

Partisan Cues from Corporate America: Sparse, Increasingly Liberal, and Aligned with (Some) Stakeholders

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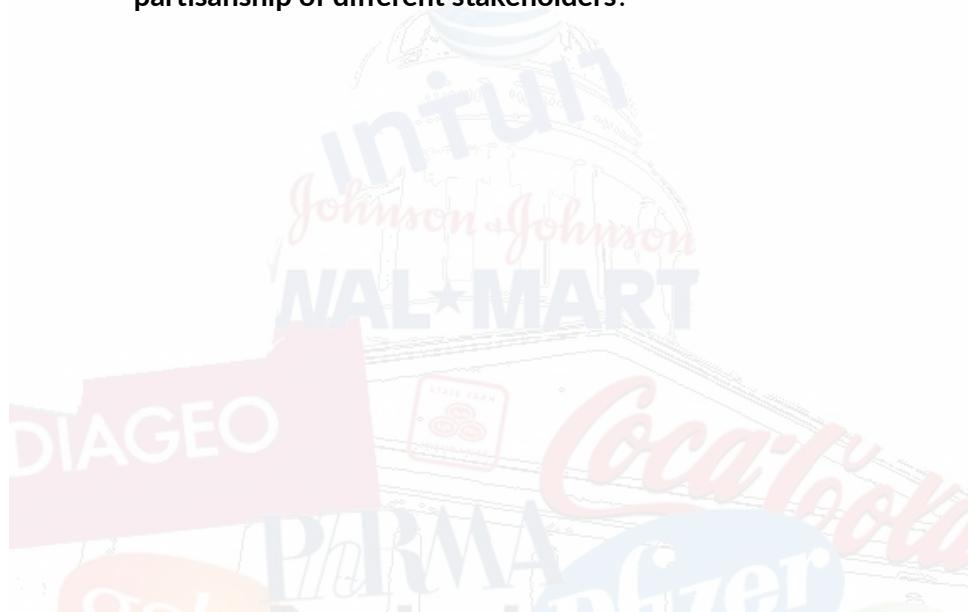
APSA Political Communication Pre-Conference
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Corporate Interests and Partisan Politics



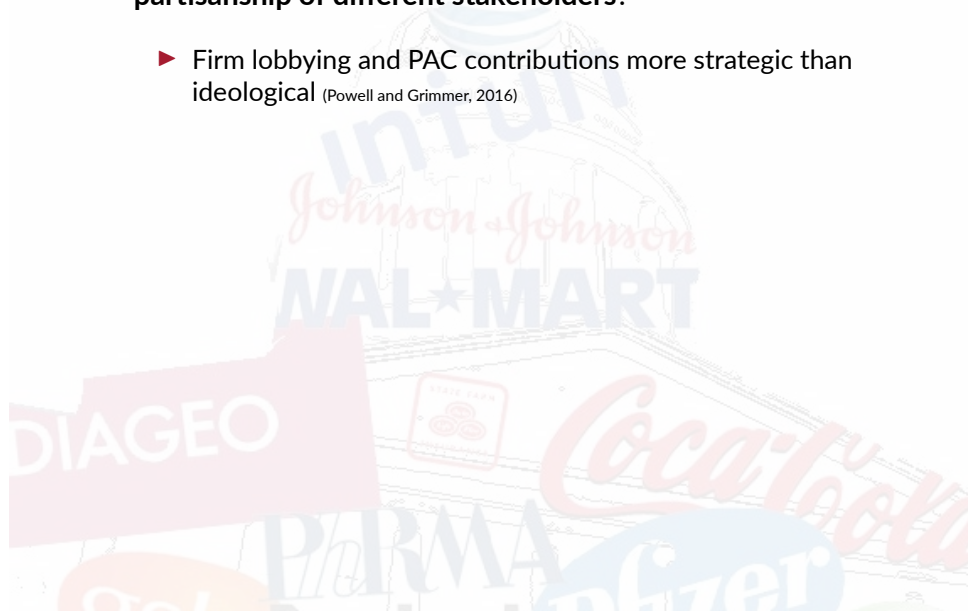
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DIAGEO



Coca-Cola

PARMA

Pfizer

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Inconsistency Between Speech and Activities



let's talk about climate change

and how we're working to advance a lower-carbon future

the human energy company
Chevron

chevron • Follow

chevron Our climate change report explains how we're committed to helping advance a lower-carbon future. Swipe or visit the link in our bio to learn more.

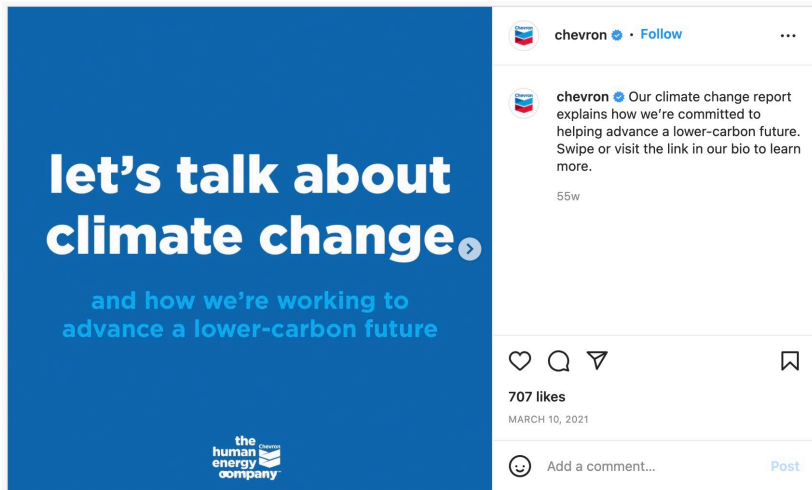
55w

707 likes

MARCH 10, 2021

Add a comment... Post

Inconsistency Between Speech and Activities*



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post from Chevron. On the left is a blue graphic with white and light blue text. The main text reads "let's talk about climate change." with a right-pointing arrow. Below it, in smaller light blue text, it says "and how we're working to advance a lower-carbon future". At the bottom right of the graphic is the logo for "the human energy company" with the Chevron logo above it. On the right is the Instagram post interface. The post is from "chevron" (verified), dated "55w" (55 weeks ago), and has "707 likes". The caption reads: "Our climate change report explains how we're committed to helping advance a lower-carbon future. Swipe or visit the link in our bio to learn more." The post includes icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark. At the bottom of the post is a comment input field with a smiley face icon and the text "Add a comment..." and a "Post" button.

let's talk about climate change. ▶

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*Chevron-affiliated PACs donated 2x in campaign contributions to Republicans from 2012-2022



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- ▶ In-progress: additional measures of consumers' preferences (Twitter, vendor data) and employees' preferences (Twitter)

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- 4 These cues *only weakly align* with inferred preferences of **consumers**

How Corporate Brands Use Partisan Cues

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Explicit partisan cues through *position-taking*:

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Chevron ✓
@Chevron



We call for the peaceful transition of the U.S. government. The violence in Washington, D.C. tarnishes a two-century tradition of respect for the rule of law. We look forward to engaging with President-Elect Biden and his administration to move the nation forward.

9:17 PM · Jan 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App



646 Retweets **3,114** Quote Tweets **2,691** Likes



How Corporate Brands Use Partisan Cues

Explicit partisan cues through *position-taking*:

Hundreds of Companies Unite to Oppose Voting Limits, but Others Abstain

Amazon, Google, G.M. and Starbucks were among those joining the biggest show of solidarity by businesses over legislation in numerous states.



From left, Kenneth Frazier, the chief executive of Merck; Kenneth Chenault, a former chief of American Express; Mary T. Barra, who runs General Motors; and Kevin Johnson, who runs Starbucks. Jason Redmond/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images



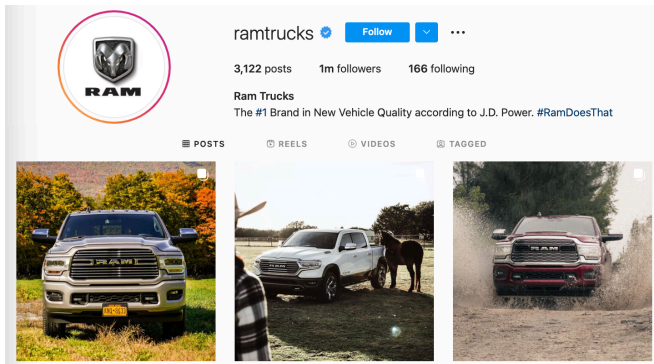
How Corporate Brands Use Partisan Cues

Implicit partisan cues through *attention* and *framing*:

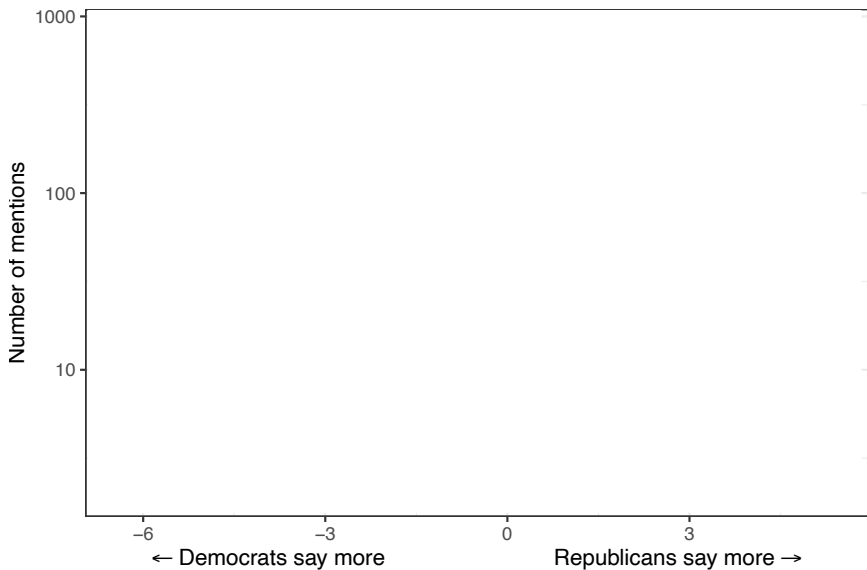


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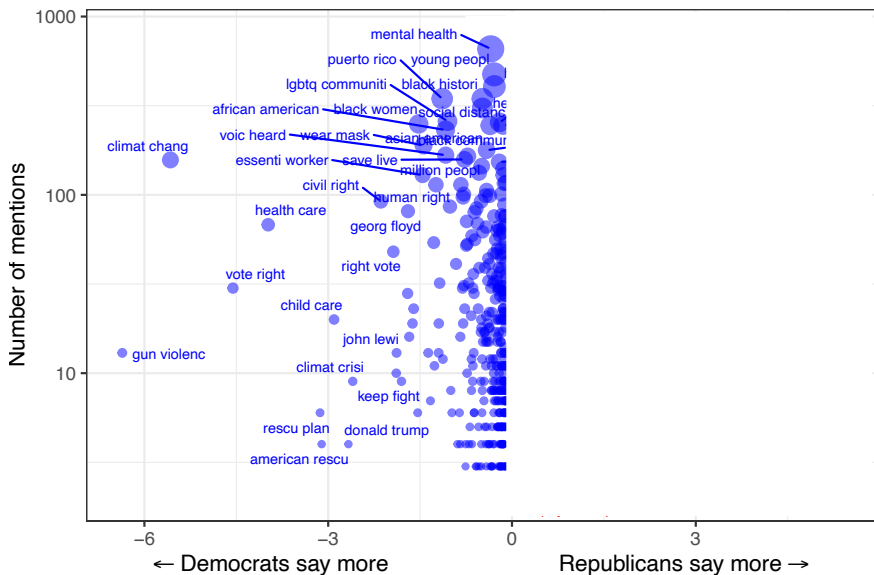
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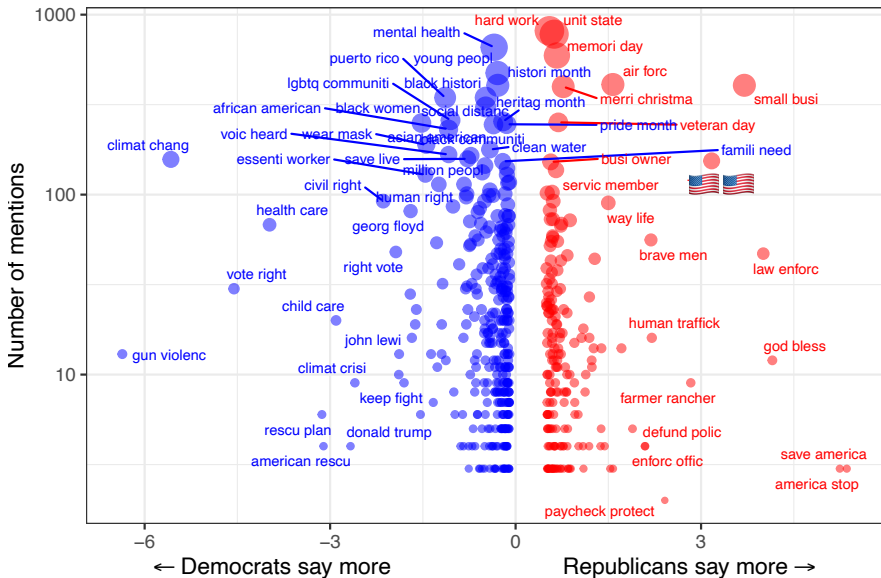
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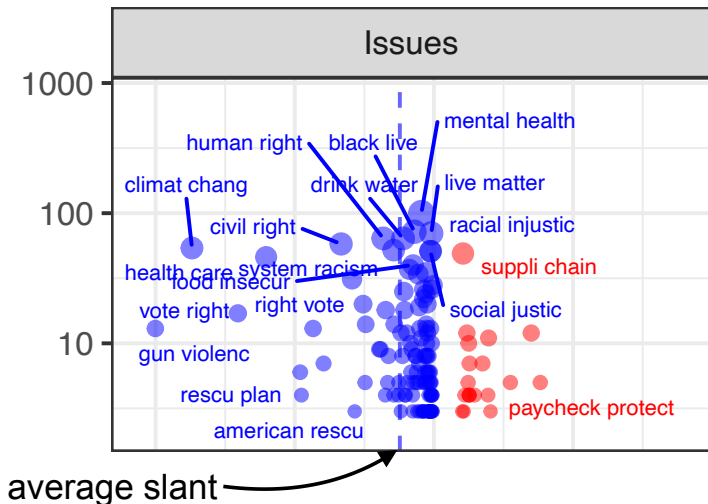
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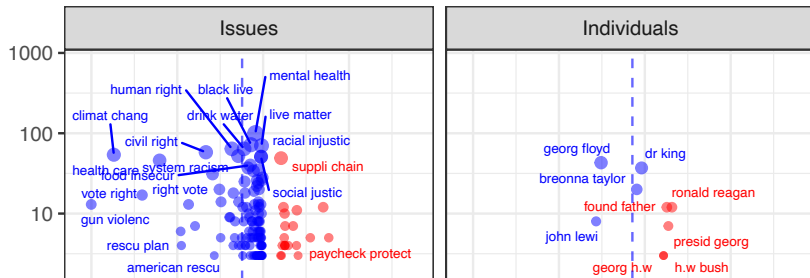
Descriptives

Brand Mostly Speak like Democrats

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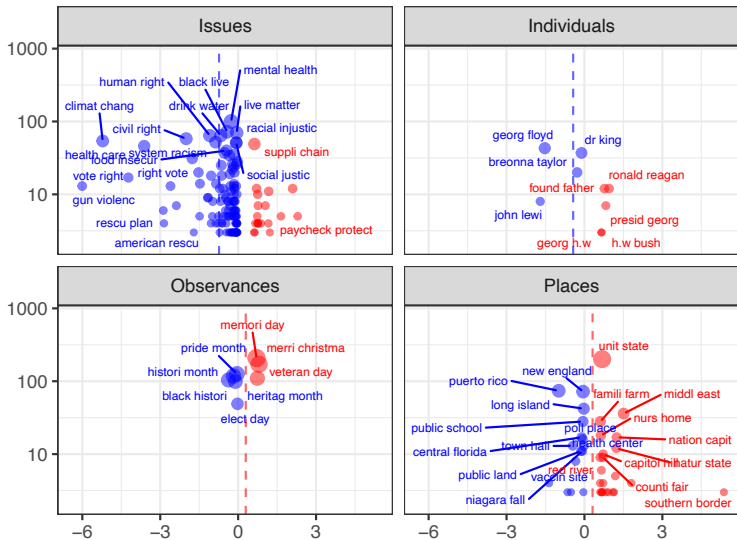


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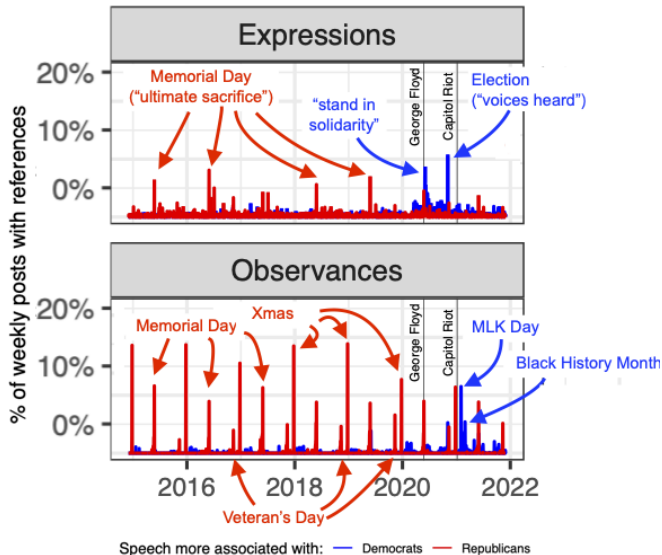
..but not universally (e.g. observances, places):



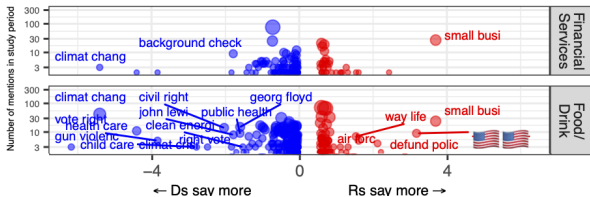
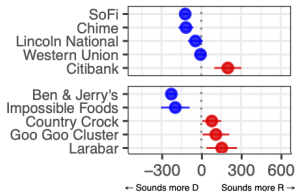
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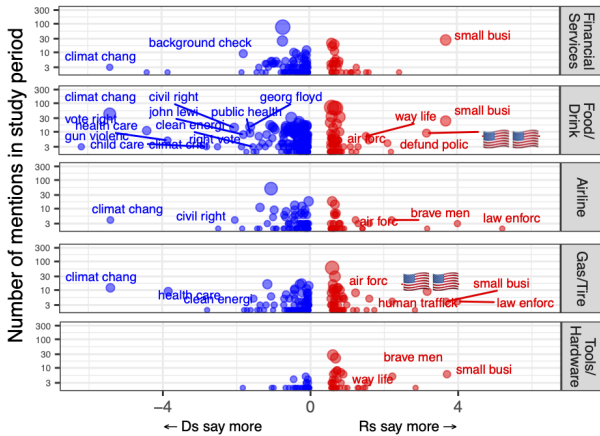
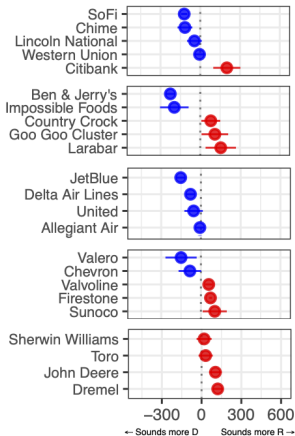
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Sectoral Variations in Brands' Speech Cues



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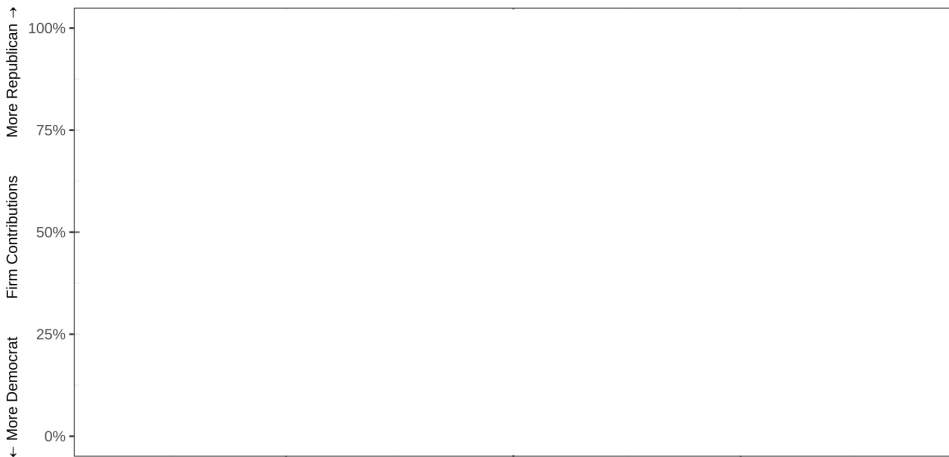


Most **R**-leaning sector ↗



Alignment

Brands' Speech Cues Broadly Align With Firms' Average Electoral Preferences



← More Democrat

Brand Cues

More Republican →

Motivation

Overview

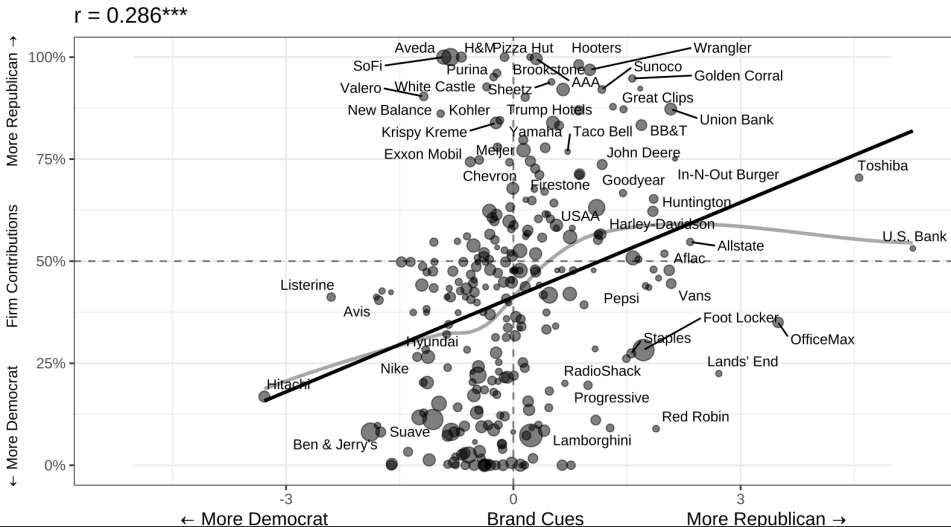
Measurement

Findings

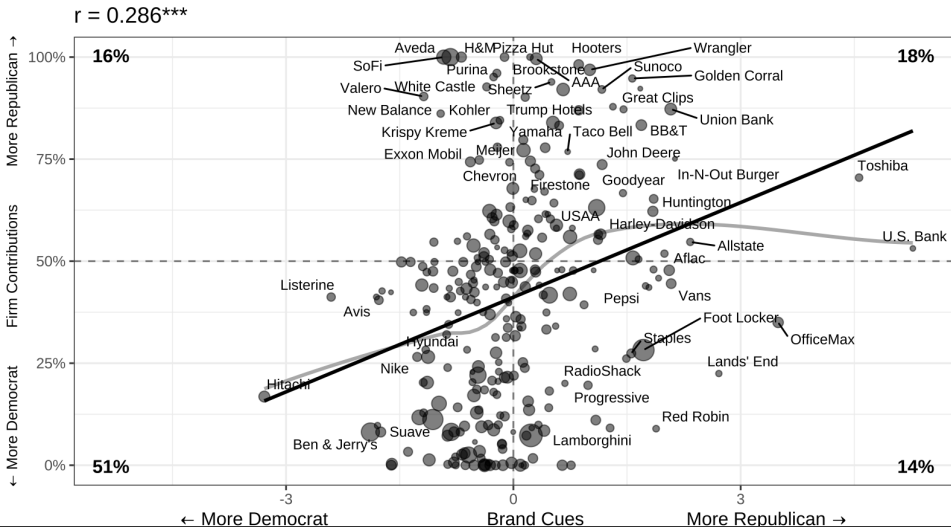
Conclusion

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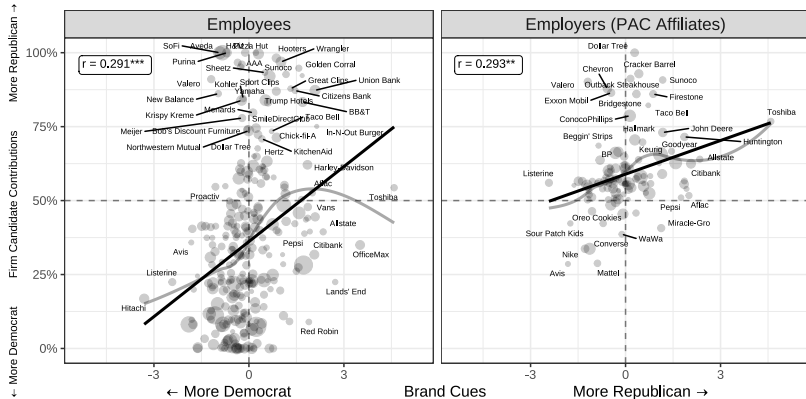
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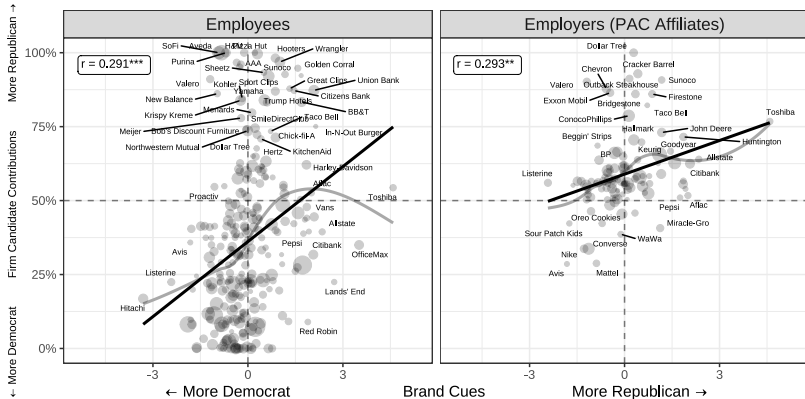
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Brands' Speech Cues Align With Employees' and Employers' Respective Preferences

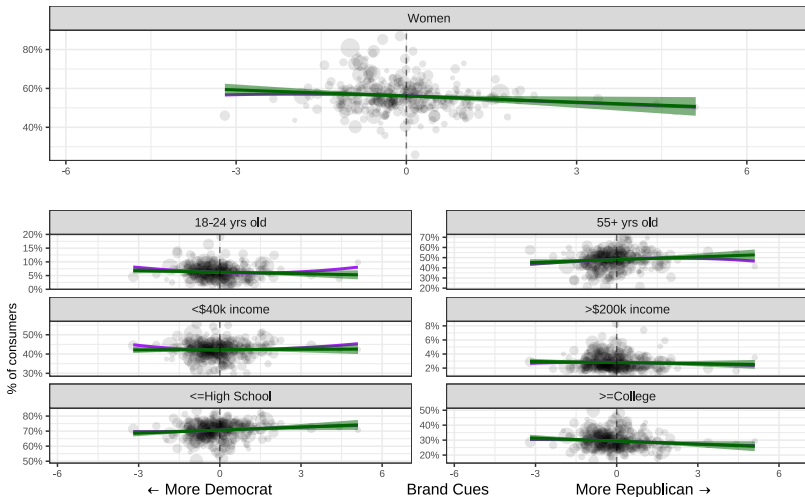


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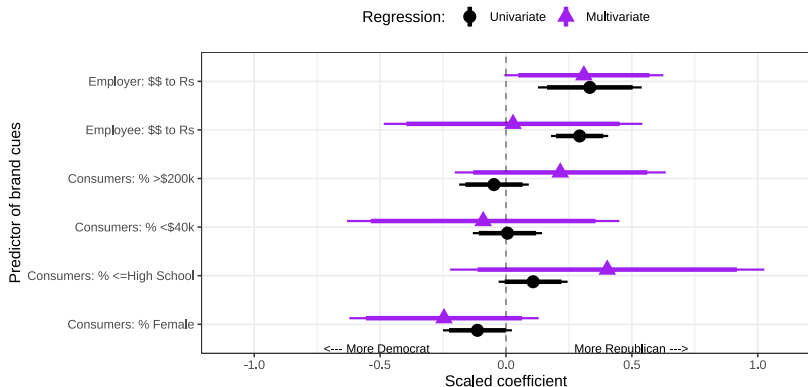


Even though employers are usually more **R**-leaning ↗

Brands' Speech Cues Align (Very Weakly) With Consumers' Inferred Preferences



Brands' Speech Cues are Best Predicted by Employees' and Firms' Preferences



Concluding Remarks

Nuances on the “woke capitalism” claim:

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- ▶ Most major corporations are not partisan (implicitly or explicitly) on social media
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On-going work: other stakeholders

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