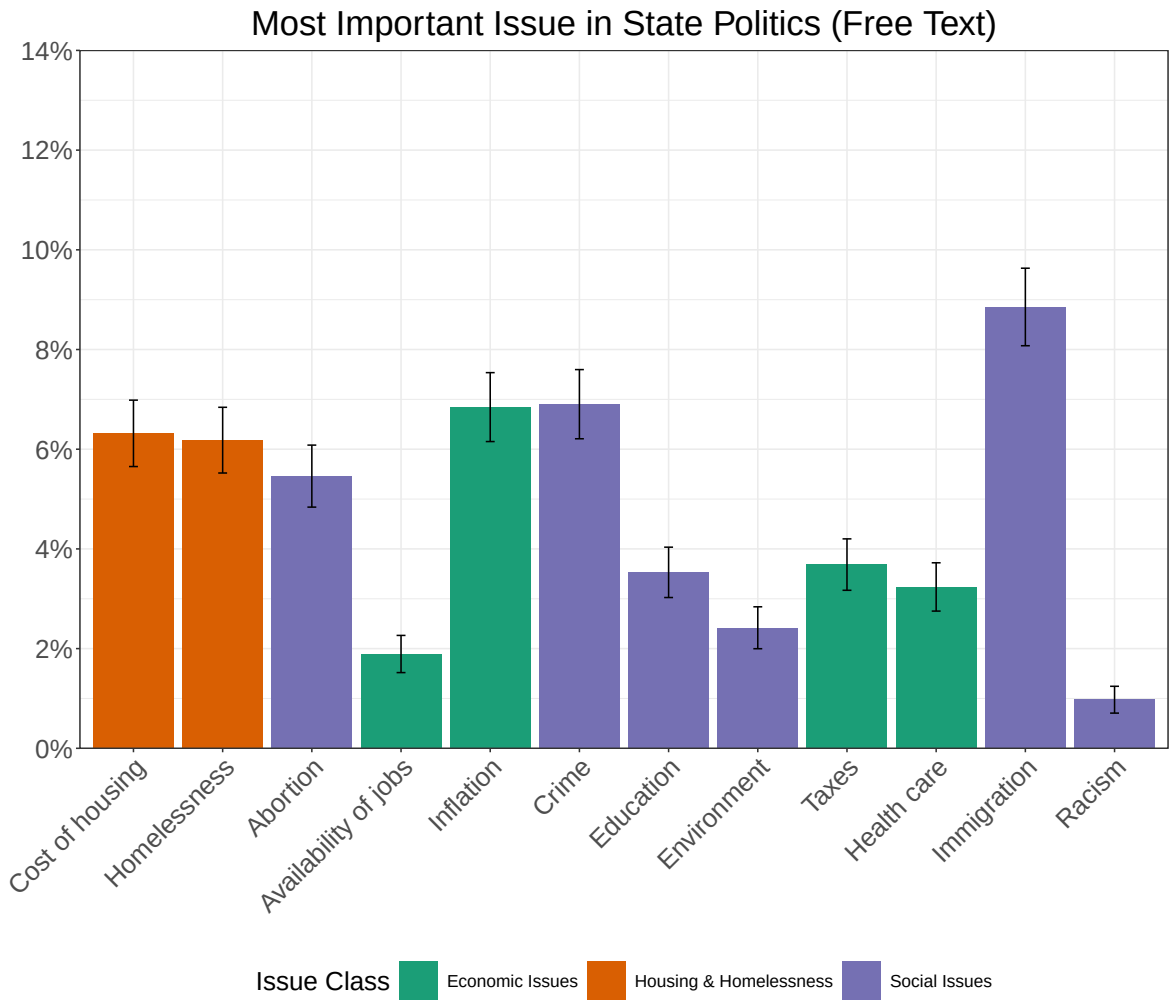

Figure B.3: Proportion of respondents classified as belonging to topical "issue publics," per responses to free-text question about whether there is an issue in state politics that's especially important to them.

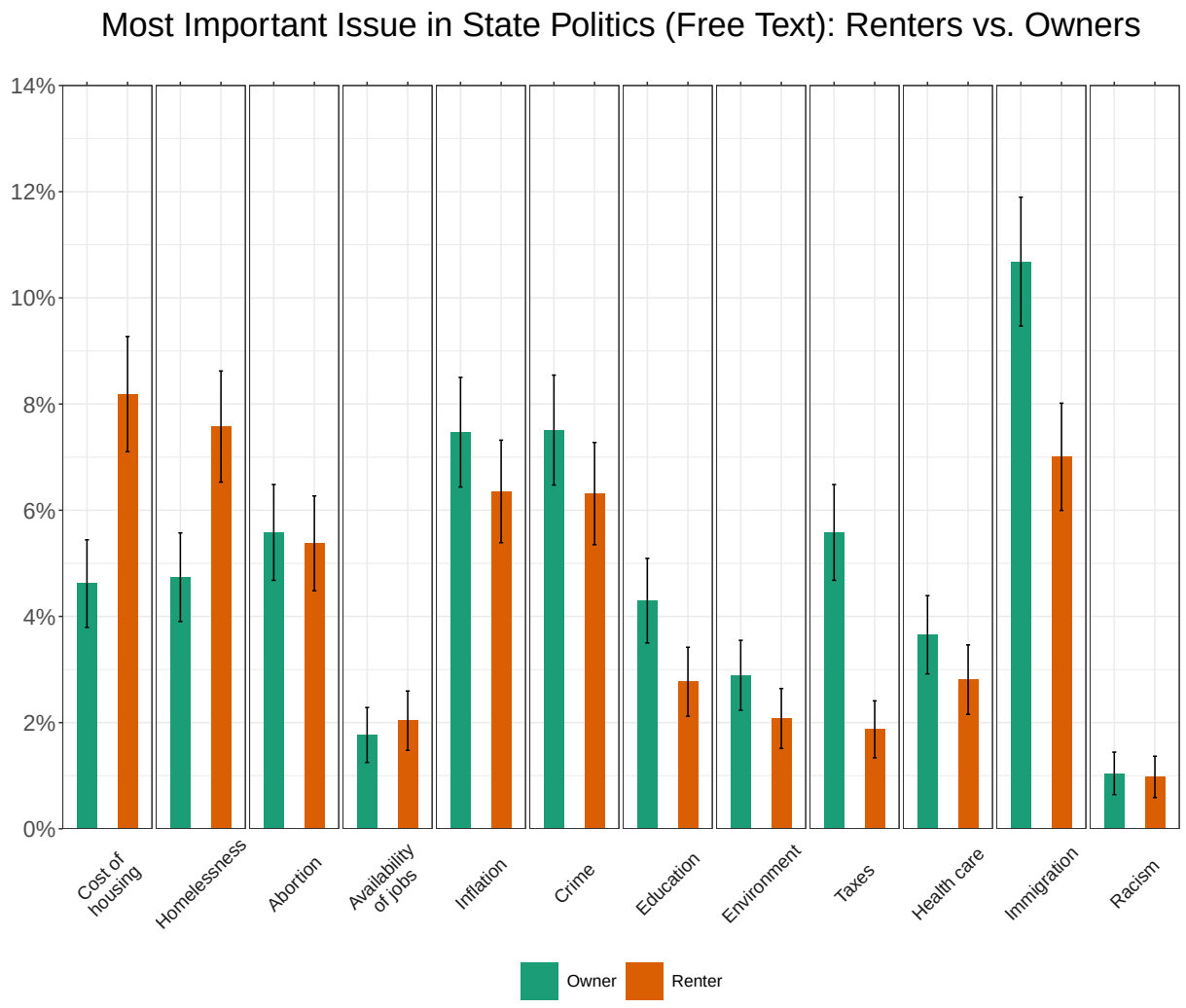

Figure B.4: Proportion of respondents, by tenure, classified as belonging to topical "issue publics," per responses to free-text question about whether there is an issue in state politics that's especially important to them.

C Subgroup Results

As noted, our preanalysis plan calls for reporting of subgroup results by tenure (renter vs. homeowner), stated desire for future home prices and rents in one's city (lower vs. not lower), party identification (Democrat vs. Republican), and classification as member of the housing issue public. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 in the main paper show Renter vs. Owner and Democrat vs. Republican differences on perceived efficacy and support for housing policies. Figure 4.4 shows how support for each housing policy correlates with the two issue-public measures (free-text and closed-form), as well as tenure and party identification.

In this section of the SI, we provide additional graphical results for the subgroups specified in the preanalysis plan.

C.1 Perceived Efficacy and Support

The differences between people who want lower housing prices and people who don't (Figure C.1) generally resemble the difference between renters and owners (Figure 4.2). Relative to people who don't, respondents who want lower prices are exceptionally optimistic about the effectiveness of rent control for "helping people in {state name} get housing they can afford," and exceptionally pessimistic about the effectiveness of market-rate housing development vis-a-vis the same end. People who want lower prices are also exceptionally supportive of below-market-rate infill development and renter tax breaks, relative to people who want prices to stay level or go up.

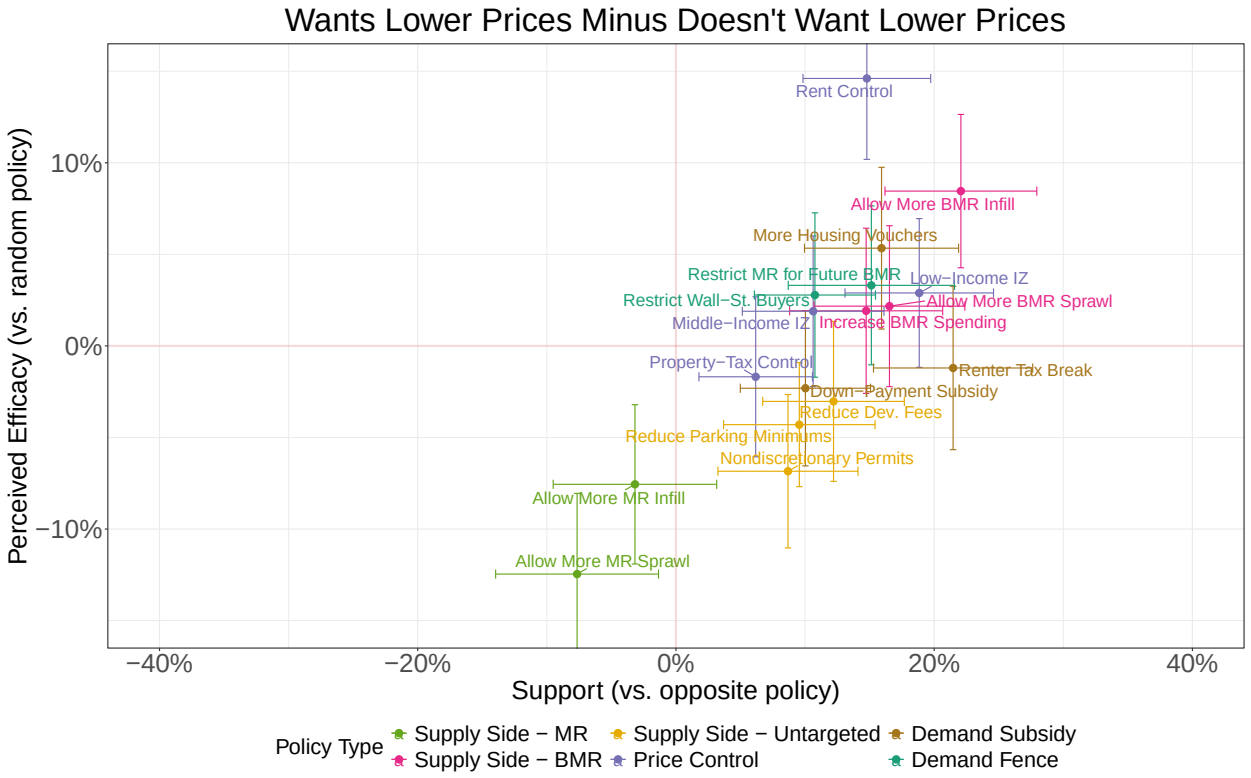

Figure C.1: Differences in relative perceived efficacy and overall support for posited solutions for housing unaffordability, comparing people who say they want home prices and rents in their city to be lower in the future to people who say they want prices to stay the same or be higher.

Distinctions between the housing "issue public" and the rest of the sample are more muddled (Figures C.2 and C.3), as one would expect given the very small correlations between either classification and housing policy preferences per Figure 4.4. People who listed the cost of housing as a top-3 issue are somewhat more optimistic about the effectiveness of rent control and restrictions on Wall Street buyers, and somewhat less optimistic about the effectiveness of property-tax controls and allowing more market-rate development, relative to people who did not. The top-3 housers are also a little more supportive of rent control.

There is marginally more variation between "housing issue public" and other respondents when one uses the free-text answers to identify housing issue-public members (Figure C.3). People who volunteered housing as their top concern are somewhat more supportive of renter vouchers, renter tax breaks, and more government spending on subsidized affordable housing. They are also, if anything, slightly less supportive of market-rate housing development than other respondents, although the differences are statistically indistinguishable from zero.

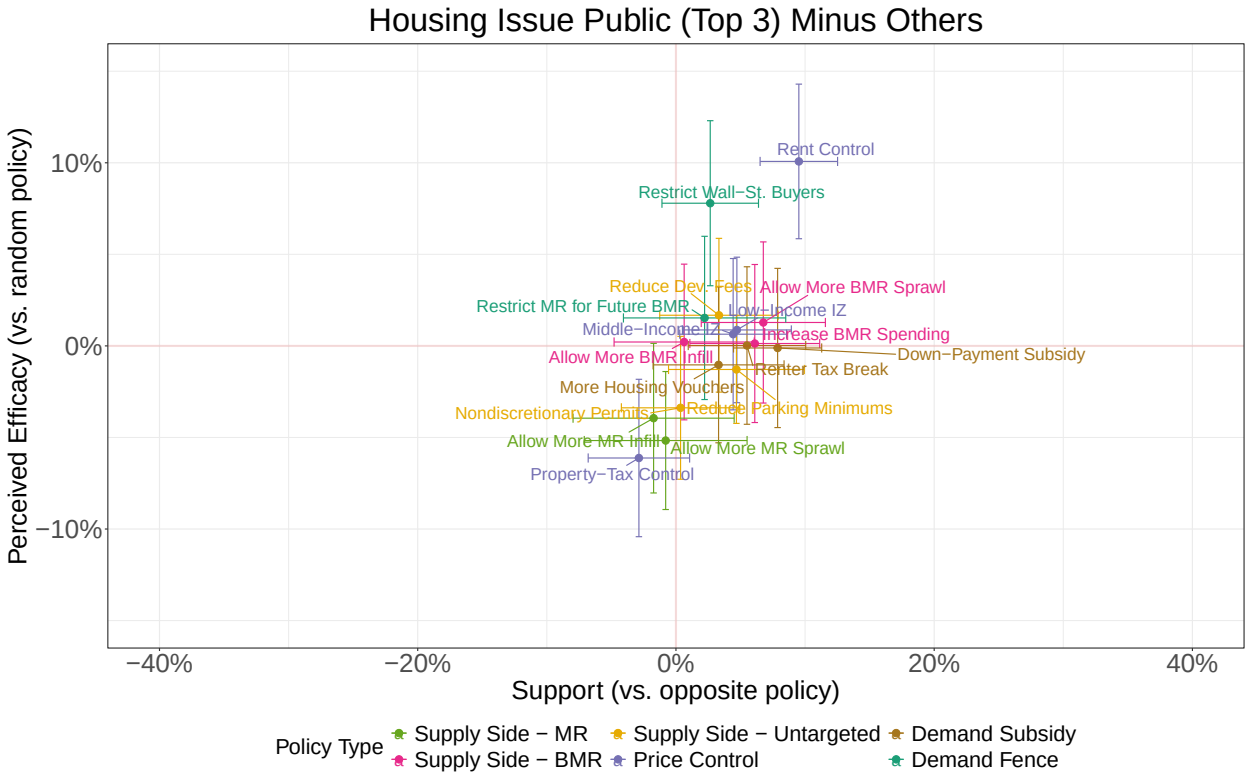

Figure C.2: Differences in relative perceived efficacy and overall support for posited solutions for housing unaffordability, comparing people who listed "Cost of housing" as a top-3 concern in state politics to all other respondents.

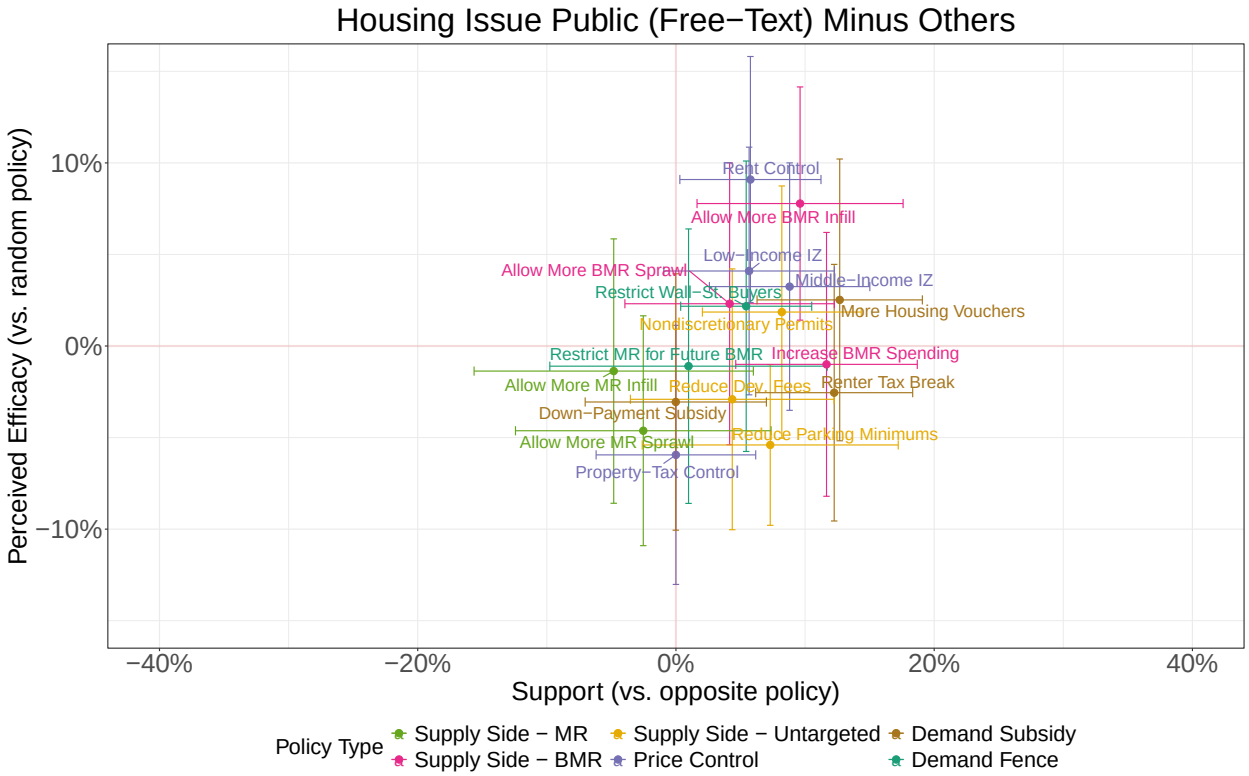

Figure C.3: Differences in relative perceived efficacy and overall support for posited solutions for housing unaffordability, comparing people who were classified as a member of the housing "issue public" per the free-text most-important-problem question to all other respondents.

C.2 Revealed Issue Importance and Support

Figure C.4 plots revealed issue importance (y axis) and support (x axis) for the 39 policy issues in our study, using data from the full sample. Figures C.5, C.6, C.7, C.8, and C.9 provide show differences in average support and average importance for each subgroup split specified in our preanalysis plan. To make the figures less busy, non-housing policies are plotted with a low alpha (saturation).

On balance, we consider these results to be less illuminating than Figure 4.6 in the main text, which compares intensity of preference as between supporters and opponents on each issue, but a few patterns are worth noting. First, as Figure C.4 shows, the high levels of support we observe for most housing policies do not reflect some idiosyncratic tendency of the respondents in our sample to always pick a "Democratic" or "activist government" position. Some of the non-housing policies were highly unpopular. (See also Figure D.1.)

Second, as Figure C.5 shows, renters (relative to homeowners) place more importance on rent control, housing vouchers, and increasing spending on below-market-rate housing, whereas homeowners place more importance on property-tax limits, reducing development fees, and nondiscretionary permitting.

Third, Democrats and Republicans are less polarized on housing policy than on the most hot-button of cultural and economic issues. See Figure C.7 shows. This holds for both "support" and "revealed importance" or preference intensity. Unsurprisingly, Democrats place somewhat more importance on increasing spending on housing subsidies, while Republicans place somewhat more importance on limiting development fees and property taxes. (However, on quite a few of the nonhousing issues, Democrats and Republicans are not very polarized.)

Finally, as Figures C.8 and C.9, we cannot really distinguish the preferences or revealed-issue-importance judgments of the housing "issue public" (identified with either the closed-form or the free-text question) from everyone else.

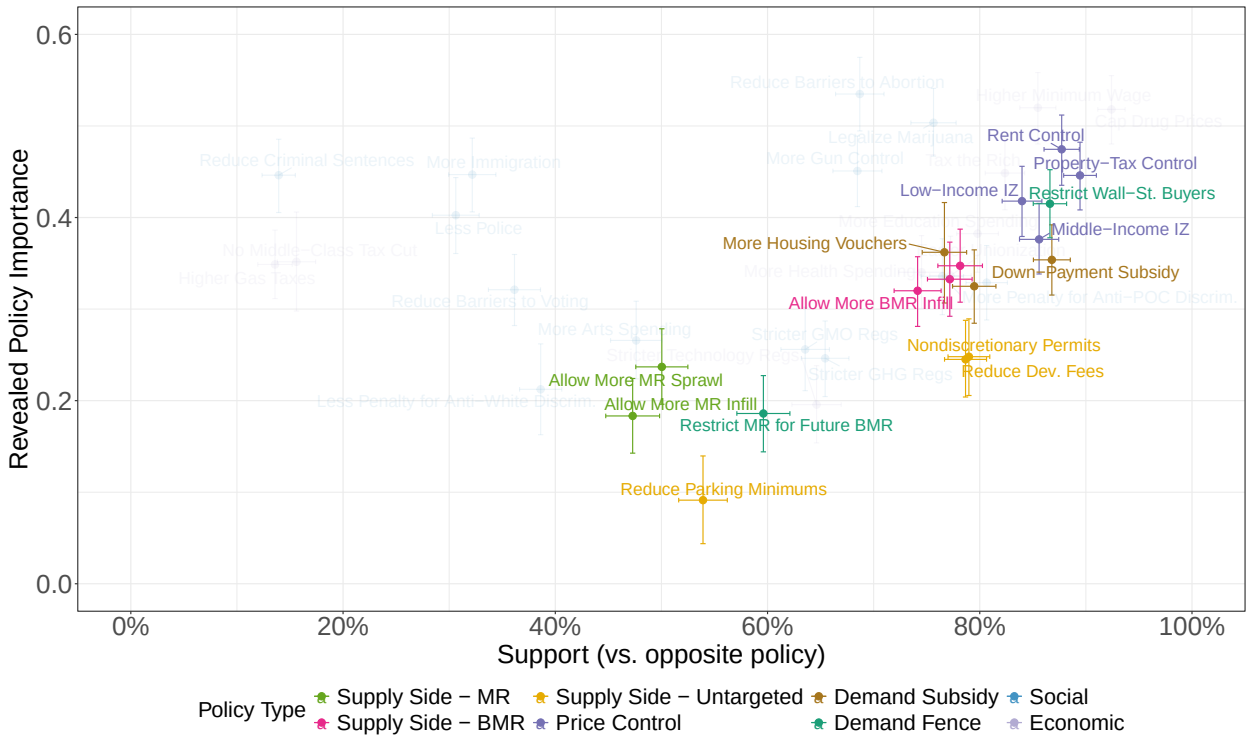

Figure C.4: Policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, in full sample.

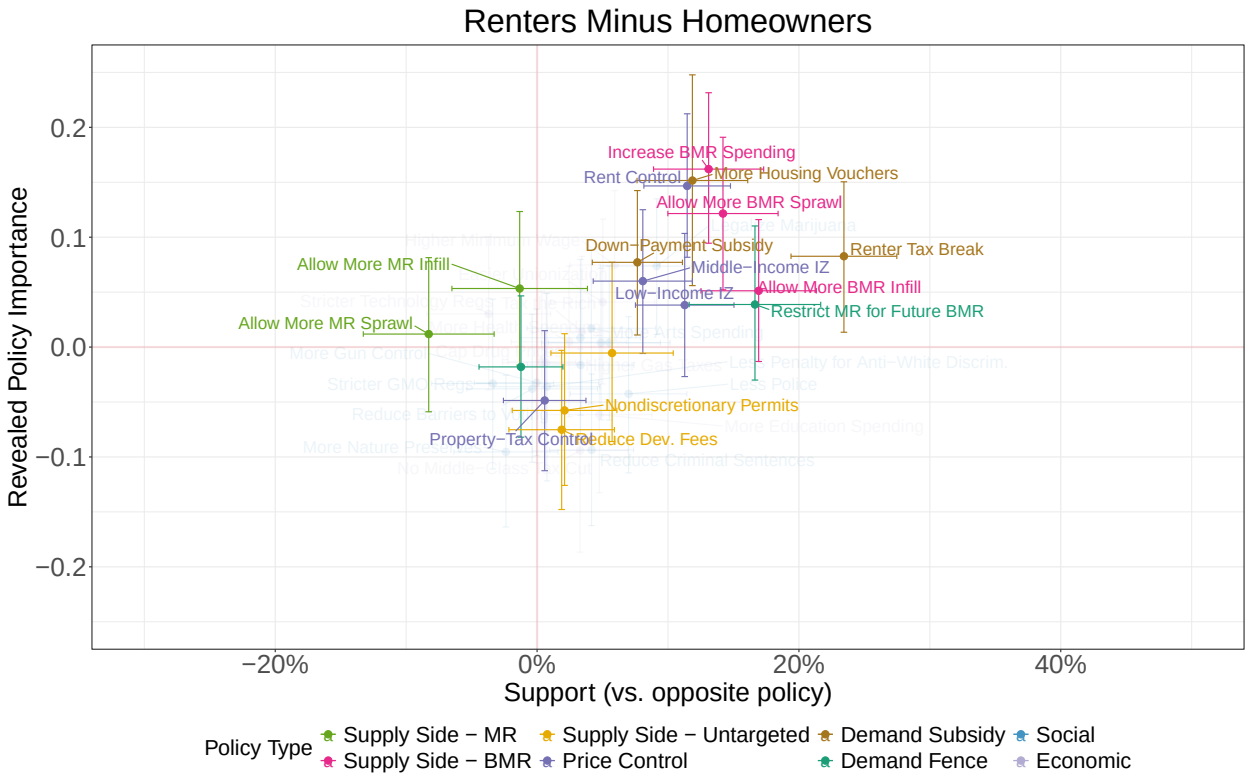

Figure C.5: Difference in policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, as between tenants and homeowners.

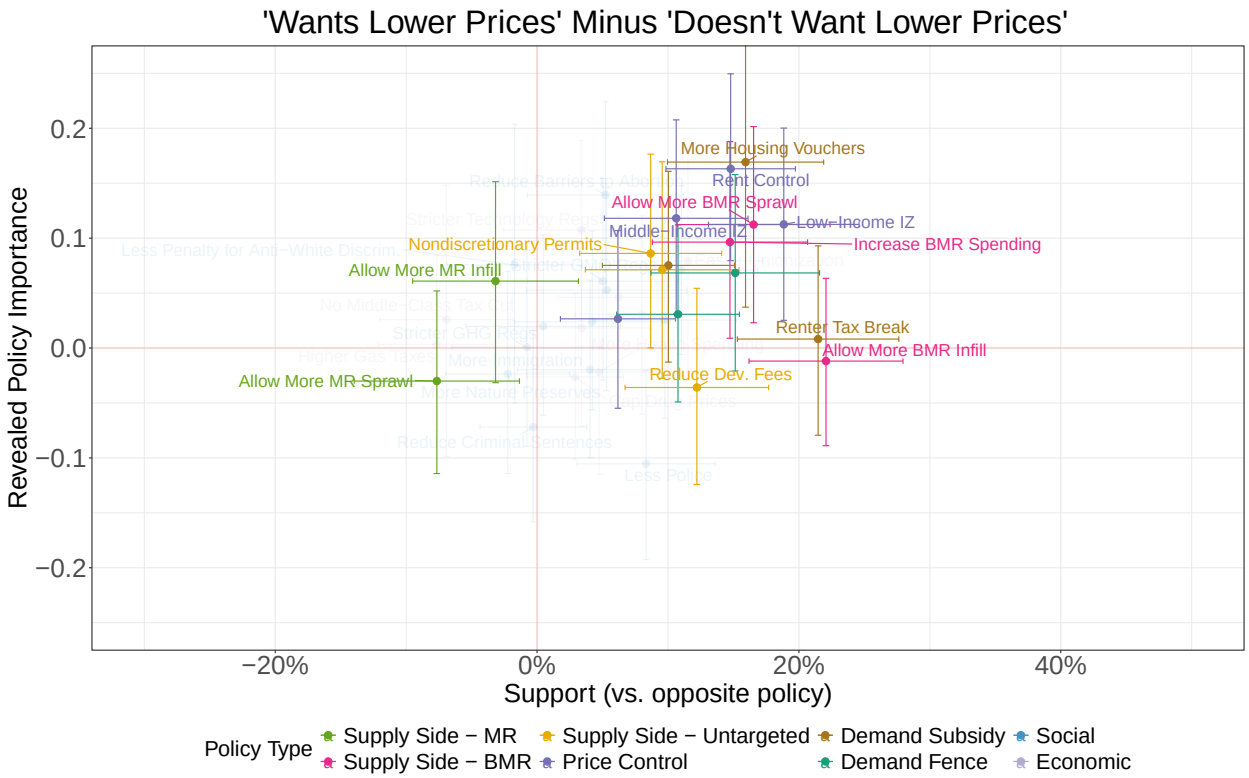

Figure C.6: Difference in policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, as between people who said / did not say they want home prices and rents in their city to be lower in the future.

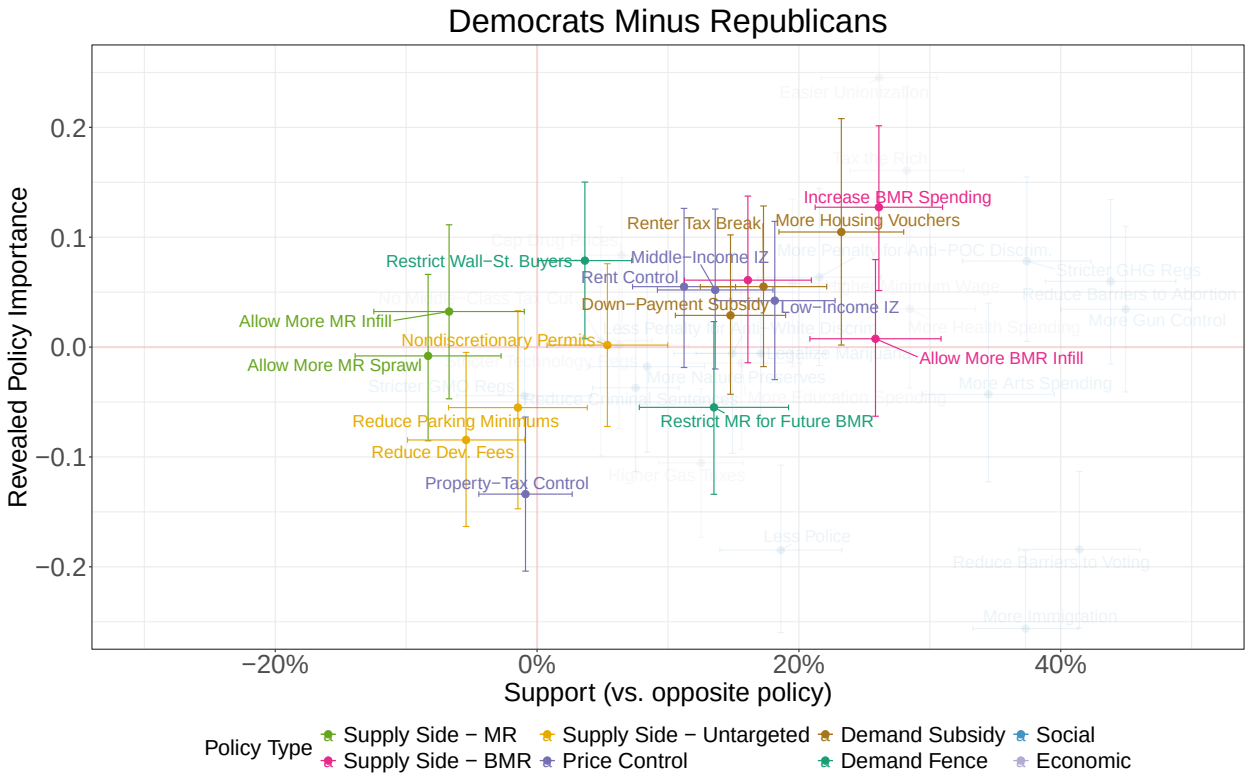

Figure C.7: Difference in policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, as between Democrats and Republicans.

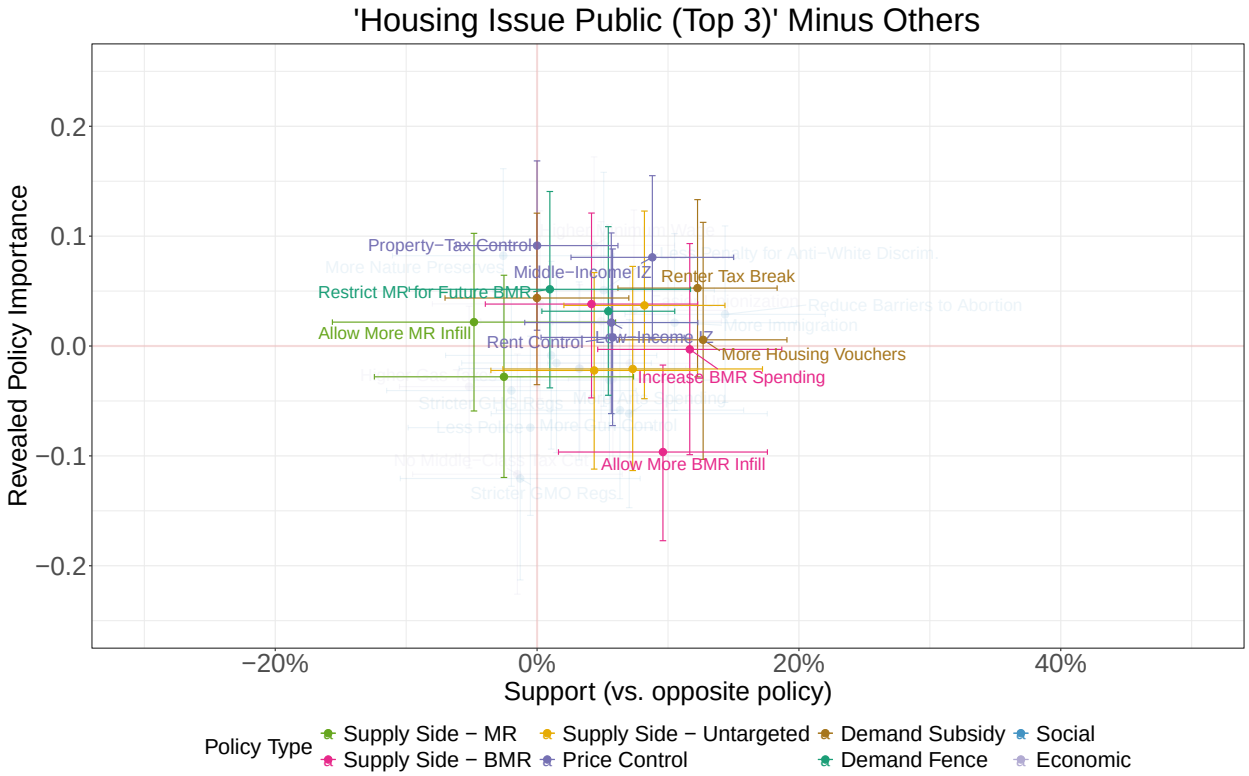

Figure C.8: Difference in policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, as between people who did / did not list "cost of housing" as a top-3 concern on closed-form, most-important-issue question.

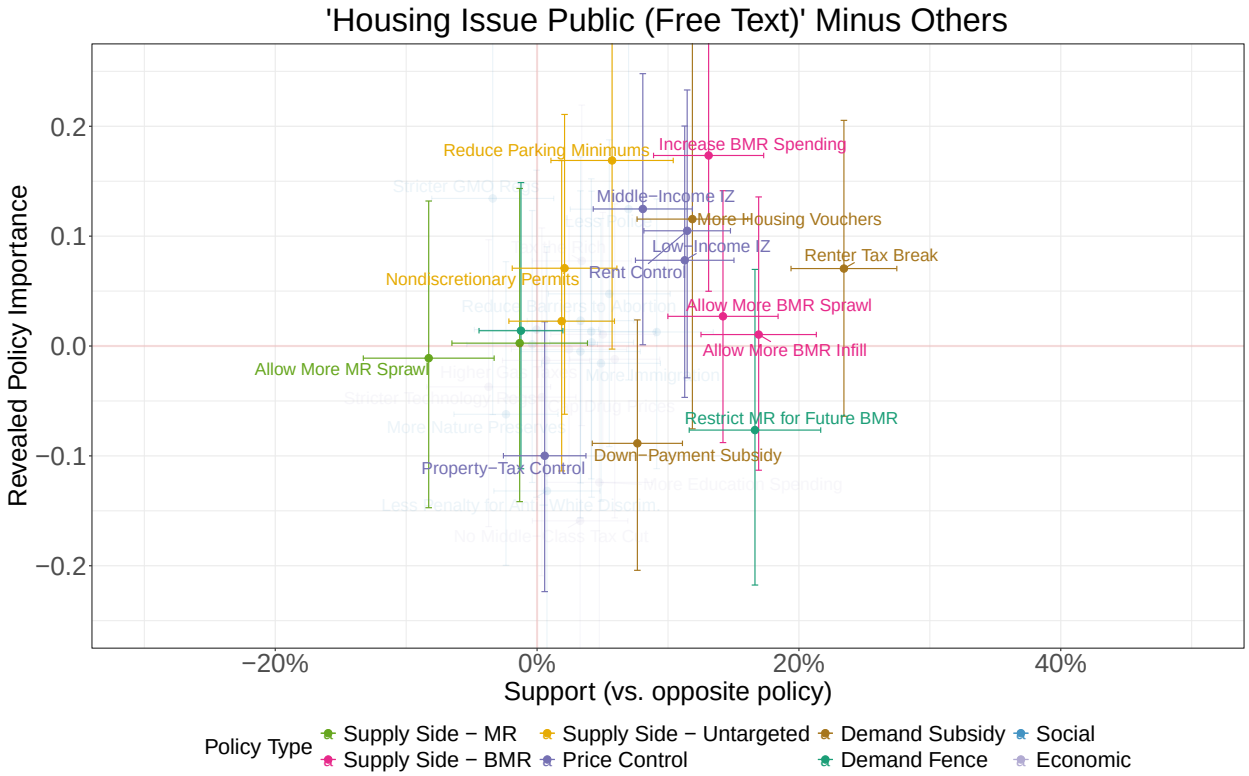

Figure C.9: Difference in policy preferences and revealed importance with respect to housing issues (full opacity) and non-housing issues, as between people who were / were not classifed as part of housing "issue public" per their free-text responses to most-important-issue question.

D Distribution of Answers to Policy-Position Questions, Including Don't-Knows

Figure D.1 plots the proportion of respondents who supported each position on each issue, including don't-knows. For figures in the main text, don't-knows were coded as coin-flips between the other two positions (i.e., as 0.5, where 0 represents support for the conservative position [non-housing issues] or "do nothing" position [housing issues], and 1 represents support for the liberal position [non-housing issues] or "do something" position [housing issues], as specified in our pre-analysis plan.

Figure D.1: Distribution of responses to policy-preference questions, with 95% confidence intervals on the proportion of respondents who support the labeled policy (which is "Policy 1"). Items are ordered in descending order by the proportion of respondents who support Policy 1 minus the proportion who support Policy 2.

E Pairwise Correlations Among Policy Preference Items and Group Characteristics

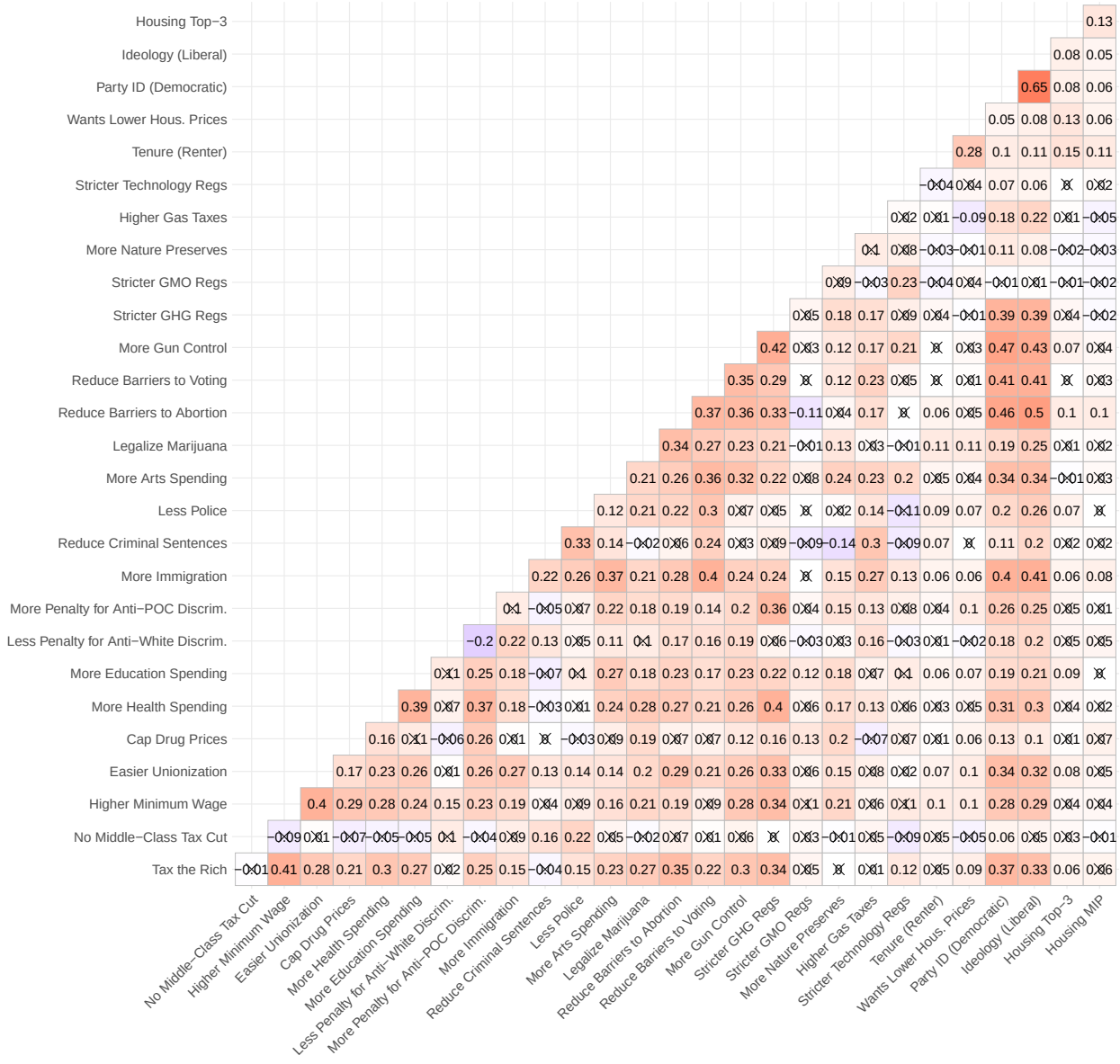

Figure E.1: Pairwise correlation coefficients among non-housing policy-preference items and group characteristics (tenure, partisanship, etc.).

F "Win rates" vs. Bradley-Terry Estimates of Perceived Policy Efficacy

In our preanalysis plan, we specified that we would use a policy's expected win rate (against a random alternative) as the primary measure of perceived relative efficacy for the 17 housing policies in our study. In principle, a parametric model such as the Bradley-Terry model should yield less noisy (though more assumption-dependent) estimates of the policies' rankings by perceived efficacy. Simulations provided with our preanalysis plan found little if any difference in recovering the stipulated true ranking of policies across the full sample and owner/renter splits, so we opted to use the simpler, more transparent win-rate measure in the main paper, relegating Bradley-Terry estimates to the Supplemental Information.

Figures F.1 and F.2 plot estimates of each policy's perceived efficacy from the linear win-rate model (x axis) against the Bradley-Terry model (y axis), for the full sample and for every target subgroups in the sample. Each figure also plots the best-fit line from a linear regression of y on x. The Bradley-Terry coefficients were generated using the BradleyTerry2 package in R. Confidence intervals for the Bradley Terry estimates are based on quasi-SEs (Firth and De Menezes, 2004), which may be a little too narrow as the Bradley-Terry model does not account for the dependence structure which may exist in the data due to the existence of multiple observations per respondent.[17]

The figures show that both the nonparametric winrate (with standard errors clustered on the respondent) and the Bradley Terry approaches recover virtually the same ordering of policies not only for the full sample, but even for the smallest of the target subgroups (members of the housing issue public, as identified from the free-text most-important-issue question). Standard errors are of course larger on the small-subgroup results, but not noticeably smaller on the Bradley-Terry estimates than on linear model (win-rate) estimates with robust standard errors clustered on the respondent.

[17] Were we relying on the Bradley-Terry estimates, we would use a nonparametric bootstrap to generate confidence intervals.

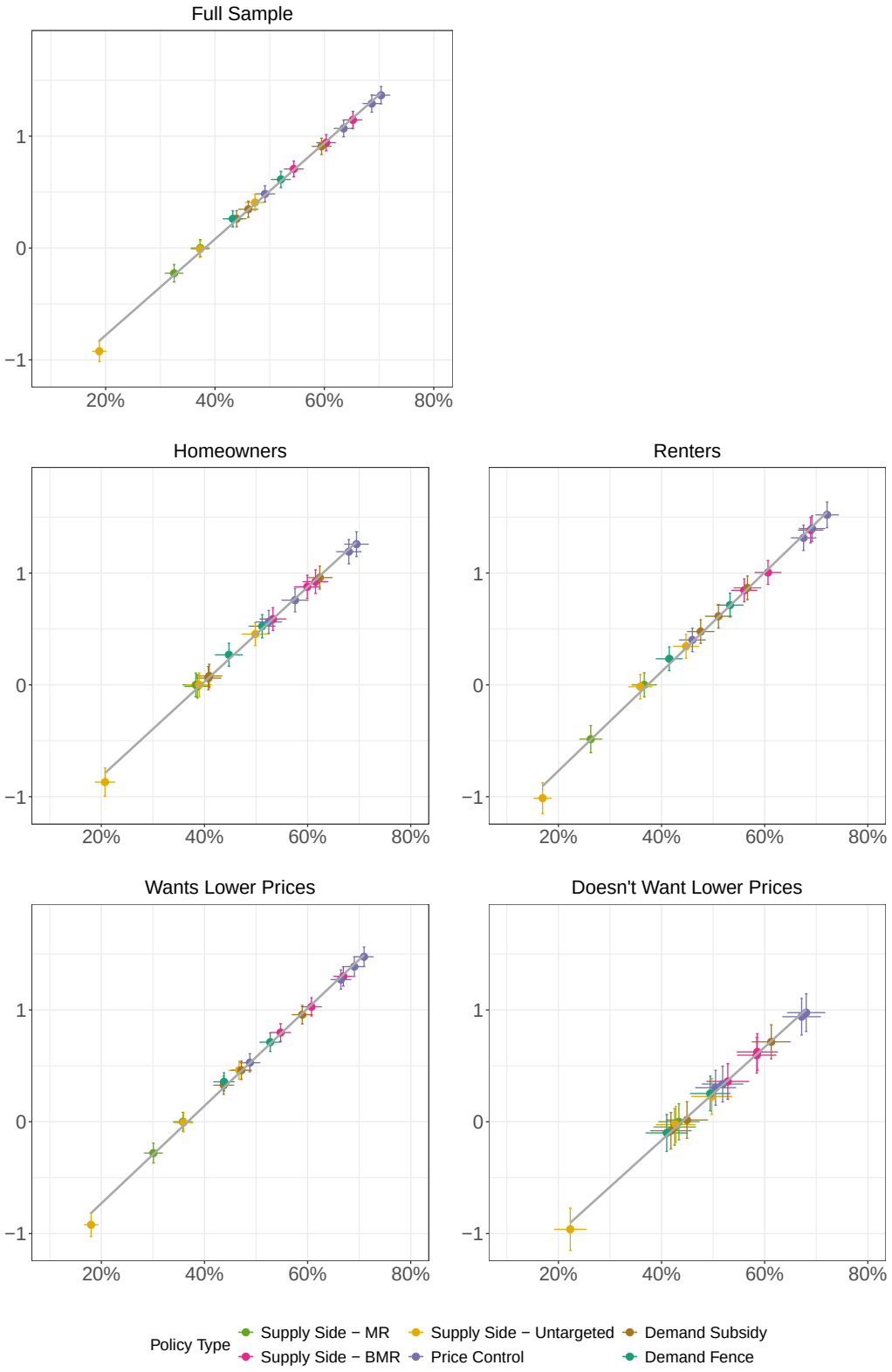

Figure F.1: Coefficients from Bradley-Terry model of perceived efficacy data (y-axis) plotted against win rates (x axis), with 95% confidence intervals.

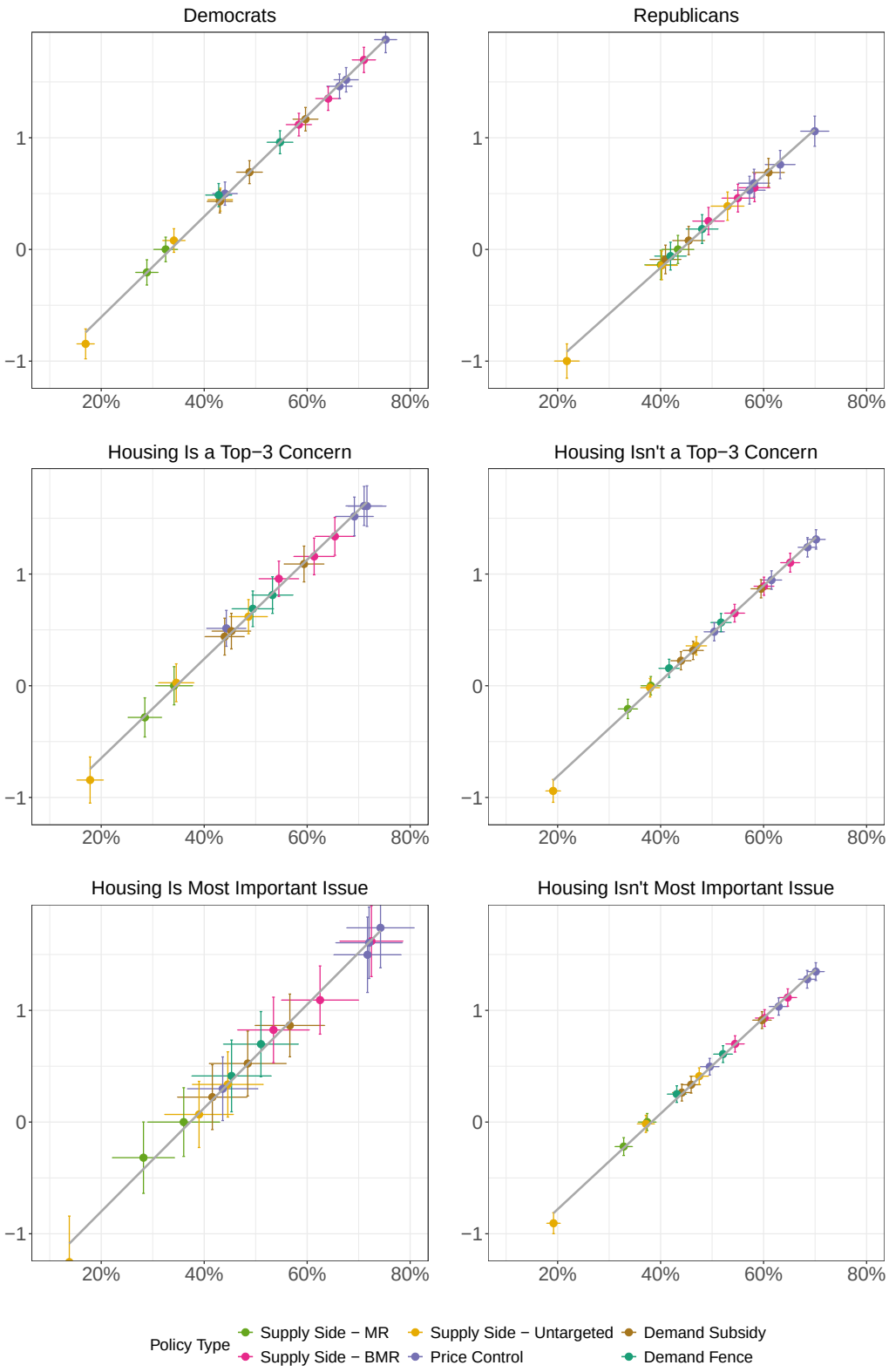

Figure F.2: Coefficients from Bradley-Terry model of perceived efficacy data (y-axis) plotted against win rates (x axis), with 95% confidence intervals, for additional target subgroups.

G Pilot Survey Results

G.1 Distribution of responses to Likert-style policy preference questions

Figure G.1: Distribution of responses to Likert-style policy questions on the pilot survey, with 95% confidence intervals on the proportion of respondents who support or strongly support the policy. Housing policy items that correspond to policy-preference question on the main survey are presented first, and in descending order by the proportion of respondents who support the corresponding "Policy 1" on the main survey.

G.2 Perceived efficacy of housing policies

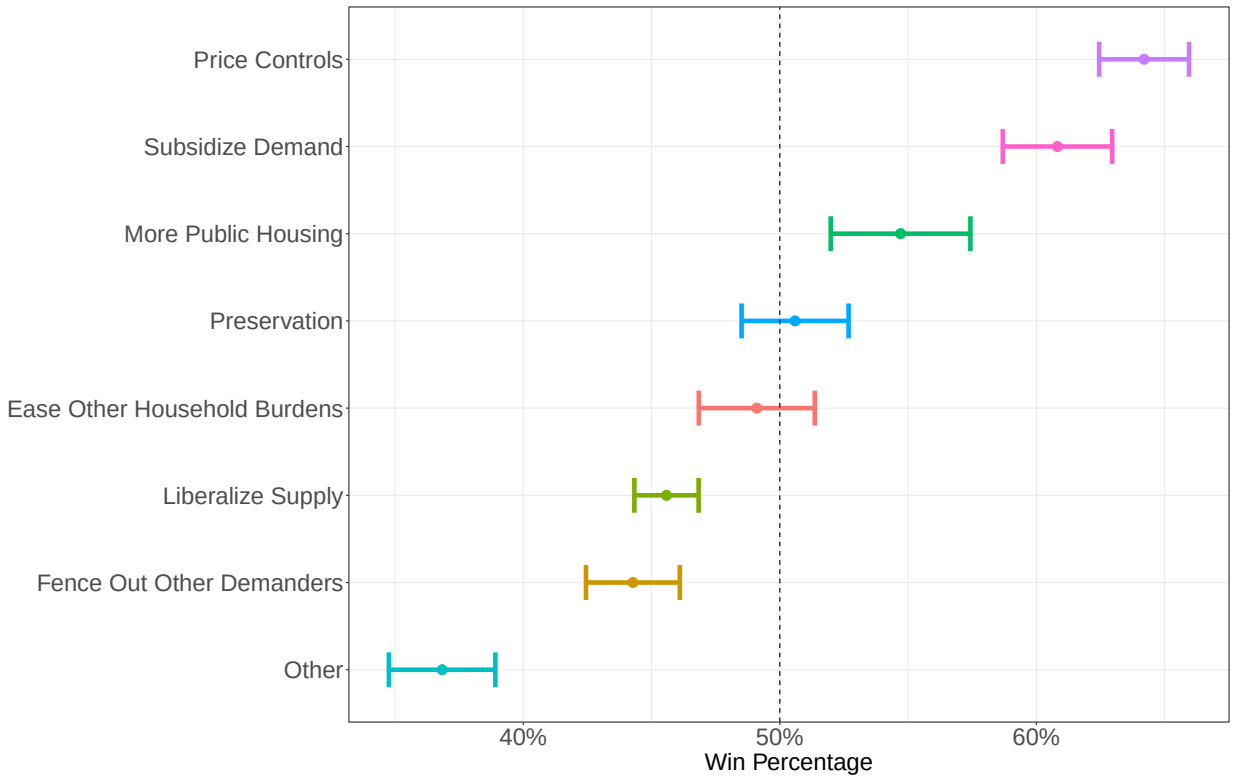

Figure G.2: Perceived efficacy of housing policies on pilot survey (pairwise win rates), grouped by policy type.

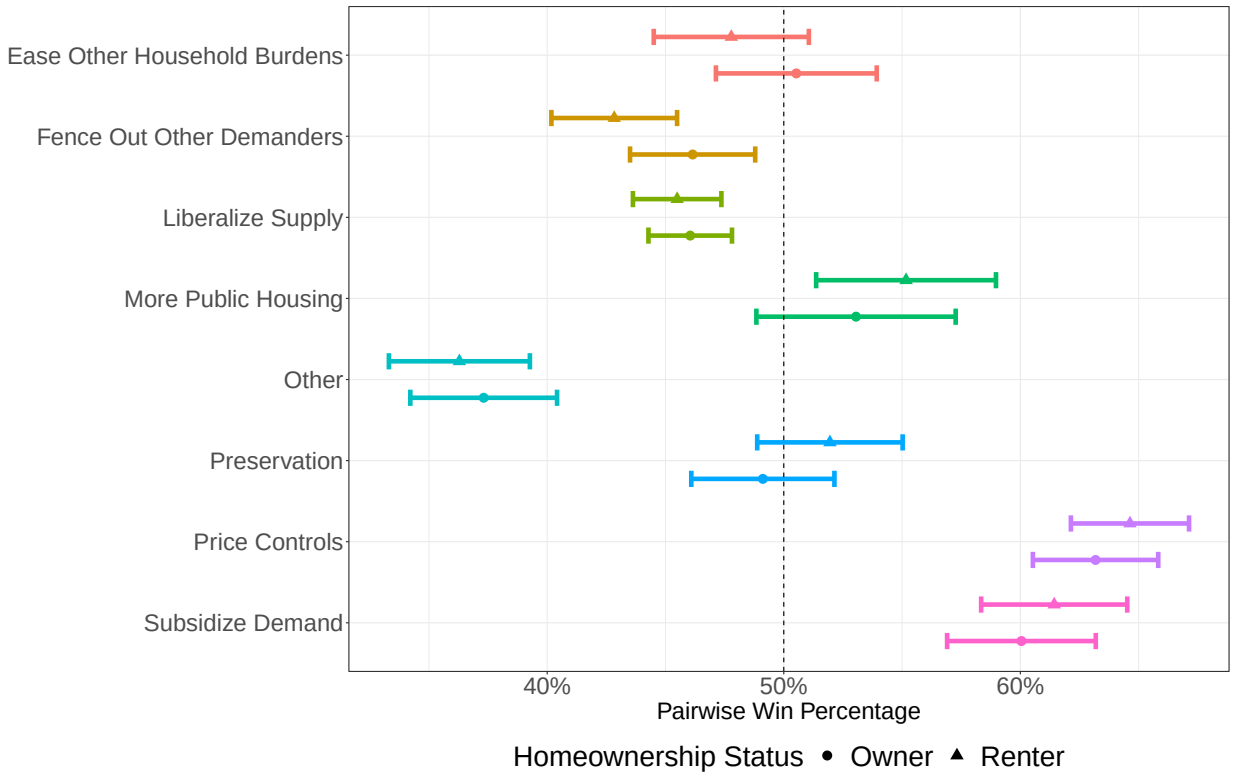

Figure G.3: Perceived efficacy of housing policies on pilot survey (pairwise win rates), grouped by policy type, subset by tenure.

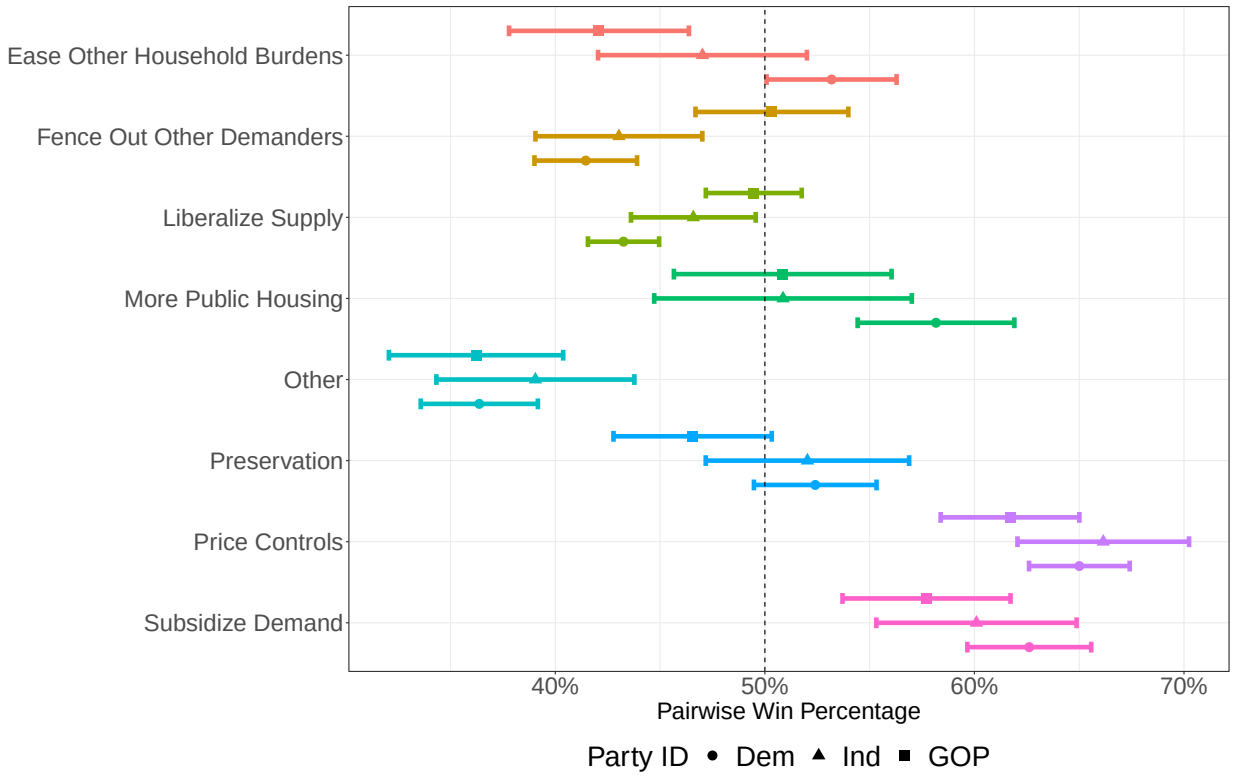

Figure G.4: Perceived efficacy of housing policies on pilot survey (pairwise win rates), grouped by policy type, subset by party identification.