

**In Voters' Minds, Are All Politics Really Local?
Comparing Voters' Knowledge of National and Local Politics**

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In the debate over whether citizens are knowledgeable enough to make competent electoral choices, the evidence clearly proves that Americans do not know much about politics beyond basic facts about government and their elected leaders. Given that media coverage makes national politics more prominent than local politics, it is logical to assume that Americans are even less knowledgeable about local politics than national politics. Recent research has begun to make the case that people are at least as familiar with local politics as they are national politics, if not more. In this study, we surveyed a random sample of likely voters in Jacksonville, Florida about local and national politics during a municipal election campaign. Despite the fact that we conducted our study in an environment that favors parity in knowledge between national and local politics, our evidence casts serious doubt about recent claims that people know as much about local issues and local government as they do about national issues and national government.

Survey research time and again has clearly established that the American public knows very little about politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Neuman 1986; Zaller 1992; Kohut, Morin and Keeter 2007). Consequently, some scholars have questioned whether Americans know enough to make sound decisions in the ballot box (Zaller 1992; Converse 1964; Somin 1998).¹ Furthermore, are people even worse off when it comes to local politics since local issues get relatively less news coverage than national and state issues? Evidence from recent studies suggests that the answer is no, claiming public may know as much, if not more, about local politics as it does about national politics.

In this study, we compare how much Americans know about local politics to how much they know about national politics using a survey of Duval County likely voters during a Jacksonville mayoral campaign. We also examine demographic and political predictors of knowledge to see if they vary in influencing knowledge about national and local politics. We find that Americans do not know nearly as much about local politics as they know about national politics, even during an off-cycle local election campaign. Likely voters were more informed about the basic structure and processes of national government than those of local government. Furthermore, Americans knew more about where national political leaders stood on national issues than they did about where local candidates stood on local issues. This survey was conducted right before early voting began in a municipal election, yet *likely voters* were not familiar with how their local government worked nor were they very familiar with the people campaigning to run it.

¹ There is a long well established literature debating the competency of the electorate to make sound, competent or correct votes at the ballot box. We are not weighing in on this issue, we are merely examining whether there is a gap between local and national political knowledge.

Compared to previous work on this topic, we argue that our study provides methodologically superior measures of local and national political knowledge. We constructed a question battery at each level of government designed to probe how much people know about the structure of government and where elected leaders stood on important issues. Unlike previous studies, we made sure that questions posed about local government were as analogous to questions posed at national level as possible. The previous studies do not use this approach. This study was also conducted during a period when we were likely to find parity in what people knew about local politics and national politics. Yet, we find large disparities in what people knew about government and issues at the national level and the local level.

In the following sections, we will review the existing literature on political knowledge, lay out the literature's competing expectations for what Americans should know about national and local politics, explain our survey and research design, as well as discuss our findings.

How Much Do Americans Know About National and Local Politics?

The American public is not deeply informed about politics. Analyzing decades of survey data, Neuman (1986) concludes that 75% of the public is not politically sophisticated and another 20% is uninterested in politics. "Most people can be mobilized to political action, they half-attentively monitor the flow of political news, but they run for the most part on a psychological automatic pilot" (Neuman 1986, p 6-7). Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996) seminal study elaborated upon what Neuman's did, showing that people knew the basics about how government was organized, who their elected officials were, and about salient political issues. But, most people did not have a strong grasp of the minutiae of how government operates or a

strong grasp of where their elected officials stood on issues that were not prominently featured in the news.

Consequently, some worry that the general public cannot properly hold government accountable for what it does and does not do. “This suggests that voters not only cannot choose between specific competing policy *programs*, but also cannot accurately assign credit and blame for highly visible policy *outcomes* to the right officeholder” (Somin 1998, p 417). Extending this logic, those who do not know a lot about politics will be less able to critically evaluate what they see, hear, or read about what politicians are doing and the ways that politicians spin their records in news coverage because they lack the proper context to make sense of the news (Zaller 1992).

Yet, we may be blaming the public for political ignorance while missing important components of what the public does know (Lupia 2015). Shaker (2012) argues that well known conclusions about wide spread political ignorance are based on studies focusing on *national politics* while most of the governance in this country is local. Ninety-six percent of the elected officials in the United States represent local jurisdictions (Marschall, Shah, and Ruhil 2011) and 76% of Americans reside in communities that have fewer than 100,000 residents (Oliver, Ha and Callen 2012, p 4). As Byron Price of *The Associated Press* noted in the 1930s, “In its last essence all politics is local politics...” (Price 1932, 7)²

There are reasons to suspect that Americans will be in tune to local politics like they are to national politics. Nielsen data show that more Americans watch local news (71%) rather than

² Former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill is commonly credited with making the phrase “All politics is local” popular, but Price used variations of it in his reporting years before O’Neill did.

national news (65%) (Olmstead, Jurkowitz, Mitchell and Enda 2013). In 2012, a greater percentage of Americans thought that local news organizations (65%) were more credible than any of the three national broadcast networks (ABC News had the highest rating at 57%) (Pew Research Center For The People & The Press 2012).

Among the many governmental reforms that Progressives advocated for was separating local elections from federal and state elections. Their real motives have been questioned (see Anzia 2014 and Bridges 1997), but Progressives argued that separating elections would allow citizens to focus on local issues instead of national and state politics. They claimed that national and state parties would drown out local candidates and distract voters (Anzia 2014). Lawmakers echo this sentiment today when activists push to move local elections to even-numbered years.³

Today, most municipal elections are held in odd numbered years without the presence of federal election campaigns to distract voters' attention away from local issues. Presently, only five states hold their municipal elections concurrently with national or state elections: Arkansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oregon and Rhode Island (Greenblatt 2015). If most elections do not have to compete with national and state campaigns for citizens' attention, and people are as likely to watch local news as they are the national news, and Progressives' claims were correct, it stands to reason that voters might be as knowledgeable about local politics as they are about national politics.

³ Earlier this year, the California General Assembly approved a bill that would force localities with less than 25% turnout in local elections to hold their elections concurrently with federal and state elections. State Representative David Hadley argued against it, saying that "Forcing our local campaigns to compete with state and federal races for money, for volunteers, for voter attention, I think is the wrong way..." (Greenblatt 2015)

Recent research suggests that this is true and that people may possibly know more about local politics than national politics. Shaker (2012) conducted a survey using a random sample of Philadelphians right after a mayoral election and asked them a series of questions about local and national politics. He found that overall, respondents correctly answered approximately the same percentage of local questions as they did national ones. Similarly, Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) analyze surveys of suburban voters and find that voters considered themselves to be highly knowledgeable about the people running for office in their towns.

Shaker's (2012) study employs a conventional knowledge question battery mixed with issue questions about national politics, but he does not replicate the types of questions when he probes for local political knowledge. Instead, for the national knowledge he uses four of the five questions that Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) recommend using (in place of longer question batteries) and substitutes a presidential policy question for the fifth. His local questions ask respondents about Philadelphia's superintendent, mayoral candidates' backgrounds, mayoral candidates' names, candidate's policies, as well as who won the election. These questions are reasonable questions to include in a question battery assessing political knowledge but they do not allow him to draw direct comparisons between national and local knowledge. The Delli Carpini and Keeter recommended questions test knowledge about government structure and processes, where Shaker's local knowledge questions measure basic knowledge about candidates and their campaigns – two very different aspects of political knowledge.

Research on smaller municipalities suggests that people in those communities may actually know more about local politics than they do about national politics. Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) analyze surveys of suburban voters during election season and find that voters considered themselves to be highly knowledgeable about the people running for office in their towns.⁴ Their survey is rare in that it probes suburban voters about suburban politics, but unfortunately, it does not directly measure what people know about candidates or what they stand for. Asking people to assess their own level of knowledge about local candidates or government is likely to elicit inflated assessments of what people really know.

Do Americans Really Know As Much About Local Politics As They Do About National Politics?

Even though the recent literature claims that people know as much about local politics as they do about national politics, we expect to find the opposite. We hypothesize that a study using comparable question batteries would show that people are more informed about national politics than local politics. People are less politically engaged in local elections than they are in national ones and the news environment places more salience on national politics than local politics.

Voter turnout in municipal elections is significantly lower than it is in national elections and trends in both reveal opposing patterns. Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and New York all have experienced steady declines in the percentage of registered voters who turn out since 1952 (Maciag 2014). In 2001, municipal election turnout averaged about 27% nationwide, using

⁴ The survey asked respondents to estimate how much they knew about local candidates. “I’m going to read the names of some candidates who ran in the last election. After I say the name, I’ll ask you a few questions about him or her. First is [Candidate Name]. How much would you say you know about that candidate? Would you know a lot, a fair amount, only a little, only know the name, or never heard of [Candidate]?” (Oliver, Ha and Callen 2012)

Voting Age Population (VAP) measures, but it was lower than 21% ten years later (Maciag 2014). Turnout in presidential elections showed a modestly upward trend since 1952 with fluctuation over time using Voting-Eligible Population measures (McDonald 2014). McDonald (2014) reveals that turnout in national midterm elections is also down over time, but the decline is not as sharp as it is in local elections.

Americans do not show much of an interest in politics, but when they do pay attention, they may be more inclined to focus on national politics rather than local politics. Anderson (2011) conducted experiments to study how people prioritized political learning given that they have limited amounts of time and resources to spend on acquiring information and the election environment features campaigns at multiple levels of government at the same time. He found that when tasked with learning about presidential candidates, (U.S.) Senate candidates, and House candidates, people chose to read the most information about the presidential campaign, followed by the senate campaign, and finally the House campaign (Anderson 2011). Extending this logic to politics at the local level, people are not likely to follow local politics very closely compared to state and national politics.

People are slightly more likely to watch local news than national news, but the local news environment dedicates much less attention to local politics than national news programs dedicate to national politics. Additionally, the expansion in entertainment choices has contributed to falling ratings for local news since the late 1970s (Prior 2007), but the “Big Three” national broadcast network evening news programs (ABC, CBS, NBC) still attract more viewers than any other news program. In the first decade of the 2000s, national news programs dedicated approximately 56% of their programming to domestic and international politics (48%

if you exclude federal election coverage) (Tyndall 2015). Local news programs only dedicated 7% of their coverage to local politics in 2006 and only 3% in 2012 (Jurkowitz et al. 2013). With the exception of the most politically engaged citizens, and assuming that most people watch both national and local news, it stands to reason that most individuals would be less likely to be informed about public affairs in their local communities than national politics.

Research Design

We conduct our analysis using a cross-sectional survey of 660 likely voters in Jacksonville, Florida. Jacksonville is located in Duval County, Florida and has a consolidated county-city form of government. Though a few smaller communities (Baldwin, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach) maintain their own forms of government, all county residents are represented by Jacksonville's mayor and city council, and are eligible to vote in the City of Jacksonville's elections. The telephone survey was conducted from February 27th through March 8th, 2015 during a campaign for mayor. The survey ended one day before early voting began ahead of the March 24, 2015 election. The response rate, defined by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) was 20.7%.⁵

We drew a random sample of likely voters from the Duval County voter file, which contained 549,740 registered voters. The State of Florida and each of its sixty-seven counties make its database of registered voters available to anyone who requests it. The file, provided by the Duval County Supervisor of Elections, contains a voting history (whether they voted in a

⁵ AAPOR Response Rate 2 (RR2) is the number of complete and partial interviews divided by the number of interviews (complete plus partial) plus the number of non-interviews (refusal and break-off plus non-contacts plus others) plus all cases of unknown eligibility (unknown if housing unit, plus unknown, other).

given election) for every registered voter going back to the Presidential Primary Elections in 2004. Likely voters are classified as voters who cast a ballot in 3 of the 4 previous general elections (2011 First Election, 2011 General Election, 2012 General Election and 2014 General Election), or for more recently registered voters if they have voted in all eligible general elections (both 2012 and 2014, or only 2014 if they were registered to vote after the 2012 general election).

The election featured incumbent mayor Alvin Brown, a Democrat, and two Republican challengers: Lenny Curry and Bill Bishop. Alvin Brown became Jacksonville's first African-American mayor of Jacksonville when he was narrowly elected in 2011. Curry was a former Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida and Bishop was a city council member who was finishing up his last term in the Jacksonville City Council.

To compare levels of local to national political knowledge, we asked respondents questions about the basic structure of national and local government, as well as, political leaders' positions on issues being discussed nationally and in the local campaign, respectively. We attempted to create a question battery at each level of government that was analogous to the other and one that would include items similar to those that Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) recommend for usage in knowledge indices. The indices measure respondents' institutional knowledge of national and local government as well as their awareness of where local candidates and national politicians stood on important issues. We also asked respondents to place Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush on a left-right ideological scale. See Tables 1a and 1b for the lists of national and local questions.

The issue questions measured respondents' awareness of where their elected leaders (or prospective elected leaders) stood on issues that were important locally and nationally at the time. The local issues questions asked respondents about what the mayoral candidates were saying about fixing the city's growing pension obligations as well as where the candidates stood on taxes. The national issues measured respondents' awareness of where President Obama and congressional Republicans stood on taxes and government spending as well as immigration reform.

We created a knowledge index for national questions and another for local questions. There were a total of nine items in the national index and ten items in the local one. To compare them, our knowledge variables measure the percentage of questions that the respondent answered correctly.

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Before we proceed to the analysis, we will note that our research design presents a "most likely" case to find parity between national and local knowledge. As we already mentioned, the survey was conducted for a little over a week and wrapped up the day before early voting began in the blanket primary.⁶ The campaign was active early on in January, though Curry ran TV ads as early as the Thanksgiving weekend in 2014. From January 1st through March 3rd, the mayoral campaigns had run over 3047 television ads (Pro Publica 2015). Given that we were interviewing people who regularly vote in both national and local elections, this is

⁶ Local elections in Florida are partisan elections, but voters participate in a blanket primary and if one of the candidates receives a majority of the vote, the election is decided. If nobody succeeds in doing so, the top two who get the most votes proceed in a runoff election that takes place approximately two months later. Florida allows registered voters to vote early beginning two weeks before Election Day, which was March 24th for the blanket primary.

a time when we should see parity in how much people know about national politics and local politics. If the evidence does not support this, it is highly unlikely that people less engaged in politics, arguably most of the rest of the population, will know as much about local politics as they do about national politics.

Though this data was only drawn from a single city, Jacksonville is a diverse city with the 12th largest population in the country. Table 2 presents demographic statistics for Duval County, Marion County, Los Angeles County, Philadelphia, New York, Houston and the United States from the 2014 American Community Studies (ACS) provided by the US Census. According to the ACS, Duval County is nearly identical to Marion County, Indiana (Indianapolis) and has very similar demographic statistics compared to other major cities and the US in general.

<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

Not only is Jacksonville very similar demographically to the rest of the country, the political interest and media watching statistics are consistent with national trends. According to data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), Jacksonville is comparable to the average national statistics on a series of political interest measures (Schaffner and Ansolabehere 2015). Jacksonville residents show no statistically significant difference from the rest of the United States when asked about their level of interest in government and public affairs (see Table 3), and in fact have a slightly higher estimated value for that variable, 3.34 compared to 3.27 for the rest of the United States. Jacksonville residents are similar to the rest of the country on three measures of media usage as well, see Table 4. Jacksonville residents read the newspaper and listen to news on the radio at nearly identical rates to the rest of the county, and actually are slightly more likely to watch television news. These items in

conjunction with the evidence from Table 2 suggest that Jacksonville is not at all different from the rest of country and is in fact a test case with external validity.

<INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>

<INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>

We also compare the effects that demographic predictors have on national and local knowledge. Our predictors include one's level of education, household income, race, home ownership, gender, partisanship, and a dummy variable capturing whether the respondent eventually voted in the blanket primary election or not. Education is an ordinal variable with five categories that equals one if they have less than a high school education, two if they graduated high school or have a GED, three if they have some college education, four if they completed college, and five if they have post-graduate degree. Home ownership is a dummy variable that equals one if the respondent owns a home and zero otherwise. Race is measured using two dummy variables. One measures whether the respondent is black or not and another measures whether they are Latino, Asian American, or a member of another race. The baseline category in the regression models is white. The gender variable equals one if the respondent is male and zero if they are female. The partisanship variable equals one if the respondent is registered as either a Democrat or Republican and zero otherwise. Finally, we include a variable measuring whether the respondent eventually voted in the blanket primary election or not.

Findings

Figure 1 displays histograms for national and local knowledge. The distribution for national knowledge approximates a normal distribution, but the distribution for local knowledge is quite the opposite. A majority of Jacksonville's likely voters correctly answered

between four and six of the nine questions about national politics. On the other hand, approximately sixty percent of them were only able to correctly answer between zero and two of the ten local questions.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Jacksonville likely voters knew far more about national politics than local politics. Figure 2 below graphs the average values for the national and local indices. It also breaks down the indices by the types of questions: basic questions about government and issues. Again, people in the survey knew more about national politics than local politics by wide margins. They correctly answered 54% of the national questions, but only 22% of the local ones. They also correctly answered about 41% of the national issue questions and only 8% of the local issue questions! There was more parity in knowledge about national and local government, as Jacksonville voters knew 62% of the answers for national questions and 46% of the local questions.

<INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE>

In addition to the figures presented above, in order to test the hypothesis that voters have a greater level of national political knowledge than local knowledge, we conduct a series of paired *t* tests (see Table 3). The first *t* test analyzes the differences between the percentages of national and local knowledge questions each respondent got correct (see Tables 1 for listing of questions and correct answers). The second *t* test analyzes differences between questions focused on the structure and operations of national and local government. Finally, a third *t* test assesses differences between national and local policy position knowledge. Each of the *t* tests tells the same story. Duval County's likely voters are much more knowledgeable about national

politics. Each t test indicates a statistically significant ($P < .001$) difference between the means of each measure of national and local political knowledge. In overall political knowledge scales there is a difference of almost 32 percentage points between national and local political knowledge. Likely voters were generally better at identifying local governmental structure questions, but local awareness still trailed national knowledge by more than 16 percentage points. Issue specific questions showed the greatest differentiation with the gap between national and local knowledge at nearly 34 percentage points.

<INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE>

We see the same patterns if we plot the knowledge indices by our demographic predictors. Figures 3-8 (see Appendix A) plot the average national and local knowledge scores by age, education, household income, race, gender, home ownership, whether they are registered with a party, and finally whether they voted in the eventual March election. It does not matter how you break down political knowledge. Our likely voters were much more informed about national politics than they were about local politics. As an addendum (see Appendix B), we include two regressions using demographic variables to predict national and local political knowledge. Both models comport with the literature as education, income, gender, political participation and race predict both national and local political knowledge. This helps confirm the consistency between the national and local political knowledge indices. Since the predictors work similarly we can be confident that both the national and local knowledge scales are on similar dimensions, which bolsters our claims about the knowledge gap between local and national political knowledge.

Conclusion

The overwhelming evidence for the hypothesis that a gap between local and national political knowledge exists casts serious doubt on claims that local political knowledge approximates levels of national political knowledge. Contrary to recent studies, we find that in terms of what the American public knows about politics, there is not any parity between what they know about national politics and local politics. They know much more about national government and where their national elected leaders stand on the issues than they do about local government and where local politicians stand on important issues. The differences hold up across every demographic group in our study. American voters do not know much about how their local government works or what their politicians stand for during campaigns.

Our research stands out from previous research on this topic in a couple of important ways. We used analogous sets of questions about national and local politics, allowing us to draw stronger inferences about what people know about politics across both levels. Our sample was randomly drawn from a pool of registered voters whom we deemed likely to vote based on their voting history. We interviewed local voters who are more engaged than the rest of the local electorate during a local mayoral campaign, yet they knew surprisingly little about local government nor where their mayoral candidates stood on important issues. Thus, we are confident that the rest of the local electorate would exhibit the same ignorance about local politics relative to national politics.

These findings build upon previous studies that question Progressives' claims about the benefits of separating local elections from national and state elections. Progressives argued that citizens would be more able to focus on local issues and local campaigns if they did not have the distraction of national and state campaigns running at the same time. We conducted

our survey in the middle of a local campaign without such national and state distractions and super voters were not very informed about local government or local candidates. We do not claim that moving elections to coincide with national and state elections would improve this situation. But, it is clear that separating elections did not lead to a more enlightened pool of local voters.

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Table 1: Knowledge Questions

Question	Question Wording	Answer Choices	Correct Answer
1 - Local (govt)	Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the Jacksonville City Council?	Open-ended	Republican
1 - National (govt)	Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the US House of Representatives?	Open-ended	Republican
2 - Local (govt)	In Jacksonville's city government, whose responsibility is it to propose an annual budget?	Open-ended	Mayor (or Alvin Brown)
2 - National (govt)	In the national government in Washington, DC, whose responsibility is it to propose an annual budget?	Open-ended	President (or Barack Obama)
3 - Local (govt)	Do you happen to know who becomes the acting mayor if the current mayor of Jacksonville is temporarily unable to fulfill his duties?	Open-ended	President of the City Council (or Clay Yarborough)
3 - National (govt)	Do you happen to know who becomes the acting President if the current President of the United States is temporarily unable to fulfill his duties?	Open-ended	Vice President (or Joe Biden)
4 - Local (govt)	Do you happen to know what job or political office is held by John Rutherford?	Open-ended	Sheriff
4 - National (govt)	Do you happen to know what job or political office is held by John Roberts?	Open-ended	Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
5 - Local (issues)	* Do you happen to know if Alvin Brown has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Fight for more state and federal spending in Jacksonville and auditing of city finances to eliminate wasteful spending without raising taxes 2) Increase private sector investment in our communities, while relying future economic growth to increase tax revenues eliminating the need for raising taxes 3) Raise tax rates	2) Increase private sector investment in our communities, while relying future economic growth to increase tax revenues eliminating the need for raising taxes
5 - National (issues)	** Do you happen to know if Barack Obama has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Cutting spending on entitlement programs like Medicare and other domestic policy programs 2) Stabilizing the deficit, partly by cutting mandatory spending, closing tax loopholes, and limiting tax benefits 3) Continuing across-the-board budget cuts in spending on defense and domestic programs	2) Stabilizing the deficit, partly by cutting mandatory spending, closing tax loopholes, and limiting tax benefits
6 - Local (issues)	* Do you happen to know if Lenny Curry has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Fight for more state and federal spending in Jacksonville and auditing of city finances to eliminate wasteful spending without raising taxes 2) Increase private sector investment in our communities, while relying future economic growth to increase tax revenues eliminating the need for raising taxes 3) Raise tax rates	1) Fight for more state and federal spending in Jacksonville and auditing of city finances to eliminate wasteful spending without raising taxes
6 - National (issues)	** Do you happen to know if Congressional Republicans have publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Cutting spending on entitlement programs like Medicare and other domestic policy programs 2) Stabilizing the deficit, partly by cutting mandatory spending, closing tax loopholes, and limiting tax benefits 3) Continuing across-the-board budget cuts in spending on defense and domestic programs	1) Cutting spending on entitlement programs like Medicare and other domestic policy programs
7 - Local (issues)	* Do you happen to know if Bill Bishop has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Fight for more state and federal spending in Jacksonville and auditing of city finances to eliminate wasteful spending without raising taxes 2) Increase private sector investment in our communities, while relying future economic growth to increase tax revenues eliminating the need for raising taxes 3) Raise tax rates	3) Raise tax rates

7 - National (issues)	## Do you happen to know if Barack Obama has publicly supported either of these ideas?	1) Developing a plan that would allow illegal immigrants who have jobs to become legal U.S. residents 2) Developing a plan for stopping the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. and deporting those already here illegally	1) Developing a plan that would allow illegal immigrants who have jobs to become legal U.S. residents
8 - Local (issues)	# Do you happen to know if Alvin Brown has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Raise the sales tax by half of a cent 2) Have JEA pay a one-time lump sum in exchange for reduced payments to the city's general fund in the future 3) Perform an emergency 90-day audit of city finances before considering other options	2) Have JEA pay a one-time lump sum in exchange for reduced payments to the city's general fund in the future
8 - National (issues)	## Do you happen to know if Congressional Republicans have publicly supported either of these ideas?	1) Developing a plan that would allow illegal immigrants who have jobs to become legal U.S. residents 2) Developing a plan for stopping the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. and deporting those already here illegally	2) Developing a plan for stopping the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. and deporting those already here illegally
9 - Local (issues)	# Do you happen to know if Lenny Curry has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Raise the sales tax by half of a cent 2) Have JEA pay a one-time lump sum in exchange for reduced payments to the city's general fund in the future 3) Perform an emergency 90-day audit of city finances before considering other options	3) Perform an emergency 90-day audit of city finances before considering other options
9 - National (issues)	Does respondent place Hillary Clinton to the left of Jeb Bush? ^^1) Where would you place Hillary Clinton on this scale? 2) Where would you place Jeb Bush on this scale?	1) Very liberal 2) Slightly liberal 3) Moderate; middle of the road 4) Slightly conservative 5) Very conservative	Hillary Clinton left of Jeb Bush
10 - Local (issues)	# Do you happen to know if Bill Bishop has publicly supported any of these ideas?	1) Raise the sales tax by half of a cent 2) Have JEA pay a one-time lump sum in exchange for reduced payments to the city's general fund in the future 3) Perform an emergency 90-day audit of city finances before considering other options	1) Raise the sales tax by half of a cent

* Text read prior to the series of questions about local taxation: *There are a number of ideas being discussed to help Jacksonville's government pay for the rising costs of the services it provides the public.*

** Text read prior to the series of questions about national taxation: *There are a number of ideas being discussed to help government in Washington, DC pay for the rising costs of the services it provides the public.*

Text read prior to the series of questions about local pension issue: *The city of Jacksonville currently has an unfunded liability of 1.6 billion dollars for its pension system that serves police officers and firefighters. Currently about 15% of the city's annual operating budget is used to pay the pension obligation with the city's obligation increasing over the next 20 years. The increased contributions for the pension reduce the amount in the city budget for other city services. A number of proposals have been offered to help the city meet its pension obligations.*

Text read prior to the series of questions about national immigration issue: *When it comes to immigration policy, what should be the main focus of the U.S. government in dealing with the issue of illegal immigration?*

^^ Text read prior to the series of questions about national ideological placement: *We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a five-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from very liberal to very conservative. Many in the news media consider Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush to be the frontrunners for their respective party's presidential nomination in 2016.*

Table 2: Demographic Comparison of Duval County, Florida, the United States and Select Counties/Cities

	Duval County, FL	United States	Marion County, IN	Los Angeles County, CA	Philadelphia County, PA	New York City, NY
Population estimates	897,698	318,857,056	934243	10,116,705	1,560,297	8,491,079
Persons under 18 years	22.9%	23.5%	24.9%	22.8%	22.2%	21.6%
Persons 65 years and over	12.8%	14.5%	11.3%	12.2%	12.5%	12.1%
Female	51.6%	50.8%	51.8%	50.7%	52.7%	52.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	55%	62.1%	57.9%	26.8%	35.8%	33.3%
Black or African American alone	30.1%	13.2%	27.8%	9.2%	44.1%	25.5%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	8.6%	18.7%	9.8%	48.4%	13.6%	28.6%
Veterans, 2010-2014	9.5%	6.5%	6%	3.1%	4.5%	2.2%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2010-2014	9.6%	13.1%	8.5%	34.9%	12.5%	37.1%
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2010-2014	60.3%	64.4%	55.3%	46.4%	52.9%	31.9%
Median gross rent, 2010-2014	\$941	\$920	\$781	\$1221	\$915	\$1234
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2010-2014	88.4%	86.3%	84.9%	76.8%	81.4%	80.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2010-2014	26.5%	29.3%	27.7%	29.9%	24.5%	35%
Median household income (in 2014 dollars), 2010-2014	\$47,582	\$53,482	\$42,378	\$55,870	\$37,460	\$52,737
Persons in poverty	18.2%	14.8%	21.3%	18.7%	25.8%	20.6%

Table 3
Jacksonville vs. Rest of United States in Political Interest¹

	Jacksonville, FL	Rest of United States
Hardly At All	4.8%	7.0%
Only Now and Then	7.3%	11.3%
Some of the Time	37.3%	29.7%
Most of the Time	50.6%	52.0%
Total Mean ²	3.34	3.27
Total N	54,065	174

¹ Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ... ?

² Mean scores based on four-point scale from 1 (Hardly at All) to 4 (Most of the Time)

Table 4
Jacksonville vs Rest of United of States for media viewership in the past 24 hours

	Watched TV News		Read Newspaper (print or online)		Listened to News on Radio or Talk Radio	
	Jacksonville	Rest of US	Jacksonville	Rest of US	Jacksonville	Rest of US
No	77.85	73.9	52.6%	51.5%	37.1	38.2
Yes	22.15	26.1	47.4%	48.5%	62.9	61.8
Total N	180	56,020	180	56,020	180	56,020

Table 5: t Tests for Average Levels of Political Knowledge

	Percentage of Correct National Knowledge Answers	Percentage of Correct Local Knowledge Answers	Difference
All Political Knowledge Questions	54.66%	22.95%	31.71%***
Governmental Questions	62.05%	45.57%	16.48%***
Issue Questions	41.74%	7.88%	33.86%***

*** Differences are statistically significant at the $P < .001$ level

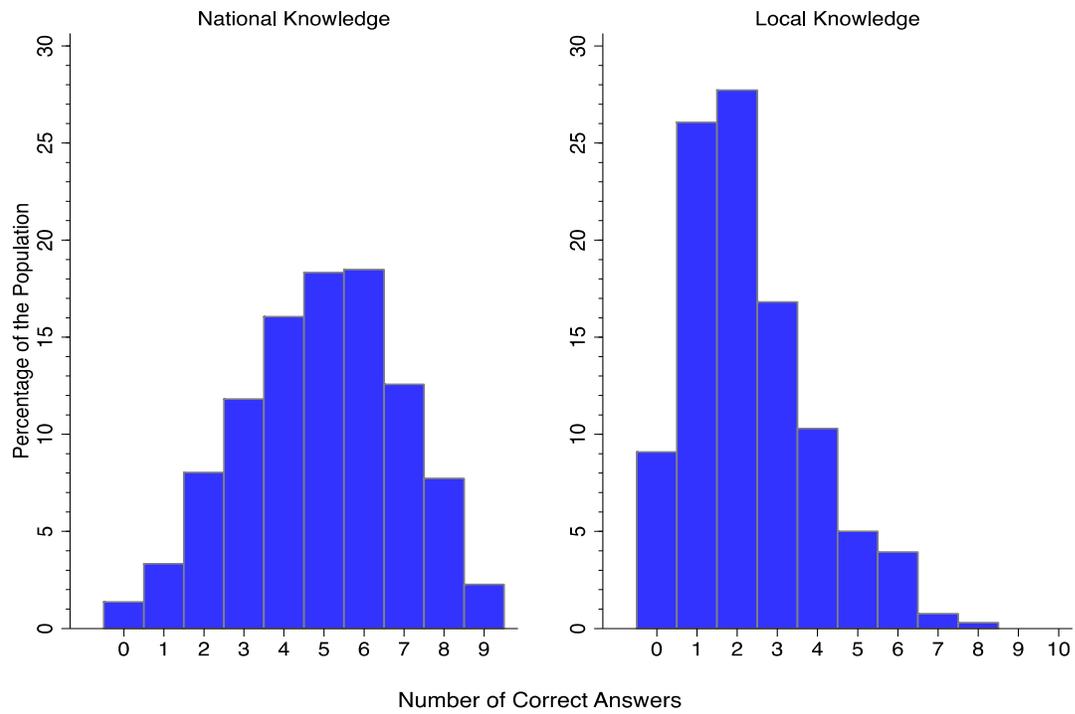
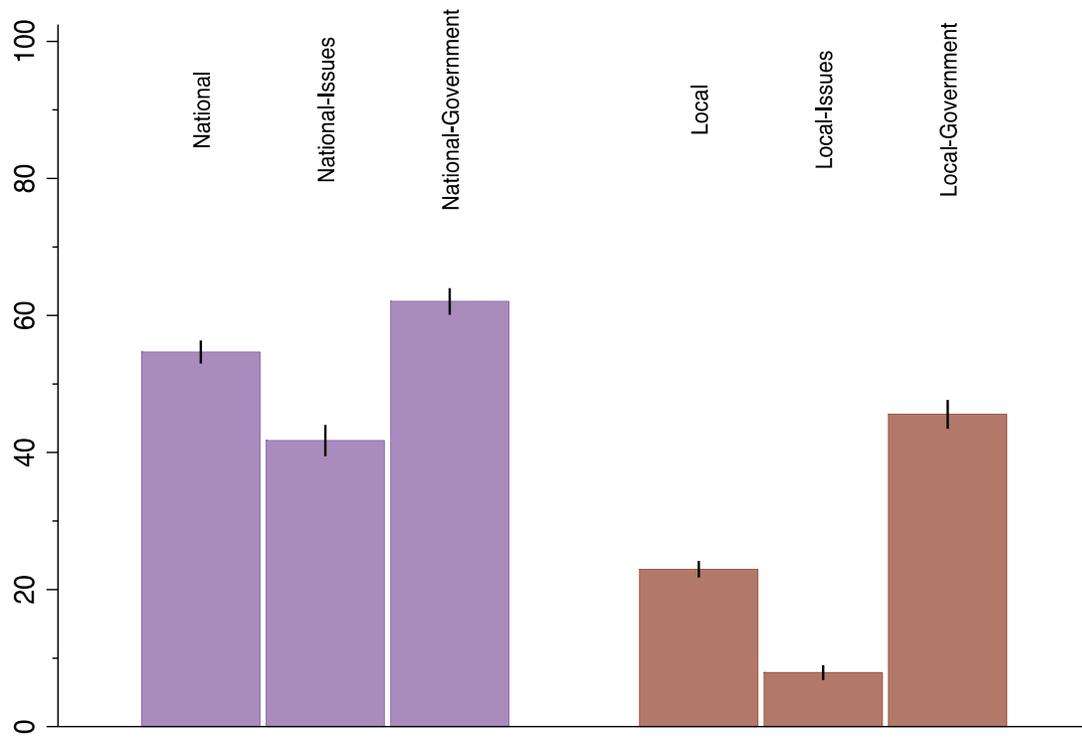
Figure 1: Histograms of National and Local Knowledge

Figure 2: Average Levels of National and Local Knowledge



Note: Black spikes represent 95% confidence intervals. The y-axis measures percentage of questions answered correctly.

APPENDIX A

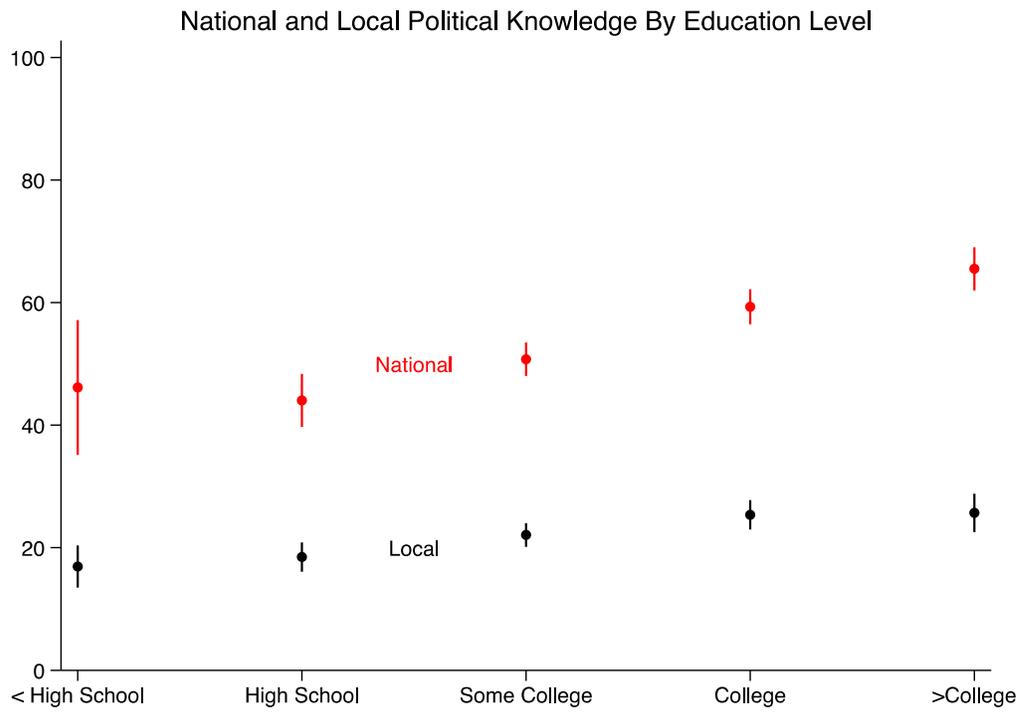
Figure 3: Knowledge by Education

Figure 4: Knowledge By Race



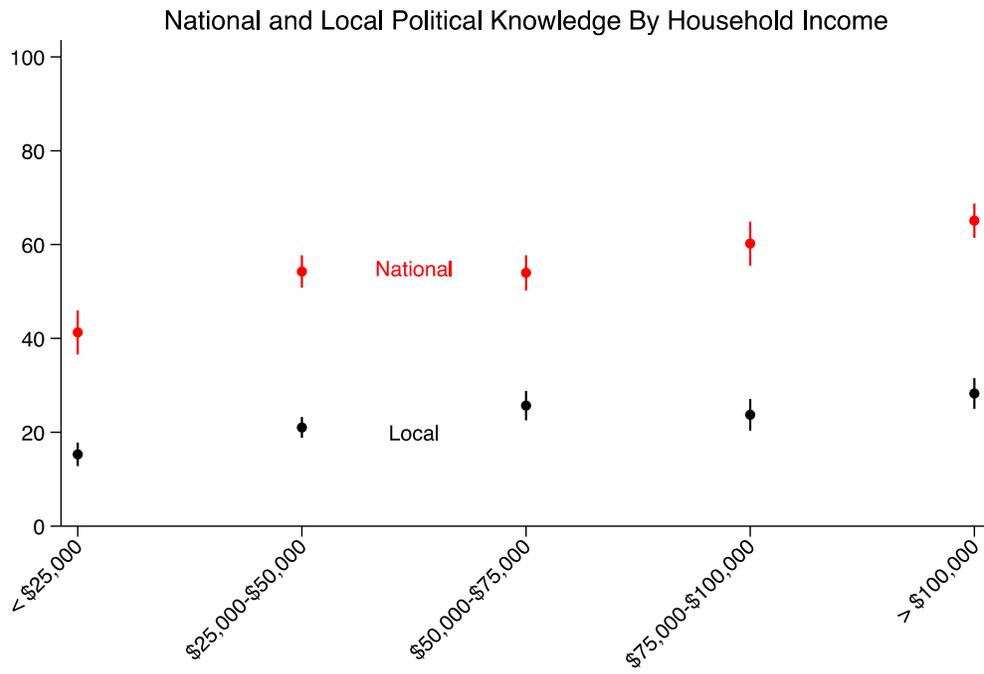
Figure 5: Knowledge By Income

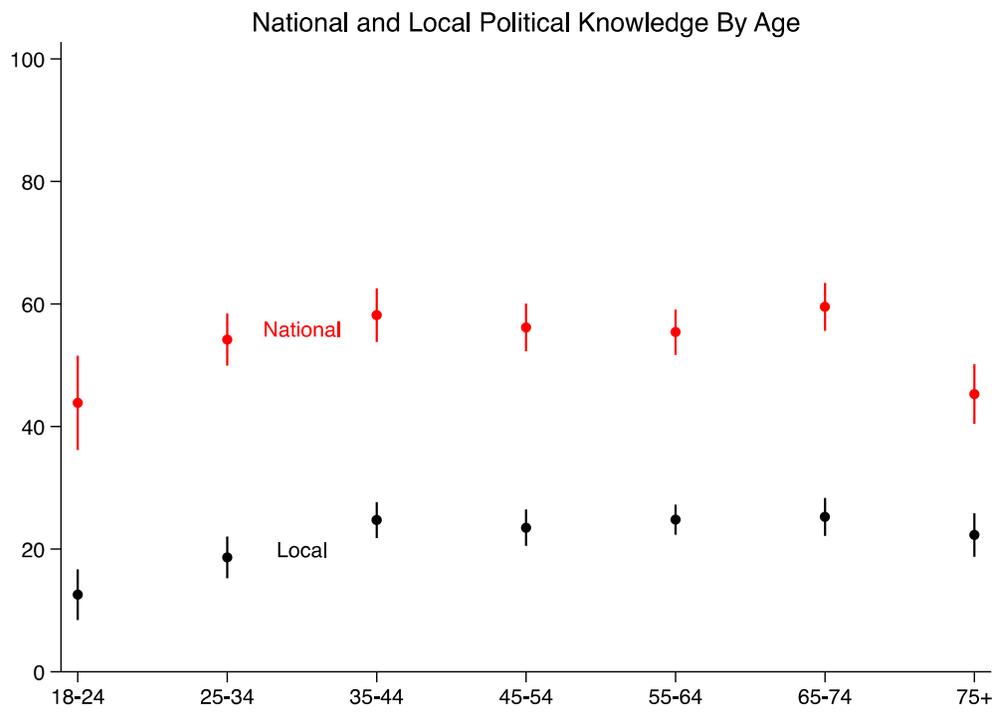
Figure 6: Knowledge By Age

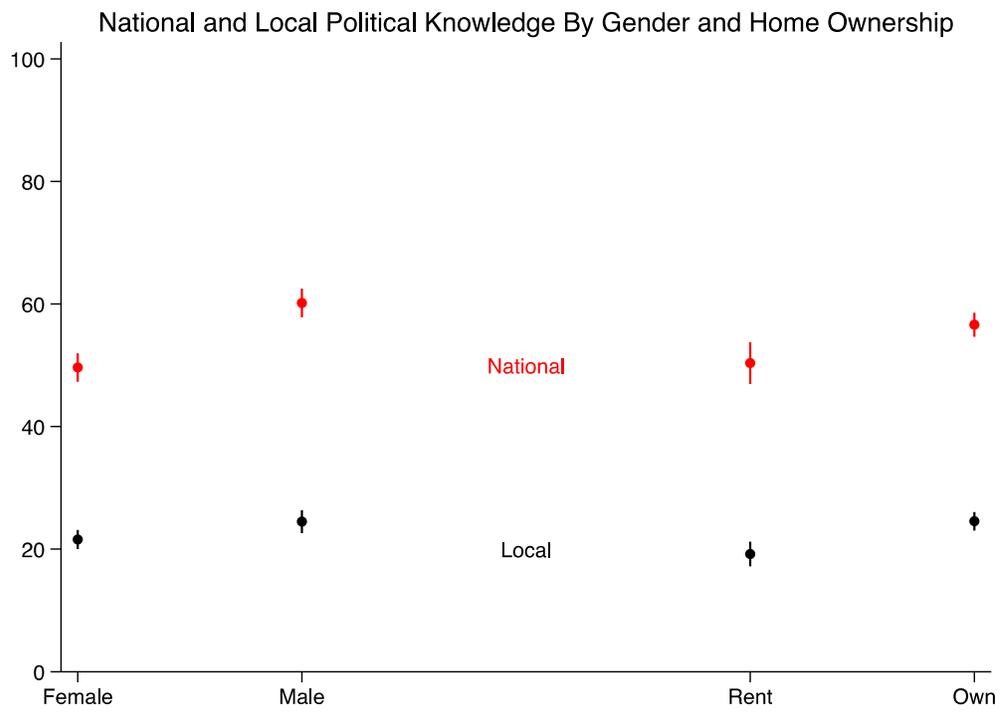
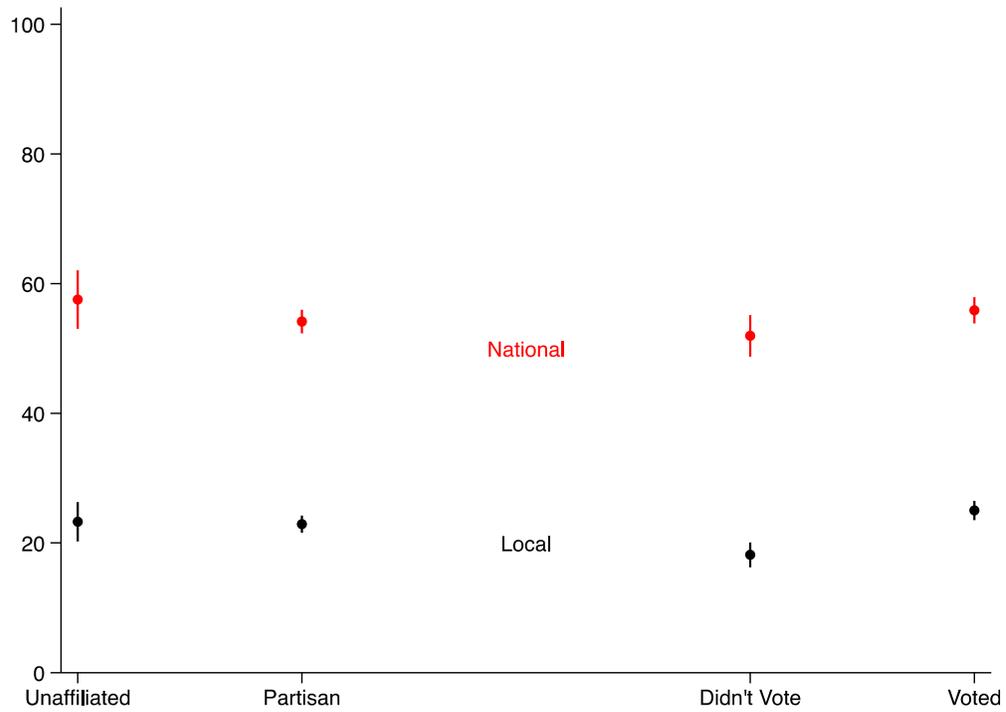
Figure 7: Knowledge by Gender and Home Ownership

Figure 8: Knowledge by Whether The Respondent Voted and Whether They Registered With a Party Or Not



APPENDIX B

TABLE 3: Models Predicting National and Local Political Knowledge

	National Political Knowledge	Local Political Knowledge
Education	4.52*** (0.94)	1.43* (0.73)
Income	2.02** (0.74)	1.58** (0.58)
Own Home	3.53 (2.12)	2.60 (1.64)
Black	-4.28* (2.04)	-1.51 (1.58)
Other Race	-8.55* (3.81)	-6.06* (2.95)
Male	10.16*** (1.79)	3.04* (1.38)
Voted in March Election	2.91 (1.96)	7.04*** (1.51)
Constant	26.29*** (3.88)	6.06* (3.00)
<i>N</i>	487	487
<i>R</i> ²	0.22	0.13

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$