The Bureaucratic Politics of International Cooperation

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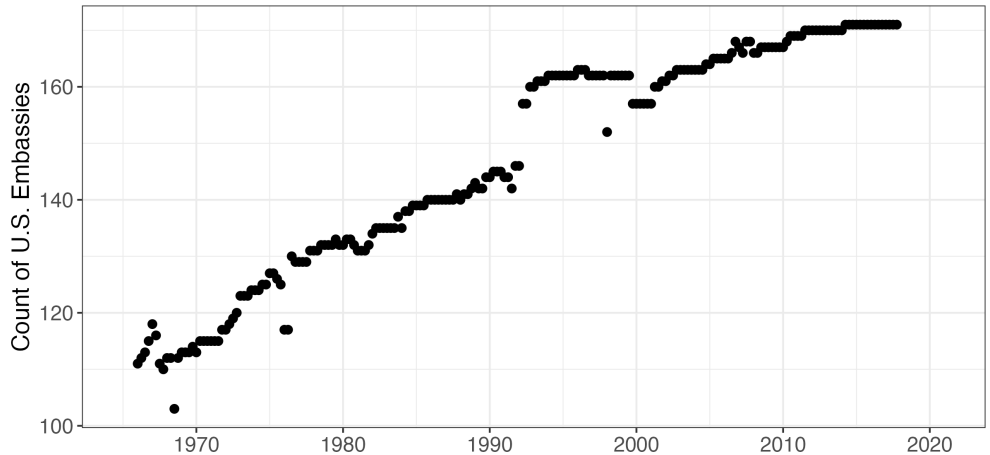
ARE BUREAUCRACIES IMPORTANT? (OR ALLISON WONDERLAND)

by Stephen D. Krasner

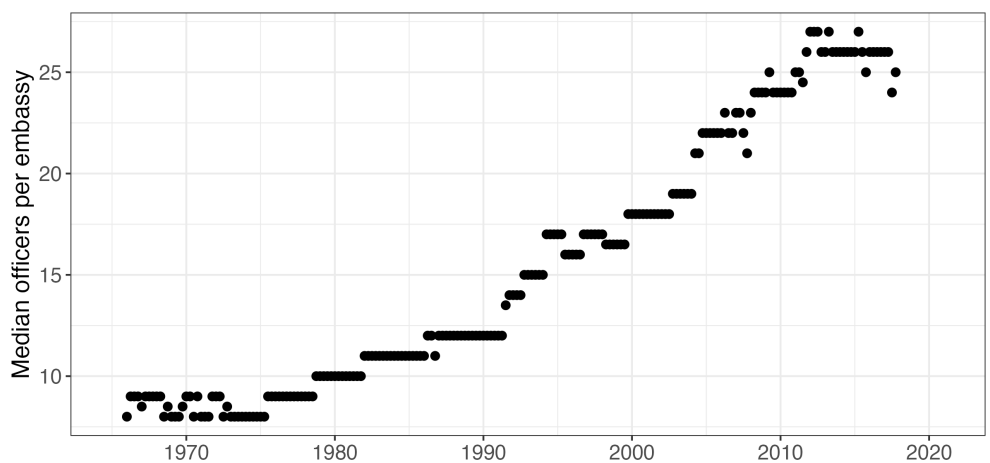
Who and what shapes foreign policy? In recent years, analyses have increasingly emphasized not rational calculations of the national interest or the political goals of national leaders but rather bureaucratic procedures and bureaucratic politics. Starting

this approach has come to portray the American President as trapped by a permanent government more enemy than ally. Bureaucratic theorists imply that it is exceedingly difficult if not impossible for political leaders to control the organizational web which surrounds them. Important decisions result from numerous smaller actions taken by individuals at different levels in the bureaucracy who have partially incompatible national, bureaucratic, political, and personal objectives. They are not necessarily a reflection of the aims and values of high officials.

U.S. Embassies Over Time



Diplomatic Personnel per U.S. Embassy



This paper:

- Theory: *conditional* nature of bureaucratic influence
- Most comprehensive dataset on U.S. diplomatic personnel
- Use officer-level attributes to develop measures of embassy-level capacity
- Show that embassy capacity affects bilateral cooperation
  - only when pol. oversight $\downarrow$ & bureaucratic autonomy $\uparrow$

Theory

Diplomats in-country have stronger **preferences** for bilateral cooperation (vs. other participants in policy process), due to:

- *ideology*: selection and/or socialization (Lindsey (2017; 2023); Jost, Meshkin & Schub (2022); Wilson (1989); Gailmard & Patty (2007))
- *incentives*: producing measurable diplomatic outputs (Holmstrom & Milgrom (1991); Poulsen & Aisbett (2016))

Theory

Ability to realize preferences in policy outcomes depends on **capacity** and **autonomy**

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$$y = e_E + e_{WH} - e_E e_{WH}, \qquad u_i = y - c_i e_i^2$$

- y: diplomatic output (joint production with substitution)
- e_E, e_{WH}: effort by Embassy and White House
- c_i: costs of effort (conversely, $\frac{1}{c_i}$ = capacity)

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$$\frac{dy}{dc_{WH}} < 0, \quad \frac{d^2y}{dc_{WH}\, dc_E} < 0$$

- less production when WH faces higher costs of effort
- exacerbated under conditions of low embassy capacity

Theory

Alternatively:

$$y = (1 - p)e_E, \qquad u_E = y - c_E e_E^2$$

- p: prob. WH veto or delay
- if $p \downarrow$ in c_{WH}:

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- p: prob. WH veto or delay
- if $p \downarrow$ in c_{WH}:

$$\frac{dy}{dc_{WH}} > 0, \quad \frac{d^2y}{dc_{WH}\, dc_E} < 0$$

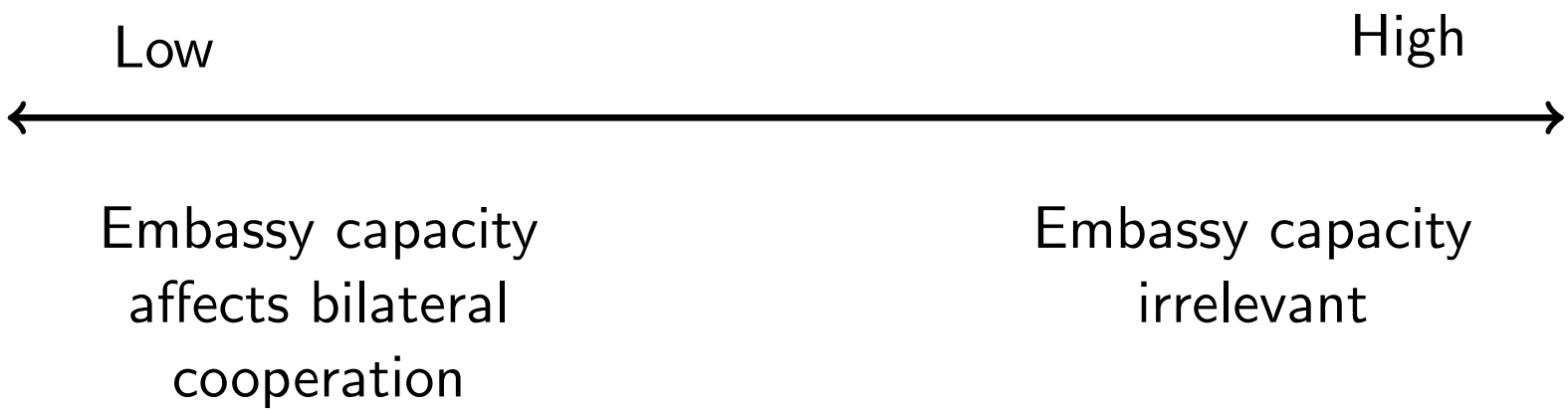
Prediction: When the White House faces greater constraints on its ability to actively engage in diplomacy, that should heighten the disparity in diplomatic output between high-capacity vs. low-capacity embassies.

White House Engagement

Embassy capacity affects bilateral cooperation

Embassy capacity irrelevant

White House Engagement



Three quantities to operationalize:

- Diplomatic capacity
- WH costs of engaging in diplomacy
- Bilateral cooperation

Outcome: Bilateral Treaties

- 5,636 executive agreements, signed 1989–2016
  (Hathaway, Bradley, & Goldsmith 2020)

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Defense	1635
Finance, Trade, and Investment	623
Humanitarian	605
Science, Space, and Technology	549
Environment, Conservation, and Energy	495
Transportation and Aviation	393
Law Enforcement	313
Nonproliferation	273
Miscellaneous	196
Educational Exchanges and Cultural Cooperation	174
Taxation	138
Diplomacy and Consular Affairs	126
Maritime	115

Outcome Measure: Bilateral Treaties

Subcategories among the 1635 "Defense" agreements:

Acquisition & Cross-servicing	355
Status of Forces	290
Information Exchange & Information Security	254
Training & Assistance	219
Joint Initiatives & Projects	199
R&D, Testing	111
Alliances & Commitments	79
Benefits	76
Other	33
Facilities & Bases	23
Counterterrorism	10

Typical embassy "country team", from Kopp & Gillespie

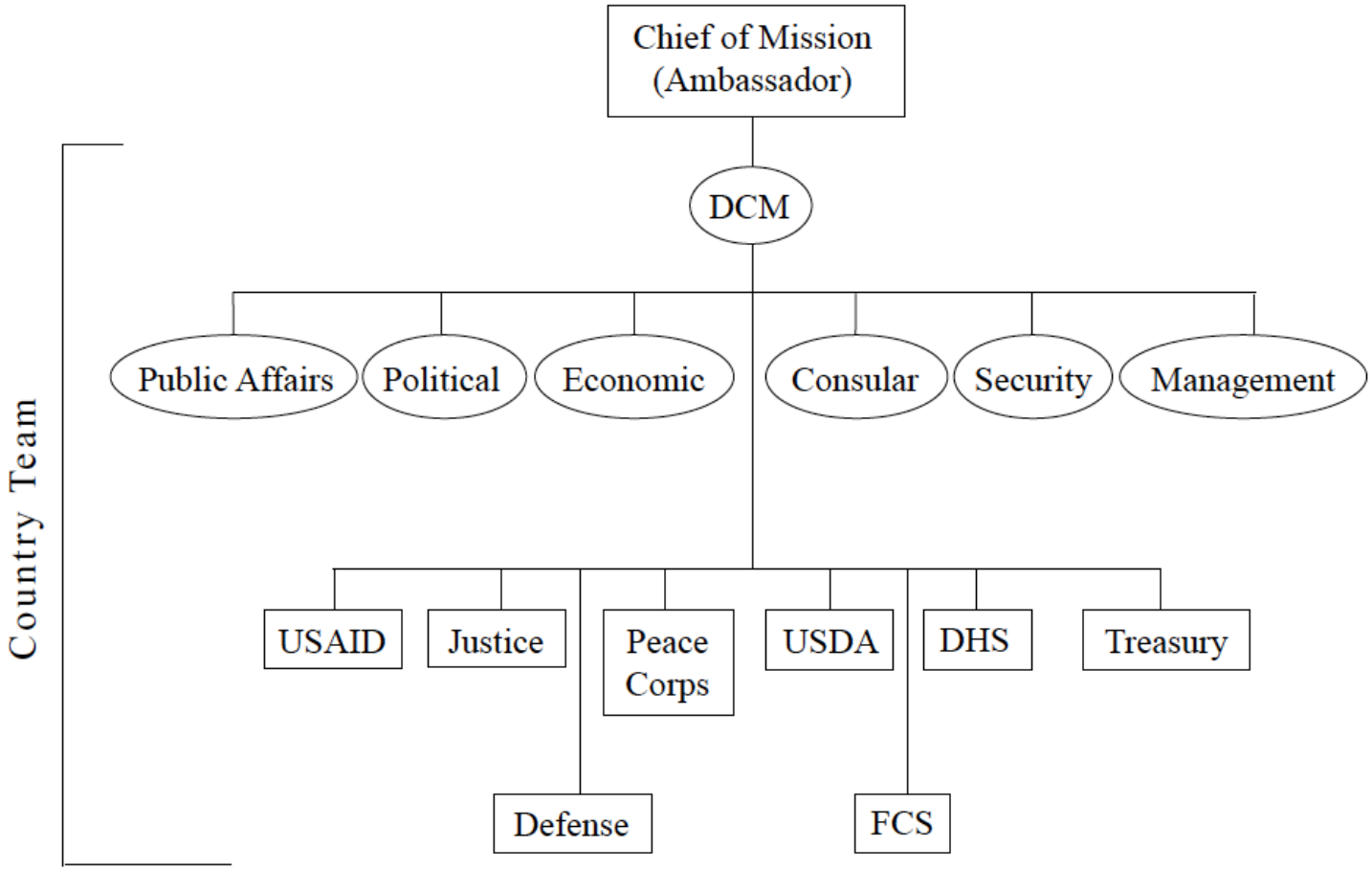


Figure 6.1
Organization of a Typical Mission

United States Department of State

Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts

Guide for Business Representatives

[redacted]

January 1991

MOROCCO

RABAT (E), 2 Ave. de Marrakech; P.O. Box 120; APO N Y 09284; Tel [212] (7) 622-65; Telex 31005

AMB:	E. Michael Ussery	RSO:	Peter Stella
DCM:	Richard L. Jackson	AGR:	Andrew A. Duymovic
POL:	Michael C. Lemmon	AID:	Dennis Chandler
ECO:	David S. Robins	PAO:	Edward T. Penney
CON:	George W. Brazier III	ODA:	Col James E. Murphy USMC
ADM:	Alphonse Lopez	MLO:	Col Thomas E. Burch USAF

CASABLANCA (CG), 8 Blvd. Moulay Youssef; APO NY 09284 (CAS); Tel [212] 26-45-50

CG:	Timberlake Foster	ECO:	Allen S. Greenberg
LAB:	William H. Owen	CON:	Suella Pipal
POL:	Peter McDevitt	ADM:	J. Patrick Truhn
COM:	Samuel D. Starrett	BPAO:	Elizabeth Thornhill

MARRAKECH (US Information Service), Ave Echchouada, L'Hivernage B.P. 240; Tel [212] (4) 472-83

BPAO: Franklin Huffman

Key Officers Data

(Collected in collaboration with David Lindsey (CUNY))

At the officer-quarter-year level:

- 472,299 officer-QY obs., 1966–2017
- 352,562 in embassies
- 274,030 in embassies, 1989–2016 (our sample)

At the country-half-year level (this analysis):

- n = 6,197 country-half-years, 169 country, 47 HYs, 1989–2016

Diplomatic Capacity

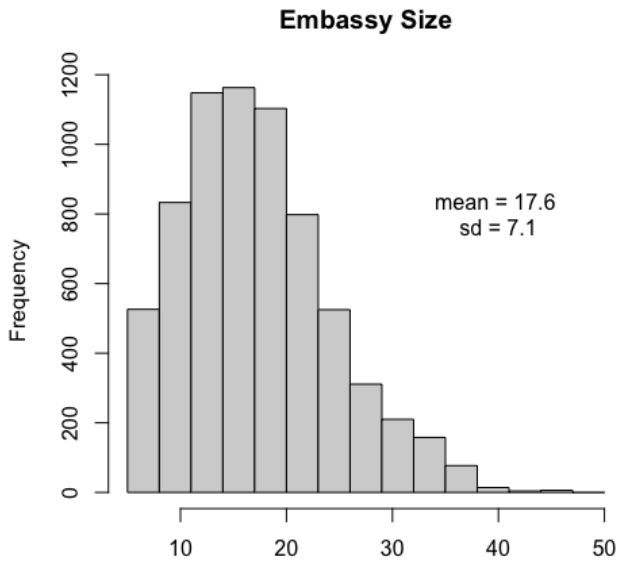
Four separate measures of embassy-level capacity:

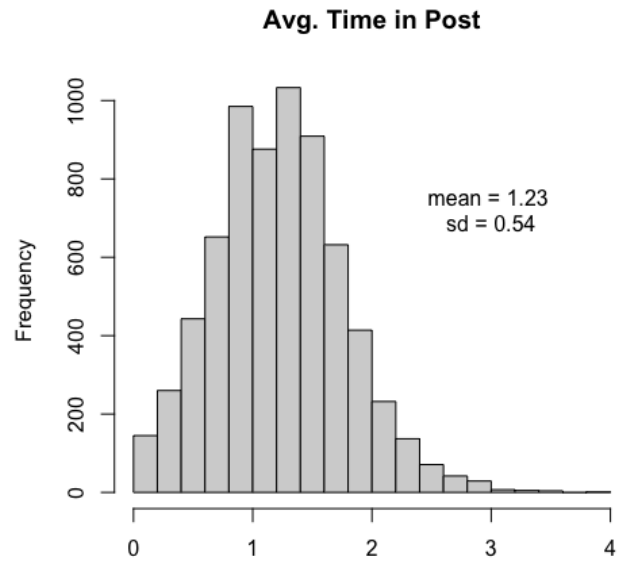
- Capacity$_{c,t}$, for country c, half-year t

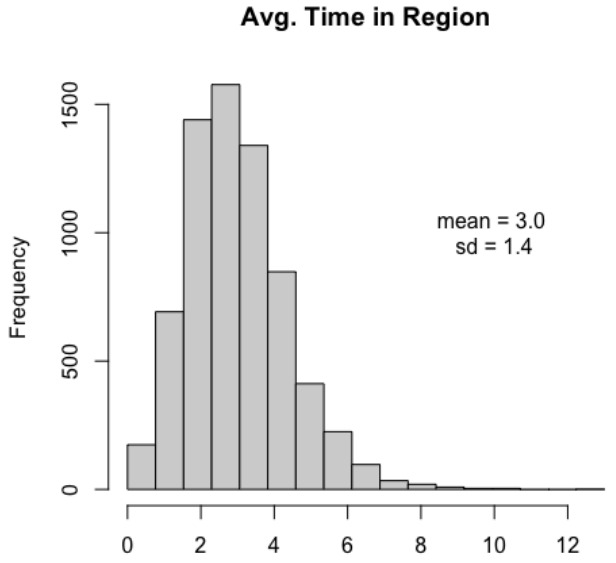
1. Embassy Size: # officers listed in U.S. embassy in c, t

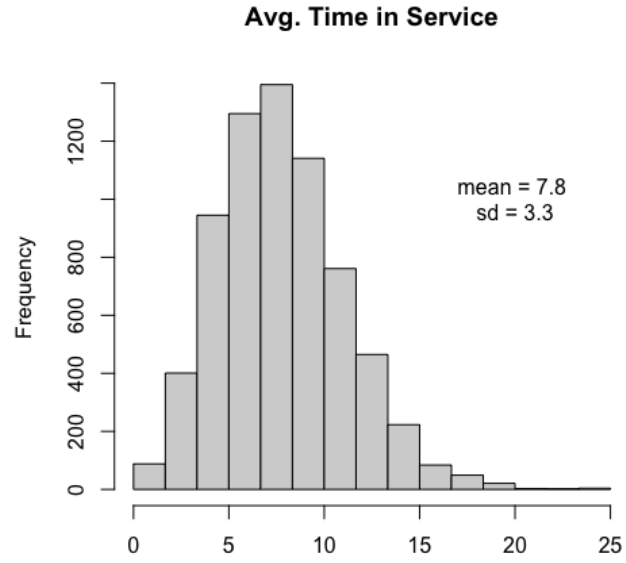
2-4. Avg. Time in Post/Region/Service:

   - For each officer-QY, calculate: (i) time in current post; (ii) total time spent in current region; (iii) time since first appearance in the data
   - At the embassy-HY level: average (i), (ii), and (iii), across Ambassador, DCM, and FSO generalists (Political, Econ, Mgmt, Consular, Public Diplomacy)


Embassy Size
Frequency
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
10
20
30
40
50
mean = 17.6
sd = 7.1


Avg. Time in Post
Frequency
0
200
400
600
800
1000
0
1
2
3
4
mean = 1.23
sd = 0.54


Avg. Time in Region
Frequency
0
500
1000
1500
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
mean = 3.0
sd = 1.4


Avg. Time in Service
Frequency
0
200
400
600
800
1200
0
5
10
15
20
25
mean = 7.8
sd = 3.3

Correlation Among Capacity Measures

	Emb. Size	ATIP	ATIR	ATIS
Emb. Size	1.00			
ATIP	0.14	1.00		
ATIR	0.14	0.42	1.00	
ATIS	0.27	0.23	0.57	1.00

Capturing different aspects of capacity:

- Emb. Size: total # diplomat-hours
- ATIP: country-specific knowledge + working as team
- ATIR: region-specific + bureau-specific knowledge
- ATIS: general diplomatic expertise + screening

White House Engagement

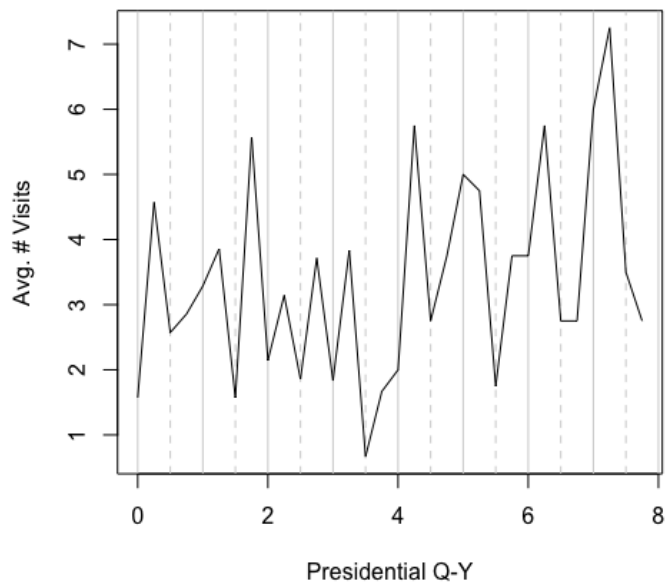
Embassy capacity affects bilateral cooperation

Embassy capacity irrelevant

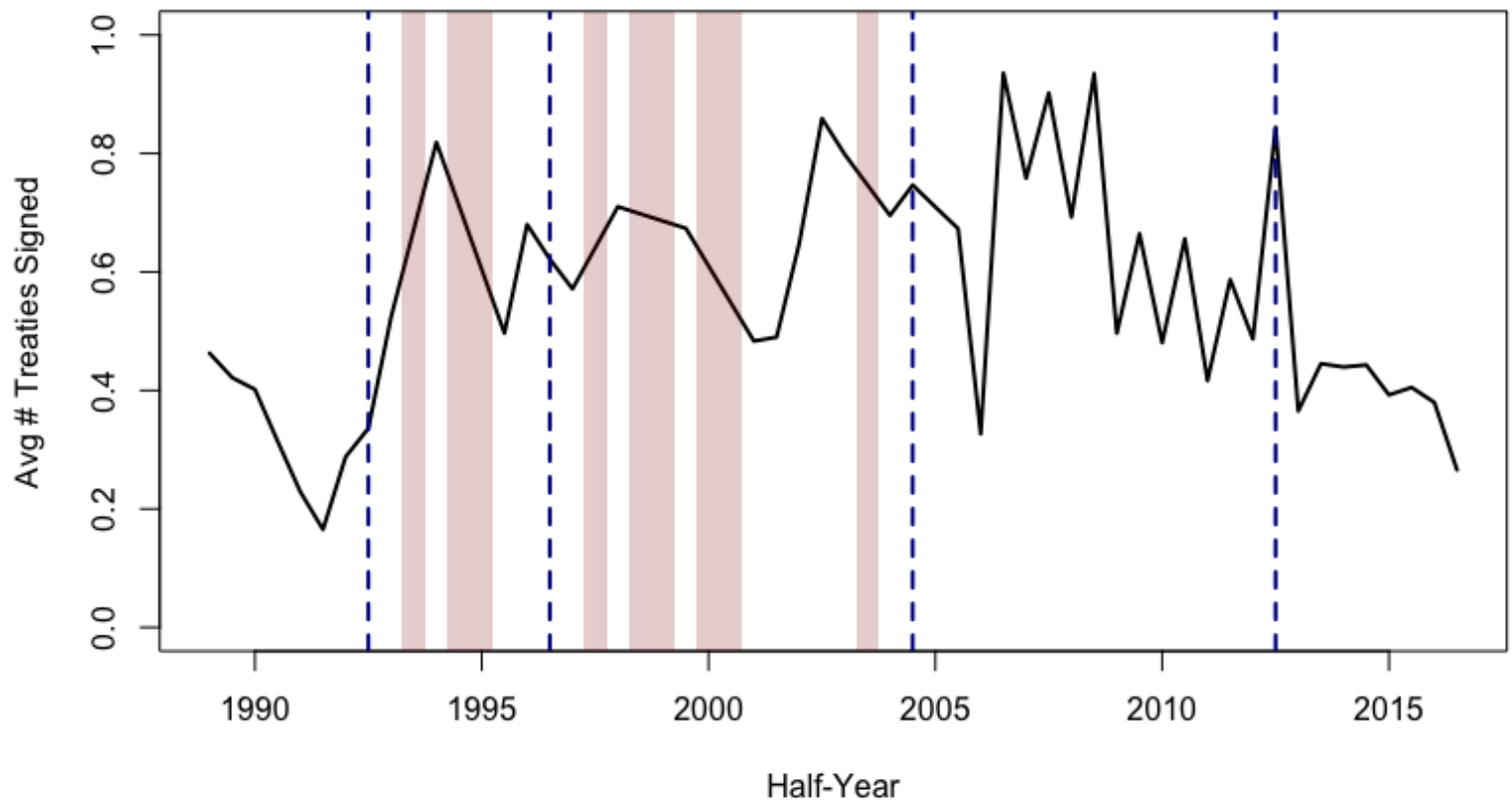
Political Attention/Oversight

Presidential re-election as a shock to foreign policy attention

- Lindsey & Hobbs (2015): meetings in President's Daily Diary
- Bubeck et al (2022): presidential public papers & executive orders; congressional speeches, bills, laws
- presidential visits:



Treaty Signing Over Time



Research Design

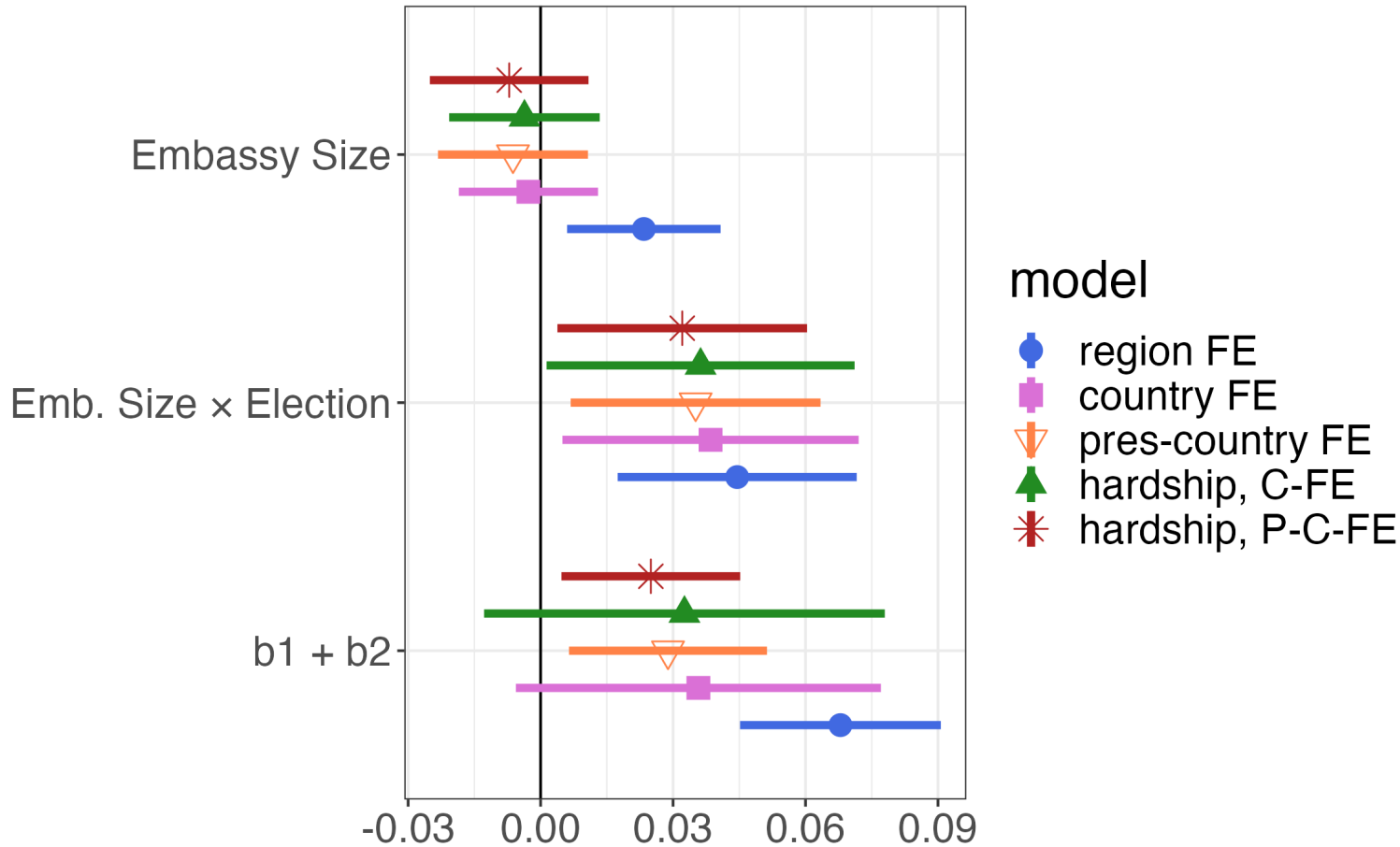
- Embassy-half-year obs.
- Outcome: # agreements signed
- Treatment: pres. re-election period (2nd half of 4th year)
- Moderator: embassy-level capacity

Research Design

$$\text{Agreements}_{ct} = \text{Capacity}_{ct} \times \text{Elec}_t + \text{Controls}_{ct} \times \text{Elec}_t + \text{FE}$$

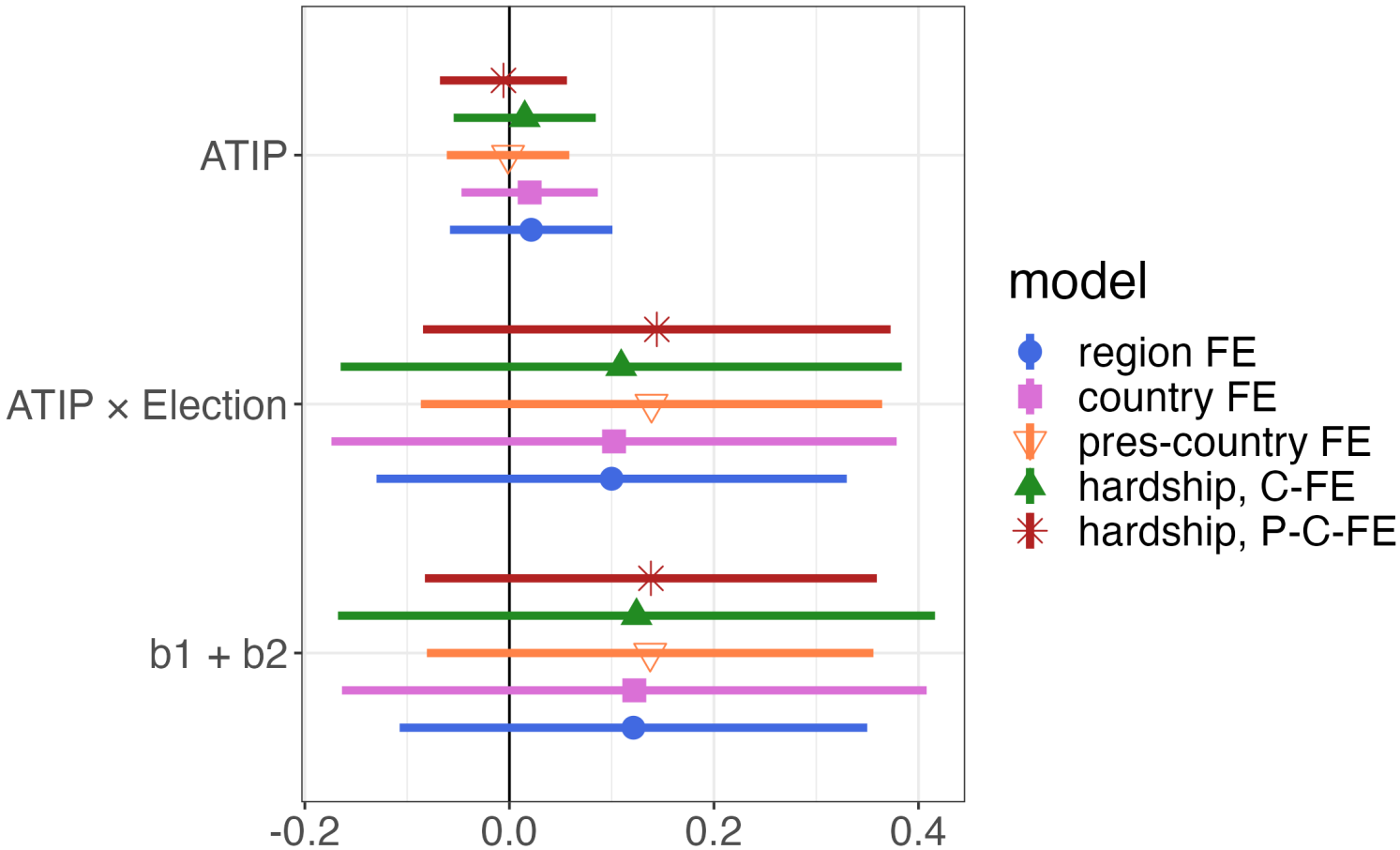
- Controls: GDP, pop., trade, aid, UNGA voting, capabilities, polity, recent severed relations, recent MIDs, (emb. size); hardship
- FE: half-year, and Region or Embassy
- OLS (Poisson for robustness)
- SE two-way clustered, by embassy and half-year

Embassy-Level: # Officers



- DV (# treaties signed): mean = 0.59, sd = 1.18
- n = 6,197 country-half-years (169 countries, 47 HYs, 1989–2016)
- all models: region FE, HY FE, controls × elec, SE clustered by country & HY

Embassy-Level: Avg. Time In Post (ATIP)



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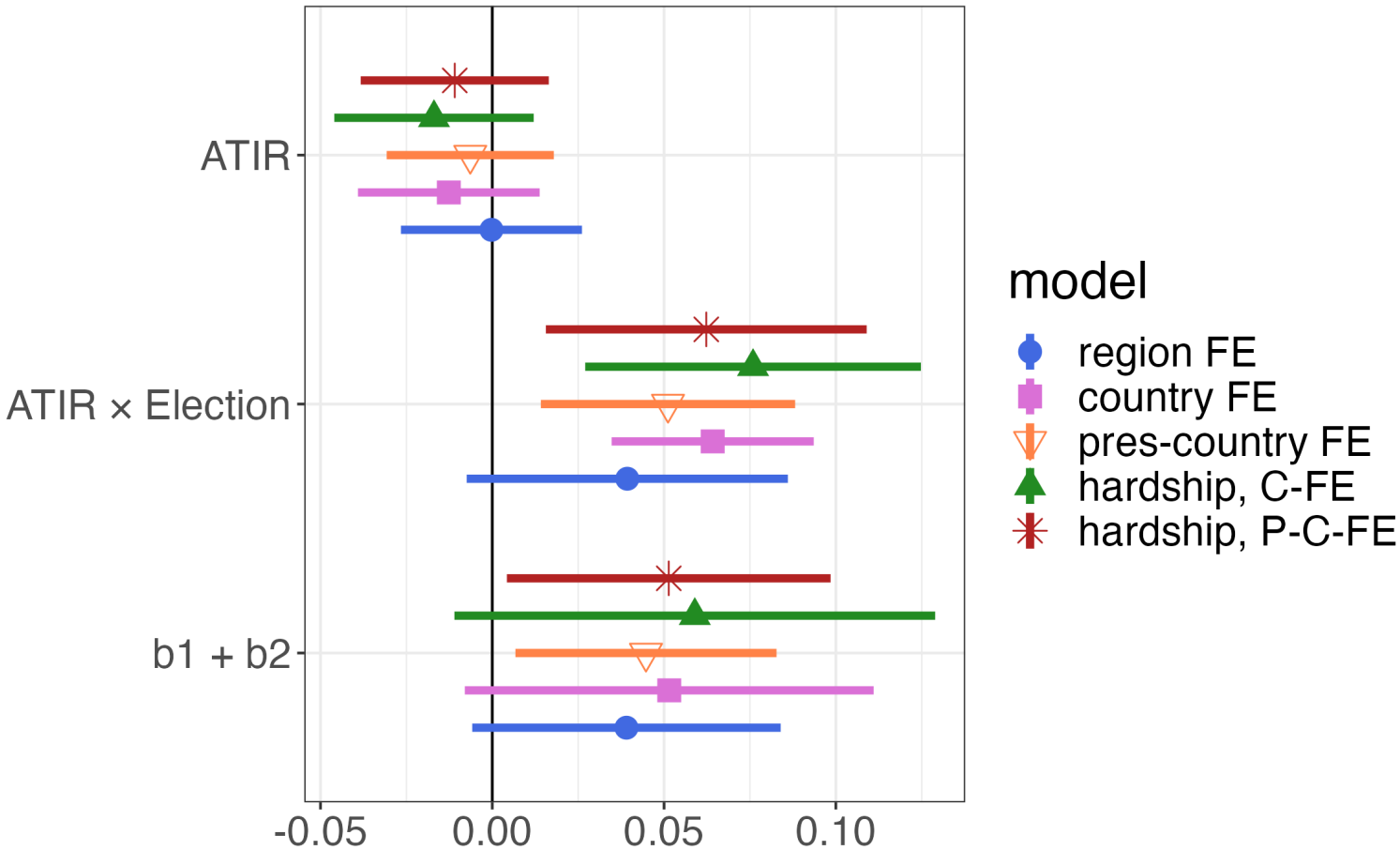
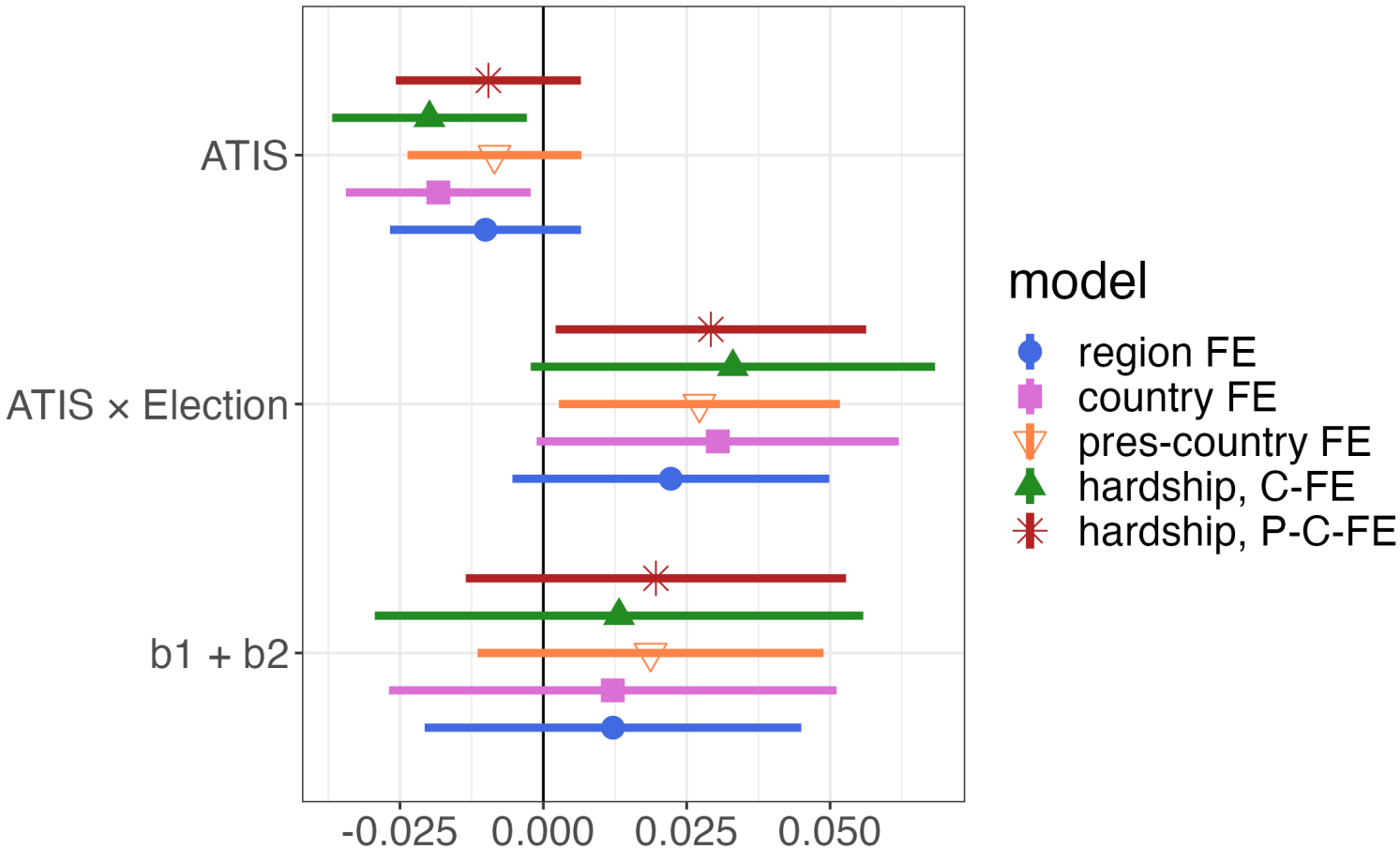
Embassy-Level: Avg. Time In Region (ATIR)



- DV (# treaties signed): mean = 0.59, sd = 1.18
- n = 6,197 country-half-years (169 countries, 47 HYs, 1989–2016)
- all models: region FE, HY FE, controls × elec, SE clustered by country & HY

Embassy-Level: Avg. Time In Service (ATIS)



- DV (# treaties signed): mean = 0.59, sd = 1.18
- n = 6,197 country-half-years (169 countries, 47 HYs, 1989–2016)
- all models: region FE, HY FE, controls × elec, SE clustered by country & HY

Issue-Level Research Design

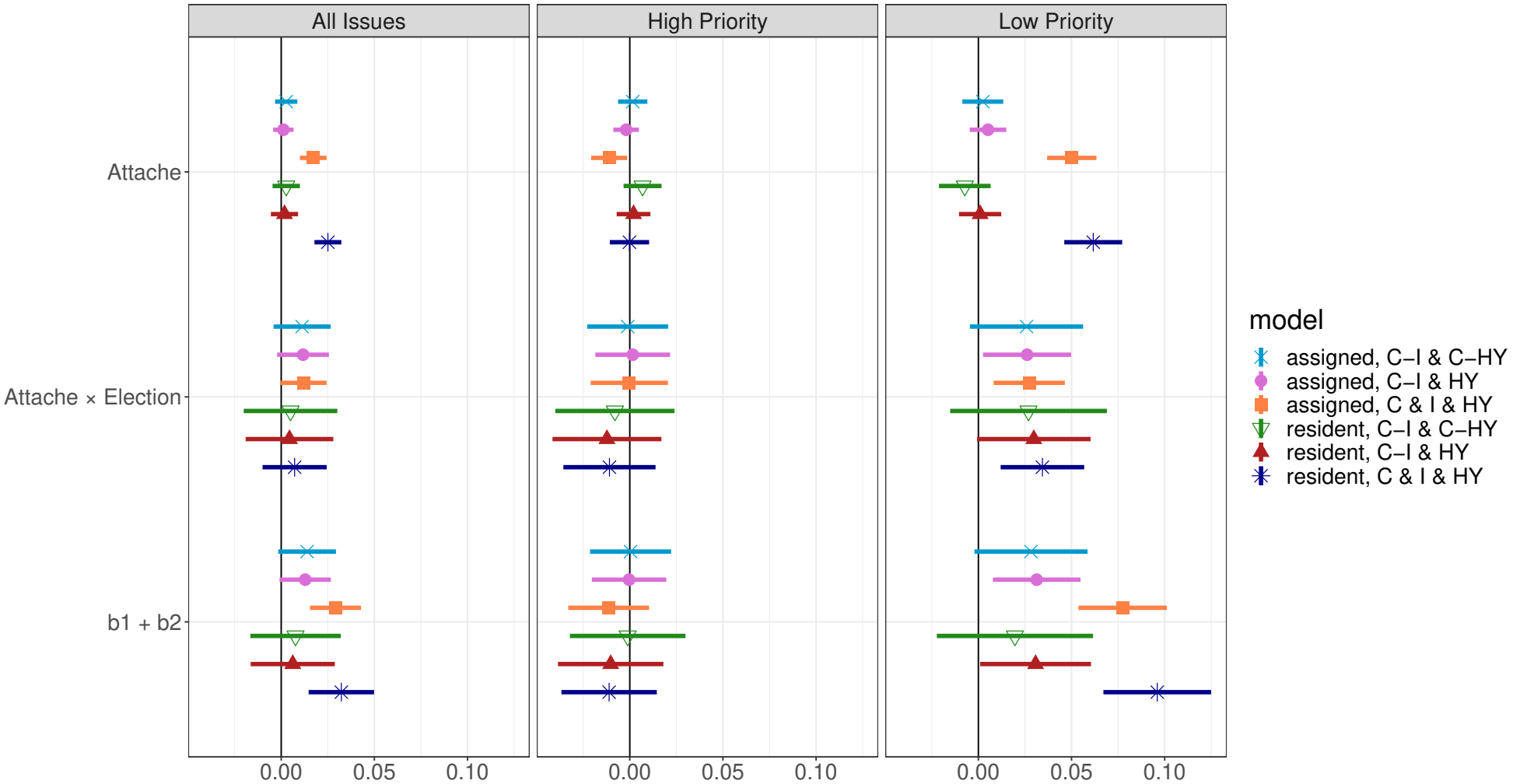
$$\mathbb{1}[\text{Any Agreement}_{ict}] = \text{Attaché}_{ct} \times \text{Elec}_t + \text{Controls}_{ct} \times \text{Elec}_t + \text{FE}$$

- Controls: GDP, pop., trade, aid, UNGA voting, capabilities, polity, recent severed relations, recent MIDs, (emb. size)
- OLS, w/ SE two-way clustered, by embassy and half-year

Issue areas:

- high-priority: military, commercial, law enforcement, treasury, agricultural
- low-priority: aid, health, scientific, aviation

Embassy-Issue-Level: Attaché Presence



- DV ($\mathbb{1}$[any treaty signed]): mean = 0.045
- n = 62,109 country-issue-half-years (34,505 for high-priority, 27,604 for low-priority)
- all models: controls × elec, SE clustered by country & half-year

Thank you!

- Matt Malis `https://mattmalis.github.io/`
- Calvin Thrall `https://www.calvinthrall.com/`

Residualized Embassy Size

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Kenya	7.53	47
2	Mexico	6.06	47
3	Italy	5.62	46
4	Botswana	4.82	46
5	France	4.81	47
6	Thailand	4.77	47
7	Kuwait	4.53	43
8	Japan	4.48	47
9	Vietnam	4.27	32
10	Barbados	3.77	47
11	Panama	3.76	45
12	Georgia	3.23	38
13	Armenia	3.08	37
14	Liberia	3.04	47
15	Greece	3.03	47
16	Afghanistan	2.95	26
17	Ghana	2.84	46
18	Philippines	2.76	47
19	United Arab Emirates	2.52	47
20	Bulgaria	2.46	47

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Libya	-7.25	10
2	Equatorial Guinea	-6.35	18
3	New Zealand	-5.86	47
4	Brunei	-5.81	33
5	Papua New Guinea	-4.53	47
6	Bosnia & Herzegovina	-3.87	33
7	Algeria	-3.55	47
8	South Sudan	-3.41	8
9	Malaysia	-3.28	47
10	Switzerland	-3.28	47
11	Venezuela	-2.93	35
12	Yemen	-2.88	41
13	Costa Rica	-2.85	47
14	Brazil	-2.83	47
15	Cape Verde	-2.73	28
16	Trinidad & Tobago	-2.63	46
17	Saudi Arabia	-2.62	47
18	Benin	-2.61	46
19	Slovakia	-2.61	37
20	Nigeria	-2.58	48

Residualized ATIP

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Palau	1.8	22
2	Uganda	0.31	34
3	Jordan	0.26	47
4	Kenya	0.25	47
5	Senegal	0.23	47
6	Morocco	0.22	47
7	Indonesia	0.2	47
8	Poland	0.2	45
9	Zimbabwe	0.2	47
10	Bangladesh	0.19	47
11	France	0.19	47
12	Liberia	0.17	47
13	Bahrain	0.16	47
14	Uruguay	0.16	47
15	Egypt	0.15	47
16	India	0.14	43
17	Congo - Kinshasa	0.13	47
18	Finland	0.13	47
19	Mexico	0.13	47
20	Greece	0.11	47

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Iraq	-0.53	24
2	Afghanistan	-0.39	26
3	Brunei	-0.35	33
4	New Zealand	-0.29	47
5	Bosnia & Herzegovina	-0.28	33
6	Libya	-0.25	10
7	Papua New Guinea	-0.25	47
8	Yemen	-0.24	41
9	Lebanon	-0.2	43
10	South Sudan	-0.2	8
11	Albania	-0.19	39
12	Angola	-0.19	36
13	Central African Republic	-0.18	27
14	Equatorial Guinea	-0.18	18
15	Gambia	-0.17	42
16	Tajikistan	-0.17	33
17	Australia	-0.16	47
18	Burundi	-0.16	47
19	Marshall Islands	-0.16	28
20	Belarus	-0.15	20

Residualized ATIR

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Palau	3.58	22
2	Marshall Islands	1.4	28
3	Syria	1.19	25
4	United Kingdom	1.14	47
5	Venezuela	1.08	35
6	Germany	1.04	41
7	Brunei	1	33
8	Guatemala	0.96	47
9	Argentina	0.91	46
10	Jamaica	0.8	46
11	Kenya	0.78	47
12	Brazil	0.74	47
13	Eswatini	0.74	46
14	Dominican Republic	0.72	47
15	Egypt	0.71	47
16	Honduras	0.69	47
17	Congo - Kinshasa	0.67	47
18	Sierra Leone	0.67	47
19	Greece	0.6	47
20	Nepal	0.6	41

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Canada	-1.28	47
2	South Sudan	-1.27	8
3	Papua New Guinea	-1.08	47
4	Mauritius	-0.96	47
5	Angola	-0.89	36
6	Libya	-0.88	10
7	New Zealand	-0.88	47
8	Australia	-0.86	47
9	Belarus	-0.84	20
10	Morocco	-0.83	47
11	Azerbaijan	-0.8	38
12	Afghanistan	-0.77	26
13	Haiti	-0.72	44
14	Portugal	-0.72	46
15	Bahamas	-0.71	47
16	Trinidad & Tobago	-0.69	46
17	Belize	-0.66	47
18	Spain	-0.63	47
19	Montenegro	-0.62	16
20	Bosnia & Herzegovina	-0.61	33

Residualized ATIS

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Cape Verde	3.95	28
2	Jamaica	3.45	46
3	India	3.09	43
4	Marshall Islands	2.69	28
5	Nigeria	2.66	48
6	Kenya	2.58	47
7	Eswatini	2.43	46
8	Palau	2.42	22
9	Argentina	2.19	46
10	Central African Republic	2.19	27
11	Iraq	2.17	24
12	United Kingdom	2.16	47
13	Vietnam	2.09	32
14	Equatorial Guinea	2.02	18
15	Greece	1.98	47
16	Liberia	1.67	47
17	Brunei	1.61	33
18	Egypt	1.61	47
19	Laos	1.56	38
20	Tunisia	1.55	47

	countryStandardized	avg_resid	n_qy
	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>
1	Slovakia	-2.81	37
2	Mauritius	-2.78	47
3	Mozambique	-2.69	47
4	Angola	-2.63	36
5	Ecuador	-2.3	43
6	Algeria	-2.25	47
7	China	-2.17	44
8	Niger	-2.09	46
9	Paraguay	-2.02	47
10	Trinidad & Tobago	-1.94	46
11	Oman	-1.84	47
12	Yemen	-1.76	41
13	Belarus	-1.67	20
14	Guinea	-1.58	47
15	Hungary	-1.58	47
16	Burundi	-1.56	47
17	Finland	-1.54	47
18	Bahamas	-1.51	47
19	Madagascar	-1.48	47
20	Tajikistan	-1.46	33