Partisan Discrimination in Hiring

Martin Abel, Andrea Robbett, and Daniel Stone
October 29, 2024

Affective Polarization and Partisan Sectarianism

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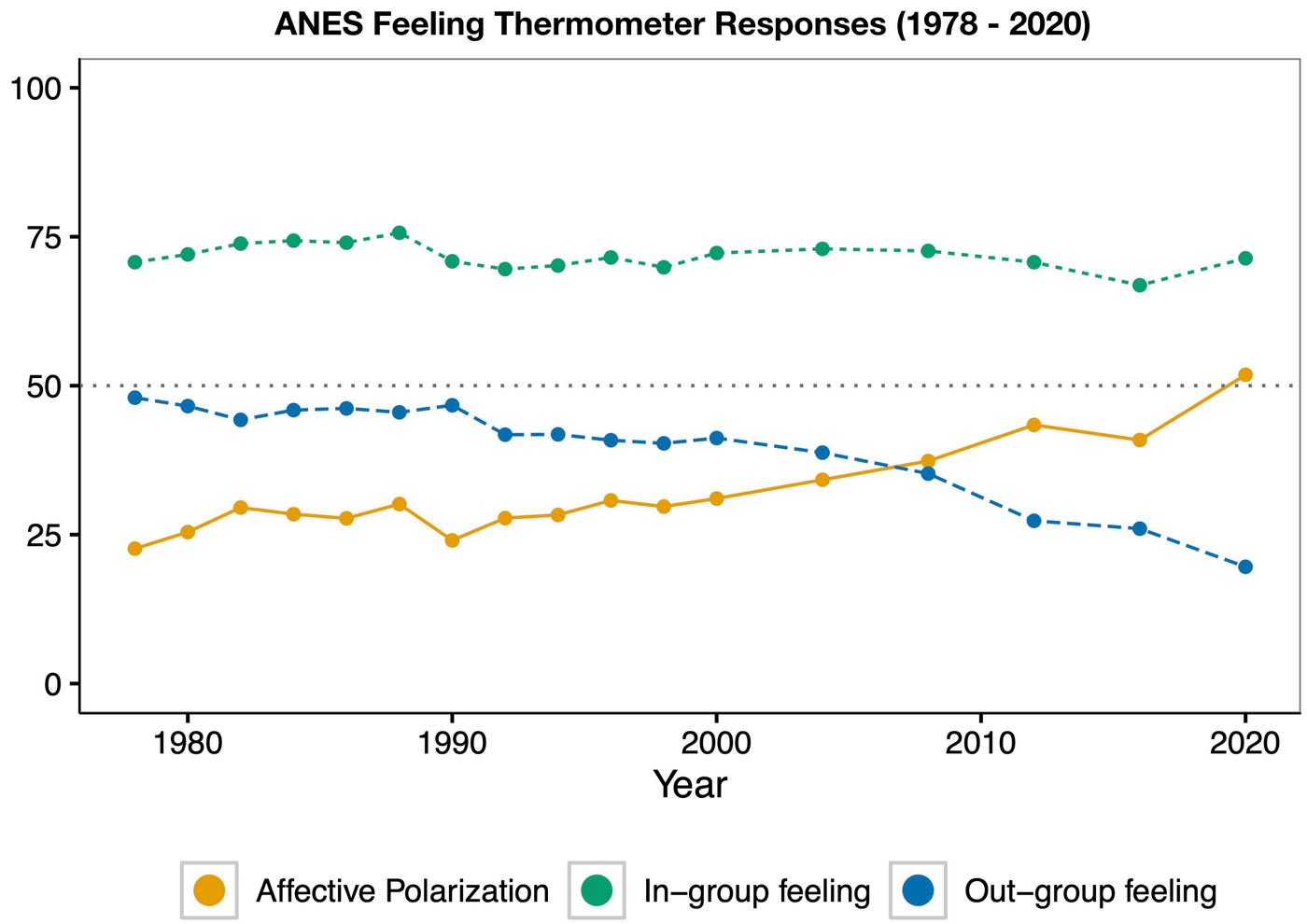

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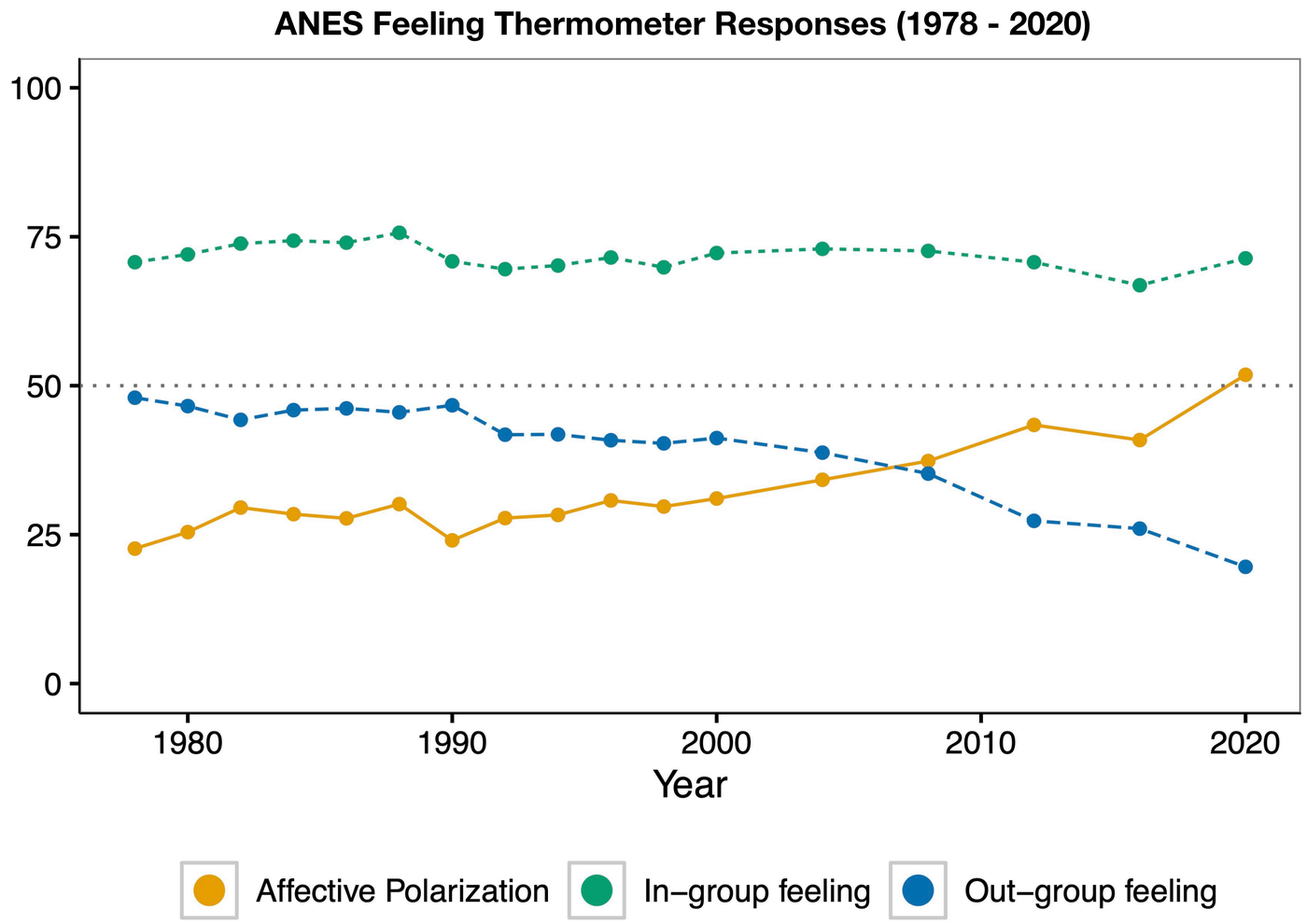

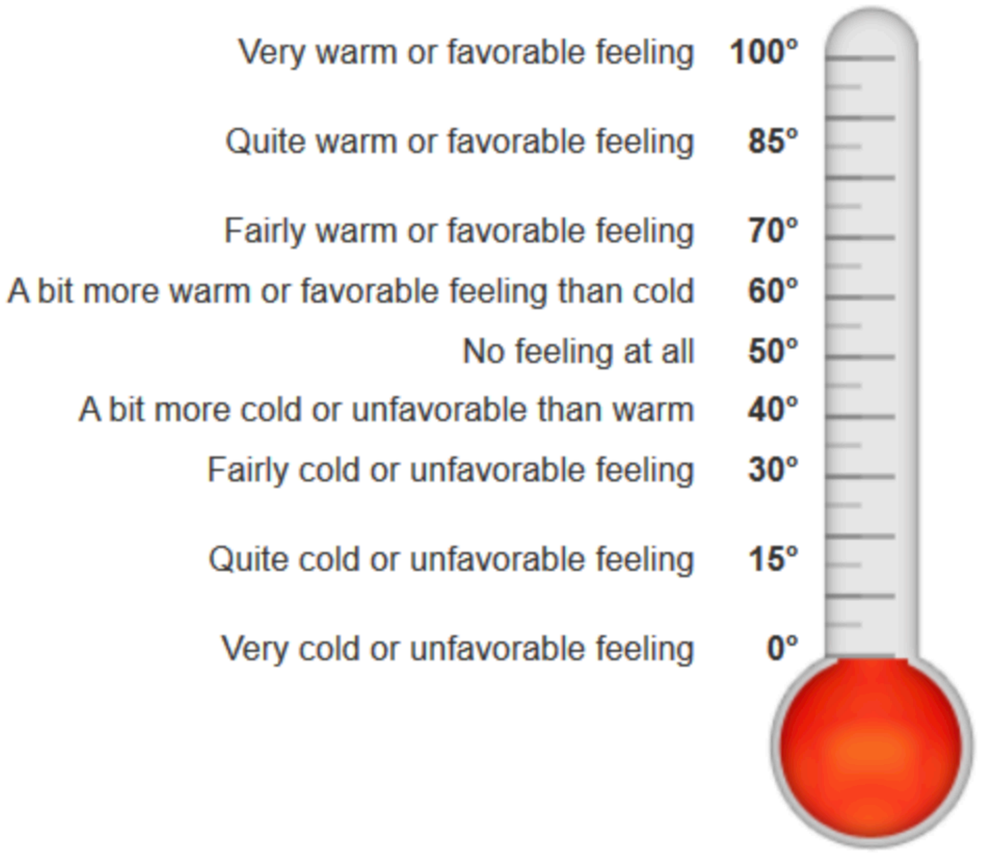

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    - have lower reservation wages when the employer shares their political affiliation (McConnell et al. 2018)
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    - more willing to share messages on a dating platform with co-partisans (Huber and Malhotra 2017)
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  - Exaggerated stereotypes of the other party may translate into beliefs that opposing partisans are less competent, more dishonest and willing to cheat the firm, less responsive to feedback, or generally have a worse work ethic

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  - Eliciting beliefs about performance to assess the role of inaccurate statistical discrimination

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- Their job was to view the profiles of workers and decide how much they were willing to pay a given worker to complete various tasks for them
- The design builds on previous experiments in which participants make hiring decisions and receive a payment that depends on the actual productivity of the worker(s) they hired (Reuben et al. 2014; Bohnet et al. 2016; Bohren et al. 2023)

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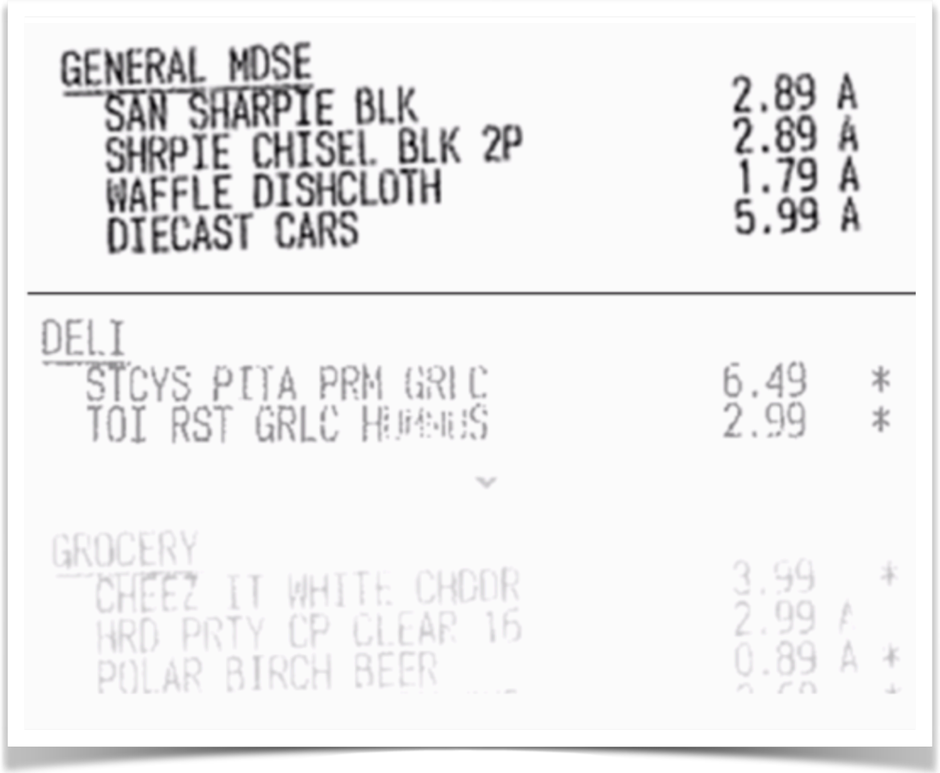

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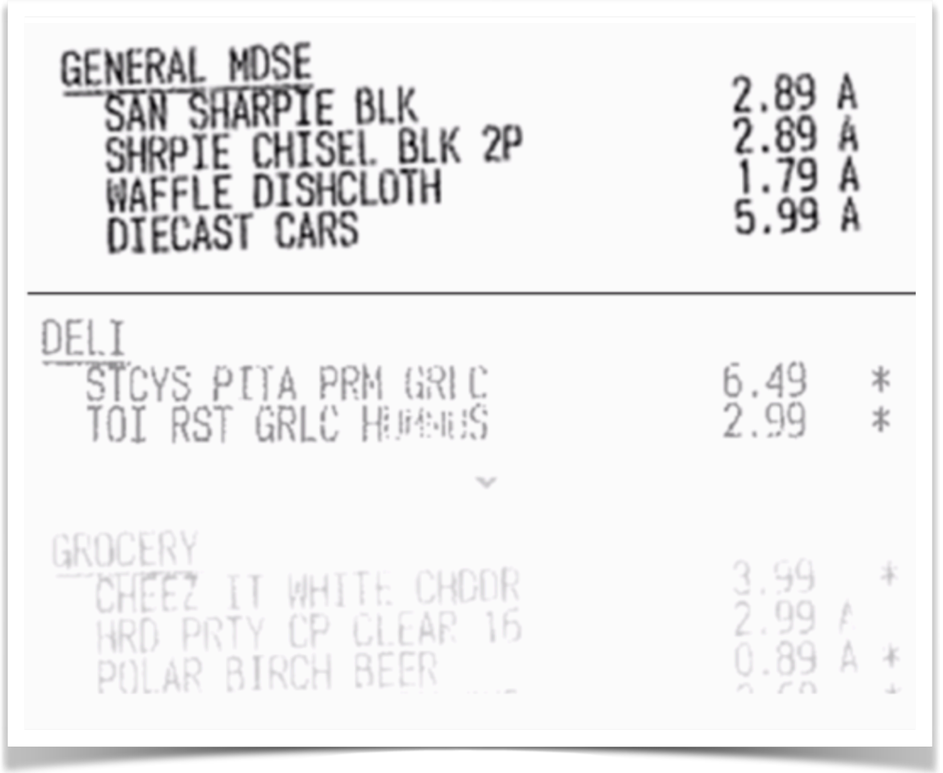

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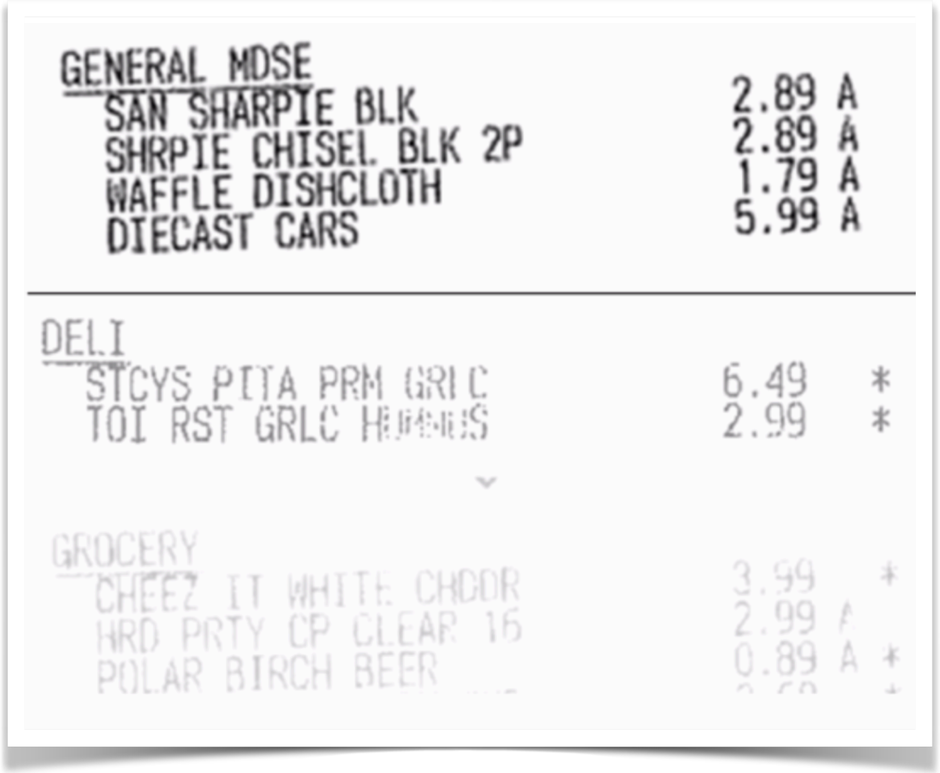

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- This gives us four measures of productivity: % items accurately transcribed (*accuracy task*), % receipts attempted rather than skipped (*shirking task)*, % receipts voluntarily added (*volunteering task)*, and change in accuracy after criticism (*feedback task)*

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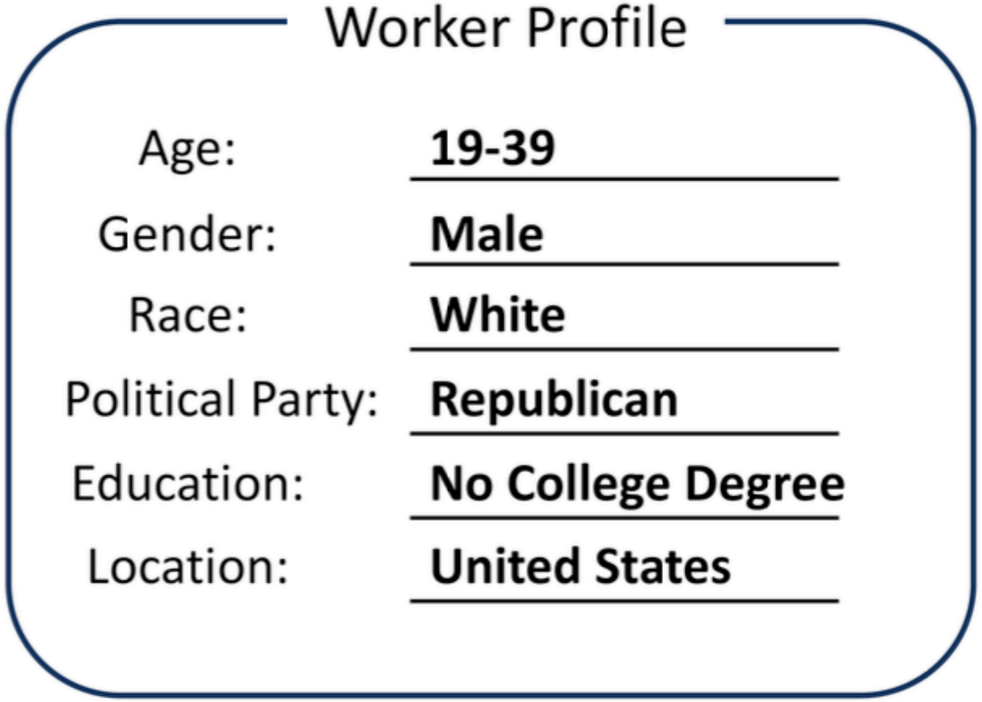

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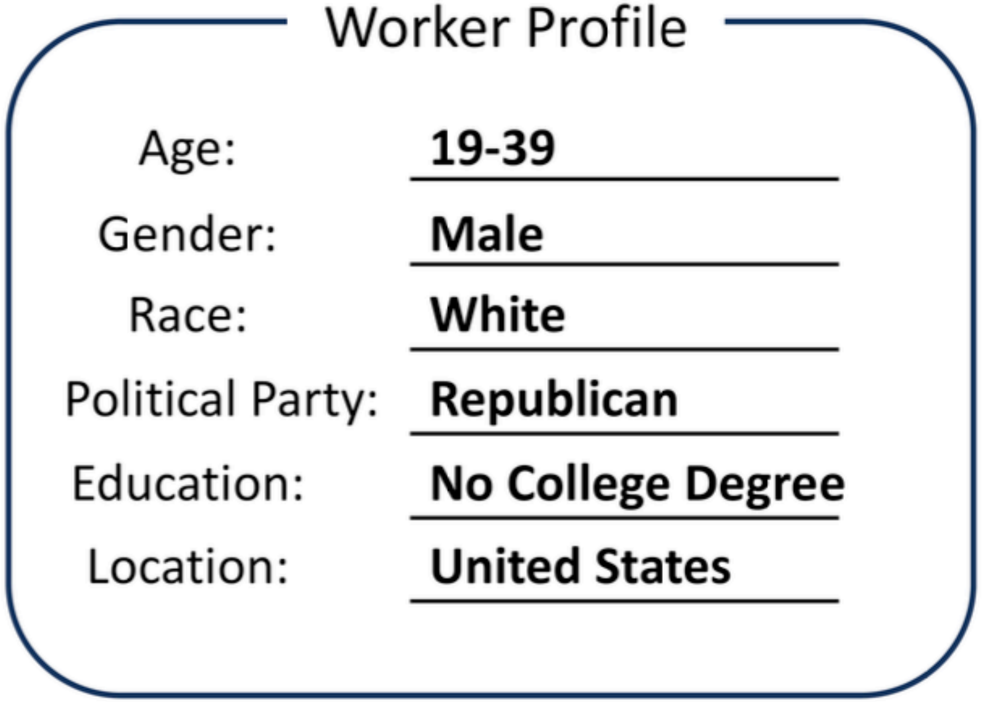

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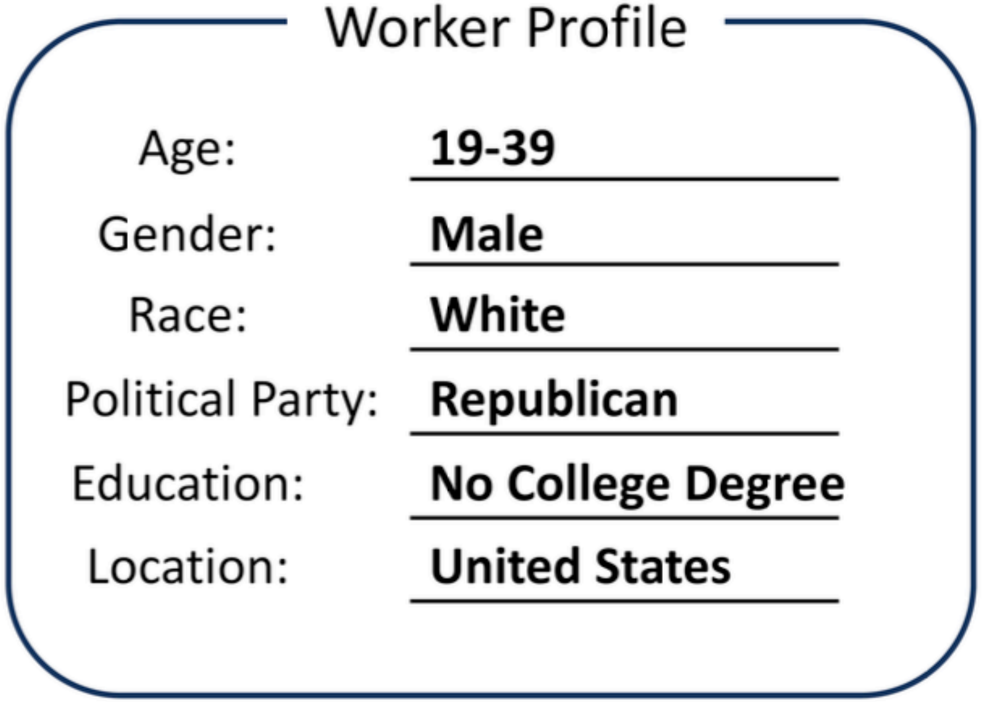

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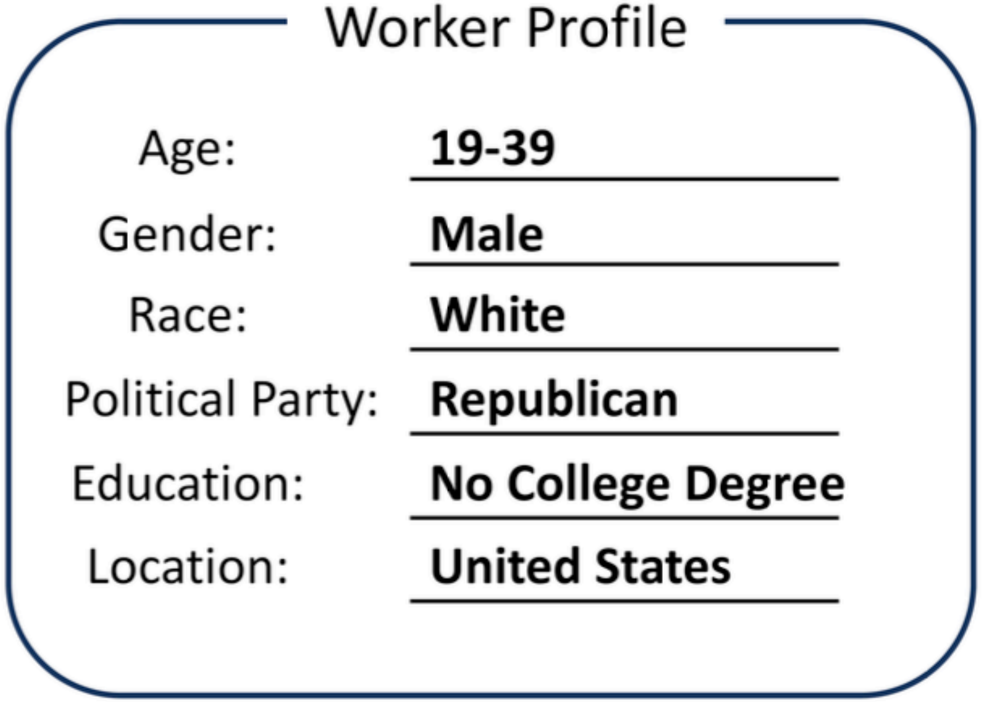

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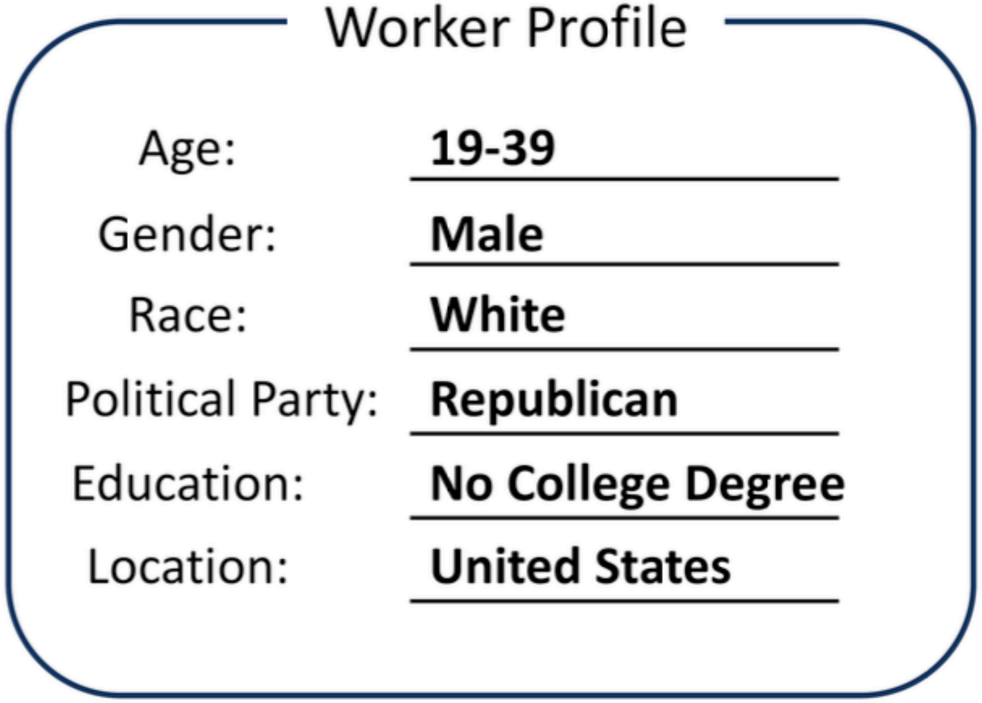

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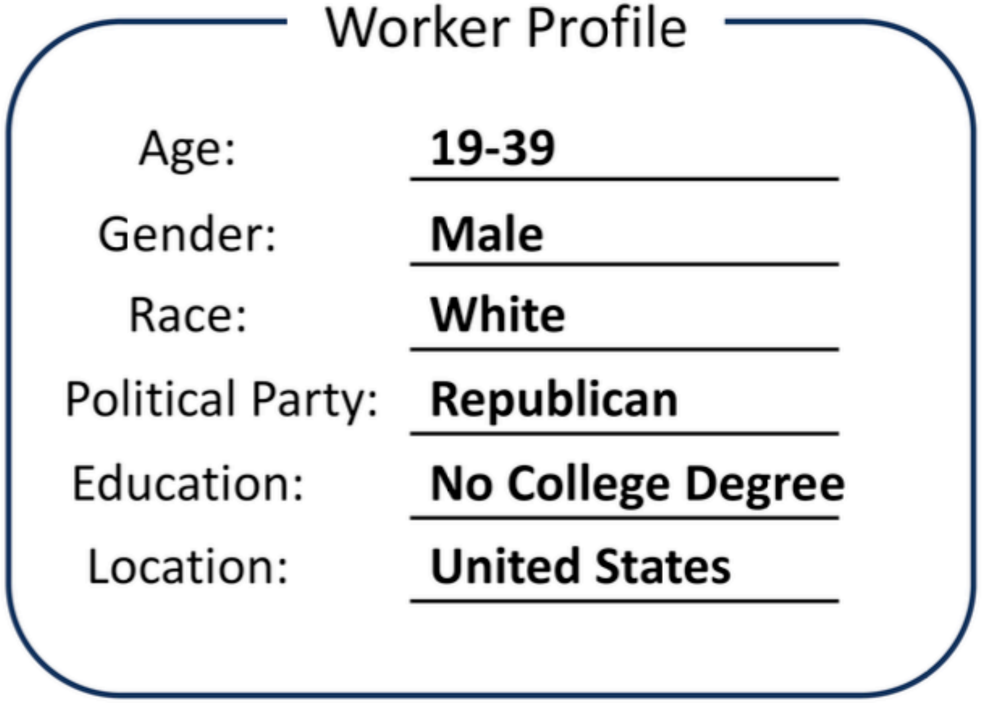

$$\text{payoff} = \begin{cases} 100 & \text{if } \bar{w} < m \\ 100 + productivity - m & \text{if } \bar{w} \geq m \end{cases}$$

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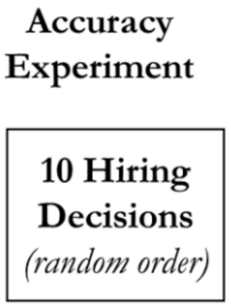

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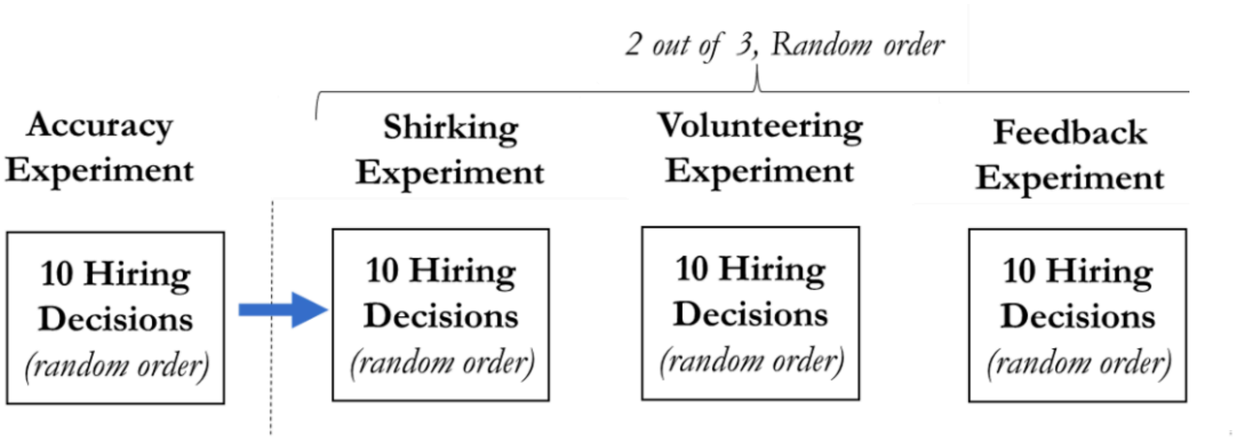

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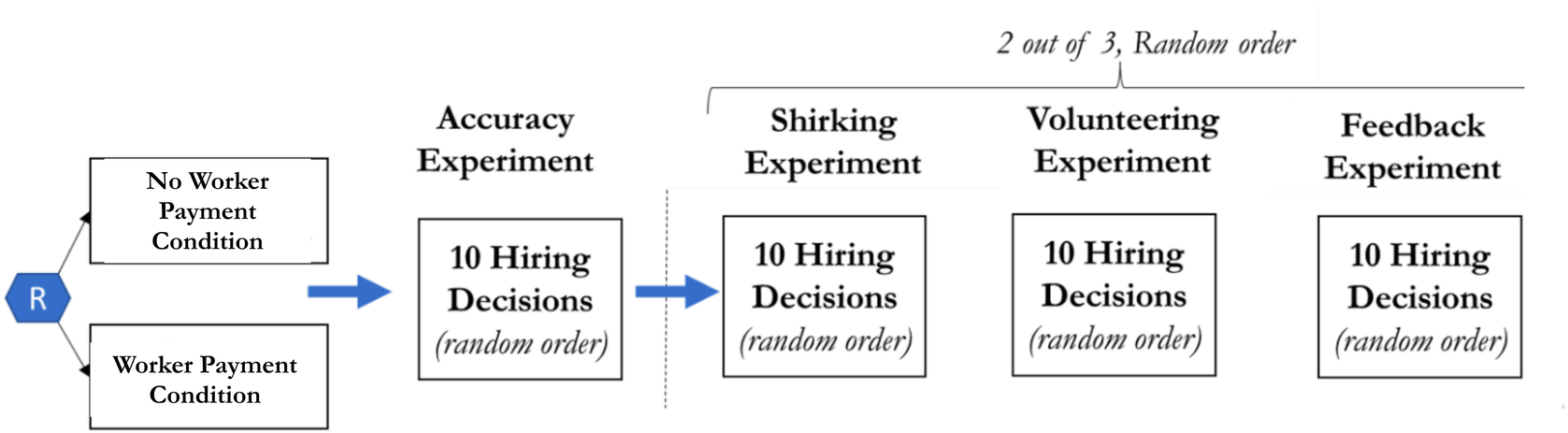

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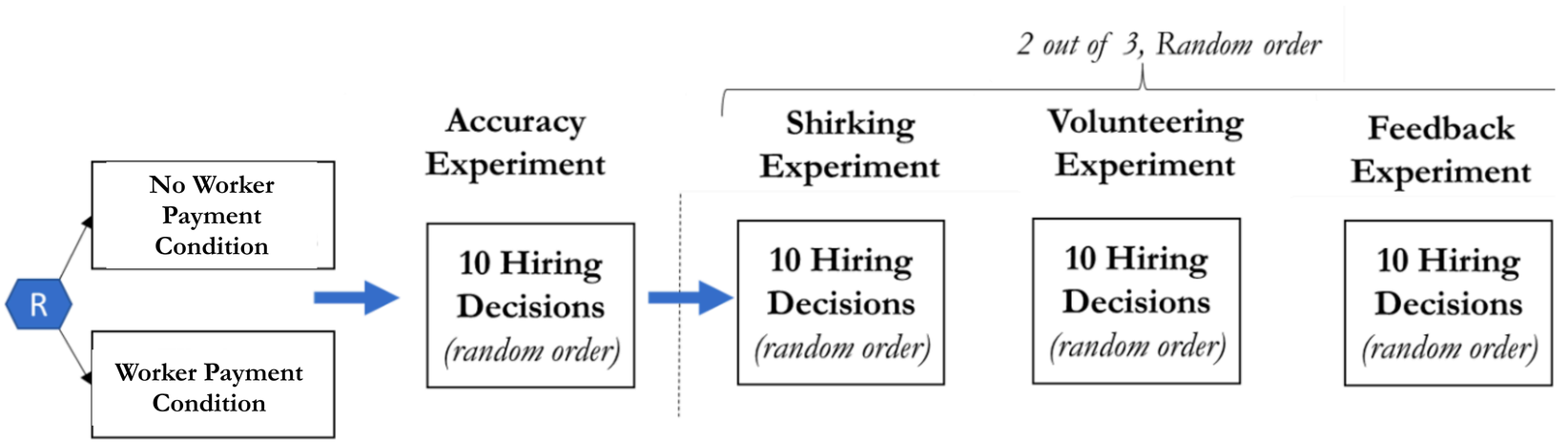

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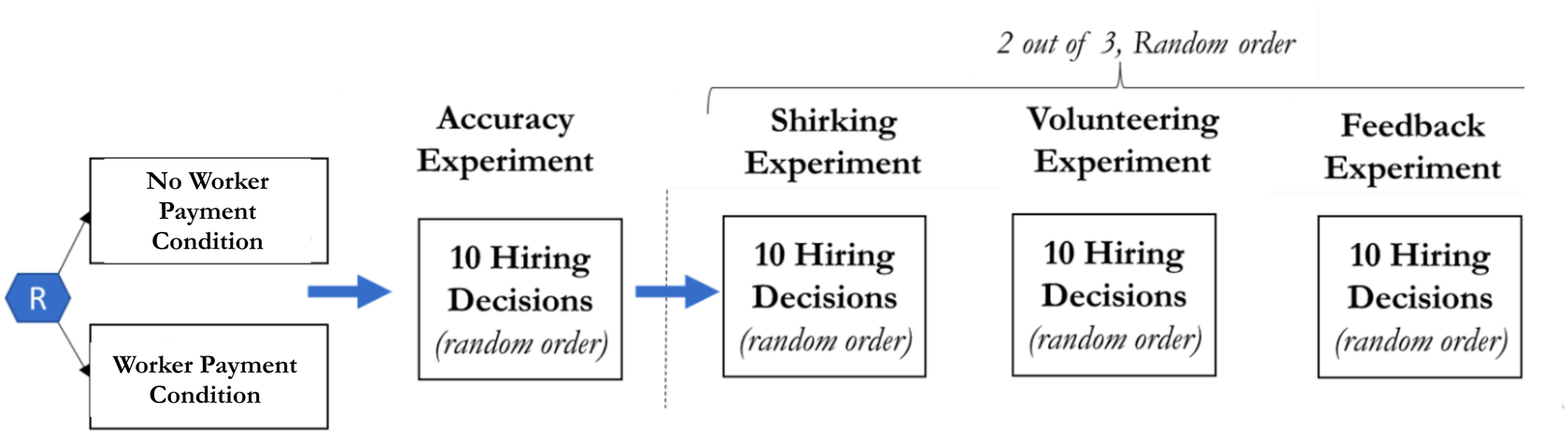

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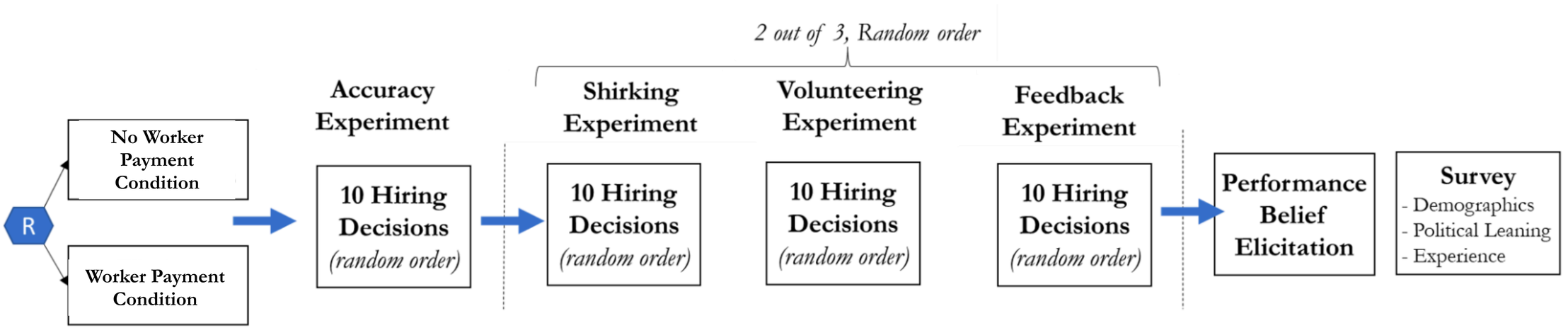

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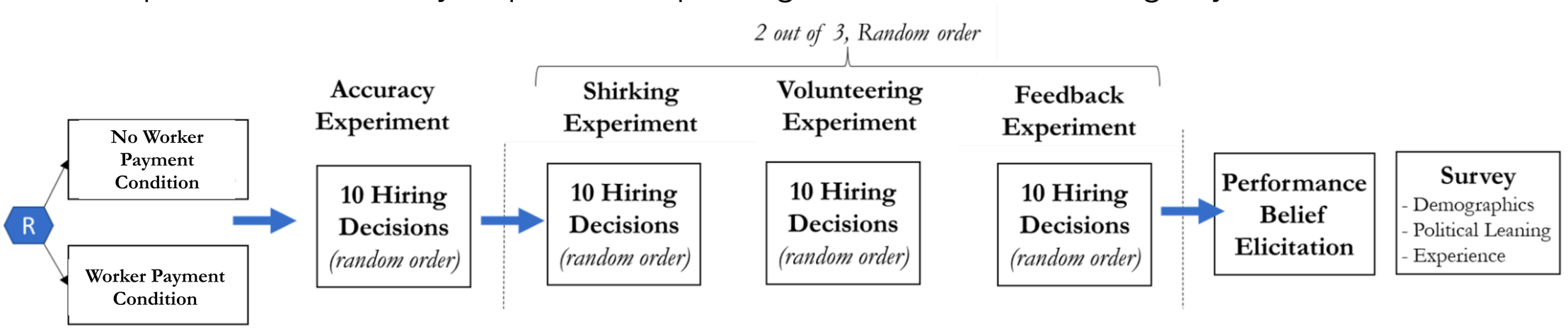

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	(0.305)		
Black	-0.229		
	(0.223)		
4-Year Degree	5.935***		
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Age 40-69	0.188		
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← *Out-partisans wage penalty is ~80% of the college wage premium*

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	(0.186)	(0.241)	(0.283)
Outpartisan	-4.587***	-5.394***	-3.731***
	(0.305)	(0.454)	(0.400)
Black	-0.229	0.525*	-1.099***
	(0.223)	(0.297)	(0.329)
4-Year Degree	5.935***	6.386***	5.460***
	(0.267)	(0.370)	(0.381)
Age 40-69	0.188	-0.101	0.457
	(0.216)	(0.312)	(0.296)
Female	0.707***	1.149***	0.250
	(0.181)	(0.263)	(0.245)
Observations	29999	15369	14630
Left-Out Group Mean	63.76	63.09	64.46
SD	17.6	17.4	17.8
Adj R-Square	0.54	0.56	0.53
Participant FE	Y	Y	Y
P-Val: Ind = Outp	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Democrats	Republicans

Does the type of task matter?

	Maximum Wage Offer (0-100)			
	Accuracy	Shirking	Feedback	Volunteering
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Independent	-1.84***	-1.79***	-1.31***	-1.90***
	(0.24)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.33)
Outpartisan	-4.32***	-5.03***	-4.39***	-4.79***
	(0.33)	(0.46)	(0.51)	(0.51)
Black	-0.47*	0.17	-0.56	0.09
	(0.28)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)
4-Year Degree	7.60***	5.60***	4.67***	4.66***
	(0.33)	(0.41)	(0.42)	(0.41)
Age 40-69	-0.36	0.82**	0.17	0.45
	(0.30)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.38)
Female	0.53**	0.99***	-0.10	1.49***
	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Observations	10879	6470	6170	6480

Does the type of task matter?

	Maximum Wage Offer (0-100)							
	Accuracy		Shirking		Feedback		Volunteering	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Independent	-1.68***	-2.01***	-1.24***	-2.38***	-0.66*	-2.07***	-1.45***	-2.40***
	(0.30)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.52)	(0.34)	(0.53)	(0.49)	(0.45)
Outpartisan	-5.36***	-3.26***	-5.48***	-4.54***	-4.60***	-4.15***	-6.14***	-3.38***
	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.63)	(0.67)	(0.68)	(0.77)	(0.81)	(0.60)
Black	0.16	-1.17***	1.03*	-0.84	0.17	-1.43**	0.97*	-0.93
	(0.36)	(0.43)	(0.55)	(0.57)	(0.52)	(0.61)	(0.56)	(0.57)
4-Year Degree	8.40***	6.82***	5.94***	5.21***	4.87***	4.45***	5.01***	4.29***
	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.58)	(0.56)	(0.55)	(0.64)	(0.55)	(0.62)
Age 40-69	-0.75*	0.01	0.56	1.06*	0.14	0.17	0.06	0.80
	(0.42)	(0.43)	(0.48)	(0.56)	(0.54)	(0.52)	(0.53)	(0.53)
Female	1.09***	-0.02	1.05**	0.94**	0.64	-0.96**	1.86***	1.09**
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.41)	(0.39)	(0.41)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.44)
Observations	5449	5430	3320	3150	3300	2870	3300	3180

Is the wage penalty driven by social preferences?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Independent	-1.790***			
	(0.286)			
Outpartisan	-4.631***			
	(0.443)			
Independent x WP	0.072			
	(0.384)			
Outpartisan x WP	0.063			
	(0.623)			
Black				
4-Year Degree				
Age 40-69				
Female				
Black x WP				

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4-Year Degree				
Age 40-69				
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- Knowing that the worker will actually receive the wage does not influence the co-partisan premium or out-partisan penalty

Is the wage penalty driven by social preferences?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Independent	-1.790***	-1.751***	-1.403***	-2.049***
	(0.286)	(0.279)	(0.356)	(0.426)
Outpartisan	-4.631***	-4.657***	-5.181***	-4.081***
	(0.443)	(0.431)	(0.625)	(0.588)
Independent x WP	0.072	0.042	0.179	-0.261
	(0.384)	(0.374)	(0.485)	(0.566)
Outpartisan x WP	0.063	0.134	-0.413	0.671
	(0.623)	(0.608)	(0.905)	(0.799)
Black		-0.145	0.628	-1.043**
		(0.326)	(0.417)	(0.501)
4-Year Degree		6.113***	6.975***	5.240***
		(0.375)	(0.548)	(0.503)
Age 40-69		0.440	0.377	0.490
		(0.299)	(0.435)	(0.410)
Female		1.073***	1.457***	0.651*
		(0.269)	(0.409)	(0.345)
Black x WP		-0.169	-0.185	-0.138
		(0.447)	(0.594)	(0.659)
4-Year Degree x WP		-0.336	-1.140	0.459
		(0.532)	(0.740)	(0.759)
Female x WP		-0.704*	-0.609	-0.794
		(0.363)	(0.531)	(0.491)
Age 40-69 x WP		-0.480	-0.880	-0.073
		(0.430)	(0.621)	(0.593)
Observations	29999	29999	15369	14630

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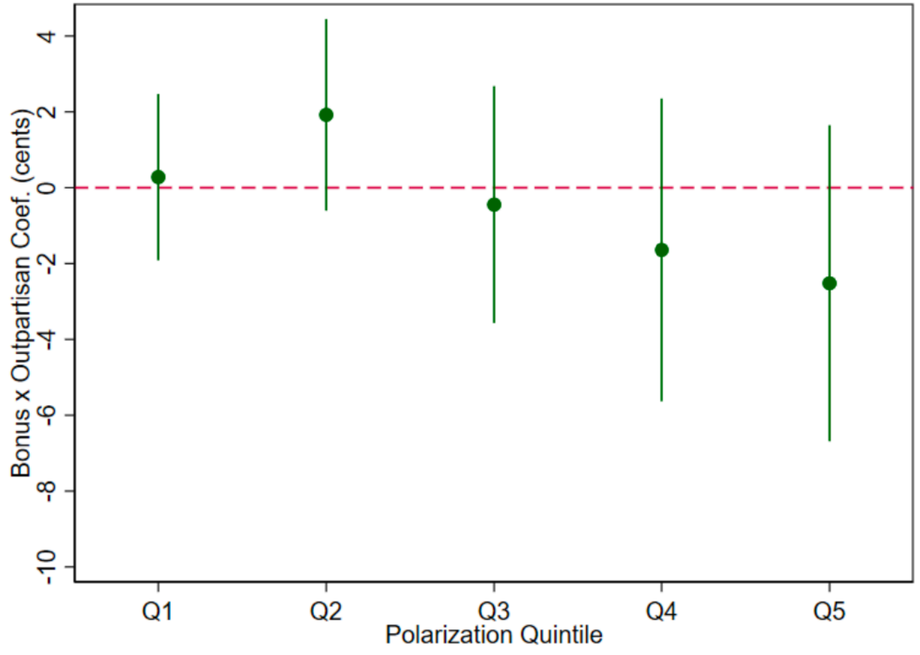
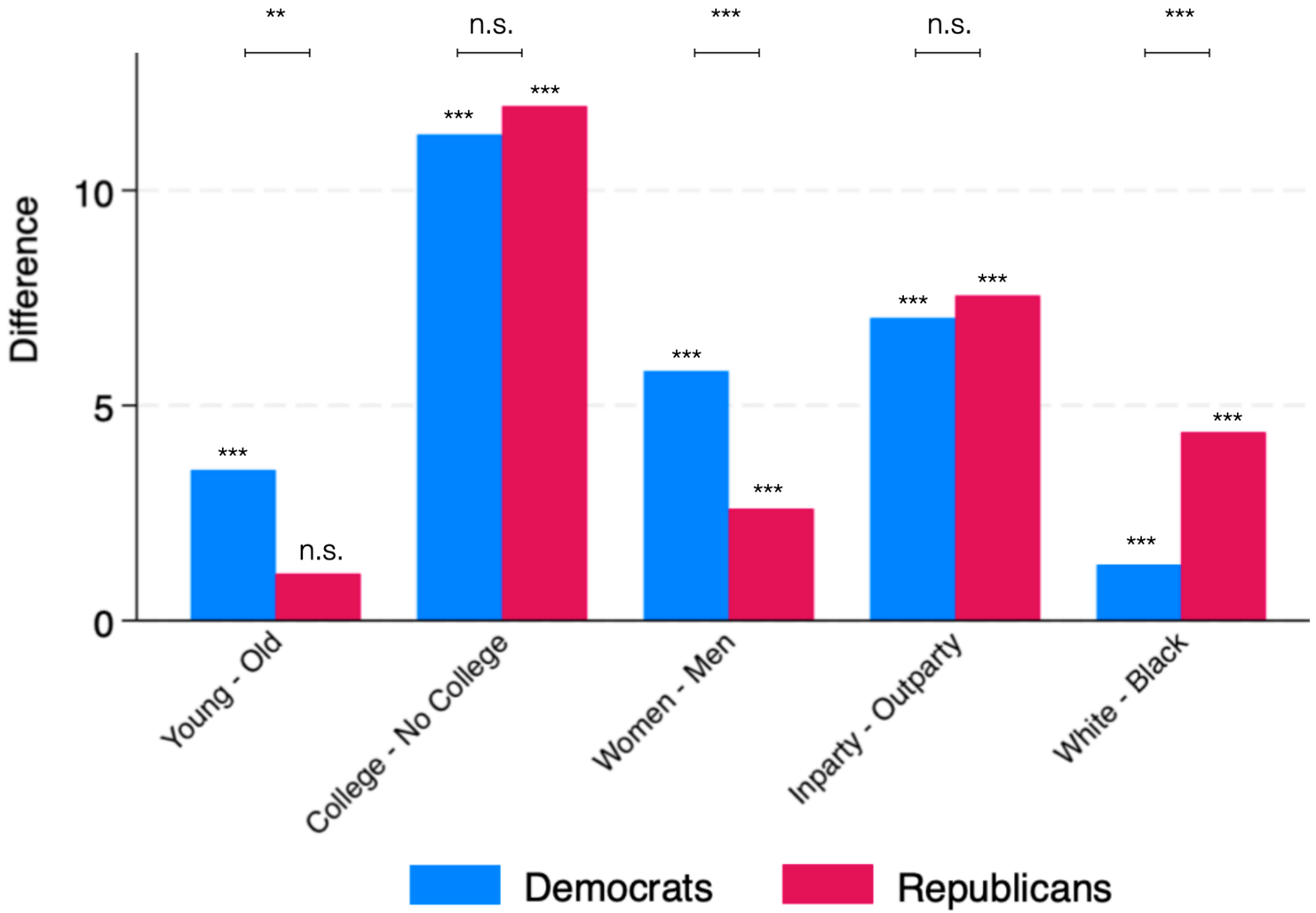


Worker Productivity and Beliefs

Actual Worker Productivity

	(1)
Republican	0.026
	(0.026)
Democrat	-0.011
	(0.023)
4-Year Degree	0.018
	(0.020)
Black	-0.023
	(0.023)
Female	-0.002
	(0.019)
Age 40-69	-0.037*
	(0.020)
Observations	360
Task	Accuracy
P-Val: Rep = Dem	.095



Worker Productivity and Beliefs

	(1)
Independent	-1.122**
	(0.267)
Outpartisan	-2.507**
	(0.327)
Independent x Prod Belief	-0.098**
	(0.027)
Outparty x Prod Belief	-0.273**
	(0.041)
Independent x AP	
Outpartisan x AP	
Observations	10509
Inparty Mean	67.10
SD	16.5
Adj R-Square	0.67
Sample	All
Worker Controls	Y

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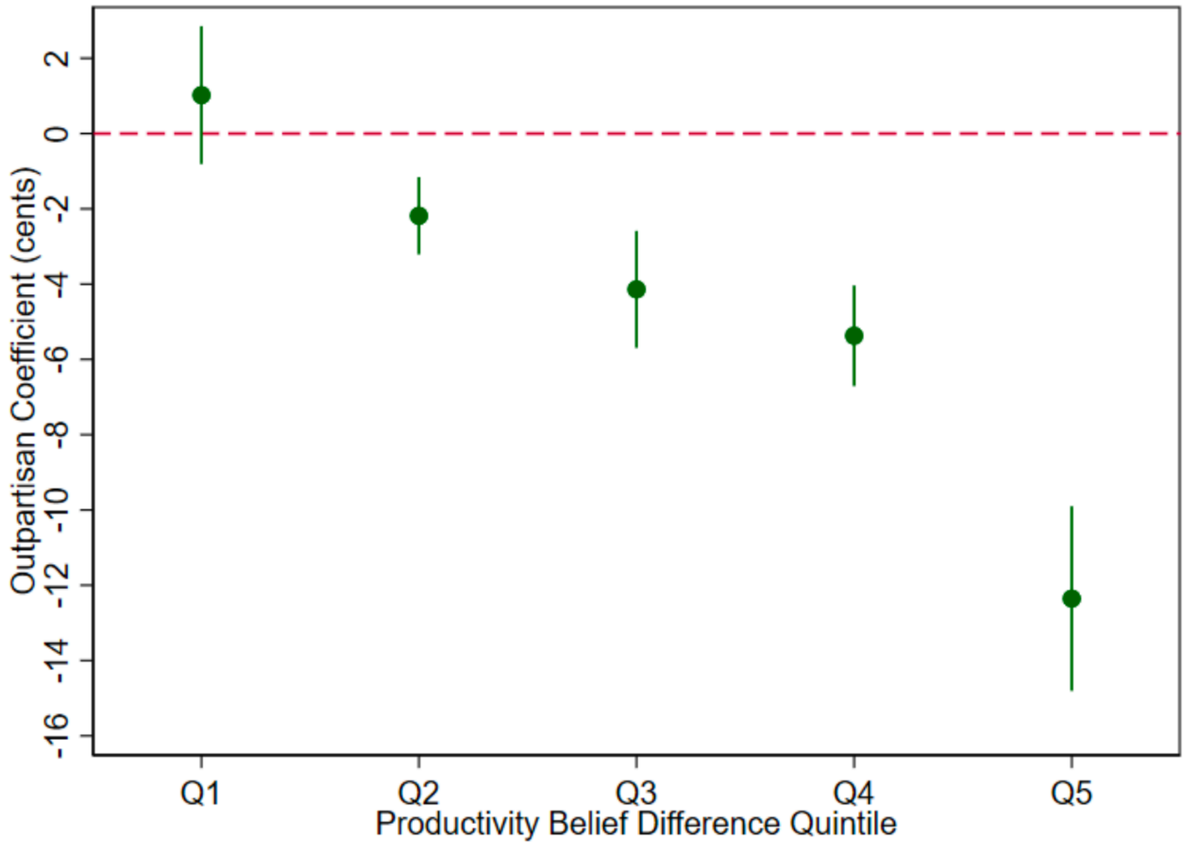
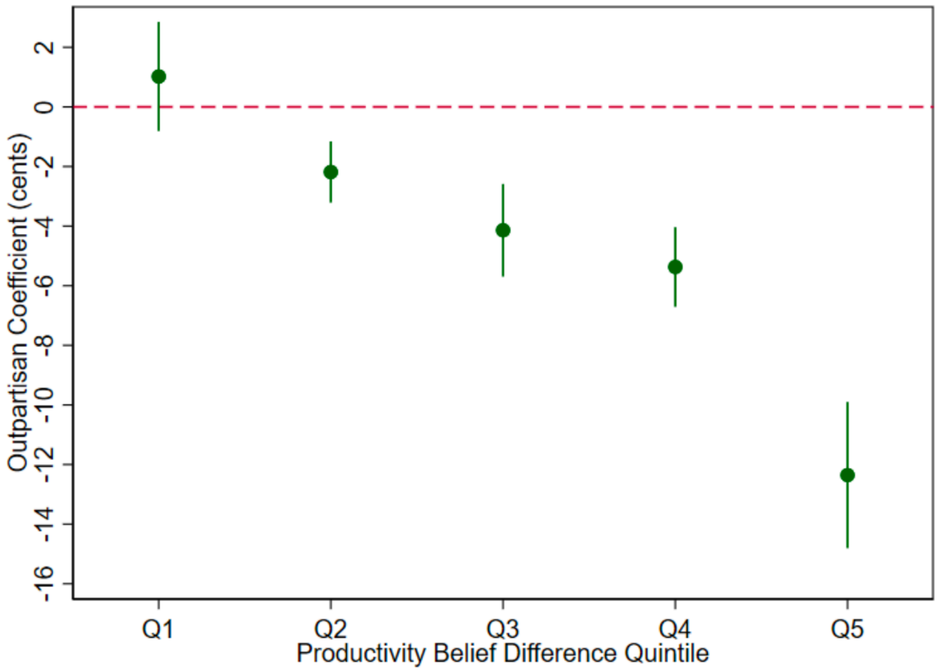


Worker Productivity and Beliefs

	(1)	(2)
Independent	-1.122***	-0.377
	(0.267)	(0.432)
Outpartisan	-2.507***	-0.468
	(0.327)	(0.566)
Independent x Prod Belief	-0.098***	-0.088***
	(0.027)	(0.027)
Outparty x Prod Belief	-0.273***	-0.250***
	(0.041)	(0.040)
Independent x AP		-0.017**
		(0.008)
Outpartisan x AP		-0.043***
		(0.010)
Observations	10509	10449
Inparty Mean	67.10	67.10
SD	16.5	16.5
Adj R-Square	0.67	0.67
Sample	All	All
Worker Controls	Y	Y



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- There is little evidence that group-contingent social preferences play a role
- Instead, (inaccurate) statistical discrimination seems to account for much of the wage penalty
- Even controlling for beliefs, affective polarization explains some of the variation in wage offers, suggesting an identity or normative mechanism