Registered Report Stage 1

Does the Effect of Political Participation Depend on the Status of the Participator? *

August 27, 2026

Abstract

Privileged citizens are more likely to participate in politics and to be better politically represented. Does unequal participation drive unequal representation? Or are politicians biased toward privileged citizens, regardless of their political activity? While politicians' biases toward high-status citizens have been documented, the role of political participation therein remains empirically under-researched. Using nearly 40 years of uniquely comprehensive survey data on Swedish politicians and citizens, we provide the most robust observational evidence to date that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more consistently aligned with the opinions of the politically active. Motivated by this background evidence, a novel pre-registered survey experiment with Swedish politicians will test whether politicians give greater weight to an identical political activity based solely on the participator's status. Our integration of observational and experimental findings will provide new answers to the important question of whether low-status citizens could increase their political influence by participating more.

*Prepared for the APSA 2026 conference in Boston, Massachusetts. This study is supported by the European Union (ERC, PRD, project number 101077659).

https://doi.org/10.33774/apsa-2026-3kjwj **ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1531-4606 Content not peer-reviewed by APSA. **License:** CC BY 4.0

Introduction

While the potential impact of political participation on representation is a classic and long-standing concern in the literature, robust investigation of causal mechanisms underlying this relationship is increasingly salient due to two recently documented empirical phenomena. First, research shows an increase in non-electoral political participation, which tends to be concentrated among higher status groups (Dalton 2017, 2022; Oser 2022; Schlozman, Brady, and Verba 2018; Theocharis and Van Deth 2018). Second, recent scholarship consolidates the finding that different societal groups are represented unequally worldwide (Bartels 2018; Gilens and Page 2014; Lupu and Pontusson 2023; Lupu and Warner 2022a, 2022b; Persson and Sundell 2024). Taken together, research on the rising levels of non-electoral participation and the growing evidence of unequal representation raises the question of whether the increased rates of participation by high-status groups contribute to the over-representation of their preferences in politics.

An increasingly important link in the study of equal representation is elite perceptions of public opinion, and the explanation that political participation drives politicians' biased perceptions of public opinion is theorized in recent research (e.g., Broockman and Skovron (2018, 534, 557–559); Pereira (2021, 1309–1310); Sevenans et al. (2025, 1329)). Public opinion perceptions matter, as politicians operate under conditions of incomplete and uncertain information about the true distribution of preferences among their constituents, and rely on proxies, such as constituent contact and other forms of political participation to make strategic policy decisions. Yet, research is needed to disentangle whether politicians are influenced by the communication of preferences from politically active citizens, who incidentally tend to be high-status; or alternatively, if politicians are inherently biased toward high-status groups.

We argue that distinguishing these two explanations has important implications for the long-standing question of how political participation relates to representation. On the one hand, if elected representatives are responsive to citizens' preference signals, and

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the individuals who are most likely to participate politically tend to be among the most sociodemographically advantaged, then elite responsiveness may become biased toward the preferences of the most advantaged. Thus, unequal participation may lead to unequal representation (Gallego 2015; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). We call this the "preference signal" theory. To address the resulting bias, disadvantaged groups could potentially remedy their lack of influence by participating more.

On the other hand, elite responsiveness to participation might be conditional on the sociodemographic status of the participant through what we call the "status bias" theory. Research shows that politicians are inherently biased toward the preferences of privileged citizens, regardless of their level of political activity (Butler 2014; Sevenans et al. 2025). If this high-status bias applies to the influence of political participation, it could impede equal representation, because even if low-status groups participated politically in identical ways compared to high-status groups, politicians would nevertheless be biased toward picking up preference signals received from high-status citizens.

In this paper, we investigate an important link in the causal chain between participation and representation, namely politicians' perceptions of public opinion. To do so, we combine an analysis of uniquely comprehensive data on politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion depending on citizens' political participation in Study 1, with a pre-registered survey experiment with politicians that tests causal mechanisms of how participation and the status of politically active citizens influence politicians' perceptual accuracy in Study 2.

In Study 1, we analyze existing surveys that ask parallel questions to Swedish politicians and citizens over almost 40 years, which allows us to measure politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion and examine whether their understanding of public opinion is biased toward the views of citizens who are politically active. The results from Study 1 show that politicians' understanding of public opinion aligns more closely with the opinions of politically active citizens than with those of inactive citizens. Specifically, when the opinions of politically active citizens deviate from those of inactive citizens, politicians'

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perceptions correspond more closely to those of the politically active. This association holds in a series of robustness tests. Adjusting for the differences in sociodemographic status between politically active and inactive constituents does not meaningfully diminish the strong association between the opinions of politically active citizens and politicians' understanding of public opinion. These findings are consistent with the argument that politically active individuals may influence politicians' perceptions of public opinion by communicating preference signals through their political behavior.

However, Study 1 cannot identify whether politicians are influenced by the communication of preferences from politically active citizens, who incidentally tend to be high-status; or alternatively, whether politicians are inherently biased toward high-status groups. Additionally, the policy issues for which constituents are mobilized and ways in which high-status individuals participate might differ from the participation of low-status individuals in ways that are not observable using the available data for Study 1.

Therefore, Study 1 provides essential background evidence that motivates Study 2, where we causally test how a single contact initiative affects politicians' public opinion perceptions and whether identical political activity by low-status and high-status citizens influences politicians' perceptions of public opinion in the same way. Study 2 enables us to test whether low-status groups can remedy their lack of influence by participating more.

In Study 2, we take advantage of the unique opportunity to field a survey experiment with political elites in the same context as Study 1 through a high-quality panel of Swedish politicians. For two tasks, the politicians are contacted by a citizen with either a higher or lower sociodemographic status with the request to take policy action on an issue. We then ask politicians to estimate public opinion on this issue using measures that capture politicians' perceptions of the extent to which other citizens agree with or care about the issue. We also ask politicians a series of questions aimed at identifying underlying mechanisms prominently discussed in the literature to explain why these outcomes may differ. The survey experiment was fielded on 11 June, and the data are expected to be

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available in September 2026.

This paper provides novel insights by clarifying the effect of political participation on politicians' perceptions of public opinion and whether this effect depends on the status of the participator. By integrating competing theoretical expectations and testing them experimentally, our study shows how the role of political participation for representation potentially differs between high- and low-status citizens.

Politicians' Perceptions of Public Opinion

For politicians to represent and be responsive to preference signals sent by the public, they must form their own perceptions of public opinion. A common assumption about why politicians are motivated to understand public opinion is that they care about winning votes, staying in office, and implementing their preferred policies, which is sometimes referred to as politicians being vote-, office-, and policy-seeking (Strom 1990). As public opinion about policy is assumed to affect citizens' voting patterns (Downs 1957; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995), politicians' accurate estimation of public opinion is instrumental to achieving one of their most important goals. Additionally, politicians' perceptions of public opinion can have important implications for elite decision-making and policymaking behavior (Butler and Nickerson 2011; Sevenans 2021). Politicians' perceptual accuracy is therefore important not merely for the sake of knowing the precise distribution of public opinion, but because this knowledge guides their strategic action by equipping them to anticipate key political reactions.

Recent empirical research indicates that politicians have clear biases in their understanding of public opinion, which raises new and fundamental questions about how politicians form their perceptions of public opinion. Several studies find that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are biased in favor of high-status groups. While Pereira (2021) finds that Swedish members of parliament (MPs) accurately identify majority opinion among their co-partisans around 70-80% of the time, they are systematically biased

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toward the opinions of high-status co-partisans as white-collar, highly educated, high-income, and urban citizens. Similar evidence is found in Western Europe and Canada, where politicians overestimate support for high-income preferences on socio-economic issues (Sevenans et al. 2025). In Belgium, Canada, and Israel, politicians skew toward the priorities of men and the highly educated (Sevenans, Soontjens, and Walgrave 2022). However, the question of *why* politicians' perceptions are biased in ways that align with certain societal groups and not others remains.

The main proposed explanation for politicians' perceptual biases is citizens' political activity, which exposes representatives to specific preference signals from which they form their perceptions of public opinion. As citizens who politically participate are not representative of the broader population, they might affect the biases in politicians' perceptions of public opinion writ large. That political activity affects which preferences get represented is consistent with classic work by Verba and Nie (1972), who argued that unequal political participation may lead to the interests of the politically active being communicated more clearly to politicians than the interests of the politically inactive. Although this explanation figures in early and important work on the topic – such as Miller and Stokes' (1963) argument that the communication representatives have with their constituents biases their understanding of constituent opinion (Miller and Stokes 1963, 54–55) – direct evidence supporting this explanation is still lacking.

Suggestive evidence in support of this claim is identified in research showing that politicians often report that they gauge public opinion by relying on discussions with individual citizens, rather than on impersonal sources like opinion polls (Senninger and Seeberg 2024; Walgrave and Soontjens 2023; Walgrave, Soontjens, and Sevenans 2022). Additionally, evidence based on analyzing data about Swedish MPs who are contacted by labor unions and business organizations suggests that citizens' contact may affect public opinion perceptions (Pereira 2021), while related research on Danish and Dutch politicians' perceptual accuracy yields mixed evidence (Otjes and Rasmussen 2026). Further, Pilet et al. (2024, see Figure 4 on page 1043) show that politicians in Canada, Belgium,

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Germany, and Switzerland have a bias toward citizens who are conservative and slightly more likely to contact them compared to citizens with more liberal views.

More broadly, research showing that non-electoral participation communicates preferences and is associated with better representation underscores the potential role of political activity as a mechanism by which citizens' preference cues are communicated to decision-makers (Bernardi, Bischof, and Wouters 2021; Gause 2022; Gillion 2012; Leighley and Oser 2018; Wasow 2020). The most comprehensive observational analysis to date connecting participation and representation finds robust evidence of a positive relationship between non-electoral participation and subsequent opinion-policy congruence across 40 countries from 1996 to 2016 (Lindqvist et al. 2026). However, previous studies are unable to distinguish between two separate causal mechanisms, namely whether these biases stem from the content of the preference signals themselves or from a status bias that leads politicians to weigh identical signals differently depending on who communicates them.

Taken together, while the explanation that citizens' political participation drives biased perceptions is prominent in recent research (Broockman and Skovron (2018, 534, 557–559); Pereira (2021, 1309–1310); Pilet et al. (2024, 1040); Sevenans et al. (2025, 1329)), it has not yet been rigorously tested, and evidence of the underlying mechanisms is lacking.

Disentangling Preference Signals and Status Bias

What Lijphart (1997) called "Democracy's unresolved dilemma" – i.e., that unequal participation may cause unequal representation – suggests a potential clash between two democratic ideals. These ideals are the *responsiveness* to the expressed will of the people, meaning that representational outcomes should reflect the preferences communicated by the public, and *equal representation* of all citizens, even of those who are not politically active. The importance of both of these democratic ideals was expressed clearly in Dahl's

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classic claim that "a key characteristic of a democracy is the continued *responsiveness* of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered *political equals*" (Dahl (1971, 1), emphasis added). Thus far, research investigating whether the ideal of responsiveness possibly undermines the ideal of equal representation has not yet distinguished between two distinct underlying theories.

These two distinctive theories are the influence of preference signals communicated through political participation, and the influence of citizens' status characteristics that bias politicians' perceptions in their interpretation of identical preference signals. The relative importance of preference signals conveyed through political participation in comparison to participators' sociodemographic status signals in shaping public opinion perceptions remains poorly understood, as both explanations are often observed simultaneously. Well-represented citizens tend to be most politically active and tend to have a privileged sociodemographic background. While we do not regard these theories as the only potential explanations for how unequal participation relates to unequal representation, we focus on disentangling these two theories because we expect both to play a central role in explaining how unequal participation relates to unequal representation.

The first theory concerns citizens' communication of *preference signals*. If preference signals shape politicians' perceptions of public opinion, then politicians would be biased toward politically active citizens, as they are able to directly communicate their preferences to politicians. Research shows that politicians seek information about public opinion and herein particularly value preference signals communicated through political participation, as they are more personal sources of information (Walgrave, Soontjens, and Sevenans 2022). If a preference signal is the only relevant influence, then representational inequality arises solely from differences in participation: High-status individuals are better represented because they participate more. When citizens who are politically active come from diverse sociodemographic backgrounds, representational outcomes could be equal. The challenge for political equality in this scenario would be to mobilize less advantaged citizens to be at least as politically active as their more advantaged counterparts.

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Lower-status individuals would be able to effectively communicate the preferences of less advantaged groups to decision-makers when participating at equal rates as higher-status individuals (Lijphart 1997; Verba 2003).

The second theory concerns politicians' *status bias*. A status bias would imply that the sociodemographic status of politically active individuals, once perceived by representatives, influences how those representatives interpret preference signals conveyed through political participation. The role of a high-status bias gained attention in the literature based on research in the U.S. (Butler 2014) and confirmed by recent research in Belgium (Sevenans et al. 2025). These works show that politicians are particularly responsive to high-status citizens and less attentive to preference signals received from low-status citizens. As Butler (2014, 49) concluded in relation to socio-economic status (SES), "Even when low-SES individuals participate at the same rate as high-SES individuals do, officials take the input from high-SES individuals more seriously." This prior work raises the question of whether the same political behavior of high- and low-status citizens would still yield unequal representation, as representatives will pay closer attention to the preference signals communicated by citizens with higher status.

There are several reasons that could explain politicians' high-status bias. It might be a more unconscious bias that leads politicians to update their perceptions of public opinion in line with the preferences of high-status individuals, as they tend to view high-status citizens as more proficient, better informed, and more important to them (Butler 2014; Sevenans and Walgrave 2023). Another potential explanation is the influence of perceived shared status background between high-status citizens and politicians, who tend, on average, to be high-status (Carnes and Lupu 2023). Such an unconscious bias is likely to affect politicians of different sociodemographic and ideological backgrounds, similarly to even left-wing politicians being biased towards conservative preferences (e.g., Broockman and Skovron 2018). Other explanations refer to more rational reasons for politicians to pay more attention to high-status citizens' opinions. High-status individuals are more likely to vote and hold politicians accountable at the ballot box (Butler 2014;

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Gerber et al. 2011). Furthermore, politicians may expect higher donations from such groups in certain contexts (e.g., Kalla and Broockman 2016), which provides an incentive to listen more carefully to their wishes.

We note that evidence in favor of a high-status bias is not unanimous. Recent research in the U.S. focused on a specific type of costly political participation shows evidence of a *low-status* bias in this context (Gause 2022). Specifically, Gause (2022) shows that U.S. legislators in the early 1990's were more likely to support the preferences of racial and ethnic groups who engaged in costly protest. As we are not specifically focused on highly cost-intensive forms of political participation, we theoretically focus on the previously well-documented high-status bias but discuss the possibility of results inconsistent with this explanation in the empirical section.

The preference signals and status bias theories are not mutually exclusive. Both preference signals and status bias could simultaneously contribute to unequal representation in a context where higher-status citizens are more politically active than lower-status citizens, and their preference signals may be taken more seriously by representatives.

There are meaningful political and normative implications of whether evidence is found in favor of either preference signals or status bias. If we identify the influence of preference signals, a potential solution to Lijphart's (1997) unsolved dilemma of democracy is to identify interventions whereby lower-status citizens become more politically engaged in order to more actively signal their preferences to political decision-makers. Yet, the case of a high-status bias would clarify that Lijphart's (1997) concern about unequal participation misses an important piece of evidence, and those concerned about equal representation should pay closer attention to mitigating status biases in contemporary democracies. Well-identified observational and experimental research on politicians' perceptions of public opinion is therefore needed to establish the existence and strength of these distinctive mechanisms.

To test both theories, we formulate two hypotheses. We focus primarily on the political act of contacting politicians, as multiple prominent studies since the advent of

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survey-based empirical research on these topics in the 1960s have highlighted contacting politicians as an important political behavior through which citizens may effectively communicate their preferences to decision-makers, even if these preferences are not representative of the broader public (Broockman and Skovron (2018, 534, 557–559); Miller and Stokes (1963, 54–55); Pereira (2021, 1309–1310); Pilet et al. (2024, 1040); Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2012, 117–146); Sevenans et al. (2025, 1329)). However, investigations of distinctive categories of political participation dating back to research by Verba and Nie (1972) on *Participation in America* have clarified that contacting politicians typically entails lower participation costs than public, collective, and time-intensive activities such as demonstrating (Schlozman, Brady, and Verba 2018; Theocharis and Van Deth 2018). Therefore, in addition to the political act of contacting politicians, we note that these outlined mechanisms might similarly apply to other forms of political participation, and we conduct a robustness test focused on the political act of demonstrating.

We begin by investigating the relationship between political participation and politicians' perceptions of public opinion. We first investigate an observable implication of the preference signals theory, stating that political participation affects politicians' perceptions of public opinion. We expect politicians' perceptions of public opinion to be biased toward the opinions of those contacting them (H1). By testing this first hypothesis, we aim to provide indicative evidence of the role of participation. Evidence in line with this hypothesis would be consistent with the preference signals theory.

H1: *Politicians' perceptions of public opinion are biased more strongly in favor of the preferences of politically active individuals compared to the inactive.*

If a status bias applies, then politicians' inferences should differ for the identical form of political participation based solely on the status of the participating citizen. Specifically, when examined in a research design that allows testing identical forms of political participation that differ only in the status of the citizen who participates, we expect politicians to be biased in favor of high-status citizens (H2).

H2: *Politicians contacted by citizens give more weight to the opinions of higher-status*

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citizens compared to lower-status citizens when estimating public opinion.

Empirical Strategy

To test the hypotheses, our empirical strategy integrates two different approaches. In Study 1, we examine uniquely comprehensive data that links citizens' policy positions and political activity with data on politicians' perceptions of public opinion on the same policy issues (H1). This observational evidence in Study 1 provides background evidence that motivates the pre-registered survey experiment in Study 2, as Study 1 cannot rule out two alternatives: that politicians are additionally characterized by status bias, or that some issues both mobilize participants and are prone to perceptual error. Therefore, Study 2 tests the causal effect of a single contact instance in a controlled setting (H1), and whether politicians contacted in identical ways by citizens give greater weight to the opinions of higher-status citizens compared to lower-status citizens (H2).

Our inquiry concerns Sweden, where we expect Swedish politicians to be generally well-attuned to public opinion and for levels of citizen participation to be high. Sweden ranks highly on liberal democracy indicators as one of the most democratic countries in the world during our study period and has comparatively high levels of political participation (Nord et al. 2025). Moreover, members of the Swedish parliament come from more diverse sociodemographic backgrounds than legislators in most other democracies (Carnes et al. 2025; Carnes and Lupu 2023), which could reduce their inherent status biases. Sweden could therefore be a demanding test for our argument. Yet, even here, where conditions should attenuate status biases, prior research documents perception biases favoring high-status citizens (Pereira 2021). If status biases are observable in this setting, we expect the findings from Study 1 and Study 2 to generalize to other democracies where citizens participate and contact politicians in similar ways, and where politically active citizens are, on average, sociodemographically advantaged. The latter is a well-established pattern across democracies and holds in our observational data as

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well (see Online SI Table B.4).

Another reason to select this case is the quality of the data. For Study 1, the collection of parallel survey data from the public and political elites in Sweden is arguably the most comprehensive data source in the world for measuring parallel data on citizens' opinions, as well as politicians' opinions and perceptions of constituent opinions. These data also include information on citizens' political activity, allowing us to gain insights into the extent to which politicians are biased toward the politically active. For Study 2, Sweden is one of the few countries that maintains an ongoing and high-quality survey panel of politicians, which gives us the unique opportunity to conduct a survey experiment among politicians in the same context as Study 1.

In both studies, we analyze measures of constituent opinion that are most comprehensive and valid for the respective research designs. Consistent with prior research that uses various definitions of public opinion we expect that these distinctive measures are likely to yield similar results. Specifically, in Study 1, we analyze co-partisan opinion, as the surveys consistently ask politicians about their perceptions of their party supporters' opinions and prior research shows that findings based on co-partisan opinion measures are consistent with similar measures concerning all constituents' or voters' opinions (e.g., Sevenans et al. (2025) and Walgrave et al. (2023)). In Study 2, we investigate general public opinion, allowing us to select treatment issues for which preferences are balanced across status groups, ensuring a successful treatment manipulation.

Study 1

Observational Data and Method

In Study 1[1], we analyze parallel data from 1985 to 2022 on MPs (conducted by the Riksdag Member of Parliament Survey (RDU, Riksdagsundersökningen)) and citizens

[1]Access Online Supplementary Information (SI) for Study 1 here: https://osf.io/8ngsj/overview?view_only=7dd75bc4102d4a9fa5341ac7a35040f5

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(conducted by the Swedish National Election Survey (SNES) and the Society, Opinion and Media (SOM)-Institute). The data are based on surveys that ask citizens about their opinions about a range of policy proposals, and ask MPs whether a majority of their co-partisans agreed with the same policy proposals. We document detailed information on the survey data in Online SI A. All policy proposals and the corresponding survey years are documented in Online SI Table B.2 and B.3.

As noted, our dependent variable in Study 1 is political elites' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, as this is the definition of public opinion used in the elite surveys. To identify co-partisans among the citizens' surveys (SOM and SNES), we code the party each respondent voted for from post-election surveys.[2] Perceptual accuracy is a common dependent variable in previous studies, either measured as a binary variable when politicians estimate majority opinion (e.g., Pereira (2021)), or as a continuous variable when politicians estimate the share of the population that supports a given policy (e.g., Otjes and Rasmussen (2026)). Given the wording of the survey items, we are confined to a binary measure of perceptual accuracy that turns 1 if the MP correctly estimated that the majority of co-partisans supports or does not support the policy proposal, and 0 if they incorrectly estimated that the majority of co-partisans supports or does not support the policy proposal. The average perceptual accuracy of Swedish politicians during this time period is 77% (sd = 0.41).

Our main independent variable is whether individuals who contact politicians disagree with the majority of their fellow co-partisans on a specific policy proposal (Contacted Politician $\neq$ Majority) and our main control variable, following Pereira (2021), is whether high- or low-status citizens disagree with the majority of their fellow co-partisans on a specific policy proposal (Status $\neq$ Majority). As outlined earlier, we suspect that when

[2]For pre-election SNES-surveys, we code party based on voting intention. Surveys by SOM from the year before the election do not contain voting information and we instead use party preference. We later check for the robustness of our results using only information on voting preferences.

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politicians are contacted by co-partisans who disagree with the majority of co-partisans, they become biased in their perception of public opinion toward citizens who contact them (H1). We expect this bias to remain, even when accounting for the preferences of high- or low-status citizens. This finding would be consistent with the explanation that politically active individuals are influential in shaping politicians' understanding of public opinion.

Both the independent variable and control variables are measured using the same approach. We first identify the members of each group (e.g., those contacting politicians, high-income individuals, rural residents, etc.) and then measure their preferences. We identify respondents who contact politicians by their responses to two similar questions in the citizens' survey. The first is whether the respondent reported contacting an MP in the last year. The second question is whether the respondent "has written a letter or contacted a member of parliament in any other way" in the "last years". Consistent with prior research, the proportion of citizens who contact politicians is a relatively low 11% on average in the pooled sample (for the averages across years, see Online SI Figure Figure B.1). As noted, to probe the generalizability of our findings on contacting as a political activity, we run a robustness test with individuals who demonstrated in previous years.

We identify members of the sociodemographic (high- and low-status) groups based on self-reported characteristics in the citizen surveys. We include a range of standard sociodemographic indicators that are often analyzed in the literature and relate to theoretically relevant aspects of status by comparing people with high/low education, high-/low-income, white-/blue-collar workers, urban/rural residents, and men/women.[3]

For the contact and status groups, we then code individuals' responses in support of a policy as 1, indifferent responses as 0.5, and no support as 0. We subsequently

[3]The coding of these status groups is explained in Online SI A. As in the case of related studies (Pereira 2021), ethnicity is not included as a status marker due to data availability.

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code each group's average as 1 if it is above 0.5, and as 0 if it is below 0.5. We finally compare whether each group agrees, on average, with the majority of its co-partisans. The resulting variable is binary and coded as 1 when a group, on average, disagrees with the majority of its co-partisans, and 0 when it agrees. Some group averages are calculated based on a small sample size when only a small share of citizens contact politicians and support a specific party. For our main analyses, we therefore set a cutoff at 30 survey respondents, and in the "Robustness tests" section, we report on additional analyses using cutoffs at 0 and 50.

While the data do not offer detailed information regarding the specific policy issues about which citizens contacted politicians, it is nevertheless the most comprehensive data to date that integrates items on citizens' political participation and politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion. In this regard, our observational analysis shares a common limitation in this broader field of research on politicians' misperceptions of public opinion (Pilet et al. 2024; Sevenans et al. 2025), and related research on opinion-policy congruence (Gilens and Page 2014; Lupu and Tirado Castro 2023; Persson and Sundell 2024). Our integration of this uniquely comprehensive observational data in Study 1 with causal evidence in Study 2 therefore allows us to create a valuable triangulation of evidence on the role of political participation in politicians' public opinion perceptions.

Observational Analysis

In this section, we examine whether politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more closely aligned with the opinions of citizens who contact politicians compared to those of inactive citizens. We then conduct a series of robustness tests. Our general estimation strategy is to predict politicians' perceptual accuracy in linear probability models. In the Online SI, we provide additional information on model specifications and regression findings.

We test our first hypothesis, H1, on whether political participation is associated with politicians' perceptions of public opinion. The dependent variable is politicians' percep-

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tual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and the independent variable is whether citizens who contact politicians disagree with the majority. We additionally include a set of controls. We first control for the preferences of high-status groups by including a measure of whether high-status groups disagree with the majority opinion. We subsequently conduct a separate analysis to control for whether low-status groups disagree with the majority opinion.

In addition, in all models, we control for whether MPs' own policy preferences are in line with the majority of their co-partisans (MP $\neq$ Majority), as it should be easier to estimate majority support among co-partisans for politicians who agree with their supporters (due to projection bias, see Otjes and Rasmussen (2026) and Pereira (2021)). We also control for preference imbalance among co-partisans, measured as the absolute difference between the share of constituents who support or oppose a given policy (Pereira 2021). Smaller values for preference imbalance reflect a more balanced preference distribution, which is expected to be associated with lower perceptual accuracy. We further include fixed effects for year, party, and policy issue. The latter allows us to control for all time-invariant, unobserved issue-specific characteristics. All models include cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.[4]

In Figure 1, we begin by modeling the association between the preferences of citizens who contact politicians and politicians' perceptual accuracy while accounting for the preferences of high-status citizens. Model 1 regresses politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion on whether the majority of co-partisans contacting politicians disagrees with the majority of co-partisans. This gives us an indication of whether politicians' perception of public opinion is correlated with the preferences of politically active citizens. The point estimate for the preferences of politically active citizens (Contacted Politician $\neq$ Majority, purple circle) is sizable, negative, and statistically significant at a p-value below

[4]In Online SI O we run the same analysis but with RDU data up until 2006 (which has a panel structure), which allows us to use cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP over time. The main results are robust to this specification.

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0.01. Model 2 adds a coefficient for whether highly educated citizens disagree with the majority of co-partisans. Models 3-6 repeat this specification for other high-status groups (high-income, white collar, urban,and male individuals). The contact estimates remain statistically significant and negative across Models 2-6. This shows that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more closely aligned with those who contact them, even when accounting for the preferences of various high-status groups.

To test whether the association between the preferences of politically active citizens and politicians' public opinion perceptions holds when accounting for the preferences of low-status groups, we control for whether the preferences of various low-status groups diverge from majority opinion in Online SI Figure D.1. The contact estimates remain highly comparable to models accounting for high-status preferences, which shows that contact is robustly associated with politicians' public opinion perceptions.

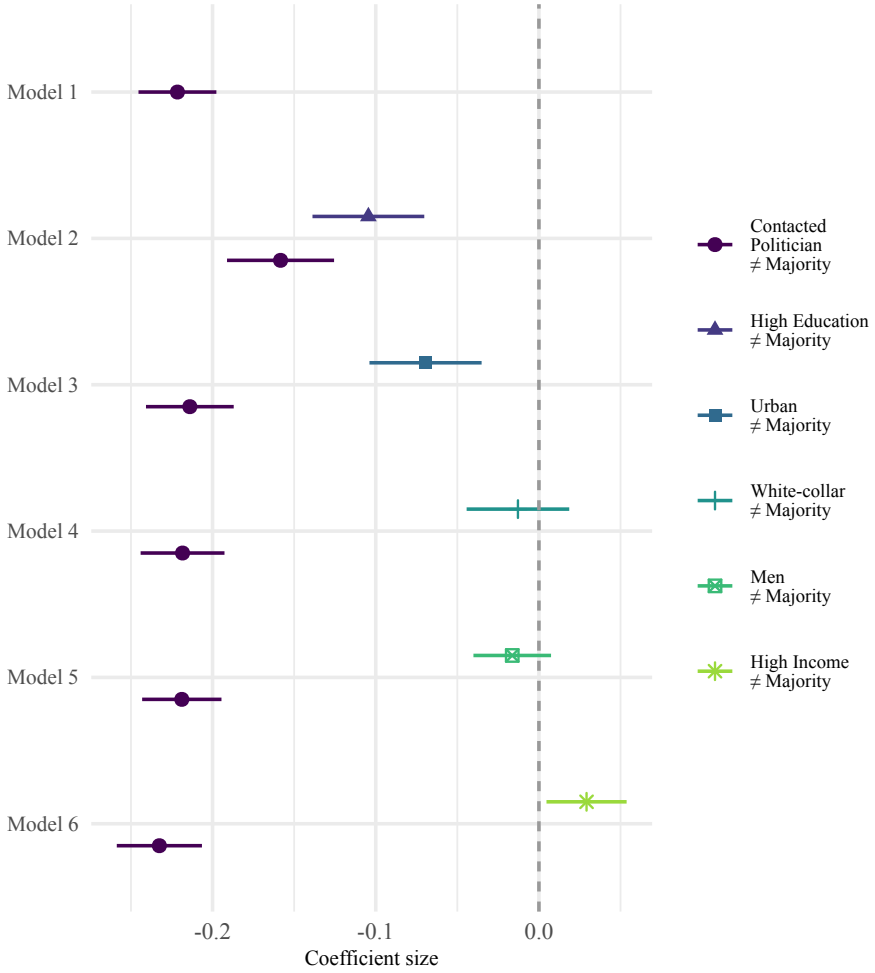
Robustness tests

To probe the strength and stability of these results, we conduct several robustness tests. First, we keep status constant while varying the contact variable. The findings show that within each status group, the preferences of citizens who contact politicians are equally or more strongly related to politicians' perceptions of public opinion compared to inactive citizens in every sociodemographic group that we investigate (see Online SI E).

Second, we conduct an additional subgroup analysis that keeps the contact variable constant while varying the status variables. We have sufficient observational data to conduct this analysis for three status characteristics, namely white-/blue-collar, urban/rural and men/women. The results are similar for each sociodemographic category: both the preferences of high- and low-status groups who contact politicians are associated with a loss of politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion, but the coefficient point estimate for all high-status groups is larger than the coefficient for low-status groups. Further, linear hypothesis tests show that this difference is statistically significant for two of the three

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Figure 1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Controlling for the preferences of high-status groups



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression. Full model information in Online SI Table C.1.

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status groups (the test is significant for white-/blue-collar and urban/rural, but not for men/women; see Online SI F). While this robustness test yields limited but suggestive correlational evidence in favor of high-status bias (H2), experimental evidence is needed to assess causal relations.

Third, we test the generalizability of our findings to other forms of political participation. The data include additional information on whether citizens participated in any demonstrations. Protest is similarly popular as a form of political participation as contacting politicians (see Online SI Figure G.1) and is expected to be an important way in which citizens communicate their policy preferences to politicians. We replicate our main findings by including the preferences of protesters instead of those contacting politicians in Figures G.2 and G.3, which shows that the preferences of protesters are strongly and significantly associated with politicians' public opinion perceptions. Thus, politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more closely aligned with the preferences of politically active citizens who contact them or go to the streets to demonstrate compared to the politically inactive.

Fourth, we conduct checks for distinctive measures of contact. Specifically, we test whether the results are affected when accounting for the preferences of citizens who contacted politicians exclusively within the last year, and the results remain highly comparable (see Online SI H).

Fifth, to assess the reliability of estimates for the measurement of status, we probe different thresholds for subgroup inclusion. Specifically, we use the cutoff point of 30 co-partisan respondents for the number of observations needed to include a status group in our analysis in the manuscript, and replicate our main findings with robustness tests using cutoffs of 0 and 50 in Online SI I.

Sixth, we check the robustness of our findings to changes in our measurement of the dependent variable by excluding politicians when they are indifferent toward a policy proposal due to the risk that these politicians are less attentive to public opinion in general. However, the results remain highly comparable to the main analysis (see Online

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SI J). Similarly, we conduct robustness checks that exclude indifferent citizens (see Online SI K) and include don't know answers (see Online SI L), since politicians may or may not account for these opinions. The results are highly similar when using these alternative specifications.

Seventh, we replicate the main analyses while omitting small parties, which affects the measure of perceptual accuracy regarding co-partisan opinion. The results are also consistent with our main findings (see Online SI M).

Finally, we probe whether our results are affected by the approach of compiling data across surveys and years. Specifically, we conduct analyses with survey data from election years only (see Online SI N) and where only the panel data with MPs until 2006 are included (see Online SI O). Our results replicate in these robustness tests.

Taken together, these robustness tests are consistent with our main findings, thereby strengthening confidence in the reliability of our reported estimates. The observational analysis provides evidence that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more strongly aligned with politically active citizens than with inactive citizens. Across our models, politicians' probability of being accurate is consistently 21-23 percentage points lower when politically active citizens disagree with majority-opinion and around 16 percentage points lower when accounting for the preferences of highly educated citizens. The coefficient for contact remains stable, sizable, and statistically significant at a p-value below 0.01 in all models. These findings provide novel insights into the association between politicians' estimations of public opinion and the opinions of the politically active.

However, there remain important limitations to Study 1 that motivate the pre-registered experiments in Study 2. While the findings provide suggestive evidence for the potential role of preference signals communicated through political participation, they remain limited in identifying causal effects and cannot fully distinguish between preference and status signals. Importantly, the observational analysis in Study 1 cannot identify whether identical participation by a high- vs. low-status citizen would produce the same influence on politicians' perceptions of public opinion.

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Study 2

Motivated by Study 1's uniquely comprehensive and robust observational evidence in favor of an association between political participation and politicians' perceptions of public opinion, we conduct a pre-registered experiment in Study 2. We examine the causal effect of a single instance of contact on politicians' public opinion perception (testing H1) and whether a contributing factor to the close alignment between politicians' public opinion perceptions and the opinions of politically active citizens in Study 1 is politicians' inherent high-status bias (testing H2). This allows us to disentangle preference signals from status signals. Depending on the strength of a status bias among politicians, this test can indicate the extent to which low-status groups could mitigate politicians' bias by contacting them at a rate similar to that of high-status citizens. The experimental design does not, however, test whether political participation itself affects politicians' status perception of a participating citizen.

Data and Method

We take the unique opportunity to field an experiment among politicians in the same country context as Study 1, using the longstanding and well-established Panel of Politicians conducted by the SOM-Institute. The sample includes a large proportion of local politicians, including local councilors and mayors, as well as members of parliament and EU-politicians.[5] Prior research in the Swedish context leads us to expect the effects of contact and status to be broadly comparable across these types of politicians (Karlsson 2018). Although responsible for different jurisdictions, these distinctive types of politicians all have a stake in understanding public opinion on policy issues that dominate Swedish party politics across jurisdictions, and politicians must assess their alignment on

[5]In a previous survey round 98% of politicians were local, 3% national-, and 0.17% EU-level. The percentages add to more than 100% as some politicians are active at the national, as well as local level.

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these issues with the public. As detailed below, the issues selected for the experiment are highly salient to Swedish party politics.

The panel has a high response rate of around 39% among Swedish politicians compared to other politician surveys (i.e., ca. 5% in UK and 20% in Germany, see Giger and Pereira 2025), and is fielded twice a year. The online survey is sent via e-mail to a pool of politicians who have agreed to be contacted by the SOM Institute.[6] The risk that employees, and not politicians themselves, respond to the survey is considered very small, as most politicians in the sample have only a small office or no office staff at all.

We choose a survey experiment to measure politicians' perception of public opinion in a controlled setting, which allows us to measure respondents' attitudes immediately after the treatment. The focus of our study on politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion is distinct from a field experiment approach that manipulates contact by citizens in order to measure politicians' behavioral responsiveness to the request, such as responding to a citizen's e-mail (e.g., Dinesen, Dahl, and Schiøler 2021). An additional advantage of this design is that it avoids ethical concerns related to the increasing popularity of experiments in which politicians receive fake e-mails (Zittel et al. 2023).

Due to the nature of survey experiments, we manipulate a single contact experience at a time. As politicians are often contacted on multiple occasions, the survey specifies that the contact scenario is one example of many possible contact initiatives. For internal validity, we design the treatments as an individual e-mail to write a credible request with a strong status treatment. However, we note that the experiment is a conservative test of the effect of contacting politicians (H1), as we only manipulate a single instance of contact.

The survey experiment has been pre-tested and refined on the basis of the pre-test results, which confirm that the status manipulations work in the intended way in all

[6]After we field the survey and obtain the data, we will include a table showing key statistics of the sample and to what extent it is representative in terms of politicians' party affiliation, gender, and age in Sweden.

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three treatment vignettes (see Tables B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6). The pre-test was conducted with a convenience sample of over 500 Swedish citizens since conducting a pre-test with politicians is not feasible, given that it would require using the same respondents in the final survey experiment. See Appendix B for the pre-test survey outline and results.

Treatment

To test the effect of contact compared to no contact, and the effect of contact by a citizen with either high or low status, every respondent first completes the control condition task and then two repeated treatment tasks. Across these three tasks, the order of the policy issues is randomized, but every respondent encounters each policy issue only once within the survey. The control task consists of answering an item battery to capture politicians' perceptions of public opinion concerning one of the three policy issues. Each treatment task consists of a vignette displaying a single instance of contact by a citizen and then a set of survey items, including the battery measuring public opinion perceptions.

The contact treatment vignettes are displayed in the survey outline in Appendix C. The treatment vignettes are brief e-mails in which either a high- or low-status citizen expresses their policy position and requests that the politician take action. Our main experimental design goal is to provide strong status treatments to ensure that politicians are indeed manipulated in their perception of the citizens' status, and that any null effects cannot be attributed merely to weak treatments.

We balance the goal of strong treatments against the concern of demand effects and choose to formulate e-mail texts that contain other information in addition to the sociodemographic background of the citizen. We also slightly vary the placement of the treatment information but ensure that the risk of respondents overlooking the high- and low-status information is kept to a minimum. Moreover, across the vignettes, the policy issues differ, making it more difficult for respondents to detect the intended manipulation.

We include the status treatments as information that the citizen provides, thereby revealing their sociodemographic background. Different aspects of citizens' sociodemo-

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graphic backgrounds are varied, which we bundle into high- or low-status cues. The treatment levels are a white collar job, associated with higher status and education vs. a blue-collar job, associated with lower status and education; and high income vs. low income.[7] Additionally, we manipulate the citizens' names so that they are associated with different social classes. The names were chosen on the basis of research showing that certain forenames and surnames in Sweden continue to be associated with higher or lower status (Dalman 2025).

We control for the citizen's gender instead of varying it as an additional status marker, as prior research indicates that gender in an experimental survey setting is a weaker and potentially more vague status signal than, for example, profession (see further Elder and Hayes 2023). Additionally, there is mixed evidence on whether politicians are more or equally responsive to women as to men (e.g., Kim and Michelitch 2022; Rhinehart 2020). To avoid gender confounding the status treatment, we randomly vary citizen's gendered names in every vignette. As some professions in the vignettes are likely to be perceived as generally female or male jobs and respondents might overlook the varying gender in the e-mail signature, we checked whether respondents perceived the gender treatments in our pre-test. Across all three treatments, we find that they do (see Appendix B, Table B.4, Table B.5, Table B.6), but, as expected, gender is inconsistently related to perceptions of status (see Appendix B Table B.3). All names are typical Swedish and common in Sweden, which might suggest that the contacting citizen does not have a migration background, keeping this citizen trait constant.

Every vignette concerns one of three different issues for which high- and low-status groups share similar preferences in Sweden: 1) Against the expansion of private healthcare; 2) In favor of allowing assisted death; 3) In favor of nationalizing the responsibility over schooling. For clear inference in relation to our experimental manipulations of citi-

[7]To ensure comparability with Study 1, we do not include ethnicity as a status marker, but the influence of additional status markers—such as ethnicity, health, or disability—remains a promising avenue for future research.

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zens' status, it is important that respondents do not expect high- and low-status groups to hold meaningfully different preferences on these issues. Otherwise, treatment effects might be explained by differences in attitudes that politicians attribute to citizens with different status backgrounds (see similarly Sevenans and Walgrave 2023, 430). We, therefore, selected the policy issues on the basis of recent survey data of general public opinion showing that high- and low-status citizens share similar preferences regarding these issues. Appendix A reports differences in policy preferences between the relevant high- and low-status groups.

The first vignette deals with the issue of the increasing privatization of healthcare in Sweden and long waiting times for appointments. This problem affects citizens of various sociodemographic backgrounds, as most healthcare in Sweden does not allow circumventing waiting times by, for example, paying more for a visit. Therefore, the issue has become increasingly unpopular among the public and particularly affects the care of the elderly, who are not eligible for emergency appointments as babies and children are. In the vignette, a person describes their worry about healthcare privatization due to the care work for their mother and their frustration with the circumstance that tax money is paid to healthcare institutions owned by private providers. Both left-wing and right-wing parties agree that Swedish healthcare should undergo reform, but they vary in their positions regarding the extent to which privatization should be rolled back. We vary the citizen's profession and their attributed education level as a high- or low-status cue as well as their name. The citizen states working either as a tech-founder and entrepreneur (a white-collar job, associated with higher status and education) or a cashier at the grocery store (a blue-collar job, associated with lower status and education).

The second treatment issue concerns assisted dying, which has not been legalized in Sweden. The issue is not particularly partisan, as the conservative party in Sweden is a conservative, economically liberal party and not a conservative, Christian party as is the case in other countries (i.e., the CDU in Germany). In the e-mail, a citizen explains that they are terminally ill and argues in favor of legalizing assisted dying in Sweden

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in order to choose a dignified death. We are aware that this issue might cause negative emotions among the politicians reading such an e-mail. The text is therefore written in a neutral tone that does not overly dramatize the difficult circumstances. The status of the citizen is varied by mentioning their profession as either a senior partner at a law firm (a white-collar job associated with higher status and education) or a personal assistant for people with a disability (a blue-collar job, associated with lower status and education), as well as their name.

The third issue concerns shifting the responsibility of schooling from the municipalities toward the national government. Sweden's 290 municipalities bear the responsibility for schooling, which has raised concerns among some that the provision of education is dependent on the place of residence. Overall, there is a growing debate concerning the quality of education, and nationalizing the responsibility of schools is one of the suggested policies. In the e-mail, a parent raises their concerns regarding the inequality of schooling across municipalities. The citizen describes how the quality of schools has increased with the move to the current municipality. We chose to avoid a scenario where the citizen complains about the quality of education in the politician's own municipality to avoid triggering any defensiveness. In this vignette, status is varied by income (high or low) as well as by names.

Measurements

At the beginning of the survey and before the treatments, we include measures of politicians' demographics (including age and gender), position, party affiliation, and tenure. After each treatment, we measure the outcome concerning respondents' perception of public opinion and include several measures to test mechanisms. For our outcome, we measure whether politicians adjust their perceptions of public opinion. Our focus on perceptions of general public opinion reflects the circumstance that the policy issues in the treatment vignettes were selected to ensure balanced preferences across status groups. We use a set of survey items to measure two different aspects of respondents' perceptions

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of what others in the public think about the policy issue. The measures capture the distribution of perceived opinions and perceived issue salience. We include both measures, as politicians are likely to evaluate public opinion not only on the basis of how many people share an opinion, but also on how strongly they care about the issue. First, we ask politicians to estimate the share of people who would agree with the citizen (for a similar measure, see Pereira (2021)). Second, we ask politicians to evaluate how strongly people care about the issue.

As noted, we ask about the share of individuals rather than the share of co-partisans because our survey design focuses on policy issues for which we determined similar support potential for low- and high-status citizens. This requires us to examine policy preferences in the general public, not among co-partisans. As explained in the treatment section, we made sure to select treatment issues where preferences are equally distributed between status groups.

In terms of mechanisms, we include several post-treatment items. First, based on evidence by Butler (2014) and Sevenans and Walgrave (2023), we measure to what extent respondents perceive the e-mail as proficient, informed, and important to the citizen (for similar survey items, see Butler and Dynes 2016; Pereira and Öhberg 2024). Second, previous research theorized a mechanism of electoral accountability, as politicians expect high-status groups to be more likely to hold them accountable during elections (Butler 2014; Gerber et al. 2011) or to potentially donate to their party (Kalla and Broockman 2016). Third, if statistical power is sufficient, we will assess the mechanism of the influence of perceived shared background to test whether politicians are most likely to update their public opinion perception when reading an e-mail from a citizen with whom they share sociodemographic characteristics (Carnes and Lupu 2023).

For exploratory analyses, we include survey items measuring action-intention and a behavioral measure of responsiveness to test whether biased perception of public opinion is further related to politicians' intention to take political action or opinion-seeking behavior. To capture whether politicians would take political action in response to the citizen's

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request, we use measures from prior research (for similar items, see Öhberg and Naurin 2016). Additionally, we include a behavioral measure of politicians' engagement with citizens' opinions. In the pre-test with a sample of Swedish citizens, we informed citizens at the end of the survey that they had the possibility to write a text that would be made accessible to a sample of Swedish politicians. In the survey with politicians, we include a link to these texts and track whether politicians click on it to read through the texts. Finally, we measure respondents' basic demographics, such as gender, age, party affiliation and tenure.

Analysis Plan and Modeling Strategy

The survey experiment is designed to test how politicians' perceptions of public opinion are affected by preference signaling through contact (H1), and by the status of those who contact politicians (H2). Survey results from respondents who have not completed the whole survey will be retained on a task-complete-case basis (i.e., all completed tasks are used regardless of whether the respondent finished the full survey). We will report the number of respondents excluded due to partial completion of the survey as a whole, and test whether attrition is systematically related to treatment condition.

To test H1 causally, we use OLS regression to estimate the average treatment effect of contacting a politician in comparison to not contacting them on politicians' perceptions of public opinion. The outcome is measured through two survey items capturing (i) how many citizens agree with the contacting citizen, and (ii) how strongly citizens care about the contacting citizen's issue. We include issue fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the respondent level. Our overall claim is disjunctive – that an effect exists on at least one of the two outcomes – so we adjust for multiple testing (Rubin 2021). We control the family-wise error rate across the tests using Hochberg's step-up procedure (Hochberg 1988), which is valid under independence or positive dependence. Results will be considered statistically significant if the Hochberg-adjusted p-value is at or below 0.05.

We assess this test to be a very conservative test of the effect of preference signals,

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as politicians are only exposed to a single contact initiative in a survey setting in which a citizen expresses their opinion. This is an important difference in comparison to the analysis in Study 1, where we gauge information on the preferences of any citizen who indicated to have contacted a politician and assess how their preferences relate to politicians' public opinion perception. As stated in H1, we expect politicians to update their public opinion perception in line with the citizen who contacted them.

Next, to test H2 and the extent to which politicians are biased toward high-status citizens contacting them, we estimate the average treatment effect of contact from a high-status citizen in comparison to a low-status citizen on politicians' perception of public opinion. In line with H2, we expect a positive effect of high-status contact. We include issue fixed effects and controls for the citizen's gender and issue order. Standard errors are clustered at the respondent level. Again, the test is disjunctive and we consider the results to be statistically significant if the Hochberg-adjusted p-value is at or below 0.05.

As robustness checks, we will report the regression results for H1 and H2 when adding pre-treatment covariates measuring politicians' party affiliation, tenure, and policy issue stance. As exploratory analyses for H2, we will re-run the main regression with the mechanism items as alternative outcomes. Next, if statistical power allows, we will consider the results grouped by politicians' party affiliation. We expect that members of left-wing parties (Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the Left Party) are more likely to update their public opinion perception when contacted by low-status individuals than members of right-wing parties (Moderates, Liberals, and Christian Democrats). We thereby draw on research finding that left-wing parties tend to be more responsive to lower status constituents or that the bias towards affluent citizens becomes insignificant for left-wing governments (Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019; Mathisen et al. 2023; Pontusson and Rueda 2010), which could be the product of their attentiveness to these groups. Additionally, we expect politicians to be more likely to consider responsive policy actions in response to the contact that most affected their perceptions of public opinion. Finally, we conduct an exploratory test on whether politicians are more likely to engage with citizens' opinions

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when they are more susceptible to updating those perceptions across all three issues.

Power analysis We perform an a-priori power analysis. As we are using a panel that exclusively surveys politicians, our sample will include every politician willing to participate in the survey, which we expect to total a maximum possible sample size of approximately 1,200 respondents. Given this built-in sample size limitation, we conduct a power analysis to identify the effect sizes we can detect at which level of statistical power by conducting a simulation-based power analysis in R for 1,200 respondents. For the test of H1, we calculate that we are able to estimate a Cohen's d effect size as small as 0.12, with a statistical power of 0.9, and an alpha of 0.05. For the test of H2, we simulate every respondent completing two tasks, generating outcomes under a range of potential effect sizes. The task order is randomized and each task is randomly assigned to either a high-status or low-status treatment condition. We aim to estimate the average treatment effect across all tasks. Respondent-level random variation was included to approximate the correlation among repeated measures. Our simulations indicated that, given our design, sample size, with a statistical power of 0.9, and an alpha of 0.05, we are able to estimate a Cohen's d effect size as small as 0.17.

Anticipating Results Inconsistent with Hypotheses

We draw on our earlier discussion of relevant literature to detail three potential results from the survey experiment that would *not* be consistent with either H1, a preference signal effect or H2, a high-status bias.

First, it is possible that the experimental results will not be in line with H1. Finding null effects would suggest that we cannot provide evidence that an individual contact initiative affects politicians' public opinion perception. Second, and in terms of H2, instead of finding a high-status bias among politicians it is possible that politicians will have a low-status bias. This would mean that politicians are more likely to update their public opinion perception when contacted by a low-status citizen. As noted, such a finding

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would be consistent with recent research indicating that politicians may be particularly receptive to the preferences of low-status citizens who are politically active, because their less frequent political participation might be considered particularly important by politicians (Gause 2022). The implication of a low-status bias for political equality would be that disadvantaged citizens should be mobilized to increase their political participation while signaling that they represent marginalized preferences.

Third, in case we are unable to reject the null hypothesis for H2 and the evidence points toward null effects, this finding would suggest that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are not characterized by any status bias and that they give equal weight to the opinions of high- and low-status citizens. These findings would imply that increased participation by low-status groups may enable them to shape politicians' perceptions of public opinion in ways comparable to high-status groups.

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Online Supplementary Information (Online SI) for Study 1 in "*Does the Effect of Political Participation Depend on the Status of the Participator?*"

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A Survey Information and Variable Coding

MPs were surveyed by the Riksdag Member of Parliament Survey (RDU) (Riksdagsundersökningen, Brothén and Holmberg 2010; Esaiasson and Holmberg 1988; Esaiasson and Oscarsson 1996; Öhberg 2025; Öhberg and Ahlbom 2025; Öhberg, Oscarsson, and Ahlbom 2022a) in 1985, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2018, and 2022 and citizens by the Swedish National Election Survey (SNES, Holmberg 1998; Holmberg and Gilljam 1985a, 1985b; Holmberg and Oscarsson 2002, 2006, 2018), as well as the SOM Institute (2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2019a, 2019b, 2023, 2024). The response rate for the RDU is exceptionally high by international standards (see Vis and Stolwijk 2021, 1284), exceeding 90% until 2006, and remaining remarkably high through the most recent survey wave in 2022, with its lowest response rate of 79.4% in 2018 (Öhberg, Oscarsson, and Ahlbom 2022b, 19). To retrieve more data on citizens, especially on those who are politically active in smaller parties, we combine the SNES and SOM surveys from the same year, as well as the SOM survey from the preceding year. We combine the data from the citizens' and the politicians' survey to construct a data set with MP-year-policy as the level of observation.

We identify status groups based on measures indicating education, income, occupational social class, urban or rural residence (similarly to Pereira 2021), and gender. We code low education as having finished 9 years of schooling or less, and high education as having studied at university. For income we use the variable for total household income, and code whether respondents live in a low-income (15th percentile or lower) or high-income household (85th percentile and above). We measure occupational social class by coding whether respondents are white-collar, blue-collar, or belong to another class category (such as farmers or the self-employed). We also code whether respondents live in rural areas or villages (rural), or in cities (urban), and include information on their gender (man or woman).

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B Descriptive Statistics

In this section, we display descriptive statistics. Table B.1 provides summary statistics on the observations included in the main analysis. Table B.2 and Table B.3 display all policy proposals and years included in our analyses. Figure B.1 displays how many individuals, on average, reported having recently contacted a politician.

Table B.1: Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Perceptual Accuracy	18,061	0.77	0.41	0	1
MP $\neq$ Majority	19,041	0.35	0.48	0	1
White-collar $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.06	0.24	0	1
High Education $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.13	0.34	0	1
Urban $\neq$ Majority	21,233	0.05	0.21	0	1
High Income $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.15	0.36	0	1
Men $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.09	0.29	0	1
Blue-collar $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.09	0.29	0	1
Low Education $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.08	0.27	0	1
Rural $\neq$ Majority	21,233	0.05	0.22	0	1
Low Income $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.10	0.30	0	1
Women $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.09	0.28	0	1
Contacted Politician $\neq$ Majority	21,803	0.16	0.37	0	1
Preference Imbalance	21,803	0.18	0.12	0.0005	0.49

Note: Unit of observation is MP-Year-Policy.

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Table B.2: Policy Proposals

Policy Proposal	Original Text	Year
Smaller public sector	Minska den offentliga sektorn	1985, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2018, 2022
No employee funds	Avskaffa löntagarfonderna	1985
Less defense spending	Minska försvarsutgifterna	1985, 1994, 1998, 2006, 2018, 2022
More private healthcare	Bedriva mer av sjukvården i privat regi	1985, 1994, 1998, 2006, 2018, 2022
Ban pornography	Förbjuda alla former av pornografi	1985, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006
Allow ads on TV	Tillåta reklam i svensk TV	1985
Build more daycare homes	Bygga fler barndaghem	1985
Six-hour workday	Införa sextimmars arbetsdag för alla förvärvsarbetande	1985, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2022
Keep nuclear power	Behålla kärnkraften, även efter år 2010	1985, 1994
Raise high-income taxes	Höja skatten på höga inkomster	1994
Less refugees	Ta emot färre flyktingar i Sverige	1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2018, 2022
No cars in inner cities	Stoppa privatbilismen i innerstäderna	1994, 1998, 2006
Less influence of finance	Minska finansmarknadens inflytande på politiken	1994
Gender quotas	Införa könskvotering till höga chefsbefattningar [...]	1994
Swedish membership EU	Svenskt medlemskap i EU	1994
Leave the EU	Sverige bör utträda ur EU	1998, 2006
Join NATO	Sverige bör söka medlemskap i NATO	1998, 2002, 2006, 2018, 2022
Smaller income differences	Minska inkomstskillnaderna i samhället	1998, 2006, 2018, 2022
Introduce the Euro	Sverige bör bli medlem i EMU	2002

Note: The proposals are listed in the order that they entered survey program, starting from 1985. The year category refers to the election year.

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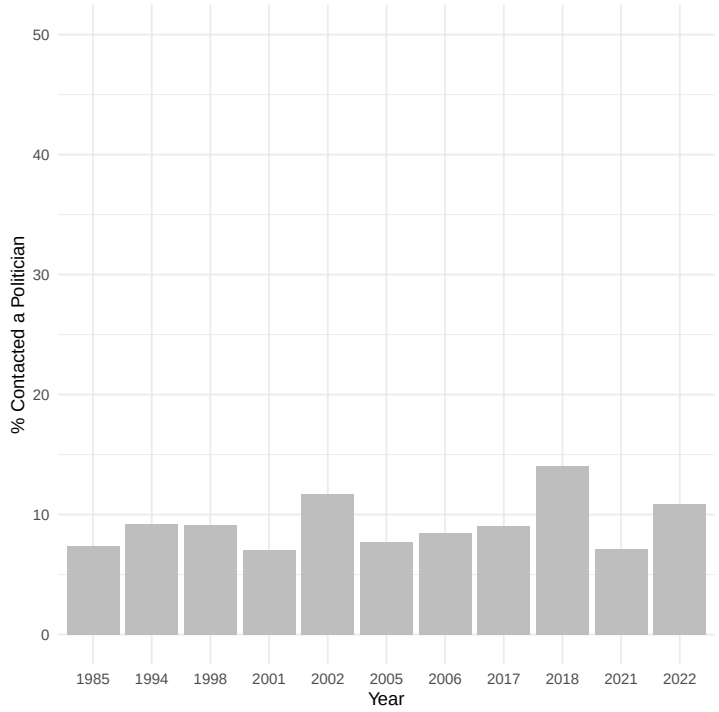
Table B.3: Table B.2 Continued – Policy Proposals

Policy Proposal	Original Text	Year
Less employment protection	Mjuka upp arbetsrätten	2002
Support War on Terror	Sverige bör politiskt stödja USA:s krig mot terrorismen	2002
Lower taxes	Sänka skatterna	2002, 2006, 2018, 2022
Introduce language test	Införa språktest för att kunna bli svensk medborgare	2002, 2018
Strengthen animal rights	Stärka djurens rätt	2002
Get rid of nuclear energy	Sverige bör på lång sikt aveckla kärnkraften	2002, 2006, 2018, 2022
Turkey EU Membership	Turkiet bör ges medlemskap i EU	2006
Reintroduce property tax	Återinföra fastighetsskatten	2018
Agencies outside Stockholm	Utlokalisera fler statliga myndigheter från Stockholm [...]	2018
Preserve rural schools	Bevara skolor i glesbygd/mindre orter	2018
Abolish high-income tax	Avskaffa värnskatten	2018
Market rents new buildings	Tillåta fri hyressättning i nybyggnation	2018
Ban begging	Förbjuda tiggeri	2018
Less gov. influence on munic.	Minska statens inflytande över kommunernas verksamhet	2018
Support immigrant culture	Öka det ekonomiska stödet till invandrarna [...]	2018
Harsher penalties	Införa mycket hårdare fängelsestraff för brottslingar	2018
Abolish tax deduction (RUT)	Avskaffa skatteavdraget för hushållsnära tjänster	2018
Raise taxes on gasoline	Höja skatten på bensin	2018, 2022
Make labor immigration easier	Generösare regler för arbetskraftsinvandring	2018

Note: The proposals are listed in the order that they entered survey program, starting from 1985. The year category refers to the election year.

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Figure B.1: Share of survey respondents that have recently contacted a politician



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Table B.4 displays the relationship between sociodemographic markers in our Swedish general population data, and contact behavior. High-status groups tend to contact politicians more than low-status groups, except for urban individuals who are less prone to contact politicians than rural individuals. Thus, we see the same pattern in our data as is usually found in other research.

Table B.4: Predictors of Contact Behaviour

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Higher Education	0.04***					0.03***
	(0.004)					(0.01)
Middle Education	0.08***					0.07***
	(0.004)					(0.01)
White-collar		0.05**				0.03**
		(0.003)				(0.004)
Other		0.06**				0.04**
(incl. self-employed)		(0.005)				(0.01)
Urban			−0.01**			−0.03**
			(0.003)			(0.004)
Middle Income				0.01**		−0.001
				(0.004)		(0.01)
High Income				0.06**		0.03**
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Woman					−0.02**	−0.02**
					(0.003)	(0.004)
Constant	0.06**	0.08**	0.11**	0.10**	0.12**	0.07**
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.01)
Observations	43,289	44,911	37,340	36,520	42,242	26,581
R^2	0.01	0.01	0.0004	0.003	0.001	0.02
Adjusted R^2	0.01	0.01	0.0003	0.003	0.001	0.02

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01.

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C Political Activity on Public Opinion Perceptions, Accounting for Status

In this section we document the full regression table for the coefficients in Figure 1. The regressions controlling for high-status opinion are found in Table C.1.

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Table C.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.43** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.16** (0.02)	−0.21** (0.01)	−0.23** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.013)
High-status ≠ Majority			-0.01 (0.02)	−0.10** (0.02)	−0.07** (0.02)	0.03** (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.34** (0.01)	−0.34** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.34** (0.01)	−0.34** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.44** (0.03)	0.43** (0.03)	0.40** (0.03)	0.40** (0.03)	0.44** (0.03)	0.42** (0.03)
Constant	0.85** (0.1)	0.77** (0.03)	0.77** (0.03)	0.77** (0.03)	0.79** (0.03)	0.83** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	18,248	18,248	18,248	18,248	17,815	16,816	18,248
R^2	0.14	0.36	0.36	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36

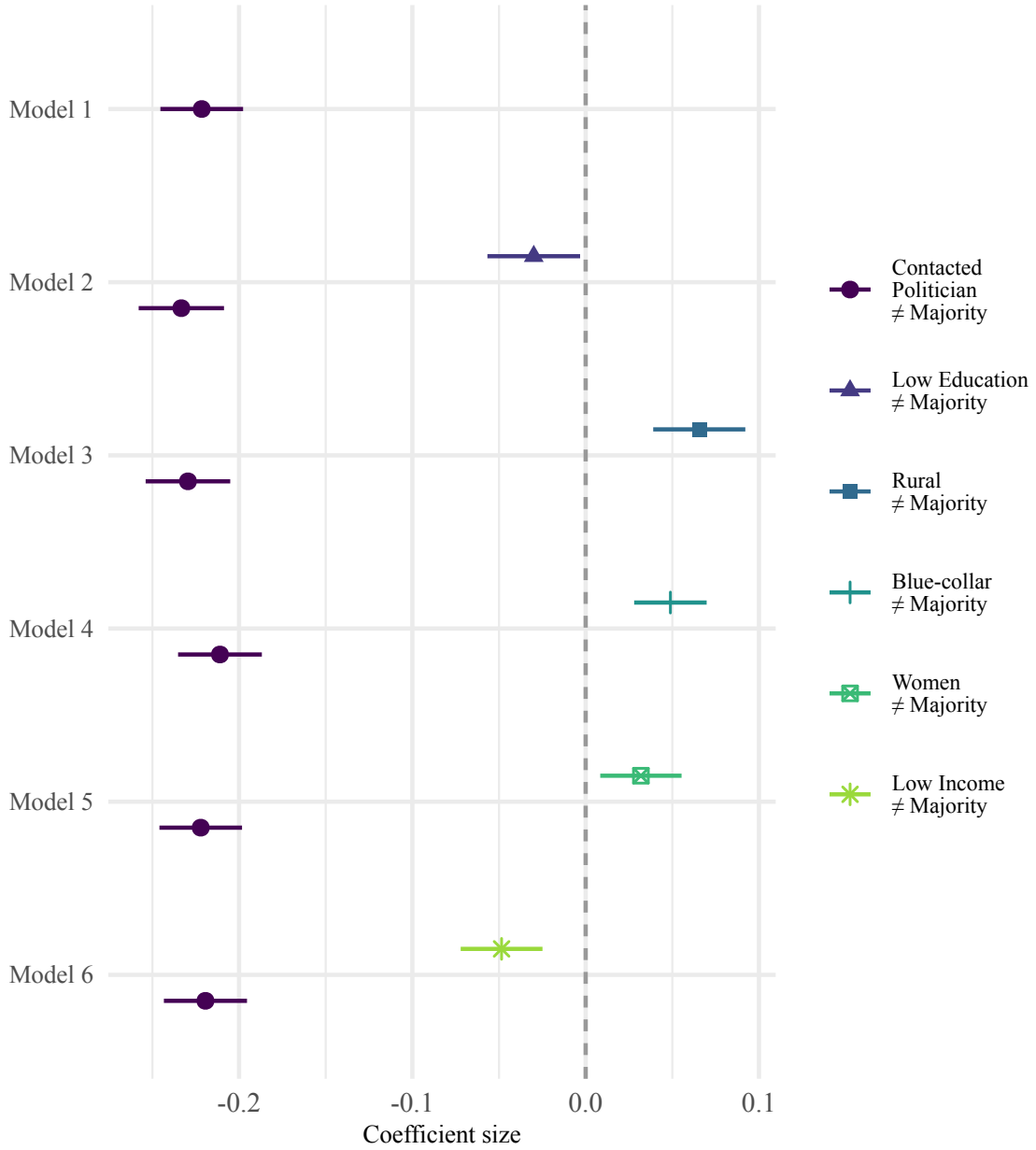
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

D Main Results for Low-Status Groups

In this section, we document the results when controlling for low-status opinion. The coefficients are displayed in Figure D.1. The regressions controlling for low-status opinion (the coefficients displayed in Figure D.1) are found in Table D.1.

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Figure D.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Controlling for the preferences of low-status groups



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression. Full model information in Online SI Table D.1.

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Table D.1: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.43** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.21** (0.01)	−0.23** (0.01)	−0.23** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.05** (0.01)	−0.03** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)	−0.05** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.34** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)	−0.33** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.44** (0.03)	0.50** (0.03)	0.38** (0.03)	0.47** (0.03)	0.40** (0.03)	0.46** (0.03)
Constant	0.85** (0.1)	0.77** (0.03)	0.73** (0.03)	0.86** (0.03)	0.75** (0.03)	0.77** (0.03)	0.75** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	18,248	18,248	18,248	17,651	17,815	17,840	18,248
R^2	0.14	0.36	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

E Robustness Test - Regression Models by Sociodemographic Group

In Figure E.1 we run three regression models for each sociodemographic group: one for those who contact, one for those who do not contact, and one final model with both variables included. We run the models for eight of the ten high- and low-status groups in our data, as the number of observations is too small to conduct well-powered analyses for low-income and low-education individuals (there is insufficient variation on at least one variable to run the regression). As in our main regression models, we only include estimations of group opinion if there were at least 30 respondents in each group providing their opinion. The regression models are the same as in Table C.1, Model 1, with the same control variables.

We choose this approach over running interaction effects due to the way the independent variables are constructed. The subgroup analysis is similar to interacting the preferences of those contacting politicians to those of high- or low-status groups, but yields results that are more interpretable compared to the alternate approach of analyzing three-way interaction effects. The variables capture information on status and whether an individual contacted a politician, as well as whether they disagree with majority opinion. When interacting both variables, we would disregard, for example, individuals who contacted a politician but agreed with majority opinion, which would be accounted for by inserting a third variable for a three-way interaction model.

The results from the subgroup analysis show that, compared to inactive citizens, the opinions of those contacting politicians are equally or more aligned with politicians' perceptual accuracy in every sociodemographic group that we investigate. Specifically, the coefficient point estimates of the opinions of citizens who contact politicians are more strongly associated with politicians' perceptions of public opinion than the opinions of non-contacting citizens in seven out of eight demographic groups. The group with the smallest sample size and the largest confidence intervals, namely the high-income group,

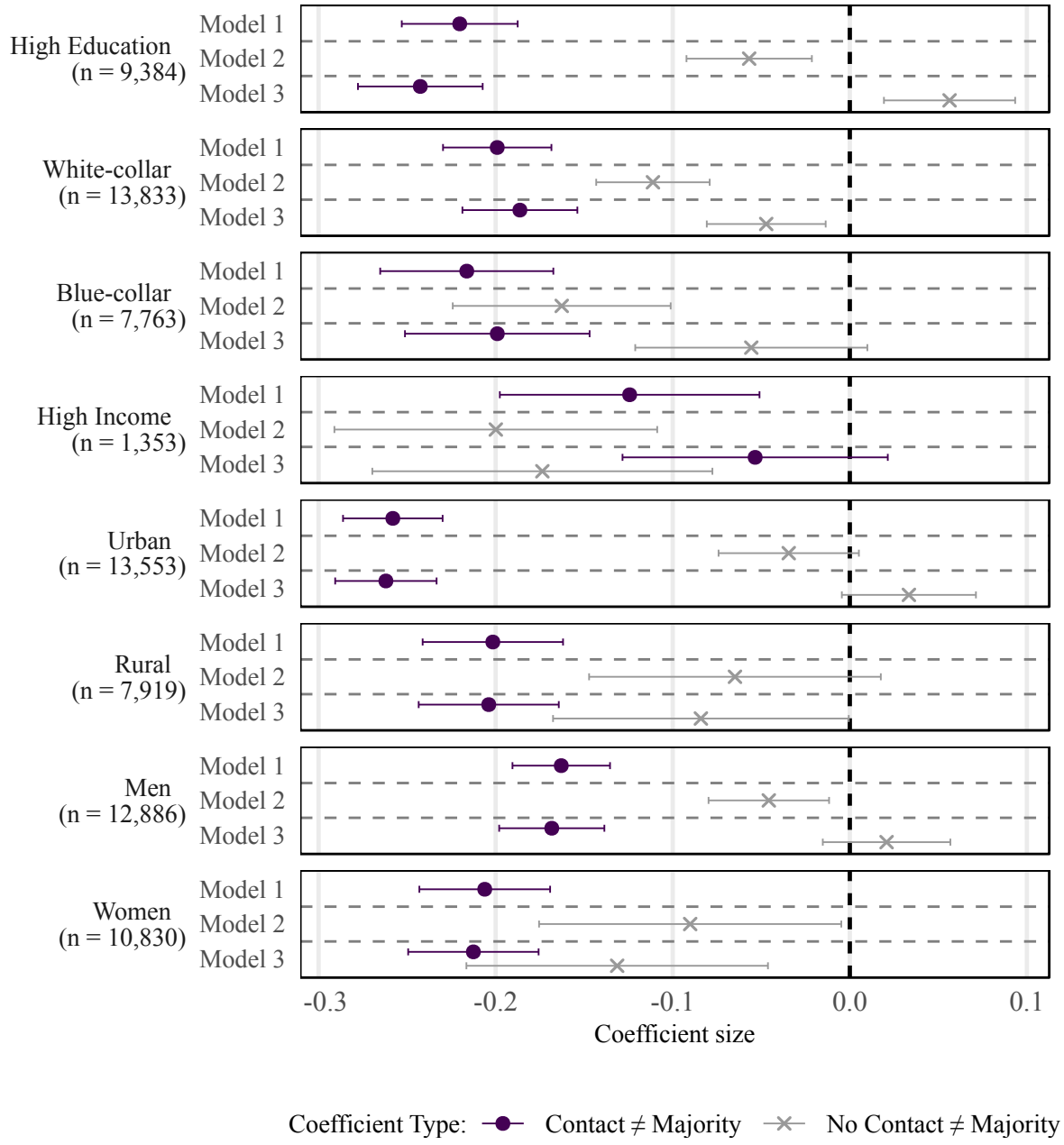
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is the only group for which the point estimate of the inactive is more closely aligned with politicians' perceptions than the contacting group, but the confidence intervals are large and overlapping. As we have a much lower sample for this group (ten times lower than that of the white-collar group for example), there is limited empirical justification for drawing inferences based on this finding. We also conduct Wald tests of equality between the two coefficients in model 3 for all categories (see Table E.1, Table E.2, Table E.3, Table E.4, Table E.5, Table E.6, Table E.7, Table E.8), and the differences are statistically significant (p-values below 0.05) between contact and non-contact coefficients in every case except for women and the high-income group.

The overall trend from these observational analyses supports H1, as the regression analysis shows that politicians' perceptions of public opinion are more closely aligned with the preferences of the politically active (i.e., individuals who contact politicians) even among citizens of the same demographic group.

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Figure E.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptions of public opinion – Comparing those contacting and not contacting within the same demographic group



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion. The points illustrate coefficients from 24 regression models, run on subsamples of specific groups, displaying the coefficients for whether those contacting and not contacting within demographic groups disagree with the majority of their co-partisans. A purple circle represents the coefficient for Did not Contact Politician ≠ Majority, whereas a grey X represents the coefficient for Contacted Politician ≠ Majority. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as fixed effects for year, party, and policy issue. Full models are displayed in Appendix E.

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Table E.1: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. High-educated individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.22**		−0.24**
	(0.02)		(0.02)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		−0.06**	0.06**
		(0.02)	(0.02)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.30**	−0.33**	−0.30**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.48**	0.60**	0.52**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Intercept	0.75**	072**	0.73**
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	9,384	9,384	9,384
R^2	0.36	0.34	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.2: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. White-collar individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.20**		−0.19**
	(0.02)		(0.02)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		−0.11**	−0.05**
		(0.02)	(0.02)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.32**	−0.34**	−0.32**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.49**	0.62**	0.47**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.78**	0.78**	0.79**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	13,833	13,833	13,833
R^2	0.35	0.35	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.3: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. High-income individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.12**		-0.05
	(0.04)		(0.04)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		−0.20**	−0.17**
		(0.05)	(0.05)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.21**	−0.21**	−0.21**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Preference Imbalance	0.87**	0.78**	0.69**
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Intercept	0.76**	0.67**	0.69**
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	1,353	1,353	1,353
R^2	0.47	0.47	0.47

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.4: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. Blue-collar individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.22**		−0.20**
	(0.02)		(0.03)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		−0.16**	-0.06
		(0.03)	(0.03)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.30**	−0.31**	−0.30**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.49**	0.49**	0.46**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Intercept	0.73**	0.77**	0.76**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	7,763	7,763	7,763
R^2	0.35	0.34	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.5: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. Urban individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.26**		−0.26**
	(0.01)		(0.01)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		-0.03	-0.03
		(0.02)	(0.02)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.30**	−0.33**	−0.30**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.41**	0.67**	0.42**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Intercept	0.75**	0.73**	0.75**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	13,553	13,553	13,553
R^2	0.36	0.34	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.6: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. Rural individuals divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.20** (0.02)		−0.20** (0.02)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		-0.06 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.04)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.28** (0.01)	−0.30** (0.01)	−0.28** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.63** (0.06)	0.81** (0.06)	0.60** (0.06)
Intercept	0.82** (0.03)	0.70** (0.04)	0.83** (0.04)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	7,919	7,919	7,919
R^2	0.35	0.34	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.7: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. Men divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.16**		−0.17**
	(0.01)		(0.02)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		−0.05*	0.02
		(0.02)	(0.02)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.35**	−0.37**	−0.35**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.52**	0.63**	0.52**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Intercept	0.81**	0.79**	0.80**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	12,886	12,886	12,886
R^2	0.36	0.35	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table E.8: Coefficients from Figure E.1. The role of co-partisan opinion on MP perceptual accuracy. Women divided by participation experience.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.21** (0.02)		−0.21** (0.02)
Did not Contact ≠ Majority		-0.09 (0.04)	−0.13** (0.04)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.30** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.30** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.52** (0.04)	0.63** (0.04)	0.49** (0.04)
Intercept	0.73** (0.04)	0.73** (0.04)	0.74** (0.04)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓
N	10,830	10,830	10,830
R^2	0.34	0.34	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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F Robustness Test - Varying Status of Those Contacting Politicians

In this section, we examine whether the opinions of high-status contacters are more associated with politicians' biases than those of low-status contacters. We therefore examine the opinions of those contacting, and compare the results of the low- and high-status individuals within that group. As in our main regression models, we include estimations of group opinion only if there are at least 30 respondents in each group providing their opinion. By limiting the analysis to include only those who are politically active, we aim to clarify the association between the opinions of politically active citizens who are low-/high-status and politicians' perceptual accuracy.

Consistent with the analysis in the manuscript, we include these groups' opinions through a binary variable that takes on the value 1 when the average majority opinion in the group is different from the majority opinion of all co-partisans. We conduct these analyses separately for each sociodemographic configuration for which sufficient data exist to conduct valid analyses (white-/blue-collar, urban/rural, men/women). In the final model in each regression table, we also include the average opinion of the broader sociodemographic groups to control for the fact that public opinion might be more influential than the opinions of specific status groups contacting politicians. However, we note that these analyses might be limited by multicollinearity issues.

The results suggest that the opinions of high-status contacters are more strongly associated with politicians' perceptions of public opinion compared to the opinions of low-status contacters. However, Wald tests of equality between the two coefficients (model 4 in each table) indicate that the difference between the high- and low-status groups is significant in the comparisons of white-/blue-collar (p-value = 0.0003) and urban/rural (p-value = 0.009) but not in the final comparison of men/women (p-value = 0.383).

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Table F.1: The role of status (white-/blue-collar) of those contacting, on politicians' perceptual accuracy

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
White-collar Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.27** (0.03)		−0.24** (0.03)	−0.26** (0.03)
Blue-collar Contacted Politician ≠ Majority		−0.19** (0.03)	−0.16** (0.03)	−0.10** (0.03)
White-collar ≠ Majority				-0.07 (0.03)
Blue-collar ≠ Majority				−0.14** (0.03)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.27** (0.01)	−0.30** (0.01)	−0.27** (0.01)	−0.27** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.40** (0.06)	0.52** (0.06)	0.34** (0.06)	0.24** (0.06)
Intercept	0.64** (0.06)	0.77** (0.05)	0.68** (0.06)	0.72** (0.06)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	7,671	7,671	7,671	7,671
R^2	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.36
Adjusted R^2	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Table F.2: The role of status (urban/rural) of those contacting, on politicians' perceptual accuracy

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Urban Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.26** (0.02)		−0.22** (0.02)	−0.20** (0.02)
Rural Contacted Politician ≠ Majority		−0.20** (0.02)	−0.09** (0.02)	−0.09** (0.03)
Urban ≠ Majority				-0.08 (0.04)
Rural ≠ Majority				0.09 (0.05)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.28** (0.01)	−0.28** (0.01)	−0.27** (0.01)	−0.27** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.47** (0.06)	0.63** (0.06)	0.44** (0.06)	0.46** (0.07)
Intercept	0.77** (0.03)	0.82** (0.04)	0.82** (0.03)	0.79** (0.04)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	7,902	7,902	7,902	7,902
R^2	0.36	0.35	0.36	0.36
Adjusted R^2	0.36	0.35	0.36	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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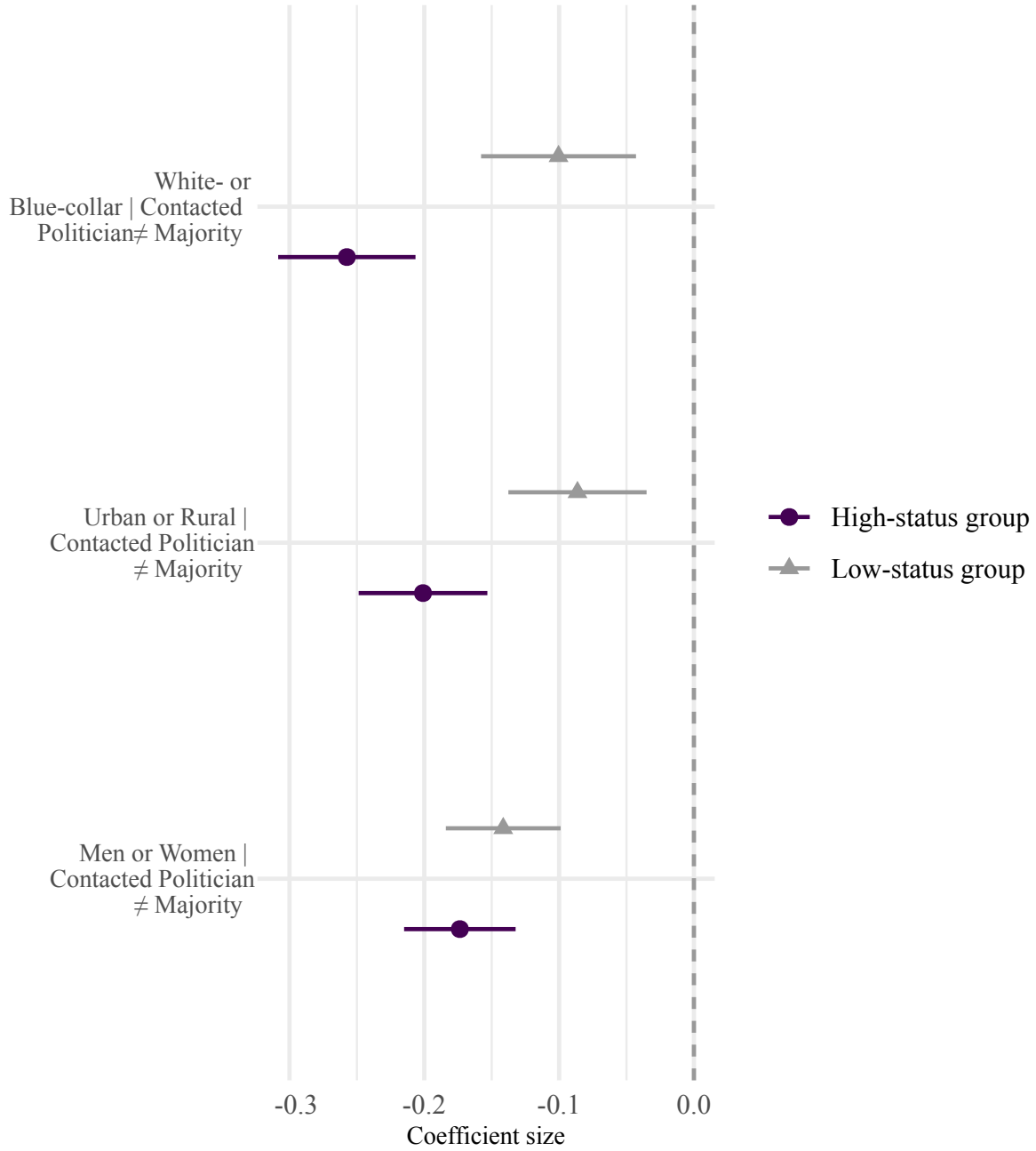
Table F.3: The role of status (men/women) of those contacting, on politicians' perceptual accuracy

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Men Contacted Politician≠ Majority	−0.23**		−0.18**	−0.17**
	(0.02)		(0.02)	(0.02)
Women Contacted Politician ≠ Majority		−0.21**	−0.13**	−0.14**
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Men ≠ Majority				−0.11**
				(0.03)
Women ≠ Majority				−0.19**
				(0.05)
MP ≠ Majority	−0.29**	−0.29**	−0.28**	−0.28**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance	0.60**	0.65**	0.55**	0.45**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Intercept	0.72**	0.71**	0.73**	0.77**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	9,742	9,742	9,742	9,742
R^2	0.37	0.36	0.37	0.37
Adjusted R^2	0.36	0.36	0.37	0.37

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year.

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Figure F.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptions of public opinion – Comparing contacters who are high- or low-status



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of public opinion. The points illustrate coefficients from three regression models, namely model 4 in Table F.1, Table F.2 and Table F.3. Run on subsamples of specific groups, displaying the coefficients for whether those contacting and not contacting within demographic groups disagree with the majority of their co-partisans. A purple circle represents the coefficient for the opinion of high-status groups that contacted a politician and disagree with the majority, whereas the grey triangles represent coefficients for low-status groups that contacted a politician and disagree with the majority. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP $\neq$ Majority, as well as fixed effects for year, party, and policy issue.

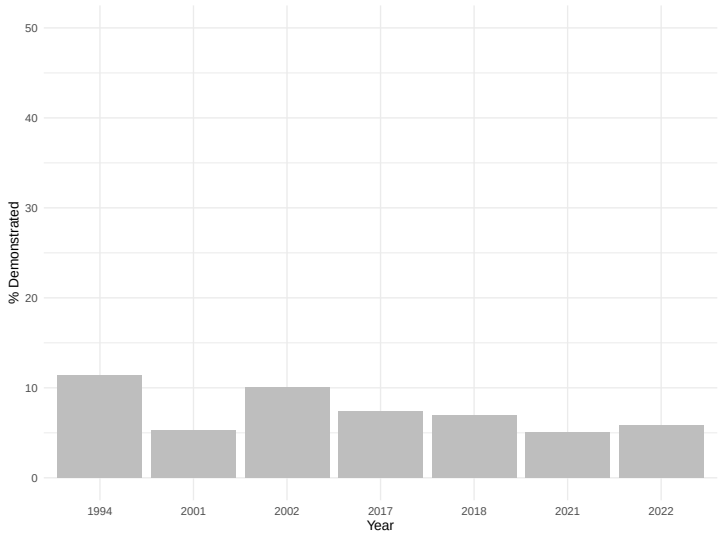
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G Robustness Test - Analysis with Demonstrating Instead of Contacting

In the main analysis, we examine associations between the opinions of those contacting politicians and politicians' perceptual accuracy. In this section, we examine the results when using the independent variable of the opinions of demonstrators, as our general argument relates to political participation more broadly.

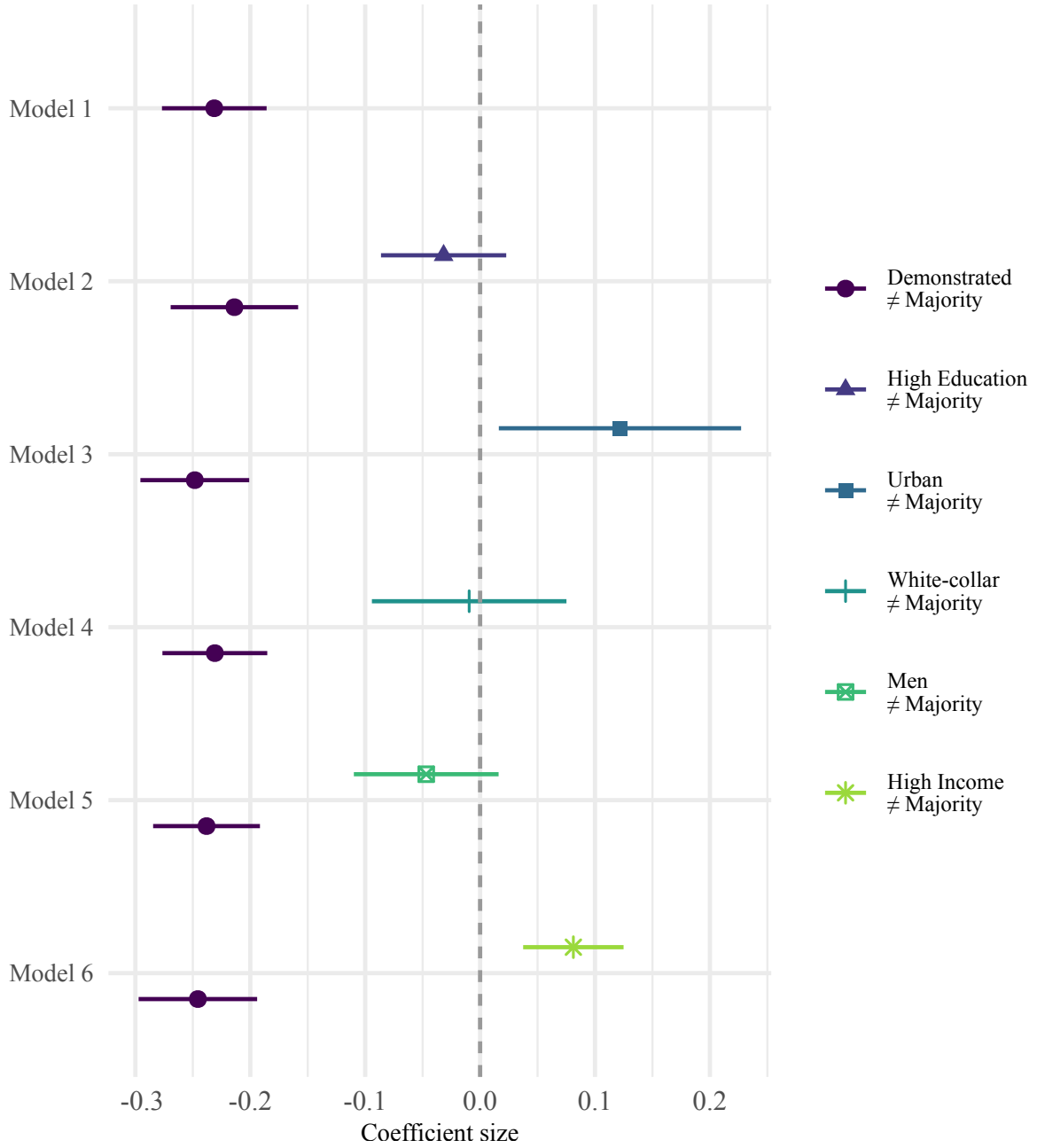
We first plot the share of respondents that reported having demonstrated in a given survey wave in Figure G.1. Subsequently, we run the main analysis, but with the opinions of demonstrators instead of the opinions of those contacting politicians. Results are displayed in tables and figures in this section that are consistent with the analysis of contact in the main text, and the findings are largely similar to those in our main analysis.

Figure G.1: Share of survey respondents that have recently demonstrated



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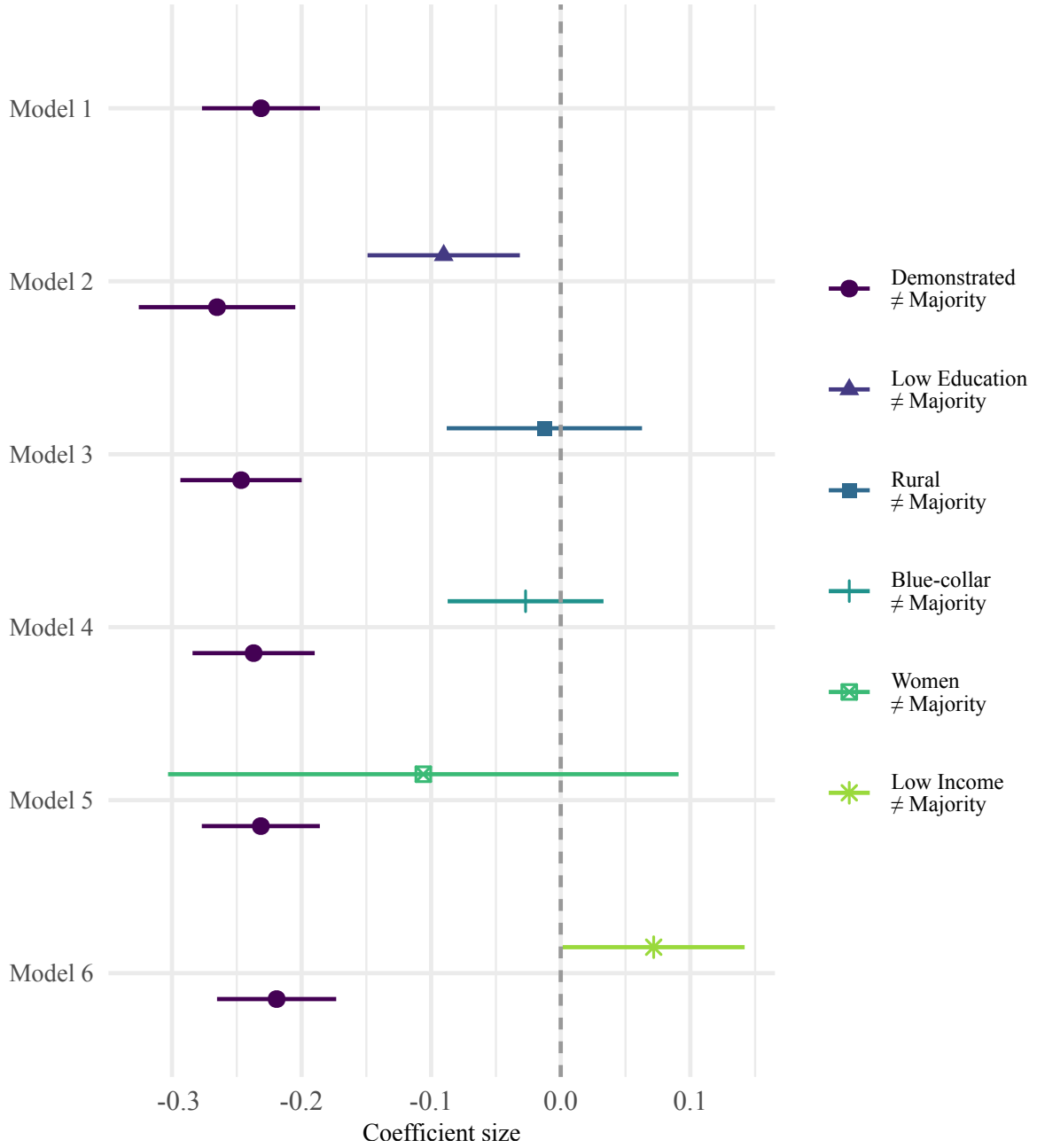
Figure G.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Demonstrators and high-status groups



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure G.3: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Demonstrators and low-status groups



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table G.1: The role of those demonstrating and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Demonstrated ≠ Majority	−0.37**	−0.23**	−0.23**	−0.21**	−0.25**	−0.25**	−0.24**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
High-status ≠ Majority			-0.01	-0.03	0.12*	0.08**	-0.05
			(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.03)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.37**	0.36**	0.34**	0.41**	0.52**	0.33**
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Constant	0.84**	0.90**	0.90**	0.90**	0.88**	0.97**	0.92**
	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,563	6,637	6,864
R^2	0.11	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.33

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table G.2: The role of those demonstrating and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Demonstrated ≠ Majority	−0.37**	−0.23**	−0.24**	−0.27**	−0.25**	−0.22**	−0.23**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Low-status ≠ Majority			-0.03	−0.09**	-0.01	0.07*	-0.11
			(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.10)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.27**	−0.28**	−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**	−0.27**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.37**	0.34**	0.24**	0.38**	0.45**	0.36**
		(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Constant	0.84**	0.90**	0.92**	1.01**	0.89**	0.87**	0.90**
	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,488	6,563	6,821	6,864
R^2	0.11	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.33

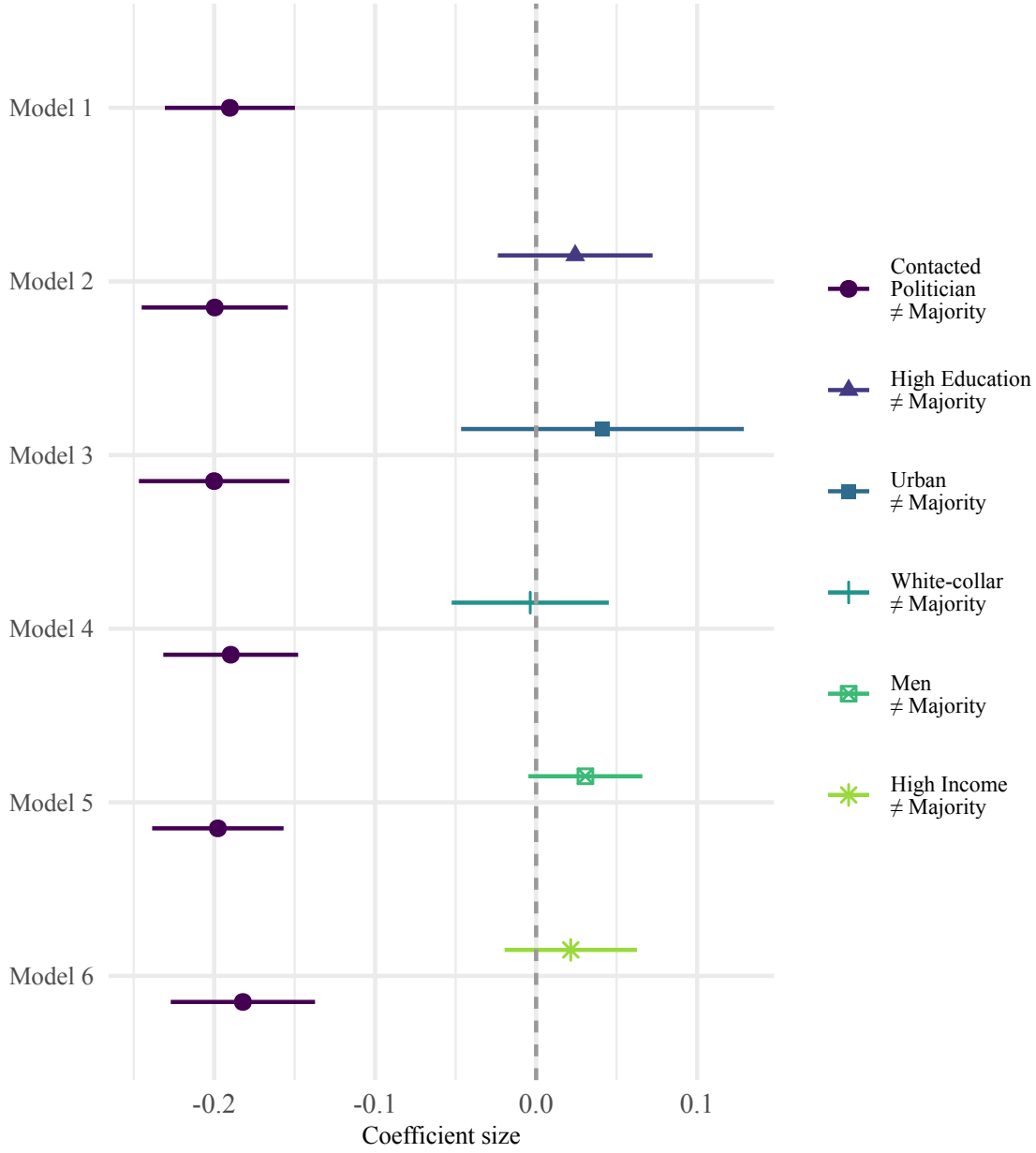
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

H Robustness Test - Including Contact Behavior from Last Year

We note in the main text that there are two versions of the survey question on contact behavior over the years: One that asks respondents about the last 12 months, and one that asks respondents about the last years. We conduct a robustness test in this section that includes a more limited set of data. Namely, we include only data for which contact behavior is explicitly measured as whether the respondent has contacted a politician in the last year. The results for this analysis are similar to the findings reported in the manuscript.

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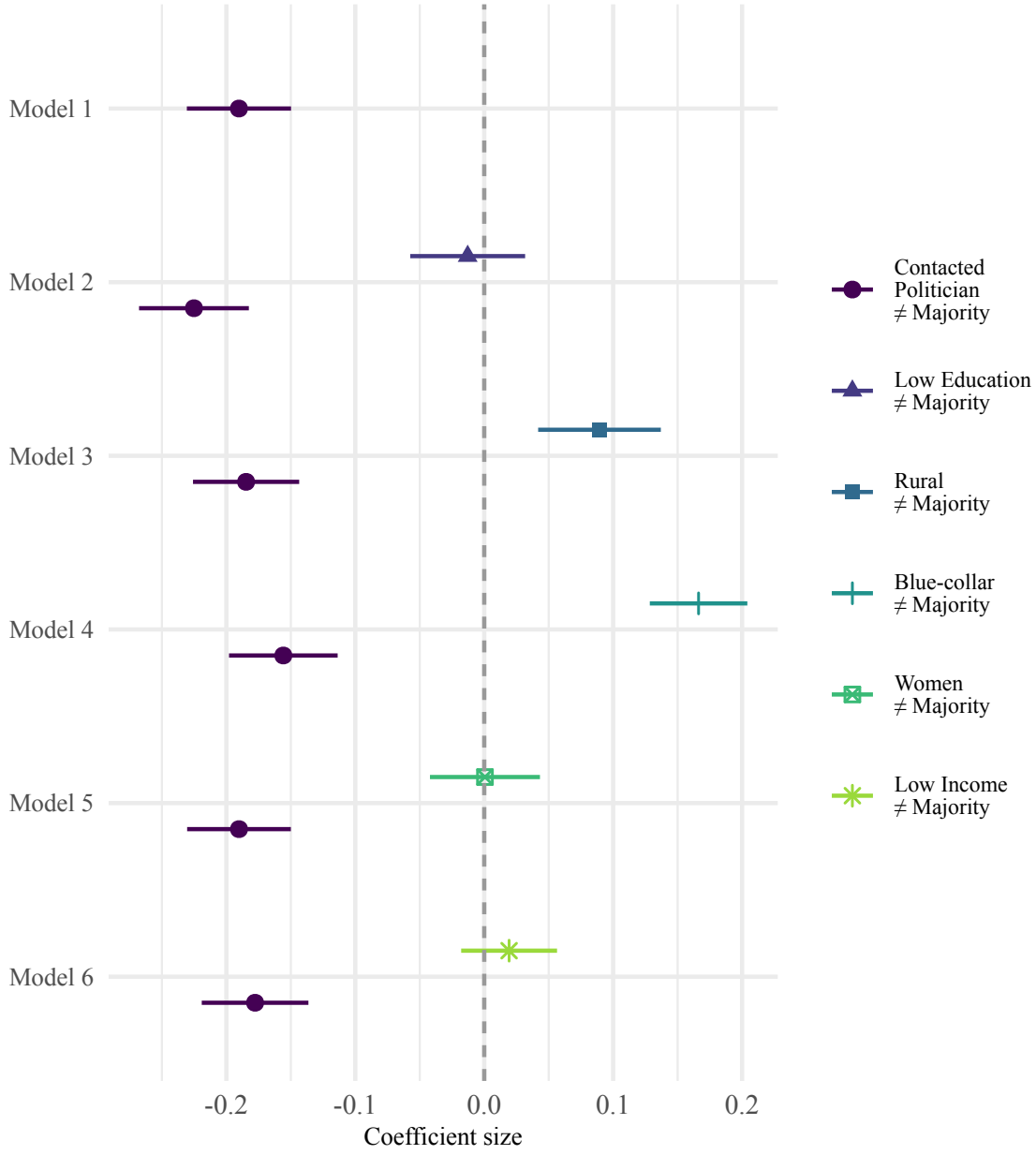
Figure H.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test - Only incl. contact behavior from last year



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure H.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test - Only incl. contact behavior from last year



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table H.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Only incl. contact behavior from last year.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.36**	−0.19**	−0.19**	−0.20**	−0.20**	−0.18**	−0.20**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
High-status ≠ Majority			-0.004	-0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03
			(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.69**	0.68**	0.70**	0.70**	0.73**	0.73**
		(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Constant	0.78**	0.60**	0.60**	0.60**	0.61**	0.59**	0.59**
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	7,241	7,241	7,241	7,241	7,241	6,395	7,241
R^2	0.08	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table H.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Only incl. contact behavior from last year.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.36** (0.02)	−0.19** (0.02)	−0.16** (0.02)	−0.23** (0.02)	−0.18** (0.02)	−0.18** (0.02)	−0.19** (0.02)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.17** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.09** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.001 (0.02)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31** (0.01)	−0.29** (0.01)	−0.30** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.69** (0.05)	1.06** (0.08)	0.63** (0.06)	0.73** (0.06)	0.74** (0.06)	0.69** (0.06)
Constant	0.78** (0.01)	0.60** (0.04)	0.48** (0.04)	0.62** (0.04)	0.59** (0.04)	0.58** (0.04)	0.60** (0.04)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	7,241	7,241	7,241	7,241	7,241	6,795	7,241
R^2	0.08	0.39	0.40	0.40	0.30	0.39	0.39

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

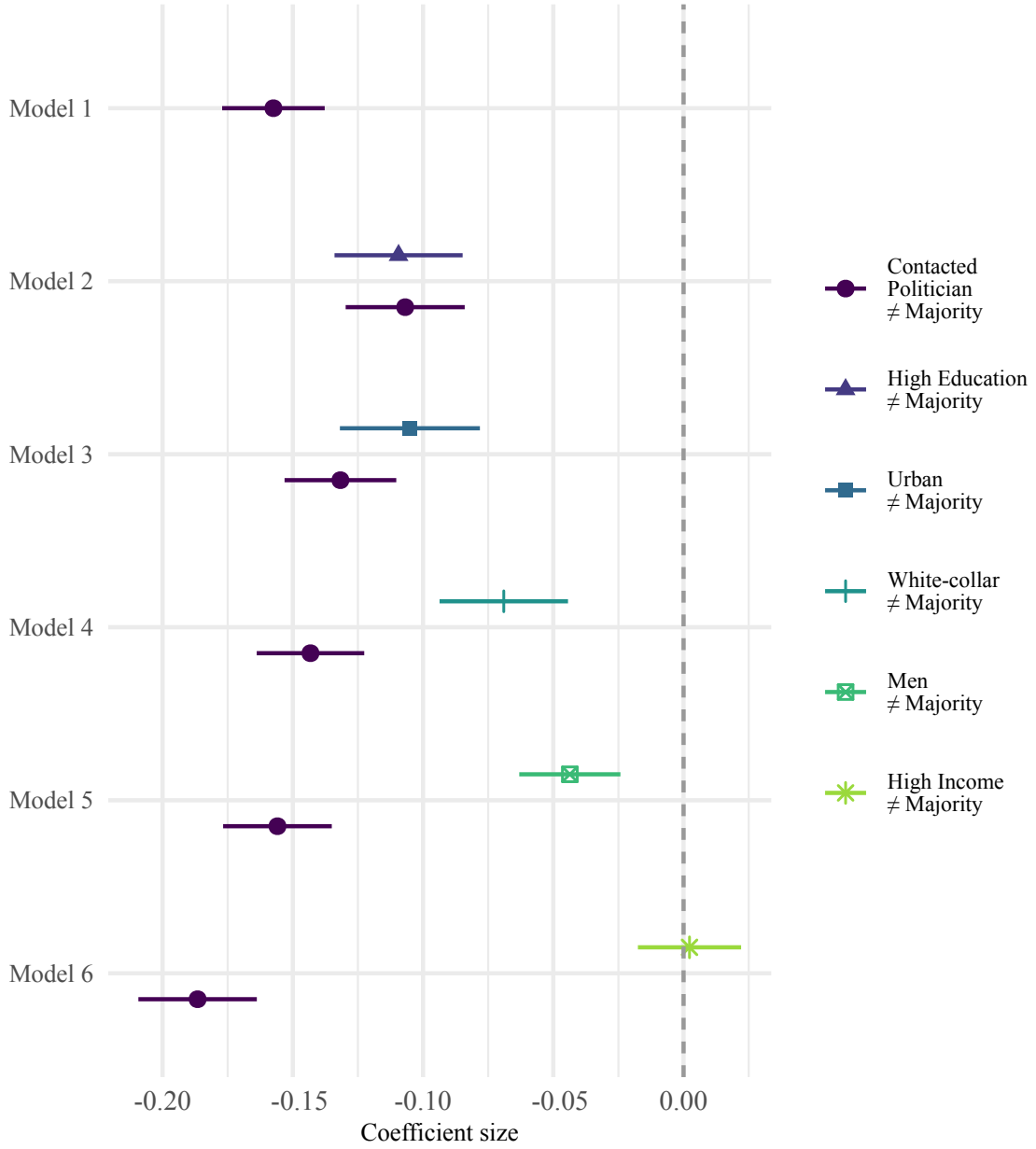
I Robustness Test - Changing the Cutoff for Inclusion of Opinion Estimates

When calculating the opinions among co-partisans that contact politicians, we sometimes obtain low samples sizes, and we therefore document in the manuscript that we set a cutoff at 30 observations. A sample size below that is deemed too unreliable to calculate majority opinion, and we discard the observation. We believe that this is justified as low sample sizes provide more unreliable estimates.

Of course, a cutoff at 30 is naturally arbitrary, and we therefore test two alternative approaches. First, we run the main analysis with no cutoff. The results are displayed in Figure I.1, Figure I.2, Table I.1 and Table I.2. Second, we run the same analysis but with a cutoff of 50, displayed in Figure I.3, Figure I.4, Table I.3 and Table I.4. The results are largely the same as in the main analyses reported in the manuscript.

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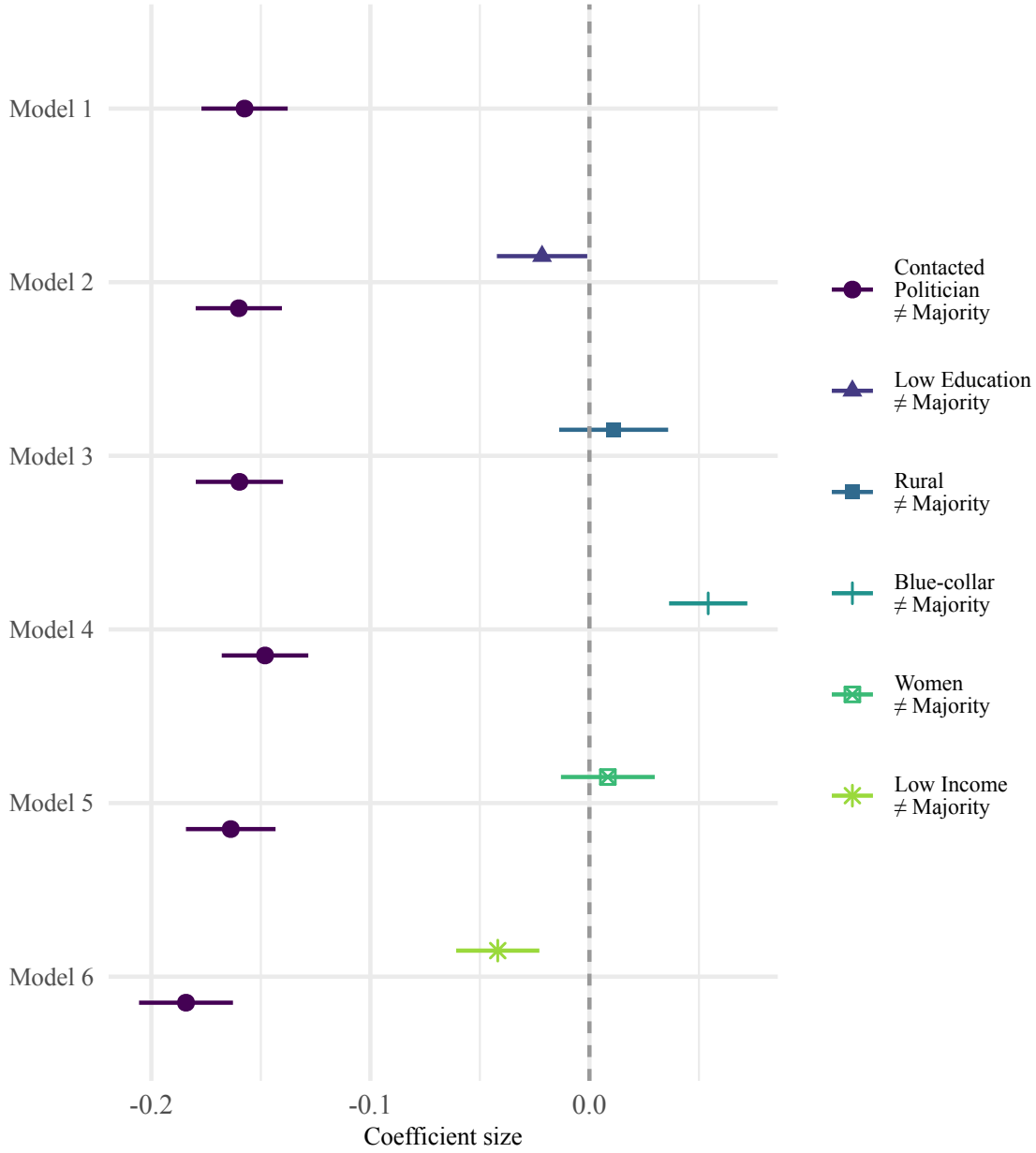
Figure I.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test - cutoff = 0



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model. All observations of majority opinion in a specific group are included.

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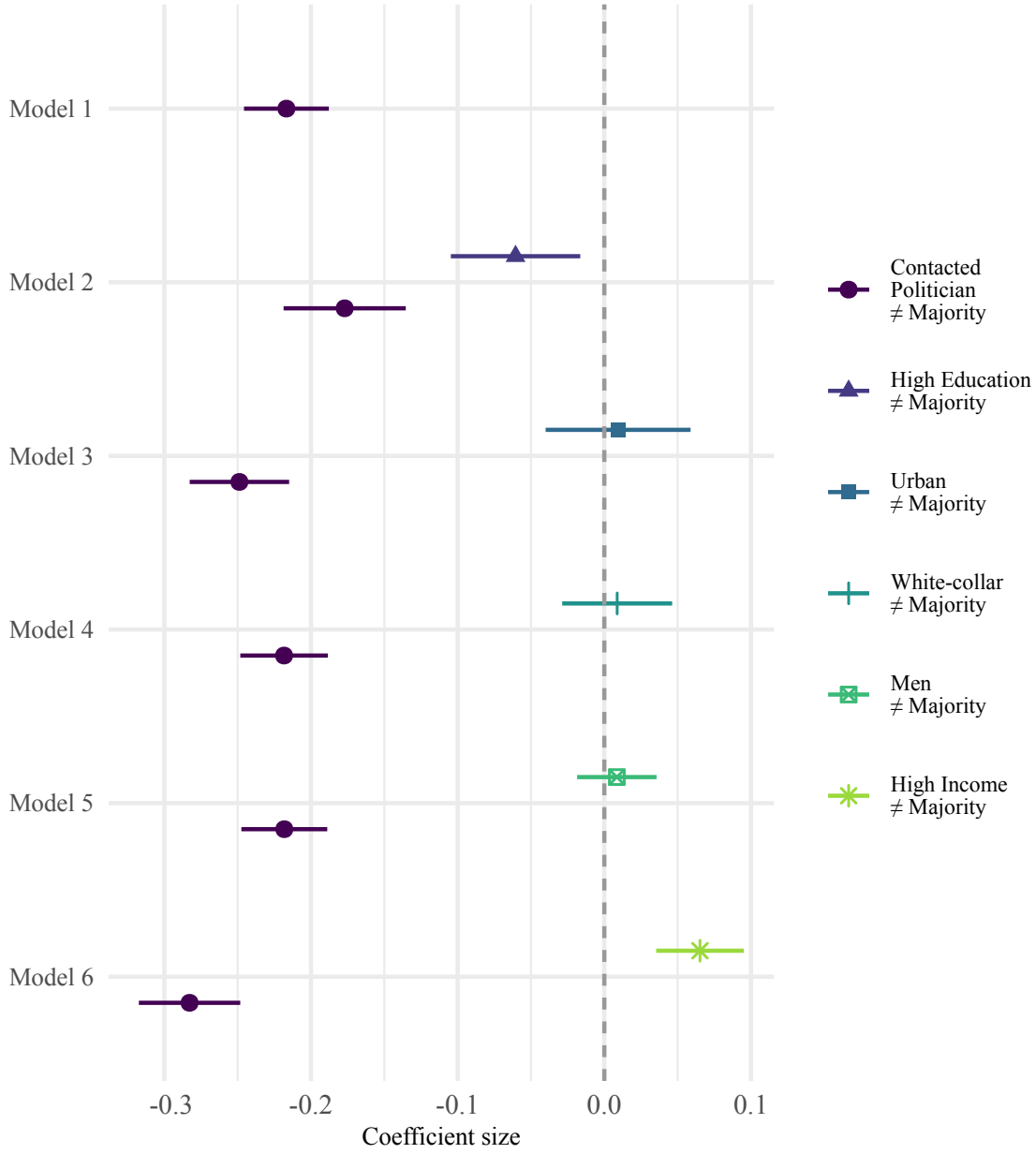
Figure I.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test - cutoff = 0



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model. All observations of majority opinion in a specific group are included.

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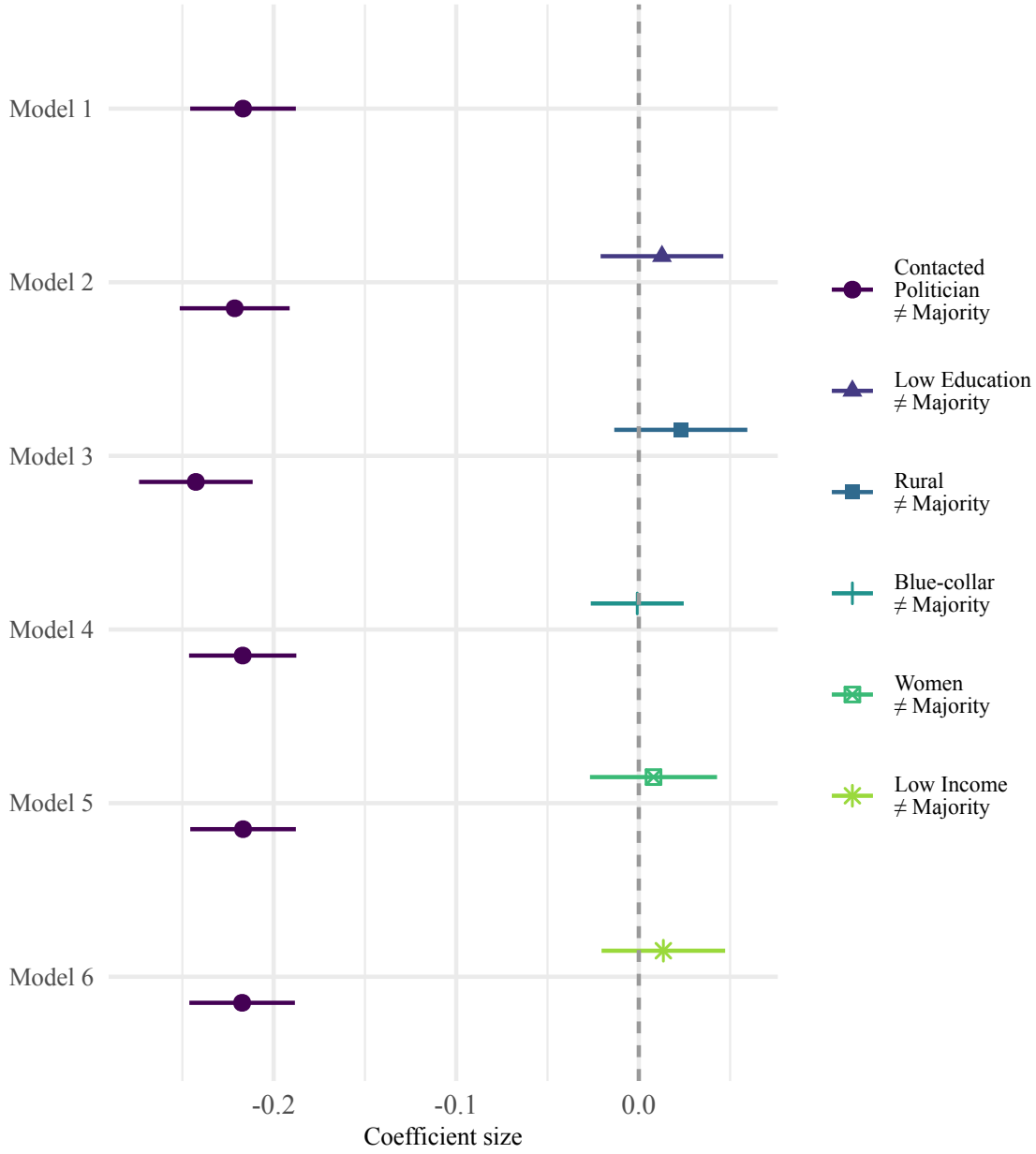
Figure I.3: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test - cutoff = 50



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model. Observations are only included if majority opinion in a group could be calculated with at least 50 survey respondents.

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Figure I.4: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test - cutoff = 50



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model. Observations are only included if majority opinion in a group could be calculated with at least 50 survey respondents.

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Table I.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - cutoff = 0.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.39** (0.01)	−0.16** (0.01)	−0.14** (0.01)	−0.11** (0.01)	−0.13** (0.01)	−0.19** (0.01)	−0.16** (0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			−0.07** (0.01)	−0.11** (0.01)	−0.11** (0.01)	0.002 (0.01)	−0.04** (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.37** (0.01)	−0.37** (0.01)	−0.36** (0.01)	−0.37** (0.01)	−0.35** (0.01)	−0.36** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.49** (0.02)	0.47** (0.02)	0.45** (0.02)	0.47** (0.02)	0.45** (0.02)	0.45** (0.02)
Constant	0.83** (0.003)	0.78** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.77** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	24,553	24,553	24,553	24,553	23,781	22,512	23,465
R^2	0.11	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table I.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - cutoff = 0.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.39**	−0.16**	−0.15**	−0.16**	−0.16**	−0.18**	−0.16**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.05**	−0.02**	0.01	−0.04**	0.01
			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.37**	−0.36**	−0.37**	−0.37**	−0.35**	−0.36**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.49**	0.57**	0.47**	0.51**	0.41**	0.50**
		(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.83**	0.78**	0.75**	0.79**	0.77**	0.78**	0.77**
	(0.003)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	24,553	24,553	24,553	24,553	23,781	22,512	23,465
R^2	0.13	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table I.3: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - cutoff = 50.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.40** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.02)	−0.18** (0.02)	−0.25** (0.02)	−0.28** (0.02)	−0.22** (0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			0.01 (0.02)	−0.06** (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.07** (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.30** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.43** (0.03)	0.43** (0.03)	0.41** (0.03)	0.39** (0.03)	0.45** (0.04)	0.43** (0.03)
Constant	0.85** (0.004)	0.78** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.79** (0.03)	0.84** (0.04)	0.77** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	14,588	14,588	14,588	14,588	14,223	13,184	14,588
R^2	0.13	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table I.4: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - cutoff = 50.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.40**	−0.22**	−0.22**	−0.22**	−0.24**	−0.22**	−0.22**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.01
			(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32**	−0.32**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.32**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.43**	0.42**	0.40**	0.41**	0.42**	0.43**
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.85**	0.78**	0.78**	0.85**	0.78**	0.78**	0.78**
	(0.004)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	14,588	14,588	14,588	13,899	14,223	14,302	14,588
R^2	0.13	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35

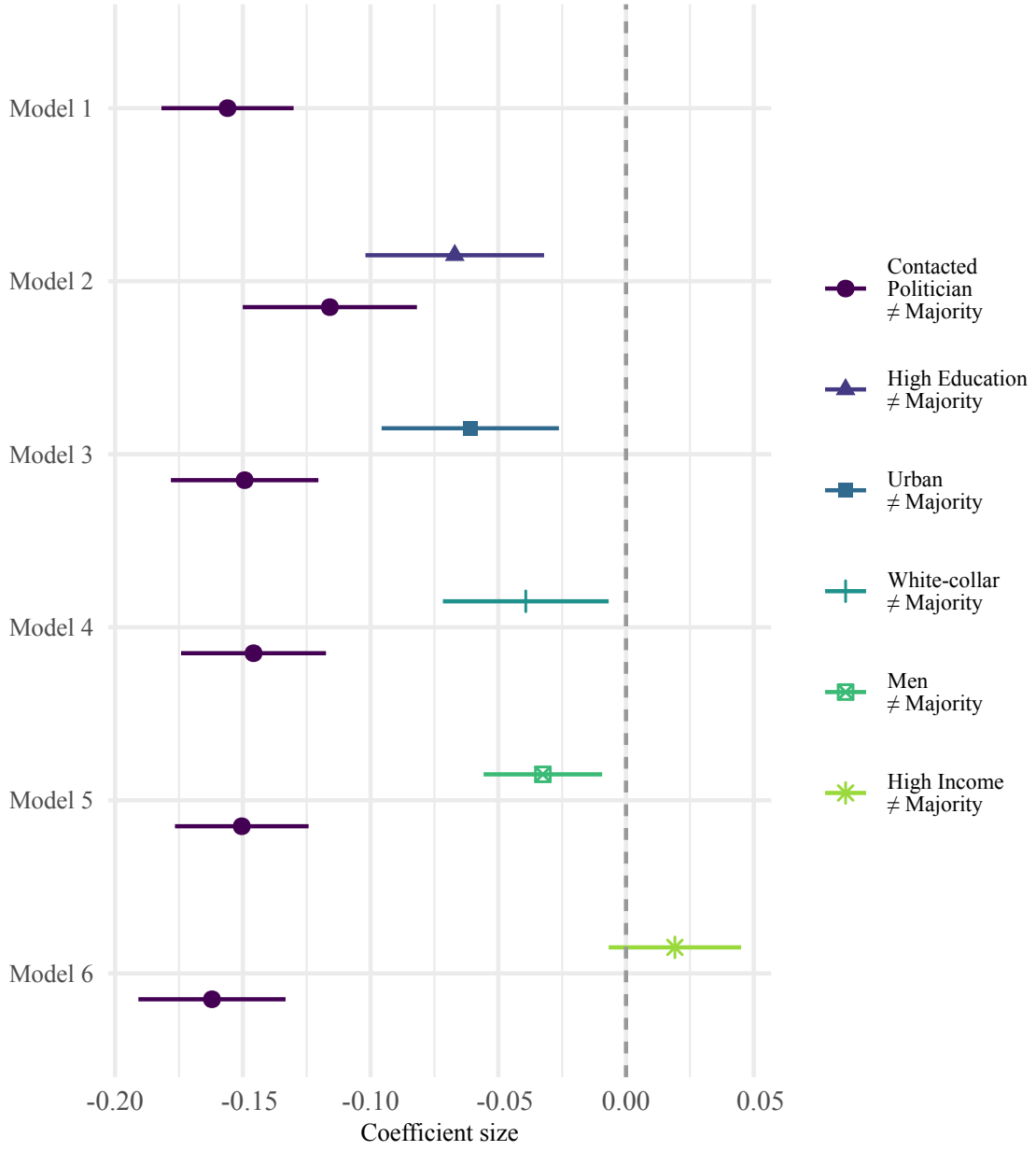
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

J Robustness Test - Excluding Politicians with Indifferent Opinions

In this section, we conduct a robustness test where we only include politician opinions that are in favor or against policy proposals, and thus exclude observations with politicians who are indifferent toward policy proposals. We do this because politicians who do have an opinion are more likely to have informed responses as to whether their co-partisans agree with a policy proposal or not. The results in Figure J.1 are nevertheless similar to the ones reported in the main text.

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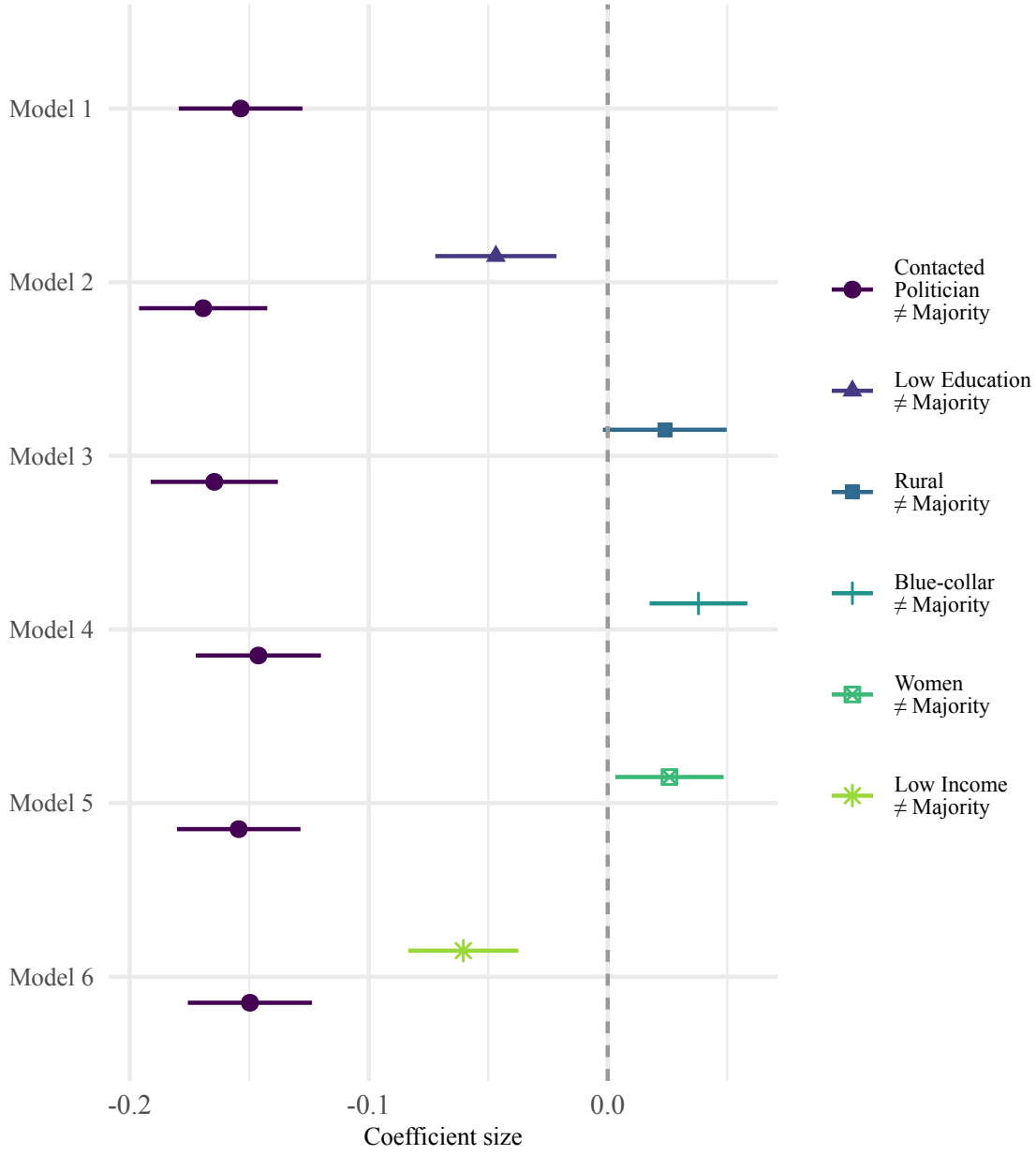
Figure J.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding politicians with indifferent opinions



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure J.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding politicians with indifferent opinions



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table J.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding politicians with indifferent opinions.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.48**	−0.16**	−0.15**	−0.12**	−0.15**	−0.16**	−0.15**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			−0.04*	−0.07*	−0.06**	0.02	−0.03**
			(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.51**	−0.51**	−0.50**	−0.50**	−0.51**	−0.51**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.38**	0.36**	0.35**	0.35**	0.37**	0.35**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.87**	0.76**	0.77**	0.77**	0.78**	0.77**	0.77**
	(0.003)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15,601	15,601	15,601	15,601	15,244	14,342	15,601
R^2	0.18	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table J.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding politicians with indifferent opinions

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.48**	−0.15**	−0.15**	−0.17**	−0.17**	−0.15**	−0.16**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.04**	−0.05**	0.02	−0.06**	0.02**
			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.51**	−0.50**	−0.50**	−0.50**	−0.51**	−0.50**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.39**	0.42**	0.31**	0.37**	0.33**	0.40**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.86**	0.76**	0.74**	0.82**	0.77**	0.79**	0.75**
	(0.003)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15,601	15,601	15,601	15,095	15,244	15,241	15,601
R^2	0.18	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47

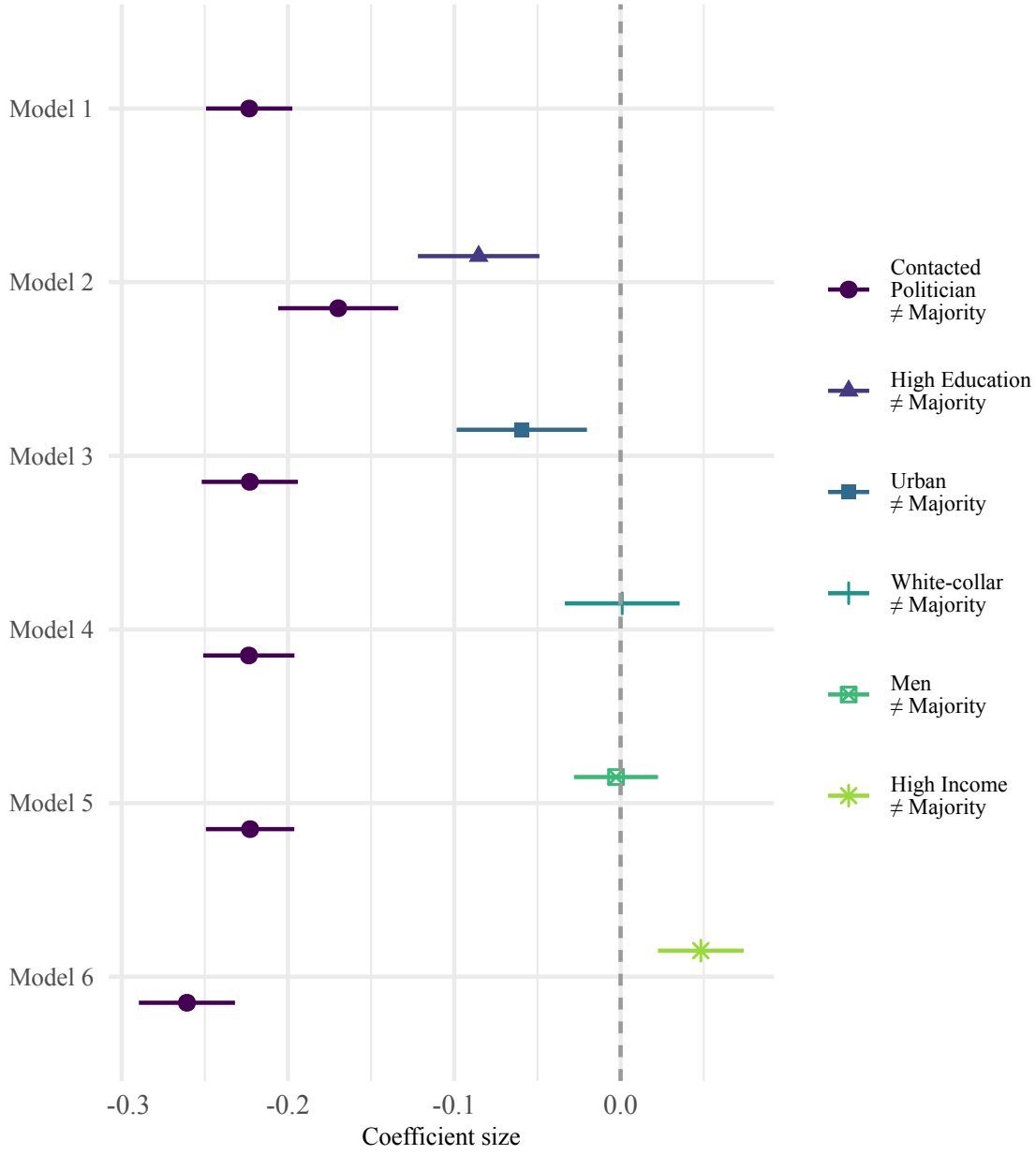
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

K Robustness Test - Excluding Citizens with Indifferent Opinions

In this section we conduct a robustness test where we include only citizens who have an opinion on the policy proposals, thereby excluding anyone who is indifferent. We do this because politicians may only care about citizens who actually have an opinion on a topic. The results in Figure K.1 and Figure K.2 are similar to the findings reported in the main text.

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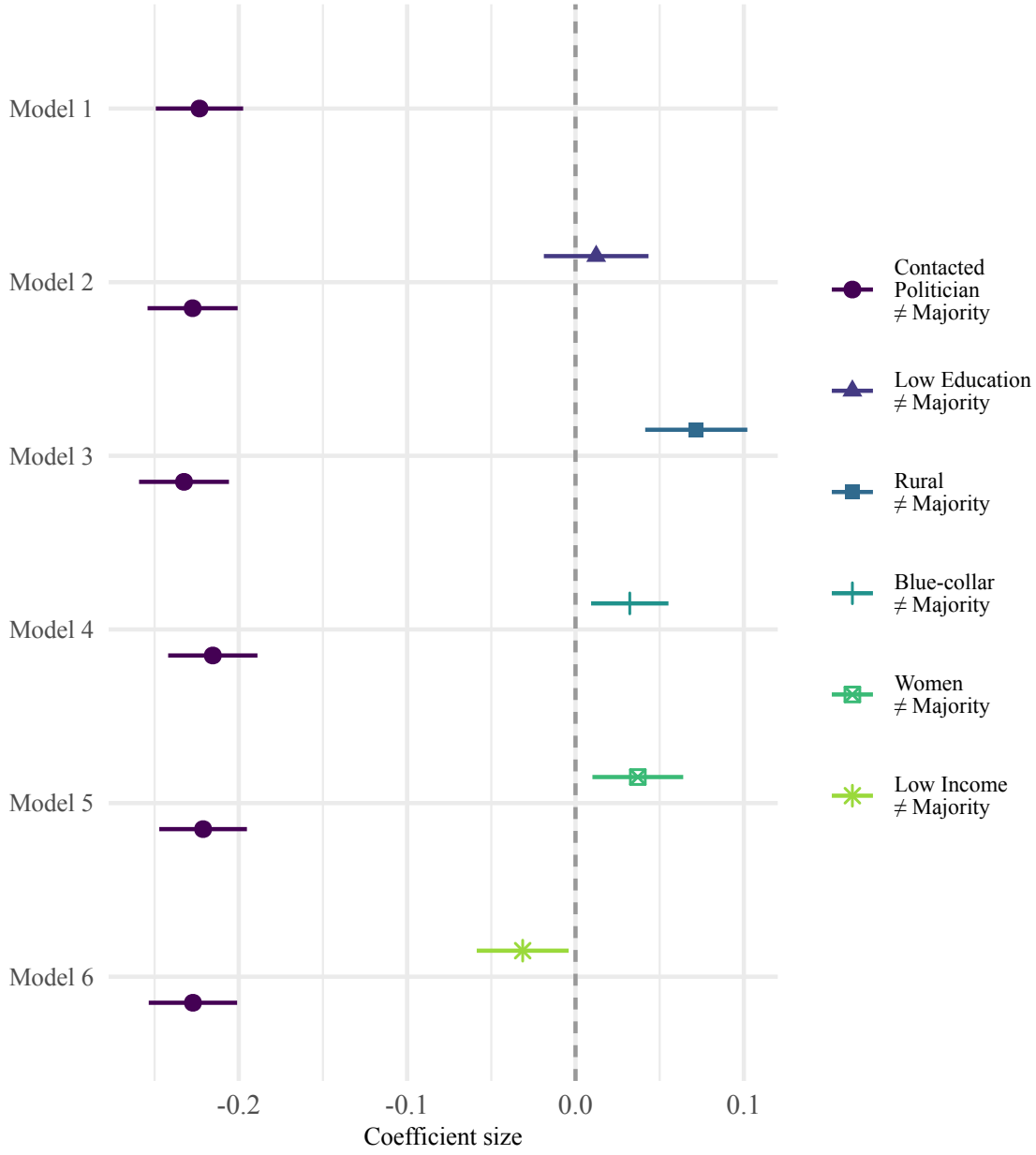
Figure K.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding citizens with indifferent opinions



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure K.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding citizens with indifferent opinions



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table K.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding citizens with indifferent opinions.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.17** (0.02)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.26** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			0.001 (0.02)	−0.09** (0.02)	−0.06** (0.02)	0.05** (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.38** (0.02)	0.38** (0.03)	0.35** (0.02)	0.35** (0.03)	0.41** (0.03)	0.38** (0.03)
Constant	0.86** (0.003)	0.81** (0.03)	0.81** (0.03)	0.82** (0.03)	0.81** (0.03)	0.86** (0.03)	0.81** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	16,811	16,811	16,811	16,811	16,402	15,658	16,811
R^2	0.14	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table K.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding citizens with indifferent opinions

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42**	−0.22**	−0.22**	−0.23**	−0.23**	−0.23**	−0.22**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.03**	0.01	0.07**	−0.03**	0.04**
			(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32**	−0.32**	−0.32**	−0.31**	−0.33**	−0.32**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.38**	0.42**	0.38**	0.41**	0.34**	0.41**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.86**	0.81**	0.79**	0.88**	0.79**	0.83**	0.80**
	(0.003)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	16,811	16,811	16,811	16,112	16,402	16,263	16,811
R^2	0.14	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.35

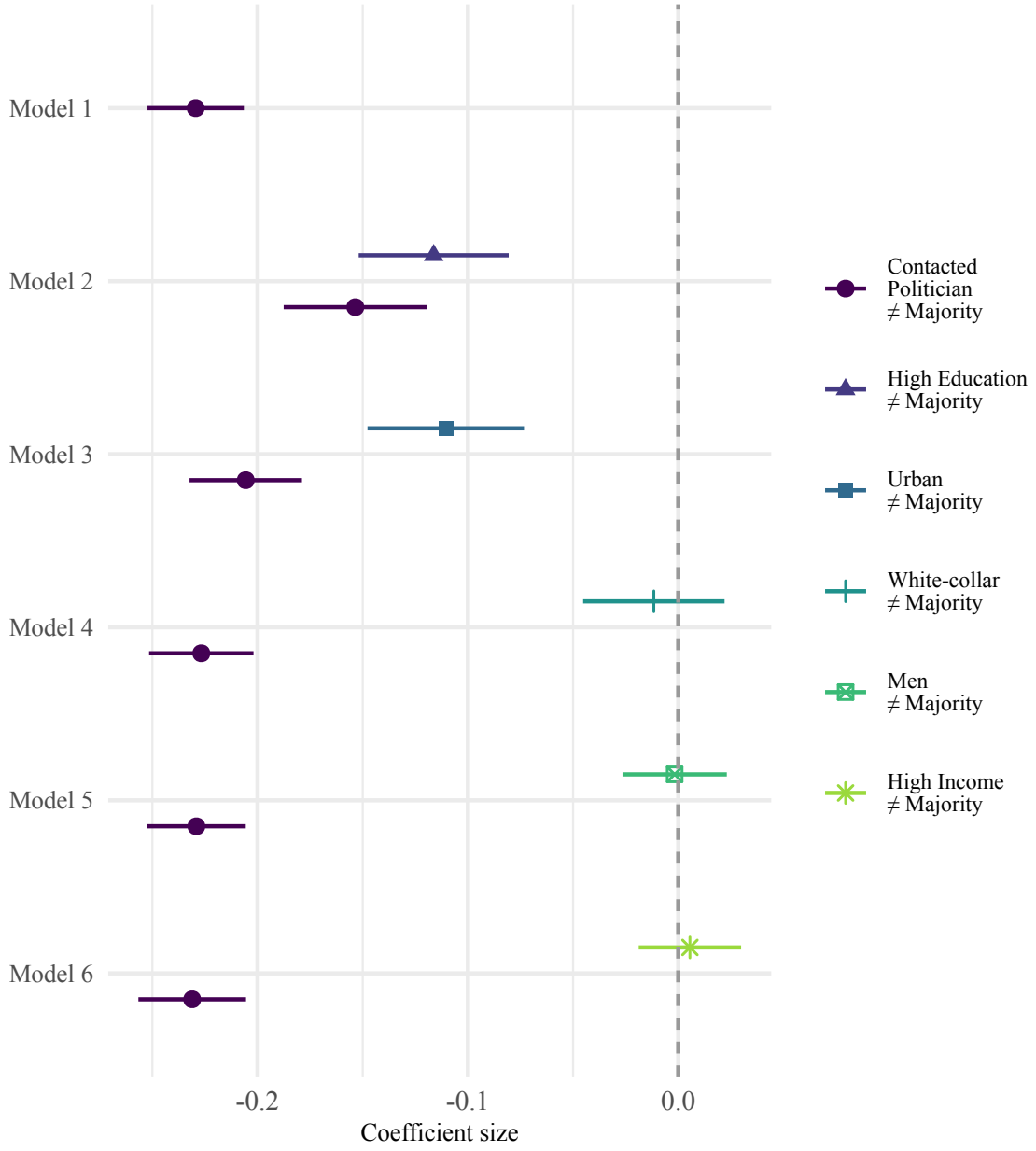
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

L Robustness Test - Including Don't Know Answers

In this section, we conduct a robustness test where we include don't know answers in the calculation of majority opinion. In the main analysis, we solely include citizens who gave an answer to the surveyed policy question, and thereby implicitly assume that don't know answers are equally distributed between those in favor and against the proposal. However, it is a common approach to include don't know's as part of those that are opposed to the proposal. In this robustness check, we examine whether our results change when we include don't know answers. The results in Figure L.1, Figure L.2, Table L.1, and Table L.2 show that this specification produces similar results as that found in the main analysis.

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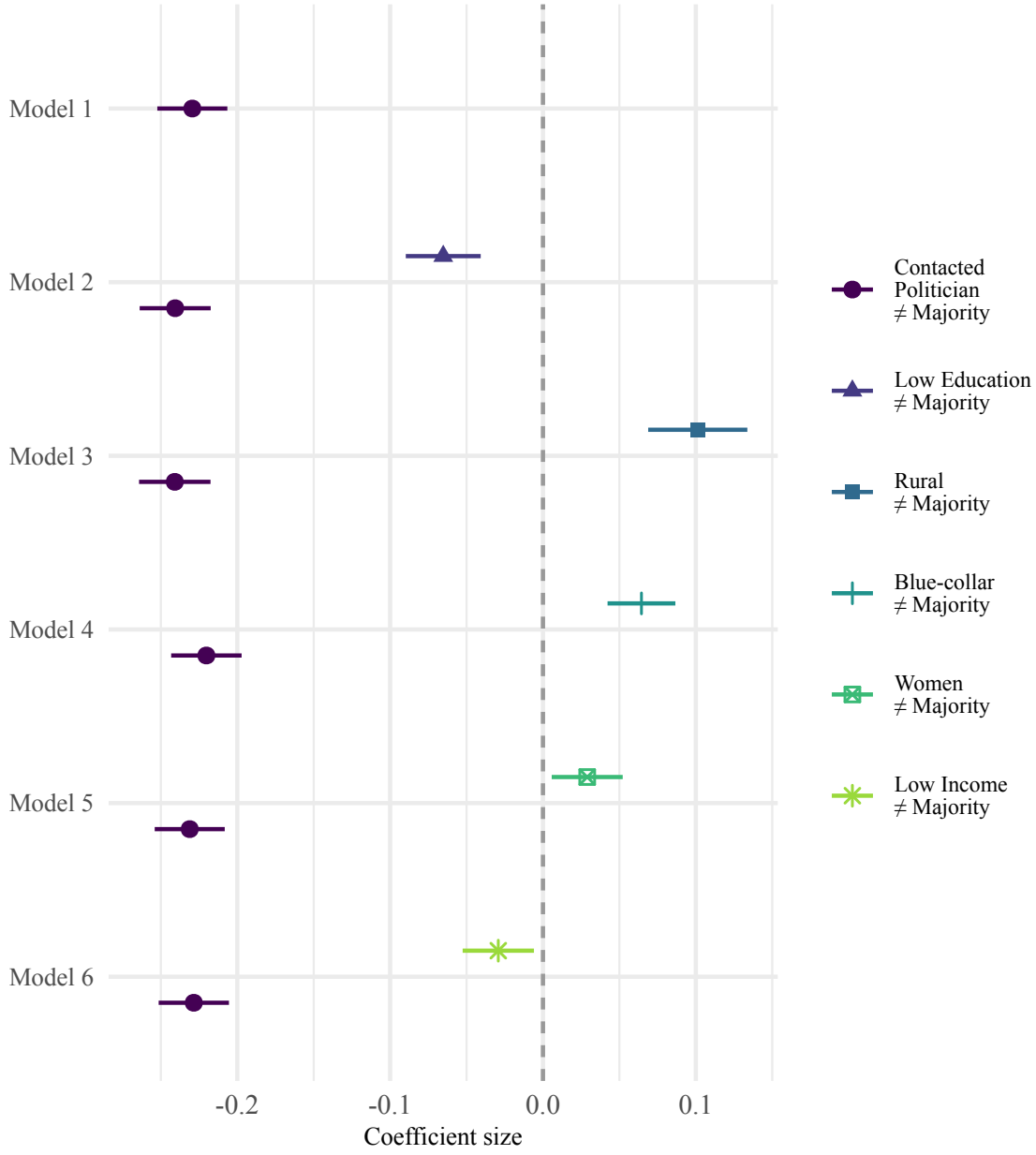
Figure L.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test - Including Don't Know Answers



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure L.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test - Including Don't Know Answers



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table L.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Including Don't Knows.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.43**	−0.23**	−0.23**	−0.15**	−0.21**	−0.23**	−0.23**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			-0.01	-0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03
			(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.44**	0.44**	0.40**	0.41**	0.43**	0.44**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.85**	0.77**	0.77**	0.77**	0.79**	0.83**	0.77**
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	18,248	18,248	18,248	18,248	18,248	18,248	18,248
R^2	0.08	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table L.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Including Don't Knows

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.43**	−0.23**	−0.22**	−0.24**	−0.24**	−0.23**	−0.23**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.06**	−0.07**	0.10**	−0.03*	0.03*
			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**	−0.33**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.44**	0.52**	0.35**	0.48**	0.42**	0.47**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.85**	0.77**	0.73**	0.89**	0.76**	0.78**	0.76**
	(0.1)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	18,248	18,248	18,248	17,651	17,815	17,862	18,248
R^2	0.14	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37

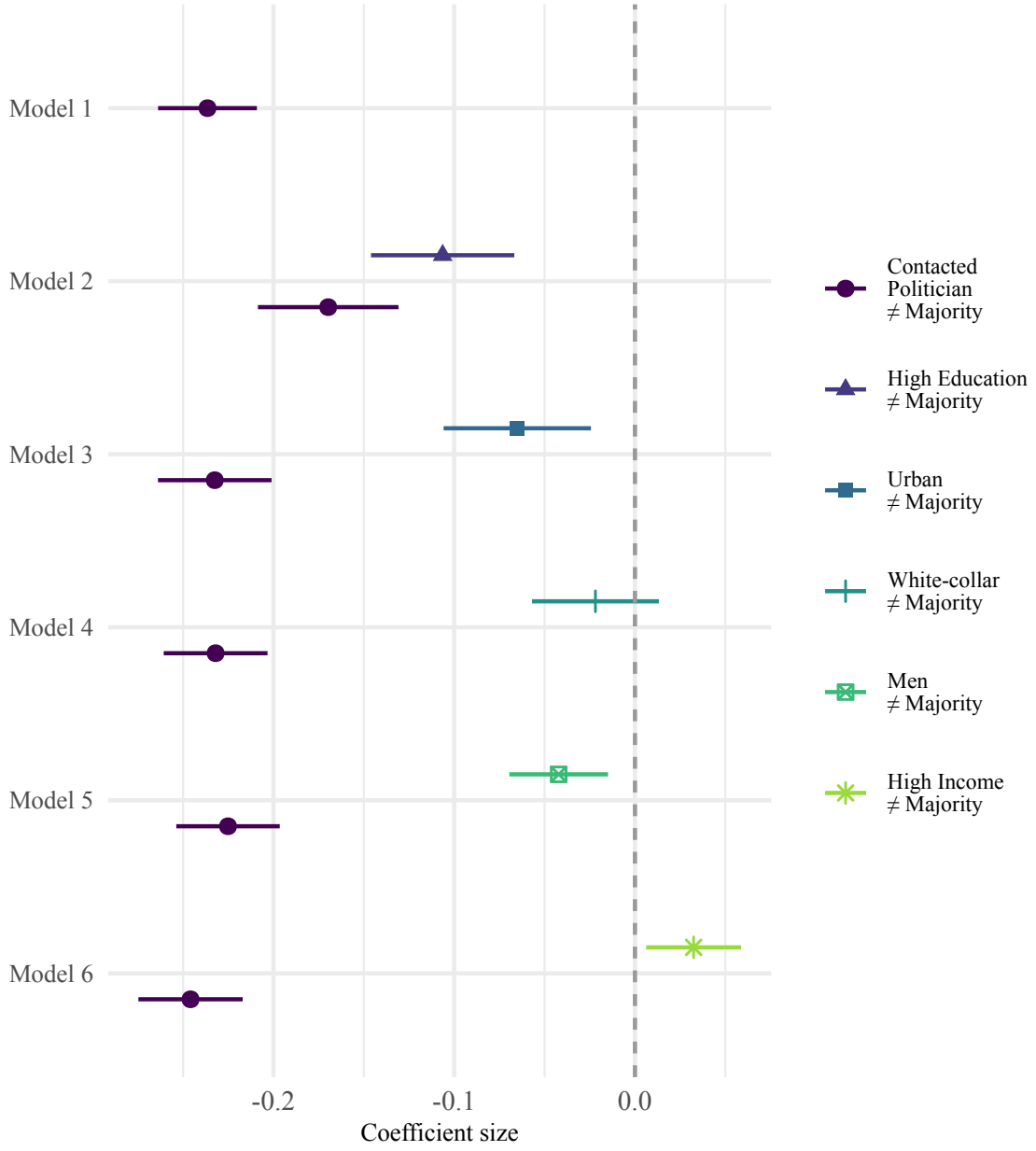
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

M Robustness Test - Excluding Smaller Parties

In this section we conduct a robustness test where we include only larger parties. We define a large party as one that received more than 10% of the total vote share. The results in Figure M.1 and Figure M.2 show similar results to those reported on in the manuscript.

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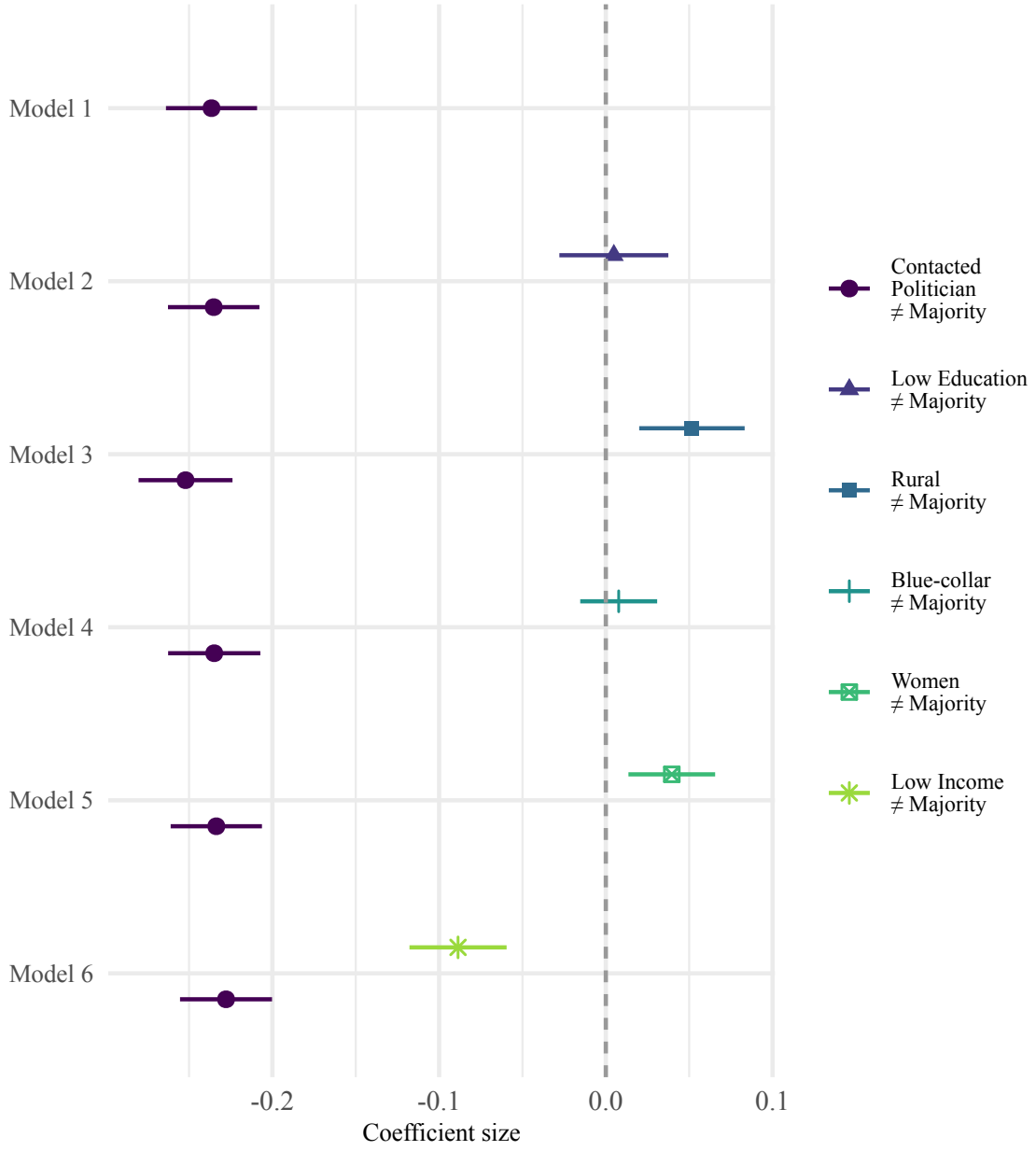
Figure M.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding small parties



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure M.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Robustness Test - Excluding small parties



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table M.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding small parties.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42** (0.01)	−0.24** (0.01)	−0.23** (0.01)	−0.17** (0.02)	−0.23** (0.01)	−0.25** (0.01)	−0.23** (0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			-0.02 (0.02)	−0.11** (0.02)	−0.07** (0.02)	0.03* (0.01)	−0.04* (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.42** (0.03)	0.41** (0.03)	0.37** (0.03)	0.39** (0.03)	0.44** (0.03)	0.39** (0.03)
Constant	0.85** (0.003)	0.81** (0.03)	0.82** (0.03)	0.81** (0.03)	0.82** (0.03)	0.84** (0.04)	0.83** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15,223	15,223	15,223	15,223	14,905	14,455	15,223
R^2	0.14	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.37

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table M.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding small parties

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42**	−0.24**	−0.23**	−0.24**	−0.25**	−0.23**	−0.23**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.01	0.005	0.05**	−0.09**	0.04**
			(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.31**	−0.32**	−0.31**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.42**	0.43**	0.42**	0.43**	0.35**	0.46**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.85**	0.81**	0.81**	0.84**	0.82**	0.81**	0.79**
	(0.003)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15,223	15,223	15,223	15,175	14,905	14,974	15,223
R^2	0.14	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37

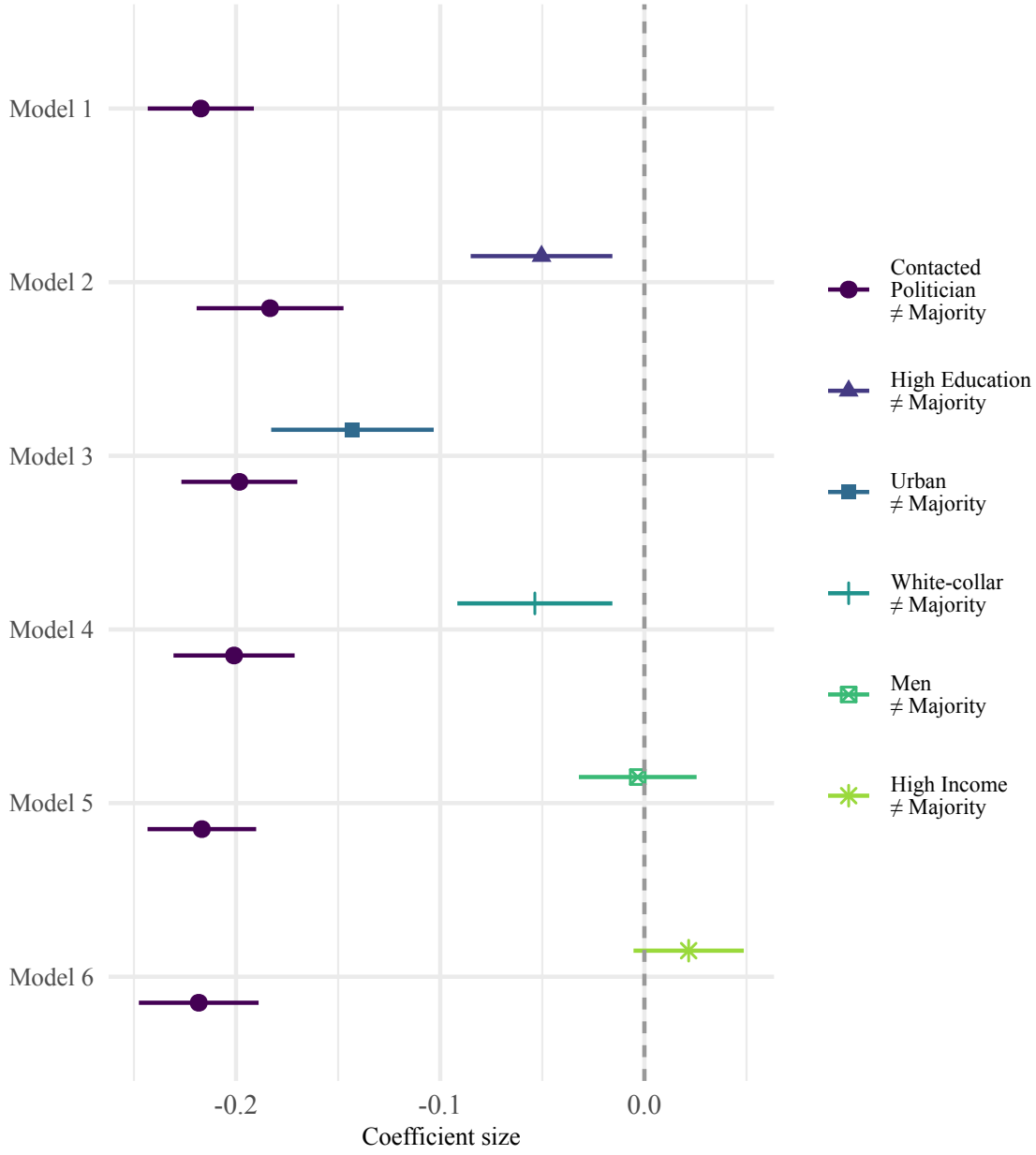
Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

N Robustness Test - Excluding Non-election Years

In this section, we conduct a robustness test where we exclude any data that is not from an election year. This means that all data on partisanship is measured by what the respondent reported having voted for (or vote intention in the case of pre-election surveys) in the last election. We thereby conduct two robustness tests in one: we examine whether our results change when excluding data from the year before the election, as well as when excluding observations that are based on party preference data rather than reported vote. The results in Figure N.1, Figure N.2, Table N.1, and Table N.2 are similar overall to the main analysis.

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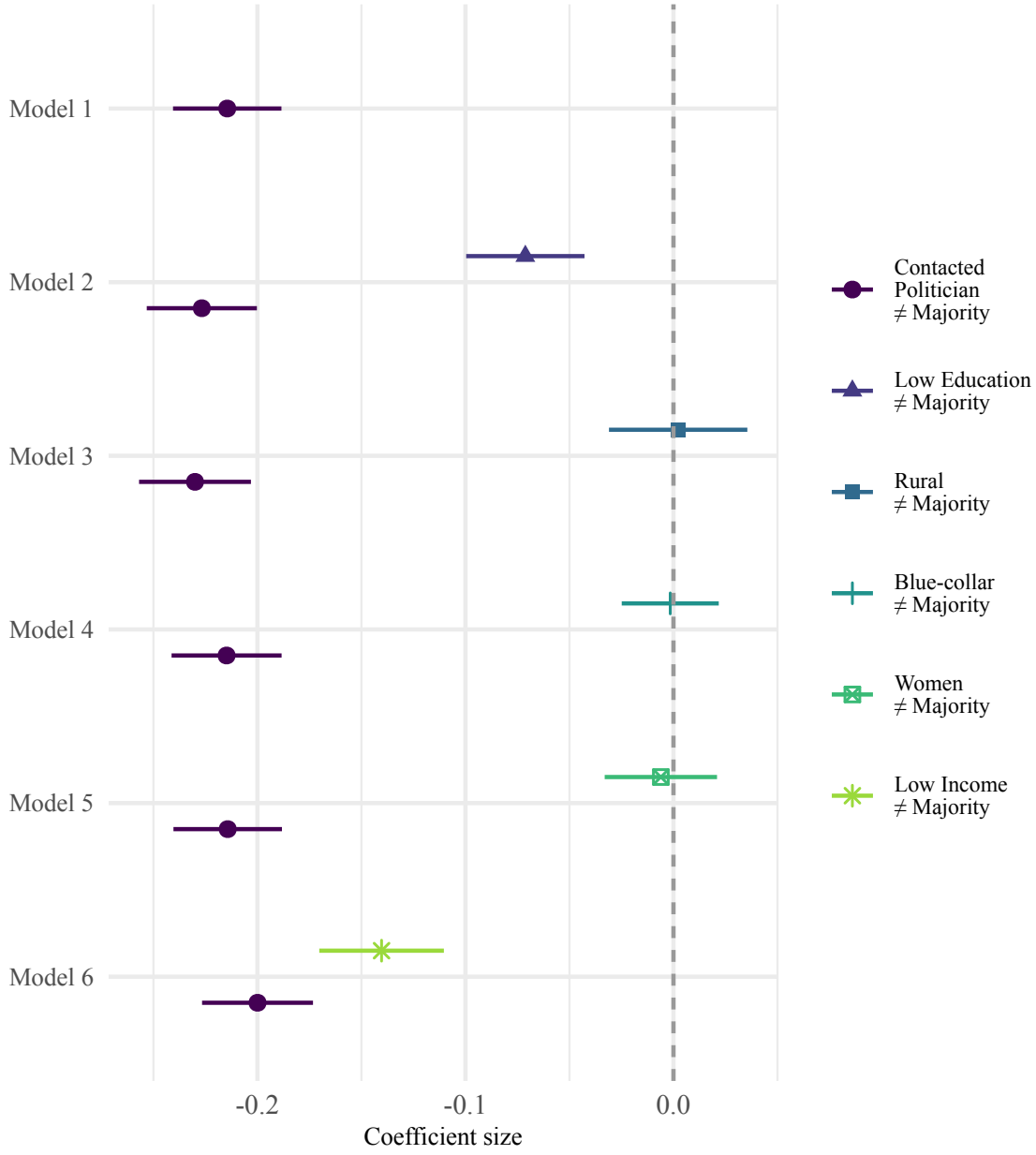
Figure N.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test - Excluding non-election years



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure N.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test - Excluding non-election years



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP in each year, and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table N.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding non-election years.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.20** (0.02)	−0.18** (0.02)	−0.20** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)	−0.22** (0.01)
High-status ≠ Majority			−0.05** (0.02)	−0.05** (0.02)	−0.14** (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)	−0.32** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.50** (0.03)	0.48** (0.03)	0.48** (0.03)	0.46** (0.03)	0.47** (0.03)	0.50** (0.03)
Constant	0.85** (0.003)	0.75** (0.03)	0.76** (0.03)	0.75** (0.03)	0.78** (0.03)	0.82** (0.03)	0.75** (0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	16,937	16,937	16,937	16,937	16,504	14,732	16,937
R^2	0.13	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table N.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test - Excluding non-election years.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.42**	−0.22**	−0.22**	−0.23**	−0.23**	−0.20**	−0.22**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Low-status ≠ Majority			-0.005	−0.07**	0.001	−0.14**	-0.01
			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.32**	−0.32**	−0.31**	−0.32**	−0.31**	−0.32**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.50**	0.49**	0.42**	0.48**	0.39**	0.49**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.85**	0.75**	0.75**	0.90**	0.77**	0.80**	0.75**
	(0.003)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	16,937	16,937	16,937	16,113	16,435	16,404	16,937
R^2	0.13	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP in each year. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

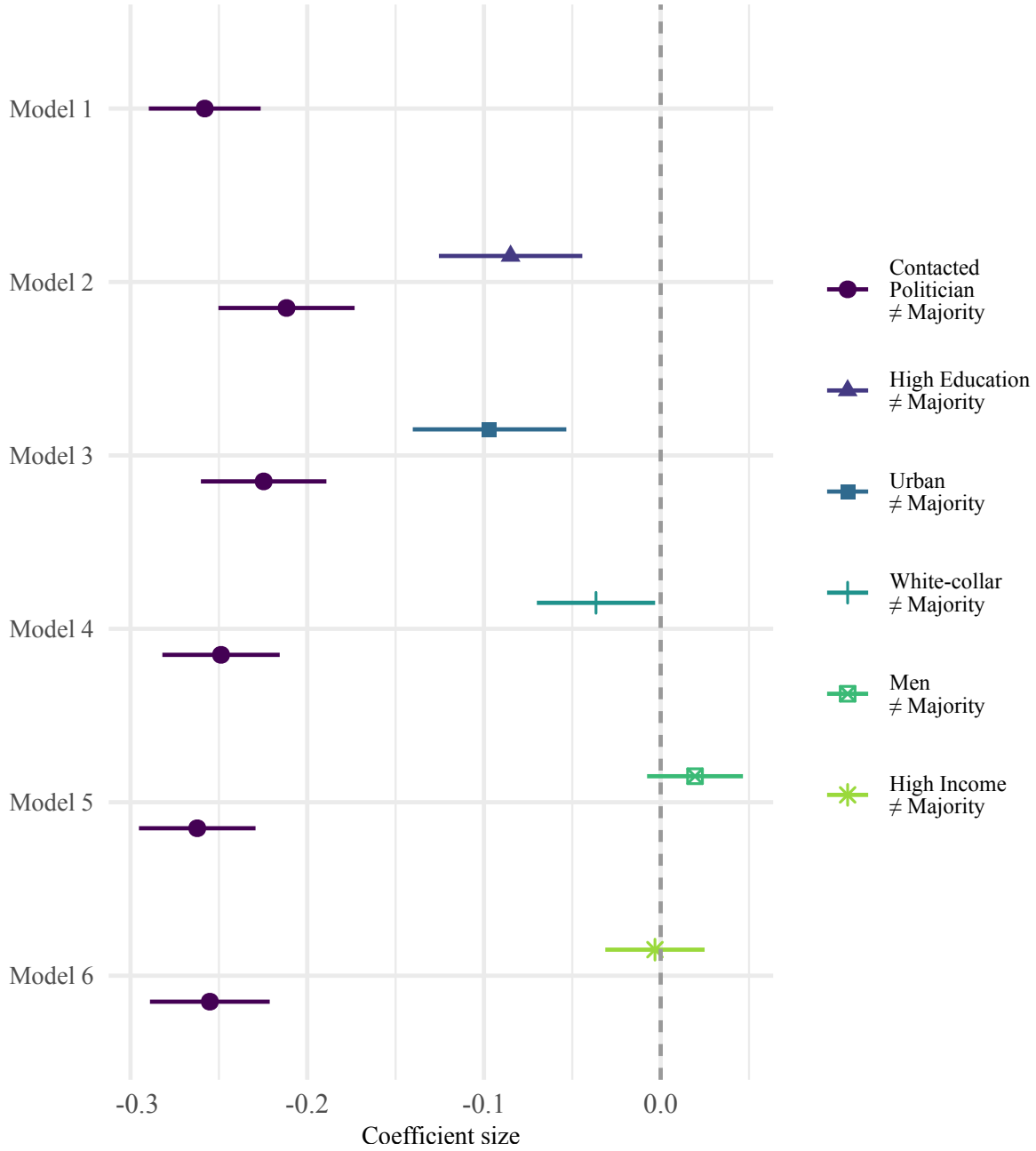
O Robustness Test - Riksdag MP Panel Data 1985-2006

In the manuscript, we use data for Study 1 that is available from 1985 to 2022. However, there is an older version of the Riksdag survey, a panel data set, covering years up until 2006. Since these data are not available for later years, we opt to use the data with better coverage in the main analysis. However, as a robustness test, we run the same analysis on the data available until 2006.

The main difference between our approach in the manuscript and in the Online SI is that the cluster-standard errors at the MP-level can take in variation from several survey waves. Furthermore, we can also include two more control variables, previously utilized by Pereira (2021), namely MPs' Expertise and Experience. We adopt the coding procedure for these variables from Pereira's (2021) work. Expertise reflects whether the MP sits on a committee that concerns the issue area, whereas Experience reflects time in office (logged number of terms in office). The findings are very similar to the main results reported in the manuscript.

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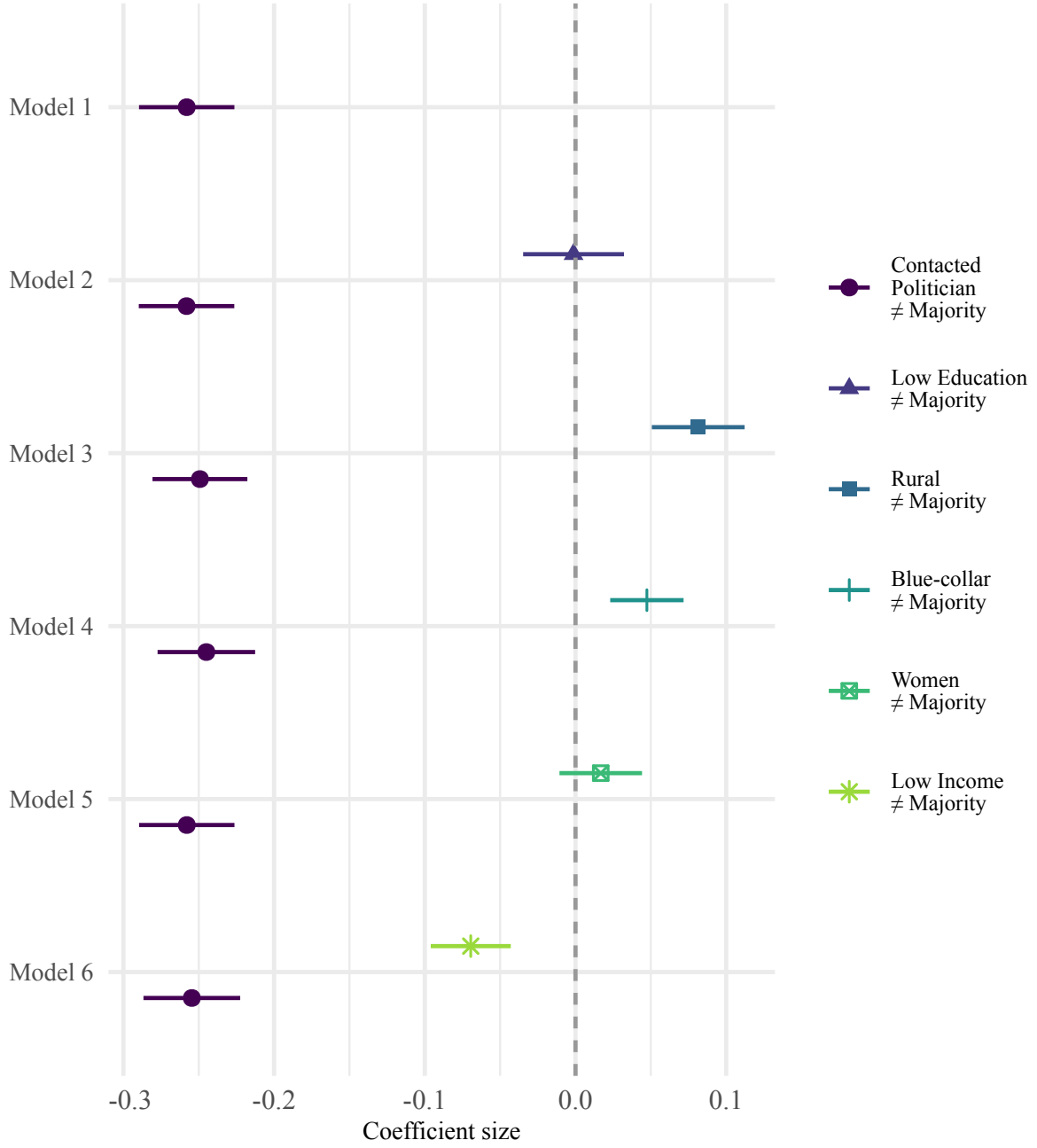
Figure O.1: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - High-status group controls - Robustness Test – Panel data set 1985-2006



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP (in this data set across panel waves), and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Figure O.2: Determinants of politicians' perceptual accuracy, comparison of coefficients - Low-status group controls - Robustness Test – Panel data set 1985-2006



Note: The dependent variable is politicians' perceptual accuracy of co-partisan opinion, and each row documents a regression analysis. All regression models are linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by MP (in this data set across panel waves), and controls for preference imbalance, MP ≠ Majority, as well as year-, party-, and policy issue fixed effects. Each row shows the additional coefficient that was included in each model.

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Table O.1: The role of those contacting politicians and high-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test – Panel data set 1985-2006.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (White-collar)	(4) (High Education)	(5) (Urban)	(6) (High Income)	(7) (Men)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.46** (0.01)	−0.26** (0.02)	−0.25** (0.02)	−0.21** (0.02)	−0.22** (0.02)	−0.25** (0.02)	−0.26** (0.02)
High-status ≠ Majority			−0.04** (0.02)	−0.08** (0.02)	−0.10** (0.02)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.48** (0.04)	0.46** (0.04)	0.43** (0.04)	0.46** (0.04)	0.48** (0.04)	0.54** (0.04)
Expertise		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Experience		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.84** (0.004)	0.67** (0.04)	0.67** (0.04)	0.69** (0.04)	0.70** (0.04)	0.61** (0.06)	0.66** (0.04)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	12,182	12,182	12,182	12,182	12,182	11,026	12,182
R^2	0.17	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP. The high-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (High-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Table O.2: The role of those contacting politicians and low-status groups' opinions on perceptual accuracy - Robustness Test – Panel data set 1985-2006.

	(1) (None)	(2) (None)	(3) (Blue-collar)	(4) (Low-education)	(5) (Rural)	(6) (Low Income)	(7) (Women)
Contacted Politician ≠ Majority	−0.46** (0.01)	−0.26** (0.02)	−0.24** (0.01)	−0.26** (0.01)	−0.25** (0.01)	−0.25** (0.02)	−0.26** (0.02)
Low-status ≠ Majority			0.05** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)	−0.07** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
MP ≠ Majority		−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)	−0.31** (0.01)
Preference Imbalance		0.48** (0.04)	0.56** (0.05)	0.48** (0.04)	0.57** (0.04)	0.37** (0.04)	0.50** (0.04)
Expertise		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Experience		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.84** (0.004)	0.67** (0.04)	0.65** (0.04)	0.68** (0.04)	0.65** (0.04)	0.70** (0.04)	0.67** (0.04)
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Party FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	12,182	12,182	12,182	12,182	12,182	11,877	12,182
R^2	0.17	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Linear probability models with cluster-robust standard errors by individual MP. The low-status group's opinion that is included as a control variable (Low-status ≠ Majority) is noted below the model number.

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Note: All additional information and robustness checks for Study 1 are included in the Online Supplementary Information (SI) that can be accessed here: https://osf.io/8ngsj/overview?view_only=7dd75bc4102d4a9fa5341ac7a35040f5.

Appendix

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A Distributions of Opinions Within Different Sociodemographic Groups

A.1 Privatize Healthcare

Table A.1: Social Class Opinions on Health Care - Election Survey 2022

	Blue-collar	White-collar	Other
Against	82.00%	79.90%	66.30%
In favour	18.00%	20.10%	33.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.2: Income Groups' Opinions on Health Care - Election Survey 2022

	Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
Against	79.60%	80.00%	69.70%
In favour	20.40%	20.00%	30.30%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.3: Urban/Rural Opinions on Health Care - Election Survey 2022

	Rural	Urban
Against	79.30%	78.50%
In Favour	20.70%	21.50%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.4: Men/Women Opinions on Health Care - Election Survey 2022

	Men	Women
Against	77.00%	80.60%
In Favour	23.00%	19.40%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.5: Education Groups' Opinions on Health Care - Election Survey 2022

	Low Education	Middle Education	High Education
Against	79.70%	76.50%	79.80%
In favour	20.30%	23.50%	20.20%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

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A.2 Allow Assisted Dying

Table A.6: Social Class Opinions on Assisted Dying - SOM Survey 2022

	Blue-collar	White-collar	Other
Against	18.90%	21.10%	21.10%
In favour	81.10%	78.90%	78.90%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.7: Income Groups' Opinions on Assisted Dying - SOM Survey 2018

	Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
Against	26.90%	23.90%	30.80%
In favour	73.10%	76.10%	69.20%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.8: Urban/Rural Opinions on Assisted Dying - SOM Survey 2022

	Rural	Urban
Against	19.40%	22.20%
In Favour	80.60%	77.80%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.9: Men/Women Opinions on Assisted Dying - SOM Survey 2022

	Men	Women
Against	19.40%	22.60%
In Favour	80.60%	77.40%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.10: Education Groups' Opinions on Assisted Dying - SOM Survey 2022

	Low Education	Middle Education	High Education
Against	21.50%	17.80%	23.70%
In favour	78.50%	82.20%	76.30%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

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A.3 Schools Run by Government

Table A.11: Social Class Opinions on Schools - SOM Survey 2022

	Blue-collar	White-collar	Other
Against	22.60%	13.70%	16.30%
In favour	77.40%	86.30%	83.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.12: Income Groups' Opinions on Schools - SOM Survey 2018

	Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
Against	19.10%	17.20%	18.30%
In favour	80.90%	82.80%	81.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.13: Urban/Rural Opinions on Schools - SOM Survey 2022

	Rural	Urban
Against	18.20%	18.30%
In Favour	81.80%	81.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.14: Men/Women Opinions on Schools - SOM Survey 2022

	Men	Women
Against	15.80%	20.70%
In Favour	84.20%	79.30%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table A.15: Education Groups' Opinions on Schools - SOM Survey 2022

	Low Education	Middle Education	High Education
Against	15.80%	21.00%	16.10%
In favour	84.20%	79.00%	83.90%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

A.4 Are Differences Between Groups Statistically Significant?

We can see that the differences in opinions between the relevant groups are small. However, in this section we examine whether the status categories we vary have statistically significant differences in opinion. We check this for the relevant categories using a χ^2 test. We also include Cramér's V to examine the strength of the association. We only analyze

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two status categories at a time, together with average support compared to opposition. This gives us four categories in each case for each test.

In the case of private healthcare (issue 1) and assisted dying (issue 2), we vary social status/occupation, but respondents are likely to infer differences in income and education between the different treatments. In the case of whether schools should be run by the government (issue 3), we only vary income. The results are presented in tables below for each status category and issue.

As is evident in Table A.16, there are significant differences in opinions only for the issue of healthcare privatization between blue- and white-collar individuals, as well as those with low and high education. However, the difference in opinion is substantively small between these groups, and the statistically significant difference in opinion is mainly due to the large number of observations. Cramér's V indicates that the associations between these variables are low. For this statistic there is no difference between the types of status that we vary across our treatments.

Table A.16: Statistical Tests of Group Differences in Policy Opinions

Issue	Grouping variable	χ^2	df	p-value	N	Cramér's V
Healthcare	Blue- & white-collar	4.335	1	0.037	7,022	0.025
Healthcare	Low- & mid-income	0.082	1	0.774	7,148	0.004
Healthcare	Low- & high education	4.148	1	0.042	3,994	0.033
Euthanasia	Blue- & white-collar	0.552	1	0.458	899	0.028
Euthanasia	Low- & high-income	0.438	1	0.508	369	0.041
Euthanasia	Low- & high education	0.194	1	0.659	618	0.022
Schools	Low- & high-income	0.002	1	0.9605	418	0.009

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B Pre-test Survey and Results

This survey received ethical approval by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. The pre-test was conducted from 18 to 19 December 2025 with a convenience sample of around 500 Swedish citizens. The pre-test was conducted with a Swedish survey provider (Indikator) online. Respondents answered the outcome questions of the main survey before the treatments, then completed three treatment tasks, answered manipulation checks, and several survey items related to potential mechanisms presented in the theory section. Finally, respondents answered questions asking about their demographics and preferred political party. In the following, we first display the survey outline and then results from the pre-test.

On the basis of the pre-test, we implemented the following changes to improve the survey with politicians:

- The vignette texts were shortened to make the status treatments more prominent within the vignette.
- Treatment 1 includes the additional mention of the high-status citizen being a tech-founder to strengthen the perception of differences in education between the high-status (tech-founder and entrepreneur) and low-status (grocery market cashier) professions.
- Treatment 2 includes the additional mention of a doctor title for the high-status profession of a lawyer to strengthen the treatment.
- We adjusted the survey item asking about whether respondents expected the citizen to hold politicians' accountable in an upcoming election as the variation on this item was small and hinting towards a ceiling effect. Additionally, the survey question was improved to target electoral accountability. A similar survey item had been included as an outcome question in the beginning of the pre-test. This item was dropped due to its similarity to the accountability mechanism question.

B.1 Survey Outline Pre-tests with Citizens

In this section, we display the full survey outline for the pre-tests conducted with a sample of around 500 Swedish citizens.

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SURVEY START

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Thanks for your interest in this study. Please read carefully the information below. You are then asked to confirm that you are at least 18 years of age or older.

Principal Investigator: [anonymized]
Principal Investigator Department: [anonymized]
Principal Investigator Email Address: [anonymized]

You are being asked to participate in a research study titled “Participating in Politics”. The purpose of this study is to examine how individuals perceive political participation.

This study will be conducted through the following online survey. The survey should take you approximately 12 minutes to complete. In this study, you will read some text and then answer questions about the text.

There are no direct benefits to you, but you may feel gratified knowing that you helped further the scholarly work in this research area. You will be compensated for participating in this study. There are no costs to you associated with your participation. The researchers do not anticipate that participation in this study would entail any risks or discomforts beyond those experienced in everyday life. We would like to point out, however, that the survey includes questions about assisted dying, which some participants may find emotionally sensitive.

We will exert all reasonable efforts to keep your responses and your identity confidential. We may have access to, and may maintain in our data collection, your randomized respondent ID. However, aside from your respondent ID, we will not maintain within our research data any information that uniquely identifies you, such as your name, location, or Internet Protocol (IP) address. In any report we publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Data collected from the experiment will be coded to remove your name or any other personal identifiers. Access to the records will be limited to the researchers. The researchers will not release to others any information that could indicate your identity unless you give your permission, or unless they are legally required to do so.

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Your participation is voluntary. Some questions on the survey, such as comprehension questions, may be required in order to complete the survey. You may still choose to end your participation in the study at any time. If you have questions or concerns concerning this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, [anonymized], researcher at the [anonymized], at [anonymized].

Thank you for your attention. By clicking "I approve" you confirm that you have read the information and agree with it. Moreover, please only approve if you are at least 18 years of age or older. Otherwise, please click "I do not approve" and leave the study.

[randomize order in which Share Q1, Share Q2, and Share Q3 appear]

Share Q1: Some oppose privatization of healthcare in Sweden. Please give your best guesses to the following questions. [slider, 0\% - 100\%]

- How many voters oppose privatization of healthcare in Sweden?
- How many voters care a lot about the issue?
- How many voters would vote in the upcoming election for a party based on its efforts to stop further healthcare privatization?

Share Q2: It is being debated whether Sweden should legalize assisted dying for people with terminal illnesses who would like to end their life with the assistance of a medical professional. Please give your best guesses to the following questions.
[slider, 0\% - 100\%]

- How many voters agree that assisted dying should be legalized?
- How many voters care a lot about the issue?
- How many voters would vote in the upcoming election for a party based on its efforts to legalize assisted dying?

Share Q3: A current political debate revolves around the question of whether municipalities should maintain their responsibility of schooling, or whether the national government should take over the responsibility. [slider, 0\% - 100\%]

- How many voters agree that the national government should be responsible for schools?
- How many voters care a lot about the issue?

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- How many voters would vote in the upcoming election for a party based on its efforts to nationalize the responsibility for schools?

TREATMENT: vignette and post-treatment measures with randomized issue, three times

It is common for citizens to reach out to the politicians in their municipality to share their concerns or common problems they face. In the following, you will read several fictitious emails from citizens who are reaching out to a politician in their municipality. Read through the e-mails carefully. After reading each e-mail, we will ask you to evaluate the issues mentioned in the e-mails.

TREATMENT ISSUE 1: Opposing the privatization of healthcare

Hello!

I work as [**an entrepreneur/ a cashier at a grocery store**] and with my working hours it is difficult to bring my 80-year-old mother to the doctor. She needs my help, but the waiting time for an appointment is long, and appointments outside of my working hours are rare. I cannot simply leave work whenever we have the chance to get a free time slot at the hospital.

Now, a nearby hospital is supposed to be sold to a private investor. I am really tired that the taxes I pay every month are being spent on the profit of these investors while the quality of healthcare is declining.

I am writing to you because something needs to be done about the ongoing privatization of healthcare. You taking a stand on this issue can make a difference!

Best wishes,
[**gender + high-status: Edvard Rosenblad ; Lovisa Rosenblad/ gender + low status: Mats Andersson / Jessica Andersson**]

TREATMENT ISSUE 2 allow assisted dying

Hello,

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A year ago, I was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. My illness is progressing, and at a later stage it will affect my ability to breathe independently. As current legislation stands, I would be required to continue through the full course of the illness until death occurs naturally.

Throughout my career as a [**a senior partner at a law firm / personal assistant for people with a disability**], I have always worked to promote the autonomy and decision-making capacity of people. Now I want to decide my own future. I would prefer to have the option of an assisted death before I reach a point where I can no longer maintain personal autonomy or quality of life.

Sweden does not currently provide a legal framework for this choice. I urge you to support legislation that would allow terminally ill individuals, under strict safeguards, to decide the manner and timing of the end of life.

Sincerely,

[**gender + high status: Carl-Johan Lindén / Alexandra Lindén; gender + low-status: Micke Johansson / Sara Johansson**]

TREATMENT ISSUE 3: Nationalizing the responsibility for schools

Hi,

I recently moved with my [wife / husband] and child, because of my job. [**I have always earned well, but / I have been struggling financially, and**] this position provided a more stable [**(and high) / (albeit low)**] income.

While we are happy with the move, and we especially love the new school for our child, it has made me realize that the quality of schools differs tremendously across places and is largely dependent on the municipality in which you live. It seems unreasonable to me that Sweden, which is a rich country, cannot guarantee high-quality education to all its children. Would it not be better if the national government took over the responsibility for providing high-quality education across the whole country?

I am therefore asking you to consider your stance on this issue and advocate for making schooling the responsibility of the national government instead of municipalities.

Best wishes,

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[**high status: Gustaf Bergqvist / Victoria Bergqvist/ low status: Ronny Larsson /Izabella Larsson**]

Variables that are varied in the following survey items is the name corresponding to the vignette: [Edvard Rosenblad, Lovisa Rosenblad, Mats Andersson, Jessica Andersson, Carl-Johan Lindén, Alexandra Lindén, Micke Johansson / Sara Johansson, Gustaf Bergqvist, Victoria Bergqvist, Ronny Larsson, Izabella Larsson]

Manipulation check 1: We want to know whether the e-mail was easy to understand. By whom was the e-mail written? You can pick several response options. The e-mail was written by [randomized order]

- Someone who is highly educated
- Someone who received little education
- A woman
- A man
- A working-class person
- A white-collar worker
- Someone with a high income
- Someone with a low income

Manipulation check 2: How do you think others in society would perceive the social status of [citizen name]? By social status, we mean the relative rank that an individual holds in society. Such a rank can be based on respect, honor, prestige, assumed competence, and deference.
[Likert scale or slider from low-status to high-status]

Mechanisms: We are interested in your perception of the citizen who wrote the e-mail.
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [slider, 0% - 100%]

- **[Proficiency]**: I think that [citizen name] understands the complexity of the debate regarding [healthcare privatization / assisted dying / nationalizing the responsibility for schools].
- **[Informed]**: I think that [citizen name] bases their opinion on sound arguments.
- **[Importance]**: I think that the raised policy issue is very important to [citizen name].
- **[Deservingness]**: [citizen name]'s concerns deserve to be taken seriously.

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Mechanism on estimating background characteristics: How many citizens in your municipality would you expect to have a similar background as [citizen name]? [slider, 0\% - 100\%]

Mechanisms

- **[Electoral accountability:]** How likely do you think it is that [citizen] will vote in the upcoming elections?
  [slider, 0\% - 100\%]
- **[Donations:]** How likely do you think it is that [citizen] will donate to a political party in the upcoming elections? [slider, 0\% - 100\%]

E-mail: Now we want to hear from you! We invite you to write your own e-mail to a politician. All e-mails will be made accessible to a sample of local politicians, Swedish EU politicians, and MPs, as we will conduct our next survey with politicians in Sweden. The goal of the survey with politicians is to understand how letters and e-mails by citizens affect politicians' perceptions of public opinion. Thus, this is your opportunity to write to a politician and make sure that it reaches them.

Please take your time with this task. [Large open text field]

Which of the following best describes the type of work you do? [order randomized]

- Managerial / Professional
- Technical / Skilled trade
- Service work (e.g., retail, hospitality)
- Manual labor
- Administrative / Office work
- Student
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Other: [open text field]

Where do you live?

- In the city
- In a small town
- On the countryside
- Other: [open text field]

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Approximately how large, normally, is your own monthly income before tax (pension, student aid, benefits, etc. should be included)?

- Less than 10 000 kronor
- 10 000 – 19 000 kronor
- 20 000 – 34 999 kronor
- 35 000 – 49 999 kronor
- 50 000 - 64 999 kronor
- 65 000 – 79 999 kronor
- More than 80 000 kronor

Which political party do you most identify with? [randomized order]

- Swedish Social Democratic Party
- Sweden Democrats
- Moderate Party
- Left Party
- Centre Party
- Christian Democrats
- Green Party
- Liberals

What is your gender? [randomized order]

- Male
- Female
- Other

How old are you? [slider from 18 to 100]

What is the highest level of education you have obtained? [dropdown menu]

- Primary school or equivalent
- Upper secondary school
- Upper secondary school, 3 years or more
- Postsecondary education, less than 3 years
- Postsecondary education, 3 years or more
- Postgraduate education (Licentiate or Doctorate degree)
- Other education
- Prefer not to answer

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Debrief: Thank you for your time and for participating in this survey. Our goal in this survey was to understand how respondents perceive letters to politicians written by citizens with varying socio-economic backgrounds.

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B.2 Descriptives

We report summary statistics about the pre-test sample in Table B.1, which shows that the sample was, on average, 62 years old (SD = 14 years) and 70% of the sample were male. As these demographics (apart from age) were asked at the very end of the survey, the number of responses drops for these items. The table additionally includes the summary statistics of the outcome questions for all three issues that were asked at the very beginning of the pre-test. Table B.2 depicts a propensity table showing respondents' places of residence and their preferred political party. Most respondents are Social Democrats, followed by the Moderates, which are the two largest parties in Sweden.

Figures B.1, B.2, and B.3 show the histograms for the outcome variables across all three issues, depicting the large variation in responses.

Table B.1: Summary statistics of respondents' characteristics and the outcome variables

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	645	62.349	13.735	18	87
Income	381	4.436	1.442	1	7
Level of education	380	3.503	0.932	1	6
Share opposing issue 1	602	52.261	20.436	0	100
Share opposing issue 2	602	45.133	25.461	0	100
Share opposing issue 3	602	28.316	22.532	0	100
Share caring issue 1	582	51.780	20.687	0	100
Share caring issue 2	582	44.687	24.881	0	100
Share caring issue 3	582	30.390	22.879	0	100

Table B.2: Propensity table for residence and preferred political party

Characteristic	
Place of residence	
City	264 (69%)
Countryside	53 (14%)
Small town	68 (18%)
Preferred political party	
Centre Party	22 (5.9%)
Christian Democrats	13 (3.5%)
Green Party	46 (12%)
Left Party	28 (7.5%)
Liberals	29 (7.8%)
Moderates	82 (22%)
Social Democrats	111 (30%)
Sweden Democrats	41 (11%)

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Figure B.1: Histogram of the outcome variables for issue 1

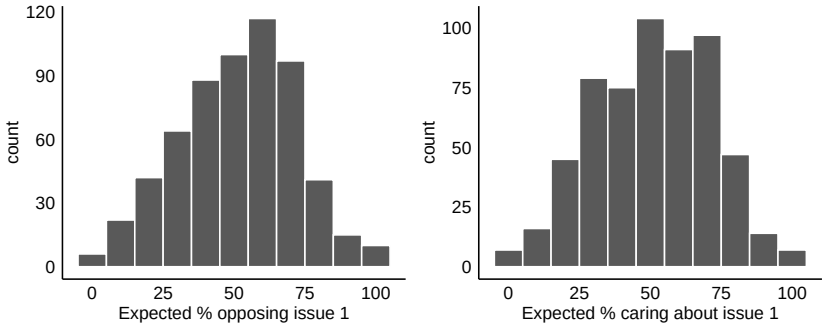


Figure B.2: Histogram of the outcome variables for issue 2

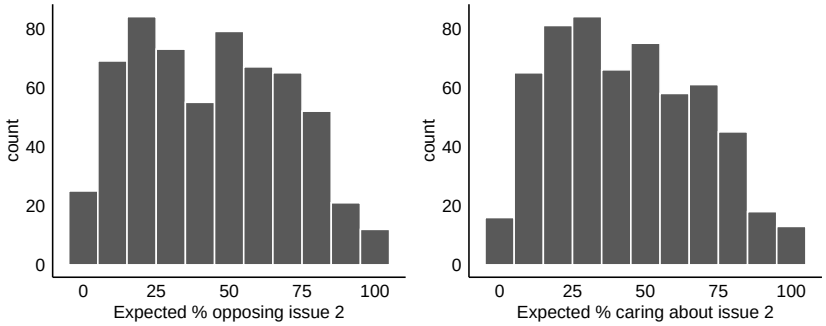
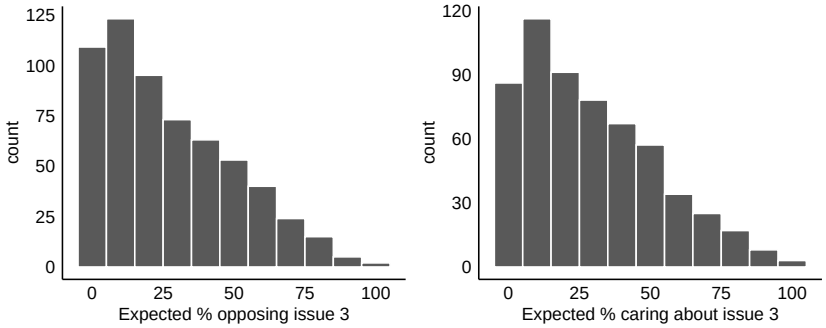


Figure B.3: Histogram of the outcome variables for issue 3



B.3 Manipulation checks

As a manipulation check, we asked respondents how they perceived the status of the citizen who had written the e-mail on a scale reaching from 0 (low-status) to 100 (high-status). Table B.3 shows that all three status treatments significantly affected respondents' perception of the citizen's status by 8 to 10 points. Every treatment additionally varies the citizen's gender, which does not uniformly affect perceived status. In vignette 2 concerning assisted dying, female citizens were perceived to have a lower status. However, this effect is smaller than the effect of the other status treatments. Additionally, it is unclear whether gender affects perceived status in the same way across all three

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treatments, which speaks in favor of randomizing gender throughout the vignettes (as planned). The finding that the status of the email sender was successfully manipulated implies that, even if politicians have priors about which status subgroups are more likely to contact them, these priors are not so strong that they cannot be updated when reading an email containing status cues.

Table B.3: Treatments on perceived status ranging from low-status (0) to high-status (100).

	Perceived status (0-100)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment 1: Low-status (vs. high-status)	−8.53***		
	(1.84)		
Treatment 1: Female (vs. male)	0.46		
	(1.84)		
Treatment 2: Low-status (vs. high-status)		−10.46***	
		(1.93)	
Treatment 2: Female (vs. male)		−4.00*	
		(1.93)	
Treatment 3: Low-status (vs. high-status)			−8.40***
			(1.96)
Treatment 3: Female (vs. male)			−2.40
			(1.96)
Intercept	59.88***	60.45***	58.90***
	(1.60)	(1.68)	(1.71)
Observations	551	518	518
R^2	0.04	0.06	0.04

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Additionally, we asked respondents' how they would describe the citizen from the vignette. Table B.4 shows the results for treatment 1, the privatization of healthcare vignette, Table B.5 for the issue of assisted dying, and Table B.6 for the issue concerning the nationalization of the responsibility of schools. All three tables show that the results of the status treatments are in the expected directions.

Table B.4: Treatment 1 on status indicators.

	High education	Low education	White-collar worker	Blue-collar worker	High-income	Low-income	Man	Woman
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Low-status (vs. high-status)	−0.10*	0.06	−0.15***	0.21***	−0.09*	0.17***	0.03	0.004
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male (vs. female)	0.07	−0.01	0.04	−0.06	0.03	−0.14***	0.20***	−0.25***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Intercept	0.43***	0.12***	0.37***	0.19***	0.32***	0.28***	0.28***	0.60***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Observations	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
R^2	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.04	0.06

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

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Table B.5: Treatment 2 on status indicators.

	High education	Low education	White-collar worker	Blue-collar worker	High-income	Low-income	Man	Woman
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Low-status (vs. high-status)	−0.19***	0.12***	−0.04	0.22***	−0.25***	0.15***	0.01	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male (vs. female)	−0.11**	0.08*	−0.10**	0.06	−0.11**	0.09*	0.23***	−0.30***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Intercept	0.48***	0.12***	0.36***	0.21***	0.50***	0.24***	0.33***	0.61***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Observations	525	525	525	525	525	525	525	525
R^2	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.06	0.09

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.6: Treatment 3 on status indicators.

	High education	Low education	White-collar worker	Blue-collar worker	High-income	Low-income	Man	Woman
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Low-status (vs. high-status)	−0.14**	0.06	−0.07	0.10*	−0.27***	0.19***	0.03	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male (vs. female)	−0.01	−0.03	−0.01	−0.02	0.04	−0.04	0.30***	−0.31***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Intercept	0.44***	0.22***	0.36***	0.28***	0.48***	0.26***	0.28***	0.67***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Observations	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
R^2	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.08	0.04	0.10	0.10

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

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C Survey Outline Politicians

In this section, we display the full survey outline of the experiment that will be conducted with politicians in summer of 2026. This survey received ethical approval by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.

Due to ethical concerns, the survey begins with a contextualizing sentence and the clarification that this is a fictional setting (see Naurin and Öhberg 2021). To test the effect of contact on perceptions of public opinion, respondents answer a public opinion perception item batteries concerning one of three policy issues. Then, the survey explains that a citizen of the politicians' municipality is reaching out. The vignettes are kept short and variation in length is kept minimal as the six vignettes vary between 111 to 116 words. The municipal framing was chosen because it represents the most proximate and intuitive constituency reference point for all politician types in our sample. While MPs represent electoral districts and EU politicians operate at a supranational level, Swedish politicians — regardless of jurisdiction — maintain close ties to local party branches and regularly engage with constituents at the municipal level (see also Karlsson 2018). Swedish politics is notably locally anchored: MPs are typically recruited through municipal party organizations and maintain active local profiles. EU politicians similarly retain strong ties to their domestic municipal base.

The issues across the treatment vignettes are relevant for all types of politicians in the sample as elderly care, assisted dying, and schooling dominate party politics in Sweden across jurisdictions. While local governments bear the greatest political responsibility for these issues, both national- and EU-level politicians regularly take action on these issues and must assess their alignment with public opinion. We therefore expect local politicians, MPs, and EU politicians to all have strong incentives to pay close attention to public opinion on these issues. For instance, the national government periodically intervenes in both domains: in 2023, the Swedish government launched a dedicated inquiry into independent school funding as part of planned privatization reforms; in 2025, a new Social Services Act was adopted to strengthen preventive care for the elderly and children. MPs therefore actively discuss these issues, take public positions, and coordinate closely with local party branches. EU politicians are most indirectly affected, yet they routinely carry their domestic party's position into the European Parliament and must maintain alignment between domestic and EU-level politics.

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SURVEY START

[Selection of one of three share items (share Q1, share Q2, or share Q3), depending on which issue is randomized into the control task]

Share Q1: It is debated in Sweden whether the privatization of healthcare (**e.g.** elderly care) should be limited. Please give your best guesses to the following questions on the privatization of healthcare. [5-point Likert scale]

- To what extent do you expect Swedish citizens to **agree** that the privatization of healthcare should be limited?
- To what extent do you expect Swedish citizens to **strongly care** about the issue?

Share Q2: It is being debated whether Sweden should legalize assisted dying for people with terminal illnesses who would like to end their life with the assistance of a medical professional. Please give your best guesses to the following questions. [5-point Likert scale]

- To what extent do you expect citizens to **agree** that assisted dying should be legalized?
- To what extent do you expect citizens to **strongly care** about the issue?

Share Q3: A current political debate revolves around the question of whether municipalities should maintain their responsibility for schooling, or whether the national government should take over the responsibility. [5-point Likert scale]

- To what extent do you expect citizens to **agree** that the national government should be responsible for schools?
- To what extent do you expect citizens to **strongly care** about the issue?

It is common for citizens to reach out to the politicians in their municipality to share their concerns or common problems they face. In the following, you will read two fictitious emails from citizens from your municipality. Imagine you receive them in your inbox. After reading each e-mail, we will ask you to evaluate the issues mentioned in the e-mails.

[Names to vary in the e-mail:
Male + high-status: Edvard Rosenblad; Carl-Johan Lindén
Female + high-status: Lovisa Rosenblad; Victoria Lindén

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Male + low-status: Micke Johansson; Ronny Larsson
Female + low-status: Jessica Andersson; Izabella Larsson
]

TREATMENT ISSUE 1: Opposing privatization of healthcare
Hello!

[**I am a tech-founder and entrepreneur/ I work as a cashier at a grocery store**] and with my working hours it is diSicult to bring my 80-year-old mother to the doctor. She needs my help, but the waiting time for an appointment is long, and appointments outside of my working day are rare.

Now, a nearby hospital is supposed to be sold to a private investor. I am really tired that my taxes are being spent on the profit of these investors while the quality of healthcare is declining.

I am writing to you because something needs to be done about the ongoing privatization of healthcare. You, taking a stance on this issue, can make a difference.

Best wishes,
[**gender + status name**]

TREATMENT ISSUE 2 allow assisted dying
Hello,

A year ago, I was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. It is a very painful disease with a fatal outcome. I wish it were possible that I didn't have to go through the full course of the illness.

Throughout my career as a **[senior partner at a law firm / personal assistant for people with a disability]**, I have always worked to promote the autonomy of people. Before

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reaching a point where I can no longer maintain my personal autonomy, I would prefer to have the option of an assisted death.

Sweden does not currently provide a legal framework for this choice. I urge you to support legislation that would allow terminally ill individuals, under strict safeguards, to decide when and how their suSering should end.

Sincerely,
[Dr. /][gender + status name]

TREATMENT ISSUE 3: Nationalizing the responsibility for schools

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Hi,

I recently moved with my [wife / husband] and child, because of my job. [**I have always earned well, but / I have been struggling financially, and**] this position provided a more stable [**and high / albeit low**] income.

We and our child love the new school, but it has made me realize that the quality of schools is largely dependent on the municipality in which you live. It seems unreasonable to me that Sweden, which is a rich country, cannot guarantee high-quality education to all its children.

Would it not be better if the government took over responsibility from the municipalities to secure high-quality education across the country? You as a politician have the opportunity to do something about this.

Best wishes,
[**gender+ status name**]

Outcome: Think about the e-mail you just read and give your best guesses to the following questions. [5-point Likert scale]

- To what extent do you expect Swedish citizens to **agree [**that the privatization of healthcare should be limited; that assisted dying should be legalized; that schools should be nationalized**]**?

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- To what extent do you expect Swedish citizens to **strongly care** about the issue?

Mechanisms: We are interested in your perception of the citizen who wrote the e-mail. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [5-point Likert scale]

- **[Proficiency]**: I think the citizen understands the complexity of the debate regarding [healthcare privatization / assisted dying/nationalizing the responsibility for schools].
- **[Informed]**: I think the citizen based their opinion on sound arguments.
- **[Importance]**: I think that the raised policy issue is very important to the citizen.

Mechanisms

- **[Electoral accountability]:** How likely do you think that the citizen is to take the politician's action on the issue into account when deciding how to vote? [5-point Likert scale]
- **[Donations]:** How likely do you think it is that the citizen will donate to a political party in the upcoming elections? [5-point Likert scale]

Responsiveness: Think of the e-mail you read. How likely are you to take the following actions? [5-point Likert scale]

- Answer the e-mail to explain your position.
- Raise the issue of [healthcare privatization, assisted dying, nationalizing the responsibility for schools] among your party colleagues.

Behavioral measure: In a previous survey, we asked a sample of over 664 Swedish citizens to write an email to a politician about an issue they personally care about. You can access all their e-mail texts by clicking on this link (a new browser window will open). [insert link to email texts here]

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