Workplace Politics in the Knowledge Economy

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

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"Porque fuera hay cosas preciosas
Los inviernos al sol, mil canciones"
— Carolina Durante, "Hamburguesas"

"Love every song that I know / You ask me well how so
Strange I can't defend / I love how every song ends"
— Jeff Tweedy, "Nobody Dies Anymore"

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Abstract

Workplaces have historically been important sites of political preference formation and political action. Over the past two decades, influential work has emphasized the political consequences of socio-structural transformations in the labour market, from declining unionization to dualization and automation. However, existing work has overlooked how politics permeates modern workplaces in ways that are significantly different from the union-led labour politics of industrial societies. This dissertation proposes a new theoretical framework to understand workplace politics in knowledge-based societies, focusing on the United Kingdom and United States. I argue that contemporary workplace structures and skills requirements, coupled with the growing importance of nonpecuniary dimensions of work, make political identities relevant to understanding workers' and firms' behaviour in the knowledge economy, while politicized workplace networks become consequential for political engagement beyond the workplace. This argument unfolds across the three main empirical chapters of this dissertation. Using an original survey of 2,000 UK workers, Chapter 3 demonstrates that working in a collaborative setting and belonging to a younger cohort are associated with informal political talk, which, in turn, influences political engagement outside work and demands for corporate political speech. Building on these findings, Chapter 4 introduces a conjoint experiment showing that political identities shape workers' willingness to collaborate and socialize with colleagues under certain conditions. Lastly, Chapter 5 examines the conditions under which firms in the US engage with corporate progressive speech to align politically with their progressive workforce. Combining text data from Twitter and from companies' financial reporting with different firm-level measures of employee ideology and labour market data, I find that publicly traded firms relying on a Democratic-leaning workforce tend to engage publicly more frequently with progressive causes, particularly when facing employee retention and recruitment pressures. More broadly, this dissertation speaks to the importance of keeping workplaces, firms, and the social interactions unfolding within them at the forefront of research into the politics of advanced democracies.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The workplace and labour market transformations have been central to theories of politics for at least two centuries (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Weeden and Grusky, 2005; Wright, 1980; Gallego, Kurer and Schöll, 2022; Burawoy, 1979; Häusermann, Kemmerling and Rueda, 2020; Rueda, 2005; Schwander and Häusermann, 2013). From the emergence of the first strikes led by the Chartist movement in the United Kingdom in the 1830s to modern employee walkouts in technology companies such as Google and Amazon, workplaces have continuously been key settings for political mobilization.

Despite this continuity, the ways in which politics enters the workplace today look very different from those of industrial societies. In industrial societies, workplace politics was mainly channelled through formal institutions of collective representation. In particular, unions played a central role in organizing collective bargaining and structuring political conflict around class, with wages and overall employment conditions as key issues of contestation. The hierarchical and less collaborative nature of workplace structures, coupled with the emphasis on routine cognitive skills, limited the extent to which conversations about politics —and political identities more broadly— entered the workplace back then. Moreover, a more constrained information landscape, absent online newspapers and social media platforms, not only made politics less ubiquitous but also created fewer pressures for organizations to publicly speak up on socially divisive issues.

The transition to knowledge-based economies has reshaped both the structure and meaning of work in ways that are politically consequential. Unions have weakened, employment relationships have become less stable, and a wide array of career opportunities has opened up for highly educated workers, contrasting with the more standardized career paths of industrial societies. Meanwhile, changes in the task content of knowledge-based occupations —in particular, the growing importance of non-cognitive and social skills— and the move toward more collaborative, team-based environments have created the conditions under which politics can emerge not only in spontaneous conversations but also in ways that affect workers' cooperation and the development of social ties.

The expansion of tertiary education and rising living standards for university-educated workers also means that the economic returns and social status provided by a job might not

be enough anymore — a job should also be meaningful and have a broader (sometimes societal) purpose. As a result of these transformations, the workplace has turned into a central site for identity formation and socialization. This is especially true considering the decline of other institutions of socialization and identity formation, and the shrinking size of social networks (including family-based ones) for geographically mobile professionals.

It is against this backdrop that this dissertation unfolds. As most rich democracies transitioned into the knowledge economy, a large body of work in political science has focused on how labour market transformations shape political conflict and electoral outcomes. The rising dualization of the labour market has created new electoral subgroups, with distinctive political attitudes and party preferences (Rueda, 2005, 2007; Häusermann, Kemmerling and Rueda, 2020; Bo' et al., 2023), while the rise of big data and the rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence are likely to be consequential for the politics of social solidarity (Iversen and Rehm, 2022; Haslberger, Gingrich and Bhatia, 2025) and electoral politics more broadly (Lall, 2025). Similarly, the broad decline of unions, which have traditionally played a key role in shaping members' policy preferences (Iversen and Soskice, 2015*b*; Kim and Margalit, 2017; Ahlquist and Levi, 2013), has been associated with declining support for left-wing parties (Ray and Pontusson, 2025).

However, this literature has focused mainly on labour market structures and electoral outcomes, paying less attention to the ways in which politics enters the workplace itself, and the conditions under which it permeates organizational speech. Consider, for instance, the rise of politically motivated employee walkouts in the United States, the large share of workers who report feeling comfortable discussing politics with colleagues (Raconteur, 2024; Gallup, 2024), or the recent moves by technology companies to restrict or even ban political conversations at work. In other words, the fact that workplace politics unfolds in more incidental, subtle, and reactive ways today —often without the mediation of unions— does not mean it has faded away. This dissertation addresses that gap in political science by developing a novel theoretical framework that explains how politics permeates the modern workplace and explores its consequences for cooperation and socialization among employees, firms' political speech, and patterns of political participation.

The core argument of this dissertation unfolds in two steps. First, I argue that modern workplace structures and the nature of work in the knowledge economy have intensified workers' demands for value alignment and political homogeneity in the workplace. In particular, the growing role of non-cognitive and collaborative skills in the modern workplace, combined with the fact that many highly educated workers see their workplace as a platform for advancing broader societal goals and developing social ties, helps explain not only why incidental conversations about politics are more frequent, but also why political misalignment is often sanctioned in workplace interactions, while political alignment is rewarded. This dynamic is especially pronounced under conditions of widespread affective polarization, since political identities serve as cues for work-related traits that people value in their colleagues. Furthermore, because political homogeneity facilitates informal political conversations, workplaces can become mobilizing spaces, leading to more participation in costly and collective forms of political action.

Second, going beyond workers' behaviour, I introduce a conceptual innovation to our understanding of how organizations react to broader sociostructural and political transformations. I argue that, as educational expansion and cultural liberalism reshape workers' demands and expectations, traditionally conservative, pro-status quo organizations face growing pressure from employees to engage with socially progressive causes. Firms, which can now easily engage with broader audiences through social media, may, however, face opposition from conservative politicians or stakeholders, leading them to be highly selective about when to speak up.

At a conceptual level, these two arguments reflect the fact that, in the absence of formal coordination institutions typical of coordinated market economies, value-identity alignment serves as a mechanism of cohesion and trust in liberal market economies. Knowledge economy workers, for the reasons outlined, seek value alignment with their colleagues and employers; firms, in turn, signal political and social commitments to attract and retain ideologically aligned talent and because they may perceive a certain degree of value alignment as necessary for effective performance, especially in highly collaborative settings. In other words, workers and firms engage in an ideational mode of coordination that is beneficial to both. While this alignment is not always explicitly political, it usually manifests itself along identity and

symbolic lines that correlate with specific political camps and generate a strong sense of group belonging.

My theoretical framework incorporates different strands of research across the social sciences into a unifying political science framework. I draw on research in economic sociology and labour economics to document the growing relevance of collaborative skills (Deming, 2017; Zhang, 2023) and the importance that highly educated workers attach to nonpecuniary dimensions of work (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022; Colonnelli et al., 2023; Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Burbano et al., 2024). Meanwhile, recent advances in management and experimental economics research (Dimant, 2024; Lane, Miller and Rodriguez, 2024; Robbett and Matthews, 2021; Evans et al., 2024), coupled with the socio-psychological literature on affective polarization (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012; Iyengar and Westwood, 2015), are key to understanding the role of social identities —including partisanship— in shaping, and sometimes constraining, group cooperation.

In this dissertation, I bring these theories and findings into a solid body of work about the political transformations associated with the transition into knowledge-based societies (Boix, 2019; Rueda, 2007; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Beramendi et al., 2015; Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024; Gallego, Kurer and Schöll, 2022; Kurer and Van Staalduinen, 2022). Existing political sociology research has often treated the workplace primarily as a site of political preference formation or attitudinal reinforcement (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024). My theory, however, conceptualizes the workplace as a space where workers feel increasingly comfortable bringing their own political views, and where a certain degree of political alignment allows people to identify more strongly with their job and, potentially, perform more effectively in team-based environments. My framework also incorporates attitudinal reinforcement, since I expect politically homogeneous workplaces —those where most employees align politically with one another— to solidify preexisting negative attitudes about outpartisans and positive ones about copartisans. Conversations about politics will in fact be facilitated by political homogeneity, which will sometimes be followed by political mobilization, in line with seminal findings by Mutz (2006, 2002).

Furthermore, my dissertation interprets the recent rise in corporate political speech, often

in a progressive-leaning direction, as evidence of the "complementarity between participation in the urban economy and left-libertarian political values" (Iversen and Soskice, 2019, p. 225) in modern knowledge economies. By paying attention to this phenomenon, I put the study of firms at the forefront of my analysis. Unlike the varieties of capitalism (VoC) tradition, I understand firms not only act as engines of competitive advantage but also as institutions that shape broader societal norms through their communication channels, selectively engaging with salient social or political issues when doing so is advantageous. In the knowledge economy, companies want to accommodate the ideological preferences —particularly on second-dimension issues— of employees to be able to attract highly skilled and highly motivated employees. By proposing this argument, my dissertation shows that demand-driven, electoral approaches to the study of political economy (Kitschelt, 1999; Beramendi et al., 2015) and firm-centred and institutionalist explanations (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Thelen, 2014) are highly complementary and can be reconciled to explain how politics permeates firms —from workplaces to boardrooms and CEOs' offices— in knowledge-based societies.

The theoretical argument advanced in this thesis applies most directly to countries with a large share of university-educated workers and an occupational structure characterized by a large supply of high–value added, high-skilled jobs. In this dissertation, however, I focus on two cases: the United Kingdom and the United States. The high proportion of people with tertiary education in both countries —52.7% in the United Kingdom and 50.7% in the United States (OECD, 2024)— and occupational structures with a substantial share of knowledge-based employment make them typical examples of modern knowledge-based economies. Moreover, their relatively lower job tenures and higher mobility among high-skilled workers, compared to other Western European countries, make them especially well suited to the theoretical foundations of this thesis.

Following the format of a paper-based dissertation, my core theoretical and empirical contributions are developed in three separate articles. Together, these studies shed light on the role of political identities in the modern workplace and their implications for firm-related and political outcomes. In particular, this thesis revolves around three different questions: How do informal conversations about politics at work influence broader patterns of political

engagement beyond the workplace? (Chapter 3) How do political identities shape cooperation and social relationships at work? (Chapter 4) Under what conditions do large corporations engage with broader political and social issues? (Chapter 5)? These questions are addressed by employing a wide range of methodological approaches and data sources. I draw on both original experimental and observational designs as well as text analysis techniques to examine Twitter data and companies' financial reporting.

Chapter 3 serves as a motivating chapter, drawing on an original survey of 2,000 workers in the UK. To my knowledge, the survey represents the most comprehensive data collected within a single country about how politics permeates the modern workplace, including the frequency of political discussions, the political makeup of the workplace, preferences for companies' political speech, and the relative weight that workers attach to nonpecuniary versus pecuniary considerations.

In addition to these descriptive analyses, Chapter 3 explores the determinants of informal political conversations at work, to then analyse the impact of these conversations on broader patterns of political mobilization outside work. I find that highly collaborative settings are particularly conducive to informal political conversations at work, partly because they allow for the development of stronger social relationships between colleagues. Younger cohorts, on the other hand, are more likely to engage in informal political conversations at work, in part because they tend to work in more politically homogeneous environments and feel most uncomfortable working with politically misaligned colleagues. Given the potential risks associated with talking about politics at work, I show that those in lower-ranked positions, facing higher labour market risks, are likely to engage less in political conversations at work.

Drawing on seminal political sociology literature about social networks and political participation (Kenny, 1992; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2002; McClurg, 2006; Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg, 2013), Chapter 3 also shows that the workplace can serve as a politically mobilizing context, especially when it comes to more costly and social forms of political participation, such as attending protests. It is likely that, by discussing politics with colleagues, norms around how companies should engage with political and social issues are also affected: empirically, I find a strong positive association between discussing politics at work

more frequently and wanting companies to publicly speak up on social and political issues.

Building on key findings from Chapter 3, Chapter 4 (co-authored with Francesco Raffaelli) analyses how political identities shape cooperation and socialization in the workplace. The fact that conversations about politics are relatively common at work —allowing many workers to get a sense of their colleagues' political outlook— and that a large proportion of workers perceive themselves to work in politically diverse settings motivates a conjoint experimental design in which respondents are exposed to pairs of potential teammates with, among other features, distinctive political identities.

This chapter provides causal evidence on how colleagues' political leanings, once known, shape workers' preferences for collaboration and socialization. We argue that political identities act as cues for increasingly relevant non-cognitive skills, such as character skills and interpersonal trust. To test this, we introduce a new measure of affective polarization at work. The results show that individuals who doubt that outpartisans can be honest or good teammates are the most opposed to cooperating with politically misaligned colleagues.

Although political identities do not completely outweigh competence considerations for the average respondent, we find that among highly affectively polarized individuals, political identities take precedence over competence. In addition, our results appear also driven by specific groups of workers —those in politically homogeneous workplaces, sociocultural occupations, or left-leaning workers— who more strongly seek to avoid working with politically misaligned colleagues. A second original survey corroborates these findings, showing that younger, left-wing, and highly educated workers are more likely to use colleagues' political views as proxies for how honest or competent they are.

Taken together, the findings from Chapter 4 suggest that, in contexts of widespread polarization, the growing relevance of relational and noncognitive skills in knowledge-based societies can be conducive to identity-based political sorting. Workplaces have traditionally been viewed as contexts where individuals are exposed to a wider range of worldviews, including political perspectives, which can foster perspective-taking and tolerance (Mutz, 2006). However, even though we show that political diversity at work remains prevalent, our findings point to a possible feedback loop —in which political sorting reinforces preferences for avoiding outpartisans—

that limits opportunities for the cross-partisan contact desired in liberal democracies.

After demonstrating in Chapters 3 and 4 how politics emerges in the modern workplace, influencing political engagement outside work and workers' willingness to collaborate with one another, Chapter 5 analyses the conditions under which large, publicly traded companies in the US engage in corporate political speech. In many democracies, a growing number of companies are taking public positions on a wide range of social and political issues, despite the potential risks this entails (Burbano, 2021; Panagopoulos et al., 2020; Wowak, Busenbark and Hambrick, 2022). So far, however, political science research has mostly overlooked firms' political speech. Speech matters not only from an organizational perspective but also politically, as it has the ability to shape public opinion on societal and political issues. This is especially true in the case of large firms with politically vocal leadership.

Chapter 5 proposes a theoretical framework to understand the conditions under which the largest publicly traded firms in the US engage in progressive-leaning speech, from calling out racial inequality and promoting women's rights to advocating for environmental causes. I argue that Democratic-leaning, high-skilled workers have particular influence in leading companies to engage with politically divisive topics, especially in contexts where employee retention pressures and recruitment needs are most pressing. By combining computational methods to extract all tweets and 10-K filings from S&P 500 companies with (mostly) donation-based ideological measures of companies' stakeholders and proprietary data on turnover and hiring rates, I find that firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce are significantly more likely than Republican-leaning firms to engage in political speech when net headcount growth rates are higher.

This chapter also speaks to the recent Republican-led backlash against companies' progressive-leaning speech, or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and ESG practices in the US. I show that firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce located in Republican-majority states tend to constrain themselves, especially since 2020, when it comes to engaging with progressive causes. In 2025, President Donald Trump's executive order curbing DEI policies has led to a rapid decrease in how often these companies engage publicly with progressive causes; however, my findings show that firms with a Democratic-leaning employee base are still significantly more likely to be among those who publicly embrace progressive causes.

More broadly, Chapter 5 brings the study of firms to political science research by looking into a form of corporate behaviour that is distinct from traditional lobbying —often conducted as quietly as possible to avoid public scrutiny— and corporate social responsibility practices. By putting existing research on the electoral realignment of highly educated voters into dialogue with management and labour economics research on firm behaviour, Chapter 5 suggests that these electoral transformations also have an impact in how organizations interact with social and political change. These transformations are not only crucial to understand how progressive-leaning speech comes about, but also how it can be constrained through changes in the legal environment.

As a whole, this dissertation contributes to several debates in political science and adjacent fields. First, an established literature in comparative political economy and political sociology has paid extensive attention to how labour market transformations shape political outcomes in knowledge-based societies (Rueda, 2005; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Boix, 2019; Schwander and Häusermann, 2013). However, despite important insights about the growing importance of relational skills in the knowledge economy (Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014), these studies have understood workplaces as bundles of skills and tasks that shape preferences (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Beramendi et al., 2015; Oesch, 2006; Iversen and Soskice, 2019), while overlooking the organizational and interpersonal dimensions of work as a mobilizing force. My dissertation contributes to this literature by instead paying attention to how contemporary workplace structures and skill requirements make political identities more relevant for workers and subsequently for firms.

Second, I engage with a broader debate across the social sciences on whether socially and politically heterogeneous settings are increasingly at risk, particularly as the knowledge economy deepens preexisting social and economic divides. While seminal studies have portrayed the workplace as more ideologically heterogeneous than most other social settings (Mutz, 2002; Mutz and Mondak, 2006; Mutz, 2006), more recent research in sociology and political science points to rising occupational (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025), income (Godechot et al., 2024), and political homogeneity (Chinoy and Koenen, 2024; Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024) at the workplace across Europe and the United States. This dissertation shows

that while most UK workers still perceive their workplaces as politically diverse, these workers may favour increased political homogeneity at work under specific conditions. Furthermore, going beyond workers' preferences for selecting into more politically homogeneous work teams, I show that political alignment —at least rhetorically— can also emerge between employees and employers under specific labour market conditions. Therefore, by analysing both horizontal (employee–employee) and vertical (employee–employer) work relationships, the dissertation identifies different mechanisms mechanism through which political homogeneity may arise.

Lastly, while featuring less prominently in mainstream political science today —see contributions by Hersh and Shah (2025*a*,*b*) for recent exceptions— this dissertation also speaks to debates about the sources of stakeholder capitalism and corporate political speech. While previous research has focused on documenting the rise in corporate political speech or establishing correlations between stakeholder ideology and corporate speech, my study is the first to systematically theorize the conditions under which different stakeholders will be more or less successful in influencing their employers' political speech. I show that while progressive employees matter significantly for whether companies speak up on politically salient issues, governments have the ability to counteract this influence by introducing legislation that raises the costs of political speech for companies.

In sum, despite common claims of "hollowed-out" workplace politics and the decline in union power across advanced economies, this dissertation shows that politics has not faded away from workplaces in the modern knowledge economy. Workers and firms in the knowledge economy continue to engage politically at work — just not only through the traditional, union-centred channels of the industrial era, in the case of workers, or through the "quiet politics" and lobbying practices, in the case of firms. By proposing a new theory about how political identities, workplaces, and firms interact in the the knowledge economy, this dissertation brings back workplaces and firms to the study of politics in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This dissertation develops a new theoretical framework for understanding the role of political identities and conversations at work in shaping both political and firm-level outcomes, with particular attention to cooperation in the workplace and organizational political speech. To do so, I engage with and build on different strands of literature, both in political science and adjacent fields, such as sociology, economics, and management. These literatures can be organized into three main areas: labour market transformations and political preference formation in the knowledge economy; changing values, work identity, and political engagement; and organizational responses to political transformations.

2.1 Labour Market Transformations and Political Preference Formation in the Knowledge Economy

This thesis is first motivated by well-studied structural transformations associated with the transition towards the knowledge economy, including changes in occupational structures and task content (Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Oesch, 2006; Wren, 2013; Boix, 2019; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Deming, 2017; Autor et al., 2025). How have workplaces and labour markets more broadly been transformed in the transition to the knowledge economy? What are the political implications of these transformations, both in terms of political behaviour and political preference formation? This section engages thoroughly with these two questions.

Skill Requirements and Organizational Structures in the Knowledge Economy

In recent years the term "knowledge economy" has become an umbrella for related but conceptually different phenomena, from public and private investment in research and development to the share of employment in knowledge-intensive sectors and the share of workers with ICT (information and communication technology) skills (see Diessner et al. (2025) for an extensive review). In this dissertation, I conceptualize the knowledge economy as a "mode of organization of the economy characterized by the co-production and co-deployment of technology and high-level skills" (Diessner et al., 2025, p. 6).

When talking about skills, Iversen and Soskice (2019), building on an influential literature in labour economics (Deming, 2017; Edin et al., 2022), have made a key contribution to understanding the growing role not only of analytical skills but, most importantly for my theory, of relational skills in the knowledge economy. They argue that, as physical skills are downgraded in favour of analytical and relational skills, trust and reputation —both among employees and between employees and employers— become particularly relevant in many jobs performed by those with university degrees. My dissertation builds on this research by showing that these relational skills make political identities more consequential for workplace relationships, as they function more often as signals of trust and reputation in ways that cognitive skills do not.

These relational skills matter particularly in the new economic organization of knowledge economies, increasingly based on teamwork and collaboration between employees across both managerial and nonmanagerial jobs (Zhang, 2023; Lazear and Shaw, 2007). For instance, by analyzing 34 million job postings in the United States from 2007 to 2021, Zhang (2023) shows that requirements for collaborative skills have increased twofold over this period, with around 30% of jobs explicitly demanding them.

Similarly, the expansion of high-end, knowledge-intensive services has reinforced the need for decentralized and horizontal workplace structures (Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Ruigrok and Achtenhagen, 1999; Wynen, Verhoest and Rübecksen, 2014; Florida, 2014), in sharp contrast to the hierarchical bureaucracies typical of industrial capitalism (Weber, 1978). By analyzing more than 6 million firms, which posted 156 million jobs in the US between 2010 and 2019, Hurst, Lee and Frake (2024) show that references to having "flat hierarchies" have increased substantially over this period.

Political science, however, has mostly overlooked the ways in which these transformations —the rising importance of relational and collaborative skills— matter for broader political phenomena and for the conditions under which politics permeates workplace and organizational settings. In my dissertation, I argue that these transformations have created new opportunities for political identities to influence workplace dynamics and social relationships, as well as to foster informal political talk more broadly.

Political Consequences of Labour Market Transformations

In recent decades, a large body of political science research on labour market transformations has focused on their impact on policy preferences, political behaviour, and party strategies (Rueda, 2005, 2007; Häusermann, Kemmerling and Rueda, 2020; Bo' et al., 2023; Iversen and Soskice, 2015*a*; Emmenegger, 2012; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015). With different conceptualizations and definitions of labour market risks, these studies show that these risks —mostly those associated with the transition to post-industrial societies— influence political preferences, especially social policy preferences and party choice (see Häusermann, Kemmerling and Rueda (2020) for an extensive review). More recently, a closely related literature on the political consequences of automation and digitalization (Gallego, Kurer and Schöll, 2022; Busemeyer and Tober, 2023; Bicchi, Kuo and Gallego, 2024; Iversen and Rehm, 2022) has gained ground, mirroring the rapid deployment of artificial intelligence by workers and firms (see Gallego and Kurer (2022) for an extensive review).

While crucial for understanding the political consequences of structural transformations, these studies provide limited insights into the interaction between occupational task structures, work logics, and the role of political identities in shaping work-related dynamics, such as cooperating on a team project.

Workplaces as Sites of Political Preference Formation

Going beyond the role of labour market transformations in shaping electoral outcomes, a less developed literature has argued that workplace experiences play a key role in the process of political preference formation. In an influential contribution, Kitschelt and Rehm (2014) argue that individuals' experiences at work are conducive to distinctive political attitudes. In particular, these work experiences are shaped by a horizontal dimension, concerning the specific nature of the occupational task structure, and a vertical dimension, concerning how much discretion and autonomy a worker has at work. For them, workers generalize and extrapolate from their experience on the job along these two dimensions to the sphere of policy preferences.

While their design does not allow them to rule out self-selections concerns, Kitschelt and

Rehm (2014) convincingly argue that, even if certain preexisting political predispositions are most conducive to ending up in a specific type of occupation, this does not mean that the occupation will not have any influence on how you interpret the social and political reality surrounding you. More recently, Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst (2024) propose a similar argument and show empirically, using observational and panel data, that individuals in more human-centred fields of education and occupations —defined based on the importance of cultural-communicative skills relative to economic-technical skills— tend to vote more for culturally liberal, left-leaning parties. Crucially, they show that while their results are partly explained by self-selection, "graduating in a particular field and, beyond that, working in an occupation with high cultural-communicative content tends to reinforce these sympathies" (Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024, p. 13). In other words, "individuals self-select into socialization" (Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024, p. 14).

These studies, more or less explicitly, treat workplaces as bundles of skills and tasks that shape political preference. My dissertation adds a different perspective by arguing that workplaces are not only settings where task structures and skills influence political attitudes, but also organizational and interpersonal arenas that can become politically mobilizing forces. On the one hand, I show that informal political talk emerges more easily in highly collaborative workplaces and where social ties are stronger; on the other, these politicized workplace networks are conducive to different kinds of political engagement and even shape expectations about how companies should respond to political and social issues.

Complementing Kitschelt and Rehm (2014) and Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst (2024)'s findings, recent contributions in the field have revived interest in social networks, which play a crucial role in solidifying political attitudes (Zollinger and Attewell, 2025; De Jong and Kamphorst, 2025; Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025). These studies suggest that in different contexts, educational and occupational networks — which appear to have increased in the transition to the knowledge economy (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025)— matter greatly for political attitudes and behaviours. For instance, higher (lower) educated individuals who mostly spend time with other higher (lower) educated people tend to vote more strongly for progressive (far right) parties (De Jong and Kamphorst, 2025).

These findings imply that the growing homogeneity of networks along educational and occupational lines may also produce more politically homogeneous environments. This directly challenges an influential account of the workplace as one of the most politically diverse social settings that individuals experience in their day-to-day life (Mutz, 2006; Mutz and Mondak, 2006). In her seminal studies, Diana Mutz shows that exposure to politically diverse workplaces is associated with more tolerant views (Mutz and Mondak, 2006), but also with lower political participation, since cross-cutting interactions instil ambivalence and reduce social accountability (Mutz, 2006). More recent findings, however, suggest that lower exposure to people with different occupational classes at work (likely associated as well with higher political homogeneity) correlates with lower political participation and, for lower-skilled occupations, higher support for the radical right (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025).

Building on this body of work, my dissertation brings political homogeneity at work — understood as workplaces in which a majority of colleagues agree politically with one another— to the forefront of the analysis. First, I show that political homogeneity at work, which is significantly higher among younger and left-wing individuals, increases the likelihood of wanting to avoid working with outpartisans. Second, I show that a high degree of political homogeneity is a necessary condition for progressive corporate speech to emerge. Lastly, in line with Mutz (2006), I show that political discussions at work are more common when individuals are embedded in politically homogeneous work environments. Therefore, while previous research had focused mainly on the electoral implications of educational and occupational homogeneity, my work identifies political homogeneity as a key condition for understanding why and how politics permeates firms, affecting cooperation between colleagues and employee–employer relationships.

2.2 Changing Values, Work Identity, and Political Engagement

This section is organized along four different areas of research. The first one analyses how workers' demands evolve in the knowledge economy and the rising significance of nonpecuniary

dimensions of work. The second emphasizes the importance of workplaces as sources of socialization, meaning, and identity formation, especially for highly educated workers. Next, I explore how political identities shape vertical and horizontal workplace relationships. Finally, I engage with research on how workplace experiences shape political engagement beyond the workplace. This section, therefore, substantiates a key motivation of this dissertation: that workplaces today —despite the decline of union density across rich democracies— remain crucial settings where people develop personal identities, learn about social and political issues, and potentially mobilize, whether by engaging politically outside of work or by exerting pressure on companies to take public stances on politically divisive issues.

What Workers Want from Work

While in industrial societies workers' demands were broadly focused on traditional economic issues such as pay and compensation, in today's knowledge economies workers' preferences cover a much wider range. They not only want to work for a company that pays well, but also one that offers flexibility, aligns with their values, or takes actions that positively impact society. This is particularly true for highly educated workers, who have more strongly embraced culturally liberal causes and have more choice over the work they do (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022).

Two studies are particularly useful to illustrate the growing importance of the nonmonetary or nonpecuniary dimensions of work. Using data from online U.S. job postings, Wilmers and Zhang (2022) shows that employers often highlight their prosocial impact —including references such as "making a difference" or "improving the lives" in their job postings. These references are especially widespread among employers in the healthcare sector, but they also appear frequently in typical knowledge-economy occupations such as science, management, law, and business and finance. In Wilmers and Zhang (2022)'s sample, 37% of job postings include references to prosocial values, with postings requiring a higher degree more likely to do so (42%) than those that do not (33%).

A key finding of Wilmers and Zhang (2022)'s study is that university-educated workers value more strongly jobs framed as prosocial, even if they are often paid worse, which, in-

advertently, reduces earnings inequality. University-educated workers are also more likely to report having a job that is useful to society is important to them. Their findings align well with the evidence from a field experiment conducted by Burbano (2016). Workers —and especially high-performers— are willing to accept a lower reservation wage when their prospective employer commits to socially responsible practices. Both studies suggest that "employees are motivated by "purpose" in the workplace and are willing to trade off pecuniary benefits for nonpecuniary benefits" (Burbano, 2016, p. 1023).

The political consequences of these trends have until recently received less attention. Hurst and Lee (2025), conducting a field experiment with an actual US employer, show that the pro-diversity commitments in online job postings reduce political diversity within organizations, as job seekers on the political right become less attracted. Meanwhile, the management literature finds that ideological misalignment between employers and workers undermines organizational commitment and employee motivation, though evidence is mixed regarding whether alignment boosts commitment and motivation symmetrically (Wowak, Busenbark and Hambrick, 2022; Burbano, 2021).

Drawing on this work, my dissertation conceptualizes corporate political alignment as a distinctive nonpecuniary benefit. While existing research focuses on prosociality and socially responsible practices, I argue that political alignment between employees and employers — or between colleagues— can itself provide intrinsic value, make work feel more meaningful, and be perceived as beneficial for organizational outcomes. This argument also connects to a large body of work in organizational psychology, sociology, and, more recently, labour economics on the concept of "meaningful work", exploring its main determinants, ranging from the design of job tasks to purpose-driven organizations and workers' financial circumstances (Cassar and Meier, 2018; Rosso, Dekas and Wrzesniewski, 2010; Burbano et al., 2024; Caza and Wrzesniewski, 2013).

Workplaces as Sources of Socialization and Identity

As part of the broader sociostructural transformations associated with the transition to the knowledge economy, a large body of work has documented important changes in the kind of set-

tings where people socialize with others, develop a sense of belonging and, potentially, mobilize politically. On the one hand, union density has declined across advanced economies (Ebbinghaus and Visser, 1999), together frequency of attendance to religious services (Molteni and Biolcati, 2023; Barro, Dewitte and Iannaccone, 2025), and and family structures have shrunk (Sobotka and Berghammer, 2021). On the other hand, online engagement has skyrocketed across all age groups.

These transformations have been more or less explicitly accounted for in the vast social capital literature (Putnam, 2000; Chetty et al., 2022; Campbell, 2013, 2023). In political science, much recent evidence points to the political consequences of these changes —for instance, linking the weakening of social capital and associational life, in the form of social isolation or weaker friendship and family structures, to the increasing support for radical right parties (Bolet, 2021; Rydgren, 2009) and the decline of mainstream parties (Colombo and Dinas, 2023).

Despite these transformations, different pieces of evidence suggest that workplaces remain crucial spaces of socialization in knowledge-based societies. Survey data from both the US and the UK indicate that the workplace is the most common setting in which people meet their closest friends, followed by by school and university (Cox, Orrell and Wall, 2022; YouGov, 2022). This is especially evident among highly educated workers in the US: 45% of them report having met close friends through work, compared to 35% of those without a university degree. Similarly, 54% of university-educated workers in the US report discussing personal issues with coworkers, compared to 35% among those with a high school education or less. These are most likely conservative estimates, since in 2021 and 2022, when these surveys were fielded, a large proportion of highly educated workers were working remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which limited the frequency of workplace socialization.

Since the workplaces carries such an important social significance for highly educated workers, it is not surprising that what these workers more frequently derive a strong sense of their identity from their job. A survey from the Pew Research Center (2023) shows that in the US 53% of workers with postgraduate education report that their job or career is extremely or very important to their identity, compared to 34% of those with some college or less education

— very similar figures are shown by Gallup (2014) nine years before. Similar evidence is also observed in the UK, where workers in professional and managerial jobs reporting that work impacts their overall happiness more often (YouGov, 2020).

Against this backdrop, an emerging literature—both scholarly (Chen, 2022) and non-academic (Thompson, 2023)—has emphasized that "work has expanded in the lives of the highly skilled, by simultaneously extracting more of their time and fulfilling more of their needs religion once met" (Chen, 2022, p. 18). While Chen (2022)'s focus is on Silicon Valley, the broader point is that the workplace has become a central site of socialization and identity formation, particularly for highly educated workers who are most plugged into the knowledge economy.

Bringing these insights to the political science literature, my dissertation argues that the importance of the workplace as a site of socialization, identity formation, and positive contribution to society has important implications for how politics enters modern organizations. In particular, I show that collaborative workplaces promote closer ties among colleagues, which in turn make the emergence of informal political talk more likely, especially among younger cohorts. At the same time, I find that workers with stronger prosocial attitudes —those who care deeply about the societal impact of their job— attach greater importance to their colleagues' political identities when assessing potential teammates.

Political Identities and Workplace Relationships

In recent years, affective polarization research has paid increasing attention to how political identities influence people's behaviours in nonpolitical settings. Within this literature, only a small number of studies examines how political alignment shapes work-related decisions, such as hiring (Gift and Gift, 2015), in the case of employers, or job choice (McConnell et al., 2018), in the case of workers. Similarly, in economics, recent studies show that employers in Brazil have a preference for politically aligned employees, even at the cost of economic performance (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025), and that employees are more motivated and perform better when aligned with their employers in the US bureaucracy (Spenkuch, Teso and Xu, 2023) and at a world-leading bank (Delfino and Espinosa, 2025).

These studies propose different mechanisms to explain why political identities influence employers' and employees' decisions to engage with one another in the context of work. One explanation, rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979), taste-based: political identities generate personal affinity towards aligned individuals and hostility toward misaligned ones (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021). On the other hand, it is also possible that employers perceive that political alignment will result in smoother and more productive collaboration at work, as suggested by (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025); in the case of employees, they may perceive a politically aligned employer as more caring and responsive, or just perceiving an intrinsic value for sharing a similar political outlook with their employer.

In contrast, we know far less about how political identities affect horizontal workplace relationships between peers. Because of its managerial implications, most evidence so far comes from management and behavioral economics, which shows that, particularly in times of widespread political polarization, political misalignment undermines group cooperation (Dimant, 2024; Lane, Miller and Rodriguez, 2024; Robbett and Matthews, 2021). Recent findings by Chinoy and Koenen (2024) show that workers in the US are willing to trade off a small but significant proportion of their salary to work with politically aligned employees.

To fill this gap, my dissertation analyses how political alignment (and misalignment) shapes collaboration preferences among workers. As collaborative skills become increasingly central to modern workplaces, and as new management practices give workers greater autonomy over whom to work with (Boss et al., 2023), understanding how political identities shape cooperation is even more relevant. Collaborating and interacting at work often lead to conversations about a wide range of topics and, most importantly, foster perspective-taking across people with different value systems (Mutz, 2006). In sum, as structural transformations increasingly homogenize networks along educational, occupational, and political lines, it is even more crucial to understand when and why workers' preferences accentuate or mitigate these trends. My work explores the conditions under which workers, when given the choice, prefer working with politically aligned workers and at what cost.

The Spillovers of Talking Politics at Work

The intuition that what happens at work has implications for political outcomes beyond the workplace is far from new in political science. Inspired by the Columbia school, an influential body of work has emphasized since the 1970s the importance of social networks in shaping political attitudes and patterns of participation (Huckfeldt, 1979; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2002; McClurg, 2006).

In their seminal book, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) study how social networks influence political behavior and attitudes, with particular attention to the structure of these networks. From this view, "politics is a social activity, imbedded within structured patterns of social interaction. Political information is not only conveyed through speeches and media reports but also through a variety of informal social mechanisms: political discussions on the job or on the street, campaign buttons on a co-worker's shirt, even casual remarks." (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995, p. 124). Although Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) are not exclusively interested in workplace networks, their South Bend study of the 1984 presidential election identifies the workplace as one of the most frequent settings outside the family where people discussed political affairs.

A key takeaway from these studies is that politicized social networks —that is, social networks where political discussions happen frequently— are highly correlated with a higher degree of political and civic engagement (Kenny, 1992; McClurg, 2006; Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg, 2013). This is conditional, however, on the network's political structure: politically homogeneous networks are most conducive to political participation (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995), but politically cross-cutting discussions tend to depress political participation Mutz (2006). Similarly, discussion partners perceived as more knowledgeable and competent carry higher social influence (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; McClurg, 2006), as do political networks for political actions requiring more social interaction (Huckfeldt, 1979).

While the workplace is not often analysed or theorized as a distinct setting, it is often considered in these studies as the most relevant site for political discussions outside the family. More recently, using panel data that combines workers' employment history data with voting records, Hurst et al. (2025) find causal evidence that having politically engaged colleagues

increases individual turnout, especially among university-educated and younger employees, as well as among those with more intermittent voting records.

Building on this strand of research, my dissertation explicitly conceptualizes the workplace as a distinct setting where political conversations frequently emerge. I add to existing work in two ways: first, by showing that organizational and interpersonal factors make informal political talk more common at work; and, second, by analysing the consequences of politicized workplace networks beyond voting, including different nonelectoral forms of participation and expectations about corporate political speech. In this way, I also engage with an older labour politics and political sociology literature that was developed with industrial workplaces in mind (Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1956; Burawoy, 1979; Huckfeldt, 1979; Korpi, 1978; Pateman, 1975; Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995), but that is more limited in understanding workplace politics in the knowledge economy.

Furthermore, another influential strand of research has argued that workplace experiences and organizational governance structures more broadly do play a role in fostering workers' civic and participatory skills (Pateman, 1975; Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; Greenberg, Grunberg and Daniel, 1996). For Pateman (1975), for instance, the main mechanism linking workplace experiences to political participation outside work is workplace democracy: as workers become involved in the decision-making of their organization, they develop skills that are useful for political participation. Building on Pateman (1975)'s seminal work, more contemporary studies show that, in fact, workers in cooperatives have higher civic engagement than those in conventional firms, even though this is partly driven by selection (Schlachter and Ársælsson, 2024).

From a different methodological approach, qualitative and ethnographic scholars have analysed how informal political talk comes about (Cramer, 2004; Gamson, 1992), how it impacts deliberative processes (Conover, Searing and Crewe, 2002), and how it is avoided (Eliasoph, 1998). Similarly, in the Marxist tradition, influential studies of the workplace have explored the role of social relationships at work in disciplining and motivating workers (Burawoy, 1979), or argued that the rise of a middle-class professional class and modern corporations led to political apathy and a growing sense of social alienation (Mills, 1951).

In short, this section has shown that in knowledge-based societies highly educated workers have more purpose-driven attitudes towards their job that go beyond traditional concerns about pay and compensation. Existing research shows that this in part because of how much of these workers' personal identities is derived from their job. I have also summarized previous research, mostly anchored in social identity theory, about employers' and employees' preferences in favour of copartisan employees and copartisan employers, respectively. Lastly, I have discussed studies in political sociology about how politicized social networks tend to be conducive to a higher degree of civic and political engagement outside those networks.

2.3 Organizational Responses to Political Transformations

Given the evidence reviewed so far on the workplace as a crucial site for meaning, identity, and political discussions among workers, it is not surprising that organizations —particularly those employing a highly educated workforce— face growing pressure to take stands on social and political issues. In this final section, I review an emerging literature about the rise in corporate political speech and the political and economic factors shaping this trend. Moreover, I show that the electoral realignment literature can be useful to understand changes in firm behaviour, and that existing theoretical frameworks in comparative political economy are insufficient for explaining the evolving patterns of firm behaviour in the knowledge economy. While most of this literature has so far focused on the US, this dissertation shows that similar dynamics are also observed in the UK, at least in terms of partisan divisions over corporate political speech.

How Stakeholders' Ideology Shapes and Constrains Corporate Actions

Traditionally, political economy has argued that employers can shape, more or less coercively, the political mobilization of employees (Hertel-Fernandez, 2018; Stuckatz, 2022) or consumers (Culpepper and Thelen, 2020). Over the past decade, however, a growing body of work focused mainly in the US has explored the role of stakeholders —particularly employees, consumers, and shareholders— in influencing and constraining the political behaviour of companies, including corporate political donations (Li, 2018; Li and Disalvo, 2023) and corporate speech on socially

and politically divisive issues (Barari, 2024; Conway and Boxell, 2024; Steel, 2024).

Regarding corporate political donations, Li and Disalvo (2023) have shown that in the US the partisanship of corporate stakeholders impacts companies' donation behaviour: after the Capitol insurrection, companies with a more Democratic stakeholder base were more likely to pause contributions to Republican Objectors and remained more committed to this pledge over time. Similarly, Li (2018) finds that employees tend to reduce their donations when their companies' PACs support out-partisan politicians, which may constrain access-seeking political action committees (PACs) in their donation behaviour. For politically charged workforce policies, such as abortion, employees' ideological leanings and demographic characteristics (e.g., the share of female employees) help explain why some companies announced abortion-related policies while others remained silent after the US Supreme Court's reversal of Roe v. Wade (Adrjan et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, a number of studies have also shown that companies, before publicly engaging on socially divisive issues —through issuing a statement on social media or signing an open letter in support of a given cause, for instance—, take the ideological leanings of their stakeholders into consideration. Barari (2024)'s analysis of around 2 million Twitter and Instagram posts from 1,000 corporate brands in the US shows that companies' political speech tends to be aligned with the political preferences of key stakeholders, while Steel (2024) finds that corporate directors' ideological leanings influence companies' responses to controversial legislation, such as anti-LGBTQ laws.

A distinctive feature of modern corporate political speech is that it is not necessarily associated with specific internal workplace policies or corporate social responsibility practices (Hambrick and Wowak, 2021). This does not mean, however, that corporate political speech does not carry consequences for firms. In fact, a growing body of work suggests that it can entail significant costs, from economic consequences (e.g., adverse investor reactions) to organizational challenges (e.g., diminished motivation and performance among misaligned employees, or reduced access to potential recruits) (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Burbano, 2021; Panagopoulos et al., 2020; Wowak, Busenbark and Hambrick, 2022; Appels, 2023).

My dissertation demonstrates that, despite these risks, the combination of certain con-

ditions —a homogeneously progressive workforce in a context where firm recruitment and retention needs are particularly salient— may force firms to engage in social and political progressive issues outside their core business interest.

Electoral Realignment and Corporate Progressive Speech

In today's knowledge-based societies, where many highly educated workers rely on their job as an importance source of meaning and identity, they have also come increasingly in favour of demanding their employers to speak up on socially and politically controversial issues, including diversity, racial inequality, or climate change. Evidence from the US shows that the rise corporate political speech is mainly driven progressive-leaning stance-taking. This aligns with the fact that Democrats are much more in favour corporate political speech much more strongly than Republicans (Hersh, 2023; Cheng and Horowitz, 2025): 66% of Democrats say that companies and organizations making public statements on political or social issues is very or somewhat important, compared with 34% of Republicans. Moreover, against the backdrop of corporate America's traditional alignment with the Republican Party, firms appear especially sensitive to stakeholders perceived as favouring the Democratic Party (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*).

A solid body of work in political sociology on the growing importance of progressive-leaning, highly educated electorate (the so-called "winners" of structural transformations) (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2023; Ansell and Gingrich, 2021; Zacher, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Zollinger, 2024) also sheds light on why companies in the US and elsewhere are increasingly pressured to embrace progressive causes. By bringing this literature into the study of firms' behaviour, my dissertation argues that the social embeddedness of the modern knowledge economy in culturally progressive values (Iversen and Soskice, 2019) has reshaped workers' expectations about how organizations engage with social and political issues. In fact, I view the rise in corporate political speech, often in a progressive-leaning direction, as evidence of the "complementarity between participation in the urban economy and left-libertarian political values" (Iversen and Soskice, 2019, p. 225) in modern knowledge economies.

Beyond labour market considerations, I argue that progressive employees' influence is often

constrained by other stakeholders, particularly conservative politicians. These politicians have the ability of raising the costs of stance-taking, or of introducing specific workplace policies, trough legislation, economic retaliation, or simple public statements.

Existing work, however, has paid little attention to the conditions under which employees' ideological leanings will be more influential than those of other stakeholders in shaping corporate political speech. This dissertation fills this gap by proposing that corporate political speech can be used strategically when recruitment and retention concerns are most widespread. In these contexts, the combination of a politically left-leaning workforce and labour market pressures helps explain why corporations are sometimes more responsive to employees' ideological leanings. However, other stakeholders —especially politicians— are likely to moderate employees' influence. CEOs and boards of directors, I show, do not actively obstruct workforce influence, as they prefer to avoid the negative repercussions of misaligning with their employees.

Furthermore, so far the dominant framework to study firms in the comparative political economy literature has been the "Varieties of Capitalism" (VoC) approach (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Thelen, 2001), which theorizes firms as strategic actors shaped by the institutional environment —for instance, industrial relations, training systems, or financial systems— they are embedded in. Building on this influential framework, this dissertation incorporates corporate political speech on issues beyond pay and compensation, and employee-employer value alignment, as typical features of firms in knowledge-based societies that tend to be deployed strategically. Unlike the VoC tradition, I understand firms not only act as engines of competitive advantage but also as institutions that shape broader societal norms through their communication channels, selectively engaging with salient social or political issues when doing so is advantageous.

In this section, I have engaged with an emerging literature —mostly limited so far to the US— on the role of stakeholders' ideology in shaping and constraining firms' political behaviour and, in particular, corporate political speech. I have also shown two different ways in which this dissertation contributes not only to this strand of research but also to a broader literature on the comparative political economy of modern knowledge economies and the study of firms.

2.4 Dissertation Overview

Argument in a Nutshell

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is anchored in a longstanding tradition of research across the social sciences, including not only political science but also sociology, management, organizational studies, and labour economics. Incorporating studies in adjacent fields into political science to propose a new theory of workplace politics and firm behaviour in knowledge-based societies is one of the main endeavours of this dissertation.

The core proposition of this dissertation is that politics, understood in a broad sense, has once again permeated workplaces and organizations in knowledge-based societies, even as declining unionisation rates have led some to assume that the idea of the workplace as a politically consequential setting had waned. Politics in the modern workplace is often not mediated by traditional unions and goes beyond traditional demands, such as pay and compensation. Polarization alone is not enough to explain workers' preferences in favour of political homophily at work, both in terms of the people they work with and the people they work for. The theory advanced in this dissertation shifts attention to the role of structural transformations about how work is conducted, the kind of skills that are required, and the workplace's role as a source of identity and friendship in knowledge-based societies.

First, I argue that the growing size of the university-educated population, who have come to consider their job an important part of their personal identity and care strongly about its nonpecuniary dimensions, is key to explaining workers' preferences in favour of political homogeneity at work and working for organizations that publicly align with their values. Second, the shift toward flatter, more collaborative forms of work, coupled with the rising premium on relational skills, makes political identities more salient and potentially consequential for workplace relationships. Finally, as many highly educated workers rely on workplaces as a key setting for socialization and close friendships, political conversations at work become more likely. As other forms of socialization are weakened —from unions, large family structures, religious organizations, and voluntary associations—, I argue that politicized workplace networks will be positively associated with different forms of political participation.

Workers' preferences in favour of working with politically aligned colleagues or working for politically aligned organizations will, however, only materialize under certain conditions. Regarding the first question, some workers will weigh signals about their teammates' competence more strongly than political ones, with the latter not necessarily influencing views about the former. For other workers, political identities will carry higher a weight, sometimes overriding competence considerations. This should be the case for workers who care strongly about the noncognitive and relational skills of their colleagues and believe that outpartisans are less likely than copartisans to possess these skills and traits. Similarly, workers with prosocial attitudes towards their job, or who tend to work in politically homogeneous environments, will also be more likely to care strongly about their teammates' political outlook.

To explain when workers can shape their employers' political stance-taking, I theorize the conditions under which corporate political speech —in particular, progressive-leaning speech— emerges. I propose that the growing importance of nonpecuniary dimensions of work in the knowledge economy and of work as an identity marker —particularly among the highly educated— leads workers to be more demanding about political alignment between themselves and their employers. Organizations, however, will tread carefully in their political stance-taking as they fear alienating other key audiences (most importantly, politicians) and only publicly engage in politically controversial issues when a majority of their current and prospective workforce is left-leaning and they are concerned about retaining and attracting new employees.

This argument leads to two different broad expectations. First, progressive workers will be particularly influential in shaping corporate political speech in contexts where companies are particularly concerned about retaining their existing workforce and attracting new workers; second, firms will constrain themselves when conservative policymakers mobilize politically and legally to undermine corporate political speech.

In the rest of this chapter, I briefly summarize the three following chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 3 - From Talk to Action: Informal Political Conversations and Political Engagement in the Knowledge Economy

Chapter 3 serves as a motivating empirical chapter for the dissertation, as well as an update of existing theories about how politicized workplace networks are associated with individuals' patterns of political participation outside work. How common are informal political conversations in today's workplaces, and what are their determinants? And to what extent can these politicized workplace networks be conducive to workers' political engagement beyond work?

Drawing on an original survey of 2,000 workers in the UK, I find that working in highly collaborative settings is positively associated with engaging more frequently in informal political conversations at work. Mediation analyses suggest that this is in part because collaborative environments also allow for the development of stronger social relationships between colleagues, which are likely to make conversations about personal and social issues, including politics, more comfortable. Second, I find that younger cohorts not only feel most uncomfortable working with politically misaligned colleagues but are also more likely to engage in political discussions at work than older cohorts. Not everyone, however, can afford to discuss political affairs with colleagues and managers at work: I find that those in lower-ranked positions, facing higher labour market risks, are less likely to do so.

In Chapter 3, I also show that these politicized workplace networks tend to make individuals more likely to participate in elections, attend protests, or donate to a political cause, and that these results are not simply explained by those who discuss politics at work being more interested in politics in the first place. Finally, I find that these informal political conversations are also positively correlated with stronger views about companies needing to engage publicly with social and political issues.

While the correlational nature of the empirical design does not allow me to interpret these results causally, they are robust to the inclusion of a wide range of controls, including sociodemographic traits and workplace characteristics. Furthermore, the reverse mechanism, in which those that engage in political actions outside work in the first place and then talk about their actions with colleagues at work, is also possible. But even if this is sometimes the case, both mechanisms can take place simultaneously. For instance, politically mobilized

individuals who frequently attend protests might talk about these actions at work and this in turn could mobilize colleagues that were not politically engaged before.

More broadly, this chapter plays an important role in this dissertation by showing that specific features of knowledge-based societies, such as the reliance on highly collaborative work structures and the importance of workplace networks to develop close personal ties, facilitate the emergence of conversations about politics at work. Furthermore, workplace political networks remain an important mobilizing factor in today's knowledge economies —not only in terms of fostering political participation beyond work, but also in shaping people's views on how modern corporations should engage with the broader social and political landscape.

Chapter 4 - Teaming Up or Splitting Apart? Political Identities in the Modern Workplace

Building on descriptive findings from Chapter 3 about the prevalence of political discussions at work and the fact that a majority of workers report having a sense of their colleagues' political views, Chapter 4 provides causal evidence on how colleagues' political leanings, when known, shape workers' preferences for collaboration and socialization.

We argue that the increasing emphasis on team-based and collaborative work in the knowledge economy has led employees to place a growing premium on political alignment in the workplace. To test this argument, we employ a conjoint experimental design in which 2,000 respondents in the UK are exposed to pairs of potential teammates with distinctive political identities and information about their competence (e.g., how they performed in their previous job and whether they deliver work on time), among other features.

Our findings show that, compared to a copartisan baseline, workers are, on average, 8 to 12 percentage points less willing to collaborate with outpartisans, even when provided with information about two distinct forms of competence. The aversion towards outpartisan is, as expected, even stronger in the case of socialization with colleagues outside the office.

A new measure of affective polarization in the workplace, based on open-ended survey items, suggests that political identities serve as cues for assessing non-cognitive skills and relational skills, i.e., those respondents who believe that outpartisans are unlikely to have these

attributes tend to rely more strongly on partisan cues when making up their minds about different pairs of prospective colleagues. Using machine learning methods, heterogeneity analyses show the results are partly driven by respondents in politically homogeneous environments and those who feel most strongly about positively impacting society through their job, both of whom are particularly sensitive to colleagues' political identities.

More broadly, these findings suggest that, in contrast to the industrial era, today's knowledge economy appear to foster, under some conditions, identity-based sorting — potentially making the workplace a less likely setting for political coordination or consensus-building across occupational classes or ideological divides. However, at the same time, the fact that the average respondent prefers working with highly competent colleagues regardless of their political preferences suggests that, in high information contexts, political identities have limited power in shaping work relationships.

Chapter 5 - When Do Firms Speak Up? Employee Ideology and the Politics of Corporate Speech

While Chapters 3 and 4 focus on individual-level analyses, Chapter 5 brings the study of firms to the forefront and does so in the context of the US. Despite the recent politicization of corporate political speech in the US, and of broader workforce policies, from ESG to DEI policies, little is known about the conditions under which firms' political stance-taking emerges and the relative weight of different stakeholders in shaping it. Following existing evidence showing that progressive-leaning highly educated workers are most in favour of corporate political speech, and the fact of most of this speech tends to be progressive-leaning, this article focuses exclusively on companies' engagement with progressive causes, such as racial inequality, women's rights, or climate change

The main argument is that organizations tend to systematically align with their workforce's political leanings, but this is most strongly the case when they are concerned about retaining and attracting new employees. Conservative corporate directors and CEOs, as rational actors, will not constrain the progressive-leaning speech of their firm when most of the workforce is left-leaning. On the other hand, the alignment between a progressive-leaning workforce and

corporate progressive speech will be weakened under conditions of conservative mobilization —through state legislation or presidential executive orders for instance— against progressive-leaning speech or workforce policies.

I test my theory by analyzing text data from corporate Twitter accounts and 10-K filings from most S&P 500 companies, combined with donation-based stakeholders' ideology measures, DW-NOMINATE scores on the ideology of US lawmakers, and monthly, firm-level data on labour market flows. Using fixed-effects count models, I show that, in fact, publicly traded firms relying on a Democratic-leaning workforce tend to engage publicly more frequently with progressive causes.

As theorized, concerns over employee attraction and retention emerge as a key mechanism explaining this relationship. Speaking to the recent Republican-led backlash, I find that firms with Democratic-leaning workforces located in Republican-majority states are less vocal on progressive-leaning causes, especially since 2020, while Republican-leaning corporate directors and CEOs do not appear to undermine the association between workers' ideological leanings and corporate progressive speech. While corporate political speech is not necessarily tied to specific and more costly actions, I do find that companies embracing progressive causes tend to obtain better ESG scores. Lastly, I provide survey evidence showing that highly educated individuals, those in knowledge-intensive occupations, and those who derive a stronger sense of personal identity from their job are most likely to support corporate-led DEI policies.

This chapter, more broadly, makes two important contributions to existing research on the political transformations associated with knowledge-based societies. On the one hand, it shows that employees' ideological leanings —in particular, the progressiveness of highly educated workers— are key to understanding the rise in progressive-leaning speech among traditionally pro-status quo large American corporations. While popular accounts of this phenomenon have often pointed to the role of the CEO class, I find that left-leaning rank-and-file employees are more strongly associated with companies that embrace progressive causes. On the other hand, I identify a novel mechanism about the role of corporate political speech as a non-pecuniary benefit that companies might use strategically in times of workforce expansion. Labor market conditions, therefore, do not only influence workers' ability to extract better pecuniary benefits

from their employers, but also their ability to influence how organizations position themselves on contemporary social and political debates.

Chapter 3

From Talk to Action: Informal Political Conversations and Political Engagement in the Knowledge Economy

Abstract

Politics has reemerged in the workplace across many democracies in recent years. Yet existing research has largely overlooked how and why politics permeates the modern workplace. In this article, I propose a theory about the role of modern work organizations (e.g., more team-based, collaborative and less hierarchical) and the nonpecuniary dimensions of work in creating new conditions under which political talk and mobilization unfold at work. Using original survey data from the United Kingdom, I first show that those in highly collaborative workplaces are most likely to engage in political conversations at work, as well as younger cohorts and those who perceive fewer risks in doing so. Such conversations, I show, are positively associated with different types of political participation as well as views on how organizations should engage with broader political issues. Tackling selection concerns, I find support for a mobilization mechanism for lower-cost activities (e.g., voting in elections), while for politically engaged individuals, politicized workplace networks appear to reinforce their propensity to participate in higher-cost collective action (e.g., participating in protests). More broadly, this study contributes to our understanding of the workplace as a key institution of socialization, identity formation, and politicization against the backdrop of the decline of other intermediary organizations.

3.1 Introduction

In democracies, informal political conversations have long been viewed as crucial for civic engagement and sustaining a healthy democracy. While these discussions happen most frequently with those closer to us, such as family and, friends, they also sometimes surface in professional settings such as the workplace (Mutz and Mondak, 2006). In particular, as traditional sites of political socialization, from neighbourhood associations to union halls, have weakened, the workplace has reemerged as an important venue for political preference formation and political discourse (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Selenko et al., 2025; Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025). Despite spending much of their waking hours at work (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2020), we know surprisingly little about when, why, and with what consequences workers discuss politics with their colleagues — see Hertel-Fernandez (2020) for one exception in the US context.

This question is even more significant when considering the contrast between workplaces in industrial societies and those in today's knowledge-based societies. In industrial societies, workplace politics was mainly handled by labour unions, which acted as "schools of democracy" (Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1956; Pateman, 1975) and focused on bread-and-butter economic issues (Korpi, 1978). Conversations about politics then, when happening, took place in relatively structured and hierarchical organizational setting. Today's knowledge economies are instead characterized by a broader understanding of what counts as political, including social and cultural issues beyond economic ones, and political talk now emerges more informally in a less guided way, often without the intermediation of unions.

Political discussions at work are in fact happening frequently: in the UK a 2024 survey shows that about 70% of workers feel comfortable discussing politics at work, while 20% say they have fallen out with a colleague over political views (Raconteur, 2024). But under what conditions are political discussions at work most likely to emerge in knowledge-based societies where the traditional institutions of collective action at work have weakened?

Understanding how informal political talk comes about in the workplace matters beyond normative explanations about the importance of exchanging ideas about social and political affairs for a well-functioning democracy. It matters as well because the workplace can serve as a mobilizing platform for different forms of political and civic engagement outside work. By

engaging in conversations about politics with colleagues, workers exchange useful information about the political process and politically influence each other, ultimately increasing their propensity to participate actively in the democratic process.

While these two questions – who talks politics at work and how are workers mobilized politically – are classic questions in political science and sociology at least since the early days of industrialization, they have been mostly overlooked in recent contributions about the political underpinnings of knowledge-based societies. The older labour politics and political sociology literature provide important insights on these questions (Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1956; Burawoy, 1979; Huckfeldt, 1979; Korpi, 1978; Pateman, 1975; Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995), but they were developed with an industrial workplace in mind that is far from the norm in today's post-industrial societies; meanwhile, the more recent literature on the political transformations of the knowledge economy (Beramendi et al., 2015; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Boix, 2019) has paid little attention to the issue of how politics is experienced at work and the overall importance of organizational work structures in understanding political mobilization.

In this article, I propose a new theoretical framework that views workplace political talk in part as a consequence of the more team-based and flatter organizational structures of work, which favour the development of stronger peer and friendship networks. This is particularly the case among younger cohorts, for whom boundaries between their personal and professional lives have been blurred, and who consider it more socially appropriate to bring political and societal discussions to the workplace. Questions of hierarchy, however, continue to matter, since engaging in political exchanges with colleagues or managers can be perceived as risky, especially among those in less secure and stable labour market positions. Such politicized workplace networks, I argue, can also, under certain conditions, play a significant role in bringing workers closer to electoral and non-electoral forms of participation, or at least in solidifying and furthering the political engagement of those already in the political process

Drawing on a survey of 2,000 active workers in the United Kingdom, I find broad support for my theoretical expectations. I first show that those in highly collaborative workplaces are around 33% more likely to engage in political discussions at work than those in less collaborative

settings, with the mediation analysis pointing to the role of workplace friendship networks as an important mediator. Younger cohorts, particularly 25–44-year-olds, are moderately more likely to engage in political talk (around 10% more likely than workers aged 55 and older). Meanwhile, as theorized, I find that those facing lower risks engage more frequently in informal political talk: those in higher-ranked supervisory roles or in politically aligned workplaces are between 10% and 20% more likely to do so. These results are robust to the inclusion of a wide range of sociodemographic (e.g., education, age, gender, industry) and workplace level characteristics (e.g., firm size), as well as other variables, such as interest in politics or workplace prosociality that are likely correlated with both the explanatory factors and the frequency of political talk at work.

Second, I find that such politicized workplace networks are consequential for political engagement outside work. Their influence is especially strong for more costly and socially-oriented forms of political participation, such as attending a protest or a political rally, compared with voting in national or local elections. Discussing politics at work "often" (compared to "never") is associated with about a 15% increase in the predicted probability of voting in national and local elections and an even higher increase (closer to 20%) in the predicted likelihood of participating in a protest. Similarly, such conversations are also positively associated with workers about on corporate political speech: those who "often" discuss political work, compared to those who "never" do, are 20% more likely to support the idea that companies should speak up on political and social issue.

Finally, leveraging a comparison between reported past turnout and intended turnout in the upcoming election, I show that these results are not merely driven by selection: politicized workplace networks increase the likelihood of electoral participation once elections are imminent, but they are not predictive of past turnout. However, higher-cost forms of participation (e.g., attending protests or political rallies) appear concentrated among those who were already politically active, with workplace talk reinforcing their propensity to engage in more demanding forms of participation.

This study makes three main contributions to different strands of research in political science. First, while existing research has mainly focused on the consequences of informal

political discussions and network heterogeneity for political attitudes and behaviors (Mutz, 2006; Mutz and Mondak, 2006; McClurg, 2006), this article takes a step back to analyse the conditions that allow political conversations to emerge in the first place. In this way, it provides new answers to questions that have been present in political sociology for decades, at least since (Lipset and Man, 1960; Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1956). Some of the findings are reminiscent of those earlier studies —for instance, regarding homogeneity or the overall importance of politicized social networks for participation— but others are new, such as the role of workplace structures and friendship networks in fostering political talk and mobilization, and the emergence of generational differences.

Second, this article contributes to a nascent literature on the political dimension of workplaces in modern knowledge economies (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025; Cornago Bonal and Raffaelli, 2025; Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024; Chinoy and Koenen, 2024). These studies have focused so far on documenting trends in the political composition of firms over time in the US (Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024; Chinoy and Koenen, 2024), or the association between occupational homogeneity at work and voting behaviour (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025), but have overlooked how certain features of the knowledge economy —most importantly its reliance on highly collaborative workplace structure and a large pool of young, highly educated graduates who care strongly about the socializing dimension of work— can go hand in hand with prevalence of political tall at work and have broader repercussions for political mobilization. The fact that politically aligned workplaces feel more comfortable engaging in political conversations at work may be particularly consequential in light of recent evidence about the growing occupational (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025) and political homogeneity (Chinoy and Koenen, 2024).

Third, my findings speak to a longstanding literature in political sociology on the role of social networks, and network structures more broadly, in shaping political participation (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2002; McClurg, 2006; Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg, 2013) and, more recently, political attitudes and party choice (Zollinger and Attewell, 2025; De Jong and Kamphorst, 2025). Building on this strand of research, I focus exclusively on workplace-based political networks and —unlike existing work— show empirically that these

are particularly crucial for forms of participation that are more costly and have a strong social or collective component. While reverse causality is often a concern when studying the political ramifications of workplace experiences (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Selenko et al., 2025), my findings suggest the politicized workplace networks may also shape the political engagement of those who were not politically active in the past, at least when it comes to voting.

Finally, by showing that politicized workplace networks are also positively associated with workers' views on corporate political speech, I also contribute to a nascent literature on corporate political speech, which has documented its rise in the US (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024) and analysed the reasons that drive companies to do it (Cornago Bonal, 2025; Barari, 2024; Li and Disalvo, 2023). This article provides the first available evidence the UK about views on corporate political speech: as in the US left-wing, highly educated and respondents with more prosocial attitudes towards work are significantly more supportive of companies publicly engaging with political and social issues.

3.2 Theory

Societies where citizens actively engage with one another in respectful dialogue have long been viewed as an ideal for a well-functioning democracy (Habermas, 1974; Dewey, 1927). By engaging with each other in face-to-face interactions, relationships are formed — both weak and strong ties — which contribute to the emergence of cooperative behaviours and social capital. In these conversations, politics sometimes emerges, and with it, sometimes conflict (Raconteur, 2024).

Despite evidence that political conversations are happening at work (Glassdoor, 2023; Gallup, 2024), existing work has mostly overlooked the conditions under which these kinds of conversations are most likely to emerge in the workplace and the mechanisms linking them to different types of political engagement outside work. The traditional labour politics and political sociology literature, developed around workplaces typical of industrial societies, has emphasized the role of unions and homogeneity in fostering collective action at work (Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1956; Lipset and Man, 1960; Korpi, 1978; Huckfeldt, 1979; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995) but provides limited answers to understand the politics of the modern

workplace. Meanwhile, more recent work on the electoral realignment of knowledge economies has implicitly treated workplaces as bundles of skills and tasks that shape preferences (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Beramendi et al., 2015; Oesch, 2006; Iversen and Soskice, 2019), while overlooking the organizational and interpersonal dimensions of work as a mobilizing force.

Building on this work, my theory tackles two seminal political sociology questions — who speaks about politics at work, and how political mobilization happens at work— by bringing insights from the new sociology of work literature (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013; Wilmers and Zhang, 2022; Rivera, 2016; Rao and Tobias Neely, 2019). In particular, I argue that the ways in which work is increasingly organized in knowledge economies —through collaboration and less hierarchical team structures— and the blurred lines between job and personal identities create new conditions under which political talk emerges. Once these conversations take place, I propose that contemporary workplaces, especially those with a high proportion of graduates, can be politically mobilizing not only through traditional channels of collective action or, more indirectly, shaping political preferences through specific workplace experiences, but also through the relational logic of collaboration and network formation typical of knowledge economies.

More broadly, my argument theorizes two central features of the workplace —networks and hierarchy— that are crucial to understand how politics permeates the workplace today and the politically mobilizing potential of workplace networks. Industrial workplaces were typically more hierarchical, with workers' interactions more constrained by these hierarchies, and political mobilization happening within them. Typical knowledge economy workplaces, with their more collaborative and flatter hierarchies, allow instead for informal political talk and mobilization to emerge less from formal organizations and more from regular interactions between colleagues in and out of work. Potentially, these transformations make workplace networks even more consequential for political mobilization than in the extensively theorized industrial workplaces, especially as other institutions of socialization —from unions to churches and large family networks— have weakened.

In the rest of this section, I carefully develop the different stages of my theory and derive the main hypotheses.

Who Talks Politics at Work?

A key transformation in labour markets in the transition to the knowledge economy has been the growing importance of collaborative skills. Analyzing 34 million job postings in the United States from 2007 to 2021, Zhang (2023) finds that requirements for collaborative skills have increased twofold over this period. This trend has major implications for the way workers experience their daily jobs. By collaborating with each other — for many knowledge economy workers, in relatively flattened, small team-based structures — workers often develop trusting relationships and, sometimes, friendships.

Collaborative work environments, I argue, allow for more frequent conversations about politics (and other sensitive topics), mainly because stronger interpersonal relationships and a sense of trust among colleagues are more likely to develop. It is in politically homogeneous, collaborative settings where political discussions will occur more often, not only because of the trust developed through informal, non-task-related conversations but also because conflict will be mostly avoided.

Hypothesis 1 can be summarized as follows:

- **H1**: Workers in highly collaborative environments tend to discuss politics at work more frequently than workers in less collaborative work environments
- **H1.A**: Workers in highly collaborative environments are more likely to discuss politics at work when they are politically aligned with most of their colleagues.

The mediation analysis is hypothesized in H1B:

- **H1.B**: Expectations about friendship formation mediate the positive effect of highly collaborative settings on discussing politics at work

Different generations often hold different views about what is socially appropriate and what they consider to be the prevailing social norms. Regarding the workplace, younger workers, especially millennials and below, have been socialized into jobs where the distinction between the personal and professional sphere is blurring (Kossek, 2016; Pedersen and Lewis, 2012); this has been promoted in part by organizations that often present themselves, genuinely or not,

as more humane (Grossmann and Hopkins, 2024). Consider, for instance, the gradual decline of Human Resources departments in favour of "People and Culture" teams, reflecting the rise of more human-centred, prosocial organizations. More recently, the expansion of hybrid working (Aksoy et al., 2025) seems to have contributed to the increasing blurring between the workplace and workers' personal lives (Hesselbarth, Alfes and Festing, 2024).

In addition to these changes in how younger cohorts relate to the workplace, there are additional factors that make them more likely to discuss politics at work than older groups. First, younger generations across advanced economies are more geographically mobile (Xu, 2025) and tend to live further from their place of birth and, hence, their family networks. Second, according to the British Cohort Study, compared to older cohorts, those born in 1990 are less likely to belong to a club or organization, and more likely to live alone (Mansfield et al., 2024). These two trends, I argue, lead younger cohorts to turn to the workplace as an important platform for developing friendships, forming opinions about politics and society, and solidifying their own personal and social identity.

- **H2**: Younger cohorts are more likely to discuss politics at work than older cohorts

The mediation analysis is hypothesized in H2A:

- **H2.A**: Expectations about friendship formation mediate the positive effect of belonging to younger cohorts on discussing politics at work

Not every worker, however, can afford to discuss politics or even reveal their political preferences at work. Those in less secure jobs might feel less confident about genuinely engaging in political conversations at work, since politically misaligned employers could act against them (Hertel-Fernandez, 2017, 2020).

At the same time, employers, or those in supervisory roles, might engage in political conversations not only because it is less risky for them, but also because it gives them valuable information about the political distribution of their workforce. This information becomes most valuable when companies are weighing their decision on whether to take a stance on a political or social issue; it is also possible that employers in companies that require workers to

collaborate intensely among themselves aim to form politically or socially aligned teams, and therefore talking politics would also provide them with useful information.

Similarly, workers will refrain from discussing potentially controversial political topics with colleagues in more politically heterogeneous workplace environments in order to avoid conflict. Instead, when their views align with those held by the majority of the workforce, political conversations will emerge more easily.

- **H3**: Those in supervisory roles and those who are politically aligned with most of the workforce are more likely to discuss politics at work

3.2.1 From Talk to Action

Understanding the determinants of informal political talk at work is crucial because of its spillover effects on political participation. The question of why and when individuals decide to participate in politics has been central to political science, at least since the emergence of the Columbia (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948) and Michigan (Campell et al., 1960) schools. Education and income remain strong predictors of participation today, with the highly educated and well-off engaging significantly more than disadvantaged groups (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; Lijphart, 1997). Education matters for political participation not only because of the civic skills it provides or the higher sense of efficacy it fosters, but also because it places individuals in more socially dense and politically active networks that facilitate political discussions and mobilization (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry, 1996).

In recent decades, another strand of research has emphasized how social networks —the frequency of political discussion and the ideological composition of one's network—influence political engagement (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2002; McClurg, 2006; Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg, 2013). Socializing frequently with politically active networks, especially larger networks, increases the likelihood of political engagement (La Due Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998; Kenny, 1992), even after accounting for important individual characteristics. Moreover, the growing educational and occupational homogeneity of networks in the knowledge economy matters greatly for political attitudes and behaviors (Zollinger and Attewell, 2025; De Jong and Kamphorst, 2025; Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025).

However, previous work has paid less attention to the political consequences of politicized workplace networks in knowledge economies, even though they remain among the most politically heterogeneous social environments and, in the context of declining civic organizations, are crucial spaces where workers' identities and long-term friendships are formed. I argue that political discussions at work are particularly consequential for less salient, more costly, and socially embedded forms of participation (e.g., protests, donations to political causes), since these depend greatly on interpersonal mobilization and information sharing within networks. Highly salient events such as general elections receive wide media coverage instead, making workplace networks a less decisive channel.

- **H4**: Talking about politics at work has a stronger positive association with less salient, more costly forms of political participation (attending a protest, etc) than in highly salient political events (e.g., voting in elections)

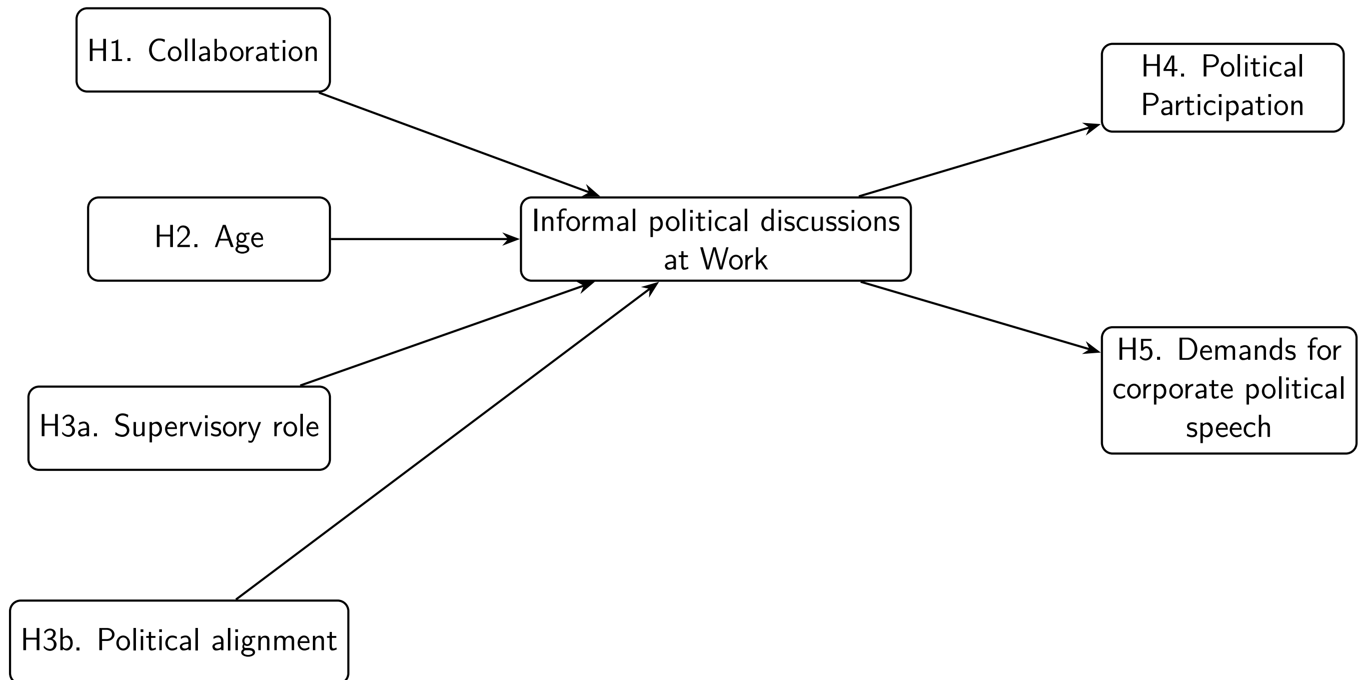
Besides political conversations at work spilling over into different kinds of political participation, I argue that these also have consequences for what workers are likely to expect from companies. In recent years, a growing number of companies, especially in the US, have begun to publicly speak up on a wide range of politically connotated social issues (Cornago Bonal, 2025; Barari, 2024; Cassidy and Kempf, 2024), and to emphasize their positive contributions to society (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022). However, not much is known about the extent to which workers demand these types of corporate actions outside the US (Hersh and Shah, 2025*b*).

By discussing political affairs with their colleagues, norms around how companies should engage with the political and social environment are also likely to shift. Similarly, those with strong prosocial attitudes and left-wing political values are also most likely to want companies to take public stances on political and social issues.

- **H5**: Workers who discuss politics at work, hold prosocial attitudes, or identify as left-leaning are more likely to expect companies to speak up on political and social issues.

The theoretical framework, including the different hypotheses, is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Drivers and consequences of political talk at work



3.3 Data

For this study, I conduct an original survey of 2,000 UK citizens, which received approval from the appropriate Institutional Review Board. Several reasons point to the UK as an ideal case for this study. First, while the few existing studies on workplace politics have focused on the US, much less is known about the UK and other western European countries, where the workplace has been historically an influential setting for political mobilization. Second, the UK is one of the democracies where union membership has declined most sharply since the 1980s (Visser et al., 2019), making even more relevant to study how politics enters the workplace through alternative or complementary channels. Lastly, it represents a typical modern knowledge-based economy, with 52.7% of the population holding tertiary education (OECD, 2024) and an occupational structure characterized by high-value added, high-skilled jobs (Diessner et al., 2025). These are the workers who tend to have higher autonomy at work, even when it comes to choosing teams or colleagues (Boss et al., 2023).

The survey was conducted between April 22nd and 26th, 2024, in partnership with More in Common, a non-profit organization focused on addressing polarization in several countries,

including the UK. All respondents were actively employed at the time of the survey; therefore, students, unemployed or inactive individuals, self-employed workers, and retirees were excluded from the sample. I implemented demographic quotas computed on the general population to ensure sufficient power for subgroup analysis.[1] As with any online panel, there may still be limitations in terms of the representativeness of the sample. For instance, workers in highly precarious forms of employment are likely to be underrepresented, as well as non-UK citizens. Since respondents are informed early in the survey that this is a questionnaire about political preferences, our sample appears to be more politically interested than the broader population.[2]

3.3.1 Measurement and Descriptive Evidence

Discussing politics at work. The main variable of this study —both acting as outcome variable in H1-H3 and main explanatory variable in H4-H5— is the frequency of discussion about politics at work, measured by the survey question, "How often do you discuss politics with colleagues at work?" ("Often", "Sometimes", "Rarely", "Never"). When used as an explanatory variable, the variable is operationalized in its original form, using "Never" as the baseline category. When used as an outcome variable in a logistic regression, categories "Often" and "Sometimes" are grouped into one, as well as "Rarely" and "Never".

Table B1 shows that over 50% of respondents report discussing politics at work either "Often" or "Sometimes", while only about 15% report never discussing politics at work. This suggests that political conversations indeed occur in the workplace for a relatively large number of workers and that it might have increased over time.[3] These results appear to be in line with a recent survey conducted in the US (Glassdoor, 2023) showing that 61% of respondents had discussed politics with colleagues over the past twelve months.

[1] I apply a quota for gender (male and female) x age group (below 35, 35-50, above 50) x education.

[2] 77% of our sample reports being "quite interested" or "very interested" in politics, a number slightly higher than in surveys like the British Election Study, where these numbers are closer to 60%.

[3] While Conover, Searing and Crewe (2002)'s study using survey data from 1990 shows that 53.6% of respondents never discussed politics at work and around 37% did it either "sometimes" or often, our survey shows that only 15.85% of respondents never discuss politics at work, and around 54% of them discuss politics at work "sometimes" or "often".

Table 1: Frequency of political discussions at work

Frequency of political discussions	**%**
Often	13.25
Sometimes	41
Rarely	29.9
Never	15.85

Political engagement. To measure whether respondents' turnout in general elections, the survey first includes a question about respondents' party choice in the 2019 general election, as well as a Sunday question about the party they would vote for if a general election was called tomorrow. Given that a general election was indeed called a month after the survey was conducted, I use the Sunday question to measure turnout. Individuals who say "Don't know" or "I would not vote" to this Sunday question are grouped together as "non-voters", while all those who report a party preference are considered as "voters". The 2019 vote choice measured is also used when exploring the mechanisms. To measure turnout in local elections, I use a binary question about whether respondents voted in a local election over the past 12 months.

To measure respondents' nonelectoral political and civic engagement, the survey includes a broad range of binary questions about whether respondents have had the chance to participate in different activities over the past 12 months, including having signed a petition, having attended a protest, rally, or march, having donated money to a campaign group or political organization, and having shared political content on social media. These are all operationalized as binary outcome describing whether respondents engaged in any of these actions or not.

Explanatory variables. The empirical section relies as well on a range of explanatory variables. H1, H2, and H3 rely on four main explanatory variables that are explained below.

To measure the importance of collaboration among colleagues at their current job, respondents are asked, "How important is collaboration among colleagues for achieving work-related goals at your current job?", choosing from four options, "Very important", "Rather important", "Not very important", and "Not important at all". Given that responses are heavily skewed toward reporting collaboration as important, I collapse the two negative categories ("Not very important" and "Not important at all") into a single "Not important" category.

This "Not important" category serves as the baseline in all model specifications.

To measure respondents' age, I ask respondents to place themselves in one of the following age groups, "18-24", "25-34", "45-54", "55-64", and "65+". The oldest age group serves as the baseline in all model specifications, although the "55-64" group is also used as a robustness check.

To measure whether respondents have supervising responsibilities at their job, they are asked a binary question about whether they "supervise or oversee supervise or oversee the work of other employees on a day-to-day basis?".[4] Those that do not supervise or oversee other workers serve as the baseline condition in all model specifications.

Third, I measure the degree of political alignment at the respondent-level by combining information from two different survey questions. I proceed in three steps. I first ask respondents to choose between three options ("My colleagues are fairly similar to each other politically", "My colleagues are fairly diverse politically", "I am not aware of the political views of most of my colleagues") to describe the political views of their colleagues. Table B2 shows respondents' perceptions of their workplace's political makeup. About 66% of respondents in our sample report having some awareness of their workplace's political composition, with around 38% describing it as politically heterogeneous and 28% as more homogeneous. Meanwhile, 33% report being unaware of their colleagues' political views.[5]

Table 2: Perception of political diversity in the workplace

Perception of political diversity in the workplace	**%**
My colleagues are fairly diverse politically	38.25
My colleagues are fairly similar to each other politically	28.05
I am not aware of the political views of most of my colleagues	33.4

Second, to the 28% of the sample that reported to work in a politically homogeneous environment, I asked about their workplace ideological make-up (whether they are mostly left-wing, mostly centrist, or mostly right-wing). In a final step, I consider those who are left-wing (right-wing) and perceive to work in politically homogeneous workplaces with mostly left-wing (right-wing) people as working in "politically aligned workplaces". This group, as shown in

[4] 45.8% of respondents report to supervise or oversee the other employee on a day-to-day.

[5] These tend to be respondents with lower levels of education, low political interest, and who work in smaller firms, where political discussions at work are rare.

Table 3, are around 15% of the sample (300 respondents). In the empirical section of this study, politically aligned workplaces are mostly compared to politically diverse workplaces, leaving aside those who report not to be aware of their colleagues' political views.

Table 3: Distribution of political alignment measure

Distribution of political alignment measure	**%**
Politically diverse workplace	38.6
Not aware	33.4
Politically homogeneous (but not aligned)	13.1
Politically aligned workplace	15

In the mediation analysis, I rely on an additional variable that captures respondents' preferences about forming friendships at work. Respondents are asked, "How much do you value the opportunity to form friendships with colleagues?", choosing from four options, "Very much", "Quite a bit", "Not too much", and "Not all". A large majority of respondents expect to develop friendships at work, emphasizing the socialization dimension of this setting.[6] In the main analysis, I collapse the two negative categories ("Not too much" and "Not at all") into a single "Not much" category. This "Not much" category serves as the baseline category in all model specifications.

I measure workers' feelings about working with politically misaligned colleagues in two different ways. I ask respondents to say whether they agree or disagree (from "Strongly agree to "Strongly disagree") with two different statements ("It is important for me to work with colleagues that share my political views" and "I feel uncomfortable working with colleagues who have very different political views from my own"). I group "Strongly agree" and "Agree" as 1 and the rest as 0 for both statements, as these are used as the outcome in logistic regression.

To test H5, I measure views on corporate political speech by asking respondents to place themselves on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "businesses should actively take a stance on major political and social issues" and 10 means "businesses should focus on their business interests and avoid involvement in political and social issues". When used as an outcome variable, I convert this into a binary measure comparing those who favour corporate political

[6] 32.85% choose "Very much", 46.45% "Quite a bit", 18.45% "Not too much", and 2.25% "Not at all".

speech (values from 0 to 4) against those who either have no strong preference or believe companies should avoid involvement in political and social issues (values from 5 to 10).

For H5, I also rely on a measure of prosocial attitudes at work. In the question, respondents position themselves on a scale from 0 to 10 based on job preferences, where 0 means they value jobs with a positive societal impact, 10 means they value good pay, and 5 means they equally value both factors. Prosocial workers are defined as those who prioritize jobs with a positive societal impact over good pay (0-4), who make 23.8% of the sample, compared to 22.5% placing themselves in the centre, and 54% who prioritize good pay (6-10).

Table 4 shows that, while the share of respondents that oppose corporate political speech is higher than those that favour it, the opposite is true for left-leaning respondents (44.4% favour it and 39.1% opposite it). Similarly, Table 5 shows that those with stronger prosocial attitudes towards their job are also more likely to favour corporate political speech.

Table 4: Views on corporate political speech by ideology

Views on corporate political speech	Overall %	Left-wing %	Right-wing %
Avoid political involvement (6-10)	52	39.1	66.3
Middle (5)	20.2	16.4	12.3
Take a stance (0-4)	27.4	44.4	21.4

Table 5: Views on corporate political speech by prosocial attitudes

Views on corporate political speech	Overall %	Good pay %	Positive societal impact %
Avoid political involvement (6-10)	52	63.1	36.6
Middle (5)	20.2	16.4	16.5
Take a stance (0-4)	27.4	20.5	46.9

Controls. All model specifications include a range of controls that are key to mitigating the problem of omitted variable bias. All models control for education (low, middle, high), firm size (under 10, 10-49, 50-249, 250-499, 500 or more), industry,[7] ideological self-placement, and interest in politics

[7] I grouped industries into two groups: "prosocial industries", which includes "Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities", "Arts, Entertainment and Recreation", and "Public Administration and Defence", and other industries.

3.3.2 Empirical Strategy

The empirical strategy relies on cross-sectional survey data and therefore the evidence provided is mainly correlational. Several empirical strategies are deployed to mitigate reverse causality and selection concerns.

To empirically test the determinants of informal political talk at work (H1-H3), I estimate a series of logistic regression models using a binary variable that captures whether respondents report discussing politics at work. I begin with baseline models that test each hypothesis individually, depending on the specific hypothesis. I then progressively add controls to account for possible confounding factors.

The final specification can be expressed as:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{logit}(\Pr(\text{PolWork Binary}_i = 1)) = \beta_0 &+ \beta_1\textbf{Collaboration}_i + \beta_2\textbf{Age group}_i \\ &+ \beta_3\textbf{Political Alignment}_i + \beta_4\textbf{Supervisory role}_i \\ &+ \beta_5\text{Prosociality}_i + \beta_6\text{Political interest}_i \ + \boldsymbol{\gamma}\mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i\end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

where PolWork Binary$_i$ is a binary indicator that equals to 1 if respondent i discusses politics at work "Often"/"Sometimes". The main independent variables of interest are the intensity of collaboration at work (Collaboration$_i$), age group (Age group$_i$), whether the respondent has a supervisory role (Supervisory role$_i$), and whether the respondent aligns politically with the majority of their colleagues (Political alignment$_i$). In addition, I control for prosocial workplace attitudes (Prosociality$_i$) and political interest (Political interest$_i$). The vector $\mathbf{X}_i$ represents a vector of sociodemographic and workplace controls, including gender, education, industry, and firm size. This iterative approach allows me to evaluate both the individual influence of each theoretical predictor and also control for potential confounders.

Second, to empirically test the association between informal political talk at work and different kinds of political participation (H4), I estimate a series of logistic regression models where each dependent variable captures a specific form of civic or political engagement over

the past 12 months. These include voting in national and local elections, attending protests, participating in political meetings, making political donations, charitable giving, and sharing political content on social media.

The final model estimated can be expressed as follows:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\text{logit}(\Pr(Y_i = 1)) = \beta_0 &+ \beta_1 \textbf{PolWork}_i + \beta_2 \text{Political alignment}_i \\
&+ \beta_3 \text{Collaboration}_i + \beta_4 \text{Prosociality}_i \\
&+ \beta_5 \text{Political interest}_i + \beta_6 \text{Speak up}_i \\
&+ \boldsymbol{\gamma} \mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i
\end{aligned}
\tag{3.2}
$$

where Y_i is a binary indicator equal to 1 if respondent i has taken part in a given political action over the past 12 months. The main independent variable of interest is the frequency of political discussions at work (PolWork_i). In addition, I control for workplace political homogeneity (PolAlign_i), collaboration intensity (Collaboration_i), prosocial workplace attitudes (Prosociality_i), political interest ($\text{PoliticalInterest}_i$), and preferences about corporate political engagement (SpeakUp_i), since these might influence both people's likelihood to talk politics at work and political engagement. The vector $\mathbf{X}_i$ includes a broad set of sociodemographic and workplace-level control variables, including education, gender, ethnicity, income, firm size, firm type, and industry. All models are estimated using logistic regressions with a binary political participation outcome.

Lastly, to test Hypothesis 5, I run the same model as in Equation 3.2 but including a binary outcome on preferences for corporate political speech (Speak up_i).

To further explore these associations, I complement the logistic regression models with a mediation analysis following the Imai et al. (2011)'s approach and using their *mediation* R package (Tingley et al., 2014). Importantly, my data are observational rather than experimental or panel-based, which means the results should not be interpreted as evidence of causal mediation. Instead, the analysis provides a descriptive decomposition of the total association into a direct component and an indirect component operating through the proposed mediator.

Formally, the method estimates the average causal mediation effect (ACME), interpreted here as the indirect association through the mediator, and the average direct effect (ADE), the remaining association not explained by the mediator. The total effect is the sum of these two components. Both the outcome and mediator models are estimated using logistic regression, and the proportion mediated is computed as the ratio of the ACME to the total effect.

Because workplace political talk and political participation may both reflect pre-existing orientations, reverse causality is a key concern in this design; I address this issue explicitly in Section 3.4.3, where I explore whether these associations are better explained by a mobilization or a reinforcement mechanism.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 The Determinants of Informal Political Talk at Work

In line with H1, I find that workers in highly collaborative environments are significantly more likely to discuss politics at work. Figure 2 shows that, compared to workers in low collaboration environments, those in highly collaborative settings have an average predicted probability of discussing politics that is around 33% higher, and around 28% higher for those in settings where collaboration is "rather important", compared to those for whom collaboration at work "not important". Appendix Table A1 shows that these results are robust to the inclusion of individual- and workplace-level controls that may be correlated with the degree of collaboration required at work and informal political talk, including political interest. As expected by H1.A, Figure 3 shows that collaborative settings are most strongly associated with informal political talk among respondents who are politically aligned with most of their current colleagues. Appendix Table A2 shows that this interaction is positive and statistically significant after adding controls.

Figure 2: Average marginal effect of collaboration at work on the frequency of political discussions at work (with controls)

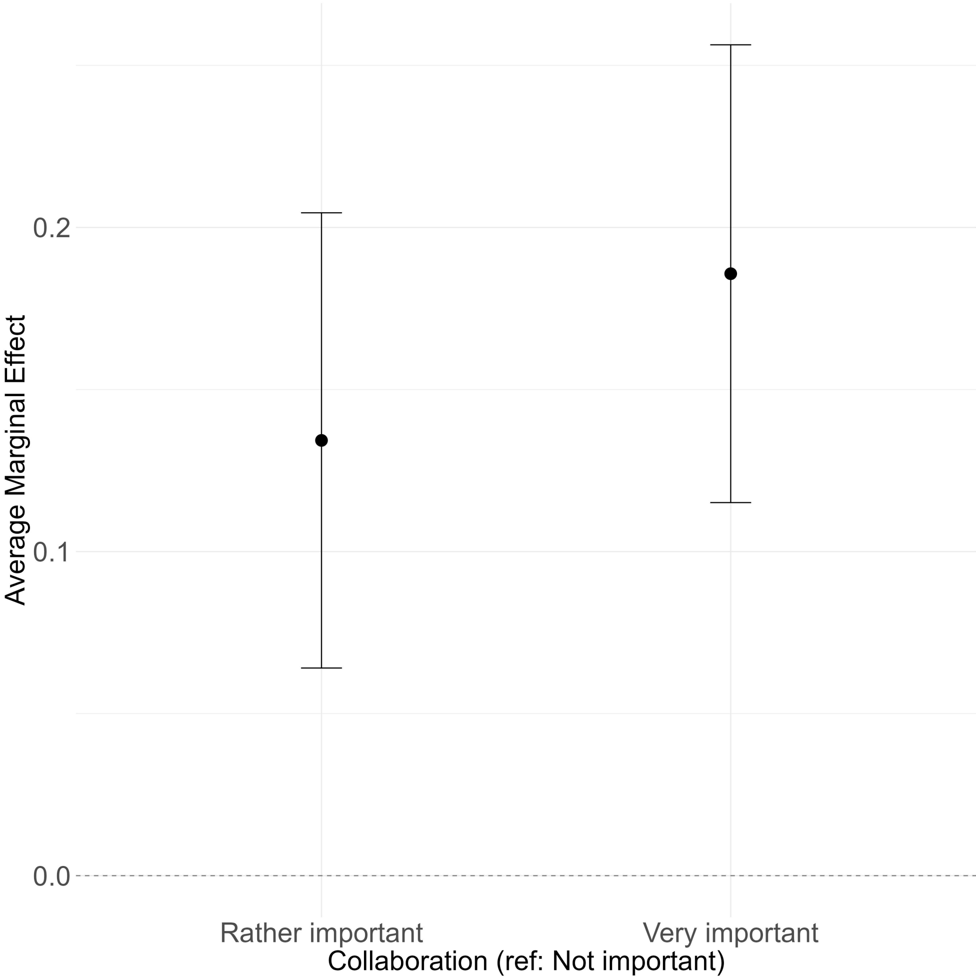
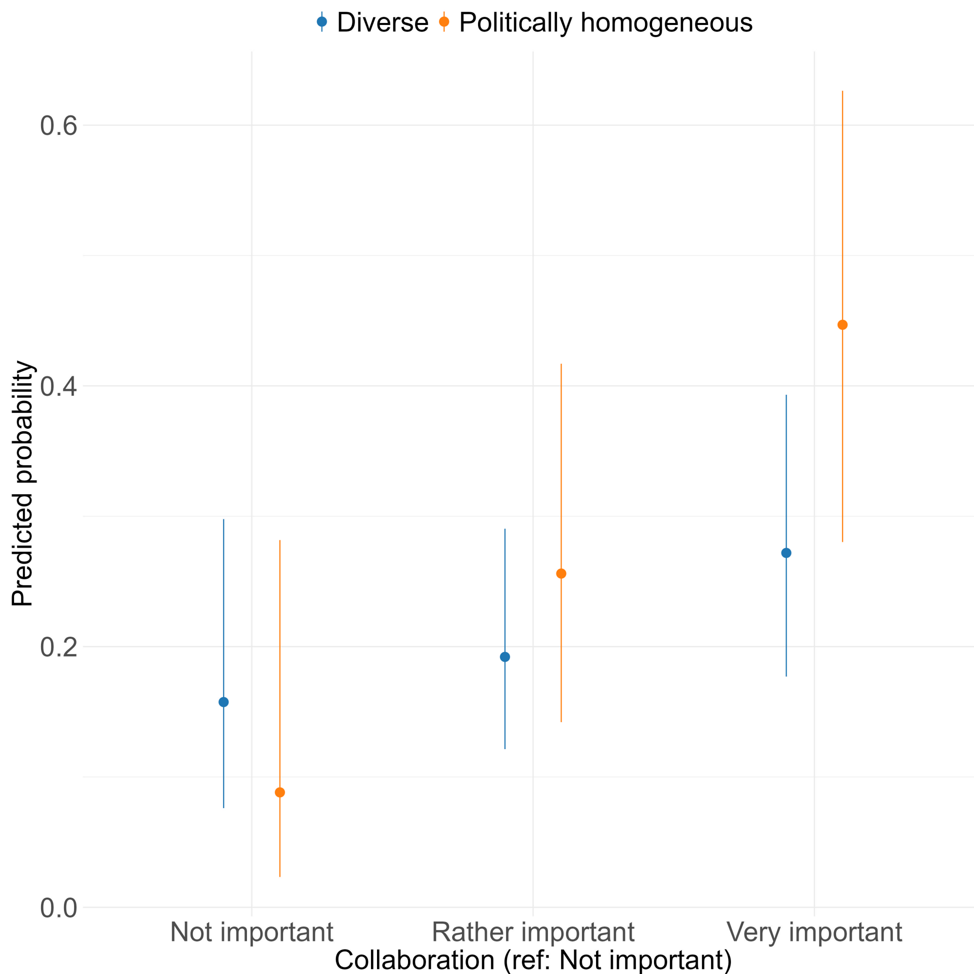


Figure 3: Predicted probability of discussion politics at work (interaction between degree of collaboration and degree of political homogeneity at work) (with controls)



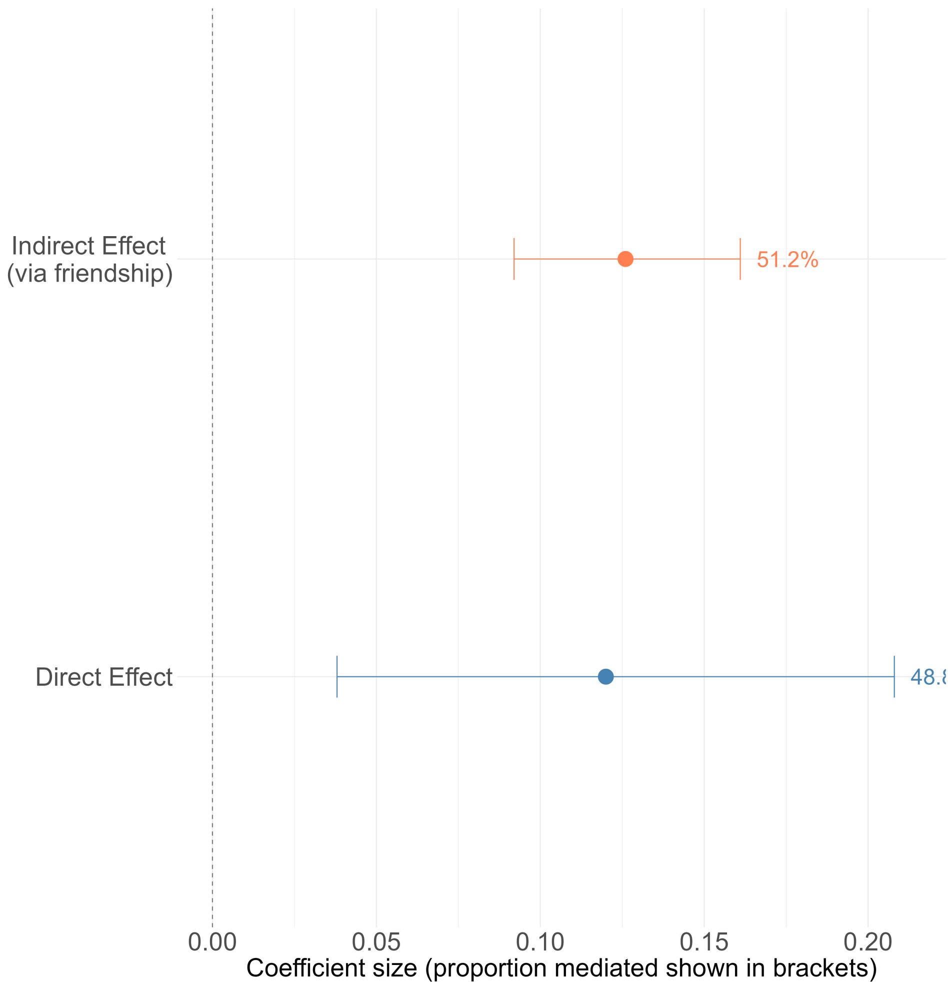
What is it exactly about collaborative environments that makes them more conducive to conversations about politics among colleagues? I theorize that the influence of collaboration on the frequency of discussing politics at work happens partly indirectly through the development of stronger personal connections with colleagues, which is most likely when people work closely with each other.

To empirically test this mechanism, I conduct a mediation analysis. I distinguish between direct and indirect effects using the mediation approach proposed by Imai et al. (2011) — see Kamphorst et al. (2025) for a recent application using observational survey data. The goal of this approach is to show the proportion of the impact of collaboration on informal political talk at work that is mediated indirectly through other factors — in this case, the formation

of close friendships at work. The total influence of collaboration is decomposed into a direct and an indirect pathway.

In this case, the expectation is that collaborative settings are positively associated with more frequent informal political talk because they foster the development of stronger personal ties. In line with H1.B, Figure 4 shows that, consistent with H1.B, 51.2% of the total effect operates through the formation of friendships at work. Given the correlational nature of this finding, the analysis controls for potential confounding factors, including political interest, sociodemographic traits (e.g., income, ethnicity, education, industry), and workplace-specific characteristics (e.g., firm size and degree of collaboration required).

Figure 4: Collaboration and discussing politics at work: mediation analysis for friendship networks (with controls)



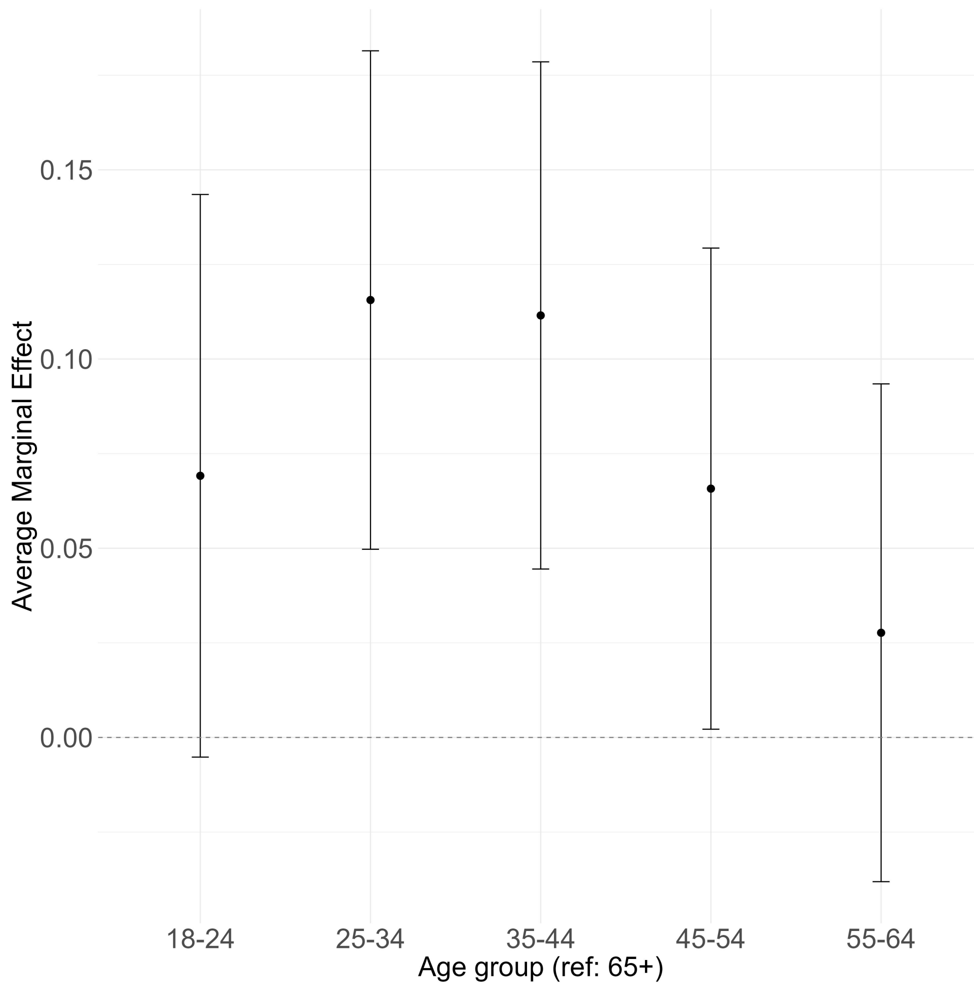
Meanwhile, consistent with H2, I find that younger workers (especially those aged between

25 and 45) are more likely to discuss politics at work. Figure 3 shows that 25-45 years old have around a 10% higher predicted probability of talking about politics at work compared to the eldest group (65 and older).[8] Appendix Table A3 illustrates that these results are robust to controlling for sociodemographic traits and workplace-level characteristics, as well as other factors that are likely correlated with age and informal political talk, including friendship networks, political interest, prosocial attitudes, and workplace political homogeneity.

As it was the case for collaborative settings, this finding is partly explained by the fact that younger workers rely more heavily on workplace networks for the formation of friendships, which then make conversations about non-work topics, including politics, more likely. After estimating a similar mediation model to the one illustrated in Figure 4, Figure A1 shows that 35% of the association between age and the likelihood of engaging in informal political talk at work is explained by the strength of friendship networks. This provides evidence in favour of H2.A.

[8]Appendix Figure A2 shows that the same results hold when using "55-64" as the baseline category.

Figure 5: Average marginal effect of age at work on the frequency of political discussions at work (with controls)



Following my theory, I interpret this as evidence of a possible generational shift in what is considered appropriate to discuss at work. In fact, Figure A3 shows that younger workers say that they feel uncomfortable working with colleagues who have very different political views from their own at a much higher rate than older workers.[9] Therefore, younger workers are not only more likely to engage in informal political talk but also to feel unhappy working with colleagues whose political views are far from their own. Brought together, these findings suggest that younger workers talk about politics more not because they are more tolerant of political diversity, but because they feel more strongly about political alignment. Appendix

[9]Similarly, Appendix Table A7 shows that younger workers are significantly more likely than older workers to agree with the idea that sharing political views with colleagues at work is important, even after introducing a demanding set of controls.

Table A6 includes full regression results for Figure A3, including sociodemographic traits, workplace-level characteristics, and political interest as controls.

Engaging openly in political conversations at work, however, could entail some risks for workers. On the one hand, those with less secured roles might perceive that the risk of talking politics than those in leadership positions. On the other, as individuals tend to avoid politics when conflict is likely to emerge, those that align politically with most of their colleagues should engage more in political conversations at work than those in politically diverse workplaces.

In line with H3, I find that those in secure, supervising roles are more likely to engage in political conversations at work, as are those employed in politically homogeneous workplace where conflict over politics is unlikely. Figure A4 illustrates that those with a supervising role have between a 10% and 15% higher predicted probability of talking about politics at work compared to those with do not manage other colleagues. While supervisory roles may serve as a proxy for seniority, it is also possible that supervisors, particularly in industries that require a high degree of collaboration, seek alignment in social values or even political views among their team members. In these cases, discussing politics at work would provide valuable information to managers about the ideological leanings of the organization's workforce.

Also consistent with H3, Figure A5 shows that respondents who are politically align with their colleagues have around a 10% higher probability of talking politics with colleagues than those in politically diverse workplaces. Since around 30% of respondents say not to be aware of their colleagues' political leanings (respondents with low interest in politics and lower educational attainment are highly overrepresented within this group), this analysis includes a reduced sample of only those who have some sense of their colleagues' political outlook.

Appendix Table A4 (for political alignment) and Appendix Table A5 (for supervisory role) show that these associations remain positive and statistically significant after including individual sociodemographic and workplace-level characteristics. In the case of the impact of having a supervisory role on the frequency of workplace political discussions, the size of the coefficient is cut in half after adding interest in politics as a control, but remains statistically significant.

These findings regarding the determinants of political talk (H1-H3) cannot be interpreted causally. I argue, however, that some of these theorized determinants (e.g., age, supervisory

status) are likely exogenous to the frequency of political talk at work. Meanwhile, others (e.g., working in a highly collaborative setting or in a politically aligned environment) could be endogenous, although labour market dynamics are likely to constrain these potential selection effects. Given that younger workers and those with supervisory roles are also likely to have certain traits (e.g., higher levels of education) that are associated with political interest and politicized social networks more broadly, my models for H1, H2, and H3 control for a broad set of covariates, including political interest, that partly mitigate the risk of omitted variable bias.

3.4.2 From Talking about Politics to Participation

In the previous section, I have provided empirical evidence about determinants of the emergence of political discussions at work guided by my theoretical expectations. I turn to study the impact that workplace political discussions have on different forms of political participation. The general expectation is that talking about politics at work will be conducive to higher levels of political participation, especially for more costly, and socially based types of participation, such as attending a protest or donating to a political campaign.

Figure 6 illustrates the influence of discussing politics at work on different forms of political participation. In line with H4, I find that discussing politics with colleagues carries a higher weight when it comes to forms of participation that are less common, more costly, and have an important social basis, such as attending a protest. For instance, those who often discuss politics at work are about 15% points more likely to vote in national and local election than those who never do; but these estimates go up to between 20% and 30% for attending a protest or sharing political content on social media.

All models in Figure 6 control for political interest and other individual and firm-level characteristics, meaning that workplace political discussions remain positively associated with political participation even after controlling for political interest. Appendix Table A4 presents the full regression results, showing that both political interest and workplace political discussions independently predict higher likelihood of voting in national and local elections. However, for nonelectoral forms of participation, workplace political talk appears to have stronger associ-

ations than political interest alone. To further explore the pathways linking workplace political discussions to political engagement, I turn to the mediation analysis approach proposed by Imai et al. (2011).

Figure 6: Average marginal effect of discussing politics at work on different kinds of political engagement (with controls)

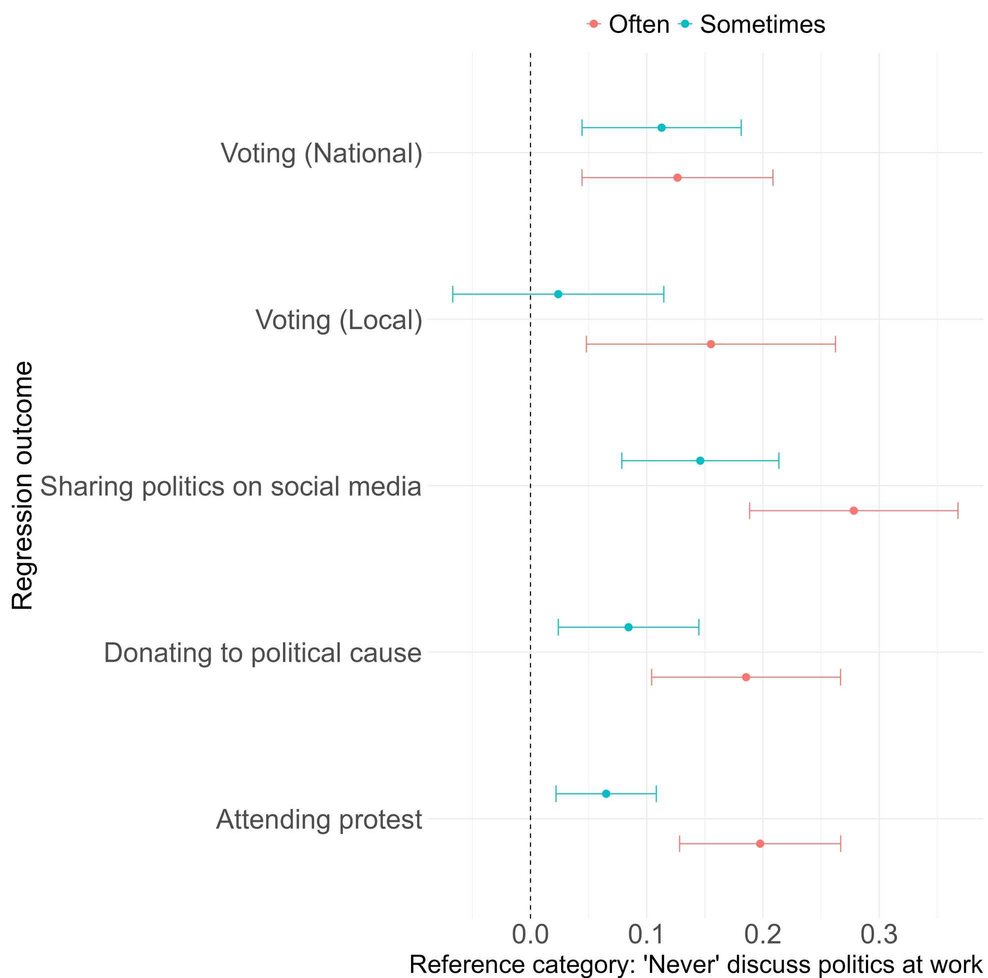
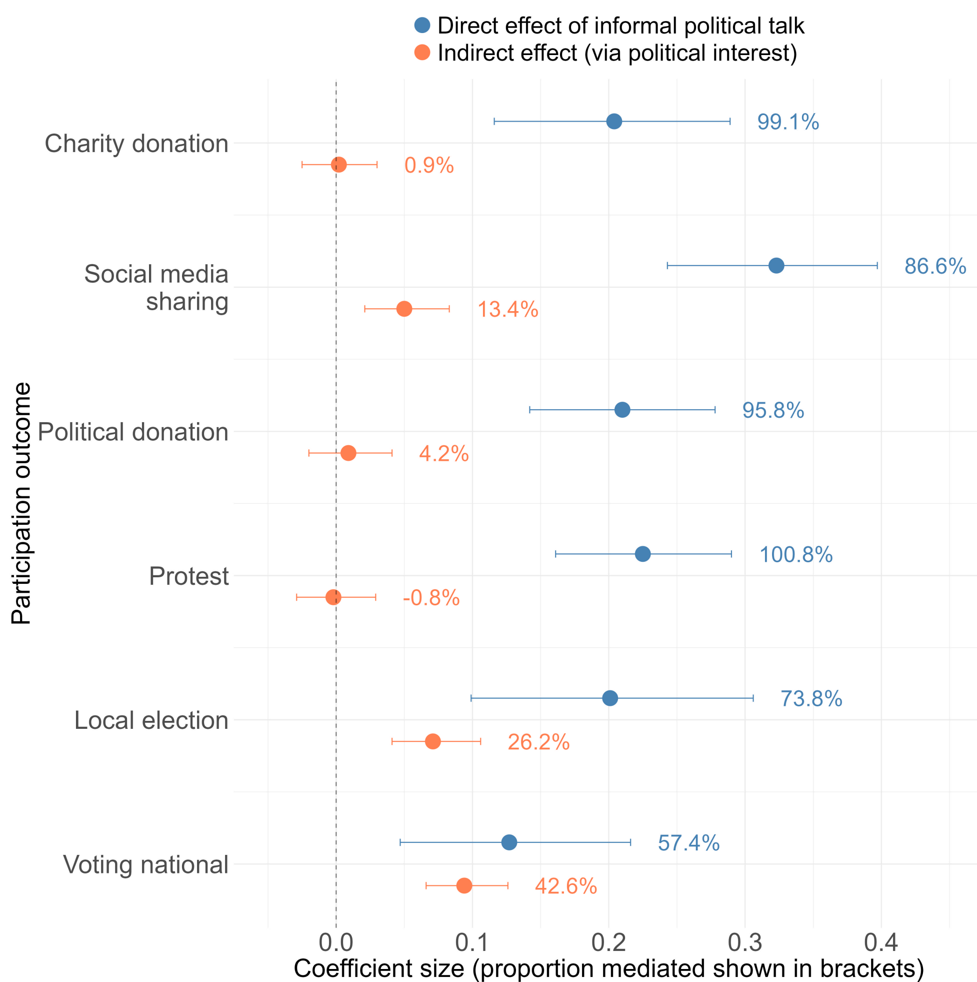


Figure 7 displays the role of interest in politics as a mediator of the relationship between informal political talk and different kinds of political participation. It shows that for electoral participation much of the influence of informal political talk at work is mediated through increasing levels of political interest — 42.6% for voting in national elections and 26.2% for voting in local elections. However, when it comes to more costly and socially driven forms of participation, such as attending protests, this pattern changes. Now political discussions at work play a more significant direct role and political interest an almost insignificant role as a

mediator.[10]

This divergence suggests that informal workplace networks are particularly important for mobilization purposes in less frequent and more demanding kinds of political engagement. For voting outcomes, workplace discussion appear to increase political interest, which in turn brings people to the ballot box. For nonelectoral forms of participation, however, politicized workplace networks seem to mobilize individuals more directly.

Figure 7: Interest in politics as mediator between informal political talk and different kinds of political engagement (with controls)

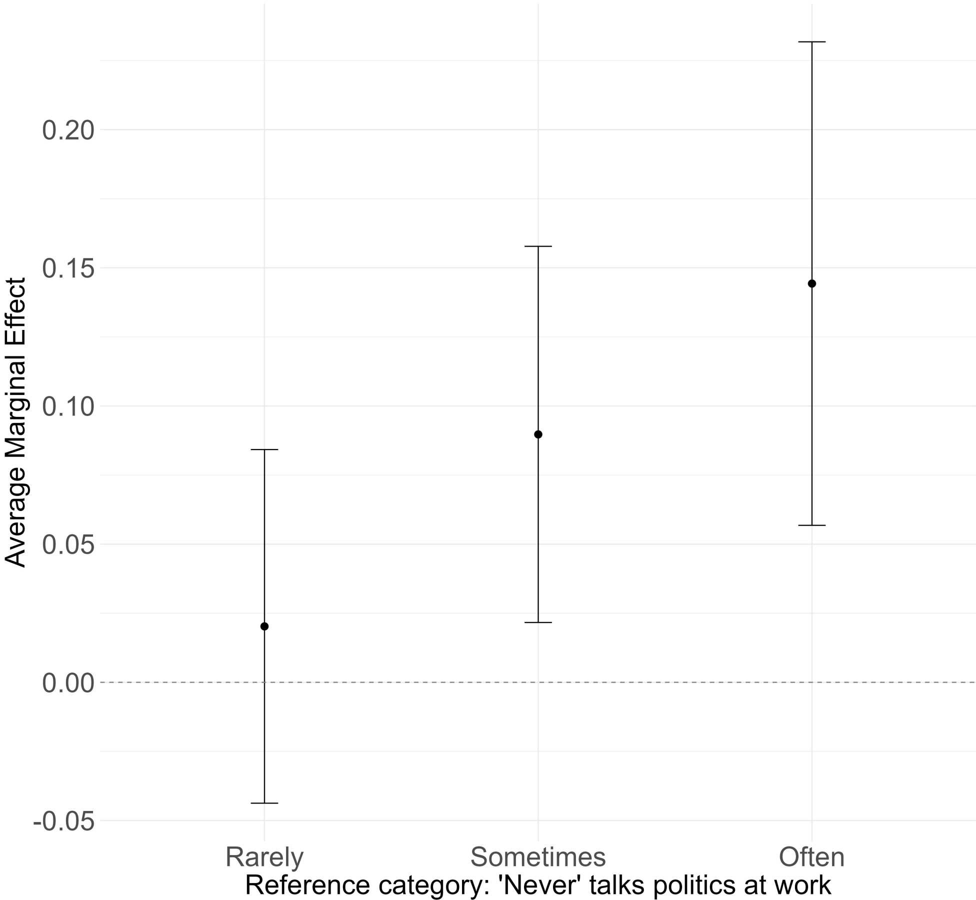


Lastly, I have theorized that informal political talk, apart from boosting political participation, also plays a role in shaping norms around how companies should engage with the current

[10]As in previous mediation models, the analysis controls for potential confounding factors, including sociodemographic traits (e.g., age, income, ethnicity, education, industry), and workplace-specific characteristics (e.g., firm size and degree of collaboration required).

political and social environment. As predicted by H5, Figure 8 shows that a higher frequency of informal political talk at work is associated with stronger preferences in favour of corporate sociopolitical speech. Although both of these are likely to be affected by a wide range of sociodemographic and workplace-level characteristics, the results are robust to the inclusion of these controls, as well as other variables such as interest in politics, prosocial attitudes, and ideological self-placement. Appendix Figure A6 and Appendix Figure A7 show respectively that prosocial attitudes at work are also strongly associated with preferences for corporate political speech as well as left-wing political values.

Figure 8: Average marginal effect of discussing politics at work on preferences for corporate political speech (with controls)



3.4.3 Mechanisms: Mobilization or Reinforcement?

The mediation results above analysed how exactly workplace political talk shapes participation. For voting, it works mainly by fostering political interest, while for more demanding forms of

activism it appears to have a more direct influence, without necessarily boosting political interest — potentially in part because those who attend protest or rallies already have high levels of political interest, leaving less room for workplace talk to boost it further.

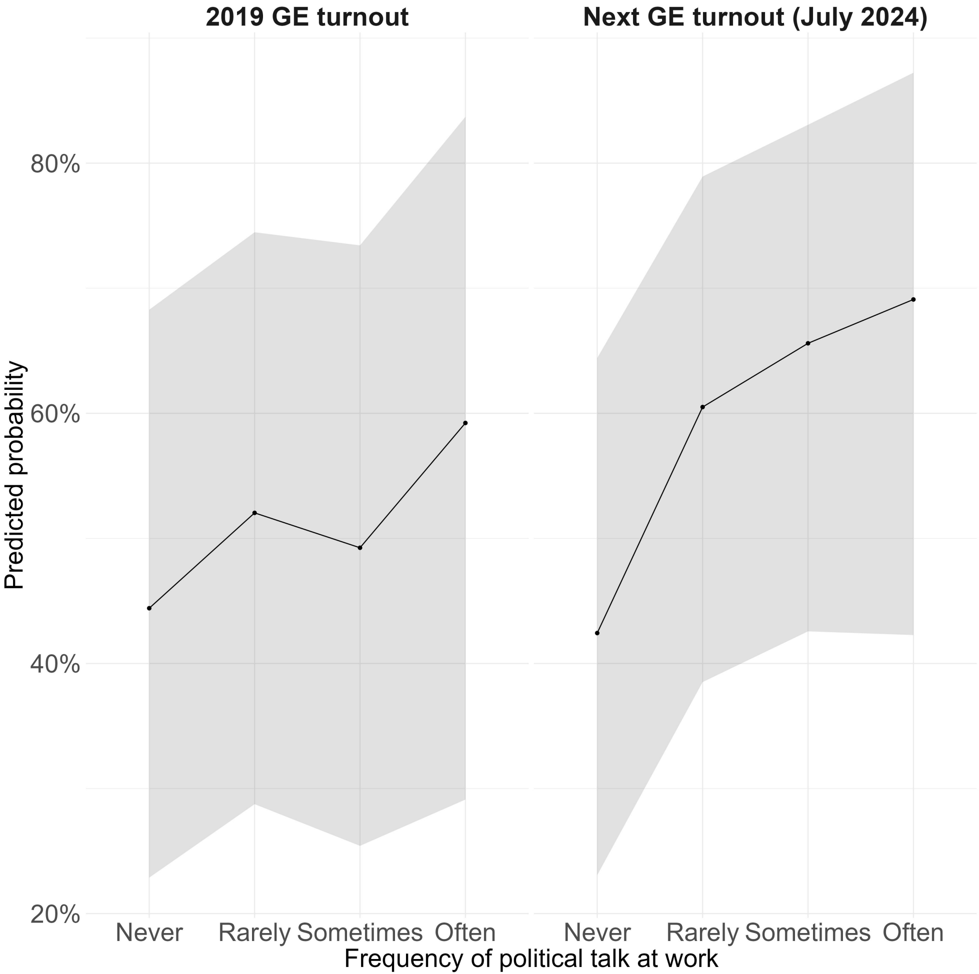
These findings, however, do not shed light on who exactly is mobilized by workplace political discussions. One possibility is that these political discussions mainly reinforce engagement among those already politically active, while another is that they mobilize previously less active individuals. To address this question, I compare reported turnout in the 2019 general election with reported likelihood of voting in the upcoming 2024 election.

Figure 9 provides evidence against the idea that engaging in political discussions is simply explained by preexisting political engagement: workplace political talk is strongly predictive of reported turnout intentions in 2024, but not of reported turnout in 2019.[11] This result suggests that past political engagement does not necessarily explain why people discuss politics at work today. I interpret this as more consistent with a mobilization mechanism than a pure selection story, particularly given that at the time of the survey (April 2024) the possibility of an imminent election was being discussed widely by the media (Crerar and Courea, 2024) and by the Prime Minister himself (Geiger and Zeffman, 2024)—an election would finally be called a month after the survey was fielded, on 22 May 2024.[12]

[11] Appendix Table A10 presents the full regression results for both models.

[12] The correlation between reported turnout in 2019 and reported voting intention in 2024 is moderate (r = 0.35).

Figure 9: Predicted probability of voting in general elections across intensities of informal political talk (2019 election vs next election)



The same strategy cannot be implemented for the nonelectoral forms of participation, since these are measured only at the time of the survey. In this case, I run separate models regressing each nonelectoral political engagement variable on an interaction between the frequency of informal political talk at work and reported turnout in 2019. Table 6 shows that for high-cost activities such as attending protests and political rallies, the mobilizing influence of informal political talk at work is concentrated among those who already voted in 2019, suggesting a reinforcement dynamic. Meanwhile, for lower-cost activities such as donating to charity, donating to political causes, or sharing content on social media, the interaction is not significant, suggesting that politicized workplace networks mobilize participation more broadly, regardless of previous levels of political engagement.

Table 6: Determinants of nonelectoral forms of political and civic engagement. Interaction between frequency of informal political talk and reported turnout in 2019 general election

Model:	Protest (1)	Political meeting (2)	Donating charity (3)	Donating politics (4)	Social media (5)
Variables					
Political talk	-0.8567	-0.6093	-0.0570	0.3440	0.0516
	(0.7014)	(0.6754)	(0.3871)	(0.6493)	(0.4825)
Turnout 2019	-0.6242	-1.003**	0.2343	0.5594	-0.5203
	(0.4710)	(0.4876)	(0.2378)	(0.4996)	(0.3741)
Political talk × Turnout 2019	1.599**	1.484**	0.3693	0.3098	0.8024
	(0.7103)	(0.6892)	(0.3898)	(0.6529)	(0.4892)
Fit statistics					
Observations	1,799	1,799	1,799	1,799	1,799
Squared Correlation	0.09588	0.10886	0.07610	0.12802	0.14382
Pseudo R^2	0.12611	0.14391	0.07064	0.12785	0.13468
BIC	1,317.3	1,226.3	1,987.3	1,612.0	1,886.8

All models include demographic, workplace, and political controls (coefficients not shown)
IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

In sum, these interaction models suggest that informal political talk serves different roles depending on individuals' preexisting political engagement. For high-cost, time-intensive activities like attending protests and rallies, workplace talk reinforces participation among those already electorally engaged. However, for actions like charity donations, political donations, and social media sharing, workplace talk appears to mobilize participation more broadly, regardless of previous electoral engagement or interest in politics. Figure 9 provides evidence against simple selection explanations, by showing that workplace political talk predicts likelihood of voting in the upcoming election but not past turnout. This suggests that current political discussions influence future behavior rather than simply reflecting preexisting political engagement.

3.5 Conclusion

Drawing on an original survey of 2,000 workers in the UK, this study examines when and why political conversations emerge in modern workplaces, and how these discussions shape

workers' political participation outside of work. The findings address longstanding questions about the emergence of politicized networks and political mobilization while arguing that contemporary workplace structures — particularly the collaborative environments typical of knowledge economies— create new opportunities for political engagement.

I first show that younger workers and those in highly collaborative workplaces are most likely to engage in political conversations at work, partly because they develop stronger personal relationships with colleagues, which allow these kinds of conversations to emerge. As expected, highly collaborative settings are most conducive to informal political talk when they are also politically homogeneous. Supporting the idea that engaging with politics at work can also entail risks, I find that workers who are politically aligned with most of their colleagues, or who have higher status within the organization, discuss politics more frequently than those in politically diverse settings and those facing higher labour market risks.

Second, I find that informal political talk is strongly associated with political participation across a range of actions, but operates through different mechanisms. I address selection and reverse causality concerns by leveraging a comparison between reported past turnout and intended turnout in an upcoming election: these findings show that workplace talk mobilizes participation in voting, while for higher-cost activities like protests, it reinforces engagement among those already politically active. Finally, I show that by engaging in these conversations, individuals become more supportive of their organizations speaking up on salient political and social issues, contributing to a nascent literature on preferences for corporate political speech, focused so far mainly on the US (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*,*b*).

These findings help explain why political conversations are still prominent in contemporary workplaces despite declining unionization rates over the past decades, challenging popular accounts of politically hollowed out workplaces (Anderson, 2019). The collaborative structures typical of knowledge work, combined with the workplace's important role as a site for socialization and developing closer ties, create favourable conditions for informal political talk. This article shows that, even in contexts of declining union membership, informal political networks can still shape engagement — not through formal democratic structures (Pateman, 1975) or experiential civic learning (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995; Brady, Verba and Schlozman,

1995), but through everyday conversations that influence political behavior in distinct ways depending on the type of political action.

While establishing full causality is not possible in this study, different lines of evidence suggest that the influence of informal political talk on political participation is not simply driven by selection: in some cases, such as voting in national elections, I show that politicized workplace networks mobilize voters for an imminent national election. This aligns with recent work by Hurst et al. (2025) in the US, which combines workers' employment histories and voter turnout records to show causal evidence that colleagues' political engagement increases individual turnout, especially among university graduates, young employees, and those with more intermittent voting histories. Meanwhile, for more costly forms of participation, such as attending protests and political rallies, politicized workplace networks appear to reinforce those that were already politically engaged. Future research using panel data or experimental designs should engage more thoroughly with this question in contexts outside the US.

Two structural trends, however, might push the prevalence of political talk at work in different directions in the medium term. On one hand, if existing trends regarding occupational (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025) and political homogeneity (Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024; Chinoy and Koenen, 2024) continue to deepen in many democracies, the political role of the workplace might become even more prominent, since political conversations are most likely to surface in politically aligned workplaces, echoing seminal findings by Mutz (2006). On the other hand, considering this study's findings regarding the importance of friendship networks and workers' structural power for political talk at work, the fissuring of the workplace (Weil, 2014) and a rising prevalence of more atomized, precarious forms of employment (Thelen and Wiedemann, 2021) could also make these conversations less likely in the future, especially among more precarious workers. The same is true regarding remote working arrangements, although my data show that remote workers are equally likely to engage in political conversations with colleagues as those who never work remotely.

Appendix A

Table A1: Degree of collaboration and discussing politics at work (Often/Sometimes vs Rarely/Never). Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Frequency of political talk at work					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Constant	-0.9831***	-1.701***	-1.853***	-1.877***	-2.224***	-3.847***
	(0.1581)	(0.2314)	(0.2363)	(0.2377)	(0.2533)	(0.3067)
Rather important (ref: Not important)	0.9442***	0.9037***	0.9257***	0.8408***	0.8180***	0.7511***
	(0.1729)	(0.2002)	(0.2012)	(0.2030)	(0.2129)	(0.2252)
Very important	1.566***	1.471***	1.450***	1.281***	1.177***	1.088***
	(0.1718)	(0.1996)	(0.2005)	(0.2034)	(0.2132)	(0.2258)
18-34 (ref: 55+)		0.2745**	0.2763**	0.2324*	0.1270	0.4864***
		(0.1264)	(0.1274)	(0.1288)	(0.1361)	(0.1493)
35-54		0.2059*	0.2252*	0.1829	0.1955	0.4124***
		(0.1211)	(0.1221)	(0.1237)	(0.1290)	(0.1385)
Male (ref: Female)		0.5930***	0.6348***	0.5469***	0.5742***	0.3967***
		(0.1013)	(0.1026)	(0.1044)	(0.1099)	(0.1188)
Middle education (ref: Low)		0.1254	0.1359	0.0913	0.0170	0.0746
		(0.1481)	(0.1489)	(0.1509)	(0.1589)	(0.1767)
High education		0.4207***	0.3823***	0.2578**	0.2330*	-0.0739
		(0.1119)	(0.1129)	(0.1160)	(0.1217)	(0.1319)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		-0.1466	-0.1800	-0.1397	-0.1570	-0.1000
		(0.1378)	(0.1394)	(0.1408)	(0.1485)	(0.1609)
Prosocial industry		0.0450	-0.0121	0.0188	-0.0098	0.0345
		(0.1176)	(0.1190)	(0.1206)	(0.1270)	(0.1370)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		0.0610	0.0464	-0.0074	0.1137	-0.0266
		(0.1557)	(0.1568)	(0.1583)	(0.1666)	(0.1808)
50-249		0.2777*	0.2567*	0.2013	0.2592	0.1518
		(0.1504)	(0.1515)	(0.1531)	(0.1609)	(0.1745)
250-499		0.7004***	0.6890***	0.6184***	0.7208***	0.4355*
		(0.2065)	(0.2078)	(0.2099)	(0.2191)	(0.2322)
500		0.2495	0.2701*	0.2435	0.3015*	0.2141
		(0.1586)	(0.1598)	(0.1613)	(0.1698)	(0.1839)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)			0.1466	0.1533	0.1264	0.1960
			(0.1259)	(0.1274)	(0.1338)	(0.1462)
High prosociality			0.5991***	0.5998***	0.5521***	0.5181***
			(0.1290)	(0.1305)	(0.1370)	(0.1469)
Supervisory role (ref: No supervisory role)				0.6391***	0.6355***	0.5210***
				(0.1059)	(0.1112)	(0.1200)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)					1.619***	1.473***
					(0.1323)	(0.1419)
Interested in politics (ref: No interested)						2.333***
						(0.1708)
Fit statistics						
Observations	1,990	1,841	1,841	1,838	1,838	1,838
Squared Correlation	0.05368	0.09329	0.10357	0.12102	0.20575	0.31486
Pseudo R^2	0.03961	0.07090	0.07975	0.09362	0.16355	0.25998
BIC	2,658.9	2,448.5	2,441.2	2,409.7	2,241.2	2,005.9

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A2: Interaction between degree of collaboration and degree of political alignment at work. Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Frequency of political talk at work		
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)
Variables			
Constant	0.6061**	-0.1016	-1.677***
	(0.2938)	(0.3707)	(0.4178)
Rather important (ref: Not important)	0.1586	0.2857	0.2408
	(0.3177)	(0.3476)	(0.3629)
Very important	0.6066*	0.7173**	0.6920*
	(0.3173)	(0.3470)	(0.3624)
Not aware (ref: Politically diverse workplace)	-3.982***	-4.106***	-3.896***
	(0.5881)	(0.7919)	(0.8032)
Politically homogeneous	-0.4520	-0.5262	-0.6589
	(0.6305)	(0.7247)	(0.7477)
Rather important × Politically homogeneous	0.8573	1.018	1.029
	(0.6967)	(0.7867)	(0.8128)
Very important × Politically homogeneous	1.056	1.378*	1.431*
	(0.6858)	(0.7829)	(0.8079)
18-34 (ref: 55+)		-0.0638	0.2023
		(0.1568)	(0.1663)
35-54		0.0593	0.2041
		(0.1511)	(0.1578)
Male (ref: Female)		0.4980***	0.3381**
		(0.1251)	(0.1320)
Middle education (ref: Low education)		0.1726	0.2094
		(0.1860)	(0.2007)
High education		0.3525**	0.1265
		(0.1379)	(0.1455)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		0.0696	0.1303
		(0.1734)	(0.1826)
Prosocial industry		0.0208	0.0451
		(0.1442)	(0.1513)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		0.0144	-0.0997
		(0.1947)	(0.2049)
50-249		0.0199	-0.0842
		(0.1859)	(0.1961)
250-499		0.6728***	0.4413*
		(0.2579)	(0.2652)
500 or more		0.2682	0.2133
		(0.1995)	(0.2095)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)			2.010***
			(0.1863)
Fit statistics			
Observations	1,990	1,841	1,841
Squared Correlation	0.39901	0.39730	0.45147
Pseudo R^2	0.32173	0.32428	0.37719
BIC	1,952.9	1,877.1	1,751.2

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A3: Age group and discussing politics at work (Often/Sometimes vs Rarely/Never). Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Frequency of political talk at work					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Constant	-0.1949*	-1.722***	-1.882***	-1.891***	-2.247***	-3.912***
	(0.1075)	(0.2455)	(0.2508)	(0.2523)	(0.2692)	(0.3204)
18-24 (ref: 65+)	0.3003*	0.1546	0.1228	0.0689	-0.0740	0.4032*
	(0.1669)	(0.1858)	(0.1872)	(0.1895)	(0.2010)	(0.2215)
25-34	0.7179***	0.4248**	0.4580***	0.3932**	0.3289*	0.6836***
	(0.1541)	(0.1743)	(0.1758)	(0.1778)	(0.1869)	(0.2001)
35-44	0.6029***	0.3324*	0.3514**	0.2812	0.2896	0.6510***
	(0.1559)	(0.1767)	(0.1784)	(0.1809)	(0.1888)	(0.2030)
45-54	0.3849***	0.1688	0.1972	0.1485	0.1852	0.3786**
	(0.1490)	(0.1675)	(0.1687)	(0.1708)	(0.1779)	(0.1878)
55-64	0.1891	0.0613	0.0673	0.0362	0.0554	0.1588
	(0.1525)	(0.1714)	(0.1723)	(0.1740)	(0.1824)	(0.1919)
Rather important (ref: Not important)		0.9105***	0.9341***	0.8491***	0.8258***	0.7562***
		(0.2004)	(0.2015)	(0.2033)	(0.2134)	(0.2259)
Very important		1.478***	1.457***	1.288***	1.183***	1.093***
		(0.1998)	(0.2008)	(0.2036)	(0.2137)	(0.2264)
Male (ref: Female)		0.5971***	0.6415***	0.5536***	0.5829***	0.4000***
		(0.1015)	(0.1029)	(0.1047)	(0.1102)	(0.1193)
Middle education (ref: Low education)		0.1084	0.1166	0.0754	-0.0032	0.0496
		(0.1488)	(0.1497)	(0.1517)	(0.1600)	(0.1777)
High education		0.3825***	0.3382***	0.2179*	0.1866	-0.1191
		(0.1141)	(0.1152)	(0.1181)	(0.1241)	(0.1343)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		-0.1469	-0.1772	-0.1359	-0.1527	-0.1092
		(0.1387)	(0.1403)	(0.1418)	(0.1496)	(0.1622)
Prosocial industry		0.0505	-0.0067	0.0240	-0.0034	0.0353
		(0.1179)	(0.1194)	(0.1210)	(0.1274)	(0.1373)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		0.0624	0.0463	-0.0070	0.1122	-0.0238
		(0.1561)	(0.1572)	(0.1587)	(0.1671)	(0.1814)
50-249		0.2692*	0.2465	0.1941	0.2510	0.1465
		(0.1510)	(0.1521)	(0.1537)	(0.1614)	(0.1751)
250-499		0.6915***	0.6796***	0.6113***	0.7120***	0.4216*
		(0.2071)	(0.2085)	(0.2107)	(0.2204)	(0.2333)
500 or more		0.2421	0.2608	0.2356	0.2929*	0.2091
		(0.1592)	(0.1603)	(0.1618)	(0.1704)	(0.1846)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)			0.1528	0.1580	0.1327	0.2072
			(0.1262)	(0.1277)	(0.1342)	(0.1466)
High prosociality			0.6151***	0.6152***	0.5745***	0.5311***
			(0.1297)	(0.1312)	(0.1379)	(0.1478)
Supervisory role (ref: No supervisory role)				0.6351***	0.6304***	0.5086***
				(0.1062)	(0.1116)	(0.1205)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)					1.626***	1.476***
					(0.1327)	(0.1423)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)						2.340***
						(0.1714)
Fit statistics						
Observations	2,000	1,841	1,841	1,838	1,838	1,838
Squared Correlation	0.01473	0.09480	0.10572	0.12296	0.20750	0.31668
Pseudo R^2	0.01073	0.07216	0.08141	0.09505	0.16530	0.26164
BIC	2,774.1	2,467.9	2,459.6	2,428.7	2,259.3	2,024.3

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A4: Political alignment at work and discussing politics at work (Often/Sometimes vs Rarely/Never). Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Frequency of political talk at work					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Constant	0.9761***	-0.2934	-0.4564	-0.4996	-0.4279	-2.001***
	(0.0808)	(0.3680)	(0.3752)	(0.3774)	(0.4182)	(0.4845)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)	0.4868***	0.5450***	0.5014**	0.5115**	0.5172**	0.4294**
	(0.1859)	(0.2018)	(0.2035)	(0.2043)	(0.2054)	(0.2123)
Rather important (ref: Not important)		0.4108	0.4239	0.3837	0.3888	0.3691
		(0.3136)	(0.3154)	(0.3169)	(0.3192)	(0.3301)
Very important		0.8901***	0.8731***	0.7794**	0.7917**	0.8142**
		(0.3125)	(0.3142)	(0.3171)	(0.3199)	(0.3311)
Male (ref: Female)		0.3619**	0.3966**	0.3420**	0.3334**	0.2329
		(0.1592)	(0.1607)	(0.1625)	(0.1635)	(0.1719)
Middle education (ref: Low education)		0.3992	0.4139*	0.3785	0.3836	0.4088
		(0.2471)	(0.2485)	(0.2502)	(0.2523)	(0.2672)
High education		0.5666***	0.5402***	0.4683***	0.4417**	0.3492*
		(0.1706)	(0.1718)	(0.1757)	(0.1799)	(0.1879)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		0.1929	0.1756	0.1757	0.1588	0.2259
		(0.2281)	(0.2300)	(0.2307)	(0.2334)	(0.2473)
Prosocial industry		0.2538	0.1938	0.2157	0.2151	0.2158
		(0.1848)	(0.1870)	(0.1885)	(0.1893)	(0.1975)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		-0.1058	-0.1205	-0.1825	-0.1790	-0.2087
		(0.2495)	(0.2511)	(0.2536)	(0.2588)	(0.2711)
50-249		-0.0924	-0.1260	-0.1863	-0.1816	-0.2585
		(0.2377)	(0.2396)	(0.2427)	(0.2464)	(0.2575)
250-499		0.5912*	0.5415	0.4591	0.4618	0.3551
		(0.3347)	(0.3364)	(0.3392)	(0.3429)	(0.3536)
500 or more		0.2369	0.2428	0.2029	0.2122	0.2478
		(0.2653)	(0.2671)	(0.2685)	(0.2719)	(0.2858)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)			0.3081	0.3339	0.3355	0.3461
			(0.2072)	(0.2089)	(0.2102)	(0.2214)
High prosociality			0.5959***	0.5930***	0.5988***	0.4658**
			(0.1992)	(0.2001)	(0.2025)	(0.2090)
Supervisory role (ref: No supervisory role)				0.4014**	0.3961**	0.3133*
				(0.1650)	(0.1665)	(0.1745)
18-24 (ref: 65+)					-0.1487	0.1733
					(0.3024)	(0.3219)
25-34					-0.0514	0.0851
					(0.2814)	(0.2924)
35-44					0.1210	0.2880
					(0.2930)	(0.3055)
45-54					-0.1570	-0.1214
					(0.2705)	(0.2785)
55-64					-0.1453	-0.0869
					(0.2846)	(0.2965)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)						1.919***
						(0.2481)
Fit statistics						
Observations	1,005	954	954	952	952	952
Squared Correlation	0.00692	0.05645	0.06564	0.07015	0.07154	0.14914
Pseudo R^2	0.00640	0.05268	0.06195	0.06651	0.06799	0.12898
BIC	1,145.0	1,106.6	1,110.4	1,109.2	1,141.9	1,083.5

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A5: Supervisory role and discussing politics at work (Often/Sometimes vs Rarely/Never). Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Frequency of political talk at work					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Constant	-0.2942***	-0.8516***	-1.877***	-2.224***	-3.847***	-4.135***
	(0.0615)	(0.1510)	(0.2377)	(0.2533)	(0.3067)	(0.3161)
Supervisory role (ref: No supervisory role)	1.047***	0.7620***	0.6391***	0.6355***	0.5210***	0.4771***
	(0.0938)	(0.1023)	(0.1059)	(0.1112)	(0.1200)	(0.1222)
18-34 (ref: 55+)		0.2477**	0.2324*	0.1270	0.4864***	0.3453**
		(0.1256)	(0.1288)	(0.1361)	(0.1493)	(0.1529)
35-54		0.1342	0.1829	0.1955	0.4124***	0.3620**
		(0.1203)	(0.1237)	(0.1290)	(0.1385)	(0.1413)
Male		0.4598***	0.5469***	0.5742***	0.3967***	0.3975***
		(0.1010)	(0.1044)	(0.1099)	(0.1188)	(0.1211)
Middle education (ref: Low education)		0.1196	0.0913	0.0170	0.0746	0.1062
		(0.1476)	(0.1509)	(0.1589)	(0.1767)	(0.1797)
High education		0.3270***	0.2578**	0.2330*	-0.0739	0.0160
		(0.1127)	(0.1160)	(0.1217)	(0.1319)	(0.1350)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		-0.1077	-0.1397	-0.1570	-0.1000	-0.1281
		(0.1364)	(0.1408)	(0.1485)	(0.1609)	(0.1639)
Prosocial industry		0.1349	0.0188	-0.0098	0.0345	-0.0113
		(0.1171)	(0.1206)	(0.1270)	(0.1370)	(0.1393)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		0.0775	-0.0074	0.1137	-0.0266	-0.0589
		(0.1542)	(0.1583)	(0.1666)	(0.1808)	(0.1835)
50-249		0.2862*	0.2013	0.2592	0.1518	0.0982
		(0.1493)	(0.1531)	(0.1609)	(0.1745)	(0.1775)
250-499		0.6967***	0.6184***	0.7208***	0.4355*	0.4259*
		(0.2054)	(0.2099)	(0.2191)	(0.2322)	(0.2371)
500 or more		0.2980*	0.2435	0.3015*	0.2141	0.2109
		(0.1568)	(0.1613)	(0.1698)	(0.1839)	(0.1874)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)			0.1533	0.1264	0.1960	0.1220
			(0.1274)	(0.1338)	(0.1462)	(0.1489)
High prosociality			0.5998***	0.5521***	0.5181***	0.4293***
			(0.1305)	(0.1370)	(0.1469)	(0.1502)
Rather important (ref: Not important)			0.8408***	0.8180***	0.7511***	0.3947*
			(0.2030)	(0.2129)	(0.2252)	(0.2365)
Very important			1.281***	1.177***	1.088***	0.5128**
			(0.2034)	(0.2132)	(0.2258)	(0.2435)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)				1.619***	1.473***	1.449***
				(0.1323)	(0.1419)	(0.1439)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)					2.333***	2.337***
					(0.1708)	(0.1727)
Friendship expectations (middle) (ref: Low)						0.9147***
						(0.1652)
Friendship expectations (high)						1.242***
						(0.1876)
Fit statistics						
Observations	1,997	1,847	1,838	1,838	1,838	1,838
Squared Correlation	0.06393	0.08386	0.12102	0.20575	0.31486	0.34020
Pseudo R^2	0.04702	0.06368	0.09362	0.16355	0.25998	0.27884
BIC	2,639.5	2,465.7	2,409.7	2,241.2	2,005.9	1,973.5

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A6: Feel uncomfortable working with colleagues with very different political views (Strongly agree/Agree vs Neither/Disagree/Strongly disagree). Logistic regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	−1.780***	−2.152***	−2.255***	−2.513***	−2.650***
	(0.108)	(0.203)	(0.205)	(0.237)	(0.263)
55+	-	-	-	-	-
45-54	0.202	0.287	0.295	0.313+	0.308+
	(0.174)	(0.186)	(0.186)	(0.186)	(0.187)
35-44	0.512**	0.485**	0.476*	0.515**	0.494**
	(0.172)	(0.188)	(0.189)	(0.190)	(0.191)
25-34	0.620***	0.660***	0.615***	0.652***	0.615***
	(0.165)	(0.181)	(0.182)	(0.183)	(0.185)
18-24	0.599**	0.779***	0.723***	0.779***	0.734***
	(0.185)	(0.197)	(0.198)	(0.200)	(0.202)
Female		-	-	-	-
Male		0.116	0.099	0.058	0.057
		(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Low education		-	-	-	-
Middle education		−0.075	−0.103	−0.101	−0.101
		(0.193)	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.195)
High education		0.183	0.151	0.095	0.107
		(0.139)	(0.140)	(0.142)	(0.142)
Less prosocial industry		-	-	-	-
Other industry		−0.034	−0.045	−0.032	−0.039
		(0.169)	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.170)
Prosocial industry		−0.039	−0.060	−0.054	−0.070
		(0.142)	(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.143)
Under 10		-	-	-	-
10-49		−0.048	−0.027	−0.054	−0.071
		(0.208)	(0.209)	(0.210)	(0.210)
50-249		0.137	0.128	0.100	0.076
		(0.195)	(0.196)	(0.197)	(0.197)
250-499		0.410+	0.411+	0.353	0.328
		(0.237)	(0.238)	(0.239)	(0.240)
500 or more		0.507*	0.505*	0.483*	0.470*
		(0.197)	(0.198)	(0.198)	(0.199)
Politically diverse/Not aware			-	-	-
Politically homogeneous			0.469***	0.413**	0.386**
			(0.127)	(0.129)	(0.131)
Not interested in politics				-	-
Interested in politics				0.392*	0.364*
				(0.173)	(0.173)
Low friendship expectations					-
Middle friendship expectations					0.194
					(0.179)
High friendship expectations					0.314+
					(0.186)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	2000	1850	1850	1850	1850
Log-Likelihood	−960.54	−872.20	−865.55	−862.84	−861.38

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A7: Political agreement with colleagues is important (Strongly agree/Agree vs Neither/Disagree/Strongly disagree). Logistic regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Variables							
Constant	-2.109***	-2.970***	-2.972***	-2.993***	-3.117***	-3.904***	-4.167***
	(0.1223)	(0.3659)	(0.3694)	(0.3690)	(0.3748)	(0.4218)	(0.4367)
Age: 18-34 (ref: 55+)	1.065***	0.8299***	0.8089***	0.7860***	0.6820***	0.7993***	0.6927***
	(0.1538)	(0.1645)	(0.1656)	(0.1663)	(0.1704)	(0.1729)	(0.1754)
Age: 35-54	0.5097***	0.2720	0.2634	0.2356	0.2364	0.3063*	0.2595
	(0.1584)	(0.1691)	(0.1700)	(0.1708)	(0.1738)	(0.1747)	(0.1766)
Middle education (ref: Low)		-0.5953**	-0.5660**	-0.6083**	-0.6678***	-0.6717***	-0.6647***
		(0.2353)	(0.2362)	(0.2374)	(0.2411)	(0.2432)	(0.2446)
High education		0.3764***	0.3522**	0.2654*	0.2277	0.1309	0.1965
		(0.1417)	(0.1429)	(0.1458)	(0.1499)	(0.1514)	(0.1533)
Collaboration: Rather important		0.4549	0.4684	0.3923	0.3452	0.2730	-0.0302
		(0.2974)	(0.2973)	(0.2983)	(0.3033)	(0.3064)	(0.3211)
Collaboration: Very important		0.7263**	0.6913**	0.5569*	0.4135	0.3235	-0.1858
		(0.2921)	(0.2927)	(0.2958)	(0.3016)	(0.3050)	(0.3276)
Production/manual occupations (ref: Business)		-0.0551	-0.0697	-0.0440	-0.0938	-0.0569	-0.0662
		(0.1663)	(0.1675)	(0.1683)	(0.1727)	(0.1735)	(0.1754)
Sociocultural occupations		-0.2647	-0.3195*	-0.2814	-0.4142**	-0.3670*	-0.3519*
		(0.1892)	(0.1913)	(0.1924)	(0.1983)	(0.1993)	(0.2006)
Male (ref: Female)		0.2734**	0.2840**	0.2263*	0.1886	0.1165	0.1181
		(0.1283)	(0.1296)	(0.1312)	(0.1342)	(0.1352)	(0.1361)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		0.0384	0.0324	-0.0193	0.0352	-0.0166	-0.0403
		(0.2284)	(0.2294)	(0.2306)	(0.2346)	(0.2367)	(0.2385)
50-249		0.4015*	0.3713*	0.3165	0.3117	0.2616	0.2193
		(0.2090)	(0.2105)	(0.2117)	(0.2160)	(0.2181)	(0.2199)
250-499		0.8514***	0.8311***	0.7641***	0.8041***	0.6875***	0.6508**
		(0.2447)	(0.2459)	(0.2477)	(0.2526)	(0.2543)	(0.2571)
500 or more		0.4641**	0.4762**	0.4539**	0.4515**	0.4082*	0.4031*
		(0.2183)	(0.2196)	(0.2203)	(0.2244)	(0.2264)	(0.2285)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low)			-0.2672	-0.2665	-0.2955	-0.2777	-0.3130*
			(0.1769)	(0.1774)	(0.1812)	(0.1825)	(0.1837)
High prosociality			0.4148***	0.4145***	0.3731**	0.3438**	0.2652*
			(0.1479)	(0.1487)	(0.1528)	(0.1537)	(0.1553)
Supervisory role (ref: No)				0.4398***	0.3953***	0.3317**	0.2963**
				(0.1376)	(0.1408)	(0.1419)	(0.1432)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Diverse)					1.061***	0.9592***	0.9199***
					(0.1332)	(0.1347)	(0.1361)
Interested in politics						1.133***	1.101***
						(0.2426)	(0.2435)
Middle friendship expectations (ref: Low)							0.7665***
							(0.2420)
High friendship expectations							1.096***
							(0.2557)
Fit statistics							
Observations	2,000	1,841	1,841	1,838	1,838	1,838	1,838
Squared Correlation	0.02596	0.06997	0.07738	0.08521	0.12745	0.14195	0.15815
Pseudo R^2	0.02778	0.06551	0.07362	0.07979	0.11625	0.13181	0.14375
BIC	1,826.2	1,731.8	1,732.7	1,728.4	1,672.5	1,652.9	1,647.2

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A8: Political talk at work and political participation. Logistic regression (coefficients represent log-odds)

Dependent Variables: Model:	National election (1)	Local elections (2)	Protests (3)	Social media (4)	Donating (5)
Variables					
Constant	-0.3090	-1.023***	-4.273***	-3.805***	-3.996***
	(0.4482)	(0.3209)	(0.6907)	(0.4902)	(0.5340)
Talk politics: Rarely (ref: Never)	0.7314***	-0.0053	0.8517*	0.5886*	0.3959
	(0.2021)	(0.1722)	(0.5142)	(0.3461)	(0.3464)
Talk politics: Sometimes	0.9504***	0.1130	1.129**	1.164***	0.8386**
	(0.2665)	(0.1989)	(0.5354)	(0.3568)	(0.3681)
Talk politics: Often	1.110***	0.7145***	2.189***	1.844***	1.490***
	(0.3916)	(0.2480)	(0.5535)	(0.3787)	(0.3926)
Middle education (ref: Low education)	-0.0151	0.1530	0.0201	-0.0400	0.1250
	(0.2112)	(0.1516)	(0.2717)	(0.1958)	(0.2342)
High education	0.1000	0.2240*	0.2445	0.0362	0.5912***
	(0.1890)	(0.1224)	(0.2017)	(0.1500)	(0.1725)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Never)	0.0059	0.1592	0.5992**	0.6879***	0.3174
	(0.1991)	(0.1405)	(0.2973)	(0.2117)	(0.2304)
Collaboration: Rather important (ref: Not important)	-0.0384	0.3528*	0.1852	-0.2781	0.2557
	(0.2597)	(0.1963)	(0.3892)	(0.2703)	(0.3417)
Collaboration: Very important	0.2058	0.4998**	0.1399	0.0017	0.5764*
	(0.2681)	(0.1973)	(0.3845)	(0.2657)	(0.3355)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)	-0.2882	-0.0467	-0.1622	0.0664	-0.0505
	(0.1774)	(0.1268)	(0.2243)	(0.1587)	(0.1874)
High prosociality	0.4304**	0.2740**	0.4474**	0.1949	0.6664***
	(0.2175)	(0.1302)	(0.1846)	(0.1493)	(0.1589)
Interested in politics (ref: Not Interested)	1.465***	0.6175***	-0.1152	0.6201***	0.1225
	(0.1781)	(0.1417)	(0.2981)	(0.2366)	(0.2427)
Gender: Male (ref: Female)	0.4678***	0.0666	0.4217**	0.3919***	0.2523*
	(0.1648)	(0.1068)	(0.1710)	(0.1294)	(0.1448)
Ethnicity: White (ref: Non-white)	-0.1551	-0.1343	-0.7440***	-0.4449***	-0.4907***
	(0.2424)	(0.1460)	(0.1872)	(0.1569)	(0.1674)
Personal income: £30,000 (ref: <£30,000)	-0.0440	-0.0348	-0.0113	0.2092	0.3424*
	(0.1873)	(0.1249)	(0.2132)	(0.1566)	(0.1823)
Personal income: £50,000	0.1210	0.2744**	0.3806*	0.1996	0.5147***
	(0.2357)	(0.1397)	(0.2006)	(0.1595)	(0.1790)
Firm size: 10-49 (ref: 1-10)	0.1368	0.0565	0.4503	0.3077	0.1372
	(0.2316)	(0.1669)	(0.3141)	(0.2260)	(0.2494)
Firm size: 50-249	0.3608	0.0490	0.3742	0.5999***	0.0966
	(0.2373)	(0.1637)	(0.3038)	(0.2150)	(0.2404)
Firm size: 250-499	0.4671	0.0472	0.8786***	0.6295**	0.5673**
	(0.3555)	(0.2121)	(0.3401)	(0.2581)	(0.2787)
Firm size: >500	0.0564	0.1061	0.2647	0.2971	0.0769
	(0.2440)	(0.1760)	(0.3273)	(0.2357)	(0.2600)
Type: Public organization (ref: Private)	-0.0646	-0.0759	0.3591*	-0.0692	0.3336**
	(0.1898)	(0.1260)	(0.1942)	(0.1527)	(0.1693)
Type: Self-employed	0.0598	-0.0546	0.3201	0.3733	0.4971*
	(0.3249)	(0.2123)	(0.3279)	(0.2489)	(0.2718)
Type: Other	0.0076	-0.4553**	-0.0007	-0.1889	0.9168***
	(0.2994)	(0.2243)	(0.4210)	(0.3072)	(0.2910)
Industry: Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)	0.1265	0.0430	-0.1366	0.4453**	-0.1124
	(0.2057)	(0.1423)	(0.2406)	(0.1734)	(0.2019)
Industry: Prosocial industry	0.2534	0.0701	-0.0438	0.2344	-0.0947
	(0.1969)	(0.1272)	(0.1935)	(0.1512)	(0.1668)
Fit statistics					
Observations	1,799	1,799	1,799	1,799	1,799
Squared Correlation	0.17457	0.08412	0.11968	0.15416	0.13412
Pseudo R^2	0.18048	0.06407	0.14570	0.14358	0.13290
BIC	1,396.7	2,489.2	1,284.6	1,861.9	1,596.3

IID standard errors in parentheses

Table A9: Views on companies' political stance-taking. Logistic regression

Dependent Variable:	Views on corporate political speech						
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Variables							
Constant	-1.652***	-2.113***	-2.341***	-2.349***	-2.367***	-2.668***	-2.803***
	(0.1530)	(0.2325)	(0.2422)	(0.2434)	(0.2439)	(0.2684)	(0.2815)
Talk politics: Rarely (ref: Never)	0.3129*	0.3784*	0.3454*	0.3838*	0.3424	0.1973	0.1340
	(0.1833)	(0.2048)	(0.2079)	(0.2092)	(0.2100)	(0.2155)	(0.2193)
Talk politics: Sometimes	0.9101***	0.9291***	0.8301***	0.8976***	0.7793***	0.6806***	0.5456**
	(0.1704)	(0.1930)	(0.1964)	(0.1992)	(0.2042)	(0.2097)	(0.2243)
Talk politics: Often	1.309***	1.310***	1.112***	1.216***	1.032***	0.9768***	0.8341***
	(0.1974)	(0.2223)	(0.2277)	(0.2335)	(0.2432)	(0.2507)	(0.2643)
18-34 (ref: 55+)		0.4381***	0.4544***	0.4781***	0.4502***	0.4225***	0.4571***
		(0.1395)	(0.1429)	(0.1437)	(0.1444)	(0.1489)	(0.1505)
35-54		0.2675**	0.3139**	0.3428**	0.3460**	0.3217**	0.3421**
		(0.1364)	(0.1398)	(0.1405)	(0.1409)	(0.1462)	(0.1467)
Male (ref: Female)		-0.2160*	-0.1411	-0.1087	-0.0995	-0.0924	-0.1087
		(0.1113)	(0.1145)	(0.1155)	(0.1158)	(0.1194)	(0.1198)
Middle education (ref: Low education)		-0.2056	-0.1668	-0.1426	-0.1557	-0.1044	-0.0955
		(0.1710)	(0.1740)	(0.1746)	(0.1751)	(0.1804)	(0.1809)
High education		0.0849	0.0177	0.0762	0.0722	0.0227	-0.0014
		(0.1226)	(0.1259)	(0.1284)	(0.1289)	(0.1335)	(0.1342)
Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)		0.3107**	0.2675*	0.2510*	0.2450	0.2370	0.2477
		(0.1482)	(0.1521)	(0.1525)	(0.1529)	(0.1575)	(0.1577)
Prosocial industry		0.2748**	0.1679	0.1602	0.1532	0.1481	0.1526
		(0.1254)	(0.1292)	(0.1297)	(0.1301)	(0.1346)	(0.1347)
10-49 (ref: 1-10)		-0.0533	-0.1037	-0.0726	-0.0555	-0.0227	-0.0425
		(0.1806)	(0.1843)	(0.1853)	(0.1859)	(0.1917)	(0.1923)
50-249		0.1301	0.0807	0.1152	0.1253	0.1846	0.1666
		(0.1706)	(0.1744)	(0.1755)	(0.1760)	(0.1817)	(0.1823)
250-499		0.4586**	0.4398**	0.4811**	0.5045**	0.5771***	0.5452**
		(0.2108)	(0.2156)	(0.2169)	(0.2174)	(0.2233)	(0.2241)
500 or more		0.3397*	0.3698**	0.3994**	0.4072**	0.4415**	0.4277**
		(0.1765)	(0.1802)	(0.1810)	(0.1815)	(0.1874)	(0.1876)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)			0.1572	0.1536	0.1508	0.1524	0.1578
			(0.1453)	(0.1457)	(0.1461)	(0.1519)	(0.1522)
High prosociality			1.096***	1.104***	1.104***	1.013***	1.015***
			(0.1296)	(0.1299)	(0.1304)	(0.1347)	(0.1348)
Supervisory role (ref: No supervisory role)				-0.2795**	-0.2787**	-0.2008	-0.2077*
				(0.1203)	(0.1206)	(0.1246)	(0.1247)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)					0.3452***	0.3268**	0.3216**
					(0.1244)	(0.1289)	(0.1290)
Centre (ref: Right-wing)						-0.0859	-0.0631
						(0.1567)	(0.1573)
Left-wing						1.086***	1.088***
						(0.1361)	(0.1362)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)							0.2990*
							(0.1790)
Fit statistics							
Observations	1,991	1,841	1,841	1,838	1,838	1,838	1,838
Squared Correlation	0.03498	0.05777	0.09976	0.10256	0.10661	0.15909	0.16199
Pseudo R^2	0.03008	0.04859	0.08333	0.08615	0.08969	0.13306	0.13438
BIC	2,301.0	2,187.3	2,126.6	2,126.1	2,125.9	2,046.5	2,051.1

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A10: Political talk at work and reported turnout (2019 vs. 2024). Logistic regression (coefficients represent log-odds)

Dependent Variables: Model:	Turnout 2019 (1)	Turnout 2024 (2)
Variables		
Constant	-0.2831	-0.3090
	(0.4913)	(0.4482)
Talk politics: Rarely (ref: Never)	0.3059	0.7314***
	(0.2384)	(0.2021)
Talk politics: Sometimes	0.1943	0.9504***
	(0.3121)	(0.2665)
Talk politics: Often	0.5976	1.110***
	(0.4618)	(0.3916)
Middle education (ref: Low education)	-0.1156	-0.0151
	(0.2367)	(0.2112)
High education	0.2032	0.1000
	(0.2185)	(0.1890)
Politically homogeneous (ref: Politically diverse)	0.0883	0.0059
	(0.2335)	(0.1991)
Collaboration: Rather important (ref: Not important)	0.2500	-0.0384
	(0.2978)	(0.2597)
Collaboration: Very important	0.2074	0.2058
	(0.3040)	(0.2681)
Middle prosociality (ref: Low prosociality)	0.2828	-0.2882
	(0.2174)	(0.1774)
High prosociality	0.3508	0.4304**
	(0.2334)	(0.2175)
Interested in politics (ref: Not interested)	1.526***	1.465***
	(0.2129)	(0.1781)
Gender: Male (ref: Female)	0.4334**	0.4678***
	(0.1875)	(0.1648)
Ethnicity: White (ref: Non-white)	0.6646***	-0.1551
	(0.2312)	(0.2424)
Personal income: Less than £30,000 (ref: £30,000-£50,000)	0.2593	-0.0440
	(0.2084)	(0.1873)
Personal income: More than £50,000	0.4484*	0.1210
	(0.2677)	(0.2357)
Firm size: 10-49 (ref: 1-10)	0.1398	0.1368
	(0.2834)	(0.2316)
Firm size: 50-249	-0.2191	0.3608
	(0.2728)	(0.2373)
Firm size: 250-499	-0.1150	0.4671
	(0.3833)	(0.3555)
Firm size: $>$500	-0.1607	0.0564
	(0.2911)	(0.2440)
Type: Public (ref: Private)	-0.0237	-0.0646
	(0.2181)	(0.1898)
Type: Self-employed	-0.0952	0.0598
	(0.3806)	(0.3249)
Type: Other	-0.9101***	0.0076
	(0.2909)	(0.2994)
Industry: Other industry (ref: Less prosocial industry)	0.1370	0.1265
	(0.2375)	(0.2057)
Industry: Prosocial industry	0.1629	0.2534
	(0.2214)	(0.1969)
Fit statistics		
Observations	1,799	1,799
Squared Correlation	0.09628	0.17457
Pseudo R^2	0.12992	0.18048
BIC	1,174.5	1,396.7

IID standard errors in parentheses

Figure A1: Age and discussing politics at work: mediation analysis for friendship networks (with controls)

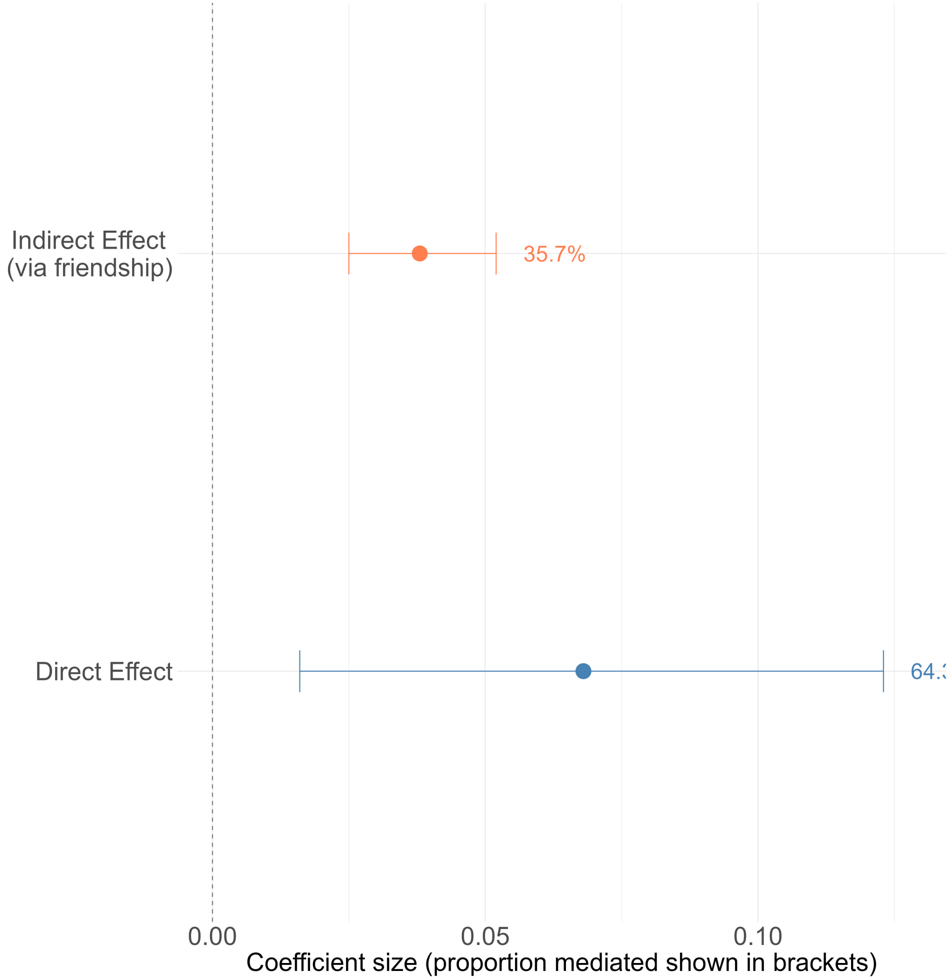


Figure A2: Average marginal effect of age group on the frequency of political discussions at work (reference category 55-64)

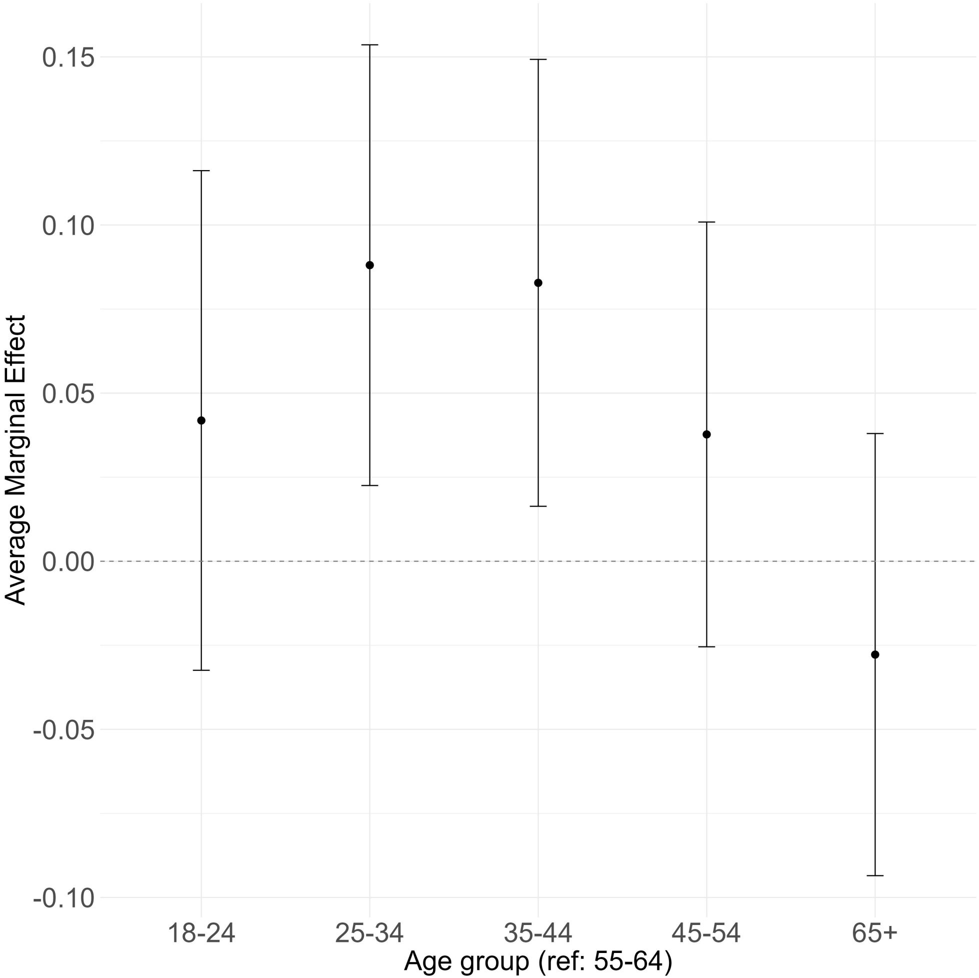


Figure A3: Average marginal effect of age on feeling uncomfortable working with politically misaligned colleagues (with controls)

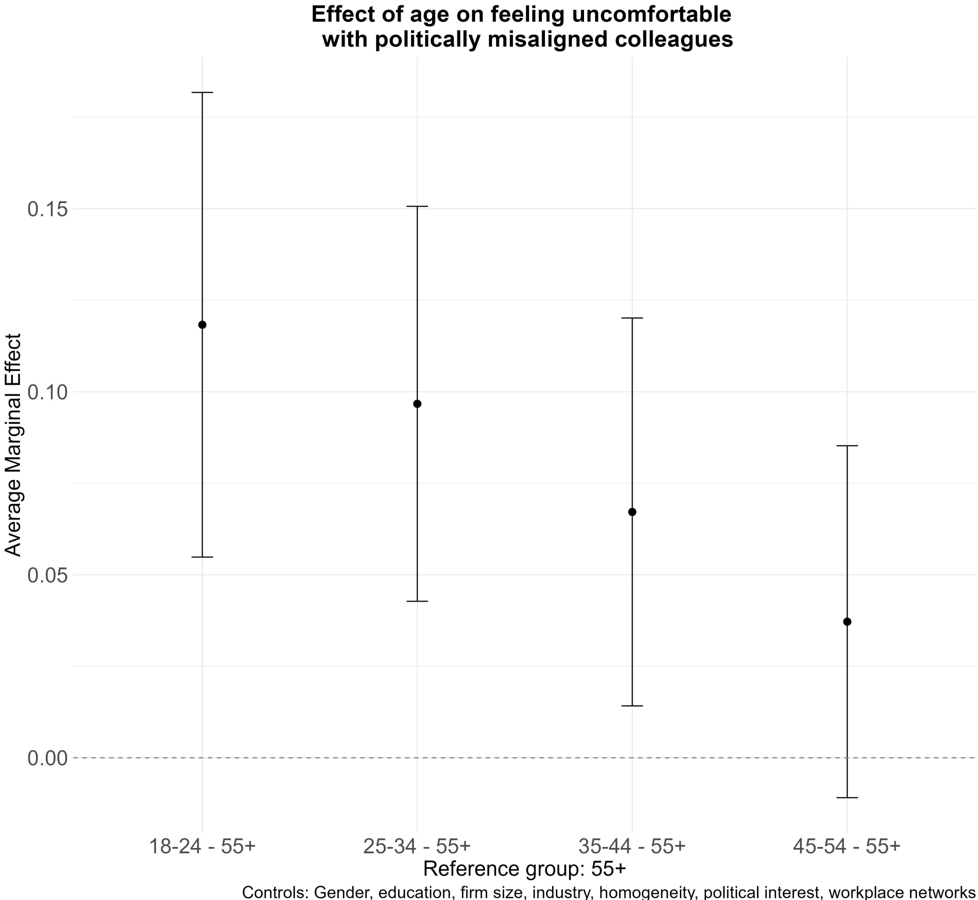


Figure A4: Average marginal effect of supervisory role at work on the frequency of political discussions at work

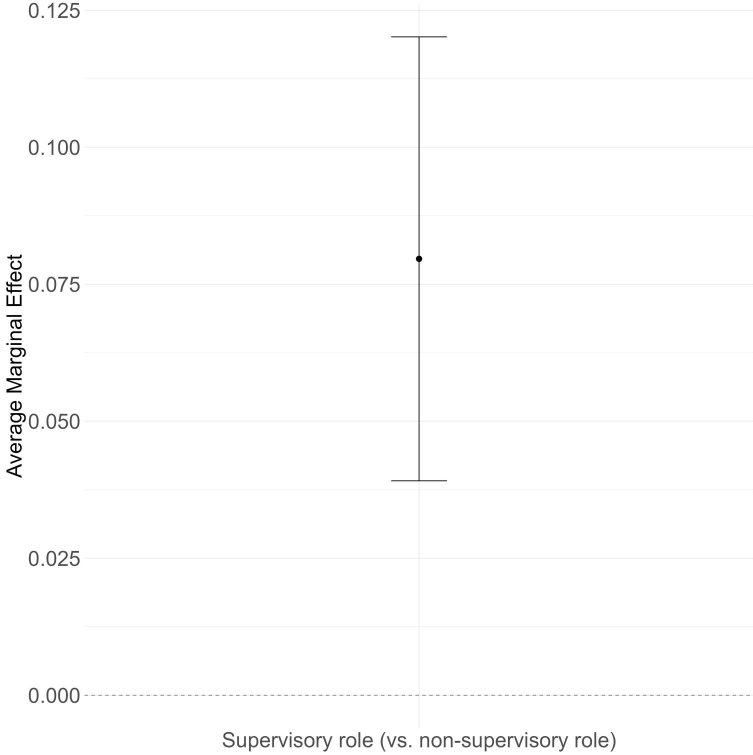


Figure A5: Average marginal effect of political alignment role at work on the frequency of political discussions at work

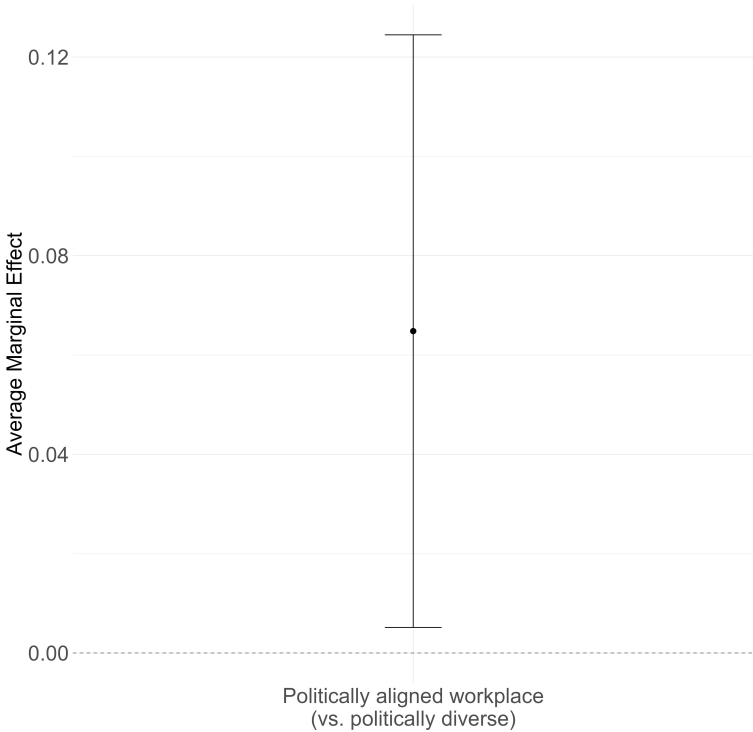


Figure A6: Average marginal effect of prosociality at work and preferences for corporate political speech (with controls)

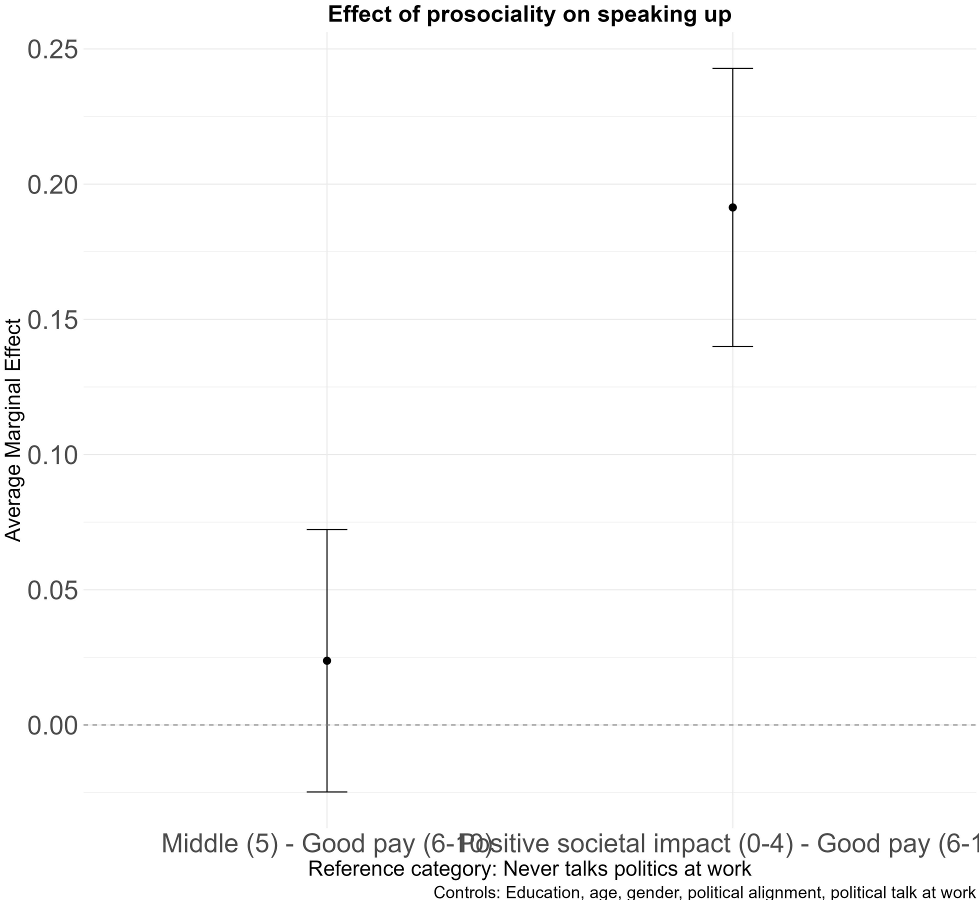
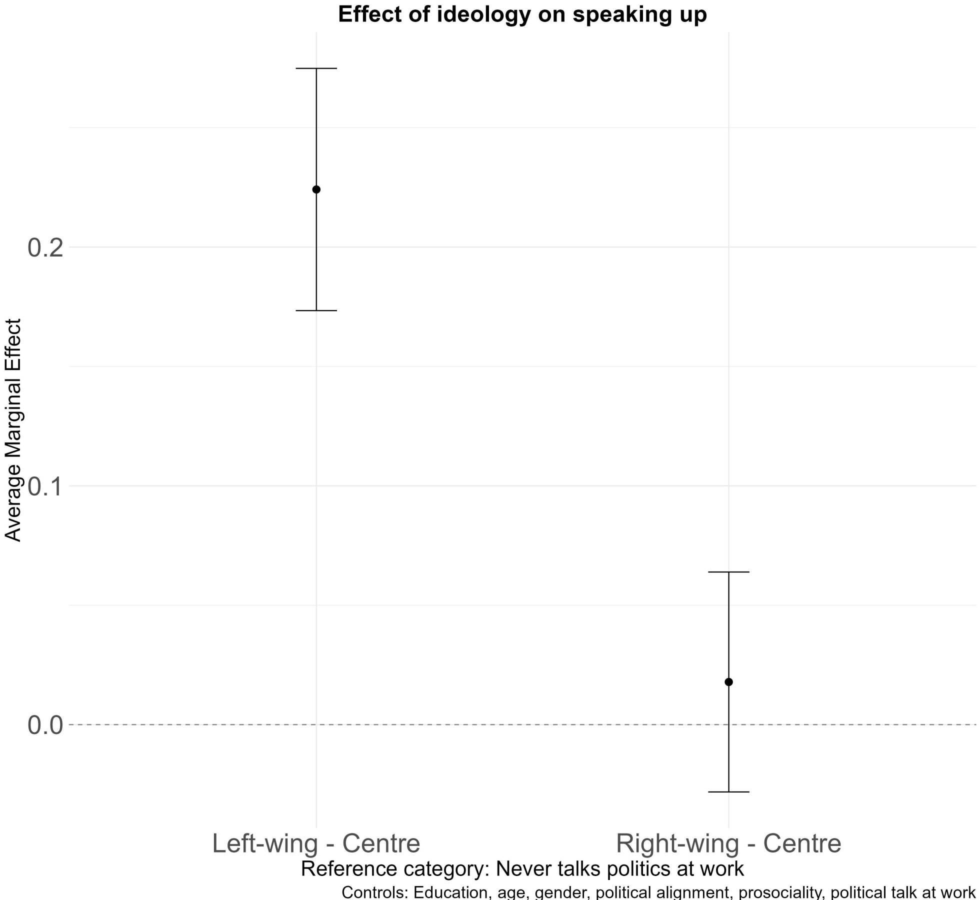


Figure A7: Average marginal effect of ideological self-placement and preferences for corporate political speech (with controls)



Chapter 4

Teaming Up or Splitting Apart? Political Identities in the Modern Workplace (with Francesco Raffaelli)

Abstract

What role do political identities play in modern workplaces, and under what conditions do they shape workers' willingness to collaborate with colleagues? Using an original preregistered survey experiment with British employed citizens, this article reveals that while workers avoid close collaboration with outpartisans and favour copartisans, competence considerations prevail over political ones. Political identities do, however, interact with task competence in meaningful ways: highly competent workers are significantly penalized when they are outpartisans. We argue this reflects workers turning to colleagues' political identities as a signal for highly valued interpersonal traits and as a heuristic for avoiding workplace conflict, rather than a purely taste-based preference. Heterogeneity analyses of the conjoint findings support this argument, drawing on a novel work-centered measure of affective polarization, open-ended responses, and an additional survey. More broadly, this article contributes to our understanding of the conditions under which political sorting may emerge in the modern workplace.

4.1 Introduction

On April 18, 2024, Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Alphabet and its subsidiary Google, stated in a company blog, *"This is a business, and not a place to act in a way that disrupts coworkers or makes them feel unsafe, to attempt to use the company as a personal platform, or to fight over disruptive issues or debate politics."* This followed the firing of 28 employees who protested against Project Nimbus, a contract that provides cloud computing infrastructure to the Israeli government. Google, however, is not alone in discouraging workers from bringing politics to the workplace. In December 2022, Meta's head of people Lori Goler announced in an internal forum to employees that the company was *"increasing the number of topics that can no longer be discussed at work based on what we've seen to be very disruptive in the past"*, which includes issues such as vaccine efficacy, abortion, elections, and political movements.

Despite growing calls from organizations in recent years for workers to *"bring their whole selves to work"* (Clark and Smith, 2022; Chen, 2022), many employers now appear to fear that politically motivated internal divisions could undermine workplace collaboration and lead to negative outcomes. In contexts of heightened political polarization, these concerns have sometimes resulted in the implementation of strict "no-politics-at-work" policies. At the heart of these debates lies a critical question: what role do political identities play in modern workplaces, and under what conditions are these identities likely to influence collaboration among rank-and-file employees?

Political divisions at work matter for employers to the extent that they hinder interaction and collaboration, an increasingly important dimension of work in knowledge and service-based economies (Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024). But how workers navigate these divisions also matters because of what it reveals about political sorting and polarization in society more broadly. Workplaces have in fact been traditionally more socially and politically diverse than the composition of other social settings, including neighbourhoods and family networks (Mutz and Mondak, 2006). However, as sorting deepens across many domains of social life in democracies, understanding whether workers actively avoid political differences at work when given the opportunity speaks closely to the conditions under which cross-partisan contact, and the tolerance it fosters (Mutz, 2002; Amsalem, Merkley and

Loewen, 2022; Huckfeldt, Mendez and Osborn, 2004; Baldassarri and De Jong, 2025), can be sustained in modern democracies.

An emerging literature in political economy and political behaviour has shown that employers favour copartisans (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025) or discriminate against outpartisans (Gift and Gift, 2015) in hiring decisions, and that employees are often willing to accept lower wages to work for copartisan employers (McConnell et al., 2018). Yet, we know far less about how political considerations, when visible, shape workers' preferences for collaboration at work. Are employees truly less inclined to cooperate with colleagues who hold opposing political views, even when these are highly competent? And, if so, what kinds of workers are most likely to favour copartisan and avoid outpartisan colleagues and why? As political identities become increasingly intertwined with various dimensions of work, understanding how these identities affect collaboration in modern workplaces can shed light on the forces sustaining and reinforcing political polarization in advanced democracies (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; Wagner, 2021). Should workers prove substantially more willing to engage in workplace relationships with politically aligned colleagues, while avoiding those they politically disagree with, the potential of the workplace to promote political tolerance and perspective-taking (Mutz and Mondak, 2006; Mutz, 2006) would be severely undermined.

Existing studies investigating the influence of partisanship on nonpolitical domains have most frequently understood these political attributes as generating emotional attachments (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; Huber and Malhotra, 2017; McConnell et al., 2018) — a taste-based logic in which people simply prefer copartisans and dislike outpartisans regardless of context. From this view, political alignment has intrinsic utility, just as misalignment has intrinsic cost. In this study, however, we argue that in the workplace — a highly strategic and economically consequential setting — colleagues' political attributes are used as informational heuristics about interpersonal fit rather than operating exclusively as sources of expressive or emotional attachment.

We identify two complementary mechanisms supporting this view. First, workers use political identities as signals of non-cognitive and interpersonal traits, such as honesty and trustworthiness, that hard competence measures do not perfectly capture but are increasingly valued

in modern knowledge economies (Deming, 2017, 2022; Zhang, 2023). Second, concerned about the interpersonal friction that political misalignment might cause, workers turn to political identities as a heuristic for easier collaboration. Although we do not claim that political identities override competence considerations — which most workers have strong instrumental reasons to prioritize — we argue that these two heuristics explain why political preferences influence collaboration choices even when explicit information on different forms of competence is available.

To test this theoretical framework, we conducted an original survey in the United Kingdom in April 2024, including a conjoint experiment, with a sample of 2,000 employed citizens. We also gathered rarely available information on the frequency of political discussions at work, the perceived ideological homogeneity of individuals' current workplaces, and political sorting, which motivates our experimental setting and is important to understanding its real-world implications. Our conjoint experiment simulates a scenario in which respondents show their preference between two potential teammates for a project lasting around two years, with both teammates sharing equal responsibilities. To increase the stakes and address concerns about demand effects, we embed a high-stakes incentive vignette drawing on the concept of reward interdependence (Belmi and Pfeffer, 2018).[1] The profiles of these teammates vary along competence traits, partisan and Brexit preferences, whether they discuss politics at work, and sociodemographic characteristics. Thus, this conjoint design assesses whether political identities still influence teammate preferences when additional information potentially challenging respondents' prior assumptions is provided.

This study reveals that political identities shape workers' willingness to collaborate with teammates, even when information about two distinct forms of competence is available, but that competence considerations generally outweigh political ones. On average, workers strongly prefer highly competent colleagues regardless of their political views, with low performers being between 22% and 26% less likely to be preferred than high performers. Meanwhile, compared to a copartisan baseline, workers are on average 8% to 12% less willing to collaborate with outpartisans. At the same time, political identities interact with competence-related

[1] Half of respondents are informed that an excellent team performance on the hypothetical project will result in a 10% salary increase.

attributes in important ways: the appeal of highly competent outpartisans drops significantly — by around 10 percentage points — compared to equally competent copartisans, suggesting political considerations moderate but do not completely override competence considerations.

To understand which respondents turn more strongly to political attributes, we introduce a novel work-centred measure of affective polarization combining open-ended survey responses with closed-ended Likert scale items, which captures respondents' stereotypes against outpartisans on (mostly) interpersonal traits they prioritize in colleagues. Respondents with higher scores on this measure show the greatest aversion to working with outpartisans, and the measure predicts heterogeneity in conjoint responses more strongly than strength of party identification or interest in politics alone. Consistent with this heuristic logic, an additional survey of 2,000 respondents conducted with YouGov shows that respondents are more likely to rely on colleagues' political views when asked to choose "honest" colleagues than when selecting "competent" ones, suggesting that political views are perceived as more informative of interpersonal traits than hard skills.

Several pieces of evidence raise further questions about a pure taste-based logic. First, when analysing open-ended survey items, a comparatively larger share of respondents claim that political alignment is likely to reduce the chances of conflict, something they want to avoid at work. A second group explicitly engages in partisan stereotyping, arguing that political identities serve as a signal of shared values and traits. Second, in line with the heuristic logic, we find that workers penalize colleagues who discuss politics at work (especially when these are outpartisans) but do not reward copartisans discussing politics: if an emotionally driven taste-based logic was present, we should observe a premium for this combination of attributes. Third, going also against a purely taste-based account, we find that those with stronger party identification and who are more politically active do not weight political attributes in the conjoint more strongly than those with weaker party identities.

Our study speaks to different strands of research in political science. First, we contribute to the growing literature on how political identities permeate nonpolitical settings (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Gift and Gift, 2015; Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; Huber and Malhotra, 2017; McConnell et al., 2018; Kim and Pelc, 2024;

Dimant, 2024). In particular, this article shows that, when studying preferences on collaboration between pairs of hypothetical colleagues, competence considerations generally prevail over political ones, though political identities still play an important role. Moreover, our article contributes to a key debate about the underlying mechanism. Instead of a pure taste-based logic or a simple competence signal (Gift and Gift, 2015; Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025), we show that political identities act as heuristics for interpersonal fit, signalling non-cognitive traits (e.g., warmth, integrity) and anticipated conflict that competence measures do not capture.

Second, we contribute to a literature on the political implications of knowledge economies (Beramendi et al., 2015; Iversen and Soskice, 2020; Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024; Zollinger, 2024). While this literature has analysed how structural shifts reshape electoral landscapes and party systems, the implications of these transformations for how politics permeates everyday workplace dynamics remain largely unexplored. We show that the rising importance of relational and interpersonal skills (Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Deming, 2017; Zhang, 2023) creates the conditions under which political identities become consequential signals for interpersonal fit: since these skills are hard to observe directly, workers turn to political considerations as a proxy. Along these lines, we also show that colleagues' political leanings also shape other workers' willingness to engage in collaboration, even when competence information is available.

Lastly, our article speaks to an influential literature on the workplace as a site of political preference formation and network-based political socialization (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst, 2024; Mutz and Mondak, 2006; Burawoy, 1979; Finifter, 1974), as well as on the role of social networks in solidifying political attitudes (Zollinger and Attewell, 2025; De Jong and Kamphorst, 2025; Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025). While these studies show the influence of network composition and work task structures on political attitudes, our study takes a step back to show that workplace composition is itself partly endogenous to workers' preferences when given a choice. By doing so, we identify the micro-level mechanisms through which workers sort by political considerations. Furthermore, by identifying the individual-level mechanisms that drive workers' preferences for political homogeneity,

we contribute to an emerging literature on political sorting in labour markets, focused so far mainly on the US (Chinoy and Koenen, 2024; Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024). Contrary to narratives of pervasive sorting, we show that around 40% of workers perceive their workplace as politically diverse.

The article is structured as follows. First, we outline our theoretical framework and present our key hypotheses. Second, we describe our experimental design and provide descriptive evidence that motivates the use of a conjoint experiment. Third, we present the main findings, exploring the underlying mechanisms and heterogeneity across relevant subgroups of respondents. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for scholarly debates, as well as for broader public debates on political polarization and social divisiveness.

4.2 Literature Review

A growing body of research shows that political identities influence behaviour beyond the electoral arena, from dating and hiring to economic interactions (Iyengar et al., 2019; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; Huber and Malhotra, 2017; Gift and Gift, 2015; McConnell et al., 2018). In this framework, political alignment carries intrinsic utility, while misalignment carries intrinsic cost. However, this framework does not necessarily account for how political identities operate in strategic settings where material stakes and collaboration between peers are particularly important. For the reasons outlined below, the workplace is an ideal context to explore this.

4.2.1 The Changing Nature of Work

Despite this growing body of research on the spillover effects of political identities in non-electoral settings, the workplace remains a relatively understudied context in contemporary political science research. Existing research has examined the workplace as a site of political mobilization (Hertel-Fernandez, 2017), a source of political preference formation (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014), and through the lens of union membership and its effects on economic (Kim and Margalit, 2017) or racial attitudes (Frymer and Grumbach, 2021). However, despite

evidence from behavioural economics that political polarization may harm group cooperation (Dimant, 2024; Lane, Miller and Rodriguez, 2024; Robbett and Matthews, 2021), a deeper understanding of whether and how political identities permeate modern workplaces and shape collaboration among colleagues is lacking.

Recent transformations in the labour market and changing social norms make value alignment potentially more consequential for collaboration in the modern workplace. Knowledge and service sector jobs, which now represent a high share of total employment in advanced economies, are increasingly characterized by flatter organizational structures (Zhang, 2023) and a more interpersonal work logic (Oesch, 2006). In these contexts, non-cognitive skills — including trustworthiness, warmth, and socioemotional competence — are crucial for work performance. Where collaboration and interpersonal trust are essential, value and political alignment may strengthen trust while misalignment can undermine it (Carlin and Love, 2013, 2018), making political identities relevant for workplace cooperation.

At the same time, the visibility and salience of political identities in the workplace appear to be on the rise. Many employees, particularly those with tertiary education, now see their jobs as avenues for driving social change (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022), while workers increasingly feel comfortable bringing their personal values and political identities to work (Chen, 2022). Meanwhile, modern organizations emphasize their contributions to society beyond profit maximization and engage with social and political issues (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Barari, 2024), inadvertently contributing to changes in the social norms surrounding what is appropriate to discuss at work. A recent Raconteur survey conducted in the UK found that a majority of respondents now consider it appropriate to ask colleagues about their political preferences. Even when political views are not explicitly stated, people can often accurately infer others' political views from demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, education, and age (Titelman and Lauderdale, 2023).[2]

[2]Consistent with this, original data collected for this article show that only one worker in five never talks about politics at work (Table B1) and only one out of three reports not knowing the political views of most colleagues (Table B2).

4.2.2 How Politics Shapes Workplace Relationships

The few studies exploring how political identities permeate the workplace have focused on vertical workplace relationships, including hiring practices (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025; Gift and Gift, 2015) and workers' decisions about which employers to work for (McConnell et al., 2018). This line of research shows that employers tend to discriminate in favour of copartisans, even when this may undermine firm performance (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025), or against outpartisans (Gift and Gift, 2015) in hiring decisions, while employees are willing to earn less to work for copartisan employers (McConnell et al., 2018) and are more motivated and perform better when politically aligned with their employer (Spenkuch, Teso and Xu, 2023).

These studies have tentatively pointed to two different mechanisms. One explanation, rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979), is taste-based: political identities generate personal affinity, or an emotional attachment, towards aligned individuals and hostility and aversion toward misaligned ones (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021). A less common, alternative explanation argues that employers' preferences in favour of copartisans, or against outpartisans, might be instrumental (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025); that is, they may perceive that political alignment will result in more productive work outcomes, with the opposite being true for misalignment. In a survey conducted among business owners, Colonnelli, Neto and Teso (2025) show that respondents most commonly mentioned an instrumentalist mechanism (29.67%)[3] and a taste-based mechanism (21.95%)[4] as the most likely reasons, according to business owners themselves, for more frequently hiring employees with similar political views. Existing work, therefore, remains inconclusive about which mechanism is most likely to prevail and under what conditions.

We know far less about how political identities affect horizontal workplace relationships between colleagues and, in particular, preferences for collaboration, despite their growing importance in modern workplaces. A better understanding of these dynamics is crucial for a number of reasons. First, even if not all workers can select with whom they form teams at

[3]It is easier for a business owner and an employee to work productively together if they share the same political views."

[4]Some business owners do not like to have people with different political views around, even if this does not hinder performance at work."

work, an increasing number of workers, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors, are given autonomy to select project ideas and team members (Boss et al., 2023), making workers' preferences potentially consequential for workplace sorting. In fact, Frake, Hurst and Kagan (2024) find that workers with greater market power are more likely to sort into politically segregated workplaces. Second, understanding horizontal relationships is crucial for political scientists, given the traditional role of workplaces in bringing together socially and politically heterogeneous individuals, which contributes to political tolerance and perspective-taking (Mutz and Mondak, 2006; Mutz, 2006).

Most crucially, while previous work on how political alignment shapes hiring decisions has pointed to two relevant mechanisms, it remains unclear whether these mechanisms extend to horizontal peer relationships, and if so, under what conditions political signals are most consequential. Furthermore, existing research has often considered political preferences alone, without considering them together with other attributes, such as competence measures, that are highly relevant in strategic settings like the workplace. How do political signals interact with conventional competence attributes when both are known? Do workers trade off politics against performance, or do they weight both at the same time? And do political identities matter equally across all workplace contexts, or does their relevance depend significantly on occupation-specific considerations and the skills that are most valued in different contexts? In other words, the question of when, for whom, and through what mechanisms political identities shape collaboration preferences in modern workplaces remains unanswered.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

To answer these questions, we contrast two theoretical approaches. The first, rooted in the literature on affective polarization, adopts a "taste-based" view of political identities: people prefer to collaborate with co-partisans because they *like* them and *dislike* out-partisans. The second argues that people use partisan identities as a shortcut — a *heuristic* — for *some* individual traits: non-cognitive, interpersonal, and "emotional" skills. According to the taste-based account, workers will prefer politically aligned colleagues at work because they dislike having outpartisans around, regardless of how this affects collaboration at work. In the second

perspective, workers will avoid outpartisans because they believe them harder to collaborate productively with; instead, they expect politically aligned colleagues to have more similar working styles, be more honest and trustworthy.

We do not claim that these mechanisms are mutually exclusive. Social identity processes may generate baseline taste-based preferences for copartisans and against outpartisans that operate across all contexts, depending on the strength of party identification and individuals' political engagement. At the same time, political identities may also be used instrumentally as signals of workplace-relevant traits, with their perceived usefulness varying across occupation and workplace settings.

A key aim of this article is to show empirically that the weight assigned to political identities varies systematically with instrumental workplace considerations in ways that cannot be explained by a taste-based mechanism alone. This requires analyzing not only whether political identities matter, but when and for whom they matter most. In the following subsections, we introduce each theoretical framework and derive testable hypotheses that allow us to empirically differentiate between them.

Political Identities as a Matter of Taste

The first theoretical approach we consider builds on the literature on affective polarization, understood as "an emotional attachment to in-group partisans and hostility towards out-group partisans" (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021, p. 1477). From this perspective, political identities are "fixed" and unchangeable: people *like* copartisans and *dislike* outpartisans because they feel positively attached to the former group and negatively detached from the latter. Political identities signal whom to like and whom to dislike.

In this view, the weight given to political identities does not depend on objective or contextual factors. People may care more or less about political attitudes depending on individual or societal levels of affective polarization, but *all* individuals — net of their unique psychological traits — should care about political identities regardless of the type of work they do, the attributes they value in colleagues, or the workplace environment in which they operate. Most importantly, according to this framework, those with stronger partisan identification and more

politically engaged should show stronger preferences for copartisans and against outpartisans at work.

However, while we know that people value political identities when this information is available, recent literature (de Jong and Baldassarri, 2026) shows that they rarely think about them spontaneously when asked what they value in colleagues. This finding is difficult to reconcile with a purely affective mechanism: in times of high affective polarization (e.g., Wagner, 2021), if political identities carried strong emotional salience in workplace contexts, we would expect them to have a front-row seat in workers' minds. This pattern motivates our second theoretical framework, which treats political identities as a *heuristic*, a *cognitive* shortcut.

Political Identities as a Heuristic

The second theoretical approach centers on the idea that workers do not prefer collaborating with copartisans over outpartisans merely for "taste-based" reasons; rather, they use political identities as a signal to assess traits they value in colleagues and to secure smooth communications in the workplace, including conflict avoidance. From this perspective, political identities are "a kind of social radar or simplifying mechanism to reduce uncertainty about the world" (Kalin and Sambanis, 2018, p. 240). This logic aligns with the idea of statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972), where people turn to observable group characteristics as proxies for unobserved traits. However, in our theory, political identities signal interpersonal and relational skills instead of expected productivity alone.

In particular, we argue that political identities act as signals of non-cognitive traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, and likeability. Since some people view outpartisans as less likeable, honest, and trustworthy, workers use political alignment as a proxy for interpersonal competence, a relevant dimension that conventional performance measures do not fully capture. Similarly, since political misalignment will increase the perception of potential conflict, workers concerned about potential conflict should show a stronger preference for politically aligned teammates and against those misaligned ones. In our theory, partisanship and task-related competence (e.g., performance, reliability) are therefore complementary signals that workers

evaluate simultaneously.

Political Identities, Competence, and Workplace Collaboration

Because workplace collaboration is mainly task-oriented and workers face material incentives tied to performance, we expect conventional competence attributes to be the most significant determinant of teammate preferences. Work-related traits such as overall performance and reliability should therefore remain highly consequential in shaping teammate preferences when such information is available (Hinds et al., 2000; Casciaro and Lobo, 2008, 2015). All else equal, we expect workers to prefer competent over less competent colleagues.[5]

An important question is whether political identities continue to matter when explicit competence information is available. If partisanship is simply viewed as an imperfect proxy for competence in a low information environment, then offering individuals information on the competence of potential coworkers might eliminate the role of politics, or, at minimum, political views should be less influential when competence information is available than when it is not.

However, we expect that political identities will continue to influence preferences even when detailed competence information is available. From the taste-based view, ingroup favouritism and outgroup aversion should persist regardless of competence levels. Future colleagues' political views would operate as an additional "expressive" factor that workers value on top of task performance. From the heuristic perspective, political identities convey complementary information about an important dimension —non-cognitive, interpersonal skills— that is not perfectly captured by task competence. In other words, workers value colleagues along (at least) two different dimensions: task-related competence (e.g., performance, reliability, technical skills) and interpersonal competence (e.g., trustworthiness, warmth, conflict management). While conventional performance metrics signal the former, we expect political identities to be particularly useful, in people's minds, to signal the latter.

This complementarity means that political identities and competence should interact in shaping collaboration preferences. A highly competent outpartisan will be perceived as strong

[5]As a worker's level of competence is much less relevant in the context of outside work socialization, we expect competence considerations to be less relevant in the socialization outcome.

on task performance but potentially lacking in interpersonal traits, reducing the reward for high competence; meanwhile, a low-competent copartisan will be perceived as weak on task performance but potentially strong interpersonally, mitigating the penalty for low competence.

The Risks of Talking Politics at Work

The theoretical framework outlined so far has assumed that colleagues' political identities are broadly visible to other colleagues, or can be accurately inferred. This assumption reflects existing evidence[6] and is supported by our descriptive findings, which show that most workers talk about politics at work (see Table B1) and, consistently, are aware of their co-workers' political leanings (see Table B2). This assumption has two natural implications.

First, if frequent interpersonal interactions are increasingly necessary in modern workplaces, then bringing politics into the workplace, for instance by discussing politics at work, is likely to be negatively perceived because it might increase the risk of conflict. Second, if political alignment (or the lack of misalignment) signals a higher likelihood of smoother and more efficient work interactions, the negative effect of bringing politics to work may be even stronger when the co-worker initiating political discussions is an outpartisan. Indeed, an outpartisan who talks about politics not only increases the risk of workplace conflict, but also strengthens the visibility of what is perceived as a negative signal about their interpersonal traits.

The fact that, on the one hand, individuals favour copartisans and penalize outpartisans but, on the other, prefer colleagues who do not talk about politics at work, points to something crucial about our broader theory. In our theory, workers mostly care about colleagues' political views not as an end in itself, but as a signal of whether a teammate will be easy to collaborate with and whether they will work together productively. This speaks against a purely taste-based approach, which would predict that individuals might actually favour colleagues who engage in political conversations at work, especially when they are politically aligned.

The following section builds on this theoretical framework to formulate testable hypotheses

[6] A survey conducted by the Chartered Management Institute in March 2024 among 1,000 UK managers shows that 44% had witnessed disagreements over political views among colleagues. Among these, one in four reported that such disagreements led to growing tensions in meetings or discussions. More broadly, about 20% said that team cohesion and collaboration had been negatively affected by political disagreements.

and introduce theoretical expectations about the main heterogeneous treatment effects.[7]

4.4 Testable Hypotheses

H1: Political Identities and Work Collaboration Preferences

Regardless of whether individuals use political identities as signals of traits that matter in the workplace or simply prefer copartisans for taste-based reasons, we expect exposure to an outpartisan colleague to decrease the probability of selecting them as a teammate, while exposure to a copartisan will have a positive effect. We expect opinion-based identities such as Brexit identities to follow the same pattern (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021). Beyond workplace collaboration, we also examine preferences for socializing with colleagues outside the office, which serves as an important validity check allowing us to benchmark our main outcome against a context where political identities are likely to play a stronger role compared to conventional competence.

- **H1**: Copartisanship (outpartisanship) and shared (opposite) Brexit identities have a *positive* (*negative*) effect on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with, and a *positive* effect on the probability of preferring a colleague to socialize with outside the office.

H2: Political Identities Moderate the Influence of Competence on Collaboration Preferences

Second, building on our theoretical framework, we expect political identities to moderate the weight individuals assign to task-related competence (e,g., performance, reliability) when evaluating potential teammates. This is because political considerations shape individual perceptions of colleagues' interpersonal skills that are complementary to conventional task competence.

- **H2.A**: The positive effect of high competence on the probability of preferring a colleague as teammate is smaller if this hypothetical colleague is an outpartisan.

[7] All theoretical expectations were preregistered on *Open Science Framework*.

- **H2.B**: The negative effect of low competence on the probability of preferring a colleague as teammate is smaller if this hypothetical colleague is a copartisan.

H3: Talking Politics at Work

Third, we expect colleagues who openly discuss politics at work to be penalized, particularly when they are outpartisans. This is, on the one hand, because, on average, workers will be conflict avoidant, especially in a context where they need to work closely with a colleague for a prolonged period. This will be particularly the case when that colleague discussing politics at work is an outpartisan, since it increases the perceived risk of workplace conflict significantly.

- **H3.A**: Talking about politics at work has a negative effect on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with.
- **H3.B**: The negative effect of outpartisanship on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with is greater if this hypothetical colleague also talks about politics.

4.5 Empirical Framework

4.5.1 Case Selection and Sampling Strategy

We conduct a conjoint experiment embedded in an original survey of 2,000 UK citizens, which received approval from the appropriate Institutional Review Board. The survey was conducted between April 22nd and 26th, 2024, in partnership with More in Common, a non-profit organization focused on addressing polarization in several countries, including the UK. All respondents were actively employed at the time of the survey; therefore, students, unemployed or inactive individuals, self-employed workers, and retirees were excluded from our sample. We implemented demographic quotas computed on the general population to ensure sufficient power for subgroup analysis.[8]

A worker's choice about the kind of colleague she would like to have as a teammate or spend time with outside the office is shaped by a wide range of factors; it is, therefore, a

[8]We apply a quota for gender (male and female) x age group (below 35, 35-50, above 50) x education.

multidimensional decision making process. Conjoint experiments are precisely most useful "when researchers seek to test causal hypotheses about multidimensional preferences and decision making" (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014, pp. 27), which explains its increasing popularity among political scientists over the past decade.

Our experiment simulates a scenario in which respondents can state their preference between two potential teammates for a project lasting approximately two years, with equal responsibilities for both teammates. To address concerns about demand effects in our conjoint design and encourage respondents to think carefully over their colleague choice, we embed a high-stakes incentive vignette drawing on the concept of reward interdependence (Belmi and Pfeffer, 2018). Half of our sample is placed in a high reward interdependence condition, where they are informed that an excellent team performance on the hypothetical project will result in a 10% salary increase; the other half act as the control group and receive no information about salary incentives. By explicitly linking team success to a meaningful financial outcome, we increase the stakes of the decision, leading respondents to think carefully about the kind of colleague they choose. Moreover, by comparing the high-stakes condition with the control group, we can explore whether incentive structures impact the influence of political identities in the process of team formation. The high accuracy rate on attention checks (about 80% of respondents in the treatment condition correctly identified both the salary increase amount and its connection to team performance) suggests that most respondents internalized the high-stakes scenario. The full text read by respondents before completing the conjoint can be found in the supplementary materials (see Appendix 4.7.1).

We believe that the UK is a theoretically relevant case for a variety of reasons. First, while most studies on the role of political identities in shaping nonpolitical outcomes have focused on the United States, less is known about other democracies where political identities also influence people's perceptions of copartisans and outpartisans (or Leave and Remainers) on traits unrelated to politics (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021). Second, a few studies involving cross-country comparisons show that affective polarization is somehow more limited in the UK than in the US (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012; Boxell, Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2024). Additionally, the strength of party identification has weakened more significantly in the UK than

in the United States, leading to greater electoral volatility and vote-switching (Fieldhouse et al., 2021). These two factors make the UK a relatively harder case to test our theory compared to the United States. Finally, the emergence of "Leave" and "Remain" identities after the UK's EU referendum in 2016 allows us to compare how significant these identities are in the workplace compared to traditional partisan identities. Appendix Table B3 presents summary statistics for the main covariates of the survey.

4.5.2 Experimental Design

In the conjoint experiment, each respondent evaluates five pairs of hypothetical colleague' profiles whose eight attributes are randomized. After seeing each pair of profiles, respondents are asked two different questions in a forced-choice format. First, they are asked, "*Which colleague would you prefer to have on your team for your next project*". This question captures respondents' preferences for workplace cooperation. Then, they are asked, "*Which colleague would you prefer to go for coffee with, have a drink with, or attend a social event after work?*". This second question aims to capture preferences for socializing outside the office.

Our dependent variable is a binary outcome. Following common practice in the conjoint literature, we estimate AMCEs and MMs using a linear probability model, with standard errors clustered at the respondent level because each respondent evaluated five pairs of hypothetical teammates.[9] In the *Results* section, estimates of both average marginal component effects (AMCEs) and marginal means (MMs) are reported, along with estimates of the average component interaction effects (ACIEs) for the interaction between different conjoint attributes (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014). MMs are particularly useful for subgroup analyses as, unlike AMCEs, are not sensitive to baseline categories (Leeper, Hobolt and Tilley, 2020).

Table 1 summarizes the eight attributes that respondents observe in the conjoint profiles of hypothetical colleagues, along with their levels.[10] To avoid primacy and ordering effects, the order of attributes is randomized across respondents but remains consistent within each respon-

[9] We used the *R cregg* package developed by Leeper (2020).

[10] Table B3 presents summary statistics for the main covariates of the survey and Table B4 presents a summary of the frequency of each attribute-level.

dent, reducing the cognitive load. Workers' competence is captured by two different attributes that aim to capture different dimensions of competence: first, overall performance vis-à-vis other colleagues and, second, timely delivery.[11] Regarding colleagues' political leanings, two different attributes are included. First, partisan identity is signalled through information about the party supported.[12] by the hypothetical colleague. Given that at the time of the survey (April 2024) around 70% of the UK electorate congregated around either the Conservatives or Labour, only information about supporting either of these parties (or not supporting any party) is included; since these have dominated UK politics at least since the post-Second World War period, they have also generated stronger partisan identities and more explicit associations. In addition to this, given the polarizing effect of Brexit (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021), vote choice in the 2016 EU referendum is included. Lastly, an attribute on talking politics at work is also shown with two levels.

Table 1: Conjoint Table

Attribute	**Levels**
Competence (Performance)	Performed among the top half of employees in previous year Performed among the bottom half of employees in previous year
Competence (Reliability)	Always delivers work in time Does not always deliver work in time
Party Identification	Conservative supporter Labour supporter Does not support any political party
2016 EU Referendum Vote	Voted Leave in the 2016 EU referendum Voted Remain in the 2016 EU referendum Did not vote in the 2016 EU referendum
Bring Politics to the Workplace	Does not talk about politics at work Talks about politics at work
Gender	Male Female
Ethnicity	White Non-white
Age	30 45 60

In addition to these five attributes, information about colleagues' age, gender, and ethnicity is displayed to respondents for three reasons. First, these traits enhance the experiment's

[11]We do not have different theoretical expectations about these two attributes but we believe that each of them might resonate differently among various types of respondents depending on personality traits or specific types of workplace environments. For instance, some respondents might not want to work with a top performer due to concerns about their own underperformance while still wanting someone who delivers on time.

[12]Given low party membership in the UK, we chose to indicate party support rather than membership.

ecological validity[13], as they are easily observable by workers and impact social cooperation and discrimination (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004). Second, partisan identities are a more significant source of discrimination in hiring decisions than other traditional forms of discrimination (Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025), thus providing us with a benchmark for the impact of political identities. Lastly, including these traits ensures any potential correlations with competence or partisan identities do not bias our results. Appendix Figure B1 displays frequencies of conjoint features, showing that constraints imposed on ethnicity worked as expected, and Appendix Figure B2 shows that imbalance is not in issue.[14]

Our scenario aims to be realistic by asking respondents to state their preference between two potential colleagues. Although this scenario may not be realistic for all respondents[15], it relates to real-world situations where two colleagues are required to work together on a team, or where a colleague is involved in the hiring process for a team member of similar rank. Furthermore, respondents are informed that the two potential teammates already work at the company, making it possible that they have some information about them. In fact, although political preferences are not always publicly displayed at work, there is significant evidence suggesting that they are often known. In our own survey, 66% of respondents indicate awareness regarding the ideological homogeneity of their workplace, and approximately 50% of them discuss politics at work with a certain regularity.

The operationalization of the partisanship attribute, which contains three levels ("Outpartisan", "Copartisan", and "Other"), requires combining information from individual respondents' voting intentions and the specific profiles they encounter in the conjoint analysis. As profiles reflect support only for the Conservatives, Labour, or no party, decisions must be made about how to treat voters from smaller parties like the Liberal Democrats, Green Party, or Reform UK. A respondent is considered a copartisan if they would vote for Labour (Conservatives) and encounter a profile supporting Labour (Conservatives). In our main specification, respondents

[13] To ensure the credibility of the conjoint, which should resemble the current UK working-age population, we program the conjoint so that only 30% of the total profiles present a non-white co-worker.

[14] We compare a covariate (in this case, prosociality) across feature levels.

[15] While workers do not always choose their project teammates, management and social network researchers argue that "people often play either a direct or indirect role in choosing work partners" (Hinds et al., 2000, pp. 226). Many companies, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors, now encourage workers to be entrepreneurial, granting them autonomy to select project ideas and team members, enhancing innovation and performance (Boss et al., 2023).

voting for the Liberal Democrats, Green Party, or Scottish National Party are also considered copartisans when exposed to Labour profiles. Similarly, those voting for Reform UK are treated as copartisans when encountering Tory profiles.[16] The "Other" category includes respondents who would not vote, vote for parties other than the seven largest parties, are unsure, or encounter a profile with no party support.

We acknowledge that external validity is limited in this type of experiment, since in real-world decisions the information landscape might be more constraint and the weight assigned to any given attribute might be different once workers are embedded in existing relationships and organizational hierarchies. Our experiment makes both political preferences (e.g., partisan and Brexit preferences) and competence explicit, which generates an important trade-off: while it allows for causal identification in a high-information setting it does it at the cost of some realism. Explicitly disclosing colleagues' political views could therefore overstate their relevance compared to real workplaces, where this information may only be inferred more subtly. Furthermore, our design captures individuals' preferences prior to any actual interaction, since our theoretical interest is in how workers prioritize different dimensions when comparing between two potential colleagues. Another important question, which we do not tackle here, is what happens once collaboration begins, especially given that workers do not always have the choice of stopping working with a teammate. Contact theory would suggest that repeated interaction could reduce partisan aversion, but the opposite is also possible if forced cooperation between politically misaligned workers generates friction and reinforces preexisting prejudices.

4.6 Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Before presenting the experimental findings, we provide evidence of the credibility and external validity of our approach. First, Table B1 reports that over 50% of respondents report discussing politics at work either 'Often' or 'Sometimes'. This suggests that a high share of respondents

[16] In alternative specifications, we restrict the sample to Labour and Conservative supporters.

should be generally aware of their colleagues' political identities and that our experimental design is credible among respondents. Second, Table B2 shows that not only most respondents have some awareness of their workplace's political composition, but also that almost 40% of them are employed in heterogeneous political environments. This alleviates concerns about most workers being employed in politically homogeneous organizations. In fact, only about 12% of respondents work with colleagues who share their right- or left-wing views.[17]

Most importantly, we show that a significant share of workers actually perceive a link between political preferences and the attributes they value in colleagues. If workers did not believe political identities to be informative of valued workplace traits, they would be unlikely to use such identities as a relevant signal when deciding between two potential teammates. We therefore propose a categorical work-centred measure of affective polarization (AP) that captures the degree to which workers believe outpartisans are unlikely to hold the specific attribute they personally value most in colleagues. We return to this measure of work-centred AP to explore conjoint heterogeneity in the mechanisms section.

This measure is built in three steps. First, before being exposed to the conjoint experiment, respondents were asked in an open-ended format to name the single attribute they value most in an ideal colleague. As shown in Figure B4, honesty, kindness, loyalty, and trust are some of the most commonly mentioned qualities. Second, immediately after completing the conjoint task, respondents are reminded about the specific attribute they wrote and asked how likely Labour, Conservative, Remain, and Leave voters are to have this attribute.[18][19] We then use these responses, together with respondents' party preferences, to construct our work-centred AP measure.[20]

[17] See Appendix 4.7.4 for the political sorting measure we introduce.

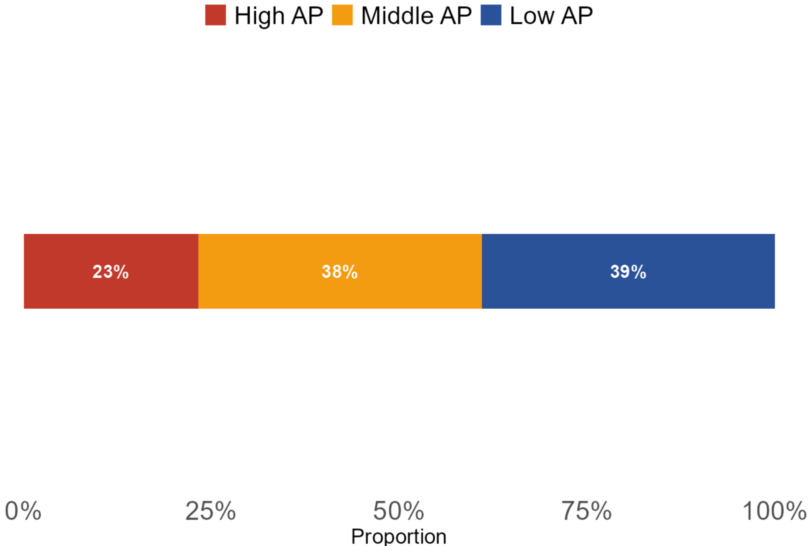
[18] A potential limitation of this measure is that the political stereotyping question is administered immediately after the conjoint task. However, the open-ended item asking respondents to name the attribute they value most in a colleague is collected before the conjoint, and the AP measure combines both components. Most importantly, the conjoint profiles do not offer information about interpersonal traits, so it is less likely that the conjoint task itself primed respondents' stereotypes on these dimensions.

[19] Figure B6 illustrates how different types of voters perceive individuals with similar or opposing political identities. For example, around 30% of Labour party supporters believe it is unlikely that a Conservative supporter possesses a highly desirable attribute, while only around 25% think it is likely.

[20] Left-leaning voters are categorized as "high AP" if they consider Conservative voters as unlikely or extremely unlikely to have the trait they value in colleagues, while right-leaning voters are classified as "high AP" if they believe Labour voters are unlikely or extremely unlikely to have that trait. Respondents who see outpartisans as neither likely nor unlikely to have that trait are classified as "middle AP", and those who believe outpartisans are likely to possess the trait are classified as "low AP." Respondents are only asked about

Figure 1 displays the resulting distribution of the measure, with 23% categorized as "high AP", 38% as "middle AP", and 39% as "low AP". Table B5 shows that those who identify with a party, self-identify as left-wing, are politically sorted, and are interested in politics are significantly more likely to fall into the "high AP" subset. However, as we will explain more in detail in Section 4.6.1, our work-centred AP measure captures something substantively distinctive from political interest and partisan identification.

Figure 1: Distribution of work-centred affective polarization values



Notes: Respondents are classified as "high AP" if they consider outpartisans unlikely or extremely unlikely to have the attribute they value most in colleagues; "middle AP" if they consider outpartisans neither likely nor unlikely to have it; and "low AP" if they consider outpartisans likely to have it. Left-leaning voters (Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, SNP) are classified with respect to their perceptions of Conservative voters; right-leaning voters (Conservative, Reform UK) with respect to their perceptions of Labour voters.

Following the same logic, we construct an equivalent measure of work-centred AP based on Brexit preferences. Figure B5 shows the resulting distribution of the Brexit-based, work-centered AP measure, with 19% categorized as "high AP", 53% as "middle AP", and 28% as "low AP".

whether Labour and Conservative voters are likely to have that highly valued trait because these are the two parties they observe in the conjoint profiles.

Findings from Conjoint Experiment

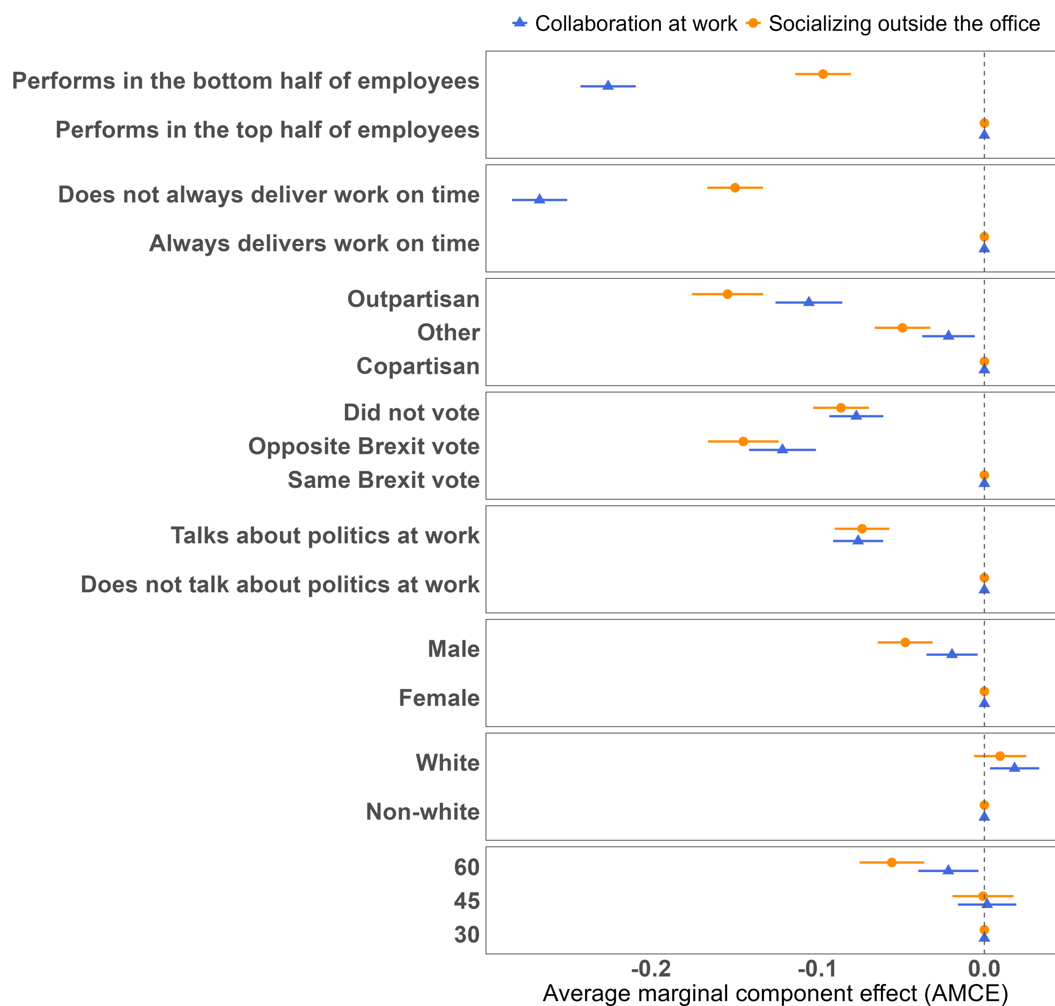
This section reports the results of the conjoint experiment. First, we show that, while competence considerations carry the greatest weight, colleagues' political views have a causal effect on collaboration preferences even when competence information is available. We then analyse how political considerations moderate the weight attached to competence attributes, and show that the relative importance of political consideration vis-à-vis competence attributes varies across contexts in ways consistent with an instrumental, heuristic logic. Finally, we show that colleagues who discuss politics at work are penalized, especially when they are outpartisans, which undermines a purely taste-based interpretation of our findings.

H1: Political Identities and Collaboration Preferences

Figure 2 displays the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) from the conjoint analysis. Two outcomes are presented: the main outcome ("collaboration at work"), which captures respondents' preferences for workplace cooperation, and a benchmarking outcome ("socializing outside the office"), which captures preferences for spending time with colleagues outside the workplace. The latter is used to evaluate whether the relative weight assigned to each attribute varies across contexts.[21]

[21] The expectation is that political considerations will carry greater weight when the instrumental demands of task performance are absent.

Figure 2: Average marginal component effect (AMCE)



Notes: Blue points represent estimates for the outcome about cooperation at work and orange points for the outcome about socializing outside the workplace.

The figure shows that less competent colleagues are penalized substantially compared to competent ones, regardless of the type of competence.[22] Compared to highly competent workers, less competent workers suffer an average penalty of between 22% (for the performance attribute) and 26% (for the timely delivery attribute). Competence considerations therefore heavily shape collaboration preferences when this information is available, in line with our theoretical expectations.

However, in line with Hypothesis 1, political considerations also influence collaboration preferences even when competence information is available, though more moderately. Relative

[22]As expected, competence considerations are less relevant when it comes to socializing together outside the office, even though high competence is still rewarded in this context. This might be explained by the fact that in people's judgments competence, intelligence, and likeability tend to be correlated Casciaro and Lobo (2008).

to the copartisan baseline, respondents show on average a reduced willingness to collaborate with outpartisans by 8 to 12 percentage points.[23]

However, in line with Hypothesis 1, political considerations also influence collaboration preferences even when competence information is available, though more moderately. Relative to the copartisan baseline, respondents show on average a reduced willingness to collaborate with outpartisans by 8 to 12 percentage points.[24]

We contextualize the size of these effects against existing evidence. Using a similar conjoint design in the US, where no task-performance attributes are included, de Jong and Baldassarri (2026) find that respondents are between 33% and 35% more likely to choose a strong copartisan over a strong outpartisan co-worker, and 18% and 19% more likely to choose a copartisan over a moderate outpartisan — in both cases, these are stronger than in our study. Bearing in mind the caution required when comparing two studies conducted in different countries, the weaker effects in our study are consistent with the interpretation that providing explicit competence information attenuates reliance on colleagues' political views as a signal for valued qualities in colleagues.

The negligible negative effect of the "Other" category, nearly indistinguishable from the copartisan baseline, suggests that aversion to outpartisans has a more pronounced impact than copartisan favouritism in the context of horizontal workplace relationships. This contradicts previous evidence on vertical workplace relationships – for instance, regarding employees' willingness to request a lower wage when working for a copartisan employer – that found a higher prevalence of ingroup favouritism (McConnell et al., 2018).

Lastly, in the context of horizontal workplace relations, we find, in line with Lane, Miller and Rodriguez (2024), that political identities tend to affect preferences for workplace cooperation more strongly than other identities, such as gender, ethnicity, and age.[25]

[23]Appendix Figures B6 and B7 show that the results are robust across different partisanship operationalizations.

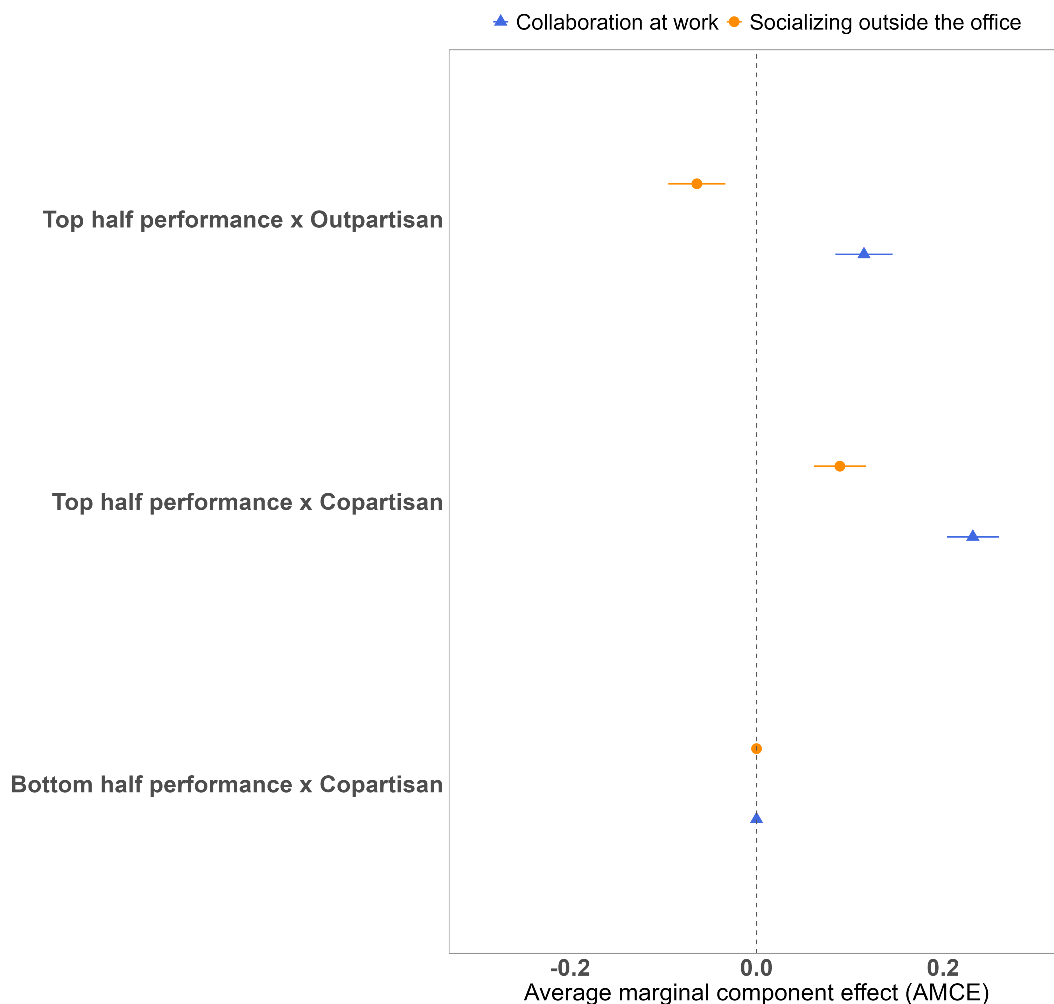
[24]As explained in Section 4.5.2, our operationalization classifies respondents into "copartisan", "outpartisan", and "other" categories following a left-right bloc alignment logic. All findings are robust to restricting the analysis to Labour and Conservative supporters (Appendix Figure B6) and to a continuous propensity-to-vote specification (Appendix Figure B7).

[25]Appendix Figures B8, B9, and B10 present the results of the Marginal Means analysis across respondents' gender, ethnicity, and age. The results indicate that female respondents have a slight preference for female profiles, coethnic profiles are not consistently favoured, and younger respondents tend to penalize older profiles. However, the magnitude of these is generally smaller than that of political alignment and misalignment.

H2: Political Considerations Moderate the Influence of Competence

To analyse the interaction between political attributes and competence, we calculate the average component interaction effect (ACIE), which captures the causal effect of specific combinations of political and competence attributes compared to a baseline. Hypothesis 2 predicts that political identities will moderate the positive effect of high competence and the negative effect of low competence on collaboration preferences.

Figure 3: Average component interaction effect (ACIE)



Notes: Blue points represent estimates for the outcome about cooperation at work and orange points for the outcome about socializing in a less professional setting.

Figure 3 aligns with this expectation. Relative to a low performance/copartisan baseline, the average premium in favour of a top performer is around ten percentage points lower for outpartisans (11%) than for copartisans (23%), indicating that political misalignment undermines the reward for high task performance. Appendix Figure B11 shows that interaction

between the reliability attribute and partisanship produces very similar results.[26] Since the ACIE may be sensitive to the specific choice of the baseline, Appendix Figure B14 replicates this analysis using marginal means, with equivalent results to those from Figure 3.

At the same time, Figure 3 shows that the average respondent remains unwilling to prioritize political alignment over competence: relative to a low-performing copartisan baseline, a top-performing outpartisan still receives around an 11% positive premium. Political identities therefore moderate the value of competence but do not override it. This same conclusion holds when competence and political dimensions are bundled together. Appendix Figure B15 combines performance, reliability, partisanship, and Brexit identity into single competence and political alignment bundle. We see that a high-competence politically misaligned colleague is clearly preferred over a low-competence politically aligned one for workplace collaboration.

The socialization outcome tells a different story in Figure 3, and one that suggests that context matters a great deal in how respondents assign weight to different conjoint attributes. When respondents are asked about the colleague they would prefer to attend a social event with after work, the pattern reverses: less competent copartisans are now preferred over highly competent outpartisans. This reversal is theoretically important. If political preferences were purely affective, the relative importance of political considerations vis-à-vis competence should remain broadly stable across contexts, since emotional attachments in favour of copartisans, or aversion towards outpartisans, should not depend on the nature of the interaction. We take this as evidence that respondents treat political identities as context-dependent signals and not just as a fixed preference. In addition, the fact that respondents clearly distinguish between the two different kinds of settings increases the internal validity of our experiment.

H3: Talking Politics at Work

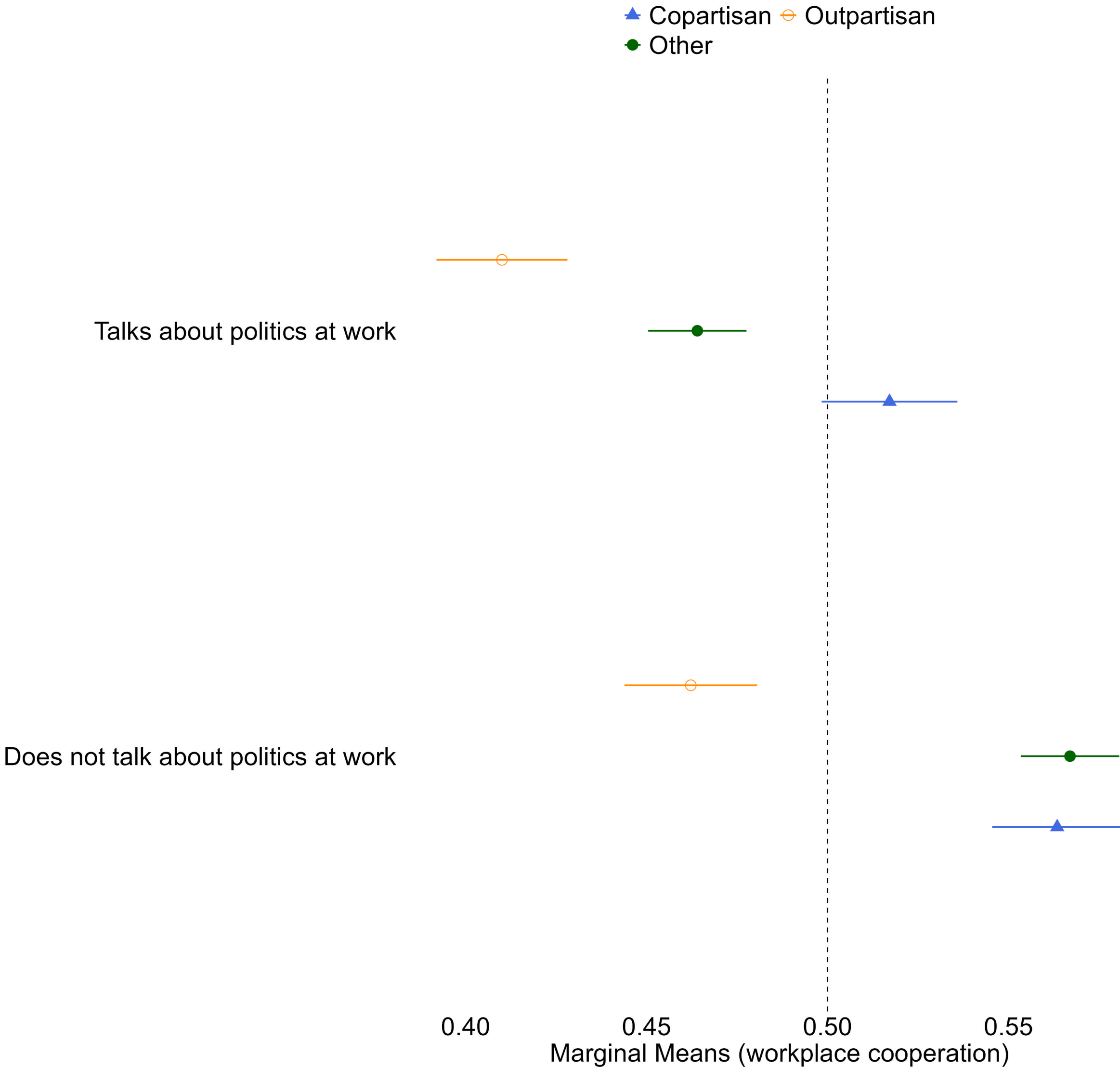
As predicted by H3.A, Figure 2 shows that talking about politics at work decreases the probability of preferring that colleague as a teammate. In line with H3.B, Figure 4 shows that this negative effect is particularly pronounced when the hypothetical profile is an outpartisan.

Most importantly, we do not observe a symmetric relationship when exposed to a copartisan

[26] Appendix Figures B12 and B13 show the equivalent interactions for the Brexit vote attribute.

who talks about politics at work: discussing politics does not lead to a positive premium when the colleague is politically aligned. This asymmetry is in part explained by the fact that the copartisan premium is itself more modest than the outpartisan aversion. At the same time, it raises questions about a purely expressive, taste-based account. If preferences for copartisans were mainly driven by positive emotional feelings, these should be even more pronounced when copartisans engage in political conversations at work. This is not, however, what we observe in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Marginal means, talking politics x partisanship



Notes: The figure displays the Marginal Means for the interactions between the talking about politics conjoint attribute and the partisanship conjoint attribute.

4.6.1 Why and For Whom Do Political Identities Shape Collaboration Preferences in the Workplace?

In this section, we explore why political identities matter in this setting, and for whom they matter most. As argued in our theoretical framework, exploring heterogeneity in our results is crucial for distinguishing between a taste-based and a heuristic interpretation. A taste-based explanation expects the weight attached to colleagues' political views to be mainly driven by the strength of partisan identity and general interest in politics, and to be relatively uniform across contexts. From the heuristic view, political identities should matter most for workers who strongly associate workplace-relevant traits, such as honesty or trustworthiness, with political views, and in contexts where these traits are most instrumentally relevant.

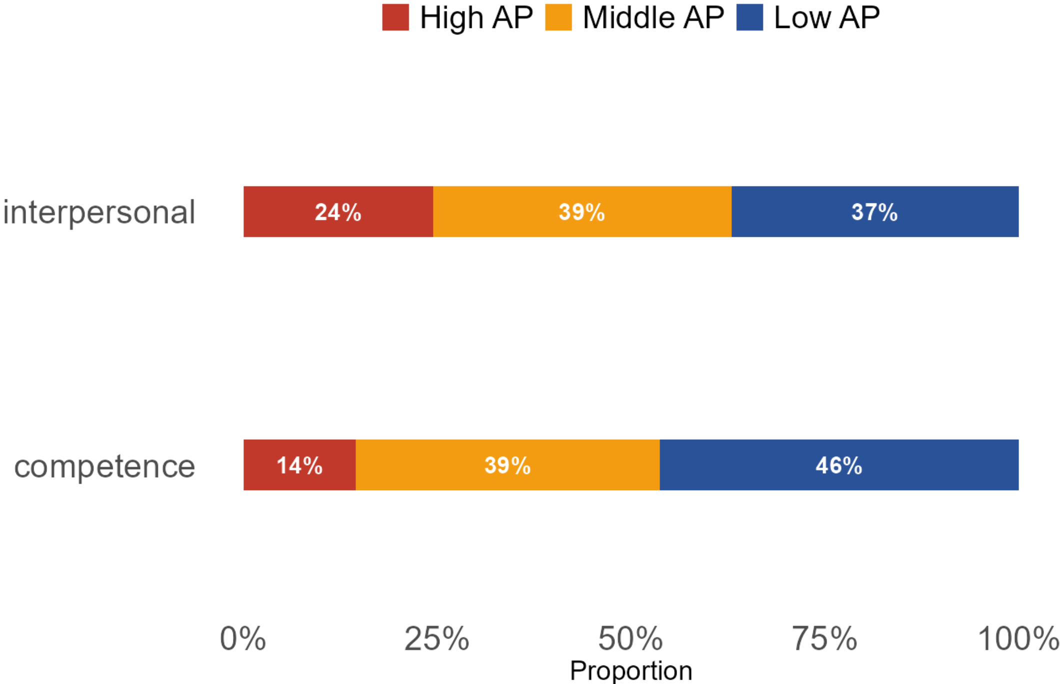
Political Identities as Useful Signals at Work

A key argument of this study is that individuals perceive political identities to be a stronger and more useful signal of social and interpersonal skills, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and warmth, than of hard competence skills, such as how analytical, knowledgable, or intelligent someone is. Three pieces of evidence point in favour of this claim.

First, should political identities be a stronger signal of interpersonal than competence traits, we should expect our work-centred measure of affective polarization (which measures the degree to which workers believe outpartisans are unlikely to hold the specific traits they themselves value most in a colleague) to be higher among those who spontaneously value interpersonal qualities than among those who value hard competence skills.[27] This is precisely what we observe in Figure 5. Workers with high affective polarization are overrepresented among those who value interpersonal traits (24%) relative to those who value competence traits (14%), while the opposite holds for low affective polarization workers (37% vs. 46%). This pattern is confirmed in a multinomial logistic regression framework with work-centred affective polarization as the outcome variable (see Appendix Figure B16), including relevant controls: workers with high affective polarization have twice the odds of valuing interpersonal over competence traits compared to low polarization respondents.

[27] See Appendix 4.7.2 for the classification procedure.

Figure 5: Distribution of work-centred AP across interpersonal and competence-valuing respondents



Second, to provide further evidence on this, we conducted an additional survey in March 2025 with 2,000 respondents in the UK in collaboration with YouGov. In this survey, one item measures the perceived usefulness of colleagues' political views to get honest — by far the most spontaneously valued colleague trait according to our main survey — or competent colleagues. Half of respondents were asked which of the following traits ("political views", "age", "nationality", and "gender") would be most important to them if they needed to choose a teammate who is *honest*. The other half instead was asked which of these traits they would rely on if they needed to choose a *competent* teammate. As shown in Table 2, 36.9% of respondents would rely on political views when selecting an honest colleague, compared to only 27.2% when choosing a competent one.[28] The 9.7% difference in the weight assigned to political views across the two conditions provides further evidence that political views are perceived as more informative of interpersonal trustworthiness than of task-relevant ability.[29]

[28] Age appears as the most relevant factor, which is unsurprising given its established role as a proxy for experience and reliability.

[29] Appendix Table B6 shows that younger individuals, left-wing voters, and those with higher levels of formal education are more likely to use political views as a signal for non-cognitive and social skills.

	Their age	Their political views	Their gender	Their nationality
Honesty	46.8%	36.9%	8.2%	8.1%
Competence	60.9%	27.2%	5.7%	6.2%

Table 2: Perceived importance of attributes for judging honesty and competence

Third, these two findings together generate a testable prediction about behaviour in the conjoint: the workers who are most likely to turn to colleagues' political identities as a heuristic should be those who (a) believe outpartisans lack the traits they value most, and (b) value interpersonal traits, since those are the traits for which political views are perceived as informative.

Figure 6 presents marginal means across the three levels of our work-centred AP measure for respondents who value interpersonal traits in colleagues (approximately 80% of the sample). Among high AP respondents, outpartisan profiles are only selected between 36% and 41% of the times, while less affectively polarized individuals select outpartisan profiles between 43% and 47% of the times. Similarly, for the copartisan attribute, high AP respondents are more likely to select copartisan teammates than the rest. Most crucially, high AP respondents penalize outpartisans and favour copartisans to the same degree as low performers and favour high performers; therefore, for these respondents, political identities carry as much relevant information as direct work performance evidence.[30][31] As a consequence, unlike what we demonstrated in Section 4.6 for the average respondent, high AP respondents do not prefer highly competent politically misaligned colleagues over less competent politically aligned colleagues (see Appendix Figure B18).

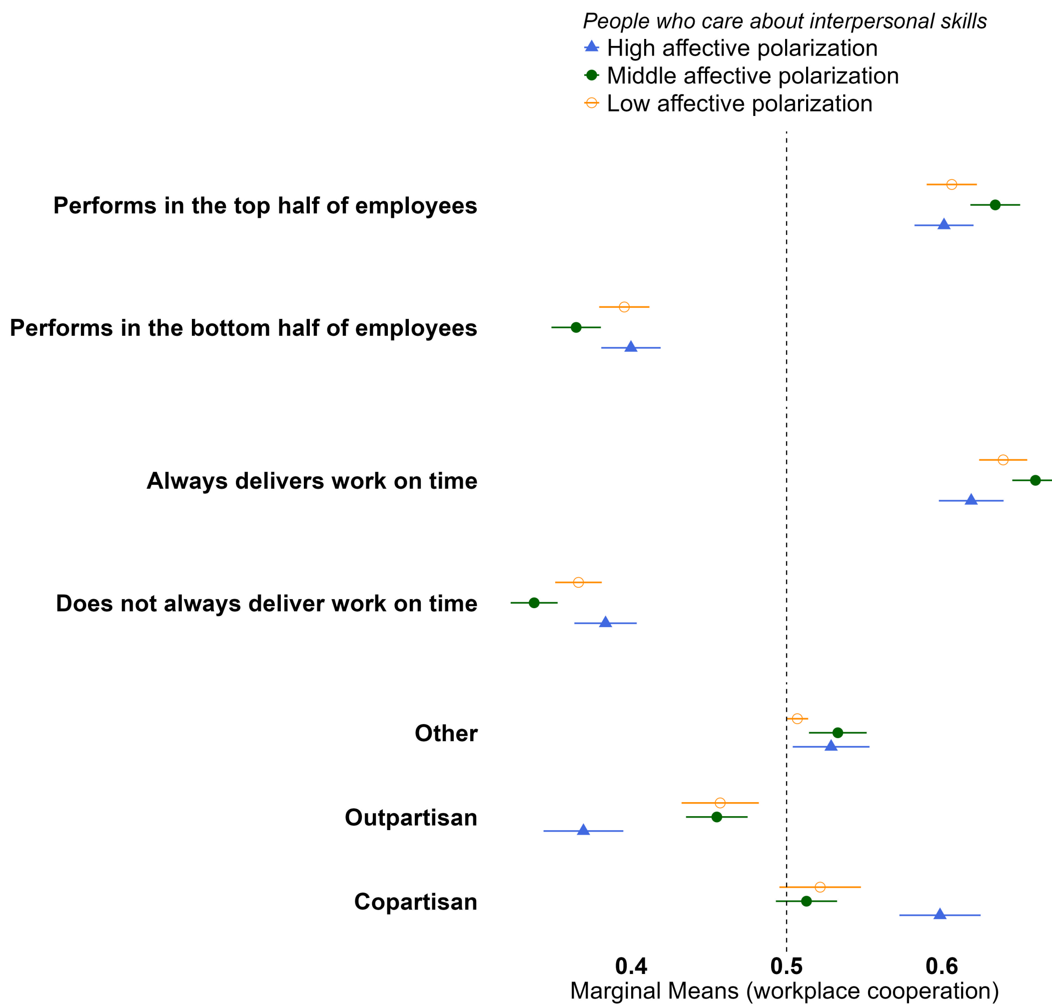
We acknowledge that, since high AP is defined by beliefs about outpartisans' traits, its correlation with outpartisan avoidance risks tautology. However, high AP appears to predict a stronger weighting of political attributes among those who value interpersonal traits, but not

[30] Our theory predicts this pattern should be weaker among workers who value hard competence traits, since political views are a more imperfect signal of those. We cannot test this robustly due to the small subsample of respondents who mention hard competence traits in the open-ended survey item, but Appendix Figure B17 shows that estimates are indeed noisier and attenuated in that group.

[31] Appendix Figure B19 replicates the analysis using Brexit-based AP. While outgroup aversion follows a similar pattern, ingroup favouritism among low Brexit AP respondents is substantially higher than among low party-based AP respondents. This suggests that Brexit identities generate a kind of ingroup favoritism that is mostly independent of perceptions about the link between Brexit preferences and having highly desired workplace traits, which is more consistent with a taste-based, affective warmth towards Brexit-aligned profiles.

as clearly among those who value hard competence traits (see Appendix Figure B17). If the measure just restated a general preference for copartisans and against outpartisans, it should predict conjoint behaviour similarly across both subgroups.

Figure 6: Conditional marginal means, by work-centred AP (respondents who value interpersonal traits in colleagues)



Notes: The figure displays the marginal means across respondents with different degrees of affective polarization on work-related attributes, restricted to those who value interpersonal traits in colleagues.

The modest outgroup aversion among low AP respondents could be interpreted in two ways. One possibility is that it reflects a residual taste-based logic: even those who do not think negatively of outpartisans along work relevant measures are slightly less favourable to them when it comes to cooperating at work based on warmth or affect. Second, as we explore more in detail later in this section, it may reflect a form of conflict avoidance reasoning: even

those without strong party-based stereotyping against outpartisans may believe that political differences generate workplace friction and should be therefore avoided.

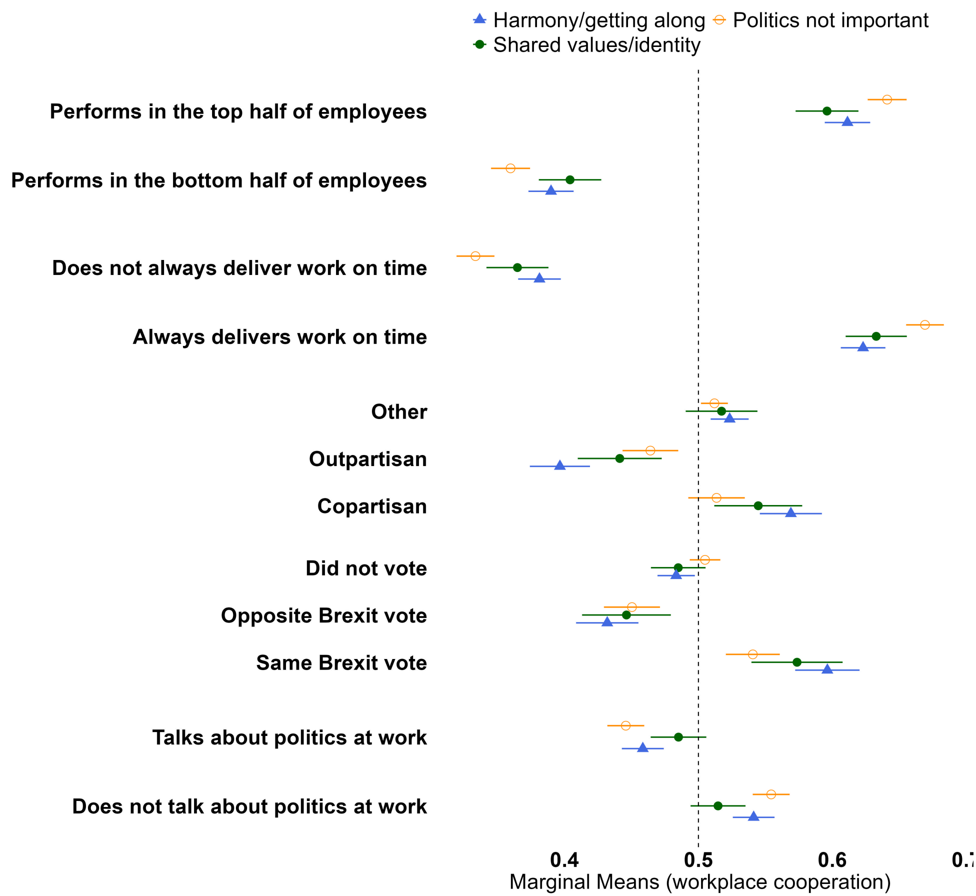
Evidence from Open-Ended Responses

After completing the conjoint experiment, respondents were asked to explain in their own words why working with politically aligned colleagues is important. Among those who provide meaningful responses (76.5% of the sample), 47.4% report that politics is not relevant for workplace cooperation, while 34.9% mention social harmony and conflict avoidance and 17.7% turn to a partisan stereotyping logic: political alignment is viewed as a signal of shared values, character, or worldview.[32] Figure 7 shows that those who mostly care about social harmony and avoiding conflict are the most likely to want to avoid outpartisan colleagues, as well as the most likely to favour Brexit-aligned colleagues.[33]

[32]See Appendix 4.7.3 for the classification procedure.

[33]High AP respondents are significantly more likely to cite harmony reasoning (36.6%) than Middle or Low AP respondents (both $\sim$23.7%), while the group that report not caring about colleagues' political preferences is mostly formed by Middle and Low AP workers (88.7%).

Figure 7: Conditional marginal means, by reasoning for political alignment at work



Notes: The figure displays the marginal means across respondents with different type of explanations about why political alignment with colleagues at work matters.

The harmony group frames political alignment in terms of the costs it avoids (e.g., social friction, awkwardness, and distraction from work): "being aligned politically will likely lead to less arguments, which will make people more productive." The values/identity group also explicitly focus on what political alignment signals or is likely to produce (e.g., shared morals, similar outlooks, higher compatibility): "party support is very telling of what a person actually supports and feels." This mirrors the statistical discrimination logic underpinning our AP measure. Instead, neither group is making explicit an unconditional affective warmth toward copartisans; sentences such as "It feels good to work with someone on the same side" or "I don't like people who vote differently from me" are largely absent. Appendix Table B7 displays representative examples from the open-ended responses by reasoning category.

Two underlying dimensions of these responses are of particular theoretical relevance in this

study. First, both the harmony and values/identity narratives are consequentialist: respondents consistently derive their preferences from what political alignment and misalignment are expected to produce (e.g., less friction or character compatibility), while taste-based narratives, mentioning things such as "I simply prefer working with people who share my politics" are largely absent. Second, both mechanisms (conflict anticipation and trait inference) operate on the interpersonal (and not competence-relevant) dimension of workplace interaction, which aligns with the YouGov survey evidence that political views are perceived as informative of honesty but comparatively less so of task ability.

The Limited Role of Partisan Strength and Political Engagement

A taste-based account would expect heterogeneity along different individual-level factors capturing the strength of partisan identity and expressive political engagement. For instance, workers who feel most strongly attached to their party are also most likely to experience more positive affect towards copartisans and negative affect toward outpartisans, and this should translate into giving greater weight to political attributes in the conjoint than those who do not identify with that party. However, Appendix Figure B20 shows that weak and strong partisans penalize outpartisan colleagues and favour copartisans in a similar way. The same holds for interest in politics and protest participation: political interest and protest participation do not significantly predict the weight given to political considerations in cooperation choices at work (Appendix Figure B21 and Appendix Figure B22).[34] These null results thus speak against the widespread relevance of a taste-based logic.

Robustness Checks

We validate these findings following Robinson and Duch (2024)'s machine learning approach to detect heterogeneous effects within our sample and calculate individual-level marginal effects (IMCEs) using a BART-estimated conjoint model.[35] Appendix Figure B23 displays the

[34] While party identification and political interest are associated with our work-centred AP measure (see Appendix Table B5), they do not independently moderate the importance of party preferences in the conjoint choice.

[35] Unlike the conditional AMCEs or Marginal Means introduced by Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014) and Leeper (2020), respectively, this method calculates conditional effects based on the complete set of individual characteristics for each subject included in the model. As a result, each respondent has a unique

distribution of IMCEs across individuals with high and low AP, consistently showing that individuals with high AP tend to prioritize copartisan colleagues over outpartisan ones to a greater extent. This approach also allows to consider simultaneously all the potential drivers of heterogeneity in the conjoint. Appendix Figures B24 and B25 display variable importance matrices derived from estimating separate random forest models for each attribute level, without and with work-centred AP included as a subject covariate respectively. When AP is included with the rest of the variables, it outweighs the rest as the most explanatory factor of who assigns greater weight to copartisan over outpartisan profiles, with political sorting remaining as a less important predictor; the predictive role of ideological self-placement declines most significantly.[36]

Appendix Figures B26, B27, B28, and B29 present pre-registered heterogeneity analyses by ideological self-placement,[37] occupation, political sorting, and field of education. Left-wing respondents attach greater importance to political considerations than right-wing ones; those in politically homogeneous environments show a stronger preference for copartisans and against outpartisans; those in sociocultural occupations — education, health, the arts, and public administration — are the most sceptical about teaming up with outpartisan colleagues, while business-oriented and routine workers show more moderate results; and those trained in social sciences (excluding business and economics), humanities, teaching, and health-related fields place greater weight on colleagues' partisanship, in line with Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst (2024)'s argument that interpersonal and communication skills play a more important role in these fields.

Lastly, we find that the salary incentive condition appears to influence respondents' stated reasoning: those in the treatment condition are more likely to mention performance attributes (53.2% vs. 45.6%) and less likely to mention political attributes (23.8% vs. 27.4%) when asked what drove their conjoint choices in an open-ended question after the conjoint experiment. However, as shown in Appendix Figure B30, the treatment does not significantly moderate

IMCE for every covariate and attribute level.

[36] This is unsurprising given the previously demonstrated overrepresentation of left-wing individuals among those with high levels of AP.

[37] The expectation about left-wing voters prioritizing more political considerations when selecting colleagues was not pre-registered.

the weight assigned to partisan attributes in the conjoint choices themselves, with outpartisan and copartisan marginal means producing similar values across treatment conditions.[38]

All in all, a coherent profile emerges across the different analyses conducted in this section. It is workers who believe outpartisans are unlikely to possess their most valued workplace traits (for a large share of respondents these are interpersonal traits, such as integrity and warmth) and believe that political misalignment might undermine social harmony at work (these two groups highly overlap empirically) who care most about colleagues' political identities when evaluating hypothetical future teammates. The fact that the strength of partisan identity and interest in politics do not shape respondents' willingness to collaborate at work raises questions about a pure taste-based account, although a residual taste-based baseline is visible. We recognize that the boundary between taste-based and heuristic mechanisms can be blurry. Anticipated conflict, for instance, could imply both an instrumental desire to avoid friction at work and an affective discomfort with outpartisans. Our claim is not that affective processes are absent, but that the pattern of heterogeneity is better explained by the heuristic framework than by a purely taste-based one.

4.7 Conclusions

Over the past decade, scholarly and media debates have raised concerns about political identities shaping different dimensions of social life, including economically and professionally consequential decisions, such as who to hire and who to work for. The leading explanation, rooted in the affective polarization literature, is that political identities generate an emotional attachment typical of ingroup/outgroup social identities. By studying preferences for collaboration in the workplace, this article points to a complementary explanation: in addition to activating an emotional response, individuals turn to these political identities more strategically (Kalin and Sambanis, 2018). They do so when they believe these provide useful information about interpersonal qualities and skills they value in colleagues, and that political misalignment will

[38]University-educated respondents are an exception: Figure B31 shows that salary incentive is associated with a small and borderline statistically significant copartisan premium, which suggests that highly educated workers may reason more strategically about the link between political alignment and collaborative outcomes when financial stakes are made explicit. The same pattern is not observed among low or middle education workers.

reduce the possibility of potential frictions and undermine collaboration. Secondly, our study shows that, despite pervasive accounts on how political considerations shape a growing number of social and economic decisions, in the context of preferences for workplace cooperation, political considerations play a weaker role than traditional competence and ability measures — when both are visible — and that, in fact, a large share of respondents do not believe that political alignment with colleagues is important at all.

Through the analysis of open-ended survey responses, we propose two explanations of why political alignment with colleagues is perceived as important. Around two-thirds of those who consider it important, emphasize conflict avoidance and social harmony, while the other third views political alignment as an informative signal of shared character, values, or worldview. Instead, a taste-based logic, according to which political alignment has intrinsic utility, is mostly absent in these responses. Similarly, we do not find any evidence that those with stronger partisan identities and who are more politically engaged attach a greater weight to political considerations in the conjoint, as the taste-based logic would have predicted. In addition, the fact that talking politics is not clearly rewarded even when the colleague is politically aligned also speaks against a taste-based logic; if the copartisan premium was driven by positive emotional feelings toward politically aligned colleagues, a copartisan who publicly expresses their political identity should be even more appealing.

More broadly, our study draws attention back to the workplace as a setting that has been mostly overlooked by political scientists in recent decades. Historically an influential site for both political mobilization and the formation of political preferences, the workplace has undergone significant transformations in the transition to knowledge-based economies. Yet our findings suggest these transformations may undermine the workplace as a politically heterogeneous setting. As relational and interpersonal skills become increasingly central to modern work, and as our findings show these are precisely the traits most open to partisan stereotyping, the conditions under which political identities shape workplace sorting may intensify, especially for individuals with greater market power and who have more freedom in terms of who to work with or who to work for (Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024).

On the other hand, the results suggest that a majority of respondents are willing to col-

laborate with highly competent colleagues despite not fully aligning with their political views or values. In fact, work-related information about a potential colleague's competence tends to matter more than their political views — though this is not the case when it comes to socializing outside the office, or among highly affectively polarized workers. Furthermore, our survey identifies that around 40% of workers in the sample perceive to work in politically heterogeneous workplaces, which offers an opportunity for interventions to reduce political stereotyping and affective polarization.

This article opens potential avenues for future research. While it focuses on hypothetical workers supporting traditional centre-left and centre-right parties, future studies should explore similar designs that include supporters of more radical parties, which may generate stronger levels of aversion. Second, our design relies on a hypothetical scenario and makes political preferences explicit in a way that may overstate their salience compared to real workplaces, where this information may be transmitted more subtly. It also does not account for the fact that some of these dynamics might be exacerbated or mitigated once collaboration actually begins. For instance, the intensity of pre-existing prejudices against outpartisans could be reduced when colleagues with opposing political identities are required to collaborate and interact, although the opposite effect is also possible. To address both limitations, future research should ideally involve field experiments within firms across different sectors to understand how real employees in different workplace structures respond to similar scenarios.

While our findings may offer some optimism for those concerned about the dominance of political identities in many dimensions of social life, or the high prevalence of political sorting, the broader picture offers a more cautionary outlook. The workplace has long been recognised as one of the few settings where individuals with different political views are likely to interact and collaborate (Mutz and Mondak, 2006). This exposure matters for broader societal and political outcomes, since it fosters empathy, perspective-taking, and can help reduce partisan prejudices. Our findings suggest that this role may be under pressure under some conditions. When workers actively avoid outpartisan colleagues and when those already embedded in homogeneous workplaces weight political alignment most strongly, a self-reinforcing dynamic emerges with negative implications for liberal democracies: once initiated, political

sorting at work may become self-perpetuating, undermining both the economic benefits of political diversity (Evans et al., 2024) and the cross-partisan contact necessary to mitigate polarization. This becomes particularly relevant given recent evidence pointing to the growing social homogeneity of workplaces in the knowledge economy (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025), which may translate into increased political sorting (Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024; Chinoy and Koenen, 2024). As one of the last social institutions where exposure to political differences is most likely to emerge, and given how much time we still spend at work, the ability to maintain this diversity may matter more for social cohesion and democratic health than the scarce attention of the scholarly literature has so far suggested.

Appendix B

Integrations to the Preregistered Pre-Analysis Plan

This section integrates the preregistered pre-analysis plan by illustrating the article's minor deviations from it

- The PAP separates hypotheses **H1.A** and **H1.B** on the effect of competence and political identities. The article combines them in a single hypothesis (**H1**).
- The PAP presents a hypothesis on the influence of the reward interdependence prime (**H4.A** and **H4.B**). We do not find support for these expectations, as shown in Figure B30. In the main text of the article, the section presenting the robustness checks further elaborates on the importance of the reward interdependence prime on highly educated respondents (Figure B31).
- The section presenting the robustness checks and the Appendix report the additional heterogeneous treatment effects analyses that were preregistered and were not presented in the main text of the article. In particular, by education level (Figure B29), prosocial motivation (Figure B32), workplace type (Figure B27), and level of political homogeneity in the workplace (see Figure B28 and Figure B33 for two different measures of political homogeneity in the workplace).
- Two additional pre-registered heterogeneity analyses are not included in the article but are included in the Appendix report. The first one reports heterogeneity by reported levels of collaboration at work (Figure B34) and the second one by expectations about friendship formation at work (Figure B35).
- While the specific work-centred affective polarization measure was developed after pre-registration, the underlying theoretical expectation was already present in the preregistered theoretical framework and mechanisms. For instance, the PAP indicates that "we will examine the HTEs for respondents who particularly value personality-related characteristics in colleagues", which is aligned with the the interpersonal/competence attribute split. The measure operationalises this preregistered expectation.

4.7.1 Vignette

- **High reward interdependence vignette**: "Imagine that you work for a company where **significant salary increases** are possible at the end of the year. Your boss has assigned you to work on a crucial new project and **wants your opinion about which other colleague should join you on this project**. There are two potential candidates that already work in the company. This project will last around **2 years**, and you and the chosen colleague will be the only ones working on it. You will have **equal responsibilities**. Your boss has suggested that an **excellent team performance** on this project will lead to a **10% salary increase**. Consequently, if your team performance falls short, it could decrease your chances of receiving a salary raise. In the following task, you will be presented several pairs of colleagues and after each pair you will be asked some questions."

- **No reward interdependence vignette**: "Imagine that you work for a company. Your boss has assigned you to work on a crucial new project and **wants your opinion about which other colleague should join you on this project**. There are two potential candidates that already work in the company. This project will last around **2 years**, and you and the chosen colleague will be the only ones working on it. You will have **equal responsibilities**. In the following task, you will be presented several pairs of colleagues and after each pair you will be asked some questions."

4.7.2 Classification of Valued Colleague Attributes

Respondents' open-ended answers to the question "What single attribute do you value the most in an ideal colleague?" are classified into three categories using keyword matching on the lowercased, trimmed responses:

- **Integrity**: honesty, trust, loyalty, respect, fairness, accountability, sincerity, and related terms (e.g., "honest", "trustworthy", "loyal", "principled").

- **Warmth**: friendliness, caring, empathy, humour, openness, cooperation, social compatibility, and related terms (e.g., "kind", "supportive", "team player", "easy-going").

- **Competence**: work ethic, intelligence, skill, dedication, analytical ability, and related terms (e.g., "hardworking", "knowledgeable", "efficient", "creative").

For the main analyses, integrity and warmth are combined into a single interpersonal category, resulting in a binary split between interpersonal and competence traits. Responses that could not be classified (e.g., off-topic answers) were excluded from the analysis. Classification was performed using predefined keyword dictionaries; the full list of keywords and the R code are available in the replication materials.

4.7.3 Classification of Open-Ended Responses on Why Colleagues' Political Views are Important

Respondents were asked after the conjoint experiment to explain in their own words why working with politically aligned colleagues is important. Responses were classified into three substantive categories plus a residual category:

- **Harmony/conflict avoidance**: references to avoiding arguments, tension, friction, awkwardness, or stress; desire for a peaceful or comfortable work environment (e.g., "It saves having arguments", "Less likely to be any conflict or uneasy situations").
- **Shared values/identity**: references to shared character, worldview, moral alignment, or political views as a signal of personality traits (e.g., "It shows we hold the same values", "Party support is very telling of what a person actually supports and feels").
- **Tolerant/politics not important**: explicit statements that political alignment is irrelevant, that competence matters more, or that the respondent is indifferent to colleagues' political views (e.g., "I'm not bothered. As long as they perform in the workplace", "It doesn't really matter at work").
- **Other**: vague, missing, or unclassifiable responses, excluded from the substantive analysis.

The final distribution is: harmony (534 responses, 26.7%), values/identity (271, 13.6%), tolerant (724, 36.2%), and other (471, 23.6%). The full keyword lists and the R code implementing this classification are available in the replication materials.

4.7.4 Tables

Descriptive Analysis

Measure: Political Sorting – To further explore the extent of political sorting in our sample, respondents who report working in politically homogeneous workplaces are asked a follow-up question about the exact ideological make-up of their workplace: 34% report working with a majority of left-wing colleagues, 18% with a majority of right-wing colleagues, and about 48% indicate that most of their colleagues are centrists. We classify left- and right-wing workers who perceive to work mainly with left- and right-wing colleagues respectively as politically sorted. According to this measure, only about 12% of respondents work with colleagues who share their right- or left-wing views. However, this figure rises to 18% if we include centrist respondents.

Measure: Workplace AP – Our measure of workplace AP is built in three steps. First, before being exposed to the conjoint experiment, respondents were asked in an open-ended format to name the single attribute they value most in an ideal colleague. Second, immediately after completing the conjoint task, respondents are reminded about the specific attribute they wrote and asked how likely Labour, Conservative, Remain, and Leave voters are to have this attribute. This measure allows to document the intensity of affective polarization in relation to work-related attributes at the individual level. Around 30% of Labour party supporters believe that it is unlikely that a Conservative supporter possesses a highly desirable attribute, while only around 25% think it is likely. Third, we use these responses to construct our work-centered AP measure. Left-leaning voters are categorized as "high AP" if they consider Conservative voters as unlikely or extremely unlikely to have the trait they value in colleagues, while right-leaning voters are classified as "high AP" if they believe Labour voters are unlikely or extremely unlikely to have that trait. Respondents who see outpartisans as neither likely nor unlikely to have that trait are classified as "middle AP", and those who believe outpartisans

are likely to possess the trait are classified as “low AP.” Respondents are only asked about whether Labour and Conservative voters are likely to have that highly valued trait because these are the two parties they observe in the conjoint profiles. Following the same logic, we construct an equivalent measure of work-centred AP based on Brexit preferences. Figure B5 shows the resulting distribution of the Brexit-based, work-centered AP measure, with 19% categorized as “high AP”, 53% as "middle AP”, and 28% as “low AP”.

Table B1: Frequency of political discussions at work

Frequency of political discussions	**%**
Often	13.25
Sometimes	41
Rarely	29.9
Never	15.85

Table B2: Perception of political diversity in the workplace

Perception of political diversity in the workplace	**%**
My colleagues are fairly diverse politically	38.25
My colleagues are fairly similar to each other politically	28.05
I am not aware of the political views of most of my colleagues	33.4

Sample Statistics

Table B3: Descriptive statistics of main covariates

Covariate	Levels	Relative Proportion
Educational attainment	High education	0.15
Educational attainment	Low education	0.40
Educational attainment	Middle education	0.45
Ethnicity	Asian / Asian British	0.06
Ethnicity	Black / Black British	0.07
Ethnicity	Mixed descent (e.g. White Asian, White Black)	0.02
Ethnicity	Other	0.01
Ethnicity	Prefer not to say	0.01
Ethnicity	White (British/Irish/Other)	0.83
Firm Size	1-49	0.38
Firm Size	50-499	0.34
Firm Size	500 or more	0.19
Gender	Female	0.51
Gender	Male	0.49
Supervisory role	No	0.54
Supervisory role	Yes	0.46
Feels close to a party	No	0.39
Feels close to a party	Yes	0.61
Perceived workplace homogeneity	I am not aware of the political views of most of my colleagues	0.33
Perceived workplace homogeneity	My colleagues are fairly diverse politically	0.39
Perceived workplace homogeneity	My colleagues are fairly similar to each other politically	0.28
Interest in politics	Not interested at all	0.06
Interest in politics	Not that interested	0.16
Interest in politics	Quite interested	0.43
Interest in politics	Very interested	0.34
Discuss politics at work	Never	0.16
Discuss politics at work	Often	0.13
Discuss politics at work	Rarely	0.30
Discuss politics at work	Sometimes	0.41
Vote intention	Another party	0.02
Vote intention	Conservative	0.22
Vote intention	Don't know	0.09
Vote intention	I would not vote	0.06
Vote intention	Labour	0.38
Vote intention	Liberal Democrat	0.07
Vote intention	Plaid Cymru	0.00
Vote intention	Reform UK	0.09
Vote intention	Scottish National Party (SNP)	0.02
Vote intention	The Green Party	0.05
Age group	18-24	0.12
Age group	25-34	0.18
Age group	35-44	0.16
Age group	45-54	0.19
Age group	55-64	0.17
Age group	65+	0.17
Importance of collaboration	Not important at all	0.03
Importance of collaboration	Not very important	0.07
Importance of collaboration	Rather important	0.41
Importance of collaboration	Very important	0.48
Ideological self-placement	Centre	0.32
Ideological self-placement	Left-wing	0.32
Ideological self-placement	Right-wing	0.35
Political sorting	No	0.85
Political sorting	Yes	0.15
Low prosociality	Good pay (6-10)	0.54
Middle prosociality	Middle (5)	0.22
High prosociality	Positive societal impact (0-4)	0.24
Working from home	Every day	0.14
Working from home	Never	0.47
Working from home	Once a month	0.05
Working from home	Several times a month	0.10
Working from home	Several times a week	0.24

Table B4: Conjoint attributes (summary statistics)

Attribute	**Level**	**N**	**Relative Proportion**
Party Identification	Does not support any party	6685	0.33
Party Identification	Labour supporter	6656	0.33
Party Identification	Tory supporter	6659	0.33
Competence (Performance)	Performs in the bottom half of employees	10021	0.50
Competence (Performance)	Performs in the top half of employees	9979	0.50
Competence (Reliability)	Always delivers work on time	9921	0.50
Competence (Reliability)	Does not always deliver work on time	10079	0.50
Bring Politics to the Workplace	Does not talk about politics at work	10013	0.50
Bring Politics to the Workplace	Talks about politics at work	9987	0.50
Ethnicity	Non-white	8918	0.45
Ethnicity	White	11082	0.55
Gender	Female	10007	0.50
Gender	Male	9993	0.50
Age	30	6807	0.34
Age	45	6555	0.33
Age	60	6638	0.33

Findings

Table B5: Multinomial logistic regression results for affective polarization

	Dependent variable: Affective polarization (ref. level = Low AP)					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6: Full
Sociocultural occupations (High AP)	0.26·	0.22·	0.20	0.16	0.15	0.23
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Sociocultural occupations (Middle AP)	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.03
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Business occupations (High AP)	0.22	0.22	0.10	0.11	0.04	0.13
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Business occupations (Middle AP)	0.24·	0.25·	0.18	0.17	0.12	0.15
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Political sorting (High AP)		0.67***	0.48**	0.34*	0.27·	0.30·
		(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Political sorting (Middle AP)		−0.13	−0.24	−0.33*	−0.38*	−0.36*
		(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Feels close to a party (High AP)			1.10***	1.08***	0.88***	0.89***
			(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Feels close to a party (Middle AP)			0.55***	0.53***	0.40***	0.40***
			(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Left-wing (High AP)				0.83***	0.87***	0.88***
				(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Left-wing (Middle AP)				0.46***	0.49***	0.51***
				(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Centrist (High AP)				−0.03	0.07	0.07
				(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Centrist (Middle AP)				−0.06	0.01	0.01
				(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Interested in politics (High AP)					0.92***	0.93***
					(0.17)	(0.18)
Interested in politics (Middle AP)					0.54***	0.53***
					(0.13)	(0.13)
Education: High (High AP)						−0.39**
						(0.13)
Education: High (Middle AP)						−0.15
						(0.11)
Age 25-34 (High AP)						0.26
						(0.23)
Age 25-34 (Middle AP)						0.25
						(0.20)
Age 35-44 (High AP)						0.06
						(0.24)
Age 35-44 (Middle AP)						0.32
						(0.20)
Age 45-54 (High AP)						0.13
						(0.23)
Age 45-54 (Middle AP)						0.23
						(0.19)
Age 55-64 (High AP)						0.09
						(0.23)
Age 55-64 (Middle AP)						0.15
						(0.20)
Age 65+ (High AP)						0.17
						(0.23)
Age 65+ (Middle AP)						0.34·
						(0.20)
Male (High AP)						0.13
						(0.13)
Male (Middle AP)						0.02
						(0.11)
Intercept (High AP)	−0.63***	−0.74***	−1.38***	−1.60***	−2.22***	−2.24***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.26)
Intercept (Middle AP)	−0.09	−0.07	−0.35***	−0.43***	−0.79***	−0.94***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.21)
AIC	4301.85	4276.58	4202.94	4166.91	4134.96	4139.13
Num. obs.	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	1995

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table B6: Logistic regression results for honesty

	Dependent variable: Political views			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	−1.212***	−1.582***	0.071	−0.724
	(0.161)	(0.183)	(0.480)	(0.517)
Conservative	-	-	-	-
Green	1.654***	1.314***	1.083***	1.051**
	(0.295)	(0.305)	(0.315)	(0.320)
Labour	1.029***	0.741***	0.559**	0.539*
	(0.194)	(0.204)	(0.213)	(0.216)
Liberal Democrat	0.965***	0.681**	0.486+	0.410
	(0.248)	(0.257)	(0.266)	(0.269)
SNP	1.107*	0.769	0.639	0.498
	(0.487)	(0.497)	(0.511)	(0.519)
Reform UK	0.318	0.442+	0.299	0.288
	(0.255)	(0.262)	(0.269)	(0.272)
Voted Leave		-	-	-
Voted Remain		0.856***	0.780***	0.610***
		(0.173)	(0.177)	(0.184)
Did not vote		0.730**	0.036	0.037
		(0.232)	(0.291)	(0.296)
18-24			-	-
25-35			−0.855+	−0.832+
			(0.442)	(0.446)
36-45			−1.238**	−1.165*
			(0.452)	(0.457)
46-55			−1.206**	−1.045*
			(0.456)	(0.463)
56-65			−1.662***	−1.377**
			(0.461)	(0.470)
66-75			−1.934***	−1.733***
			(0.462)	(0.467)
76+			−1.553**	−1.274*
			(0.492)	(0.500)
Low education				-
Middle education				0.825***
				(0.214)
High education				1.040***
				(0.223)
Num.Obs.	942	942	942	942
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

Table B7: Representative open-ended responses by reasoning category

Category	Representative responses
Harmony/ conflict avoidance	"Being aligned politically will likely lead to less arguments, which will obviously by default make people more productive."
	"Less likely to be any conflict or uneasy situations."
	"I do not want to argue at work but concentrate on completing the tasks."
	"Reduces tension. Avoids me having to accommodate their views to keep the peace."
	"It makes life much easier and comfortable. Working with like-minded people is far easier."
	"If everyone is on the same page, less conflict and more work done."
	"Working with like-minded individuals can enhance both professional productivity and personal satisfaction."
	"We are likely to share similar goals which makes working together easier."
Shared values/ identity	"It shows we hold the same values and therefore quite possibly have very similar life goals and aspirations."
	"Its nice to know someone else has thought about an issue, and come to the same conclusion."
	"Sharing the same political ideology with a colleague shows we are like-minded."
	"It can sometimes show the person who they really are."
	"It means we can have a similar ethos on social justice."
	"They would understand how I relate to things outside of the workspace."
	"Tend to mean that we have similar things in common outside of politics too."
	"As I know we have the same values and ethics."
Politics not important	"That is not something I think about when I am with my colleagues."
	"I'm not bothered. As long as they perform in the workplace."
	"I don't mind if people don't have the same political views as me as long as they aren't extremist views."
	"It doesn't really matter at work."
	"It isn't as long as they treat everyone respectfully and aren't aggressive about their views."
	"It isn't that important for me, as long as we don't get into confrontations about it."
	"Working with colleagues who share the same political views as me isn't important to me, it's a bonus but not important."
	"I put it's not important as everyone is entitled to their own opinion."

Notes: Responses are reproduced verbatim from the open-ended survey item asking respondents why they prefer politically aligned colleagues at work. Minor spelling errors have been corrected for readability.

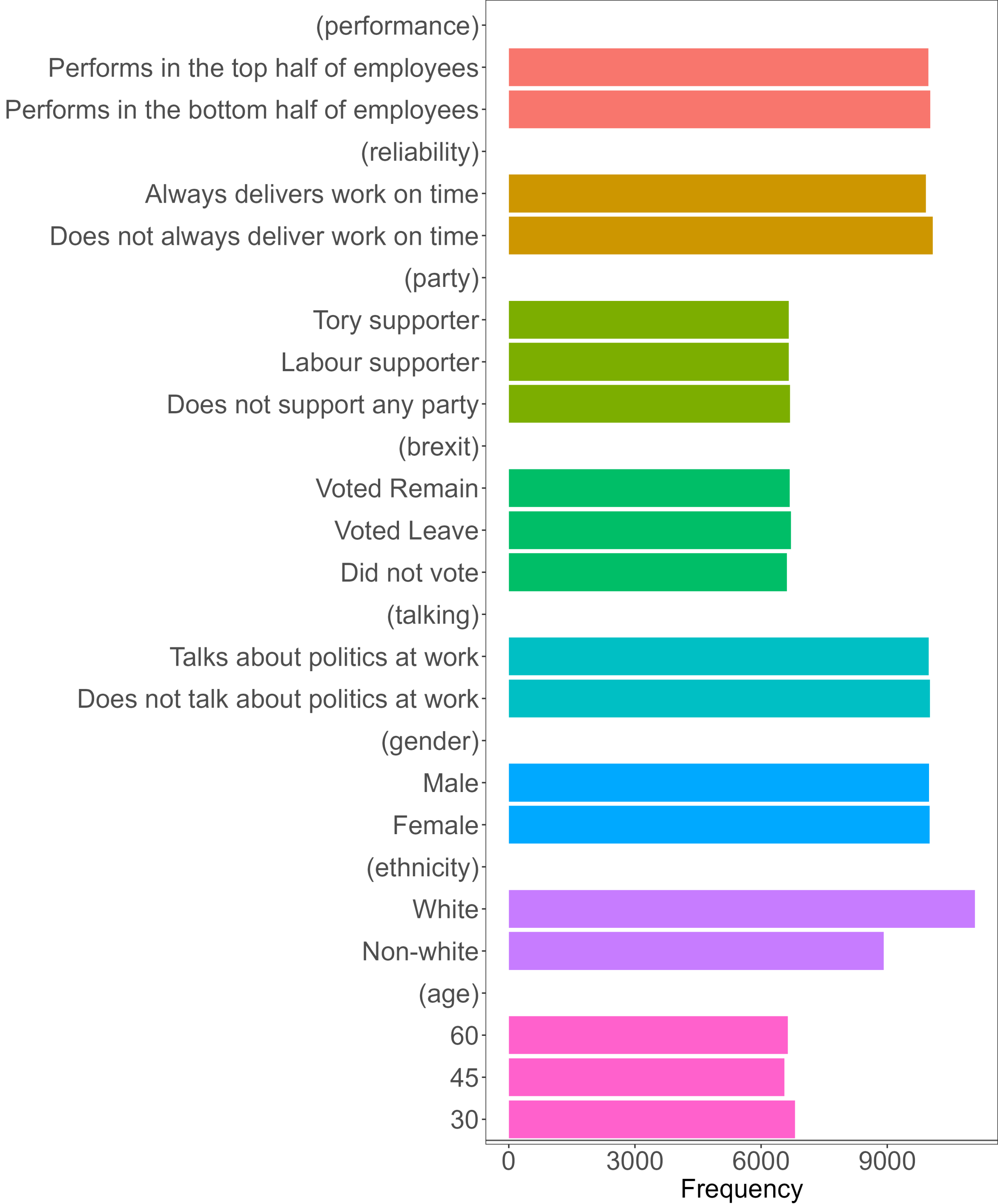
Table B8: Logistic regression results for political sorting (Yes/No)

	Dependent variable: Political sorting						
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	−2.109***	−1.870***	−2.313**	−2.234**	−2.245**	−3.109***	−3.148***
	(0.118)	(0.153)	(0.752)	(0.780)	(0.780)	(0.823)	(0.824)
Education: Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education: Middle	−0.045	−0.032	−0.076	0.019	0.019	0.033	0.047
	(0.229)	(0.230)	(0.231)	(0.241)	(0.241)	(0.244)	(0.245)
Education: High	0.300+	0.301+	0.230	0.070	0.063	−0.041	−0.082
	(0.155)	(0.157)	(0.159)	(0.165)	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.170)
Age: 18-34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Age: 35-54		−0.421*	−0.390*	−0.293	−0.293	−0.378*	−0.369*
		(0.173)	(0.174)	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.183)	(0.184)
Age: 55+		−0.306+	−0.276	−0.283	−0.279	−0.356+	−0.364+
		(0.175)	(0.176)	(0.182)	(0.183)	(0.186)	(0.186)
Collaboration: Not important at all			-	-	-	-	-
Collaboration: Not very important			−0.179	−0.005	−0.016	0.066	0.027
			(0.822)	(0.842)	(0.844)	(0.850)	(0.851)
Collaboration: Rather important			0.242	0.385	0.372	0.361	0.321
			(0.747)	(0.765)	(0.766)	(0.773)	(0.773)
Collaboration: Very important			0.687	0.765	0.750	0.721	0.641
			(0.743)	(0.761)	(0.763)	(0.770)	(0.771)
Right-wing				-	-	-	-
Left-wing				0.559***	0.559***	0.615***	0.566***
				(0.151)	(0.151)	(0.153)	(0.154)
Firm size: 1-49					-	-	-
Firm size: 50-499					0.040	−0.033	−0.030
					(0.171)	(0.173)	(0.174)
Firm size: 500+					0.049	0.013	0.044
					(0.204)	(0.206)	(0.206)
Not interested in politics						-	-
Interested in politics						1.123***	1.101***
						(0.280)	(0.281)
Low prosociality							-
Middle prosociality							0.148
							(0.211)
High prosociality							0.428*
							(0.172)
Private firm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public							0.337+
							(0.174)
Self-employed							0.476
							(0.290)
Other							0.386
							(0.321)
Observations	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842
Note:							*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

4.7.5 Figures

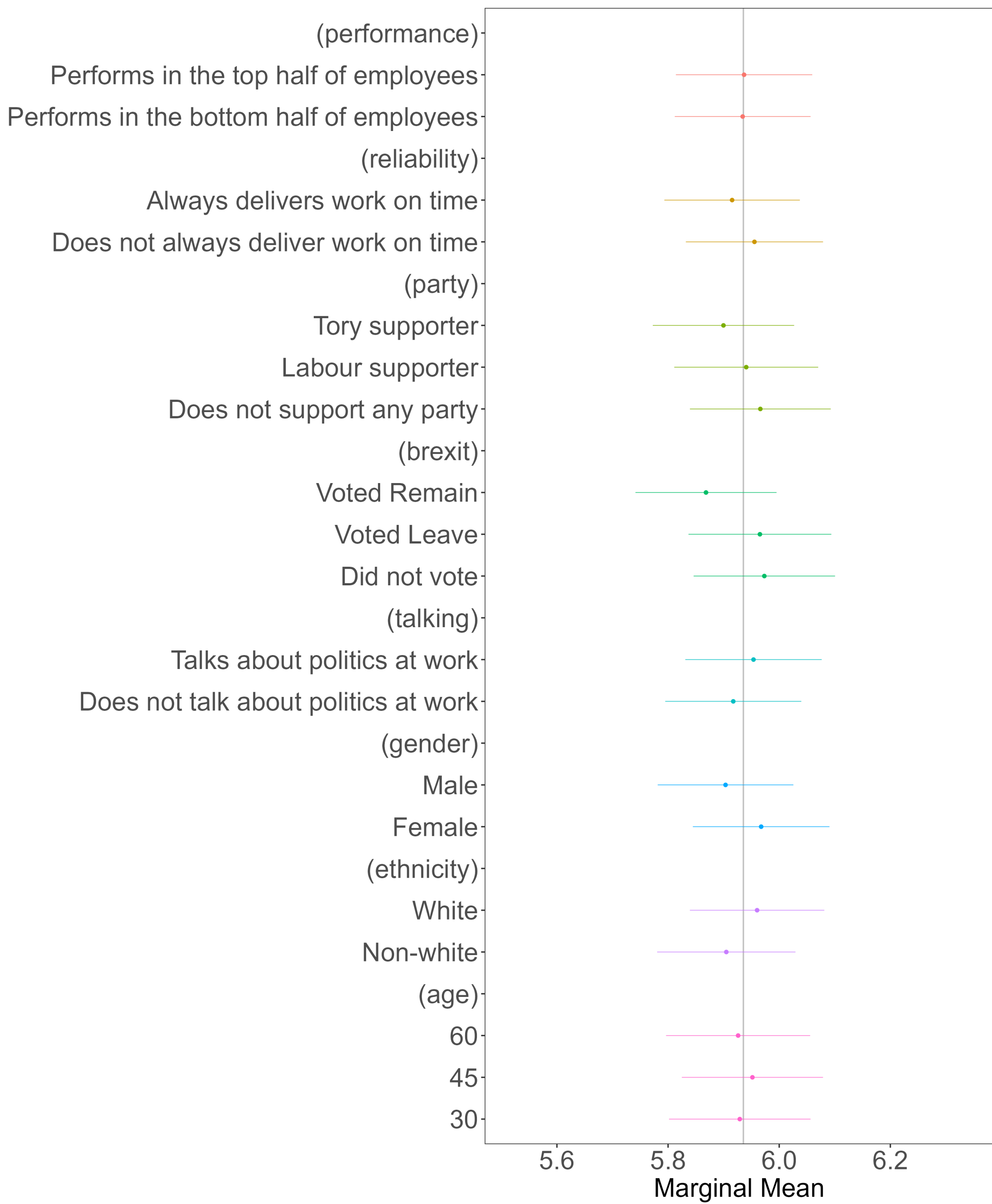
Sample Statistics

Figure B1: Frequency of attribute-levels



Notes: This figure shows the frequency of attribute-levels in the conjoint.

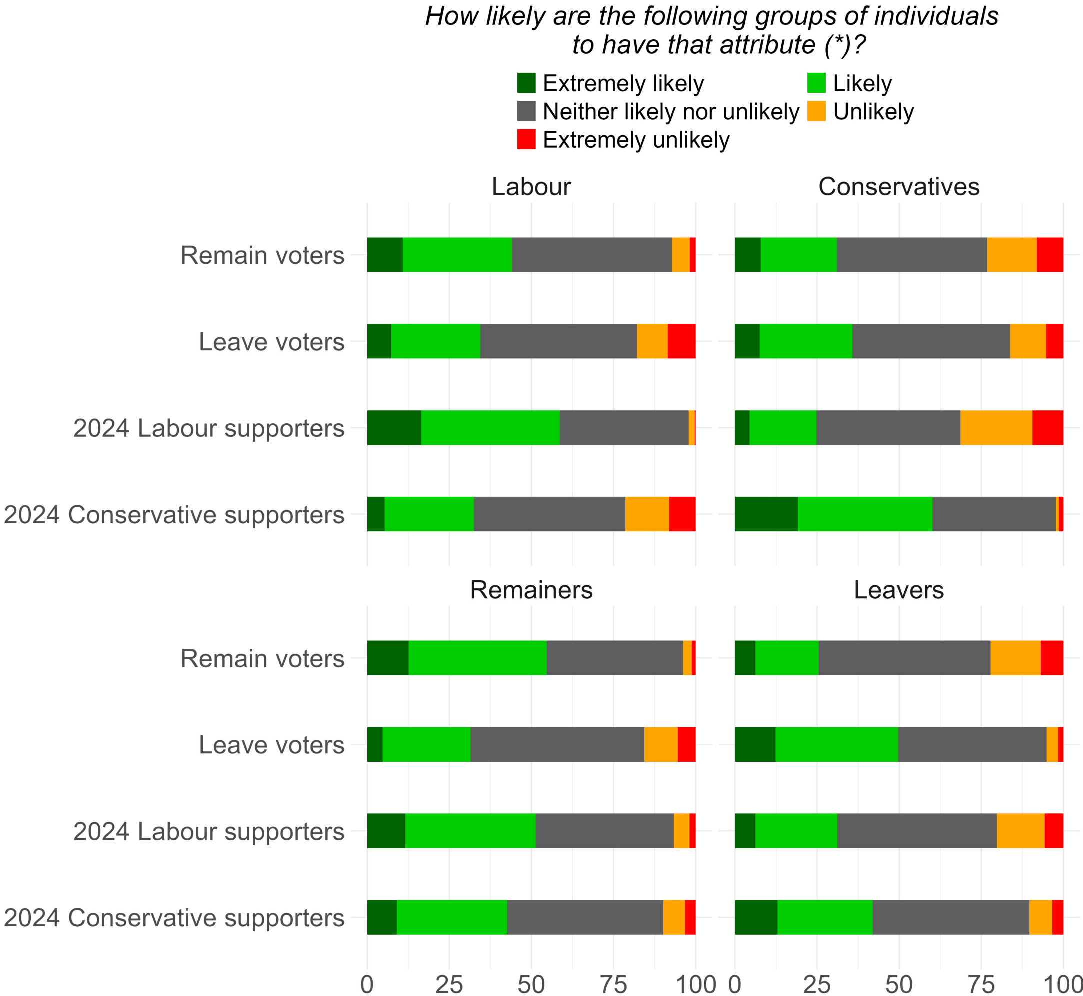
Figure B2: Balance testing



Notes: This figure shows that imbalance is not an issue.

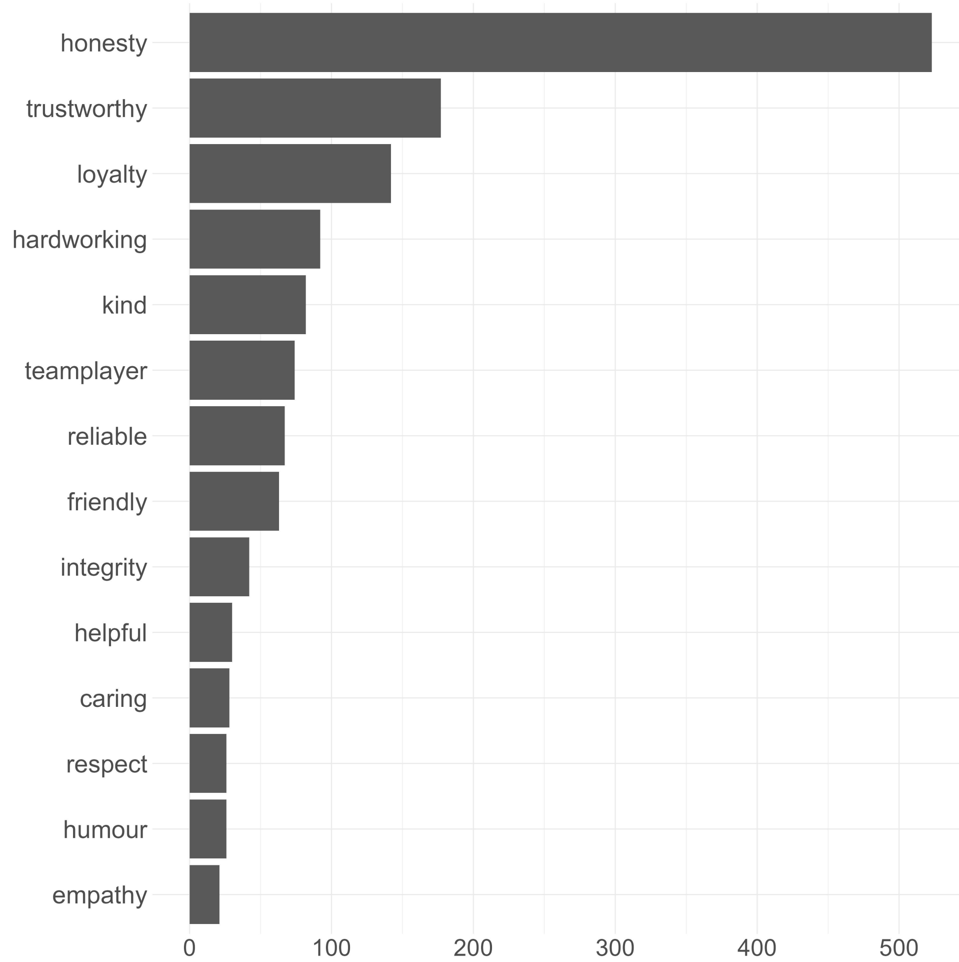
Findings

Figure B3: Descriptive distribution of affective polarization on work-related attributes



Notes: In the survey, respondents were asked to report the single attribute they value the most when thinking about their ideal colleague (see Figure B4).

Figure B4: Most important single attribute in a colleague (open-ended responses)



Notes: The figure shows the distribution of respondents' answers to the following open-ended survey question: *Everyone values different qualities in their colleagues. Thinking about an ideal colleague, what single attribute do you value the most? Please specify only one attribute.*

Figure B5: Distribution of work-centred affective polarization values (Brexit preferences)

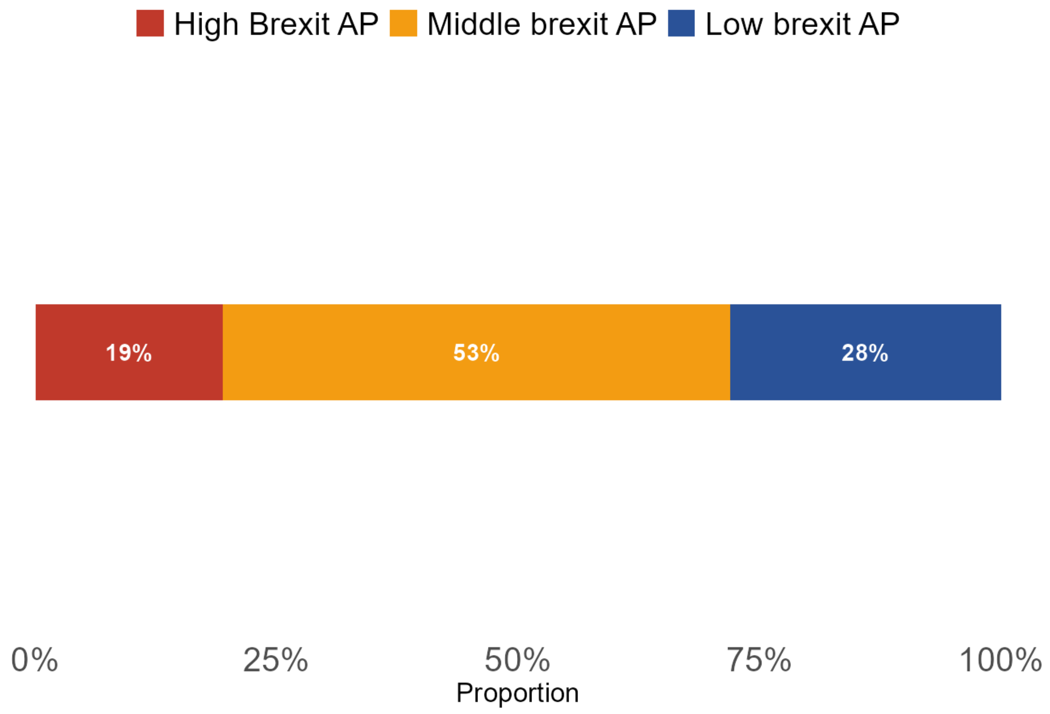
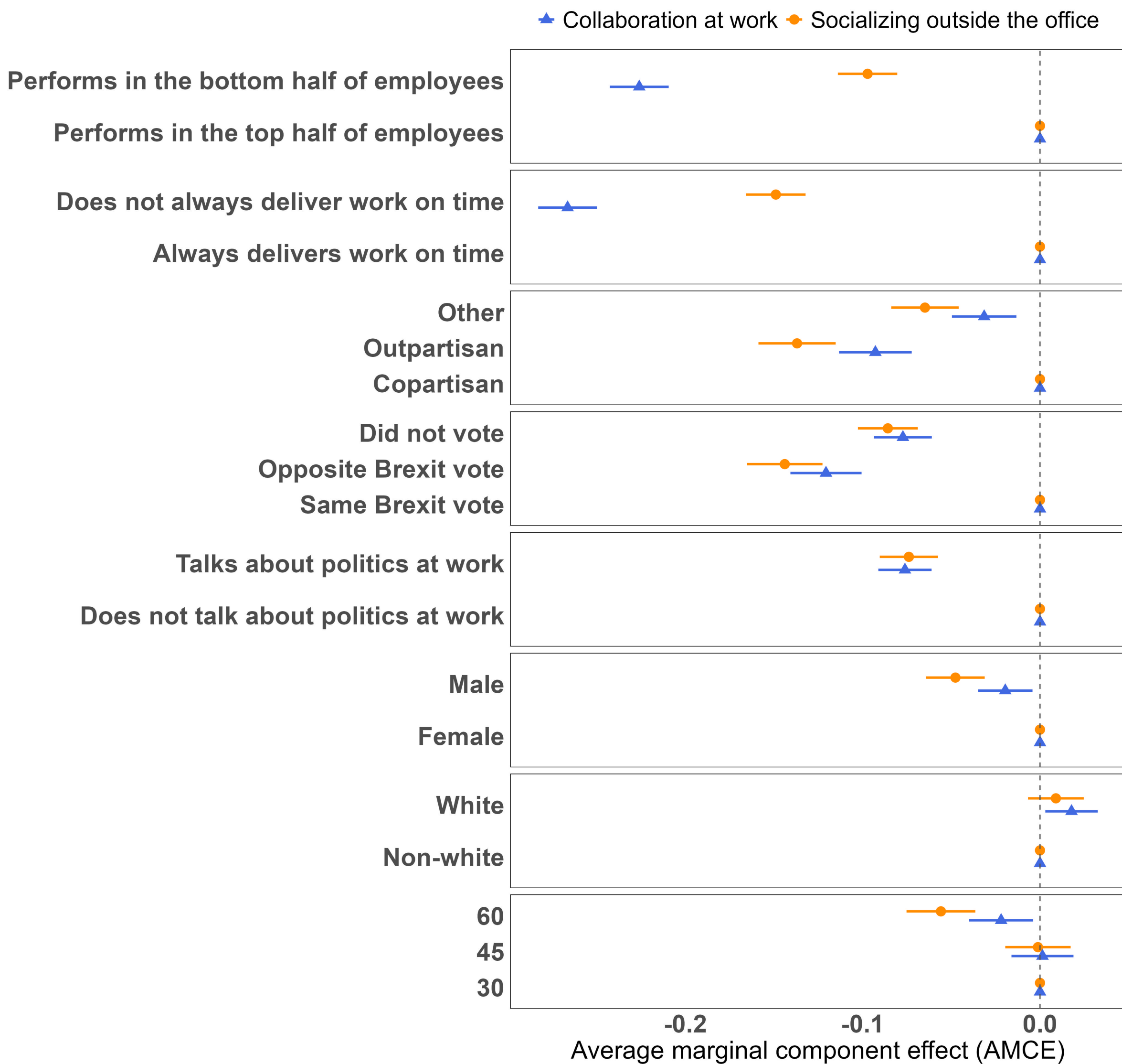
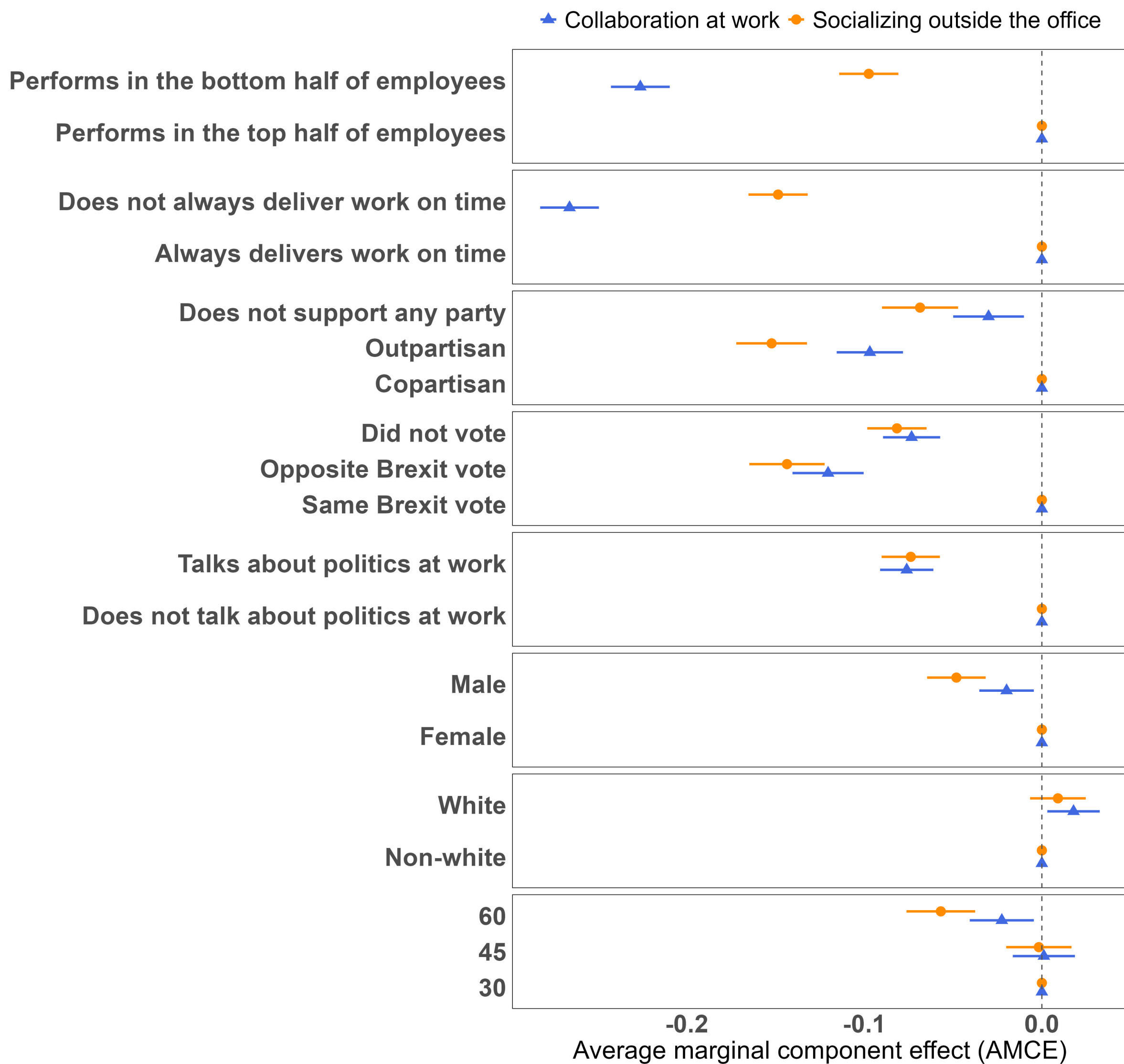


Figure B6: Labour/Conservative consistent voters (Robustness Check)



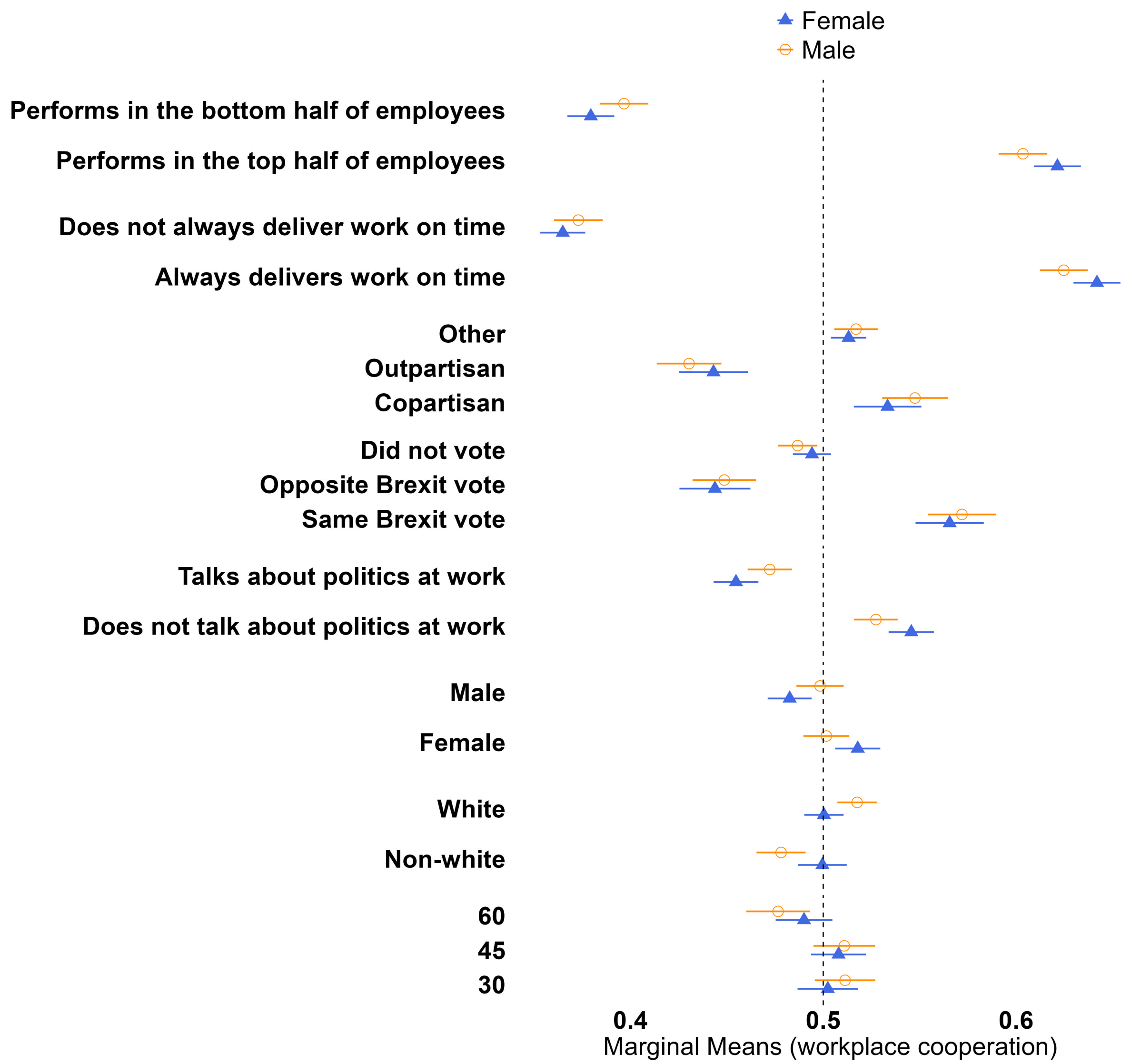
Notes: This figure shows the results based on marginal means with a partisanship measure that includes only Labour voters and Conservative voters whose current voting intention is consistent with their vote recall from the 2019 general election.

Figure B7: Propensity-to-vote scores (Robustness Check)



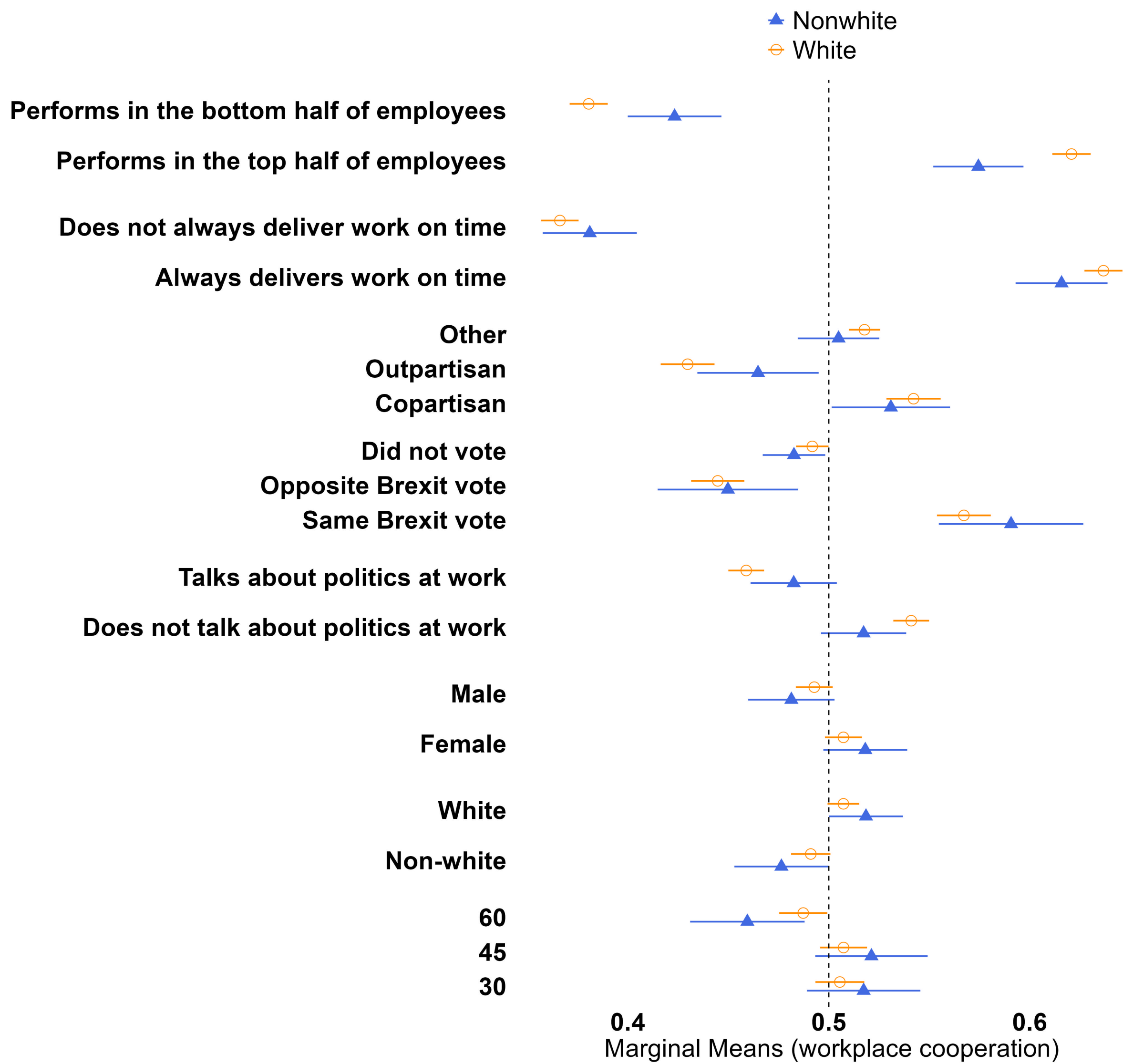
Notes: This figure shows the results based on marginal means with a partisanship measure constructed with propensity-to-vote scores. Those with a propensity to vote higher than 6 (out of 10) for the Conservatives or Labour are considered as copartisans of a profile that supports the Conservatives or Labour, while those with a propensity to vote for that party lower than 4 (out of 10) are considered outpartisans.

Figure B8: Gender



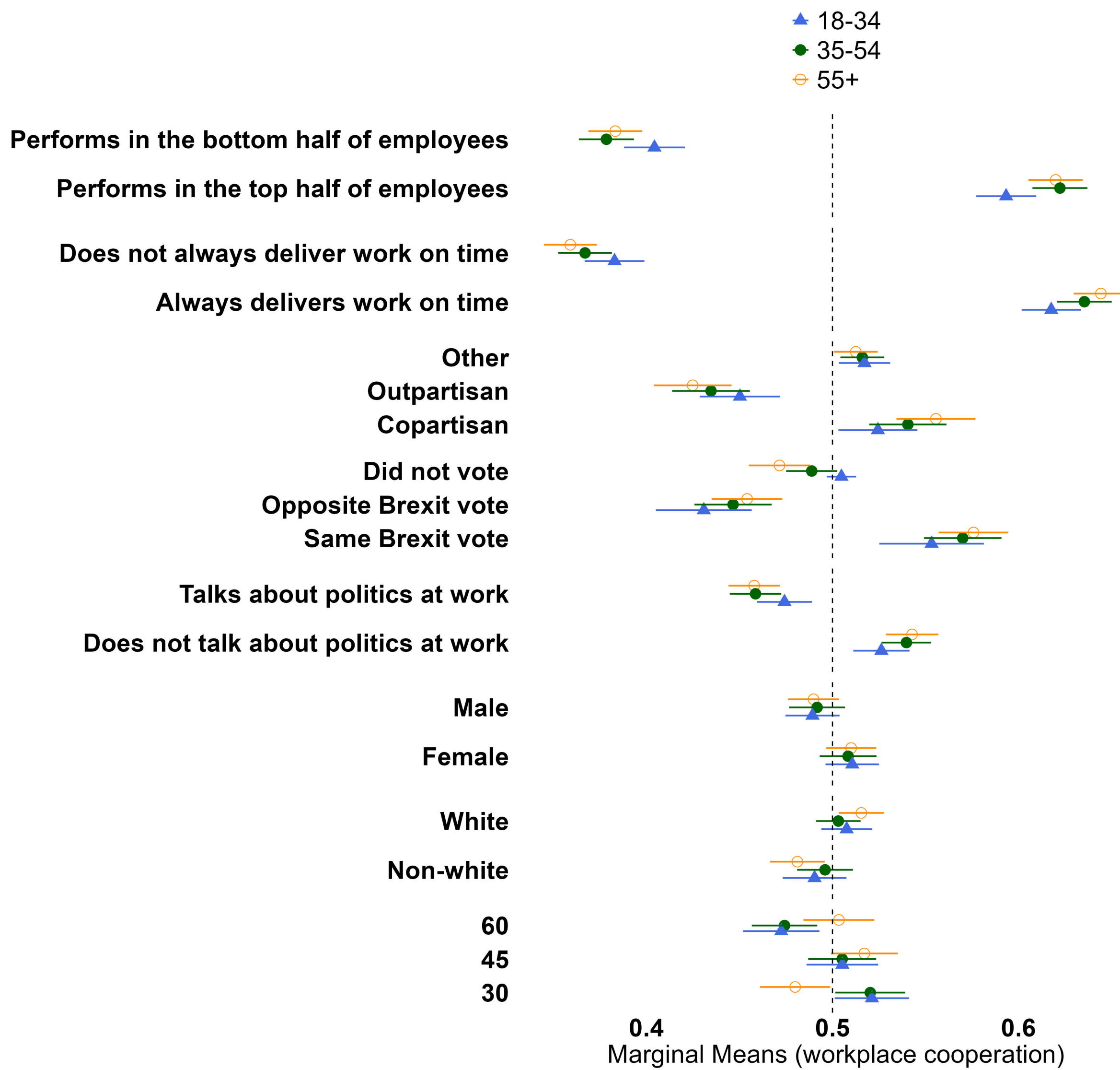
Notes: The figure shows the conditional Marginal Means by respondents' gender

Figure B9: Ethnicity



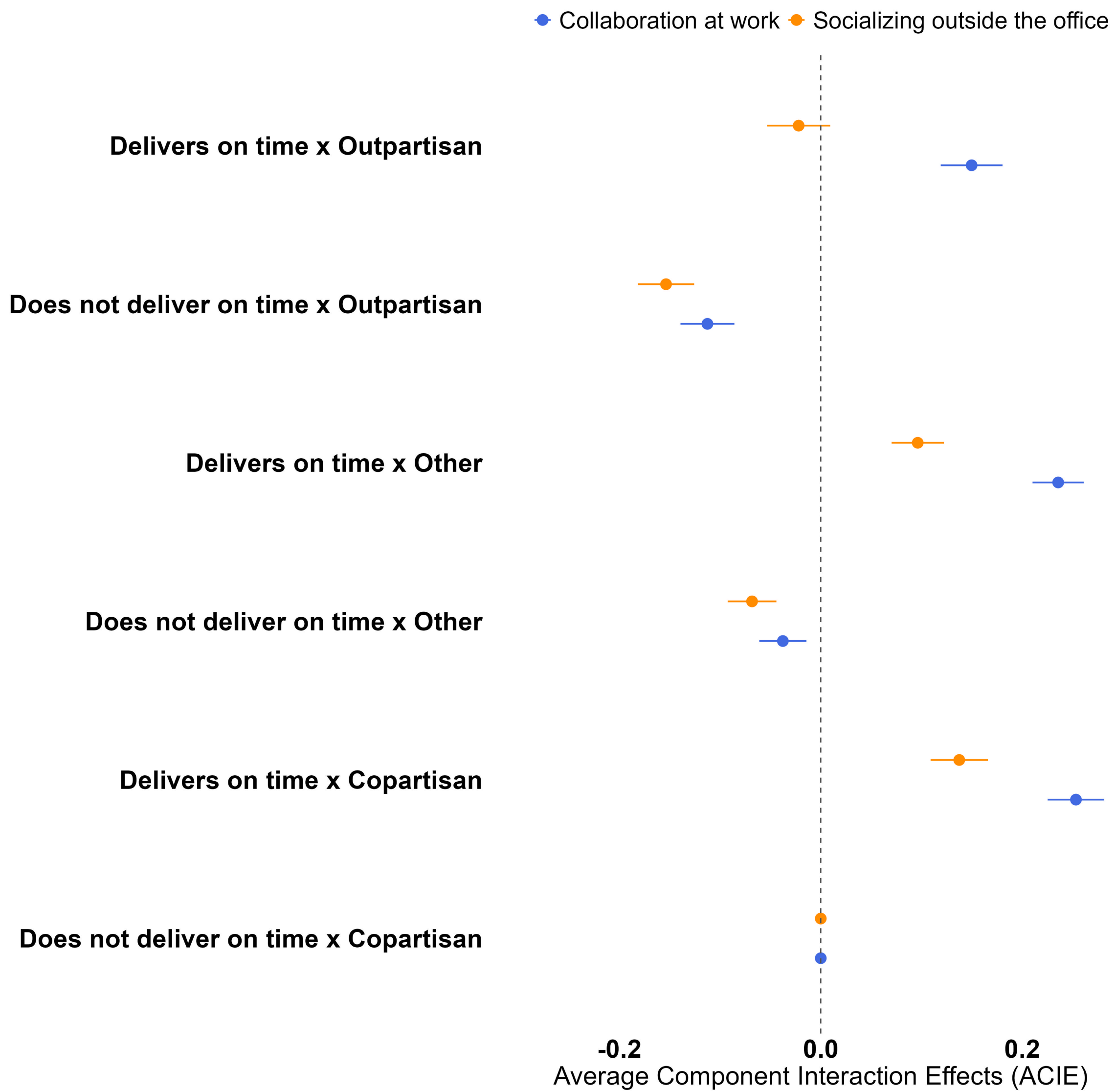
Notes: The figure shows the conditional Marginal Means by respondents' ethnicity

Figure B10: Age



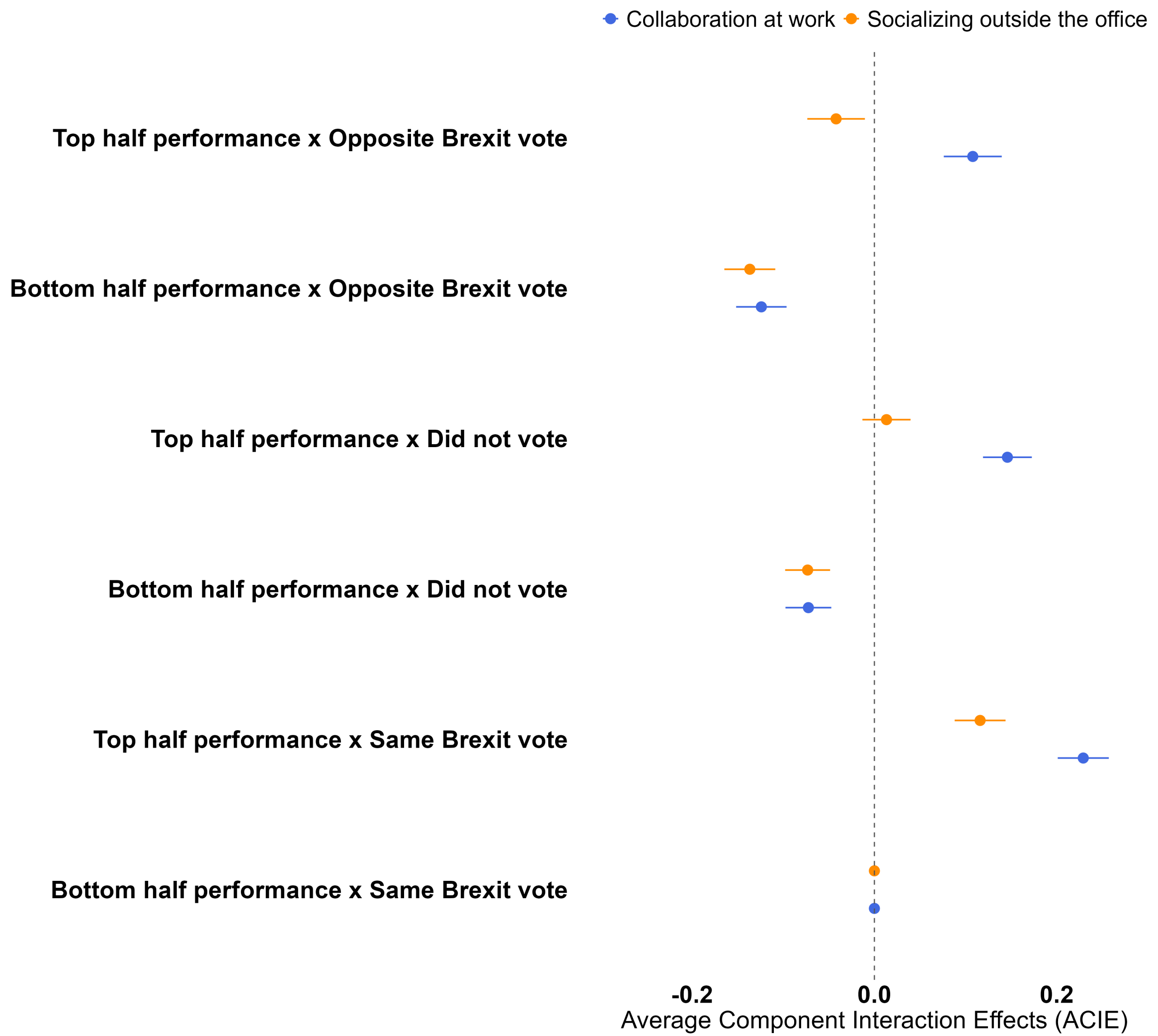
Notes: The figure shows the conditional Marginal Means by respondents' age

Figure B11: ACIEs, partisanship × reliability



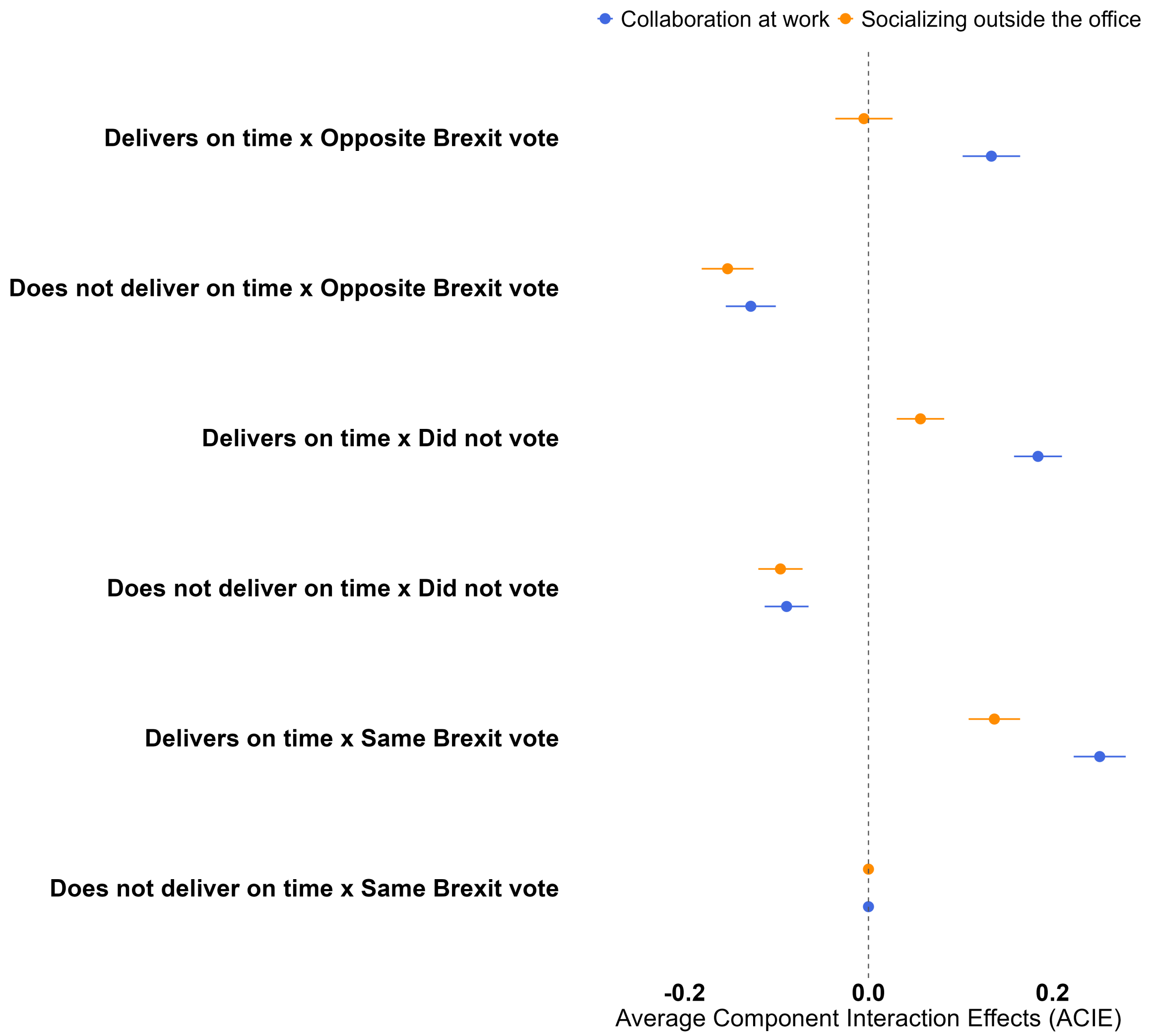
Notes: The figure displays the ACIEs from Figure 4 of the article, but here, it presents the estimates for the interaction with the reliability attribute instead of the performance one.

Figure B12: ACIEs, brexit identity x performance



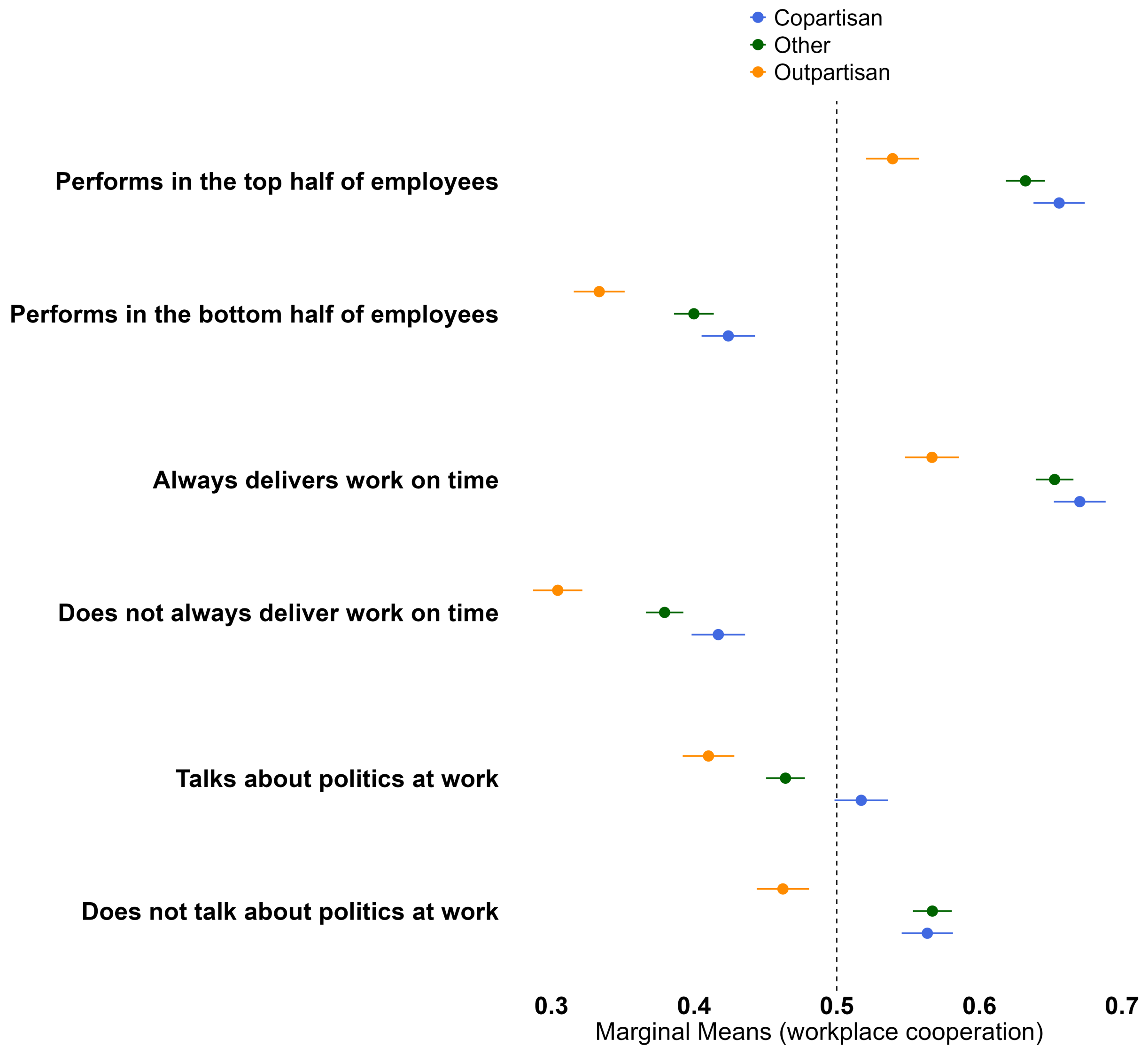
Notes: The figure displays the ACIEs for the interactions between the performance attribute and the Brexit vote attribute.

Figure B13: ACIEs, brexit identity x reliability



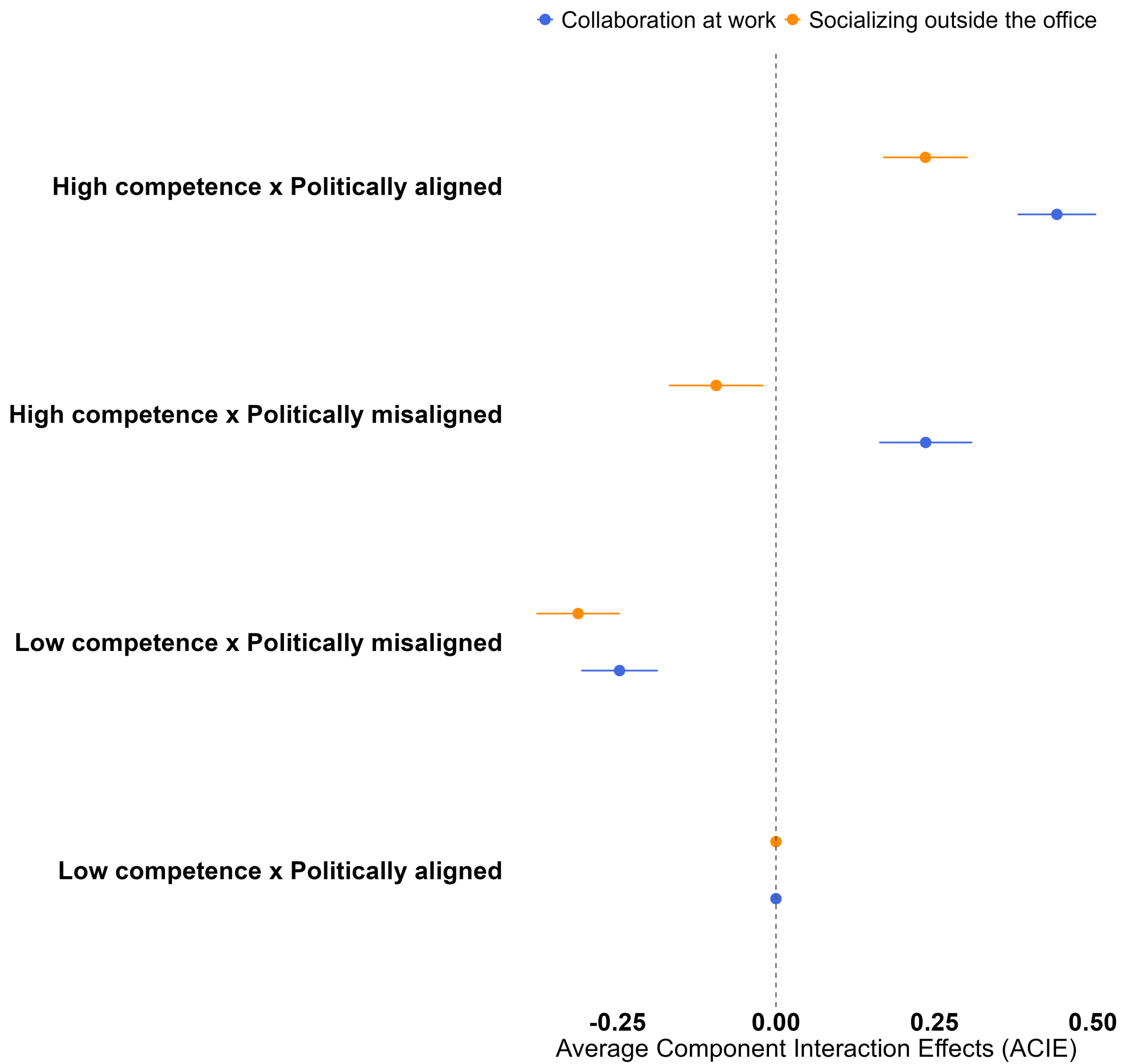
Notes: The figure displays the ACIEs for the interactions between the reliability attribute and the Brexit vote attribute.

Figure B14: Marginal means, competence x partisanship



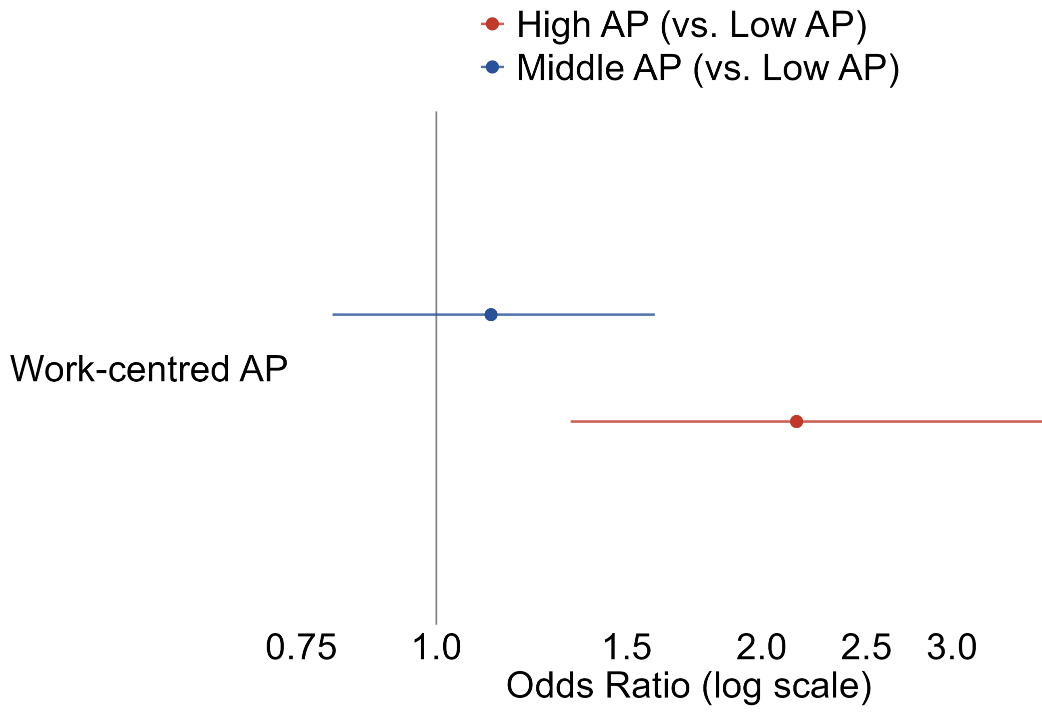
Notes: The figure displays the Marginal Means for the interactions between the performance attribute and the partisanship attribute.

Figure B15: ACIE, Political x competence bundles



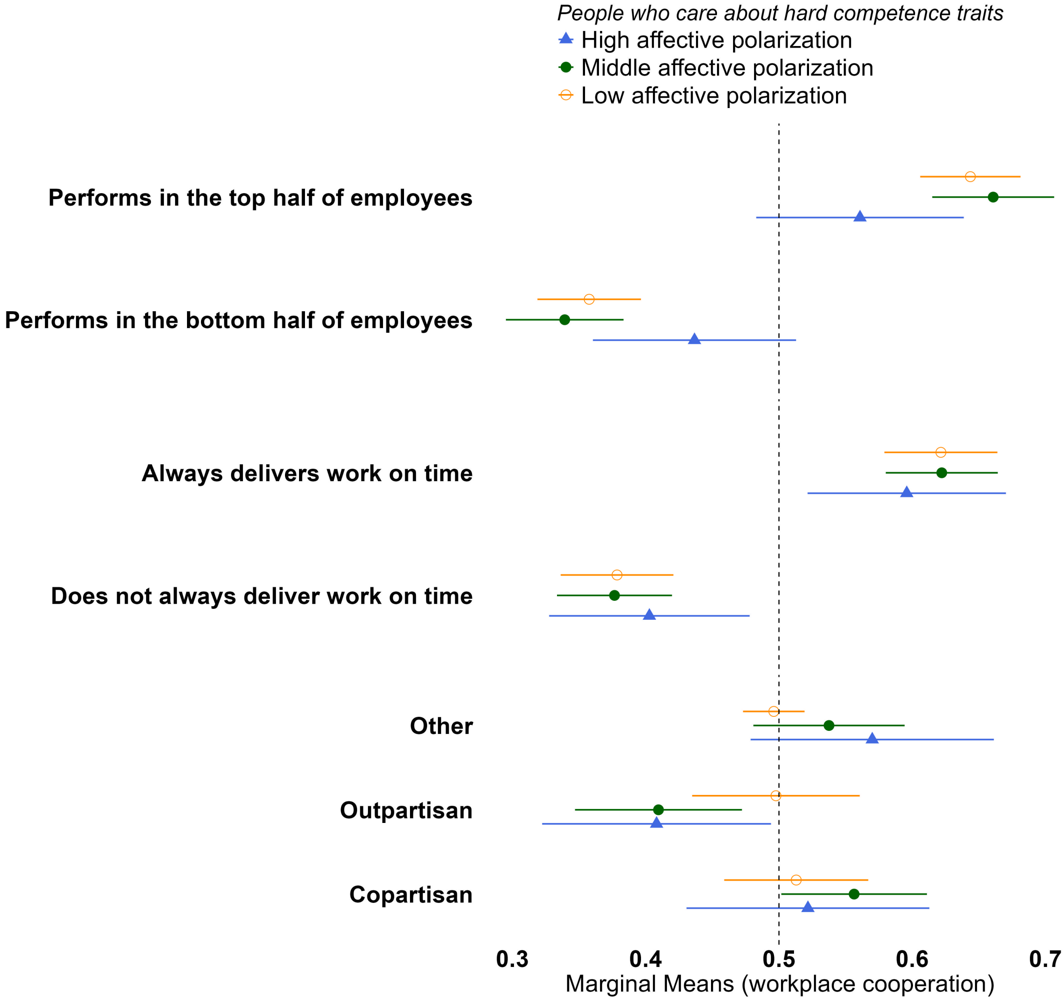
Notes: The figure displays the ACIEs for the interactions between the competence bundle (reliability and performance) and party bundle (partisanship and Brexit vote).

Figure B16



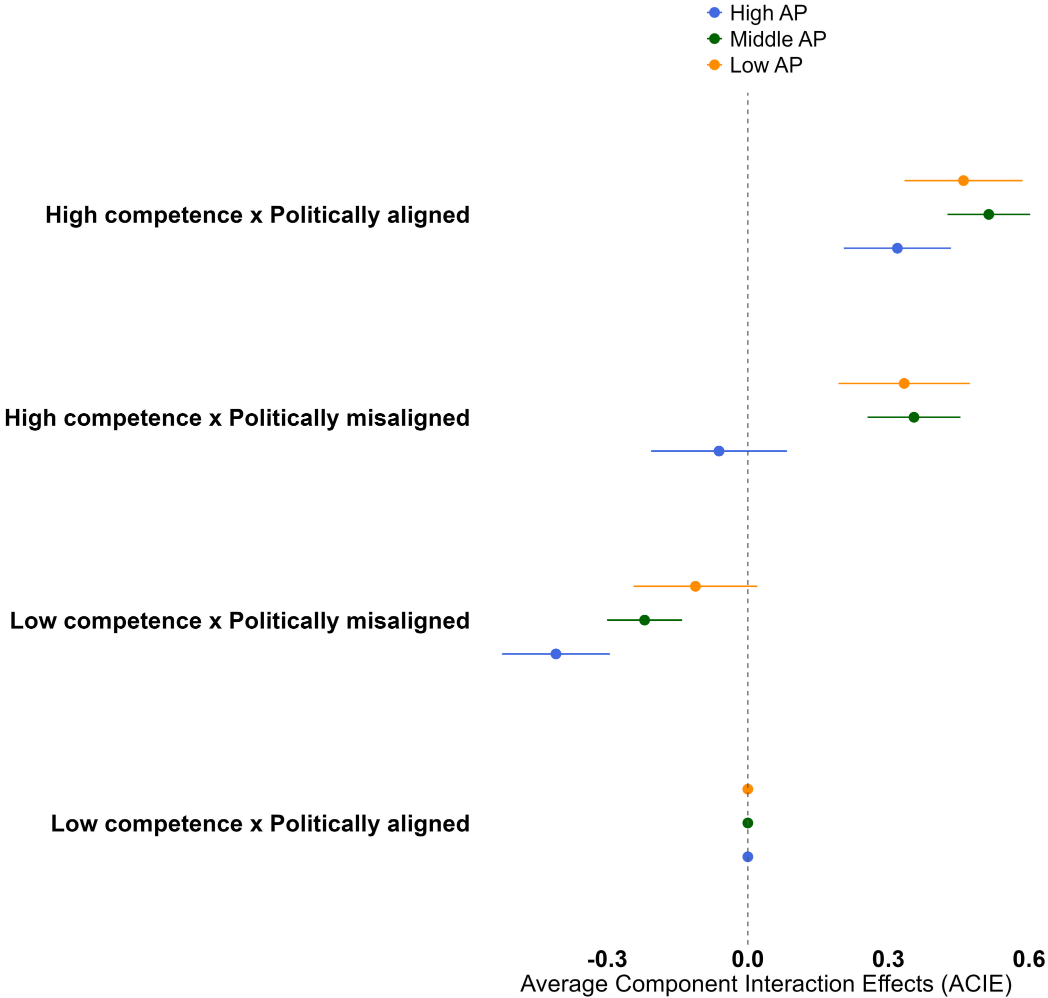
Notes: Results from a multinomial logistic regression controlling for industry, gender, education, age, prosociality, and political sorting.

Figure B17: Conditional marginal means, by work-centred AP (respondents who value hard competence traits in colleagues)



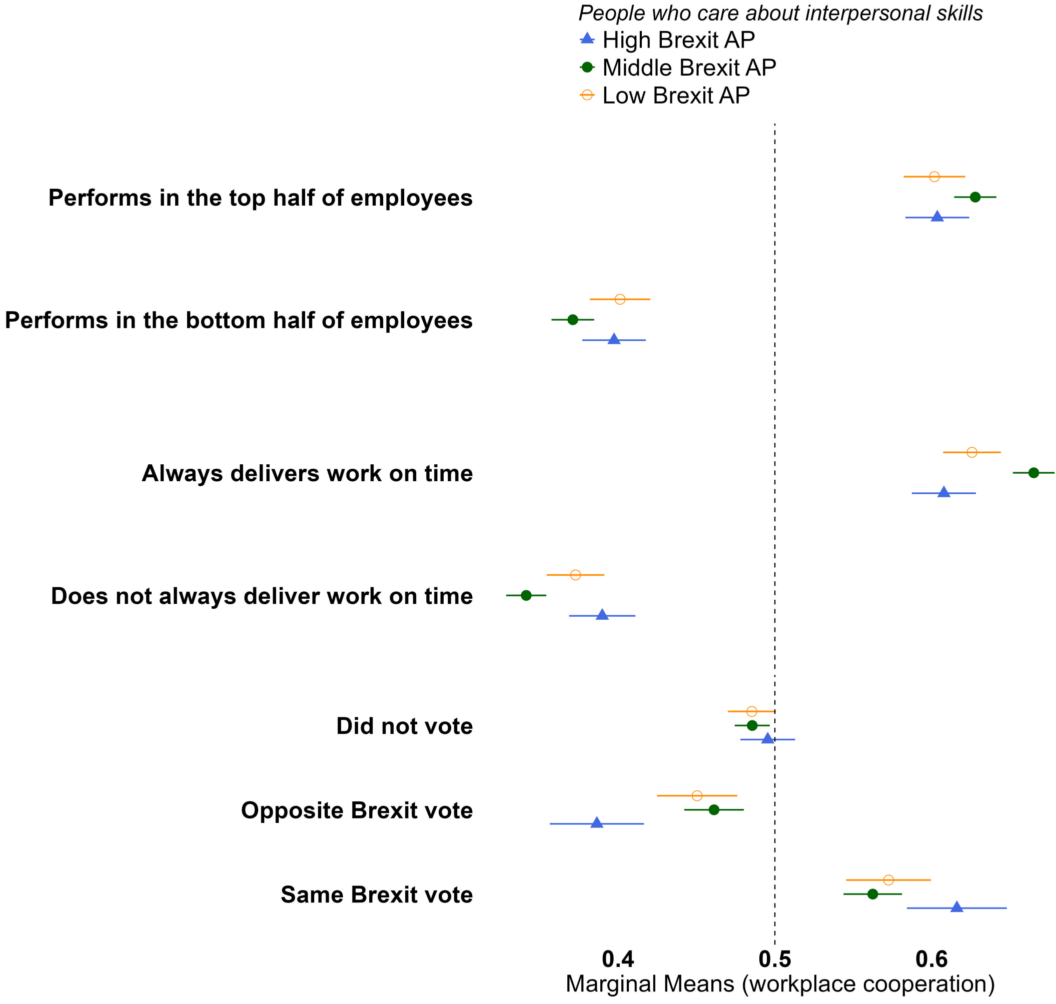
Notes: The figure displays the marginal means across respondents with different degrees of affective polarization on work-related attributes.

Figure B18: ACIE, political (e.g., partisan and Brexit attributes) x competence (e.g., performance and reliability attributes) bundle, by work-centred AP



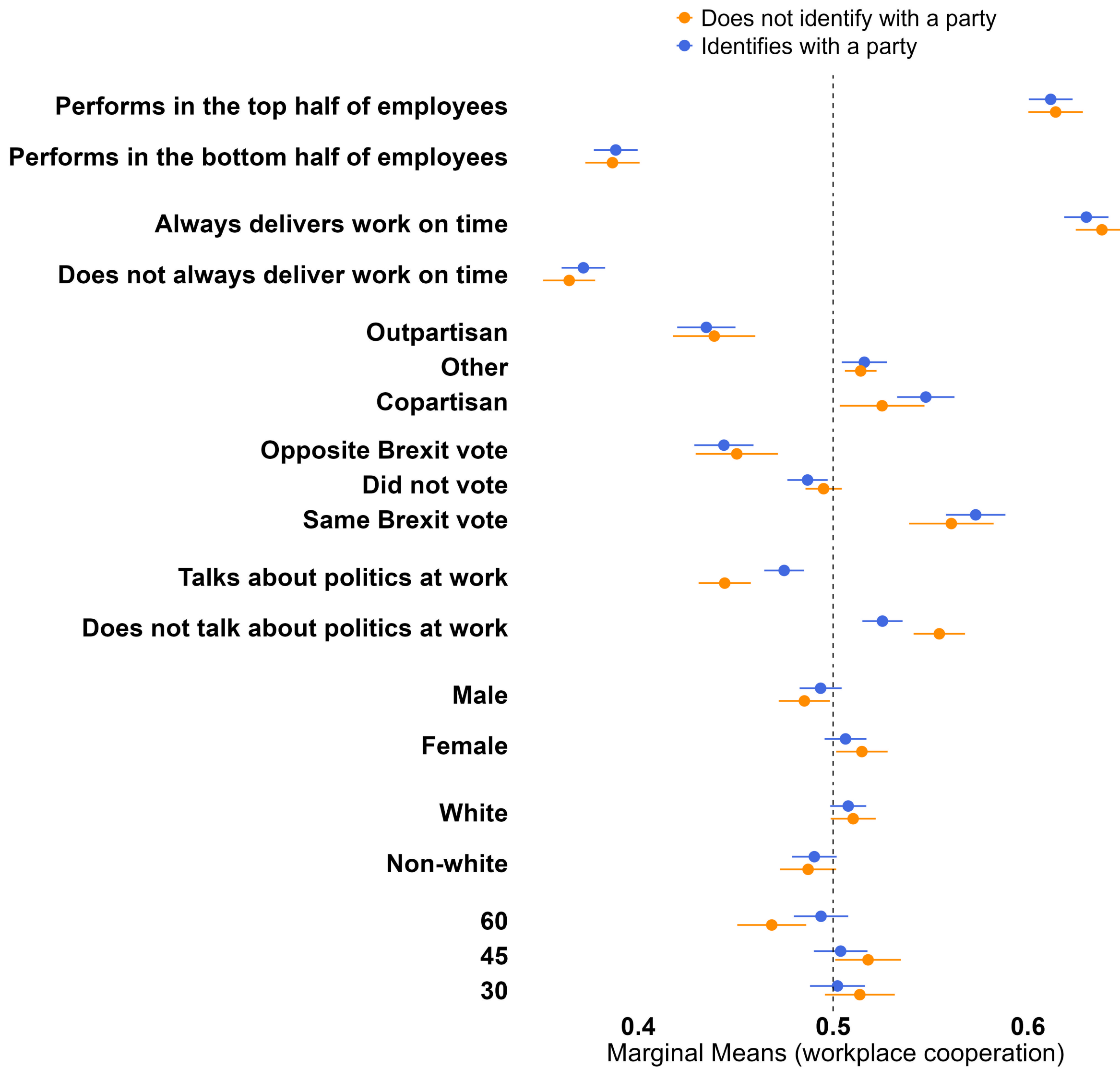
Notes: The figure displays the ACIEs across respondents with different degrees of affective polarization on work-related attributes.

Figure B19: Conditional marginal means, by work-centred Brexit AP (respondents who value interpersonal traits in colleagues)



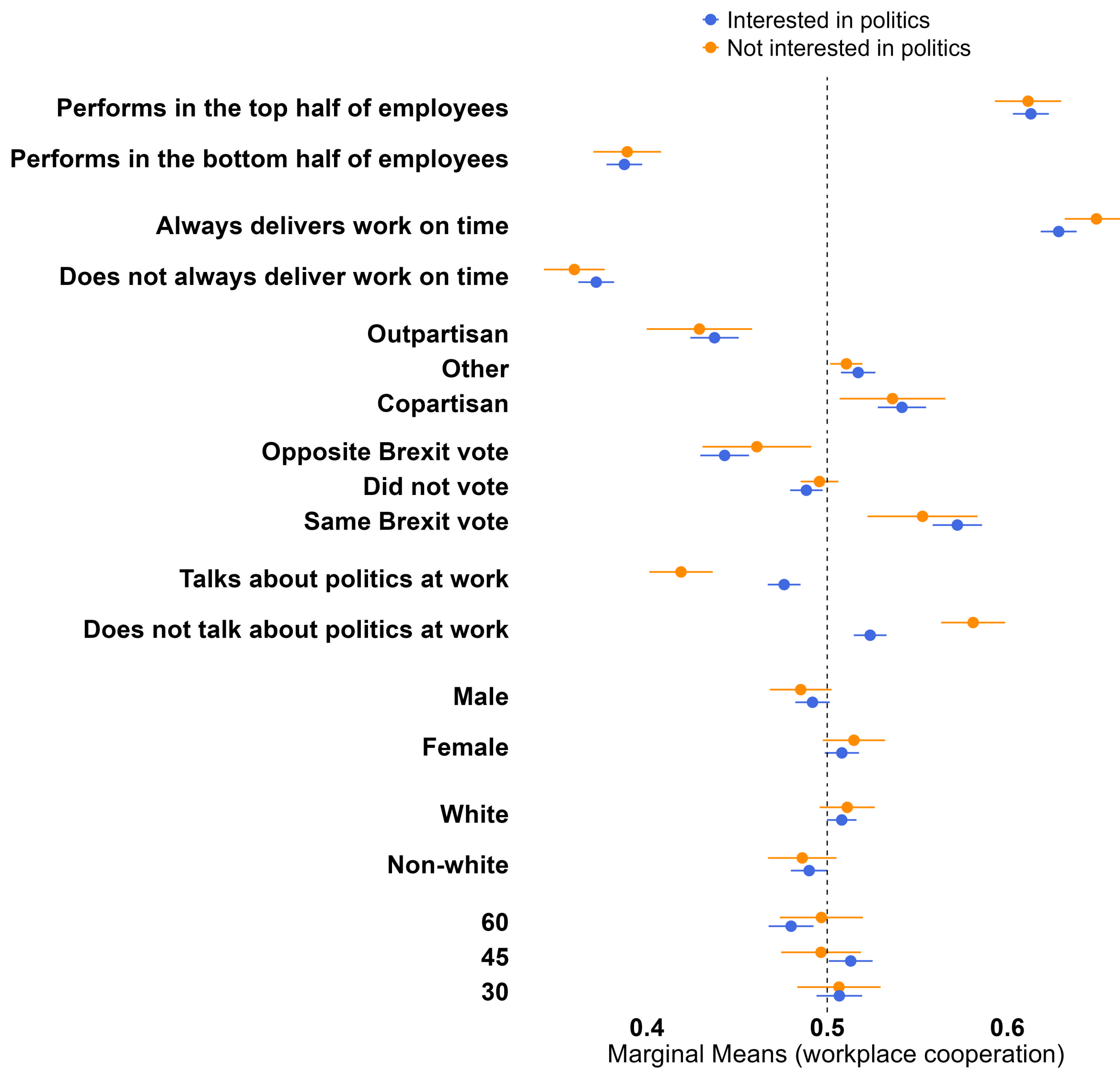
Notes: The figure displays marginal means across respondents with different degrees of Brexit-based affective polarization, restricted to those who value interpersonal traits in colleagues.

Figure B20: Marginal means, by intensity of partisan identity



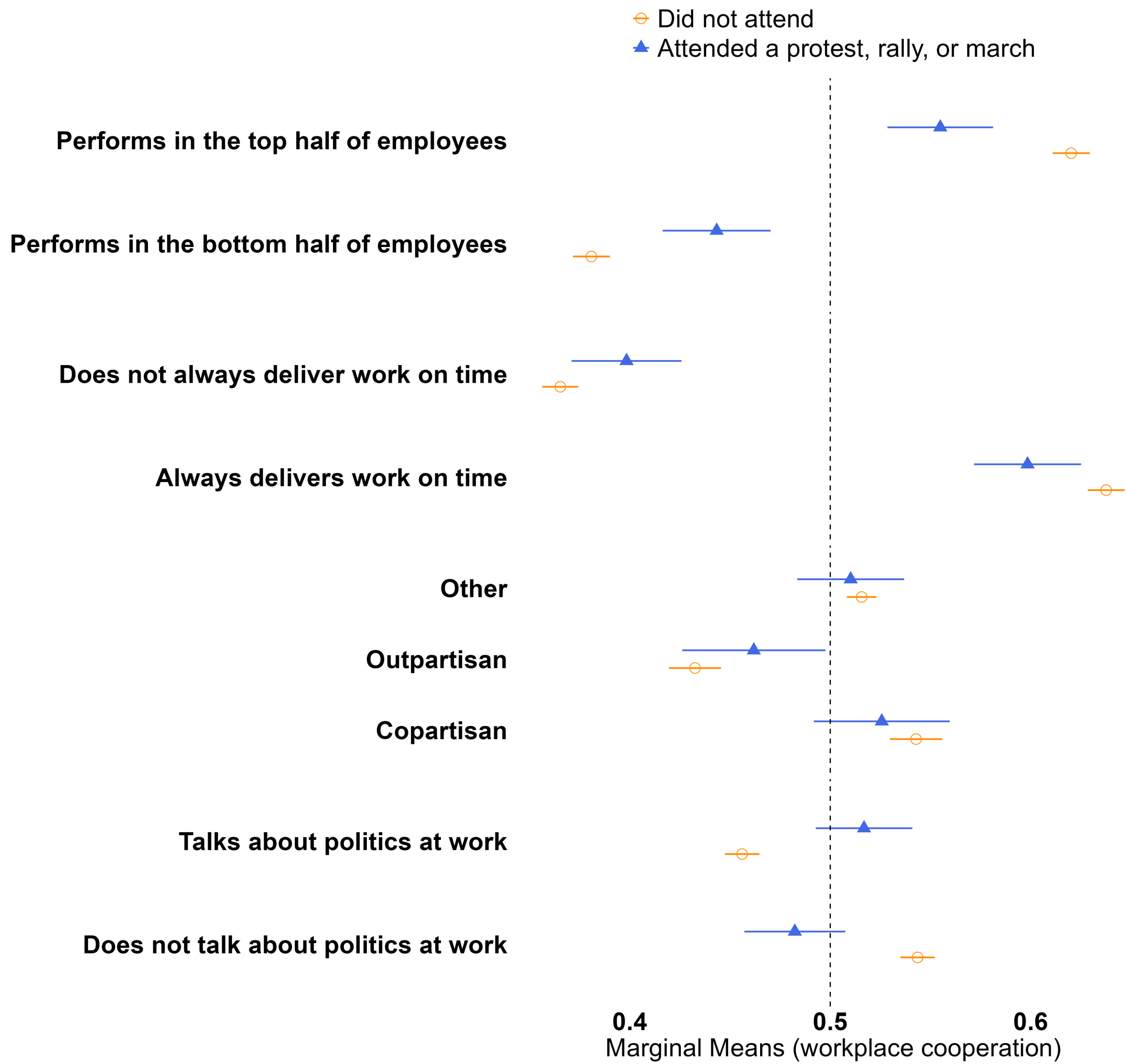
Notes: The figure shows that respondents who identify with a party exhibit a somewhat stronger preference for copartisan colleagues compared to those who support the party but do not strongly identify with it. However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Figure B21: Marginal means, by degree of political interest



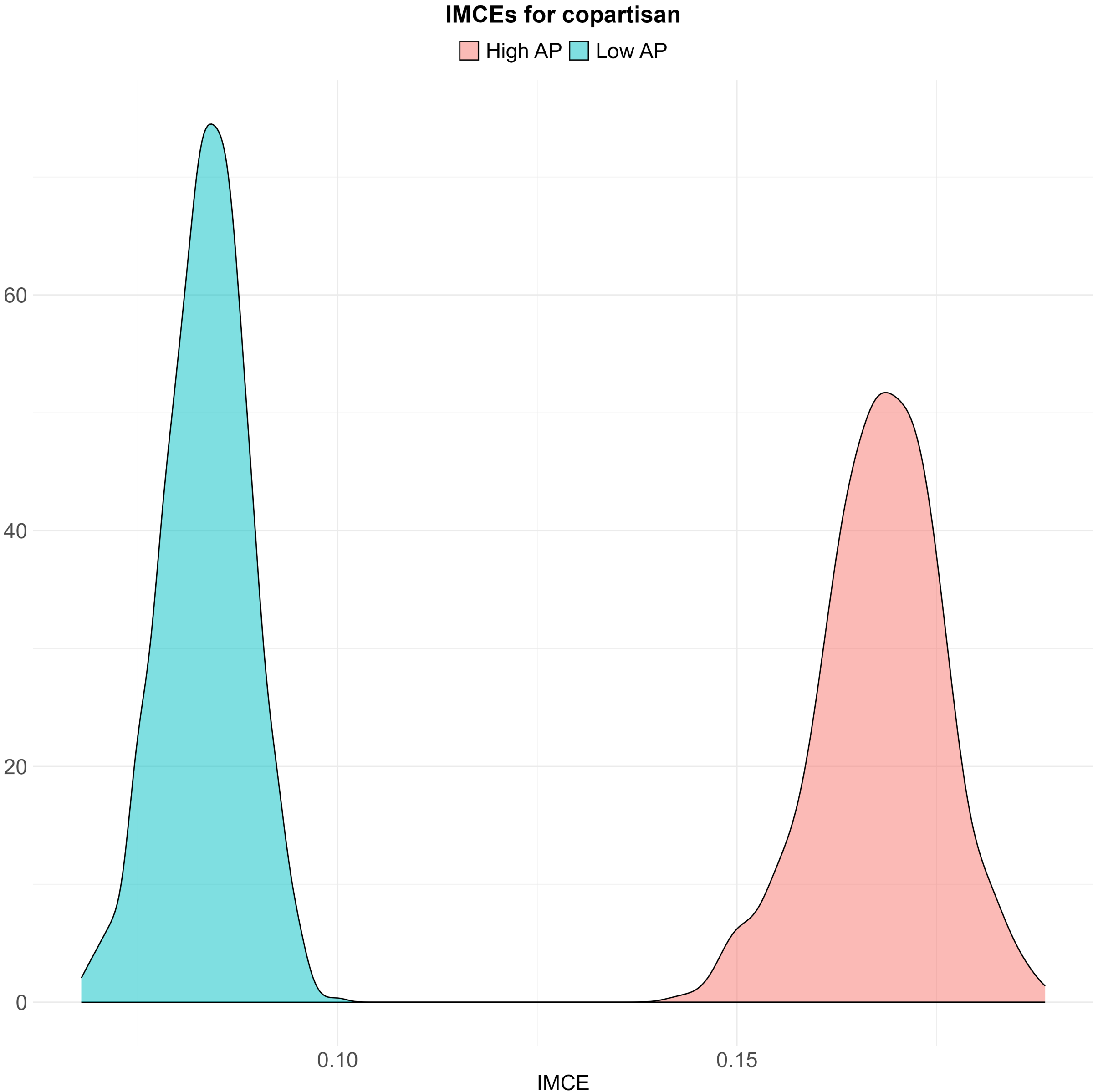
Notes: The figure shows HTEs for individuals with varying degrees of political interest.

Figure B22: Marginal means, by protest participation



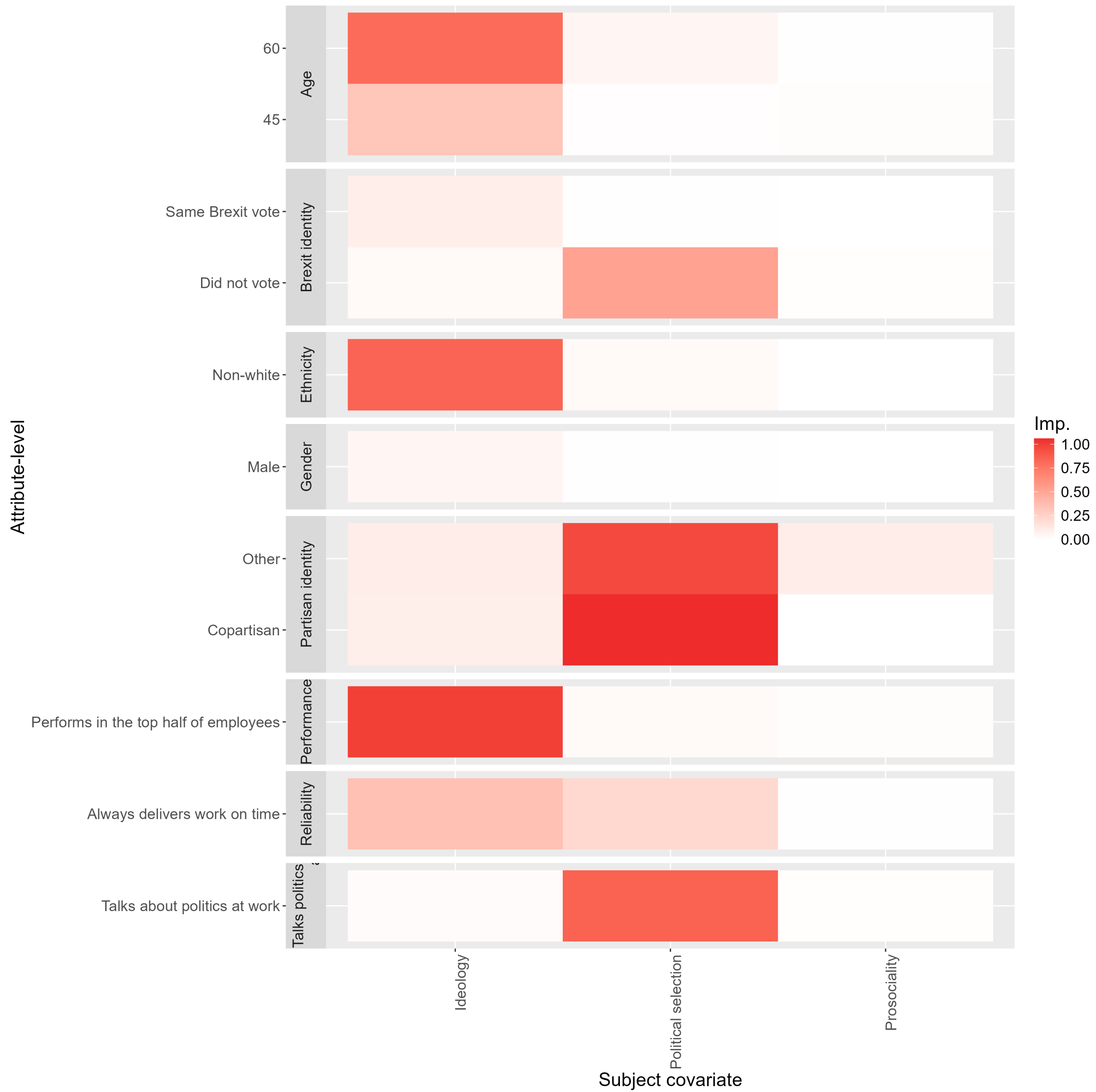
Notes: The figure shows HTEs for individuals who have participated in protests over the past 12 months or not.

Figure B23: Distribution of IMCE estimates, by affective polarization



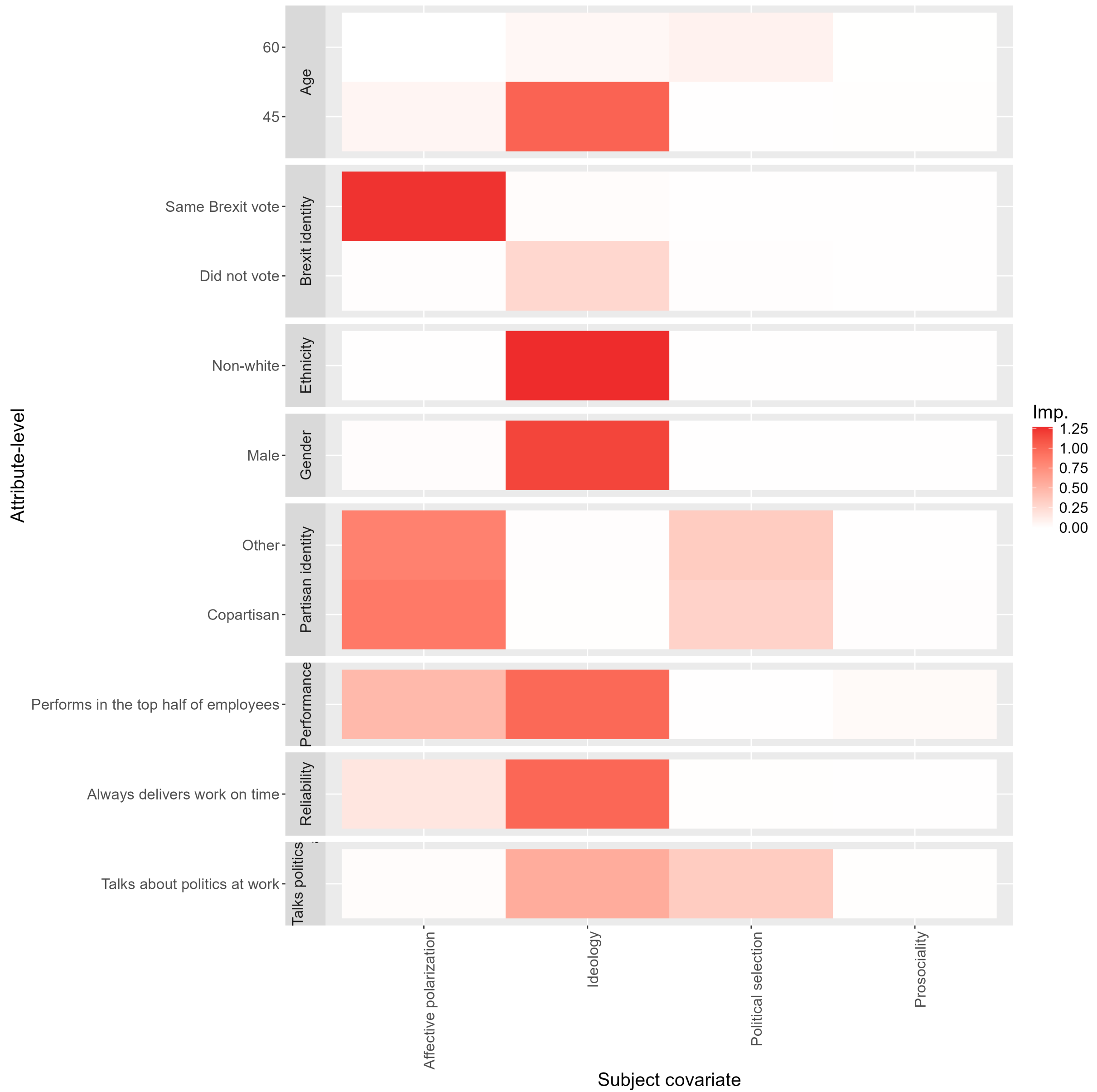
Notes: The figure shows the distribution of IMCEs (individual-level marginal component effects from a BART-estimated conjoint) by a binary measure of whether the individual is highly affectively polarized or not.

Figure B24: Variable importance score I



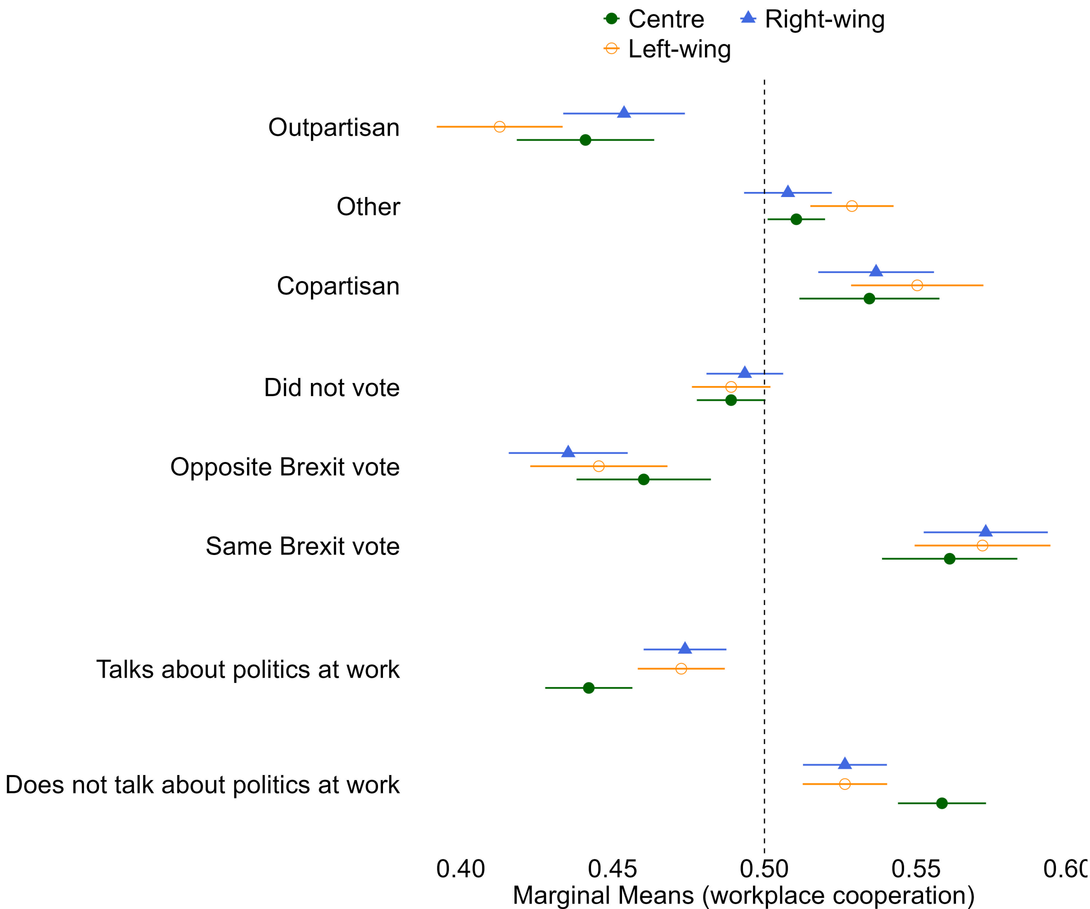
Notes: Using *cjbart* R package (Robinson, 2024), the heat map represents random forest variable importance scores for all attribute-levels of the conjoint experiment.

Figure B25: Variable importance score II



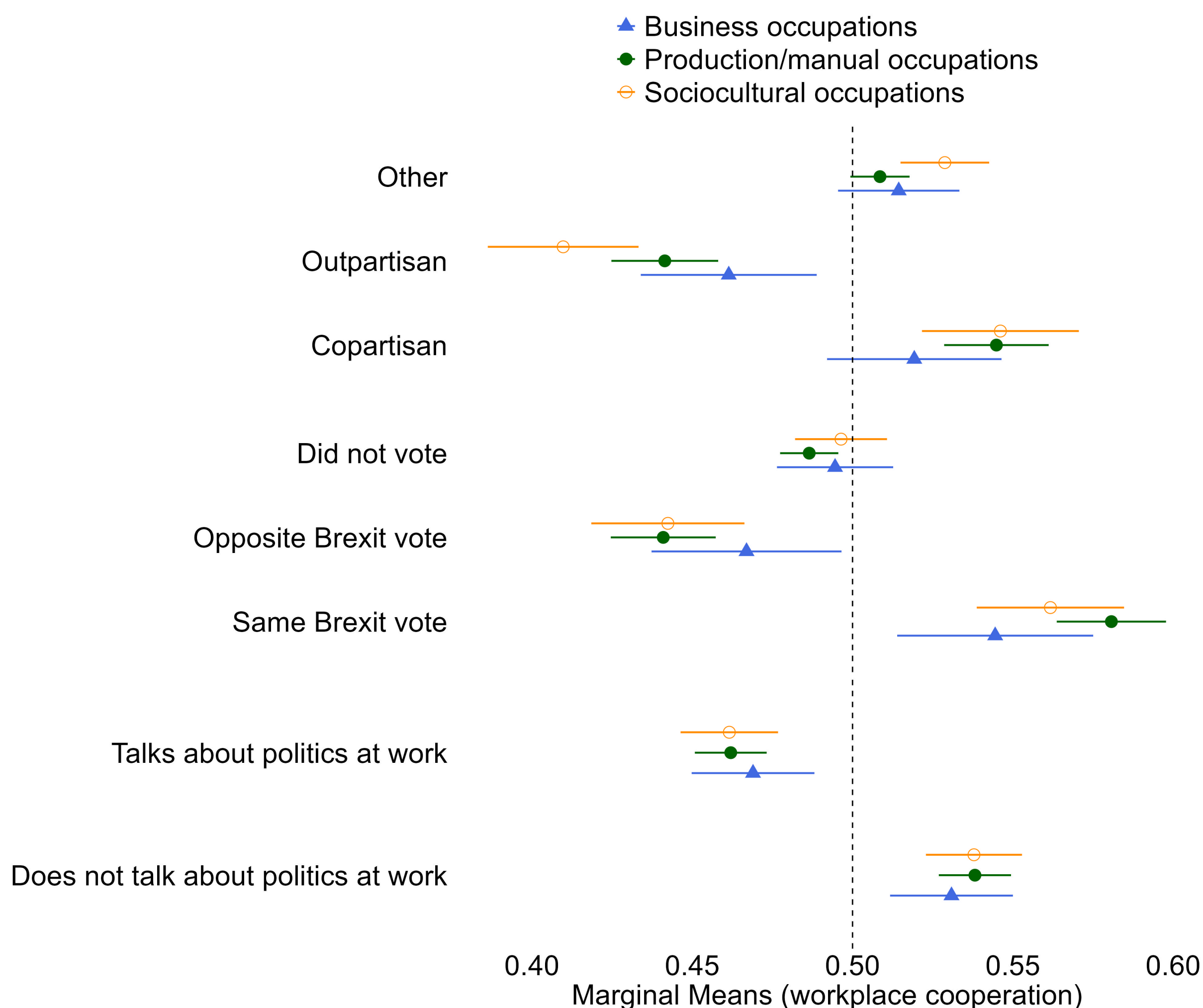
Notes: Using *cjbart* R package (Robinson, 2024), the heat map represents random forest variable importance scores for all attribute-levels of the conjoint experiment.

Figure B26: Conditional marginal means, by respondents' ideology



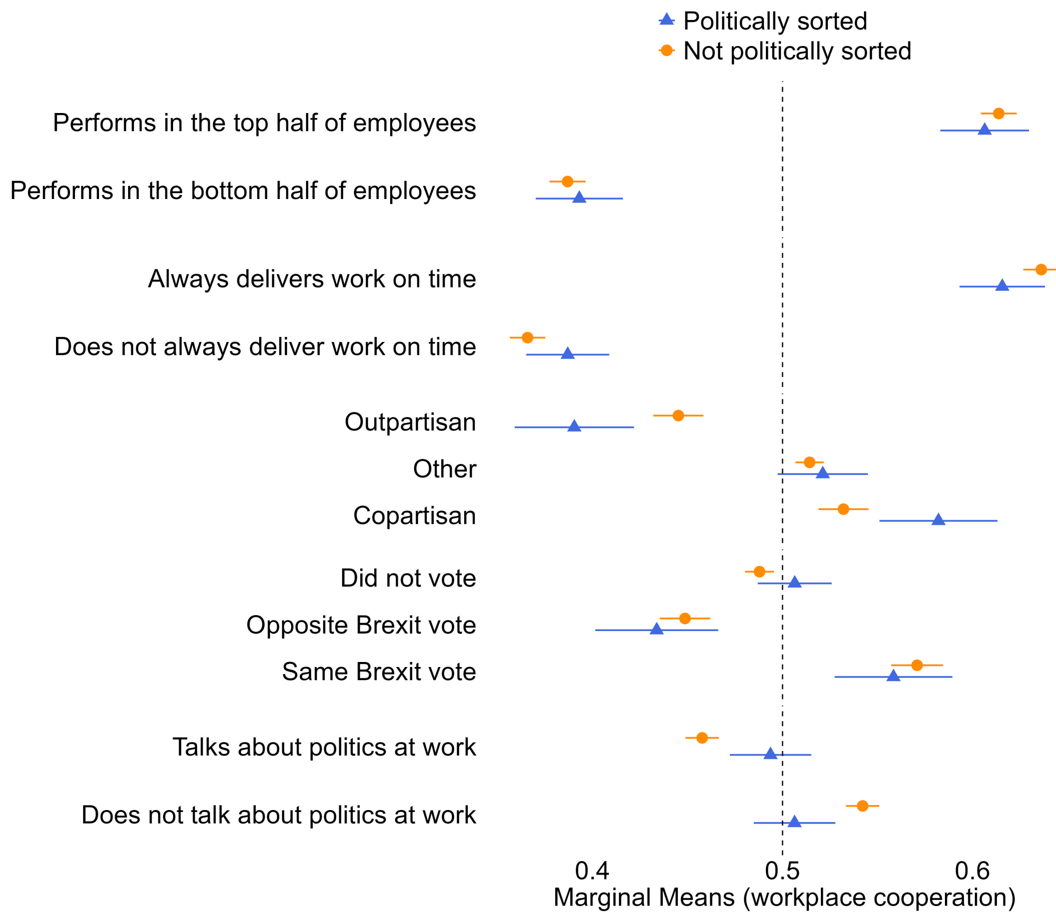
Notes: The figure shows conditional marginal means by reported ideological self-placement (0-10). Respondents scoring 0-4 are categorized as left-wing, 5 as centrists, and 6-10 as right-wing.

Figure B27: Conditional marginal means, by occupation



Notes: The figure shows the results for HTE by industry type relying on an industry-level, objective measure. Industries are classified into three categories: (1) *Sociocultural occupations* include Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Public Administration and Defence; (2) *Business occupations* include Information and Communication, Financial and Insurance Activities, Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities, and Real Estate Activities; (3) *Production/manual occupations* include Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation and Storage, Accommodation and Food Services, and other production and service sectors.

Figure B28: Conditional marginal means, by political sorting



Notes: The figure shows the results for HTE by political sorting. Political sorting is defined as left- or right-wing respondents who report working mainly with colleagues of the same ideological leaning. See Appendix for full variable description.

Figure B29: Marginal means, by field of education

Notes: This figure shows the results based on marginal means depending on field education, following Hooghe, Marks and Kamphorst (2024)'s definition.

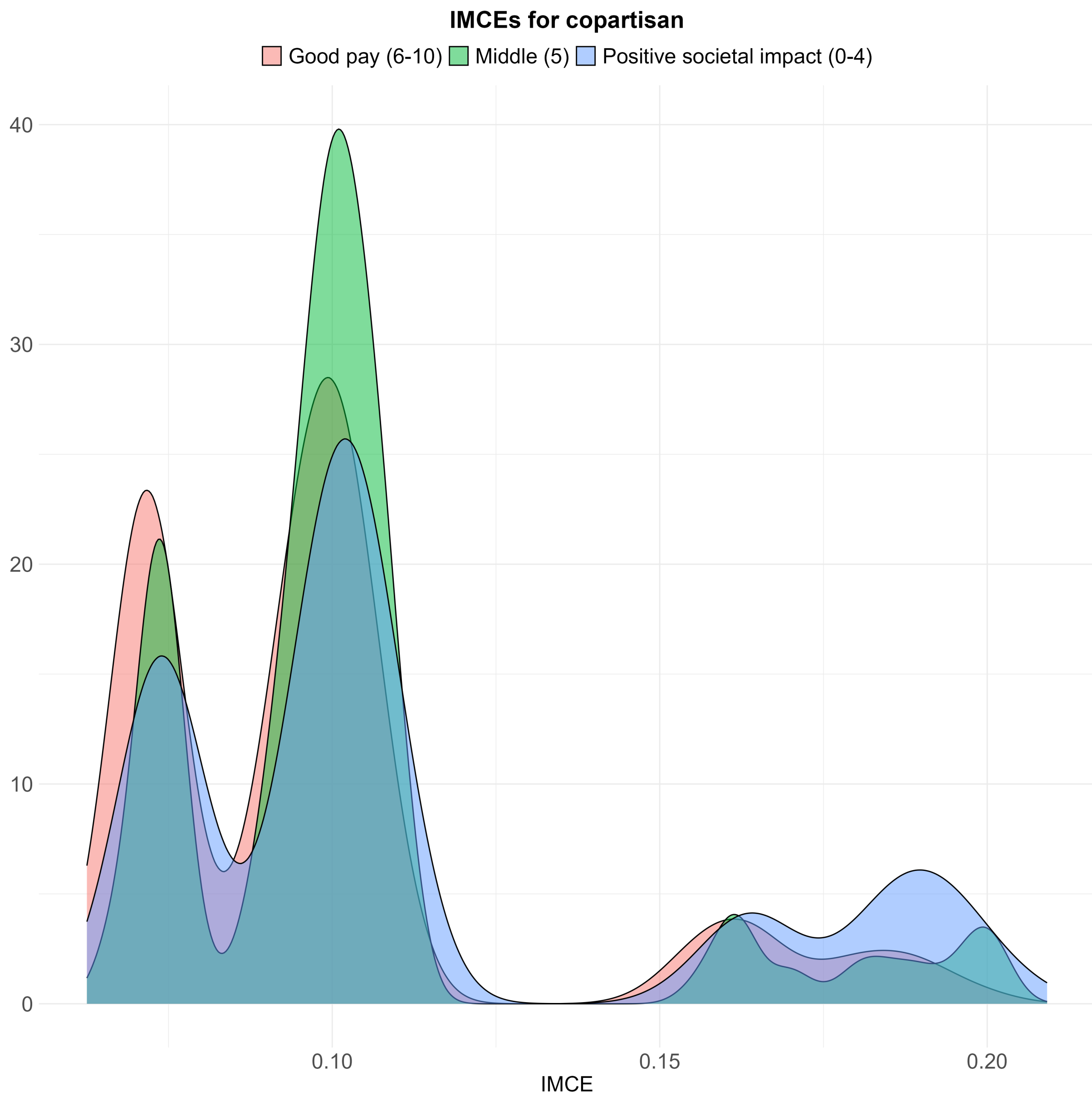
Figure B30: Marginal means, by low/high reward interdependence

Notes: This figure shows the results based on marginal means depending on treatment condition (high/low reward interdependence).

Figure B31: Marginal means, by low/high reward interdependence (high education respondents)

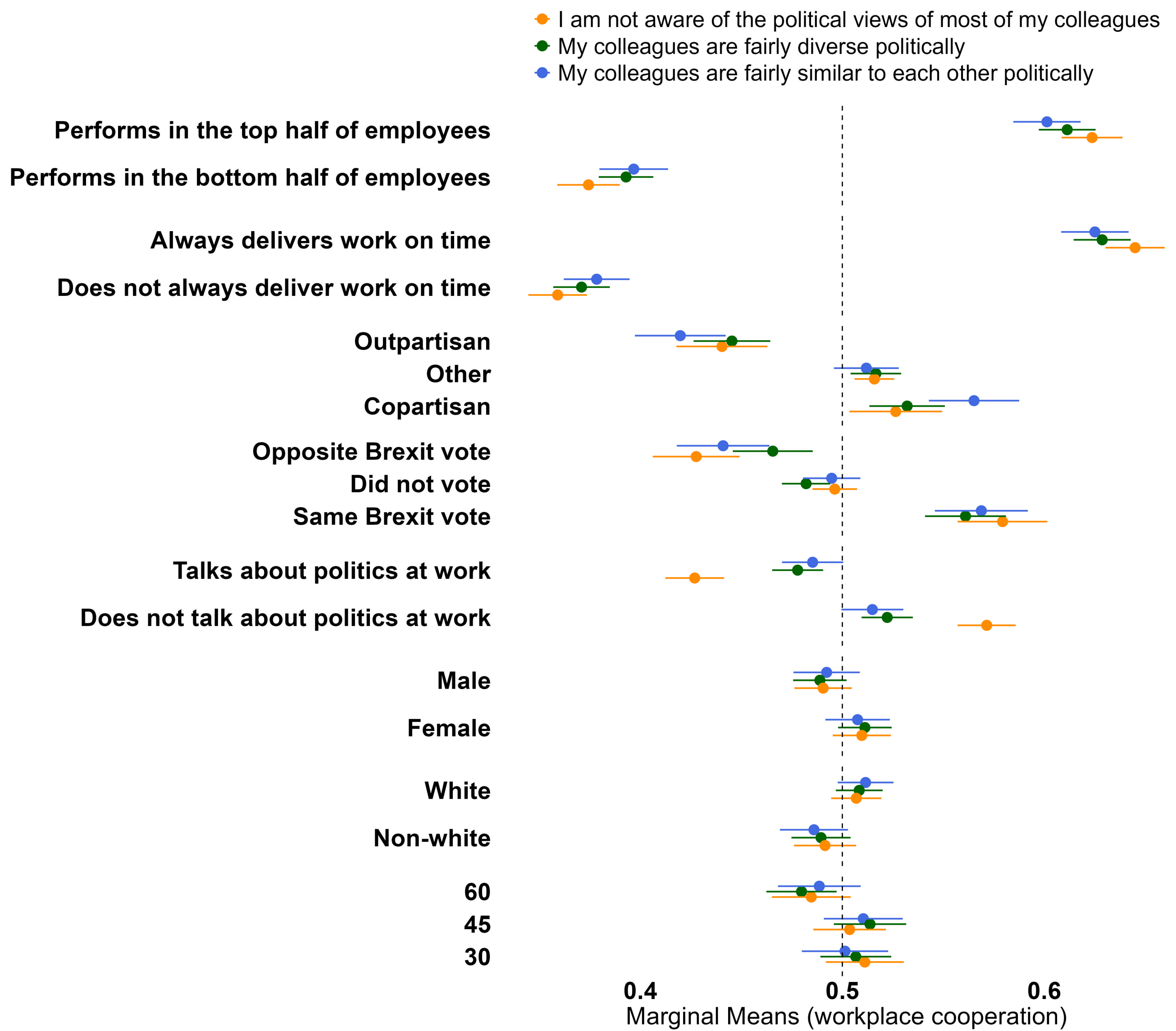
Notes: This figure shows the results based on marginal means depending on treatment condition (high/low reward interdependence) for high education respondents.

Figure B32: Distribution of IMCE estimates, by prosociality



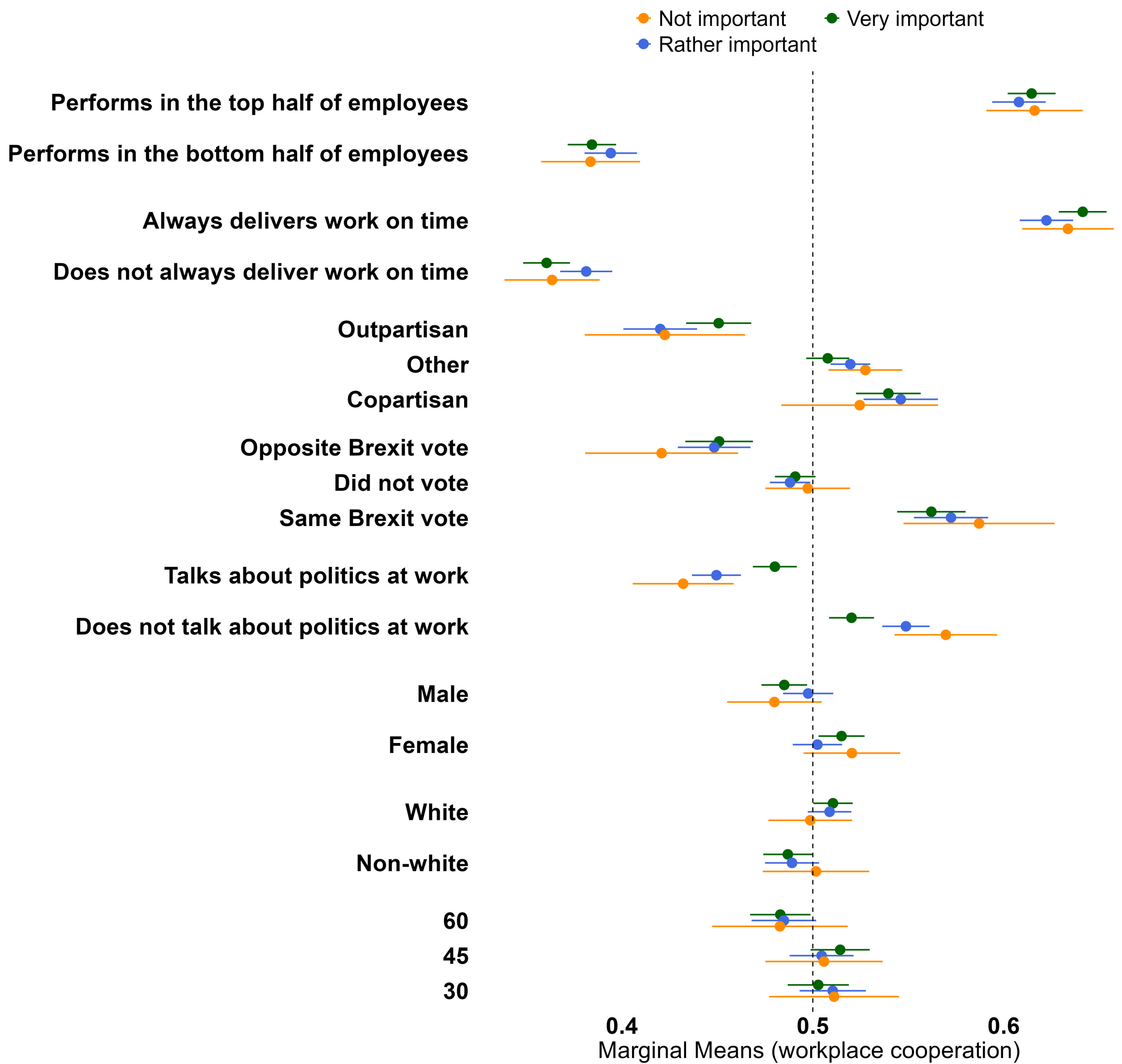
Notes: The figure shows the distribution of IMCEs (individual-level marginal component effects from a BART-estimated conjoint) by individuals' degree of prosociality.

Figure B33: Conditional marginal means, by perceived political diversity in the workplace



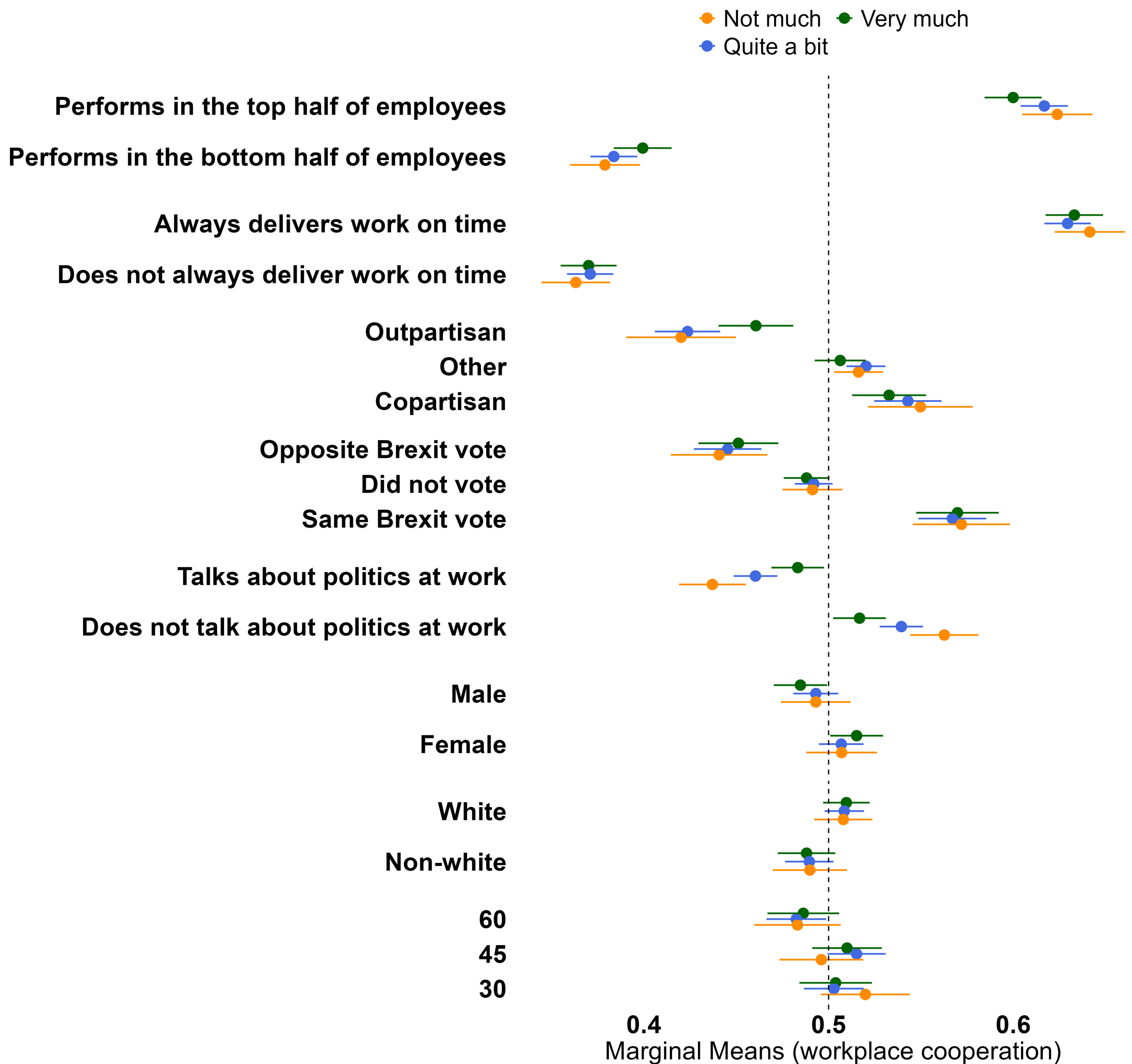
Notes: The figure shows the results for HTE by perceived political diversity in the workplace. Respondents are asked about their perception of the political diversity of their workplace: colleagues are politically similar, colleagues are politically diverse, or not aware of colleagues' political views.

Figure B34: Conditional marginal means, by reported degree of collaboration at work



Notes: The figure shows the results for HTE by their subjective degree of collaboration with colleagues required at their workplace. Respondents are grouped by how important collaboration with colleagues is in their current job: not important (combining "not important at all" and "not very important"), rather important, or very important.

Figure B35: Conditional marginal means, by expectations about friendship formation at work



Notes: The figure shows the results for HTE by their expectations on friendship formation at work. Respondents are grouped by how much they value the opportunity to form friendships with colleagues at work: not much (combining "not at all" and "not too much"), quite a bit, or very much.

Chapter 5

When Do Firms Speak Up? Employee Ideology and the Politics of Corporate Speech

Abstract

Large U.S. companies have increasingly voiced support for progressive causes, such as gender and racial equality and climate change. Despite a growing conservative backlash, little is known about the conditions under which firms publicly engage in these politically divisive topics. Linking Twitter data from S&P 500 companies (2015–2022) and 10-K filings (2015–2025) with donation-based measures of stakeholders' ideology, I show that firms with more progressive workforces are significantly more likely to publicly embrace progressive causes. Using proprietary monthly data on firm-level labour movements, I find that concerns over employee attraction and retention are an important mechanism driving this alignment. An event study around George Floyd's murder shows that firms with Democratic-leaning workforces responded more strongly to this unanticipated shock than otherwise similar firms with conservative workforces, suggesting that workforce ideology can influence corporate speech beyond pure sorting. However, the Republican-led backlash since 2020 has moderated (but not eliminated) the influence of progressive workers on corporate speech. These results suggest that a growing, politically realigned group of highly educated employees can shape the public discourse of traditionally conservative, market-driven institutions.

5.1 Introduction

Large corporations can influence political outcomes in several ways, such as by lobbying specific politicians or making monetary donations (Weschle, 2022). Traditionally, these practices aimed at influencing politics are conducted quietly, with the aim of avoiding public scrutiny (Page, Seawright and Lacombe, 2018; Culpepper, 2010). In recent years, however, a growing number of large firms across democracies have publicly taken positions on a wide range of social and political issues beyond their core business interests (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Barari, 2024), including racial and gender equality and environmental issues, among others. In particular, explicit stances on progressive-leaning causes have become much more frequent than outright conservative position-taking.

As corporate sociopolitical speech rises, existing research shows that it is broadly aligned with the ideological preferences of key stakeholders (Barari, 2024; Conway and Boxell, 2024; McKean and King, 2024). At the same time, the rise of progressive-leaning corporate speech is likely connected to the leftward shift among corporate directors and executives (Steel, 2024) and to shifting investor preferences as sustainable funds grow in importance (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024). Yet we know little about when and why certain stakeholders are more influential in shaping corporate public stances. In particular, the role of employees' ideological leanings remains undertheorized, despite growing evidence on the increasing importance that progressive, highly educated workers attach to the nonpecuniary dimensions of work and sociopolitical value alignment (Colonnelli et al., 2023; Wilmers and Zhang, 2022). Understanding corporate sociopolitical speech is particularly crucial when we consider the influence that large US corporations, such as Meta or Amazon, exert in shaping social and political norms through their social media profiles or those of their executives.

In this article, I argue that progressive-leaning knowledge economy workers play a key role in explaining the rise —and progressive turn— of corporate sociopolitical speech. In the knowledge economy, these workers, who have come to hold increasingly socially progressive positions (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2023; Zacher, 2024; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019) and derive a strong sense of personal identity from their jobs (Gallup, 2014), are of growing importance to the operations of many firms. This gives them substantial leverage

in shaping what companies say on politically salient social issues. Following this logic, I argue that companies will be most responsive to the ideological leanings of current and prospective employees when attracting and retaining talent is more challenging. In addition, companies may also be aware of the positive downstream effects of aligning with their workforce on motivation and performance (Spenkuch, Teso and Xu, 2023; Gupta and Briscoe, 2020).

But there are limits to the influence of employees. Most importantly, due to fear of potential backlash from politicians, even firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce should be less likely to publicly engage in progressive causes when they are headquartered in Republican-led states. Finally, aware of the importance of aligning with their employees' ideological values, my theory predicts that conservative CEOs and boards will allow corporate progressive speech to unfold when it is consistent with their workforce's preferences.

I rely on multiple data sources to test my theory. To construct the outcome variable, I analyse Twitter data on the social and political speech of 442 publicly traded S&P 500 companies from January 2016 to December 2022 using a new dictionary of progressive-leaning mentions. To overcome the unavailability of Twitter data since 2023, I develop a second dictionary using text data from all 10-K filings published by S&P 500 firms in the US between 2015 and 2025. This allows me to construct a novel dataset of firm-level attention to social issues, such as climate change, diversity and inclusion, and gender equality, for 500 publicly traded companies over 10 years. To measure employees' ideological leanings, I rely on a donations-based measure of non-executive employees' political donations, as well as on another firm-level measure that combines data on the geographic distribution of employees across US metro areas with presidential election results. To measure firms' recruitment needs, I use proprietary data from People Data Labs to construct a firm-specific measure of monthly net headcount growth, while I turn to Bloomberg ESG scores to analyse whether corporate progressive speech on Twitter translates systematically into better ESG performance. Finally, I test the microfoundations of my argument by analysing survey data from the Pew Research Center in the US.

The findings provide broad support for my theoretical expectations. First, I show that firms with a more Democratic-leaning workforce tend to engage more frequently with progressive

causes in both their corporate Twitter accounts and in 10-K filings. Democratic-leaning employees in particular tend to have a more decisive influence on firm political speech than other relevant stakeholders, especially when firms face strong recruitment and retention needs. While Democratic-leaning firms do not engage substantially more than Republican-leaning firms in contexts of low headcount expansion, they engage up to twice as much in months when recruitment and attraction needs are more pressing. Event-study analyses around salient events (e.g., George Floyd's murder) show that workforce ideology is particularly relevant during high-salience events. Findings from these event studies, additional placebo tests, and the lagged nature of the employee ideology measure significantly mitigate endogeneity and selection concerns. While corporate political speech is not necessarily associated with economically and/or internally meaningful actions, I find that a higher rate of progressive mentions on Twitter is positively associated with higher ESG scores.

At the same time, my findings also speak to the limits of employee influence and the constraints imposed by anti-ESG/DEI legislation. I find that companies with a progressive workforce located in Republican-led states are significantly less likely to speak publicly about progressive causes, a constraint that has intensified since 2020. Similarly, while evidence to date from firms' 10-K filings shows a sharp decline in progressive mentions across the board in 2025, I find that employees' ideology has become even more important for explaining variation across firms in recent times. Finally, survey evidence shows that Democrats, highly educated workers (especially those with postgraduate education), and those in knowledge-economy occupations are more supportive of progressive workforce policies and corporate sociopolitical activism.

This article contributes to several scholarly debates. First, while much attention has been paid to how employers use their resources to politically mobilize their employees (Hertel-Fernandez, 2018; Stuckatz, 2022) and consumers (Culpepper and Thelen, 2020), my article contributes to a nascent literature on the role of stakeholders' political ideology in influencing and constraining firms' political behaviour, particularly regarding political speech (Barari, 2024), corporate political spending (Li and Disalvo, 2023) and responsiveness to social activists' demands (Gupta and Briscoe, 2020). This article goes a step further by theorizing companies' strategic decision to engage in corporate sociopolitical speech for talent attrac-

tion and recruitment purposes; however, I also show that, as corporate sociopolitical speech has been mostly politically progressive-sounding, and most strongly supported by progressive workers, stakeholders' influence can be particularly undermined by changes in the political environment and government legislation, as exemplified by the decline in corporate progressive speech following Donald Trump's return to the White House in January 2025. The fact that conservative CEOs and boards of companies with Democratic-leaning workforces do not appear to prevent firms from speaking up on progressive causes aligns with existing findings on the greater responsiveness of corporations to Democratic-leaning stakeholders (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*).

Second, this article builds on the political behaviour literature about the electoral realignment along geographical and educational lines in the United States (Zacher, 2024; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2024; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2019) and other advanced economies (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2019; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Ansell and Gingrich, 2021), improving our understanding of the broader implications of these transformations beyond the electoral arena. My findings suggest that the social embeddedness of the modern knowledge economy in culturally progressive values (Iversen and Soskice, 2019) leads to a change in expectations from workers and organizations about how they should relate to the social and political world. This points to a broader transformation in how progressive movements view their relationship with big corporations, shifting from the traditional scepticism around an economically conservative agenda to seeing them as important allies in changing social norms. This is particularly important in a context where knowledge economy workers embrace purpose-driven visions of work and get a strong sense of identity from it, while other traditional institutions of in-person socialization and political action have weakened.

Third, this article contributes to a growing literature on the implications of political identities for social interactions outside the political arena (McConnell et al., 2018; Colonnelli, Neto and Teso, 2025; Spenkuch, Teso and Xu, 2023; Cornago Bonal and Raffaelli, 2025). However, less is known about how the distribution of employees' preferences over political and social issues affects organizational outcomes and, most importantly, the likelihood of companies speaking up about these issues. These findings show that, while it is possible that companies

are sincere in their commitments to progressive causes, they tend to engage more strongly in circumstances where competition for knowledge economy employees is fiercer. Therefore, although some of the analysed topics may appear to be outside the traditional business interests of firms, there are business and operational reasons that lead them to engage with these issues.

The article is structured as follows. First, I introduce the broader theoretical claims after engaging with different strands of the literature in political science, management, and economic sociology. I then describe the empirical approach and data sources, explaining how I operationalize the main variables. Third, I present the main findings, address identification challenges, and introduce placebo tests as well as an event-study design. Fourth, I turn to survey evidence to confirm the microfoundations of the argument. Finally, I conclude by summarizing the findings and outlining their broader implications for the study of politics and firms in knowledge-based societies.

5.2 Theory

Despite the sharp increase in corporate political speech over the past decade, political scientists have paid little attention to explaining when and why it emerges. While some may interpret this kind of speech as "cheap talk" —a low cost action that does not always translate into meaningful action— it has already proved consequential for many firm-level outcomes. Evidence from experimental and observational studies suggests that speaking out can harm companies on a range of economic (e.g., negative investors' reactions) and organizational outcomes (e.g., decreasing employee motivation and performance among misaligned workers, or reducing the available pool of potential employees) (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Burbano, 2021; Panagopoulos et al., 2020; Wowak, Busenbark and Hambrick, 2022; Appels, 2023). But why, then, are so many large corporations still speaking up? And why are they doing it more frequently over time?

Political economists have examined how employers use their resources to politically mobilize their employees (Hertel-Fernandez, 2018; Stuckatz, 2022) and consumers (Culpepper and Thelen, 2020). More recently, however, a growing body of research has examined the reverse

pathway: the ways in which stakeholders shape and constrain the political behavior of firms. Stakeholder' ideological leanings influence not only corporates' public stances on politically relevant matters (Barari, 2024; Conway and Boxell, 2024; Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Steel, 2024), but also decisions around corporate political spending (Li, 2018; Li and Disalvo, 2023) and workplace internal policies related to highly sensitive issues such as abortion (Adrjan et al., 2023).

In particular, when it comes to corporate sociopolitical speech, Barari (2024)'s analysis of around 2 million Twitter and Instagram posts from 1,000 corporate brands in the United States shows that companies' sociopolitical speech is broadly aligned with the political preferences of key potential audiences, especially employees, consumers, and elected officials. Both Barari (2024) and Cassidy and Kempf (2024) indicate that left-leaning corporate speech is much more frequent than conservative speech, especially since 2019. Meanwhile, Steel (2024) finds that the left-wing shift in the ideological leanings of corporate directors and executives in the US — mainly due to growing gender and racial diversity — is key to understand companies' public stances on LGBTQ-related legislation. This aligns well with the fact that corporate elites themselves perceive that the business landscape is becoming more aligned with the Democrats on social issues (Hersh and Shah, 2023), and that business leaders tend to be more responsive to Democratic-leaning stakeholders (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*).

Existing research, however, has said little about the conditions under which these different actors will be more or less influential. And, most importantly, it has undertheorized the role of employees, particularly in explaining why companies engage in progressive-leaning political speech. In this article, I put employees at the forefront of our understanding of corporate progressive speech in large publicly traded US corporations.

To develop my theory, I first draw on political sociology research about the growing electoral importance of culturally liberal knowledge economy workers —those with high educational attainment and working in expanding sectors of the knowledge economy, from healthcare to information and technology (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2023; Zacher, 2024; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Ansell and Gingrich, 2021). I propose that this strand of research, together with recent work emphasizing the importance of nonpecuniary

dimensions of work for highly educated workers (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022; Colonnelli et al., 2023), is crucial for understanding the recent leftward shift in corporate political speech in the US as well as its rapid partisan polarization.

Second, drawing on standard labour economic models, I propose that labour market conditions, such as firms' attraction and retention needs, are also key to understanding when companies will be most responsive to employees' ideological leanings. I argue, however, that politicians can raise the costs of corporate political speech and actions by introducing legislation limiting what companies can do and say and, ultimately, counteracting the influence of employees. Conservative-leaning CEOs and boards, on the other hand, will not necessarily oppose left-leaning stance-taking when their workforce is also left-leaning, since they care about the potential negative consequences of employee/employer misalignment in terms of firm performance and recruitment.

In the rest of this section, I develop these different components of my theoretical framework.

5.2.1 Corporate Sociopolitical Speech as a Distinct Phenomenon

Corporate sociopolitical speech has emerged as a distinctive concept in recent years. Hambrick and Wowak (2021) argue that it is substantively different from existing forms of political influence or corporate social responsibility practices. First, unlike lobbying or corporate donations, a key feature of corporate sociopolitical speech is its high visibility. Second, since it involves only communicating the firm's stance on an issue, it does not involve any costs —although certain stances might be accompanied by cost-related commitments. Third, as a form of communication, it is not necessarily related to specific internal workplace policies or corporate social responsibility practices —although, again, companies may try to align their positioning on socially relevant issues with what they do internally.

In line with previous findings (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Barari, 2024), there are strong reasons to expect that progressive corporate sociopolitical speech is much more frequent than conservative speech.[1] One is that Democrats are significantly more supportive than Republi-

[1] However, other responses are possible. These include taking a more socially conservative position, such as Chick-fil-A's CEO opposing same-sex marriage in June 2012, or taking an "apolitical" stance, acknowledging the event but not engaging with it. For instance, the Business Roundtable, a trade group formed by CEOs of large US companies, said it "does not have a position on this issue" when the Supreme Court decision against

cans of companies publicly engaging with broader societal issues (Cheng and Horowitz, 2025).[2] A second reason is that, given the traditional alliance between corporate America and the Republican Party, businesses may be particularly responsive to Democratic-leaning stakeholders (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*) as they broaden their political coalition and show responsiveness to previously less represented actors.

5.2.2 Employees as Drivers of Corporate Political Speech

The rise of left-leaning corporate sociopolitical speech can be understood as a product of broader social and political transformations characteristic of knowledge-based societies. First, the expansion of university education and growing presence of traditionally underrepresented groups have made the knowledge economy workforce more politically progressive (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2023; Ansell and Gingrich, 2021; Zacher, 2024; Iversen and Soskice, 2019) — this might also extend to the upper management and boards, but the evidence is so far mixed (Steel, 2024; Fos, Kempf and Tsoutsoura, 2025). Second, as highly educated individuals derive a strong sense of personal identity from their job (Gallup, 2014) and care more strongly about the nonpecuniary dimensions of work (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022; Colonnelli et al., 2023), they also demand that their employers align with their social and political values. Finally, in the United States, the economic geography of high-skilled, knowledge-intensive jobs overlaps substantially with the left-leaning political stance of many urban, densely populated economic centers. As a consequence, workers are often embedded in socially and politically homogeneous networks —both inside and outside the workplace— that reinforce their views.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that organizations have increasingly accommodated their actions to the demands of their workers. Business leaders across the political spectrum perceive that, over the past decade, businesses have become more aligned with the Democrats, and that Democratic-leaning stakeholders tend to be more influential in defining the company's political orientation (Hersh and Shah, 2025*a*). Employees, in fact, are perceived as the stakeholder pushing companies most strongly towards the Democrats (Hersh and Shah,

abortion rights was leaked. Most importantly, companies can also decide to stay silent.

[2] According to a February 2025 Pew Research survey, 66% of Democrats say that companies and organizations making public statements on political or social issues is very or somewhat important, compared with 34% of Republicans — these figures have remained broadly unchanged since the previous 2020 survey.

2025*a*). Similarly, a Conference Board survey of business leaders shows that the pressure to take a stand on women's reproductive rights after the Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe v. Wade came mainly from employees (78%) and employee resource groups (55%).[3]

- **Hypothesis 1**: Companies with a more Democratic-leaning workforce are more likely to adopt progressive stances on politically and socially salient issues

5.2.3 Firms' Recruitment Needs and Corporate Progressive Speech

But when are companies most likely to be responsive to their employees' ideological leanings? I propose that labour market conditions, and in particular the firms' recruitment needs at a given time, will play a key role in shaping companies' degree of responsiveness. In other words, under favourable labour market conditions, workers will be particularly influential in shaping not only their material compensation but also how companies engage with politically charged, high-salience social issues.

When firms are rapidly expanding their workforce, the current and future workforce — that is, those already working at companies and those who might work there in the future— is likely to have an advantageous position to shape companies' sociopolitical speech. This is mainly because in such scenarios attracting and retaining high-skilled employees becomes more difficult and costly. Echoing Hirschman (1972), current or prospective employees will have more voice (ideological influence) if the threat of exit (leaving the company, for current employees, or choosing another firm that aligns more closely with their values, for prospective employees) is credible.

Two factors make this particularly relevant for knowledge-intensive firms. On the one hand, the importance of qualified human capital for these companies' operations should make firms particularly responsive to employee demands, especially when retaining and attracting talent is more challenging. On the other hand, these are firms where workers derive a stronger sense of identity from their jobs, which is likely to lead them to place greater importance on sociopolitical value alignment (Gallup, 2014).

[3] According to this survey, comparatively much less pressure came from senior management (26%), consumers (12%), and investors (3%).

In contrast, when firms are not expanding their workforce and actively competing for talent, the relative influence of employees will decrease. Without the urgent need to attract and retain workers, the benefits of progressive positioning decline while the risks of alienating customers, investors, or conservative politicians remain. Firms will therefore be more likely to default to silence on politically divisive issues. In this context, firms with Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning workforces will show a similar degree of (low) engagement with progressive causes.

- **Hypothesis 2**: Firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce are more likely to adopt progressive corporate sociopolitical speech when they face a more difficult environment to retain employees and attract new ones.

5.2.4 Boundary Conditions and Cross-Pressures

Beyond employees, publicly traded corporations walk a fine line when engaging with politically charged, salient issues, such as diversity and inclusion policies or climate change, that are highly polarizing in a context like the US. While stakeholders may sometimes be ideologically aligned, in other cases firms find themselves cross-pressured, with employees, consumers, CEOs, board, and state politicians pulling in different directions.

This creates strategic trade-offs where firms weigh the benefits of appealing to one stakeholder group against the costs of alienating others. Firms will be most responsive to employee preferences when other stakeholders are either aligned or lack the power (or willingness) to impose significant costs. In contrast, when other stakeholders do have these favourable conditions, the influence of employees will be attenuated.

Politicians are one of the most resourceful actors: they can raise the costs of corporate political speech (e.g., speaking up on a political issue) and actions (e.g., introducing specific workforce policies) through legislation and regulatory action. When the legal and political environment becomes hostile to progressive-leaning speech, firms will then become more wary about stance-taking that might call for political scrutiny or economic retaliation.

In the US, several examples in recent years illustrate this argument. Disney's initial decision to remain silent regarding the Republican-sponsored "Don't Say Gay" law — most likely

prioritizing a politically heterogeneous consumer base and wanting to avoid confrontation with Florida's State Governor Ron DeSantis — which caused significant outcry among Disney employees, who forced the company to change course and publicly oppose the bill.[4] This reorientation of Disney's position then triggered significant retaliation from DeSantis' state administration (Grimes, 2023). Beyond this example, between 2021 and 2024, Republican-led state legislatures passed 44 bills penalizing firms for considering ESG criteria in business decisions (Rives, 2025). For instance, Texas's Senate Bill 13 encouraged public entities to divest from ESG-focused companies, while Florida introduced similar legislation in 2023. At the federal level, executive orders have restricted diversity and inclusion activities across government departments.

- **Hypothesis 3**: Firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce will engage less publicly with progressive causes when they are located in a Republican-led state, particularly in recent years.

The ideological leanings of other key actors — consumers, CEOs, and boards — likely play a role in how firms position themselves publicly, if at all, on sociopolitical issues. The large consumer-oriented conglomerates included in the S&P 500 (the pool of companies included in my analysis) tend to have a more politically heterogeneous consumer base, in part due to the large geographical dispersion of their retail locations. Furthermore, unlike in knowledge-economy firms, consumer-oriented business locations tend to be located in less urban and, consequently, less progressive areas, which is likely to influence their employees' ideological leanings. Following from this, I expect consumer-oriented companies in sectors such as consumer discretionary and consumer staples to engage less publicly with progressive corporate sociopolitical speech than employee-oriented, knowledge-intensive firms.

Both CEO and board ideology are also likely to influence corporations' decision-making on how to approach politically sensitive issues. Left-leaning CEOs may be more willing to speak up, especially when their operations rely on a progressive-leaning workforce. This does not mean, however, that conservative CEOs will always oppose left-leaning stance-taking.

[4] According to the 2023 Axios Harris Poll 100, a ranking of the reputation of the most known US companies, these developments were politically polarizing for the public: Disney's reputation among Democrats increased from 72.5 to 80.3 in 2023, while it decreased from 75 to 61 among Republicans.

Because conservative CEOs tend to take a more instrumental approach to corporate activism, they want to avoid decisions that might harm their business in any way (Wowak and Busenbark, 2024).[5] For instance, distancing the firm's values from those held by most employees could cause internal friction or reduce employees' organizational commitment. As a consequence, conservative CEOs will tend not to publicly stand against the preferences of their left-leaning workforce.

Similarly, boards of directors can play an influential role in how firms approach politically sensitive issues. Recent evidence shows that their ideological composition matters for corporate responses to controversial legislation, such as anti-LGBTQ laws (Steel, 2024). As with CEOs, I expect boards' preferences regarding corporate sociopolitical speech to be guided by profit maximizing and operational motives. This should lead them to want the company's values to align with their employees, especially in times of a challenging employee attraction and retention landscape for the firm.

- **Hypothesis 4**: The presence of conservative boards or conservative CEOs will not reduce the influence of progressive-leaning employees on the likelihood of corporate progressive speech.

5.3 Data and Case Selection

Case Selection

Several factors make the United States and ideal case to test my theory. First, the US is home to some of the largest and most politically and economically influential firms in democratic contexts, particularly in the technology, financial, and consumer-facing sectors; given their influence in shaping not only the legislative process but also broader social norms, studying when they publicly engage with socially and politically salient issues becomes particularly relevant. Second, the country is undergoing a significant political realignment across the business community, with many corporations having already distanced themselves from the

[5] In line with this intuition, Bhagwat et al. (2020) find that investors react positively when the sociopolitical position taken by firms is closer to one held by employees, consumers, and state legislators; it is negative, however, when the position of the firm deviates from these three stakeholders.

traditionally business-friendly Republican Party.[6] More recently, conservative proposals against the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) agenda appear on the rise in the US (Masters and Temple-West, 2023), which suggests that polarization around these issues is increasing at least among political and business elites. Third, the availability of employees' donations for political platforms, candidates, and PACs in the United States is particularly useful for the purpose of this study, since it allows me to have a proxy for the political ideology of employees at the firm-level. Lastly, from a labour market perspective, the lower job tenure and higher worker mobility in the US compared to knowledge-based societies in Europe fit particularly well the theoretical foundations of my study.

Data Sources and Measurement

Sample of Companies

The sample of firms in this article consists of 442 companies from the S&P 500 index in February 2023.[7] The focus on publicly traded companies with large market capitalization across a wide range of industries — including knowledge-intensive, capital-intensive, and consumer-oriented companies, among others— is ideal for this study, since it allows to determine the conditions under which my theory is most likely to apply. Furthermore, since this pool includes some of the most economically and politically influential firms in the world, analysing their position-taking on social and political issues is particularly important as a social scientist. All company names and their respective Twitter handles are found in Appendix Table C1-C9, and the absolute values and relative shares by sector are found in Appendix Figure C1.

Corporate Political Speech (Twitter Data)

I first measure corporate progressive speech by analysing all tweets issued by these 442 companies on the social media platform Twitter (now called X) between 2015 and 2022. Twitter's

[6]While some technology leaders have recently aligned with President Donald Trump, existing academic research shows that technology entrepreneurs traditionally align with the Democratic Party (Broockman, Ferenstein and Malhotra, 2019).

[7]The initial analysis targeted all 500 firms but 58 were excluded due to not having an active Twitter account or having very low activity during the study period. In addition, following Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) and Cassidy and Kempf (2024), we exclude company brands in newspapers, publishing, and television broadcasting, since their main activity is to report on political news.

popularity as many companies' preferred communication channel during the study period, as well as the time granularity of its data, made it an important source for corporate communications (Cassidy and Kempf, 2024; Barari, 2024). While companies' stakeholders may not always be aware of every tweet posted by a corporate account, business journalists often monitored Twitter accounts, especially during politically salient events (Hsu, 2020), reporting on companies' position-taking. Therefore, given that employees, shareholders, and politicians learn about companies' stances on different issues through Twitter, tweets posted by these companies are an important object of study. When downloading posts from the Twitter application programming interface (API), I exclude replies or retweets for comparability purposes. After imposing these restrictions, I obtain approximately 1.4mn tweets between 2015 and 2022.

Previous studies analysing Twitter corporate accounts have calculated companies' partisan speech by using similarity measures between companies' Twitter activity and politicians' Twitter accounts (Barari, 2024; Cassidy and Kempf, 2024). These studies have shown that corporate political speech on Twitter is rare, and when it occurs, it tends to be about left-leaning, progressive causes. Drawing substantively on these studies but deviating methodologically from them, I take a dictionary-based approach to analyse Twitter-based corporate political speech.

Following Latura and Weeks (2023)'s approach, I create a dictionary of tokens that capture a range of topics that have become especially salient for Democrats and, more broadly, for progressive individuals in the US over the past decade. This dictionary contains the most relevant words and short phrases indicative of attention to the following issues: (1) diversity and inclusion, (2) gender-related matters, (3) queer rights, (4) racial inequality, (5) climate change and environmental issues, (6) economic inequality, and (7) social impact-related topics.

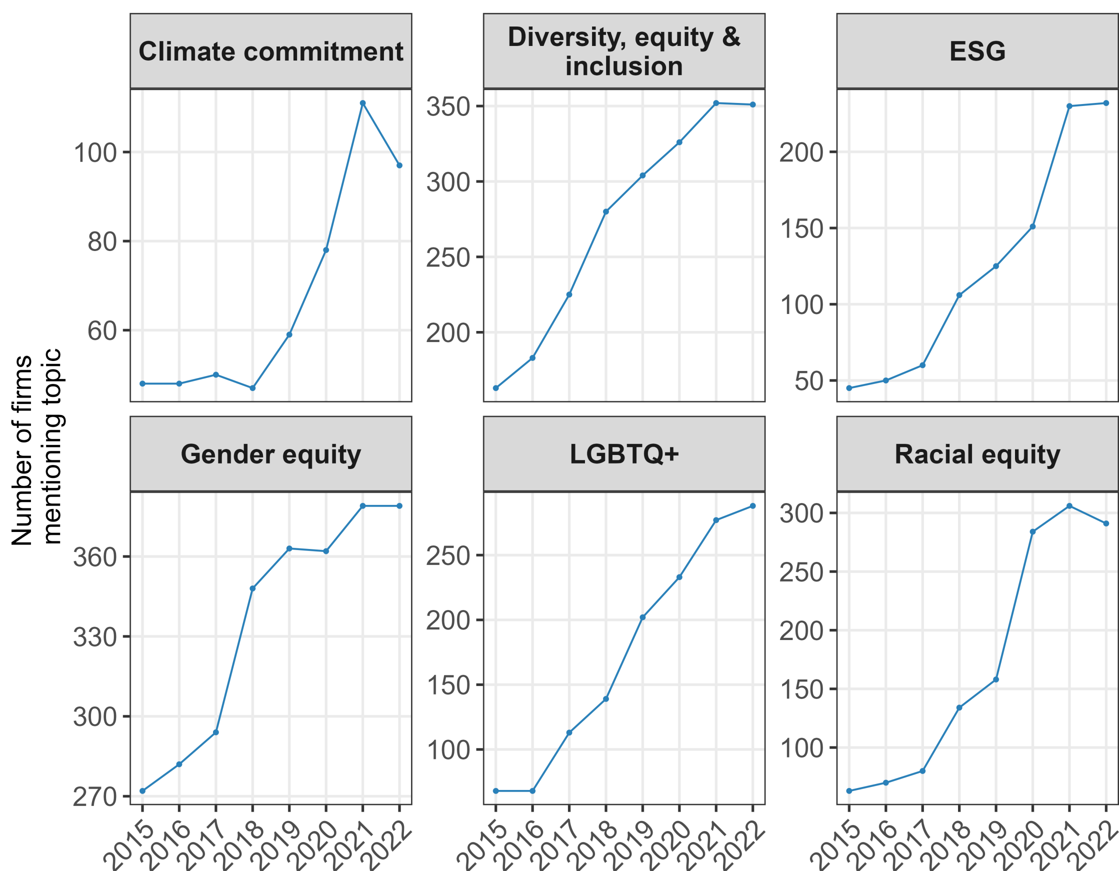
The topics included in the analysis are selected for their high prominence during the study period. Most of these issues are central to the universalism-particularism divide that has become politically relevant over the past few decades in knowledge-based societies (Beramendi et al., 2015; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Bornschier et al., 2024). The specific tokens within each topic were selected based on a close qualitative reading of several out-of-sample texts drawn from *Diversity and Sustainability* annual reports published in 2021. The final

selection was informed both by this qualitative analysis and by suggestions generated using ChatGPT, which was prompted with the out-of-sample texts to identify socially progressive language likely to appear in corporate Twitter communications. Appendix Table C11 displays the full dictionary.[8]

Drawing on this dictionary of companies' progressive Twitter speech, Figure 1 shows that, consistent with the trends documented by Cassidy and Kempf (2024) and Barari (2024), S&P 500 companies have paid increasing attention to these progressive causes. Appendix Figure C2 shows that environment-related mentions represent around 31% of the total number of progressive mentions included in the dictionary, followed by women-related mentions (25%), social impact-related mentions (16%), diversity, equity and inclusion mentions (14%), inequality-related mentions (9%), race-related mentions (4.5%), and queer-related mentions (0.6%). Using monthly data, Appendix Figure C3 shows that for some topics, such as mentions to women, LGBTQ+ and racial issues, there are clear spikes around socially salient events. However, a similar upward trend is observed in Appendix Figure C4 when removing months in which companies tend to repeatedly tweet about International Women's Day, Pride Month, or Black Americans' rights.

[8] As a reference point, I create an additional dictionary containing business and economic tokens, such as "consumer" or "investor" (see Appendix Table C11). These are used to benchmark how often companies speak about sociopolitical issues compared to these more traditional business concepts, which should not increase over time and are not closely connected with employees' political leanings.

Figure 1: Number of companies engaging with dictionary topics on Twitter, 2015-2022



Corporate Political Speech (K-10 filings)

To extend the time horizon of my study beyond 2022[9], I turn to analysing progressive mentions in all 10-K filings published by the 442 S&P 500 companies for which I analyse corporate Twitter profiles. The SEC Form 10-K is an annual filing required by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that provides a detailed overview of a company's financial condition and operations. These filings are closely monitored by financial analysts and journalists alike, and companies are legally accountable for the information they provide in the 10-K filing. In recent years, management and business scholars have increasingly paid attention to them by analysing their content mostly using computational methods (Baker et al., 2024; Cho, Krishnan and Cho, 2024; Kim, Wang and Wu, 2023).

[9]The Twitter data ends in December 2022, when Elon Musk's takeover of the company (rebranded as X) restricted access to the platform's API for research purposes.

I download all 10-K filings between 2015 and 2025 for the companies included in this study using R *edgar* package, a tool used for the retrieval and parsing of corporate filings. Then, I construct a novel dataset of firm-level attention to social issues, such as climate change, diversity and inclusion, and gender equality. The same dictionary used for the Twitter data is employed to identify attention to social issues in 10-K filings. Appendix Table C26 displays the full progressive dictionary based on 10-K filings. The unigrams, bigrams, and short sentences are almost identical to the dictionary created to analyse Twitter data; however, small modifications are required to capture specific dynamics associated with 10-K filings text (e.g., hashtags are removed) and, as companies are more likely to discuss specific workplace policies in 10-K filings than on Twitter, I pay more attention to specific workplace policies (e.g., parental leave, reproductive rights).

Donation-Based Employees' Ideology

To construct a firm-year measure of employees' ideological leanings, as well as of other stakeholders (CEO, board, and top managers), I use an open dataset made available by Mannor and Busenbark (2025), which includes donation-based indicators of political ideology (DIPI) for each of these actors. The authors replicate existing studies (updating their time coverage and making them comparable) by compiling data from different sources —mainly the Federal Election Commission, Open Secrets, Execucomp (for top managers), and BoardEx (for boards of directors)— to generate these firm-year measures of the political ideology of these four actors. The authors follow standard procedures in the literature to identify these different types of actors — for instance, distinguishing between non-executive employees and top managers — and calculate these ideological scores by firm and year between 1992 and 2022.

Most importantly, each firm-year measure is calculated as a rolling average of the donation patterns of a given actor over the prior ten years. For instance, for a company like Amazon, the non-executive employees' ideology measure in 2022 is calculated as the rolling average of Amazon's workers' donations behavior between 2012 and 2022. The fact that non-executive employees' ideology is averaged over the past ten years is particularly useful for this study, since it allows us to get a less noisy and more reliable proxy of the broader ideological outlook

of corporate workforces.

When an executive or a director is missing in the political donations database, the authors follow previous studies (Fewer and Tarakci, 2025) and assume them to be politically neutral (assigning them a 0.5 score). The final database provides ideological scores for each actor ranging from 0 (most conservative) to 1 (most progressive). As in previous research, a key limitation of this donation-based approach is that donations below $200 are not reported by the FEC, limiting the population of donors covered in these datasets.

Operationalization of non-executive employees' ideology. I classify firm-year observations based on the donation-based ideology of non-executive employees. Specifically, when running interaction models, I define Democratic-aligned firms as those with an employee ideology score greater than 0.60, Republican-aligned firms as those with a score below 0.40, and mixed firms as those falling in between. Formally:

$$\text{Employee Ideology}_{it} = \begin{cases} \text{Democratic-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{employees}} > 0.60, \\ \text{Republican-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{employees}} < 0.40, \\ \text{Mixed} & \text{if } 0.40 \leq \text{Donation}_{it}^{\text{employees}} \leq 0.60. \end{cases}$$

Operationalization of CEO and board ideology. I apply the same thresholds to donation-based CEO and board ideology measures when using them in interaction models:

$$\text{CEO Ideology}_{it} = \begin{cases} \text{Democratic-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{CEO}} > 0.60, \\ \text{Republican-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{CEO}} < 0.40, \\ \text{Mixed} & \text{if } 0.40 \leq \text{Donation}_{it}^{\text{CEO}} \leq 0.60. \end{cases}$$

$$\text{Board Ideology}_{it} = \begin{cases} \text{Democratic-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{Board}} > 0.60, \\ \text{Republican-aligned} & \text{if Donation}_{it}^{\text{Board}} < 0.40, \\ \text{Mixed} & \text{if } 0.40 \leq \text{Donation}_{it}^{\text{Board}} \leq 0.60. \end{cases}$$

Location-Based Employees' Ideology

In addition to the donation-based employees' ideology measure, I propose a second location-based employees' ideology measure. This measure combines firm-level proprietary data from People Data Labs on the top ten US metropolitan areas where employees are based with metropolitan-level aggregates of county-level results from the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections, obtained from the MIT Election Lab. I construct the measure in two steps. First, using data from People Data Labs, I obtain information about the top ten US metropolitan areas where employees in a given firm are based and overall employee counts, and calculate the proportion of employees that is located in each metropolitan area. Second, I convert county-level results from the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections into metropolitan-level. Lastly, this location-based measure of employees' ideological leanings is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Employee ideology}_i = \sum_j (\text{proportion of employees}_{ij} \times \text{vote share democrats}_j),$$

where proportion of employees_{ij} represents the proportion of employees in metro area j for company i, and vote share democrats_j denotes the average of Democratic vote share in metro area j in the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections.

Appendix Figure C8 displays the distribution of this measure across the companies included in the analysis. The slight rightward skew in the distribution (i.e., toward more Democratic-leaning values) is attributed to the economic geography of the United States. Knowledge-intensive jobs, for instance, are predominantly concentrated in Democratic-leaning metropolitan areas. This measure is exposed to the issue of ecological fallacy (i.e., firms do not always reflect the ideological makeup of the metropolitan area where they are located); however, it is also likely to capture well the overall ideological environment of the local labour markets in which firms operate.

Monthly Firm Net Headcount Growth

To measure firms' recruitment needs, and the overall relative power of current and prospective workers to influence corporate political speech, I propose a monthly, firm-specific measure of net headcount growth based on employees' movements using proprietary data from People Data Labs. Since my theory expects that concerns around employee attraction and retention will come first, and will be followed by companies' corporate speech, the main specification relies on a lagged version of this variable. The measure is defined as:

$$\text{Net headcount expansion rate}_{it} = \frac{\text{Additions}_{it-1} - \text{Departures}_{it-1}}{\text{Employee Count}_{it-1}}$$

As a validation exercise, Appendix Figure C9 displays the distribution of this measure over time across different industry sectors. When averaged by year, the measure displays time- and industry-specific trends mirroring well-established industry patterns. For instance, Appendix Figure C9 shows a strong dip in Energy employment around 2020, a major increase in Information Technology net headcount growth rate from 2020 to 2021, and a broadly stable trend in the Healthcare sector, which provide face validity to my approach.

Operationalization of net headcount growth. For the main analysis, I divide the net headcount expansion rate into terciles, calculated over the full sample of firm-month observations. This produces three categories:

$$\text{Headcount Growth}_{it} = \begin{cases} \text{High expansion} & \text{if Headcount growth rate}_{it} \text{ lies in top tercile,} \\ \text{Medium expansion} & \text{if Headcount growth rate}_{it} \text{ lies in middle tercile,} \\ \text{Low expansion/contraction} & \text{if Headcount growth rate}_{it} \text{ lies in bottom tercile.} \end{cases}$$

DW Nominates Scores

To proxy the political and legal constraints that companies face when embracing progressive causes, I use DW-NOMINATE scores (Lewis et al., 2025) measuring the ideology of US lawmakers on a liberal-conservative scale, with scores ranging from -1 (most liberal) to 1 (most

conservative). I assign to each company average DW-NOMINATE scores for every legislative term in the state where the company is headquartered. In the main specification, I use scores drawn from lawmakers from the House of Representatives on the conservative-liberal economic dimension, but I also use scores from the Senate and calculate scores using the less commonly used cultural dimension. I transform the score to a 0 to 1 variable to make it comparable to the donation-based stakeholders' ideology measures.

Operationalization of DW nominates scores Following the same approach used for employees, CEOs, and boards, I classify this measure into three categories:

$$\text{House Ideology}_{st} = \begin{cases} \text{Democratic state} & \text{if } \text{DW}_{st} > 0.60, \\ \text{Republican state} & \text{if } \text{DW}_{st} < 0.40, \\ \text{Mixed state} & \text{if } 0.40 \leq \text{DW}_{st} \leq 0.60. \end{cases}$$

Firm-Specific Variables

Additionally, I include a number of firm-specific, time invariant variables that are used either as controls or for subsetting the sample in some analyses. To measure industry, I employ the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) industry taxonomy that distinguishes between 11 sectors: Communication Services, Consumer Discretionary, Consumer Staples, Energy, Financials, Health Care, Industrials, Information Technology, Materials, Real Estate, and Utilities. To categorize companies across three types (knowledge-intensive, capital-intensive, and consumer-oriented), I use GICS Sub-Industry classification. Appendix Table C12 includes the full correspondence between GICS Sub-Industry categories and my broader categorization. Using PDL proprietary data, I construct a firm-level measure capturing the share of employment in research and development. This is a time-invariant measure, since I am only able to obtain this measure for the most recent data point when the data was downloaded from People Data Lab's application programming interface (API). Since it is unlikely that a company changes their skill structure in a seven-year period, I impute this share of R&D employment retroactively from 2025 to the studied period (2015-2022). To measure company size, I include a measure of the current number of employees working at the company, derived from People Data Lab's

resume data. In the empirical section, these continuous measures are often transformed into categorical variables using terciles and/or quartiles.

Lastly, as an additional control, I use the consumer ideology measured developed by Li and Disalvo (2023), which estimates the political preferences of consumers by analysing the Twitter (political) accounts followed by a company's followers. Due to the limited overlap between Li and Disalvo (2023)'s sample of companies and mine (only 110 companies out of 442 are matched), the sample size is significantly reduced when introducing this control.

Individual-Level Survey Data

I turn to survey evidence to test at the mechanisms proposed by the theory at the individual level. First, I analyse a Pew Research Center survey of 5,188 US full-time and part-time workers, conducted between February 6-12, 2023. The survey provides evidence on partisan divides regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in the workplace. As an outcome variable, I use the following survey question: "In general, do you think that focusing on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion at work is mainly: 1) A good thing; 2) A bad thing; 3) Neither good nor bad". I transform this into a binary outcome assigning the value 1 to those who choose "a good thing" and 0 to those choosing the two other options. In addition to traditional measures of educational attainment, current occupation, gender, and ethnicity, I measure the strength of job identity with the following survey question: "My job or career is (Extremely, Very, Somewhat, Not too, not at all) important for my overall identity".

Empirical Strategy

Negative binomial regressions (firm-year). To test my theory, I first employ two different kinds of analyses. First, I employ regression analyses with industry, year, and state fixed effects at two different levels of aggregation (firm-year and firm-year-month). To examine the overall association between employees' ideology and the frequency of progressive mentions in corporate Twitter communications, I conduct my analysis at the firm-year level, resulting in 3,504 observations. I implement the following negative binomial regression:[10]

[10] A negative binomial regression is preferred over a Poisson model due to high overdispersion in the progressive mentions counts.

$$\log E[Y_{it}] = \beta_1 \, \text{EmpIdeo_10yr}_{it} + \mathbf{X}_{it}'\boldsymbol{\gamma} + \alpha_{\text{industry}} + \alpha_{\text{state}} + \alpha_{\text{year}} + \underbrace{\log(\text{words}_{it})}_{\text{offset}} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5.1)$$

In Equation (5.1), the dependent variable is the expected number of progressive mentions by firm i in year t, measured as $\log E[\texttt{total_mentions}_{it}]$. The main independent variable of interest is employees' average ideology, based on employees' donations over the previous ten years ($\texttt{EmpIdeo_10yr}_{it}$). $\mathbf{X}_{it}$ represent a vector of controls, including CEO ideology, board ideology, top management ideology, and company size. The model also introduces an offset term, $\log(\text{words}_{it})$, which accounts for the total number of words tweeted by the firm in a given year, leading to an interpretation of the results as rates of progressive mentions rather than raw counts. Finally, $\alpha_{\text{industry}(i)}$, $\alpha_{\text{state}(i)}$, and $\alpha_{\text{year}(t)}$ denote industry, state, and year fixed effects, respectively, and ε_{it} is the error term. Since the donations-based measure of employees' ideology is calculated at the firm-year level standard errors are clustered by firm and year.

When analysing K-10 filling text instead of Twitter corporate accounts, the same Equation (5.1) but applied to the K-10 filings data. As a robustness check, the location-based measure of employees' ideology (based on election results in firms' top 10 business locations) is introduced instead of the donations-based measure.

Linear probability model (firm-year-month). To examine the interaction between employees' ideology and firm-specific, monthly net headcount growth rates, the same data is disaggregated at the firm-year-month level, resulting in 42,048 observations. I implement the following lineal probability model:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{it} = {} & \beta_1 \, \text{EmpIdeo_10yr}_i + \beta_2 \, \text{HeadcountGrowth}_{it} + +\boldsymbol{\beta_3} \, \text{EmpIdeo_10yr}_i \times \text{HeadcountGrowth}_{it} + \\ & \mathbf{X}_{it}'\boldsymbol{\gamma} + \alpha_j + \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (5.2)$$

In Equation (5.2), the dependent variable Y_{it} is a binary outcome measuring whether firm i in month t engages with progressive speech. The remaining variables are already defined after

Equation (5.1), except for the total number of words per year, which are now calculated by month. Both the employees' ideology and the net headcount growth variables are transformed into categorical variables, as explained above. The lagged measure of net headcount growth rates is divided into three quartiles to facilitate the interpretation of the results, but it is also divided into deciles for a more fine-grained analysis.

When analysing how Democratic-leaning firms headquartered in Republican-led states engage with progressive causes, compared to Democratic-leaning firms in Democratic-led states, Equation (5.2) is run but changing the net headcount growth rate measure for a measure of the average house state ideology using DW-NOMINATE scores.

Event study around salient events and placebo tests. To study corporate political speech around salient political events and strengthen the identification strategy, I employ an event-study design, interacting months relative to the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 with an indicator for whether a firm has a Democratic-leaning workforce. This design allows me to estimate heterogeneous treatment effects on corporate speech up to six months before and after the event. Because the timing of George Floyd's murder is exogenous to firms, this analysis reinforces the interpretation that employees' ideology shapes corporate political communication, rather than being explained by selection into firms. More details about the model are reported in Section 5.4.1.

Lastly, I add a number of placebo models to show that workforce ideology matters specifically for corporate political speech and not for communications on other topics, including investor, economy, consumer, and workforce mentions.

5.4 Findings

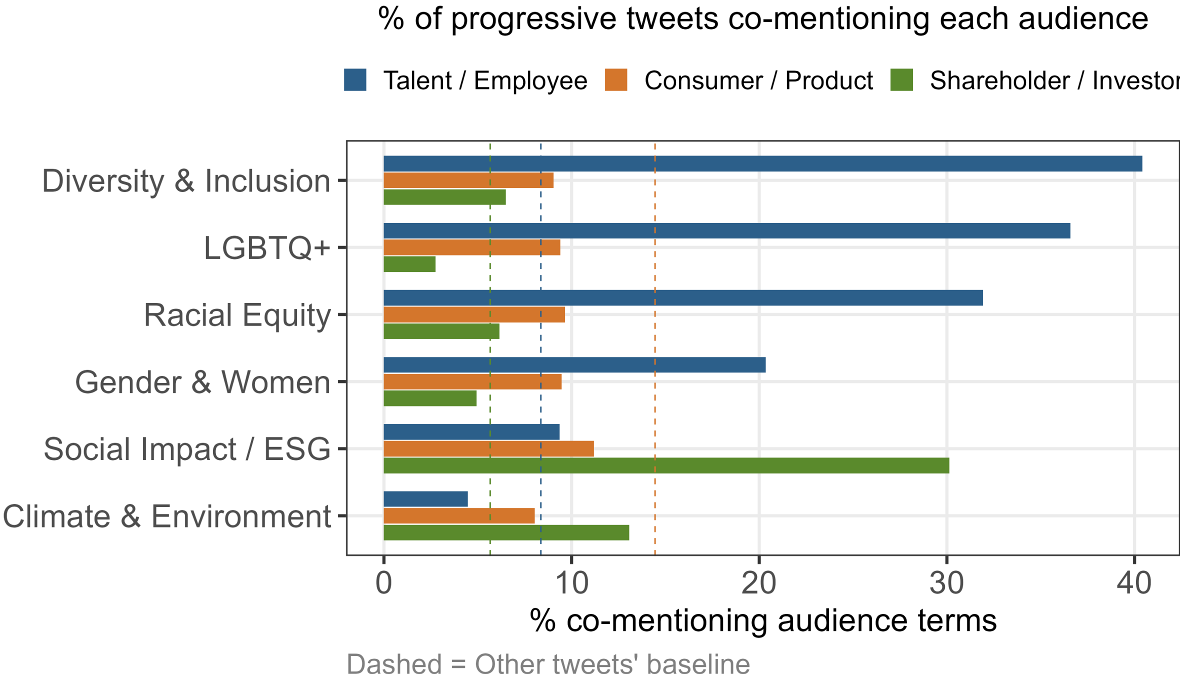
5.4.1 Twitter Data (2016-2022)

Corporate Progressive Speech Is (Mostly) Workforce-Oriented

Before documenting the association between workforce ideology and progressive speech, I first establish empirically that progressive corporate tweets are oriented toward employees more

often than toward other stakeholders. Figure 2 shows that 40% of Diversity & Inclusion tweets, 37% of LGBTQ+ tweets, 32% of racial equity tweets, and 20% of gender-related tweets co-mention workforce-related terms (e.g., employees, talent, hiring), compared to only 8% of non-progressive tweets. Consumers and shareholders, by contrast, are mentioned much less frequently in tweets on these topics. ESG and climate-related tweets are the exception, as they tend to be oriented toward investors and shareholders. These descriptive observation therefore aligns with the claim that corporate progressive speech is partly targeted at current and future employees.

Figure 2: Percentage of progressive corporate tweets co-mentioning each stakeholder



The baseline expectation from the theory is that companies with a more Democratic-leaning employee base are more likely to engage with broader social issues. Employing a negative binomial regression, Table 1 supports this by showing a positive association between firm-level employee ideology and the rate of corporate progressive speech in companies' Twitter accounts from 2016 to 2022.

Table 1: Negative binomial regression: firm-level employee ideology and corporate progressive speech

Dependent Variable:	**Counts of progressive mentions in a given year**					
Model (negative binomial):	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.8592***	0.8909***	0.9676***	1.003***	0.6240**	0.4537**
	(0.2664)	(0.2704)	(0.2644)	(0.2794)	(0.2581)	(0.2023)
CEO ideology		-0.1781	-0.2359*	-0.2023	-0.1720	-0.0855
		(0.1423)	(0.1401)	(0.1437)	(0.1421)	(0.1221)
Board ideology			1.467***	1.547***	1.085**	1.134***
			(0.4676)	(0.4479)	(0.4329)	(0.3201)
Top management ideology				-0.2829	-0.2499	-0.2406
				(0.3393)	(0.3130)	(0.1866)
Company size (medium firms)					0.4900***	-0.0554
					(0.1238)	(0.0932)
Company size (large firms)					0.8009***	0.0544
					(0.1293)	(0.1070)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	3,204	3,196	3,168	3,166	3,166	3,037
Squared Correlation	0.22090	0.22925	0.23307	0.22949	0.23800	0.53583
Over-dispersion	0.79794	0.79979	0.81197	0.81216	0.85515	2.1599

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Each column represents different models, with control variables added sequentially. While the size and significance of the employee ideology coefficient remain unchanged in the first four models, its size drops in Model 5 when adding company size, suggesting that larger firms have a more left-leaning workforce as well as more resources to engage with social and political issues. I view Model 6 as the most demanding specification as it accounts for overall Twitter activity (measured as the number of total words) for a given company in a given year. This is important because Democratic-leaning firms appear more active on Twitter during the study period than other firms.[11]

Substantively, moving from the most Republican-leaning to the most Democratic-leaning

[11] Board ideology appears to matter greatly for corporate progressive speech as well. However, as the employees' ideology coefficient remains equally significant and of a similar size after introducing board ideology in the model, they both seem to have an independent influence on the outcome.

firm is associated with an increase of about 20 progressive mentions, controlling for CEO, board, and top management ideology, and including fixed effects for state, industry, and year.[12] Appendix Figure C6 indicates that knowledge-intensive firms are more responsive in their communications to their employee base ideological leanings than consumer-oriented firms. Appendix Table C13 shows that these results are broadly robust to a more indirect measure of employee ideology, which combines data on the top 10 metropolitan areas where employees work with presidential election votes in those areas, although the coefficient becomes insignificant in the most demanding specification.

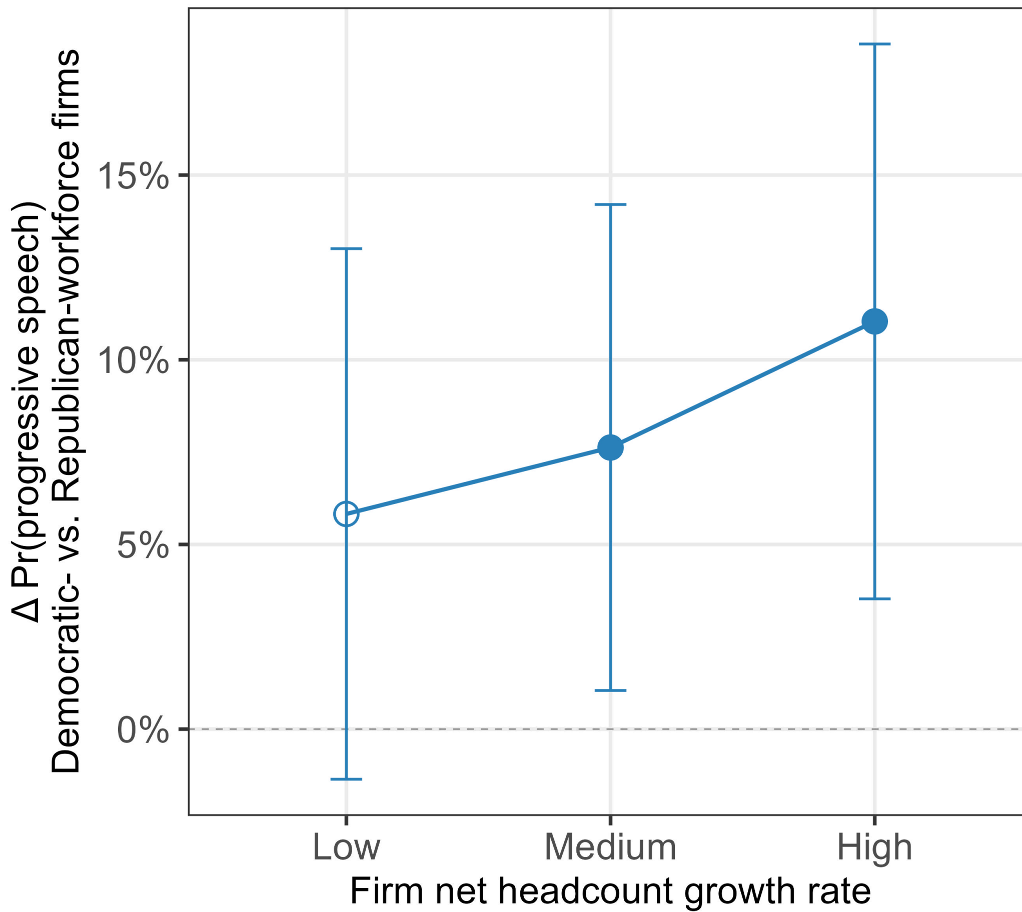
Labour Market Mechanism

I argue that a key reason why this alignment between employees' ideology is observed is related to specific labour market conditions that push companies to publicly engage on sometimes divisive socially progressive causes. In particular, I suggest that firms' concerns about employee attraction and retention play a key role in shaping their public stances. When firms need to appeal to prospective Democratic-leaning employees, or are particularly concerned about exits within their existing workforce, publicly endorsing progressive causes might seem like a rational choice. Meanwhile, when these concerns are not present, even Democratic-leaning firms would most likely want to avoid taking the risk of speaking up.

This argument is tested using a linear probability model where the political stance of firms' workforces is interacted with a firm-year-month variable of net headcount growth. Figure 3 shows that, as expected, firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce are most likely to engage with socially progressive issues when firms' headcounts are expanding. At low headcount growth rates — which include firms that are actively contracting their workforce, with more departures than additions — the gap between Democratic and Republican-leaning firms is small and statistically insignificant. As headcount growth increases, however, the gap widens monotonically, reaching approximately 11 percentage points at high expansion rates. This pattern is consistent with workers having greater leverage to shape corporate political speech when firms are actively competing for talent.

[12] The results also hold when including a firm-level consumer ideology measure for a subset of 109 firms, as seen in Appendix Table C14.

Figure 3: Progressive speech gap widens as firms expand their workforce



Notes: Average marginal effects from linear probability models, with CEO, board, top management ideology, firm size controls; industry, state, year-month FE. Clustered by firm and year-month.. The y-axis shows the gap in the probability of progressive speech between Democratic and Republican-workforce firms across terciles of lagged net headcount growth rate.

Several additional checks confirm the robustness of this finding. Appendix Table C15 shows that controlling for firm performance (e.g., return on assets, market capitalisation, and Tobin's Q) leaves the interaction coefficient unchanged, ruling out the possibility that the result reflects profitable firms speaking up more during growth periods. Finally, as shown in Appendix Table C20, the labour market mechanism holds when excluding months containing high-salience recurring events such as International Women's Day, Pride Month, and Black History Month, indicating that the result is not driven by firms selectively engaging during predictable calendar events.

When decomposing the gap between Democratic and Republican-workforce firms, Ap-

pendix Figure C14 that both types of firms move under workforce expansion pressure, but in opposite directions, and especially since 2020. In fact, firms appear to align their corporate Twitter speech with their own workforce ideology when recruitment needs are most pressing. While the results are not always statistical significant due to small sample size (see Appendix Figure C15, especially when disaggregating by topic, the symmetric trend across Democratic and Republican-workforce firms is consistent with the idea that firms are most responsive to workforce ideology in contexts of workforce expansion.

Political Constraints

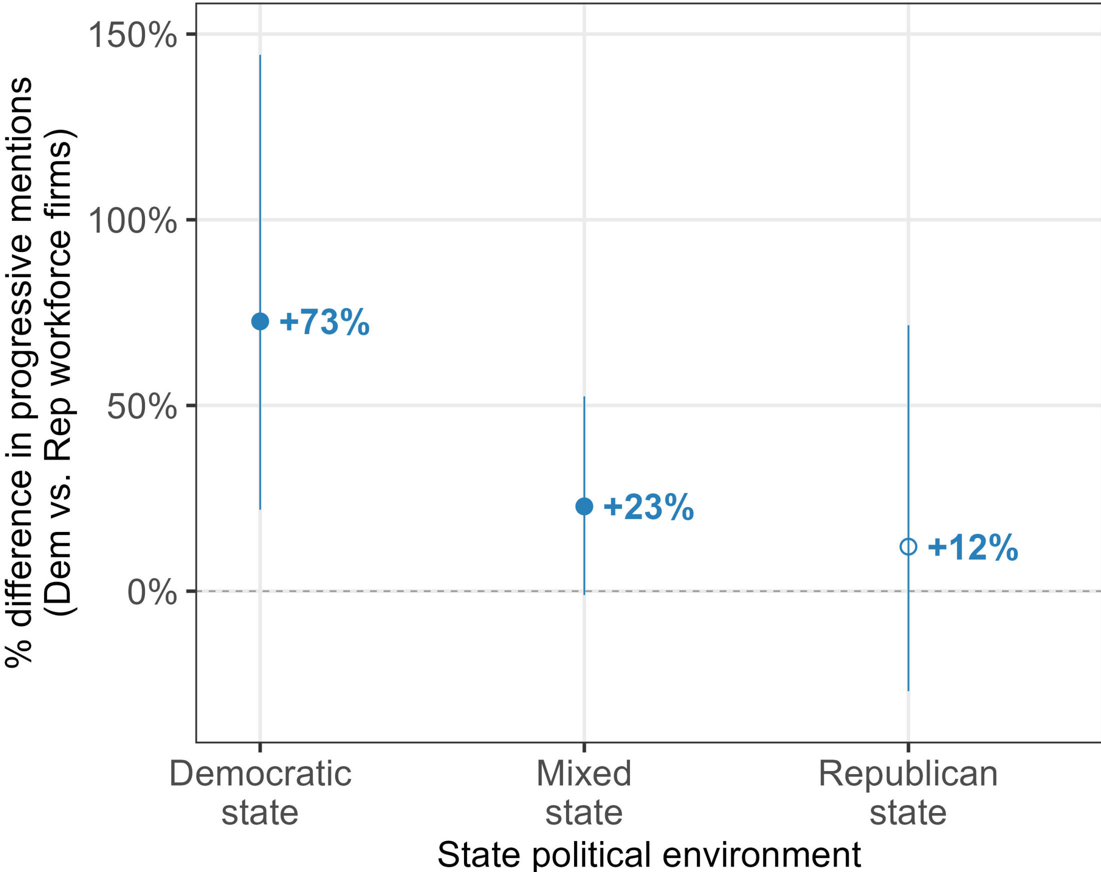
The evidence provided so far points to a clear connection between employees' ideological leanings and how frequently companies speak up on politically progressive causes. Although this result is robust to the inclusion of other stakeholders' ideology, such as CEOs, boards, and top managers, it overlooks the role that politicians can play in constraining firms' positioning and their responsiveness to their own workers. In particular, I expect that firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce headquartered in states or districts with a Republican majority in the legislature will be less likely to engage in progressive causes, despite the pressure from their workforce, to avoid potential political backlash — even in the form of targeted legislation, as seen in Florida's Republican-led legislature's attempt to curb Disney's legal autonomy — against their companies.

In line with this expectation, Figure 4 shows that Democratic-leaning firms headquartered in more conservative legislative environments tend to be more muted about progressive causes than equally Democratic-leaning firms in ideologically mixed or Democratic-friendly legislative environments. Although these differences are not large — Democratic-leaning firms employ on average about six progressive mentions less when they are embedded in a more conservative legislative environment — they are statistically significant even in the most demanding specification, as seen in Appendix Table C17. Once again, given the rarity of progressive mentions, and how consequential they can be, a six-mention difference is substantively important.[13] Appendix Table C18 suggests that these constraints in Republican-led states became

[13]Appendix Figure C12 shows that the results are similar when measuring the ideological environment of the firms' headquarters with NOMINATE second dimension estimates on social and cultural issues, instead of

most pronounced after 2020, when these states began introducing legislation targeting companies engaging in ESG-friendly policies. Although the results are not statistically significant in the most demanding specification, the change in sign indicates that Democratic-leaning firms located in Republican states are more constrained in their political speech than before 2020, while those in Democratic states display higher rates of progressive mentions.

Figure 4: Democratic-Workforce Firms Engage Less in Republican-Led States



Notes: Negative binomial with industry, state, year FE. SE clustered by firm. State environment: categorical (Dem/Rep/Mixed) based on DW-NOMINATE scores of state House delegation

Apart from politicians, other stakeholders, particularly boards and CEOs, may also counteract the role of employees' ideology in shaping corporate political speech. Evidence earlier in the paper (see Table 1) suggested that board ideology was also significantly associated with the frequency of corporate progressive speech. Do conservative boards constrain the influence

the NOMINATE first dimension (economic liberalism-conservatism) used in Figure 4.

of Democratic-leaning employees? And what about conservative CEOs?

Appendix Figure C11 shows that firms with a mostly Democratic-leaning employee base engage with progressive causes regardless of the ideology of their board — the differences are minimal in terms of expected counts between those with liberal and conservative boards. In the same way, Appendix Figure C13 indicates that conservative CEOs do not constrain firms' responsiveness to employees' ideological leanings — the differences across CEOs' ideological leanings are practically non-existent. This is aligned with the idea that boards' and CEOs' preferences about corporate communications tend to be broadly endogenous to the ideological leanings of employees.

Event-Study Design

I have provided evidence so far about the conditions under which employees' ideology is most likely to influence companies' engagement in progressive causes. Theoretically, the underlying argument is that companies are strategically responsive to their existing workforce ideology.

An alternative, complementary explanation is that employees may self-select into firms that already signal specific political values, particularly when labour markets allow them to be selective.

While the empirical design does not allow me to distinguish perfectly between the two explanations, and dynamic trend in which both feed each other is most likely, several empirical facts suggest that my results are not exclusively driven by self-selection.

First, employee ideology is measured as the average share of rank-and-file employees' donations over the past ten years. This 10-year average captures stable ideological patterns, rather than recent hiring decisions, and predates the more recent rise in corporate political speech.

Second, I introduce an event-study to show that otherwise similar firms with different workforce ideologies respond differentially to exogenous shocks and, in particular, the rise in race-related communication after George Floyd's murder among firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce. Since workforce composition is unlikely to change drastically overnight, sorting is likely to unfold gradually; therefore, a sharp differential response to an unanticipated

shock (e.g., George Floyd's murder) would speak more to the responsiveness argument and against a pure sorting explanation.

I expect firms to be particularly responsive to employees' political leanings around high-salience, politically charged moments. Crucially, I make a distinction between two types of events: anticipated recurring events, such as International Women's Day (March 8) and Pride Month (June), which generate predictable corporate responses regardless of workforce ideology; and unanticipated high-salience shocks, such as George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020, which create an unexpected cost of silence that is differentially felt by firms with progressive workforces.

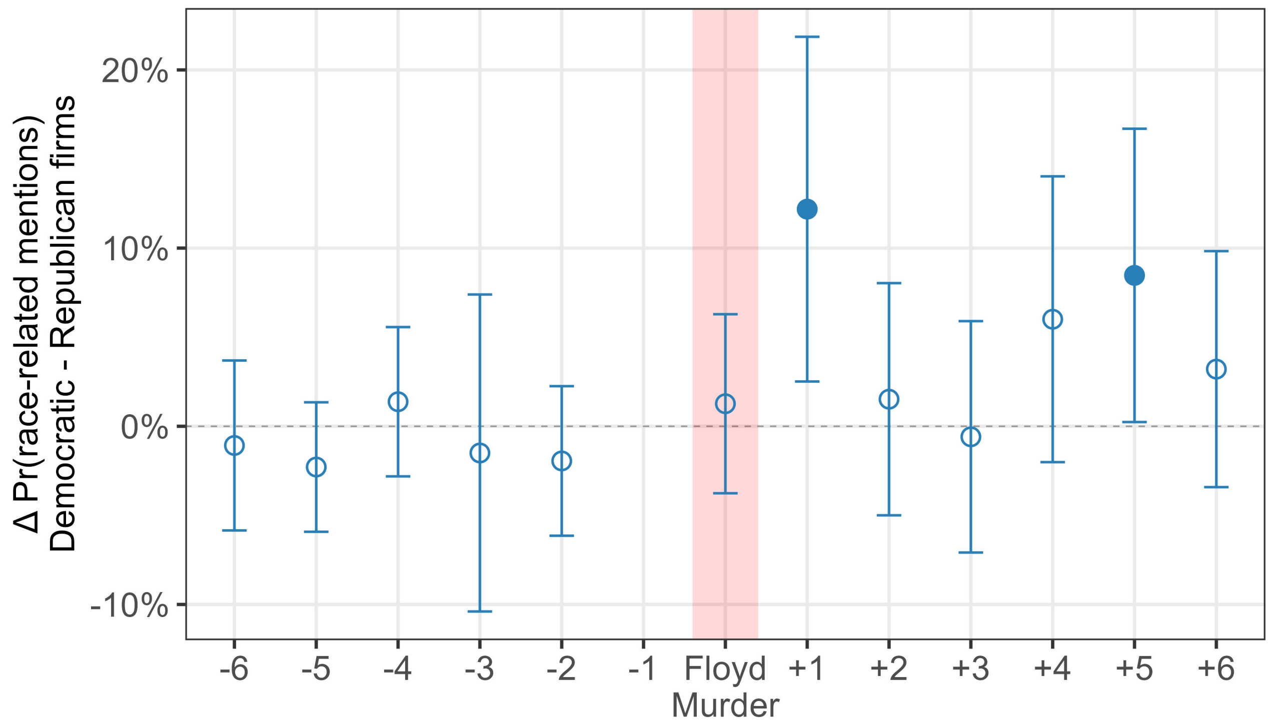
To test these expectations, I estimate a heterogeneous event study interacting months relative to each event with a binary indicator for whether the firm has a Democratic-leaning workforce. All firms were exposed to the same events through media coverage and public debate. As in previous models, I control for CEO, board, and top management ideological leanings and employee size, and include state and industry fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the firm level:

$$Y_{it} = \sum_{\tau=-6,\tau\neq-1}^{6} [\beta_\tau + \delta_\tau \cdot \text{DemWorkforce}_i]\, \mathbf{1}(t=\tau) + \mathbf{X}'_{it}\boldsymbol{\alpha} + \alpha_j + \alpha_s + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where Y_{it} is a binary indicator equal to 1 if firm i posted about the relevant topic in month t. DemWorkforce$_i$ is a time-invariant binary indicator equal to 1 if firm i has a Democratic-leaning workforce. δ_τ captures the differential change in speech at time τ for Democratic-workforce firms relative to Republican-workforce firms, compared to the reference month. α_j and α_s denote industry and state fixed effects respectively.

Figure 5 presents the results for the event study around George Floyd's Murder on 25 May, 2020. In the six months before the event, pre-trends are flat: Democratic and Republican-workforce firms did not differ on their race-related speech. In the month following Floyd's murder, Democratic-workforce firms increased their engagement with racial issues, compared to Republican-workforce firms. While these differences fade away in the months after the event, Democratic-workforce firms were still more likely to speak up on racial issues five months after the event.

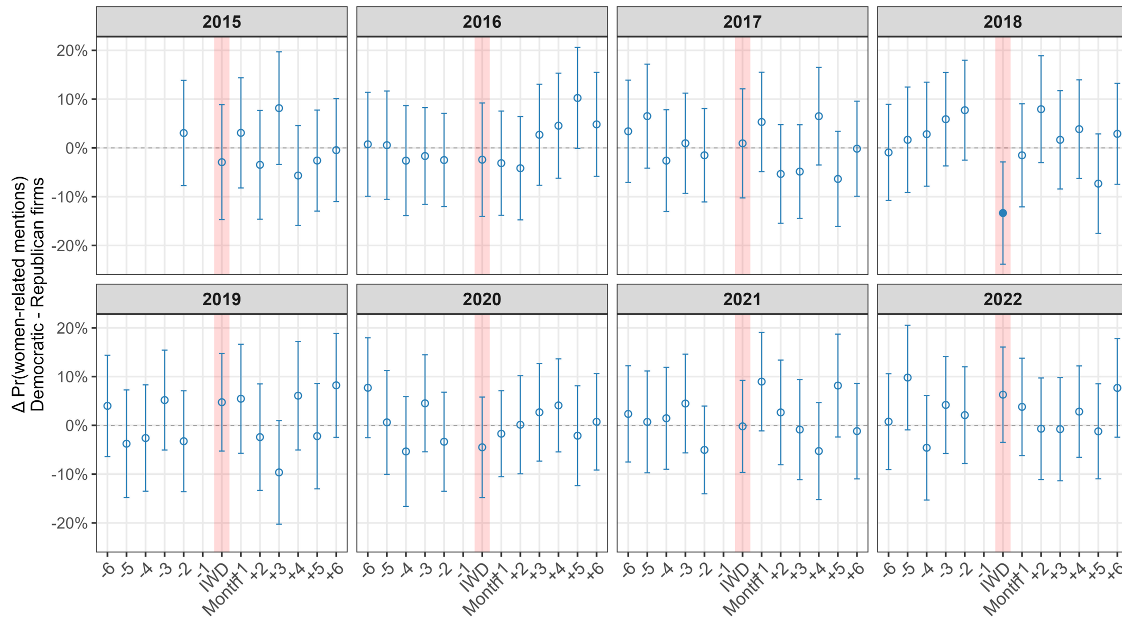
Figure 5: Event study around George Floyd's murder



Notes: LPM with CEO, board, top management ideology, firm size controls; industry and state FE. SEs clustered by firm.

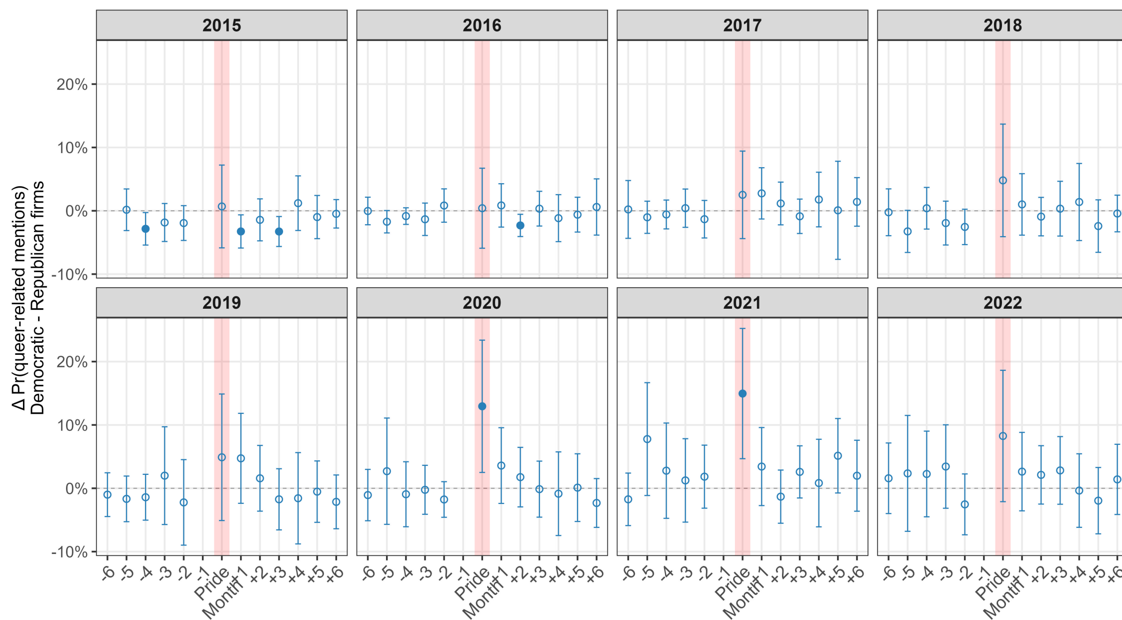
The results are different in the case of predictable, recurring events. Figure 6 and Figure 7 show that for International Women's Day and Pride Month firms with Democratic and Republican workforces both respond, and the gap between them is often not statistically significant.

Figure 6: Event study around International Women's Day (2015-2022)



Notes: LPM with CEO, board, top management ideology, firm size controls; industry and state FE. SEs clustered by firm.

Figure 7: Event study around Pride Month (2015-2022)



Notes: LPM with CEO, board, top management ideology, firm size controls; industry and state FE. SEs clustered by firm.

Robustness Checks

In light of this evidence, one possibility is that the results presented so far are mainly driven by the influence of employees' ideology around specific events that repeat every year. To empirically test this possibility, I remove from the model all March observations for women-related mentions and all June observations for LGBTQ-related mentions; for race-related mentions, I remove all February observations in the dataset, as well as June observations between 2020 and 2022, since Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19 to commemorate the end of slavery in the US and became a federal holiday in 2021.

In Appendix Table C19, I observe that the positive association remains very similar to the main model —including all months between January 2015 and December 2022— used in Table 1. Similarly, Appendix Table C20 shows that the labour market mechanism also holds when excluding months with highly salient events. I interpret this as evidence that my results are not exclusively driven by repeated events that are celebrated every year or highly salient events, such as the momentum for the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020.

Another possibility is that companies' endorsement of progressive causes, including commitments to tackle gender or ethnic discrimination in the workplace, is just a rhetorical tool that does not translate into meaningful action (Baker et al., 2024). However, I provide suggestive evidence contradicting this possibility. Employing Bloomberg ESG scores, an annual firm-specific measure measuring companies' management of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, Table C21 shows that a higher number of progressive mentions per year is positively associated with higher ESG scores. Substantively, moving from 0 to 20 progressive mentions per year is associated with a 0.5-point increase in the firm's ESG score — a visual representation of these predicted values can be found in Figure C17. Bloomberg ESG scores are certainly an imperfect measure of whether companies translate their broad social commitments into action; nevertheless, its reputation as one of the most transparent and widely used ESG scores makes it an appealing option to measure companies' commitments to some of the values they publicly display. The reverse mechanism, in which higher ESG scores lead companies to be more vocal about the kind of ESG-friendly actions they are introducing internally, or just be more engaged with politically-charged social issues as part of their broader

communication strategy, is also possible. Indeed, it is likely that both mechanisms are in play and reinforce each other.

5.4.2 Mandatory Annual Financial Reports: 10-K Filings (2015-2025)

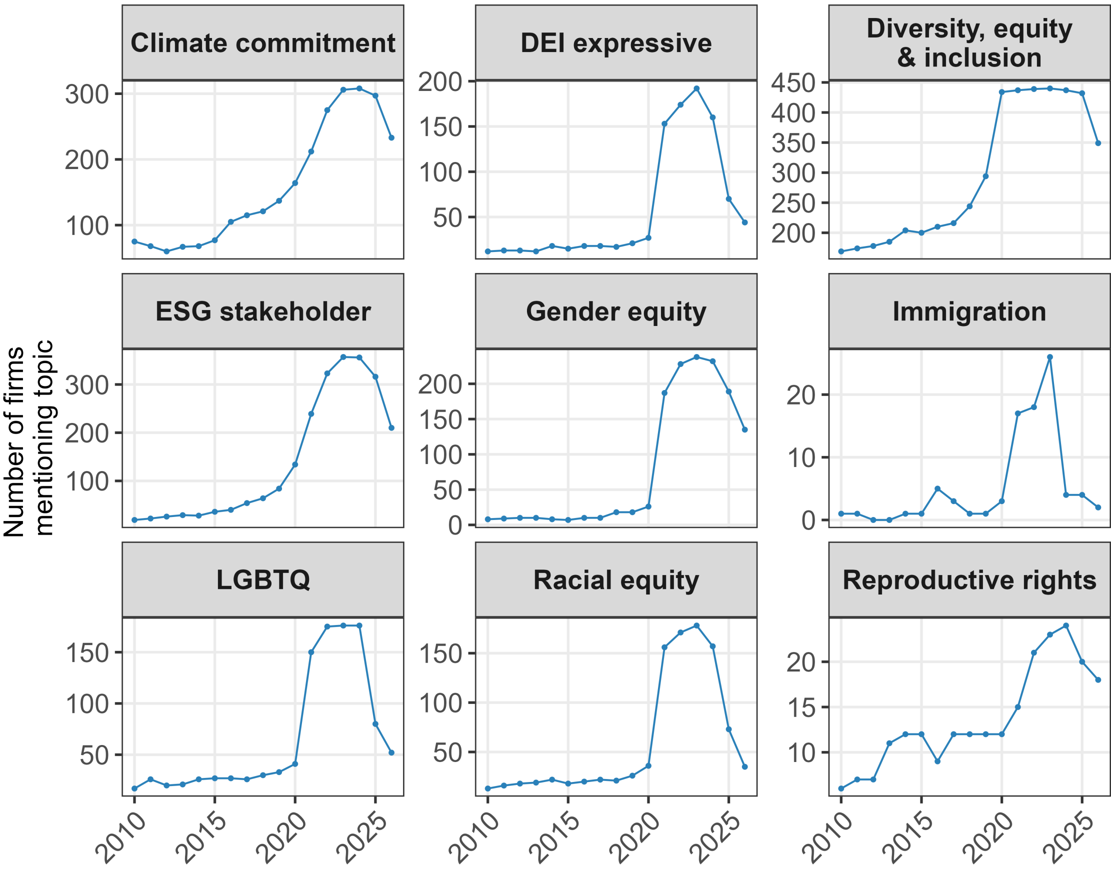
One limitation of Twitter data is that it ends in December 2022, when Elon Musk's takeover of the company (rebranded as X) restricted access to the platform's API for research purposes. But extending the temporal dimension of the analysis beyond 2022 is crucial for two reasons. On one hand, we want to know how companies have reacted to the recent backlash against progressive-leaning corporate speech in the US, especially since Donald Trump's return to the White House in January 2025, and whether workforce ideology still plays a significant role under conditions where the cost of corporate political speech is higher. On the other, since employees themselves play a role in their companies Twitter communications, we would want to observe a different kind of speech where employee involvement is more limited.

To address these, I extract all 10-K filings published by S&P 500 firms in the United States between 2015 and 2025. 10-K filings are annual financial reports that publicly traded companies must submit to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). While the main audience for these reports consists of regulators, shareholders, investors, and financial analysts, journalists also tend to report significant changes, sometimes making headlines. I construct a dataset of firm-level attention to social issues, such as climate change, diversity and inclusion, and gender equality, for 500 publicly traded companies over 10 years. The same dictionary used for the Twitter data is employed to identify attention to social issues in 10-K filings, with small changes to account for different styles of communications compared to Twitter.

Figure 8 shows that, similar to what was observed in Section 5.3, over the past ten years companies have also paid greater attention to topics such as diversity and inclusion, Environmental, Social, and Governance, gender-related issues, and racial inequality. However, Donald Trump's return to the White House, and his administration's rhetoric and actions — including the Executive Order 14151 ending diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in the federal government— have led to a substantive decrease in the references to these issues in

companies' latest annual reports from 2025. As seen earlier with Democratic-leaning firms headquartered in Republican-majority states engaging less with progressive causes (see Figure 4), Figure 8 again points to the power of governments to constrain what companies say or do.

Figure 8: Number of companies engaging with dictionary on 10-k filings, 2015-2025



Despite this more hostile environment, many companies still include references to diversity and inclusion, or ESG, with a higher frequency than before the Covid-19 pandemic. And even though employees are not the main target audience of these documents, Table 2 shows that employees' ideological leanings partially explain why some companies engage more with progressive causes in their 10-K filings than others. This has been particularly true since 2020, when mentions of different progressive causes skyrocketed across companies' 10-K filings and increasingly became a matter of political contestation.

Table 2: Employee ideology and progressive mentions (10-K filings): negative binomial fixed-effects models before and after 2020

Dependent Variable:	Total progressive yearly mentions	
Sample period	**2015–2019**	**2020–2025**
Model:	(1)	(2)
Variables		
Employee ideology	-0.023	0.287**
	(0.145)	(0.121)
CEO ideology	0.009	-0.049
	(0.079)	(0.067)
Board ideology	0.064	0.243
	(0.266)	(0.253)
Top management ideology	-0.087	-0.107
	(0.171)	(0.131)
Medium firm	0.200***	0.094**
	(0.068)	(0.043)
Large firm	0.110	0.091*
	(0.068)	(0.048)
Fixed-effects		
industry	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics		
Observations	1,700	2,069
Squared Correlation	0.32917	0.44523
Pseudo R^2	0.04510	0.05280

Clustered (firm) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Figure C16 shows that a one-quarter increase in how Democratic-leaning a company's workforce is corresponds to between 10 and 15 additional progressive mentions in a given year, while moving from the most conservative to the most liberal workforce is associated with around a 30% increase relative to the baseline. I interpret this as evidence that even in a context where corporate progressive speech is punished by the federal government (and Republican-led state legislatures), employees' ideology continues to be relevant, while the ideological leanings of CEOs, companies' boards, and top management do not play a key role. Importantly, I view the analysis of 10-K filings as a hard test of my theory, given that employees are neither the main audience of these reports nor directly involved in their production.

5.4.3 Who Supports DEI? Evidence from US Survey Data

The empirical evidence provided so far has been at the firm level. However, central to my argument is the assumption that progressive knowledge economy workers are particularly supportive of companies publicly addressing societal and political issues, as well as implementing workforce policies that, for instance, improve the representation of traditionally underrepresented groups. A second and equally important assumption is that those workers who derive a stronger sense of personal identity from their job —mostly university-educated workers— are most likely to expect companies to engage with progressive causes. I turn to additional microlevel analyses in order to confirm that these assumptions hold at the individual-level. I analyse a Pew Research Center survey of 5,188 US full-time and part-time workers, conducted between February 6-12, 2023.

Table 3 displays the average marginal effects from a logistic regression model with views on DEI policies as a binary outcome[14] — those that consider these policies "a good thing" (55.5% of the sample) are compared against those who think they are "neither good not bad" and "a bad thing" (44.5% of the sample). As expected, Democrats are the most likely (55% more likely than Republicans) to believe that focusing on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion at work is mainly "a good thing".

However, even when accounting for partisanship, those with postgraduate degrees and in knowledge-intensive occupations (e.g., "Information/Technology" and "Professional, scientific, technical services") are much more likely to support DEI policies (around 10%) than those with lower educational attainment or employed in construction or manufacturing. Women and younger workers also tend to be more supportive of DEI policies.

Furthermore, deriving a stronger sense of personal identity from one's job is also moderately associated with more favourable views toward DEI policies[15], as argued in my theoretical framework — not specifically for DEI policies but more broadly for progressive causes.

[14] The raw regression coefficients, as log-odds, can be found in (see Table C27).

[15] Appendix Table C28 shows that those with postgraduate degrees and those in the "Information/Technology" industry and in sociocultural occupations, such as health care and education, are the most likely to tie their personal identity to their job. With this in mind, it is reasonable to expect that as these individuals more often build their identities around their work, they will also seek alignment with their employers on social and political issues.

Table 3: Average marginal effects on support for DEI policies (model with all covariates)

Predictor	AME (pp)	95% CI
Party identity (ref. Republican)		
Democrat	55.06***	[52.2, 57.9]
Independent	28.42***	[25.2, 31.7]
Education (ref. < High school)		
High school graduate	1.00	[–7.8, 9.8]
Some college, no degree	6.10	[–2.5, 14.7]
Associate's degree	4.48	[–4.3, 13.3]
College graduate / some postgrad	8.10†	[–0.4, 16.6]
Postgraduate	13.18**	[4.6, 21.8]
Gender (ref. Male)		
Female	8.71***	[6.3, 11.1]
Other	19.31**	[7.2, 31.4]
Age (ref. 18–29)		
30–49	–8.81***	[–12.6, –5.0]
50–64	–17.33***	[–21.3, –13.4]
65+	–19.86***	[–24.9, –14.8]
Industry (ref. Manufacturing / Mining / Construction / Agriculture)		
Banking, finance, real estate, insurance	4.85†	[–0.3, 10.0]
Education	3.58	[–1.3, 8.5]
Government, public administration, military	7.81**	[2.5, 13.2]
Health care and social assistance	4.06†	[–0.5, 8.6]
Hospitality, service, arts, entertainment, recreation	5.62*	[0.4, 10.8]
Information / Technology	10.78***	[5.7, 15.9]
Professional, scientific, technical services	8.39**	[3.3, 13.4]
Retail and trade	5.18*	[0.0, 10.3]
Transportation	5.35†	[–0.6, 11.3]
Job identity		
Important (vs Not important)	3.68**	[1.4, 6.0]

Notes: Entries are average marginal effects (percentage points) with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Significance: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

5.5 Conclusion

This article explores the conditions under which large corporations publicly engage with progressive causes, aligning with their Democratic-leaning employee base. Drawing on multiple data sources, I find broad support for my theoretical expectations. Firms with a Democratic-leaning workforce tend to engage with progressive causes more often than Republican-leaning

firms, particularly when concerns around employee retention and attraction are more pronounced. While conservative CEOs and boards do not appear to moderate the influence of Democratic-leaning workers, I find that firms with a Democratic workforce headquartered in Republican-led states engage less in progressive speech, especially since 2020. Finally, I show evidence that more frequent progressive mentions are associated with higher ESG performance scores, with both factors potentially reinforcing one another. These results are robust to the inclusion of industry, year, and state fixed effects, and to clustering standard errors by firm and year.

A central contribution of this article is that U.S. companies are more responsive to the ideology of their employee base when concerns around employee retention and attraction are more pronounced. This influence is particularly strong in knowledge-intensive firms, where keeping a highly skilled workforce is critical for operations and growth. This adds a political dimension to a well-established economics literature on employers' ability to shape compensation and working conditions depending on labour market conditions (Manning, 2013; Card, Devicienti and Maida, 2014). While the nonpecuniary dimensions of work have been overlooked by standard approaches in comparative political economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Beramendi et al., 2015; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024), my findings suggest that workers (especially highly educated ones) care not only about wages but also about sociopolitical value alignment, and that their ability to shape corporate behavior on these issues depends on their relative bargaining power in the labour market.

Secondly, this article brings back firms to the centre of political science research by looking into a form of corporate behaviour —social and political stance-taking— that is distinct from the more widely studied traditional lobbying, often conducted quietly to avoid public scrutiny, and corporate social responsibility practices. By putting research on the electoral realignment of highly educated voters into dialogue with management and labour economics research on firm behaviour, this article contributes to a broader literature on the political transformations underpinning knowledge-based societies (Häusermann, Kemmerling and Rueda, 2020; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Iversen and Rehm, 2022; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Zollinger, 2024). While my findings support the idea of a complementarity between today's urban-oriented

knowledge economy and a culturally progressive ideology (Iversen and Soskice, 2019), I also show that this alignment is not inevitable or fixed: it remains open to political contestation and can be reversed.

Lastly, my findings also speak to heated contemporary debates about how corporations should engage with broader political and societal trends. The recent backlash against DEI policies by President Donald Trump's administration —and the subsequent decision by many companies to abandon these initiatives— shows that governments retain the power to slow down or even reverse the trajectory of change. However, when analysing K-10 filings, I show that, in fact, employees' ideological leanings are more relevant today in explaining why firms engage with progressive causes in K-10 filings than before 2020, when the conservative backlash against DEI or ESG-friendly policies was less visible.

The article also has limitations that open promising avenues for future research. One limitation relates to the challenge of causal identification. While I employ several strategies to address endogeneity concerns —including measuring employee ideology as a 10-year rolling average, using lagged specifications, conducting placebo tests, and exploiting the exogenous timing of salient events— sorting remains an important threat to causal identification. In particular, I cannot definitively rule out that progressive workers preferentially select into firms that already engage in progressive speech. The event-study analysis around George Floyd's murder provides the strongest evidence for employee influence by examining responses to an unexpected shock, and the placebo tests show that employee ideology does not predict speech on nonpolitical topics. However, future research should explore natural experiments, such as firm relocations, mergers, or exogenous labour market shocks, that produce quasi-random variation in workforce composition to more robustly establish the causal effect of employee ideology on corporate political speech.

Second, the focus is exclusively on progressive speech. Future work should analyse whether and how firms publicly embrace conservative stances, as well as their reaction to the introduction of conservative legislation and the rising salience of socially conservative issues. Third, future studies could combine LinkedIn data and voter registration files—building on work by Frake, Hurst and Kagan (2024) and Hurst and Lee (2025)—to explore how employees react

when they become politically misaligned with a public statement of their employer, and explore the role of value alignment against more pecuniary considerations. Four, the interaction between the political transformations associated with the rise of the knowledge economy and business behaviour should be explored from a comparative perspective across Europe, where organizations also face increasing pressures to speak up on a wide range of social and political issues. Finally, while I show that a higher count of progressive mentions is positively correlated with higher ESG scores, future studies should explore the conditions under which corporate political speech translates into more costly, meaningful actions.

Despite these limitations, this article demonstrates how the rise of the knowledge economy is reshaping how firms interact with political trends today. By showing that employees' ideological preferences can, under some conditions, influence corporate speech on salient social issues, it helps explain corporate political speech as an structural phenomenon that is rooted in political transformations associated with the rise of post-industrial societies. In an age where the border between corporate leaders and governments is blurring, corporate stances —whether genuine or insincere, enduring or fleeting— and workplace policies have become symbols and drivers of broader political transformations.

Appendix C

5.5.1 Figures

Figure C1: Sample composition

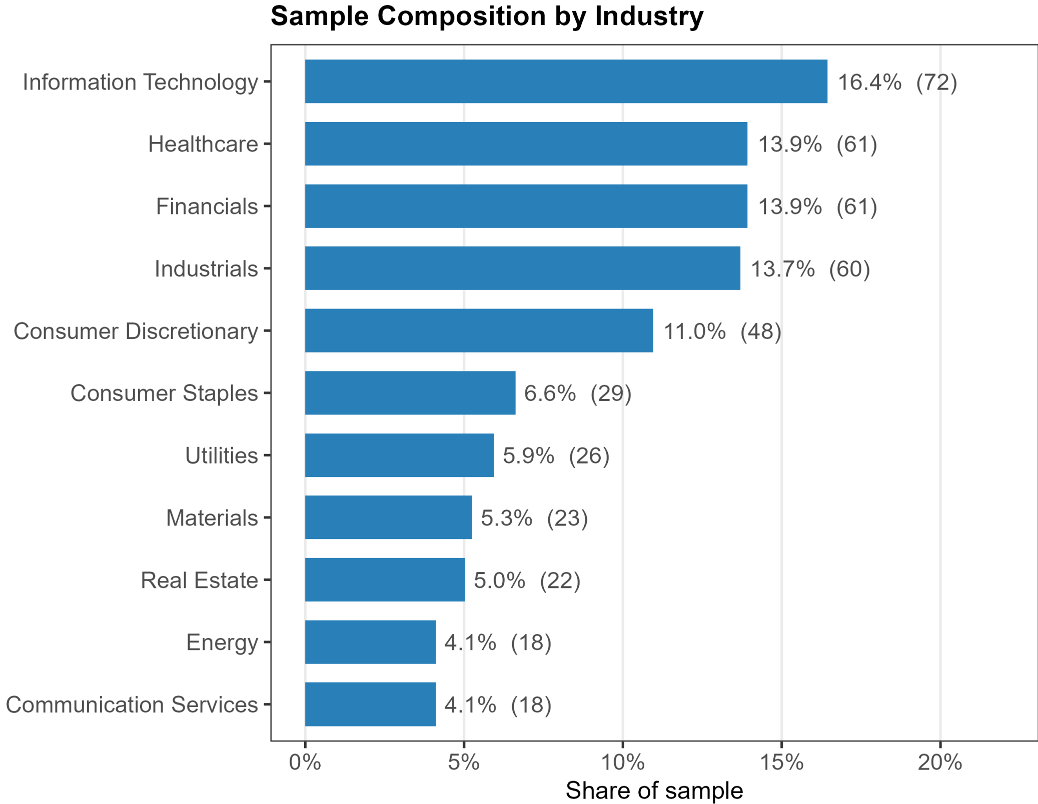
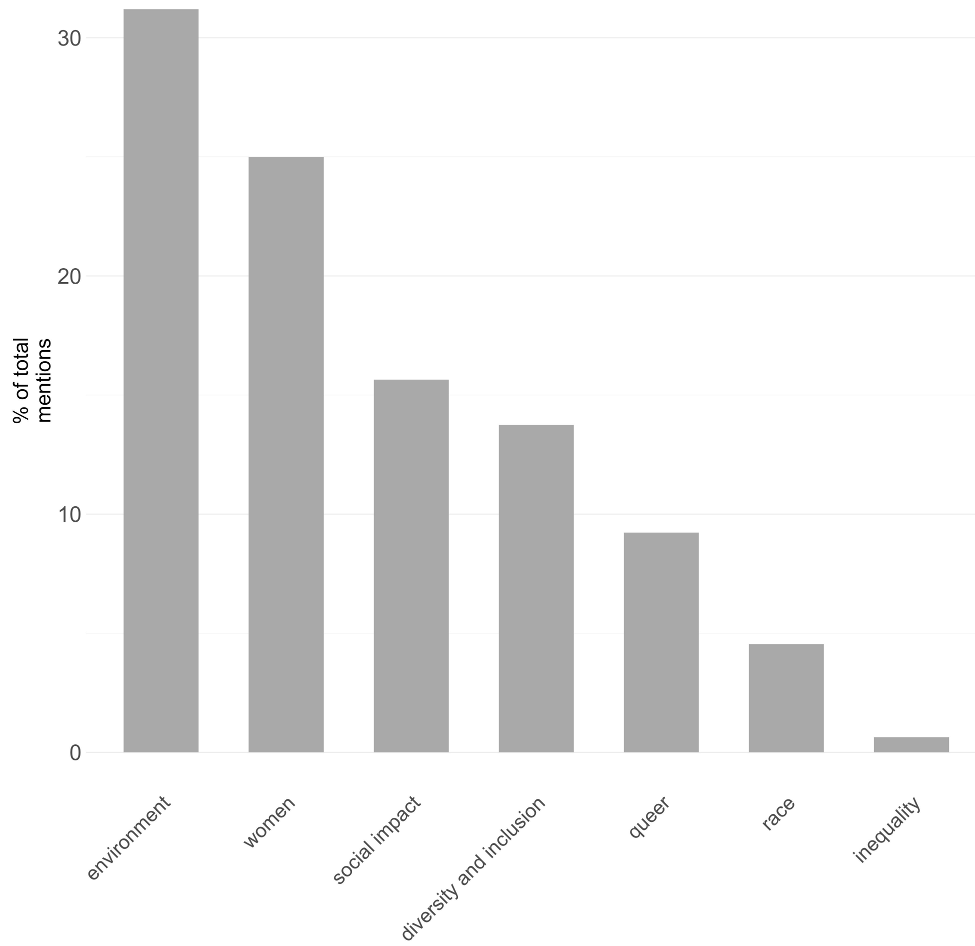
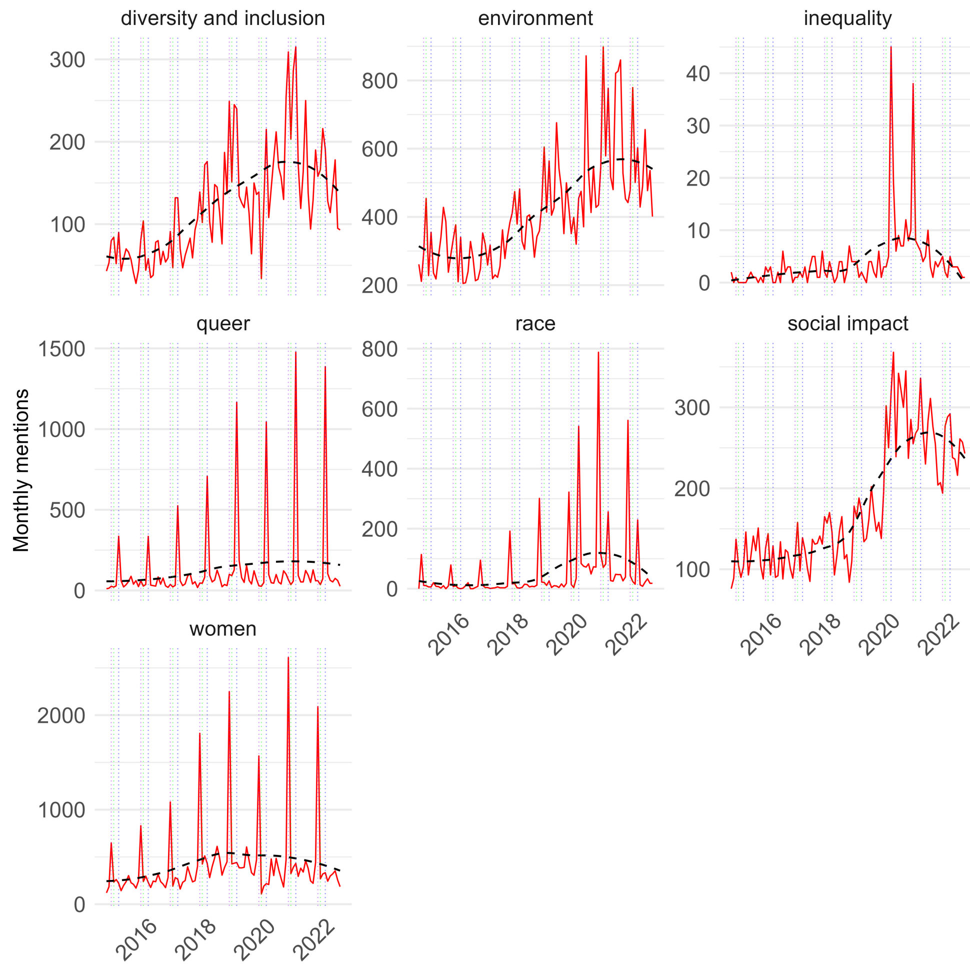


Figure C2: Relative shares within the progressive dictionary by topic



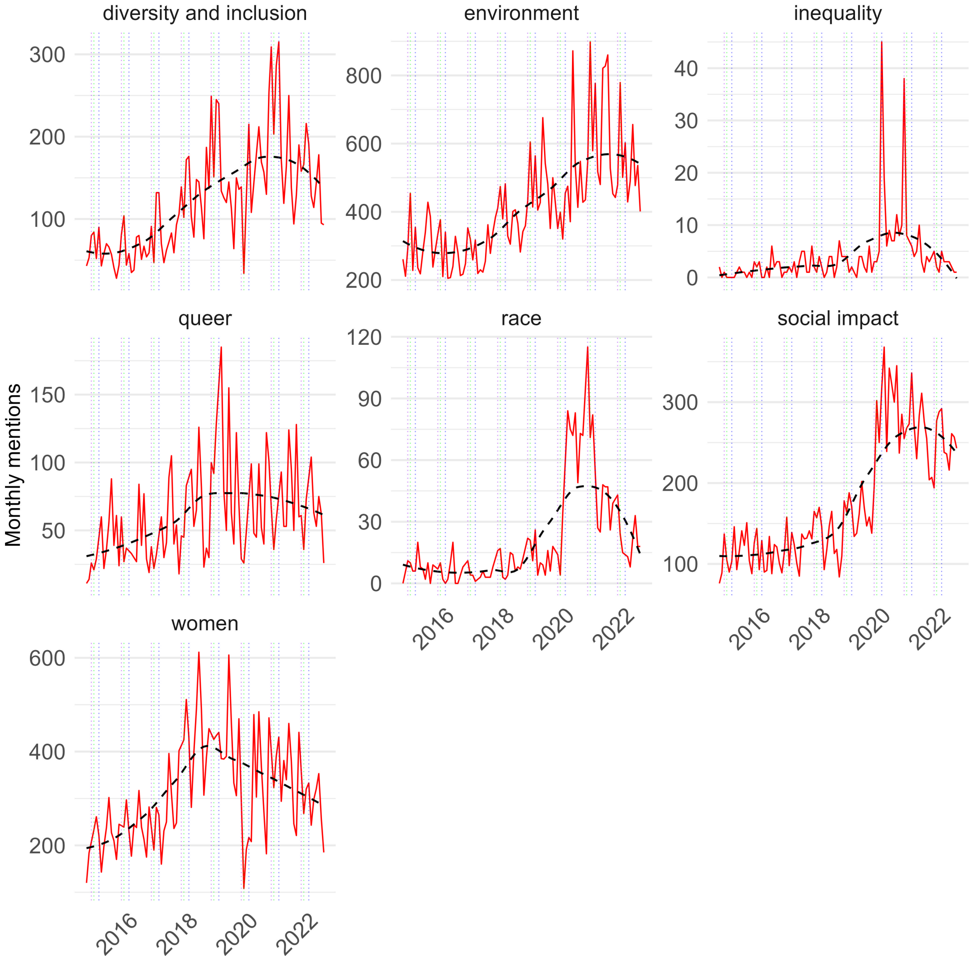
Notes: The figure shows the relative weight of mentions linked to each topic within the broader dictionary of progressive mentions.

Figure C3: Monthly progressive dictionary mentions by topic



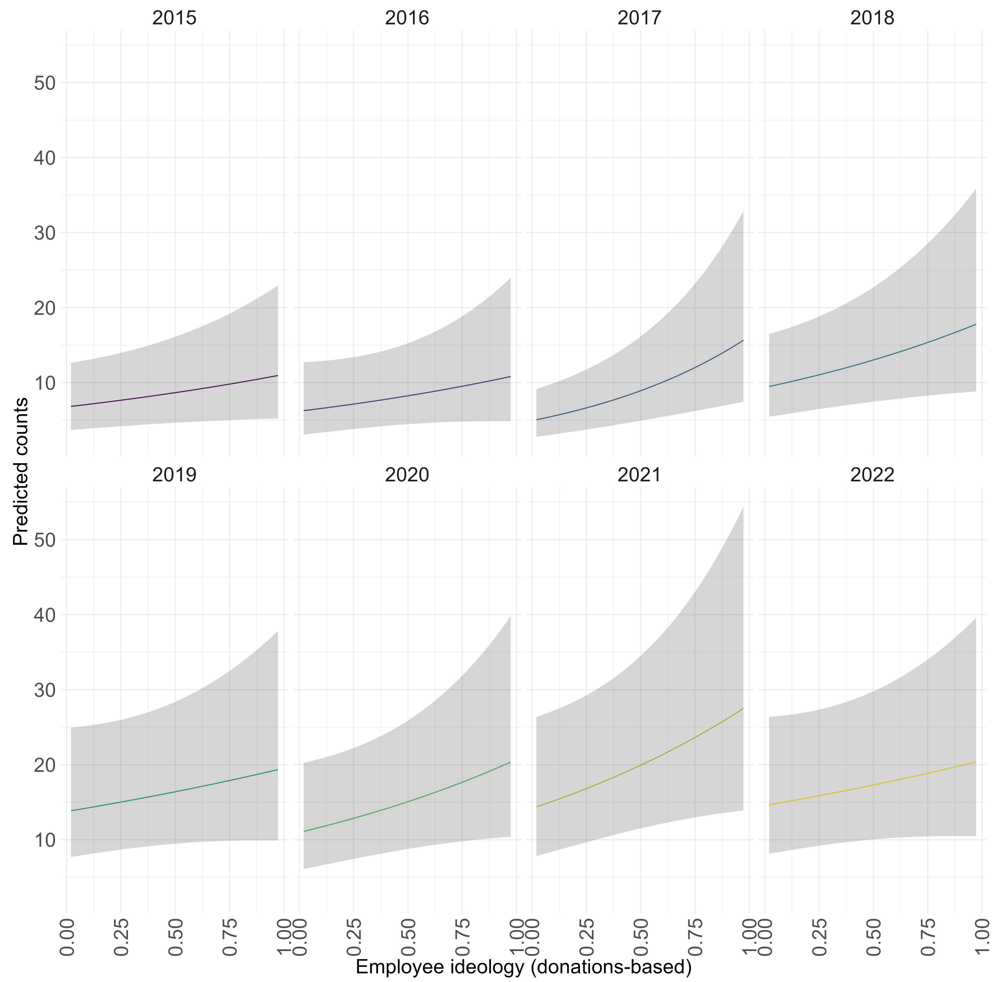
Notes: The figure shows the evolution of monthly mentions to the different topics included in the dictionary of progressive mentions.

Figure C4: Monthly progressive dictionary mentions by topic (excluding repeated events (e.g., Pride Month)



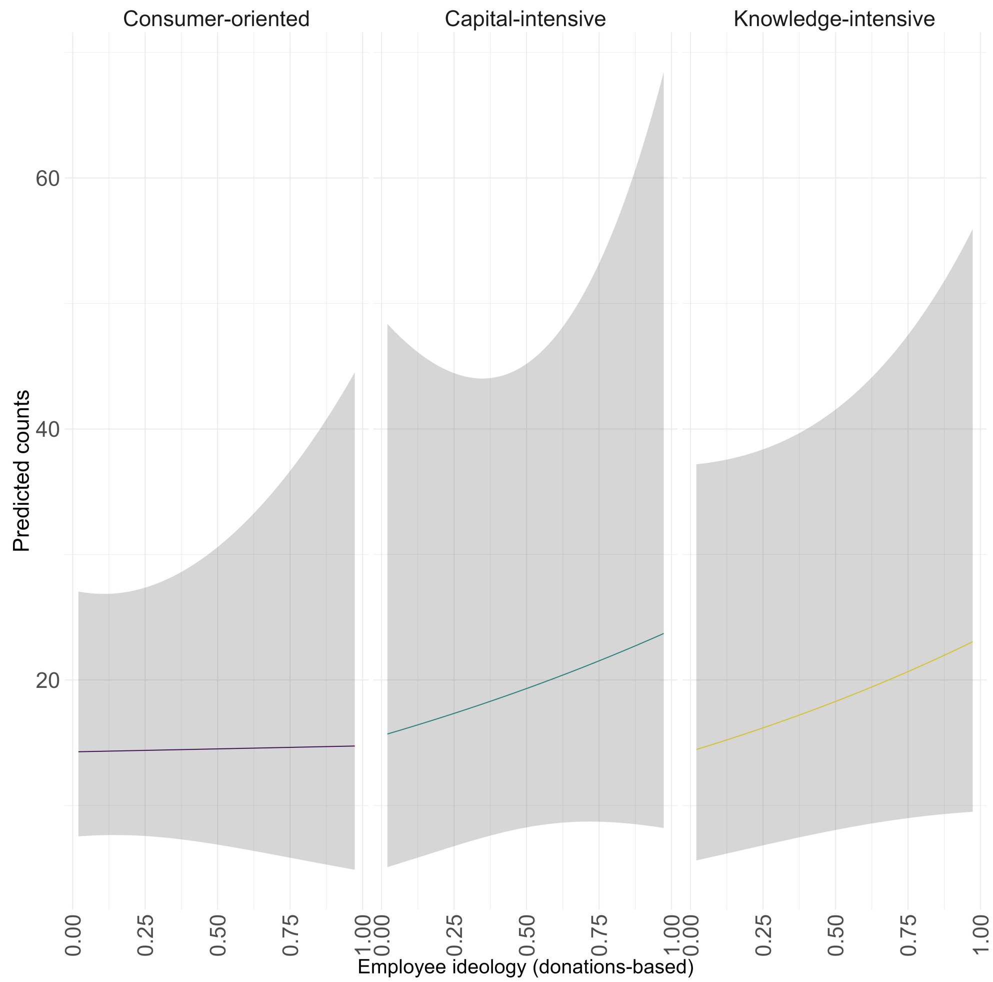
Notes: The figure shows the evolution of monthly mentions to the different topics included in the dictionary of progressive mentions, excluding months where an event related to one of these topics takes place every year.

Figure C5: Interaction between donation-based employee ideology and year



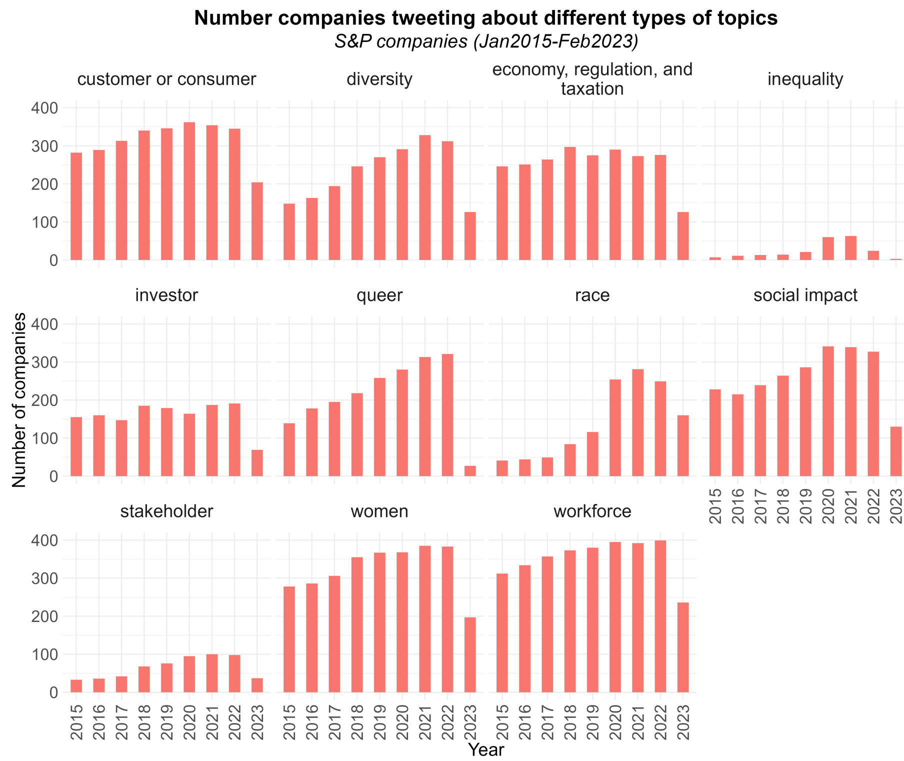
Notes: Predicted counts from a negative binomial model with year $\times$ employee ideology interactions. The model includes industry, state, and year fixed effects as well as controls for CEO, board, and top management ideology, firm size, and an offset for total words.

Figure C6: Interaction between donation-based employee ideology and industry type



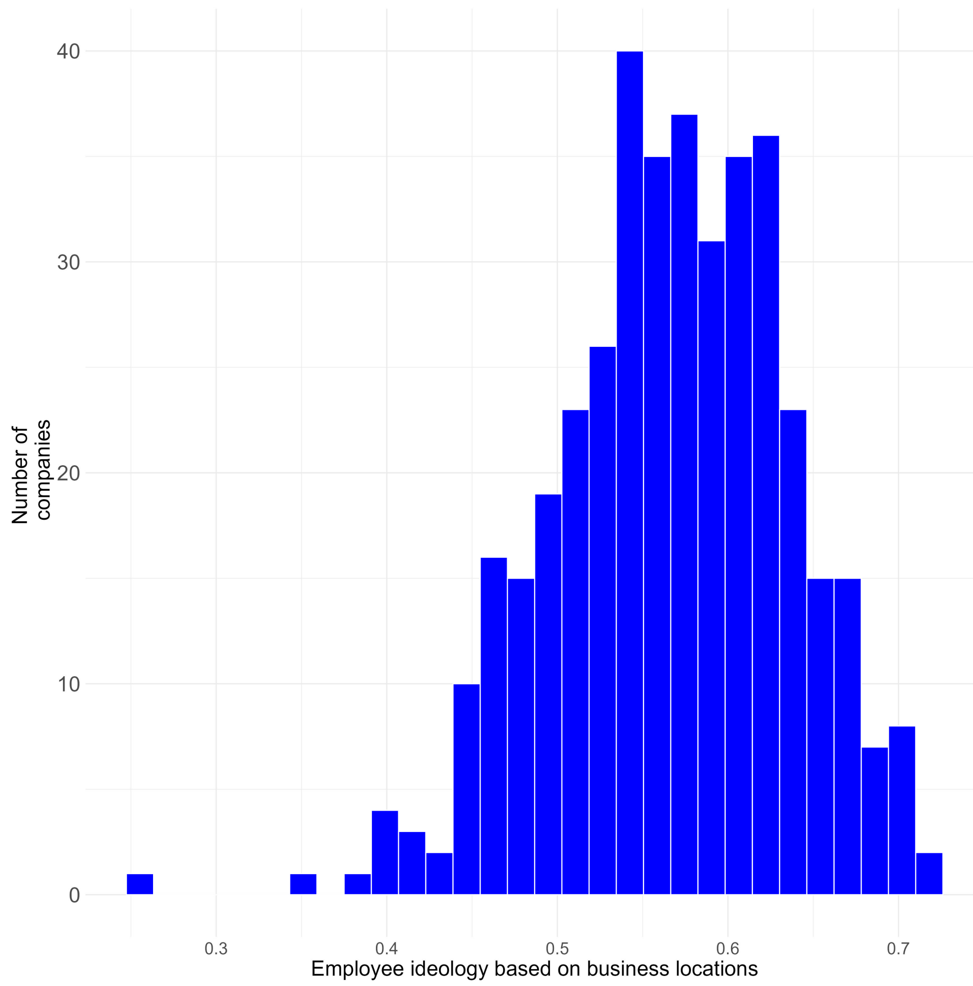
Notes: Predicted counts from a negative binomial model with industry group $\times$ employee ideology interactions. The model includes state, and year fixed effects as well as controls for CEO, board, and top management ideology, firm size, and an offset for total words.

Figure C7: Number of S&P 500 companies mentioning a given dictionary topic each year



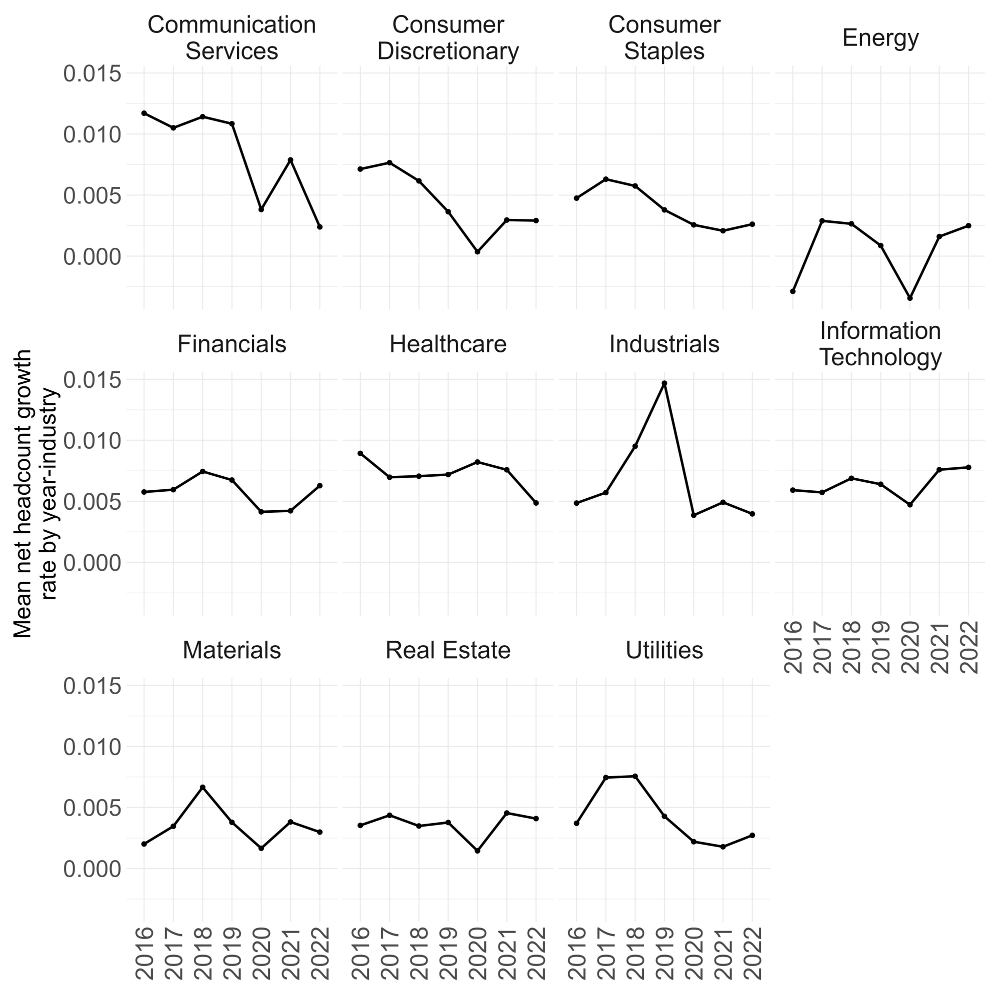
Notes: The figure shows descriptively the number of companies that each year mention at least once each of the dictionary topics.

Figure C8: Distribution of location-based employee ideology measure



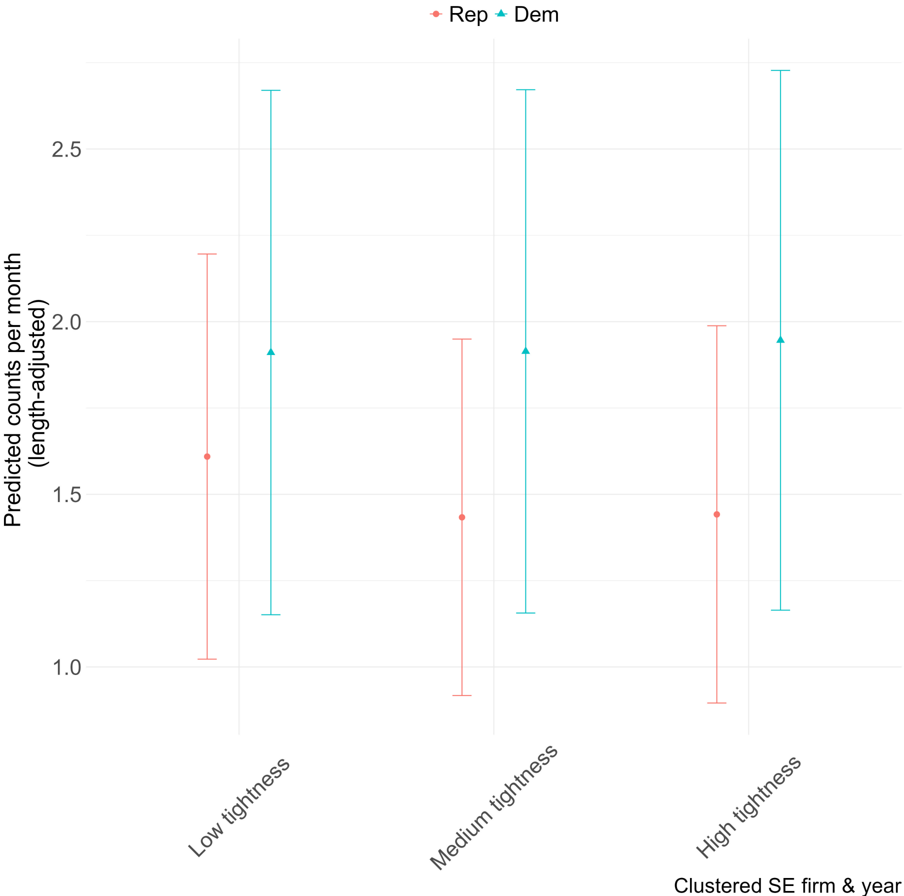
Notes: Each bar represents the number of companies in the sample that have a given score in the location-based ideology measure.

Figure C9: Mean net headcount growth rate by year-industry



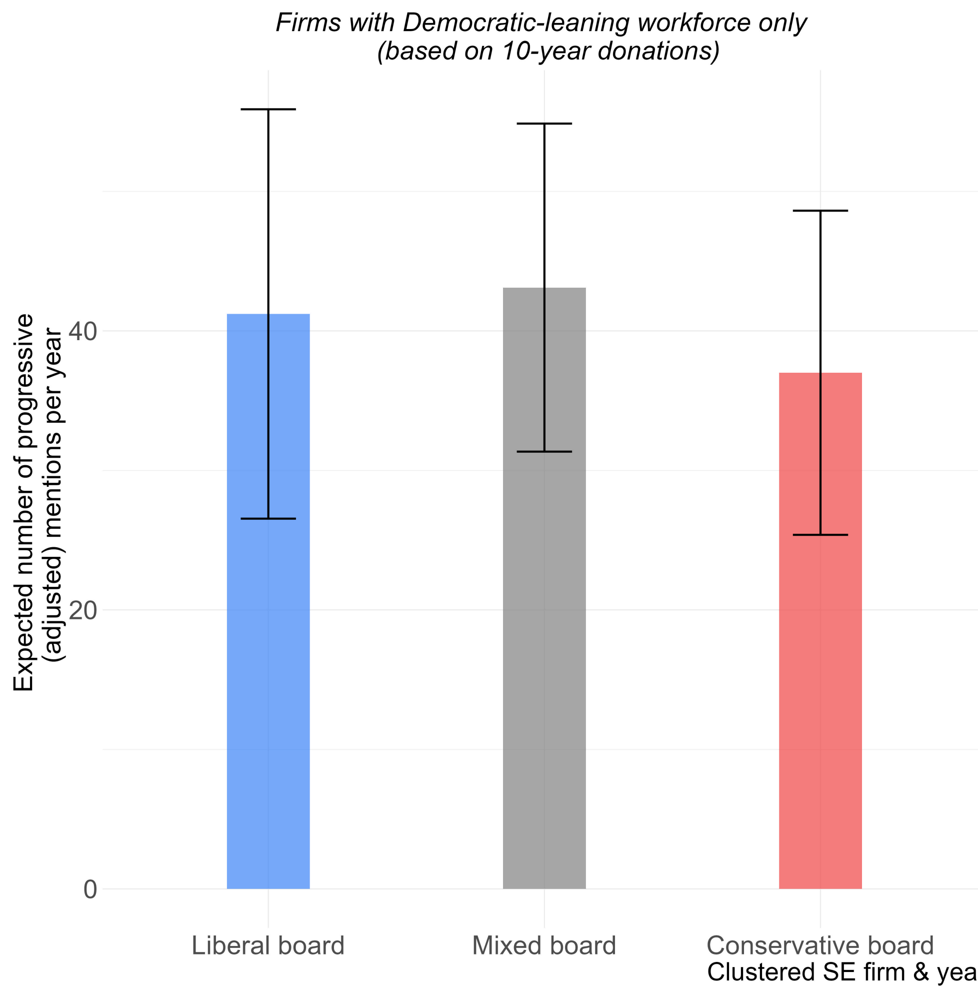
Notes: The figure shows how the evolution of the average net headcount rate by year-industry.

Figure C10: Progressive corporate speech by employee ideology and labour market tightness: expected counts per month



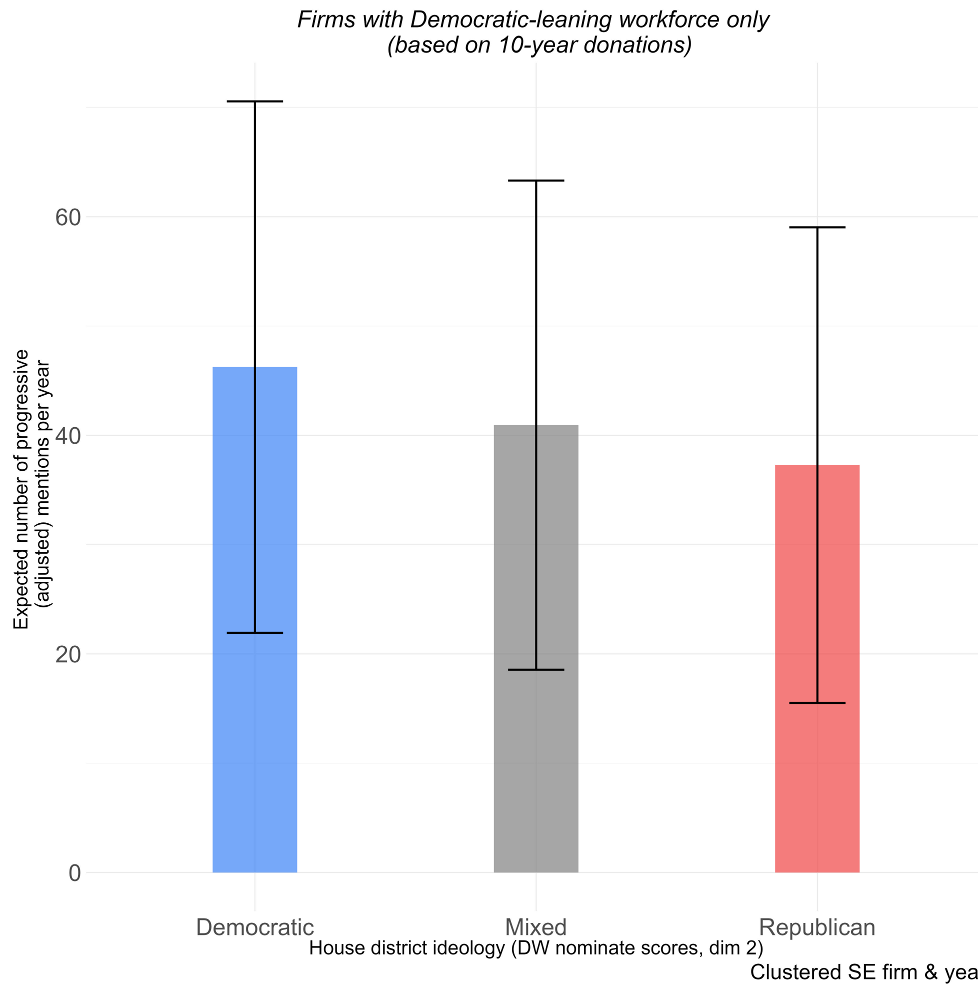
Notes: Predicted monthly counts of progressive mentions from a negative binomial model with industry, state, and year-month fixed effects; controls include CEO, board, top management ideology and firm size, with an offset for total words. Estimates compare Democratic and Republican firms across terciles of lagged labour-market tightness. Standard errors are clustered by firm and year.

Figure C11: Expected progressive mentions for the interaction between Democratic-leaning workforce and board ideology



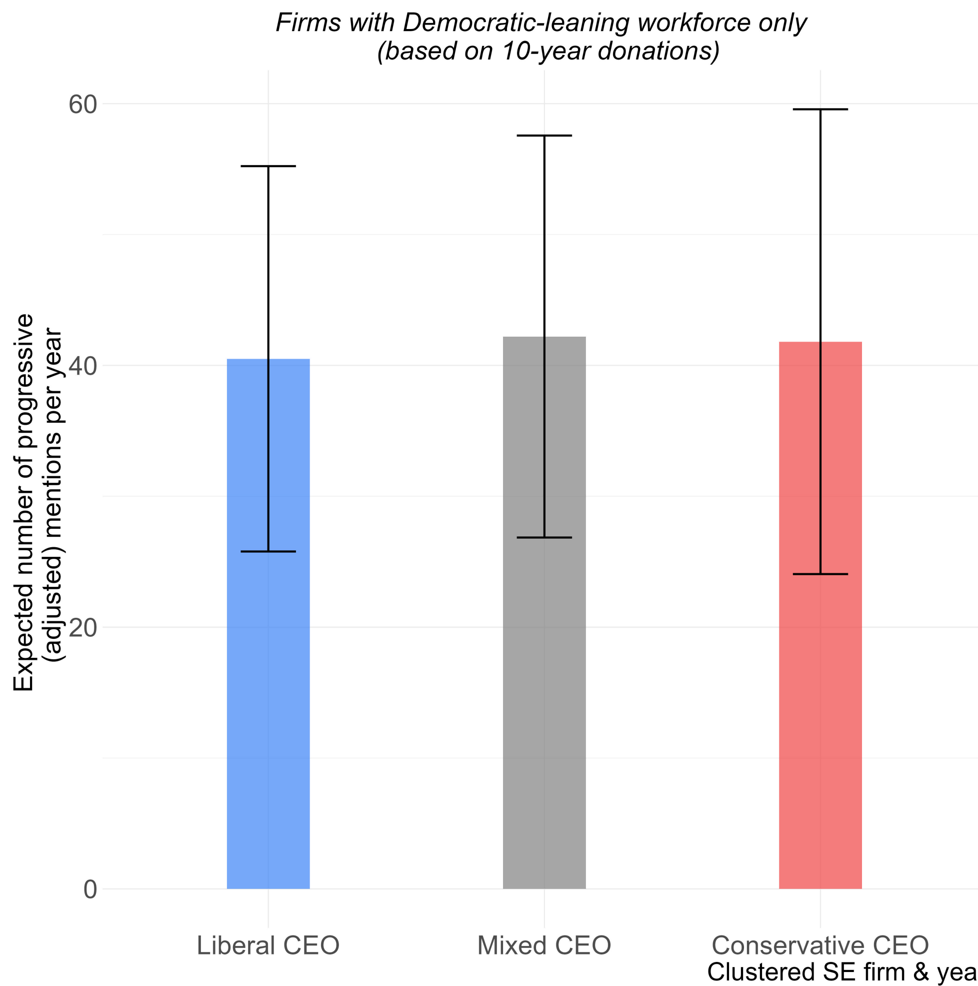
Notes: Bars display average marginal predictions of the expected number of progressive mentions per year for firms with Democratic-leaning workforces, by the firm's board ideology (Democratic, mixed, or Republican). Average marginal predictions come from a negative binomial model that controls for CEO ideology, top management ideology, and employee size; it also includes industry, state, and year-month fixed effects, with standard errors clustered by firm and year. The offset normalizes for document length so values can be interpreted as adjusted expected counts.

Figure C12: Expected progressive mentions for the interaction between Democratic-leaning workforce and state legislature ideology (cultural dimension)



Notes: Bars display average marginal predictions of the expected number of progressive mentions per year for firms with Democratic-leaning workforces, by the firm's House district ideology (Democratic, mixed, or Republican) measured using DW-NOMINATE scores (dimension 2) (Lewis et al., 2025). Average marginal predictions come from a negative binomial model that controls for CEO ideology, board ideology, top management ideology, and employee size; it also includes industry, state, and year-month fixed effects, with standard errors clustered by firm and year. The offset normalizes for document length so values can be interpreted as adjusted expected counts.

Figure C13: Expected progressive mentions for the interaction between Democratic-leaning workforce and CEO ideology



Notes: Bars display average marginal predictions of the expected number of progressive mentions per year for firms with Democratic-leaning workforces, by the firm's CEO ideology (Democratic, mixed, or Republican). Average marginal predictions come from a negative binomial model that controls for board ideology, top management ideology, and employee size; it also includes industry, state, and year-month fixed effects, with standard errors clustered by firm and year. The offset normalizes for document length so values can be interpreted as adjusted expected counts.

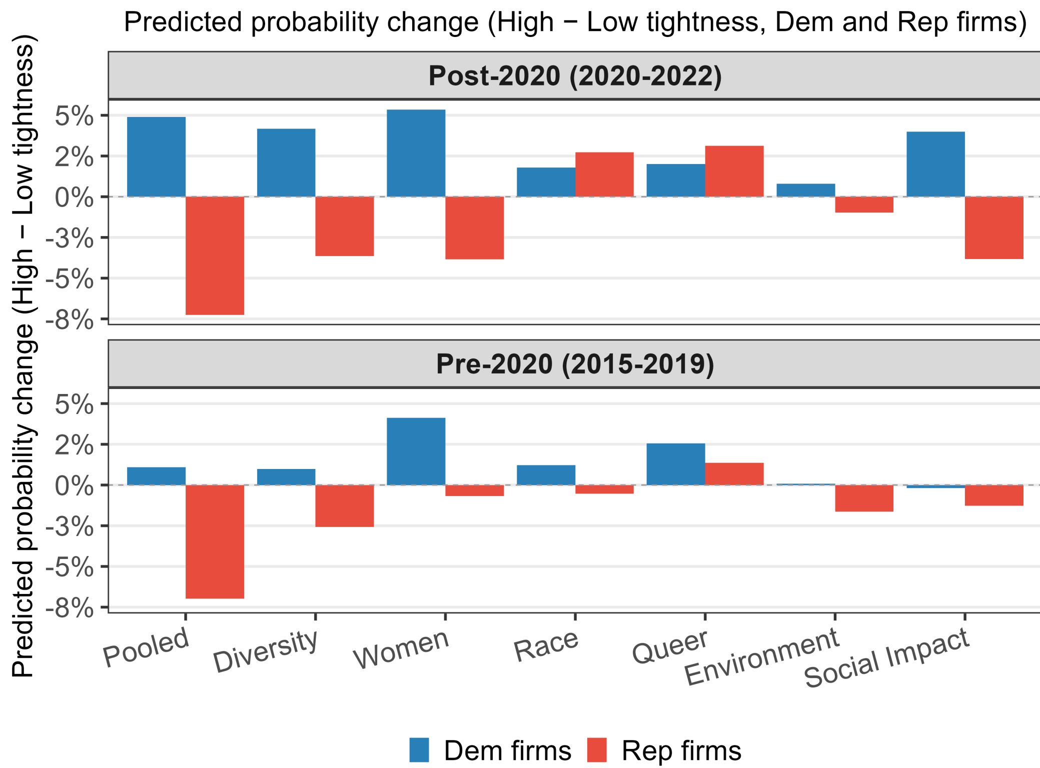


Figure C14: Change in Pr(progressive speech) from low to high firm net headcount growth, by firm type and period. LPM with CEO, board, top management ideology, firm size controls; industry, state, year-month FE. Clustered by firm and year-month.

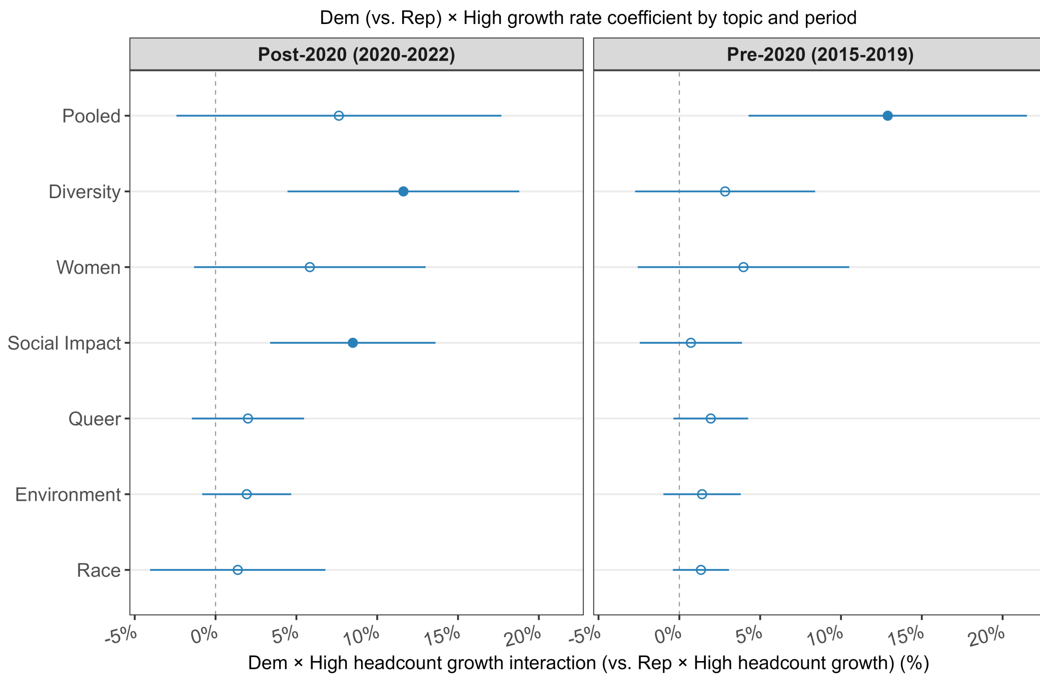
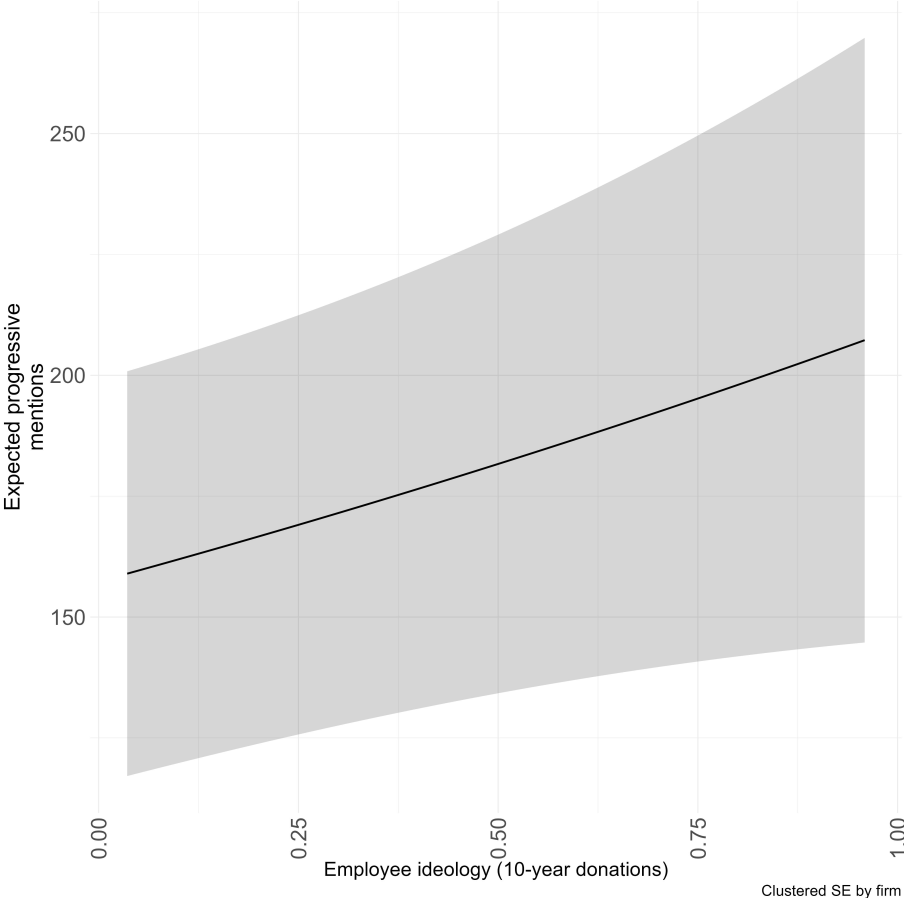


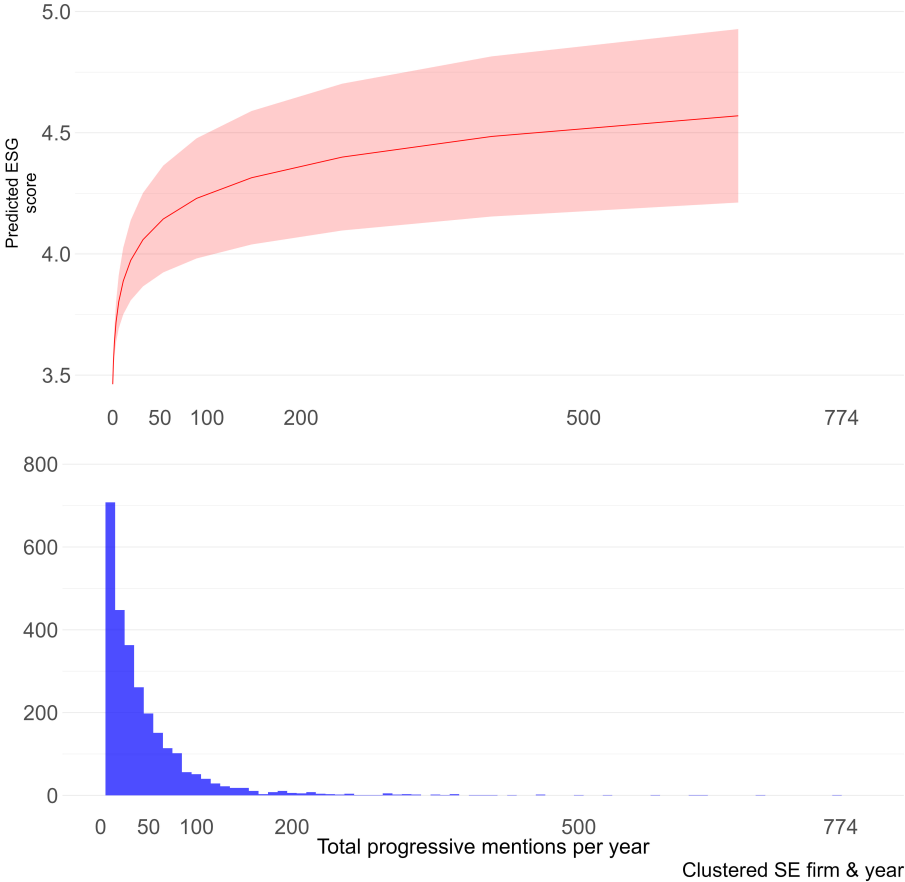
Figure C15: Forest plot of effects by topic and period.

Figure C16: Donation-based employee ideology and expected progressive mentions in 10-K filings 2020-2025



Notes: Predicted values from negative binomial models with industry, state, and year fixed effects. The figure includes only the 2020–2025 sample, showing that more Democratic-leaning workforces are associated with higher expected progressive mentions in 10-K filings.

Figure C17: Relationship between progressive corporate mentions and ESG scores: Predicted values and distribution



Notes: Predicted values from an OLS model with industry, state, and year fixed effects. The top panel shows that higher progressive mentions are associated with higher Bloomberg ESG scores, while the bottom panel displays the distribution of yearly mentions. Standard errors are clustered at the firm and year levels.

5.5.2 Tables

Table C1: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (I)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
AlaskaAir	Alaska Airlines	28897	Industrials
AbbottNews	Abbott	1078	Healthcare
AMD	AMD	1161	Information Technology
airproducts	Air Products	1209	Materials
honeywell	Honeywell	1300	Industrials
skyworksinc	Skyworks	1327	Information Technology
HessCorporation	Hess Corporation	1380	Energy
AEPnews	AEP	1440	Utilities
AmericanExpress	American Express	1447	Financials
aflac	Aflac	1449	Financials
AIGinsurance	AIG	1487	Financials
AMETEKInc	AMETEK Inc.	1598	Industrials
Amgen	Amgen	1602	Healthcare
ADI_News	Analog Devices, Inc.	1632	Information Technology
APA_Corp	APA Corporation	1678	Energy
Applied4Tech	Applied Materials	1704	Information Technology
ADMupdates	ADM	1722	Consumer Staples
autodesk	Autodesk	1878	Information Technology
ADP	ADP	1891	Information Technology
AveryDennison	Avery Dennison	1913	Materials
BallCorpHQ	Ball Corporation	1988	Materials
ConstellationEG	Constellation	1995	Utilities
BNYMellon	BNY Mellon	2019	Financials
baxter_intl	Baxter International	2086	Healthcare
BDandCo	BD	2111	Healthcare
Verizon	Verizon	2136	Communication Services
BestBuy	Best Buy	2184	Consumer Discretionary
BioRad	Bio-Rad Laboratories	2220	Healthcare
Boeing	The Boeing Company	2285	Industrials
roberthalf	Robert Half	2312	Industrials
bmsnews	Bristol Myers Squibb	2403	Healthcare
brownforman	Brown-Forman	2435	Consumer Staples
Cigna	Cigna Healthcare	2547	Healthcare
CSX	CSX	2574	Industrials
CampbellSoupCo	Campbell Soup Co	2663	Consumer Staples
cbrands	Constellation Brands	2710	Consumer Staples
cardinalhealth	Cardinal Health	2751	Healthcare
CaterpillarInc	CaterpillarInc	2817	Industrials
lumentechco	Lumen	2884	Communication Services
jpmorgan	J.P. Morgan	2968	Financials
Chevron	Chevron	2991	Energy
Clorox	Clorox	3121	Consumer Staples
CocaColaCo	The Coca-Cola Co.	3144	Consumer Staples
CP_News	Colgate-Palmolive	3170	Consumer Staples
AocInsurance	AOC INSURANCE BROKER	3221	Financials
comcast	Comcast	3226	Communication Services
ComericaBank	Comerica Bank	3231	Financials
Citi	Citi	3243	Financials
DXCTechnology	DXC Technology	3336	Information Technology
ConagraBrands	Conagra Brands	3362	Consumer Staples
ConEdison	Con Edison	3413	Utilities
CooperVision	CooperVision	3504	Healthcare
MolsonCoors	Molson Coors Beverage Company	3505	Consumer Staples

Table C2: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (II)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
Corning	Corning Incorporated	3532	Information Technology
Cummins	Cummins Inc.	3650	Industrials
CVSHealth	CVS Health	3735	Healthcare
Target	Target	3813	Consumer Discretionary
JohnDeere	John Deere	3835	Industrials
Delta	Delta	3851	Industrials
DTE_Energy	DTE_Energy	3897	Utilities
Disney	Disney	3980	Communication Services
DollarGeneral	Dollar General	4016	Consumer Discretionary
DominionEnergy	Dominion Energy	4029	Utilities
DoverCorp	Dover	4058	Industrials
DuPont_News	DuPont	4060	Materials
DukeEnergy	Duke Energy	4093	Utilities
PerkinElmer	PerkinElmer	4145	Healthcare
eatoncorp	Eaton	4199	Industrials
Ecolab	Ecolab	4213	Materials
atmosenergy	atmosenergy	4383	Utilities
Equifax	Equifax Inc.	4423	Industrials
EQTCorp	EQTCorp	4430	Energy
EXPD_Official	Expeditors	4494	Industrials
exxonmobil	ExxonMobil	4503	Energy
FMCCorp	FMC Corporation	4510	Materials
nexteraenergy	NextEra Energy, Inc.	4517	Utilities
FedEx	FedEx	4598	Industrials
FederalRealty	federalrealty	4605	Real Estate
FifthThird	Fifth Third Bank	4640	Financials
RegionsBank	Regions Bank	4674	Financials
MandT_Bank	M&T Bank	4699	Financials
usbank	U.S. Bank	4723	Financials
Ford	Ford Motor Company	4839	Consumer Discretionary
FTI_Global	Franklin Templeton	4885	Financials
GallagherGlobal	Gallagher	4973	Financials
generaldynamics	General Dynamics Corporation	5046	Industrials
GeneralMills	General Mills	5071	Consumer Staples
GM	General Motors	5073	Consumer Discretionary
genuinepartsco	Genuine Parts Company	5125	Consumer Discretionary
grainger	Grainger	5439	Industrials
L3HarrisTech	L3Harris	5492	Industrials
Welltower	Welltower Inc.	5543	Real Estate
KraftHeinzCo	The Kraft Heinz Company	5568	Consumer Staples
Hersheys	HERSHEY'S	5597	Consumer Staples
HP	HP	5606	Information Technology
HomeDepot	The Home Depot	5680	Consumer Discretionary
HormelFoods	Hormel Foods	5709	Consumer Staples
CenterPoint	CenterPoint Energy	5742	Utilities
jbhunt360	J.B. Hunt 360	5783	Industrials
Huntington_Bank	Huntington Bank	5786	Financials
ITWCareers	ITW	5878	Industrials
Trane_Tech	Trane Technologies	5959	Industrials
intel	Intel	6008	Information Technology
IBM	IBM	6066	Information Technology
IFF	IFF	6078	Materials
IntlPaperCo	International Paper	6104	Materials

Table C3: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (III)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
InterpublicIPG	Interpublic Group	6136	Communication Services
JacobsConnects	Jacobs	6216	Industrials
JNJNews	Johnson & Johnson	6266	Healthcare
KLAcorp	KLA	6304	Information Technology
Kinder_Morgan	Kinder Morgan	6310	Energy
Entergy	Entergy	6338	Utilities
KelloggCompany	Kellogg Company	6375	Consumer Staples
KCCorp	Kimberly-Clark Corp.	6435	Consumer Staples
LamResearch	Lam Research	6565	Information Technology
Lennar	Lennar	6669	Consumer Discretionary
LillyPad	Eli Lilly and Company	6730	Healthcare
bathbodyworks	Bath & Body Works	6733	Consumer Discretionary
lincolnfingroup	Lincoln Financial	6742	Financials
LockheedMartin	Lockheed Martin	6774	Industrials
MarathonOil	Marathon Oil	7017	Energy
MarshMcLennan	Marsh McLennan	7065	Financials
McCormickCorp	McCormick Corporate	7146	Consumer Staples
SPGlobal	S&P Global	7163	Financials
McKesson	McKesson Corporation	7171	Healthcare
Medtronic	Medtronic	7228	Healthcare
Merck	Merck	7257	Healthcare
MicronTech	Micron Technology	7343	Information Technology
3M	3M	7435	Industrials
MotoSolutions	Motorola Solutions	7585	Information Technology
ViatrisInc	Viatris	7637	Healthcare
BankofAmerica	Bank of America	7647	Financials
newell_brands	Newell Brands	7875	Consumer Discretionary
NewmontCorp	Newmont Corporation	7881	Materials
Nike	Nike	7906	Consumer Discretionary
Nordson_Corp	Nordson_Corp	7921	Industrials
nscorp	Norfolk Southern	7923	Industrials
EversourceCorp	Eversource Energy	7970	Utilities
NiSourceInc	NiSource	7974	Utilities
xcelenergy	Xcel Energy	7977	Utilities
NTWealth	Northern Trust Wealth	7982	Financials
northropgrumman	Northrop Grumman	7985	Industrials
WellsFargo	Wells Fargo	8007	Financials
WeAreOxy	Oxy	8068	Energy
firstenergycorp	FirstEnergy Corp.	8099	Utilities
ONEOK	ONEOK	8151	Energy
PNCBank	PNC Bank	8245	Financials
PPG	PPG	8247	Materials
PGE4Me	Pacific Gas & Electric	8264	Utilities
sempra	Sempra	8272	Utilities
ParkerHannifin	Parker Hannifin	8358	Industrials
Paychex	Paychex	8402	Information Technology
PPLCorp	PPL Corporation	8455	Utilities
Pentair	Pentair	8463	Industrials
PepsiCo	PepsiCo	8479	Consumer Staples
pfizer	Pfizer Inc.	8530	Healthcare
Exelon	Exelon Corporation	8539	Utilities
AltriaNews	Altria	8543	Consumer Staples
conocophillips	ConocoPhillips	8549	Energy

Table C4: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (IV)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
ProcterGamble	Procter & Gamble	8762	Consumer Staples
PSEGNews	PSEG	8810	Utilities
PulteGroupNews	PulteGroupNews	8823	Consumer Discretionary
RaymondJames	Raymond James	8898	Financials
ROKAutomation	Rockwell Automation	9203	Industrials
Sealed_Air	Sealed Air Corporation	9555	Materials
SherwinWilliams	Sherwin-Williams	9667	Materials
AOSmithHotWater	A. O. Smith	9771	Industrials
smuckers	Smucker's	9777	Consumer Staples
Snapon_Tools	Snap-on Tools	9778	Industrials
keybank	KeyBank	9783	Financials
edisonintl	Edison International	9846	Utilities
SouthernCompany	Southern Company	9850	Utilities
SouthwestAir	Southwest Airlines	9882	Industrials
StanleyBlkDeckr	Stanley Black & Decker	10016	Industrials
StateStreet	State Street	10035	Financials
PublicStorage	Public Storage	10096	Real Estate
Stryker_ST	Stryker Surgical Technologies	10115	Healthcare
Sysco	Sysco	10247	Consumer Staples
teleflex	Teleflex	10407	Healthcare
TXInstruments	Texas Instruments	10499	Information Technology
Textron	Textron Inc.	10519	Industrials
thermofisher	Thermo Fisher	10530	Healthcare
GlobeLife	Globe Life	10614	Financials
tylertech	Tyler Technologies	10789	Information Technology
TysonFoods	Tyson Foods	10793	Consumer Staples
united	United Airlines	10795	Industrials
AmerenCorp	Ameren Corporation	10860	Utilities
UnionPacific	Union Pacific	10867	Industrials
UDRMarketing	UDR Apartments	10894	Real Estate
UnitedHealthGrp	UnitedHealth Group	10903	Healthcare
UPS	UPS	10920	Industrials
RaytheonTech	Raytheon Technologies	10983	Industrials
UHS_Inc	UHS, Inc.	11032	Healthcare
VFCorp	VF Corporation	11060	Consumer Discretionary
Walmart	Walmart	11259	Consumer Staples
WBA_Global	Walgreens Boots Alliance	11264	Consumer Staples
WestPharma	West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc.	11376	Healthcare
westerndigital	Western Digital	11399	Information Technology
Weyerhaeuser	Weyerhaeuser	11456	Real Estate
WhirlpoolCorp	Whirlpool Corporation	11465	Consumer Discretionary
WilliamsUpdates	Williams	11506	Energy
WECEnergyGroup	WEC Energy Group	11550	Utilities
alliantenergy	Alliant Energy	11554	Utilities
TJXCareers	TJXCareers	11672	Consumer Discretionary
ZionsBank	Zions Bank	11687	Financials
JH_Fintech	Jack Henry	11811	Information Technology
TruistNews	Truist	11856	Financials
MorganStanley	Morgan Stanley	12124	Financials
TRowePrice	T. Rowe Price	12138	Financials
Microsoft	Microsoft	12141	Information Technology
Oracle	Oracle	12142	Information Technology
Gartner_inc	Gartner	12441	Information Technology

Table C5: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (V)

Twitter handle	**Company name**	**gvkey**	**Industry**
NVHomes1979	NVHomes	12459	Consumer Discretionary
Adobe	Adobe	12540	Information Technology
Fiserv	Fiserv	12635	Information Technology
Cadence	Cadence	13421	Information Technology
CarnivalPLC	Carnival Corporation	13498	Consumer Discretionary
DentsplySirona	Dentsply Sirona	13700	Healthcare
paramountco	Paramount	13714	Communication Services
Zoetis	Zoetis	13721	Healthcare
CharlesSchwab	Charles Schwab Corp	13988	Financials
FastenalCompany	Fastenal Company	14225	Industrials
firstrepublic	First Republic	14275	Financials
amphenol	Amphenol Corporation	14282	Information Technology
PXDtweets	Pioneer	14359	Energy
MGMResortsIntl	MGM Resorts	14418	Consumer Discretionary
WasteManagement	WM	14477	Industrials
FM_FCX	Freeport-McMoRan	14590	Materials
WRBerkleyCorp	W. R. Berkley Corporation	14822	Financials
DevonEnergy	Devon Energy	14934	Energy
Labcorp	Labcorp	14960	Healthcare
ValeroEnergy	Valero	15247	Energy
IDEXCorp	IDEXCorp	15267	Industrials
biotechne	Bio-Techne	15414	Healthcare
B_BInsurance	Brown & Brown, Inc.	15417	Financials
GenDigitalInc	Gen™	15855	Information Technology
abbvie	AbbVie	16101	Healthcare
EA	Electronic Arts	16721	Communication Services
SVB_Financial	SVB	17120	Financials
TMobile	T-Mobile	17874	Communication Services
IQVIA_global	IQVIA	17928	Healthcare
newscorp	News Corp	18043	Communication Services
PTC	PTC	18699	Information Technology
Paycom	Paycom	20116	Information Technology
CatalentPharma	Catalent Pharma	20228	Healthcare
KeysightNews	KeysightNews	20232	Information Technology
CoterraEnergy	Coterra Energy	20548	Energy
synchrony	Synchrony	20686	Financials
AristaNetworks	Arista Networks	20748	Information Technology
Cisco	Cisco	20779	Information Technology
Hologic	Hologic	20904	Healthcare
CaesarsEnt	Caesars Entertainment	21808	Consumer Discretionary
CitizensBank	Citizens	21825	Financials
HCAhealthcare	HCA Healthcare	22260	Healthcare
TrimbleCorpNews	Trimble Inc.	22815	Information Technology
SolarEdgePV	SolarEdge	23119	Information Technology
Etsy	Etsy	23238	Consumer Discretionary
Ceridian	Ceridian	23546	Information Technology
autozone	AutoZone	23809	Consumer Discretionary
Regeneron	Regeneron	23812	Healthcare
TheAESCorp	The AES Corporation	24216	Utilities
MonsterEnergy	Monster Energy	24316	Consumer Staples
VertexPharma	Vertex Pharmaceuticals	24344	Healthcare
ZebraTechnology	Zebra Technologies	24405	Information Technology
biogen	Biogen	24468	Healthcare

Table C6: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (VI)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
PayPal	PayPal	24616	Information Technology
ODFL_Inc	ODFL, Inc.	24617	Industrials
kimcorealty	Kimco	24731	Real Estate
Qualcomm	Qualcomm	24800	Information Technology
GileadSciences	Gilead Sciences	24856	Healthcare
Synopsys	Synopsys	24975	Information Technology
MohawkFlooring	Mohawk Flooring	25119	Consumer Discretionary
Lindeplc	Linde plc	25124	Materials
bostonsci	Boston Scientific	25279	Healthcare
steris	STERIS Healthcare United States	25313	Healthcare
DRHorton	D.R. Horton	25340	Consumer Discretionary
Starbucks	Starbucks Coffee	25434	Consumer Discretionary
Match	Match	26061	Communication Services
HPE	HPE	26156	Information Technology
FortiveCorp	Fortive Corporation	26590	Industrials
Humana	Humana	27914	Healthcare
Intuit	Intuit	27928	Information Technology
MicrochipTech	MicrochipTech	27965	Information Technology
Chubb	Chubb	28034	Financials
oreillyauto	O'Reilly Auto Parts	28180	Consumer Discretionary
NewsfromRCgroup	Royal Caribbean Group	28191	Consumer Discretionary
HowmetAerospace	Howmet Aerospace	28192	Industrials
CDWCorp	CDW Corporation	28320	Information Technology
Allstate	Allstate	28349	Financials
CamdenLiving	Camden	28629	Real Estate
EquityRes	Equity Residential	28733	Real Estate
BorgWarner	BorgWarner	28742	Consumer Discretionary
drpepper	Dr Pepper	28877	Consumer Staples
MarriottIntl	Marriott International	28930	Consumer Discretionary
regencycenters	Regency Centers	29099	Real Estate
Incyte	Incyte	29127	Healthcare
SimonPropertyGp	Simon	29389	Real Estate
EastmanChemCo	Eastman Chemical Co.	29392	Materials
TractorSupply	Tractor Supply	29736	Consumer Discretionary
AlbemarleCorp	Albemarle Corp.	29751	Materials
InvescoUS	Invesco US	29804	Financials
WestRock	WestRock	29830	Materials
AvalonBay	AvalonBay Communities	29875	Real Estate
Prologis	Prologis	29984	Real Estate
InvitationHomes	Invitation Homes	30004	Real Estate
IRProducts	Ingersoll Rand Products	30098	Industrials
EssexApartments	Essex Apartment Homes	30293	Real Estate
RealtyIncome	Realty Income	30822	Real Estate
CapitalOne	Capital One	30990	Financials
DollarTree	Dollar Tree	31587	Consumer Discretionary
Healthcare_ABC	AmerisourceBergen	31673	Healthcare
darden	Darden Restaurants	31846	Consumer Discretionary
ResMed	ResMed	31887	Healthcare
bakerhughesco	Baker Hughes	32106	Energy
moderna_tx	Moderna	34410	Healthcare
DowNewsroom	Dow	34443	Materials
FOXTV	FOX	34636	Communication Services
corteva	Corteva Agriscience™	35168	Materials

Table C7: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (VII)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
OtisElevatorCo	Otis Elevator Co.	36190	Industrials
carrier	Carrier	36191	Industrials
organonbiosim	Organon Biosimilars	38821	Healthcare
GEHealthCare	GE HealthCare	41818	Healthcare
dish	DISH	60900	Communication Services
WabtecCorp	Wabtec Corporation	60979	Industrials
ArchInsInt	Arch Insurance International	61302	Financials
EverestIns	Everest Insurance®	61388	Financials
DaVita	DaVita	61483	Healthcare
HenrySchein	Henry Schein	61494	Healthcare
EsteeLauder	Estée Lauder	61567	Consumer Staples
WatersCorp	Waters Corporation	61574	Healthcare
NetApp	NetApp	61591	Information Technology
TheHartford	The Hartford	61739	Financials
IronMountain	Iron Mountain	62374	Real Estate
Travelers	Travelers	62689	Financials
ANSYS	Ansys	63080	Information Technology
FactSet	FactSet	63172	Financials
QuestDX	Quest Diagnostics	64166	Healthcare
CarMax	CarMax	64410	Consumer Discretionary
amazon	Amazon	64768	Consumer Discretionary
QorvoInc	Qorvo, Inc.	64853	Information Technology
RalphLauren	Ralph Lauren	64891	Consumer Discretionary
yumbrands	Yum! Brands	65417	Consumer Discretionary
CHRobinson	C.H. Robinson	65609	Industrials
mettlertoledo	METTLER TOLEDO	65772	Healthcare
UnitedRentals	United Rentals	66065	Industrials
VERISIGN	VERISIGN	66368	Information Technology
Quanta_Services	Quanta Services	66446	Industrials
CruiseNorwegian	Norwegian Cruise Line	104432	Consumer Discretionary
Cognizant	Cognizant	111864	Information Technology
CoStarGroup	CoStar Group	112111	Industrials
RepublicService	Republic Services	112168	Industrials
CrownCastle	Crown Castle	113490	Real Estate
eBay	eBay	114524	Consumer Discretionary
GoldmanSachs	Goldman Sachs	114628	Financials
nvidia	NVIDIA	117768	Information Technology
Aptiv	Aptiv	118122	Consumer Discretionary
bookingcom	Booking.com	119314	Consumer Discretionary
F5	F5	121077	Information Technology
sbasite	SBA Communications	121382	Real Estate
JuniperNetworks	Juniper Networks	121718	Information Technology
BlackRock	BlackRock	124434	Financials
Akamai	Akamai Technologies	125595	Information Technology
CharterNewsroom	Charter News	126136	Communication Services
ExpediaGroup	Expedia Group	126296	Consumer Discretionary
Agilent	Agilent Technologies	126554	Healthcare
TeledyneMarine	TeledyneMarine	126721	Information Technology
EdwardsLifesci	Edwards Lifesciences	133366	Healthcare
MetLife	MetLife	133768	Financials
onsemi	onsemi	134932	Information Technology
IntuitiveSurg	Intuitive	136725	Healthcare
CRiverLabs	Charles River Labs	137131	Healthcare

Table C8: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (VIII)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
illumina	Illumina	138205	Healthcare
Equinix	Equinix, Inc.	138743	Real Estate
MoodysCorp	Moody's Corporation	139665	Financials
AlignTechInc	Align Technology	141384	Healthcare
Garmin	Garmin	141459	Consumer Discretionary
GlobalPayInc	Global Payments Inc.	141913	Information Technology
MDLZ	Mondelēz Intl	142953	Consumer Staples
Accenture	Accenture	143357	Information Technology
WTWcorporate	WTW	144009	Financials
zimmerbiomet	Zimmer Biomet	144559	Healthcare
ElevanceHealth	Elevance Health	145046	Healthcare
Centene	Centene	145552	Healthcare
principal	Principal®	145701	Financials
AdvanceAuto	Advance Auto Parts	145977	Consumer Discretionary
netflix	Netflix	147579	Communication Services
CMEGroup	CME Group	149070	Financials
WynnLasVegas	Wynn Las Vegas	149318	Consumer Discretionary
Nasdaq	Nasdaq	149337	Financials
Seagate	Seagate	150937	Information Technology
molinahealth	Molina Healthcare	152149	Healthcare
LKQCorp	LKQ Corporation	155394	Consumer Discretionary
Assurant	Assurant	157057	Financials
salesforce	Salesforce	157855	Information Technology
MarketAxess	MarketAxess	158742	Financials
dominos	Domino's Pizza	160211	Consumer Discretionary
Mastercard	Mastercard	160225	Information Technology
extraspace	Extra Space Storage	160479	Real Estate
monolithicpower	MPS	160888	Information Technology
digitalrealty	Digital Realty	160991	Real Estate
LasVegasSands	Sands	161844	Consumer Discretionary
MosaicCompany	The Mosaic Company	162129	Materials
celanese	Celanese	162254	Materials
ICE_Markets	ICE	163610	Financials
CFIndustries	CF Industries	163946	Materials
warnerbros	Warner Bros.	164296	Communication Services
ameriprise	Ameriprise Financial	164708	Financials
LeidosInc	Leidos	165123	Industrials
LiveNation	Live Nation	165746	Communication Services
FISGlobal	FIS	165993	Information Technology
Meta	Meta	170617	Communication Services
Phillips66Co	Phillips 66	170841	Energy
ServiceNow	ServiceNow	171007	Information Technology
FirstSolar	First Solar	175404	Information Technology
Broadridge	Broadridge	176928	Information Technology
TEConnectivity	TE Connectivity	177267	Information Technology
Discover	Discover	177376	Financials
MSCI_Inc	MSCI	178507	Financials
ultabeauty	Ulta Beauty	178704	Consumer Discretionary
awwa	American Water Works Association	179437	Utilities
VisaNews	VisaNews	179534	Information Technology
InsidePMI	Philip Morris International	179621	Consumer Staples
ATVI_AB	Activision Blizzard	180405	Communication Services
Verisk	Verisk	180652	Industrials

Table C9: S&P 500 Companies in Sample (IX)

Twitter handle	Company name	gvkey	Industry
Broadcom	Broadcom Inc.	180711	Information Technology
Fortinet	Fortinet	183377	Information Technology
Generac	Generac	183736	Industrials
CBOE	Cboe	184500	Financials
NXP	NXP	184725	Information Technology
Tesla	Tesla	184996	Consumer Discretionary
WeAreHII	HII	186310	Industrials
MarathonPetroCo	Marathon Petroleum	186989	Energy
Enphase	Enphase Energy	187450	Information Technology
EPAMSystems	EPAM Systems	187697	Information Technology
Xylem	Xylem	189491	Industrials
CBRE	CBRE	260774	Real Estate
LyondellBasell	LyondellBasell	294524	Materials
AllegionPlc	Allegion	316056	Industrials

Table C10: Dictionary of progressive tokens

Diversity	**Race**	**Women**	**Queer**	**Environment**	**Social impact**
"diversity"	"racial"	"women"	"lesbian"	"climate crisis"	"social impact"
"inclusion"	"racism"	"woman"	"bisexual"	"global warming"	"ESG"
"inclusive"	"racist"	"female"	"gay"	"fossil fuel-"	"social responsibility"
"underrepresent-"	"anti-racist"	"gender"	"transgender"	"Paris Agreement"	
"DEI"	"#BlackLivesMatter"	"reproductive"	"trans"	"#climateaction"	
"belonging"	"#BLM"	"abortion"	"LGBTQ"	"#climatechange"	
"belongs"	"#Juneteenth"	"leave policy"	"pride month"		
"representation"	"#BlackHistoryMonth"	"Roe v. Wade"	"homosexual"		
	"African American"	"Dobbs"	"cisgender"		
	"Black American"	"parental leave"	"queer"		
	"George Floyd"	"maternity"	"non-binary"		
	"BIPOC"	"paternity"	"same-sex"		
	"Latinx"	"feminis-"	"pronouns"		
	"Hispanic"	"pay gap"	"#pride"		
	"Asian American"	"equal pay"			
	"Indigenous"	"gender pay"			
	"Native American"	"glass ceiling"			
	"people of color"	"gender equality"			
	"#AAPI"	"#MeToo"			
	"systemic racism"	"#IWD"			
		"Int'l Women's Day"			
		"women's history"			
		"sexism"			
		"sexist"			
		"harassment"			

Notes: Trailing hyphens denote partial stems capturing word families (e.g., "underrepresent-" matches *under-represented*, *underrepresentation*).

Table C11: Dictionary of Economic/Business Tokens

Workforce	**Investor**	**Consumer/Customer**	**Economy**
"employee"	"investor"	"consumer"	"economy"
"workforce"	"shareholder"	"customer"	"tax"
"talent"	"board"	"client"	"regulation"
"skills"	"equity"		"fiscal"
"training"	"stakeholder"		"monetary"
"retention"	"dividend"		

Table C13: Firm-level employee ideology (business locations) and corporate progressive speech

Dependent Variable:	**Counts of progressive mentions in a given month**					
Model (negative binomial):	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (business locations)	2.929***	3.101***	2.551***	2.641***	2.578***	0.8406
	(0.6786)	(0.7046)	(0.7198)	(0.7461)	(0.6929)	(0.7345)
CEO ideology		-0.1370	-0.1765	-0.1537	-0.1626	-0.0863
		(0.1494)	(0.1503)	(0.1530)	(0.1484)	(0.1362)
Board ideology			1.316***	1.356***	0.9427**	1.001**
			(0.4671)	(0.4702)	(0.4631)	(0.4922)
Top management ideology				-0.1467	-0.1247	-0.0233
				(0.2676)	(0.2757)	(0.2820)
Company size (medium)					0.4949***	-0.2587*
					(0.1299)	(0.1389)
Company size (large)					0.7490***	-0.1342
					(0.1334)	(0.1466)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	3,240	3,196	3,168	3,166	3,166	2,863
Squared Correlation	0.15739	0.16305	0.17112	0.16883	0.19384	0.40607
Pseudo R^2	0.02063	0.02136	0.02238	0.02239	0.02799	0.04089
BIC	28,888.3	28,490.4	28,228.4	28,219.0	28,074.5	25,835.8
Over-dispersion	0.72107	0.72933	0.73662	0.73627	0.77250	1.1368

Clustered (firm) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C12: Industry classification into knowledge-intensive, capital-intensive, and consumer-oriented sectors

Category	**GICS Sub-Industries**
Knowledge-intensive	Advertising; Application Software; Systems Software; Semiconductors; Semiconductor Materials & Equipment; Communications Equipment; Technology Hardware, Storage & Peripherals; IT Consulting & Other Services; Internet Services & Infrastructure; Data Processing & Outsourced Services; Financial Exchanges & Data; Transaction & Payment Processing Services; Biotechnology; Pharmaceuticals; Life Sciences Tools & Services; Health Care Equipment; Health Care Supplies; Health Care Services; Health Care Facilities; Asset Management & Custody Banks; Broadcasting; Investment Banking & Brokerage; Insurance Brokers; Property & Casualty Insurance; Multi-line Insurance; Consumer Finance; Research & Consulting Services; Human Resource & Employment Services
Capital-intensive	Electric Utilities; Gas Utilities; Water Utilities; Multi-Utilities; Oil & Gas Exploration & Production; Oil & Gas Equipment & Services; Oil & Gas Refining & Marketing; Oil & Gas Storage & Transportation; Commodity Chemicals; Specialty Chemicals; Industrial Gases; Metals; Gold; Copper; Packaging Products & Materials; Industrial Machinery & Supplies & Components; Industrial Conglomerates; Building Products; Aerospace & Defense
Consumer-oriented	Agricultural & Farm Machinery; Agricultural Products & Services; Air Freight & Logistics; Apparel Retail; Apparel, Accessories & Luxury Goods; Automobile Manufacturers; Automotive Parts & Equipment; Automotive Retail; Brewers; Broadline Retail; Cable & Satellite; Cargo Ground Transportation; Casinos & Gaming; Computer & Electronics Retail; Construction & Engineering; Construction Machinery & Heavy Transportation Equipment; Consumer Electronics; Consumer Staples Merchandise Retail; Data Center REITs; Distillers & Vintners; Distributors; Diversified Banks; Diversified Support Services; Drug Retail; Electrical Components & Equipment; Electronic Components; Electronic Equipment & Instruments; Electronic Manufacturing Services; Environmental & Facilities Services; Fertilizers & Agricultural Chemicals; Food Distributors; Health Care Distributors; Health Care REITs; Home Furnishings; Home Improvement Retail; Homebuilding; Hotels, Resorts & Cruise Lines; Household Products; Independent Power Producers & Energy Traders; Industrial REITs; Integrated Oil & Gas; Integrated Telecommunication Services; Interactive Home Entertainment; Interactive Media & Services; Life & Health Insurance; Managed Health Care; Metal, Glass & Plastic Containers; Movies & Entertainment; Multi-Family Residential REITs; Other Specialized REITs; Other Specialty Retail; Packaged Foods & Meats; Paper & Plastic Packaging Products & Materials; Passenger Airlines; Personal Care Products; Publishing; Rail Transportation; Real Estate Services; Regional Banks; Reinsurance; Restaurants; Retail REITs; Self-Storage REITs; Single-Family Residential REITs; Soft Drinks & Non-alcoholic Beverages; Technology Distributors; Telecom Tower REITs; Timber REITs; Tobacco; Trading Companies & Distributors; NA

Table C14: Firm-level employee ideology and corporate progressive speech (including consumer ideology for 109 firms)

Dependent Variable:	**Counts of progressive mentions in a given year**					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.8592***	0.8909***	0.9676***	1.003***	0.6240**	1.910**
	(0.2664)	(0.2704)	(0.2644)	(0.2794)	(0.2581)	(0.8253)
CEO ideology		-0.1781	-0.2359*	-0.2023	-0.1720	0.1104
		(0.1423)	(0.1401)	(0.1437)	(0.1421)	(0.2567)
Board ideology			1.467***	1.547***	1.085**	1.950***
			(0.4676)	(0.4479)	(0.4329)	(0.7129)
Top management ideology				-0.2829	-0.2499	-0.7954*
				(0.3393)	(0.3130)	(0.4262)
Company size (medium)					0.4900***	1.296***
					(0.1238)	(0.3001)
Company size (large)					0.8009***	1.394***
					(0.1293)	(0.3467)
Consumer ideology						1.259
						(1.366)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	3,204	3,196	3,168	3,166	3,166	828
Squared Correlation	0.22090	0.22925	0.23307	0.22949	0.23800	0.25754
Pseudo R^2	0.03214	0.03224	0.03383	0.03393	0.03976	0.05605
BIC	28,564.4	28,506.4	28,230.2	28,218.5	28,067.4	7,821.6
Over-dispersion	0.79794	0.79979	0.81197	0.81216	0.85515	1.2924

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C15: Firm-level employee ideology × headcount expansion tercile

Dependent Variable:	Progressive speech (1/0)		
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic workforce × Low headcount expansion	0.0583	0.0647	0.0566
	(0.0367)	(0.0433)	(0.0437)
Democratic workforce × Medium headcount expansion	0.0762**	0.0692*	0.0733*
	(0.0336)	(0.0379)	(0.0374)
Democratic workforce × High headcount expansion	0.1104***	0.1114**	0.1152***
	(0.0383)	(0.0428)	(0.0427)
ROA		-0.0275	
		(0.1314)	
Log market cap			0.0115
			(0.0161)
Log Tobin's Q			-0.0463*
			(0.0242)
Controls			
CEO ideology	✓	✓	✓
Board ideology	✓	✓	✓
TMT ideology	✓	✓	✓
Employee size	✓	✓	✓
Fixed-effects			
Industry	✓	✓	✓
State	✓	✓	✓
Year-month	✓	✓	✓
Fit statistics			
Observations	32,652	26,579	25,459
R^2	0.14888	0.14140	0.14308
Within R^2	0.04294	0.04474	0.04781

Clustered (firm & year_month) SEs in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C16: Firm-level employee ideology (locaion-based) × Lagged net headcdount growth rate

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Medium LMT (vs. Low LMT)	0.0996*	0.0852	0.0987*	0.0996*	0.0527	-0.0226
	(0.0572)	(0.0571)	(0.0576)	(0.0577)	(0.0557)	(0.0445)
High LMT (vs. Low LMT)	0.1419	0.1325	0.1574	0.1620	0.1396	0.1432
	(0.1078)	(0.1098)	(0.1092)	(0.1092)	(0.1093)	(0.0879)
Democratic employees × Low LMT	0.4861***	0.5001***	0.4422***	0.4595***	0.4671***	0.1293
	(0.1353)	(0.1376)	(0.1378)	(0.1390)	(0.1378)	(0.1106)
Democratic employees × Medium LMT	0.6762***	0.7061***	0.6323***	0.6494***	0.6679***	0.2546***
	(0.1264)	(0.1278)	(0.1295)	(0.1316)	(0.1280)	(0.0962)
Democratic employees × High LMT	0.5406***	0.5761***	0.4830***	0.4941***	0.5071***	0.0380
	(0.1433)	(0.1452)	(0.1444)	(0.1462)	(0.1436)	(0.1187)
Ideologically mixed × Low LMT	0.3196***	0.3155**	0.2603**	0.2669**	0.2415*	-0.0031
	(0.1237)	(0.1247)	(0.1235)	(0.1237)	(0.1278)	(0.0983)
Ideologically mixed × Medium LMT	0.3987***	0.4129***	0.3447***	0.3492***	0.3541***	0.0835
	(0.1237)	(0.1237)	(0.1238)	(0.1245)	(0.1230)	(0.0989)
Ideologically mixed × High LMT	0.2995**	0.3211**	0.2574*	0.2644*	0.2957**	-0.0870
	(0.1375)	(0.1388)	(0.1375)	(0.1392)	(0.1402)	(0.1164)
CEO ideology		-0.1410	-0.2205	-0.1931	-0.1987	-0.0722
		(0.1509)	(0.1506)	(0.1584)	(0.1542)	(0.1129)
Board ideology			1.572***	1.639***	1.320***	1.543***
			(0.4822)	(0.4823)	(0.4616)	(0.3427)
Top management ideology				-0.1864	-0.2480	-0.2375
				(0.2489)	(0.2493)	(0.1870)
Company size (medium)					0.4894***	-0.0370
					(0.1311)	(0.0961)
Company size (large)					0.7083***	0.0518
					(0.1368)	(0.0989)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	33,623	33,280	33,052	33,040	33,040	30,629
Squared Correlation	0.09949	0.10354	0.10925	0.10764	0.12254	0.35068
Pseudo R^2	0.02752	0.02825	0.02988	0.02993	0.03585	0.11135
BIC	143,251.6	141,596.2	140,301.0	140,254.5	139,421.5	124,484.5
Over-dispersion	0.49817	0.50009	0.50431	0.50412	0.52601	1.0312

Clustered (firm) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C17: Firm-level employee ideology (10-year donations) x House district ideology

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Mixed workforce (vs Democratic workforce)	0.2401	0.2284	0.2444	0.2460	0.0943	0.1920
	(0.2008)	(0.2060)	(0.1980)	(0.2016)	(0.1945)	(0.1476)
Republican workforce (vs Democratic workforce)	-0.2305	-0.2229	-0.3195	-0.3025	-0.2776	-0.2209*
	(0.2302)	(0.2340)	(0.2124)	(0.2134)	(0.2078)	(0.1227)
Democratic workforce × Democratic house district	0.6260***	0.6431***	0.6802***	0.7007***	0.5262***	0.3710***
	(0.1880)	(0.1952)	(0.1998)	(0.2040)	(0.2018)	(0.1234)
Democratic workforce × Mixed house district	0.5035***	0.5259***	0.5170***	0.5317***	0.3840***	0.1596
	(0.1480)	(0.1477)	(0.1412)	(0.1462)	(0.1383)	(0.1321)
Democratic workforce × Republican house district	0.5333**	0.5344**	0.6713***	0.6767***	0.5046**	0.3457**
	(0.2121)	(0.2187)	(0.2146)	(0.2177)	(0.2214)	(0.1359)
Mixed workforce × Democratic house district	0.7325***	0.7352***	0.7296***	0.7382***	0.5571***	0.2803**
	(0.1885)	(0.1951)	(0.1941)	(0.1955)	(0.1922)	(0.1099)
Mixed workforce × Mixed house district	0.3706***	0.3622***	0.3480***	0.3575***	0.3383***	-0.0054
	(0.1243)	(0.1250)	(0.1166)	(0.1199)	(0.1076)	(0.1123)
Mixed workforce × Republican house district	0.4925**	0.4921**	0.5934***	0.5705***	0.4160**	0.3212*
	(0.2278)	(0.2358)	(0.2232)	(0.2132)	(0.1983)	(0.1687)
CEO ideology		-0.2035	-0.2531*	-0.2226	-0.1910	-0.0911
		(0.1447)	(0.1423)	(0.1444)	(0.1414)	(0.1209)
Board ideology			1.217***	1.301***	0.9219**	1.057***
			(0.4540)	(0.4274)	(0.4250)	(0.3107)
Top management ideology				-0.2616	-0.2476	-0.2376
				(0.3301)	(0.3066)	(0.1796)
Company size (medium)					0.4856***	-0.0652
					(0.1217)	(0.0934)
Company size (large)					0.7653***	0.0295
					(0.1297)	(0.1044)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	3,240	3,196	3,168	3,166	3,166	3,037
Squared Correlation	0.22684	0.23891	0.24775	0.24481	0.25340	0.53463
Pseudo R^2	0.03404	0.03486	0.03643	0.03651	0.04173	0.12796
BIC	28,882.7	28,487.0	28,212.1	28,201.0	28,067.5	24,991.1
Over-dispersion	0.80815	0.81815	0.83049	0.83056	0.87017	2.1906

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C18: Firm-level employee ideology (10-year donations) x House district ideology (Pre/Post-2020)

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions	
Model:	Pre-2020	Post-2020
Variables		
Mixed House ideology (vs. Democratic)	0.1391	0.3601*
	(0.2965)	(0.2060)
Republican House ideology (vs. Democratic)	-0.0282	0.7406**
	(0.3255)	(0.3571)
Democratic workforce × Democratic House ideology	0.5134*	0.6096***
	(0.2821)	(0.2053)
Democratic workforce × Mixed House ideology	0.2197*	0.1423
	(0.1155)	(0.1222)
Democratic workforce × Republican House ideology	0.2867	-0.2736
	(0.2040)	(0.3390)
Mixed workforce × Democratic House ideology	0.4320	0.2975
	(0.2773)	(0.2809)
Mixed workforce × Mixed House ideology	0.1359*	0.0119
	(0.0806)	(0.1190)
Mixed workforce × Republican House ideology	0.5423*	-0.4373
	(0.2871)	(0.3343)
CEO ideology	-0.1329	-0.0902
	(0.1352)	(0.1935)
Board ideology	1.085***	1.167**
	(0.3679)	(0.4545)
Top management ideology	-0.1553	-0.2333
	(0.2054)	(0.2823)
Company size (medium)	-0.0517	-0.0607
	(0.1058)	(0.1030)
Company size (large)	0.1289	-0.0097
	(0.1142)	(0.1213)
Fixed-effects		
industry	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics		
Observations	1,843	1,192
Squared Correlation	0.55690	0.49595
Pseudo R^2	0.12892	0.12471
BIC	14,673.4	10,636.6
Over-dispersion	2.0149	2.6636

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C19: Firm-level employee ideology and progressive mentions (excluding major events)

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.7608***	0.7973***	0.8730***	0.9108***	0.5806**	0.4044*
	(0.2724)	(0.2759)	(0.2742)	(0.2905)	(0.2725)	(0.2080)
CEO ideology		-0.2076	-0.2625*	-0.2288	-0.1979	-0.1114
		(0.1439)	(0.1438)	(0.1492)	(0.1470)	(0.1287)
Board ideology			1.379***	1.456***	1.032**	1.047***
			(0.4902)	(0.4662)	(0.4576)	(0.3286)
Top management ideology				-0.2904	-0.2662	-0.2519
				(0.3498)	(0.3285)	(0.1921)
Company size (medium)					0.4562***	-0.1040
					(0.1271)	(0.0966)
Company size (large)					0.7003***	-0.0591
					(0.1304)	(0.1058)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	3,204	3,196	3,168	3,166	3,166	3,037
Squared Correlation	0.20347	0.21501	0.22011	0.21687	0.22069	0.53647
Pseudo R^2	0.03304	0.03321	0.03466	0.03478	0.03940	0.13144
BIC	27,338.0	27,281.6	27,019.2	27,007.2	26,896.4	23,799.8
Over-dispersion	0.79738	0.79958	0.81036	0.81059	0.84335	2.1669

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C20: Firm-level employee ideology x Lagged labour market tightness (excluding major events)

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Low LMT	0.2306**	0.2242**	0.2225**	0.2120**	0.1721*	0.1282*
	(0.0959)	(0.0960)	(0.0970)	(0.0996)	(0.0961)	(0.0681)
Medium LMT	0.2375**	0.2414**	0.2126*	0.2040*	0.1286	0.0183
	(0.1078)	(0.1060)	(0.1170)	(0.1205)	(0.1058)	(0.0751)
Democratic employees × High LMT	0.6848***	0.7126***	0.7101***	0.7174***	0.5722***	0.2981**
	(0.1406)	(0.1383)	(0.1289)	(0.1302)	(0.1265)	(0.1168)
Democratic employees × Low LMT	0.2668**	0.2917**	0.2849**	0.2995**	0.2116	0.1495
	(0.1346)	(0.1322)	(0.1268)	(0.1355)	(0.1331)	(0.1088)
Democratic employees × Medium LMT	0.4049***	0.4255***	0.4487***	0.4636***	0.3872***	0.2622**
	(0.1233)	(0.1264)	(0.1337)	(0.1453)	(0.1367)	(0.1130)
Ideologically mixed × High LMT	0.6315***	0.6357***	0.6066***	0.6037***	0.5180***	0.1712**
	(0.1155)	(0.1133)	(0.1045)	(0.1040)	(0.0982)	(0.0867)
Ideologically mixed × Low LMT	0.3625***	0.3615***	0.3317***	0.3418***	0.2924**	0.0855
	(0.1108)	(0.1137)	(0.1077)	(0.1116)	(0.1174)	(0.0914)
Ideologically mixed × Medium LMT	0.4531***	0.4332***	0.4334***	0.4396***	0.3993***	0.1930
	(0.1150)	(0.1184)	(0.1365)	(0.1412)	(0.1411)	(0.1215)
CEO ideology		-0.2829*	-0.3687**	-0.3472**	-0.3305**	-0.2322*
		(0.1549)	(0.1551)	(0.1624)	(0.1608)	(0.1377)
Board ideology			1.762***	1.832***	1.506***	1.392***
			(0.4810)	(0.4460)	(0.4156)	(0.3299)
Top management ideology				-0.2098	-0.2497	-0.2942
				(0.3914)	(0.3684)	(0.2013)
Company size (medium)					0.4619***	-0.0601
					(0.1226)	(0.1004)
Company size (large)					0.6409***	-0.0581
					(0.1233)	(0.1068)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year_month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	33,623	33,280	33,052	33,040	33,040	30,629
Squared Correlation	0.15039	0.16347	0.16958	0.16829	0.17181	0.42019
Pseudo R^2	0.04596	0.04707	0.04958	0.04966	0.05450	0.13714
BIC	131,878.6	130,291.7	128,972.6	128,924.3	128,295.7	113,544.7
Over-dispersion	0.58527	0.59041	0.59995	0.59974	0.62107	1.3313

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C21: Progressive mentions and ESG scores: negative binomial fixed-effects models before and after 2020

Dependent Variable:	ESG score	
Model:	(1)	(2)
Variables		
Yearly progressive mentions (log)	0.1704***	0.1121***
	(0.0281)	(0.0319)
Return-on-assets		1.014
		(0.7115)
Market value of equity (ln)		0.3328***
		(0.0635)
Tobin Q (ln)		-0.1773
		(0.1222)
Company size (medium)		-0.0359
		(0.1243)
Company size (large)		0.0519
		(0.1723)
Fixed-effects		
industry	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics		
Observations	2,643	2,103
R^2	0.48452	0.51493
Within R^2	0.04190	0.12072

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C22: Placebo tests: predicting investor-related mentions

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.2074	0.4231	0.2948	0.2863	0.0077	-0.0974
	(0.5498)	(0.5438)	(0.5585)	(0.5627)	(0.5537)	(0.6227)
CEO ideology		-0.7754**	-0.8061***	-0.8428**	-0.8196**	-0.8587**
		(0.3112)	(0.3080)	(0.3387)	(0.3239)	(0.3368)
Board ideology			0.8984	0.8205	0.7590	1.166
			(1.043)	(1.046)	(1.046)	(1.166)
Top management ideology				0.2408	0.2120	0.7434
				(0.7242)	(0.6923)	(0.7513)
Company size (medium)					0.5618**	-0.0729
					(0.2294)	(0.2372)
Company size (large)					0.4723*	-0.3162
					(0.2641)	(0.2708)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	2,411	2,408	2,403	2,401	2,401	2,326
Squared Correlation	0.20173	0.19620	0.19920	0.20507	0.20182	0.43915
Pseudo R^2	0.11140	0.11326	0.11367	0.11362	0.11564	0.12954
BIC	8,644.4	8,628.7	8,617.0	8,614.4	8,611.4	8,416.3
Over-dispersion	0.28308	0.28738	0.28812	0.28766	0.29188	0.33659

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C23: Placebo tests: predicting economy-related mentions

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	-0.1139	-0.0599	-0.0434	-0.0439	-0.3776	-0.1606
	(0.4327)	(0.4307)	(0.4372)	(0.4362)	(0.4562)	(0.4006)
CEO ideology		-0.2227	-0.2102	-0.2112	-0.1890	-0.0244
		(0.2643)	(0.2513)	(0.2479)	(0.2379)	(0.2225)
Board ideology			-0.2474	-0.2516	-0.3387	-0.0546
			(0.9719)	(0.9851)	(0.9599)	(0.7646)
Top management ideology				0.0136	0.0510	0.3497
				(0.3972)	(0.4106)	(0.3478)
Company size (medium)					0.6654***	-0.0158
					(0.2027)	(0.1575)
Company size (large)					0.3956**	-0.4099**
					(0.1971)	(0.1728)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	2,427	2,424	2,419	2,417	2,417	2,342
Squared Correlation	0.22108	0.22851	0.22878	0.22899	0.23254	0.37841
Pseudo R^2	0.07432	0.07454	0.07483	0.07478	0.07849	0.13991
BIC	12,736.7	12,732.4	12,697.2	12,694.5	12,661.1	11,726.7
Over-dispersion	0.45504	0.45636	0.45676	0.45612	0.46895	0.78970

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C24: Placebo tests: predicting consumer-related mentions

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.6056	0.5907	0.5990	0.6507	0.2862	-0.0326
	(0.4219)	(0.4193)	(0.4269)	(0.4340)	(0.4434)	(0.2916)
CEO ideology		0.0307	0.0454	0.1003	0.1232	0.0887
		(0.1982)	(0.1946)	(0.2043)	(0.1912)	(0.1738)
Board ideology			-0.4489	-0.3423	-0.6945	-0.4625
			(0.7502)	(0.7466)	(0.6720)	(0.5144)
Top management ideology				-0.5066	-0.5198	0.0915
				(0.3786)	(0.3845)	(0.3392)
Company size (medium)					0.8038***	0.2791**
					(0.1803)	(0.1259)
Company size (large)					0.6624***	0.0382
					(0.1858)	(0.1375)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	2,427	2,424	2,419	2,417	2,417	2,342
Squared Correlation	0.14204	0.14150	0.13904	0.14317	0.19029	0.58484
Pseudo R^2	0.05108	0.05108	0.05105	0.05137	0.05702	0.12687
BIC	16,523.3	16,506.2	16,471.9	16,457.4	16,377.9	15,010.2
Over-dispersion	0.55607	0.55559	0.55637	0.55695	0.58349	1.1147

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C25: Placebo tests: predicting workforce-related mentions

Dependent Variable:	total_mentions					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Employee ideology (10-year donations)	0.3318	0.3323	0.2593	0.3020	-0.0933	0.0160
	(0.3649)	(0.3680)	(0.3633)	(0.3641)	(0.3114)	(0.2765)
CEO ideology		-0.0698	-0.0879	-0.0381	-0.0076	0.0732
		(0.2032)	(0.1985)	(0.2023)	(0.1813)	(0.1482)
Board ideology			0.8835	1.028*	0.5623	1.026**
			(0.5803)	(0.5946)	(0.5733)	(0.5054)
Top management ideology				-0.5171	-0.4811	-0.4618
				(0.3311)	(0.3293)	(0.3118)
Company size (medium)					0.7290***	0.0297
					(0.1598)	(0.1381)
Company size (large)					0.9564***	0.2308
					(0.1829)	(0.1570)
Fixed-effects						
industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit statistics						
Observations	2,427	2,424	2,419	2,417	2,417	2,342
Squared Correlation	0.16167	0.16193	0.15646	0.16313	0.18893	0.29709
Pseudo R^2	0.02898	0.02895	0.02906	0.02934	0.03685	0.09530
BIC	18,771.1	18,757.1	18,716.3	18,708.2	18,582.9	17,213.0
Over-dispersion	0.66231	0.66222	0.66291	0.66491	0.70647	1.2187

Clustered (firm & year) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C26: Dictionary of Progressive Keywords in 10-K Filings

Category	**Keywords / Phrases**
Diversity and Inclusion	diversity, inclusion, underrepresent, minority, minorities, equality, unequal
Racism	race, racism, African American, Black American, George Floyd
Gender	women, female, gender, feminism, feminist
Reproductive Rights	reproductive, abortion, leave policy, parental leave
LGBTQ	lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, LGBTQ, pride, homosexual, cisgender, queer
Environment	environmental, green, climate crisis, global warming, greenhouse, carbon, footprint
ESG	social impact, ESG
Workforce and Talent	employee, talent, skill, shortage

Table C27: Views on DEI policies at work. Logistic regression (coefficients represent log-odds)

Dependent Variable:	DEI policies (1/0)					
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variables						
Constant	-1.148***	-1.446***	-1.760***	-2.001***	-1.342***	-1.431***
	(0.0584)	(0.2247)	(0.2396)	(0.2428)	(0.2600)	(0.2616)
Democrat (ref: Republican)	2.767***	2.735***	2.711***	2.692***	2.659***	2.659***
	(0.0846)	(0.0851)	(0.0855)	(0.0860)	(0.0869)	(0.0870)
Independent	1.322***	1.298***	1.288***	1.327***	1.280***	1.291***
	(0.0765)	(0.0770)	(0.0775)	(0.0784)	(0.0793)	(0.0795)
High school graduate (ref: Less than HS)		-0.0302	-0.0625	-0.0469	0.0443	0.0532
		(0.2340)	(0.2350)	(0.2359)	(0.2375)	(0.2375)
Some college, no degree		0.1877	0.1194	0.1915	0.3086	0.3242
		(0.2280)	(0.2294)	(0.2305)	(0.2321)	(0.2321)
Associate's degree		0.1394	0.0591	0.1232	0.2286	0.2376
		(0.2347)	(0.2363)	(0.2374)	(0.2389)	(0.2389)
College graduate		0.3667	0.2648	0.3583	0.4192*	0.4312*
		(0.2246)	(0.2273)	(0.2285)	(0.2298)	(0.2298)
Postgraduate		0.6049***	0.4836**	0.6143***	0.7169***	0.7077***
		(0.2258)	(0.2300)	(0.2316)	(0.2334)	(0.2334)
Hospitality, service, arts, entertainment (ref: Manufacturing, construction, etc)			0.5002***	0.3873***	0.2920**	0.3013**
			(0.1377)	(0.1392)	(0.1414)	(0.1416)
Healthcare and social assistance			0.4985***	0.2938**	0.2339*	0.2172*
			(0.1188)	(0.1224)	(0.1236)	(0.1237)
Retail and trade			0.4130***	0.3013**	0.2638*	0.2775**
			(0.1377)	(0.1395)	(0.1412)	(0.1414)
Education			0.4168***	0.2184*	0.2038	0.1913
			(0.1291)	(0.1322)	(0.1336)	(0.1337)
Banking, FIRE			0.4036***	0.3008**	0.2598*	0.2598*
			(0.1374)	(0.1388)	(0.1398)	(0.1399)
Transportation			0.2903*	0.2726*	0.2849*	0.2870*
			(0.1598)	(0.1608)	(0.1623)	(0.1624)
Government, public administration			0.5367***	0.4717***	0.4210***	0.4203***
			(0.1446)	(0.1463)	(0.1471)	(0.1472)
Information/Technology			0.6348***	0.6417***	0.5972***	0.5843***
			(0.1399)	(0.1410)	(0.1424)	(0.1424)
Professional, scientific, technical services			0.5483***	0.4682***	0.4563***	0.4518***
			(0.1355)	(0.1372)	(0.1388)	(0.1388)
Female				0.4945***	0.4713***	0.4676***
				(0.0646)	(0.0653)	(0.0654)
Other				1.266***	1.083***	1.078***
				(0.3725)	(0.3773)	(0.3780)
30-49 (ref: 18-29)					-0.4856***	-0.4884***
					(0.1101)	(0.1101)
50-64					-0.9380***	-0.9388***
					(0.1136)	(0.1136)
65+					-1.073***	-1.071***
					(0.1422)	(0.1423)
Job identity (Important vs Not important)						0.1996***
						(0.0632)
Fit statistics						
Observations	5,867	5,867	5,866	5,866	5,866	5,866
Squared Correlation	0.21408	0.22089	0.22666	0.23686	0.25289	0.25420
Pseudo R^2	0.16645	0.17366	0.17836	0.18753	0.20074	0.20198
BIC	6,755.4	6,749.4	6,806.0	6,758.2	6,686.6	6,685.3

IID standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table C28: Logistic regression with importance of work as source of identity. Pew Research

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	-0.300***	-0.385***	-0.452***	-0.496***	-0.513**
	(0.050)	(0.090)	(0.121)	(0.124)	(0.157)
Republican	-	-	-	-	-
Democrat	0.199**	0.130+	0.111	0.100	0.096
	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.071)
Independent	-0.111	-0.153*	-0.161*	-0.154*	-0.160*
	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.073)
High school graduate		-	-	-	-
Less than high school		0.278	0.270	0.267	0.259
		(0.240)	(0.242)	(0.242)	(0.242)
Some college, no degree		-0.196+	-0.225*	-0.215*	-0.209+
		(0.107)	(0.108)	(0.108)	(0.108)
Associate's degree		-0.028	-0.085	-0.080	-0.083
		(0.118)	(0.119)	(0.119)	(0.119)
College graduate/some postgrad		0.035	-0.056	-0.045	-0.045
		(0.096)	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)
Postgraduate		0.523***	0.376***	0.394***	0.389***
		(0.098)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.105)
Manufacturing, mining, construction, etc			-	-	-
Hospitality, service, arts, entertainment, recreation			-0.036	-0.061	-0.062
			(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.137)
Health care and social assistance			0.402***	0.359**	0.353**
			(0.114)	(0.117)	(0.117)
Retail and trade			-0.213	-0.238+	-0.237+
			(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.136)
Education			0.320**	0.279*	0.276*
			(0.122)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Banking, finance, accounting, real estate, insurance			0.005	-0.016	-0.021
			(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.133)
Transportation			0.019	0.018	0.025
			(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.157)
Government, public administration, military			0.064	0.048	0.035
			(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)
Information/Technology			0.375**	0.378**	0.368**
			(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.135)
Professional, scientific, technical services			0.142	0.126	0.128
			(0.129)	(0.130)	(0.130)
Other			0.439*	0.412*	0.418*
			(0.171)	(0.172)	(0.172)
Male				-	-
Female				0.111+	0.109+
				(0.060)	(0.061)
				(0.719)	(0.721)
18-29					-
30-49					0.082
					(0.102)
50-64					-0.002
					(0.105)
65+					-0.068
					(0.130)
					(1.074)
Num.Obs.	5207	5207	5206	5206	5206

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This dissertation has investigated the ways in which politics permeates the modern workplace, shaping firm-related outcomes (e.g., collaboration at work and corporate communications) as well as political and civic engagement in society more broadly. Its core argument is that several features of today's knowledge-based societies provide the conditions for political identities to become particularly relevant in shaping these outcomes, and often in ways that are significantly different from the union-led labour politics that were typical of industrial societies.

First, due to the highly collaborative nature of modern work and the heightened reliance on job networks for developing social ties, informal political talk is a distinctive feature of workplaces in the knowledge economy and its consequences extend to patterns of political and civic engagement outside work. Second, perceptions around key skills in knowledge-based societies —in particular, the importance of relational skills and trust— are likely to be influenced by political and value alignment (or misalignment): when colleagues' political views become visible, they will influence other colleagues' willingness to team up and socialize with them. Finally, since many workers derive a strong sense of identity from their jobs, they also prefer employers that publicly align with their social and political values.

Nevertheless, political alignment between employees, or between employees and employers, only emerges under specific conditions. Preferences in favour of working with politically aligned teammates —even at the cost of other competence considerations— emerge more strongly among those who value noncognitive and relational skills and perceive outpartisans as lacking them, and those who have prosocial orientations. On the employer side, organizations are most likely to align with their employees' leanings when labour market pressures to retain and attract a largely left-leaning, highly educated workforce outweigh the potential backlash risks.

Empirical evidence for this argument is provided extensively across three different chapters. Using an original survey of 2,000 workers in the UK, Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive picture of how frequently politics is discussed at work, how politically homogeneous respondents perceive their workplaces to be, and the importance attached to nonpecuniary dimensions of work. When exploring the conditions under which informal political talk emerges, I find that working in a collaborative setting and belonging to a younger cohort are strongly associated with informal political talk, while those facing fewer risks when talking politics at work —those

who align politically with most colleagues, or who are in secure, higher-ranked roles— are also more likely to do so. Second, I show that politicized workplace networks are strongly associated with different kinds of political engagement outside of work, as well as with stronger demands in favour of companies' speaking up on social and political issues.

Motivated by these findings, Chapters 4 and 5 examine the specific conditions under which political alignment between workers (Chapter 4) and between organizations and their workers (Chapter 5) is most likely to occur. Using a conjoint design —using the same sample of 2,000 workers as in Chapter 3— in which respondents are exposed to five different pairs of potential teammates, Chapter 4 shows that, while the average respondent is unwilling to fully trade work competence considerations for political alignment when choosing a teammate, highly competent outpartisans are penalized compared to highly competent copartisans.

Most importantly, using a new measure of affective polarization at work that exploits open-ended survey items, this chapter shows that those who strongly care about noncognitive and relational skills at work, and see outpartisans as unlikely to have them, are most strongly opposed to teaming up with outpartisans. This mechanism is confirmed with a second survey of 1,000 workers in the UK, which shows that a large share of workers — particularly younger, left-wing, and highly educated ones – use colleagues' political views as proxies for honesty and, to a lesser extent, competence. Similarly, using machine learning methods to analyse heterogeneity in the conjoint, we find that politically sorted, left-wing, and prosocial respondents — three characteristics positively correlated with higher affective polarization at work — care more strongly about their potential colleagues' political identities.

Chapter 5 brings firms into the picture, exploring the conditions under which they speak up on politically divisive issues to align with their employees. It draws on corporate tweets from S&P 500 firms and 10-K filings, donation-based measures of stakeholders' ideology, and firm-level monthly data on labour market flows to show that large US public companies tend to align with their employees' ideological leanings. In line with the view that progressive corporate speech is deployed strategically, this alignment is strongest when recruitment and retention pressures are high. However, since 2020, firms with Democratic-leaning workforces located in Republican-majority states have been less vocal on progressive causes than comparable firms

in states without anti-DEI/ESG legislation. Survey evidence, as was the case in Chapter 3, supports the broader theoretical framework about left-leaning, highly educated individuals in high-skilled occupations, as well as those who derive a stronger sense of personal identity from their job, being most in favour of corporate political speech and DEI policies.

My theoretical framework and findings speak at least to three different current debates in political science. First, over the past decade, a large body of work has analysed the political transformations associated with the rise of knowledge-based societies (Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Häusermann and Kitschelt, 2024; Boix, 2019), paying particular attention to labour market changes and the (unequal) expansion of higher education. These studies, while particularly insightful for understanding the growing fragmentation of political landscapes across advanced economies, including the strengthening of anti-establishment forces, fall short of explaining nonelectoral political phenomena. These studies focus mainly on the economic dimensions of work —wage dynamics or job security— while overlooking the social interactions that have always been inherent to all stages of economic development.

My dissertation fills this gap by linking workplace organizational structures, evolving skill demands —especially the premium on relational skills— and the growing nonpecuniary importance of work to the salience of political identities inside firms. By analysing how politics influences both workers' choices and organizational decisions, my dissertation makes a novel contribution to understanding how political identities interact with features of the knowledge economy to produce firm-level outcomes (e.g., collaboration patterns, corporate speech) that can potentially further reinforce political sorting and homogeneity, limiting opportunities for cross-cutting discussions in advanced democracies.

Second, this dissertation speaks to longstanding debates about whether workplaces bring together people with different social backgrounds and political views. While seminal work has portrayed the workplace as a cross-cutting setting (Mutz, 2002; Mutz and Mondak, 2006; Mutz, 2006), recent research documents growing occupational (Consiglio and van Staalduinen, 2025), income (Godechot et al., 2024), and political homogeneity (Chinoy and Koenen, 2024; Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024) across Europe and the United States.

This dissertation reconciles these views: in the UK, most workers still perceive their work-

places as politically diverse, yet homogeneity emerges under specific conditions. In other words, structural transformations might favour social, economic, and political sorting, but whether workplaces become politically homogeneous depends on contextual factors, in particular the extent of partisan prejudice and labour market conditions. Furthermore, while these previous studies have mainly looked at political alignment across employees (Chinoy and Koenen, 2024; Frake, Hurst and Kagan, 2024) or across executives (Fos, Kempf and Tsoutsoura, 2025), my thesis explores the conditions under which firms are most likely to publicly align with employees. Analysing both horizontal (employee–employee) and vertical (employee–employer) alignment across two countries is a key contribution of this dissertation.

Third, my work speaks to contemporary debates —both among scholars and media debates— about the sources of business realignment and stakeholder capitalism, particularly in the US. While much of the political economy research has focused on how employers shape the political mobilization of employees (Hertel-Fernandez, 2018; Stuckatz, 2022) or consumers (Culpepper and Thelen, 2020), more recently scholarly attention has turned to the role of stakeholders in influencing and constraining progressive-leaning corporate speech (Barari, 2024; Conway and Boxell, 2024; Steel, 2024).

A key contribution of this thesis emerges in dialogue with these recent studies, which have so far mostly overlooked the importance of employees and undertheorized the conditions under which different actors will be more or less successful in pushing for, or against, corporate political speech. This dissertation points to the importance of taking into account employees' ideological leanings —especially those of highly educated employees who care strongly about the nonpecuniary dimensions of work— to understand why traditionally conservative, pro-status quo US corporations decide to embrace, at least rhetorically, progressive causes, and what this reveals about the bargaining power of highly educated workers. Rather than seeing firms only as engines of competitive advantage, as much of the VoC tradition does, I treat them as actors that shape societal norms by selectively engaging with salient political and social issues when advantageous. It is precisely their influence in shaping societal norms and workers' views that has made corporate political speech a politically polarizing issue more recently, especially in the US.

Empirically, this dissertation has focused exclusively on two countries at the frontier of the knowledge economy, the US and the UK. On the issues that concern this thesis, both countries are characterized by a large share of university-educated workers, an occupational structure characterized by a large supply of high–value added, high-skilled jobs, and a more flexible labour market, with relatively lower job tenures and higher mobility among high-skilled workers. Moreover, as liberal market economies, the weakness of their welfare state gives employers a major role as providers of public goods, which might also heighten workers' expectations about companies' engagement in broader social and political issues. Despite the specific idiosyncrasies of these two cases, I suggest that my argument could travel well to other knowledge-based societies in western Europe.

Recent transformations in the world of work, from the rise in remote and hybrid arrangements to the rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, raise additional questions about the issues addressed in this dissertation. On the one hand, I have shown that high skilled workers with politically progressive views play an important role in shaping corporate political speech in context when firms' recruitment and retention needs are most challenging. However, if the expansion of AI was going to bring down the demand of graduate jobs, the ability of these workers to extract nonpecuniary benefits from companies —including, for instance, corporate political alignment— will be severely undermined.

On the other hand, the rise of remote and hybrid working arrangements —especially among knowledge economy workers— could also reduce the importance of workplaces as key sites for socialization and identity formation, making workers also less selective about the kind of colleagues they want to work with or the kind of company they want to work for. Nevertheless, in my dissertation, I show that colleagues' political views matter similarly, or even more, for those working under hybrid arrangements. In addition, return-to-work mandates in the UK and the US, with some companies —including Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Amazon, and Dell— recently demanding employees return to the office five days a week, suggest that on-site work is unlikely to disappear, even for university-educated workers. Recent survey evidence from the US and the UK shows that, in fact, the youngest workers (those aged 16-24) are the least likely to want to work fully remotely (Gallup, 2025; Jacobs and Hope, 2025), emphasizing

the importance of the workplace as a setting for socialization and developing friendships.

On the political front, recent events —from the "no-politics at work" bans introduced by some technology companies to the strong Republican-led legal and political backlash against DEI and ESG legislation— prove that politicians, at least in the US, perceive organizations as important political battlegrounds, given the influence of what they say and do. My dissertation shows that while companies' public engagement with progressive causes has declined sharply in 2025, following Donald Trump's return to the White House, employees' left-leaning ideology is still positively predictive of corporate progressive speech. At the same time, recent evidence suggests that many companies are not completely retreating from these policies (Raval, Jacobs and Rogers, 2025), but are reframing them, in an attempt to find a balance between the political backlash and continuing to meet the expectations of their progressive workforces. Regardless of which ideological shape corporate speech takes in the future, my dissertation offers a starting point from which to understand the link between this speech, the political identities of workers, and the implications for employer-employee relations.

More broadly, while in the early days the knowledge economy was characterized by an implicit alliance between an intellectual, scientific, academic class and a more profit-oriented, business class around the expansion of civil liberties and cultural progressivism, it is possible to question whether this alliance will persist in more advanced stages of the knowledge economy. Current discussions around university funding in both the UK and the US, and the role that politics should play in workplaces, boardrooms, and corporate communication, may indicate the slow breaking up of this alliance, and, ultimately, reaffirm the political dimension of these spaces (Yuchtman, 2025), especially as workers continue to sort into workplaces and both traditional left and right-wing camps undergo ideological transformations. The patterns I have documented and examined speak to the importance of keeping workplaces and the social interactions unfolding within them at the forefront of research into the politics of advanced democracies.

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Additional Materials

Preregistration: "Teaming Up or Splitting Apart? Political Identities in the Modern Workplace"

This study was preregistered on "Open Science Framework" on April 24, 2024

Introduction

The implications of affective polarization go beyond the realm of politics. Since outpartisans are perceived as "hypocritical, selfish, and closed-minded" (Iyengar et al. (2019) p. 130), it is not surprising that partisan animosity extends beyond political settings, including dating (Huber and Malhotra, 2017), hiring practices (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Gift and Gift, 2015; **?**), or economic interactions (McConnell et al., 2018).

The workplace, however, despite being one of the main environments of socialization of most people and one in which exposure to ideologically diverse views is more frequent (Mutz and Mondak, 2006), remains a relatively unexplored area in political science. Two recent studies have focused on *vertical workplace relationships*, showing that both employers and employees have, respectively, a preference for copartisan employees (Gift and Gift, 2015; **?**) and copartisan employers (McConnell et al., 2018).

However, overall, we know much less about the role of partisanship and political attitudes in shaping more *horizontal workplace relationships*, i.e., how politics affects workers' willingness to (1) cooperate and (2) socialize with their coworkers. This is particularly surprising if we take into account important sociostructural transformations associated with the rise of the knowledge economy, such as the growing importance of non-cognitive skills and the higher demand for collaboration between workers in less hierarchical workplaces. At the same time, against the decline of more traditional forms of socialization (Guhin, Calarco and Miller-Idriss, 2021), work is also increasingly a place where people meet some of their closest friends (YouGov, 2021, (Cox, 2021)) and where conversations about politics are likely to take place (Glassdoor, 2023[1]).

[1] According to a recent Glassdoor survey, around 60 per cent of US workers have discussed politics with colleagues at work over the past 12 months.

Research Questions

In this study, we integrate perspectives from political science, organizational behaviour and social psychology research to develop a theory that addresses three primary questions: (1) How much importance do respondents place on the political leanings and competence of potential coworkers when choosing collaborators for project work?; (2) To what extent does *politics trump merit*? Or, in other words, are outpartisans less likely to be preferred even if they are highly competent at work?; And, finally, (3) to what extent are these considerations shaped by the existence of an explicit payoff (e.g., a potential salary increase) and the levels of reward interdependence (e.g., salary and promotions prospects can be defined by the team performance or by the worker's individual performance). Additionally, we will also explore the heterogeneity of these results depending on (1) respondents' degree of prosociality (i.e., how much importance they place on their job's societal impact compared to their salary), (2) firm-level characteristics (e.g., the degree of political homogeneity), and worker-level characteristics such as education.

The analysis has two different types of outcomes. The first one relates to workplace cooperation (e.g., a preference for selecting one potential colleague over another for project work) while the second one focuses exclusively on socialization (e.g., a preference for engaging in activities outside of work with a potential colleague over another). In our theoretical expectations, the socialization outcome will be mainly used as a benchmark (i.e., this is a context where we expect political homophily to shape social relationships more strongly). Although workers typically cannot choose their team members, our study simulates a realistic scenario where a boss asks an employee about *their preference* between two existing colleagues for a major project lasting two years.

Our study focuses on the UK, a multiparty system with moderate to high levels of affective polarization (Westwood et al., 2018; Gidron, Adams and Horne, 2020; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021)[2]. Using a conjoint experiment embedded in a vignette survey experiment that

[2]Depending on the results of experiment, we are planning to extend this paper to other contexts with comparatively high levels of affective polarization, such as Spain, where (highly politicized) political identities (e.g., regional identities) have the potential of undermining trust and cooperation in nonpolitical settings as well

will be fielded in the UK in the spring of 2024, this article aspires to make several contributions. First, it explores the implications of affective polarization in the workplace by focusing on how individuals respond to trade-off between two characteristics (partisanship and competence) that have been shown to independently affect people's willingness to collaborate with others at work. Second, by focusing on the effect of talking about politics in the workplace, we bring insights on the difference between holding a certain political attribute (i.e., being a Conservative/Labour supporter, or having voted Remain/Leave) and acting on it (i.e., speaking about politics at work). Third, it explores how differently individuals in different types of workplaces and socialization environments resolve these trade-offs.

More broadly, while a growing body of work shows that employers discriminate along political lines in hiring practices and that employees (particularly those with higher levels of education) care about the political values of their employers, it is less clear how much importance employees attach to working with politically-aligned employees and how this shapes their willingness to collaborate and socialize with them, especially when information about their competence is also available. While trust has become an increasingly important factor in knowledge economies (Lane and Bachmann, 1998; Iversen and Soskice, 2020), together with noncognitive and relational skills, the role of partisanship in this mix remains unexplored.

Theoretical Framework

Our theory is anchored in a growing social identity literature that shows that partisanship affects the way we feel about others, potentially undermining trust (Carlin and Love, 2013) and reducing the prospects for cooperative social behavior among citizens with opposing partisan identities. We argue that this is likely to matter in the context of the workplace, especially for workers' willingness to collaborate with outpartisans or with those with opposing political identities (e.g., Brexit identity).

Existing literature suggests that factors such as competence and sociability are particularly important when choosing who to work with. Information about partisanship, however, appears to shape people's ideas of how competent, honest, or trustworthy a person is[3]. Therefore,

[3] Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley (2021) find that Conservative supporters consider Labour supporters signifi-

workers may trade competence for political alignment because they believe that copartisans are more competent or at least hold certain positive attributes that they tend to associate with competence. For instance, individuals who value the sociability of their colleagues the most may also assume that copartisans are kinder and more sociable.

Organizational behaviour researchers have explored the trade-off between competence and sociability in the context of the workplace, with the (empirically backed) assumption that they are negatively related. Belmi and Pfeffer (2018) show that that workers will resolve this trade-off in different ways across different workplace contexts: individuals tend to prefer working with competent colleagues (even if less sociable) when their economic rewards depend more heavily on the collective performance of their team.

In our project, we use a conjoint design to focus on competence-related attributes and the political leanings of coworkers. Our goal is to understand the relative importance of these factors and explore the conditions under which workers may want to trade-off competence for political alignment. For instance, does the preference to work with a highly competent colleague diminish if they hold opposing political views? Additionally, under what conditions are each of these attributes prioritized? Our article expects that the degree of reward inter-dependence (i.e., whether worker's economic rewards are based mainly upon the collective performance of their team) will matter for how much workers prefer working with politically aligned (even if sometimes less competent) or highly competent (but sometimes politically misaligned) colleagues.

In the next section, we develop more specific and nuanced theoretical expectations.

Theoretical Expectations

In this study, we formulate four sets of theoretical hypotheses to be tested using the research design presented in this Pre-Analysis Plan. The first set of hypotheses focuses, respectively, on the effect of political copartisanship and competence on the probability of *a)* preferring a coworker for your team and *b)* preferring a coworker for socializing (e.g., going for coffee, a drink, or making plans after work). The second set of hypotheses organizes our expectations

cantly less intelligent than copartisan Conservative supporters, and the same is true in terms of how Labour supporters view Conservative supporters. Symmetric results are observed among Leave and Remain supporters

on the interaction of competence and copartisanship, whereas the third set of hypotheses will look at the interaction of outpartisanship and talking about politics at work). Finally, the last set of hypotheses lay out our expectations on the conditions under which the effect of competence and co-partisanship will be respectively stronger or weaker.

Our expectations on the effect of copartisanship and competence are twofold, focusing on both outcomes included in the analysis[4].

- **H1.A**: We expect copartisanship to have a *positive* effect on the probability of preferring a profile as a colleague to collaborate with and a *positive and greater* effect on the probability of preferring a profile as a colleague to hang out outside the office with.
- **H1.B**: We expect competence to have a *positive* effect on the probability of preferring a profile as colleague to collaborate with and *no effect or a smaller positive effect* on the probability of preferring a profile as co-worker to hang out outside the office with.

These two hypotheses will be tested by calculating the average marginal component effect (AMCE) over baseline values. For instance, the AMCE will give us the difference in the probability that a respondent would select a highly competent coworker to work together in the project relative to an otherwise identical potential coworker that is less competent.

A key goal of this study is exploring whether political preferences "trump" merit. Therefore, the second set of hypotheses are focused on the effect of the interaction between political alignment and competence; more specifically, we explore whether the probability of preferring a less competent colleague increases if they are copartisans. Thus, we formulate the following expectations.

- **H2.A**: We expect the positive effect of high competence on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with to be smaller if this hypothetical colleague is an outpartisan.

Simultaneously, we also expect that:

- **H2.B**: We expect the negative effect of low competence on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with to be smaller if this hypothetical colleague is a copartisan.

[4]From this section onward, the wording "copartisanship" refers to both (1) supporting the same political parties and (2) having expressed the same vote in the 2016 EU Referendum

In addition, this paper distinguishes between the impact of holding an attitude (e.g., supporting a specific party or having specific ideological leanings) compared to acting on this attitude (e.g., talking about your politics at work) for collaboration at work. Therefore, we explore an interaction between being an outpartisan and talking about politics. We hypothesize (**H3.B**) that the negative effect of being an outpartisan is stronger when this outpartisan colleague also talks about politics at work. More broadly (**H3.A**), we expect talking about politics at work to have a negative effect on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with (**?**).

- **H3.A**: We expect that talking about politics at work has a negative effect on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with.
- **H3.B**: We expect that the negative effect of outpartisanship on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with to be greater if this hypothetical colleague also talks about politics at work (compared to a colleague that is outpartisan but does not talk about politics at work).

Hypotheses entailing interactions effects between two different conjoint attributes will be tested by calculating the average marginal interaction effect (AMIE).

Finally, we focus on the conditions under which, respectively, competence and copartisanship have a higher or lower weight in workers' preferences.

- **H4.A**: We expect the positive effect of competence on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with to be *greater* for respondents that have been primed with a high reward interdependence scenario.
- **H4.B**: We expect the positive effect of copartisanship on the probability of preferring a colleague to collaborate with to be *greater* for respondents that have been primed with a high reward interdependence scenario

To some extent, **H4.A** and **H4.B** could be seen as conflicting. We do not believe that this should be the case. On the one hand, respondents primed with a high reward interdependence scenario may value competence more (i.e., high/low competence will have a more

positive/negative effect) as their stakes are higher. On the other, however, they may believe that different partisan groups may have (lack) attributes that make the less (more) effective at work or easier to work with. This, in turns, could lead respondents primed with a high reward interdependence scenario to be more sensitive to the political leanings of potential colleagues.

Finally, we have theoretical reasons to expect that different types of individuals will weigh partisan and competence considerations differently. Therefore, we will explore heterogeneous treatment effects (hence, HTEs) across different subgroups of respondents.

- **HTE.1**: We expect the effect of copartisanship to be stronger for voters with high levels of education.
- **HTE.2**: We expect the positive effect of copartisanship to be *greater* for respondents that care more about the societal impact of their job (more *prosocial* workers).
- **HTE.3**: We expect the positive effect of copartisanship to be *greater* for respondents in workplaces where collaboration among colleagues is more important.
- **HTE.4**: We expect the positive effect of copartisanship to be *greater* for respondents that value the opportunity to form friendships with colleagues at work.

  HTE.1 and **HTE.2** build on literature that shows that high-educated workers tend to prioritize more value alignment (Wilmers and Zhang, 2022) and get a higher sense of identity from their job (Gallup, 2014). **HTE.3** is built on the assumption that political alignment may matter more when collaboration is more widespread, as sharing political values boosts trust and reduces the likelihood of potential conflicts. **HTE.1**, **HTE.2**, and **HTE.3** might be capturing related features about high educated knowledge economy workers.

- **HTE.5**: We expect the effect of copartisanship to be *greater* for respondents in more politically homogeneous workplaces.
- **HTE.6**: We expect the effect of talking about politics to be positive for workers in more politically homogeneous workplaces but negative for workers in more politically diverse workplaces

HTE.5 and **HTE.6** speak to a possible dynamic of social closure playing out in politically homogeneous workplaces (**?**), which certain workers might want to solidify.

HTE.6, more specifically, suggests that workers' skepticism towards colleagues who discuss politics at work may stem from concerns about potential conflict.

In addition, we will conduct exploratory analysis on various respondent subgroups and on Outcome 2.

- We will examine the HTEs across specific socio-demographic subgroups (e.g., women, graduates)
- We will examine the HTEs across respondents with different *types* of education. The intuition is that for those that studied social science, law, humanities, teaching, personal care services degrees (either in university or vocational degrees) the effect of copartisanship will be higher[5]
- We will examine the HTEs for respondents who particularly value personality-related characteristics in colleagues.
- We will examine the differences between Outcome 1 and Outcome 2.

Theoretical Mechanisms

We propose four different mechanisms that could explain *why* individuals may trade-off coworkers' competence for the their political leanings.

First, individuals may believe that the attributes required to be "competent" are associated with partisanship[6]. This would suggest that respondents might "read" the positive information shown in the conjoint profiles through partisan lenses.

[5]There are two related arguments for this. First, this is similar to **HTE.3**, i.e., these are people more likely to be in jobs where sharing certain values is instrumental to achieving work-related goals. Second, these degrees are often conducive to occupations with an interpersonal work logic (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; **?**), where sharing similar values might make working together easier.

[6]For example, if a Conservative supporter believes that Labour voters tend to be less disciplined or less hardworking (and that the opposite is true for Conservative voters) this would explain why she would choose to have a copartisan in her team

Second, it is also possible that, especially in highly pro-social jobs, individuals will perceive that sharing values – closely associated with political preferences – makes it easier to achieve important goals at work.

Third, if workplace interactions and/or long-hours in the office are very common, individuals could prefer to be with workers that align with them politically.

Fourth, it could also be possible that some individuals will attach a high positive weight to coworkers that do not speak about politics because they are fearful of conflict and more appreciative of an "easier", or "more peaceful" workplace.

Design

This study is in partnership with More in Common, members of the British Polling Council and an international research and civic non-profit focused on polarization. We plan to embed a conjoint survey experiment in a vignette survey experiment to understand better British workers' preferences towards coworkers.

Treatment and Control Conditions

Respondents will be exposed to two different frames of the situation. Half of respondents will be randomly assigned to a *high reward interdependence scenario*, while the other half will be assigned to a no reward interdependence scenario[7].

- **High reward interdependence vignette**: "Imagine that you work for a company where **significant salary increases** are possible at the end of the year. Your boss has assigned you to work on a crucial new project and **wants your opinion about which other colleague should join you on this project**. There are two potential candidates that already work in the company. This project will last around **2 years**, and you and the chosen colleague will be the only ones working on it. You will have **equal responsibilities**. Your boss has suggested that an **excellent team performance** on this project will lead to a **10% salary increase**. Consequently, if your team performance

[7] The parts of text in **bold** will also appear in bold to respondents

falls short, it could decrease your chances of receiving a salary raise. In the following task, you will be presented several pairs of colleagues and after each pair you will be asked some questions."

- **No reward interdependence vignette**: "Imagine that you work for a company. Your boss has assigned you to work on a crucial new project and **wants your opinion about which other colleague should join you on this project**. There are two potential candidates that already work in the company. This project will last around **2 years**, and you and the chosen colleague will be the only ones working on it. You will have **equal responsibilities**. In the following task, you will be presented several pairs of colleagues and after each pair you will be asked some questions."

Conjoint

Respondents in both groups will be exposed to a conjoint survey, simulating a scenario in which workers have the possibility of choosing who they would like to work with (Outcome 1) and whether they would want to socialize with that colleague outside work (Outcome 2). The Table below reports the attributes and the levels of our conjoint. Two different attributes are included in the case of competence capturing two different dimensions of competence: (1) overall performance vis-a-vis other colleagues and (2) timely delivery. While we do not have different theoretical expectations about these two attributes, we include both as they might resonate differently among different types of respondents (i.e., some respondents might not want to work with a top performer while still wanting someone who delivers on time).

To make it resemble the "real" British population, we program the conjoint so that only 30% of the total profiles present a non-white co-worker.

The order of the conjoint attributes will be randomized between – and not within – respondents. This means that each respondent will see the attributes always in the same order across the five tasks, but the order will be different for different respondents.

Competence (performance)	Performed among the top half of employees in previous year Performed among the bottom half of employees in previous year
Competence (reliability)	Always delivers work in time Does not always delivers work in time
Party identification	Conservative supporter Labour supporter Does not support any political party
2016 EU referendum vote	Voted Leave in the 2016 EU referendum Voted Remain in the 2016 EU referendum Did not vote in the 2016 EU referendum
Bring politics to the workplace	Does not talk about politics at work Talks about politics at work
Gender	Male Female
Ethnicity	White Nonwhite
Age	30 45 60

Manipulation and Attention Checks

Right after the vignette, respondents will be asked (1) how long they would be expected to work with the potential co-worker in the fictional scenario and (2) what is the reward in case of a successful performance. Regardless their answer, they will be exposed to the correct answers as a reminder[8].

Moreover, throughout the survey, respondents will be exposed to two attention checks[9]. Those that fail **all** these said attention checks and/or complete the survey in less than 7 minutes (around 60% of the estimated time) will be dropped and replaced by another respondent.

Structure of the Survey

With the exception of sensitive data questions, open-ended questions, and questions conditional to previous answers, respondents will be required to answer each question in the survey before they can go on to the next question. The conjoint will be a forced-choice conjoint.

Pre-treatment

Before being exposed to the vignette and the conjoint, respondents will be exposed to the following survey items, aiming to measures their political preferences

- **Political Data**

    1. Vote in the 2016 EU Referendum
    2. Vote in the 2019 General Election
    3. Vote intention if an election were held the following day
    4. PTV for the Conservative and the Labour parties
    5. Left-right self-placement
    6. Partisan identity (i.e., feeling particularly close to any party and, if so, which party)

[8] Only respondents exposed to the Treatment Condition will be asked question (2) and receive the correct answer for it

[9] They will be required to select a given value on a scalometer

7. Political interest

- **Measures of politics at work**

  1. `PolWork`: how often does the respondent discuss politics with colleagues at work
  2. `PolDiv`: how diverse (or similar) the respondent's colleagues are in terms of political preferences
  3. `PolDiv_lean`: what are the political leanings of respondent's colleagues[10]

- **Attribute**: respondents are asked what attribute (only one) they value the most when thinking about the ideal colleague

- **Work Priorities**[11]

  1. `prosociality`: respondents are asked what they prioritize when choosing a job. They are presented with a bipolar scale with "Has a positive societal impact" on one pole and "Pays well" on the other and they are asked to select a value fro 0 to 10[12]. The centre point reports the label "Both factors have equal importance to me".
  2. `collaboration`: respondents are asked how important is collaboration among colleagues for achieving work-related goals at their current jobs
  3. `friends`: respondents are asked how much they value the opportunity to form friendships with colleagues in their workplaces

Outcomes

For each task of the conjoint, respondents have to answer to two outcome questions. Both questions are forced-choice and require respondents to choose between one of the two profiles

[10]This question is conditional on `PolDiv`. Only respondents that say to know their colleagues' political preferences are asked this question

[11]The order of the two following survey items is randomized within this block

[12]People prioritize different things when choosing a job. While for some, it is most important to be paid well, for others, working for an organization that has a positive societal impact and aligns with their values is paramount. Please tell us what you prioritize on a scale from 0 to 10 when choosing a job, where 0 means "working for an an organization that has a positive societal impact" and 10 means "working for an an organization that pays well"

that they were exposed to.

1. **Outcome 1**: Which colleague would you prefer to have as part of your team in your next project?

2. **Outcome 2**: Which colleague would you prefer to go for coffee, go for a drink, or attend a social event after work?

Post-Treatment

- **Q1**: Could you explain in your own words what are the considerations you take into account when deciding who to have as a team mate in the previous task? **(Open-ended question)**

Mechanism 1: Views on workers' competence affected by their political identities

Question **Q2** aims to test the main mechanism proposed in this project, that individuals may trade-off competence for co-partisanship because they believe that the attributes needed to be "competent" are associated with partisanship.

- **Q2**: Earlier in the survey, you were asked to report the one attribute that you value the most when thinking about your ideal colleague. Your answer was: *(Answer is reported)*. How likely are the following groups of individuals to have that attribute?[13]

  - Labour voters
  - Conservative voters
  - Remain supporters
  - Leave supporters
  - Women
  - British Muslims
  - People below 35 years old

[13] The order of the following groups is randomized for each respondent

Mechanism 2: (Instrumental) Prosociality

We expect individuals in pro-social occupations to attach a greater weight to partisanship over competence.

- **Q3**: respondents are asked to indicate on 1-5 scale to which extent they agree or disagree with the following statements

    1. It is important for me to work with colleagues that share my political views
    2. It is important for me to work with colleagues that are highly competent and skilled
    3. I feel uncomfortable working with colleagues who have very different political views from my own

Respondents that report that it is important to them to work with colleagues that share their political views are are asked to motivate their answer in an open-ended question (**Q4**).

Respondents that report to feel uncomfortable working with colleagues with political views very different from theirs are are asked to motivate their answer in an open-ended question (**Q5**).

Mechanism 3: Intensity of Workplace Interactions

Respondents that report that it is important to them to work with colleagues that share their political views are are asked to which extent they agree or disagree with the following statements

- **Q6**

    1. Working with colleagues who share my political views is important to me because we need to spend a lot of time together at work
    2. Working with colleagues who share my political views is important to me because then it is more likely we become friends

Respondents that report that it is *not* important to them to work with colleagues that share their political views are are asked to which extent they agree or disagree with the following statements

- **Q7**

  1. Working with colleagues who share my political views is not important to me because I only care about how good they are at their job
  2. Working with colleagues who share my political views is not important to me because I prefer working with a politically diverse team
  3. Working with colleagues who share my political views is not important to me because I do not care about politics at work

Mechanism 4: Fear of Conflict

Finally, we also explore the possibility that workers want to avoid conflict at the workplace and, therefore, they would either prefer someone who share their political views.

Respondents that report that it is important to them to work with colleagues that share their political views are are asked to which extent they agree or disagree with the following statements

- **Q6**

  1. Working with colleagues who share my political views is important to me because it makes working with them easier
  2. Working with colleagues who share my political views is important to me because I want to avoid confrontation at work

Socio-demographic and Occupational Data

With the exception of items needed to make sure that the respondents are nationals of the UK and in the workforce, and to implement socio-demographic quotas (i.e., gender, age, level of education), items registering socio-demographic and occupational data will be asked right before the end of the survey, as they are not particularly taxing from a cognitive point of view.

Sample

At the moment, we limit this analysis to the United Kingdom[14]. Regarding the sampling, we will resort to the use of a panel of the general population, with some restrictions and quota to ensure to have enough power.

- First of all, the sample will be restricted to individuals that are currently in the workforce, thus excluding (1) students, (2) unemployed and inactive individuals, (3) self-employed workers, and (4) retirees.
- Second, using data from the most recent national census (2021), we will apply quota for gender (male and female) x age class x education. The quota will computed on the general population of the UK and not on the specific subgroup that we are using (i.e., the workforce) to make sure to have enough power for subgroup-analysis.

Power Analysis

The main idea of any power analysis is to make sure that the experiment has enough statistical power to avoid a false negative - that is, failing to detect an effect that is indeed present. In this Pre-Analysis Plan, we use Shiny App, an open-source online tool [15] to compute our statistical power.

Considering to have $1,000$ respondents per treatment group (for a total of $2,000$ respondents at our disposal) and assuming an AMCE equal to 0.05, $\alpha = 0.05$ and a maximum number of 3 levels per attribute, if each respondents evaluates 2 profiles in each task and is assigned a total of 5 tasks (Effective N $= 1,000 * 2 * 5 = 10,000$), we obtain a statistical power equal to 0.98, well over the conventional threshold 0.80. For reference, in their experi-

[14] We make this choice for a variety of reasons. First, the economic structure of the country and of its labour market allow to sample both low-skilled workers and workers employed in the so-called "Knowledge Economy" sectors. Second, the United Kingdom does not qualify as a two-party system and it presents a critically lower degree of polarization than, for example, the US (Baldassarri and De Jong), thus becoming a relatively hard case where to test our theory. Finally, on top of partisan divides, common to all democracies, the United Kingdom presents another highly-polarized political divide around the specific issue of Brexit and this latter divide cuts to some extent across traditional partisan lines. This, in turn, allows us to compare different forms of political polarization that translate into more affective forms of polarization

[15] https://markusfreitag.shinyapps.io/cjpowr/

ment, Baldassarri and De Jong use two samples of a little over 2.600 and 3.000 respondents respectively.

Analysis

Measures

As a substantive share of our analysis entails subgroup analysis, in this section, we outline how we define the subgroups that will be studied

- **Partisanship**: the main measure of co-partisanship (between respondent and profile) will be a categorical variable obtained using respondents' vote intention. The variable will take value 1 ("co-partisan") if both the profile and the respondent respectively supports and intends to vote the Labour or the Conservative parties; the variable will take value 0 ("out-partisan") if the profile supports the Labour party and the respondent intends to vote for the Conservatives, or vice versa; the variable will take value 2 ("other") if the respondent intends to vote for a different party (e.g., SNP, Green, ...), does not know, or reports that she will not be voting.
  Given the present political conditions in the UK, we expect a much larger share of respondents to be incline to vote for the Labour party rather than the Conservatives. Thus, we will also use an alternative measure of partisanship: party identification. We will use this measure in the same way described before for vote intention.

- **Brexit identity**: symmetrically, respondents and the profiles will be said to have the same (opposite) Brexit identity when they both voted the same (opposite), while respondents that were too young, did not vote, or do not know will be in a third, separate category ("Other")

- **Competence**: although not directly related to subgroup analysis, we have two separate measures of competence in the profiles of the conjoint: (1) performance and (2) on time-delivery. Our analysis will look at both independently and separately.

- **Personality**: we say that respondents "particularly value personality-related characteristics in co-workers" if they indicate a personality-related attribute as most important attribute in their ideal co-worker

- **Prosociality**: we use item `prosociality` to define respondents with low (0-4), middle (5), and high (6-10) levels of prosociality.

  As alternative measure of prosociality, we will use an industry-based measure, categorizing as "pro-social" respondents that have an occupation included among those that have a "interpersonal service work logic" in Oesch's scheme

- **Political homogeneity**: we use item `PolDiv` to define respondents that work in places with high levels of political heterogeneity ("My colleagues are fairly diverse politically") vs. high levels of political homogeneity ("My colleagues are fairly similar to each other politically") vs. those that are not aware of their colleagues' political views

- **Education**: we use a categorical variable to measure education levels[16].

- **Importance of collaboration**: we use item `collaboration` to define respondents working in jobs where collaboration is important ("Very important", "Rather important) or not important ("Not very important", "Not important at all")

- **Importance of developing friendships at work**: we use item `friends` to define respondents that value forming friendships at work ("Very much", "Quite a bit") or do not ("Not too much", "Not at all")

Treatment Condition Randomization

First, we will run a logit regression to ensure that the probability of being assigned to one group *vis-à-vis* the other is not affected by the socio-demographic or the political covariates collected in the survey.

[16] 1-Low: "Incomplete Secondary Education (Below GCSE / O Level)"; "Secondary Education Completed (GCSE / O Level / CSE or equivalent)"; "Secondary Education Completed (A Level or equivalent)"; 2-Middle: "Some Vocational or Technical Qualification"; "Vocational or Technical Qualifications Completed (e.g. HND, NVQ)"; 3-High: "University Education Completed (First Degree e.g. BA, BSc)"; "Postgraduate Education Completed (e.g. Masters)"; "Doctorate, Post-doctorate or equivalent (Higher Degree)"

AMCE

We are interested in the AMCE (Average Marginal Component Effect) - that is, the average difference in the probability of preferring one profile when comparing to different levels of the same attribute while holding constant all other attributes. This casual quantity allows us to test hypotheses **H1.A**, **H1.B**, and **H4.A** and **H4.B**.

The AMCE is obtained by regressing the dependent variable on dummy variables for all the levels of all attributes (with the exception of a baseline).

For both the outcomes described in the previous section, we will run multiple specifications. As the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable, we will be using a logit regression.

- A specification will have no covariates, one only socio-demographic covariates, and one with both socio-demographic and political covariates.
- A specification will have individual-level clustered standard errors and one will not.

Moreover, in order to test **H4.A** and **H4.B**, we will be running the aforementioned analyses (1) on the entire sample, (2) on the control group only, and (3) on the treatment group only. We will also compute the AMIE for treatment-group status.

AMIE

We are interested in the AMIE (Average Marginal Interaction Effect) to test hypotheses **H2**, **H3.A** and **H3.B**, and for heterogeneous treatment effects.

Although the estimand will be different – AMIE instead of AMCE – we will be running all the aforementioned specifications in this case too.

Marginal Means

Following Leeper, Hobolt and Tilley (2020), we will report conditional marginal means for the different heterogeneous treatment effects that will be explored.

Mechanisms

As outlined in previous sections, we will be using survey items in the post-treatment survey to disentangle the different mechanisms taken into account. Section **4.3** reports the survey items used to measure to investigate and disentangle the different theoretical mechanisms.