

Politicized Meritocracy: Determinants of Partisan and Racial Selection in US City Government

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT; PLEASE DO NOT CITE

Abstract

A rich body of research emphasizes the importance of a representative government for policymaking and public service provision. Yet, recent work on the composition of US bureaucracies reveals significant gaps in the descriptive representation of partisan and racial groups in government and their consequences for service delivery. What drives partisan and racial selection in professionalized bureaucracies? Focusing on selection in New York City's government, this project addresses the question in three steps. First, I use detailed administrative data on the characteristics of city employees, including their partisanship, race, and gender, to illustrate the representational gaps between local bureaucrats and their constituents. Second, I focus on the New York Police Department (NYPD) and unpack the dynamics of partisan and racial misrepresentation. I find that Republican and White employees are more likely to be hired, promoted, appointed to senior ranks, receive more departmental awards, and have longer tenure than non-White and Democratic officers. Third, I show that the murder of George Floyd substantially increased turnover at the NYPD and affected the racial and partisan composition of police on the margins. By delineating the complexities of selection in modern bureaucracies, this study provides new evidence about how independent, professional bureaucracies are politicized endogenously.

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1 Introduction

It has been well-established that the upper echelons of the US federal bureaucracy are highly politicized. High-ranking positions at federal agencies regularly experience significant turnover and partisan cycles with changes in presidential administrations (Bolton et al., 2020; Spenkuch et al., 2023). This strong partisan selection is hardly surprising given that the US president has a substantial influence on the staffing of these senior positions. For one, US presidents select political appointees who share their partisan identity (Lewis, 2008). Additionally, senior executive bureaucrats whose partisanship and preferences clash with the presidential agenda resign to avoid political marginalization and conflict with the incoming administration (Bertelli and Lewis, 2012; Doherty et al., 2018, 2019; Bolton et al., 2020).

In contrast, it is more difficult to explain the dominance of particular parties or racial groups among rank-and-file bureaucrats in politically insulated and regulated civil service systems. In theory, civil service enables members from all groups and classes to enter and progress in bureaucratic careers. The high political independence of lower-level bureaucrats and the emphasis on competitive recruitment, standardized career advancements, and secure tenure in meritocracies reduce the possibility of politically motivated staffing of public agencies. This is especially true for bureaucrats of many US city governments, where civil service commissions operate staffing processes at arm’s length of politicians, and the high discretion of street-level service providers further reduces politicians’ influence. Nevertheless, recent evidence shows that local bureaucracies across US jurisdictions and agencies, including police departments, correctional agencies, and public schools, have strong partisan and racial leanings and are often unrepresentative of the jurisdictions they serve (Lerman and Page, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2020; Ba et al., 2023; Donahue, 2023). What explains such partisan and racial selection in today’s professionalized and meritocratic bureaucracies?

In this paper, I show that even without explicit patronage appointments and political

influence, institutional features of meritocratic bureaucracies can lead to politicized and unrepresentative bureaucracies. Unpacking various components of bureaucratic selection in a modern civil service system, I describe how dynamics of self-selection, homophily, and institutional inertia in screening and promotion processes in bureaucracies shape the political and racial composition of meritocracies. Additionally, I examine how changes in the political environment of bureaucratic agencies affect these selection dynamics. The primary insight of the descriptive exercises in this paper stipulates how bureaucracies can be politicized endogenously through the type of individuals drawn to, recruited, promoted, and retained in the public sector.

Understanding and disentangling the complex selection processes that dictate the representativeness of public agencies is important for at least two reasons. First, in a racially diverse society, a representative bureaucracy fosters government legitimacy because it demonstrates equal access to power, the willingness of different groups to participate in bureaucratic processes, and the value of differential experience and expertise in government (Selden, 1997; Theobald and Haider-Markel, 2008; Riccucci et al., 2014; Kringen, 2016). Second, the representation of different groups and preferences in government often has meaningful effects on the quality of public goods provision (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011; Ba et al., 2021, 2023; Harris, nd) and the bureaucracy’s ability to understand and meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016; Bhavnani and Lee, 2018; Xu, 2021). Beyond bureaucrats’ race or gender, their partisan identities are an essential component of such active representation. Given the extreme polarization of American parties and the fact that partisanship is a crucial predictor of individuals’ attitudes on many policy issues, a skewed partisan representation in street-level bureaucracies can have important distributional consequences for public service provision (Lerman and Page, 2015; Forand et al., 2022; Ba et al., 2023; Donahue, 2023).

For my empirical setting, I draw on novel administrative data for employees across New York City (NYC) agencies. This case allows me to combine multiple relevant records, in-

cluding civil service exam data, payroll information, promotion and attrition decisions, and official voter registration records. In addition to employment information, the resulting data contains measures on the partisanship, race, gender, age, place of work, and residence of individual bureaucrats. Hence, this effort provides a detailed description of partisan and racial selection in one of America’s largest bureaucracies, covering more than 560,000 employees on the NYC payroll since 2014. NYC is a good case to study how professionalized bureaucracies can be politicized endogenously. Its formalized civil service system with strict rules for hiring and promotions ensures a high independence of bureaucrats from political influence and control. Additionally, the vast majority of elected politicians in NYC have consistently been Democrats. This lack of electoral turnover in the ruling party renders the prevailing explanation for bureaucratic partisanship (i.e., political cycles) less relevant.

My analysis proceeds in three steps: First, I estimate municipal employees’ different degrees of representativeness vis-à-vis citizens. In addition to observable traits, such as race and gender, I estimate how city employees mirror citizens of New York City in terms of their partisanship. I show stark differences in representativeness across agencies, geographic regions, time, and characteristics. While police, fire, and sanitation departments are consistently more Republican, White, and male relative to NYC’s voting population, the Department of Social Services employs more Democrats, African Americans, and female individuals compared to the general public. Among the top five city agencies, only the Department of Correction manages to closely mirror NYC’s citizens in its partisan and racial composition.

In the second step, I focus on selection within the NYPD and unpack the drivers of descriptive (mis)representation by tracing the types of individuals selecting into the bureaucracy and examining differential career trajectories and attrition rates of more than 58,000 officers. I find consistent differences in selection dynamics across individual officers by partisanship and race. My analysis suggests that while most NYPD aspirants (exam-takers who pass the first entry exam) are Democrats and non-White, Republican and White exam-takers

are more likely to advance to the hiring stage. Similarly, Republican and White officers are more likely to gain higher ranks in NYPD’s hierarchy, are more often appointed to elite units, and receive more departmental awards than Democrats and non-Whites. Additionally, I show consistent trends of homophily: Teams headed by Democratic (black or Hispanic) leaders have lower shares of lower-ranked Republican (White) members and exhibit higher racial diversity. Finally, Democrats and non-White officers leave the force earlier, while Republican and White officers are more likely to remain on the force beyond the retirement age and are less likely to be dismissed or terminated.

In a final step, I examine how changes in the political environment of US law enforcement affect these selection dynamics. Many police departments across the US registered record high numbers of retirements and resignations by police officers following the 2020 BLM protests, and concerns arose that this “mass exodus” contributed to a rising level of crime and lower quality of police services (Nix and Wolfe, 2020; Mourtgos et al., 2022). However, without knowing the *characteristics* of departing officers – besides their mere number – it is difficult to assess the overall impact of police turnover on policing services. Leveraging the substantial protest movement following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 in an event study design, I show that Republicans and White officers were 35% and 50% more likely to leave the NYPD force immediately after George Floyd’s death than Democratic and non-White employees, respectively. The results suggest that almost 900 White officers decided to step down in the six months following the protests compared to only 768 non-White members of the force.

This article makes three main contributions to scholarship on bureaucratic politics and local political economy. First, this research builds on and expands the literature on bureaucratic representation. A substantial body of work assesses the effect of the descriptive composition of bureaucracies on bureaucratic performance and policy-making. For instance, several articles highlight that bureaucrats provide better services if they are embedded in their jurisdictions (i.e., have social ties and share identity markers with citizens) (White

et al., 2015; Bhavnani and Lee, 2018; Ba et al., 2021; Xu, 2021; Xu et al., 2021). In contrast, I shed light on the *origins* of bureaucratic representation. By describing the dynamics that give rise to under- or overrepresentation in the bureaucracy, this study contributes to our understanding of what drives bureaucratic governance.

Second, this article speaks to the growing body of work on bureaucratic partisanship and selection. Both in the US (Bertelli and Lewis, 2012; Doherty et al., 2018, 2019; Bolton et al., 2020; Spenkuch et al., 2023) and other electoral democracies (Xu, 2018; Colonnelli et al., 2020; Fiva et al., 2021; Akhtari et al., 2022; Toral, 2022), the selection and turnover of partisan bureaucrats are usually attributed to the power of politicians to interfere in the staffing of bureaucracies. By shifting the focus to the broader determinants of bureaucratic selection, I provide an alternative explanation for partisan and racial selection in highly professionalized civil service systems, where politicians' influence on bureaucratic hiring is minimal.

Third, while there is a growing interest in the dynamics of responsiveness and representation in US local governments, the primary focus of scholars has been the traits of elected officials, including city council members or county representatives (de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw, 2016; Einstein and Kogan, 2016; Sances, 2021). In contrast, I speak to the growing interest in the composition of local *bureaucracies* (Miller and Segal, 2018; Ba et al., 2021, 2023; Donahue, 2023) and focus on the role of bureaucrats' characteristics and their relationships with politicians and citizens to understand the dynamics of descriptive representation. Especially on the local level, where bureaucrat-citizen interactions are frequent and often the only face-to-face contact that citizens have with the state, it is critical to understand the root causes of representational gaps between bureaucracies and their jurisdictions.

2 Issues of Representative Bureaucracy in Meritocracies

An increasing body of research suggests that improving the representativeness of bureaucracies by increasing the profile of minorities in public service has meaningful effects on

public goods provision and government accountability (Kingsley, 1944; Meier, 1975). The core argument is that descriptive representation (i.e., a bureaucracy that shares pertinent demographic attributes and social identities with the population to which it attends) enhances the responsiveness of bureaucracies to citizens’ needs and thus improves public service provision, especially for marginalized groups. The underlying assumption is that having bureaucratic agents who mirror the demographics of the general population (passive representation) translates into policymaking that benefits citizens with those same traits due to shared values associated with social identities (active representation) (Meier, 1975). A more closely matched representation of constituencies is also expected to improve citizens’ trust in bureaucracy and government more broadly (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Theobald and Haider-Markel, 2008; Riccucci et al., 2014). That is, representation can influence public service provision due to its symbolic value for citizens, even if it does not directly affect bureaucrats’ actions.

The benefits of representative bureaucracy are especially pronounced for street-level bureaucrats, including public school teachers (Meier and Stewart, 1992; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016), judges and correction officers (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011; Harris, nd) and police forces (Riccucci et al., 2014; Miller and Segal, 2018; Ba et al., 2021), where effective oversight of bureaucratic discretion is difficult and bureaucrat-citizen interactions are frequent (Meier and Stewart, 1992; Lipsky, 1980; Ba et al., 2023). For instance, Ba et al. (2021) show that relative to White officers in Chicago on the same shift and patrol assignment, Black, Hispanic and female officers use force less often, especially against Black civilians and in majority-Black areas. Similarly, leveraging employment discrimination litigation across US police organizations since 1973, Harvey and Mattia (2022) find that increases in shares of Black officer substantially reduced racial disparities in crime victimization and Miller and Segal (2018) show that female representation in US policing increased reporting rates of domestic violence and decreased rates of intimate partner homicide and violent crimes against women.

Moving beyond observable traits of bureaucrats, such as race or gender, recent research also highlights that the partisan identities of street-level bureaucrats have instrumental implications for how they do their jobs (Lerman and Page, 2015; Colonnelli et al., 2020; Forand et al., 2022; Piotrowska, 2022; Spenkuch et al., 2023; Ba et al., 2023). For example, when incarceration is politically salient, Democratic correction officers are more likely to support rehabilitative models and less likely to favor punitive models of incarceration than their Republican counterparts (Lerman and Page, 2015). Similarly, Democratic police officers make fewer traffic stops and arrests, use force less often, and exhibit smaller racial disparities than Republican officers (Ba et al., 2023; Donahue, 2023). These partisan differences in officers' behavior are substantial and rival behavioral gaps across racial groups of officers.¹

Despite the desirable consequences of having a racially and politically balanced bureaucracy, many US street-level bureaucracies have strong partisan leanings and are politically and demographically unrepresentative of their constituencies. For example, 79% of US public school teachers are White, and White teachers often constitute the majority of a school's faculty, even in schools where most students are non-White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Similarly, substantial gaps exist in the descriptive representation of US police: across a sample of 98 major US law enforcement agencies, 56% of officers are White, relative to only 38% of the population in the relevant jurisdictions. Similarly, 32% of officers are Republican vis-à-vis 14% of voting-age citizens and only 31% of officers identify with the Democratic party relative to 43% of civilians (Ba et al., 2023).

Outside of the US, such politically motivated staffing of local bureaucracies is often associated with patronage-based systems where elected officials and party machines have considerable control over local government employment (Colonnelli et al., 2020; Akhtari et al., 2022). Yet, in meritocratic systems, where strong norms of impartiality in selection and promotion dominate, and the careers of politicians and bureaucrats are separated (Dahlström

¹Using quasi-random shift assignments of Chicago police officers, Ba et al. (2023) find that deploying a Democratic instead of a Republican officer reduces the volume of stops, arrests, and use of force by 14%, 12% and 24% per 100 shifts citywide, respectively.

and Lapuente, 2017), it is more difficult to explain a politically and racially skewed composition of bureaucracies. Civil service and merit systems in most jurisdictions across the US would seem to reduce the opportunity for selection biases. Many bureaucratic agencies are required to hire and promote directly from a list of qualified, certified candidates and have little or no control over the testing and hiring process, as these responsibilities have been delegated to the parent jurisdiction’s civil service commission or department of human resources. Similarly, strict rules apply to voluntary and involuntary exits of bureaucrats from their agencies. So, what explains such imbalanced partisan and racial selection in US professionalized local bureaucracies – findings that we usually associate with political patronage and machine politics?

3 Attraction-Selection-Attrition Mechanisms in Bureaucracies

To understand the dynamics of selection in meritocratic bureaucracies, I characterize the representativeness of bureaucracies as a result of broader institutional features. I propose that biases – intentional or unintentional – in self-selection, hiring, promotion, and attrition practices in public bureaucracies are complementary in producing a mismatch between individual bureaucrats and the populations they serve. Using law enforcement as a case, I open the black box of the complex selection dynamics that determine the overall representativeness of US local bureaucracies in terms of race, partisanship, and gender.

The Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model, put forward by Schneider (1987) and common in the study of organizational behavior, provides a useful theoretical framework for this purpose. This model proposes that organizations – and their behaviors – are defined by the collective characteristics of people within them and that person-organization (P-O) fit is the central determinant of selection dynamics. It predicts that organizations tend towards homogeneity concerning the personality characteristics of their members due to a three-stage selection process. First, individuals are attracted to organizations based on their modal personality. Individuals decide whether to self-select into an organization from

an implicit estimate of the congruence between their personality characteristics and the organization’s goals (and processes, structures, and culture as manifestations of these goals). These organizations then select the most compatible applicant to the extent that they can influence the hiring process. Finally, because a lack of congruence is aversive, “misfits” tend to leave the organization. The logic is that fit yields commitment and satisfaction, which foster retention, and, by implication, those who do not fit leave (Schneider et al., 1995). The result is increasing homogeneity of members in an organization over time. In line with the general ASA framework, mission compatibility between public sector organizations and bureaucrats is found to be an essential factor for attracting, motivating, and retaining civil servants (Wilson, 1989; Besley and Ghatak, 2005; Prendergast, 2007; Dal Bó et al., 2013; Forand et al., 2022; Spenkuch et al., 2023). In the following, I delineate how the ASA mechanisms structure the racial and partisan composition of meritocratic bureaucracies. Since my empirical analysis of the selection dynamics focuses on US law enforcement, I pay particular attention to how ASA applies to recruitment, hiring, promotion, and attrition in police agencies.

3.1 Attraction

If individuals perceive their values to match those of the bureaucratic agency, they are more likely to self-select into the bureaucracy.² This might be because they derive intrinsic value from the specific public sector output they produce as bureaucrats (Besley and Ghatak, 2005; Prendergast, 2007) or because their partisanship and policy preferences align with those of the government agency (Forand et al., 2022). When gleaning their mission compatibility, applicants often rely on cues from an agency’s public image and political environment, their networks, and their identification with the profession (Donohue, 2021). For instance, as

²Note that I do not conceptualize mission fit simply as high public service motivation (PSM) (i.e., the “predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions or organizations” (Perry and Wise, 1990, p.368)). In contrast, following related work (Besley and Ghatak, 2005; Linos, 2017; Forand et al., 2022; Spenkuch et al., 2023), I assume that the congruence between the preferences and characteristics of bureaucrats and the specific goals of the relevant government agency determines mission fit.

policing has historically been an all-White male-dominated occupation, potential recruits among minority groups may choose not to become police officers due to perceptions that the profession is hostile toward them (Kringen and Kringen, 2014; Kringen, 2016) or due to a lack of role models and relatives employed in policing (Foley et al., 2008).

Similarly, issues of policing are highly politicized and polarized along partisan lines in the US. Republicans are substantially more likely to trust police, less likely to perceive police killings as a problem, and more likely to oppose protests and other efforts to reduce police violence in minority communities (Pew, 2016; Ba et al., 2023; Donahue, 2023). Moreover, the Republican Party increasingly leverages these pro-police sentiments in their electoral campaigns (Grosjean et al., 2023) and connections between police organizations and the Republican Party have recently intensified (Fineout, 2022; Donahue, 2023). Thus, from the pool of potential recruits, Republican and White citizens may be more likely to participate in the police recruitment process than Democratic and non-White individuals.

3.2 Selection

While intended to prioritize merit, the specificities of selection procedures in meritocratic bureaucracies can further reinforce these biases in candidate selection. Many civil service examinations include barriers in the screening process that may be particularly relevant for minority applicants, including degree requirements and background investigations. For instance, some evidence indicates that African American applicants are more likely to be disqualified during background screenings in the police hiring process, suggesting that checks for criminal histories and financial records have a disparate impact on minority candidates (Kringen and Kringen, 2014; Kringen, 2016). While affirmative action policies of bureaucratic agencies may offset these tendencies, their effectiveness for improving minority representation remains weak (Garner et al., 2020).

Alternatively, voluntary attrition during the selection process may skew the pool of potential hires. As the hiring and training process can take several months, candidates can

further update their perceptions of how they fit with the respective bureaucratic agency and its mission. In the case of policing, this implies that Democratic and non-White applicants tend to self-select out of the hiring process. Indeed, based on interviews with small samples of police recruits, some studies suggest that African American police applicants view the hiring process more negatively, believe the organization is less attractive, identify less with the profession, and are more likely to withdraw from the process than White applicants (Ryan et al., 2000; Ployhart et al., 2002; Kringen and Kringen, 2014).

3.3 Promotion and Attrition

The third step in the ASA cycle predicts that bureaucrats with low fit to their agency are more inclined to exit due to lower levels of commitment and satisfaction. Promotional opportunities are an essential determinant of job satisfaction and perceived fit in later stages of bureaucrats' careers (Hilal and Litsey, 2020). For law enforcement agencies, for instance, research suggests that officers whose intentions to be promoted are thwarted become more cynical and are more likely to withdraw from the agency (Scarborough et al., 1999), and minorities and women are particularly dissatisfied with the promotions processes in their agencies (Guajardo, 2014). Part of these differences may be explained by lower promotional aspirations among officer groups whose attributes constitute a minority in the force. Democratic and non-White bureaucrats might self-select out of the promotion process for reasons related to police culture and tokenism. The need to prove themselves in a Republican and White-dominated profession, the possible backlash against perceived preferential treatment, and a lack of role models in senior positions, could impede the ambitions of Democratic and non-White officers to seek promotion (Huff and Todak, 2023). Additionally, while departments and individual supervisors have little influence on official promotions to higher ranks, they can hinder the opportunities for horizontal and discretionary career steps of minority employees, such as assignments to specialty units. These dynamics might lead Democratic and non-White officers to retire earlier than Republican and White members of the force.

4 Data and Measurement

I now discuss my strategy for measuring descriptive representation in US city bureaucracies and empirically evaluating the relevance of the attraction-selection-attrition mechanisms in explaining it. I combine detailed administrative data on employees of New York City that allow me to trace bureaucrats' careers in government. NYC is undoubtedly unique in many ways, including its demographic composition and local political environment. Yet, it also provides a valuable case for studying selection dynamics in meritocratic bureaucracies. First, the availability of granular data on the city's bureaucrats allows for a close examination of bureaucratic selection and representativeness across and within agencies. More importantly, NYC is the largest and one of the most professionalized city governments in the US. Its formalized civil service system with strict rules for hiring and promotions ensures a high independence of bureaucrats from political influence and control. Additionally, the vast majority of elected politicians in NYC have consistently been Democrats. This lack of electoral turnover in the ruling party renders the prevailing explanation for bureaucratic partisanship (i.e., political cycles) less relevant. Instead, uncovering the career trajectories of different types of NYC's street-level bureaucrats teaches us about how meritocratic bureaucracies can be politicized *endogenously*.

I start with a roster of roughly 560,000 unique employees across the five major agencies of NYC in terms of their staff size, including the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Department of Correction, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Sanitation.³ This data comes from the NYC annual payroll between 2014 and 2021 and covers employees with appointment dates between 1970 and 2021.⁴ To identify the various demographic attributes of these employees, I merge the employment records with the 2021 L2 voter file based on employees' last names, first names, and middle initials. I restrict possible

³The Department of Education is currently excluded from the analysis due to data availability constraints.

⁴<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Citywide-Payroll-Data-Fiscal-Year-/k397-673e>; I identify unique employees based on the last name, first name, middle initial, and appointment date.

matches to registered voters in the city’s five boroughs or one of the neighboring counties of New York State since NYC agencies require their employees to reside within these areas. Following related work (Ba et al., 2023), I employ the probabilistic record linkage algorithm by Enamorado et al. (2019) and retain all matches with a posterior match probability of at least 0.7.

To study the specific drivers of selection among NYPD officers, I then add information on the career trajectories of about 58,000 uniformed police employees, including appointments, promotions, and retirements, from official records published in the City Record newspaper since 2014.⁵ Finally, I obtain data on roughly 96,000 entry-level and 5,700 promotion exams for the NYPD between 2014 and 2021, which I match to the L2 voter file and the NYPD officers on the payroll. This allows me to assess the attributes of both hired and non-hired NYPD aspirants.⁶ I link these administrative data probabilistically based on individuals’ full names and other employment details, where possible, in all these merging procedures. As Figure A1 shows, I can correctly match most employees and records with a very high probability – the median posterior probability of a match is above 0.95 across all matching procedures.

To measure the partisanship and race of individuals in my data, I rely on the information in the L2 voter files. For partisanship, I focus on the three main categories included in L2: Democrat, Republican, and Non-Partisan. Together, these comprise 96% of the 7,940,000 voter registrations in NYC and its surrounding counties. Note that the L2 information on partisanship in New York—unlike for other US states—is based on official registration records and does not require imputations. However, I must rely on L2’s proprietary imputation algorithm to measure bureaucrats’ and citizens’ races. To code racial categories of registered voters, L2 combines the given name, surname, and demographics of a voter’s census block to infer race.⁷

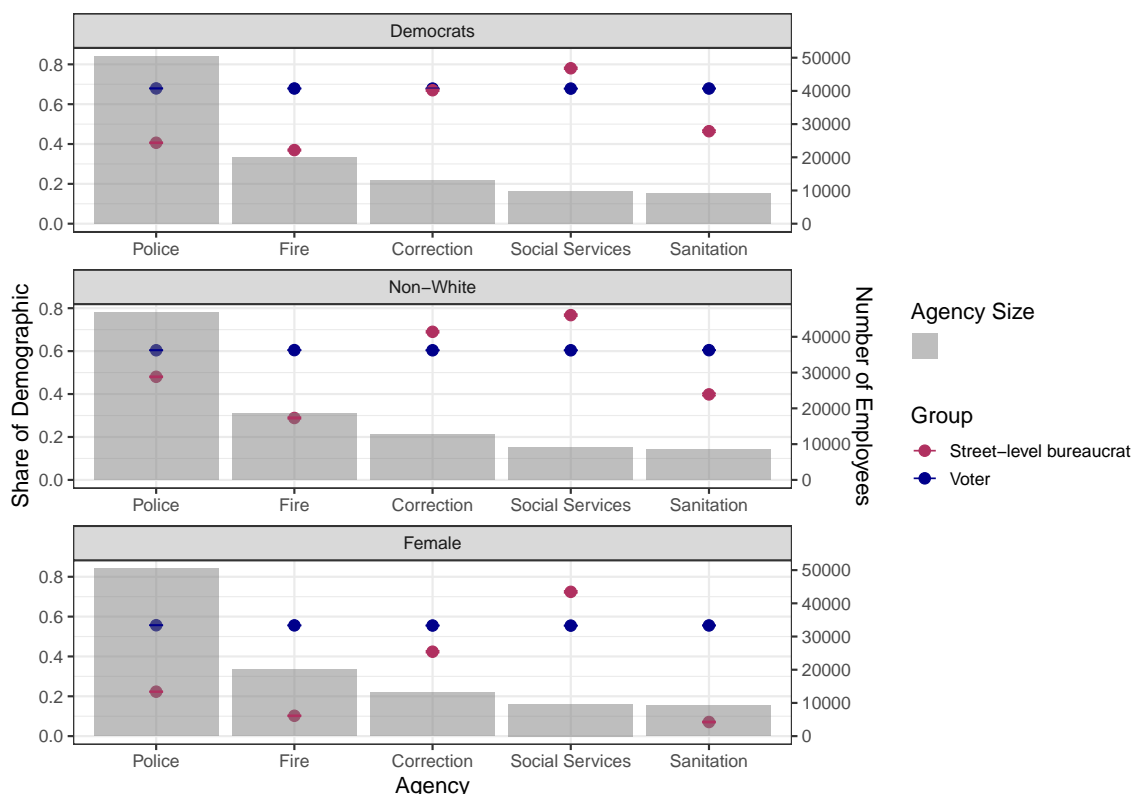
⁵<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcas/about/city-record.page>

⁶Note that the exam data does not provide information on *all* applicants, but instead contains individuals who successfully passed the exam (i.e., those with a score of 70/100 or above).

⁷In future iterations, I intend to include sensitivity analyses following Gallop and Weschle (2019) to address potential measurement errors in the racial categories.

5 Representativeness of NYC’s Government

Figure 1: Share of Demographics, Agencies vs. Registered Voters in NYC

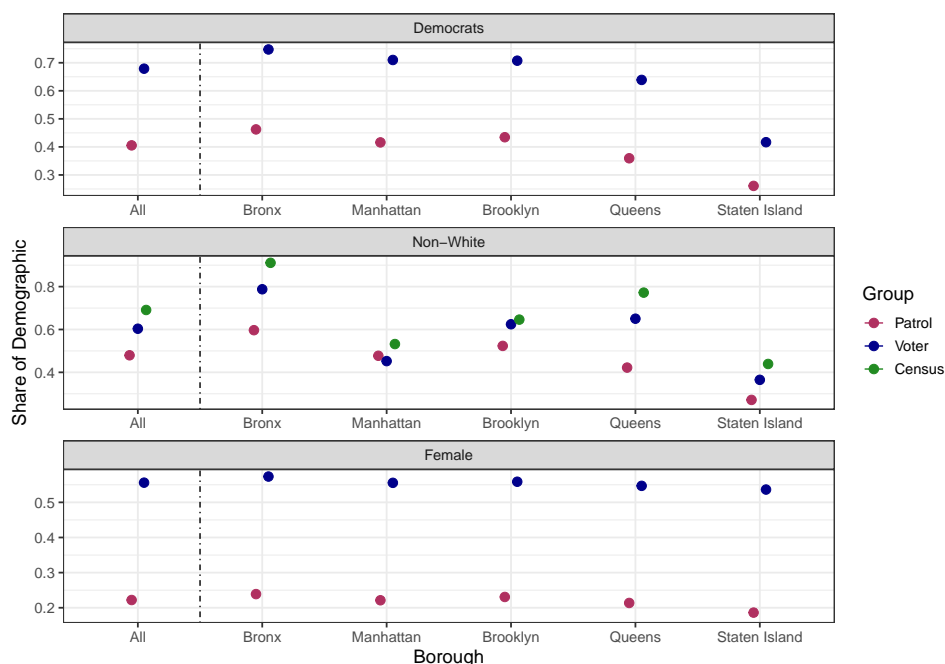


Agency employees only include uniformed/public facing employees plus leadership (i.e., I exclude administrative and other agency staff). Agency personnel includes individuals living in NYC’s five boroughs and neighboring boroughs, while NYC citizens are restricted to NYC’s five boroughs. Agency estimates are weighted by the posterior probability of matches between agency payrolls and the voter file.

I now compare the demographic composition of street-level bureaucrats and civilians in their jurisdictions along partisanship, race, and gender. Figure 1 first displays results across NYC agencies. Most agencies diverge from their jurisdictions regarding these attributes, albeit in different directions. Relative to the NYC voting population, the police, fire, and sanitation departments have substantially smaller shares of Democratic, non-White, and female members. For instance, while almost 70% of registered voters in NYC are Democrats and 60% are non-White, this only applies to 38% and 29% of front-line workers at the fire department, respectively. Interestingly, the two law enforcement agencies considered here (i.e., the police

and correction departments) differ in their representativeness. The NYPD substantially underrepresents Democrats by 30 percentage points and non-Whites by ten percentage points. The Department of Correction, in contrast, closely matches NYC’s voters in terms of partisanship and even *overrepresents* non-Whites. Similarly, the Department of Social Services skews more Democratic, non-White, and female than civilians in its jurisdictions.

Figure 2: Share of Demographics, Police vs. Registered Voters in NYC



Uniformed police employees and traffic enforcement agents are assigned to boroughs based on their work location in their final year on the payroll. Agency estimates are weighted by the posterior probability of matches between agency payrolls and the voter file.

These pooled results of representativeness mask some interesting trends across neighborhoods and time. Turning to descriptive representation at the NYPD in more detail, Figure 2 shows that gaps between the racial composition of citizens and NYPD officers are particularly stark in majority-Black communities, including the Bronx and Queens. At the same time, Democrats are underrepresented, and Republicans are overrepresented across all NYC boroughs, even in areas where Democrats are a minority among civilians. Yet, considering the trends in the partisan and racial composition of NYPD employees since 2014, Figure A2 indicates that the share of Republicans and White officers declined slightly, thus closing the

representational gaps vis-à-vis their constituencies somewhat.

6 Dynamics of Selection

Based on this general overview of the representativeness of NYC’s government, I now focus on selection within NYPD and unpack the dynamics of descriptive (mis)representation by tracing the types of individuals selecting in and out and the career trajectories of different types of officers. The aim is to disentangle the complex processes of self-selection, recruitment, promotion, and officer attrition that could drive the staffing of the country’s largest law enforcement agency.

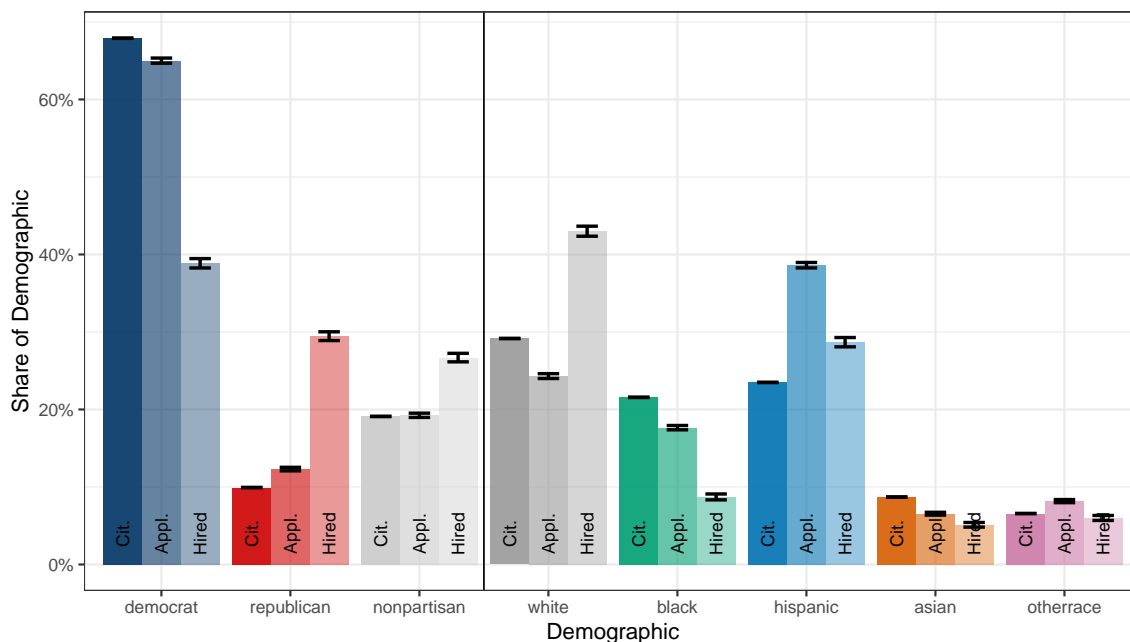
6.1 Attraction and Selection

To follow the process of recruitment at the NYPD, Figure 3 shows the share of party and racial categories among three different groups: NYC voters (matched to NYPD aspirants on age), all candidates who passed the NYPD entrance exam, and those applicants who were successfully hired and appointed by the NYPD. Considering partisanship first, it is clear that the pool of applicants already slightly underrepresents Democrats among its jurisdiction (68% vs. 64%) and overrepresents Republicans (12% vs. 9%). Yet, this representational gap is substantially larger between *hired* exam takers and NYC’s voters: Democrats make up only 38% of hired candidates, and Republicans account for 29% of successful applicants. Similar trends are observed for race, where the share of Whites almost doubles between the application and the hiring stages. These higher hiring probabilities for Republican and White applicants remain after accounting for exam difficulty and exam performance. As Table 1 shows, among candidates of the same exam and similar scores, Republicans and White candidates are five percentage points and two percentage points more likely to be appointed than Democratic and Black applicants, respectively.⁸

⁸Figure A3 further indicates that these gaps persist across exam performance.

What could explain these differences in selection into the force *after* applicants have already passed the exam? The recruitment process at the NYPD can be lengthy and uncertain. After the written entrance exam, applicants must pass further medical, physical, and psychological assessments as well as background character investigations. The average time it takes a candidate to be hired is one year, after which applicants must complete six months of police academy training. Republican and White applicants may be more committed to the police profession and less likely to reconsider other career options throughout this process. While the data does not allow for a direct test of this conjecture,⁹ Table A1 indicates that Democratic and non-White candidates are more likely to take another civil service exam within a year, suggesting that relative to Republicans and White applicants, they may see policing as just one viable appointment within the NYC bureaucracy.

Figure 3: Share of Demographics - Citizens, Police Exam Takers, Hired Exam Takers



The three bars among each partisan and racial group represent (from left to right) (1) share among NYC voters, (2) share among police exam takers, and (3) share among hired exam takers. Voters and exam takers are matched on age.

⁹My freedom of information request for data on police academy graduates is still pending (FOIL-2023-056-02128).

Table 1: Differences in Hiring By Exam Taker Characteristics

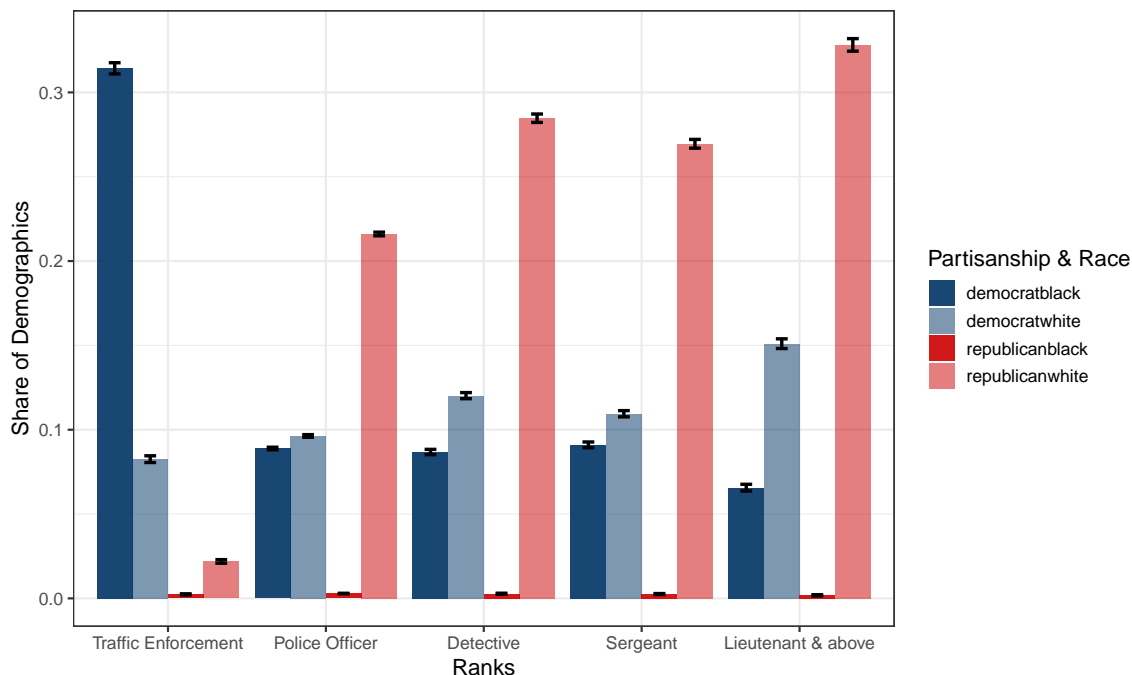
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Republican	0.05*** (0.00)		0.05*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)
Non-Partisan	0.02*** (0.00)		0.02*** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)
Black		-0.04*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Hispanic		-0.01*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Asian		-0.01* (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Other Race		-0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Exam score (80-90)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	
Exam score (90-100)	0.03*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)	
Exam FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Exam \times Score Bin FE	No	No	No	Yes
Mean of DV	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Num. obs.	64891	62719	60003	60003

Linear probability regressions, weighted by the posterior probability of a match between exam data and voter file. HC1 standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

6.2 Career Progression

How do assignment and promotion procedures in law enforcement further exacerbate these partisan and racial biases in selection? Using data on all uniformed employees and traffic enforcement agents on the NYPD payroll (2014-2021), Figure 4 indicates that Democrats, particularly Black Democrats, are clustered among the lower ranks. For instance, among traffic enforcement agents 33% are Black Democrats, whereas only 6% of lieutenants or above are Black and Democratic. For White Republicans, in contrast, these figures amount to 2% and 35%, respectively.

Figure 4: Share of Demographics by Police Rank



Yet, these distributions only provide a snapshot of the rank distribution and do not account for the fact that older cohorts of officers, who could have higher shares of Republican and White officers, may have achieved higher ranks simply due to their longer tenure. To account for this, Table 2 depicts differences in promotion probabilities across partisanship and race within the same cohorts. Models (1)-(3) only include official promotions that require a promotion exam (i.e., sergeant and above), and Models (4)-(6) further include discretionary

Table 2: Differences in Promotions by Officer Characteristics

	Official Promotions			Title Changes		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Republican	0.01*		0.00	0.03***		0.02***
	(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)		(0.00)
Non-Partisan	0.01		0.00	0.01**		0.01
	(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)		(0.00)
Black		-0.01*	-0.01		-0.04***	-0.03***
		(0.00)	(0.00)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Hispanic		-0.01***	-0.01**		-0.02***	-0.02***
		(0.00)	(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Asian		0.04***	0.04***		-0.00	0.00
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Other Race		0.03***	0.04***		-0.00	0.00
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of DV	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.17	0.17	0.17
Adj. R ²	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.13	0.13	0.13
Num. obs.	49558	48521	45990	49558	48521	45990

Linear probability regressions, weighted by the posterior probability of a payroll and voter file match. Level of observation: Uniformed employee. Outcome: Dummy for whether the employee received a promotion/title change between 2014 and 2021. HC1 standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

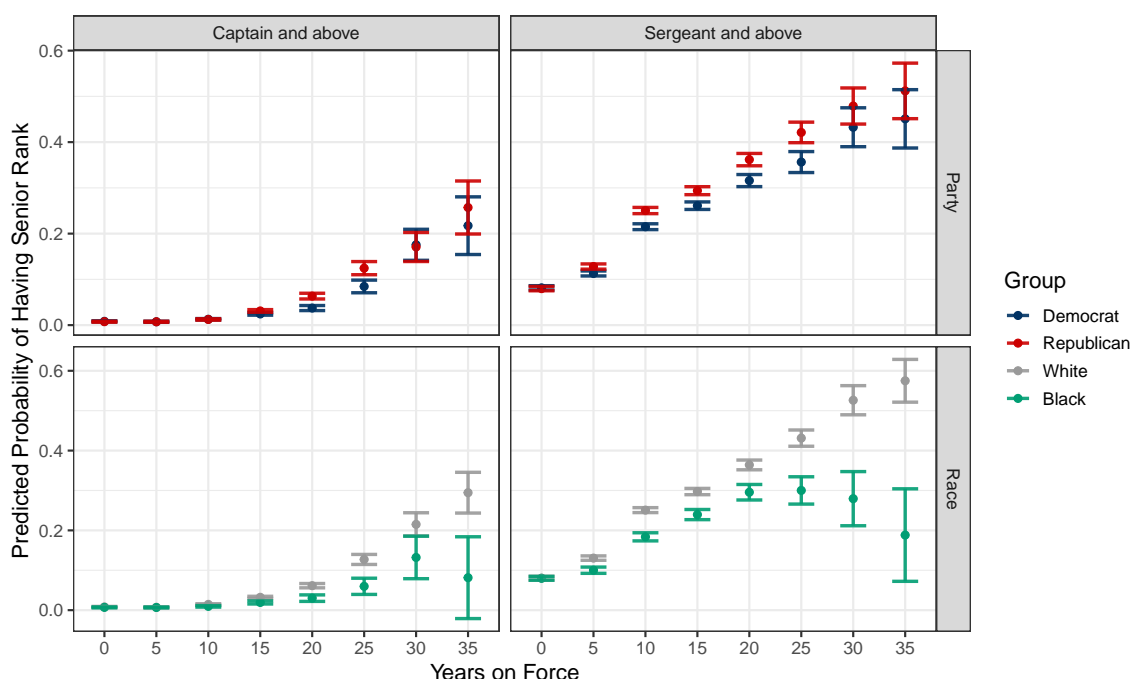
promotions (e.g., between detective grades). The estimates suggest that Republicans and Whites are one percentage point more likely to get promoted than Democratic, Black, and Hispanic officers, respectively. With an overall promotion rate of only 9% in the sample, these estimates imply substantively meaningful differences. As Table A2 shows, these differences are not explained by gaps in promotional aspirations: Republican and White officers are not more likely to take a promotion exam throughout their tenure than Democrats and non-Whites.¹⁰ Notably, these partisan and racial gaps are even larger when incorporating discretionary promotions and grade changes. Supplementary analyses in Tables A3 and A4 indicate that Republican and White officers are also more likely to receive departmental awards and to be assigned to prestigious elite units, including anti-terrorism and special

¹⁰The exception is Asian officers, who are more likely to take promotion exams and receive promotions.

forces. Additionally, teams headed by non-White (Democratic) leaders have lower shares of lower-ranked White (Republican) members and exhibit higher racial diversity overall (see Tables A5 and A6).¹¹

In Figure 5, I further assess whether this partisan and racial seniority gap persists across officers' tenure. Interestingly, the Black-White gap endures and widens over time, whereas Democrats seem to catch up to the ranks of Republicans after 30 years on the force. Taken together, this suggests that Republican, and particularly White, officers benefit from steeper progress along the career ladder in law enforcement.

Figure 5: Seniority Gap by Years of Experience



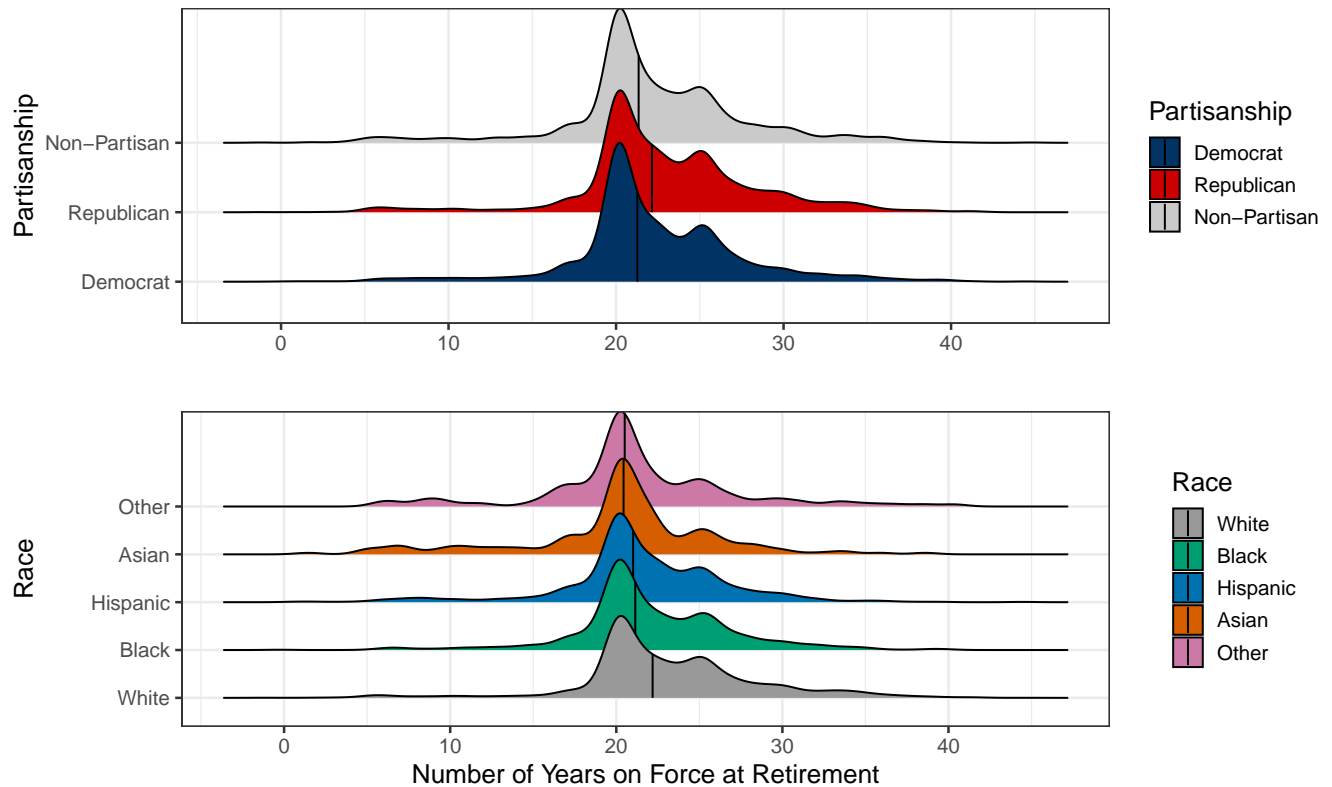
Depicted are predicted probabilities of having a senior rank, with 95% HC1 confidence intervals. All underlying regression models (LPM) include officer cohort fixed effects.

¹¹These analyses use a cross-section of active officers (as of October 2021) for whom more detailed information on assignments and awards is available at <https://nypdonline.org/link/2>.

6.3 Attrition

How do these differences in career trajectories across types of officers translate into their attrition from the force? Figure 6 depicts the distribution of years on the force at the time officers retire. Evidently, Republicans and White employees stay on the force somewhat longer, often working beyond the retirement age of 20 years. For instance, the median retiring Republican or White officer worked for 22.1 years, compared to 21.3 years for Democratic officers and 21 years for non-White officers. As Figure A4 illustrates, this leads to a dominance of Republicans and Whites among longer tenured members on the force.

Figure 6: Distribution of Years on Force at Retirement



Black lines indicate median years on the force at retirement.

To assess how these partisan and racial gaps in attrition relate to the divergent career trajectories presented in Section 6.2, I estimate differences in experience at retirement by officer ranks. Table 3 shows that the earlier attrition of Democrats is particularly pronounced

among police officers as opposed to higher-level ranks. This provides some suggestive evidence that Democrats are especially likely to retire early if they did not experience a promotion throughout their tenure, possibly because of frustrations with their career progression.

Table 3: Differences in Years on Force at Retirement, by Characteristics and Rank

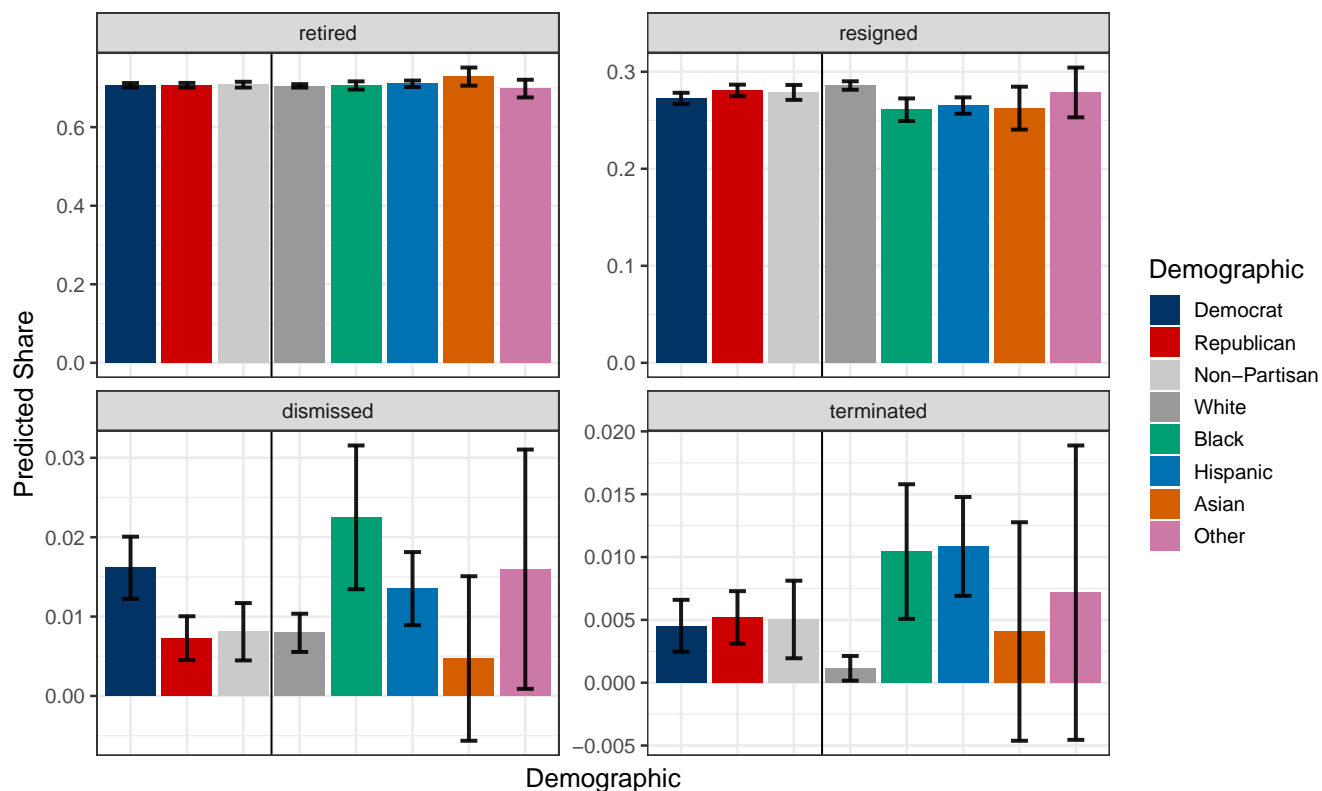
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Republican	0.24*** (0.07)		-0.11 (0.18)	
White		0.28*** (0.07)		0.16 (0.21)
Police officer			-1.53*** (0.13)	-1.34*** (0.20)
Sergeant			-0.92*** (0.16)	-0.76*** (0.22)
Republican \times Police officer			0.41* (0.20)	
Republican \times Sergeant			0.14 (0.23)	
White \times Police officer				0.03 (0.23)
White \times Sergeant				-0.08 (0.26)
Cohort Bin (10) FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of DV	22.53	22.53	22.53	22.53
Adj. R ²	0.69	0.69	0.70	0.70
Num. obs.	8125	8149	8125	8149

OLS, weighted by probability of matches between payroll and voter file and payroll and retirement records. Level of observation: Retiree. Outcome: Time since appointment date at retirement. HC1 standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

In addition to the timing, the reasons NYPD officers exit the force also seem to differ across partisanship and race. Across all types of officers, retirements and resignations account for the grand majority of exits (see Figure 7). However, involuntary exits (i.e., dismissals and terminations) account for significantly higher shares of exits among Democratic, Black, and Hispanic officers than for Republicans and Whites. Specifically, 2% of exiting Democrats,

3.3% of Blacks, and 2.4% of Hispanics leave involuntarily, whereas only 1.3% of Republicans and 0.9% of White officers leave due to dismissals or termination.¹²

Figure 7: Predicted Probability of Exit Type



The estimates are obtained from regressions of exit type (conditional on exit) on group demographic, cohort FE and fiscal year FE. The covariates are fixed at their observed values for predictions.

7 Police Accountability and Selection

The analysis so far has shown that biases in officer recruitment, career progression, and turnover shape NYPD's partisan and racial composition. In this section, I assess how changes in the political environment of the police affect these selection dynamics. Many US police departments reported sharp increases in retirements and resignations following the massive public protests and police scrutiny in 2020. A survey of almost 200 agencies indicated that

¹²Figures A5 and A6 further indicate that these higher involuntary exit probabilities for Democrats and non-Whites predominantly affect early-career officers.

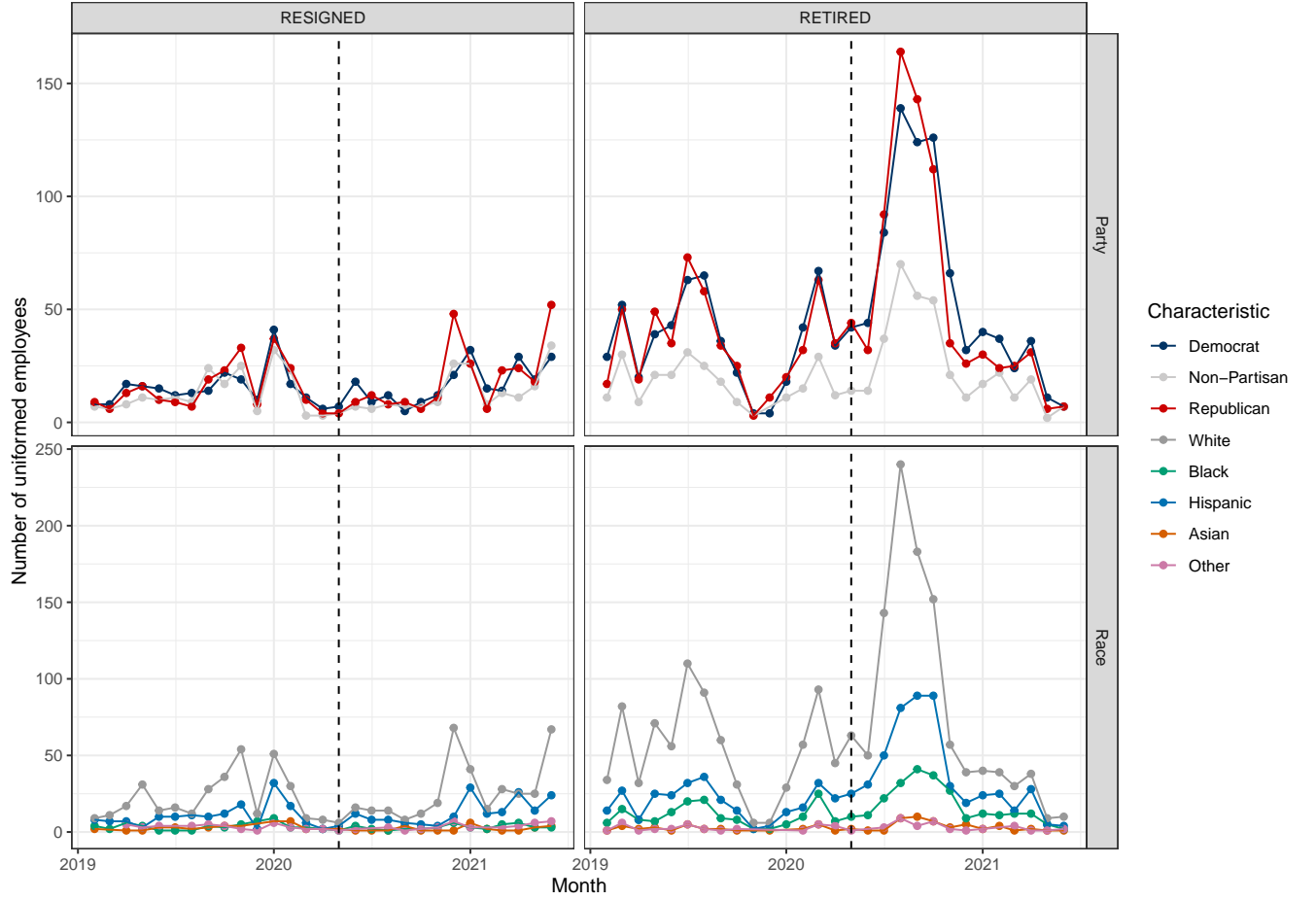
retirements increased by 45% and resignations rose by 18% on average between April 2020 and April 2021 compared to the previous 12 months ([Police Executive Research Forum, 2021](#)). Retiring officers often cited the lack of support from policymakers and the public, together with low pay, as the main reasons for leaving their departments ([MacFarquhar, 2021](#)).

This “mass exodus” sparked concerns that the high turnover rates would lead to decreased quality of service and rising crime rates ([Mourtgos et al., 2022](#)). Prior research links fewer officers per capita to higher numbers of violent and property crimes ([Levitt, 1997](#); [Chalfin and McCrary, 2018](#); [Piza and Chillar, 2021](#); [Chalfin et al., 2022](#)). Some estimates suggest that an additional ten officers abate approximately one homicide, with particularly strong declines in homicides for Black victims ([Chalfin et al., 2022](#)). These findings prompted the speculation that officers’ rapid departure from their agencies has disproportionately negative consequences for minority communities ([Nix and Wolfe, 2020](#); [Mourtgos et al., 2022](#)). Yet, to fully gauge the impact of officer turnover on policing and citizen welfare, it is essential to examine the *type* of departing officers besides the overall number of exits. Since the race and partisanship of officers are important determinants of police behavior ([Ba et al., 2021, 2023](#)), the characteristics of officers who leave in response to public protests likely affect the overall costs of police turnover.

To assess the impact of large-scale protests and calls for police reform on the composition of US police, I study the attrition by different groups of NYPD officers following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. [Figure 8](#) describes the total number of monthly exits by officer traits over time. Retirements spiked between July and September 2020, reaching a maximum of 434 in August 2020. While this trend applies to all groups of officers, the increase seems particularly pronounced for Republican and especially White employees.

To assess these attrition dynamics across partisanship and race more systematically, I build an officer-month panel data set for all active officers on the payroll in the months directly preceding and following George Floyd’s death. This yields a panel of 38,001 officers

Figure 8: Total Number of Retirements and Resignations by Employee Groups



and higher-ranked employees, of whom 2,887 left within six months before and after George Floyd’s killing. I then estimate a model akin to an event study design:

$$\text{exit}_{it} = \alpha + \sum_{k \in [-6, 6] \setminus \{0\}} \text{GeorgeFloyd}_{tk} \delta_k + \sum_{k \in [-6, 6] \setminus \{0\}} (\text{group}_i \times \text{GeorgeFloyd}_{tk}) \beta_{ik} + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where exit_{it} is a binary indicator for whether an employee i exits the NYPD force in month t , group_i is a categorical indicator for employee i ’s partisanship or race and GeorgeFloyd_{tk} measures the distance to May 2020. In other words, $\text{GeorgeFloyd}_{tk} = 1$ if George Floyd was killed in month $t + k$. γ_i are fixed effects for employees’ cohort, rank, and work location, and ε_{it} indicates robust standard errors. The main coefficients of interest, β_{ik} , measure the

month-specific differential propensity of partisan and racial officer groups to exit.

Figure 9 depicts the estimated interaction coefficients β_{ik} . The results suggest that compared to Democratic and non-White officers, Republicans, and especially Whites, were more likely to retire in the months immediately after George Floyd’s death and the resulting protest movement. In August 2020, for example, Republicans were 0.3 percentage points more likely to exit than Democrats ($p = 0.06$), and White officers were 0.7 percentage points more likely to leave than non-Whites ($p < 0.001$). Importantly, although these estimates are small, they are substantively meaningful: Since the monthly propensity to exit the NYPD is small among all active uniformed employees, these differences imply a 35% increase in exit probability for Republicans relative to Democrats and a 50% increase for Whites relative to non-White officers.¹³

What is the overall effect of George Floyd’s murder on the differential exit of officers? When re-estimating Equation (1) with a binary indicator for months before and after George Floyd’s death, I find that the probability of exiting increased by 0.53 percentage points for non-White officers immediately after George Floyd’s murder (see Table A7). For Whites, however, it increased by an additional 0.23 percentage points or 43% more. Simple back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that 895 White officers left in the six months after the George Floyd protests, compared to 330 officers who left before the demonstrations. For non-Whites, these figures only amount to 768 and 386.¹⁴ For the Republican-Democratic gap in exits, Table A7 suggests that the aggregated effect of George Floyd’s death is also positive but small and indistinguishable from zero ($p = 0.62$).¹⁵

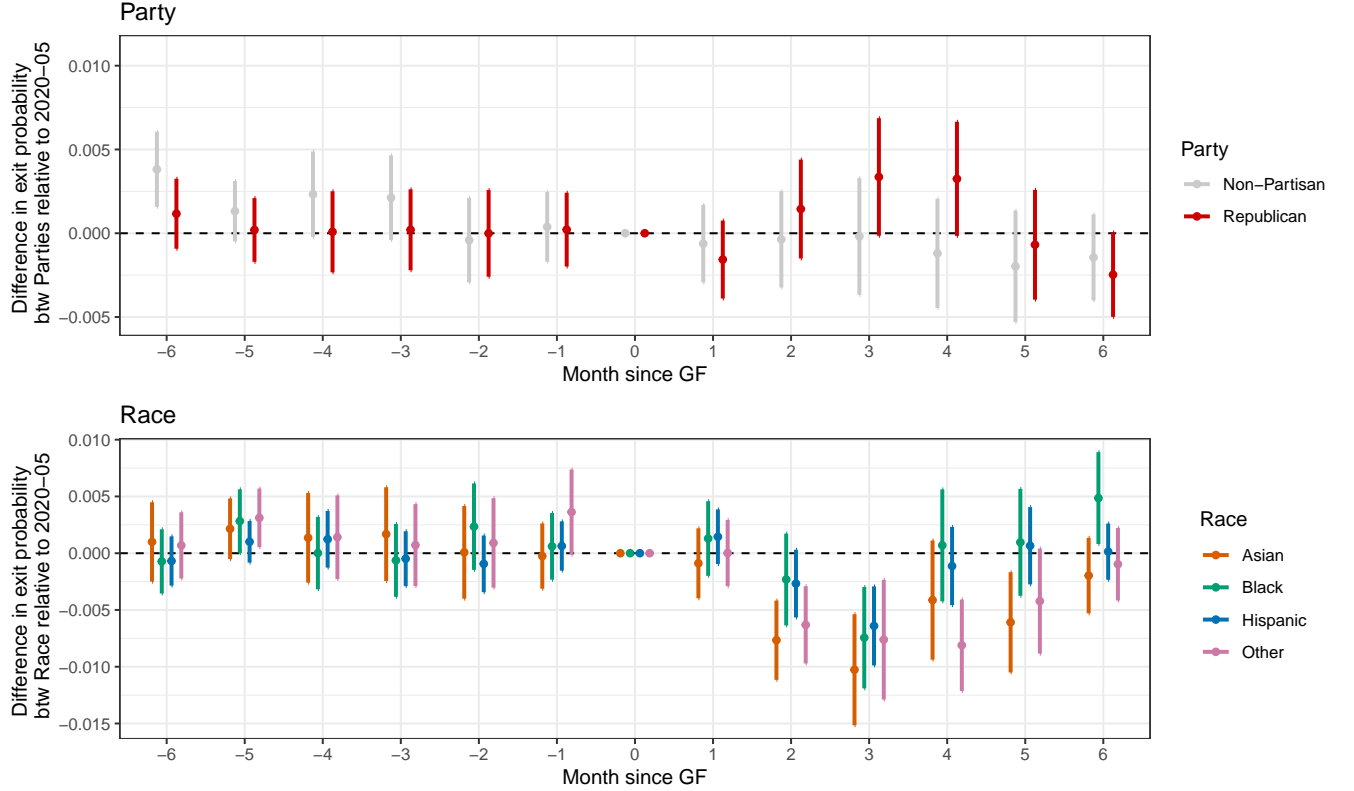
One may be concerned that these differential exit trends only capture a delayed effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on officers’ willingness to remain on the force. To alleviate

¹³To illustrate this, Figures A7 and A8 depict the marginal effects of GeorgeFloyd_{tk} (i.e., the predicted increase in exit probability compared to May 2020) across partisanship and race.

¹⁴These figures are based on the predicted probabilities of exit across race and period (before George Floyd, White: 0.0031; after George Floyd, White: 0.0107; before George Floyd, non-White: 0.0035; after George Floyd, non-White: 0.0088) together with the total number of White and non-White officers by period.

¹⁵Figures A9 and A10 further indicate that officers leaving in the six months after George Floyd’s death were also older, more senior, and had higher records of misconduct than in previous periods.

Figure 9: Difference in Exit Probability between Parties and Race Groups



Estimated interaction coefficients (β_{ik}) from Equation (1) with robust 95% confidence intervals. Democrats (top panel) and Whites (bottom panel) are the baseline category.

these concerns, I estimate Equation (1) for front-line workers at the NYC fire department (FDNY). Given that FDNY bureaucrats resemble NYPD officers in many dimensions—including unionization rates, salary and their exposure to the pandemic on the job—but were less affected by the 2020 police protests and changing political climate, they serve as a valid placebo analysis. Figures A11 and A12 indeed show that there is no substantial increase in turnover among fire fighters following the George Floyd protests and, more importantly, no differential exit trends across party or racial groups of bureaucrats. This further bolsters the claim that the increase in departures among NYPD officers, and particularly Whites, resulted from the increased public scrutiny, calls for police reform, and changes in officer morale.

8 Conclusion

The race and partisanship of street-level bureaucrats are central to issues of representative bureaucracy and are crucial determinants of public service provision (Ba et al., 2021, 2023; Donahue, 2023). This article argues that the complex selection dynamics in modern civil service systems contribute to the politicization of bureaucracies and a lack of representativeness in government. Whereas previous studies focus on patronage and political cycles to explain the partisan and racial composition of bureaucracies, this article highlights how dynamics of self-selection, recruitment, promotion, and attrition of bureaucrats influence who becomes and remains a bureaucrat. I document representational gaps between bureaucrats and citizens and disentangle the complex selection dynamics using novel administrative data on public employment in NYC’s government. The granularity of this data allows me to provide a detailed picture of partisan and racial selection in one of America’s largest and most professionalized bureaucracies, covering more than 560,000 employees on the NYC payroll since 2014.

I illustrate various representational gaps between local bureaucrats and citizens, including differences in representativeness across agencies and geographic regions. For instance, while Democrats and African Americans are underrepresented in NYC’s police and fire departments relative to their jurisdiction, these groups are overrepresented in the correction and social services departments. Focusing on selection within the NYPD, I then unpack the dynamics of descriptive (mis)representation by tracing the types of individuals selecting into the bureaucracy and examining differential career trajectories and attrition rates of more than 58,000 officers. I find consistent differences in selection dynamics across individual officers by partisanship and race, with higher probabilities of hiring, promotions, appointments to elite units, departmental awards, and longer tenures among White and Republican employees relative to non-White and Democratic officers. Finally, I show how prominent cases of police violence affect selection in local law enforcement. Leveraging the substantial

protest movement following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd in an event study design, I find that Republicans and White officers were 35% and 50% more likely to leave the NYPD force immediately after George Floyd’s death than Democratic and non-White employees, respectively.

These findings have important implications for how we think about the politicization and representativeness of bureaucracy. First, a politically insulated and impartial career civil service is often seen as the hallmark of good governance and a Weberian state. Yet, even textbook Weberian bureaucracies, such as NYC’s highly regulated and formalized civil service system, can be politicized through the type of individuals they attract, select, and retain. Second, the findings reinforce recent calls to study bureaucratic representation as a multi-dimensional concept that explicitly incorporates partisanship (Ba et al., 2023). In a politically polarized society where partisanship has become a central identity marker, this conceptualization provides a richer framework to understand who receives what from the government and why. Finally, the results help to reassess some conventional wisdom about selection at US law enforcement agencies. At the recruitment stage, for instance, a common perception suggests that the lack of minority hires is due to lower attraction to the profession for non-White candidates. However, this article indicates that the underrepresentation of minority and Democratic appointments arises at the hiring stage (i.e., *after* potential recruits have already taken the written entrance exam). These findings can inform police departments in their efforts to diversify their forces. Similarly, amid the 2020 protest movements, concerns arose that the underrepresentation of minorities among police forces would worsen, as non-White officers were increasingly caught between their job and their identity and thus incentivized to leave (Barnett, 2020). In contrast, this article finds that the George Floyd protests caused primarily White and older officers to exit. This dynamic suggests an unexplored mechanism through which large-scale protests might achieve more police accountability without explicit police reforms.

Yet, important issues and open questions remain. Although the large administrative data

from NYC allows for a rich picture of partisan and racial selection, the analysis is restricted to only one primary US jurisdiction. It remains to be seen how the results presented here generalize to other city governments, particularly other law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the nature of this article is inherently descriptive and only offers a first step toward uncovering why professionalized bureaucracies can be politicized through bureaucratic selection. More specifically, it cannot uncover the exact mechanisms that led to the documented biases in bureaucrats' partisanship and race. For instance, the fact that Republican and White officers are more likely to receive promotions and desirable assignments could be explained by individual-level factors, such as job satisfaction and motivation to advance in the profession, or institutional-level aspects, including support from superiors and the agency more broadly. Future research may seek to use other data sources and methods, such as surveys of street-level bureaucrats and experimental designs, to further explore the mechanisms at play.

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Appendix: Supporting Information for *Politicized Meritocracy*

A Tables

Table A1: Difference in Probability of Taking Another Civil Service Exam Within One Year

	Model 1	Model 2
Republican	−0.02*** (0.00)	−0.02*** (0.00)
Non-Partisan	−0.01*** (0.00)	−0.01*** (0.00)
Black	0.07*** (0.00)	0.06*** (0.00)
Hispanic	0.02*** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)
Asian	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Other Race	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Examscore (80-90)		−0.00 (0.00)
Examscore (90-100)		0.00 (0.00)
Exam FE	No	Yes
Mean of DV	0.12	0.12
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.03
Num. obs.	60003	60003

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A2: Difference in Probability of Taking a Promotion Exam (2014-2021)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Republican	−0.00 (0.00)		0.00 (0.00)
Non-Partisan	0.00 (0.00)		−0.00 (0.00)
Black		−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)
Hispanic		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Asian		0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Other Race		0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of DV	0.09	0.09	0.09
Adj. R ²	0.12	0.12	0.12
Num. obs.	49558	48521	45990

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A3: Differences in (Log) Number of Awards by Officer Characteristics

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Republican	0.20*** (0.01)		0.13*** (0.01)
Non-Partisan	0.08*** (0.01)		0.04** (0.01)
Black		-0.27*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)
Hispanic		-0.16*** (0.01)	-0.12*** (0.01)
Asian		-0.26*** (0.02)	-0.24*** (0.02)
Other Race		-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.12*** (0.02)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of DV	0.92	0.91	0.91
Adj. R ²	0.21	0.21	0.22
Num. obs.	28422	27609	26222

Regressions weighted by posterior probability of a match between payroll and voter file. The information on awards received is only available for active officers (here as of October 2021). Level of observation: Employee. Outcome: Log number of departmental awards since their appointment date at NYPD. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A4: Differences in Command Assignments for Active Officers
(as of 10/20/2021)

	All Elite	Terrorism	Drugs	Special Forces
Republican	0.03*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)
Non-Partisan	0.02*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Black	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)
Hispanic	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Asian	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)
Other Race	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of DV	0.10	0.04	0.02	0.04
Adj. R ²	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.02
Num. obs.	26222	26222	26222	26222

Regressions weighted by posterior probability of a match between exam data and voter file. The command information is only available for active officers (here as of October 2021). Level of observation: Employee. HC1 standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A5: Correlation of Team Leadership and Team Composition

	Share of Party			Share of Race				
	Republican	Democrat	Non-Partisan	Hispanic	White	Asian	Black	Other
Republican leader	0.05*	-0.04*	-0.01	-0.03	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Non-Partisan leader	-0.02	-0.03	0.05**	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.00	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Asian leader	0.04	-0.06	0.02	-0.02	-0.07	0.08***	-0.02	0.04*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Black leader	-0.02	0.04	-0.02	-0.01	-0.13***	0.03*	0.08***	0.03**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Hispanic leader	-0.03	0.02	0.00	0.06**	-0.09***	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Other Race leader	-0.03	0.05	-0.02	0.02	-0.10	0.02	-0.01	0.07***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Mean DV	0.38	0.39	0.23	0.27	0.52	0.05	0.11	0.05
R ²	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.11	0.10	0.05	0.05
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.08	0.03	0.03
Num. obs.	644	644	644	644	644	644	644	644

Cross-sectional OLS; The information on team assignment is only available for active officers (here as of October 2021). Level of observation: Team. Outcome: Share of relevant demographic per team. Regressions also control for 5 bins of team size, precinct team dummy, special operations team dummy and the highest rank of the leader. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A6: Correlation of Team Diversity and Team Leadership

	Gini Coefficient	
	Party	Race
Republican	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Non-Partisan	-0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Asian	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.11*** (0.03)
Black	0.06* (0.03)	-0.05* (0.02)
Hispanic	0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Other Race	0.01 (0.05)	-0.10** (0.03)
Adj. R^2	0.13	0.22
Num. obs.	644	644

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Regressions also control for 5 bins of team size, precinct team dummy, special operations team dummy and the highest rank of the leader. Level of observation: Team. Dependent variable: Gini index.

Table A7: Effect of George Floyd on Differential Exits

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
George Floyd	0.0055*** (0.0004)	0.0066*** (0.0004)	0.0044*** (0.0003)	0.0053*** (0.0003)
Republican	0.0004 (0.0003)	0.0005 (0.0003)		
George Floyd \times Republican	0.0002 (0.0006)	0.0003 (0.0006)		
White			0.0012*** (0.0003)	-0.0004 (0.0003)
George Floyd \times White			0.0020*** (0.0005)	0.0023*** (0.0005)
Fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean of DV	0.0060	0.0060	0.0060	0.0060
Adj. R ²	0.0012	0.0212	0.0014	0.0210
Num. obs.	301477	299928	388169	386154

OLS, weighted by posterior probability of a match between payroll and voter file. Outcome: Official exit (retirement, resignation, termination or dismissal). Level of observation: Employee-month. HC1 standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

B Figures

Figure A1: Boxplots of Posterior Probabilities of Correct Matches across Matching Procedures

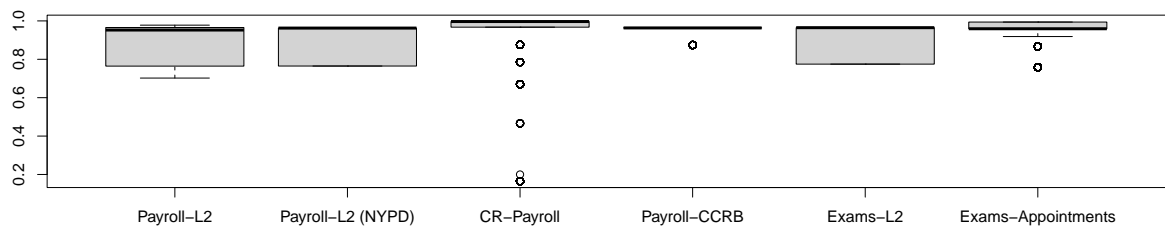


Figure A2: Share of Demographics at NYPD

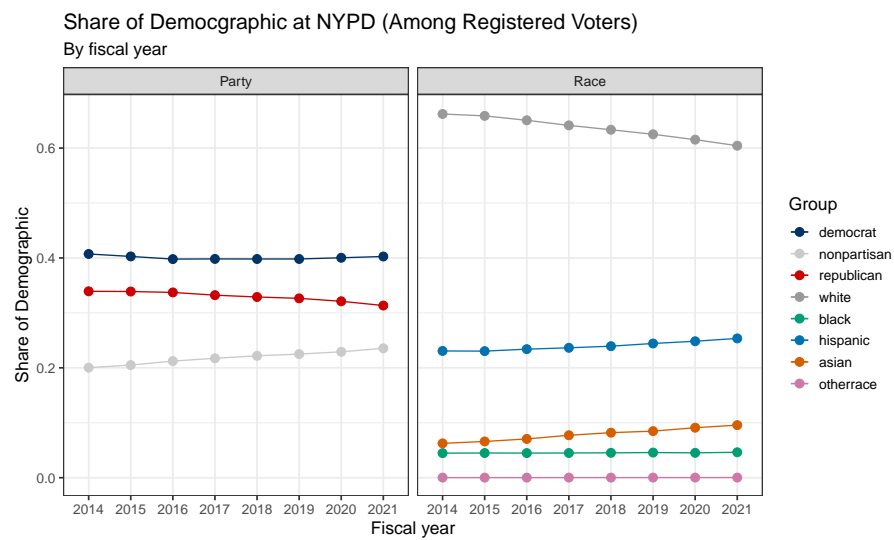


Figure A3: Hiring Differences Across Exam Scores

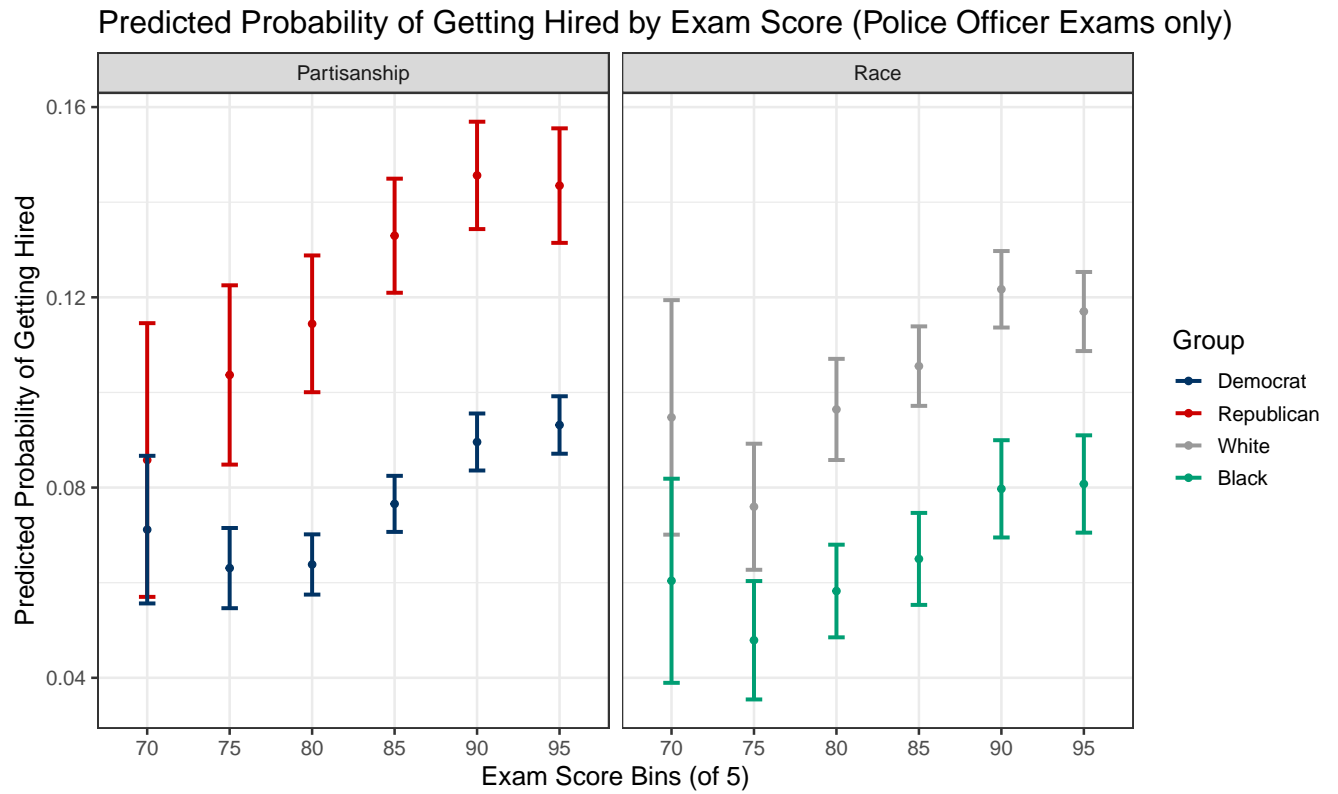
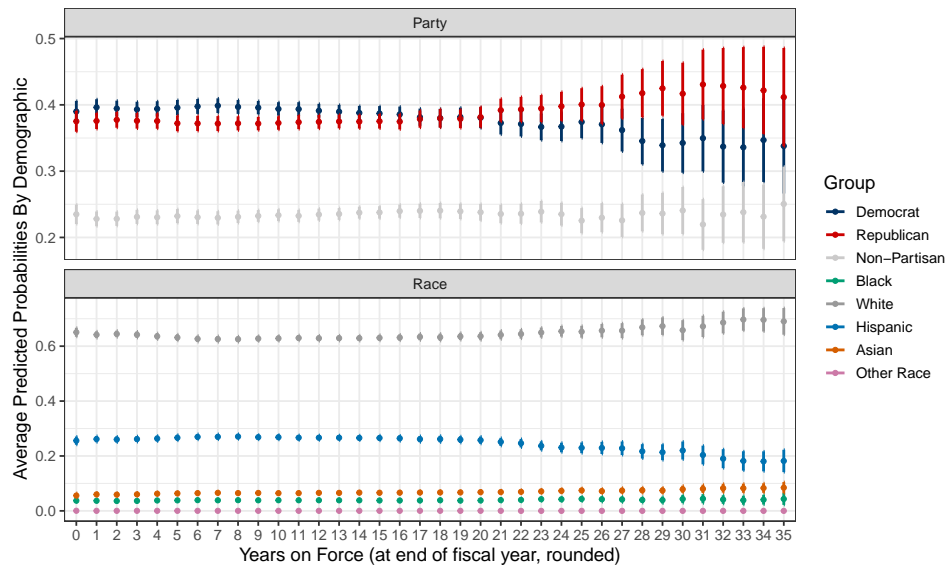


Figure A4: Predicted Probability of Demographic By Experience



The estimates are predicted probabilities based on regressions of group indicators on experience, cohort FE and fiscal year FE. This accounts for the fact that certain cohorts are skewed in terms of partisanship and race because of their composition at the time of appointment rather than differential attrition. The covariates are fixed at their observed values for the predictions.

Figure A5

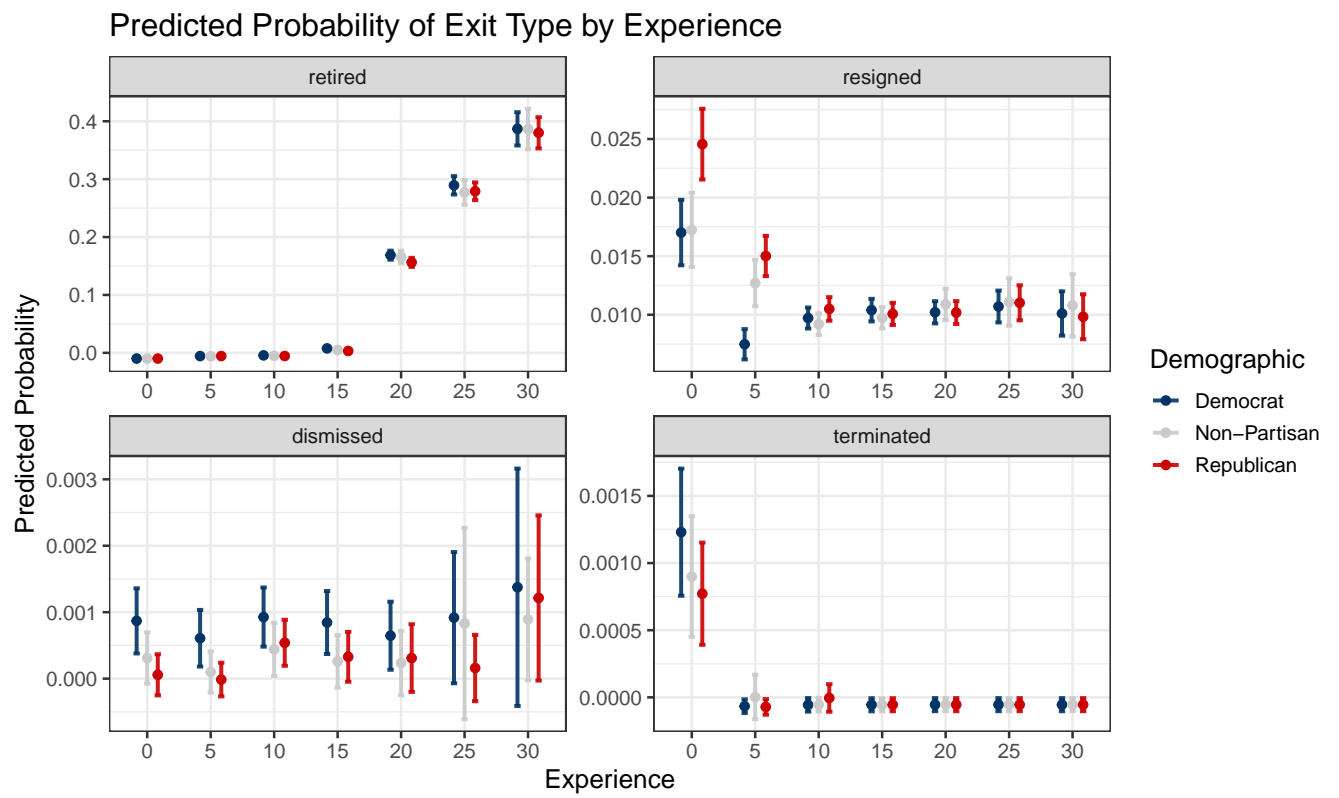


Figure A6

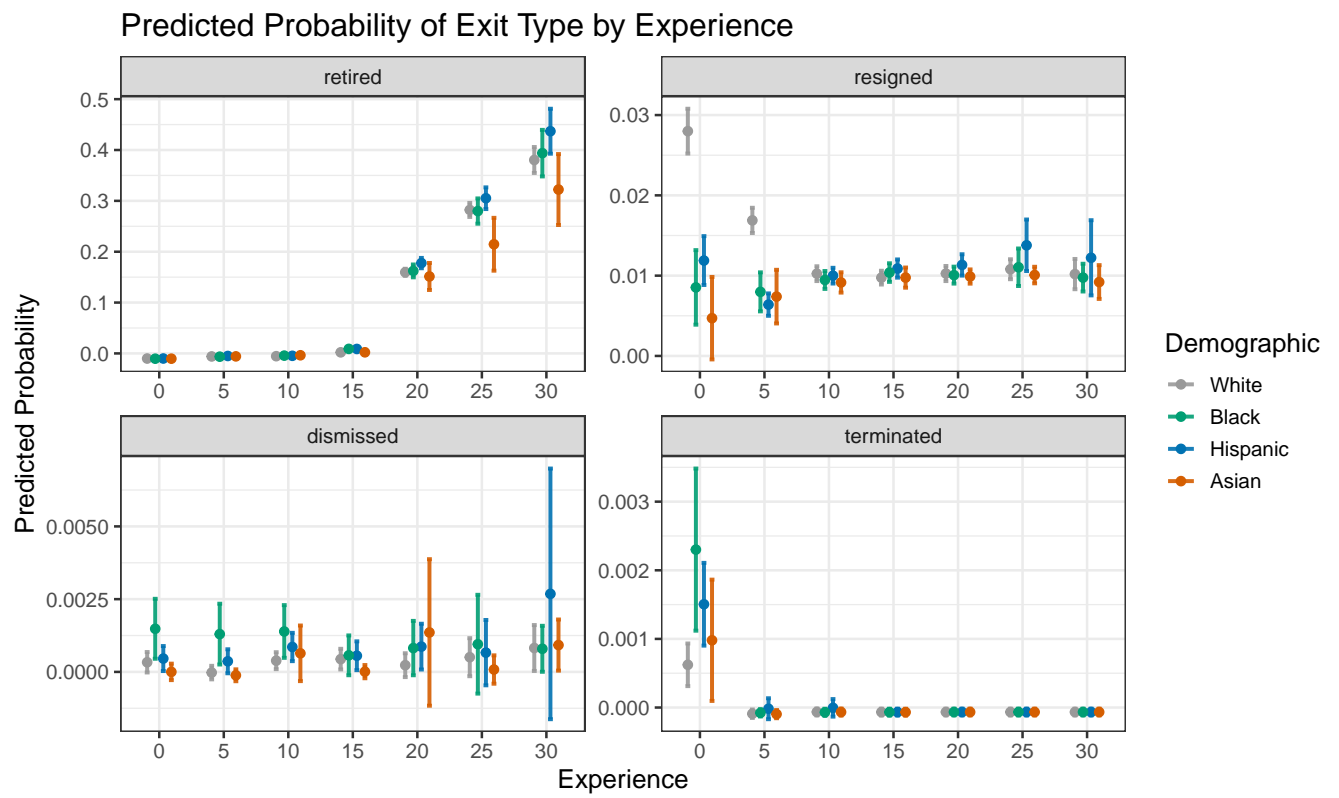


Figure A7: Marginal Effect of GeorgeFloyd_{tk} on Probability of Exit, by Party

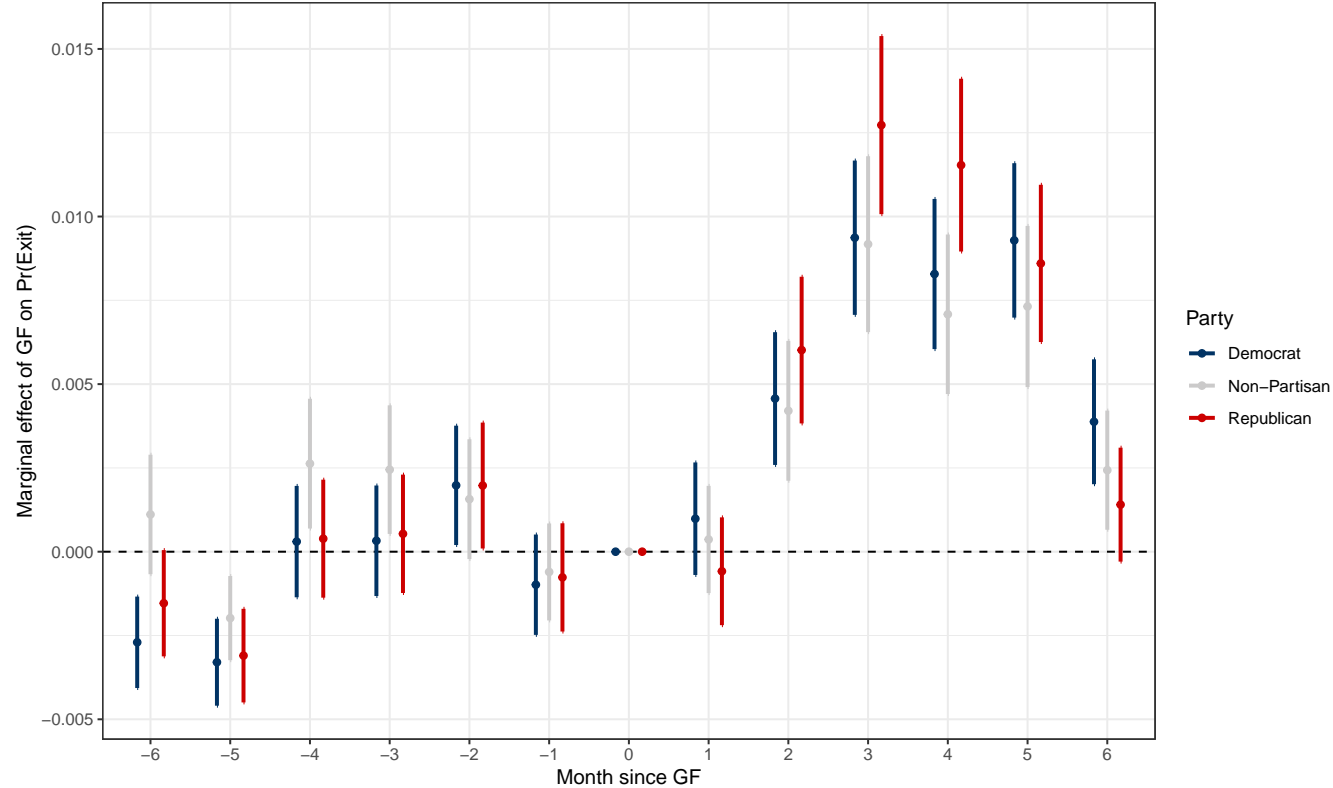


Figure A8: Marginal Effect of GeorgeFloyd_{tk} on Probability of Exit, by Race

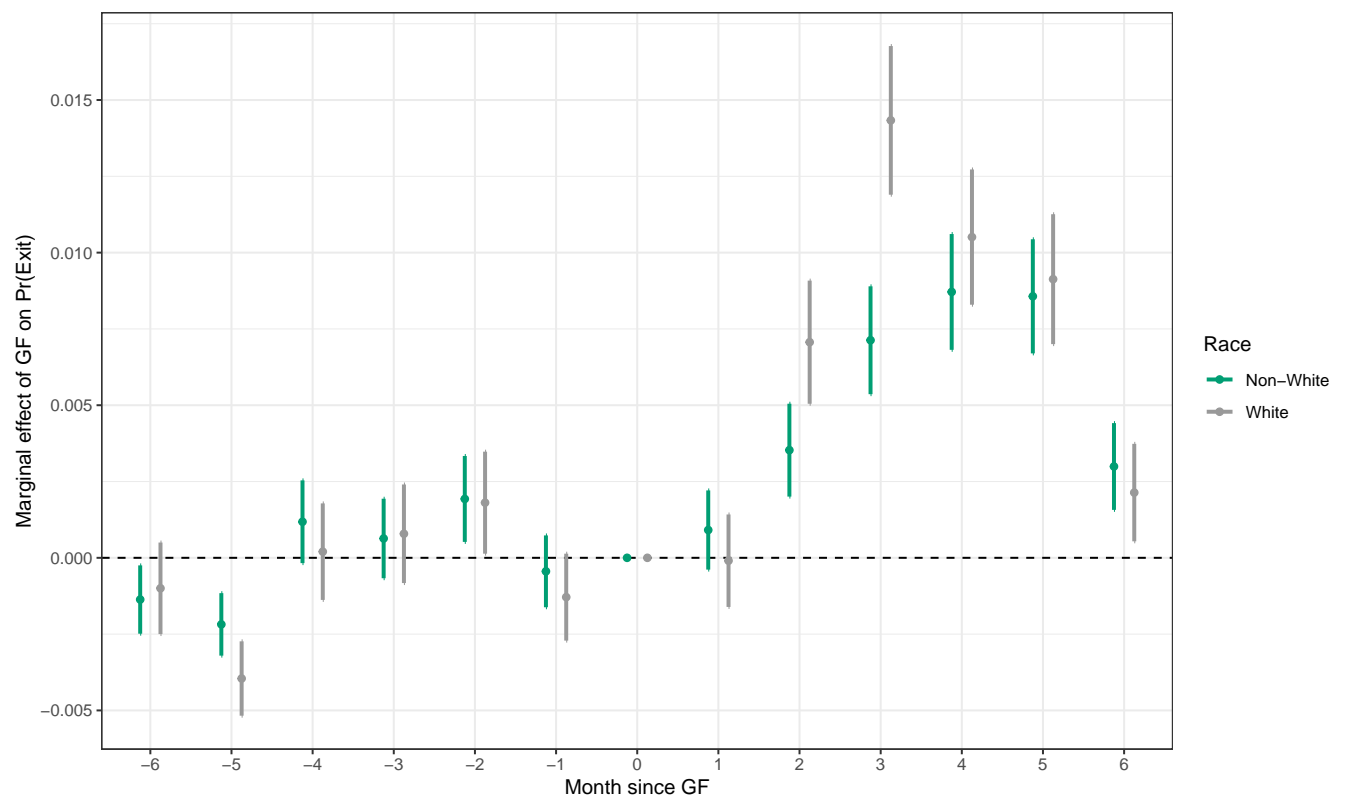


Figure A9: Description of Exiting Officers in 6-months Windows (June-November)

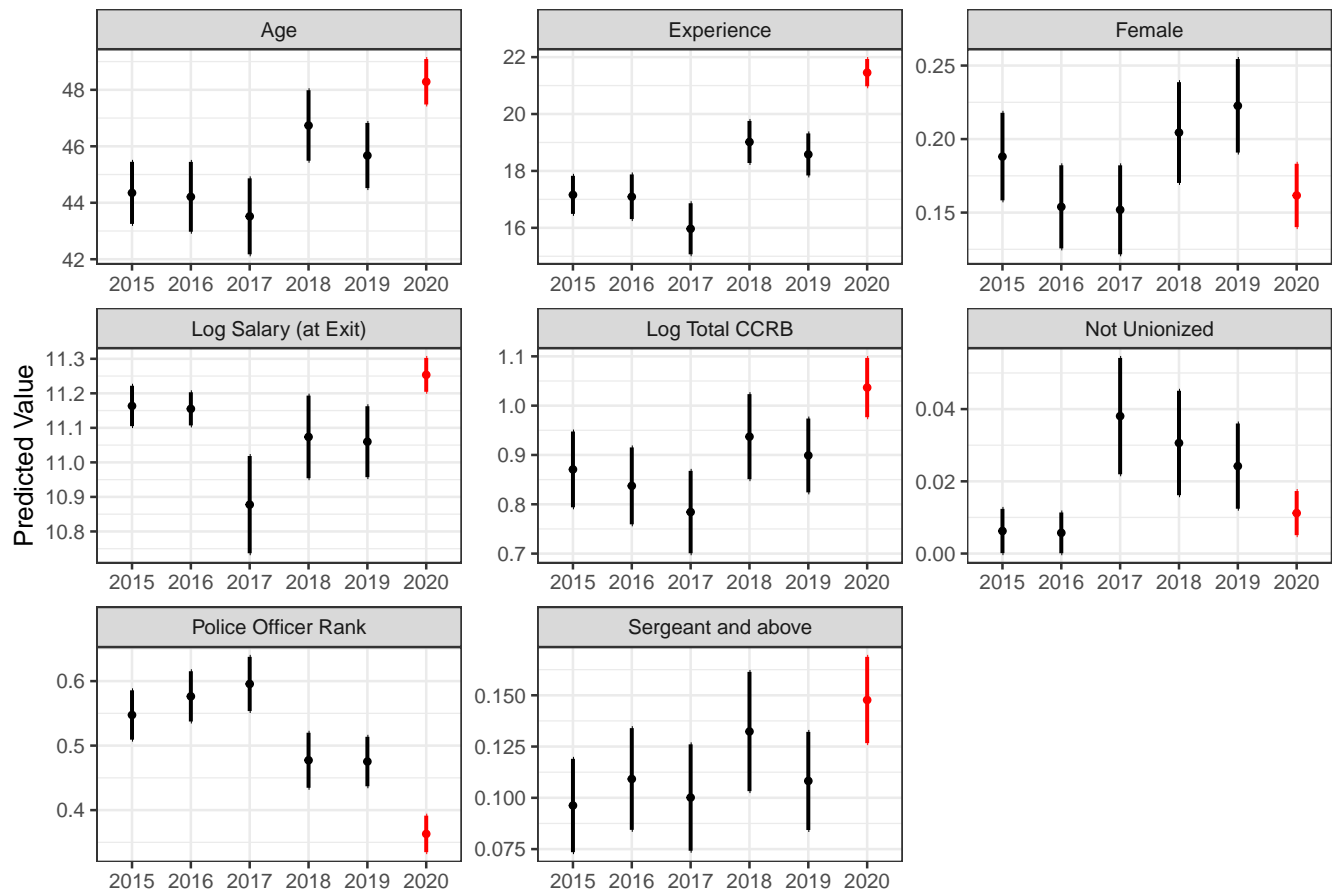


Figure A10: Power of Covariates to Predict Exit across Periods, Importance Scores of Random Forest Algorithm

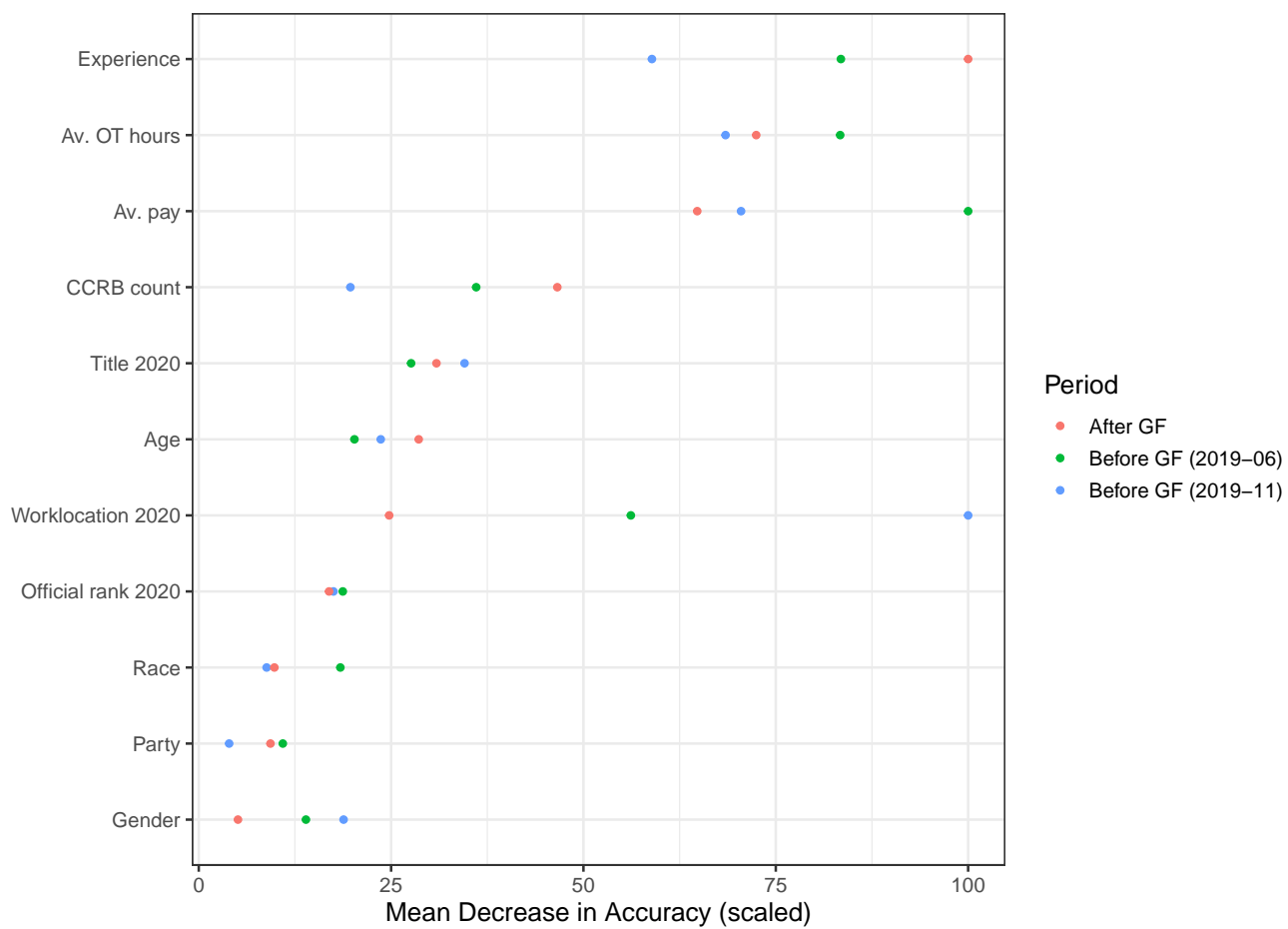


Figure A11: Placebo: Total Number of Retirements and Resignations for FDNY

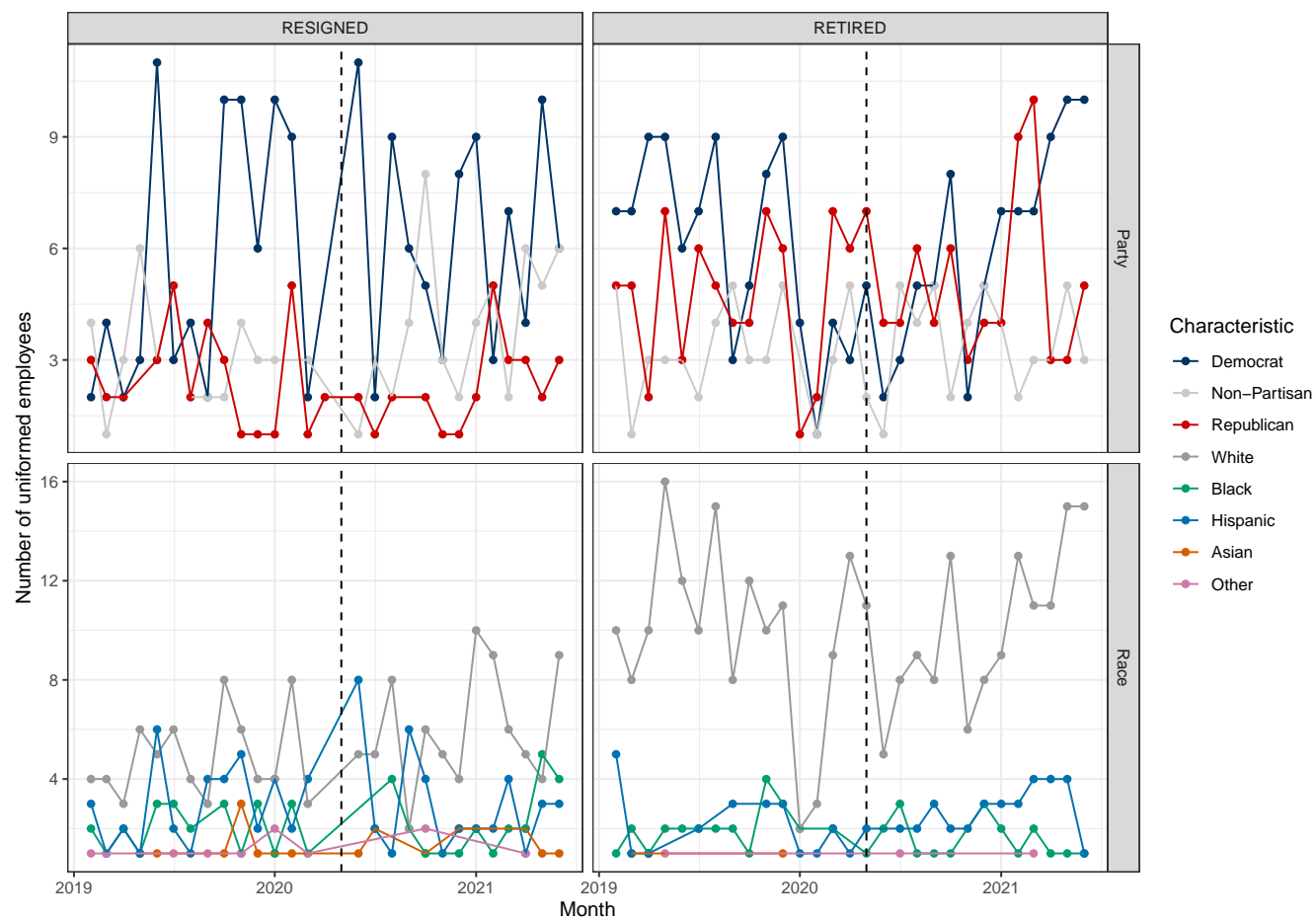
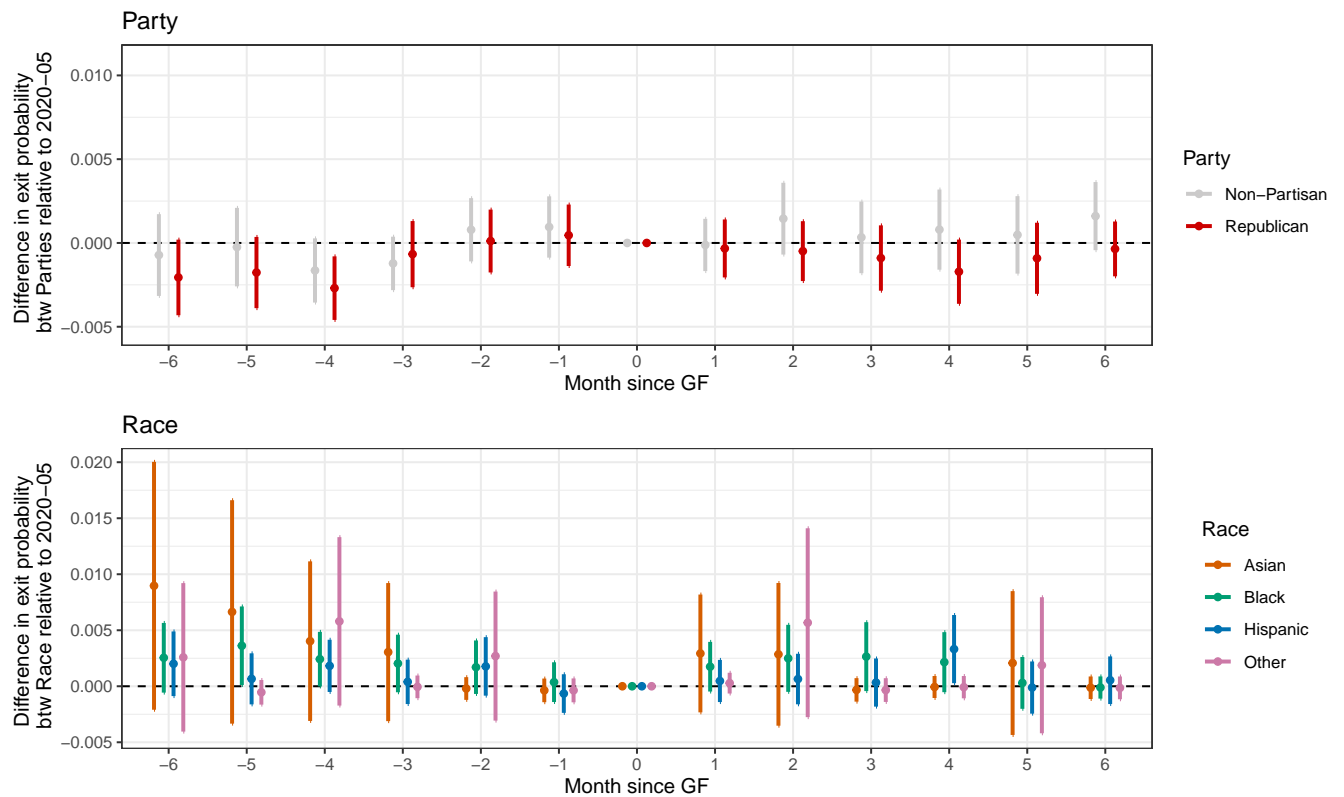


Figure A12: Placebo: Difference in Exit Probability between Parties and Race Groups at FDNY



Estimated interaction coefficients (β_{ik}) from Equation (1) with robust 95% confidence intervals. Democrats (top panel) and Whites (bottom panel) are the baseline category.