Online Appendix for "Believe It or Not? Partisanship, Preferences, and the Credibility of Campaign Promises," by Pablo Fernandez-Vazquez and Alexander G. Theodoridis

A.1 Survey Items

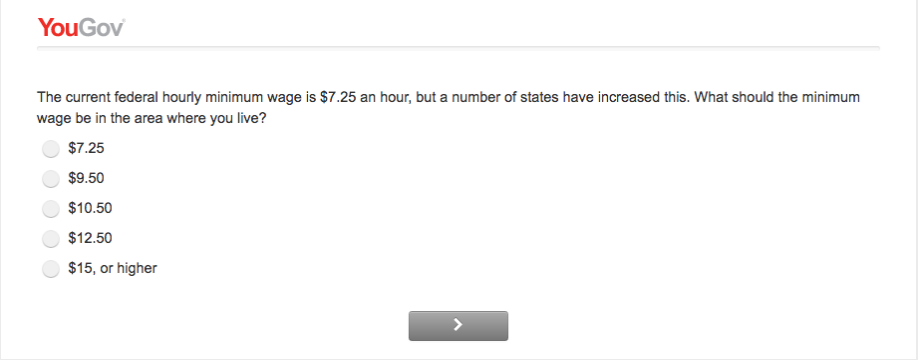

Figure A1: Respondent Preference Regarding the Minimum Wage.

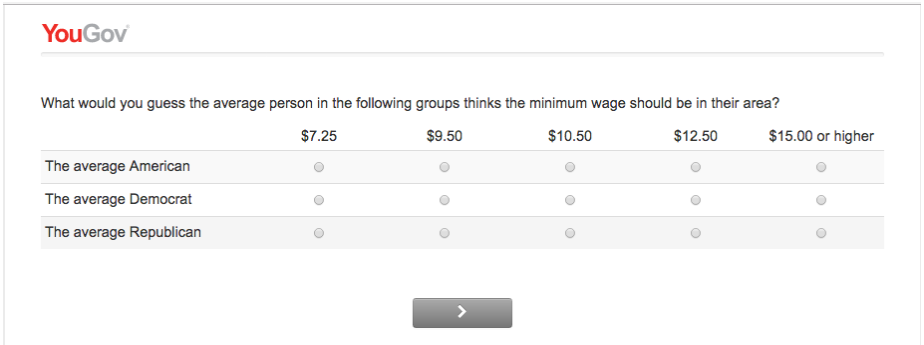

Figure A2: Perceptions about Preferences of Others

A.2 Analysis for Independents Only

The following analysis evaluates the impact of the candidate's policy shift among independents only. It compares the effect of the change in endorsed positions depending on whether the candidate moves closer to the respondent's preferred policy or not. Figure A3 plots these estimates for each candidate. The estimated effects suggest that the direction of the policy shift only matters among partisans: Independents are equally receptive to

the candidate's shift no matter what is the direction of the policy movement. Hence, there is no empirical evidence that respondents engage in motivated reasoning based solely on the direction of the candidate's shift. In other words, the respondent's own preference on the issue matters for how she reacts to a candidate's rhetoric, but only in interaction with her partisan identification.

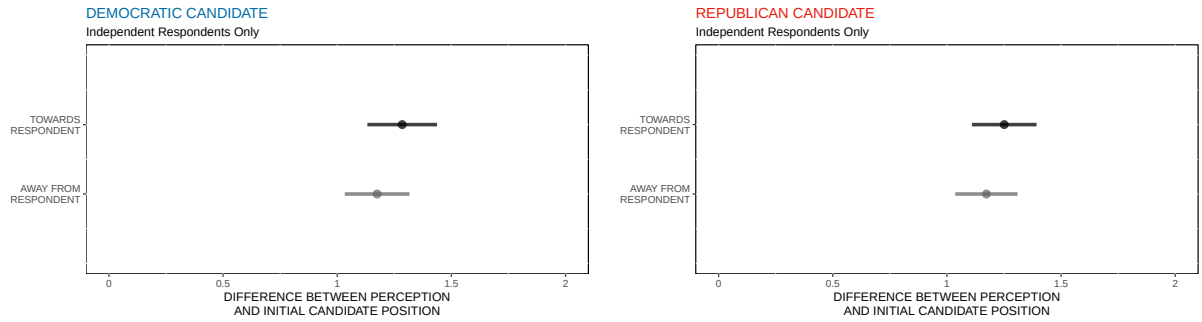

Figure A3: Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals. **Independent Respondents Only**.

A.3 Robustness Check: First Strategy to Address the Role of Party Stereotypes

As mentioned in the main text, the empirical evidence reported in Figure 8 could also be consistent with an alternative explanation, one in which respondents use party stereotypes to guess where the candidate is located. This implies that, regardless of the treatment, respondents tend to place the Democratic candidate near higher minimum wage levels and Republican candidate near lower minimum wage levels because these tend to be the partisan stereotypes on this issue. Under this alternative account, the higher estimated impact of candidate shifts closer to in-partisans or farther from out-partisans would be an artifact: it would just reflect that these shifts correlate positively with taking positions near the party stereotype.

To address this alternative explanation and confirm whether *Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation* holds as an independent phenomenon, we split the sample according to

whether the candidate shifts closer to the party stereotype or farther from it and replicate the analysis in Figure 8 separately for each subsample. In doing so, we effectively control for the role of stereotypes. For this purpose we take advantage of the fact that the survey questionnaire includes an item capturing the respondent's perception about the party's stereotype on the issue. Specifically, it asks where the average Republican/Democrat prefers on the issue of the minimum wage.[9] Hence, we have individual-level information on the party stereotype. With this information we create a dummy variable indicating whether the candidate has moved closer or farther away from the party stereotype: Take a respondent who places the Democratic Party stereotype at position \$12.50. Assume also that the initial candidate stance was \$10.50. Now, if the second candidate stance is \$12.50, we consider that the party is moving closer to the stereotype. If, on the contrary, the second stance is \$9.50 we consider that the candidate has moved farther from the stereotype.

Figure A4 presents results for the subsample of cases in which the candidate shifts farther away from her party's stereotype. The empirical pattern that arises is fully consistent with Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation: A candidate shift has a stronger effect on in-partisans if the candidate moves closer to them. In contrast, the highest impact on out-partisans occurs when the candidate moves away from them.

Figure A5 presents results for the subsample of cases in which the candidate shifts closer to her party's stereotype. The evidence for in-partisans is also fully in line with the expectations of the Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation: candidate shifts closer to respondents have a larger effect than shifts away from them. For out-partisans, there is no clear pattern, however. Taken together, the evidence for both subsamples is largely

[9]The survey instrument does not specify whether it refers to voters or to political candidates. However, given that the previous question refers to the average voter, it is likely that respondents had the average Republican/Democratic *voter* in mind. In any case, the high correlation in the position of partisan voters and their preferred parties (Lenz 2013) makes the distinction less relevant.

consistent with Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. This suggests that the empirical pattern presented in Figure 8 in the main text is not fully driven by stereotypes.

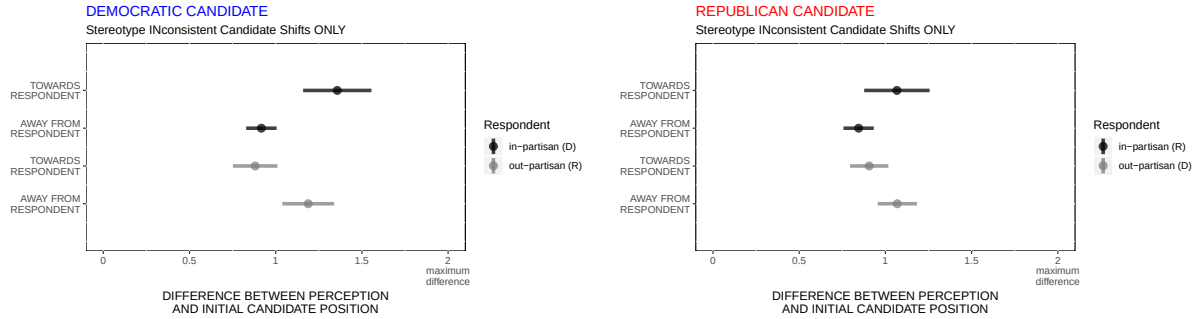

Figure A4: Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals. **Only candidate shifts *farther from the party's stereotype***

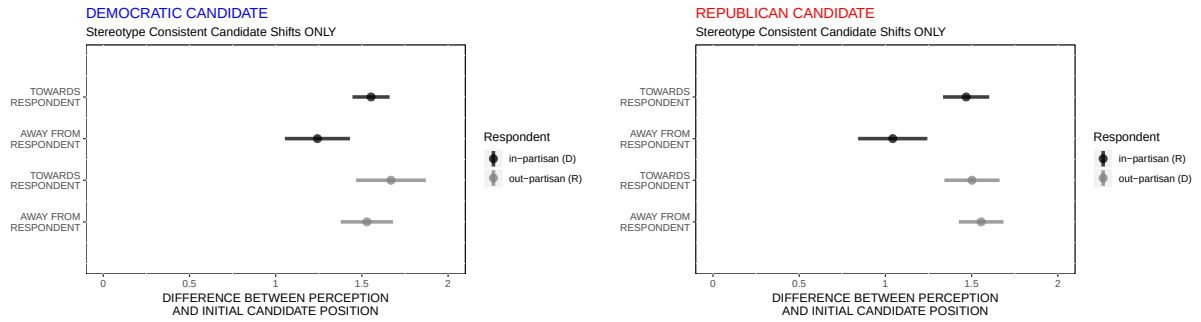

Figure A5: Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals. **Only candidate shifts *closer to the party's stereotype***

A.4 Robustness Check: Second Strategy to Address the Role of Party Stereotypes

As a second strategy to address the possibly confounding role of party stereotypes, we calculate how the respondent's guess about the candidate's preference *deviates* from the party's stereotype. Again, we take advantage of the fact that the survey questionnaire includes an item capturing the individual's perception of what the party stereotype is on the issue of the minimum wage. To illustrate the coding of this variable, assume that the respondent's thinks that the stereotypical position for a Democrat is 4 on the scale

($12.50). If the respondent places that Democratic candidate at position 3 on the scale ($10.50), the outcome variable equals $3 - 4 = -1$. If, on the contrary, the respondent places the candidate at position 5 on the scale ($15 or more), the outcome equals $5 - 4 = 1$. This outcome thus recovers the part of the respondent's guess about the candidate that is *unexplained* by the party stereotype.

Figure A6 presents the distribution of this variable for both the Democratic and the Republican candidates. Both distributions behave as expected: First, the high proportion of zeroes confirms that there is a tendency to place the candidate at the party's stereotype. Second, both distributions are slightly skewed. In the case of the Republican candidate, the distribution of candidate perceived position is skewed toward more generous minimum wages. This suggest that the treatment is moving the perceived candidate position in that direction. Likewise, for the Democratic candidate, the distribution of perceived candidate positions is skewed towards smaller minimum wage levels. This is also likely to be result of the treatment effect.

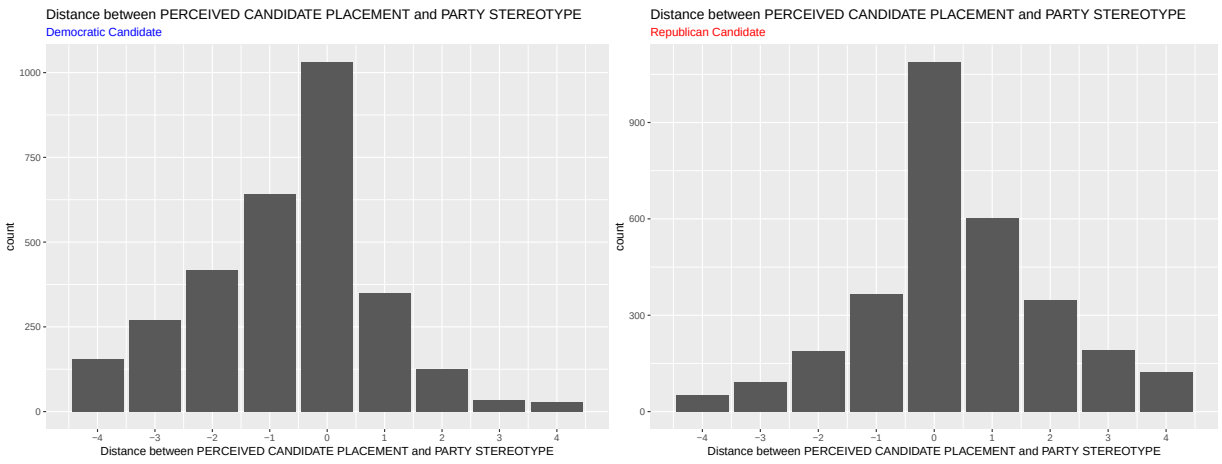

Figure A6: How respondents' perceptions of candidates deviate from party stereotypes.

In order to be able to capture how the candidate shift induces deviations in perceptions from party stereotypes, we also calculate how much the second candidate stance deviates from the partys stereotype (as perceived by the respondent). Hence, it captures the difference between the second candidate stance and the party's stereotype. Figure A7 reports

the distribution of this measure for both the Republican and the Democratic candidate. The distributions of this measure also make sense for both candidates. Since most respondents consider that the stereotypical Republican supports low minimum wage levels (the left side of the issue scale) it is more likely to find large differences on the opposite side of the scale. Conversely, for the Democratic candidate, since the reputation tends to be that Democrats favor higher minimum wage levels (right side of the issue scale), it is more likely to find large differences on the opposite side of the scale.

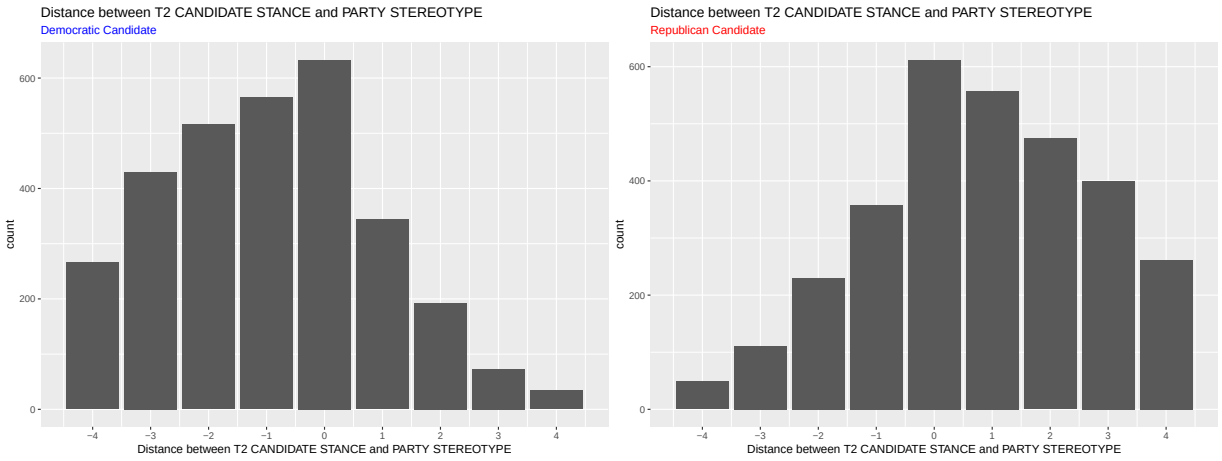

Figure A7: How respondents' perceptions of candidates deviate from party stereotypes.

To estimate the magnitude of the treatment effect, the strategy we follow is to compute how much perceptions deviate from the stereotype relative to how much the candidate's (second) stance deviated from that same stereotype. Hence we take the ratio of both differences:

$$\frac{\text{how respondent's guess about candidate deviates from stereotype}}{\text{how candidate's stance deviates from stereotype}}$$

Since the ratio is undefined when the denominator is 0, we add 0.5 to that denominator. Here is the distribution of this outcome of interest:

Now, in order to test whether *Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation* holds once we take into account the role of stereotypes, we compute the average of this outcome for each partisan group, depending on whether the candidate has moved closer to the respondent

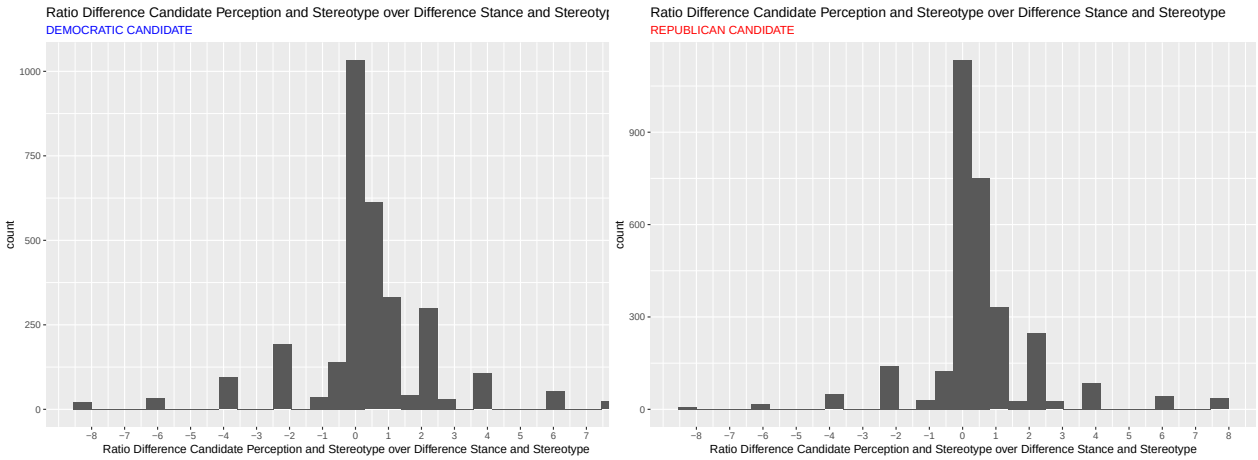

Figure A8: Ratio of deviations from the party's stereotype.

or farther from her. In other words, we replicate the analysis in the main text (Figure 8) with this alternative outcome:

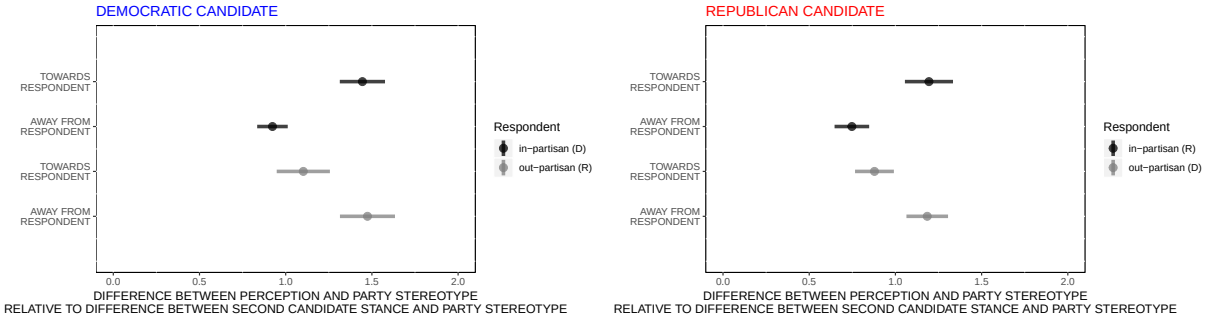

Figure A9: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation using deviations from the party's stereotype as outcome of interest. Averages and 95% confidence intervals. **By partisan group and by the DIRECTION of the candidate position shift**

The pattern of results is fully in line with the preference mediated partisan motivation scenario. The estimates in Figure A9 show that, for both candidates, the issue stance has a stronger effect among in-partisans if the candidate moves closer to them. Likewise, the issue stance plays a larger role among out-partisans when the candidate moves farther away from them. In other words, there is also evidence of preference mediated partisan motivation when looking only at the part of respondents' perceptions that is unexplained by party stereotypes. Hence, we can conclude that the evidence presented in the main text is *not* an artifact of the role of party stereotypes.

A.5 Robustness Check: Testing for Motivated Reasoning with a Regression Model

This section assesses the empirical support for each of the theoretical scenarios using a multiple regression model. With this strategy it is possible to control for the respondent's partisan stereotypes on this issue. Specifically, the regression includes the respondent's perception of where Republicans and Democrats tend to stand on the issue of the minimum wage. In addition, the regression model controls for the respondent's own preference on the issue to rule out the possibility that the pattern of motivated reasoning reported in the main text is actually produced by false consensus bias, i.e. the tendency to overestimate the proximity between the candidate and the respondent (see, e.g. Ross, Greene and House 1977). The baseline regression equation we estimate is the following:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{perception} = \beta_1\,\text{stance (t-1)} + \beta_2\,\text{policy shift} \\ + \beta_3\,\text{voter position} + \beta_4\,\text{perception of D/R stereotype} + \varepsilon \quad (1)\end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable, *perception*, indicates the respondent's guess about what "the candidate actually prefers". *Stance (t-1)* denotes the candidate's past position on the minimum wage issue. The variable *Policy shift*, moreover, represents the difference between the current stance –*stance (t)*– and the previous one –*stance (t-1)*–. For a candidate that initially advocated a $7.25 minimum wage, *Policy shift* equals one if the candidate currently endorses the next option on the minimum wage scale ($9.50), two if the candidate endorses the policy that is two positions away on the scale ($10.50), and so forth. The coefficient for *Policy Shift* captures how a one-unit change in the candidate's issue stance affects the respondent's perception. Logically, the maximum potential effect of the policy shift would imply a coefficient equal to one. Values for this coefficient below one, therefore, suggest that respondents discount the policy shift as not fully credible.

Perception of D/R stereotype is a control variable that reflects the respondent's opinion about what the average Democrat/Republican prefers on the minimum wage issue. If the candidate in the vignette is a Democrat, the perceived stereotype for Democrats is used. If the candidate is a Republican, the Republican perceived stereotype is used. This predictor is included as a measure of the respondent's partisan stereotypes, i.e. her beliefs about what candidates of that party tend to prefer regarding the minimum wage. Finally, in order to control for the possibility of false consensus bias, the equation includes the respondent's preferred policy on the issue, *voter position*.

Table A1 presents the results of this baseline regression model. It confirms the result presented in the main text that respondent's reactions to the candidate policy shift are more consistent with the second scenario (*skepticism*) than with the first (*full credibility*). Indeed, the coefficient for *Policy Shift* indicates that the impact of a one-unit shift in issue position is only 0.3 units for either party. In other words, since this coefficient is less than 1, we can conclude that respondents do not behave according to the *full credibility* scenario and, instead, discount the policy shift in line with the *skepticism* hypothesis.

The respondent's prior belief about where Democrats and Republicans stand on the issue (*Perception of D/R stereotype*) also correlates with the respondent's placement of the candidate. The coefficient equals 0.3 for the Democratic candidate and 0.2 for the Republican one, and both estimates are statistically different from zero. The coefficient estimate for *Voter Position* is negative and not statistically significant, which suggests that the respondent's own preference on the issue does not have an effect on her perception of where each candidate stands. Hence, there is no evidence of false-consensus bias in voter opinions about candidate placements.

Taking the baseline regression model as the starting point, we gauge the empirical support for the *partisan motivation* scenario by specifying an interaction between the

Table A1: Regression Results. Baseline Model.

	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate
	(1)	(2)
Stance (t-1)	0.5*	0.5*
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Policy Shift	0.2*	0.2*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Voter Position	−0.004	−0.001
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Perception of D/R stereotype	0.3*	0.2*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.7*	0.5*
	(0.1)	(0.1)
Observations	3,049	3,048

Note: *p<0.05

candidate's policy shift and the partisanship of the respondent:

$$\text{perception} = \beta_1 \,\text{stance (t-1)} + \beta_2 \,\text{policy shift} + \beta_3 \,\text{policy shift * party ID} + \beta_3 \,\text{party ID} + \beta_4 \text{voter position} + \beta_5 \,\text{perception of D/R stereotype} + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Party ID is a dummy variable that takes the value of one if the respondent identifies with the party of the candidate. Hence, for a Democratic candidate, *Party ID* equals one if the respondent is a Democrat. For a Republican candidate, this variable indicates that the respondent is a Republican. The *partisan motivation* scenario predicts that respondents lend more credibility to the policy shift adopted by the candidate of their own party. Hence, the testable implication is that the interaction coefficient *policy shift * party ID* is positive.

Table A2 presents the regression results. These estimates focus on the subsample of respondents who declare a party identification (about 78% of the sample). Hence, the interaction coefficients present the difference in the effect of policy shift between respondents

who identify with the party of the candidate and those that identify with the other party. The coefficient estimates for *Perception of D/R stereotype* confirm that the respondent's prior about where Democrats and Republicans stand on this issue correlates positively with the post-treatment perception of what policy the candidate actually prefers. At the same time, there is no clear evidence of false consensus bias. The coefficient for *voter position* is not statistically distinguishable from zero for the Democratic Candidate. For the Republican one there is a positive correlation between the respondent's position and her perception of the candidate's placement, but this effect is very small in magnitude.

Table A2: Regression Results. Testing for **Partisan Motivation**.

	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate
	(1)	(2)
Stance (t-1)	0.5*	0.6*
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Policy Shift	0.2*	0.3*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Democrat	−0.03	
	(0.1)	
Policy Shift * Democrat	0.03	
	(0.02)	
Republican		0.3*
		(0.1)
Policy Shift * Republican		−0.04
		(0.02)
Voter Position	−0.003	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Perception of D/R stereotype	0.3*	0.2*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.8*	0.2
	(0.1)	(0.1)
Observations	2,378	2,376
Note:	*p<0.05	

Regarding the test of the *partisan motivation* scenario, neither interaction coefficient (*Policy Shift * Democrat* and *Policy Shift * Republican*) is statistically significant. Therefore, there is no empirical support for the hypothesis that respondents are more receptive

to a candidate's policy shift if the candidate belongs to their preferred party. Figure A10 confirms this by comparing the marginal effect of the policy shift for each candidate and each partisan group. As can be seen the marginal effect estimates are not statistically distinguishable across partisan groups. Hence, we can conclude that there is no support for the hypothesis that motivated reasoning is based on the respondent's partisanship alone.

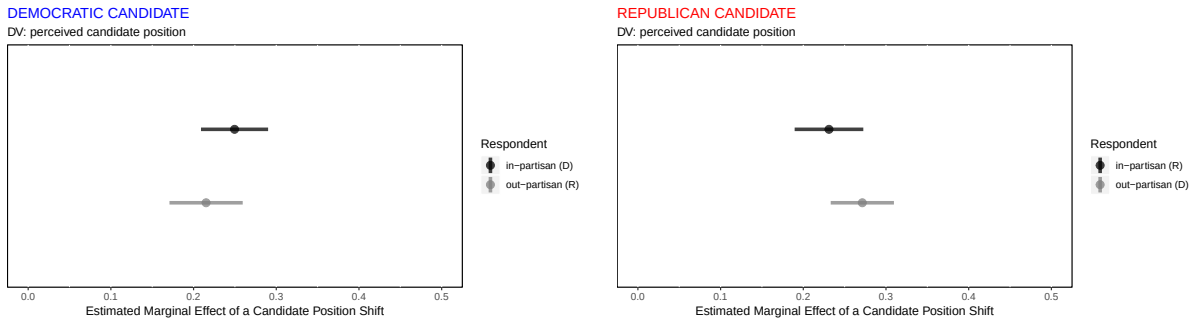

Figure A10: Testing for **Partisan Motivation**. Estimated marginal effects of a one-unit candidate shift with and 95% confidence intervals. **By partisan group**.

We now evaluate whether voters behave according to the *preference mediated partisan motivation*. This scenario predicts that, within each partisan group, the effect of the shift depends on whether the candidate moves closer to the respondent's issue position or not. Hence, we augment the previous regression equation with a triple interaction between the magnitude of the policy shift, the respondent's partisanship, and the direction of the shift:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{perception} = \beta_1\,\text{stance (t-1)} + \beta_2\,\text{policy shift} + \beta_3\,\text{party ID} + \beta_4\,\text{Closer to Respondent} \\ + \beta_5\,\text{policy shift * party ID} + \beta_6\,\text{policy shift * party ID * Closer to Respondent} \\ +\beta_7\text{party ID * Closer to Respondent}+\beta_8\text{voter position}+\beta_9\,\text{perception of D/R stereotype}+\varepsilon\end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Closer to Respondent is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the current candidate stance is closer to the respondent's position than the previous stance. It is interacted with both *policy shift* and *party ID* to test whether the respondent's preference mediates in party ID-based motivated reasoning. Table A3 presents the full regression results. Given the

difficulty in interpreting regression output in a model with a triple interaction, Figure A11 plots the estimated marginal effect of the candidate's policy shift across partisan groups and conditioning on the direction of the shift.

Table A3: Regression Results. Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation.

	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate
	(1)	(2)
Stance (t-1)	0.5*	0.6*
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Policy Shift	0.3*	0.3*
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Democrat	0.05	
	(0.1)	
Closer to Respondent	0.2*	−0.05
	(0.1)	(0.1)
Policy Shift * Democrat	−0.1*	
	(0.03)	
Policy Shift * Closer to Respondent	−0.1*	
	(0.04)	
Democrat * Closer to Respondent	−0.2	
	(0.1)	
Policy Shift * Democrat * Closer to Respondent	0.2*	
	(0.1)	
Republican		0.3*
		(0.1)
Policy Shift * Republican		−0.1*
		(0.03)
Policy Shift * Closer to Respondent		0.03
		(0.04)
Republican * Closer to Respondent		0.03
		(0.1)
Policy Shift * Republican * Closer to Respondent		0.1
		(0.05)
Voter Position	−0.002	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Perception of D/R stereotype	0.2*	0.2*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.7*	0.3*
	(0.1)	(0.1)
Observations	2,378	2,376

Note: *p<0.05

The empirical estimates of the effect of the candidate's policy shift reported in Figure A11 approximates well the theoretical expectations of the *preference mediated partisan motivation* scenario (Figure 4). For the Democratic candidate, Democratic respondents are more receptive if the candidate moves closer to their position than if the candidate moves farther away: the estimated marginal effect is larger in the former case and the difference is statistically significant. As a mirror image, Republican respondents lend more credibility to the Democratic candidate when she moves farther away from their preferred policy. For the Republican candidate the pattern is not as clear, but it still offers partial support for the *preference mediated partisan motivation* hypothesis. The effect of the shift among Democrats does not change depending on whether the Republican candidate moves towards their position or not. Yet, among respondents who share the candidate's partisan affiliation, the shift has a stronger effect on perceptions when the candidate moves to endorse a policy closer to the respondent's preferred position. In sum, this alternative empirical strategy also finds empirical support for the *preference mediated partisan motivation* theoretical scenario. This implies that the respondent's prior about where Democrats and Republican stand on the issue is not driving the results reported in the main text. We can also rule out the alternative explanation that our empirical findings are actually due to a false-consensus effect.

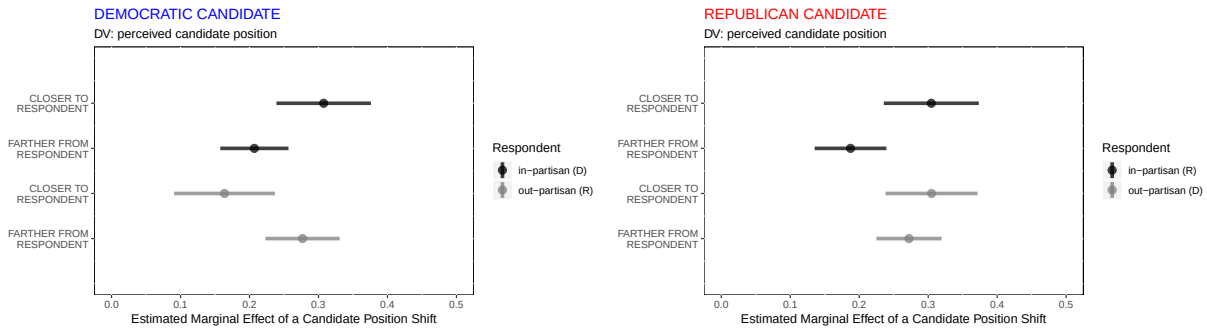

Figure A11: Testing for **Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation**. Estimated marginal effects of a one-unit candidate shift with and 95% confidence intervals. **By partisan group and by the DIRECTION of the candidate position shift**.

A.6 Addressing Correlation Between Type of Shift and Respondent Preference

In this section we address the fact that, within each partisan group, the indicator *moving towards/moving away from* the respondent can correlate with the respondent's issue preference. To give an example, moving closer to a Republican respondent correlates positively with moving towards lower minimum wage levels. To address the possibility that the endogeneity of this indicator could be biasing results, we replicate the test for *Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation* among respondents who share the same minimum wage preference. Results are reported in figures A12 to A16. The first figure presents the effect of candidate stances among respondents who prefer a "$15 or more" minimum wage, the second figure refers to respondents who support a "$12.50" minimum wage, and so on.

These results largely reproduce a pattern consistent with the Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. This is particularly the case among in-partisans: candidate shifts closer to the position of in-partisans tends to have a stronger effect on perceptions. Evidence of preference mediated partisan motivation among out-partisans is somewhat weaker, particularly for small subsamples, like Democrats that favor low minimum wages or Republicans that favor high minimum wages. This could be due to the small size of these subsamples. All in all, after holding the respondent preference constant, there is evidence that candidate shifts closer tends to have a larger impact than shifts away from them. Regarding out-partisans, the impact tends to be stronger if the candidate moves farther away from their position.

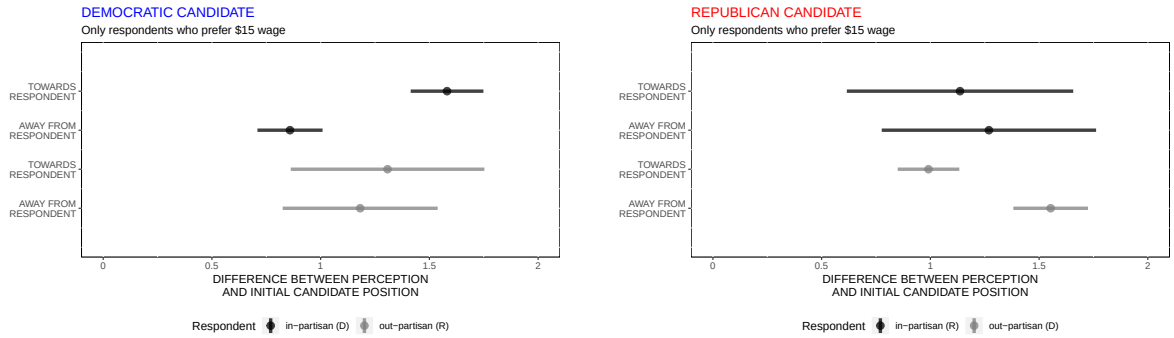

Figure A12: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals by partisan group and DIRECTION of the candidate shift.**Only respondents that favor a $15 minimum wage**

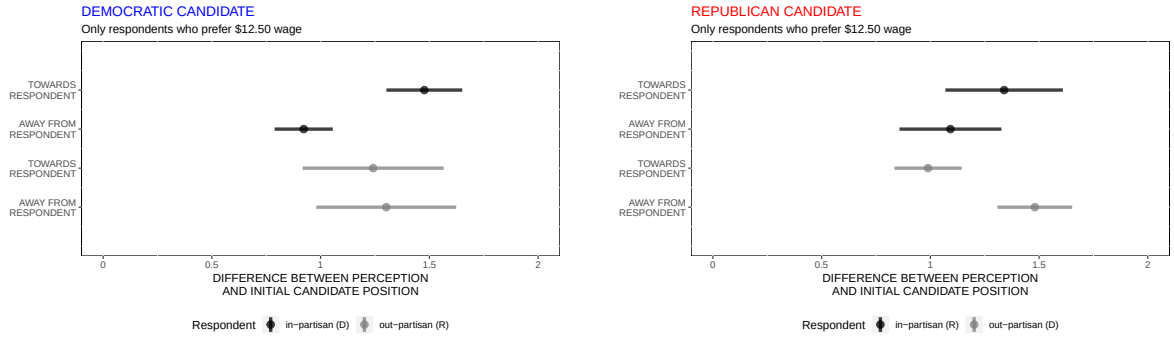

Figure A13: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals by partisan group and DIRECTION of the candidate shift. **Only respondents that favor a $12.50 minimum wage**

A.7 Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation and Evaluation

In addition to perceptions of where a candidate stands, preference mediated partisan motivation might also shape opinions about the candidate's character. Tomz and Van Houweling (2012) show that voters tend to evaluate candidates who shift issue positions more negatively than those who stay put. In Figure A17, we estimate whether perceptions about a candidate's honesty depend on partisan affiliation and whether the candidate shifts closer to the voter's position. We plot the average honesty attributed to the candidate for each partisan group and each type of policy movement, where hon-

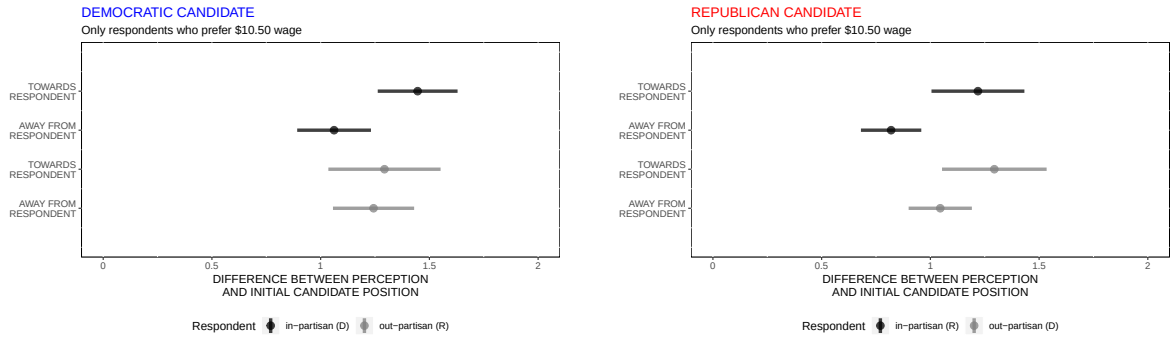

Figure A14: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals by partisan group and DIRECTION of the candidate shift. **Only respondents that favor a $10.50 minimum wage**

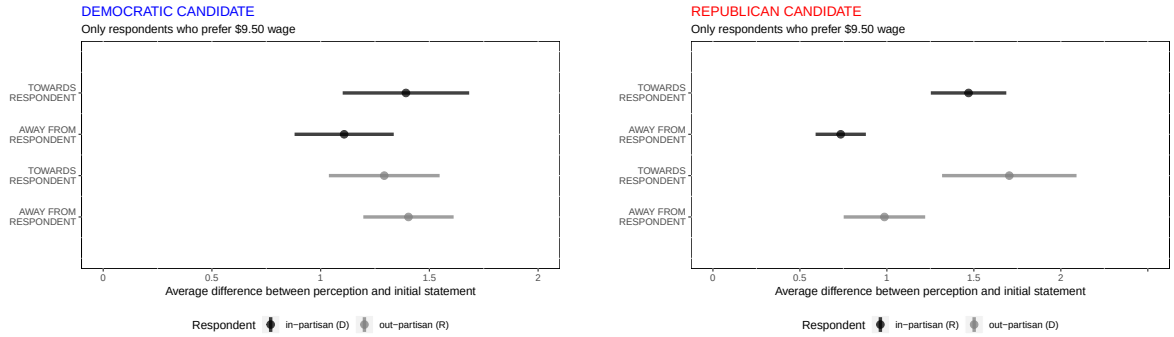

Figure A15: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals by partisan group and DIRECTION of the candidate shift. **Only respondents that favor a $9.50 minimum wage**

esty ranges from 1 (the lowest level) to 5 (the highest level). The first conclusion we can draw is that, unsurprisingly, respondents tend to evaluate more positively a candidate of their own party. The direction of the shift does not have a clear effect for the out-party candidate. Democrats have slightly better opinions about the honesty of a Republican candidate that moves closer to their position. Opinions about the Democratic candidate, on the other hand, are the same among Republican voters whether she moves closer or farther from them. The direction of the policy shift does play an important role for the in-party candidate: The candidate is perceived to be more honest when she moves closer

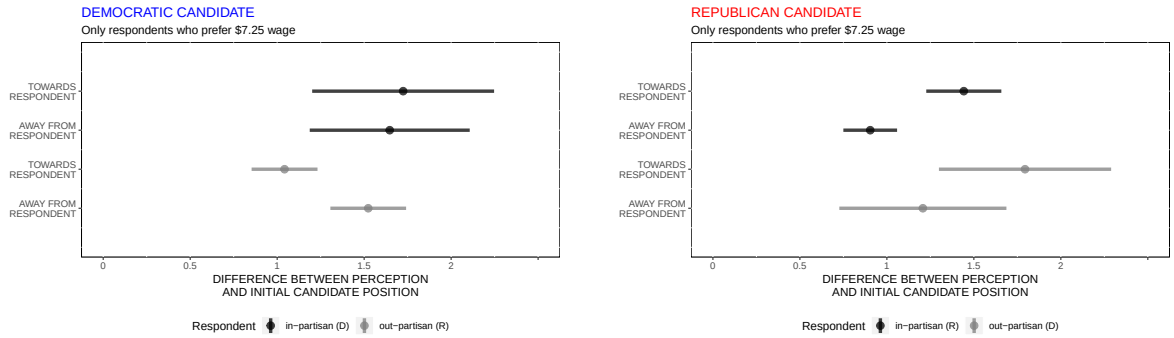

Figure A16: Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation. Absolute difference between the initial candidate position and respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals by partisan group and DIRECTION of the candidate shift. **Only respondents that favor a $7.25 minimum wage**

to the respondent than when she moves away. This suggests that the respondent's issue preference colors reactions to a candidate's policy shift not only in terms of her perceived position, but also in terms of her perceived virtue.

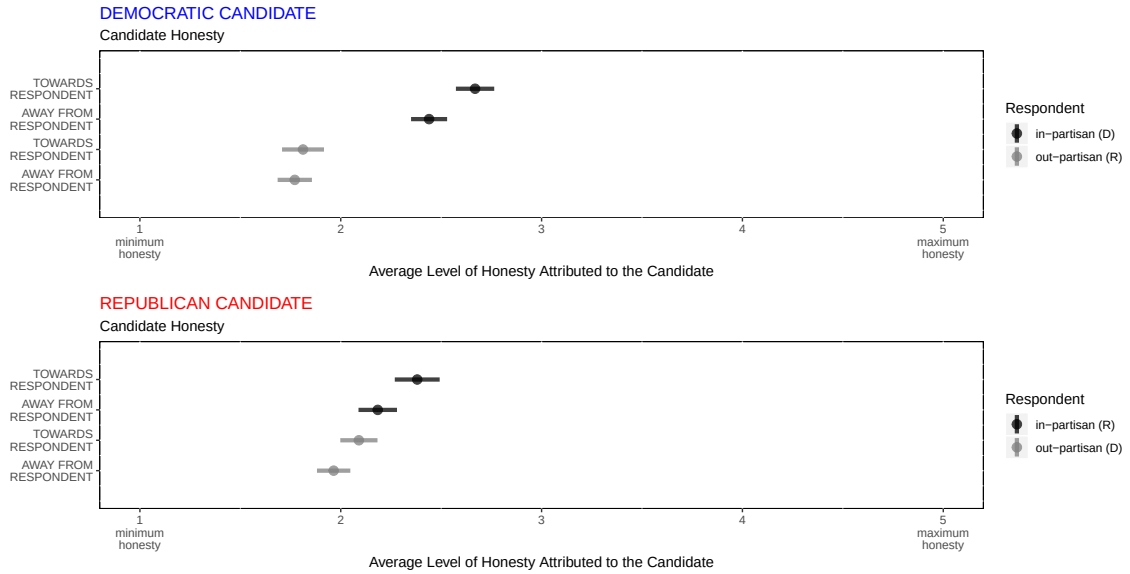

Figure A17: Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation in opinions about the candidate's honesty. Perceived candidate honesty: averages and 95% confidence intervals for each candidate, partisan group and as a function of the direction of the candidate shift.

A.8 Testing for Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation Using An Alternative Outcome

This section tests for the existence of Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation using an alternative outcome of interest. It is defined as the distance between the second candidate stance and the respondent's guess about where the candidate actually stands. The closer the respondent's perception to the candidate's final stance, the more credible the candidate position shift. As a benchmark, if respondents take candidate shifts at face value, we should observe that there is no difference between the respondent's guess and the candidate's final position.

The approach to evaluate the preference mediated partisan motivation scenario is the same as the one we adopt in the main text. We compare the average outcome of interest across partisan groups and depending on the direction of the candidate shift -towards the respondent or away from her-. Figure A18 presents the evidence.

This plots shows that co-partisans of both candidates lend more credibility to the

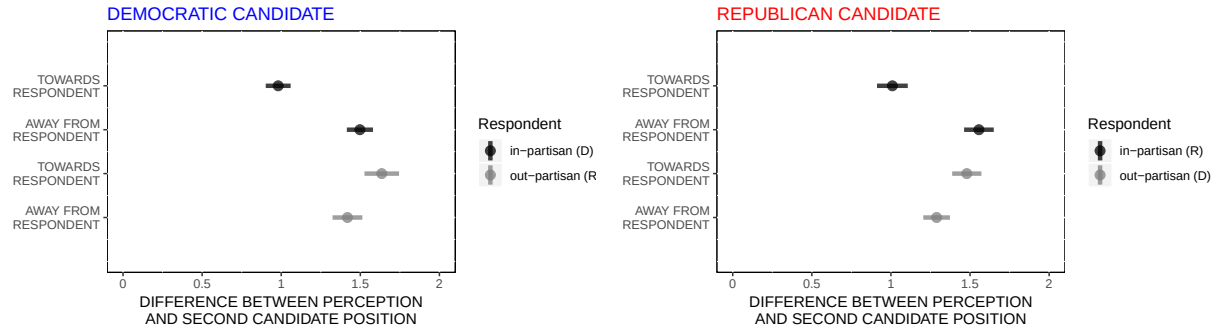

Figure A18: Absolute difference between the **second** candidate position and the respondents' perception of where the candidate stands. Averages and 95% confidence intervals. **By partisan group and by the DIRECTION of the candidate position shift**.

second stance if the candidate moves *towards* the respondent's preferred position: The average difference between the respondent's guess and the second stance is closer to zero for candidate shifts towards to the respondent. The pattern reverses for out-partisan respondents: The final candidate stance has a stronger impact if the candidate shifts *away* from the respondent. Indeed, the average distance is smaller for shifts away from the respondent than for those towards her. In sum, the test using this alternative outcome measure also supports the Preference Mediated Partisan Motivation hypothesis.