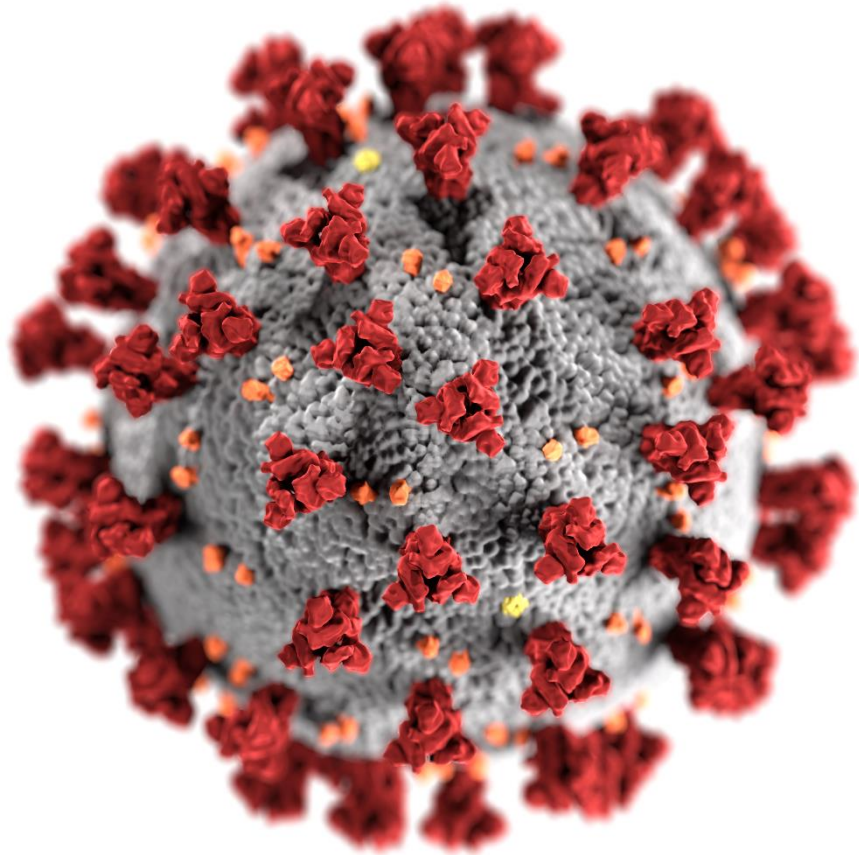# Voting Access Reforms
and Policy Feedback Effects on Political Efficacy and Trust

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A Unique Election

Mail Voting in 2020

■ **Mail voting is the default**   ■ **Ballot sent to all registered voters**
■ **Any registered voter can request a mailed ballot**   ■ **Stricter excuse rules for ballot requests**

Credit: Vox

How do election reforms influence political efficacy and trust?

Does context matter?

A Policy Feedback Theory of Reform
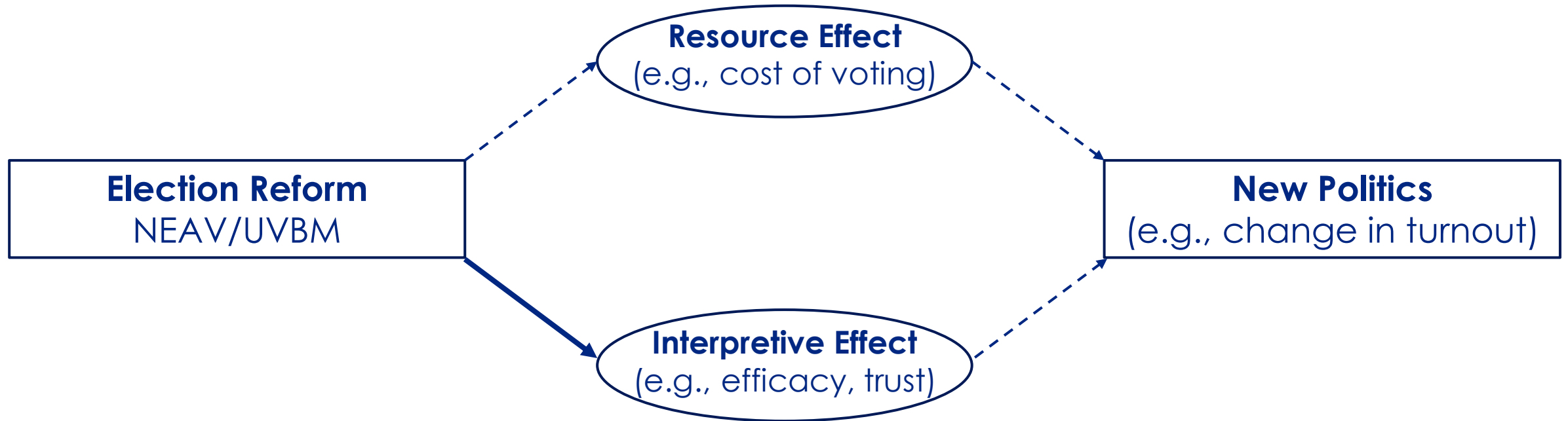
A Policy Feedback Theory of Reform

H1 Internal Efficacy: Reforms will increase internal political efficacy.

H2 External Efficacy: Reforms will increase external political efficacy.

H3 Government Trust: Reforms will increase trust in government.

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Conditional Effects?

Partisanship: Democrats and Republicans may view election reforms differently.

State Power: Partisans in states with single-party control may view election reforms differently.

Data and Methods

Independent Variables	Dependent variables

▪ Original dataset of statewide adoption of UVBM & NEAV policies by year	▪ ANES Cumulative (1996-2020)
	  ▪ n=25,159
	  ▪ UVBM n=12,883
	  ▪ NEAV n=18,865
	
	▪ Internal Efficacy (2 questions)
	▪ External Efficacy (2)
	▪ Trust in Government (1)

Data and Methods

NEAV Groups	UVBM Groups
▪ 2000: ME, MT, NE, ND, WI	▪ 2000: OR
▪ 2004: FL, NC, UT, VT	▪ 2012: WA
▪ 2008: GA, NJ, OH	▪ 2016: CO
▪ 2012: IL, MD	▪ 2020: CA, DC, HI, NV, NJ, UT, VT
▪ 2016: MN	
▪ 2020: AL, AR, CT, KY, LA, MA, MI, MO, NH, NY, PA, RI, SC, SD, VA, WV	▪ Group Control: AK, AZ, FL, GA, ID, IL, IA, KS, ME, MD, MN, MT, NE, NM, NC, ND, OH, OK, WI, WY
▪ Group Control: DE, IN, MS, TN, TX	
▪ Excluded: AK, AZ, CA, CO, DC, HI, ID, IA, KS, NV, NM, OK, OR, WA, WY	▪ Excluded: AL, AR, CT, DE, IN, KY, LA, MA, MI, MS, MO, NH, NY, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WV

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Data and Methods

Difference-in-difference strategy

Estimand of interest is the ATT
$$Y_{ist} = a_s + \lambda_t + \tau^{DD} D_{st} + X_i + \varepsilon_{ist}$$

TWFE estimators can be biased for staggered adoptions
- Cannot assume consistent effects across states/time

Group-time DiD estimator (Callaway & Sant'anna 2021)
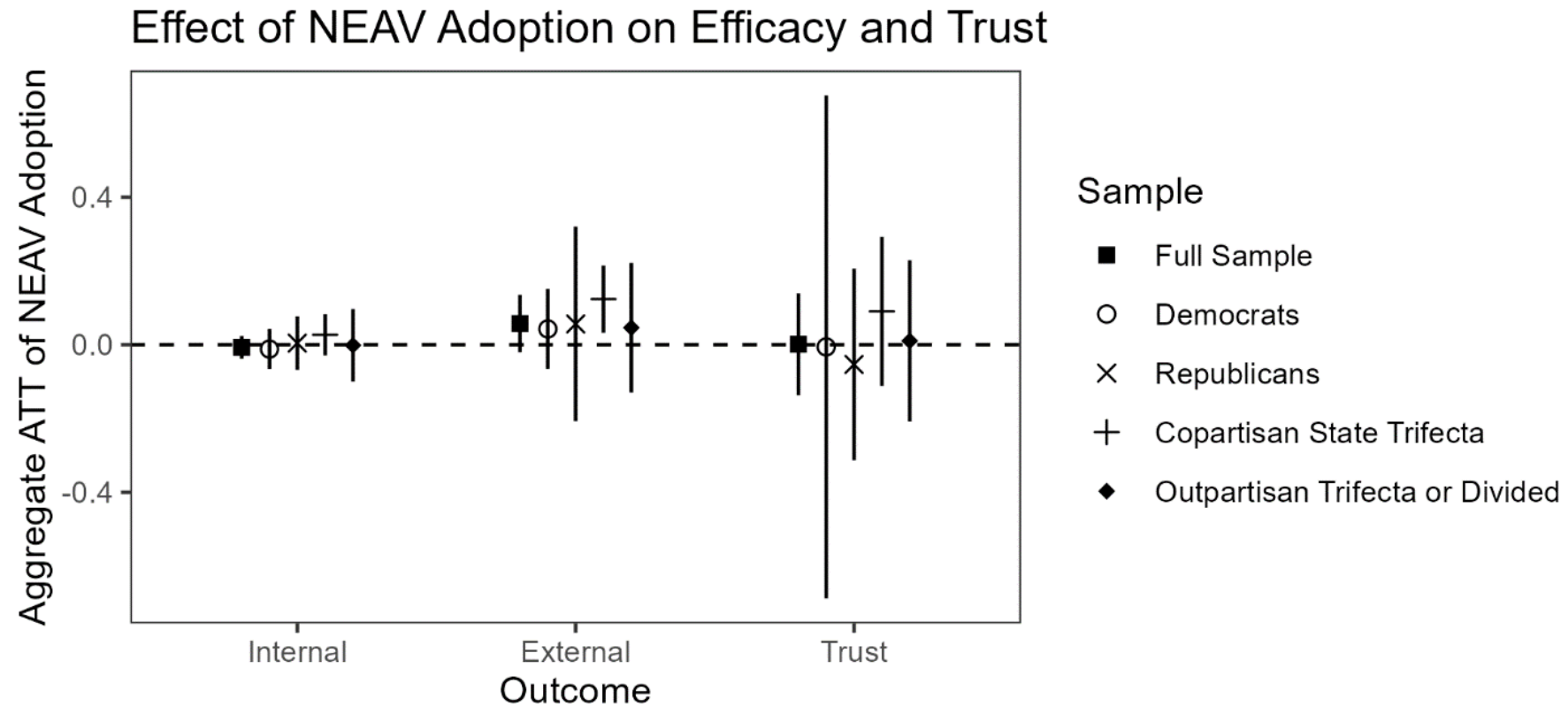$$Y_{igt} = a_g + \lambda_t + \tau^{GT} D_{gt} + X_i + \varepsilon_{igt}$$

Estimates τ^{GT} for simultaneously-treated units at each period after first treatment

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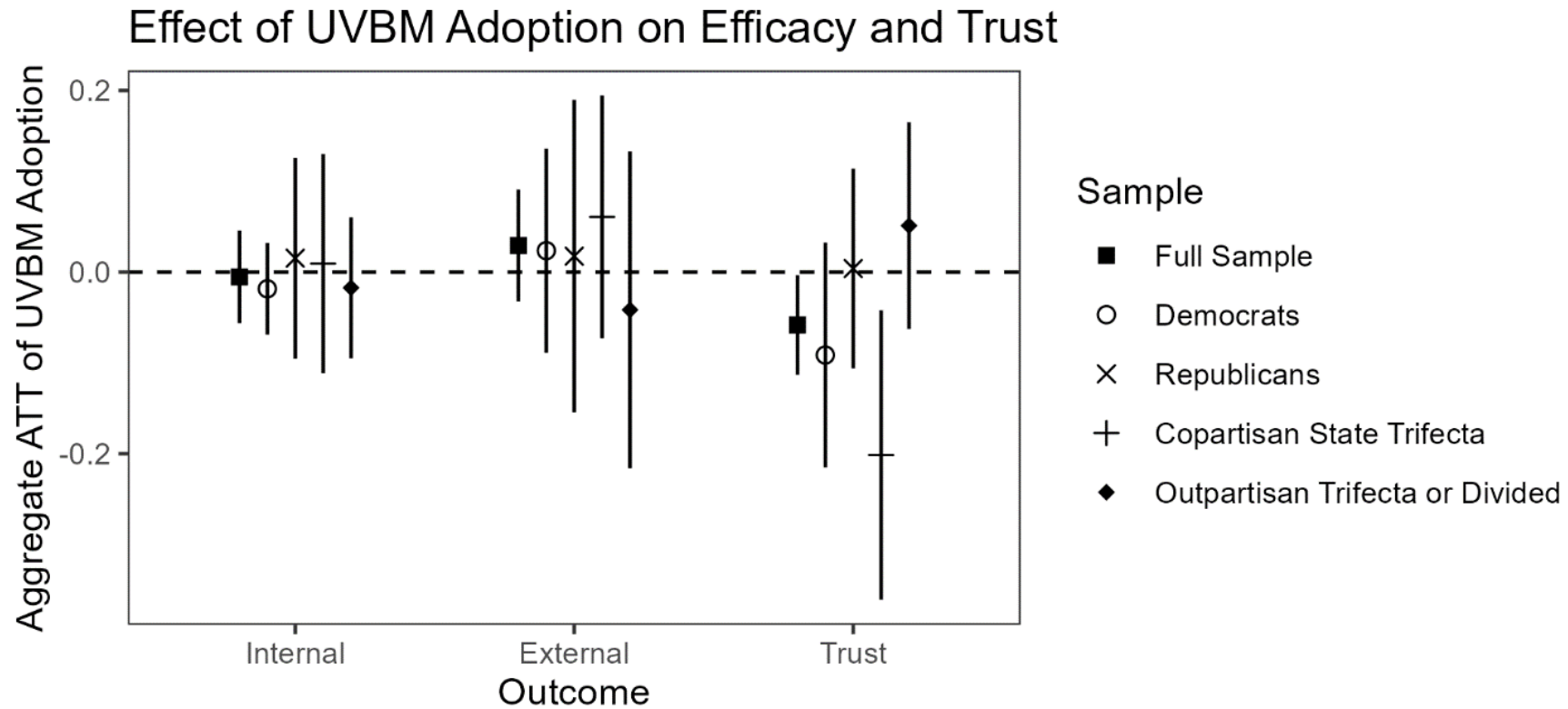
Data and Methods

Four methods of estimating single-parameter ATT:

1. **Simple:** weighted average of all group-time ATTs

2. **Group:** average ATTs in treated periods within groups, then average across groups

3. **Dynamic:** average ATTs within treated periods across groups, then average across periods

4. **Calendar:** average ATTs within calendar years across groups, then average across years

Results: Aggregated ATT for NEAV

Effect of NEAV Adoption on Efficacy and Trust

Results: Aggregated ATT for UVBM

Effect of UVBM Adoption on Efficacy and Trust

Implications

- Little evidence of positive or negative interpretive effects from expansive reforms
    - Little evidence of effects conditional on partisanship & state power
    - Possible interpretive distinctions between NEAV (more options) and UVBM (fewer options)

- Limited partisan & instrumental impact of these reforms encourages emphasis of normative considerations

Thank you!

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